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Police chief Juliette Tremblant recognized the shape of the man strolling down the street—in as calm and leisurely fashion as if it were the middle of the day rather than midnight. She slowed her car, convinced her eyes were playing tricks on her. It had been a long time since Tyler O'Neill had been seen in this town.

As she pulled to a stop at the curb, he turned toward her, and her heart about stopped.

“What the hell are you doing here, Tyler?”

“Well, if it isn't Juliette Tremblant.” He made his way over to her, then leaned down so he could look her in the eye. He was close enough to touch.

Juliette was not, repeat, *not* going to touch Tyler O'Neill. Not with her fingers. Not with a ten-foot pole. There would be no touching. Which was too bad, since it was the only way she was ever going to convince herself the man standing in front of her—as rumpled and heart-stoppingly handsome now as he'd been at sixteen—was real.

And not a figment of all her furious revenge dreams.

“What are you doing back in Bonne Terre?” she asked.

“The manor is sitting empty,” Tyler said and shrugged, as though his arriving out of the blue after ten years was casual. “Seems like someone should be watching over the family home.”

“You?” She laughed at the very notion of him being here for any unselfish reason. “Please.”

He stared at her for a second, then smiled. Her heart fluttered against her chest—a small mechanical bird powered by that smile.

“You’re right.” But that cryptic comment was all he offered.

Juliette bit her lip against the other questions.

Why did you go?

Why didn’t you write? Call?

What did I do?

But what would be the point? Ten years of silence were all the answer she really needed.

She had sworn off feeling anything for this man long ago. Yet one look at him and all the old hurt and rage resurfaced as though they’d been waiting for the chance. That made her mad.

She put the car in gear, determined not to waste another minute thinking about Tyler O’Neill. “Have a good night, Tyler,” she said, liking all the cool “go screw yourself” she managed to fit into those words.

It seems Juliette has an old score to settle with Tyler.

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to see how he makes it up to her.

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“Why did you say you needed to talk to me?”

“Pull over.”

This had to be bad news. “Why?”

He touched her arm, and she recoiled. She wanted nothing more to do with Mister Perfect. He was toying with her, asking inane questions and hinting at dire circumstances.

She yanked the steering wheel and made a hard right onto a side street. Halfway down the block, she parked and turned off the engine. Eve preferred facts to innuendo. She wanted the truth, no matter how horrible.

“All right, Blake, I’m parked. If you have something to tell me, get on with it.”

His eyes flicked as if he was searching her face, trying to gauge her reaction. “It might be better if I gave you more information. Set the framework.”

“Just spit it out.” She braced herself. “Am I dying?”

He cleared his throat. “Eve, I have reason to believe that you’re pregnant.”

“That’s impossible.”

She was a virgin.

CASSIE MILES

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AND SECRET BABY



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Though born in Chicago and raised in L.A., Cassie Miles has lived in Colorado long enough to be considered a semi-native. The first home she owned was a log cabin in the mountains overlooking Elk Creek, with a thirty-mile commute to her work at the *Denver Post*.

After raising two daughters and cooking tons of macaroni and cheese for her family, Cassie is trying to be more adventurous in her culinary efforts. Ceviche, anyone? She's discovered that almost anything tastes better with wine. When she's not plotting Harlequin Intrigue books, Cassie likes to hang out at the Denver Botanical Gardens near her high-rise home.

Books by Cassie Miles

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**Rocky Mountain Safe House

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Eve Weathers—A brilliant mathematician, she leaves her inner nerd behind in the struggle to protect her unborn baby.

Blake Jantzen—He returns from a Special Forces assignment to avenge his father's murder.

Dr. Ray Jantzen—Blake's father sacrificed everything to protect those he cared about.

Dr. Edgar Prentice—Partnered with Dr. Ray, he initiated a study of in vitro babies twenty-six years ago.

David Vargas—His financial genius is matched only by his intense ambition.

Dr. Trevor Lattimer—The doctor suffers from a debilitating infection that has left him nearly blind.

Peter Gregory, aka Pyro—His musical talent shines through in his explosive rock and roll.

General Stephen Walsh—An old friend of Blake's father, he provides the tools to help in the investigation.

Chapter One

Clutter spilled across the desktop in Ray Jantzen's home office: unopened junk mail, books, a running shoe with a broken lace, file folders, research notes for a paper he'd published in the *American Journal of Psychiatry* and...a gun.

Behind a stack of magazines, he located a framed photograph of his late wife, Annie, and their son, Blake. The sight of his beloved Annie's smile wrenched at his heart. She'd passed away two years ago, a month shy of their fortieth anniversary.

With his thumb, Ray wiped a smudge from the glass and focused on the image of his son. Though Blake was only eight in this picture, his dark brown eyes snapped with impatient intelligence. *Gifted* wasn't a sufficient word to describe him. And yet, he hadn't chosen a career where he could concentrate on his intellect. At age twenty-five, Blake was part of a Special Forces team working undercover in undisclosed locations.

Setting aside the photo, Ray opened his laptop and typed an e-mail.

My dear son, I loved you from the moment you emerged from your mother's womb with

a squall and two clenched fists. Forgive me for what I'm about to disclose...

He was well aware of his pompous phrasing, clearly a defense mechanism to hide his shame. He should have told Blake long ago. After four decades as a psychiatrist, Ray should have been wiser. Unspoken secrets never went away. The lies one told festered beneath the surface and arose in times of stress to bite one's ass.

His e-mail ended with: Take care of Eve Weathers. She needs you.

He hit Send, closed the laptop and took it to the safe hidden behind the bookshelves. Like the rest of his office, the interior of the safe had accumulated a great deal of paper. But these notes were precious; they would tell the whole truth about the story he hinted at in his e-mail.

After locking the safe and closing the hinged section of bookshelves, he went to the window. The red, yellow and magenta tulips in his garden bobbed in the June breezes. The sun was setting behind the foothills west of Denver. So beautiful. He should have spent more time outdoors.

The door to his office opened. A melodic voice said, "Good evening, Dr. Jantzen."

"How did you get inside?"

"Your alarm system is rudimentary. Your locks, pathetic." The extraordinary tonal quality of the intruder's voice hinted at his immense musical talent. "And this office is a rat's nest. How do you work?"

"I like it this way."

"And what does that say about your emotional state? Hmm? Disorganized thinking, perhaps?"

Angered by this mocking analysis, Ray turned away from the window and faced the intruder. His eyes were silver, like the barrel of his Beretta.