

DANIELLE
STEEL

A lit sparkler is positioned on the right side of the cover, with its bright yellow and orange sparks radiating outwards. The background is a deep, dark blue with some lighter blue bokeh effects.

All That
Glitters

a novel

DANIELLE STEEL

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A Novel



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About the Author

Chapter 1

Coco Martin, officially Nicole, was a striking young woman with dark hair and green eyes. She had a stunning figure, and the poise of someone older than her years. What made her remarkable and even more appealing was that she was totally unaware of her great beauty. She was modest as well as spectacularly beautiful. Men had stared at her for years and she was oblivious to them. Women would have been jealous of her, but she was so kind to everyone that they forgot what she looked like, and genuinely liked her. She had turned twenty-one at the end of last year, and had just finished her junior year as a journalism major at Columbia University. It had been a major coup when she landed a summer internship at *Time* magazine. She'd found the notice on the bulletin board in the school of journalism. The position was intended for graduate students, but after her interview, they had been so impressed that they had hired her. She was thrilled. She had started two weeks before and she was excited to have the opportunity to work at such a prestigious magazine.

It was a hot Friday in July when she boarded the jitney in New York for the three-hour trip to Southampton to spend the weekend with her parents. She was an only child, and had always enjoyed an unusually close relationship with them, even when she was very young. They treated her more as an adult than a child, and took her everywhere with them. They had had some wonderful trips together, and welcomed her among their friends when they entertained. The three of them enjoyed one another's company. Tom and Bethanie were proud of their only daughter.

Their marriage had gotten off to an unusual start when they were young themselves. They had met when they were both in college and fell madly in love, although they came from vastly different backgrounds. Tom Martin had grown up dirt poor, as he readily admitted, in the Midwest. He had gotten a full scholarship to Princeton, and it changed his life. His parents would have been more than satisfied if he had wanted to be a plumber or electrician, or at the most maybe an accountant. But Tom had never accepted his parents' limited vision for him. His friends in college convinced him that it was more profitable to manage other people's fortunes than try to make his own from scratch. After Princeton, he got an entry-level job at a New York bank and eventually, after working diligently, with Bethanie's help, he attended business school at Wharton, and in time became one of the most respected investment advisors in New York. He was a quiet, discreet man, not given to showing off, although he had a business partner, Edward Easton, who was far more visible and one of the well-known stars in the business.

Like Coco, Bethanie had been dazzling when Tom met her, a stunning beauty and a lively, creative young woman. She was studying photography in the department of visual arts at Brown University, and had genuine talent.

Bethanie was from a venerable old New York family. Both she and Tom were only children and she had made her debut the year before she met Tom. They had fallen in love when they were both nineteen, had met at a party in New York and had been together ever since. When Bethanie told her parents they wanted to get married after they graduated from college, they'd objected strenuously, and thought that Tom would never amount to anything. They wanted her to marry someone from their own social circle, not a poor boy from a simple background with ambitious dreams. They didn't see how he could go very far. Bethanie saw all his strengths and merits, and had total faith in him. Even if he would never become a material success, and remained poor forever, she loved him. When her parents flatly refused to agree to the marriage, two weeks after they graduated, Bethanie and Tom pooled what they had in their checking accounts, went to Las Vegas for the weekend, and got married in the Elvis Chapel. The Monday after, she faced her parents with the news, and they were outraged.

Tom took the bank job he'd been offered, and found work waiting on tables at night to save for business school. Bethanie refused to accept her usual allowance from her parents and took freelance photography jobs, and worked as a waitress with him at night. They lived on what they made and saved all they could. And eventually Tom went to Wharton and got his MBA. Coco had come along by then. And in the end, they proved Bethanie's parents wrong, and won their respect and admiration. When Tom became successful, he bought his own parents a house.

The two things Bethanie lived by, and had said to her daughter frequently, were "Don't play by other people's rules" and "Think outside the box." She said that one of the worst things in life was to have no dreams. Coco's parents had convinced her that she could do anything she wanted to, if she was willing to work hard and face whatever challenges came up.

