

## Prologue

The morning paper rattled in his hands as he read, for the third time, the bold black headline. His pounding heart finally broke the trance. Mouth wide open, he inhaled a huge gulp of air. The pounding got worse.

“Tell me I am going to outlive them all.”

The wispy words barely flowed from his parched mouth. His face whitened just as it had following the death of the others.

“Or am I next?”

His right hand instinctively reached to his left breast shirt pocket for the well-worn, gold wire-rimmed reading glasses he always kept there. It took both hands to put the spectacles to his face. Seconds later the headlines blurred and the fine print came into focus.

Pravda, 13 September 1971 - The Central Committee of the Communist Party and the USSR Council of Ministers announce, with regret, the death on 11 September 1971, after a protracted, painful illness, of the former First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the

Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev,  
at the age of 78.

“He died of a heart attack?”

His loud words filled the room and seemed to calm him. He no longer felt the pounding in his chest. His hands stopped shaking.

For almost ten years, Aleksandr Popov lived with the constant fear of his own death. He knew others, perhaps scores, were murdered to assure the secret would be kept. They were all expendable. But he also knew, of the five left entrusted with the secret, he was the next most expendable. Yet, in less than ten years, two of the five were murdered, and now a third, Khrushchev, died of natural causes. He wasn't sure if he should feel relieved, or even more fearful.

Aleksandr leaned back in the over-stuffed leather chair. It wasn't long before he felt his body go limp. A slight smirk settled on his face.

“Why should I be afraid . . . to the rest of humanity, I am already dead.”

## Chapter 1

Even with his back facing the doorway to his office, Jack could feel her eyes wandering over his body. The thought alone made him shiver. As he swiveled his chair around, his heart rate picked up. He drew in a slow deep breath through his nose to try to disguise his excitement. His eyes locked onto hers in a long gaze. He didn't blink. Neither did she.

"You decided to stop in the office after all." Jack was the first to break the silence, although his comment was followed by another bout of voiceless stares. "I take it the presentation did not go well."

"Well? Let's just say it died a slow death as I was making it."

"Sit down and tell me about it. It's probably not as bad as it seems."

"Oh yes it is."

Dyan slid her tall, thin, twentysomething body into the chair in front of Jack's desk, the same one she sat in so often over the past year. Just being back on her own turf, in familiar surroundings, was enough to alleviate at least some of the stress she was feeling. She took in a deep breath and closed her eyes.

"Low-tech, low-cost terrorist acts aren't sexy enough for the Bureau," she

said with her eyes closed. "They don't even think they're credible." Then she sat up, eyes wide open. "Mine was the only presentation that didn't have the word biological, chemical, radiological, or nuclear in the title. I was the last speaker of the day standing in front of a roomful of mostly male FBI jocks, mouths already salivating for their first happy hour drink. A wimpy female presenting a bunch of wimpy ideas. Terrorists who might use gasoline instead of uranium, or feces instead of anthrax."

Dyan lowered her head. "I didn't even get one question. Not one goddamn question."

"I know how much time and effort you put into . . ."

"It's not that," Dyan interrupted. "I felt honored to be picked for this task force. I knew I was the youngest, least qualified person assigned to it. I just thought people would be more open. Now I know how the Phoenix agent felt before 9/11 when he tried to warn us about bin Laden sending students to U.S. aviation schools.

"Just because we haven't had a terrorist attack on U.S. soil since September 11th, doesn't mean it's never going to happen again. It's just a matter of time. We all know there are terrorist cells in this country. It's only a matter of time before . . ."

There was a long silence before Jack spoke up. "Dyan, everyone is doing the best job they can to make sure the next time doesn't happen. But you know, and I know, we aren't perfect. These guys are smart. And very patient. No matter what we do, there is still probably going to be a next time. Hopefully, what we are doing will lessen the impact and severity of it. Don't let the system get you down."

Dyan looked up at Jack. She was glad that she stopped in to see him before going home. His words were exactly what she hoped she would hear from him. Their eyes locked again. Jack Nelson is wickedly handsome, she thought to herself. It didn't matter that he was black and she was white. In fact, it probably heightened the sexual tension between them. The fact that she just spent four nights away from her husband of three months, the first time she went without sex for more than twenty-four hours since her honeymoon, also contributed to the tingling she was feeling in various parts of her body as she tried not to squirm in her seat.

