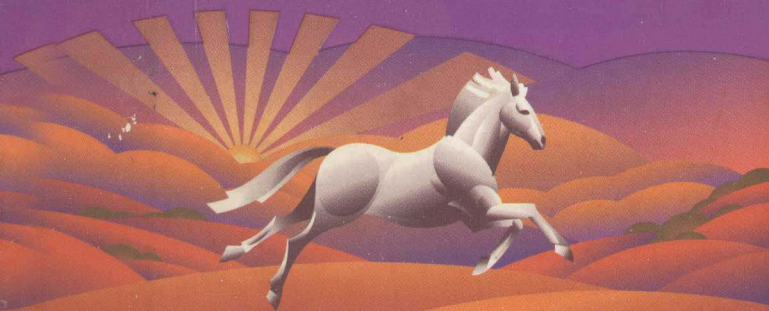


NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

ELIZABETH LOWELL



*REMEMBER
SUMMER*

ELIZABETH LOVELL

REMEMBER SUMMER

(Previously published as *Summer Games*)

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Remember Summer was previously published in an altered form entitled *Summer Games* by Silhouette Books in 1984.

AVON BOOKS, INC.
1350 Avenue of the Americas
New York, New York 10019

Copyright © 1984, 1988 by Ann Maxwell; 1999 by Two of a Kind, Inc.
Inside cover author photo by Sigrid Estrada
Published by arrangement with the author
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 99-94793
ISBN: 0-380-76761-9
www.avonbooks.com/romance

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First Avon Books Printing: September 1999

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Prologue

Summer of 1984

She looked like hell.

Sallow, blotchy skin, pale lips, red eyes, and stringy brown hair. The woman's picture put the cherry on the cake of a day that had sucked from the instant a telephone call woke him up in a place halfway around the world.

But Robert Johnstone didn't share his thoughts. He was, after all, talking to the woman's father, who was also his boss. Justin Chandler-Smith IV—called Blue by those who knew him well enough—loved his family as much as he hated terrorists. It would take a stupid man to point out that the youngest of the Chandler-Smiths hadn't inherited her parents' good looks.

Johnstone was not a stupid man.

"How old is this picture?" he asked neutrally.

It was an effort to keep his voice calm. He was still angry about being pulled off one project and dumped into the middle of another without any warning. So he looked at the passport-size photo and kept reminding himself that Blue wouldn't have asked for him by name if it wasn't important.

Whatever *it* was.

"Seven days, give or take," Chandler-Smith said. "It's Baby Lorraine's Olympic ID photo."

Johnstone's ice-blue glance shifted from the photo to his boss. Other than the girl's hazel eyes and a stubborn kind of chin, he didn't see much resemblance between Lorraine Chandler-Smith and her very handsome, hard-edged, and distinguished father. Though Chandler-Smith had no title worth mentioning, he had much more power than ninety-nine percent of the uniforms marching around the Pentagon. More brains, too.

"Who else?" Johnstone asked, passing the picture back over the big desk.

"Captain Jon. Trainer, coach, ass chewer, mother hen." Chandler-Smith pushed another photo over the desk. "He's reliable."

"Opinion or fact?"

"Fact. I had that man vetted all the way back to his great-grandfathers before I let Baby Lorraine train with him."

A fleeting smile changed the impassive lines of Johnstone's face. "I believe it."

"These are Baby's teammates, both long and short list." Chandler-Smith began laying out laminated ID photos. He tapped each photo, reciting names and outstanding physical characteristics.

Johnstone didn't interrupt. He simply sat with a predatory kind of stillness and memorized each face, each name, each fact that would help him to separate Olympic riders from Olympic terrorists.

"These are the stable help," Chandler-Smith continued, laying out more photos. "Pay particular attention to the females."

"Why? Do we have information on one of them?"

"No. But if anybody gets to Baby's horse, it will be through the girls. That stud won't tolerate men within kicking range."

Johnstone's black eyebrows rose. "Sounds dangerous."

"Her stallion? Yes. Make no mistake about it. Without Baby nearby, Devlin's Waterloo is as dangerous as a hand grenade with a loose pin."

"I'm surprised you let her ride a rogue."

"'Let' has nothing to do with it. Baby is as stubborn as I am."

"And if you were any more proud of her," Johnstone said dryly, "you would strut sitting down."

Chandler-Smith laughed. "Guilty as charged. Baby has more brains and guts than most men I've worked with. Plenty of looks, too, but you'd never know it from that ID."

Wisely, Johnstone said nothing. Beauty was in the eye of the beholder. Obviously Chandler-Smith looked at his youngest daughter with a blinding kind of love.

