Scattered

by Tess_DiCorsi

Summary

Post-"Sans Voir" with what could happen going forward. Multiple chapter story.
Chapter 1.

"We can live beside the ocean
Leave the fire behind
Swim out past the breakers
Watch the world die" - "Santa Monica" by Everclear

Los Angeles, CA
Summer 2012

The news of G. Callen's daring prison escape came across the police radio at 10:40PM PDT on Friday, July 27th. According to official reports from both the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and the Los Angeles Police Department, Callen was sluggish and listless that day. He refused medical attention twice, once at 11:10AM, again when he left his lunch untouched in the early afternoon. Medical attention was finally administered when he was found semi-conscious with a 104 degree temperature just before 8PM.

The prison doctor, a twenty-year veteran of the CDCR, diagnosed Callen with acute appendicitis. With staffing cuts, summer vacation plans and the rotation of new medical school graduates, the Los Angeles County Jail Hospital was short handed. Callen was transported in pain to Los Angeles County Hospital where a surgical team was waiting with three corrections officers and a U.S. Marshal on loan to act as guards.

Callen was logged into the hospital at 10:20PM, accompanied by two EMTs as he was rushed on a gurney from the CDCR ambulance to an elevator taking him to the operating room. When the elevator door opened, the two EMTs were themselves unconscious and Callen was gone. The hospital was immediately put on lock-down but no Callen. A room by room, floor by floor search was futile. Every person leaving the hospital was matched to their identification, every car was searched leaving the parking lot. No stone was left unturned. No Callen either.

Callen's known associates were immediately named as persons of interest in his disappearance. Henrietta Lange, Callen's only listed contact, was in London for the Opening Ceremonies of the 2012 Olympics. As a Bronze Medalist in the 1964 Tokyo Games, she never missed an Opening Ceremony - even in Moscow in 1980. The London CCTV cameras recorded her movements that night from the Olympic Stadium to her room at the Savoy. Hotel security cameras had her in the hotel's gym at the time of Callen's escape, in her sixth mile on the treadmill.

Sam Hanna, Callen's former partner at NCIS, was also in London. Callen's arrest and Sam's inability to help his friend made him a problem for his NCIS employers. After a leave of absence, Washington didn't trust Sam, members of his team were concerned for him. Sam was assigned to
work with a joint security task force at the Olympics. His familiarity with Arabic was a big selling point as Hetty found him an assignment to keep him busy and out of Los Angeles. She could also assess his state of mind in person before either putting him back in the field in Los Angeles or finding another overseas assignment. Sam was monitoring early morning CCTV video feeds in the Olympic Village security offices when Callen disappeared.

LAPD didn't need to investigate where NCIS Liaison Officer and LAPD Detective Marty Deeks was. They knew. With fears that a long-term undercover operation was in trouble, Deeks was recalled by LAPD for an emergency extraction of another undercover officer. Deeks was sent to a club called Inamorata as an old alias, music company executive Johnny Kelley. Detective Anna Garcia was working as a club hostess, Maria Sanchez, tracking drug transactions and a prostitution ring run by the owners. Garcia, her handler believed, was compromised. She refused an early request to come in and then was not returning calls. Deeks was tasked with going into the club and getting her out. He played the jealous ex to the hilt. Deeks grabbed Garcia and wound up getting belted around by some of the club's private security men. A team of LAPD uniformed officers stormed in, arresting Deeks and several of the private security staffers before he was too badly beaten. Garcia was brought in as a material witness. At the time of Callen's escape, Deeks was in the LAPD surveillance truck swapping out his watch and wallet for Johnny Kelley's Rolex, platinum money clip and Fendi wallet.

LAPD didn't know where Kensi Blye and Nell Jones were but NCIS did. Well, they didn't know exactly, but they knew where they weren't - Los Angeles. Agent Blye and Intelligence Analyst Jones were invited in early April to address new NCIS female recruits at a seminar about the opportunities and challenges of being a woman in their lines of work. The seminar was at the Navy Yard. Callen's arrest was an embarrassment to both the organization and Los Angeles office so Director Vance thought of canceling their talks. Nell made a case that nothing was more challenging than the Chameleon/Marcel Janvier case with losing Mike Renko, Lauren Hunter and Callen. Vance agreed. Nell rocked a multimedia presentation while Kensi ran a freewheeling Q and A session. Vance decided the two would be regulars at these seminars going forward.

After the seminar, Abby Scuitto gathered up the visitors and her team - Tim McGee, Anthony DiNozzo, Ziva David and Jimmy Palmer - for a night on the town. Ziva and Kensi hit it off right away, Nell was the apple of McGee's eye. At the time of Callen's escape, Kensi, Nell, Ziva and Abby were doing their best "Coyote Ugly" imitation to Big and Rich's "Ride a Cowboy" on the bar at a dive called Broadcast Brews. Kensi got Tony to record it on her iPhone to send it to Deeks with a note saying 'having a great time, don't you wish you were here?' The time stamp on the video and email sent to Deeks was 10:33PM PDT/1:33AM EDT.

The Office of Naval Intelligence and the CIA told LAPD that Nate Getz was in an undisclosed location outside of the United States and would not be available for questioning. Sworn affidavits could be provided stating that Nate was not in either Los Angeles or the United States of America at the time of Callen's escape if needed. There would be no further comment from either agency and no contact.

That left Eric, who was in Los Angeles that Friday night. Not a fan of the Olympics, not working with LAPD, not in Washington DC - Eric spent that Friday night online with a friend who was a game designer for EA trying to come up with a first person shooter game for the Robin Hood mythology. Internet and Skype usage records, a sworn statement from Bernard Somers of EA that included three pages of Somers defending Will Scarlet's role in the Robin Hood world and a $17 signed credit card charge for sushi dinner delivery at 10:37PM put Eric in his Manhattan Beach studio apartment at the time of Callen's escape.

Callen's connections in the Russian expat community in Los Angeles offered no help. Arkady
Kolcheck actually laughed when he heard of Callen's escape. He told both NCIS and the LAPD that if he was criminally inclined, which of course he was not, he'd look at Callen as a loyal and smart employee. Callen found a permanent solution to a man who killed two agents, kidnapped an intelligence officer and sold information to one of America's enemies. Marcel Janvier's death wasn't an execution to Kolcheck, it was an act of patriotic self-defense.

Callen managed to escape on the one day when his friends and co-workers were heavily alibi'd. NCIS's own investigation cleared them all, Deeks had a longer, second investigation clear him through LAPD's Internal Affairs. Callen also managed to completely disappear. No one fitting his description checked into any hospital in the Pacific or Mountain Time Zones. He was also not seen in any train stations, airports or car rental companies.

A search of Callen's home found what the Marshal Service thought was an intentionally emptied dwelling for a life on the run. Hetty explained that Callen had very few possessions and anything left was likely all Callen owned. After Hetty bought the house on his behalf with his money, Callen spent the next year and a half replenishing his savings. Not a dime was moved after his arrest. His lawyer was retained by Hetty, who was owed a favor or two, worked pro-bono. His assets remained frozen.

The CDCR, LAPD, NCIS, FBI and U.S. Marshal Service were furious. Members of Callen's former team were cooperative, answering all questions asked truthfully - multiple lie detector tests given by multiple agencies confirmed that. Phones were tapped, team members were followed and everyone was behaving professionally. Well, except Deeks, who always waved to his tail, forward the texts of Surfline Forecasts surf alerts to the U.S. Marshal Service Los Angeles Bureau Chief and had pizza delivered to a surveillance unit working outside his apartment every few nights. Hetty told him that the pizza was a bad idea. He dropped off In and Out burgers the following night. Heroes, Chinese and Thai food were added to the rotation. After a while, the agencies turned their attention to other cases.

Both NCIS and Interpol heard rumblings of a French crime organization interested in revenge against the NCIS operatives present at Janvier's shooting. Interpol shared their intelligence on Janvier. He had a daughter Chloe and son-in-law Andre Dubois who worked for him, a brother Emile who managed his money. These three were able to empty Janvier's accounts and, like Callen, simply disappear. Interpol thought they were likely regrouping and figuring out their next move. NCIS disagreed, finding Janvier's daughter at least as ruthless, and maybe more, than her dead father. If she was interested in revenge, she wasn't regrouping, she was plotting.

Lingering concerns about possible involvement in Callen's escape and now threats against their lives had Sam, Kensi and Deeks grounded again. All "special projects" were removed from the Office of Special Projects. Director Vance farmed out the few assignments Hetty was planning to other governmental agencies under the guise of inter-departmental cooperation. Eric and Nell still ran intelligence requests but now for all divisions, not just OSP. Sam was given what he called a "promotion in name only" to Supervising Tactical Special Agent. He ran tactical operations via his own area in the Ops Center for the San Diego and Hawaii offices.

Kensi was charged with tracking the possible moves, financial or physical, of Janvier's family. She worked with Interpol and the DCPJ almost exclusively. She spent at least one morning a week in the French Consulate offices. Kensi also cultivated her contacts, hoping to hear something about Callen.

While Deeks teased Kensi about "talking dirty" while speaking to her French contacts, he was left with little to do other than annoy his occasionally returning minders. Twice, he spoke to Hetty about returning to LAPD full-time, twice he was turned down. Kensi reacted badly when she heard
him make the second request, was furious to hear there was a first. Deeks tried to explain that he
was doing nothing more than taking up space, working on the odd FISA warrant request or
reviewing evidence in upcoming cases for legal loopholes. Hetty insisted Deeks stay put for his
own safety, both from Chloe Janvier-Dubois and Kensi.

Just after Labor Day, Director Vance started sending cases to OSP. Sam was still in Ops, Kensi and
Deeks on the street. Their first case, according to Deeks, was "glorified busy work" - a missing
Marine vehicle and laptop was hardly a special project. Hell, he went to the academy with one of
the top guys in LAPD's Auto Theft Unit and would be happy to pass this along personally. Kensi,
while itching to get back to work, wasn't thrilled with the case either. "Busy work" was a bit harsh,
more like something she did as a probationary officer.

Hetty reminded both of them that they were deskbound for weeks and a simple case to get their
legs beneath them was not a bad idea. Also, while the laptop had significant security features,
according to a Captain Walls at Camp Pendleton, there were concerns about the data on the
computer falling into the wrong hands. It was imperative that they find the Chevy Impala and the
laptop.

Through Kaleidoscope, Eric was able to trace the vehicle to a recently renovated gas station-garage
and mini-mart in Victorville. After a two-hour drive to the edge of the Mojave, Kensi and Deeks
secured the vehicle and more importantly the laptop. While Kensi pushed a thumb drive into the
laptop's USB port to download any records of usage in recent days, Deeks searched the car for
evidence explaining who stole it and why.

Bored with their now routine new duties, Eric, Nell and Sam watched Kensi and Deeks work from
a traffic cam about half-a-block away. Nell saw a security camera closer to the garage that Eric
was able to access. Hetty walked into Ops just as Deeks secured the laptop and thumb drive in
Kensi's vehicle and Kensi was on her cell phone with the Captain Walls from Camp Pendleton who
was looking for the car.

Completing their tasks, Kensi and Deeks went into the mini-mart section of the gas station to see if
there was any security footage of the car's driver. Deeks called out, "Hello, anyone here?" just
before the entire mini-mart blew up. Nell screamed, Sam jumped from his chair, Hetty's hand
covered her mouth in horror. Eric called for Kensi or Deeks to answer him. Not really called, more
begged.

The Victorville Volunteer Fire Department was not trained for a fire the magnitude of the one
consuming the mini-mart. The underground gas tanks exploded, ending any hope of finding
survivors. It took nearly two days for the San Bernadino Fire Department HazMat Unit to put out
the fire and another day for rescue and recovery specialists on loan from LAFD to find two bodies.
Dental records were needed to make the final identifications.

For the fifth and final time, Hetty Lange submitted her resignation. There was no promise from
Director Vance that this wouldn't happen again, no Callen to pickpocket her letter of resignation,
no team to rescue her from a Romanian crime family, no meeting with the fractured team begging
her to return to save them. With the Janvier case, she lost five of the best agents - well, four agents
and one police officer - she ever had in less than six months. She promised Washington she'd stay
until the basic investigation of the deaths of Agent Blye and Detective Deeks was complete but
after that, she was done. They were the final loses she could tolerate - two young and vibrant
people she chose, she recruited, she trained and she watched die violent deaths.

Interpol could not confirm any involvement by Janvier's family. Fire investigators on loan from
Edwards Air Force Base could confirm there were explosives lining the new drywall in the mini-
mart. The local police said the original garage owner sold the place in late June 2012 and it only
looked reopened days before the explosion. While the new owners were waiting for replacement
gas pumps, both underground gas tanks were filled a day before the explosion. There was nobody
working in the mini-mart despite appearing as if it was open for business. Whoever wanted the
building to blow made sure everything around it would go but only the intended targets would be
killed.

While Hetty had access to Deeks's safe-deposit box - he gave it to her after he named her next of
kin - Sam picked up the contents with his new full time bodyguard, Assistant U.S. Marshal Michael
Madden. Sam's family was now being protected by the U.S. Marshals, the same organization
hunting Callen. He promised to join his family once Deeks and Kensi were buried and the rest of
the team was safe. Sam left the sealed bankers box on Hetty's desk before returning to his area in
Ops.

Hetty started with Deeks's legal documents. With his birth certificate, mother's death certificate,
assorted school transcripts and LAPD insurance information was Deeks's will. Not surprisingly,
Marty Deeks left almost everything to Kensi Blye. His college and law school diplomas were to be
sent to a family court judge he knew. He wanted Hetty to have his old LAPD uniforms, gently
used, for NCIS's wardrobe collection. Whatever Kensi didn't want was to be sold and money given
to the Boys and Girls Club in Reseda. They saved him as a kid, maybe he could save a kid. Finally,
he did not want the typical LAPD fallen officer's funeral, just cremated and his ashes scattered in
the Pacific.

Hetty next opened a waistpack, his "bro-sack" from Alex Vasnev case, and two items fell out - a
new Tiffany's box and a new Cartier box. In the bigger blue box was a platinum engagement ring
with what she figured was a one carat round diamond in a Bezet setting and a simple woman's
wedding band. The red box had a men's platinum wedding ring. The inscription in the woman's
wedding band was in Hebrew - "Ani L'Dodi, v'Dodi Li" - while the men's band inscription startled
Hetty - "Semper Amemus, 5.25.12".

She pulled her records - Kensi and Deeks were both off from the Friday before Memorial Day until
the Wednesday of the following week. She remembered Kensi talking about going to Camp
Pendleton Thursday night to see some old friends. She was unsure what Deeks had planned though
now she thought she knew. Opening the back pocket of the pack she found an envelope. Inside was
a marriage license dated May 25, 2012. Martin A. Deeks married to Kensi M. Blye on Delmar
Beach with Camp Pendleton Marine Chaplain Major Thomas Emerson as the officiant and Major
General Gregory Watson and his wife Josephine as witnesses.

A few photos showed different shots of Kensi in a white silk, tea-length dress, Deeks in a black
suit with white shirt and white silk tie; Kensi and Deeks posed with the older man in a Marine dress
uniform holding a bible; an older couple, he in a Marine dress uniform, she in sky blue suit with
Kensi and Deeks. Hetty's shock turned to grief as she looked at the one picture of the just the two
of them - smiling, happy and so obviously in love.

Two letters were left, one addressed to her, one to Kensi. With her emotions near the breaking
point, Hetty took a deep breath and read the one addressed to her.

"September 1, 2012,

Shutters on the Beach, 3:10AM

Dear Hetty,

If you're reading this, I'm only hoping it wasn't my fault and nobody else got hurt. Actually, if it
was my fault, my only hope is that nobody else got hurt.

If you haven't looked in the bro-sack, Kensi and I have a little surprise for you. Surprise!

Please don't be angry with her. She'll tell you she wanted to keep things quiet. She'll say that after what happened to Callen and everything else since I darkened NCIS's door that she didn't want us to be a distraction. Maybe she didn't but I traded telling the world what she was to me for the right to work with her every day. I got her as my partner at work and at home. Look at her, who wouldn't sign up for that? If Granger, Vance or anyone at LAPD is looking to assign blame for this, simply tell them I didn't want to stop working by her side. I always was selfish.

I left a note for her. Please make her read it. She can't think that I was just another person in her life who left her behind. She needs to know that I love her, present tense, even now. I want her to understand that I loved her for years, maybe since she took out Radovan Lazik's bodyguard and stopped me from doing the same to Frank Scarli. God, I love her and I will miss growing old with her. Everything she needs to know is in my letter to her. Everything you need to know is that we never intended to lie to you, we just wanted to have it all and for a while we did. I'm not only selfish, I'm lucky too.

I've left a will and instructions for my funeral. If Roger Bates wants to give me a full funeral, assuming I've earned one, talk him out of it. You can do it, you scare the hell out of him. Went to too many police funerals while I was on the job, don't want to attend this final one.

Finally, thank you. The best moment of my professional life was when you handed me your pen and put me on your team. It never bothered me that I didn't fit in with the guys in the Legal Bureau or Bates's squad but it meant everything to me to be accepted by you and by your people. It was an honor.

Kensi's starting to realize she's alone and I'm on the balcony. What kind of husband writes a goodbye letter to the second best thing that ever happened to him during a beach weekend with the first? Add stupid to selfish and lucky.

Mr. Kensi Blye, occasionally stupid, sometimes selfish, unbelievably lucky."

Hetty didn't know how long she looked at the letter. She remembered a long ago conversation with Kensi. In the archive room, Hetty found the box of Kensi's belongings she allowed the young agent to store for safety sake. As she pulled the box off the shelf, she heard a few items shift in what felt like an empty box. Inside, she found a travel itinerary for a M. Deeks and K. Blye for an Australian Christmas 2012 vacation. There was an envelope with a few photos - one of Kensi with Dom, one of the team taken at the 2011 Christmas party and several of Kensi with Deeks. Most looked like camera phone photos. As she looked at them, especially the candid shots, she was just sick. There were nights out with the team where they were smiling at each other while smiling at the camera, hiding their relationship in plain sight.

One photo she was sure she saw as a cropped shot while emptying Deeks's locker. The full photo had them standing in a bar, her arms around his waist holding, and her chin on his shoulder. She saw the reason Deeks's locker photo was cropped. His hand rested on her arm, her engagement ring in full view. She knew there was something between them but never thought it was this. Hetty was almost proud that they fooled her for so long and heartbroken they couldn't continue.

There was an envelope with a Post-It note on it that just said "Give this to Deeks" in block letters. Returning to her desk to pick up Deeks's final letter to Kensi, Hetty took them both to the burn
room and hoped the messages' ashes would reach them both. She took the banker box with both Kensi and Deeks possessions and left. She worked from home for another two weeks before finally retiring, only showing up for the joint memorial service for Special Agent Kensi Blye and Detective Martin Deeks. A week after the service, Henrietta Lange fell off the grid.

The Marshal Service along with NCIS allowed Sam a computer set up in his new waterfront home in Annapolis, MD that rivaled Eric's system in Ops. He continued to work with NCIS, providing as needed tactical support for NCIS's Navy Yard investigations. He taught the occasional seminar at the Naval Academy. He was also the best Little League baseball, Pop Warner football and Pee Wee basketball coach in the state of Maryland. A world class security system kept the Hanna family protected from the Janviers.

With NCIS's Office of Special Projects in flux, Director Vance moved both Nell and Eric to the Navy Yard. The East Coast weather was a shock to Eric. Nell was named the Navy Yard's head of digital operational intelligence, Eric given his own staff in the cybercrimes unit. The two worked hand in hand as they did in Los Angeles, now just in different corners of the building. Eric and Tim McGee started a gaming league pitting agents and senior staff against technical analysts.

On February 18, 2013, President's Day, NCIS, at least temporarily, took the Los Angeles Office of Special Projects offline. There were assurances from NCIS higher-ups that the office would reopen once the repercussions from Callen's actions and the deaths of Kensi and Deeks died down. Nobody quite believed them.

x-x-x

717 Dune Road
Quogue, New York
February 19, 2013

Kelly Nessler-Kennedy walked up from the basement gym. Her short brown hair was still a little damp after her post-workout shower. She found her husband where he usually was before 9AM most mornings - standing with their dog near the floor to ceiling back windows, looking at the ocean. The only difference over the last few months was the cast on his left wrist. "It's not mocking you," she told him as she's told him every day since moving to their new home.

"The ocean is mocking me."

"Because large bodies of water have nothing else to do but make fun of you, Dean." She walked up behind him, put her arms around his waist and her head on his shoulder. "I'm hungry."

He rubbed her top arm and melted back into her embrace. "You're always hungry, Kel. I was thinking maybe we'd go to BJ's this afternoon. We need some stuff and they're talking snow over the weekend."

"They've been talking snow for weeks and it never comes." She kissed him on cheek. "How about we grab a late lunch out and then some oversized vats of food you love buying so much."

He turned in her arms, carefully hugging her. "You're rather partial to the meals from those oversized vats of food. And the Atlantic Ocean is mocking me. It is out there and its water is just 35 degrees. So near but so far away."

"I'll make you a deal, Arthur Curry," she pulled away and smiled at him, though he could still see her wince. "We have a little breakfast, you work, I'll write, lunch out and BJ's. The perfect non-Aquaman day for you."
"Deal, Wonder Woman." Marty Deeks kissed his wife good morning as they walked to the kitchen. Monty trailed closely behind.

###

You really didn't think I'd kill them, now did you?
Chapter 2.

"I hear the train a comin'
It's rolling round the bend
And I ain't seen the sunshine since I don't know when,
I'm stuck in Folsom prison, and time keeps draggin' on"
- "Folsom Prison Blues" by Johnny Cash

California State Prison, Los Angeles County
Visiting Attorney's Room
June 5, 2012, 10:35AM

Dressed in one of his several "going to court" suits, Marty Deeks paced alone in a bright white, cinder block room. He usually wore these suits to testify against the men who are held in a place like this facility. Instead, he was dressed for a visit. An old snitch named Zero Davis called - collect, of course - from the facility with a message from a G. Callen. Inmate Callen wanted to see Martin Deeks, attorney-at-law, as soon as possible. Callen wanted this meeting to be confidential. Deeks was to tell no one. Zero told Deeks that he didn't know the detective was a lawyer and wanted to know if Deeks could handle an appeal. Deeks blew him off.

