

he was beginning to believe her. She wasn't the delusional type. He was now wondering how this had escaped his knowledge. He didn't like having to admit that he had not been aware of a sister or a niece. "No, I'm sorry, I didn't know about your relatives."

"Of course you didn't. Susan intended it that way. Many years ago, she checked me into Glory Heights and left me here. She and Jordana are my only living relatives, and Susan makes sure that no one knows that. To Susan, I'm an embarrassment. She's controlled where I live, how I get to work, where I can go, and now whom I can marry. She wants no one associating her with me, her epileptic sister. After all, someone could suggest that this 'insanity' might also run in her blood. That would not do well for her *position* in the world." Pearl shot Matthew a glance, as if to say she had harbored the bitterness for Susan, not him.

The firmness with which Pearl spoke startled Matthew. Her voice had held no stammer. In fact, she had never spoken more resolutely. Matthew kept his own voice even. "What is her position?"

"My sister is Senator Susan Seymour, Matthew. That's whom I have to fight. Now, are you going to help me or not?"

Matthew had a lot to think about. He had left Pearl with the knowledge that he would consider what she said, but he reminded her about the seriousness of her seizures. He explained again that she was in no position to marry Sonny Capshaw. Of that, Matthew was certain. Convincing Pearl of it was another story, although he again mentioned the impact of skipping meds and not wearing the helmet. God, even to Matthew it sounded like a broken record. As for allowing her to see Sonny again, Matthew told her he didn't have control over it—it was the warden's call. Then, after assuring her they would soon talk again, he left the hospital.

It was after midnight and he knew that Cory would be asleep in their neighbor's spare bedroom. Matthew went home, swallowed a scotch, neat, and reflected upon all he had learned that evening. Tomorrow was going to be an interesting day, he knew. If Pearl had a relative in the area, as she claimed, he wanted

to speak with her. He had little tolerance for absent relatives. He was going to call Jordana in the morning. Never mind that he felt like a fool for not knowing that Pearl, his longtime client, had a Minnesota senator for a sister and a niece practically in the next suburb.

He was a little irritated with Pearl for not having told him about her family, but it sounded like she had her reasons. Perhaps she had thought it was irrelevant. Before, she didn't have the motivation and conviction to marry Sonny Capshaw. Nevertheless, it should have been in her records. But it hadn't been in her records. He'd read them.

Matthew would have to swallow his "handling everything" pride and make the call. His clients deserved the fullest life possible, and he firmly believed that included having access to family. Pearl had given him Jordana Barlow's phone number and he intended to use it.