
Piazza
NAVONA



A Novel



Chapter One – Digital Copy

Piazza Navona

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By

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To those who read this novel

First of all, thank you for humoring me by reading my novel. But before you begin, I want to let you know that all the characters in the novel are made-up, but all the locations are as real as can be. This is because I am very passionate about travel, and most of all Italy. The other parts of the story are imaginary, so please don't read too much into it. Just enjoy the ride, and think of happy thoughts. That's all I want to get across with this story.

One

My daughter Lauren has always been a little eccentric, very moody and at times too demanding. So it was no surprise to my husband and I, when she asked for a, no expense spared wedding. She announced it when she turned 12 and then at 18. However, at the time we simply shrugged it off. Now almost 25 with a two carat legacy engagement ring from Tiffany's on her finger, she was insisting that along with the lavish wedding, she wanted a formal engagement party. We agreed naturally, grasping the fact, that she gave us ample notice.

The night before Lauren's engagement party, I looked across the bedroom to my husband Mark, who was sitting in bed staring with his eyebrows furrowed, at his laptop. Reading something important, I assumed. Since he made it known for months, he'd been laboring over a case, which blended into the moments before bed. But I needed his undivided attention; I just didn't know at what instant to interrupt without upsetting him.

"Sorry to interrupt, but what time do you think you'll be done with golf tomorrow? I said, holding my breath for some sort of irruption, or eye rolling.

"Why?"

"I just want to be sure..."

"That I'm home in time for Lauren's engagement party. Yes, yes, I know." He said, without once glancing in my direction.

"Okay, good, I'll make us lunch."

He did not reply, and I took that as my cue to finish lotioning up, and turn in.



My husband Mark, and I met in our senior year in high school, and right away knew we would get married someday, preferably after college. But an unplanned pregnancy after the Winter Ball, fast forwarded that decision. We were married in City Hall before our senior prom in May and by mid- October, our daughter Lauren was born. So, while Mark started his first year at the University of San Francisco to study law, I stayed home and struggled with postpartum depression and raising a newborn.

Right after passing the bar exam, Mark landed an entry-level job at a law firm on Montgomery street. So I signed up for general ed classes at city college until I could figure out what degree to pursue. But a few months in, I discovered that I was pregnant again. So, I dropped out, and while raising my two daughters, one in second grade and the other a newborn, I registered in a correspondence school for interior design, to obtain a certificate, thinking I would someday run my own business.

We lived in a cramped apartment in a two-story Edwardian in San Francisco's Richmond district for ten years. Minding the landlord who lived in the upstairs unit, and at every chance, pointed out our shortcomings. Until Mark made partner, and we bought a house. A four bedroom, three-story house perched on a hillside in Sausalito with views overlooking the bay and downtown San Francisco. I couldn't think of a better place to live, since the small town reminded me of Lake Como in Italy, where Mark and I spent two glorious weeks, taking a long

and very overdue honeymoon on our five-year anniversary.

Mark's long hours at the office during the week and sometimes even at home at nights and weekends, kept him disconnected from our family life. So it was my responsibility to run the household and only when absolutely necessary, fill him in about the challenges of. Driving the girls from soccer practice to ballet, birthday parties to teen sleepovers. Homework, science projects, cupcake fundraisers, and applying to college. This is in addition to playing a cheerleader and sounding board any hour of the day when anyone in my family, including Mark, showed signs of distress or a dip in self-esteem.

When Lauren moved to Los Angeles to study finance at UCLA, I felt the worst version of an empty nest. Even though I still had Audrey to take care of. So I decided to start a home-based event planning business, where I relied heavily on my mother's influential friends and Mark's acquaintances to build reputation. Audrey tagged along with me to all the events, I organized, and became truly interested in the creative aspect of the business, to the point that she decided to go to college in Florence, Italy to study art. She would leave a few weeks after Lauren's engagement party.