Now, Deeks was steaming, wishing he blew Callen off too. Callen was over twenty minutes late and considering his social calendar in prison probably wasn't all that full, Deeks added the delay to a growing list of things he was pissed about where Callen was concerned. Stuck alone in the room where the two chairs and table were bolted to the ground was a reminder of just how screwed up everything was. He snuck out of his apartment before Kensi was even up, leaving a note about confidential police business and a promise to call her around lunchtime with an explanation. That was not how he wanted to treat her.

A buzzer went off and the door clanged opened. Dressed in an orange jumpsuit, Callen shuffled in wearing handcuffs, a waist chain and leg irons with two corrections officers in tow. Callen's hair was longer and he was growing a beard. He was taken to one of the chairs bolted to the ground. With one guard at the opened door, a massive second officer changed the handcuffs from behind his back to the front before sitting Callen down. Chains were pulled around his leg irons and secured to the legs of the chair. A final chain was run from the leg irons chain to the back of his waist chain. G. Callen, inmate 051512078, was going nowhere.

As the massive corrections officer walked to the door, the other guard, a muscular Hispanic man with Morales on his nameplate, handed Deeks a black plastic box the size of a deck of cards. "Mr. Deeks, this is a personal alarm. If, at any time, you feel you are in danger, you are to press this red button." There was only one button on the box and it was bright red. "When you press that red button, your meeting with the prisoner will be over and several corrections officers will secure both
you and the prisoner. Do you have any questions?"

"No, sir."

"There are no listening devices or video cameras in this attorney's meeting room. If you feel you are not safe, you are to hit the red button immediately. It will take about ten seconds for a team of correction officers to arrive in the room. The correction officers will be armed. Any orders given by the corrections officers entering the room are to be obeyed immediately. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir. I do."

"The big green button on the wall near the door," Morales pointed, "is for when your meeting is over. Once you press that button, a corrections officer will escort you from the room then the prisoner will be brought back to his cell. Are we clear?"

"Yes, sir. We're clear. Thank you." Deeks took the panic box and tucked it in his suit jacket pocket as Officer Morales and the other guard left.

"Good to see you, Deeks. That's a fine looking suit. You never dressed like that for work." Callen smiled warmly. He was as calm and relaxed as he was in the days before the deaths of Mike Renko, Lauren Hunter and Marcel Janvier. Their professional lives were in the toilet and Callen acted as if nothing happened.

"Sorry Callen, orange isn't really your color. Washes you out. Now that we've gotten the fashion review out of the way, what do you want? Why am I here?"

"Sit down, Deeks." Callen pointed to the chair across the table from where he sat. "No 'good to see you'? No 'how ya' doing'? If I didn't know better, I'd think you're angry."

"I'll stand, thanks." Deeks leaned on the wall slightly behind the empty chair. "I can't understand why I'd be angry. I watched you murder an unarmed man. Hetty quit. Granger is now in charge. Sam took a leave of absence. Sam and Kensi are under investigation by NCIS and because I'm the Liaison Officer, I'm under investigation by both NCIS and LAPD. Sam, Kensi and I wound up begging Hetty to return. Kensi cried during that meeting, you miserable son of a bitch, and that got Hetty to relent. So now, Kensi is beating herself up both for looking weak in front of Sam, Hetty and me and for making Hetty do something she may not have wanted to do. And even though she's back, Hetty and the rest of us are all still answering to a very cranky Owen Granger. So you can see why my mellow was harshed when I get a collect call from a junkie snitch with orders from you. And, oh yeah, you're twenty minutes late. You know, I agree with you. I think I'm angry too."

"It hasn't been easy for me in here."

"You'll excuse me if I'm more sympathetic to your collateral damage in all this. You know, people who considered you a friend." Deeks took a deep breath. "So, again, why am I here?"

"I need help and I need some I can speak to without being monitored. I have a good criminal lawyer but he isn't able to do what I need done. That's why I reached out to you," Callen explained. "I need your help, Deeks. A man's life is still in danger."

"Tell me your story and I'll decide if I can help. Your judgment of late has been questionable."

"This has to be between you and me. Keep the others out of this. Even Kensi."

"No."
"Excuse me?"

"I'm not your lawyer, Callen. No confidentiality. I don't answer to you anymore, either. Shooting an unarmed man, no matter how big a scumbag he was and how better the world is without him, isn't what I signed up for in my NCIS duties. Besides, I'm not lying to Kensi. I didn't tell her where I was going this morning at your request but I'll decide what she knows and doesn't know about this."

Callen lifted his eyebrow. "I don't think Kensi would be happy with you deciding what she does or doesn't know."

"You know, you're right." Deeks made a move to the green button near the door. "I need to get out of here to give her a full update of my whereabouts this morning and a sincere apology. She deserves better. Good seeing ya, watch your back."

"A man named Ira Weiss will be contacting you in the next few days."

Deeks turned back to Callen. "Who is he and what does he want with me?"

"Weiss is CIA. I've been working with him since Janvier killed Hunter."

"I'm sorry, you're working with the CIA?"

"When I was held back at the boathouse by Granger..."

"And Kensi, Sam and I were sent off to be killed," Deeks interrupted Callen. "I'd like that on the record since I'm being forced to be a lawyer this morning. Please continue."

Callen made a face. Deeks could tell this was not going the way Callen hoped. Good. The last few weeks weren't what Deeks thought they'd be either. "Granger was given orders by a friend of Weiss's in Naval Intelligence to keep me in the boathouse. Weiss found me there. We were partners when I was with the Agency."

"And it took you until the first week of June to share this?"

"You tell us everything about your interactions with LAPD? You sure as hell didn't share everything with Kensi back in November."

"Bastard," Deeks muttered. "I work for LAPD. I answer to them. I owe them."

"You owe Nate anything?"

"Nate? How is Nate involved in this?"

"Nate is Cherokee. The CIA lost contact with him just when Janvier got his hands on Atley."

"Nate is in Iran? As a spy?"

"He has been since we last saw him. He has been in and out of Iran multiple times over the last two years. He's been a big part of a resistance movement there under the guise of being a disgruntled ex-pat working with their government as part of some political theater."

"NCIS Nate? The mild-mannered shrink, Nate."

"Nate Getz, NCIS's own."
"And a drugged Atley gave him up."

"Exactly. The CIA knew that the feds would force NCIS to release Janvier. Nate's identity wasn't the only information Janvier had from Atley. He would have been running an auction for the stolen intelligence in the days after his release. I had authorization from the CIA to take lethal actions if Atley talked. The CIA is dealing with Atley and the intelligence fallout. I'm here because it went public. I won't be here long."

Deeks thought Callen was dreaming. The D.A.'s Office had a slam dunk case against Callen.
"What does this Ira Weiss want from me?"

"I'm indisposed." Callen tried to lift his legs but only got them a few inches off the ground. "The CIA is looking for someone to find Nate and get him stateside."

Deeks laughed. "And what can I do, pick him up at the airport? My knowledge of downtown Tehran is a good deal more limited than oh, say the Valley."

"You're a top flight operator, Deeks, the right man for the job. Just follow Weiss."

"Because that worked out so well for you."

"The news crew and patrol car were wrinkles we weren't prepared for."

"As opposed to you shooting an unarmed man, something your partner, your mentor and the rest of the team wasn't prepared for." Deeks wasn't laughing anymore. "Or unless 'we' is your CIA buddy Weiss and not your partner of five years or two women who love you like a son and a brother."

Callen sighed, "Deeks, Weiss is a good man. I worked with him in Russia and I trust him with my life. Next to you, he's the happiest dark soul I've ever met."

"I am not a dark soul," Deeks snapped, thinking the tone of his response really didn't support his argument.

"Oh Deeks, you're far too good at what we do not to have your demons. And Weiss has his. But you both get things done, put on a happy face and pretend the lies and the violence have no affect on you. I'm sure you'll be fine."

"I'm really not taking orders from you anymore."

"Nate. Think of it as taking orders from Nate. Or Hetty, wanting to save Nate."

"Son of a bitch," Deeks muttered. Deeks took a deep breath. "So Weiss contacts me..."

"He contacts you and you alone. Keep Kensi, Sam, Hetty and everyone else out of this."

"You're really not in a position to make that call," Deeks told him. "Besides, I already answer to two masters, not sure I can handle adding CIA to NCIS and LAPD for just M-E."

"This isn't about you Deeks. Nate's done a lot of good work in Tehran. If he's found, he'll be tortured for what he knows including the names of locals who have helped him along the way. They'll get those names and other intelligence from Nate. They will, not because Nate isn't strong but because after they've water boarded him, beaten him, smashed his teeth, ribs and fingers and used a car battery and jumper cables on him, he'd give them your home address just to make it stop. After they're done with him, they'll execute him and probably publicly with the people who helped him. And their families. He's been an excellent field operative; he needs to stay that way."
Saving Nate was a worthwhile cause even as Deeks began to think Callen was not. "I'll talk to Weiss if he calls."

"And you'll keep this meeting quiet."

Deeks didn't answer.

"You're telling Kensi."

"I tell her everything."

Callen chuckled, "Even the names of the women you sleeping with?"

"I'm not having that conversation with you." Deeks sighed, "Do you need anything else? Money in your canteen account? Cigarettes? Some other tradable items?"

"I'm not in gen-pop. Your old snitch Zero is a trustee working in the library, bringing books to those of us in segregation. He says hi by the way."

"I'm sure you'll give him my regards," Deeks replied dryly.

"He was helpful and really excited to talk to you. How well did you pay him Deeks?" Callen teased. Turning serious, he added, "I can take care of myself on this end. Meet with Weiss."

"Anything else?"

"How's Hetty?"

"Miserable," Deeks voice softened. "In like two days she lost Renko, Hunter and then you. She's only back because Kensi thought she could save the team with her the force of her personality."

"If anyone can, it is Hetty. What about Sam?"

"Except for the meeting with Hetty, I haven't seen Sam since you were booked."

"Kensi?"

"She doesn't like losing people who matter to her. You matter to her."

"And you?"

In a broadly false, cheerful tone, Deeks replied, "Oh, you know me, I put on a happy face and pretend the lies and the violence have no affect."

"I am sorry for the trouble you're all in but I did what I had to do."

"And I'll do the same." Deeks hit the green button on the wall. "Take care of yourself."

It took Deeks about ten minutes to get out of the correctional facility. He checked his cell phone as he crossed the parking lot to his car, pulling off his tie and taking off his suit jacket. Three missed calls from Kensi, no messages. In the car, he took a deep breath and replayed his conversation with Callen in his mind as he drove back to Los Angeles. As he turned on the 405, he fished out his phone from his jacket pocket and called Kensi.

"Where are you?" she demanded, more anxious than angry.
"Long story and one that probably is best not told on the phone. Can you get away?"

"No Sam, no you, Hetty's arguing with Granger again. I may tell Hetty I need a break just to get away from the tension." He heard her sigh. "It's not like there's anything to get done anyway."

"Meet me at Neptune's Net, say at two. If you can't get away, text me and we'll grab something out tonight."

"Are you in trouble?"

"We'll talk."

"Deeks," Kensi's alarm was obvious in her voice.

"We need to talk and not at your place or mine. I'll tell you everything, then I'll know how much trouble I'm in."

"How much trouble we're in. I'll be there at two." She hung up. He tossed his cell on the passenger's seat on top of his suit jacket.

He clicked on sports radio and lost himself in NBA conference finals talk and L.A.'s ridiculous lunchtime traffic.

x-x-x

2510 Virginia Avenue NW
Apartment 11D
Washington, DC
November 27, 2012, 8:10PM

Nell Jones was just getting use her small bungalow in Los Angeles so of course she was reassigned to Washington DC. She found some humor in moving from quaint Melrose Hill to a luxury apartment in the Watergate. This change, the fourth major move in her career, included bringing someone with her - Eric. They were in Washington for less than a month and Eric was already unhappy. Unhappy with the weather, unhappy with his Georgetown studio, unhappy with the "buttoned-up DC vibe." And if he was unhappy, so was she.

Eric missed Los Angeles. She didn't. She'd grown to hate the place.

The deaths of Kensi and Deeks ended any interest she had in remaining in Los Angeles. Kensi was her friend. They never told the guys but they did "girly" things together. Every bad BFF cliché, they were on board most Saturdays - yoga, mani-pedi, brunch, book stores. And all different places every week for Secret Agent Kensi. They had fun. They gossiped about the guys. They'd dream up incredible spy scenarios for Hetty and how she'd succeed against the taller forces of evil. They'd talk in generalities about their male partners, each knowing the other found their soul mate in and out of the office. They'd do silly things like monster car shows, WWE or the Professional Bull Riders Tour at the Forum. If you could check your brain at the door and scream like a lunatic, they were there.

She missed Deeks, too. They were the new people on the team together. He was there a few weeks earlier, though technically he was on the team for months while working a LAPD undercover job. Deeks figured out it was OK to joke with her and tease her before the others, not taking Hetty's initial reticence seriously. Not seeming to take much seriously in a group of very serious people until he absolutely had to. He also met her at 1AM outside of a sports bar on Super Bowl Sunday in February 2012 when there was a boot on her car's left rear wheel. He knew a guy who knew a guy
and the boot was off in less than an hour. Deeks told her to "pay your tickets next time" as she finally started her car to leave that night. He followed her home to make sure she was safe. For a guy who talked a lot, he never said a word about that night. She paid her tickets the following morning online - she was sure she was up to date after that.

Los Angeles was no longer her home after September, it was where Callen ruined his life and ran, Kensi and Deeks died violently and Hetty disappeared. It was a year and a half of good memories followed by weeks and weeks of heartache. The transfer to the Navy Yard with a big promotion and Eric working nearby was the only good thing that happened in Los Angeles this year. Now, she was living in a great apartment, finally dating Eric and starting to heal. Only starting though. Last week, she saw that "Titanic" was on cable and almost pulled out her cell phone to call Kensi for a girl's night in.

Nell probably should have made two trips from her car, balancing her mail, laptop and groceries as she struggled to open her front door. Once in, she made a beeline to the kitchen, hoping to place everything gently on the table before it all crashed to the floor. Just as she put everything down, an arm snaked around her waist while a hand clamped over her mouth. She heard the front door slam closed and started fighting against her captor.

"Nell," a familiar voice whispered in her ear, "if you kick me anywhere important, Kensi will never forgive you."

# # #
Chapter Summary

Key dates: Memorial Day Weekend/Late May 2012 - Marriage; Opening of Olympics/Late July 2012 - Escape; Labor Day Week/Early September 2012 - Explosion; President's Day Weekend/mid-February 2013 - OSP closes.

Chapter 3

"Who can be so overtly covert?
Sometimes even covertly overt.
Fucking-a-man
CIA Man!"
- "CIA Man" by The Fugs

Neptune's Net
June 5, 2012

A shower, because that prison stench lingers, and a change of clothes still didn't make Deeks feel any better about his morning. He watched Kensi pull into the restaurant's parking lot. He walked over to her SUV, trying to keep things light. "Sorry about this morning, I was sworn to secrecy."

She frowned at him as she got out. "I thought we didn't do secrets."

Deeks thought Kensi looked tired as he gave her a quick kiss. Her morning was obviously as taxing as his. "More professional responsibility this morning than secrets, actually. I'll tell you everything after we've gotten some food. In the famous words of my lovely and kick-ass partner, I'm hungry."

The two walked in and Kensi looked at the menu. "I don't know what I want yet. Get a table and I'll order for both of us. Shrimp tacos for you?"

"And the chowder."

"Always the chowder."

The restaurant was not overly busy. With the weekday lunch crowd thinning, he saw a nice table in the corner of the patio. Deeks sat down, rolling his shoulders and stretching a little.

"L.A. traffic will do that to you every time," a man said as he sat across the table from Deeks. He tall, slim and fit. Dressed in a black Keith Richards and the XPensive Winos tee shirt, a pair of tan cargo shorts and Teva flip flops, Deeks's new dining partner was one of those men who could be forty or could be seventy. His hair was long, grey and pulled back haphazardly into a ponytail. Youthful enough but not young. "I don't know how you Los Angelinos do it."

"Let me guess," Deeks said. "You're Ira Weiss."

"Glad to meet you, man," Weiss stuck out his hand but Deeks made no move to shake it. If Weiss was disappointed by Deeks's reaction, it certainly didn't show. "I'd be lying if I said Callen told me a lot about you." Weiss looked around. "I've been in and out of Los Angeles for decades but
somehow I've never been in this place. This is cool."

Deeks eyed Kensi as she was walking to the table. He scratched the left side of his jaw where he had an old scar. They set a number of distress signals over the years, that was certainly one. "I started coming here as a kid," Deeks shared. "My old man liked his fish." Deeks watched as Kensi retrieved her weapon while still carrying their lunches and two drinks. She was a woman of many talents.

"How was your meeting with Callen?"

"Interesting morning," Deeks was noncommittal. "Always glad to leave that place."

Kensi walked up to the table with a big smile. "Baby, you didn't tell me we'd have company," she cooed as she sat next to Weiss. She put the tray on the table with her left hand, pushing her gun into Weiss's side with her right. "Don't move."

Weiss tilted his head and smiled at her. "And you must be the lovely Agent Kensi Blye. Your photographs do not do you justice." He turned his attention back to Deeks. "She is stunning."

"I can come across this table almost as fast as she can shoot," Deeks warned.

"Slowly, put your hands flat on the table," Kensi ordered. "Who's this?" she asked Deeks.

"Kensi Blye, this is CIA Agent Ira Weiss," Deeks offered as an introduction. "It seems he's the reason Callen shot Janvier and our lives are all a mess."

"Well, you two, your lives aren't a complete mess now are they, Marty?" Weiss replied. "And I'm unarmed Kensi so you can put your weapon away. I'll keep my hands just where they are. Eat your lunch, your food is going to get cold. It smells amazing."

Deeks gave Kensi a small nod and she holstered her gun.

Weiss smiled when the gun was put away. "Go, eat you two. Enjoy your lunches, I'll talk, you eat. I don't mind."

"I do mind. If you want to talk to me, I need to talk to Kensi first. And I'm going to need a whole hell of a lot more than Callen telling me what a great guy you are to listen to your side of the story." Deeks watched Kensi's eyes go wide at the mention of Callen's name. "So if you'll excuse us, I'm having lunch with my partner."

"Of course," Weiss answered reasonably. "I'm only in L.A. today. I have a plane to catch in a few hours. I planned on approaching you next week but things changed last night and our plan is being reworked. I figured after you saw Callen this morning," Deeks saw Kensi's eyes go wide, "I'd at least say hi. I'll call you. We can do lunch next week. Maybe even come back here because hey, that smells great. I never think of soup when I'm in SoCal but wow, people here are ordering chowder in June. That has to be amazing." Weiss slowly stood up making no sudden moves. "You two enjoy."

Deeks put his hand under the table. After hitting some petrified gum, he found what he was looking for. "Hey, I," Deeks called to the CIA Agent as he was halfway across the patio. "Ira."

Weiss turned around and answered with a big smile, "Yep."

"You forgot something." Deeks threw the small listening device put under their table to the man who planted it. Weiss snatched the bug with his right hand. "Nice catch," Deeks told him.
"I could say the same to you, Marty. You and Kensi have a great lunch and a great day." Weiss winked, his smile never wavered.

Kensi moved to the chair across from Deeks but turned around to watch Weiss leave. "How about we eat then talk as we walk on the beach?"

"I love a woman with a plan." Deeks smiled for what felt like the first time that day.

Lunch was full of "The Bachelorette" and Kings hockey talk just in case someone was listening. After a short ride to Leo Carrillo State Park, Deeks recounted his morning for an amazed Kensi while they sat on the rocks and watched the waves. The two agreed that any conversation about the CIA, Weiss, Callen or Nate would be held in outdoor, noisy places - the beach, shopping malls, crowded streets. No phone calls or texts on their work phones - nothing - until they knew what Weiss wanted. After leaving the beach, they swept his place and then hers but found no listening devices.

Kensi picked up a burn phone for him, Deeks did the same for her to confuse anyone watching them. In the following days, while Deeks surfed, Kensi spent most early mornings on her new burn phone with friends in the Washington DC intelligence community looking for background on Ira Weiss. According to all, Weiss was what Callen said - a trustworthy operative with a sunny disposition but lethal intent if need be. And in an operation with Weiss, there was often a need.

Kensi and Deeks continued to show up to the Mission every day. Both were given paperwork to do and training classes to complete. With Sam still on leave and both of them under investigation, Kensi and Deeks remained deskbound except for a late Friday afternoon interview session with Granger that took them to the boathouse. Deeks was quickly dismissed when he refused to even confirm his name to Granger without invoking his right to having his LAPD union rep and a union lawyer present. Kensi gave Granger one word answers sitting on the wrong side of the table once again in the interview room. Deeks watched the two on an iPad, a loaner from Nell, while he sat in his car a block away.

Just before lunch on Monday June 11th, Deeks cell phone chirped with the phone number of his LAPD union rep on the screen. Frank Torres was a good cop, a good union rep and someone everyone at LAPD respected. One thing he was not was Ira Weiss and that's who was on the line.

"Hey Marty," Weiss started. "I'm back in LA and want to meet. You free tomorrow? I was thinking Shutters on the Beach. I had a great brunch when I recruited Nate."

"Another person from this office whose life hasn't quite worked out after chatting with you and the CIA. Surely, you have to realize that what's happened to Callen and Nate are not great selling points for whatever plans you have for me." Deeks tried to catch Kensi's eye but she was engrossed in whatever paperwork she was doing.

"Nate has done and hopefully still is doing good work for his country. There is no better selling point, as you call it, than that. You can do that too, Marty. Or you can sit on your ass being investigated for Callen's actions. According to the files I've seen, several members of LAPD brass are wondering why you just stood there doing nothing while Callen held a gun on Janvier. That does not bode well for your career."

