

A person stands on a beach at sunset, their silhouette reflected in the shallow water. The sky is a mix of orange and blue, with a full moon and a bird in flight. The text is overlaid on this scene.

Beyond  
the



Moonlit  
Sea

A NOVEL

JULIANNE  
MACLEAN

Bestselling author of *These Tangled Vines*

Beyond  
the  
Moonlit  
Sea

ALSO BY JULIANNE MACLEAN

WOMEN'S FICTION

*These Tangled Vines*

*A Fire Sparkling*

*A Curve in the Road*

The Color of Heaven Series

*The Color of Heaven*

*The Color of Destiny*

*The Color of Hope*

*The Color of a Dream*

*The Color of a Memory*

*The Color of Love*

*The Color of the Season*

*The Color of Joy*

*The Color of Time*

*The Color of Forever*

*The Color of a Promise*

*The Color of a Christmas Miracle*

*The Color of a Silver Lining*

CONTEMPORARY ROMANCE

*Promise You'll Stay*

# HISTORICAL ROMANCE SERIES

## The American Heiress Series

*To Marry the Duke*  
*Falling for the Marquess*  
*In Love with the Viscount*  
*Love According to Lily*  
*To Annabelle, With Love*  
*Where Love Begins*

## The Pembroke Palace Series

*In My Wildest Fantasies*  
*The Mistress Diaries*  
*When a Stranger Loves Me*  
*Married by Midnight*  
*A Kiss Before the Wedding* (a Pembroke Palace short story)  
*Seduced at Sunset*

## The Highlander Series

*Captured by the Highlander*  
*Claimed by the Highlander*  
*Seduced by the Highlander*  
*Return of the Highlander*  
*Taken by the Highlander*  
*The Rebel* (a Highlander short story)

## The Royal Trilogy

*Be My Prince*  
*Princess in Love*

*The Prince's Bride*

Dodge City Brides Trilogy

*Prairie Bride*

*Tempting the Marshal*

*A Time for Love*

STAND-ALONE HISTORICAL ROMANCE

*Adam's Promise*

Beyond  
the  
Moonlit  
Sea

A NOVEL

JULIANNE  
MACLEAN

LAKE UNION  
PUBLISHING



This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, organizations, places, events, and incidents are either products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or actual events is purely coincidental.

Text copyright © 2022 by Julianne MacLean Publishing Inc.  
All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced, or stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without express written permission of the publisher.

Published by Lake Union Publishing, Seattle  
[www.apub.com](http://www.apub.com)

Amazon, the Amazon logo, and Lake Union Publishing are trademarks of [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com), Inc., or its affiliates.

ISBN-13: 9781542036702

ISBN-10: 1542036704

Cover design by Caroline Teagle Johnson



# CONTENTS

[CHAPTER 1 OLIVIA](#)

[CHAPTER 2 OLIVIA](#)

[CHAPTER 3 MELANIE](#)

[CHAPTER 4 OLIVIA](#)

[CHAPTER 5 MELANIE](#)

[CHAPTER 6 OLIVIA](#)

[CHAPTER 7 MELANIE](#)

[CHAPTER 8 OLIVIA](#)

[CHAPTER 9 OLIVIA](#)

[CHAPTER 10 MELANIE](#)

[CHAPTER 11 DEAN](#)

[CHAPTER 12 MELANIE](#)

[CHAPTER 13 MELANIE](#)

[CHAPTER 14 DEAN](#)

[CHAPTER 15 DEAN](#)

[CHAPTER 16 DEAN](#)

[CHAPTER 17 MELANIE](#)

[CHAPTER 18 DEAN](#)

[CHAPTER 19 DEAN](#)

[CHAPTER 20 DEAN](#)

[CHAPTER 21 OLIVIA](#)

[CHAPTER 22 OLIVIA](#)

[1993 NEW YORK](#)

[CHAPTER 23 OLIVIA](#)

[CHAPTER 24 OLIVIA](#)

[CHAPTER 25 OLIVIA](#)

[1997 NEW YORK](#)

[CHAPTER 26 OLIVIA](#)

[CHAPTER 27 OLIVIA](#)

[CHAPTER 28 OLIVIA](#)

[2012 NEW YORK](#)

[CHAPTER 29 OLIVIA](#)

[CHAPTER 30 OLIVIA](#)

[CHAPTER 31 OLIVIA](#)

[CHAPTER 32 DEAN](#)

[CHAPTER 33 OLIVIA](#)

[EPILOGUE OLIVIA](#)

[AUTHOR'S NOTE](#)

[QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION](#)

[ABOUT THE AUTHOR](#)

Beyond  
the  
Moonlit  
Sea

# CHAPTER 1

## OLIVIA

*Miami, 1990*

I should have known better. I shouldn't have said the things I did.

