

"I'm giving you the numbers at the boarding house and at mine," he told Mrs. Howard. "We'll be one place or the other." He tore out the sheet and handed it to her, then turned to pick up the remaining volumes and the glass ball, and loaded them into the woman's arms.

They turned toward the door, and for just an instant Anne saw through the narrow space between the hinged edge and the frame. She caught movement in the distance, a glimpse of color that was gone a second later. She leaped to the opening and looked out to see a running figure disappear around the bend of the driveway. Blanche stepped to her side and asked, "What is it?" Before Anne could reply, they heard the sound of a car engine.

Rob pushed by them and sprinted across the yard toward the driveway, leaving the two women to exchange alarmed looks.

"There was someone here," Anne exclaimed in a hushed voice. "I saw him running at the bend of the driveway."

"Did you see who it was?" Blanche asked.

Anne shook her head. "No, the light's too poor. It was just a flash of blue, a shirt, I think. I wonder how long he was here, how much he heard?"

Neither she nor Blanche Howard had an answer, but each had a question. Why would an innocent person run away? And both had enough imagination to feel genuine fear.

## Chapter 10

Rob only glimpsed a dark car turning onto the road, which wasn't enough to determine its make or even to be sure of the color.

Hurrying back to the women, he locked the storage building and saw Blanche Howard safely to her car. As she left, he cautioned her not to stop anywhere on the way home and to call them at his house when she arrived.

Then he hustled Anne into the truck and drove to his place. Now he was trying to make her see reason.

"Rob, if he heard all of it, he *knows* I can't identify him. And if he only heard part of it, he has even less to fear. For that matter, he might not have been the killer at all."

"Sweetheart, listen to me." Rob's tone was urgent, and he gripped her shoulders. "This is too crucial to take chances. We've got to assume that's who he was, and that he ran before one of us could recognize him, or get a look at his car. But no matter how much he heard, he doesn't dare take a chance on your getting any closer."



"Anne, you have what may have been the weapon. You've got written records that might identify him. You saw him commit the crime. For God's sake, and even if you didn't see him, you can describe him. Don't you see how dangerous that is for you? For Blanche Howard, too, if he knew enough to know about the journals, but more for you, because you're the one who's walking around with his face in your memory."

"You're beginning to scare me," she said after a few seconds.

"Good," he retorted. "Maybe you'll start listening to me."

While Anne sat in thoughtful silence, he released her and got to his feet to walk to the front door and peer outside. He'd been sitting too long, he felt the need for action.

"It's raining again," he observed before he sat to take both her hands in his. For long moments he simply looked at her but Anne couldn't read his expression. Then he lifted her hands to his lap and pressed her palms while her heart began to pound wildly.

"Anne, you may think I'm overreacting, exaggerating the extent of the threat, but you're just going to have to humor me," he said. "I don't want you alone at any time until all this business is resolved. We may still have to deal with that madman over the survey, but this is potentially much more dangerous."

She wasn't sure what moved her more, the tenderness in his eyes, the gentle touch of his lips to her hands, or the emotion in his voice. The idea of simply turning the whole problem over to him—putting her safety in his hands—was almost irresistible. But her determination reasserted itself and she shook her head. "No," she said softly.

"What do you mean, no? Anne, if you've got some crazy idea of..." He shook his head in exasperation and declared, "I'm not letting you take any chances, and that's all there is to it."

She saw frustration and anger on his face. "Rob, I'm not planning to do something foolhardy," she said reasonably. "But I'm not going to let you wrap me in some kind of cocoon, either. This man has to be caught, and I'm going to do whatever I can to help."

"Fine," he replied, and his hands tightened around hers. "Help all you want, but not by yourself. Talk to Bill, talk to Blanche Howard, describe the man you saw to a police artist. Read Margaret's journals for some kind of clue. I don't care how many hours you give it, or where it takes you, but you're going to have me sticking to you like glue."

She acknowledged the futility of arguing with him, at least for the moment.

"All right," she said. "All right, you win. We'll stick together until everything's cleared up." And every minute I'm with you, she thought unhappily, I'll care more. Then, when it's finished and all this excitement has died down, we'll come unstuck. Oh, Rob, do you know what you're asking of me? How can I survive that?

"Are you getting hungry?" he asked suddenly.

