INTO THE NIGHT

By Lissa Jackson

Kate Grayson watched the naked woman jiggle across the tarmac, then glanced at her watch. “Five more minutes and you’re late to the point of rudeness. And rude people annoy me.” She saw two security guards exchange smiles and holster their guns before bolting after the bouncing woman gone wild.

Apparently a naked chick was not a security threat.

Broad day light, albeit waning; butt naked; and an audience—a woman with no body issues. Was that possible? The woman wore only shoes. Running shoes, judging from her stride. She was leaving her pursuers in the dust as she sprinted along the airport perimeter fencing.
While alarming from a security perspective, the situation was reminiscent of the old keystone cop movies, harried uniforms bumbling after the wily villain. Kate smiled and shook her head. “Matthews is going to be one of those assignments.” Kate loved being a pilot and the rich, the beautiful, and the slightly wacky made flying lucrative. Tyler Matthews personified them: Hollywood alumni, coolly handsome, and living in a world populated by drooling fans and crazies.

Kate returned her attention to the final exterior check of her Cessna 400, essential before engine start—provided her tardy passenger eventually showed. Standard operating procedures were sacrosanct. She took a deep breath and focused. Completing the routine, she squatted to scan the hangar floor. No lurking naked ladies or other hazards sighted, she climbed into the cockpit.

She looked at her watch again. Where is that man?

As if from nowhere, a powerfully built man opened the forward passenger door, taking her by surprise. He gave the interior a thorough once-over. She saw his shoulder holster and gun as he leaned forward, his muscular upper torso filling the cockpit’s doorway. His authoritative demeanor, crew cut, and solid physique telegraphed former CIA or special ops. “Ms. Grayson, I’m Niles O’Shea, security. I work for Tyler Matthews. I wanted to make sure his gear was loaded. Sit tight. We’ll be boarding soon.”

“Yes, a suitcase and an overnight bag are onboard.” Kate thought she’d detected a trace of worry in his distinct brogue.
“There’s been a wee logistical hiccup.”

“You mean the fan who forgot her clothes?”

“A naked lass is no problem, but a crowd, now that’s different. There’s a few last-minute
details I need to update Mr. Matthews on. I’ll be quick about it and then you two can be on your
way.” Niles didn’t wait for an answer. He closed the door, disappearing as quickly and quietly
as he’d appeared.

From her plane she watched as a noisy and colorful crowd began to spill from the main
building. It reminded her of the one and only time she attended Mardi Gras. She shuddered.
She loved New Orleans, but not Mardi Gras. Once was enough to last a lifetime.

Hoping to avoid a repeat of the frenzy at the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International
Airport when Tyler arrived on location, Kate had suggested departing from the Lakefront
Airport. Obviously, the word was out, and she wondered if the smaller airport could withstand
the onslaught. Frantic fans pushed past the temporary fencing, trampling a section. She shifted
uneasily in her seat, growing concerned as the crowd continued to move toward the small hangar
where she sat. Several fans carried prominent signs. One proclaimed in hot pink, *I’ll have your
baby*; another: *Beautify America! Clone Yourself.*

Then, as if a command had been issued from within their ranks, the whole group did an
about face. At the far end of the runway, a sleek Lear jet taxied into position. *Lemmings,* she
thought. *They’re lemmings.* The crowd surged toward the plane, press, security, and fans
indistinguishable.
The plane door opened a second time. “Evening. Tyler Matthews. Great night for a flight, isn’t it?” His voice was dark and rich like fine chocolate. The rest of him wasn’t bad either: gray eyes, black hair, and more handsome than any mere mortal ought to be.

“Nice to meet you, Mr. Matthews. I’m Kate Grayson,” she said, deciding not to shake his hand as was her habit. Star struck. This was a first.

Again, as if from the ether, Niles appeared behind Tyler. Kate counted four men positioned at the entrance to the hangar where no one had stood moments ago.

“Hop in, guys,” said Kate. “When I filed my flight plan, Mr. O’Shea, I was assured they’d ratchet up security as warranted. Are they still having a time of it?”

“No worries, miss, and call me Niles. Mr. O’Shea, now he would be me father.”

Kate nodded to Niles, but her attention was fixed on the crowd circling the Lear jet as security closed in on them. Niles did a good job of creating the diversion at the opposite end of the runway. To make it through that mob, one would need a sizable armed escort. **What a way to live.**

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Tyler slipped into the front passenger seat. “Please call me Tyler.” He turned to Niles, who settled in the rear seat adjacent to his. “Anyone ever tell you that you have a talent for ruining a peaceful evening?”

“May’ve heard that a time or two from me ex-girlfriends. Lovely plane, miss. I trust everything we’ll be discussing is confidential?”
“Of course,” Kate said. “We provide an ironclad confidentiality guarantee to our high-profile clients—clients that include politicians, royalty, and movie stars. Your secrets are secure.”

Tyler chuckled softly. “Easy, Niles. I think we’ve been put in our place. I doubt our business ranks up there with state secrets.” He stole a moment in appreciation of Kate Grayson. A down-to-earth blue-eyed beauty. Well, well, welcome back to the land of the living.

“I got the latest on DuMont—and this.” Niles handed over an envelope to Tyler. “A token of affection, let’s say.”

Tyler’s smile faded as he scanned the one-page letter: Once I lost my most precious thing. Do you know how that feels? They say actors draw from feelings, the deeper the emotion, the better the actor. I offer you greatness. “Same as the others,” Tyler said. He looked back at Niles. “He’s out, then.”

“Yeah. They could only hold him for forty-eight hours. Seems his therapist and lawyer did what they’re paid to do.”

Tyler checked Kate out of the corner of his eye. She looked like somebody had turned up the heat in the cockpit: a little uncomfortable. “His wife,” he asked Niles, “where is she now?”

“Make that ex-wife. She’s thinking it may be time to leave L.A. now that the divorce’s gone through and he’s out wandering. As we know, DuMont’s good at being invisible until he wants to be seen.”
One more divorce. Another statistic. For anyone keeping track, Tyler knew his marriage was notable for its brevity and notoriety. “What about the restraining order?” he asked.

“Two for two. The ex-wife’s got one also. But I wouldn’t rest easy with a piece of paper between me and that whack job.”

Tyler’s eyes drifted to Kate, who was glued to the spectacle of the crowd, her knuckles white as she gripped the control stick, her face a blank. Was she alarmed, curious, bored?

“Sorry,” he told her. She seemed startled to be addressed. “This kind of thing always sounds worse than it is. The guy we’re talking about? Just a nuisance. Goes with the job.”

Kate answered like a pro. “Understood. I can step outside if you want to discuss this in private.”

“Not necessary. We’re nearly done.” Tyler picked up where he left off with Niles. “If her relocation is contingent on money, makes sure she gets what she needs. Anonymously,” he added as an afterthought.

Niles watched him for any emotion, but Tyler betrayed none. “Consider it done, boss. You know I’m not one to leave calling cards.”

“Thanks, Niles. I know you know how to do your job. Maybe you and Susan are right.”

“Once in a blue moon, eh?”

“Maybe a little downtime will put things back into perspective.” Tyler’s eyes slid over the paper once more, tightening. “Sometimes I wonder if it’s ever going to let up.”
“Easy, boss, I got your back. You busted your arse to get this far. Between Olivia and this clown, you haven’t got the break that comes from paying your dues. We’re in the home stretch now. Olivia’s played her final hand. If her book’s half as sexy as they say, you’ll get more mileage from it than her. As for DuMont?” Niles made a gesture like swatting a fly. “Leave him to me. In a couple hours you’ll be chillin’ on the Emerald Coast. Beautiful place.”

Kate nodded. “I suggested Phillips Inlet when Susan briefed me.”

Tyler glanced between them. “Somehow I’m having an easier time imagining you there,” he told Kate, then watched her blush and quickly turn her attention to the flight log.

Easy, Kate. I don’t want to make you uncomfortable. We’ll be out of here soon. He consulted the old silver pocket watch that belonged to his grandfather. “Ah, Susan, punctual as always.”

Smiling sheepishly, Susan climbed into the plane. “Bet you didn’t expect a mini-convention, Kate. Sorry about this.” She settled into a rear passenger seat beside Niles, leaning forward to talk to Tyler. “So, a couple of last-minute things.”

“Tell me we’re good, Susie Q. I’m anxious to take to the skies.”

Susan placed her briefcase on her lap and popped it open, then passed a bound script to Tyler. “Downtime or not, this is Dancing on the Moon, the script I mentioned. Read it. Timing is everything. You haven’t signed for Savage Love yet.”

“I’m out,” Niles said.

Right on cue. Niles didn’t want to be party to any discussion about Savage Love. Tyler didn’t blame him; neither did he. He looked at his agent. “You worry too much.”
“You pay me to worry, remember? I only need a few minutes with my favorite movie star.” Susan flipped her bangs out of her eyes, casting a quick look at Niles’ empty seat. Tyler caught her smiling before she grew serious. “Look, Tyler …”

“You know why I’m doing *Savage Love*. I owe Gabe; he’s the only director who would cast me. And Electra’s bankable property.”