"You'll be paired with Kentucky again," Chandler-Smith continued. "He'll guard the motor home when you're not inside."

Johnstone nodded. "He's a good man."

"He said the same about you."

"What about Bonner?"

"He's still undercover." Chandler-Smith hesitated, then almost smiled at the ingrained reflex of secrecy. If he couldn't trust the black-haired man sitting in front of the desk, Chandler-Smith was a dead man. Literally. "We're hearing rumors . . ."

Though Johnstone didn't move, he changed the same way a lion changes at the scent of game. "I'm listening."

Chandler-Smith didn't doubt it. The other man's eyes burned with an intensity that would have made most people uneasy. It didn't bother Chandler-Smith. He wouldn't tolerate men around him unless they had the patience, intelligence, and concentration of a supreme predator.

"The man you call Barracuda has been making noises about killing me," Chandler-Smith said calmly.

"He's been doing that since you broke up his cozy little terrorist college in East Bumblefuck, Lebanon."

"Actually, you were the one doing the shooting."

"Shooters are a dime a dozen. Strategists aren't."

Johnstone was much more than a shooter, and no one knew it better than his boss. But Chandler-Smith didn't argue the point any more than he tried to convince Johnstone to give up the field for a desk job. For the past eight years, Johnstone had turned down every promotion that had come his way. When asked why, he simply said, *I'm no good at desks. If I ever get out, I'll get all the way out.*

Chandler-Smith knew that someday—if Johnstone survived—he would burn out. Everyone who stayed in the field did. But until that day came, he was the best agent Chandler-Smith had ever had.

"If you were Barracuda, how would you kill me?" Chandler-Smith asked.

"Do I want to live to tell the tale?"

"You must. I'm still alive."

Johnstone smiled thinly. He knew better than most people just how impossible it was to protect against a terrorist who was willing to give his life to take a life. Fortunately, very few of them were. They wanted to kill and brag, not kill and die.

"I'd grab one of your daughters," Johnstone said, "swap her for you, and kill you. Probably her, too."

Chandler-Smith nodded. "That's what I figured."

"Question is, has Barracuda figured it?" Johnstone retorted. "And is he willing to take the risk?"

"The answer to the first question is yes. As for the second . . ." Chandler-Smith shrugged. "I'm betting he is. He dropped out of sight six days ago."

"Not good," Johnstone said succinctly.

"Tell me about it. Lorraine and the older girls are under lock and key, but Baby Lorraine is different." He grimaced. "I can't take her out of the game without taking her out of the Olympics. I won't do that. Not on the evidence we have now."

"You have an asset in Barracuda's organization. Start twisting him."

"I am."

"Twist harder."

"Bonner is working on it, up close and very, very personal. But until I get something solid, I won't pull Baby out of the Summer Games. Hell, I'm not even sure I could. She's an adult."

"In that case she'll listen to you, weigh the danger to herself, and withdraw."

Chandler-Smith gave a crack of laughter. "She's an event rider, not a bloody dressage artist. The

kind of riding she does is more dangerous than getting on a brahma bull at a rodeo."

"Then don't watch her."

"I'm not following you."

"Barracuda has wanted you for years. There are two reasons he hasn't gotten you. The first is that he doesn't want to die. The second is that your movements have never—repeat, *never*—been predictable. If you insist on being there for Baby's ride, he won't have to go to the trouble of kidnapping her. You'll be putting yourself right in his sniper scope."

"That's where you come in."

"You're taller than I am," Johnstone said matter-of-factly. "I'd make a lousy shield."

"Don't worry. I'm not planning to pull a Charles DeGaulle and surround myself with taller men. But you have the best eye for evaluating attack-ambush terrain that I've ever seen. I want you to go to California, reconnoiter the Olympic sites at Santa Anita and San Diego, and choose the safest place for me to watch my daughter ride."

"A motel room with a big TV. In London."

"No. Not this time. Come hell or high water, I'm going to be at the Olympics for Baby."

"Is it worth dying for?"

"It's worth *living* for," Chandler-Smith said simply. "I've missed too much of fatherhood, disappointed my kids too many times. Especially Baby. By the time she came along, most of my life required a security clearance for access. I owe the Olympics to her. I owe it to myself. I'm going."

Johnstone knew his boss too well to argue. He looked at his watch, subtracted three hours for

West Coast time, and stood up. "I'll make plane reservations."

"Don't bother." Chandler-Smith pulled out a fat brown envelope and tossed it on the desk. "Tickets, new ID, everything you need is here."