This time Dyan broke the silence. "Don't worry . . . I'm not giving up." She stood up, turned, and walked toward the doorway. Two steps later, she stopped and looked back over her shoulder at Jack. "I think I'll go home, open a bottle of wine, get naked, and wait for my husband to come home and play with me."

Jack's face went hot. He knew if he was white, he'd now be red. Then he felt other parts of his body go hot. He watched as Dyan turned her head away and started for the door.

"Oh, you are still here," the out-of-breath secretary said, as she almost ran head-on into Dyan in the doorway of Jack's office. "You have a phone call from the director."

"The director of what?"

"FBI Director Blackman."

"Blackman?"

"Yes. He wants a copy of your report that you gave earlier today at the task force meeting."

"His assistant was there. He can get a copy from him."

"His assistant has misplaced his copy."

"Right. I bet the SOB never took a copy."

"He also wants you back in Washington first thing in the morning."

"Tomorrow's Saturday," Jack interrupted, as he stood up from his desk.

"Did he say why he wanted me there?"

"Haven't you guys heard what happened? Fifteen minutes ago, several tunnels were blown up in Boston. They think it was a terrorist attack."

## Chapter 2

"Cocamo. Great name. Have you been to the island?"

"Yes. We spent a few days there."

"Sylvan Beach, New York. Isn't that on Oneida Lake? The Erie Canal goes through it, right?"

"Yes it does." Mozat forced himself to act politely to the tall, slightly overweight, sixtyish-looking man standing on the dock with one bare foot resting on the inflatable boat that was mounted on the swim platform to the aft of his boat. "Sylvan Beach is on the eastern end of the lake, just after you leave the canal." He then turned and responded to the voice he pretended was coming from the hatch below. "I will be down in a minute."

"We will pass right by it on our way home." The man continued to carry on the conversation, oblivious to Mozat's inattentiveness. "Our boat is about ten slips down, the My Island. We're doing the Great Circle Route. Left South Haven, Michigan, that's our home port, last summer. Spent the winter mostly in the Keys, although we did take a side trip to the Bahamas during the holidays. Kids flew down for a week and met us there. It was great. Have you ever been to the

Bahamas?”

“No . . . we have not.”

“If you get a chance, you’ve got to go there. And don’t believe everything you hear about modern-day pirates in and around the islands. Most of the rumors are probably driven by the drug-related activities in the region. There were hundreds, maybe thousands of snowbird boaters in the islands. I didn’t hear of anyone having any trouble. So, did you come down here in the fall and are you headed back up the Intracoastal Waterway?”

Mozat stood motionless, staring at the man. He never saw anyone breathe and talk at the same time as the man in front of him appeared to be doing.

“Actually, we arrived down here just before the holidays.” Mozat noticed the puzzled look on the man’s face. “Not by boat, but by car.” The puzzled look disappeared. “We purchased this boat in Miami late last year, and spent the rest of the winter and spring in the Keys relaxing.”

“I know what you mean. So are you on your way back up to Sylvan Beach?”

“That is our plan.”

“Honey, who are you talking to?” A tall, slender, dark-haired woman, in her early forties, yet younger-looking, especially when she stood next to Mozat, who was twenty years older, stepped out of the hatchway onto the rear deck area of the boat wearing a loose-fitting Hawaiian print sun dress. “Oh, hello.”

“Hi.”

Remembering the coaching he received regarding the demeanor of the average boat person, friendly but not overly friendly, the latter describing the man standing on the dock, Mozat spoke up, though he would have rather cut off the conversation there. “This is my wife, Ziara.”

"Hello. Dave Lawson. Nice to meet you."

"Very nice to meet you." Ziara knew how to play her part well.

"Mo," Mozat said with the wave of his hand, as Lawson turned his sights to him. "Dave is from Michigan and is doing the Great Circle Route."

"Oh, how wonderful. Have you been through New York State yet?" Although Ziara knew from her coaching that the Great Circle Route -- a circumnavigation around the eastern third of North America, down the Mississippi River, across the Gulf of Mexico, up the east coast along the Intracoastal Waterway, across New York State via the Hudson River and Erie Canal, then into the Great Lakes -- was almost always cruised in a counterclockwise direction to take advantage of the southerly flow of the Mississippi, she did not want to appear too knowledgeable on the subject.

"No. We are headed north, up the Intracoastal Waterway," Lawson replied.

