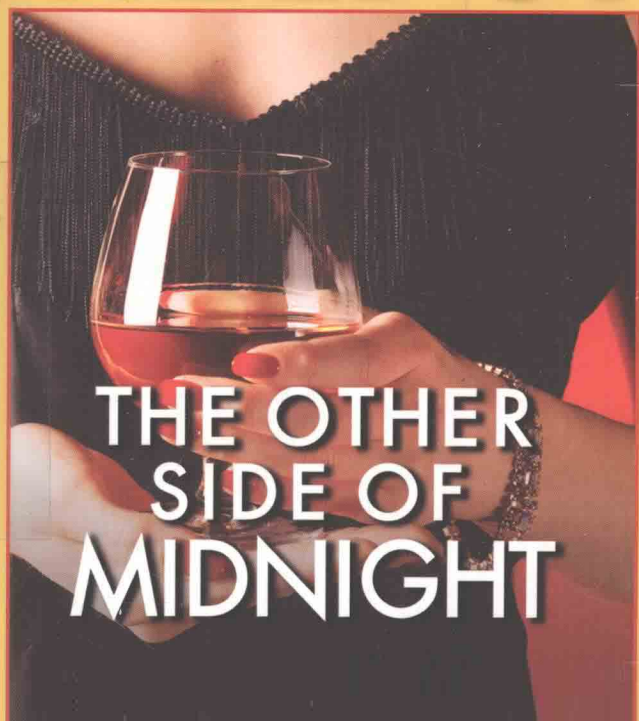


# SIDNEY SHELDON



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SIDE OF  
MIDNIGHT

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## The Incomparable Sidney Sheldon

Best known today for his exciting blockbuster novels, Sidney Sheldon is the author of *Are You Afraid of the Dark?*, *The Sky Is Falling*, *Tell Me Your Dreams*, *The Best Laid Plans*, *Morning, Noon & Night*, *Nothing Lasts Forever*, *The Stars Shine Down*, *The Doomsday Conspiracy*, *Memories of Midnight*, *The Sands of Time*, *Windmills of the Gods*, *If Tomorrow Comes*, *Master of the Game*, *Rage of Angels*, *Bloodline*, *A Stranger in the Mirror*, and *The Other Side of Midnight*. All have been international bestsellers. His first book, *The Naked Face*, was acclaimed by the *New York Times* as “the best first mystery of the year” and received an Edgar® nomination. Most of his novels have become major feature films or TV miniseries, and there are more than 300 million copies of his books in print throughout the world, published in 51 languages and in 180 countries. Sheldon has been listed in the *Guinness Book of World Records* as the “most translated author in the world.”

Before he became a novelist, Sidney Sheldon had already won a Tony Award® for Broadway’s *Redhead* and an Academy Award® for *The Bachelor and the Bobby-Soxer*. He has won several Box Office awards and has written the screenplays for twenty-five motion pictures, including *Easter Parade* (with Judy Garland) and *Annie Get Your Gun*, both of which won him Screen Writers Guild awards. In addition, he penned six other Broadway hits and created three long-running television series, *The Patty Duke Show*, *I Dream of Jeannie*, which he also produced and for which he received an Emmy nomination, and *Hart to Hart*. In 2005, his long-anticipated autobiography, *The Other Side of Me*, was published to great critical acclaim. A writer who has delighted millions with his award-winning plays, movies, novels, and television shows, Sidney Sheldon reigns as the master storyteller.

To learn more about this book and author,  
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BOOKS BY SIDNEY SHELDON

*The Other Side of Me*  
*Are You Afraid of the Dark?*  
*The Sky Is Falling*  
*Tell Me Your Dreams*  
*The Best Laid Plans*  
*Morning, Noon & Night*  
*Nothing Lasts Forever*  
*The Stars Shine Down*  
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*Memories of Midnight*  
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*Windmills of the Gods*  
*If Tomorrow Comes*  
*Master of the Game*  
*Rage of Angels*  
*Bloodline*  
*A Stranger in the Mirror*  
*The Other Side of Midnight*  
*The Naked Face*

**SIDNEY SHELDON**

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**THE OTHER  
SIDE OF  
MIDNIGHT**

**WARNER BOOKS**

**NEW YORK BOSTON**

To Jorja  
Who Pleasures Me in a Thousand Ways

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Except for the mentions of various historical world leaders, all characters in this book are fictional.



