

EXCERPT

Miriam gave the black book she held onto so tightly to the police, it explained everything Harold had done. It was enough to clear her name and to also clear Xavier's name.

That black book was like gold to Xavier. It revealed Harold's meticulous notes detailing the time he spent researching Xavier, and developing a plot to destroy the man he thought had violated his wife.

Apparently, Harold sent several envelopes to Xavier with collectors' cards for him to autograph. He timed how long it took Xavier to return the cards. He even examined each one to determine if Xavier licked the envelope or used glue.

Xavier was a creature of habit that promptly signed, licked, and returned each envelope within a day or so. Like Miriam, Harold took advantage of a man who was kind and principled to a fault, an almost fatal fault. Drugging Xavier was easy once he knew his habit. Loading the envelope with some heavy duty narcotics, he waited with the hopes of Xavier doing something stupid. .

Harold wanted Xavier embarrassed, and dead. In truth, he couldn't have envisioned a scheme that included the deaths of Warren and Martha. The tourists' murder by Xavier's Hummer was the nail in the coffin Harold built for his wife's former lover. Or so his dead soul hoped.

If Harold accomplished anything, then it was killing any opportunity Miriam had to reunite with Xavier. Yes, her own evil deeds destroyed the relationship years before but no amount of repentance would make her fantasies of a relationship come to life.

Miriam visited Xavier daily. She understood that there could never be anything between them, but felt it was her duty to make sure he was okay. Vowing to be only a memory in his life, she visited until the moment Xavier stirred out of his coma. True to her word, perhaps for the first time in her life, Miriam disappeared.

Le was reunited with her family, who found the honor in her dishonor. She hadn't allowed Senator Stevens to exploit her for any other reason than to give them a good life. They decided that to be forgivable, especially after Angela's story caught the attention of people willing to pay Le thousands of dollars to share her experiences. The money enabled her to care for her family, and Le unearthed a calling in her adversity. She fought passionately to spare other women the same indignities as they pursued citizenship. Thanks to Angela and a caring church community, she would be just fine.

Thanks to Le and Xavier, Angela's reporting finally received the recognition it deserved. The twisted plot involving Xavier's life won multiple awards and for the first time Angela no longer had to chase a story. Stories ran right to her as she joined the investigative reporting elite.

Xavier awoke from a coma to a changed life. Although cleared of all charges, he still carried the guilt of the two people he killed with his car and the death of his friend, Frank. The deaths were irreversible changes, the weightiest of all he endured. He couldn't bring himself to ask God why him. Xavier refused to believe himself to be victimized in light of the innocent lives taken.

The press hounded him with stories both factual and fictional. All of the unwanted attention was an inconvenience as he adjusted to the aftermath. He could not have paid for that type of publicity when he was in the NFL.

It was once said that a hero is a person who rises to the top in spite of their circumstances. Xavier's character was even more fine-tuned as he chose to live a quiet and simple life; sending his earnings from appearances and other minor investments to the family of Martha and Warren. He couldn't think of a better way to honor Frank's faithful spirit.

In the meantime, Charles honored Xavier's faithfulness to him, as well as his heroic spirit. Convalescence had this funny way of making him sit still, which he hated, though he used the time to re-think every aspect of his life.

One thing for sure, he knew that God had reunited him with his hero for a reason. For the first time in his life, he was willing to be patient until the reason was revealed.

-The End-