That's what I told myself when I learned what happened to my husband on his return flight from the US Virgin Islands. But isn't that what we all say after something goes terribly wrong and we look back and wish we had behaved differently?

At least I was not directly to blame for what happened to Dean. I'm not sure whose fault it was, exactly. It's a mystery that will probably remain unsolved until the end of time. My own regret involves something of a more personal nature, a series of events that began on a Sunday morning when my mother called. Dean and I were still sleeping, and he groaned as he sat up to answer the telephone.

"Hello?" He ran a hand down his face to rouse himself. "Good morning, Liz. No, it's not too early. No, you didn't wake us. How are you?"

Dean gave me a look, and I responded by pulling the feather duvet up over my head.

"Yes, the weather's been great." He nudged me with his knee. "Olivia's right here. Hold on a sec . . ."

I poked my head out, crinkled my nose, and shook my head. He pushed the phone at me with a look that said, *Don't make me talk to her.*

I couldn't possibly torture him like that, because he and my mother weren't exactly close—which was a tactful way to say that they disliked each other immensely but remained civil for my sake.

None of that was Dean's fault, of course. It was entirely my mother's.

I sat up and took the phone from him. "Hi, Mom."

Dean kissed me on the cheek, slid out of bed, and padded toward the bathroom. Mom said something to me, but I was distracted by the image of my handsome husband as he stripped off his T-shirt before closing the door behind him.

“Olivia, are you listening?”

I sat up straighter against the thick pile of feather pillows. “Yes, Mom, I’m here.”

“Did you hear what I said?”

“No. I’m still half-asleep. Say it again?”

“Can you come over for dinner tonight?” she repeated. “Sarah and Leon are in town until Wednesday, and Sarah was so sweet to call me yesterday. I haven’t spoken to her in such a long time, probably not since your father’s funeral, so I invited them.”

I scratched the back of my head because I was surprised that Sarah had called my mother. Sarah was my half sister, almost twenty years older than me, and a product of my father’s first marriage to a woman named Barbara who died before I was born.

“As I’m sure you know,” my mother continued, “tomorrow is the second anniversary of your father’s passing. Maybe that’s why she called. I don’t know. At any rate, you should be here too.”

I was ashamed of myself for forgetting what day it was, but I’d had a lot on my mind lately. I’d been making a conscious effort to *not* look at a calendar.

Hearing the sound of the shower running in the bathroom, I slipped out of bed and pulled on my robe. “It’ll be nice for us to get together. We’d be delighted to come. Assuming the invitation includes Dean as well?”

“Of course it includes Dean,” she replied with a note of sassiness that confessed everything—that she didn’t approve of him, we both knew it, but she didn’t want to cause any more rifts.

“Just checking,” I said, having decided long ago that it was pointless to try and convince her that she’d always been wrong about my husband—that he wasn’t “beneath me,” as she had once put it, simply because he didn’t come from money.

Thank goodness Dean was a good sport about my mother’s flagrant snobbery. Mostly we made fun of her, and he laughed it off. There was plenty of eye-rolling when she showed off a flashy new handbag that cost a

thousand dollars or made a not-so-subtle dig about his financial situation growing up.

As I stood at the window watching a wispy cloud float lightly across the morning sky, I asked her if I could bring anything to the dinner.

“Just yourselves,” she replied. Then we chatted for a minute or two before we hung up.

Dean was still in the shower, so I went to put some coffee on and grab the Sunday paper from outside the door. A short while later, I was seated at the kitchen table, reading the arts and entertainment pages. Dean appeared in shorts and a light-blue cotton T-shirt, his hair still wet.

“That’s a nice clean shave,” I said to him with a flirtatious grin, having commented about his rough stubble the night before when we were in bed.

He moved behind me and massaged my shoulders. “I’ll try to be smoother next time.” He kissed the top of my head and poured himself a cup of coffee. “What did your mother want?”

“She invited us to dinner tonight.”

Dean faced me, his head drawing back slightly. “Both of us? Me included?”