“She’s bankable property, all right, and notorious, difficult, and outrageous. Let’s see, have I left anything out? I don’t think you need this is in your life right now, from a personal or public-relations standpoint.”

“From a personal standpoint, maybe. But from a marketing angle, Electra’s a draw and Gabe could use that.”

“You told me you wanted to move away from the hunk image. Remember? This film has hunk stamped all over it.”

“I can survive one more movie like this; I’m a pretty good actor. It’s a debt repaid.”

Judging by the little groove that appeared between her eyes, Susan remained concerned. All around the Lear jet, the crowd had started chanting Tyler’s name. For the first time in a long time, Tyler grew distracted, even a little embarrassed by it. “What’s going on, Susan? Let’s cut to the chase before my pilot falls asleep.”

Susan sighed. “Your life is more insane than usual, something I would’ve sworn was impossible a year ago. For Heaven’s sakes, we’re meeting in a Cessna.” She hesitated. “And maybe you haven’t had the time to deal with your loss.”
“Don’t you think a year is more than enough time to deal with a marriage that barely lasted a month? I dealt with it a long time ago.” He damn well didn’t intend to rehash it now.

Susan looked at him, then at Kate and back to Tyler. “You’re right, case closed.” She forced a smile.

“Good timing on this trip,” he told her, hoping to part on a positive note. “Olivia’s book hits the stands, and I disappear for a few days to study for my next part as a pilot. Not only that, you’ve hired a competent and easy-on-the-eyes pilot to give me pointers. Do I pay you enough?” He noted the momentary surprise in Susan’s expression and the fleeting smile. He didn’t look at Kate but wondered if she was blushing again.

“We’ll talk about my big fat bonus when you get back,” Susan said. “Enjoy your getaway, Tyler. Your pilot and the destination come highly recommended. By the way, Kate and I are friends, so be extra nice.”

“Friends, huh? So why’s this the first time I’m meeting her?”

“Like I said, she and I are friends. Not everybody thinks a crazy life is normal. You didn’t need to meet her until now. Just so happens she was perfect for this job.” Susan turned to Kate. “Take care of him; you’re about to earn your money.” Tyler opened his mouth to protest, but Susan gathered her briefcase and wagged her finger. “Not a word. You know it’s true. See you when you get back,” she said, stepping from the plane.

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“Alone at last. Quick,” Tyler said, “let’s get out of here before they remember something and come back.” He gestured toward the smoke-colored clouds illuminated by the airport lights. “I’m guessing the weather won’t be a problem?”

“Shoulder harness and buckle up, too, please. We’re good to go, but we need to move it before my clearance gets voided.” Kate double-checked her instruments, then him. My God, remarkable, even close up. That’s just wrong. The rain was beginning to fall, making sounds against the roof, small quiet murmurs in the descending darkness. “No, I wouldn’t worry about the weather. Far more manageable than your fans.”

His laughter filled the cockpit, a low chuckle. “Ah, yes: the fans. They’re resourceful, sometimes more than we anticipate, but Niles has it under control.”

“I see what you mean. Nice timing.” A limousine pulled up to the Lear jet as Kate taxied in the opposite direction down the runway. Tyler’s fans expected him to step from the limo. A line of grim-faced security officers was trying to restrain the crowd behind a temporary barricade.

“One advantage of having money, you can afford the best, and Niles is that.”

“I guess you don’t get much privacy?” A rhetorical question if ever there was one.

“Some days are worse than others. You caught me at particularly bad time.” His tone was resigned but cheerful, yet the stiffness in his shoulders and the tension on his face suggested a different story.
Kate knew that after a few days out of the spotlight, her star clients longed for the insanity, the crowds, and all that glittered. Though Kate couldn’t imagine stepping back into the fire as eagerly as she had seen them do, she was grateful for the Hollywood connection. These bookings in particular created referrals and paid top dollar. Because of them, she could afford to be selective and charge less for clients involved in more interesting pursuits.

In one week she’d be off on a flyaway she loved, the Yosemite National Park. For the money Tyler was spending, she hoped he’d find a brief respite from his shiny Tinsel Town.

Handling a plane was serious business, no matter what the weather, so Kate turned her attention away from amateur analysis of her passenger toward the familiar pattern of pre-flight checks. They were in the air within minutes. Once the Cessna reached cruising altitude, Kate again found her attention drawn to Tyler. Yep, certified heartbreaker. Some minutes later, she realized he’d fallen asleep. Probably exhausted, poor little movie star. It’s those fans.

For wealthy and famous clients like Tyler Matthews, Kate offered an escape into anonymity—a viable adjunct to Destinations Unlimited, her sister Jill’s travel agency. Jill and her husband provided the real estate and financed more than a million dollars in planes. For her part, Kate piloted the getaways and once on the ground acted as guide, hostess extraordinaire, shrink—whatever was needed to ensure each client received his money’s worth. She and Jill dubbed this particularly lucrative aspect of the business as the Funk Junket. These getaways catered to actors who suffered from overexposure, literally for some of the women. They were
down in the dumps, in a funk, and stressed. Trendy spas were not enough for this overextended group. It was one of life’s ironies: their lives made them famous, and then made them nuts.

Kate paused to consider the fact that she was sitting within easy reach of Hollywood’s reigning box office king. Even Kate who found entertainment news unworthy of her time knew all about Tyler Matthew’s rapid rise to fame. She took a longer look at the tall, muscular frame cramped in the cockpit, inhaling the slight fragrance of his aftershave. Jeez Louise, he even smells good. His face conformed to the classic lines, high cheekbones and a strong jaw. His eyelashes were thick, and this close she could see streaks of silver threaded in his dark hair. The man was trouble, the kind of trouble to which most women fell prey, and he had the ticket sales and rabid fans to prove it. Despite Kate’s ambivalence about the Hollywood scene, she had to admit that she was in agreement with the general public on this one. Tyler Matthews was hot, and he knew it. Knew it? Hell, he epitomizes it. Somewhere there’s a dictionary and next to the hot entry this guy’s picture is burning up the page.

A few minutes from their destination, Tyler woke, tamping down his sleep-tousled hair and shooting a winsome grin at her. “I fell asleep? How long was I out?”

“Nearly home.” She couldn’t help but smile at the tuft of hair sticking up on his crown. It made him seem approachable.

“I meant to observe your piloting; instead I nodded off. A missed opportunity, but I’m on the job now. So what do you think about love as portrayed in romantic movies?”
“That’s a piloting question?” She could feel him watching her intently. There was a kind of heat between them, suddenly and inexplicably.

He shrugged. “No. The movie I just wrapped down here was a different direction for me. Director pitched it as undying passion, star-crossed destinies.”

“Undying passion, star-crossed destinies.” Kate drew the words out.

“Don’t put much stock in star-crossed destinies?”

“No, and I suspect you don’t either.” She kept her eyes forward and navigated, fighting the urge to look at him, yet wondering what she might find revealed in his eyes.

“You’re right,” he told her. “Maybe once a long time ago, but no more.”

“Me, too,” she said.

Tyler looked skeptical. The expression in his gray eyes softened. “And now?”

“I have my feet firmly planted on the ground. Star-crossed lovers are driven by a passion that leaves mortals like me in awe. Pumping the dream machine keeps Hollywood in the money.” Hearing her words, she was taken aback by the sound and import of them. When did she stop hoping she could have it all? After all, she was a woman whose favorite movie was *Adam’s Rib*; as a sophomore in high school she’d memorized entire passages of *Romeo and Juliet*. So much for believing. Kate flinched.

“It’s easy to trivialize emotionality. I think I would describe it differently, maybe not as cynically,” he said.
“Oops and ouch. Have I offended you? I hope not. It’s against the rules to offend clients.”

“Good rule. You haven’t offended me, not yet.” He pulled out his old-fashioned pocket watch and flipped it open. “But then it’s only Sunday evening. That gives you several days.”

Kate found herself backtracking, even though he was smiling. “Basically I’m a realist.”

He thumbed his chin in thought. “Hmm. A pilot whose feet are firmly on Planet Earth. A realist except for the erotic poetry.” At her startled glance, he explained. “Susan asked me to return your book of poetry. She didn’t realize she’d see you tonight.” He paused, his eyes scanning her face and body as if seeking a confirmation of his assessment. Kate willed herself to stay focused on flying and face forward. She did not want any eye contact. “I didn’t have a chance to do much besides skim it, but I thought I’d read it if you let me keep it for a few more days. Not the reading material I’d expect from someone grounded in reality.”

