

**AFTER THE STORM**

By Cassandra Darden Bell

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Reviewed by :: Diamond Taylor

Thirty-three-year-old Jessi Andrews has always sensed when bad news is coming, and the morning Hurricane Lily approaches her Florida town is no different. But the havoc Mother Nature is about to wreak on the outside is nothing compared to the chaos that's about to turn Jessi's life upside down. The real storm hits when Jessi stops by her husband's office--and finds him in a compromising position with his assistant.

In less time than it will take for Lily to blow through Jacksonville, Jessi's world is changed forever. After ten years of a marriage filled with deception, thirty pounds of excess weight gain, and countless knocks to her self-esteem, can she really start over? Jessi's two best friends think so. The two sons who love her think so too. Now all they have to do is convince Jessi. The first step is a long-overdue vacation. Jessi's expecting sun, sand, tropical drinks, and relaxation. But with the travel plans in her friends' hands, she's going to have to learn to expect the unexpected. And that's just the beginning, as Jessi gets motivated to put long-hidden talents to work for her in ways she'd only dreamed about in the past. Along the way, a few other dreams might come true for her, too.

*'After The Storm'* is a poignant story of three best girlfriends on the road to self-discovery and hope. Ms. Bell has created the Waiting to Exhale of the new millennium. Although it was a little slow at first, it quickly picks up steam. Ordinarily, I wouldn't like a story in first person but it was necessary for such a personal journey. There was a little too much detail in spots but overall I will be definitely recommending *'After The Storm'* to all my friends!

**4 ½ Kisses**