“Yes, I know. I was surprised too,” I said. “But Sarah is in town, and tomorrow is the second anniversary of Dad’s passing, so Mom decided to do something, I guess. It’s really last minute, nothing too elaborate. It’ll just be us, a four-course meal, and a few bottles of Dad’s favorite wine while Mom gets sentimental and tells romantic stories about him.”

Dean was quiet while he sipped his coffee.

I sat in silence for a moment, knowing he wasn’t going to enjoy any of that because he and my father had not been on speaking terms—not a word since Dad cut me off for marrying Dean. But nothing could have stopped me from walking down that aisle.

I rose from the chair and carried my empty cup to the dishwasher. “Do you still want to take Sarah’s boat out today?” I asked. “Now that we have the dinner party to go to, we’ll have to head back early.”

Dean looked out the window and thought about it. “It’s a gorgeous day. We should still go.”

“Agreed. Life’s too short. Let me grab a quick shower.”

I was pleased we were on the same page because I wanted to talk to him about something important, and I wasn’t sure how Dean would feel

about it. I was banking on the gorgeous sailing conditions to help me present my case.



As I stood on the foredeck of *Daydreamer*—Sarah’s thirty-nine-foot cruising yacht that she let us borrow from time to time—I felt revitalized and optimistic about the future. Dean was at the helm, breathing in the fragrance of the sea and enjoying the salty spray on his face, while I hung on to the shrouds, my ponytail whipping in the wind. The hiss of the waves beneath the leeward bow was music to my ears.

“Ready to come about!” Dean shouted, and I prepared to release the jib.

He turned the wheel hard over, hand over hand, and swung *Daydreamer* around. “Boom coming across!”

I ducked as it passed over my head, and within seconds, we were on a new tack, the sails snapping taut. The wind became still, and all was quiet as I hopped down to the cockpit.

“Want me to take over?” I asked.

“Sure.” He stepped aside as I moved into position.

The return trip to the marina was a more relaxing affair with gentle but steady winds to take us home. I gripped the wheel while Dean reclined on the bench beside me, his face turned toward the sun.

“Can we talk about something?” I asked, gazing at him contentedly and feeling quite blessed.

He turned toward me, and I saw my reflection in his sunglasses. “Is everything okay?”

Dean had always been attuned to my moods and emotions. I was my truest self with him, and I felt accepted and loved. Perhaps even worshipped. I knew he would do anything for me. I was his whole world, and he was mine. I was a very lucky woman.

“Everything’s wonderful,” I replied, glancing up at the mainsail and adjusting the wheel slightly. “But I’ve been thinking . . .”

Dean sat forward on the bench and rested his elbows on his knees, attentively.

“You know how we decided that I would go off the pill and we’d see what might happen?”

He nodded.

“Well . . . it’s been three months, and nothing’s happened.”

He nodded again and waited patiently for me to continue.

“We’ve been trying,” I said, “sort of, but not officially. Not *actively* trying. We’ve just been doing what we usually do.”

“And what is that exactly?” he asked with a sly, playful grin.

I laughed and shook my head at him. “Want me to describe it? Colorfully?”

“I’m game if you are.”

I chuckled and looked up at the mainsail again to check the tension. Everything was perfect. We were cutting through the water on a fast and steady tack.

“I’m wondering if we should try a little harder,” I continued. “I mean . . . I could keep track of my cycle on the calendar and take my temperature so that we know exactly when I’m ovulating.”

“And start scheduling sex?” he asked without judgment. He merely seemed curious.

I made a face. “Yes, but I hate the sound of that. We’ve always been spontaneous, and I love that about us.”

“We could still be spontaneous.”

I was relieved he seemed open to what I was suggesting, but I was still wary of it, myself.

“I have to admit I’m hesitant,” I explained, “because I read an article the other day about a couple who had trouble getting pregnant, and they put too much pressure on themselves. They started booking appointments for sex, and all the fun went out of it. And then they were devastated every month when she got her period. They grew impatient with each other and felt like failures. Then they started IVF, and that was a whole new can of emotional worms. Their marriage was never the same.”

“Did they get pregnant?” Dean asked.

“No. They were still trying. And going to couples’ therapy to fix their relationship.”