He turned the little knob on his watch, adjusting the second hand. Again, Kate felt the temperature in the cabin rise. Feeling flushed, she licked her lips and took a long drink of her bottled water. Suddenly she wanted to be anywhere but above ground in a small plane with him. She needed terra firma soon. She scrambled to change the subject and congratulated herself when she managed a fairly breezy tone, parched lips and all. “Don’t read too much into it. Cynical as I may sound, I love old movies and poetry. The book was a gift and I read a lot of poetry. I admire Johansen’s work. It has depth and tenderness.” Why am I telling him this? Why did she feel the need to soften her words?
“No closet romantic here, then.”

“None that I see. On a less provocative note, we’re only a few minutes from landing. Why don’t you tell me what do you think movies offer?”

“The same thing poetry does. We experience possibilities and maybe even understanding.” Tyler stared through the windshield into the darkness. A stroke of lightning brought his profile into stark relief. “And maybe, it gives people hope.”

An actor. Didn’t it figure? Her arms rippled with gooseflesh beneath her long sleeves. “Nice, even if only in the movies,” she said. There was a rumble of thunder.

“Sorry.” He ran his hand across his face as if tearing off a mask. “Early in my career, I dealt with several holier-than-thou critics. It was a mean-spirited debate focused on whether cinema had value. It’s easy to criticize or point to less than stellar efforts. Me, I’ve always thought opening doors is more challenging than slamming them shut.”

Kate was intrigued. Most men she’d known who fit the handsome and successful stereotype shared a common disdain for emotionality. Passion and intensity were not topics of conversation except to deny their importance. Several went so far as to insist that these concepts were afflictions peculiar to women. “No apologies necessary,” she said, “but I need to concentrate on getting us back down to earth safe and sound.” Even though she wasn’t lying, she was glad for the distraction that landing the plane was about to provide.

With the Fort Walton Airport in clear sight, Kate radioed the tower. Checking her altimeter and wind readings, she reported back at the three-mile approach. Tyler strained against
the harness, leaning forward in his seat to better take in the view. Kate smiled. “Coming into airports at night, even small airports like Fort Walton, is always spectacular. No matter how many times I land this bird, it’s just like the first time.”

She brought the plane down easily, back in her element. The deepening darkness streaked across the windows, slowing down and sharpening into detailed surroundings as the plane rolled to a stop. Her best friend, Willie, could tell a story about a near miss or two when Kate was a fledging pilot first out of the nest; even then Kate’s calm had prevailed where her expertise left off. She took pride in each and every flight.

Tyler looked at her. “You’re good.”

She stretched her arms overhead. “Lots of practice. I guess it’s easy to master something you truly love.”

“Must be hard on the men you date.”

She stopped fumbling with the buckles of her harness and stared at him. “Oh?”

“No easy thing finding yourself jealous of a damn airplane.”

She shot him a sideways glance and then returned his smile. Silence filled the cabin, bringing with it a kind of heat. The man was getting to her and what was worse, she liked it.

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The short drive to the property seemed to last an eternity—not the heavenly kind, either, but the road trip kind. It reminded Kate of her last trip to the Gulf Coast to visit Willie when she
and Willie were caught in a hurricane evacuation. In other words, a little bit of hell. Not that I’m being melodramatic or anything. Save that for the actors, Kate.

They moved from the cabin of the Cessna to the confines of the Jeep. “Aren’t you tired?” Tyler asked. “I’ll drive if you point me in the right direction.”

Kate found herself retreating into familiar roles. He was the client, and she was on the job. She drove and tried not to think about what else they were: a man and a woman traveling through the darkness to an isolated destination, a beautiful home complete with every luxury money afforded. More like a movie star and a nobody. That awkward and self-conscious thought surprised Kate. These were silly feelings she’d not felt in years.

She’d been to the property plenty of times. It was her sister Jill’s private home on the Gulf Coast where she and her husband, Gary, came to decompress—a long way from Los Angeles in miles and in lifestyle. Gary and Jill had snatched up the beachfront property in 2006 when the real estate market went bust in the area. Almost a half mile of prime ocean frontage sold by a conglomerate facing ruin, the location backed Camp Helen, one of the many state parks in Florida. To ensure maximum privacy, the home was built with the east side facing Camp Helen’s evergreens.

Tyler whistled in appreciation as they made their way up the long driveway. Palm trees swayed and whispered secrets in the sea breeze. The heady scent of gardenias saturated the air. The house was steel and glass melded into a modern work of art. A modern castle but a castle no doubt. Kate punched in the security code on the softly glowing keypad.
Tyler held the door. “Ladies first,” he said.

“After you,” she insisted. “You’re the guest.”

She followed him inside. The foyer opened into the richly appointed lobby with white-leather sofas flush to the wall on either side. Their footsteps echoed under the vaulted ceiling.

“Nice,” Tyler said. She gave him the mandatory tour, feeling slightly out of sync and putting it up to weariness. As they emerged out of the formal dining room into the living room, Tyler did a double take when he saw the plaid sofa.

Kate shook her head. “I know, I know: it doesn’t fit in with any of the other décor. It’s Gary’s.”

“Gary,” Tyler said.

“My brother-in-law. He owned it when he and my sister Jill met. He likes red and green, really all things plaid, and he swears it’s the most comfortable sofa in the world. He actually paid to have it moved from California. I think Jill was so thrilled to finally get it out of her living room in L.A. she gladly agreed to put it here. This is where they stay when they come to Florida.”

Tyler seemed charmed. “This house could be in Beverly Hills, but that couch is straight out of the dumpster behind Santa’s workshop.”

“It’s Christmastime all the time in Gary Land,” she said.

“I didn’t realize this was their home away from home. I’m flattered. Most comfortable couch, eh? I’ll have to give it a try tomorrow. For now I’m keen on seeing the rest of the place.”
Leading Tyler Matthews down the hall to the bedrooms, Kate felt like she was walking down the aisle of an airliner, yet to adjust to being on the ground. It wasn’t altitude-induced vertigo but the dream-like surrealism of it all. She practically sprinted through the master bedroom and bath. Setting the coffeemaker in the kitchen, Kate realized she was answering his questions in monosyllables. It was coming on midnight. By the time they made it onto the deck that overlooked the ocean, with the pool and the hot tub, Tyler asked her if she was feeling all right.

“Just tired. Night flying’s particularly demanding.”

“Do I need to tuck you in?”

Kate opened her mouth to say something but there was no sound.

“Only kidding.” He shot her that million-dollar smile. “Goodnight, Kate.”

“Night, Tyler.” She left him standing at the French doors. Her voice sounded fine, even if she walked a little too fast toward the security of her bedroom. It was disconcerting knowing when she awakened he’d be there. Alone together, Tyler Matthews and Kate Grayson.

She fluffed the pillows on the bed, turned back the covers, and dived in. As the moments slipped past, she lay watching the darkness through the skylight, her mind racing as she repeated a mantra to herself: This job is no different than a hundred others. Tyler Matthews is a client, one of many movie stars, rock stars, and politicians. This is my job. The problem was him.

No, it was her.

I’m tired, nothing more to it. No problem at all. One more week and I’m on my way.
Thirty minutes later, she grabbed the remote control and flipped through the channels, exasperated with herself. Satellite TV was made for nights like these, but the powers that be were conspiring against her.

“Be sure and join us tonight when the Monday Night Late Movie presents The Fury, starring Tyler Matthews.” Kate groaned at the announcer and clicked off the TV. The movie wasn’t great cinema, but it was her first introduction to Tyler Matthews. She wouldn’t soon forget the way the camera doted on him, panned up his toned body, and sharpened into an extreme close-up. The names of his films might as well be La Dee Da for all they stuck with her. It was Tyler’s face, his body, and the things he could do with both, the tangle of emotions he could evoke—on screen as well as in life, she had discovered.

She was familiar with the criteria for Hollywood superstars; she knew what it took, in terms of presence and looks. In Tyler she saw that magical, indefinable quality, a man destined for fame if he so chose.

And so he’d chosen.

“All right, Tyler. It’s a date. Tonight, it’s you and me and The Fury.”
CHAPTER TWO

Everybody needs a plan.

DuMont lifted upright and looked at the bedside clock. He threw off the covers. Late again. More and more he resented the time spent at his job, but he needed the income. Now there were alimony payments to be made, and much planning remained. Recounting recent events—his loss, his pain, his plan for revenge—steeled him for the hours he spent working long into the night.

He stumbled to the bathroom and completed his morning ritual, a shave and shower. He dressed in dark slacks, socks, loafers, and a gray long-sleeved shirt. Buttoning the shirt, he noticed the stain. After a glance at the overflowing laundry basket, he dabbed at the stain with a washcloth until the shirt was presentable. Once so meticulous, it occurred to him how much his life had changed. He was resigned to the man in the mirror staring back at him.
He hurried down the wet driveway and almost skidded past the car. He struggled, stabbing with his key, twisting it with relish, yanking open the door. He was angry and made no attempt to reel in the emotion. It felt good to let go of controlling himself. He disliked having to hurry. His lot in life was not appeasing others. He could only regret how late in life he’d come to this realization.