Coco's parents were shining examples of perseverance, courage, and hard work to achieve their goals. Her father had certainly done that. They had never given up their dreams, or lost faith in each other. Twenty-four years after they married, they were still in love, and Tom was still in awe of his beautiful wife. She had been staunchly at his side for richer or poorer, just as she had promised in the Elvis Chapel. Their wedding pictures still made them smile.

Their parents had been older, which was something they had in common too. All of them had died when Coco was very young, and she had grown up without the advantages or complications of grandparents. Her parents had been her whole world, and she was the focus of all their love and attention. As he made his fortune, Tom had acquired a patina of sophistication, with Bethanie at his side, showing him the way.

They had a beautiful apartment in Manhattan, on Fifth Avenue, with a Central Park view, and a sprawling, comfortable, luxurious house in Southampton, right on the beach. Coco loved spending time with them. She was going out for the weekend to tell them all about her internship at *Time* and what she'd done that week. Bethanie and Tom had sent Coco to one of the best private coed schools in New York, which she had attended through high school. It was where she met her best friend, Samuel Stein. She had girlfriends too. She was an independent thinker, but never hung out in

cliques, and her closest friend since she was in fourth grade had been Sam. They had hung out in school together and went everywhere together, even though he was a year older and a grade above her. And despite differences of gender, background, and religion, they were kindred spirits and soul mates from the moment they met. She told him everything, as he did with her. He satisfied her need for male companionship and was like a brother, and loyal friend, who gave her excellent advice once she started dating.

Sam's religious Orthodox Jewish parents were uncomfortable about their friendship from the beginning, and found it strange that a boy and girl would be best friends. Their greatest concern was that eventually, when they got older, their closeness would turn into romantic feelings, and they would fall in love and want to marry. Sam's mother, Zippora, particularly didn't want that to happen, although his father didn't want it either. When the time came, they wanted Sam to marry within their faith. Zippora kept a kosher home. They celebrated Shabbat every Friday night, and obliged Sam to go to synagogue with them on Saturdays. He was the oldest of four children, and had two sisters and a brother. The others had gone to a religious school in Brooklyn, but they sent Sam to a more liberal, nonsectarian school in the city, and were never sure it had been the right decision. But he had flourished there and was an excellent student, which was their main goal for him.

Eventually his next youngest sister, Sabra, gave them real cause for concern. She fell in love with Liam, an Irish Catholic boy she'd met at an interschool high-school conference on diversity, and she was determined to marry him after they graduated from college. She was even willing to convert for him. That took the heat off Sam and his friendship with Coco, and caused the Steins even more anxiety than Coco did.

Sam was a year older than Coco, and had just graduated as an econ major from NYU. Coco had gone to his graduation and his parents had been polite to her, as they always were, but having known him for twelve years, she knew how they felt about their being best friends. They made no secret of it, and lectured Sam constantly about the danger of their being friends.

Sam had insisted that she be invited to his bar mitzvah when he was thirteen. She had sat through all four hours of the religious ceremony at the temple, and had then gone to the lavish party his parents had thrown for him

at the Plaza hotel that night. Her parents had dropped her off. There had been two hundred guests and Coco had enjoyed it. It was the first bar mitzvah she'd ever been to, and she felt very grown up being there alone. She told her parents afterward that she wished she could have a bat mitzvah herself. She loved the celebration, and especially when they carried Sam's mother around the room aloft in a chair to riotous applause and lively music.

Coco's family was Catholic and had never been overly religious. Neither were Coco and Sam. Sam said he didn't think he would hold Shabbat when he grew up, and he hated living in a kosher home. He ate bacon every chance he got when he went out, but of course never told his parents. He felt that his mother's religious passion was stifling. Both his sisters had rebelled against it, but his brother, Jacob, always desperate to please them, said he wanted to be a rabbi when he grew up. He was a studious boy and Sam thought he'd do it.

