

through it. After that, I feel totally at peace, and like I'm actually in heaven."

"Are you in love with me?"

I didn't look away from him but I didn't answer either.

"Are you? Because I'm in love with you. I told you that the first night you were in here and I meant it."

Tears rolled down my face because I desperately wanted to believe him.

"What are you crying for?" he said, wiping away my tears.

"Because I *am* in love with you. But I'm also afraid. I'm not afraid to give our relationship a chance, but I'm afraid that I'll continue to fall further in love with you and then you'll change your mind about everything."

"If you don't change, I won't change. Okay?"

I nodded and Carl kissed me.

He kissed me and I could feel the love between us—even as I lay in my hospital bed, with bruises, cuts, and no makeup. Even though we'd never had sex and for the most part hadn't had a chance to discuss it.

We kissed and I wondered if he would in fact be my husband one day.