“Couples’ therapy . . .” After a pause, he rose from the bench and stood behind me, slid his arms around my waist, and buried his nose in the crook of my neck. “Don’t worry about us. We’re only just getting started. And if you want to get all clinical and start taking your temperature, I could



get myself a lab coat. If you're really good to me, I might even wear it in the bedroom."

I laughed and turned around to kiss him, knowing he would instinctively take hold of the wheel. We kissed passionately until the mainsail began to flutter in the wind.

"I love you," I said, then faced forward again before we got stuck in the no-go zone.

"I love you too," he replied and hopped lightly onto the foredeck to adjust the lines while I steered us back on track. When that was done, he returned to the cockpit and sat down again. "Just out of curiosity, when will you be ovulating next? I want to make sure I'm free that night."

I smiled. "Tomorrow, as a matter of fact."

Impressed by my organizational skills, he checked his watch. "Well, if we want to get a jump on things, we could make an appointment for tonight. Midnight would count, correct?"

"I suppose, if you look at it that way."

"And we'd kill two birds with one stone."

"How so?"

"We'd have a legitimate excuse to make an early escape from your mother's dinner party."

I laughed again. "You're terrible."

"Guilty as charged." He sat back, put his feet up on the bench, and raised his face to the sun again. "Take us home, Captain."

A fresh breeze blew across the deck, and I looked up at the clear blue sky. It was a perfect day. Oh, how I loved my life.



When we arrived home, the red light on the answering machine was blinking. I pressed the button to listen to the messages and kicked off my shoes. "Are you hearing this?" I called out to Dean, who had gone into the washroom. "It's Richard. He wants you to call him."

Dean was a pilot who flew private jets in and out of Miami, and Richard was his boss. The clients were often business travelers, always wealthy, sometimes famous. Flying was Dean's passion, and he loved his work as much as I loved mine. Or at least my idea of it. I had graduated from film school with the intention of becoming a documentarian, but I

hadn't produced anything yet. I just couldn't seem to find the right subject matter to inspire me, and funding was always an issue.

Dean returned to the kitchen. "Did he say what it was about?"

"No," I replied. "But he only left the message a few minutes ago. You should give him a call." I handed Dean the phone, then opened the fridge to grab a can of orange juice. I cracked it open and sat down at the kitchen table. I was thinking about what I should wear to my mother's house for dinner when I listened in on Dean's conversation with Richard.

"Tonight?" Dean said. "That's short notice, isn't it?" He looked at me, shook his head, and rolled his eyes. But then his expression changed. He perked up a little and turned away from me. "It's Mike Mitchell? Are you sure Kevin can't do it? How sick is he?"

My insides turned over with dread. Mike Mitchell was a singer and guitarist who had just broken into the Hollywood scene with a dramatic supporting role in an Oscar-nominated film, and his new album was currently number one on the *Billboard* charts. He was on the cover of every glossy magazine imaginable. It was not the first time Dean had flown him to his luxurious oceanside retreat in Saint Thomas.

Dean faced me with a sheepish look, a look that was asking my permission to take the job. Or perhaps *begging* was a more accurate description.

"Let me talk to Olivia about it, and I'll call you right back." He hung up the phone.

With a sigh of defeat, I drummed my fingers on the tabletop. "Don't tell me. You want to do it."

He winced a little, as if he were stepping on broken glass. "I doubt your mother will mind if I'm not there. She'd probably be overjoyed."

"But *I'd* mind," I argued. "I was looking forward to this. I haven't seen Sarah in ages, and—"

"You can still go," he said. "And you'll have more time to visit with her if I'm not there. You won't have to worry about leaving me alone with your mom."

I stared at him. "What about afterward? We were going to come home and . . . you know."

I couldn't deny that the postponement of our midnight rendezvous was the true root of my disappointment, because lately I'd developed a serious case of baby fever. I hadn't told Dean about it, but whenever I saw a young

mother on the street pushing a baby carriage, an intense longing took hold of me. And when my period arrived last month, I'd cried on the bathroom floor.

Dean laid a hand on my back and rubbed circles between my shoulder blades. "We can make love as soon as I get home. I promise that the minute I walk in the door, I'll report straight to the bedroom."

I turned in the chair and looked up at him. "When will that be? Won't you have to stay overnight?"

"No," he quickly replied. "I'll tell Richard I need to fly straight back."

"But it's not always up to you," I reminded him. "Remember that time when Mike was late getting to the airport and it pushed you over your limit for maximum hours of flight time?"