Sam was expected to go to work at his father's successful accounting firm after college, and they encouraged him to become a CPA now that he had graduated. He wanted to go to business school in a few years, but the ink was barely dry on his bachelor's degree. Sam and Coco loved the fact that they had both gone to college in New York City, she at Columbia and he at NYU, and could continue to spend time together, when they weren't studying or with friends at their respective schools. Sometimes they managed to study together. Sam always helped her with her math, economics, and statistics, and she had written more than one paper for him in psychology and literature. They pooled their strengths and had both gotten good grades and maintained a strong GPA all through college. Their parents could never complain that their friendship distracted them from their schoolwork, since their grades had never suffered from the time they spent together. And it was a mystery to Sam's parents how they were so often with each other, remained friends, and didn't fall in love.

One of the big differences between them was that Sam's parents expected him to conform to their rules, their expectations for him, and their way of life, and hers didn't. There was no room in his parents' thinking for Sam to make his own choices, and they made it clear what their plans were for him, both for marriage and career.

Coco's parents wanted her to find a career that was fulfilling, be creative about it, and march to her own tune, as they had done, Bethanie by marrying someone who came from a different world and Tom by achieving so much more than his parents had ever envisioned for him. They urged Coco not to accept other people's limited views, and to fly with her own wings. It left a broad range of options and choices for her future, and her friendship with Sam had never worried them, neither due to his sex nor to his religion. They respected her ability to make good decisions and choose her own friends. Sam always said he envied her because her parents were so open-minded. He dreaded confrontation with his parents, and couldn't imagine himself marrying the kind of girl they would eventually want to choose for him, a girl from an Orthodox Jewish home. Any other possibility was out of the question. His mother always urged him to marry early and have many children, as they had done. Both his parents came from big families.

Sam had no intention of doing any of that when he eventually left home. He had only graduated a month before, and in two more weeks they expected him to start work at his father's accounting firm. He dreaded it, and for that Coco felt sorry for him. But he knew it was expected of him and he didn't want to let them down.

Coco was excited about her summer internship, and her senior year at Columbia before she graduated. She knew her parents were disappointed that, because of her job at *Time*, she wouldn't be able to join them for their annual summer trip to Europe. She went with them every year. This would be the first time she couldn't. They were leaving on Sunday, so she had agreed to spend the weekend with them before they left.

Sam's parents lived in an apartment on upper Central Park West, not in one of the fancier buildings further south, like the Dakota or the San Remo, where famous actors, producers, and writers lived, but in a very respectable building nonetheless. His sisters shared a room, as did he with his younger brother. He didn't have enough money saved yet to move into his own apartment after graduation, and he suspected he would have to live at home for the next few years. The starting salary his father was giving him would be enough for spending money, and some dinners out with friends and occasional dates, but not enough to live on yet, not by any means. He'd

have to work hard for that, and he intended to. He longed for his own apartment, which still seemed like a distant dream.

Coco was planning to move out when she graduated, once she got a job, and assumed she would have roommates, which she did in the dorm at Columbia too. She didn't mind. Her parents had promised to help her get an apartment after graduation. Sam always envied how generous her parents were, but he didn't hold it against her. He just thought Coco was a very lucky girl, and most of the time, she agreed. At other times she found her parents' single-minded focus on her too possessive and intense. She hoped they would relax their vigilance in the next year or two, but there was no sign of it yet. She was sorry she couldn't go to Europe with them this year, but it felt grown up and exciting to have a summer job and stay home. She was enjoying it, and it was already clear to her that she wanted to work at a magazine when she finished school. She was even considering graduate classes in journalism.

Her father was waiting for her when she stepped off the jitney. He was a tall, youthful looking man with gray hair at his temples, and his face lit up as soon as he saw Coco. She was happy to see him, gave him a big hug, and they chatted in the car all the way back to the house, where her mother was waiting with a light dinner at a beautifully set table on the patio next to the pool. Like everything else Bethanie did so perfectly, she was a creative cook, kept an elegant home, and the house was tastefully decorated. Tom was always very generous with her. She had dabbled in decorating when she was younger, and enjoyed it. But once Tom started making big money, she had never worked again, and was available at all times to her husband and daughter. She had amazing flair with everything she did, an easy style and eye for beauty. Coco had inherited some of that from her. Her mother's grace and open-mindedness hadn't gone unobserved by her daughter. The freedom she had to be herself and choose her own path was the exact opposite of how Sam had been brought up, with his parents constantly dictating to him and attempting to restrict him.