"If you've read the files you'd probably know I'm not exactly the golden boy when it comes to the brass. You've also probably read my statement." That got Kensi's attention. Deeks mouthed the word "Weiss" to Kensi before continuing with the call. "In a million years, I never thought he'd shoot. Not in my statement but in my defense, I also didn't know then what was told to me last Tuesday."
"Very good Marty, you're being quite covert even as you sit in a highly secure, secret government facility. I think you have a real aptitude for this. Of course, you've got your own secrets from most of the people in that facility too, don't you? Tomorrow at two at Shutters on the Beach. Go to the front desk and ask for Doug Colvin. They'll point you in the right direction. And bring your lovely wife with you."

"Planned on doing that anyway."

"Yeah, I sort of figured that. I have to ask you one question. Does Henrietta know about the two of you?"

Deeks was surprised by the 'Henrietta' reference. "You'll have to ask her yourself. One of the first things I figured out when I first got here was that it was always a mistake to underestimate what that woman does and does not know."

"You surround yourself with smart, strong, fascinating women, Marty. An admirable trait that tells me a lot of good things about you."

"Two tomorrow," Deeks said as he hung up. Kensi started to get up but Deeks shook his head no. Instead, he walked over to Hetty's office. "Do you have a minute, Hetty?"

Hetty looked up from her laptop. Gone was the some of that mischievous twinkle in her eye that Deeks thought made her Hetty. Instead, mourning the losses of Agents Renko and Hunter and the devastation of Callen's actions left her a shell of the "tea-sipping svengali" Bates regularly called her. "What can I do for you, Detective?" She pointed to her guest chair.

Deeks took a deep breath and sat down. How to sell this lie without actually lying? He held up his phone with the caller ID clearly visible. "My union rep. The LAPD investigation is not going well for me."

"I'm sorry."

"You know I don't have a lot of friends there and this may be an opportunity for them to fire me." Deeks managed to remain on the right side of the truth.

"What do you need from me? The offer I made to you a year ago would have still been on the table before Janvier's actions." Hetty nearly spit out Janvier's name. "I'm not in a position to support..."

"Oh, no Hetty, it's not that. I need to meet with someone tomorrow about what's going on and I'd like to take the day. The meeting is at two but I need some time to think about what my options are going forward." All completely true. Deeks was almost proud of himself. Almost.

"Of course, you take the time you need. Even with the day you used last week, you have nearly a month in accrued time."

"Thanks Hetty. Another favor?"

"If I can."

"Last week when I was out, Kensi was here alone and it wasn't..." he started searching for the correct word.

"Granger was here and it was not a pleasant day."

"That's probably a nicer way than I would have put it."
"Did Miss Blye speak to you about it?"

"Hetty," Deeks leaned in and lowered his voice "You guys, Callen, Sam, you - you're family to her. Callen is in jail, Sam's not coming back until God knows when and the day I'm not here she sees Granger going after you."

"I can fight my own battles, Mr. Deeks."

"Of that, I have no doubt. But I left Kensi here alone Tuesday and she was bothered by what happened."

"What would you recommend?"

"A full mental health day. I know she took some time around Memorial Day to visit Camp Pendleton but..."

Hetty put up her hand. "No, it is not a bad idea." She tilted her head and looked at him. "With all that is going on around here, it is a good thing you're watching Miss Blye's back. But Mr. Deeks, who is watching yours?"

"I got you, I got Kensi and I like my chances right there. Tomorrow, who knows, things might be looking up," Deeks said with a smile. Almost everything was true.

"I'll talk to Miss Blye. Good luck tomorrow."

"As I said Hetty, I got you and I got Kensi. I got all the luck I need."

Kensi and Deeks spent Monday night watching the Kings win the Stanley Cup on her DVR. He showed up with Thai food just after eight. Kensi swore to him she maintained radio silence going home from work but Deeks didn't think she missed the kids in Kings jerseys jumping for joy in the street near her place. She was, after all, a highly trained investigator for a federal agency. She'd likely notice those things.

He ducked out of her place just before five in the morning with an idea. He left a note saying he'd pick her up at 1:15PM and to pack an overnight bag. They were going to talk about whatever happened with Weiss and they were doing it away from everyone. No talking on the beach, no walking and talking at a mall. Deeks called a woman he knew from his old Max Gentry days. She was at the wrong party at the wrong time and Deeks hustled her out of Ray's place just before the cops arrived. She got scared straight, finished her degree in hotel management at UNLV and was now a concierge for the Four Seasons. When an investigation took him there as Marty Deeks, LAPD and not Max Gentry, asshole, she told him if he ever needed a room she could get it for him at cost. A junior suite was his. She even comped him a couple's massage.

Since he guessed this was either a job interview or recruiting session, Deeks wore a tan suit with a dark blue dress shirt and no tie. Gave him the air of seriousness, he guessed, but didn't feel like a court suit. Then again, he thought, the last time he was recruited for a government job, he was wearing a white dress shirt, jeans and a colorful assortment of bruises compliments of Sam Hanna. He got that job. Deeks also slipped on his wedding ring. Remind Weiss that he and Kensi were a package deal.

Pulling up to Kensi's place, he realized worrying about his clothes was a waste of time and likely would be for the rest of his life. Her button down black shirt was silk and amazing. White pants, a pair of impossibly high heel black sandals and her rings completed the outfit. Weiss was right about one thing - she was stunning. He popped the trunk and watched her toss her overnight bag in.
"I thought we'd have breakfast or something this morning. Come up with a plan," Kensi said as she got into the car, leaning over to kiss him on the cheek.

He eased his car into traffic. "The plan is to hear Weiss out and then decided our next move."

"Or your next move."

Deeks shook his head. "Our next move. Couple, partners, pair, twosome."

"You said Callen didn't want me involved." Deeks saw again how much that bothered her.

"Callen also wanted to know if I told you about the women I was sleeping with. Since that's been you and only you for a good long time, I think his judgment is questionable when it comes to the two of us. Besides, he is not in a position to decide who is and isn't involved. He gave that job up a month ago."

They drove in relative quiet to Shutters on the Beach. Once at the hotel, the desk clerk directed them to the Presidential Suite, calling up to Mr. Colvin as they walked to the elevator. Deeks took Kensi's hand as the got to the suite door. He was surprised when she kissed him just as he went to knock.

"I love you," she whispered, smiling at him.

He cupped her cheek and kissed her back. "Love you, too. Let's do this." Deeks knocked on the door.

x-x-x

2510 Virginia Avenue NW
Apartment 11D
Washington, DC
November 27, 2012, 8:10PM

Deeks returned from the kitchen with a glass of water for a visibly shaken Nell. And by visibly shaken, he meant actually trembling. He was expecting her to be either angry or surprised. He wasn't expecting was how upset she was. It was not only a visceral reaction but a visual one too.

"Here you go." Deeks put the glass her coffee table on a little coaster she had right there and plopped into an accent chair. Kensi sat with Nell on the couch, holding the shocked woman's hand, rubbing her back, promising she could explain everything. Deeks wondered if Kensi would provide a similar explanation to him when they left Nell. The last few months were insane.

"We saw you die," Nell said after taking a small sip of water and a deep breath. "Well, who you use to be." Nell pointed to Deeks, now with black wire-rim glasses, short brown hair, a well maintained mustache and goatee. Kensi looked different too - short lighter brown hair, green contacts, expensive jewelry and clothes.

"You saw a building blow up. There were two bodies in the building. They were long dead. We were in a van driving away when the explosion happened. We've been working with the CIA since early summer," Kensi explained.

"Why?"

"We're working on rescuing Cherokee from the Janvier case."
"Nate," she gasped.

"You know?" Kensi asked. Deeks was stunned for a second then realized they were dealing with Nell.

"I saw the intelligence report," Nell confirmed. "NCIS and Naval Intelligence can't find him, the CIA is responsible for him."

"And we've been tasked with rescuing him," Deeks added.

"So now you don't exist. Makes sense, I guess. Protect you from Janvier's family and any leaks."

Deeks changed his mind. Nell knew a few things, not nearly enough. "They've built us lives and we're going to be living them effective December 1st," he told her.

"He's Quicksilver, I'm Xena in any intelligence dispatches."

Nell smiled for the first time since Deeks grabbed her. "Of course, you are. I'm guessing you need my help and not in an official capacity."

"Oh Nell," Deeks returned her smile, "we've missed you."

# # #
Chapter Notes

Key dates before Chapter 4: Memorial Day weekend - Marriage; Opening Game of
Olympics - Escape; Labor Day Week - Explosion; President's Day 2013- OSP closes.
Everything going forward is date stamped.

All spy stuff going forward is 100% fictional (and probably unintentionally hilarious).

Chapter 4.

"(trust me...i know what i'm doing!)
from day one i got things wrong
one day i'll get things right (MAYBE)
i never thought i knew the answers
while the whole world thinks they might." - "Trust Me" by Jesus Jones

Shutters on the Beach
President's Suite
June 12, 2012

"I'm so happy you two showed," Ira Weiss walked them into the suite's living room. There was a
large couch, two Queen Anne chairs and a coffee table in front of a marble fireplace. In the corner,
there was a small catering set-up with a fruit tray, a cookie plate, some juices and bottled water.
Weiss was playing the good host, looking comfortable and casual with his hair down, black jeans
and a black v-neck tee-shirt.

"Callen asked us to see you. We're here," Deeks said as he and Kensi sat on the couch.

"Well, Callen asked you to see me but I don't think he was aware of the change in your Facebook
relationship status." Weiss walked over to the food. "They put together a nice spread here. The
cookies are excellent. And I really have to thank you. I tried that Neptune's Net last night. Oh my
God, fabulous. Fun crowd too."

"Glad to help. Why are we here?"

Weiss put three cookies on a plate and poured himself some sort of fruit juice mix. "Ah, right to
business. First, I want to apologize for last week." Weiss took himself, the cookies and the juice to
one of the Queen Anne chairs across from the couch and sat down. He put the juice glass on the
coffee table, the cookie plate on his knee. "I should have let you two talk about your meeting with
Callen. I know he wanted it kept hush-hush, that's G, but what he said had to be a surprise."

"To say the least," Kensi joined the conversation.

"Yeah. Well, as an act of good faith, I've buried your marriage license."

"Excuse me?" Deeks looked at Kensi who shrugged her shoulders.

"I'm sure Kensi is aware that NCIS randomly does data searches on its agents and while I don't
know for sure, I'm guessing you get the same treatment Marty." Weiss sipped his juice and continued, "You know, make sure there are no big increases in bank accounts, sudden large charges on your credit cards. Keeping everyone honest through their paperwork trail. Both of you had a complete data search on May 16th as part of the investigation into the Janvier shooting. Any search after the 25th would have turned up your marriage license. Did you have a plan for when it was discovered?"

"Say as little as possible," Kensi answered.

"Which for me is harder than you think," Deeks joked.

Weiss smiled. "The marriage license is now buried as a classified document and even your Director, Kensi, does not have the security clearance to uncover it. No matter what happens here today, it stays buried until June 1, 2013. After that, you're on your own. Well, hopefully you'll be working with us."

Kensi nodded and Deeks started, "You'd have to admit that Callen's current location and his legal status isn't much of a selling point for any offer you may have to make."

"We were not prepared for a television crew and the LAPD cruiser being at the meet," Weiss replied calmly. "We expected Janvier to have some armed bodyguards and there to be an attempt on Callen's life. That would have been the opportunity to limit Janvier's damage in an act of self-defense or to bring Janvier back in. He could have been officially charged with the attempts on Agent Hanna's life as well as the lives of you two and whatever we thought was going to happened at the meet to Callen. If you read the amnesty agreement he was given, it did not include the three attempted murder charges."

"Did you know Janvier had a bomb in that building?" Kensi asked.

"Of course not. If my buddy in Naval Intelligence didn't get to Granger in time, Callen would have been with you. I needed Callen alive and well from what I saw from security and surveillance cameras, the two of you and Agent Hanna were lucky to get out of that building."

Kensi asked, "Why Callen? I know you two were partnered in the CIA but why didn't you just take Janvier into custody yourself. God knows your Agency has big-footed other NCIS cases."

"I don't look at it as big-footing, I think of it as the Agency is often in the best position to handle matters. Your office at NCIS does a spectacular job. Henrietta's eye for talent is the envy of most intelligence communities. Janvier's obsession with Callen after the shooting made it wiser to let NCIS handle his detention after the deaths of your agents. Though, to be clear, the CIA always had plans for him."

"So you let Janvier murder Mike Renko and Lauren Hunter," Kensi challenged.

"Absolutely not. Once he left Los Angeles last March, Janvier dropped off the grid. We have records of him seeing doctors in New York, Munich, Japan but we were always a day or two behind. The doctors just enraged Janvier. There were no medical reasons for his terrible headaches and inability to taste his food. He was a mess and Callen was going to pay."

"But he didn't go after Callen."

"Oh, he did in a way Marty. He bought some information from Dracul Comescu about your team. Comescu sold out Lauren Hunter from what we've been able to piece together. The woman Comescu was sleeping with was on our payroll."
"Did she mention his small pox scheme?" Deeks asked.

"No, she did not and we're no longer in business with her. Honesty or the lack thereof has deadly repercussions in our line of business. Back to Janvier, with Comescu's information, he was able to find Henrietta. He had dossiers on Callen, the two of you, Sam Hanna, Mike Renko, Henrietta, several of Callen's old partners from the CIA, including me, from his DEA days and a team leader for NCIS out of the Navy Yard named Gibbs." Weiss took another bite of a cookie. "Delish. Janvier was able to manipulate an investigation that caught Owen Granger's attention. Your Agent Renko was coming off a long undercover investigation and this looked to be an easy two month assignment back in Los Angeles with some moron gun runners. While that case was going on, he abducted Agent Hunter and set the wheels in motion. Janvier, however, was ever the businessman and what he got from Atley was going to make him hundreds of millions while he was going to kill Callen."

"How do you know Henrietta?" Deeks wondered. He was suspicious of the formal use of Hetty's first name.

"I met the incomparable Miss Lange on "Death on the Nile" in 1977. She was running the make-up department and working personally with Miss Davis, Miss Lansbury and Miss Smith. Oh, they were a trio of magnificent dames. Foursome if you include Henrietta." Weiss smiled brightly, obviously lost in a memory. "I thought I was the shit, this 23-year old CIA Agent on my first major film, working in Egypt. So cool."

Kensi seemed genuinely interested. "Why were you on a movie set?"

"I'm a sound man to the outside world. You name it, I can mike it. I worked in features for years, finally got a fulltime gig on "All My Children" in the mid 1990's that sadly ended last summer. Now I freelance on a couple of New York based crime dramas."

"So you're spy guy on the side?" Kensi asked.

"No, I'm a sound recording artist on the side; the CIA is a full time job. The film work made it easy to get in and out of countries, to go to parties at embassies and wealthy arts patrons' homes and wire those for sound too."

"So you're a sound man for the CIA."

"Among other assignments, Kensi. Back in the day, Henrietta and I looking for the same asset while we were in Egypt. She figured me out long before I figured her out but that's because Lord knows she's not the first person in any room that you'd pick for the bad-ass spy."

"She made you." Deeks teased.

"I was green. I made rookie mistakes. She made sure I didn't get myself killed, I helped her smuggle home two rugs of questionable origins. After that, we worked together on eight or nine films. "The Russia House" was our greatest achievement. Tail end of the Cold War and we're in Moscow touring government buildings and partying at exclusive clubs for the ruling class, all as guests of the Soviets. It was so cool." Weiss chuckled. "With the Cold War over, I got the fulltime gig in New York. I'm busy during UN Week and other international events but mostly the last few years were making sure Susan Lucci could be heard for fans of the wacky doings in Pine Valley."

"Why do you call her Henrietta?" Deeks had to know.

"Because Hetty is beneath her. A woman of her accomplishments deserves full respect," Weiss
almost sounded offended by the nickname. "And besides, it sounds so cool on a listening device. Any other questions about my background?"

"Not right now," Kensi told him. "Is Nate is really Cherokee?"

"Nate has been working in Iran for quite some time. He is there as Jacob Stein, a radical college professor who is basically pro anything America is against and against anything America supports. The Iranian government uses him as a 'truth teller' in their words about the evils of the West. He's made inroads in so many levels of the government. Nate's just been a star. Henrietta trains her people well."

"Nate's," Deeks wanted to phrase this right, "Nate is Jewish..."

"A fellow member of the tribe. But so is Jacob Stein. Jacob has renounced his religion, adopted the radical beliefs of the government. Nate has sold Jacob's embrace of the government's beliefs beautifully and won the trust of many key officials."

"When did you lose Nate?" Kensi cut to the chase.

"I don't think of it as losing Nate as much as him wisely hiding until he can be extracted." Weiss took a bite of another cookie. "These really are good. You sure you don't want to try one? Don't know what you're missing."

"When did you lose Nate?" Deeks repeated Kensi's question.

"We were able to get word to Nate when Atley disappeared that he may be compromised. He was supposed to be meeting with a high ranking official in the Ministry of Intelligence who he was working to turn into an asset. He never made that meeting and hasn't been heard from since."

"And you know this how?" Deeks asked.

"This wouldn't be the first official Nate turned. Professor Stein is supposedly in Gilan Province writing an anti-America book and enjoying the summer weather with several government minders nearby. Nate slipped away from his minders to meet with this official while the asset-to-be was on vacation with his family. Now Nate's gone and we're looking for him."

"Could the government have him?" Kensi worried.

"No. If they had him, we'd know." Weiss finished his juice. "We have people inside their intelligence community and in the prison system. He's in hiding but hiding just a bit too well."

"And the original plan was to have Callen find him."

"Yes. Obviously the plan was put together quickly. The other operatives Atley gave up were easier to contact and extract from their locations, though replacing them with new operatives will be very difficult. Nate and another agent on a different continent are the only ones we haven't been able to find. Callen recommended you, Marty, as his replacement."

"As I've said before, Callen's decision making has become questionable in recent weeks. Outside of a drunken spring break week in Cancun and a trip to Romania last year, I've never left the States."

"Yes, when I got back to Langley last week, the deficiencies in your background were the top subject of discussion. The LAPD psych eval is for shit to join the force and you never even took a second one until after your first undercover assignment was complete."
"Special circumstances." Deeks felt defensive. "And I did OK."

"Agreed, but jumping out of a surveillance truck and covering for a drunken colleague, while a case saver, was no guarantee you'd succeed. The second psych eval was a classic case of CYA. You were deemed fit for the undercover work because if you weren't, the arrests you were responsible for were in peril. Now, you've graded out fine with NCIS so you've got that going for you. You've been awarded a number of commendations from both LAPD and NCIS but there were several LAPD Internal Affairs investigations."

"There are always IA investigations for undercover cops. They worry about officers enjoying their undercover lifestyle too much."

"You enjoy being a pedophile?"

"No. I didn't enjoy being any of my undercover identities. Scumbags, losers and convicts."

"You didn't enjoy playing house with your then bride-to-be last month?"

"We're done." Deeks rose, annoyed. "I'm happy to go back to work and wait to be fired by the LAPD."

"Sit down Marty, I certainly did not mean to offend. As we were talking about the holes in your resume last week, the one fact we kept returning to was the length and the success of your operations. You were made exactly once and that's because you were sold out by a dirty cop. So we've got to weigh all this undercover success and Callen's recommendation with the fact that that English is your first and only language and most of your exposure to world culture is limited to the food court at the Glendale Galleria."

Deeks sat down and saw Kensi smile a little at the Glendale Galleria line. Deeks found it hard to stay angry at Weiss when Kensi was smiling with all that was going on.

"Now about LAPD," Weiss got up from his chair and took a file folder from a briefcase sitting on a desk. "This is what they have on you." Weiss handed Deeks the file, grabbing two more cookies from the catering tray. "It looks like your boss Roger Bates and the officers present at Janvier's shooting are on your side when it comes to the investigation. Internal Affairs seems to have it out for you, though. I've seen internal investigations of members of other agencies before and they're not investigating you. They're looking for an excuse to fire you."

"Quinn," Kensi muttered. Deeks thought the same thing. Quinn's friends and co-workers were getting even.

"So the LAPD wants me out, the CIA thinks I'm under qualified and NCIS has me deskbound." Deeks turned to Kensi, "You still like me, don't you?"

Kensi smiled warmly, "Most days."

"Good to know." Deeks winked at her.

"Yes, that is good to know," Weiss rejoined the conversation. "While investigating Marty, Kensi caught a number of people's eye. You, Kensi, are the operational opposite of Marty. Multilingual, extensive DoD approved training. Sorry Marty, a large number of bar fights and street brawls don't impress the boys at Langley as much as your wife's skills."

Kensi smiled at Deeks, "I have skills."
"I am not saying a word. I want you to like me for the rest of the day."

"But Kensi has limited operative experience," Weiss noted. "Your turn as the happy house-sitters Justin and Melissa Waring was your longest undercover experience Kensi and one of Marty's shortest. And you were living in the same city where you make your homes, you were travelling twice a week to NCIS's offices and most of your interactions were with harmless civilians."

Deeks chuckled, "Obviously, you never met the 'Fifty Shades' couple next door."

"Ah, we saw photos of the handcuffs on Alex Vasnev. Imagine the embarrassment of not only being a captured spy but also being brought in wearing some," Weiss switched into a near perfect Russian accent, "decadent American sex toy. The indignity of it all." Weiss chuckled as he returned to his regular speaking voice. "Kensi, the minute you have a completed long, successful operation on your CV, the array of alphabet agencies will be on your doorstep with job offers."

"So you're beating the Christmas rush?" Kensi wondered.

"In a way. Marty, you're all raw talent and natural skill. There is something to be said for holding your own in a street fight. You're good with a gun, good in a fight and you're fast on your feet. Kensi, you're all training. There is something to be said for being prepped for every possible scenario. You've got a sniper's eye and more Defense Department training than any operative I've seen. If you were one person, you'd be the greatest agent ever."

"Or cop," Deeks felt the need to protect his career choices.