"So are we." Ziara felt Mozat's fingers, from his arm wrapped around her waist, dig into her ribs. "Perhaps we could travel together?" Another dig. "When are you leaving Sailfish Marina?"

"We're heading out first thing in the morning. We'd love the company up the waterway."

"Oh, that is unfortunate," Mozat chimed in, sounding overly apologetic, as he gazed from Ziara to Lawson. "We are not leaving for another week. We have decided to spend some time in the North Palm Beach area."

Lawson's face went long. "We'd love to stay a few more days ourselves, but we need to continue heading north, otherwise we won't make it back to South Haven by the end of September. It can get mighty cold crossing the Great Lakes any time beyond that."

"We know what you mean," Ziara replied, her arm now around Mozat's waist, her fingers digging into his ribs. "I was just going to mix up a batch of rum swizzles. Could we interest you in one?"

"Sure. Let me go get my wife."

They both watched Lawson turn and head down the dock toward his boat. Mozat was the first to speak up. "I thought the odds were against him accepting the drink offer?"

"They were. At least that is what they told us anyway."

Mozat looked at Ziara. "It will not hurt to be seen with another couple sitting on the back of the boat. We will blend in all that much more."

Blending in was something the couple was desperately trying to do. They were less than 200 miles into their journey, with almost 2,000 more to go before they reached their final destination by August. So far everything was going according to their plan. In fact, the most daring part of the cruise, leaving the continental United States and traveling to Rum Runner Cay, a small island located in Crooked Island Passage, at the southern tip of The Exumas in the Bahamas, and returning to the United States without clearing Customs in either direction, went as smooth as they planned. With the most difficult part of the cruise over, they just needed to blend in with the thousands of other snowbird boaters heading north along the Intracoastal Waterway for the summer.

"Ziara, Mo, this is my wife Anne."

"Nice to meet you, and welcome aboard the Cocamo."

### Chapter 3

“Hurry up and wait,” Dyan mumbled as she sat by herself in the large, black, high-backed leather chair at the forty foot-long mahogany table that looked like it was custom made to fit in the conference room lined with flat-screened monitors instead of windows. She arrived at the Washington, D.C., FBI headquarters building at 8:45 A.M., fifteen minutes before the scheduled 9:00 A.M. start time for the meeting, only to find out that it was moved to 10:00 A.M.

She thought she’d use the free time to call her husband. She instead spoke with their answering machine. He was probably at work himself, using a Saturday without her to catch up on his own backlog, she thought. Or golfing. She knew he understood that she might be in Washington for an indefinite period. Nevertheless, tensions between them ran high yesterday when after four days of being apart, their much-anticipated Friday night encounter was reduced to a farewell airport kiss as Dyan caught an evening flight back to D.C. so she could be on time for the Saturday morning meeting. Although she needed to focus on the upcoming meeting, her mind kept wandering to what should have happened the night before. She wondered if what she was feeling now, after

three months of marriage, would last forever. Though she hoped it would, she guessed it wouldn't.

Dyan joined the FBI five years ago as a research analyst after graduating from the State University of New York at Buffalo with a degree in Information Technology. Envisioned to improve the efficiency of the Bureau in the new information age, the newly created analyst positions proved difficult to staff due to private sector demands associated with Y2K, vague job descriptions, and a lack of qualified candidates. To entice applicants, the Bureau offered unlimited job location flexibility. Being a native of central New York, Dyan accepted a position in the Syracuse, New York, FBI Field Office.

Her analytical capabilities and fresh out-of-the-box thinking quickly became a sought-after commodity in an agency built on long standing, archaic work practices. Unfortunately, the biggest boost to her short career came post 9/11 when the true importance of her skills were noticed. As part of the Bureau's effort to improve its effectiveness following 9/11, an interagency task force was formed to assess future domestic terrorist threats. Dyan was its youngest member.

She worked for almost six months on her hypothesis regarding the direction terrorist organizations, such as al Qaeda, might head in the future. While most experts focused on future terrorist scenarios that used sophisticated nuclear, chemical, radiological, or biological technologies, Dyan believed there was a much higher probability that lower tech, lower cost options were available to the terrorists that could produce the same physiological impact on the public. Although a nuclear or biological attack might produce a high level of sensationalism, the cost to achieve such an attack would likely be in the tens of

millions of dollars and involve highly technically skilled individuals. Contrast that with 9/11, which cost less than half a million dollars to execute, and was carried out by two dozen mostly uneducated individuals who brought nothing into this country but themselves. Few in the Bureau agreed with her hypothesis, until yesterday.