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In a few instances where I felt it would enhance the narrative, I have taken literary license; but any factual errors are my responsibility alone.

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# PROLOGUE

*Athens: 1947*

Through the dusty windshield of his car Chief of Police Georgios Skouri watched the office buildings and hotels of downtown Athens collapse in a slow dance of disintegration, one after the other like rows of giant pins in some cosmic bowling alley.

"Twenty minutes," the uniformed policeman at the wheel promised. "No traffic."

Skouri nodded absently and stared at the buildings. It was an illusion that never ceased to fascinate him. The shimmering heat from the pitiless August sun enveloped the buildings in undulating waves that made them seem to be cascading down to the streets in a graceful waterfall of steel and glass.

It was ten minutes past noon, and the streets were almost deserted, but even the few pedestrians abroad were too lethargic to give more than a passing curious glance at the three police cars racing east toward Hellenikon, the airport that lay twenty miles from the center of Athens. Chief Skouri was riding in the first car. Under ordinary circumstances, he would have stayed in his comfortable, cool office while his subordinates went out to work in the blazing noon heat, but these circumstances were far from ordinary and Skouri had a two-fold reason for being here personally. First, in the course of this day planes would be arriving carrying VIPs from various parts of the globe, and it was necessary to see that they were welcomed properly and whisked through Customs with a minimum of bother. Second, and more important, the airport would be

crowded with foreign newspaper reporters and newsreel cameramen. Chief Skouri was not a fool, and it had occurred to him as he had shaved that morning that it would do no harm to his career if he were shown in newsreels as he took the eminent visitors into his charge. It was an extraordinary stroke of fate that had decreed that a worldwide event as sensational as this one had occurred in his domain, and he would be stupid not to take advantage of it. He had discussed it in great detail with the two people in the world closest to him: his wife and his mistress. Anna, a middle-aged, ugly, bitter woman of peasant stock, had ordered him to keep away from the airport and stay in the background so that he could not be blamed if anything went wrong. Melina, his sweet, beautiful young angel, had advised him to greet the dignitaries. She agreed with him that an event like this could catapult him into instant fame. If Skouri handled this well, at the very least he would get a raise in salary and—God willing—might even be made Commissioner of Police when the present Commissioner retired. For the hundredth time Skouri reflected on the irony that Melina was his wife and Anna was his mistress, and he wondered again where he had gone wrong.

Now Skouri turned his thoughts to what lay ahead. He must make certain that everything went perfectly at the airport. He was bringing with him a dozen of his best men. His main problem, he knew, would be controlling the press. He had been astonished by the number of important newspaper and magazine reporters that had poured into Athens from all over the world. Skouri himself had been interviewed six times—each time in a different language. His answers had been translated into German, English, Japanese, French, Italian and Russian. He had just begun to enjoy his new celebrity when the Commissioner had called to inform him that he felt it was unwise for the Chief of Police to comment publicly on a murder trial that had not

yet taken place. Skouri was sure that the Commissioner's real motivation was jealousy, but he had prudently decided not to press the issue and had refused all further interviews. However, the Commissioner certainly could not complain if he, Skouri, happened to be at the airport at the center of activity while the newsreel cameras were photographing the arriving celebrities.

As the car sped down Sygrou Avenue and swung left at the sea toward Phaleron, Skouri felt a tightening in his stomach. They were now only five minutes from the airport. He mentally checked over the list of celebrities who would be arriving in Athens before nightfall.