Sam and Coco complemented each other as best friends. In some ways, he grounded her, and in others Coco encouraged him to spread his wings, in spite of what his parents said, and the limits they put on him. She tried to give him the courage to fly free of them, but he always felt earthbound

compared to her. He wanted to soar as she did, but he didn't know how to do that yet. It was one of his many goals. To be free and try new things. He admired how fearless Coco was and how brave.

Bethanie and Tom enjoyed dinner with their daughter. They walked on the beach after dinner, and went to bed early. On Saturday they swam in the ocean, lay by the pool, and went out to dinner that night at a restaurant Tom and Bethanie wanted to try, and hadn't yet. During dinner, Coco told them more about her work at *Time*. Her parents were always proud of her. She had always had all the emotional support she needed from them. It was freely given, and they had always encouraged her to have confidence in herself. Her mother reminded her that there was nothing she couldn't achieve if she tried. It had been an atmosphere in which Coco had thrived.

When they were out to dinner on Saturday night, Coco's parents were excited about their trip to France the next day. Hearing them and talking about it made her miss it more than she had thought she would. But she didn't want to make a bad impression at work by asking for a vacation right after she started the job, so she had decided to pass on it this year. She had wonderful memories of their many trips together during school vacations and in the summers.

"Are you all packed, Mom?" she asked her mother when they got home from dinner. Bethanie laughed guiltily with a glance at her husband.

"More or less," she said and Tom laughed.

"You know your mom. She'll be slipping more things into her suitcase and another one will suddenly appear as we walk out the door." He always pretended to grouse about how much luggage she took, but in truth, he didn't care. She liked to wear pretty clothes, and he enjoyed indulging her. Once in Paris and the South of France, she'd buy more, he knew. It was a trait Coco had inherited from her. Tom traveled light, but all he needed for the trip were white jeans, some linen jackets, a blazer, and a suit or two. It was so much easier for a man to pack less, as his wife always pointed out to him. She often had a whole suitcase of purses and shoes, to match every outfit. But at the hotel where they stayed in Cap d'Antibes, people dressed well. It was an older crowd, an expensive hotel, and they went there every summer for a week or two. Coco loved it there too.

It was a relaxing weekend, and Bethanie made them a big brunch on Sunday. After that, Tom drove Coco back to the jitney to return to the city. They had to finish packing, and were leaving on a nine P.M. flight to Paris, where they would spend several days seeing friends, going to art exhibits, and visiting their favorite museums and restaurants. And then they would head to the South of France, followed by a few days in Venice, and ending the trip in London, as they always did. They were planning to be away for just under three weeks, a luxury of time Coco couldn't afford this summer, for a worthy cause. It was her first serious summer job.

She was in a good mood all the way back to the city after seeing them. She'd had a nice time with her parents, and she went to a movie with two of her girlfriends from Columbia that night. She knew that Sam had a date with the daughter of friends of his parents and he wasn't looking forward to it.

"How was it?" she asked when he called her after the movie.

"Painful. She was nice looking, but a huge bore. My parents' only criterion is that the girls are Jewish. I don't think she said ten words all evening. I was home by ten o'clock." He made a date with Coco for later that week, to go to dinner and a movie they were both dying to see. They never ran out of things to talk about. When they hung up, she knew her parents' flight to Paris was already in the air. They had called from the airport to say goodbye again. After talking to Sam, Coco turned on the TV in their den for a while, and then went to bed early so she'd be fresh for work the next day.

The next week at *Time* flew by and kept her busy, so she didn't have a chance to miss them. Her parents called her from Paris, and told her what they were doing, what restaurants and galleries they'd been to, since they were major collectors and passionate about art. By the end of the week, they were in the South of France, happily at their favorite hotel.

