

PROLOGUE

This isn't a love story, but the end of one. The story of two ships forever passing in the night. This is the story of my father and the woman he spent most of his adult life loving, a woman who was never really his.

You can never know a person, no matter how much you think you might. I never presumed to know Richard Fitzwilliam. My father loved me, and that was always enough. He taught me how to play baseball and how to write a check, how to open doors and say "please" and "thank you."

When I was seven years old, I fell on the ice in Central Park and broke my ankle. My father picked me up and carried me the eight blocks to St. Luke's. Later, when my mother demanded to know why he didn't just get a taxi, my father would shrug and say he was faster than the Manhattan traffic. That was the man he was.

He was a man who sacrificed pieces of himself for his country twice over, earning not one but two battlefield promotions for his quick thinking and reckless bravery. Colonel Fitzwilliam was a man who didn't just dance with Death but wined, dined, and outright romanced it.

In his youth, a bon vivant and connoisseur of bad habits, he loved

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extravagantly—and often unwisely. But I'm getting ahead of myself now.

I've told stories before. War stories, political stories, all the news that's fit to print. This is my first time trying to tell a love story.

But like I said, this isn't a love story.

But almost.