



Attributor
PROTECTED

#1 NEW YORK TIMES
BESTSELLING AUTHOR

Lisa Jackson



If
She
Only
Knew

WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW . . . CAN KILL YOU

“What my husband does is a mystery to me,” Marla said.

“Don’t you think that’s odd?”

Marla chuckled humorlessly. “My whole life is odd, Nick. A husband who doesn’t confide in me, a daughter who rejects me, a father who despises me and a brother-in-law who . . . who . . .”

“Who what?”

She couldn’t admit it. Couldn’t say the damning words—that she was attracted to him, that at his touch her knees went weak and her blood ran hot. “Who . . . bothers me. And yes, I do think it’s all strange. Real strange. I just hope that I can figure it out soon before I go out of my mind.”

“Or before you get killed,” he said solemnly.

A chill ran through her blood. “Killed?” she repeated. She’d considered the fact that someone might be trying to murder her, but she’d always tossed off the idea, condemned it as her own brand of paranoia. To hear it from someone else made it so much more real.

Marla sighed and shook her head. “No way. This is too far-fetched. I was in an accident. Period. There wasn’t anything sinister about it,” she said, trying to convince herself. No one was really trying to kill her.

Or were they?

“Why would someone want me dead?” she asked.

“Because someone’s afraid of you, of what you’ll remember. . . .”

Books by Lisa Jackson

SEE HOW SHE DIES
FINAL SCREAM
WISHES
WHISPERS
TWICE KISSED
UNSPOKEN
IF SHE ONLY KNEW
HOT BLOODED
COLD BLOODED
THE NIGHT BEFORE
THE MORNING AFTER
DEEP FREEZE
FATAL BURN
SHIVER
MOST LIKELY TO DIE
ABSOLUTE FEAR
ALMOST DEAD
LOST SOULS
LEFT TO DIE
WICKED GAME
MALICE
CHOSEN TO DIE

Published by Kensington Publishing Corporation

IF SHE ONLY KNEW

Lisa Jackson



ZEBRA BOOKS
KENSINGTON PUBLISHING CORP.
<http://www.zebrabooks.com>



All copyrighted material within is Attributor Protected.

Table of Contents

WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW . . . CAN KILL YOU

Books by Lisa Jackson

Title Page

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Prologue

Chapter One

Chapter Two

Chapter Three

Chapter Four

Chapter Five

Chapter Six

Chapter Seven

Chapter Eight

Chapter Nine

Chapter Ten

Chapter Eleven

Chapter Twelve

Chapter Thirteen

[Chapter Fourteen](#)

[Chapter Fifteen](#)

[Chapter Sixteen](#)

[Chapter Seventeen](#)

[Chapter Eighteen](#)

[Chapter Nineteen](#)

[Chapter Twenty](#)

[Look for ALMOST DEAD in bookstores everywhere!](#)

[Copyright Page](#)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to all those people who helped me with the research and structuring of this book. Without their help it would not have been possible. Thanks to all my friends and family and special thanks to: Nancy Bush, Ken Bush, Matthew Crose, Michael Crose, Mary Clare Kersten, Nancy O'Callaghan, Michael O'Callaghan, Ari Okano, Kathy Okano, Betty Pederson, Jack Pederson, Sally Peters, Robin Rue, John Scognamiglio, Larry Sparks, Linda Sparks, Celia Stinson and Mark Stinson, who is dying to be a villain in one of my books. You're the best!

Prologue

Northern California, Highway 17

“It’s the next car . . . she’s coming in the next car, a black Mercedes coupe, an S500, traveling south, just as we planned.”

Crouching low in the underbrush, with fog creeping over the wet earth, he strained to hear the anxious voice crackling through the static of his two-way radio. “I thought she drove a Porsche.”

“She’s driving a Mercedes,” the voice snapped angrily. “You’ve got about ninety seconds.”

“Got it.” Eyes narrowed, he focused all his attention on the twisting road that cut through the canyons and hills in this part of California. Sure enough, through the mist and darkness, he heard the soft purr of a finely tuned engine. The car was, indeed, climbing. Getting nearer.

She was getting nearer.

His heart hammered. He remembered the scent of her skin. The look in her eyes. The depth of her betrayal.

She deserved this, the self-righteous bitch. He only wished she could know that he was the instrument of her death.

Adrenalin surged through his blood.

“Don’t blow this. It’s our only chance,” he was instructed.

“I know. I know.”

“It’s worth a hundred grand.”