She hadn't thought about food. The lunch they'd planned to have after they finished at the Land Office had been forgotten in the more crucial events of the afternoon. "A little, I guess," she said without any real interest.

But she helped him prepare a simple meal. They spoke little in the process; each of them was trying to deal with a separate set of anxieties.

Blanche Howard came just as they were sitting down to eat. She'd had no trouble, she told them, and planned to spend the evening with her husband, reading the journal entries. She promised again to call them in the morning.

When the dishes were cleared up and Monty had been fed, they went back into the living room. The dog followed them, stretching out in his customary spot in front of the hearth and falling asleep.



Rob pulled Anne down beside him on the couch and put his arm around her. For a few minutes she let her head rest on his shoulder, then said, "Rob, I think I'd better go back to Nora's tonight."

She felt him tense for a moment when he asked, "Why?"

"Because there's no telling what she's thinking by this time. I mean, I've stayed here for two nights already, and..."

He grew even more tense. She looked at him. His expression was closed, and he said nothing. After a few moments, she tried again.

"I don't even have a change of clothes with me. And I should be getting some things done there."

"What kinds of things?" he asked quietly.

"Oh, lots of things. I need to write some letters, and, um..." Again she stopped, only this time she stood up and began pacing around the room.

Rob wondered what the hell was going on. When he couldn't stand it any longer, he said, "For God's sake will you sit down and tell me what's bothering you?"

Anne stopped where she was, but didn't turn. He could see the rigidity in her shoulders when she twisted her hands in front of her. I've got to hold myself together, she thought in panic. I have to be strong if I expect to come out of this whole.

She didn't know he'd gotten up until she felt his hands on her shoulders, and she tensed even more.

"You're all tied up in knots," he said. "Sweetheart, I know this business has you upset and you have every right to be, but come sit down and let me help you relax."

With the decision taken out of her hands, Anne returned to the couch with him. He turned her so that her back was to him, with her legs crossed Indian style, facing one end of the couch. Then he brought his hands to her shoulders.

There was magic in them. Within seconds Anne was fully prepared to admit it again. After a full minute she felt tired

and her eyes drifted shut. With palms and fingers, Rob rubbed and kneaded, working in small circles down the sides of her neck and across her shoulders. He felt the firmness of her flesh, and when he touched her softly it yielded to the pressure of his hands.

Neither of them spoke while he continued the massage, expanding it to include her shoulder blades, then down her spine to the small of her back. She became more supple as his hands moved over her.

He'd meant only to help her relax. At least, that's what he told himself. But when his hands went to her waist to pull her back against him, it felt natural and right—to both of them. When he pushed her hair aside to nuzzle her neck, it was merely an extension of the massage. His lips pressed into the warmth and the softness, and he breathed deeply of her scent.

When she sighed, heat spread languidly through him. Anne felt his breath on her neck, warm and moist. His tongue traced lightly over her skin, and she shuddered with pleasure as a chill coursed down her arm. His hands slid around her waist to the front and moved up over her ribs. She settled more firmly against him and felt the strong, rapid beat of his heart.

Then he cupped her breasts while his lips moved along the line of her jaw. Through the thin fabric of her blouse and the lace of her bra, he felt her nipples harden. She twisted toward him, seeking his mouth, and he crushed hers beneath it. One arm embraced her, but it wasn't nearly enough.

He opened the buttons of her blouse and slipped his hand inside, fondling her, working a nipple to a straining peak with thumb and finger. Where the warm flesh of her breasts rose above the edge of her bra he lavished kisses, then he moaned and found her mouth again.

Anne no longer thought of the future. She forgot to worry about falling apart when they were no longer together. That



they were together now was enough. His arms holding her, his lips covering hers, his body hard and exciting against her body—this was all she wanted or needed. Tomorrow could take care of itself. She wound her arms around his neck and clung to him while desperation crept into their kiss.

Then he shifted, slipped an arm under her legs and rose with her, holding her against his chest. They searched each other's eyes for long moments before he pressed her lips in a long, tender kiss. "You don't really want to go back to Nora's, do you?" he asked when it ended.

Anne shook her head and laid it on his shoulder. He sighed and carried her into the bedroom.

Beside the bed he released her legs so that her body slid slowly along his until her feet found the floor. Then he eased her blouse over her shoulders and bent to trail his lips after it as the material slipped away. He unfastened her bra, burying his mouth in the warmth of her neck, then caressed her breasts with great gentleness while he brought his mouth back to her for a long, tender kiss.

