

DANIELLE STEEL

MIRROR IMAGE

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To the people we love,
The dreams we dream,
The people we become
in loving hands, if we dare.
To courage, to wisdom,
the pursuit of dreams,
and those who help us across the bridge,
beyond our fears, from hope to love.
To great loves lost,
and small ones mourned,
and good times won,
albeit so hard earned.
To my daughters, Beatrix, Samantha, Victoria,
Vanessa, and Zara, may your dreams
be fulfilled swiftly and easily, and your choices wise.
To my sons: Maxx, may you be blessed
and brave, and wise, and kind, and always loved,
And Nick, who was brave and giving,
and so very, very loved.
May all your dreams come true one day,
and with luck, someday mine.
May you all be greatly loved by those you love.
I love you with all my heart.
Mom.

Chapter 1

The sound of the birds outside was muffled by the heavy brocade curtains of Henderson Manor, as Olivia Henderson pushed aside a lock of long dark hair, and continued her careful inventory of her father's china. It was a warm summer day and, as usual, her sister had gone off somewhere. Her father, Edward Henderson, was expecting a visit from his lawyers. Nestled as they were in Croton-on-Hudson, nearly a three-hour drive from New York, his attorneys came to see him fairly often. Edward Henderson ran all his investments from here, as well as overseeing the steel mills which still bore his name, but which he no longer ran himself. He had retired from business entirely, two years before, in 1911, maintaining all his holdings, but trusting entirely in his attorneys and the men who ran the mills for him. With no sons, he no longer had the interest in business that he once did. His daughters would never run his steel mills. He was only sixty-five, but his health had begun to fail over the past few years, and he preferred viewing the world from his peaceful perch in Croton-on-Hudson. Here, he could observe the world quietly, and it was a healthy, wholesome life for his two daughters. It was not exciting, admittedly, but they were never bored, and they had friends among all the grand families up and down the Hudson.

The Van Cortlandt manor was nearby, as were the Shepards on the old Lyndhurst estate. Helen Shepard's father had been Jay Gould, and he had died twenty years before, and left the extraordinary property to his daughter. She and her husband, Finley Shepard, ran it beautifully, and gave frequent parties for the young people nearby. The Rockefellers had finished building Kykuit in Tarrytown

that year, with its splendid gardens and magnificent grounds, and a house which rivaled Edward Henderson's just north of them at Croton-on-Hudson.

Henderson Manor was a handsome home, and one which people came from miles to see, peering through the gates into the lovely gardens. They could barely see the house from where they stood, shielded as it was by tall trees, and little turns in the road which led to the formal driveway. The house itself sat high on a cliff, looking over the Hudson River. And Edward liked to sit in his study for hours, watching the world drift by, remembering times past, old friends, and the days when his life had moved a great deal more quickly . . . taking over his father's mills in the 1870's . . . being instrumental in the many industrial changes at the end of the last century. His life had been so busy then. When he was younger, his life had been so different. Edward Henderson had married when he was young, and lost a wife and a young son to diphtheria. After that he had been alone for many years, until Elizabeth came along. She had been everything any man could ever dream of, a bright shining streak of light, a comet in a summer sky, so ephemeral, so dazzling, so beautiful, and so much too quickly gone. They were married within the year they met. She was nineteen, and he was in his early forties. By twenty-one, she was gone. Much to Edward's horror, she had died in childbed. After her death, he had worked even harder than usual, driving himself until he was numb. He had left his daughters to the care of his housekeeper and their nurses, but finally, he realized that he had a responsibility to them. It was then that he began building Henderson Manor. He wanted them to have healthy, wholesome lives, out of the city. New York was no place for children in 1903. They had been ten when he'd actually moved them, and now they were twenty. He kept the house in the city and worked there, but he came up to see them as often as he could. At first only on weekends and then, as he fell in love with it, he began spending more time on the Hudson, rather than in New York, or Pittsburgh, or Europe. His heart was there in Croton with his daughters, as he watched them grow, and little by little his own life began moving more slowly. He loved being with them, and now he never left them

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anymore. For the past two years, he had gone absolutely nowhere. His health had begun to fail three or four years before. His heart was a problem, but only when he worked too hard, or let things upset him, or got terribly angry, which he seldom did now. He was happy in Croton with his daughters.