A lot more than that, he thought but didn’t say it. *A helluva lot more*. “I’ll take care of it.” He snapped the walkie-talkie off, slammed down the antenna and stuffed the headset into a deep pocket of his jacket. Sweat prickled his scalp and ran down his neck, though it was barely forty degrees in this stretch of woods. Slipping his ski mask over a face already painted black, he jogged through a carpet of wet leaves, his old army boots still sturdy, his camouflage suit a perfect cover in the mist-shrouded night.

Branches slapped his face. The air was dank and thick with the smell of wet earth and something else: His own fear. That he would fail. That

somehow she would survive. That she would end up laughing at him.

No way. No fucking way.

Somewhere nearby an owl hooted, barely distinct over the pounding of his heart. And a rumble of low gears and a heavy engine . . . not that of the Mercedes. Coming from the other direction. The saliva dried in his mouth.

Steady, he reminded himself as he emerged from the woods at the designated bend in the road. He hoped to God that the truck was a few miles away and hurried across the wet pavement with the stealth of a SWAT team member. He checked his watch. Thirty seconds. The damned car sounded close. He gritted his teeth; saw a flash of headlights through the fog and trees.

Come on, bitch, just come on.

Louder, from the south, the truck—a semi from the sound of it—was gaining speed. *Shit.*

Crouching low on the narrow road, he positioned himself between the sharp S curves. Concentrating hard, he heard the whine of the coupe's tires singing on the wet pavement. *Hurry*, he silently urged, his eyes narrowing. *You can beat the truck. You have to.*

The car sounded closer.

Good.

He glanced at his watch again, the illuminated dial counting off his heartbeats. Everything was going as planned except for the truck. A few more seconds . . . He licked his lips in anticipation.

Brakes whined in the night. Too close. Too damned close. He swung his head southward, toward the oncoming roar. There was a catch in the eighteen-wheeler's engine as the driver shifted into a lower gear.

Every muscle tightened as he listened. He couldn't risk a witness. Sweat ran down his spine.

He could abort. There was still time.

But when would he get another chance?

A hundred grand. And just the beginning.

Besides, she deserves this . . . and it fucking fell into your lap.

The truck's engine growled loudly, reverberating through the forest of sequoia and oak. An eighteen-wheeler hurtling down the steep grade.

In the opposite direction, the Mercedes, if his information was right, was purring ever-upward, the driver innocently unaware that she was about to die.

His breath came in short gasps. *Slow down. Think of it as an exercise—just as you did years ago when you were with the special unit. You can do this. A*

few more seconds and you're home free. His heart was a drum; his hands soaked in sweat beneath his tight-fitting gloves.

Twin beams rounded the curve from downhill. The truck's brakes squealed from uphill.

Now! He sprang, stood in the middle of the southbound lane. The sleek car accelerated, caught him in its headlights and swiftly he lifted the cover on his belt, exposing the mirrors he'd fastened to his torso.

The driver slammed on her brakes.

With a squeal, the Mercedes' tires locked. The car swerved to the right, hit the gravel on the shoulder and spun. He caught a glimpse of the driver, a horrified expression on her beautiful face as she screamed and desperately cranked on the wheel. There was another person—someone in the passenger seat beside her. *Shit!* She was supposed to be alone. He'd been assured she would be alone!

He jumped into the northbound lane. Avoided being hit by a speeding German-crafted fender by inches. Stumbled. Fell. The mirrors on his belt cracked. Glass splintered. Glittered in the headlights' glare. Hell. No time to do anything about it. Gasping, he was on his feet. Running. Toward the timberland.

Get out of here.

The semi rounded the corner, pinned him in its huge headlights, flooding the wet pavement with near blinding light. He jumped and caught sight of the driver's panicked face. He was bearded, a big bear of a man, yelling over the scream of brakes. Eighteen thick tires screeched, burning rubber. The cab twisted, the truck jackknifed.

Oh, shit, oh, shit, oh shit! Run, you bastard!

Rolling over the guardrail, he launched his body into the protective cover of oak and redwood. He landed hard, his ankle twisted, the joint popping painfully, but he couldn't stop. Not now. His heart pumped furiously. Sweat poured down his face beneath the mask. From the corner of his eye he saw the Mercedes scraping along the guardrail on the far side of the road. Sparks flew. With an agonizing shriek, polished steel sheared.

He catapulted down the hill and heard the groan of metal rending as the car hit the weakened spot in the guard rail, then broke through, barreling through the trees.

As planned.

But the truck, the damned truck was out of control, careening down the