Sliding behind the wheel, he paused to take a deep breath before beginning the tedious drive. Slow down. Breathe. Keep up appearances like the fakers. He looked in the rearview mirror. Gone was the blond hair that crowned him in his youth, replaced with gray-white tufts, unwieldy and sparse. Gone, too, was the softness of his green eyes, replaced with a sharp glint, a hollowness. Was this the man his wife had seen? He would wear his forty-five years of servitude even after he set himself free.

Breathe. He smoothed his thinning hair into place before pulling onto the highway. The slow-moving traffic brought on a daze. Streetlights, headlights, brake lights—all flared in the dreary morning, glancing off the rain-streaked windows. He tapped the gas and accelerated, speeding through the traffic. Late. He was late. The thought echoed in his head. Suddenly he decelerated, causing the driver behind him to lock his brakes and lay on his horn, his car sliding and narrowly avoiding rear ending DuMont’s. The driver screeched past him, flipping him off and howling obscenities. Smiling, DuMont mimicked the man’s gesture. He dropped his speed to ten miles below the limit to remind himself that he didn’t give a damn, it didn’t matter that he was late. Old habits die slow deaths. But he was in control now and soon things would change.
His thoughts returned to his wife, Ellie, his beautiful girl. She was his, or so he’d dared to believe. Now, in a moment of candor, he admitted to himself that she would never have stayed. Men like him could not hope to keep such a jewel.

Such sweet memories. He remembered combing Ellie’s long, golden hair each night, her tanned long limbs crossed Indian-style on their bed. Laughing and clapping her hands like an excited child—her exaggerated joy in his unexpected gifts always pleased him. “For you, Ellie.” He loved to surprise her, never tiring of her delighted squeals and bear hugs. In the beginning their lives seemed perfect, too good to be true, and so it was.

He’d never been able to tell her no because he could not bear making her unhappy. Even though he insisted she was perfect, he reluctantly agreed to the plastic surgeries. She needed to be more than perfect to compete, she told him. Somehow he knew this was the beginning of the end, the tiny thread that when pulled unravels the tapestry. Something was wrong. A vague uneasiness wormed its way into his heart.

He changed the bandages and dressings on her face, breasts, and thighs, horrified at the black and blue bruises, the swollen lump that had been his lovely girl. Hollywood dreams left her carved up, plumped up, and pumped. What other price would be extracted? He dreamt of her heart in a jar. He waited for the circles under her eyes to fade. The first nights he remained by her bed willing her to heal and hiding his revulsion. Pills, pills, pills. First for the pain. He knew she hid them after she healed, hid them and kept taking them. Unfulfilled dreams cut deep.
For long weeks, he lay quietly listening for any change in her breathing. She said she would love him forever, never leave. But now she was gone.

Her heart was broken, and Charles DuMont knew who was to blame. At first he was nothing but a pitiful man broken by his loss. Slowly he regained his strength through an understanding of what must be done to right this terrible wrong. The world was a cruel, an unjust place—not for the weak. And he was through being a loser. The hole in his heart remained, but now it made him strong. At night, when he closed his eyes, he could see into that gaping hole and feel the strength pouring from it like blood.

He turned his windshield wipers on. He had been too long in Seattle. The gray morning was crying. He missed working in Silicon Valley where the weather was like fall or spring, few rainy days, no sunless skies. He longed for California’s warmth and his life with her.

His hands tightened on the steering wheel. Ellie did not destroy their marriage. She had been full of hope. When he met her, she was working as a cocktail waitress—but only until she landed her first acting job, she said. Every night he returned to the dingy bar, asking for her and tipping her with a hundred dollar bill, no matter how small the check. After one such evening, she took him home and they had sex. She insisted they had made love. No woman ever showed him that kind of attention. Beneath the covers, curling naked against him, Ellie shared her dream: her eyes shining when she spoke of Hollywood and Tyler Matthews. He did not know who Tyler Matthews was, but Ellie said that she was his biggest fan. The light in her eyes had
upset him because he knew he hadn’t put it there. She kissed him, told him that she’d never been lucky, that he was the only good thing that ever happened to her.

All his life, he had loved hugely and wholly, one thing only: books when he’d been younger, math in high school, later computer programming. He’d made his living at the last, and then Ellie showed him there was more.

Ellie traveled to Hollywood and was gone for months. She called every few days, crying frantically and telling him there were no offers, no parts. He would repeat into the phone, “Don’t worry. Things will get better. Soon all the world will know your name.” He wired the money when she needed it. The phone calls came fewer and farther between. He was used to wiring the money by then. He thought of it as her allowance. He promised her she would get a part soon. He was working on a plan.

At first he tried calling Tyler Matthews and simply leaving his number. Then he began leaving very detailed messages requesting that she be given a reading. His Ellie was talented and his request was reasonable. The phone calls were not returned. He grew irritated that he, Charles DuMont, who owned two patents, earned a doctoral degree in computer science, and was of superior intelligence, was treated so rudely by an actor. A faker. He drafted letters enclosing Ellie’s headshots and videotaped performances and received only form letters, thoughtless letters suggesting contacting agents and acting lessons. Matthews insulted Ellie, his biggest fan, just like that.
Ellie stayed longer and longer in Hollywood until finally, late one night after a lot of nervous giggling and dancing around the point, she told him she needed to live in L.A. so she could be first in line at the casting calls. He begged her to return home. “Ellie, please.” How many times were these words uttered? She said she was home, where she was meant to be. Hollywood was her life, her true love. She loved it hugely and wholly as he loved her. She had to be there, close to Tyler Matthews, to make her dreams come true.

The light turned red on him before he could take a left down the roadway that led to the research building where he worked. He slammed on his brakes and sat waiting. A young mother herding her children into an SUV urged them to hurry lest they be late for school.

Seattle was his last chance. His manager negotiated the position in recognition for his long years of outstanding productivity and many contributions. Everyone’s late this morning, he told himself. He wasn’t the only one. That young mother and her brats, she was running late. Would somebody swoop down to punish her? This could be the day they made his dismissal permanent as they’d conspired to do for so long. He was brilliant. How had he lost everything?

He failed at his marriage, failed at his job. He hated failure. He would not fail again. The light turned green. He gunned it. He had a plan.
CHAPTER THREE

God, it was Monday. It felt like it. Kate sat on the edge of the bed and stared at her big toe sticking out of her slipper. How had she packed her comfy slippers and not the new ones? Too late to worry now. Coffee, she needed coffee. She stumbled toward the kitchen in a silk robe, her hair a mess and her worn slippers scratching across the floor. Automatic coffeemakers were her favorite invention, an absolute necessity. It was a little before seven and the house was quiet. She poured some coffee and headed into the living room where the ocean view was breathtaking. She stretched and sank back into the very comfortable and very plaid sofa.

About three more cups of coffee and her motor would finally engage. She’d shower, make herself presentable, and find out what Tyler wanted to do. Propping her feet on the ottoman, she sat clutching her mug and breathing in steam when she spotted him running up the
Into the Night

beach. He was a runner. She should have known. Despite the difficulty of running on the sand, he was coming toward the house in long, easy strides.

He bounded through the leaded-glass French doors, stopping in front of her. “Morning, sunshine. How’d you sleep?”

“Fine,” she said. He was standing before her in a running shorts and no shirt. Her eyes were exactly level with his waist. Okay, officially awake now. Broad shoulders, flat belly, ripped thighs. This guy clearly had it over coffee in the wake-up department. Definitely awake—and appreciative of the view. But no thanks. She lifted her eyes. “I take it you’ve been up since the crack of dawn?”

“Don’t worry about me,” he said. “I’m used to coping with crazy hours and little sleep.”

“Or maybe ten at night is Tyler Matthews’ regular bedtime.”

He grinned. “Yeah, you got me. Part of staying out of the tabloids means foregoing clubbing for the comforts of home. When I’m working, I’m on the set before six, meaning I’ve got to get up around four to give myself a little space. It’s become a habit, I guess. If I’m between pictures long enough, I’ll sleep in till around seven or so.”

She cleared her throat and stood. There were only a few inches of space between them, a fact to which he seemed oblivious while she was uncomfortably aware of it. “Excuse me. I think I need more coffee.”

“Cute toe. How about some breakfast after I shower?” He was gone before she could answer.
She stared at her big toe. **Four? The man gets up at four o’clock? Sometimes he sleeps in until seven. Now he wants to eat breakfast.** She was working on her second cup of coffee when he emerged from the shower, whistling happily as he headed for the kitchen.

She padded after him in disbelief. Clad in a pair of blue jeans and a white t-shirt, he looked unreasonably good. Did Tyler Matthews lead a charmed life? Kate pulled a bag of grapes and a cantaloupe from the refrigerator, staring briefly at the fruit as if it were bug-ridden. He had wanted no chef on site, according to Susan. **“Croissants and fruit sound okay? Susan e-mailed me a grocery list.”** He was staring at her again, and she felt as flushed as if she’d stepped from the shower. **“Willie, a friend of mine, did the shopping.”**

“Think I’ll go with this.” He spooned yogurt into the blender. **“Willie, eh?” he asked passing off his curiosity as nonchalance and doing a fair job of it.**

Kate recalled that he’d asked about Gary, too. **I see what’s going on here. He thinks Willie’s a man’s name.** In fact it was short for Wilhelmina. Kate smirked, deciding to be unhelpful. **“Yeah, Willie took care of it for me as a favor. Grocery shopping isn’t usually something most clients want to do.”**

“Would you like to try some of this when it’s finished?”