He continued to slowly undress her, showing infinite care and following the removal of each garment with his hand and lips. He had never before been this gentle in his lovemaking, and it made her weak with pleasure and desire. He knelt in front of her and slid her panties down her legs. She rested her hands on his shoulders for support as she stepped out of them.

In a long, sliding caress he brought his hands back up her legs as his lips trailed up her body in soft, open-mouthed kisses, until he was on his feet and his mouth was on hers once more.

He undressed himself more quickly, taking his lips from hers only long enough to pull off his shirt. When he was naked, he wrapped his arms around her, bringing her body into intimate contact with his. They stood pressed together while both explored with eager hands and feasted on kisses

that rapidly grew hotter and deeper. Finally, he pressed her onto the mattress and lay down on top of her.

Now passion washed like lightning and their blood thundered. They rolled over and over while their mouths demanded and devoured. On top again, he nipped, then kissed, the tender skin of her neck and breasts, then they shifted so that she slid over him with abandoned movements that had him clutching her hips while she crushed her mouth against his.

"Oh, Anne, you feel so good," he gasped, still holding her hips tightly with one hand while the other captured her head when she would have lifted it free. He kept their lips together for moments longer, then he gripped her with both hands and moved her down his body until she took him inside her.

For a stunned moment as he went deep, Anne froze. Then, she raised off his chest and her hair fell forward, screening both their faces, and she gave herself to the rhythm they created together. Riding waves of a pleasure too vast to be measured, she was transported with him until her gasps of excitement were lost in a mingled groan of release.

Afterward, Anne lay pressed to his side. She snuggled against his shoulder and idly trailed her fingertips through the mat of dark chest hair.

Would it be like that every time? she wondered. Would he always fill her with those potent needs, then astonish her with the intensity of their fulfillment? How could he take so much from her, yet leave her with so much that she hadn't had before?

And where would it lead? Look where it had led already. To love. It was there she no longer doubted it, and what was she going to do about it? He may have wanted, even demanded her body, but he'd said or done nothing to make her believe he wanted anything more. But we have the moment, she reminded herself.



Anne drew her head away from his shoulder, and when he looked at her, she smiled. His heart thudded against his ribs in response, and he reached to cradle her head in his hand. Bringing his mouth to hers, he kissed her long and tenderly.

"You make me want you so much, too much," he told her softly. "All I have to do is look at you, watch you walk across a room, or smell your hair." He had been breathing deeply of its scent. "It's wonderful," he said, his voice a low murmur. "You're wonderful." He drew away again but only inches, only far enough to look into her eyes. "I've just had you, and I don't know where I'd find the energy, but darling, I'm already beginning to want you again."

Closing her eyes against the tears, Anne told herself that in the morning it would be over. She couldn't trust tomorrow to take care of itself, after all. She couldn't stand another night of the torture he brought her, knowing it would have to end. In the morning she'd tell him it had been great, but it was finished. It would be hard to do, painful, but if she waited, it would only hurt more.

Some emotion tinged with sadness had passed through her eyes just before she closed them. Rob felt it slice through him. I've got to do more, he thought. Tomorrow I've got to talk to Bill, convince him that this is real, get some serious effort going to get to the bottom of it. Maybe those journals will help. She can't see much more of him. And as much as I need her, it's time to concentrate on her needs. If I concentrate on hers, maybe mine will diminish.

He felt her body settle against him and knew by her even breathing that she was asleep. He shifted to get more comfortable, then held her, kissing her hair and stroking her skin while his heart lurched again. A warmth as much emotional as physical rushed through him. He murmured her name and fell asleep.

"You've hardly touched your breakfast," Rob said as he lowered his coffee mug to the table.

"I told you I wasn't hungry," Anne said shortly.

He watched her quietly, searching her face for a clue. Something had changed, something basic. She had been in the shower when he woke up, and when she came out, she was fully dressed. There was no hint of the closeness, the warmth, they'd shared the other mornings.

He told himself she was tense about those journals, about what Blanche Howard might say when she called. And she was probably a lot more frightened than she was willing to admit. But even as he rationalized, he knew it was more. She was purposely avoiding contact with him, even refusing to meet his gaze.

