

Still Waters

by Patricia Haley

Chapter 1

"I don't want a divorce." Mrs. Williams didn't flinch, not so much as a whimper. If the thought of divorce was offensive, she didn't let on. "I didn't get married to end up divorced. I don't want to be one of those women who ends up alone and I definitely don't want my kids to be without a father."

"... but I'm tired," she said. "I'm just tired of trying to make him happy. If he would just act right, everything would be fine," she said as three of her boys came running up the aisle. "Junior, wait in the lobby for me and watch Baby Rick. I'll be right out," she said telling her sons and then turning back to the church mother. "That two year-old can be a handful at times."

"I know six kids and a husband keeps you busy. I don't know how you found so much time to spend here at church with a husband at home."

"To be honest, I used to love working here at the church. It was my only time away from the house, the kids and Greg, especially him when he gets into one of his moods like he's in right now. That's why I'm in no rush to get home today."

"Men need their space, that's all."

"Space? I'm the one who needs space. Don't get me wrong, I love my children but six is a lot. I couldn't handle another one."

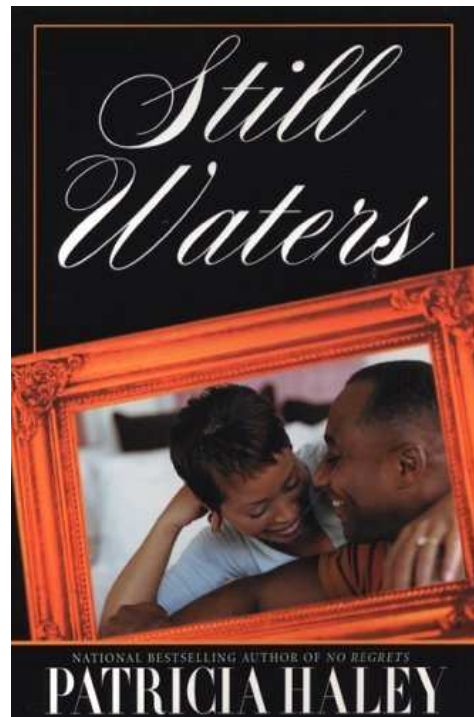
Baby Rick came charging in with Junior in pursuit.

"That's okay, I got him," Laurie said corralling Baby Rick as he tried to breeze by. "Take your brothers and go to the car," she told Junior. "I'll be right out."

Mrs. Williams laughed openly. "You're still young Laurie. How are you going to stop another child from entering this world if that's the plan God has for you?"

She'd stayed in the marriage believing it would settle down and get back to the way it used to be, back to when they were happy. If they had a chance, Greg had to get his anger under control. The more explosive he became, the more difficult and the less interested she was in concealing it from outsiders. In the meantime, she couldn't allow another child to sneak into the household, not through her womb. She had a plan, keep avoiding Greg's intimate advances until her body said the coast was clear. Menopause was far off but avoidance was the best she could do for now although it was a good chance that Greg's frustration wouldn't hold out that long with no backup plan in sight, fear whisked in.

"Got to take the good with the bad honey. Marriage isn't easy but stick it out and let God get the glory. Easy to say for a deacon's wife married forty-five years. Mrs. Williams wasn't married to Greg Wright, a man whose moods riveted like a roller coaster – fast, slow, up, down, winding, scary, and at other times sprinkled with sheer exhilaration. Those were the



times she wanted to stay, like when she first met him. Back then they couldn't stand being apart for more than a day. Now it was hard being around him for more than an hour. Something had to change. She knew it and hopefully God did too.