“No thanks. I don’t like yogurt. Besides, I don’t eat in the morning.”

He gave her a once-over from head to foot. **“Didn’t your mother tell you breakfast is the most important meal of the day? Gives you an energy boost. Makes your body happy. Everybody knows happy bodies feel better.”**
Kate watched as he added a banana, wheat germ, a splash of honey, some strawberries, and then blended the concoction. “In my family no one spoke in the morning, least of all about how happy bodies feel. Probably why I never heard about the importance of breakfast. Not that it would’ve made any difference, of course.”

He poured the pink smoothie into two glasses and offered one to her. “Have some.”

She hesitated before taking a sip. “Not too bad.”

A wicked grin danced across his face. “Drink up, Ms. Grayson. It’s a little known aphrodisiac. In a few moments you’ll be tearing my clothes off, and we’ll still be making love by this time tomorrow.” He pulled out his pocket watch from his jeans and smiled. “Any moment now.”

Kate didn’t appear fazed, though inwardly her heart skipped a beat or two. “Not likely. I’m not what you call a morning person. It takes me a little while to regain consciousness. I’m basically immune to everything in the morning, aphrodisiacs, insults, everything but coffee.”

“Damn. If you give your body something besides coffee it might respond differently.”

She laughed in spite of herself. “I knew it. You’re one of them.”

“One of them?”

“As I see it, the world is divided into two camps, morning people and night people. Morning people are deranged. They can’t help it. It’s a biological flaw.”

“Given this a lot of thought, have you?” He leaned against the kitchen counter. Kate noted that he seemed completely relaxed and his mood was contagious.
“Absolutely. Morning people are cheerful and energetic. Case in point, they can think about making love in the morning. They force-feed people bran muffins and other crunchy, lumpy, healthy stuff. They eat vitamins and drink liquefied fruit and yogurt. Yuck.” Kate twisted her face into the silly grimace her mother called her mug.

Tyler’s laughter was deep and engaging, and Kate found herself laughing, too. “What a face,” he said.

“For your information, it’s straight out of the Marx Brothers movie, Monkey Business. That face belongs to Harpo, my favorite. Much to my mother’s chagrin, I practiced until I perfected it. It drove her wild.” Kate refilled her coffee cup and gave him a last look over her shoulder. “Apparently I haven’t lost my touch.” She strutted back into the living room, leaving him chuckling.

He followed her, looking at his watch again and then reaching for the remote. “Mind if I catch the morning shows?” He settled on the couch next to her. The cushions sank beneath his weight. He smelled good and looked even better. She nodded once, feeling as if she was lost in a dream, and he clicked on the TV and punched in a channel. “Show time,” Tyler said.

Derek Sloan’s perfect television voice caressed the airways. “We conclude our Monday morning with the story everyone will be talking about all week. As promised, when we return: Olivia Matthews and her book, After the Honeymoon. All about her tumultuous and short marriage, even by Hollywood standards, to the already legendary actor Tyler Matthews, the book has hit the streets. It’s already making quite a stir—and that’s putting it mildly.”
Tyler muted the commercials and checked Kate with a sidelong look.

Kate looked back. Either Tyler’s work or gossip about him was on TV every minute of the day, or this was no coincidence. “Did you know she was going to be on?”

“Susan makes sure I know about possible public-relations issues, and this has the potential to be one.” His voice was low, a bit rough. “Call me a skeptic, but somehow I don’t expect my ex-wife’s book will be very flattering.”

“If you would rather I not be here, I’ll leave you to it and hit the shower.”

He turned toward her, his gray eyes revealing a sorrow that was at odds with his upbeat persona. “Truthfully? I’d like you to stay if that’s not asking too much. You’re probably about as impartial a witness as I could find. I’d like to hear what you think.”

Kate sank back into the sofa. There was scarcely any space between them. Droplets of water from his shower still clung to his dark hair, sparkling like tiny prisms. She took a deep breath to steady herself and was filled with the scent of him. Impartial about Tyler? She told herself she could manage that; after all, she hardly knew him.

Coming out of a commercial break, the camera zoomed back in on Derek and then cut to Tyler’s ex-wife, Olivia. Tyler let out a pent-up breath and spoke quietly. “Well, well.”

Kate looked at the golden-haired, blue-eyed beauty and felt her mouth go dry. What would anyone think? She was glowing, long in limb and voluptuous. “She’s beautiful,” Kate said. The former Mrs. Matthews, like so many in Hollywood, looked like a starlet.
Tyler seemed privy to her thoughts. “You wouldn’t know what she’s like just by looking at her, would you? It’s about looks first, at least as far as opening doors, then talent—both essential if you want to be a star or marry one. Big bucks are spent for the look. Too bad there’s no psychic surgery.” His tone was even despite the acrimony of his words. “Now then, let’s hear what the lovely ex-Mrs. Matthews has to say.”

He hit the remote, and her voice flooded the room. “No,” she was saying, “I don’t consider this another kiss-and-tell book. Those books are common. There’s nothing common about Tyler Matthews. This is a book about our private lives, and nothing was ever predictable or typical. Nothing.” Her voice was breathy, interrupted with slight pauses that seemed to lick words for maximum effect. Kate disliked it. Forced and practiced, the delivery was deadly.

“Has Tyler or his agent read the book yet? Do you know how he feels about it?”

Olivia smiled sweetly and gushed, “Goodness, no. If Tyler had any say-so over the book, it would never have been published. I haven’t a clue as to whether he’ll read it. But his agent, Susan Anderson, will. She doesn’t miss a trick if it’s about Tyler. He’s her life.”

“I think some might say that you paint an unflattering portrait.’

“Unflattering?” She paused and seemed vexed. “The book is nonfiction. I was there and this is how I saw it. It’s my story about a relationship that meant the world to me and ultimately caused me great pain. I think most women will relate to this experience. You don’t have to be married to a movie star to understand. Unflattering? Maybe sometimes. After all, Tyler is all man and no angel.”
Kate blinked in disbelief. Olivia had actually batted her eyelashes at Derek.

Derek’s journalistic integrity seemed to be wavering. A beat passed before he seemed to prevail over Olivia and remember himself. “But being married to a movie star certainly makes it a lot more saleable than if you’d been married to a car salesman or someone less famous.”

“Absolutely, Derek.” She beamed. “If you and I had been married and this book was about you, suffice it to say the interest wouldn’t be nearly as great.”

“Olivia the sweet,” Tyler muttered.

Derek was quicker to recover from insult. “Has Tyler threatened you about the book?” Olivia seemed amused. “Of course not. You don’t know him. Tyler doesn’t make threats. I don’t know what to expect in terms of his reaction, but I’m sure it’ll be intense. Tyler has only one speed and that’s intense.”

“Why did you write it, Olivia? For the money? I imagine you stand to make quite a bit. Tyler Matthews was recently voted sexiest man alive for a record-breaking fourth year. Like I said, money in the bank.”

Olivia didn’t hesitate. “That’s a fair question, Derek. The answer is no. Tyler was more than generous in the prenuptial agreement. I don’t deny I stand to make money but I wrote it for another reason. Before I married Tyler, I was a journalist. I worked for the Times covering the Hollywood beat; that’s how we met. As you know, there’s been relentless coverage of our very short marriage. I had to write this book. It’s a necessary part of putting my house in order and
setting the record straight. I’m moving on and it’s also a way to deal with the pain. I do want to
stress that I believe it will help other women.”

“Unbelievable,” Tyler said. For a moment he seemed poised to turn off the TV, or
maybe even throw the remote. Instead he sat ramrod straight against the back of the sofa.

“Olivia wouldn’t help her own mother.” He didn’t look at Kate, but she could hear the anger in
his voice.

“What about Tyler? Will he be hurt by this book?” Derek asked.

“Probably not. He’s pretty hardhearted. Really, you have to understand Tyler is not like
ordinary men.” And you’re so very ordinary, you know, her smile seemed to say. Her voice
slithered around her carefully chosen words. “Any woman who’s been in his arms will tell you
that. Of course, fidelity isn’t one of his strong points. There’ve been plenty of women.”

“Plenty?” asked Derek, echoing Kate’s thoughts.

“Trust me on this, Derek. The man is legendary in Hollywood bedrooms as well as on
the screen.”

Derek might have blushed beneath the pancake makeup. “Ah, yes. You spend some
time detailing the, uh, sexual aspect of your relationship.” He laughed nervously. “I’m sure
those pages will be dog-eared.”

