

*Nina's Diary*  
*July 4th*

1

I'm writing this to raise an alarm in the event of my untimely death. This is hard to admit, even to myself, let alone to the world. My husband is planning to kill me. For obvious reasons. He's in love with someone else. And he wants my money.

I'm sitting in my office in the tower room at Windswept as I write. I look out over the ocean. The waves pound the beach as dark clouds sweep in from the east. A storm is coming. This house belonged to my first husband, Edward. On the day we met, I was twenty-three, working in an art gallery, barely scraping by. Edward was fifty and one of the wealthiest men in New York. People said I was a gold-digger. But they were wrong. Edward might not have been the perfect husband, but I loved him. When he got sick, I nursed him. When he died, I grieved him. A year later, I met someone else and fell in love. And I married again.

That was Connor, my second husband. On the night we met, he was thirty. I was fifty and one of the wealthiest women in New York. Connor didn't have a penny. People took that to mean he could only be after my money. I didn't see it that way. People were wrong about me. I assumed they were wrong about him, too.

But they were right.

I just finished meeting with the private investigator, and I'm writing this with tears in my eyes. A photograph sits before me on the desk, incontrovertible proof that the two of them are together -- and have been for a very long time. I don't know how far it goes, or what they're capable of, but I fear the worst. As Connor well knows, we have an airtight prenup. The prenup

says he gets nothing if he cheats. I can divorce him and throw him out on the street. Everything I gave him—the cars, the clothes, the expensive watches, that boat he loves so much, the jet—I can take away. And I will. He knows I will. How far would he go to prevent that from happening? I hope I'm being alarmist, but I fear he'd go to extremes.

I'd throw him out right this minute, but I'm expecting three hundred guests. I'll be holding my annual Fourth of July gala tonight, here at Windswept. It was at that very same party two years ago that I first saw Connor. Infatuation at first sight. I should have slept with him and left it at that, but I'm too much of a romantic. Or just a fool. Well, I won't be foolish tonight. I'll be extremely careful. As soon as my guests leave, as the fireworks fade from the sky over the ocean, I'll confront him. I'll tell him it's over and kick him off my property. I won't do it alone. I'll take precautions. I hired security for tonight because of the party, and I'll make sure someone is with me, because I fear what Connor might do if he knows he's about to lose everything. I'll have to be careful. I'll have to be strong.

It's going to be so hard, though. I still love him. I love him so much that I have to fight the urge to give him another chance. To ask him to explain the things the investigator found. I can't do that. It would be a terrible mistake. It could even put my life at risk. I don't trust myself with him. That's why I'm leaving this diary where it's sure to be found. If something goes wrong, I want an autopsy. If I die unexpectedly, it was foul play, and Connor was behind it. Connor – and *her*.

***Tabitha***  
***Memorial Day Weekend***

**2**

The night Connor Ford walked back into my life, I was waitressing, just trying to make ends meet.

I was standing by the bar at the Baldwin Grill, waiting to pick up drink orders for my tables when I happened to glance out the window. A sexy black sports car with New York plates was just pulling into the parking lot, and I remember thinking, *that guy must be lost*. Don't get me wrong. The Grill is right on Baldwin Lake, one of the prettiest spots in New Hampshire. This area used to be ritzy back in the day. But not anymore. We draw a rowdy crowd in the summertime, folks from Mass, New York and Jersey who can't afford the shore. Partiers and big drinkers. They come for the local micro-brews scrawled on the chalkboard and the big screen t.v. tuned to the game. But they're not the rich and famous, no way.

As I watched, a man got out. A tall, gorgeous man. And it was *him*. He glanced at the restaurant with an air of purpose and started walking towards the entrance. I couldn't believe it. My heart was pounding. I started to sweat.

Connor and I were together for just one summer, back when I was seventeen. It was a tumultuous summer for us both. We fell into each other's arms and stayed there, clinging for dear life, until they pried us apart. To this day, nobody else has ever reached me like he did. I'd been married and divorced, in and out of my share of half-assed relationships. But I'd never gotten over him.

Now there he was, looking cool and gorgeous in dark jeans and a crisp white shirt. And here I was, pushing thirty, makeup melting off my face, my clothes smelling like food, as the love of my life walked through the door ten feet from where I stood. What did I do? I panicked. I backed into a customer, knocking his half-empty beer out of his hand and onto the floor, where it rolled around and splattered people's shoes.

"Oh my gosh, I'm so sorry. Let me take care of that," I said.

In the ensuing chaos, as I raced to get paper towels, mop up the mess and replace the poor man's drink, I lost track of Connor in the crowd. On this Friday before Memorial Day, the Baldwin Grill was jammed to capacity. You couldn't turn around without bumping into some beefy, red-faced guy who was sloppy drunk. Which made me wonder-- what the hell was Connor doing here, anyway? His family sold their lake house years ago, after his grandmother died. The lake had gone downhill since then, while Connor had only come up in the world. He'd married a woman who was rich and famous, and their pictures were constantly in the tabloids. Shouldn't he be on a yacht somewhere with Nina Levitt, instead of at a second-rate sports bar, rubbing elbows with the common people?

*Unless.*

Could he possibly be looking for me?