

sidney sheldon

the master of the unexpected

bloodline

the international bestseller



SIDNEY SHELDON

BLOODLINE

W I G S BOOKS

New York • Avenel, New Jersey

This edition contains the complete and unabridged texts of the original editions. They have been completely reset for this volume.

This omnibus was originally published in separate volumes under the titles:
The I'Vaked Face, copyright © 1970 by Sheldon Literary Trust
A Stranger In The Mirror, copyright © 1976 by Sheldon Literar Trust
Bloodline, copyright © 1977 by Sidney Sheldon
All rights reserved.

This 1992 edition is published by Wings Books, distributed by Outlet Book Company, Inc., a Random House Company,

40 Engelhard Avenue, Avenel, New Jersey, 07001, by arrangement with
William Morrow & Company.

Random House

New York • Toronto • London • Sydney • Auckland Printed and bound in
the United States of America Library of Congress Cataloging-in-
Publication Data Sheldon, Sidney.

Sidney Sheldon-three complete novels *I* Sidney Sheldon.

p.

cm.

Contents: Bloodline-A stranger in the mirror-The naked face.

ISBN 0-517-07773-6

I. Title. II. Title: Three complete novels.

PS3569. H3927 A6

1992

813' .54-dc20

92-7599

CIP

8 7 6 5 4 3 2

BLOODLINE

For Natalie

with love

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

While this is a work of fiction, the backgrounds are authentic, and I wish to express my gratitude to those who so generously contributed to my research. If, in adapting their information to the requirements of a novel, I have found it necessary to expand or contract certain time elements, I take full responsibility. My deepest appreciation goes to

Dr. Margaret M. McCarron

Associate Medical Director

Los Angeles County,

University of Southern California

Dean Brady, USC Pharmacy School

Dr. Gregory A. Thompson

Director, Drug Information Center

Los Angeles County,

University of Southern California

Dr. Bernd W. Schulze

Drug Information Center

Los Angeles County,

University of Southern California

Dr. Judy Flesh

Urs Jiggi, Hoffmann-La Roche & Co., A. G., Basel
Dr. Gunter Siebel,
Schering A. G., Berlin
The Criminal Investigation Divisions

of Scotland Yard, Zurich and Berlin

Charles Walford, Sotheby Parke Bernet, London And to Jorja, who makes
all things possible.

*"The physician will carefully
prepare a mixture of crocodile
dung, lizard flesh, bat's blood
and camel's spit .*

"

-from a papyrus listing

811 prescriptions used

by the Egyptians in

1550 B.C.

Book One



Istanbul.

Saturday, September 5.

Ten p.m.

He was seated in the dark, alone, behind the desk of Hajib Kafir, staring unseeingly out of the dusty office window at the timeless minarets of Istanbul. He was a man who was at home in a dozen capitals of the world, but Istanbul was one of his favorite cities.

Not the tourist Istanbul of Beyoglu Street, or the gaudy Lalezab Bar of the Hilton, but the Oult-of-the-way places that only the Moslems knew: the *yalis*, and the small markets beyond the *souks*, and the Telli Baba, the cemetery where only one person was buried, and the people came to pray to him.

His waiting had the patience of a hunter, the quiet stillness of a man in control of his body and his emotions. He was Welsh, with the dark, stormy good looks of his ancestors. He had black hair and a strong face, and quick intelligent eyes that were a deep blue.

He was over six feet tall, with the lean muscular body of a man who kept himself in good physical condition. The office was filled with the odors of Hajib Kafir, his sickly sweet tobacco, his acrid Turkish coffee, his fat, oily body. Rhys Williams was unaware of them.

He was thinking about the telephone call he had received from Chamonix an hour earlier.

"... A terrible accident! Believe me, Mr. Williams, we are all devastated. It happened so quickly that there was no chance to save him. Mr. Roffe was killed instantly ..."

Sam Roffe, president of Roffe and Sons, the second largest **11**

SIDNEY SHELDON

pharmaceutical company in the world, a multibillion-dollar dynasty that girdled the globe. It was impossible to think of Sam Roffe as being dead. He had always been so vital, so full of life and energy, a man on the move, living in airplanes that raced him to company factories and offices all over the world, where he solved problems others could not deal with, created new concepts, pushed everyone to do more, to do better. Even though he had married, and fathered a child, his only real interest had been the business. Sam Roffe had been a brilliant and extraordinary man.

Who could replace him? Who was capable of running the enormous empire he had left? Sam Roffe had not chosen an heir apparent. But then, he had not planned to die at fifty-two. He had thought there would be plenty of time.

And now his time had run out.

The lights in the office suddenly flashed on and Rhys Williams looked toward the doorway, momentarily blinded.

"Mr. Williams! I did not know anyone was here."