Olivia kept at her coquettish smile. “He’s an incredible lover, maybe a tad insatiable.
That’s what comes across on the big screen. Why do you think women adore him? They sense
his power. I could’ve written an entire book on that aspect alone. So, if anyone wants to know
what he’s like, they’ll have to read the book. I promise they won’t be disappointed. I never was.”

Kate shifted uncomfortably as she glanced at Tyler. His focus was directed at the screen, his profile stern. Millions of people had just heard him described as an insatiable womanizer by his beautiful ex-wife. A small terror ripped through Kate. What if it was true, and why should she even care?

“We’ll be right back with Olivia Matthews,” Derek said.

Tyler’s body tensed like a tightly wound coil. Kate reached out and lightly touched his arm. “Are you all right?”

“It’s as bad as I thought it would be. Hell, it’s worse. How are you doing with this?” He unwound a bit, his eyes searching her face. He’d been married to the woman, no matter how briefly. Married. Kate wondered what Olivia had seemed like, what he’d expected from her.

“Me, I’m great. I’m not the one who’s being publicly drawn and quartered. If I was, I’d be a lot more vocal than you. It’s called ranting and raving.”

He grinned, a sad, funny little grin that wrapped easily around her heart, and then returned his attention to the interview.

“Back with the beautiful Olivia Matthews, the ex-wife of Tyler Matthews. If you’re a fan of his—and who isn’t?—you’ll want to read her book, After the Honeymoon. We’ve got a few more minutes, Olivia,” Derek said. “I’m compelled to ask a tough question. I know it’s a painful topic.” As if on cue, Olivia’s demeanor changed. She averted her eyes from the
cameras. Derek continued. “You drop a real bombshell, maybe one of the best kept secrets in Hollywood. You want to tell us about it?”

Kate looked at Tyler, who was rooted to the spot like a witness to a coming car crash. Dread. She rose to leave and took one step before he grabbed her hand, pulling her back to the sofa.

“Stay,” he said. “Please.”

His hand was warm and easily covered hers. Wordless, she sat beside him. His grip on her hand did not relax.

“I’ll stay,” Kate said, “but it sounds like it’s going to be worse, if that’s possible. Private, I mean. Rough.”

“It is,” he said flatly. She thought of the often misquoted line, *Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned*. William Congreve’s actual lines were much more applicable to Tyler and his ex. *Heav’n has no rage like love to hatred turn’d. Nor Hell a fury, like a woman scorn’d.* She had wanted him to let her up; now she found herself squeezing his hand to reassure him. He turned and smiled, his gray eyes unfathomably sad. She couldn’t read his thoughts, she didn’t know him well enough, but his sadness touched her.

Kate watched as Olivia put on airs. *She’s fake. Everything about her. Fake. What did you ever see in her, Tyler? Were you even looking?* Olivia’s eyes brightened with unshed tears, and her voice became a detached monotone. “A moment, please. That’s all I need.” The effect
was devastating. Here sat a woman fighting for words while she struggled to put up a brave front.

Derek Sloan was as rapt as was his audience, but a certain amount of propriety had to be observed. “Olivia?” He reached across the way to touch her hand, keen to coax the secret from her. The gesture mirrored Tyler and Kate’s, made a parody of it.

Kate shuddered as Tyler uttered a low curse. “Missed your calling, Olivia. Should’ve been an actress. Would’ve made a hell of a lot better actress than a journalist.”

Olivia squared her shoulders and, as if drawing strength from Derek, she spoke. “Undoubtedly it was one of the best kept secrets in Hollywood. Tyler and I were expecting a child. But there was an accident, a terrible accident. I was almost four months pregnant when I lost the baby.” Kate felt Tyler’s hand twitch. “The extent of my injuries left me unable to have children. Tyler wanted a child badly. With no hope of children, it became clear that I was expendable. Looking back, I should’ve realized my marriage was doomed from that day on. I guess I just wanted it to work too much to see the truth. My message to all the other women out there is this: sometimes wanting it to work isn’t enough.”

Derek nodded sadly, playing perfectly to Olivia’s cues. “Sounds heartless. Care to speculate on what his love life will hold after you?”

Olivia tossed her head, her golden hair whisking about her shoulders. “Women and more women.” She shrugged as if realizing that her laughter was a little too callous, the only misstep in her practiced performance. “There may even be a child, but I predict the child will stay and
the wife will be sent packing.” The bitterness of those closing words seeped from the screen and into the living room with its silly plaid sofa, changing everything.

   Tyler withdrew his hand. Kate forced herself not to look at him. All she could think was lawsuit. Would he sue her to shut her up? It took every ounce of Kate’s resolve to remain in the room with him. She felt like a voyeur. It seemed perverse to have listened to Olivia so long.

   Derek Sloan was well pleased by the looks of him. No doubt this was a ratings coup. “Wow, that’s all I can say. After the Honeymoon is a must read. Olivia has agreed to visit us again as soon as we can work out the details. Olivia, thanks so much. Best of luck to you.”

   Kate reached over and pushed the off button on the remote. The shrill ringing of the landline startled her. She jumped. “I’ll get it. Hello. Hi, Susan. Yes, we were watching. I guess he has his phone off. I don’t know how he’s doing. You’d better ask him. He’s right here; I’ll get him.” Kate palmed the receiver and watched as Tyler crossed the room. “Susan’s worried. I’ll see you in a few minutes and we’ll talk if you want. I’m going for a shower.” She left him hunched on a stool at the wet bar, answering Susan’s questions in a firm, quiet voice.

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   Kate surrendered willingly to the relaxing flow of water. Susan sounded furious but controlled; her concern was obvious. Had Susan and Tyler been involved? She and Kate’s friendship was only a few months old. Was Susan one of the many to whom Olivia alluded?
Kate felt uneasy. Until the interview, the thought of Susan and Tyler as lovers hadn’t occurred to her. Now it seemed as if she could hear Olivia shouting her bitter accusations across thousands of miles

Olivia and Tyler. He married her, impregnated her—maybe not in that order, but nonetheless knowingly. That realization sent a biting chill through Kate. Tyler and Olivia, it almost didn’t make sense, not in the real world.

But Tyler and Olivia didn’t come from her world. They came from a land of make-believe and enormous egos, a place of dreams and nightmares. Their rules were different, their morals as alien to Kate as if she was from another planet or time. Now the woman was on television talking about the most intimate aspects of their personal lives, and Tyler would only feed the beast if he rose in his own defense. How could you win at such a game without losing something far more precious?

Kate washed her hair furiously before stepping from the shower. She usually felt indifference about the Hollywood scene, and she never understood how Jill and Gary could live in Beverly Hills. After what she’d witnessed this morning, her indifference was outright distain. She couldn’t read Tyler. She hardly knew him. With the revelation about the child, she suddenly knew more than she felt she had a right to know. How could anyone stand for such a profound disregard for his privacy?

She unhooked her phone from the charger and punched in the security code. There was a text message from Jill. She wasn’t in the mood to be clever and decided to text her sister later.
The only other message was from Dot Hampton. Kate pushed five on the keypad and listened as the phone rang.

“Hello, dear,” said Dot. “How are you?” Her familiar voice brought an instant smile to Kate.

“I’m good. How about you and Nathan?”

“Where are you calling from?” Dot asked.

“I’m in Florida, Phillips Inlet. Have a guest staying at Jill and Gary’s.”

“Nathan wants to know—”

“Tell Nathan no, I do not have a boyfriend and it’s still none of his business.” Kate was grinning as she imagined Nathan’s exaggerated frustration.

“He knows, but he has to ask. Anyway, I called because Nathan was thinking he’d like to do something a little different, maybe not the Yosemite trip after all.”

Kate was startled. “But it’s such an important anniversary.”

“Of course, dear, but he’s thinking we need to try something else, be a little unpredictable.” Dot’s even tone faltered a little. “And I was thinking rather than roughing it, we might take it easy.”

Kate’s concern was deepening. “You mean no camping? Dot, you know whatever you and Nathan want, we can do. Do you have anything in mind?”

“Maybe Ashville, North Carolina, or Phillips Inlet. Who knows? I’m sure I will get back to you soon. Must run now. Goodbye, dear. Nathan sends his love.”
“Back at you both. Talk to you soon,” Kate answered before Dot ended the call. Kate flipped the phone shut and dropped it into the little case attached to her waistband. Something didn’t feel right, and she hoped it was nothing but an overload from Tyler’s ex-wife’s performance. Olivia Matthews certainly has a long reach.
CHAPTER FOUR

Jill Jenkins pulled the blue Audi into the small parking lot adjacent to her office. The red-tiled roof and white-washed building gleaming under the California sun was a thing of beauty to her, a signpost to a rich architectural past. Switching off the ignition, she leaned backed in the car seat, sighing. Over the past four years, she and Kate had spent long hours immersed in research, as well as plodding through the voluminous bureaucratic paperwork many felt was the worst part of any renovation project. Even common maintenance like window replacement required navigating a maze of regulations. The restoration of the historical building was a work in progress, although Jill suspected it would truly never be complete; such was the nature of many renovations.