"Who am I this time?"

"I didn't look. Does it matter?"

"No. When will Kentucky arrive in California?"

"He already has."

With a curt nod, Johnstone turned to leave.

"Robert?" Chandler-Smith said.

Johnstone turned back, and was treated to the rare sight of his boss's genuine, warm smile.

"Shave, would you?" Chandler-Smith asked.

"Even without the brown contacts, you still look like a Lebanese terrorist. Baby will take one look at you and run screaming."

"She wouldn't be the first."



Chapter 1

Rancho Santa Fe

Rancho Santa Fe's tawny hills rolled gently up from the broad sand beaches of the Pacific Ocean. Many hills wore crowns of expensive houses whose windows and walls of glass were molten gold in the late-afternoon light. The cool salt smell of the sea mingled with the scent of wild grass cured by hot southern California days.

A riverbed that rarely held water twisted through dry hills and ravines, eucalyptus trees and granite outcroppings. Patches of the Fairbanks Ranch Country Club's emerald golf course remained along the riverbed, making a startling contrast with the brown hillsides. Manmade obstacles of wood, rock, and water crisscrossed the riverbed and climbed the hills.

It was the obstacles, not the quiet beauty of the land, that held Raine Chandler-Smith's attention.

Yesterday she had marched at the Los Angeles Coliseum, joining the colorful, uniformed ranks of athletes from around the world who had traveled thousands of miles to compete in the Summer Olympics. Yesterday she had been one among

thousands surrounded by rippling multicolored flags and dazzling Hollywood-style ceremonies. Yesterday she had been enthralled, humbled, and excited to be part of a tradition that was as old as Western civilization.

Today Raine was alone.

Today she was measuring obstacles that had been created for the sole purpose of testing the skill, stamina, and trust that existed between herself and her horse. The three-day event was to riders what the pentathlon was to traditional athletes—the ultimate test.

Even while her eyes and mind traced the dangerous course, she breathed in deeply, savoring the strange scents of the land around her. Raised in Virginia and Europe, she found the dryness of a southern California summer both alien and compelling. The combination of odors was clean, haunting, older than civilization or man, as old as hills and sea and sunlight combined.

She looked over the countryside again, then stretched and shifted the weight of her knapsack. The water bottle inside gurgled companionably. When she walked forward, her camera's long lens and binoculars knocked lightly against each other below her breasts. She took a few more steps, winced, and decided it was finally time to remove the pebble from her hiking shoe.

With a supple, easy movement she balanced on one foot while she removed one shoe and probed for the pebble that had been abusing her arch. She made a graceful line as she stood there like a beige flamingo at rest, but she would have been the last person to describe herself as graceful.

When she had been eleven years old and just

becoming aware of herself as a woman, she was five feet, seven and three-quarters inches of angular female who despaired of ever being as at ease on the ground as she was on a horse's back. Because the picture in her mirror never seemed to change, no matter what efforts she made to be more like her gorgeous older sisters, Raine had stopped looking in the mirror. Instead, she concentrated on the one thing she was good at, the thing she had been born to do.

She rode horses over jumps that were taller and much harder than she was.

At twenty-seven, Raine was lithe and gently curved. She had a woman's smooth strength and the poise of a rider who regularly entered and won world-class competitions. Yet she still thought of herself as a little awkward and relentlessly average in looks. Medium brownish hair, medium brownish eyes, and medium brownish figure was the way she summed up herself when she thought about it.

Raine rarely thought about it anymore. She had spent too much of her youth trying to be as beautiful and as accomplished as her much older siblings. She had failed.

A gawky brown hen simply couldn't compete with the pair of tawny swans who were her sisters. One of them was a partner in a powerful law firm and a senator's wife. The other sister was a leading lady on Broadway. Her two older brothers were also successful. One was a diplomat and the other a neurosurgeon.

When Raine was five, she pleaded and demanded and persisted until her parents gave her riding lessons. After that, life became easier for the whole family. Riding was an elegant solution to the prob-

lem of what to do with Baby Lorraine. Or Raine, as she insisted on being called, as soon as she realized that her given name was "secondhand."

Horses gave her a way to be first.

There was an elemental rapport between her and the big animals. Horses were her life's work and love. When she was riding, she forgot to feel awkward and inadequate. She merged herself with the rhythms of her horse and the demands of the jumps. There was a fantastic exhilaration in flying over fences and obstacles on the back of her huge blood-bay stallion. Only then was she wholly free, wholly alive, wholly herself.