It had been twenty years since their mother had died in the spring of 1893, on a warm balmy day that had appeared to him to be God's ultimate betrayal. He had been waiting outside, filled with such pride, and so much excitement. He had never dreamed it could happen to him again. His first wife and infant son had died in an epidemic of diphtheria more than a dozen years before. But this time, losing Elizabeth had almost killed him. At forty-five, it was a near mortal blow to him, and he almost couldn't bear going on without her. She had died in their home in New York, and at first he felt her presence there. But after a while, he came to hate the emptiness of it, and he had hated being there. He had traveled off and on for months after that, but avoiding the house meant avoiding the two little girls Elizabeth had left him. And he couldn't bring himself to sell the house his father had built, and that he had grown up in. A traditionalist to the core, he felt an obligation to maintain it for his children. He had closed it eventually, and it had been two years since he'd been there. Now that he lived in Croton full-time, he never missed it. Neither the house, nor New York, nor the social life he'd left there.

And as the summer sounds droned on, Olivia continued her painstaking inventory of the china. She had long sheets of paper on which she wrote in her meticulous hand, making note of what they needed to replace, and what had to be ordered. Sometimes she sent one of the servants to the house in town to bring something up to them, but for the most part, the city house was closed, and they never went there. She knew her father didn't like it. Her father's health was frail, and, like him, she was happy here in their quiet life in Croton-on-Hudson. She had actually spent very little time in New York since she was a child, except for the brief time two years before, when her father had taken them to New York, to present them to society and all his friends. She had found it interesting, but truly

exhausting. She was overwhelmed by the parties, the theater, the constant social demands made on them. She had felt as though she were onstage the entire time, and she hated the attention. It was Victoria who had thrived on it, and who had been in a state of total gloom when they returned to Croton at Christmas. Olivia had been relieved to return to her books, their home, her horses, her peaceful walks high on the cliff which led her sometimes to neighboring farms. She loved riding here, and listening to the sounds of spring, watching winter melt slowly away from them, seeing the splendor of the turning leaves in October. She loved taking care of her father's house for him, and had since she was a very young girl, with the help of Alberta Peabody, the woman who had raised them. She was "Bertie" to them, and the closest to a mother the Henderson girls had ever known. Her eyes were poor, but her mind was sharp, and she could have told the two young women apart in the dark, with her eyes closed.

She came to check on Olivia now, and asked her how far she had gotten. She didn't have the patience, or the eyes, to do this kind of minute work anymore, and she was always grateful when Olivia did it for her. Olivia carefully checked the embroidery, the crystal, the linens. She kept an eye on everything, and she loved doing it, unlike Victoria, who detested all things domestic. Victoria was, in every possible way, different from her sister.

"Well, have they broken all our plates, or will we still be able to manage Christmas dinner?" Bertie smiled as she held up a glass of ice-cold lemonade and a plate of gingersnaps fresh out of the oven. Alberta Peabody had spent twenty years caring for the two girls she had come to think of as "her children." They had become hers at birth, and she had never left them for a day, not since their mother had died, and she had first looked into Olivia's eyes and realized instantly how much she loved her.

She was a short, round woman, with white hair in a small bun at the back of her head. She had an ample bosom where Olivia had rested her head through most of her childhood. She had comforted them whenever they needed it, and whenever their father wasn't there, which had been often when they were young. For years, he

had grieved silently for their mother and kept his distance. But he had warmed toward them in recent years, and softened considerably since his health had begun to fail and he had retired from business. He had a weak heart, which he attributed to the shock and grief of losing two young wives, and the aggravations of modern business. He was far happier now that he was running things from here, and everything could be filtered for him through his attorneys.

"We need soup plates, Bertie," Olivia reported solemnly, brushing the long dark hair back again, totally unaware of her startling beauty. She had creamy white skin, huge dark blue eyes, and thick shining black hair the color of a raven. "We need fish plates too. I'll order them from Tiffany next week. We must tell the girls in the kitchen to be more careful." Bertie nodded, smiling up at her. Olivia could have been married by now, she could have had her own soup plates to inventory, instead she was still here, and perfectly at ease, taking care of her father and his house, and all his people. Olivia had no desire to go anywhere. She never even thought of it. She was happy right here at Henderson Manor. Unlike Victoria, who talked constantly about places halfway around the world, or at the very least in Europe. She glowered every time she thought of the house they were wasting in New York, and the fun they might have had there.