Rob ignored the hurt that was his first reaction and remembered that whatever feeling she had for him had still been there last night. She's doing this deliberately, he told himself, and found that he wasn't particularly hungry, either.

Pushing his plate away, he said, "Anne, let's talk about it. Let's get it out in the open."

She looked at him for a moment, startled. He caught a glimpse of pain in her eyes, and wondered if he had done something to cause it.

Then she looked away again, and was so slow in answering that he was just about to say something more himself, when she finally spoke.

"I've been giving a lot of thought to our relationship," she said carefully, "and I think we should put an end to it now."

This wasn't what he'd expected. He'd thought the issue would be the usual—that she wanted to face her problems on her own. The unexpected words hurt deeply. His logic wasn't protecting him, and Rob pulled a mask over his



emotions. If he hurt, at least he'd keep the fact to himself. But he had to ask. "Why, Anne? What's happened?"

"We hardly knew each other when we jumped into bed," she replied, walking over to look out the window. "Let's just say it was a chemical reaction combined with a sense of danger." Turning, she risked a look at him and found his expression closed, even cold.

That hit her in the pit of the stomach, but it gave her the strength to continue. "It relieved some tensions, maybe provided some comfort, but that kind of thing ends with the situation that causes it. I just think it would be wiser to end it now," she finished.

She sounded so cool, so reasonable. Maybe it had been exactly what she said it was. Maybe he'd only imagined that there had been something more. Damn it, why hadn't he listened to his own better judgment and kept it from ever starting? Well, as she'd told him more than once, she was a big girl. He could only accept that she knew what she wanted. Obviously, he wasn't it.

"All right, I guess you've made that plain enough," he said quietly. He tossed his napkin on the table and pushed back his chair.

Anne's hands were gripped together so tightly that her fingernails cut into her palms. She closed her eyes, and her throat ached with swallowed tears. She heard him stalk from the room, then the door of the darkroom closed with a click of finality.

Didn't he take that like a man? she thought bitterly as she walked into the bedroom to get her purse. Then she berated herself with, What did you expect him to do, beg? Is that what you wanted? No, damn it, you wanted exactly what you got. Now forget it and go. You're on your own.

She left the house, stopping only to pet Monty on the terrace outside. On an impulse she bent down to wrap her arms around the tawny neck, and when she stood up, noticed that his fur was damp where her face had touched it.

Rob looked around the darkroom and saw nothing. He blinked at the burning in his eyes, and rubbed both hands over his face in a gesture he used only when he was weary, or when he was distraught. His mind was blank. He heard Anne's footsteps in the hall going into the bedroom, heard them come back again, but it didn't register. The closing of the back screen door was a faint sound so familiar that it was unnoticeable.

Numb, he walked around the room, and a hundred images of Anne flooded his mind. The harder he tried to dispel them, the faster they came. He swore and spun around, only to be faced with the row of five-by-sevens he hadn't even shown her yet, taken during their hike on Sunday. He made a long, morose study of each one.

What the hell's the matter with you? he said to himself. Since when do you stand there and take it without dishing out some of your own? You just accepted what she said without questioning it, without pinning her down, without even trying to prove that she was lying through her teeth. MacKenzie, you're an idiot!

He moved to the door with a half-formed thought of walking out there and demanding the truth, then he remembered the sound of her footsteps and the closing of the screen door. She's gone, he thought. You've let her walk out of here into God only knows what!

Rob ran through the house and outside to discover that she was, indeed, gone. Monty loped up the hill from the road and stood at Rob's side, looking up at him while wagging his long tail.

"Sheriff, I think you'd better handle this. It's Raymond Kincaid, and he's all torn up about something. Sounded like he said 'bones,' but I'm not sure."

Ryan was at a desk in the outer office, reviewing the little he'd found about Margaret Schaeffer's disappearance. He



looked annoyed but nodded to the young deputy who functioned as his clerk, and reached for the phone.

"Good morning, Mr. Kincaid. This is Sheriff Ryan. What can I do for you?"

It took a few moments to calm his caller, but once he had, he listened attentively and ended the conversation with a promise that he'd be right there. He met his deputy's inquiring look as he hung up the phone.

"He was plowing a field and found a skeleton, a human skeleton," Ryan repeated wonderingly. "I'm going out to have a look." He rose and reached for his hat, adding, "Hold down the fort, Jim. And don't mention this to anyone till we know what we've got."