That weekend she and Sam went out to Southampton, and spent the whole time relaxing and swimming, and sleeping by the pool. They slept chastely in separate rooms, as they always had, since there had never been even a hint of romance between them. He had met a new girl that week, at the deli near his office where he'd had lunch. She was Irish Catholic, but he said he didn't care, as long as his mother didn't find out. Coco told him

about several guys she'd spotted at work, whom she hadn't met yet but looked promising. Sam always said that he was closer to Coco than to his own sisters, and he could tell her anything, as she could with him. There were no secrets between them.

They had lain in the sun all weekend and relaxed. Sam had borrowed his father's car for the weekend, since his father didn't drive on Friday night or Saturdays anyway. He turned the radio on, on the drive home. The news was on, and Coco was about to hunt for a music station they both liked, when a bulletin came on, announcing a major terrorist attack in France, on the Promenade de la Croisette in Cannes. She looked at Sam with fear in her eyes.

"Don't be crazy, Coco. Don't jump to conclusions," he told her calmly. He knew how her mind worked, and that she would panic at what they'd just heard, thinking of her parents. "They were probably at their hotel." It was late evening in France, and Coco knew they were most likely at dinner somewhere, at one of their favorite restaurants, but she worried anyway. She took out her cellphone and called both of them. Each call went directly to voicemail. She was silent for most of the ride home after that, flipping through the stations for further news. What they'd heard so far was that several bombs had been detonated. The terrorists had been shot and killed. Several hundred people had been injured and well over a hundred were dead, after an initial count. It was one of the worst attacks so far. When they got to her building on Fifth Avenue, Sam parked on the street and went upstairs with her to watch the news on TV. It was heartbreaking to see; people carrying dead children, and other children screaming in fear and running after the blast, looking for their parents, husbands kneeling over their wives, parents over children, lovers dying in each other's arms, riot police everywhere.

She watched the scene intently in terrified silence, holding Sam's hand, but there was no sign of her parents in the carnage they saw on TV. Her face was tense and Sam didn't speak as Coco continued to call their cellphones, with no answer. When she called the hotel, they said that the Martins were out and not in their rooms. When she checked with the hotel restaurant, they had not dined at the hotel that night.

"Shit, Sam, where are they?" she said nervously.

“They’re probably walking around somewhere,” he said, but he could see the terror in her eyes, and didn’t know how to reassure her.

Sam and Coco spent the night on the couch in front of the TV, watching the same footage again and again. He called his parents and said he was staying at a friend’s.

The call finally came at six A.M., which was noon in France. She hesitated for a fraction of a second before she answered, praying it was them. But an unfamiliar male voice with a French accent asked for her by name. He pronounced it like a French name. “Nicole Martin.” Her name was on her parents’ documents and travel papers as next of kin, so if something happened to them, she would be called.

“Yes, this is she,” she said, holding her breath as Sam stared at her, willing it to be good news. It had to be. They couldn’t have been victims of a terrorist attack in France. It just wasn’t possible and didn’t make sense.

The man identified himself as a captain of the gendarmerie in Cannes. He explained that there had been a terrorist attack.

“Yes, I know,” she said, wanting to scream. “Are my parents all right?” It suddenly occurred to her that they could be injured and in a hospital there. All night she had been terrified that they were dead. There was a brief pause before he responded, sounding grave.

“I regret very much to inform you, madame, they were among the victims of last night’s attack. They were on the Croisette when the first bomb detonated.”

“Are they injured? How bad is it?” she asked in a whisper, as Sam squeezed her hand and she closed her eyes while everything swirled around her and she waited to hear what the captain would say.

“They did not survive,” he said somberly. Her eyes flew open and she looked at Sam in disbelief.

“Both of them?”

“Yes, madame. Both Monsieur and Madame Martin were killed. There will be formalities. If you will contact the American embassy in Paris, they will assist you. We are very, very sorry for this terrible act. It is a great tragedy. So many victims. Our sincere sympathy,” he said. “The people of France cry with you.” She nodded and couldn’t speak for a moment, as he

gave her a number to call, to make arrangements for the victims. The captain sounded choked himself. He had been working all through the night, and now had the grim task of notifying relatives and loved ones. Many of the victims couldn't be identified. There were human fragments all over the Croisette.