After looking at dozens of places, from Laguna Beach to Beverly Hills, Jill was close to giving up and renting a modern suite in any one of the countless new office buildings. Kate insisted that there was a special place waiting out there—somewhere perfect for her big sister,
the history buff. In high school, Jill had been shy and spent her days reading American history and lugging home large pictorial books on historical architecture. And so she became the History Nutter, courtesy of Kate.

Kate said they would both “know the place instantly when they saw it,” assuring Jill it would happen any day and be well worth the wait. Even though Kate was younger, Jill often found herself relying on her; maybe it was her tenacity or her optimism. Kate always made her feel good.

As Kate had predicted, they found Jill’s dream place for their business: a 1930’s Spanish Colonial revival in downtown Los Angeles and in the heart of an impassioned renovation movement, made more perfect because it was located close to Union Station. Being close to Union station provided easy access for Kate’s passengers. Clients booking with Destinations Unlimited travel agency could take the Flyaway train service from Union station to LAX.

As youngsters, she and Kate often traveled aboard the Coast Starlight to visit their grandparents in Los Angeles. They began their 1,400-mile journey from King Street Station in Seattle, Washington, and arriving at Union Station in L.A. Built in 1939, Union Station was often called “the last of America’s great rail.”

Jill instantly fell in love with the magnificent building the first time she and Kate arrived at the station. Long before LAX became the foremost hub of transportation, Union Station was the clearinghouse for travelers with as many unique stories as there were tickets sold. For History Nutter Jill, the place was rife with atmosphere; it was like being transported back in time.
Standing on the platform, closing her eyes, it was easy to imagine the movie stars, Hollywood’s royalty, all aglitter and glamorous, waiting to board trains at the grand old station. She could sense the potent emotions of past farewells, young GIs and their sweethearts locked in desperate embraces, lingering final kisses; the uncertainty of war looming before them.

She remembered hopping in place and excitedly pointing out details to Kate, who tried hard to pretend she was interested. Kate’s eyes glazed when Jill explained that while she liked Art Deco and some Craftsman architectural styles, Spanish Colonial Revival was by far her most favorite. And Union Station was a masterpiece with its combination of some modern architectural elements and the best of the style. Kate cupped her hands over her ears and threatened to start talking flying. Density altitude she had mouthed, a subject guaranteed to produce a snooze.

Jill smiled. The train trips on the Coast Starlight to visit their grandparents had become regular events through the years, and now Union Station had returned to their lives, just down the street from their business. On one of these trips, Jill met a slightly brash, good-looking college student busy getting his degree in city planning. The son of a construction worker, Gary Jenkins was not born into wealth, but his hard work and drive would help him make his own fortune.

Jill and Gary spent the trip talking about the new urbanism, the restoration of main streets across America, and history. She was genuinely surprised when the handsome young man took to her instead of her sister. Kate by this time only agreed to take the train because Jill wasn’t fond of flying. Soon Gary’s railway trips began to coincide with theirs. Pretending it was an act
of selfless sisterly love, Jill told Kate to take to the skies, that it wasn’t necessary to accompany her on the train any longer. “I’m getting the heave-ho for the likes of Gary, huh?” But Kate was smiling. “Well, I approve and I’ll be happy on my solos to LA.”

Now Jill watched as a small gray bird alighted on the antique wrought-iron lamppost. At the sound of Audi’s door slamming shut, the bird startled, taking to the air. \textit{Kate would know the name of that little bird}. She loved her high-flying, enigmatic little sister who was equally at ease camping in the mountains or guest-speaking at civic clubs. Jill hitched her purse up on her shoulder, wondering why until this moment she’d never realized what a dreamer her sister, the so-called realist, was.

She gathered up her briefcase. Time to quit reminiscing and do some work. Another balmy Spring day, California perfection. Might be spring fever, she thought. She laughed as she read the early morning’s text message from Kate: \textit{omg HUNK!} \textit{Maybe everyone’s got spring fever, Hunk, indeed}. Tyler Matthews’ agent had booked the Funk Junket, much to Jill’s relief. She’d have a hard time putting on her game face with the likes of Tyler Matthews.

But it sounded like Kate, who was unfazed by movie stars, rock stars, politicians, royalty, and wealthy men, had taken notice of Tyler Matthews. \textit{Is he the guy who’ll finally get through that wall, Kate?} Jill knew her sister was someone special and wondered if Tyler Matthews was extraordinary enough. Jill sighed. Definitely spring fever.

First things first, Jill needed to review the notes for an afternoon meeting with Coming Attractions, a group that had accomplished amazing things in restoring local landmark theaters.
She hoped to see the remaining historic theatres on Broadway restored to their former grandeur like the Orpheum Theatre, a true success story in restoration. After they first married, she and Gary had lived in one of the newly renovated lofts and there had fallen completely in love with historical preservation.

As she rounded the building, passing under the graceful stucco archway and crossing the red-tiled courtyard, she smiled. The courtyard was paved with imported Spanish tiles. Mexican fan palms and potted urns filled with trumpet orchids, California holly, poppies, and bird of paradise plants were arranged in bright and colorful groups. It was no accident that many of the plants were the same plants that decorated Union station. Jill was a stickler for details.

She could hear the land line ringing as she hurriedly unlocked the heavy wooden door. “Destinations Unlimited,” she answered hastily picking up the receiver. “How can I help you?” The voice on the other end was male, halting and warbled, as if the caller was fatigued or perhaps elderly. He did her no favors by mumbling, either. It was difficult to make out his words.

Jill removed her earring and pressed her ear closer to the phone. “I’m sorry, sir. I’m having a little trouble hearing. Your name, sir?” She wrote down Trent Morgan neatly on the message pad. “And you’re interested in one of our special flyaways? Certainly! Drop by anytime in the next hour; that’ll be fine. Just look for the—”

This time he spoke clearly. “I know where it is,” he said.

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Hesitating, he stood in the foyer, studying the mosaic floor, an intricate Moorish design of sea-blue, white, and red tiles. He was younger than Jill had expected, looking for like a beaten man. With the front door open behind him, sunlight framed him, his lean body casting a long, dark shadow across the polished floor.

_Not the usual happy camper we book._ “Mr. Morgan?” She came from behind the hand-carved walnut table that served as the front desk. “I’m Jill Jenkins,” she said, reaching out to shake hands. The strength of his grip surprised her. There was some life in him yet. “This way, please.” She pointed to the archways that graced the doorway to her office.

He followed her, along the way stopping to study a huge wrought iron-wall hanging. “You have a nice office, Mrs. Jenkins.” His voice was low and gravelly, as if simple courtesies had to be forced through his throat, but she supposed the effort mattered to him since he bothered.

“Thank you. Please, have a seat,” she said, and he lowered himself into the chair. His movements were deliberate, almost like those of an old man. Jill knew what it was like to want to get away from it all and found herself feeling obliged. “Can I get you some coffee or something to else to drink? Tea, water, soda?”

“No, no. Nothing to drink. Thanks. Do you own the building?”

“Why do you ask, Mr. Morgan?” She settled into her chair opposite him, the broad expanse of her matching walnut table between them. She tilted her chin down and stared over
the top of her glasses, looking directly into his red-rimmed eyes. Kate called it her librarian look.

Trent Morgan didn’t like it. She watched him slouch uncomfortably and avert his eyes. “I’m sorry,” he said. “I wasn’t prying.” His voice cracked as it had during their phone conversation. “I don’t know what I’m doing any more. My wife, she always said I was no good at social skills—her forte, not mine. I can’t think of myself as a widower; marriage is forever but she’s gone now, and here I am. My apologies, Mrs. Jenkins. I don’t know why I’m telling you this.” He fidgeted with his wedding ring, rotating it on his finger.

“No offense taken, Mr. Morgan. Sometimes it can seem easier to talk to strangers. I’m very sorry for your loss.” A recent event, judging by the looks of him. “Now, how can I help you?”

“I saw your ad in the Yellow pages. That’s why I called. I need to do something. I’ve always been interested in photography. Of course I’m not a professional yet, but I’ll have plenty of time on my hands now that I’m retiring.” He seemed to make a concerted effort to relax, drawing a deep breath and folding his manicured hands upon the uncluttered table top.

“You’re talking about our Yosemite Photography Flyaway. I think that’d probably suit your interests.”

“Can you tell me something about the trip?” he asked.

“Of course. Let me start by telling you what my sister says when asked about our camping flyaways. She likes to quote the naturalist John Muir: ‘Thousands of tired, nerve-
shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wildness is a necessity...” Jill paused to let the words register.

“Yes, very nice.” His thin lips were drawn across his teeth—his version of a smile, Jill figured.