"Or cop." Weiss stood again, grabbed a few more cookies and two files. He handed one file to Deeks, one to Kensi. "The plan several weeks ago was to have Callen get in country and get Nate out. You," Weiss pointed to Deeks, "were going to be slotted into Callen's assignment but that's not going to work either. Instead, we're building new undercover assignments, this time a husband and wife. The two of you would be removed from your current lives for several weeks of training. Kensi, as you can see from our training plan, we'd like you to learn Farsi as well as some undercover techniques. Marty, you'll be brought up to speed on your DoD training. The fact that you didn't have your small pox shot until last month is a disgrace."

"And what's Nate supposed to do while I'm taking MacGyver 101 classes and Kensi is conjugating verbs with personal pronouns in Farsi?"

"Nate is likely with friendlies and a little time and distance between the agents extracting him will probably make the operation go better. Any American traveling in Iran in the next few weeks will get a great deal of scrutiny from their intelligence community. We've sent word out to our people in country that if they see Nate, he's to sit tight, we'll get him. You'll be the team to get him if you agree to what's in those folders."

"Callen would have been travelling as a Russian," Deeks said.

"Correct." Weiss seemed impressed.

"And by removed from our current lives, you mean..." Kensi wondered.

"I don't think we can explain you missing for what could be weeks for training and months undercover. Add in the dossiers Janvier had on both of you..."

"You're going to kill us." Deeks said.

Weiss remained impressed. "Not literally but yeah, you'll die rather spectacular, public deaths."
"Who will know we're alive?" Kensi asked.

"Each other."

Deeks shook his head no. "Members of the Special Projects team have some of the highest security clearances assigned. I get keeping LAPD out of the loop but NCIS? Hetty just lost Renko and Hunter. We can't do that to her."

"Janvier's dossiers were rather complete." Weiss was back on his feet and pulled a photo out of his briefcase. He handed it to Deeks. "This was in his file about you, Marty."

Deeks looked at the picture. "Shit." He joined Kensi and two of her childhood friends stationed at Pendleton at some dumpy bar near the ocean the April weekend they set the final plans for their Delmar Beach wedding. The friends left early - some early training exercise or something - so he and Kensi stayed and listened to a lousy U2 cover band. The photo showed him settling their check, her wrapped around him wanting to go back to their room and her engagement ring was in the photo for the world to see.

He handed the photo to Kensi. "Oh God," she gasped.

"The dossiers have been buried by my people. To the best of our knowledge, Janvier did nothing with them. He was building a file of those close to Callen."

"But you're not sure."

"No. Look, you could be called in for a long undercover role with a joint CIA-NCIS task force, sorry CIA can't work with LAPD officially, but I think your names being out of all intelligence memos and plans is the only way to go. Besides, with Marty's status in question with the LAPD, you..."

"Might be better off dead." Deeks took a deep breath. "Kensi and I need to talk about this."

"Of course." Weiss leaned forward. "You don't have to do this if you don't want to or don't think you can. I understand both of you are extraordinarily loyal to Henrietta. I know we're asking you to walk away from lives you've worked hard to earn, friends and family. I know all this and I will respect any decision you two make. The CIA has every intention of extracting Nate. I think you're the two to do it."

Deeks stood with the files Weiss gave the two of them. He held Kensi's hand when she stood. "How can we contact you?"

Standing, Weiss told them, "I'll find you. I'll need to know by next Friday." Weiss walked them to the room door. "Backstopping has begun, training sessions arranged, operations planned. Based on what I know of the two of you, you're the perfect pair to get Nate. I'm sure you'll do the right thing."

Deeks wished he shared Weiss's confidence.

x-x-x

717 Dune Road,
Quogue, New York
February 19, 2013

Fed and happy, Kelly Nessler-Kennedy was working in her home office. The former Kensi Blye
read the latest intelligence reports from several operatives, translated intercepts, spoke with field agents and hoped for a lead that would get them back to their friends and what they could rebuild of their old lives.

Kelly's husband, Dean Kennedy was in his den. The artist formerly known as Marty Deeks, as he liked to think of himself, went through hours of surveillance feeds on multiple large screens on his office walls, paging through photos from all over the world on his iPad and cross-checked intel from Kensi's field agents.

And then his laptop that nobody in the outside world knew about except Nell Jones beeped. Marty Deeks found one of the two people he was desperate to see.

##

Just a reminder: All the CIA/spy mentions are fictional. I do not believe the sets of Hetty's movies and New York based soap operas or crime dramas were hotbeds of international spy intrigue. I just like the idea that they were.
Five

Chapter Summary

Key dates before Chapter 5: Memorial Day weekend - Marriage; Opening Game of Olympics - Escape; Labor Day Week - Explosion; President's Day 2013- OPS closes. Everything going forward is date stamped.

Chapter 5.

"Every time I thought I'd got it made
It seemed the taste was not so sweet
So I turned myself to face me
But I've never caught a glimpse
Of how the others must see the faker
I'm much too fast to take that test" - "Changes" by David Bowie

Four Seasons Hotel Beverly Hills
Junior Suite
June 13, 2012 2:47AM

Deeks stared at the ceiling while Kensi slept in his arms. As he thought, the conversation about the CIA's offer was simple. And it was. Kensi wanted to rescue Nate. He did too. His corpse would probably still be rotting in that abandoned power station if it wasn't for Nate, Kensi, Sam, Hetty and the rest getting him away from Radovan Lazik. They rescued him, the least he could do was return the favor when the chance presented itself.

That wasn't the issue. There were others, though, and those were robbing him of sleep.

"I can hear you thinking," a sleepy but blissed-out sounding Kensi said into his chest.

Deeks made a mental note earlier that an evening massage makes Kensi happy and mellow. More early evening massages for Kensi. "You can't hear me thinking. I'm a very quiet thinker."

"There is nothing about you that's quiet, Deeks," Kensi pulled herself up and smiled at him. She kissed him on the jaw, working her way up to his ear. She whispered, "Tell me how to make it better."

"Oh Kens, you make everything better." Deeks kissed Kensi. He gave her a smile. "It's all good."

"No it's not. We have very specific roles in this relationship. I'm the silent brooding one when troubled, you're Mr. In Touch With His Feelings."

"I'd rather touch you than my feelings." He wiggled his eyebrows at her as he ran his hand through her hair. "Though, you can touch my feelings or anything else you want."

"Deeks," Kensi offered a mock warning.

"Maybe, I want to try being the brooding one. Why should you have all the fun?"
"It's not you. Be you." When he didn't answer, she sat up. "Are you rethinking the rescue?"

"No, not at all. It's the right thing to do."

"But."

He took a deep breath. "What if we get there and I'm not up to the job. What if I get you captured, if I get you killed. Kensi, I can't..." Deeks shook his head, unable to even finish that thought. "What if I screw up and we lose Nate. This isn't us hustling ourselves into a bikers bar or a free clinic. This isn't you as Inez and me as whoever I am one afternoon. I'm fine with you and me against some wannabe with a gun and bad intentions. What happens when it is you and me against a hostile government and Weiss is right, I'm LAPD and not anything else?"

Kensi stared at him. "Wow. No wonder I could hear you thinking."

"You saw my training plans. They're teaching you Farsi. About the only thing they're not teaching me is how to find my ass with both hands."

"It's a great ass and I'm more than happy to help you find it," Kensi teased but he found no humor in it. She sighed. "There isn't a single thing on that training schedule you can't do right now and you know that. You're not being taught anything."

"So they're just creating a checklist to prove when I mess this up that it was my fault and not theirs. I'm taking a class in hand to hand combat in confined places so they're not, what, liable if I mess this up?"

"Exactly how are you messing this up? They're just going to show you why you do what you do and why your instincts are right when we're working together. They're going to make sure you have multiple options if we're in a rough spot. Deeks, they want you for your instincts, your skills and for what you do every day for LAPD and NCIS."

"My instincts, my skills, whatever, are fine doing what I've been doing for years. Here. In L.A. My home. Our home. We're going someplace where I can't even speak the language and we're not welcome."

"Remember Justin and Melissa?"

Deeks chuckled but there was no humor in it. "Who could forget those two crazy kids?"

"How did they meet?"

"She remembers it differently than he does."

"How did their Aunt Hetty say they met before housesitting?"

"Aunt Hetty sometimes makes thing too complicated if you ask me."

"Deeks," Kensi warned.

"Justin saw her at his show at a gallery in Chicago. Melissa was mocking his work, which she didn't know was his work when he introduced himself. She told him his art was total crap and he was smitten. Justin had serious self-esteem issues."

"He's not alone. What did Melissa tell the neighbors?"

"Christian and Ana Grey?"
"I can't believe you read that book."

"It was hilarious and totally freaked out Jackson from Internal Affairs when I was reading it in the waiting room outside my post-shooting polygraph." Deeks smiled. It was the only fun part of the post-Janvier investigation.

"What did I tell them?"

"You slipped. They were getting you drunk. They were getting us drunk because, you know, the basement. Which, by the way, was so embarrassing to explain to Aunt Hetty. Our cover, it wasn't a problem Kensi."

"No, it wasn't because you just go with whatever happens. They can give you lessons in everything including finding your ass with both hands. You don't need them. You're perfect for this right now. Nobody's getting killed, Nate's getting rescued. We're the right team for this."

Deeks was so grateful for her faith in him - a faith he wasn't sure was well placed. "And then there's our lives. We're going to lie to everyone we know."

"We're already lying to everyone we know. We've been lying since March of last year."

"Lies of omission. Wanting to keep what's ours, ours. Big difference. Look, I've got nobody but you. You've got your Mom, your friends at Pendleton."

"You have friends and plenty of them. And you know I'm not in a good place with my Mother."

"There's not being in a good place and then there's letting her show up at the funeral of the daughter she just got back..."

"...and is doing her damndest to drive away."

"OK," Deeks changed strategies, "Hetty. She lost Renko, Hunter, Callen and now she's going to lose you."

"Us. Couple, partners, pair, twosome. Remember?"

"Fine, us. But I'm a hired gun. I showed up fully formed. You she recruited trained, molded. Your professional development is her success, too."

"She'll understand when we bring back Nate."

"Nate," he sighed.

"Deeks, that has to be the focus. You can't worry about what will go wrong. Nate is expecting us to make sure everything goes right. And we will. Weiss was wrong about you when he said you've got no training. You have no official training. You have skills. You've survived long undercover assignments. You're great with people. You get everyone to talk. Those skills, that experience, that can't be taught."

"And most of that is useless since I barely speak English."

"You speak English just fine. And constantly, trust me, so you've had a lot of practice," Kensi teased. "And when we bring back Nate, Hetty won't mind, neither will anyone else at work" Kensi's tone grew dark and her eyes narrowed. "As for the others, my Mother should remember from my Dad that you don't leave anyone behind. If she can't forgive me, well, she's a hypocrite."
She had no problem taking me from my Dad. She should have no problem with you taking me to save Nate."

"Me taking you?" Deeks cocked an eyebrow at her, the Mother topic was nowhere he wanted to go. "That sounds vaguely dirty."

"Good thing you're naked." Kensi feigned shock as she looked down at herself, "Oh look, I am too."

"It is wonderful to be married to such a highly trained investigator," Deeks smiled as he pulled her close. "Come here, you."

Studio
Laguna Beach
June 21, 2012, 7:15PM

Deeks and Kensi walked into the Laguna Beach restaurant. He wondered just how big Weiss's expense account was - Studio was not cheap. Or an easy reservation. Deeks wore his best suit, a black Hugo Boss with a starched white shirt and no tie. Watching the reaction of the bartender while they waited for Weiss, he could have strolled in naked as long as Kensi was on his arm. She wore a simple, sleeveless, slate-blue dress just stopping above her knee, a pair of strappy nude sandals that made her legs look even longer and best of all to him, her engagement and wedding rings.

It was easy to duck out early at work. Everyone was racing home for the basketball game. Granger had them doing little more than shuffling papers and updating their training. Well, updating Kensi's training. Granger was trying to decide whether Deeks was worth NCIS's time and effort. Hetty had already assured Deeks that Director Vance was on his side, admiring Deeks's loyalty to the team and to Hetty when she left to deal with Alexa Comescu. Deeks spent the week wondering about the meaning of loyalty and if there was going to be a team to be loyal to in the future.

Deeks had a ginger ale, Kensi nursed a white wine spritzer at the bar.

"Hello you two," Weiss walked up, looking like a million bucks. His long hair was slicked back and pulled into a tight ponytail. Weiss was dressed in a grey suit with a black dress shirt - Armani if Deeks had to guess. He gave Kensi a hug and a peck on the cheek before pulling Deeks into a bro-hug.

"Mr. Hyman, so good to see you," the bartender greeted Weiss with a drink. "This must be your niece and her husband."

"Yes it is." Weiss smiled at them and winked. "Rachel, Tom, this is Derek, the man who makes the tastiest gin and tonic in all of Southern California. Derek, this is my beautiful niece Rachel and Tom Anderson, the luckiest man in America."

"Yes I am," Deeks beamed at Kensi, thrilled with the rare opportunity to show off his wife.

"We're in the back," Weiss told Deeks and Kensi, "Derek," Weiss shook the bartender's hand, passing him what looked to Deeks to be a fifty dollar bill as a tip, "always a pleasure."

"Pleasure is mine," Derek told him with a broad smile. "You three have a good evening." Yep, Deeks thought, that was a fifty.

'In the back' was the private porch and a magnificent view of the setting sun over the Pacific. Deeks was really sure he needed a CIA style expense account.
"Shutters, now here, are you a fan of the beach Uncle..." Kensi asked as Deeks held out her chair as she sat.

"Uncle Jeff. Jeff Hyman."

"Oh, Ramones fan," Deeks said taking his own seat.

"Nice going. Yes, fan of the beach, fan of the Ramones. Grew up in Queens, Forest Hills actually. Loved going to the Rockaways as a kid, the Hamptons now. And as for the Ramones, the real Jeffrey Hyman was a few years ahead of me in high school. Nice to see a local boy make it big as Joey Ramone."

The waiter also greeted Weiss like a long lost friend as he dropped off the menus. There was some chit-chat about California summers versus New York summers as menus were studied and meals ordered. Once dinner arrived, the wait staff disappeared and Weiss got down to business.

"Since the two of you are here, I'm hoping for good news," Weiss tore into his lamb chop.

"We're interested," Kensi said, already making quick work of her butter poached lobster. "But we need some assurances."

"I'll give you what I can."

"We work together," Kensi started. "No sending him alone anywhere. We're partners and plan on staying partners."

"You two have been sold as a package deal. Marty's lack of international experience and language issues makes you a key part of any extraction plan. Issues with women's rights in some of the countries you will visit makes you traveling alone almost impossible."

Deeks pushed his salmon around on the plate. "I am uncomfortable with what Callen was assigned. I'm not able to knowingly shoot an unarmed man."

"Callen shot a man who was a clear danger to this country. He could not be allowed to walk away a free man. I'm not sure what I would have done, Callen did what he thought he had to do. I'm more a results man at this point of my life, Janvier was stopped. I don't care how."

"I'm not defending what Janvier did..."

"It is indefensible. Nobody would have thought twice if Callen dropped Janvier when he had Lauren Hunter trapped in that car. His walking away a free man that afternoon would have been the death of Agent Hunter over and over again in countries all over the world. Operatives on six continents would have been at best arrested, at worse, well, let's not do worse case scenarios at dinner." Weiss shook his head as if to clear it of the possibilities of bad outcomes.

"After this is over, what are our chances of walking back into our old lives?" Kensi changed the subject.

"Assuming Nate is found and returned, Kensi, your career will be made." Weiss took a bite of his lamb while Deeks noted "returned" did not guarantee Nate was alive. Weiss continued, "Whatever you want to do, whatever agency interests you, you'll likely have your choice of positions. As I told you when I pitched this assignment, they will be lined up for you."

"And Officer Joe Friday over here?" Deeks tried to joke.
"Marty, the CIA has no influence with your department. Based on the files I've seen, you have a friend in your immediate supervisor and a few others in the department. You also have a handful of well-placed enemies. The particulars of Nate's rescue won't be known to them though the CIA will provide a redacted report explaining the basics of Nate's situation, the stakes involved, generalities about your work and why you were removed from Los Angeles. I don't know what they will do. I do know Hetty has offered you a position at NCIS and bringing Nate home no doubt will make Director Vance push Hetty for you to join the agency fulltime. I'd like us to take a meeting before you two make any decision. The CIA has its appeal."

Deeks put his hands out and looked around. "The trappings are impressive. What about the rest of our lives? Where we live, what we own..."

"Your apartments, and I wanted to ask about that, you're maintaining two apartments?" Weiss seemed genuinely curious.

"My lease is up in October, Kensi's month to month. We were going to look for something that was ours and not Kensi's or mine at the end of the summer."

"Your apartments are goners. What's in them will be gone, too. If there are any personal items that you must have, we'll need a list and some time to make copies. You'll take the originals, but only a few, irreplaceable items. I'll need things like the paperwork for your wedding rings - I'm sure you'll want everyone to know your secret once you're gone."

"Yes, I'd like everyone to know," Deeks told Weiss with Kensi nodding. Deeks asked about his only irreplaceable item outside of Kensi. "I have a dog."

"And quite a good looking one. I've seen the photos from Janvier's dossiers. Since the dog is irreplaceable, we'll give you a schedule for when you'll be leaving. As soon as you get the schedule, I'd recommend you come up with a story. Based on the way the dog looks at you when you're in the water swimming and surfing, selling the dog running away is probably out of the question. You can tell your friends and co-workers that he or she was sick and sadly had to be put to sleep." Weiss raised his hand. "We will board the dog until you're set up for training in Virginia."

Deeks nodded. Weiss had an answer or a plan for everything, he thought, but one. "Why doesn't the CIA have someone for this rescue mission? You recalled Callen who has been gone from the agency for years. Since that didn't work, now you're recruiting a different agent with NCIS and an undercover cop. While I have no doubt my wife can do anything and drag me along for the ride, I'd like to know why you're going outside the CIA?" Deeks saw Kensi smile a little when he mentioned her skills but was quickly as interested in Weiss's answer as he was.

"Nate, while proving to be a remarkable field agent, is..." Weiss chose his words carefully, "distrustful of some of our operatives in the area. A Jewish-American spy in a radical country has good reason to keep his own counsel. Trust me on that one. Callen and now you two are have a past with Nate that, with the proper plans, makes extracting him much easier. I don't know if Nate would willingly go in a van with a regional operative he's not worked with in the past. Callen could have passed easily as a Russian businessman in the country which made him the perfect for the job. You two will have complete covers by the time you are in country and while you may not completely look like my fetching niece and her adoring new husband when you go in, Nate will know you and know you're there to help."

The maitre d' slowly walked up to the table. "I'm sorry to intrude, I know this is a private reunion but was everything to your liking Mr. Hyman? Is there anything you need?"
Weiss smiled broadly. "As always, a magnificent meal Peter. You must tell the kitchen that the lamb was a joy to eat. A joy. And as you can see from their plates, the newlyweds enjoyed the seafood."

Deeks watched Kensi play good niece while he held her hand as doting husband. Kensi gave Deeks's hand a strong squeeze and he gave her a big smile. "It was wonderful," Kensi gushed to Peter. "Such a beautiful place here."

Peter took her other hand and kissed it. "Lovely to hear. I'll send someone back with dessert menus. May I recommend a dessert wine?"

"Since Rachel's Uncle Jeff just made us a wonderful offer and we've accepted, do you have any champagne?" Deeks asked, playing the new in-law to the hilt.

"Of course, it isn't a celebration without champagne. I believe we have some Bollingers if that is alright with you Mr. Hyman."

"1997 if you have it," Weiss smiled, genuinely pleased. "I'm just so thrilled to have these two in the family business."

x-x-x

Jerry and the Mermaid Restaurant
Riverhead, NY
February 19, 2013

On a late Tuesday afternoon in February, Kensi and Deeks, along with their alter-egos Kelly and Dean, decided to do their shopping before their meal and make their late lunch an early dinner. She had mussels over linguine, he had the Maryland crab cakes and again mourned the fact that the restaurant only served Manhattan clam chowder.

"Got a little surprise for you," Deeks said. He pulled a folded piece of paper out of his black slacks and passed it to his wife.

"Oh, you know I love surprises!" Kensi grabbed the paper and opened it. There was a NYPD security camera photo of Hetty with a Trader Joe's shopping bag walking up Broadway. "Oh my God. Weiss said she vanished."

"Hetty did. Lois Silver showed up around Columbus Day. I've been looking for her since we got back from London. Started playing mix and match with some of her aliases."

"Not on the main..."

"No. My little Nell side set-up. After London, I think we need some help."

"She thinks..."

"I know what she thinks."

Kensi was quiet for a while. "What do you think?"

Deeks smiled and told her.

##
Chapter Notes

Key dates before Chapter 6: Memorial Day weekend - Marriage; Opening Game of Olympics - Escape; Labor Day Week - Explosion; President's Day 2013- OPS closes. Everything going forward is date stamped.

Chapter 6.

"Things are going great and they're only getting better I'm doing alright Getting good grades The future's so bright I gotta wear shades." - "The Future's So Bright, I Gotta Wear Shades" - Timbuk 3

Beverly Hills Hotel
Bungalow 6
July 4, 2012, 4:55PM

Deeks and Kensi were discussing lunch plans at her place when Deeks got a text message from a Marc Bell requesting his presence at the Beverly Hills Hotel at 5PM. He was encouraged to bring his plus one for a casual, early dinner - ask for Mr. Bell as the front desk. Deeks handed Kensi his phone and said "Marky Ramone" as way of an explanation.

The front desk detailed a bellman to take them to Bungalow 6.

"Why don't we get nice things like this?" Deeks whispered to Kensi. "Same guys cutting the checks."

Kensi gave him a one word answer: "Hetty."

Once at Bungalow 6, Weiss was a vision in patriotic garb. A red and white striped button-down shirt with blue cargo pants and white running shoes. With Kensi's red and white checked summer halter dress and his blue tee-shirt and off-white chinos, Deeks figured NCIS and LAPD held up their end of the holiday bargain.

Weiss tipped what was a very happy bellman and invited Kensi and Deeks in. "Sorry for the early dinner. I have a flight back to New York at 9:00PM so I'll be dining and dashing. I have the place for the night if you want to live like Marilyn Monroe or Liz Taylor on one of her several honeymoons, be my guest."