Dyan glanced at her watch. 9:55 A.M. and she was still the only one seated at the large table. Just as she was beginning to wonder if she was at the right location, a stream of mostly elderly -- at least when compared to Dyan -- males, dressed in dark suits -- not cheap ones, but not expensive ones either -- filled the room to capacity. As Dyan took the initiative to introduce herself to the gentleman to her left, who was ignoring her, the room went silent when Director Blackman, at six-three and pushing two-fifty, entered the room and sat at the center of the table in the one remaining seat obviously earmarked for him, almost directly across from her.

"There should be no doubt in anyone's mind that the war on terror continues," Blackman began. "Since 9/11, almost three years ago, I feel we have been successful in thwarting attempts by our enemies to inflict damage on our homeland. We have had repeated warnings of imminent attacks, all of which did not materialize, until the attack yesterday. In an obviously well-planned, well-coordinated mission, the enemy has broken their three years of silence.

"I would like Ryan Reynolds to review what we know so far from our investigation. Ryan."

At age thirty-five, Ryan Reynolds was the youngest assistant director in the Bureau. Mentored and fast-tracked by Blackman, he was appropriately nicknamed the "fair-haired boy." Although he was smart and ambitious, his

meteoric rise had gone to his head. You learned very quickly to watch your back around Ryan Reynolds.

"At exactly 4:45 P.M. Eastern Standard Time, on Friday, June fourth, 2004, explosions occurred in three tunnels of Boston's recently completed Central Artery and Tunnel Project, known as The Big Dig. As of 6:00 A.M. this morning, the death toll stands at just over a thousand people. Based on the number injured, somewhere in the range of two thousand, mostly from burns and smoke inhalation, we can expect at least several hundred more fatalities, which would make this the second most deadly attack by terrorists on American soil.

"Our preliminary investigation shows the terrorists poured gasoline, somewhere in the range of one hundred to two hundred gallons, mid-way through the tunnels and then remotely detonated the mixture several minutes later, after a significant portion of the gasoline evaporated, which created a highly explosive mixture.

"Based on a review of the video tapes, we believe the terrorists used three minivans to transport and dump the gasoline. Two of the three vehicles have since been reported stolen from Logan airport parking lots. We are still tracking down the owner of the other minivan, but expect similar findings. It appears the terrorists stole the vehicles early Friday morning and retrofitted them in time to carry out their afternoon attack. We have not found any of the stolen vehicles."

"Don't these tunnels have emergency ventilation systems to handle an event like this?" Blackman asked.

"They have massive ventilation systems, but they were designed to handle fires from a single bus, or truck, or a flammable fuel spill no bigger than what would cover the floor of a two-stall family garage. Once these fires propagated,

hundreds of cars were engulfed in flames.”

“Why gasoline?” Blackman interrupted.

“It’s readily available, effective, and cheap.” Dyan couldn’t resist blurting out the canned response she gave to anyone who asked that question.

“It’s not cheap where I buy it,” someone spoke up, to which several in the room laughed, but only for a second or two.

Blackman, not amused, asked, “I’m sorry, you are?”

“This is agent Dyan Galloway from our Syracuse Field Office,” Reynolds spoke up before Dyan could answer. “She is a member of our interagency task force on future terrorist threats and author of . . . ”

“Low-Tech, Low-Cost Terrorist Acts: The Next Wave,” Blackman interrupted. “I read your report last night. When was the report officially presented to the Bureau?”

“Coincidentally, it was presented near the closing of our task force meeting early yesterday afternoon . . . ”

“If you don’t mind Ryan, I think Ms. Galloway can speak for herself.”

“Friday afternoon, sir. I have been working on the hypothesis for several months, but last week’s meeting was the first time I presented it to the rest of the task force.”

For the next minute the only sound in the room was made by Blackman’s large fingers as he noisily squeezed each page of the report, which was open in front of him, spending no more than a few seconds on each page before slowly flipping to the next. Although Dyan was on the other side of the table, a distance of more than ten feet, she recognized the report as hers.

“I want to make sure the chronology regarding the development of this

report is well documented. We have been criticized enough over the past three years by all the Monday morning quarterbacks for not acting on information that surfaced within the Bureau. I do not want this to become another example of that." Blackman then looked directly at Dyan. "I would like a written report summarizing the chronology of your work on this report on my desk by the end of the day."