"But if I don't get to work instead of daydreaming," she told herself as she retied her shoe, "I'll end up flat on my back in the dirt, instead of flying over jumps. The cross-country part of this endurance event looks rougher than anything I've ever taken Dev over."

Picking up the binoculars again, she focused on the dry riverbed twisting along the base of the hill. After a few minutes she pulled a pad out of her rucksack, sketched in the line of river and hills, and scuffed at the ground beneath her feet. Nothing gave beneath her prodding toe.

She bent and yanked at a handful of grass until some of it pulled free. Beneath the thatch of tight, incredibly tough roots, the ground was rough and dry. It was made up of tight clods of clay and small stones. She sifted out some of the pebbles and kept them in her left hand, fiddling with them as she tried to absorb the reality of the ground through touch as well as sight and smell.

Dry, very dry, but not really hard going. Frowning, she made notes along the margin of the sketch.

The surface would change radically if it rained. The clay looked like it would be lethally slick if it ever got wet. But no storms had been forecast for the Olympics. From the look of the land, she didn't doubt that it would stay the way it was. Dry.

After another long, slow look at the riverbed, she put the small sketch pad back in her rucksack. Absently juggling the pebbles she still held in her hand, she stood on the crest of the hill and thought about the Olympic Games to come, wondering how the hills would look wearing clusters of people as well as houses.

From time to time she threw away one of the small stones until finally all the pebbles were gone. Her palm felt dry from the thirsty rocks. As she rubbed her hand on her pants, she hoped it wouldn't be too hot for the three-day event. Heat sapped a horse's strength even more than a rider's. No matter how hot it became, the horse was stuck wearing a fur coat.

"At least it isn't humid," she muttered. "That would be a killer. But this . . . I like this."

That surprised her. The arid land that should have been so alien to her felt instead like a home she had forgotten or never known.

Smiling at the odd thought, she brushed off her fingers, raised her camera, and went to work. Delicately she adjusted the very long telephoto lens and took a series of overlapping photos. Once developed, the slides would make a panorama of the part of the Fairbanks Ranch Country Club that had been torn up and given over to the Summer Games.

Frowning, far from satisfied, she lowered the camera. Photos were better than nothing, but not good enough. What she really needed was to walk

the course itself. But she couldn't. All the endurance-event competitors would walk the course for the first time, together, the day before their ride.

Ten days from today. Just ten days until the event that would be both climax and close of a lifetime of work.

Raine didn't know what she would do after the Olympics. She only knew that it would be something different. She was ready to step off the glittering, grueling carousel of international competition. In the past three years, the idea of raising and training event horses had come to her more and more frequently. Devlin's Waterloo was a stallion to build a future on. Earning a medal in the Olympics would go a long way toward making her silent dreams come true.

Wind combed through the grass around her, whispering of rain that didn't come for months on end. She closed her eyes, trying to absorb the essence of the strange, beautiful land. Never in her life had she ridden over such dry ground. It worried her that she wouldn't have the same instinctive understanding of the terrain that she had on the East Coast or in Britain or France.

But there was no help for it. Until the day before the endurance event, she would have to be satisfied with learning what she could at a distance.

Her lips curved in an ironic smile. Somehow it was fitting that the most important contest of her life should find her on the outside looking in. She had spent her years like that, watching the world at a distance. Most of the time she preferred it that way. Sometimes, though, when she heard lovers laugh softly, saw them touch each other as though

they were more precious than gold, a man bending down to his woman, smiling . . .

Abruptly Raine picked up the binoculars again. She had no illusions about her chance of finding a mate. As many men had told her with varying degrees of anger, she was too damned particular about her sex partners. The few times she finally had succumbed to loneliness had left her feeling worse about herself as a woman than before.

Get over it, she told herself coolly. The only kind of riding you're good at is on a horse.

For long minutes she scanned the land below the crest of the hill. She hardly saw the rich honey sheen of sunlight on grass or the blue-black dance of shadows beneath the wind. She concentrated on a grove of eucalyptus, deciding that the smooth-trunked trees were rather like horses, huge yet graceful, powerful yet elegant.

She wondered if the drifts of dried leaves and peeling bark she saw at the base of the trees would be slippery or if the ground itself would be damp. She couldn't tell from where she was and she couldn't get any closer without crossing the Olympic boundary markers.

Damn.

Raine looked through the glasses at the dense shadows and the gray-green leaves shimmering in the late-afternoon light. So near and yet so far . . .

Story of my life.

She lowered the glasses and turned away.

Deep in the eucalyptus grove, concealed by shadows and by the absolute stillness of his body, Cord Elliot waited for the woman's attention to pass over the grove.