It was Sophie, one of the company secretaries, who was assigned to Rhys Williams whenever he was in Istanbul. She was Turkish, in her middle twenties, with an attractive face and a lithe, sensuous body, rich with promise. She had let Rhys know in subtle, ancient ways that she was available to bring him whatever pleasures he wished, whenever he desired them, but Rhys was not interested.

Now she said, "I returned to finish some letters for Mr. Kafir."

She added softly, "Perhaps there is something I can do for you?"

As she moved closer to the desk, Rhys could sense the musky smell of a wild animal in season.

"Where is Mr. Kafir?"

Sophie shook her head regretfully. "He has left for the day."

She smoothed the front of her dress with the palms of soft, clever hands.

"Can I help you in some way?" Her eyes were dark and moist.

"Yes," Rhys said. "Find him."

She frowned. "I have no idea where he could-"

"Try the Kervansaray, or the Mermara." It would probably be the former, where one of Hajib Kafir's mistresses worked as a belly dancer. Although you never knew with Kafir, Rhys thought. He might even be with his wife.

Sophie was apologetic. "I will try, but I am afraid I-"

12

BLOODLINE

"Explain to him that if he's not here in one hour, he no longer has a job."

The expression on her face changed. "I will see what I can do, Mr. Williams." She started toward the door.

"Turn out the lights."

Somehow, it was easier to sit in the dark with his thoughts. The image of Sam Roffe kept intruding. Mont Blanc should have been an easy climb this time of the year, early September. Sam had tried the climb before, but storms had kept him from reaching the peak.

"I'll plant the company flag up there this time," he had promised Rhys, jokingly.

And then the telephone call a short while ago as Rhys was checking out of the Pera Palace. He could hear the agitated voice on the telephone. "... They were doing a traverse over a glacier.

. . . Mr. Roffe lost his footing and his rope broke.... He fell into a bottomless crevasse ..."

Rhys could visualize Sam's body smashing against the unforgiving ice, hurtling downward into the crevasse. He forced his mind away from the scene. That was the past. There was the present to worry about now. The members of Sam Roffe's family had to be notified of his death, and they were scattered in various parts of the world. A press announcement had to be prepared. The news was going to travel through international financial circles like a shock wave. With the company in the midst of a financial crisis, it was vital that the impact of Sam Roffe's death be minimized as much as possible. That would be Rhys's job.

Rhys Williams had first met Sam Roffe nine years earlier. Rhys, then twenty-five, had been sales manager for a small drug firm. He was brilliant and innovative, and as the company had expanded, Rhys's reputation had quickly spread. He was offered a job at Roffe and Sons and when he turned it down, Sam Roffe bought the company Rhys worked for and sent for him. Even now he could recall the overwhelming power of Sam Roffe's presence at their first meeting.

"You belong here at Roffe and Sons," Sam Roffe had informed him. "That's why I bought that horse-and-buggy outfit you were with."

Rhys had found himself flattered and irritated at the same time.

"Suppose I don't want to stay?"

Sam Roffe had smiled and said confidently, "You'll want to stay. You and I have something in common, Rhys. We're both ambitious. We want to own the world. I'm going to show you how."

The words were magic, a promised feast for the fierce hunger that burned in the young man, for he knew something that Sam Roffe did not: There was no Rhys Williams. He was a myth that had been created out of desperation and poverty and despair.

He had been born near the coalfields of Gwent and Carmarthen, the red scarred valleys of Wales where layers of sandstone and saucer-shaped beds of limestone and coal puckered the green earth. He grew up in a fabled land where the very names were poetry: Brecon and Pen-y Fan and Penderyn and Glyncoirwg and Maesteg. It was a land of legend, where the coal buried deep in the ground had been created 280 million years before, where the landscape was once covered with so many trees that a squirrel could travel from Brecon Beacons to the sea without ever touching the ground. But the industrial revolution had come along and the beautiful green trees were chopped down by the charcoal burners to feed the insatiable fires of the iron industry.

The young boy grew up with the heroes of another time and another world. Robert Farrer, burned at the stake by the Roman Catholic Church because he would not take a vow of celibacy and abandon his wife; King Hywel the Good, who brought the law to Wales in the tenth century; the fierce warrior Brychen who sired twelve sons and twenty-four daughters and savagely put down all attacks on his kingdom. It was a land of glorious histories in which the lad had been raised. But it was not all glory. Rhys's ancestors were miners, every one of them, and the young boy used to listen to the tales of hell that his father and his uncles recounted. They talked of the terrible times when there was no work, when the rich coalfields of Gwent and Carmarthen had been dosed in a bitter fight between the companies and the miners, and the miners were debased by a poverty that eroded ambition and pride, that sapped a man's spirit and strength and finally made him surrender.

When the mines were open, it was another kind of hell. Most of 14