Olivia looked down at Bertie then with a childlike grin. She was wearing a pale blue silk dress, which reached almost to her ankles, and it looked like a piece of summer sky wrapped around her as she stood there. She had had the dress copied from a magazine, and made by a local seamstress. It was a Poiret design, and it looked lovely on her. It was Olivia who always selected and designed their dresses. Victoria didn't really care. She let Olivia choose them, particularly, as she put it, since Olivia was her older sister.

"The cookies are awfully good today, aren't they? Father will love them." Olivia had ordered them especially for him, and John Watson, his principal attorney. "I suppose I should organize a tray for them, or have you already done it?" The two women exchanged a smile, born of years of sharing responsibilities and duties. And slowly, over the past few years, Olivia had grown from child to girl, to young woman, and mistress of her father's home. Olivia was very much in

control of her surroundings, and Bertie knew it. She respected that, and most of the time deferred now to Olivia's opinions, although she thought nothing of opposing her, or scolding her, when she went out in the pouring rain, or did something childishly foolish, which she was still sometimes wont to do even at twenty. But nowadays Bertie found that less worrisome than refreshing. Olivia was so serious and responsible, that it did her good sometimes to forget all that she was supposed to be doing.

"I've set the tray up for you, but I told Cook you'll want to order it yourself at the last minute," Bertie told her.

"Thank you." Olivia came down the ladder gracefully, and kissed the old woman's cheek as she wrapped her long, elegant arms around her. Olivia lay her head on Bertie's shoulder for an instant, like a child, and then, after kissing her cheek affectionately again, she hurried off to the kitchen to see to the tray for her father and his lawyer.

She ordered a pitcher of lemonade, a large plate of cookies for both of them, and small watercress and cucumber sandwiches, with paper-thin slices of tomatoes from their garden. There was sherry for them as well, and stronger spirits if they preferred them. Having grown up in her father's company, Olivia was not a girl who shrank from the thought of men drinking whiskey, or smoking cigars, in fact she liked the smell of them, as did her sister.

When she'd approved the linens and the silver tray Bertie had set out, she left the kitchen, and found her father in the library. The curtains were drawn to keep the room cool, they were deep red brocade with heavy fringe, and Olivia adjusted them instinctively as she glanced at her father over her shoulder.

"How are you feeling today, Father? It's terribly hot, isn't it?"

"I rather like it." He smiled proudly at her, well aware of her outstanding domestic talents. He often said that if it weren't for Olivia, he couldn't have run his home, or certainly not as smoothly. He had even jokingly said that he was afraid one of the Rockefellers might try and marry her, just so she could run Kykuit. He had been over to see it recently, and it was a spectacular home that John D. Rockefeller had built. It had every possible modern amenity, includ-

ing telephones, central heating, and a generator in the carriage barn, and Olivia's father had teased that it made their home look like a bumpkin's cottage, which was hardly the case, but Kykuit was certainly their grandest neighbor.

"This heat is good for my old bones," he said comfortably, lighting a cigar, as he waited for his lawyer. "Where's your sister?" he asked casually. It was always easy to find Olivia somewhere in the house, making lists, writing notes to the staff, checking on something that needed to be fixed, or arranging flowers for her father's table. Victoria was a great deal more difficult to keep track of.

"I think she went to play tennis at the Astors'," Olivia said vaguely, with no clear idea of where she was, but only a vague suspicion.

"Typical of her," he said with a rueful grin at his older daughter. "I believe the Astors are in Maine for the summer," as were most of their neighbors. The Hendersons had gone to Maine in previous summers too, and Newport, Rhode Island, but Edward Henderson no longer liked leaving Croton, even in the hottest of summers.

"I'm sorry, Father." Olivia blushed in embarrassment at the lie she'd told on behalf of her sister. "I thought perhaps they were back from Bal Harbor."

"I'm sure you did." He looked amused. "And God only knows where your sister is, or what mischief she's been up to." But they both knew that her vagaries were fairly harmless. She was an individual, a person on her own, and full of spirit and determination. She was as independent as their late mother had been, and in some ways, Edward Henderson had always suspected that his younger daughter was faintly eccentric. But as long as she didn't indulge it too excessively, it was something he could tolerate, and she could come to no great harm here. The worst she could do was fall out of a tree, get heat prostration walking miles to her nearest friend's, or swim a little too far down the river. The pleasures were all quite genteel here. Victoria had no romances in the neighborhood, no young men in hot pursuit, although several of the young Rockefellers and Van Cortlandts had certainly shown considerable interest in her. But everyone

was well behaved, and even her father knew that Victoria was actually far more intellectual than romantic.