Jill liked making pitches, the precision with which she spoke and the confidence it gave her. It had taken her a long time to master self-confidence. As youngsters, she and Kate were both shy. They resolved to beat their fear of public speaking together. Kate said it was no one’s business, that no one would suspect they were shy if they learned to give a good speech. So with considerable practice and jitters, they became proficient at debates and public speaking. Jill smiled to herself but Kate was still shy but no one would know it to watch her. Jill sat up a little straighter. “It’s a two-day, one-night camping trip. Yosemite is beautiful and rugged, pristine wilderness, a photographer’s dream. You’ll have firsthand experience with the incredible lighting and the natural elements that inspired the legendary photographer Ansel Adams. As a photography buff, I’m sure you’re familiar with his collections on Yosemite.” He nodded yes. “I thought so. Come nightfall, you’ll be camping in tents. If you’re an inexperienced camper, no worries. Would you like to see some photographs and video? I can pull up our Web site.”

“No, that’s not necessary. When’s the next trip and how many people go on these trips? The truth is I don’t feel like being around lots of people right now.”

“It’s a small group, nice people. We have an obstetrician and a couple who plan to eventually teach photography workshops. We never book more than five in our Stationair, and
you’re in luck. We have two seats open for the next trip. This brochure will give you an overview.” Jill slid the full-color pamphlet across the desk.

He collected it with cold fingers, brushing hers unintentionally.

Jill sat back. The hand he’d touched disappeared into her lap and bunched into a loose fist, and she focused herself on the details of the trip. “Kate, my sister and your guide, will fly all of you to the closest airport. From there, she’ll drive you to Yosemite, a short trip. From there it’s only a few minutes to the camp site. Hopefully, within an hour or two after you arrive, you’ll get settled down and start taking some great pictures. There are a number of areas within hiking distance that are perfect. The second day is all about the lakes; you can swim, hike, shoot pictures to your heart’s content. You fly out that evening.”

“Sounds good. May I think about it?

“Of course. I can calculate the price for you if you like.”

“No, the cost isn’t a factor. If I decide to go, what do I need to do? Do I come back to the office and pay?”

“Not if you’re familiar with the Web.”

He smiled again, that thin smile. “Yes. I know my way around enough to manage.”

“Great. We have a standard form you can submit online. And you can also pay online. I do need to make a copy of your driver’s license for our records, though.” He rose to pull out his wallet and passed her his license. This time they did not touch. “Please jot down your contact info,” she said, handing him a card and a pen before walking to the copier in the next room.
When she returned, he offered her the contact card. “Thanks for all your help, Mrs. Jenkins. When I decide what to do, I’ll remember you’ve been kind.”

“Thank you, Mr. Morgan. I do hope you’ll decide to book with us. If you have any further questions, give us a call.” She returned his license along with her business card. “Let me walk you out.” They passed beneath the archway and into the reception area. The hollow sound of their footsteps echoed on the tiled floor. “Later you may want to consider our By the Light of the Moon Photography Flyaway. I don’t know from firsthand experience, but I’ve got it on Kate’s authority that it’s a spectacular setting. You’ll find my sister isn’t easily impressed when it comes to these things.”

He smiled. “Taking photos in the moonlight, yes. I would be good that. The moonlight plays tricks on people. Like a movie,” he said, “or a dream. You’ve got to look past appearances, be discerning. To see, to capture things for what they really are.”

They drew to a stop at the entrance.

Jill didn’t know what to say to that. She stuck with what she was good at. “It’s planned and booked around the full moon to afford the best photo opportunities for nighttime shots. We can also customize tours to Half Done, Bridalveil, El Capitan—”

He nodded before disappearing through the door.

Jill fell silent. She remembered retreating into the library every morning before first period in high school. She suspected Trent Morgan knew that feeling. She texted her sister,

*Four passengers booked for Yosemite, maybe.*
Into The Night - Synopsis

“His presence is powerful and direct as a punch, the suspension of disbelief immediate. I felt like a voyeur.” So writes an eminent film critic of Tyler Matthews. The year following Tyler’s ridiculously short marriage and highly publicized divorce sends his personal life veering into chaos. His agent convinces him to take a working vacation to give him cover while his ex-wife’s tell-all book hits the stands. Prior to departure, his bodyguard briefs him on a nuisance fan.

Pilot Kate Grayson and her sister operate Destinations Unlimited, a travel agency specializing in unusual flying getaways for wealthy clientele. Kate flies Tyler to the private vacation home on Florida’s Gulf Coast and provides coaching for his next role as a pilot.

Tyler is just another client, although Kate can’t deny his charisma. Undaunted by fame and fortune, she is a realist, confessing the only exception is her love of poetry and her devotion to her young niece.

Kate is drawn to Tyler, his unabashed intensity. They arrive in Florida with both vowing to reel in their suddenly heightened imaginations. A scathing TV interview with Tyler’s ex-wife enrages Kate and she realizes her feelings for him. Their relationship develops sexually and romantically as she sees beyond the public façade to the man. Yet Kate recognizes the implausibility of a long-term relationship because of their differences. Florida is a promise, the
hint of what might be, but here they are removed from the context of both their lives. Every moment spent together leads them into one another’s arms, but Tyler’s fame portends big problems. A quiet dinner is interrupted when a fan insists that Tyler autograph her panties. The dinner date deteriorates when the couple is accosted by a drunkard.

Tyler’s bodyguard is spotted in hot pursuit of a photographer later that evening. He tells Tyler that the situation with the nuisance fan has ratcheted up a notch. Tyler cuts the working vacation short rather than increasing security. He extracts a promise from Kate to visit him in L.A. between her flyaways.

Kate is hiking in Yosemite while he begins shooting Savage Love, a racy movie in which he stars opposite Hollywood’s bad girl.

Anticipating Kate’s arrival in L.A., Tyler decides to gradually introduce her to his life. Her solitary choices accentuate the public nature of his lifestyle. He senses the relationship is tenuous, yet full of promise and potential. Kate and Tyler’s differences compel them to seek one another and at the same time are the obstacles to a long term relationship.

Kate touches down in Hollywood, anxious to see Tyler. She’s decided it’s time to deal herself into his world. They have one night alone and both realize they are falling in love. The privacy of their night makes the next night’s event harder for Kate. She manages to insult the premier Hollywood hostess, while giving Tyler’s co-star carte blanche to try and bed him.

Kate and Tyler hurriedly leave the party after receiving word that her niece is undergoing emergency surgery. Hours later they leave the hospital exhausted with Kate still hoping to
salvage the rest of her stay but they are met by the press. The night is a taste of Tyler’s life and Kate is rattled. She walks out on Tyler, believing that leaving him now is the only way she can survive letting the relationship go.

Tyler eventually shows up at Kate’s home. Again, Tyler and Kate take refuge in one another far from the glamour and demands of their careers. Despite their time apart, their feelings for each other have hardly lessened. They plan to take the relationship to the next level, but their hope is short-lived. An enterprising photographer has chronicled their passionate encounter on the beach and it appears in a tawdry weekly supermarket tabloid. The effects are devastating for Kate. Tyler knows the photo spread is the fatal blow. To further compound the hopelessness, Tyler must alert Kate that the nuisance fan is now stalking him. Against the backdrop of a glitzy Hollywood fundraiser, they say their final farewell.

While camping with her oldest clients, Kate’s decision to live without Tyler is seriously challenged. She returns home with a renewed hope and plans to contact him. Meanwhile, Tyler realizes the stalker has a new target: Kate.

Tyler’s arrives in Oregon to find Kate held at gunpoint. A fight and gunfire ensue. Kate succumbs to a head wound but not before watching as Tyler is shot. She struggles to reach him, to tell him that she loves him before she blacks out. Her last conscious moment is the agonizing realization that he will never know how she feels and that the only man she’s ever loved may be dead. Eventually she wakes and they commit to a life together.
Into the Night Lyrics. Like a gift from the heavens, it was easy to tell It was love from above, that could save me from hell She had fire in her soul it was easy to see How the devil himself could be pulled out of me There were drums in the air as she started to dance Every soul in the room keeping time with their hands And we sang. And we danced on into the night Ay oh ay oh ay oh ay (Ay oh ay oh) Ay oh ay oh ay oh ay (Ay oh ay oh) Singing ay oh ay oh ay oh ay (Ay oh ay oh) And we danced on into the night. One night, he starts to drive through Los Angeles, and he finally ends in the parking garage of Los Angeles International Airport. Moments later, a beautiful young lady jumps onto his bonnet and he finds himself being chased by four Iranians. What follows is a wild chase through the streets of Los Angeles, and a very funny one too. 'Into the Night' stands as one of my favourite films of the '80s. In fact it stands as one of my most favourite films ever. Why? "Into the Night" is the first single from Santana's 2007 compilation album, Ultimate Santana. The track features Chad Kroeger from Nickelback. It has received a considerable amount of airplay on VH1. Dania Ramirez of Heroes stars in the music video. The song has peaked at number 26 in the United States and number four in Australia. "Into the Night" (Album version). "I Believe It's Time". "Curación (Sunlight on Water)". "Victory Is Won". "Into the Night" (Video).