She ended the call and stared at Sam, unable to believe what the captain had told her. From the look on her face, Sam didn't dare ask her what had happened. He could see it. He put his arms around her, and she shuddered against his chest, with deep wracking sobs. This couldn't have happened, but it had. She tried to catch her breath to tell him.

"Both of them," she said with gulping sobs. He had already guessed that when she asked the captain, and then had no further questions. "What do I do now? How do I live without them?" Sam didn't know what to do for her, other than hold her.

"Do you have to go and get them?" he asked gently, and she looked totally lost. Her green eyes were emerald pools of pain.

"I don't know. He said the embassy would help me." Sam wondered if his father would lend him the money to go with her if she had to go to France. He couldn't let her face it alone. They walked into the kitchen, and he handed her a glass of water, which seemed like such a useless gesture, but he didn't know what else to do. He felt helpless and heartbroken for her. Her parents were such great people. She took a sip and set it down. She couldn't focus on anything except what she had just heard. Both her parents had been killed. It was what she had been so desperately afraid of all night.

She sent an email to her boss at *Time*, explaining what had happened and that she could not come in and would contact them when she knew more.

She and Sam spent the next two hours sitting at the kitchen table, talking, and then Sam called the embassy in Paris for her, and they gave him a number to call in Cannes. It was an emergency number that had been set up for the families of the victims, for information, and directions about where the bodies were being taken. Not all of them had been removed yet. He handed Coco the phone when he got through. The woman who answered consulted a list and told Coco that her parents were at a military base, and the American embassy in Paris would be able to give her the correct forms for their release, in order to transport them to the United States. It sounded

like there was going to be considerable red tape, but they were well organized. They had had too much practice with events like this in recent years.

Coco called the American embassy in Paris again after that. They extended their condolences immediately, and said they would email the forms she would have to fill out and have notarized to give her clearance to transport her parents back to the States. They warned her that it could take several days or even a week. They said they would call the victims' survivor number and see if they could expedite it. She felt lost again as she listened. It was a maze of words and formalities that meant nothing now without her parents. She couldn't imagine anything that would matter to her again, or her life without them.

Sam called the hotel for her, and spoke to the manager to explain what had happened, and asked them to safeguard the Martins' belongings until someone could claim them.

"Of course. Please extend our deepest sympathy to Miss Martin and the family," the manager said. But there was no family now. Only Coco.

Sam then called his father from the den, and explained the situation in hushed tones. He said he might want to borrow the money for a ticket to France. They had never fully approved of their friendship, although they'd gotten used to it in twelve years, but this was a special case that transcended all else and his father said he'd give him whatever he needed to help Coco. He felt terrible for her when Sam told him the news. Sam thanked him and hung up, and went back to Coco in the kitchen. They sat quietly together then, as though waiting for something to happen, but it already had. The rest was all irrelevant details. She would have to arrange a funeral for her parents, but she didn't want to do that until they sent their bodies back from France, and she didn't know what would happen, or even how to bring them back.

At ten o'clock, her father's somewhat flamboyant, very social partner, Edward Easton, called her. She knew from her father that Ed was her trustee in the event of his death, which always seemed unlikely. Ed explained in a serious voice that he was also the executor of her father's estate. She wasn't sure what that would be like, but it didn't matter. Ed told her how

desperately shocked and sorry he was, and what a loss it was for him as well.

As quiet and discreet as her father was, Ed was the exact opposite, always center stage and very much in evidence. He was handsome, successful, social, one of the stars of Wall Street, as her father was, but the two men were completely different, and were business partners and friends. Ed was married to an important heiress, who was a billionaire in her own right, and together they made a big splash wherever they went. He was constantly on Page Six, the gossip column of the *New York Post*, and sometimes spotted with other women. Tom hadn't liked the flashy way Ed lived, but he had great respect for him in business, and always said he was an honest man. He trusted him implicitly. They had made a fortune together and Tom had wanted him to handle his estate for Coco and Bethanie. He knew Ed would be responsible doing so. It had never occurred to him that his wife would die with him, at the same time. He'd always assumed she would outlive him.