"Thanks for the offer," Deeks said as they walked to the private patio, "but Monty's alone and 4th of July is least favorite holiday." All true but Weiss tried to bug them once and Deeks wasn't taking any chances.

"Of course. The barbecue chicken is to die for." Weiss started loading up three plates with chicken, fries, a piece of corn bread and an ear of corn on the cob. At the table were some cold salads and
coleslaw. A metal tub on the table was filled with ice and bottled beverages.

"While this is so much better than the two of us hunting around for some take-out later, may I ask why we're here?" Kensi inquired as she sat down. She and Deeks started enjoying their holiday barbecue.

"You two are all business, I kind of like that." Weiss sat across from them, pulling a beer out of the tub. He offered beers to Kensi and Deeks but both stuck with bottled water. "Your new aliases are in and I'd like to review them with you before I go back East. I'm in New York for the weekend but back in Langley first thing Monday morning so if there are any problems, I'd rather deal with them now or bring them back with me."

Weiss excused himself and returned quickly with several file folders. He pushed one across the table to Deeks. "Marty, you'll be Dean Kennedy."

Deeks smiled at Kensi, "Didn't you always want to marry a Kennedy?"

Kensi chuckled, as did Weiss. "Sorry Marty, you're a Kennedy of Del Mar not Hyannis Port. You're the only child of Clayton and Grace Kennedy. Clay was a successful real estate investor, Grace a lady who lunched - big charity do-gooder. Dean was shipped off to boarding school young. Father was killed in robbery before Dean was a teenager, mother died several years later of a brain hemorrhage. Dean has been alone since he was 19."

Kensi gave a small gasp. Deeks put his hand over hers. "All good," he told her with a wink.

"Kensi," Weiss explained, "we try to give covers quite a bit of truth. This could be a long and complicated operation. Nobody wants the months of work involved lost because of a slip up to a suspicious target."

Kensi nodded. "Tell me more about the man I married."

"Dean attended Georgetown undergrad, figured we'd keep a Loyola Marymount man like you in the Jesuit family. Got a combined J.D./M.B.A. from NYU and worked Wall Street for a year before breaking out on your own."

"You did marry well after all," Deeks joked to Kensi. "What did Dean break out to?"

Weiss spread some butter on his corn. "Venture capital. DKVC is one of the top investment firms involved in everything from video games to pharmaceuticals. Dean is highly focused, disciplined but easily bored. Also stinking rich. When he invested in a small documentary that made some cash, he learned all he could about the process and wound up trying his hand at directing. Found what he truly wanted to do."

"Because, like everyone else in this town, I always wanted to direct."

Weiss laughed. "You've made a few small documentaries, self-financed but well-received. Gives you the ability to get in and out of places, meet politicians, get into the right places, ask a few questions." Weiss took a big bite of his corn. After swallowing, Weiss shared, "Trust me, tell people you're making movies and they can't wait to help."

"How'd I meet my lovely bride?" Deeks picked up Kensi's hand and kissed it.

Weiss put down the corn, cleaned his hands before sliding a file to Kensi. "At the gym."

Deeks started laughing, Kensi looked down and shook her head.
"Is there a problem? According to both of your personnel files, the two of you met during an investigation of a drug ring at a gym that included a homicide."

"We had a case," Deeks explained, "where how we met was an issue. I’m with you on how much of our personal history should be used in our covers."

Weiss smiled and started eating and talking. "Good. Well, Kelly Nessler and Dean Kennedy met at the Equinox on Greenwich in Manhattan. She was training for a mini-iron man. He feels the need to swim regularly."

"That is you," Kensi commented. "What's Kelly's story?"

"Military brat, also an only child. Parents were Lt. Col. Edward Nessler and Linda Nessler. Linda left while Kelly was in grade school. She's out of the picture. Lt. Col. Nessler was a Marine pilot who gave up flying missions after his wife left. Was a highly respected instructor Kingsville. Died after a massive heart attack before Kelly was in college."

Deeks watched Kensi react, or pretend not to react. "Where did Kelly go to school?" Kensi asked.

"Northwestern. Thought she wanted to be a journalist so Medill made sense. Found out she hated journalism, liked writing. Worked freelance as a journalist for a short time while she wrote her first novel."

"Oh, please tell me her pen name is E.L. James. Please," Deeks teased.

Weiss smiled and shook his head. "I've been flying around all summer and if I see one more copy of that book at an airport newsstand..."

"Most the folks with Kindles are reading it too."

"Oh, I didn't need to know that. No, Kelly writes thrillers. Kickass gal spy Alexandra Manning and her mellow surfer boy handler David Fletcher. Can't understand where she got those two from. Carrying out a secret affair in between big action scenes."

"Seems I'm creative," Kensi's smile had Deeks a bit less worried about her. "Any of them sell?"

"All of them sold. Four books, all quite successful. Hollywood bought the first book but it is in turnaround hell."

"If you loved me, Dean, you'd make my book into a movie," Kensi pretended to whine.

"Oh no," Weiss stopped her. "Kelly insists her successes are her own and not because Dean could pay for it."

"Oh, good," Kensi said. "I like this girl already."

"Dean and Kelly have been married since Valentine's Day 2009. Lots of traveling for their assorted projects. Your passports will be full. Kelly helps Dean tell his stories in the documentaries so they work as a team. They're together all the time. They're friendly with the outside world but ultimately insular. They're you two."

"If Dean and Kelly met in Manhattan..."

"You're out of California when we extract you from your lives. You'll spend a few weeks training in Langley and then it's off to New York. We found a piece of real estate that's going to be your
"I'm gonna need to get a coat," Deeks said more to himself than the others at the table.

"No. Everything is going to be provided. What I told you the other night is true. We'll have copies of whatever you need waiting for you. We'll take your sizes and measurements so we can give you Dean's and Kelly's wardrobe. And that wardrobe will be everything from underwear to overcoats. Not to be unkind but California surfer chic isn't going to work for preppy Wall Street whiz Dean and while Kensi looks lovely in everything, Kelly's wealthy wife lifestyle means dressing the part."

"California surfer chic means this is going too?" Deeks asked as he pointed to his face.

"Hair's got to go, sorry. It may be darkened up a little too. Dean's an investment banker at heart even with the filmmaking and he's still doing investing. He has to move easily between Wall Street and New York documentary crowd. We will neaten up the facial hair if you want to keep it but you're going to look like the law school graduate you actually are." Weiss took a deep breath. "As for Kensi, as beautiful as your eyes are, they're a bit too unique."

"I have contacts, I've used them before."

"We'll supply you with ones that need to be replaced just once a week. You have to remember, you're not bringing any part of your current life with you. Those contacts will be found in your apartment or wherever you normally store them."

"Understood," Kensi said.

"Saturday morning Marty, you're going to visit this facility," Weiss took a sheet of paper out of another folder and handed it to Deeks. "You'll be given a full physical, a psych evaluation, a lie detector test. If you've got anything you can't replace, there will be someone there to discuss making a copy. Any photos or receipts of what you must have would be helpful. Bring the paperwork for the engagement and wedding rings. Kensi, you'll be at the same place Sunday morning."

"And so it begins," Deeks stated.

"Yes and no. We're getting you up to speed. In the meantime, you do everything as you would if I never met you two. Kensi, I know you have an address at a seminar coming up - prepare for it and go if you're here. Marty, I know you are occasionally recalled to LAPD. If it is a quick job, do it. This isn't going to be easy and it may take some time to get everything in place. You two have to be living your lives, or the lives you show the outside world, for this to work. Am I clear?"

"Yes," they said in unison.

"There is also the matter of compensation." Weiss slid a black folder, the prior folders were all red, to Kensi and Deeks. "This is your contract with the CIA. It's standard, they won't change a word even if you insist. Obviously, your training, continued health and ability to perform are paramount to the operation. You're walking away from a lot but the CIA is more than willing to make sure your needs are met."

Deeks took one look at the rate he'd be paid and was stunned. Five years with LAPD combined with hours of overtime and maybe - maybe - he'd make what they were offering. Reading further down, there was a bonus of 25% if Nate was successfully brought home. Kensi would earn the
same.

"The expenses of living as Dean and Kelly would be provided by the Agency. You'd be provided appropriate cars, clothing, the house out on Long Island I mentioned, health insurance, everything you need to maintain your covers. There will be a monthly stipend. Unlike a lot of Marty's investigations, you'll be living well. Much easier to hide in plain sight sometimes."

"This is quite generous," Kensi told Weiss. She wouldn't look at Deeks.

"The Agency pays well." Weiss spread his hands to show where they were sitting. "A lot is being asked of you. If you succeed, I'm sure there will be offers to join the CIA on a full-time basis and if you are what I think you two are, I want to be part of that pitch. If you're looking to make your own hours, you could continue as contractors. That's what you are for this operation. If things go badly, you'll be forced to reestablish yourselves without your current careers. This will tide you over whatever happens and whatever you decided to do."

The doorbell rang. Weiss excused himself.

"That's a lot of money," Deeks said.

"It never dawned on me," Kensi's voice trailed off.

"What never..."

"I guess I just thought we'd still be, I don't know, government employees." She looked at him, "I'm not doing this for the money."

"I know. We don't do what we do for the money."

"And if the CIA can't get you back with the LAPD."

"I know."

"This just makes it real, you know."

"I know."

"Not that the idea of rescuing Nate isn't real."

"I know."

"Is that all you're going to say."

"I don't know what else to say, Kens. You want to do this, I want to do this. The money's great. If it was half, would you care?"

"No."

"A quarter?"

"No."

"Then it is what Weiss said it is. A hedge against the future. Since both of us plan on succeeding, the world is our oyster when we're done."

"Oysters, you're interested in oysters?" Weiss walked in with a tray with several cartons that looked
like they had Chinese food but instead held ice cream. "Don't you know the rule, you don't eat oysters in a month without an 'r' in it. It's September at the earliest for that."

"You seems to know your food, Ira," Deeks commented. "I haven't had one bad meal with you since this all began."

"It is in the blood," Weiss put the ice cream cartons in the beverage tub. "Your old man liked his fish, mine sold them. He was a fish and produce man for some of the top restaurants in Manhattan during the forties, fifties, sixties, seventies and a bit of the eighties. Every time I see "Mad Men" and they're eating a meal with a client, I figure my old man was probably responsible for most the fish and all the vegetables on that table in real life."

"And you didn't want to sell fish for a living?" Deeks asked.

"I would have been fine with selling fish. My father was and still is a happy man. He came to American from Russia right after World War II. Immanuil Dzhamgerchinov met with a distant cousin working at the Hunt's Point Market, got a job, an Americanized name - Manny Weiss - and worked his way up from making deliveries for Snyders Foods to buying the company before he was forty. Said in the old country," Weiss fell back into his perfect Russian accent, "I'd have worked in a factory til I die. Now, I dine with Rockefellers at 21." He chuckled and returned to his own voice. "He took my mother, my sister Doris and me to a fancy restaurant every week. 21, La Cote Basque, Le Pavillon, the Colony, you name it, I was forced into a suit and brought to one every weekend."

"Is your sister a spy?" Deeks wondered.

"No, Dorrie took a far more dangerous path. She was a New York City high school teacher, the mother of my nephew David the lawyer and my wackjob niece Elaine who is a baseball statistician for ESPN. All those years at La Cote Basque, La Grenouille and La Caravelle had their impact on her. Dorrie taught French until about two years ago when she retired. Forty years of high school French is a tribute to her patience and love of teaching."

"And your mother?" Kensi asked.

"Ah," Weiss stood up and pulled out his wallet. After digging a bit, he produced an old photo and showed it to Kensi and Deeks. "This was my mother," he told them as he sat back down. "The former Esther Bauer. No insult intended Kensi but the most beautiful woman in the world."

Deeks looked at a black and white photo, probably taken in the late 1950's, early 1960's of what he figured was a 5-year old Ira in shorts and a tee-shirt and a small, striking woman on a beach boardwalk. Slim with big eyes and a sly smile, she was a dead ringer for Audrey Hepburn. She wore a pair of slim pants, sandals with heels and a long sleeve white button-down shirt.

"She's beautiful," Kensi said, smiling.

"Inside and out. She was the hat check girl at Luchow's when my father walked in to sell them some beets. He walked out with her name and a plan to make her his wife. She said he was relentless." Weiss chuckled, "I have a feeling he'd be considered a stalker now but she said he'd show up at the end of her shift at 1AM every night and ride with her on the 4 train to her apartment in the Bronx to make sure she got home safe then get back on the subway and go to Astoria where he lived so he could get up at 4AM to look at the day's produce."

Deeks knew the feeling. "A man in love."
And she loved him. Until she met him, she never thought she'd marry.

"Really?" Kensi seemed stunned.

"This photo," Weiss took the picture back from Kensi, "was taken in Long Beach, on the Island just about this time of the year. You saw what she's wearing. Except for the weeks before she passed away with cancer, I never saw her in anything but long sleeves." He shook his head. "The Nazis tattooed numbers on her arm and according to my father, whenever someone saw those numbers, it tormented her. He bought her long sleeve everythings, she wore opera gloves long after women stopped wearing gloves in the 1960's."

"Dear God," Kensi shook her head.

She never talked about what happened to her in those camps. She never talked about her family - she had a father and sister in different camps, both died before the war was over. She'd say her life began when she arrived in America because here she could be what she wanted to be without fear. Except those numbers on her arm reminded her of four years of hell simply for being who she was. To her great credit, she grabbed every bit of life and enjoyed the hell out of it here in America. She's gone over thirty years and I miss her every day."

Deeks picked up his bottled water. "To Esther Bauer-Weiss," he toasted.

Kensi lifted her bottle as Weiss picked up his beer and said "And the freedom she loved." Weiss took a deep breath. "So if you were wondering how a nice Jewish boy from Queens wound up with the CIA, Manny taught me Russian, Esther taught me German, Forest Hills High School taught me French and a lovely girl named Marta taught me enough Spanish at seventeen to explain to her Puerto Rican mother that I was a good choice for her daughter's junior prom. All this was enough to get me recruited in my senior year at NYU. After all this country did for Manny and Esther and Dorrie and me, how could I say no?"

"Does your family know what you do?" Deeks asked.

"Not the CIA, just the sound work. Dorrie asked me if I needed money when "All My Children" was canceled. I own a small apartment on West 74th Street, have a small place on the beach in Remsenberg on the Island. She thinks I'm just scraping by." He pointed to the where they sat. "If she only knew about this life."

"What's the time frame on," Deeks paused, "extracting us from our lives?"

"Not sure. There are a few things going on. You need to pass those physicals and get your lives in order. I'm thinking weeks not months. We're still looking for Nate and if somehow he shows up at the US Embassy in Turkmenistan day after tomorrow, we'll work something out with you two and move on. Knowing Nate, he's keeping a low profile and waiting for us. Actually waiting for you."

There was a knock on the door. "And that's probably my car," Weiss told them. "I've got a flight back to New York because, really, who doesn't want to spend some quality time with eight million neighbors in 100% humidity and air temperatures matching the surface of the sun?"

Weiss stood and walked over to Kensi. "You two are going to be great. Take the contracts with you, bring them to your physicals and we're in business." He kissed her on the cheek, shook Deeks's hand. "Think about enjoying the bungalow. It's so much fun. And I'm taking the Strawberry Swirl with me." Weiss took the carton of ice cream and pocketed a spoon. Winking at Deeks, he said, "I'll mail it back to them Detective, I promise I'm no thief."
Deeks chuckled as he watched Weiss leave. "Complex carbohydrate our Mr. Weiss."

"I like him."

Deeks looked at the two remaining cartons of ice cream. Coffee and chocolate - somehow Weiss knew. CIA indeed. He handed the chocolate carton to Kensi. Sticking a spoon in the coffee ice cream he said, "Actually, I like him too. Now what?"

"Wait, I guess. He knew I was going to the Navy Yard."

"Kens, he knows I like coffee ice cream." Deeks tilted his carton and showed the contents to her, "Knowing you're speaking at an NCIS sponsored conference is probably CIA intern's work."

She laughed. "The money is still..." Deeks waved to her, pointing under the table where Weiss first bugged them. She nodded but continued. "...I just never thought of money."

"I think it shows how important this operation is. How difficult it will be. How awesome you are and how much they're depending on you to save my worthless ass."

"Don't sell yourself short. It is a nice ass. The doctors will see that Saturday," she teased.

x-x-x

Apthorp
390 West End Avenue
February 27, 2013, 6:20PM

"Evening, Miss Silver," Derrick the lobby attendant called as Lois Silver walked into her building.

"Good evening to you, Derrick."

"And what did you see today?"

"Some experimental version of 'Hamlet' just off Broadway. The actors tried," she shook her head sadly.

Derrick handed her the day's mail. "You have a nice evening, Miss Silver."

"Same to you, Derrick. Same to you," she told him as she entered the elevator.

Lois Silver, the former Henrietta Lange, walked into her ninth floor apartment and took off her coat, gloves and boots. She'd be glad when the winter ended. She was tiring of her winter coat and gloves. The boots she still rather liked.

Once her winter gear was put away, she flipped through the mail. Cable bill, a form letter from her City Councilman and what looked to be a greeting card. The return address read Jason Tracy with a Los Angeles address, handwritten, though printed. The postmark, however, was the Kennedy Airport Post Office.

Suspicious, Hetty dropped the card in a Ziploc bag. Putting her letter opener through a small gap in the top, she found no suspicious substance inside. Using a pair of dishwashing gloves, she took out the card out of the bag and a photo fell out.

The photo was a dog wearing an NCIS badge sitting next to prior Sunday's New York Daily News front page. On the back of the picture was a hand-printed note.
"Happy Birthday!

Hope your happy day finds you well.

We will be in town March 2nd and would love to chat. Plan to drop by around 6ish if you're available.

Fondly,

Melissa and Justin
P.S. Monty says hi."
Chapter Summary

Timeline: Memorial Day Weekend/Late May 2012 - Marriage; Opening of Olympics/Late July 2012 - Escape; Labor Day Week/Early September 2012 - Explosion; President's Day Weekend/mid-February 2013 - OSP closes.

Chapter 7.

"Oh, they like to get you in a compromising position
They like to get you there and smile in your face
Well, they think they're so cute when they got you in that condition
Well I think it's a total disgrace." - "The Authority Song" by John 'Cougar' Mellencamp

Roger Bates's Office
LAPD Undercover Unit
July 28, 2012, 2:05AM

Deeks decided the ice packs were actually more uncomfortable than the bumps and bruises from the beating he took at Inamorata. Anna Garcia was a good cop, a top-flight undercover operative and someone Deeks considered a friend. That all said, she was a first class pain in the ass for not coming in when Bates wanted to close down her operation.

Her defense - "Deeks has done the same thing in the past" - didn't sit well with Bates. Great. He got his ass kicked, he got her out of a dangerous situation and instead of getting a thank you, he was now Anna's excuse for doing stupid things. Awesome.

Deeks was ordered to sit tight - well, actually rest on Bates's office couch - until Bates would drive Deeks home. Deeks was asleep for about twenty minutes when his foot hit the ground, waking him up. Standing at the end of the couch was Detectives Mark Jackson and Felipe Chavez from Internal Affairs.

"Oh, this can't be good," Deeks said as he started to sit up.

"You tell us Deeks," Jackson said.

"What's going on?"

"Excellent question," Chavez replied.

Deeks glared at Chavez. The two were never friends. "Look, I've had a rough night and I'm not interested in whatever games you guys want to play. Tell me what's going on or I'm not saying a word until Frank Torres is here."

"Right to the union rep. Telling," Chavez said to Jackson. "Telling."

"Fine, if you're going to play it this way, I'm not saying a word." Deeks fished his phone out of his shirt pocket. "Maybe Torres will tell me what's going on."
Jackson gave Deeks a strange look. "What the hell happened to your face, Deeks?" Jackson actually seemed concerned.

"You answer my question, I'll tell you."

"If they don't tell you what's going on Deeks, they can tell me," a furious Roger Bates said as he walked into his office. "What the hell is going on? Why are you in my office and why are you questioning my detective?" The emphasis, both times, was on the word my.

"Where was he tonight?" Jackson asked.

"He is right here," Deeks reminded them all.

"Fine," Jackson turned his attention back to Deeks. "Where were you tonight?"


"Lieutenant Bates called me around 7PM." Deeks checked his phone, noticing an e-mail from Kensi. "At 7:03PM to be exact. Anna Garcia was in trouble on a case and unlike other detectives in this room, I'm here to support my fellow officers."

"Deeks," Bates growled a warning.

"The Lieutenant picked me up at eight on the PCH by the Santa Monica Pier. I got a debrief here, I got to Inamorata at ten when I changed into my Johnny Kelley music mogul asshole gear and got Anna Garcia out of the club. I took a fairly nice beating for my trouble." Deeks lifted his tee-shirt to show some bruising around his ribs. "I got checked out by two EMTs. Can't tell you their names, I was too busy being in pain and being checked for internal injuries to get business cards. The Lieutenant drove me back here. I was told to stay here until someone can drive me home. I've been resting here ever since. Did I miss anything Lieutenant?"

"Nothing that I can think of. Now that Detective Deeks has accounted for his evening, what's going on here?"

"Where's your girl?" Chavez asked.

"My girl?" Deeks was tired and uncomfortable but Chavez now had him officially pissed off. "My girl? I don't have girls. Unlike some detective wannabes, I have women in my life. Strong, smart women, so watch your mouth."

"Detective Chavez," Bates interrupted, "if you are asking Deeks about the whereabouts of Special Agent Blye from NCIS, you best ask in a professional and respectful manner. I'd prefer not to pick up the phone and call your lieutenant to file an official complaint about your lack of professionalism towards a female law enforcement official. I know IA takes all complaints, especially those of a sexual harassment nature, very seriously. I'd hate to see you reassigned to a different detail after all those years in Internal Affairs. Especially after the professional way the department treated you when John Quinn was arrest. How long again was 'your boy' John Quinn your partner before Deeks had him arrested?"

Deeks would have kissed Bates if he didn't think that would be the reason for a sexual harassment phone call instead.

"Detective Deeks, do you know where Agent Blye was Friday evening around 10PM?" Jackson asked respectfully, taking control of the interview.
"Agent Blye is in Quantico, Virginia."