"I'll look for her after I leave you," Olivia said quietly, but neither of them were particularly concerned, as the tray from the kitchen was brought in, and she told the kitchen boy where to put it.

"You'll need another glass, my dear," her father instructed her as he relit his cigar and thanked the boy whose name he never remembered.

Olivia knew all of the people who worked for them, she knew their names, their histories, their parents, their sisters, their children. She knew their foibles and their strengths, and whatever mischief they occasionally got into. She was indeed the Mistress of Henderson Manor, perhaps even more than her own mother would have been, had she lived. In some ways, Olivia suspected that their mother had been far more like her sister.

"Is John bringing someone with him?" Olivia looked surprised. Her father's attorney usually came alone, except when there was some problem at the mill, and she had heard nothing about it this time if there was. Usually, their father shared that kind of information with them. All of that would be theirs one day, although more than likely, the girls would sell the mills, unless they married men who were capable of running them, but Edward considered that less than likely.

Her father sighed over his cigar in answer to her question. "Unfortunately, my dear, John is bringing someone today. I'm afraid I've come too far in this world. I've outlived two wives, a son, my doctor last year, most of my friends in the last decade, and now John Watson tells me he's thinking of retiring. He's bringing along a man who's recently joined his firm, and whom he seems to think quite a lot of."

"But John's not that old," Olivia looked surprised, and almost as disturbed as her father, "and neither are you, so stop talking like that." She knew he had begun to feel ancient since he'd been unwell, and even more so since he'd retired.

"I am ancient. You have no idea what it's like when everyone

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around you starts disappearing," he said, scowling and thinking of the new attorney he didn't want to meet that afternoon.

"No one is going anywhere, and neither is John for the moment, I'm sure," she said reassuringly, as she poured him a small glass of sherry and handed it to him, with the plate of fresh ginger cookies. He took one, and looked extremely pleased as he looked at her.

"Perhaps he won't go after all, after he tastes these cookies. I must say, Olivia, you get them to make miracles in that kitchen."

"Thank you." She leaned over and kissed him, and he looked up at her with all the pleasure he felt each time he saw her. She looked remarkably comfortable and cool on such a hot day, and she took one of the gingersnaps herself and sat down next to him as they waited for John Watson. "So who's the new man?" she asked curiously after a few minutes. She knew that Watson was a year or two younger than her father, but it still seemed young to retire, to her, and he had always seemed very youthful. But perhaps he was wise, bringing someone new into their affairs sooner rather than later. "Have you met him before?"

"Not yet. This will be the first time. John says he's extremely good at what he does, mostly business affairs, and he's done some estate matters for some of the Astors. He came to John's office from an excellent firm, with a very good recommendation."

"Why did he change?" she asked, intrigued. She liked hearing about her father's business. Victoria did too, but she was far more hotheaded in her opinions. Sometimes the three of them had rare go-arounds about some issues of politics or point of business, but all three of them thoroughly enjoyed it. Perhaps because he had no son, Edward Henderson loved discussing intelligent matters with his daughters.

"According to John, the new man, Dawson, had a hard blow last year. Actually, it made me feel sorry for him, and I think that's why I let John bring him . . . it's the sort of thing I'm afraid I understand rather too well." He smiled sadly at her. "He lost his wife last year on the *Titanic*. She was a daughter of Lord Arnsborough's, and I think she'd gone home to visit her sister. Damn shame she came back on the *Titanic*. Nearly lost his boy too. Apparently, they got him off in

one of the last lifeboats. It was already too full, and she put another child in her place, and said she'd come on the next one. There was no next one, and she didn't get in the last of the lifeboats. I gather he left the firm he was with, took the boy, and spent the year in Europe. It only happened sixteen months ago, and I think he's only been with Watson since May or June. Poor devil. John says he's very good, but a bit gloomy. He'll come out of it, we all do. He'll have to, for the boy's sake." It reminded him all too much of when he'd lost Elizabeth, although his loss had been due to complications of childbirth and not a disaster of the magnitude of the *Titanic*. But still, it had been disastrous to him, and he knew only too well how the man felt. Edward Henderson sat lost in thought for a moment, as did Olivia, digesting what her father had said, and both of them looked startled when they looked up and suddenly saw John Watson standing in the doorway.

"Well, how did you get in unannounced? Have you taken to climbing in the windows?" Edward Henderson laughed at his old friend, as he stood to greet him, and crossed the room looking extremely healthy. He was in good form these days, thanks to Olivia's constant care, and in spite of his complaints about how badly he was aging.