Armand Gautier was suffering from airsickness. He had a deep-seated fear of flying that stemmed from an excessive love of himself and his life and that, combined with the turbulence usually found off the coast of Greece in summer, had made him violently nauseous. He was a tall, ascetically thin man with scholarly features, a high forehead and a perpetually sardonic mouth. At twenty-two Gautier had helped create *La Nouvelle Vague* in France's struggling movie industry and in the years that followed had gone on to even bigger triumphs in the theater. Now acknowledged as one of the world's greatest directors, Gautier lived his role to the hilt. Until the last twenty minutes it had been a most pleasant flight. The stewardesses recognizing him had catered to his needs and had let him know they were available for other activities. Several passengers had come up to him during the flight to say how much they admired his films and plays, but he was most interested in the pretty English University student who was attending St. Anne's at Oxford. She was writing a thesis on the theater for her master's and had chosen Armand Gautier as her subject. Their conversation had gone well until the girl had brought up the name of Noelle Page.

"You used to be her director, didn't you?" she said. "I hope I can get into her trial. It's going to be a circus."

Gautier found himself gripping the sides of his seat, and the strength of his reaction surprised him. Even after all these years the memory of Noelle evoked a pain in him that was as sharp as ever. No one had ever touched him as she had, and no one ever would again. Since Gautier had read of Noelle's arrest three months earlier, he had been able to think of nothing else. He had cabled her and written her, offering to do whatever he could to help, but he had never received a reply. He had had no intention of attending her trial, but he knew he could not stay away. He told himself that it was because he wanted to see whether she had changed since they had lived together. And yet he admitted to himself there was another reason. The theatrical part of him had to be there to view the drama, to watch Noelle's face as the judge told her whether she was to live or die.

The metallic voice of the pilot came over the intercom to announce that they would be landing in Athens in three minutes, and the excitement of the anticipation of seeing Noelle again made Armand Gautier forget his airsickness.

Dr. Israel Katz was flying to Athens from Capetown, where he was the resident neurosurgeon and chief of staff at Groote Schuur, the large new hospital that had just been built. Israel Katz was recognized as one of the leading neurosurgeons in the world. Medical journals were filled with his innovations. His patients included a prime minister, a president and a king.

He leaned back in the seat of the BOAC plane, a man of medium height, with a strong, intelligent face, deep-set brown eyes and long, slender, restless hands. Dr. Katz was tired, and because of that he began to feel the familiar pain in a right leg that was no longer

there, a leg amputated six years earlier by a giant with an ax.

It had been a long day. He had done predawn surgery, visited half a dozen patients and then walked out of a Board of Directors' meeting at the hospital in order to fly to Athens for the trial. His wife, Esther, had tried to dissuade him.

"There is nothing you can do for her now, Israel."

Perhaps she was right, but Noelle Page had once risked her life to save his and he owed her something. He thought of Noelle now, and he felt the same indescribable feeling that he had felt whenever he had been with her. It was as though the mere memory of her could dissipate the years that separated them. It was romantic fantasy, of course. Nothing could ever bring those years back. Dr. Israel Katz felt the plane shudder as the wheels were lowered and it started its descent. He looked out the window and spread out below him was Cairo, where he would transfer to a TAE plane to Athens, and Noelle. Was she guilty of murder? As the plane headed for the runway he thought about the other terrible murder she had committed in Paris.

Philippe Sorel stood at the railing of his yacht watching the harbor of Piraeus moving closer. He had enjoyed the sea voyage because it was one of the rare opportunities he had to escape from his fans. Sorel was one of the few sure box-office attractions in the world, and yet the odds against his ever rising to stardom had been tremendous. He was not a handsome man. On the contrary. He had the face of a boxer who had lost his last dozen matches, his nose had been broken several times, his hair was thin and he walked with a slight limp. None of these things mattered, for Philippe Sorel had sex appeal. He was an educated, soft-spoken man, and the combination of his innate gentleness and truck-driver's face and body drove the women frantic

and made men look up to him as a hero. Now as his yacht approached the harbor, Sorel wondered again what he was doing here. He had postponed a movie that he had wanted to make in order to attend Noelle's trial. He was only too well aware of what an easy target he would be for the press as he sat in the courtroom every day, completely unprotected by his press agents and managers. The reporters were certain to misunderstand his attendance and think that it was a bid to reap publicity from the murder trial of his former mistress. Any way he looked at it, it was going to be an agonizing experience, but Sorel had to see Noelle again, had to find out if there was some way in which he could help her. As the yacht began to slide into the white-stoned breakwater of the harbor, he thought about the Noelle he had known, lived with and loved, and he came to a conclusion: Noelle was perfectly capable of murder.