"I can't tell you how devastated I am," Ed said to Coco on the phone, and he sounded it. It was a shock for everyone who knew them. Tom and Bethanie were forty-six years old, much too young to die. "I'll do whatever needs to be done to get them home," he reassured her. "I have a call in to the American ambassador. We both belong to the Racquet Club and I've met him a few times. I'm sure he'll do everything he can to help us." Tom Martin had been a very important man in the world of high finance and was greatly respected by all.

Eleven Americans had been killed in the attack, and several others injured. It was high season, July, when the South of France was full of tourists from every country. The victims had mostly been French, but many weren't. According to CNN, the casualties included a Saudi prince and both his wives, twenty members of the Qatari royal family, several Scandinavians, the Spanish Minister of the Interior, numerous Germans and British subjects, and a tour group of Japanese schoolchildren. Dozens of French citizens were dead and hundreds injured. The death toll had risen to a hundred and sixty-four, and two hundred and eighty-seven people injured.

There had been bulletins on the news all morning, and a mournful speech by the French president. An extremist group had taken credit for the attack.

None of the terrorists had survived, as they'd intended. Those who had survived uninjured among people on the Croisette at the time had been sequestered for psychiatric attention for several hours, and had just been released to go home. It was too late for any of it to help Tom and Bethanie. Reporters had said that there were body fragments scattered everywhere, which special teams were removing.

"I'll go over if I need to," Ed volunteered to Coco, "but we probably won't have to. The embassy will expedite it, I'm sure. Can I do anything for you right now?" he asked Coco, and she shook her head, barely able to speak, as Sam sat beside her. They both kept crying, and so did Ed.

"I'm okay. I have a friend here." She squeezed Sam's hand.

"I'll let you know what I hear. I'll come up to see you later," he promised. She didn't want him to, but she didn't want to be rude, and he was a link to her father. She'd be seeing a lot of him if he was the executor and trustee of her father's estate. She knew him well, but he was always a little overwhelming. She still looked dazed when she hung up. Sam took her to her bedroom and got her to lie down, and she asked him to lie next to her. He got onto her bed in her pink silk bedroom and held her. She lay with her eyes closed, but he knew she wasn't sleeping. She just lay there, in his arms, breathing and trying not to think of what had happened. She wondered if they had had time to be scared, or suffer, or if it was all over in an instant. The bombs had been powerful, and those closest to the explosions had literally vanished.

Ed Easton called back two hours later. He had spoken to the ambassador, and they were going to take care of everything. He and Coco didn't have to go over, although normally the French formalities were complicated, with considerable red tape to negotiate. Ed said the hotel was going to send her parents' belongings, including the contents of the room safe, all of which would arrive by courier. They would have everything by the next morning. The ambassador was hoping they could have the Martins' bodies in New York by the end of the week. The French government was in a state of chaos over the attack, but the emergency services were well organized in the midst of it. They had promised to send the other Americans' remains home quickly too. France was in deep mourning, and American networks

had named all the American victims once the families had been notified, including her parents.

Sam tried to get Coco to eat something but she wouldn't.

At four o'clock the doorman buzzed, and said that a Mr. Easton wished to come up, and she let him. Their housekeeper, Theresa, had come to work to help her, looking devastated. Flowers had begun to arrive that afternoon. Coco hadn't called the funeral home yet. She just couldn't, and they didn't know when her parents' bodies would be arriving. The first flowers that came were from her boss at *Time* magazine, and she was touched.

Sam left when Ed Easton got there. He said he'd be back as soon as he showered and changed at home, and dropped off his bag from the weekend and his father's car. He left Coco sitting in the living room with Ed, looking shell-shocked. Ed was wearing a well-cut dark suit, a white shirt, and a black tie, and looked grim too. He'd had a flood of calls from people they did business with who just couldn't believe it.

