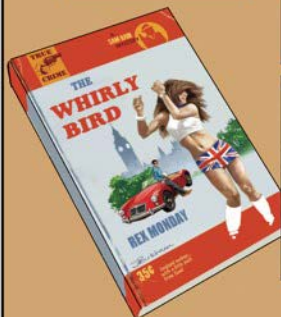




A SAM HAIN PAPERBACK,
SIGNED BY THE AUTHOR
"AFFECTIONATELY" TO SAM
HODGES...



FIVE BRIEF
TYPEWRITTEN
NOTES THAT
SPEAK OF LOVE
AND DESIRE,
THAT POINT TO
AN AFFAIR...

UNSIGNED.



AND THE
MANUSCRIPT OF
A SHORT NOVEL,
UNCREDITED.

ARE THESE
ITEMS
ALL RELATED
SOMEHOW?

OR
COMPLETELY
SEPARATE
THINGS THAT
HODGES WANTED
HIDDEN FROM
THE WORLD?



THE LETTERS
APPEAR TO HAVE
BEEN WRITTEN
ON THE SAME
TYPEWRITER AS
THE MANUSCRIPT...



It was madness, but it was divine.

Simon was ten years younger than me, handsome and intelligent and kind...

...and sexy as hell.



The fact that a man like that could still find me desirable...went to my head, I guess.

So I let myself forget the fact that he was married.



I'm not proud of that...but it had been so long...

...and it felt so good...





I don't know how, but somewhere inside me I finally found the strength to make a clean break of it.

NO, SIMON. WE **HAVE** TO.

THIS ISN'T FAIR ON HER... OR ON ME.

I COULD LEAVE HER...

NO, YOU COULDN'T.

I WOULDN'T ALLOW IT.

THE TWO OF YOU ARE JUST GOING THROUGH A BAD PATCH, SIMON... AND YOU CAN **FIX** IT.

BUT YOU'VE GOT TO LET ME **GO**...SO I CAN LET **YOU** GO, TOO.

Simon seemed to accept it...though fortunately for me he hadn't, and he turned up again a week later...

...the night that Nick came back.

I was babysitting my grandchildren, and I'd just put them to bed when the doorbell rang.

COMING.

It had been twenty years... but you don't forget the face of a man you once married.

A man who regularly beat you senseless.

HELLO, RUBY.

STILL LOOKING GOOD. NICE PLACE YOU GOT HERE.

WHAT... WHAT DO YOU WANT?

I HEAR I'VE GOT A GRANDSON NOW.

I WANT TO TEACH HIM. I WANT THE BOY TO KNOW WHAT WOMEN ARE **REALLY** LIKE.