Jackson nodded. "Do you know what she is doing there?"

"Since it is about quarter after five in the morning on the East Coast, I'm guessing she's asleep." Deeks saw Bates chuckle.

"Why is Agent Blye in Virginia?"

"She and another NCIS staff member were invited to address a group of trainees for their agency. NCIS is headquartered there. The two left Thursday morning."

"Call her," Chavez demanded.

"No," Deeks answered automatically.

"If Agent Blye," Chavez's tone was anything but respectful, "is in Virginia and you have nothing to hide..."

"Detective Chavez, I will be happy to call Agent Blye as soon as you tell us what is going on. Otherwise, I'm going to have to insist that Detective Deeks's union rep is present for any further questioning," Bates told the Internal Affairs detective.

"An inmate Deeks knows escaped tonight," Jackson told them.

"Does this inmate have a name?" Deeks asked. He knew his fair share of inmates.

"Doesn't have a first one actually. Has an initial and a last name."

"Callen? Wow." Deeks was stunned. "How did he get out of Lancaster? No, wait, let me guess. He bought a poster of Rachel Welch and a rock hammer from a guy named Red in the prison exercise yard..."

"Asshole," Chavez muttered. "Inmate Callen was taken to County Hospital with what he claimed was appendicitis. He escaped during the transfer, a little after 10:30PM."

"Unbelievable." Deeks finally realized why Jackson and Chavez were there, "Wait a minute. You can't think that I had anything to do with this. Lieutenant, I was in the surveillance truck with you."

"What's Agent Blye's number?" Bates dialed the number Deeks gave him. Jackson called in a request for a GPS trace on Kensi's phone.

After three rings, a muffled "Hello" was heard on the speakerphone.

"Kensi, it's Deeks," he started talking so she couldn't. "You're on the speaker with Lieutenant Bates, Detective Jackson and Detective Chavez from Internal Affairs."

"What time is it?" There was a pause and a more alert sounding Kensi groaned "It is 5:15. This better be important. Wait, are you in trouble or something? Are you hurt?"

"Deeks is a little worse for wear but it's a little more 'or something' right now that is being investigated," Bates told her. "Where are you Agent Blye?"

"Room 504 of the Spring Hill Suites in Quantico. Just down the road from the Navy Yard. Or up the road. I'm not sure which. We got here late Thursday and back to the rooms very late last night or this morning. Why?"
Jackson's cell phone chirped. "Agent Blye's cellphone is in Virginia," Jackson read the text message.

"And I'm with it. Deeks, what's going on?"

"Not a word, Detective," Chavez ordered Deeks.

Bates glared at Chavez. "Agent Blye, your former NCIS associate G. Callen escaped from custody Friday evening. Internal Affairs was questioning Deeks about it. Deeks is here because he was needed for a short assignment."

"Oh my God, Callen! How did that happen? Has anyone called Hetty?"

Deeks chuckled. Kensi didn't hear a word after Callen escaped.

"Agent Blye, this is Detective Jackson. I'm sure NCIS will be contacting your entire team. Thank you for your cooperation."

"I'll call you later, Kens. You call Hetty, IA is very suspicious of me," Deeks told her.

"Call me at a decent hour, please. And with some answers. I'll find Hetty." Kensi hung up.

Deeks knew Kensi was setting a land speed record getting dressed, finding Nell and getting the word out. "Are we done here?" Deeks asked. "I'm tired, I'm sore and I want to go home."

"Yeah Deeks, you're done," Bates told his detective and the two Internal Affairs officers. "It's late and I want to go home, too. Jackson, Chavez, if you have any more questions for Deeks, make sure Frank Torres is present. I didn't appreciate the tone of this interview and since you found him in my office, you both had to have a pretty good idea he wasn't involved with Callen's escape. Time to put your grudge aside Detective Chavez and behave professionally. One more interview like this and I will file a complaint."

Deeks wiggled his fingers as he waved good-bye to Jackson and Chavez. He felt a one finger salute was appropriate for Chavez but probably not beneficial to his future.

Bates took his briefcase and the two walked out of his office and to his car in silence. Once in the car and pulling into traffic, Bates asked, "You really didn't know about Callen's escape?"

"Or course not," Deeks found the seatbelt incredibly uncomfortable.

"Just was surprised by your level of shock."

"I thought he was in Lancaster in segregation. How do you escape from that?"

"Obviously, fake appendicitis and run."

Deeks thought for a second. "Or get grabbed...uh oh."

"Grabbed? Deeks?"

"Off the record, there have been some murky intelligence reports from NCIS's European offices and Interpol that Janvier, the guy Callen shot, has a pissed off family."

"How pissed?"

"Real pissed with over $100 million to bankroll that anger."
"What do the murky intelligence reports say or is that classified NCIS business?" Deeks knew Bates liked the liaison program but hated when information was not shared.

"I didn't think there was anything to it." Deeks shifted in his seat to look at Bates. "There is $100 million in blood money that should buy Janvier's daughter and his brother a nice life in some country with questionable banking and extradition laws but there are rumors that the daughter wants to find those responsible for her father's death and make them pay."

"Could the family pull this off?"

"That kind of bank, you could hire yourself a team to pull that off, easy."

"Where is that mighty mite your partner answers to? Few times I've seen them together, she looked tight with Callen."

"Mighty mite? Really? Somehow that's going to get me in trouble," Deeks started to laugh then groaned. His ribs really hurt. "She's in London at the Olympics."

"Wouldn't pick her for a sports fan."

"She told us she never misses the Olympics. Hetty has a bronze medal from the '64 games in Japan in the small bore-rifle event."

"Of course she does." It was Bates turn to chuckle. As the car pulled up to Deeks's apartment building, Bates got serious. "Deeks, IA is after you. Don't do anything stupid for a while. In fact, don't do anything stupid, period. And don't talk to them without me or without your rep. They're coming for you, kid."

"Haven't been feeling the IA love in a while." Deeks opened the car door.

"And if Callen was grabbed, I'm going to need to know if you're next. I'll park your ass back with the Legal Bureau if I have to."

"Don't," Deeks shook his head. "The kidnapping not escape theory is just that, a theory. No proof, just an idea."

"Fine, get some rest. Thanks for your help tonight."

Getting out of the car, Deeks leaned back in. "Tell Anna if she needs someone to talk to, give me a call," he told Bates before slamming the door. He knew better than anyone what it was like to come off a long undercover without warning. He whistled as he got near the door of his apartment but Monty didn't come to the window. That wasn't good.

Pulling out his gun, he quietly unlocked his front door and eased it opened. He got to his living room where Ira Weiss was dozing on his sectional and Monty sound asleep at the CIA operative's feet. "Some watchdog you are," Deeks muttered to his faithful companion before turning his attention to his uninvited guest. "Hey, Ira, wake up."

Weiss woke with a start, disoriented for a second but looked at Deeks and the gun in Deeks's hand. "What time is it?"

"Far too late for LAPD to be having clandestine meetings with the CIA." Deeks holstered his weapon as he turned on a lamp in the living room.

"Good Lord, what happened to you?" Weiss jumped up and looked that the bruises on Deeks's
"What, you don't have a training class in selling a beating to rescue an operative? Because if you don't, I can teach it." Deeks walked into the kitchen with Weiss in tow. "Do you want something to eat? I don't have anything fancy." Deeks opened the freezer and took a big bag of frozen peas out. He wrapped the bag around his ribs.

"My God, how badly were you knocked around?"

Deeks opened the refrigerator and grabbed two Bud tall boys. Handing one to Weiss he said, "Had worse. Did you break Callen out of jail?"

"What? No. That's why I'm here. I have no idea where Callen is and neither does the CIA. We were hoping you'd know."

Weiss's denial just made any polygraph IA was going to give Deeks a little easier. "Sorry, my marriage and contract with the CIA are enough things for me to be hiding. No Callen here. So you thought you'd break in just to make sure I knew the CIA didn't do anything illegal tonight. Thanks."

"Well, when I got here, there were two suits banging your door."

"Tall, thin African-American and a dark-haired guy with a moustache and soul patch?"

"Yeah, that was them. Friends of yours?"

Deeks pointed to the living room and walked slowly to the sectional. He eased himself into the chaise while Weiss sat back near Monty. "Internal Affairs."

"I watched them leave and Monty here," Weiss pointed to the sleeping dog, "was good and aggravated. Let myself in, got him some fresh water, found those dental bones in your cabinet and he calmed down."

"Good with people, good with pets, is there anything you can't do, Ira?"

"Figure out where Callen is."

"I had bad feeling coming home," Deeks told Weiss. "What do you know about Janvier's family?"

Weiss's eyes opened wide. "Oh my God, I never even thought of that."

"So the rumors are true?"

"Less rumors, more rumblings. Janvier's brother is money guy. If it was just him, he'd take the cash and run. Chloe makes the old man look like the picture of good citizenship and mental health. And her husband is weaker than a day old baby chick."

"So she's rich, mean and crazy. Awesome. I guess the money part is the reason I somehow didn't date her in my twenties. My ex's were poor, mean and crazy."

"No, she's stinking rich, junkyard dog mean and bat-shit crazy. I never even thought of her involvement."

"I hope the boys at Langley have, Ira. Maybe I can give them a training session in thinking like a cop, too. Speaking of which, if you're not here baking a file into a cake for Callen, why are you in L.A.?"
"A friend works on "General Hospital" and his daughter just gave him his third grandchild. I'm filling in." Weiss shrugged his shoulders. "Believe me, if the CIA was involved with Callen's disappearance, the one person you'd never see is me."

"So you're at my place for?"

"Actually wondered if Callen would show up here."

"Nah, I'm not high enough of the NCIS food chain to catch Callen's interest. From what Kensi told me, he and Sam had some predetermined meeting place in case either of them were in trouble. He may be there but Sam's in London with Hetty at the Olympics so Callen was probably in the wind after Sam didn't show."

"He wouldn't go to Agent Hanna's home, would he?" Weiss asked.

"Nope, Sam's got a family and they think he's DEA." Deeks pulled the bag of frozen peas from under his shirt and dropped them on his coffee table. "Hetty has multiple homes, mansions really. Good luck with that."

"Kensi's place?"

"You obviously haven't broken into her home yet," Deeks started to laugh but his side still hurt. He picked up the frozen peas and put them back under his shirt. "She'd be a prime candidate for that "Hoarders" show on cable. He might get there and wind up under a stack of magazines, never to be heard from again."

"She's so buttoned-up, I can't believe that."

"Beautiful on the outside, more beautiful on the inside, messy clutter all around her," Deeks smiled.

"Still the happy newlywed. I have to ask, how are you keeping this from Henrietta? She doesn't miss much."

"Using the best thing I have going for me: underestimation. Sam Hanna's a SEAL from a rough part of Brooklyn. Callen's DEA/CIA/NCIS and a G who has lived everywhere. Kensi bounced around as a Marine's kid and is a force of nature. Me, I'm a local who likes to surf. Just a dumb cop in a room of highly trained specialists."

"That's bullshit and you know it. Hetty's the one who hired you away from LAPD."

Deeks pointed to his face. " Bruises say I wasn't quite hired away. She was surprised when I didn't sign the papers to join NCIS though." He paused for a second, not wanting to think about disappointing Hetty. Getting back to Weiss's original question, Deeks explained, "Everyone thinks Kensi and I are pining away for each other like we're too emotionally damaged to do anything about our feelings. That's where they're wrong. Life's too short and you're dead too long not to be happy. I made that case to Kensi and she eventually bought in. The fact that people don't think I know something like that or that Kensi doesn't want to or can't be happy," Deeks shook his head. "Well, that tells me they think Kensi and I can't see the future because we're slaves to our past." Deeks took a pull on his beer. "That was surprisingly deep for an early Saturday morning."

"They're underestimating you but you push them in that direction." Weiss looked at his watch. "God, it's 3 o'clock. The call sheet had me in at 6AM. I'm getting too old for this." Weiss stood up, "You sure you don't want to go to a hospital or a doc in the box or something? I'll take you."
"I'm good. Not my first beating, not my worst beating. I need to call Kensi and then I'm going to bed."

"I'll let myself out, you stay there. Nice mutt you got. Not much on protecting the place but a very good boy." Weiss walked to the door, waving as he let himself out.

Deeks remembered the e-mail from Kensi he saw earlier. He clicked on the link that said 'having a great time, don't you wish you were here?' when a video opened of Kensi, Nell and two other dark-haired women, one he knew as Eric's forensics genius friend Abby Scuito, singing some country music song "Coyote Ugly"-style.

When the song was over, he called Kensi. "Kens," he feigned being broken-hearted, "I don't like it when you have fun without me. I really don't like when you have "Coyote Ugly" fun without me."

"Forget that, tell me everything. Why were you in Bates's office? Did Internal Affairs really think you had something to do with Callen's escape? I called Hetty but she already knew."

Of course, Hetty knew. "I'll tell you everything when I pick you up at the airport later tonight. Never know who's listening," Deeks paused for a few seconds to let that sink in. "All you need to know was our friend from Pine Valley said he's not involved."

"You saw him."

"Came by personally to assure me. Working with his friends in Port Charles this week."

"It frightens me you know the soap hometowns. Nell just walked into my room, I'll talk to you when I get back."

"Eight o'clock at the American terminal," Deeks yawned, "Tell Coyote Nellie I'll give her a ride home too."

x-x-x

Apthorp
390 West End Avenue 4W
March 1, 2013, 7:40PM

"Hello Derrick," Hetty said, answering the intercom.

"Evening Miss Silver. Mr. Ellis has arrived. Shall I send him up?"

"Yes, thank you."

Hetty disengaged the alarm system and unlocked the front door. She stood in the door jamb waiting, smiling broadly when Sam Hanna walked off the elevator. Black pea coat and slacks, red henley long sleeve tee, black ski cap in one hand, overnight bag in the other - he was a sight for sore eyes. "So good to see you," she told him as he bent to hug her.

"Good to see you," Sam pulled back and looked at her.

Hetty tilted her head toward the door and the two entered her apartment. "I'm sorry to pull you away from Nicole and Maya."

"I think Nic was almost glad I got called away. She's gone from having a husband who works long hours and travels for business to someone working from home most days. Tired of having me
under foot sometimes. Maya seems happy, though."

"Maya is what matters." Hetty took his coat and put his bag near the hall to the guest room. "Have you eaten?"

"Grabbed a couple of slices when I got out of Penn Station. That stuff they sell at home with pineapple on it, that's not pizza." Sam sat on the couch.

Hetty returned with two glasses and a bottle of Glenlivet XXV. She handed the bottle to Sam as she set down the glasses, joining him on the couch.

Sam poured the scotch and obviously enjoyed the taste. "$6.50 for pizza, $400 single malt, a perfect welcome home to New York."

Hetty smiled and sipped from her glass. "Normally, I'd offer the toast 'Propinate nobis similibusque, damnabiliter paucibus reliquis' but I may have proof that there are a damn few more of us." She pulled the photo of Monty and the birthday card out of the coffee table book on Paul Cezanne and handed it to Sam.

"Fingerprints?"

"None. After the anthrax attacks here in New York, most all the postal workers wear gloves. There was one print on the outside of the envelope and it belongs to Derrick at the front door. The stamp was peel and stick, the envelope had a small piece of tape keeping it closed so no chance for DNA. The birthday card itself is available at every Hallmark from Maine to Florida and a dozen or so major chain drugstores."

"Postmark is JFK Airport. Not a lot of people know about that post office."

Hetty shook her head. "He told me Monty was sick near the end of August and tried to return that badge a day or two later. Told me Monty wouldn't need it anymore and had the nerve to look heartbroken. I told him to keep it. Looks like he did."

Sam looked at the back of the photograph. "Justin and Melissa. The return address - he was Jason, she was Tracy when they met."

"And the address is where Daniel Zuna lived when he was murdered. Sam, they're alive." Hetty took a deep breath. "And they found me. I'm not easy to find."

"They may be alive but right now I want to kill them both."

"They'll be here tomorrow at six. We need a plan."

###
Chapter Notes

Timeline: Memorial Day Weekend/Late May 2012 - Marriage; Opening of Olympics/Late July 2012 - Escape; Labor Day Week/Early September 2012 - Explosion; President's Day Weekend/mid-February 2013 - OSP closes.

Chapter 8.

"There's a man who leads a life of danger
To everyone he meets he stays a stranger
With every move he makes, another chance he takes.
Odds are he won't live to see tomorrow.

Secret Agent Man
Secret Agent Man
They've given you a number
And taken away your name." - "Secret Agent Man" by Johnny Rivers

271 Spruce Street
Carderock Springs, MD
September 6, 2012, 1AM

Deeks remembered a phrase Weiss used to explain how they'd be extracted from their lives - "spectacular, public death" - as a white van drove he and Kensi away from the exploding gas station. The CIA operative showed up two weeks earlier with their Agency itinerary. Weiss took Monty and the rest of their irrereplaceable items along with an overnight bag for both of them to Langley so they could start working as soon as they were out of L.A. Before he departed, Weiss told them to just live normally. Well, as normally as anything that summer could possibly be.

They ate at all their favorite restaurants. Deeks surfed like mad. Kensi called old friends from Camp Pendleton. The two enjoyed a mini in-town vacation over Labor Day weekend and tried to be normal. They also had their first real fight since getting married. Deeks still wanted to do the rescue, he just worried about all they were leaving behind. As someone who moved regularly as a child, Kensi told him this was a variation of what she knew - being transferred with a new set of orders. She also told him she thought he was too invested in living in Los Angeles, a city that would be there when they completed their assignment. He told her the people - their family and friends - and not the city were what he was invested in and what worried him.

"My God, what have we done?" Kensi whispered to him as they drove away with flames shooting twenty feet into the sky. It was the only thing said on the ride to a private airfield not far from Fort Irwin. They pulled up next to a Gulfstream IV. A man about their age opened the van and walked them to the plane.

Sean Collins looked like central casting's version of a CIA Agent. Six foot one, 180-pounds, all muscle, brown hair, blue eyes, fair skin and not a single memorable thing about him. He was the anti-Ira Weiss. Collins took them to the rear of the plane, placing two four-inch binders on the table by their seats. While the flight attendant told her five charges to buckle up - there were two
uniformed Army officers sitting in the front half of the cabin chatting privately - Collins explained
the binders were complete biographies of Dean Kennedy and his wife Kelly. The two could read
the biographies on the flight to Dulles to get a jump on their assignment if they were interested. If
not, there were magazines, playing cards and a chess set. There was also a galley kitchen with
coffee, bottled water, soft drinks and snacks.

Deeks suggested Kensi grab a nap for an hour or two while he studied and he'd grab some sleep
when she wanted to read. He knew she didn't sleep the night before. Of course, he knew that
because he didn't sleep either.

Kensi slept on and off during the flight to Dulles airport. Deeks read, napped, read some more. He
thought it was funny. For his first real undercover assignment, Roger Bates gave him a driver's
license for his cover and a warning not to do anything stupid. Now he had about 700 pages of
family history, academic transcripts, even three parking tickets from the late 2000's for Dean
Kennedy and the sinking feeling that he didn't heed Roger Bates's warning. He grabbed a coffee
for himself, a water for Kensi once she was awake for good and the two dug into their new
legends.

Once at Dulles, the plane taxied to a private hanger. A four door sedan took the Army officers
away. A black Yukon SUV - a hybrid, which Deeks found amusing - took them to Dean and
Kelly's rented home in Carderock Springs, Maryland.

The house, a 1960's modernist split, was part of a quiet cul-de-sac in a wooded area. Sitting on the
front porch outside their new home was Ira Weiss, smoking a cigar, with Monty sitting at his feet.
Kensi and Deeks each took their binders as they left the SUV. Monty jumped up and ran to Kensi.

"Monty," she hugged the dog, dropping to the ground. "We have missed you so much." Monty
jumped all over Kensi with his tail wagging, obviously thrilled.

Deeks saw Weiss walk up. "I've had this dog for years and you can tell how much he's missed me." He smiled and shook his head.

"Not to be unkind Marty but of the two you of you, Kensi would be my choice to greet." Weiss
extended his hand and Deeks shook it.

"You got a point."

"Flight OK?"

"Yes," Deeks noticed Weiss was not his usual cheerful self. "What's up?"

"We need to have a little talk inside the house. Clear a few things up."

"I don't like the sound of that," Kensi stood and looked at Weiss.

"Nothing's wrong, just need to get you two in the loop on a few matters. I picked up some
sandwiches from a half-way decent deli in Bethesda. You have to be starved."

Deeks would have joked about Kensi always being hungry but Weiss was making him nervous. He
watched the CIA Agent clip back his cigar and put it in his suit jacket before walking with them
into the house.

"Wow," was Kensi's reaction to the inside of the house. A lot of blonde wood, tasteful and
expensive modern furniture and plenty of floor to ceiling windows. All his belongs as Max Gentry
in Max's shitty alcove studio in Venice Beach probably cost less than the living room couch and
would have all fit into the dining area. Hell, all of his belongings as Marty Deeks, cop-lawyer-NCIS liaison, would fit in the living room.

"This whole community is a historic district," Weiss explained. "It isn't far from Langley so the Agency has picked up a few homes here over the years, usually buying one and then selling the another they owned. While you're probably not up to that part of Kelly's bio, Kelly lived in Bethesda for a year while her father was stationed at the Pentagon. She mentioned loving this area and since Dean just finished off another exhausting documentary, he's treating his wife right until their home is finished."

"The Fair Trade Coffee documentary?" Deeks asked.

"You started reading your legend. Excellent." Weiss took them into the kitchen. The appliances were all new and top end while the cabinets more matched the 1960's feel to the home. It was beautifully maintained but a throwback. Weiss had a nice deli platter on the kitchen table with a small basket of rolls and a two bottles of Pellegrino water. The classic Fiestaware fit right in with the retro look to the home. "Sit, eat," Weiss told them as Monty plopped between Kensi's and Deeks's chairs.

Kensi and Deeks made themselves a post-midnight snack. Deeks saw the CIA Agent pull a Red Bull out of their new very well stocked Viking refrigerator. "We keeping you up past your bedtime, Ira?" he asked.