Before Dyan could respond, Blackman placed the report on the bottom of the three-inch stack of documents in front of him and moved on to the next agenda item.

Dyan sat motionless, staring at Blackman, only half-listening to the rest of the presentations and discussions. She could not believe the only thing anyone appeared to be worried about was protecting their asses.

## Chapter 4

"Can I help you?" The receptionist's voice matched the rest of her profile, like that of a female prison guard, tall and slim, yet tight and muscular. Her short cropped bleached blonde hair added to her manly look. Even her name tag, Ms. Rock, was intimidating. She was a woman even a man would not want to tangle with.

"Director Blackman wanted this by the end of the day." Dyan held the envelope out, but the receptionist did not reach for it.

"Please have a seat, Ms. Galloway. The director will be with you shortly."

Dyan gave the woman a look anyone would give a stranger who knew your name without asking for it. As she turned and walked toward the chairs along the wall, she first saw the key card reader near the elevator door, then her key card security badge hanging from the lanyard around her neck. The prison guard knew who she was before she even got off the elevator, Dyan thought.

Before she could sit down, a door at the far end of the reception area flew back and Blackman stepped through the opening. His suit jacket and tie from this morning's meeting were gone and his shirtsleeves were rolled up to his

elbows. "Ms. Galloway, please come in." Without waiting for her to get to the door, he turned and disappeared through the opening.

As she stepped through the doorway, she saw Blackman walking down a long, dimly lit hall. The only sound came from their shoes against the carpet. She could almost feel the tension building as they approached the door to his office. He disappeared through the opening. She followed.

Once inside the cavernous, dark oak paneled room, Blackman suddenly turned, which caused Dyan to instinctively stop in her tracks. She looked into his eyes. His large pupils looked like glowing embers. As if on cue, she blinked and he started to speak.

"Ms. Galloway . . . Bill Blackman." A smile formed on his face as he extended his right hand out to her.

"Dyan Galloway," Dyan said, her voice cracking, as she placed her hand into the giant one in front of her.

He motioned her to one of the six chairs surrounding the hexagon-shaped wooden table in the corner of the office. As she sat down, she saw a copy of her report laying on the table along with a red expandable folder stuffed with a three-inch stack of papers.

He pulled out the chair next to her and sat down. Their eyes locked again. "First . . . I'd like to commend you on your report. It's the kind of out-of-the-box thinking we are trying to foster in the Bureau."

There was a long silence before Dyan spoke up. "Thank you, but . . ."

"No," Blackman interrupted. "Let me say what I think is on your mind. If it wasn't for yesterday's terrorist attack, no one, including me, would have even paid attention to this." His large thick index finger made a loud thud as he

tapped the report in front of him. "And I'll be honest with you. Maybe you're right. But whether we would have taken it seriously or not, we still wouldn't have known when or where they were going to hit us."

"But we might have known how," Dyan shot back, then suddenly remembered who she was talking to, although Blackman sat as composed as ever.

"Sometimes you have to hit someone over the head with a two-by-four before you get their attention. 9/11 was a wake-up call for all of us, just like Pearl Harbor was a wake-up call for the previous generation of Americans. Although all the warning signs were there, we chose to ignore them. For almost three years we were successful in fending off any more attacks. I think we all hoped the killing in Afghanistan and Iraq would somehow substitute for any bloodshed on American soil. But deep down inside, many of us knew it would come sooner or later."

The room went silent. Dyan could see beads of sweat forming on Blackman's forehead.

"Dyan . . . I'd like you to work on a special assignment for me." Blackman put his right hand on the red folder and slid it in front of Dyan. "We believe there are about a dozen terrorist cells operating in this country. We've never gone public with that fact. We believe each cell is probably comprised of between two to ten people. So far we have positively identified -- and have under twenty-four hour surveillance -- three of the cells. We also have intelligence, you'll find it all documented in here, that indicates al Qaeda is planning a number of terrorist attacks over the next several months across the U.S. We believe their attacks are a prelude to a massive attack planned for either the upcoming anniversary of

9/11, or perhaps the November elections.

"You will have high-level security access to this file, which is code-named Domino. I'd like you to go through this data. Look at it from an outsider's perspective. See if you can come up with a how, when, and where these guys are going to hit us next, based on your theory."