Dean exhaled sharply and backed away from me. "Look, I'll say no if you want me to, but it's a good gig, and apparently, Mike requested me. If I don't do it, that'll put Richard in a bind. You know how he likes to deliver for the clients. Keep them happy."

"You don't want to keep your wife happy?"

Dean frowned. "That's not fair, Olivia. Come on. It's just one night. I'll be back before sunrise."

I realized intellectually that I was being unreasonable, but emotionally, I couldn't help myself. I was disappointed, but there was another side to this as well . . .

I waited for Dean to call Richard back, accept the job, and hang up. Then I watched him go silently into the bedroom.

"I just feel like maybe you're a bit starstruck!" I called out to him in the other room.

He reappeared in the bedroom doorway and leaned a shoulder against the jamb. "What are you talking about?"

I should have just bitten my tongue, but I didn't. "Mike Mitchell requested you personally, and you're thrilled because he's such a major star. You're flattered."

"You used the word *starstruck*," Dean replied.

"Yes. If it were any other client, you would have said no."

"But it's not any other client," he argued, disappearing into the bedroom again. "The guy's a major VIP for the company."

I sipped my juice and called out to him, "I'm sure that Richard could have found another pilot for tonight if you had said no!"

What was wrong with me? Why couldn't I just let it go?

"But I'm the one Mike requested," Dean replied, calmly. "And I don't want to let Richard down."

I stood up and went into the bedroom. Dean was at the closet, sifting through shirts on hangers.

"Just as long as he doesn't try and talk you into staying for one of his wild parties," I said. "Do you think that's what he's planning?"

"Is that what you *expect* will happen tonight?"

My eyes closed. "Please don't do that, Dean. I hate it when you do that."

"Do what?"

"Answer a question with a question."

He took a deep breath and let it out. "The party thing only happened a couple of times. And I told you . . . I'll come straight home."

I tried to accept his word, to not assume the worst.

He selected a shirt and checked it for wrinkles, then chose a jacket that had been recently dry-cleaned.

"I'm sorry," I said, running a hand through my hair. "I'm just disappointed, that's all."

"I know." He kept his back to me while he removed the cellophane wrap from the uniform.

I strode toward him and laid my hand on his shoulder. "See? This is exactly what I was talking about on the boat. I'm worried about scheduling sex and how it might affect us, and here we are, fighting already."

He faced me at last, moved closer and slid his arms around my waist, touched his forehead to mine. "I'm sorry too. It was supposed to be a romantic night, and it's a special anniversary. I should have thought of that."

"It's not your fault. It's me. I'm nervous about getting pregnant. I'm afraid it's not going to happen, and I've been thinking about it too much lately. Dreaming about what color to paint the nursery. I've even been looking at cribs, comparing all the brands." I drew back and looked him in the eye. "I need to relax about all that. I don't want to end up like that unhappy couple who got frustrated with each other and ended up in therapy."

Dean frowned a little. "You've been shopping for cribs? Why didn't you say anything?"

I shrugged. “I don’t know. I didn’t want to put pressure on you. And I know how much you hate it when I’m impatient.”

“I didn’t hate it when you were impatient to marry me.”

I smiled as he pushed a lock of hair behind my ear. “I wanted to get you to the church before you realized what you were getting yourself into and changed your mind.”

“Never.” His lips touched mine, and we kissed tenderly.

“I’m sorry,” he said, taking a step back, “but I really have to get going. Are we okay, though?”

I bit my lower lip and rocked back on my heels. “Hmm. Only if you’re back in bed with me by sunrise. Otherwise, you’ll be in the doghouse.”

He tapped his forefinger on his temple. “Got it. Dawdling leads to doghouse.”

I left him alone to get dressed and make his way to the airport.

Looking back on that conversation later, I wished I had behaved differently. I shouldn’t have given Dean such a hard time about taking the job, nor should I have suggested that he was starstruck. That had always been a sore spot between us because my rich father had once told him—point-blank—that I was out of his league in every way and he was just starry eyed at the idea of being with me.

I disagreed, of course. I loved Dean for the man he was *because* of all the luxuries he never had growing up. It made me think more of him, not less. I was in awe of him, and I was grateful and amazed that he loved me.

But on the morning of his return flight from Saint Thomas, none of that would matter in the least. I didn’t care what my father ever thought about Dean. All I wanted was to hear the sound of my husband’s key in the door. And to feel his arms around me. Just one more time.