The deputy acknowledged the order with a firm, "Right!" and reached for the phone as it began to ring again.

Ryan parked his car and made his way across furrows of newly turned earth to where Raymond Kincaid stood in the scant shade of a tractor, mopping his brow with a handkerchief.

"Mr. Kincaid," he greeted the wizened farmer as he approached. "Sorry to make you wait out in this heat."

"Just got back from the house myself, Sheriff," came the reply. "Bones're right over here," he added with an inclination of his head. He led the lawman around to the front of the tractor.

Moments later Ryan stared down at what was undeniably a human skull, arm bones and ribs. "Good Lord," he said softly.

"I stopped soon's I saw what they were," Kincaid volunteered. "Thought you'd want to dig 'em up yourself before the plow chewed 'em all to hell."

"Yes, I do. I'll get a team out here right away."

Kincaid nodded, then asked with a gesture toward the remains, "D'you suppose that's some other poor bastard Henry Schaeffer swindled?"

Ryan's grin at the old man's remark faded to a frown with his next thought, and he only nodded absently as he turned to go back to the car. A few minutes later he ended his instructions with, "Jim, call Dr. Simon down in Harrisburg. Yeah, in the coroner's office. Ask him if he can spare us a little of his time. Then call Captain Marshall and see if he'll fly the doc up here in a chopper. Let me know as soon as it's confirmed. And, Jim, let's keep a lid on this. I don't want any rumors flying till the doc's had a chance to look at it."

An enthusiastic "Right!" reached him in reply.

Alone, Anne had never felt more alone than she did as she whipped her car into town. The relief she'd expected was not in evidence. Instead she felt only guilt and pain. She had just told the man she loved that there had been nothing between them except a physical attraction, and she'd stated it in a way that clearly told him it was an attraction she could take or leave.

She had thought she was doing it to prevent pain later on, but she couldn't imagine anything hurting more. And what hurt most of all was that he hadn't cared. The pain she'd hoped to avoid had been there waiting for her all along. He hadn't cared. He had simply accepted it without emotion.

The ache persisted as images of the past week raced through her mind. Rob tending the fox, snapping her picture, pointing out a clump of wildflowers. Against her will she envisioned his long, sensitive fingers sawing through the branch, holding her foot, reaching to cradle her face. Helplessly, she remembered lying in his arms, and the flood of unbelievable sensations and emotions he'd brought to her. After that she couldn't stem the flow of tears, and she reached into her purse for tissues.

Nora had propped open the kitchen door so she could hear if anyone came to the front door while she worked on her morning's canning project. When she heard it open and close, she dried her hands and hurried into the hall, but no



one was there. Then she heard footsteps upstairs and the sound of a door closing.

She was sure it was Anne, but remembering what had happened to the young woman's room on Saturday, she thought it better to check. Arming herself with an umbrella from a stand in the corner, she started up the stairs. The umbrella didn't have much heft as a potential weapon against intruders, but the point was satisfyingly long and sharp. A moment later she knocked on Anne's door.

"None?" Anne's voice sounded tight, on the edge of breaking.

Alert at once to trouble, the landlady instinctively tried to soothe with her tone. "Yes, dear. Anne, are you all right?"

"I'm okay," Anne answered, but there was a catch in her voice.

"All right," she said, respecting Anne's privacy and trying to make her tone more casual. "I'll be in the kitchen putting up tomatoes if you want me for anything."

Anne's muffled thanks convinced the older woman that something was seriously amiss, for now her young boarder was undeniably crying.

Rob was just putting the front of the house when Nora reached the downstairs hall. She returned the umbrella to the stand and waited until he hurried through the door with Monty at his side. His only words were, "Is Anne upstairs?"

"Yes, she is," Nora replied. "And terribly upset, I'm afraid. I'm not sure she'll want to see you, Rob."

"She'll see me," he said grimly. Nora watched them, man and dog, hurry up the stairs, then returned to the kitchen, removing the traps as she went.

Rob stood outside Anne's room, silently marshaling his forces, then rapped lightly.

"Nora?" Her voice was tear clogged and heavy.

Rob mentally cursed her and himself as he cleared his throat and replied, "No, Anne, it's me."

There was no answer for several seconds, then she said, "I can't see you right now, Rob. I'm busy."