Dyan's heart was pounding, not from what Blackman was asking her to do, but from what he just told her about the terrorist cells. "We are aware of three cells and haven't arrested them?"

"That's correct."

"Were any of them involved in . . ."

"No, they weren't involved in yesterday's explosions. If they had been, we certainly would have intercepted them before they had a chance to hit those tunnels."

"But why not pick them up? Why take the chance?"

"We were lucky we found the first cell. It was well over a year ago. Through our surveillance, we have been able to uncover the two additional cells. Though they don't do it often, periodically they do communicate with one another. Our hope is to eventually get them all."

"How certain are we of there being a dozen cells?"

"We estimate a fifty percent probability."

"How certain are we these smaller terrorist acts are leading up to a massive attack?"

Blackman paused, then responded with a low muted voice. "Very certain."

## Chapter 5

“But I don’t even know the man,” Iullia repeated again. It was the fourth time she said it in the past thirty minutes, and she didn’t understand why the obviously well-educated elderly man, sitting on the opposite side of the desk in front of her, wasn’t grasping the significance of what she was saying.

The letter she pulled from her mailbox three days ago caught her eye immediately. Although business letter-sized, the texture of the off-white envelope told her it was expensive. That, along with the embossed return address of Randal B. Chapman, Attorney at Law, State Tower Building, Syracuse, New York. She double-checked to make sure the envelope had been put in the correct mail box, but typed in block letters across the front was her name, Dr. Iullia Zola.

After reading the enclosed letter, it too typed on expensive bond paper, her initial reaction was to toss it in the pile with the rest of the junk mail she received that day. After all, to be named as the beneficiary in a will for someone she didn’t even know was surely some scam. Probably a marketing ploy to get her to write her own will, which at forty-two, a full-time professor of Russian

Studies at Syracuse University, single, and with no known relatives, she saw little need for. Throw it away and you'll never hear from them again, she thought. So she did.

The forgotten letter came back to life less than twenty-four hours later when the phone rang. Then came the frantic search through the recycle bin already out by the curb, just minutes away from being picked up. The letter was not a marketing ploy. Randal B. Chapman was not looking for new business. He was carrying out the wishes of his client. He needed to meet with her.

Iullia read the three-page will for the third time. It was clearly her name, almost impossible to mix up with any other, and her address, 321 Comstock Avenue, Syracuse, New York, typed out on the pages. But no matter how long she stared at the pages, the name Richard Williams did not jog one neuron.

She listened even more carefully the second time Mr. Chapman told her what he knew of his deceased client. Williams was seventy-eight years old when he passed away two weeks ago, of natural causes, so said the coroner's report. He lived alone in a cabin just north of Old Forge, New York, a small town located in the Adirondack Mountains, about a two hour drive from Syracuse, and taught English, Spanish, and French at the local Adirondack high school for thirty years, retiring in 1993. He previously confided in Chapman that he had no living relatives. He bequeathed \$100,000 to the high school he taught at for the establishment of a college scholarship fund. The remainder of his estate went to Iullia. Chapman indicated that he was still in the process of determining its value, although he already concluded it was into the high six figures.

"It still doesn't make sense to me," Iullia said as she looked up from the will that was resting on her lap. "The only thing we appear to have in common is

teaching.”

“The only suggestion I have for you is that you visit his cabin. It now belongs to you. Maybe there is something there that will answer why you were in his will. You need to visit his place anyway to let me know if you want me to sell the cabin and its contents.” Chapman handed her an envelope which contained a key and a map showing the location of the cabin.

Iullia started to reach for the envelope, then pulled back her hand. “I don’t even know the man and you want me to rummage through his cabin?”

“Your cabin, Dr. Zola. Technically, it belongs to you.”

Iullia reached for the envelope. “Mr. Chapman, how long have you known Mr. Williams?”

“Mr. Williams came to see me for the first time in the fall of 1971. He asked me to draw up his first will for him. The only time I have ever dealt with him over the past thirty-plus years was when he made revisions to his will. Maybe a half a dozen times or so.”

“And when did he add my name to his will?”

“Add? My dear, you were in his original will.”