"No, after I finish here I'm driving up to New York. UN Week is coming up. That's my busiest time of the year. I took a nap this afternoon, I'm fine. How are you two doing?"

"Better now," Kensi said, nearly half way through a ham and turkey hero.

"What's going on Ira?" Deeks wanted to finish his meal and get to bed. It may be 10PM L.A. time but he was wiped out.

"There are two matters where you've been kept in the dark about and one directly involves me. I think we have a good working relationship, I want that to continue so I'm going to tell you what's going on."

"The CIA broke Callen out of Lancaster," Deeks stated. Kensi looked at him, surprised, but it was a long standing suspicion he held.

"Yes. Nobody remembered I was in L.A. that week and when I heard the news, I called in. The operations manager for the escape denied the Agency's involvement to me and I found you a few hours later. I did not know they were lying to me. I don't want you two to think I intentionally lied to you."

"Sorry, Ira but that's bullshit. Dammit. That's why you didn't immediately suspect that Chloe Janvier was involved - you and the Agency broke him out." Deeks knew that in July but was too tired, too sore and too trusting of Weiss to push it that night. He was almost as disgusted in himself for not pushing the matter as he was in Weiss and the CIA.

"Well, Chloe Janvier is another story but let's stick with Callen for a second. The CIA set up the escape. Callen disappeared on his own when he got to the hospital. He's been in the wind since that night. That's why the operations manager said he lied to me. It was a full-fledged red alert at Langley because Callen was gone. Not sure I quite believe that's why he lied but Callen might as well have escaped on his own for what the CIA got out of it."
"Why did the CIA break Callen out?" Kensi asked. "No faith in us?"

"No, he was going to be put on ice. I'm sure he was stunned he was still in custody at that point."

"He did tell me he wasn't going to be in long," Deeks remembered the conversation that started all this.

"He probably would have been your operations manager. That job is falling to me now. I'm telling you all this because I want you to trust me, to trust the plan. I was lied to and I'm sorry I repeated those lies to you. From this point forward, you will be involved in all decisions, all plans. I'm sure you both were polygraphed and not knowing was probably to your advantage but I think you two not trusting me is a big disadvantage going forward," Ira told them.

"Going forward," Kensi repeated. "Why does that sound like there's more we don't know?"

"There was another reason I didn't think Chloe Janvier kidnapped Callen."

"Lemme guess, you have her in custody?" Deeks said as he finished the last of his sandwich.

"Well, we have Emile Janvier in protective custody. He's been working with us since his brother was sitting in your little boathouse. He helped us convince Marcel that the money was in his Swiss account."

"There wasn't a payment to Janvier?" Kensi asked.

"There was a payment to that account but we convinced Emile that he wanted to share access to the account with the CIA."

"Convinced?" Deeks wasn't sure he wanted to know.

"Emile was and still is wanted in Egypt on a handful of fraud charges. The Agency had him on a plane and made it clear to him that his cushy life in Zurich was going to be a long forgotten memory when the flight landed in Cairo. The promise of a multi-million dollar retirement fund and the plane going back to Zurich made Emile very cooperative."

"Of course he was," Deeks said. "And Chloe?"

"Chloe Janvier and her weak-willed husband Andre Dubois are nothing more than a useful bit of fiction."

"Excuse me?" Kensi nearly choke on her water.

"If Marcel Janvier fathered a child, he never claimed one. He never paid a dime in child support, never supported a woman. Nope, the Janviers are just Marcel the evil mastermind and Emile the evil money man. Or were."

"NCIS is spending time, money and manpower looking for..."

"And they will continue to do that. It sells your covers. Janvier's family is being blamed for your deaths. Janvier's faux family is keeping Henrietta, Sam Hanna and Leroy Gibbs from NCIS's Navy Yard from looking for Callen. The dossiers Janvier had on your team are now being used as evidence that crazy, counterfeit Chloe is out for revenge. Her fictional existence will continue until your assignment is complete."

"Any other lies we need to know about," Deeks understood what was done and why but hated
"Not that you're going to believe me right now but no. You are completely up to speed and your training and prep work begins. Tomorrow, a moving van and the black Yukon will arrive around 2PM. You two will get in the SUV and get to Langley. It will be hair, make-up and wardrobe for starting your lives and Dean and Kelly. The moving van will have the rest of the Kennedy family clothes. The house, meanwhile, is loaded. You have a fridge full of food, all the necessities from soap and toilet paper to mint dental floss and Kensi's hand lotion of choice. Sorry Marty, that special soap and shampoo you have made is a bit too SoCal surfer but I think you'll like the toiletries from Kiehl's." Weiss took a deep breath, "Scale of one to ten, how high is your level of mistrust right now?"

"Ten being pure mistrust?" Kensi asked.

"Yep."

"Twelve," both Kensi and Deeks answered.

Weiss got serious and spoke quietly, "I won't defend what the Agency did lying to me about Callen. I wouldn't have shown up at your place if I knew the truth. I won't lie to you. Ever. I don't operate that way. This assignment means a lot to me. I'm the reason Nate is in Iran, I'm the reason Callen is God knows where, I'm the reason you're sitting in Maryland and not LaLaLand. There is no one more invested in your success than me. I will do whatever is needed to make this work."

Kensi suddenly yawned, "I'm sorry, excuse me."

"You two are exhausted and I need to get back to New York. I will call you tomorrow evening and answer any questions you have. I'll call you every night from this point forward if you need me to. Don't let some panicked desk jockey who didn't know what he had in Callen take your eye off the prize. Get Nate and we'll go from there." Weiss stood up, "Marty, mind walking me to my car? Kensi, there's a nice dog bed in the media room for Monty. I'd say it's in the basement but that's not like any basement I ever saw. The dog sitter was grateful for the NPR tip." He walked out of the kitchen.

Deeks shrugged his shoulders as he stood, kissing Kensi on the forehead. "I'll be right back. This should be fascinating," he whispered to her.

Deeks caught up to Weiss as the CIA Agent was walking down the driveway. "You should be grateful Kensi is well-fed and tired otherwise she'd kick your ass for that."

"I'll remember that." Weiss handed Deeks a black box about the size of an iPhone. "You know what this is?"

"Well it's dark out," Deeks said as he looked at the item. "It's an audio jammer."

"Very good. The house is wired for sound on the first floor, probably the media room in the basement too. Bedrooms and bathrooms aren't. They don't have anyone monitoring most of the time but if they get suspicious you're going to bug out or things are going poorly, they may eavesdrop."

"They being the CIA."

"They are expecting a lot from you two. A few bad days in a row and they may listen in."

"Why tell me? Why now? Why not in the house?"
"I don't like being lied to either so call this my little revenge. I need you two to trust me. You're furious but keeping things in check and I probably am grateful that Kensi is tired." Weiss pulled a sheet of paper out of his pocket. "If you don't trust this audio jammer, there are about a dozen here you can get. That one doesn't have a GPS. It works just fine, however. Don't get one with a GPS. Anyone checking signals from the house will pick up the GPS."

Deeks took the paper and folded it before putting in his back pocket. "I get it Ira, you're as pissed as I am."

"No, I don't do pissed anymore. I'm disappointed. I'm worried about you being pissed. I'm worried about Kensi's surprised look when we were talking and what that does to her and what that does to you. And what you being pissed does to Kensi." Weiss shook his head and took a deep breath. "Nate was one of two operative we weren't able to contact after Atley talked. Makisig Cruz was working for us as a part of an extremist group operating in the Philippines. His head was sent his wife, his hands to the US Embassy, his feet to his mother."

"Oh God."

"The family was given immediate asylum and new identities here in the States but that's what we're working against. I need you on board, gung-ho, ready to work. I need Kensi doing the same thing. I got Nate in this, I got Callen in this, I got you and Kensi in this. I need to get everyone out."

Deeks heard the desperation in Weiss's tone. "Ira, go to New York. Kensi and I have always been gung-ho when it comes to rescuing Nate. That post-rescue CIA recruitment pitch just got a whole lot tougher. You don't have to call tomorrow. We're on board."

Weiss's car looked to Deeks to be a late '90's Ford Mustang convertible. Pulling the cigar out of his jacket pocket, Weiss told him, "When we're done with this, I'll call Henrietta myself and explain everything. Get a good night's sleep. Faster you get Nate back, faster I'll make that call."

Deeks watched Weiss drive away. Kensi's "My God, what have we done?" played in his head over and over as he walked back to the house.

Kensi was looking around, taking in their new digs as he entered the living room. Before she could say a word, Deeks put his index finger over his lips and tossed her the audio jammer. "Monty OK downstairs?"

Kensi's eyes were opened wide looking at the piece of electronics but she nodded slowly and started playing along. "Yeah, he's got a sweet set up. Nice dog bed by the back window, satellite radio playing NPR. All good. There's a media room down there, couple of treadmills, some weights, bench press, leg press, a spinning bike and a rowing machine."

"Awesome, we'll be fit and entertained. Baby, I don't know about you but I'm tired and a shower would do me the world of good. Care to join me?" Deeks wiggled his eyebrows, earning a smile. He put his hand out and the two walked up the stairs to the house's second floor.

The second floor was more blonde wood, more floor to ceiling windows. As Kensi opened the bedroom door, Deeks lifted her off the floor and carried her into the room. "What are you doing?" she asked.

"Carrying you over the threshold. I intended to do this when we got back from Del Mar in May and forgot. Wasn't going to do it in front of Weiss." Deeks set Kensi back on her feet and kissed her. As the two looked around the room, Deeks took the audio jammer from her and dropped it on California King platform bed.
He opened the door leading to the en suite. The master bath was a vision. Stand-alone bathtub, a
double shower with multiple handhelds, side jets and shower heads, two sinks, a toilet, a bidet and
a door leading to a balcony with a hot tub. There was also a phone, a small flat screen TV and more
satellite radio.

"Wherever we wind up after this is over," Kensi looked at Deeks, "we need one of these."

Deeks walked to the shower and turned it on, "Duly noted, dear." He left the shower door opened
wide enough to fill the room with sound. Walking past the radio, he stopped, flipped it on and
found a classic rock station. "Won't Get Fooled Again" played and seemed appropriate. Smiling, he
kicked off his shoes, took Kensi's hand and pulled the two of them into the tub. "We'll christen the
shower in a minute," Deeks said before he kissed her, "but we need to talk."

He eased himself into a comfortable position in the tub, taking his gun out of his waist holster
before pulling Kensi down next to him. Kensi put her weapon next to his before wrapping herself
around him. Deeks thought about christening the bathtub first but Kensi interrupted his plans.
Whispering in his ear, she asked "What did Ira say?"

"First floor is wired for sound, so is the media room. Said the bedrooms and bathrooms weren't and
that people weren't monitoring all the time."

"You believe him?"

"Yes, but we're not taking any chances. We're not using any of his audio equipment either.
Tomorrow morning, we do a full sweep of the house. But Kens, the job starts now. We're going to
be Marty and Kensi as Dean and Kelly, good company employees all the time. But we're going to
breakfast every morning and talking."

"About?"

"Everything. I should have told you I was suspicious about the CIA breaking Callen out."

"You did in a way, last week when we ...", Kensi waved her hand.

"Loudly debated the pros and cons of what happened today?" Deeks teased. "No, I should have
told you exactly what I thought. And we're doing that from now on. We're going to do whatever the
CIA wants so we can get in the field and find Nate."

"Then what do we do?"

"After we find Nate," he kissed her forehead, "we go back to our lives and beg everyone's
forgiveness. Before that, I really could use a shower and if you look through the steam, there is
certainly room for two."

x-x-x

1711 Beverly Vista Road
Beverly Hills, CA
January 19, 2013, 8:30AM

Arkady Kolcheck saw Rosa, his housekeeper and cook, scurry across the entry. "Rosa?"

"Grocery shopping, Mr. Kolcheck," she called back as she left. "Breakfast is on the patio."

He shook his head as he walked to the patio. Of course it was on the patio, unless it was raining it
As he walked through the kitchen and out the patio door, he realized why Rosa was on the run. "Dmitri is new," Kolcheck told his uninvited guest. "If you told him who you are, this wouldn't have been necessary." This being Dmitri tied to a chaise lounge by the pool, held in place by what looked like the cords used to secure the hot tub cover.

"He pulled a gun," Callen put down his fork and showed Kolcheck the Sig P220 Carry and the weapon's magazine, "before I could complete my introduction. Rosa was nice enough to make me some breakfast. I sent her away..."

"Grocery shopping, she mentioned it." Kolcheck sat across the table from Callen, lifting the stainless steel dome covering his place setting. Pancakes and bacon, a fine breakfast. "She made you eggs. She won't make me eggs."

"Rosa told me your cholesterol level means you either have bacon or you have eggs. You like bacon. Besides, she was impressed that I wanted some vegetables in my eggs. Delicious and healthy."

Kolcheck tore into his pancakes. "In Russia, we didn't worry about cholesterol. Ate what you wanted and what happened, happened. I assume you are here with good news."

"I am." Callen took a thumb drive from his pocket and tossed it to his host. "Teplov has been stealing from you in both ports - before the crates are loaded in Vladivostok and when they arrive in Los Angeles. He's taking much more from the docks in Vladivostok."

"Excellent work. I will have to call in Peter and have a chat. As for your fee, I may not have the cash available in the house right now."

"Oh, you had plenty." Callen picked up a duffle bag from the floor. "Arkady, maybe Teplov wouldn't be stealing if you were paying him what he is owed. And keeping your safe combination under your desk blotter? Really? You were KGB."

"Were. Besides, that electronic lock is too confusing. Whatever happened to a good, old-fashioned mechanical combination lock?"

Callen finished his eggs. "I was surprised you didn't have a biometric lock on your safe, especially with that kind of money you keep in there."

"I'd like to keep my thumbs on my hands and not lose them to a robber." Kolcheck put his fork down and wiggled his fingers at Callen, chuckling a bit. Pouring himself a cup of coffee, he asked, "What are your plans now? While I haven't been questioned in a while, I do know they are still looking for you."

"I have an errand to run of a personal nature. After that, I'll decide."

"I am sorry again about the girl. She was quite beautiful."

"She was." Callen looked down and then took a deep breath. "She took good care of me after I was shot. Before Arkady could make a crack, he added, "Kensi was a sister to me, someone who meant the world to me. And I got her killed."

"Are you sure you don't want to keep working for me?"

"No, I needed some money and a passport. Got both thanks to you so I'm off." Callen stood and
extended his hand. "I am grateful for all your help, Arkady."

Kolcheck pulled him into a bear hug instead. "Good luck, my friend. When you've run your errand, call me before you make any decisions. We are a good team."

###

Just as I don't think ABC's old daytime dramas were hotbeds for international intrigue, I also don't think the CIA is flipping houses in historic Maryland neighborhoods. But it would be sort of cool.
Nine

Chapter Summary

Timeline: Memorial Day Weekend/Late May 2012 - Marriage; Opening of Olympics/Late July 2012 - Escape; Labor Day Week/Early September 2012 - Explosion; President's Day Weekend/mid-February 2013 - OSP closes.

Chapter 9.

"Out here in the fields
I fight for my meals
I get my back into my living.
I don't need to fight
To prove I'm right
I don't need to be forgiven." - "Baba O'Riley" by The Who

Tigris Hotel
Baghdad, Iraq
Suite 1752
January 24, 2013

When his CIA instruction began in September, Deeks wasn't sure what the Agency expected him to be but competent was obviously a surprise. His second hand-to-hand training session ended when he broke the instructor's nose. "We didn't know you could fight," the battered trainer explained. Obviously, Deeks thought, because why would an undercover operative for a major city police force know to fight? A move to the firing range had the instructor laughing, asking Deeks why he was there. He was assigned a Sig Sauer but allowed to keep his Beretta. Trips to the firing range were for practice and sparring at the gym more fell in line with his NCIS routine.

With few of the physical training classes needed, Deeks asked for help with his computer skills. He'd never be Eric or Nell but he wanted to broaden what he could do. He also sat with intelligence gathering analysts for a few weeks learning enough to be subbing on nights and weekends when opportunities presented themselves. While filling in on Halloween, he saw a memo with the Agency's new NCIS intelligence contact at the Navy Yard - Nell Jones. Using some of his newly acquired computer skills, Deeks found Nell's Washington DC home address without triggering a single alert.

Kensi was immersed in language classes during this time. Within weeks, she was fluent not only in Farsi but could read and speak enough Arabic to get by. Both Kensi and Deeks sat through some basic undercover seminars but they offered nothing new to Deeks and seemed to be common sense to Kensi. The two were trained to use almost any communication device available. Kensi taught Deeks Morse code at dinner over two weeks, stunned he didn't learn it as a kid. He flashed a series of gang signs and reminded her that he grew up learning a different type of covert communications.

Weiss introduced them to their case officer, Trent Kort. While Deeks didn't care Kort was openly dismissive about his police background, he didn't like how Kort treated Kensi. Kort managed to be condescending, imperious and insulting often in the same conversation. Kensi told Deeks she
met Kort during an NCIS investigation about a month after he started working the Emilio Ortega-Radovan Lazik case for LAPD. Iranians were involved, so he was probably the right man for this assignment. Even though Kort knew Callen, a fact that didn't surprise Deeks, Kensi said the CIA officer kept NCIS in the dark for most of the investigation. That also didn't surprise Deeks.

Finally, there was also something about the way Kort looked at Kensi that just bothered him. Deeks worked with Kensi for a long time, they were involved for a good part of it so men noticing and reacting to Kensi wasn't something new to him. The "creepy" and "weird" - Kensi's words - Kort was different.

Weird was how Deeks felt about how he looked. Over the years, he wore his hair long, short, shaggy, buzz cut, back in a ponytail, even a mohawk in college - but he was always a blond. Now, his hair was dyed a medium ash brown, cut short - Dan Draper style - and hair-gelled into submission. He kept some facial hair - a Van Dyke - which was also darkened. He found a pair of black, wire-rim glasses that completed the businessman turned artist look. Weeks after the makeover, he still was startled looking in the mirror some mornings. Deeks embraced Dean's business gear for his daily wardrobe. Suits and dress shirts, though usually without ties, were worn to Langley; cords or chinos and sweater on weekends.

Amazing was how Deeks felt about Kensi's new look. Her hair was short for the first time she tried a Dana Scully-style bob in the mid 1990's. She went back to that same bob with lighter brown hair that made the most of her new green contact lens. Deeks wasn't sure about the green eyes - Kensi liked them - but expensive clothes and jewelry, regular spa visits and a warm and easy smile made Kelly almost as stunning as the woman he married.

Life outside of Langley was good for Dean and Kelly. Both read Kelly's mystery novels - Kensi actually sat at her laptop every night and re-typed the books as a way to get really familiar with the material. Deeks was far more interested in the scorching hot, clandestine relationship between Kelly's kick-ass spy Alexandra and mellow surfer handler David. He was hoping to reenact some of the fictional duo's quality time spent alone and perhaps provide some ideas for any new novels. Kensi met with the CIA analyst who actually wrote the books - an expert on China named Heidi Polk who had a Harlequin Romances book contract on the side. Writing outside of her usual oeuvre - modern westerns - she took a couple of Janvier's pre-makeover photos of Deeks and Kensi along with a brief background on the two and ran with it.

The Fair Trade Coffee documentary was actually good. The CIA used it to shoot video of several small villages in Columbia, Indonesia, Yemen, the Ivory Coast and large agricultural areas in Mexico, Vietnam and Costa Rica as well as interview the locals for potential future assets. The passports for Kelly and Dean reflected all the travel that was key to making the film.

The Agency gave Dean a 2009 Mercedes SL63, Kelly a 2010 Cadillac Escalade. Deeks had them flip cars - the daughter of a Marine pilot would have the need for speed while the filmmaker with a dog would want room for his equipment. Weiss loved the attention to detail while Kort just rolled his eyes. Kensi didn't care, she just loved her new car.

Kelly and Dean met a few of their neighbors, all nice hard-working folks who were surprised anyone would do a short-term rental in suburban Maryland when DC had more to offer. Historic house, lovely surroundings and good people as neighbors were all Kelly told them she and Dean needed.

While Dean and Kelly had all they needed, Deeks and Kensi started taking care of their own needs. Regular sweeps of the house confirmed the first floor and media room were the only areas wired for sound. Deeks bought a copy of "Titanic" on DVD at a local yard sale, partly as a gift for Kensi,
partly to play it at least twice a week in the media room to annoy any listeners as he worked out in the home gym with ear-plugs in. On more than one occasion, he found Kensi watching after he finished his work out.

Kensi spent a Saturday afternoon searching for and then learning how to disable the GPS trackers in the cars. She left them in place but knew they both could be free of any minders if need be. Burn phones were easy to procure. The monthly stipend was converted to travelers cheques – something Kensi remembered her Mom doing before leaving for good – gift cards from American Express and refillable Visa and MasterCards.

The son of one of their neighbors was a budding Eric Beale - a whiz with computers. Deeks approached the teen's parents asking if the boy could help Dean with a Christmas project for Kelly for a fee. Dean was looking for a Powerbook G4 - the post-college laptop Kelly used to write her first novel he told them – to give to Kelly as a gift. The plan was to purchase it but update the guts of the computer as if it was a new laptop. Since he didn't want Kelly seeing the charges on his credit card, Dean gave the Eric Mini-Me an opened ended budget and a hard deadline – October 15th – for the computer. The Whiz Kid found one on E-Bay and spent a week in October and about $1,500 for the laptop, the improvements and the young man's time making the machine brand new. A Virgin Mobile pre-paid hotspot had them back online without the CIA watching.

Eleven weeks after the CIA moved them into the Carderock Springs home, the same moving truck showed up to move them out. Kensi and Deeks packed for a short holiday with Monty taking Dean's SUV - Kelly's sporty little car was towed by the movers. Outside of a destination wedding for a law school buddy in Miami and the weekend bachelor party two weeks earlier in New York, the pre-Dean Kennedy Marty Deeks never visited the East Coast. Kensi, who spent her high school years in North Carolina, booked them into Williamsburg for Thanksgiving, a few days in DC - thank God the W Hotel was good with pets - before finally driving north to Quogue.