"Look, we don't have any time to waste. You've got to let me in." His voice was rough as he struggled for control.

When she didn't respond, he said, "Damn it, there's too much at stake here to simply ignore it. Just give me five minutes."

The silence that followed his demand stretched to half a minute, then the lock clicked.

By the time he'd opened the door, she had moved over by the bed, and was standing with her back to him. Rob motioned to the dog to lie near the door, while he looked at her rigid back and tried to decide how to begin.

It was Anne who broke the silence. "Go ahead, I'm listening," she said in a breathless voice.

"Rob?" he said. "Because I have plenty to say. First of all, I don't buy that 'chemistry' and 'danger' business you were spouting earlier. You know damned well there's more to this than that."

Her shoulders stiffened, but she neither spoke nor turned. He wondered what would happen if he began to massage them, but stayed where he was. "So if you want to dump me, do it now. It's as decent as decency can be with the truth."

"It's not a case of dumping," she answered tensely. "It's just common sense. Any day now this murder business will be wound up. I'll say it another way, and when it is, I'll be going on to New York. And you're leaving in a few weeks yourself. So it would be over soon anyway. It just seems easier and cleaner to make the break now, before—"

The words had come out in a rush, as though if she didn't hurry, she might leave something out or lose control. She stopped speaking abruptly, but not before he heard the rising inflections that told him her control might already be gone.



For several heartbeats he looked at her, silently willing her to turn around. And when she didn't, he prompted, "Before what, Anne?"

"Before you get tired of each other—or before one of us does. Then there'd be things said and hurt feelings. I'm just trying to avoid that."

"Do you always end a relationship this quickly?" he asked. "Do you always anticipate the end as soon as it's begun?"

"Rob, will you just leave me alone, please?"

"No, I won't. I told you once before I was going to get the truth out of you. That still holds. I want to know what the hell is going on, why you're reacting this way."

"It's... I told you..." but he got no further because he caught her arm and spun her around roughly to face him. Anne thought she had seen him angry before, but not like this. Had she thought him without emotion earlier? Now his eyes flashed and there was a tension in him that made her think of a sleek animal ready to spring.

His fingers bit into the flesh of her upper arm as he growled, "Level with me, damn it!"

"Rob, you're hurting me," she cried. "Let me go."

"Not until you talk to me," he insisted, and his fingers tightened.

She tried without success to pull her arm free, and in the struggle he caught her other arm as well. "Quit fighting me, damn it!" he exploded, then he yanked her against him and brought his mouth crushing down on hers.

She couldn't struggle for a few seconds, then found she couldn't any longer—not with him, not with Rob. Instead, she raised her hands to his chest to clutch at his shirt, and she stopped trying to pull her mouth free, and began to give.

Moments later he tore his mouth from hers and stared at her while he fought to catch his breath. He saw the large, luminous eyes, pale cheeks damp with tears, and her lips,

swollen from his, and parted as she struggled to draw an easy breath. At that moment she looked completely vulnerable but not afraid.

He was, though. He was as scared as hell when he realized how she had handled him—more alarmed still that she could drive him to it.

Anne knew that his anger was gone. In its place was something else, something much softer. As he looked at her and his breathing leveled, he said, "You certainly know how to get under my skin."

She nodded. "Yes, it seems I do."

"I guess I owe you another apology," he said. "I'm sorry."

"No, don't. It wasn't your fault."

He still held her arms, but lightly now. "Do you still want to dump me?" he asked.

She gave him a considering look, then shook her head.

"No. It makes you surly."

"Oh, Anne," he choked on a half laugh, then brought his lips to hers again, but with barely any pressure.

"Rob, I won't break," he said against his mouth.

He drew away for a moment to look at her, then he smiled and pulled her into his arms. "So I've noticed." He kissed her again, still gently, but thoroughly.

"Anne, dear, you have a telephone call." Nora's voice intruding from the other side of the door brought them apart. "It's a woman, and she says it's important."

Anne lifted her gaze to Rob's and said, "It must be Mrs. Howard. I've got to talk to her."

He touched his lips to hers, lightly, then released her.

As soon as she lifted the receiver and said hello, the other woman began, "Anne, this is Blanche. I need to meet with you today."

"Of course," Anne replied, surprised at the urgency in the woman's voice. "Just name a time and place."