"I'm so sorry, Coco," Ed said, reached for her hand, and held it. Just seeing him reminded her of her father, which brought some comfort, although seeing him was bittersweet. Why was he there and her father wasn't? She still couldn't wrap her mind around it. She had always known that Ed was her trustee, and her mother would have been co-trustee with him, but she had never thought that this moment would come so soon. Her parents were so young. Ed was around fifty, but looked older that afternoon, after the shocking news. Coco looked gray beneath her suntan from the Hamptons. She was shaking as Ed put an arm around her to comfort her. "I'll do everything I can for you. Let's get through the funeral, and then we can figure out what you want to do about some of your father's things."

"Like what?" She looked startled and frightened. It was overwhelming.

"This apartment, the house in the Hamptons. If you want to keep them, or sell them, or live here." She was twenty-one, so at least she could make her own decisions, but he said he would guide her to make it all easier for her. "Everything goes to you of course, now that your mother..." He didn't finish the sentence. The estate would have been divided if Bethanie had survived. But Coco was their only heir now, to a very large fortune. It didn't even dawn on her, and she didn't care. She wanted them, not the money they had left her.

“Do you want me to call a doctor for you?” he offered. She shook her head. She didn’t want anyone or anything, except Sam with her. He was the only one who understood how she felt. He always had.

“No, I’m okay. I think I’m in shock or something.”

“We all are,” Ed said sympathetically in a hushed tone. “Who could possibly have expected this? The embassy said they’ll get the bodies home late Wednesday night or Thursday morning. When do you want to do the funeral?” He needed to ask her the questions and she tried to focus.

“I don’t know. When should we do it?” It was helpful having his advice for the practical issues. She had no idea what to do about any of it.

“Maybe Monday, in case there are any delays,” Ed suggested gently. “There could be a rosary over the weekend, if you’d like that. They could have visitation set up on Friday. Were they religious?” He didn’t think so. He was fairly certain Tom wasn’t, but he didn’t know about Bethanie, or if Coco was.

“Not really. But they’re both Catholic.” She couldn’t bring herself to speak of them in the past tense. It hurt too much. He nodded. “We only go to church on Christmas.”

“You can decide what church you want. I’ve already written the obituary,” he said, sounding efficient. She didn’t know how he’d been notified, but someone had called him. His name must have appeared on her father’s papers too.

“Thank you,” she said softly, and he patted her hand and stood, as the doorman rang again, to tell her Sam was on his way up. He had come back quickly.

“I’ll call or text you with anything I know,” Ed said and hugged her again, and then she went to let Sam in. Ed smiled at him briefly and then left. Sam watched him go, and turned to her after Ed left.

“Just out of curiosity. Did he hit on you?” he said, and she looked shocked.

“Sam! Of course not. That’s disgusting. He’s older than my father. Why would you say something like that?”

“I don’t know. He just looks the type. He’s so smooth and so slick, and he’s very good-looking.” She had never noticed. He just seemed old to her.

And she knew his children were older than she was. They were all married and had children.

“His kids are older than I am.”

“I bet his girlfriends aren’t. I’ve read about him on Page Six.”

“That’s just gossip. He’s married. And his wife is very good-looking.”

“I don’t know. I just get a funny feeling about him.”

“Jealous?” she teased him.

“Hardly. Just protective. I don’t want anyone to take advantage of you.” She was alone in the world now, and young and vulnerable, but he didn’t say it to her.

“He won’t do that. My father trusted him completely.” And she knew her father had been a great judge of character.

“He trusted him with money. With women I wouldn’t be so sure.”

“You’re a freak,” she said, and smiled for the first time since six o’clock that morning when the gendarmerie called from France.

Sam had brought some soup his mother had made for her. He was wearing jeans and a sweatshirt, so he could sleep in his clothes if he needed to. He was not going to leave her alone. He told his parents, and for once, they understood and were sympathetic, and offered to help however they could. But there was nothing they could do either.

She got a flood of emails and texts from friends that night and didn’t answer them, although she read most of them. Sam made her eat some of his mother’s soup, and Coco finally fell asleep at nine o’clock, lying next to him on her bed. He lay next to her and held her until he fell asleep too. The whole day had been a nightmare, but from this one, no one was going to wake up. It broke Sam’s heart knowing that his best friend was now alone and had no living relatives. It was what Coco had been thinking all day too. She was an orphan now.