



*Velden am Wörthersee, Day 1*

This was all her fault. If she hadn't insisted on the moonlight sail, they wouldn't be facing charges for a wrecked boat. Riley peeled off her wet clothes and flung them in the bathroom sink. But no way would she live holed up, waiting for Armand's next assault. Or from any other terrorists.

Hairdryer plugged in, she let the heat warm her neck and scalp as she squeezed the moisture from her wet curls. Right now, she had a career to build. A relationship with Jacob to forge. If these onslaughts continued after they married and started a family, how could they protect their children?

Ignoring the rumbling in her stomach, she toweled off. Her appetite always churned after performances and attempts on her life.

She slipped into wool slacks and a turtleneck sweater. Black clothes—perfect for her mood.

These days, bad-guy attacks were sabotaging her performance numbers.

At the soft thump on her door, the hairs on her nape

stiffened on alert. Her toes bunched into tight balls. During their three days at the Pension, they'd seen no other guests. But after tonight's sniper ... She sidled against the bedroom wall. Edged toward the doorjamb.

A faint whistle of "The Eyes of Texas are upon You" drifted into the room. "Riles, it's Jacob."

Breath eked from her mouth. Thank heavens they were Texan eyes and not the killer's. She flexed the knots from her toes. They hadn't used song signals since tracking terrorists on the riverboat cruise. Mostly old church hymns. Jacob might be a diehard country-music fan, but he loved binging on '30s and '40s films as much as she did. She unlocked the hand-carved door and let him in.

He slipped inside and shut the door, scanned the room like a soldier on point. "Nice digs, sugar cake."

"Uh-huh," she said, her lips quirking. His standard line every time he came inside. Tonight, no doubt, to put her at ease, but it wasn't working. Frau Propicka *had* given her the nicer room, with broad windows overlooking the lake. But the Austrian folk-print bedding and drapes, hand-painted furniture, and doors matched his.

"How about we make another memory?" He skimmed a hand across the small of her back and nudged her to him.

The citrusy scent of his aftershave washed over her. With every circle his fingers traced on her arm, volts of electricity ignited her core. But when he searched her lips with his, she nearly melted.

*Thank You, God, for bringing Jacob into my life. And for sparing our lives tonight.* She sank into the kiss, then stepped back from him. Breaths quivered in her chest. Whoa-howdy. Boundaries. She'd better set a few thou-shalt-nots here.

Lines creased his brow, the corners of his eyes. "You okay?" His voice hitched.

"Peachy." In his black cords and black crew-neck sweater

they could pass for a couple ninjas. Did male ninjas have cobalt-blue eyes and blond hair? She sat beside her desk and leaned against the chair's heart-shaped back. "We need a plan." Now that their vacation was ruined.

"I've called Margot."

Super-duper. Margot the Wonderful. His Interpol teammate from his last assignment. Staring at her lap, Riley nodded. He'd be off to Vienna, or Margot the Great would drive to Velden.

"Hey ..." He thumbed her chin up until she met his gaze. "I wanted this getaway as much as you. But if Margot takes the lead for a few days, we can cobble some special time for us."

"Uh-huh." She studied his face, the longing in his eyes. Did he really believe that—with a killer tracking them? "Maybe we should've gone to Cuero to meet my parents." Not that she'd call that a holiday. But in Texas they wouldn't be dodging potshots. Words maybe, but not bullets. "On second thought, nix that idea."

"I'm eager to meet your family, but with Armand still on the loose, I can't leave Europe."

"I know, I know." She twisted her engagement ring. One of these days they'd have to make the trip to Texas. She couldn't keep putting it off.

"Margot is requesting police protection for you."

"Thanks." Jacob needed a security detail too. "How do you think the assassin found us?"

"With me here on assignment, we couldn't use aliases. But Armand may have paid watchers at Austrian ports of entry."

She stifled a shiver. "Still, maybe we should get a couple of fake IDs and passports."

"Right. We can wear your stage wigs and travel incognito."

"You goose." She punched his arm. "Let's get something to eat. I'm starved after that swim."

He cocked a brow. "Sure you want to go out?"

“Yes.” No way was she letting Armand make her shiver and shake in her hot-pink Nikes. She plucked her jacket from the wall hook, glanced around the room.

A white envelope lay on her top bed pillow. Odd. Frau Propicka always left the room immaculate. With the bathroom tucked near the hall door, she hadn’t paid attention to the rest of the room.

“Wait.” She strode toward the bed, jabbed her finger at the pillows. “Something’s not right here.”

“Here. Let me check.” Jacob dashed in front of her. He opened the tweezers on his Swiss army knife, lifted the envelope, whipped the pillows and duvet off the mattress. Air whooshed from his mouth. “Good. No other surprises.”

Pulse pounding, she moved to his side. “I guess you didn’t leave me a love note.”

But his cockeyed grin didn’t hide his ashen pallor. “Sorry. Left my lockpicking kit in my room.” He tweezered a picture postcard from the envelope. “Great shot of the marina, even has our boat rental place in the background.” His voice was terse as he flipped over the card.

She stared at the scrawled block letters. Ice slewed through her veins.

**YOU GOT AWAY THIS TIME. NEXT TIME, YOU  
WON'T BE SO LUCKY.**