## Chapter 6

Dyan sat in her windowless office, if that's what you could call it, staring at the bare white wall in front of her. The ten-foot by ten-foot room, which she concluded must have initially been a storage closet, was her work space for the past two weeks. In her short five-year career, she was always able to glance to the outside world at any time during the workday. Until the past two weeks, she didn't realize how important it was for her to know if it was sunny or dark, blue sky or gray, calm or windy or rainy out.

Cooped up in her "prison cell," as she jokingly nicknamed the office, she lost all track of time. Two nights ago she was startled by a banging on the door, which was always kept closed because of the material she was reviewing. At first she thought it was odd that the cleaning staff was vacuuming the outside hall during normal working hours, until first the pain in her bladder, then the glance at her watch told her it was 10:17 P.M. She hadn't moved from her chair in hours. She then realized why solitary confinement was such an effective tool in breaking a human being's psyche.

She was escorted to the prison cell by Blackman following their initial meeting

in his office almost two weeks ago. Starting early the next morning, a Sunday, and for every day since, she found herself confined to her cell for no less than fourteen hours a day. Her plan to take last weekend off and return to Syracuse and her new husband, who by that time she hadn't slept with for almost two weeks, was derailed when Osama bin Laden's top lieutenant, Ayman al Zawahiri, appeared on a new video aired on Qatar's al-Jazeera news network on Thursday morning and took credit for the previous week's tunnel attack. He also warned that al Qaeda was planning more strikes in the U.S., and that it would spread disease throughout the land. When Blackman paid her a visit later that morning to check on how she was doing, the first time he'd even spoken to her since the previous Saturday, she knew there would be no escaping from her cell for the weekend.

Now, a week later, she had completed reviewing all of the top secret intelligence files on the suspected terrorist cells in the U.S. and started to piece together her theories on what she thought their next moves might be. Confident she would be able to complete her report by her self-imposed deadline of next week, she decided to quit early, although it was already after six, and head back to her hotel room where she would treat herself to a glass -- or two or three -- of wine, and a bubble bath.

As she walked through the lobby of the Crystal City Marriott, dreaming of the warm bubbly froth caressing her naked body, and the cold tart liquid cooling her taste buds, she almost didn't hear, let alone recognize, the voice of the man walking toward her from the right.

"Dyan."

She turned and stared in almost disbelief. "What are you doing here?"

"Thanks a lot. I thought you'd be glad to see me," Jack responded.

Dyan stood there staring at him. "No. I mean . . . I am. I am glad to see you. But what are you doing here?"

"Last-minute meeting got scheduled for tomorrow at headquarters. One of the cases I'm working on. Anyway, I was just coming to check to see if you were back in your room. I've been at the bar. Come on. Let me buy you a drink." Jack put his hand on the small of Dyan's back and motioned her into the noisy, crowded, dimly lit bar area. But Dyan remained frozen.

"What?"

"Nothing. I guess I'm in shock. I can't believe you're standing here talking to me face-to-face."

"Well, I am. So come on."

"Wait. Let me put this up in my room," Dyan said as she held her black leather briefcase in front of her.

"Sure . . . I'll walk up with you."

Before Dyan could say anything, Jack headed for the bank of elevators. She gazed up and down Jack's body as he walked in front of her. She still couldn't believe that it was actually him. She also couldn't believe that she was following him up to her room.

"What floor," Jack asked as they stepped into the elevator.

"Ninth."

Seconds after Jack pushed the ninth-floor button, the elevator doors closed, sealing the two of them within its small space. Neither noticed the start of the slow ascent.

Dyan's heart was pounding so loudly, she was sure Jack could hear it in the

silence of the elevator. She felt her body going hot and her face flushing as the memories, almost a year into her past, but as vivid as yesterday's, raced through her brain triggering the right combinations of hormones into her bloodstream.

"Do you remember?" Jack finally broke the silence.

"Yes."

"Are you sorry we did it?"

Before Dyan could answer, the voices they heard outside the elevator grew louder as the doors opened. They both exited the elevator, walked silently down the hall, and without hesitation, Jack followed her into her room.

"Your message light is on." Jack pointed to the annoying red light that was flashing on the phone next to the bed, and then to the one on the phone on the desk at the far end of the room.

Dyan picked up the phone, pressed the message button and listened.

"You have one message. Message one. Hi honey. You are not going to believe this, but I'm at the airport waiting to get on a plane to Washington. I'm looking forward to a hot, sleepless night with you."

Dyan again felt her face go flush, then quickly turned around as she remembered Jack was standing just feet from her in her hotel room.