"No one pays any attention to me at all," John Watson laughed. He was tall, and had a shock of white hair, much like Olivia's father, who was also tall and aristocratic, and had once had the same shining black hair as his daughters. The blue eyes were the same too, and they came alive now as he chatted animatedly with John Watson. The two men had known each other since school. Edward had actually been the closest friend of John's slightly older brother. He had been dead for years, and Edward and John had long since become fast friends, and associates in all of the Henderson legal matters.

Seeing them engaged in earnest conversation almost at once, Olivia glanced at the tray again, to see that all was in order, and prepared to leave the room, and then she turned and was startled to almost walk into the arms of Charles Dawson. It was odd seeing him there, after they had just talked about him, and embarrassing to know so much of his loss, and his grief, without ever having met him.

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As she looked at him, he seemed very handsome and somewhat austere, and she thought she had never seen sadder eyes on anyone. They were like dark pools of green, almost the color of seawater. But he managed a small smile when her father introduced them. And as they spoke, she saw something more than just tragedy about him. There was great kindness in his eyes, and gentleness, it almost made her want to reach out and console him.

"How do you do," he said politely, shaking her hand, and seeming to take every inch of her in with interest. He didn't look her over improperly, although he was certainly aware of how beautiful she was, but he seemed mostly curious about her.

"May I offer you some lemonade?" she asked, feeling suddenly shy, and hiding behind her comfortable duties. "Or would you prefer sherry? I'm afraid Father prefers sherry, even on days as hot as this one."

"Lemonade would be fine." He smiled at her again, and the two older men went back to their conversation.

She gave John Watson a glass of lemonade as well, and all three men gladly accepted the gingersnap cookies. And then, having fulfilled her responsibilities to them, Olivia quietly withdrew and closed the doors behind her. But as she left the room, something about the look in Charles Dawson's eyes haunted her, or maybe it was just because she knew his story from her father. She wondered how old his little boy was, and how Charles managed without a wife, or perhaps he had someone in his life by now. She tried to shake off her thoughts of him, it was ridiculous to be worrying about one of her father's attorneys, and quite inappropriate in fact, she scolded herself, as she turned quickly to go back to the kitchen, and nearly collided with her father's under-chauffeur. He was a boy of sixteen who had worked in the stables for years, but knew a great deal more about cars than he did about horses. And since her father had a great love for the modern machines, and had bought one of the earliest cars while they still lived in New York, Petrie, the stable boy, had made a rapid and pleasing transition.

"What is it, Petrie? What's wrong?" she asked matter-of-factly. He looked totally disheveled, and completely flustered.

"I have to see your father right away, miss," he said, obviously near tears, as she tried to lead him away from the library before he disturbed her father in his meeting.

"I'm afraid you can't. He's busy. Is there something I can help you with?" she said gently but firmly.

He hesitated, and then looked around, as though afraid someone would hear him. "It's the Ford." He looked terrified as he told her. "It's been stolen." His eyes were round with tears, he knew what would happen to him when word got out. He would lose the best job he could ever have, and he couldn't understand how it had happened.

"*Stolen?*" She looked as startled as he did. "How is that possible? How could someone come on the property and just take it, and no one notice?"

"I don't know, miss. And I seen it just this morning. I was cleaning it. It was all bright and shiny like the day your father bought it. I just left the garage door open for a little while, to air the place out, because it gets so hot, you know, with the sun directly on it, and half an hour later, it was gone. Just gone." His eyes filled with tears again, and Olivia put a gentle hand on his shoulder. There was something about his story which had struck her.

"What time would that have been, Petrie? Do you remember?" Her voice and her manner were extremely calm, most unusually so for a girl of twenty, but she was used to handling minor crises on the estate daily. And this one had a particular ring to it.

"It was eleven-thirty, miss. I know it exactly." Olivia had last seen her sister at eleven. And the Ford he was so distraught over was the car her father had bought the year before for staff purposes, errands into town, missions to be carried out in something other than the Cadillac Tourer he was driven in whenever he left Henderson Manor.

"You know, Petrie," Olivia said quietly, "I think you ought to let the dust settle for a moment. It's entirely possible that some member of the staff might have borrowed it for an errand, without thinking to mention it to you. Perhaps the gardener, I asked him to look at some rosebushes for me over at the Shepards', perhaps he forgot to tell