As Philippe Sorel's yacht was approaching the coast of Greece, the Special Assistant to the President of the United States was in a Pan American Clipper, one hundred air miles northwest of the Hellenikon Airport. William Fraser was in his fifties, a handsome gray-haired man with a craggy face and an authoritative manner. He was staring at a brief in his hand, but he had not turned a page or stirred for more than an hour. Fraser had taken a leave of absence to make this journey, even though it had come at a most inconvenient time, in the midst of a congressional crisis. He knew how painful the next few weeks were going to be for him, and yet he felt that he had no choice. This was a journey of vengeance, and the thought filled Fraser with a cold satisfaction. Deliberately Fraser forced his thoughts away from the trial that would begin tomorrow and looked out the window of the plane. Far below he could see an excursion boat bobbing its way toward Greece, its coast looming in the distance.

Auguste Lanchon had been seasick and terrified for three days. He was seasick because the excursion boat which he had boarded in Marseille had been caught in the tail end of a mistral, and he was terrified because he was afraid that his wife would find out what he was doing. Auguste Lanchon was in his sixties, a fat, bald-headed man with small stumpy legs and a pockmarked face with porcine eyes and thin lips that constantly had a cheap cigar clamped between them. Lanchon owned a dress shop in Marseille and he could not afford—or at least that is what he constantly told his wife—to take a vacation like rich people. Of course, he reminded himself, this was not truly a vacation. He had to see his darling Noelle once again. In the years since she had left him, Lanchon had followed her career avidly in the gossip columns, in newspapers and magazines. When she had starred in her first play, he had taken the train all the way to Paris to see her, but Noelle's stupid secretary had kept them apart. Later he had watched Noelle's movies, seeing them again and again and remembering how she had once made love to him. Yes, this trip would be expensive, but Auguste Lanchon knew that it would be worth every sou of it. His precious Noelle would remember the good times they used to have together, and she would turn to him for protection. He would bribe a judge or some other official—if it did not cost too much—and Noelle would be freed, and he would set her up in a little apartment in Marseille where she would always be available to him when he wanted her.

If only his wife did not find out what he was doing.

In the city of Athens Frederick Stavros was working in his tiny law office on the second floor of an old run-down building in the poor Monastiraki section of the city. Stavros was an intense young man, eager and ambitious, struggling to make a living from his chosen profession. Because he could not afford an assistant, he



was forced to do all the tedious background legal research himself. Ordinarily he hated this part of his work, but this time he did not mind because he knew that if he won this case his services would be in such demand that he would never have to worry again for the rest of his life. He and Elena could be married and begin to raise a family. He would move into a suite of luxurious offices, hire law clerks and join a fashionable club like the Athenee Lesky, where one met affluent potential clients. The metamorphosis had already begun. Every time Frederick Stavros walked out into the streets of Athens, he was recognized and stopped by someone who had seen his picture in the newspaper. In a few short weeks he had jumped from anonymity to the attorney who was defending Larry Douglas. In the privacy of his soul Stavros admitted to himself that he had the wrong client. He would have preferred to be defending the glamorous Noelle Page instead of a nonentity like Larry Douglas, but he himself was a nonentity. It was enough that he, Frederick Stavros, was a major participant in the most sensational murder case of the century. If the accused were acquitted, there would be enough glory for everyone. There was only one thing that plagued Stavros, and he thought about it constantly. Both defendants were charged with the same crime, but another attorney was defending Noelle Page. If Noelle Page was found innocent, and Larry Douglas was convicted . . . Stavros shuddered and tried not to think about it. The reporters kept asking him whether he thought the defendants were guilty. He smiled to himself at their naïveté. What did it matter whether they were guilty or innocent? They were entitled to the best legal defense that money could buy. In his case he admitted that the definition was stretched a bit. But in the case of Noelle Page's lawyer . . . ah, that was something else again. Napoleon Chotas had undertaken her defense, and there was no more brilliant criminal lawyer in the world. Chotas had