The surprise visit to Nell Jones got them the last illicit piece to protect themselves - Inez Martin. Nell, besides being brought slightly into the loop about their new identities and assignment, was tasked with building a small legend for an Inez Martin. They didn't need much, just the opportunity to get a checking account, a credit card and a post office box at a Mailbox Inc. near Kennedy Airport. They could exist financially without the CIA.

December and early January were spent in their new home continuing training and beginning to work. Kensi operated out of Kelly's second floor home office, which looked like highly successful espionage novelist's dream - an iMac desktop and Airbook laptop, maps for research, an impressive phone system for conference calls with agents and producers trying to get her books made into movies. For Kensi, it gave her access to agents in the field and the ability to compile intelligence about Nate. Her husband's Christmas gift was pushed under her desk - a mini-fridge stocked it with a snack she was happy to become reacquainted with - Yodels.

The second floor also gave her a good look at the private road to the house. With some creative wiring, Deeks was able to run their kitchen home security video screen to the small TV in Kelly's office. While the property had motion detectors and a fairly impressive alarm system, Kensi was pleased to be their first line of defense.

Dean Kennedy's office was on the first floor with a full view of the ocean. It killed Deeks to watch the grey, cold Atlantic. He took some solace in the fact that the current couldn't really support surfing even if the weather was warmer but he missed surfing every day. Deeks moved Monty's dog bed into Dean's office but Deeks noticed the mutt was spending more and more time at Kensi's feet. Weiss was right - Kensi was everyone's first choice for company and probably should be.
Dean's office had a 103-inch video screen that took up an entire wall while smaller screens were situated throughout the room. From his desk, Dean could compare different footage from his documentaries. Deeks sat there instead and studied video feeds from around the world, compliments of a CIA satellite dish sitting just inside the property's boathouse. Unlike the NCIS boathouse, this structure had just the dish and a 1999 Cigarette 38 Top Gun Racing Boat. It was supposed to be Dean's first silly purchase but it was an escape vehicle as well.

On January 11th, Ira Weiss dropped in, relaying how impressed he, Kort and the CIA were with their work. He also dropped off their itinerary for CIA Operation 5,428, or as Deeks liked to call it "Operation Locate 'n' Repatriate Nate." They'd fly to London January 22nd, January 23rd from London to Baghdad where they'd meet their Iranian contact followed by a private flight to Kuwait and a final commercial connection to Tehran.

The CIA had contractors on the ground that would provide transportation to the three areas where the Agency believed Nate would be living. Kort targeted larger cities with an educated population and Jewish communities where Nate could blend with the crowd, keep his head down and survive.

As far as the government knew, Dean and Kelly's trip was part of their newest documentary about Iran, its people and its culture. Pitched to the different ministries as a way to show the West about the successes in the country outside of the oil industry, Kort and his assets in the government got the ministry member who managed public relations - Behrooz Jafari, a contact Kort personally cultivated - to serve as their guide and provide broad access for Dean and Kelly Kennedy.

Kensi and Deeks were ready. Deeks was more comfortable with the long set-up for an undercover operation than Kensi but that didn't mean he wasn't getting antsy. He also hated the cold, rainy and occasionally snowy Long Island. Kensi, on the other hand, liked the cold and was a kid in the snow. After his first snowman, Deeks realized sand castles were much more his style.

After uneventful flights to London and then Baghdad, Deeks and Kensi were greeted at the airport by Ira Weiss and a gunnery sergeant on loan from the Marines named Miguel Morales. Morales, Weiss explained, would act as the couple's security chief. He could shoot, was trained in hand-to-hand and was good with a knife. There also wasn't a single vehicle he couldn't drive and was qualified to fly both helicopters and small planes. It took Deeks about half the ride to the hotel to realized he met Morales once before.

Following a quiet night in their suite, Deeks sat out on their balcony while Kensi used the world's loudest hair dryer. Ira Weiss joined him as he watched the Iraqis start their day.

"I thought Los Angeles was densely populated," Deeks said.

"Iran's similar. A lot of people in this world, gotta put them somewhere," Weiss mused. "Are you two ready?"

"I've been ready since Halloween."

"And Kensi?"

"Kensi's been waiting for this day since I told her Nate was Cherokee and the CIA thought we could help with the rescue."

"This isn't official and I'll deny it if you repeat it but Langley is tremendously impressed with the both of you."

"We're tremendously impressive but Ira, let's get Nate back before the recruiting begins."
"Smart man. Well, getting Nate back may be a bit easier than I expected. You'll have to do your Dean and Kelly act in Tehran for a day or two but I may have a location on Nate." Ira tossed a thumb drive to Deeks. "Kort has you doing a tour of major urban centers but I didn't think Nate would sit still."

"You're running your own search?"

"Kort isn't the only one who knows people in country. He just thinks he is."

"What's on this?" Deeks held up the thumb drive.

"Photos, maps, contacts and current intelligence about Nate. Jafari is new to the Agency. If I knew him better, I'd have him arrange your trip to this part of the country. Instead, you need to nudge him into taking you to where I believe Nate is. Gunny Morales should be able to help you with that."

"You don't trust Jafari?"

"Seems like a lovely man who wants to bring his wife and daughter to America. I have no doubt he'll do what he needs to do to make sure that happens. His wife wants to live near her sister in Michigan. But, I've never worked with him before so I'll put my faith in you, Kensi and the Gunny."

"You've never worked with me or Kensi before either, Ira."

"But Henrietta trained and trusts both Kensi and you. There isn't a better endorsement than that."

"I thought you just liked me for my looks." Deeks batted his eyes at Weiss hoping the joke overrode the concerns he still had about how he and Kensi were lying to Hetty. "I need coffee. Do you need coffee?"

"There's a Starbucks in the lobby. Yet another sign of progress as this country rebuilds."

Kensi opened the door to the balcony. "Mr. Jafari and the Gunny are here."

Deeks dropped the thumb drive in his pocket before he gave Kensi a peck on the cheek as they walked into their suite. Kensi as Kelly did a round of introductions though only Jafari was new to the group. Jafari sat with an aluminum attaché and a duffel bag ready for the trip, Gunny Morales had a fairly impressive backpack. Kelly and Dean would be traveling with well-worn backpacks reflecting their film-making journeys.

Jafari excused himself to the balcony to call his wife. Deeks as Dean took coffee orders - Jafari passed as he returned to the room - and started down to the Starbucks with Morales in tow. As they got to the elevator, the door to the suite opened with Kensi as Kelly calling to her husband.

"Dean, honey, hold on. The bathroom is just off the bedroom," Kensi told someone on the other side of the door. "Dean, if you happen to see something resembling a..."

"A doughnut, dear," Deeks started to answer but the explosion from the suite was deafening, shaking the entire building, sending Kensi flying and knocking the men by the elevator off their feet.

x-x-x

Kurdistan Province
Iran
March 1, 2013, 8:00PM

It was a happy day at the Amir family farm. The weather was beginning to turn – spring was not far away. There were significant orders for wheat and not only would there be work for members of the large, extended Amir family and their friend but they'd be hiring workers from the nearby village. The best news of all, however, was that twins Mahid and Minu received letters from Harvard advising both would be proud members of the class of 2017.

Harun Amir wanted nothing but the best for his children. He promised his wife Dina before her death nearly ten years ago from cancer that the twins would want for nothing. The finest education and a look at the world away from the family farm was exactly what Mahid and Minu would have.

Harun's father nearly drove the family into poverty providing him with an education at the University of Nebraska. At the University's Agricultural School, Harun learned not only how to run his father's farm but grow it into one of the top businesses in his province. Since both his children wanted to be doctors – Mahid a surgeon, Minu an oncologist – he would marshal all his resources to make that happen. Their callings honored his beloved Dina. The children applied to other fine schools but Harvard was their father's dream, a dream now realized.

At a family party to celebrate his children's successes, the true guest of honor was not even invited - Nathan, the children's tutor. Harun believed with all his heart that Dina sent Nathan to the family. She believed in helping all in need so when a tired traveler looked for shelter from a surprise October snow storm, Harun found not only a tutor for his children but a well-read and worldly companion who enjoyed books, music and art.

Once established in the small servant's quarters just behind the main farm house, Nathan worked with the twins, helping Mahid with his calculus and Minu with Shakespeare. He coached the children for their college interviews and helped craft their admission essays. And while Harun figured Nathan was likely wanted by the government on some charge, Harun could not turn in or turn away what he knew his beautiful Dina sent to them.

So while family and friends celebrated, Harun broke away to visit Nathan in his quarters. After his own smile and the smiles of his children, Harun could not remember seeing another man so happy about his family.

"We did it." Harun offered a piece of cake as the two men sat in Nathan's small living room.

"They did it, you did it. I helped a little but it was all your and their hard work." He smiled as he took a bite of the cake.

"You would not take anything for your help..."

"Harun, you've feed me and have allowed me to stay safe and warm during this winter. I could never take a thing from you. I owe you so much. As we've agreed, I will stay until the weather is warmer and then complete my journey home."

"You must allow me to help. I must teach my children that all kindnesses should be repaid."

"And I have been paid every night I go to bed with a full stomach in this lovely, warm home. The twins know that kindness without expectations is a gift. I will be fine. You mustn't worry about me. You must go celebrate with the family - they'll worry that you're gone."

"Nathan, you are a good man and a blessing to the Amir family." Harun patted his friend on the shoulder and stood to leave. "I will always do the right thing for a good man."
"Then we are both blessed." Nate Getz walked the man who saved his life to the door before locking it behind him. He wondered, as he did every night, who forgot him first - the CIA or Iranian Intelligence. He hoped it was the latter, was terrified it was the former.

# # #

Author's note: And now that everyone is accounted for, the little 'fast forwards' at the end of the stories come to an end. We're full steam ahead in 2013 and hopefully done by the time the season four premiere makes this entire story moot.
Ten

Chapter Summary

Timeline: Memorial Day Weekend/Late May 2012 - Marriage; Opening of Olympics/Late July 2012 - Escape; Labor Day Week/Early September 2012 - Explosion; President's Day Weekend/mid-February 2013 - OSP closes.

Chapter 10.

"I tried so hard
And got so far
But in the end
It doesn't even matter
I had to fall
To lose it all
But in the end
It doesn't even matter" - "In The End" by Linkin Park

Landstuhl Regional Medical Center
United States Army Medical Command
Landstuhl, Germany
January 26, 2013, 12:30PM

She was so beautiful walking down the aisle. He still wasn't sure how he got her to say yes - yes to starting a relationship to see what would happen, yes to taking it past 'partners with privileges,' "Yes, I will marry you, get up, get off your knee, everyone's looking." But she kept saying yes. General Watson, who told Deeks that Don Blye talked him into the best decision he ever made - marrying his Josephine, was honored to walk her down the aisle. The General also told Deeks that if he broke Kensi's heart, he'd answer to not only to the General but the 1st Marine Regiment.

The chaplain spoke about faith, hope, love and how the greatest of these three was love. Looking at Kensi, he knew, maybe for the first time in his life, someone truly loved him.

Then the beach exploded. And Deeks was awake again.

"You looked like you were having such a nice dream," Colonel Tina Carter said to him. "At least until the end." Colonel Carter was the head nurse on Kensi's ward and a woman not to be trifled with. She was pushing a wheelchair with his and Kensi's backpacks.

Deeks jumped up to help her with the bags but she was having none of it.

"Sit back down. I've moved two hundred and fifty pound patients who were dead to the world, I can take care of your luggage. Besides, you have four pins holding your left wrist together, that rather elaborate brace and watching to you move, you're still a mess from the explosion. Whatever you do, don't help. Though you're probably as stiff and sore from that chair you're sleeping in than from what happened." She signed rather dramatically as she pulled the two heavy packs from the wheelchair and dropped them on the floor. "I got you that cot to sleep in, Mr. Kennedy. You wanna help me, sleep in a bed."
"As soon as Kelly is awake, I promise. And it's Dean, please."

"Well, Dean please, Miguel Morales asked me to drop these off and to give you this note," Colonel Carter pulled a note out of her sweater pocket. "He was bringing someone to see Mr. Weiss."

"How is Ira?"

"The same," Colonel Carter's voice did not inspire confidence.

"What do you think?"

"I can't predict the future Mr. Kenn...Dean please. But he's alive and you have your first miracle right there."

"That's true. But you can't predict the future? I had you pegged as Nursetradamus." Deeks winked at her.

Colonel Carter smiled back at Deeks as she headed to the door. "I bet that's the charm that got you Mrs. Kennedy."

"More sorta wore her down," he said to both nurse and patient. Once alone with just Kensi, he asked her to wake up for about the hundredth time since they landed. There was also all the begging in what was left of the hotel's hall, the med-evac helicopter ride and the medical flight into Ramstein.

Kensi, as stubborn as ever, kept her eyes shut. Sighing, Deeks opened the note from Morales:

Mr. Kennedy -

Mr. Kort was on the same plane in with Mr. Weiss's niece Elaine. I saw him at the airport.

I am sure he's looking for scapegoats. Mr. Weiss will be first, you and Mrs. Kennedy next. Dr. Getz for being captured will make it a foursome. You need to be prepared.

I got your bags sent here from Army CID. You may want to check yours.

MM

Deeks walked over to the backpacks, stretching and working out the kinks as he did. Colonel Carter may have had a point about sleeping in the molded plastic chair. In his backpack, sitting on top of his clothes was his Beretta.

"Don't go anywhere," he told the still unconscious Kensi, "I'm changing out of these scrubs. Gotta look fine for my best girl."

In the room's bathroom, he was able to change slowly - remembering the last time his wrist was broken. This time his mother wasn't there to look guilty every time he needed help with shirt buttons. A pair of loafers packed at the last minute saved him the indignity of waiting for someone to help him tie his shoes. The waist holster felt good, almost normal.

"Still sleeping, Princess?" Deeks teased as he returned to the room, feeling better just by being dressed in his own clothes. Well, Dean's clothes. Walking to her bed, he continued his one-sided conversation. "Come on, the doctors said the head injury isn't that bad. I think you're paying me back for faking you out after I got shot. I totally had you, which was awesome and badass since I'd been shot like three hours earlier." Deeks leaned over her hospital bed and kissed her on the
forehead and then lips. "Please," he pleaded quietly, "wake up, Kens. I need you. I can't do any of this without you."

"Mr. Kennedy?" Mike Morales popped his head in the door, "can I stop in for a visit?"

Deeks stepped away from the hospital bed. "Of course, Kelly here is so bored with my company she won't even wake up."

Morales pulled up a second plastic chair next to where Deeks had been sitting. "Any changes with Mrs. Kennedy?"

"No, Sleeping Beautiful here has passed all her tests. She has several hairline fractures to her skull, three broken ribs, torn cartilage around the ribs, bruising on her back. The door saved her from the fire and shrapnel but when it pancaked her into the wall, a lot of damage was done. She's strong. She just needs to wake up."

"She will. Strong, healthy woman like that, she's just recovering. I've been in a few explosions. Big trauma means big rest."

"How's Ira?"

"Not good. Everyone's still stunned he survived the explosion. He'll be 58 in March. A young man would have a hard time recovering. They rushed him back into surgery overnight. The doctors removed part of his skull to help with the brain swelling. He's..." Morales just shook his head. "His niece is here."

"That's what your note said. Isn't she's like a stats person for ESPN?"

"Among other things."

"Oh, for God's sake, don't tell me she's..."

"Elaine Stern is one of the more unique people you'll ever meet. She had a doctorate in some sort of advanced mathematics from MIT at age 21. Her graduate thesis was on rotisserie baseball and the lack of statistical offensive leaders on the 1998, 125-win New York Yankees. I've been a baseball fan my whole life, played fantasy baseball since high school and when she drops BABIP and VORP, I don't know what the hell she's talking about half the time."

"She's CIA?"

"Consultant. Consults with CIA, NSA, ICE, Homeland Security, even NYPD. Give that woman a situation and the variables and there is not a better threat assessment analyst around. She just does that between providing 'Baseball Tonight' Curtis Granderson's batting average with runners in scoring position at the new Yankee Stadium against right-handed pitching and writing scholarly analysis about why the Baltimore Orioles's Ken Singleton was the most under-appreciated ballplayer in the late 1970's, early 1980's."

Deeks chuckled. "And she's Ira's niece."

"Oh, is she Ira's niece. During the ride over, she needed to know if she could get Dr. Brown's Diet Ginger Ale and if there was any place here that made a good take-out Chicken Caesar Salad. On the other hand, if Ira lives, she'll kill him because pitchers and catchers report in about three weeks and she had to cancel her annual spring training pilgrimage."

Deeks was laughing now. "If she finds the ginger ale, give me a head's up. Coffee here is awful."
"Will do, sir."

"Look, Gunny, and I'm guessing you are not a gunny, you can lay off the sir stuff."

"I'm not a gunny?"

Deeks pointed to Kensi. "In between begging her to wake up and playing 'Let's Make a Deal' with God to see if divine intervention would keep her alive, I watched you get us out of there. I may not be as up on my military hierarchy as my wife but there have been just a few too many people saluting smartly and doing exactly what you tell them. I know gunnys are leaders of men, you're something else."

"Ira didn't tell me much about you two. Only said you weren't CIA but you had skills. You have skills."

"That's not an answer. And one of the skills I have is a degree from Pepperdine Law so..."

"Ira does collect the more interesting ones."

"Oh, he does. I wasn't expecting a California Corrections Officer to be chauffeuring me around Iraq."

Morales eyes opened wide. "Sir, Mr. Kennedy..."

Deeks looked around the room and whispered, "Deeks, Marty Deeks. You gave me the most complete explanation in the history of the California Corrections System on how to use the panic button."

Morales was obviously searching his memory, "Callen's hippie lawyer?"

"Not hippie, surfer."

"Same difference." Deeks watched Morales eye him head to toe. "So you're a lawyer doing this."

"Among other things."

It was Morales's turn to laugh. "NSA? Nah, not NSA. Not a good home for a hippie lawyer."

"Surfer."

"Callen was NCIS. You NCIS?"

"Nope. You'll go through a lot of the alphabet before you get to my organization. But that still doesn't answer my original question."

"Miguel Morales, Major, Marines. Gotta love the alliteration. Intelligence Officer," Morales extended his hand.

Shaking it, Deeks answered, "Marty Deeks, Detective II, LAPD, NCIS Liaison Officer. Or at least I was."

"So you're a hippie, lawyer, cop. Wow, is Ira good."

"Now I'm Dean Kennedy, businessman turned filmmaker."

"And Mrs. Kennedy?"
"When she wakes up, she can do her own introductions."

"Sounds like a plan. Speaking of plans, I have no doubt Mr. Kort is here to lay the groundwork for how his asset being a suicide bomber is Ira's fault."

"I can't see how..."

"Based on the CID forensic analysis of the blast, Ira opened Jafari's briefcase while the son of a bitch was in the head. I pointed it out to Ira while you were talking coffee because there was no way in hell we were getting on that charter flight with Jafari, a funky-looking briefcase and half a dozen JAG staffers on their way to The Ponce."

"You were suspicious."

"Sir, I've been in Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Armenia, Yemen, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE, Oman, the Philippines, Afghanistan, Pakistan, a bunch of countries ending with 'stan' and a whole lot more in the last eleven years and I'm still here. Being suspicious is a healthy life choice."

"Good..." Deeks's answer was cut off by a moan from Kensi. "Oh God," Deeks jumped up and ran to her bed. "I'll tell Colonel Carter, she'll get a doctor." Morales bolted out of the room.

"Kensi," Deeks whispered in her ear, "wake up, come back to me. Nobody's rolled their eyes at me in days and I'm feeling unloved."

Kensi moved a little, Deeks prayed she was responding to her voice. "I'll make you a deal," he told her. "You wake up for me right now, I'll find you some chocolate, maybe get you a Twinkie. I didn't tell you this but I packed a box of Yodels in the film gear. I'll get them back if you just wake up."

Kensi's body jerked as Colonel Carter came to the door. "Mr. Kennedy, Dr. Jacobs is just finishing up with another patient, she'll be here in a second."

"Hear that, they're rushing doctors in to see..." Deeks was interrupted again as Kensi took a very deep breath and then yelped in pain.

Kensi's eye's opened wide. When she looked at him, she had no idea who he was. Of course she didn't, she was looking for Marty Deeks, he was Dean Kennedy.

"Kensi, it's me. Deeks," he whispered in her ear. "Remember, 'Extreme Makeover, CIA Edition'?"

Deeks saw Kensi sort it all out. Her eyes opened wide, this time with recognition. "Dean, honey, what happened?"

"That's my girl. I have missed you." He took her non-IV hand and kissed it. "God, I've missed you."

"Mr. Kennedy," Dr. Jacobs put her arm around Deeks's shoulder and firmly guided him away from Kensi and to Colonel Carter. "I'm going to give your wife a full exam, including some basic neurological tests. We're gonna need some time so why don't you get some lunch. Colonel Carter told me all you've had is three apples, gallons of coffee and a Jell-O or two."

"Glad you finally got some Jell-O, Dean," Kensi teased before turning to Dr. Jacobs. "The last time he was in the hospital, I ate all of his Jell-O."
Deeks smiled all the way to the door. Once in the hallway, however, he leaned on the wall and sank to the floor. And started breathing hard.

"Mr. Kennedy? Sir? Are you OK? Is something wrong with Mrs. Kennedy?"

Deeks looked up and saw a very concerned Morales. "Think I crashed a little."

"Let me take you to the cafeteria." Morales grabbed Deeks's good hand and pulled him to his feet. "We'll get some protein into you, can't live on coffee forever."

"Good, and while we're feeding Mr. Kennedy, I expect a full debrief Marine," Trent Kort said, walking up behind Deeks.

Deeks swung around, using the brace on his left arm to drive Kort into the wall. Holding the CIA Officer there, Deeks pulled out his gun with his right hand and pointed it at Kort's one good eye. "I am going to talk and you're going to listen."

"Let go of me." Kort tried to wiggle out of Deeks's hold but failed.

Deeks moved the brace on his left arm over Kort's windpipe. "I didn't say you could speak. Now, let's start again. I am going to talk, you are going to listen. Nod your head yes if you understand."

Kort was in distress but was able to nod.

"Good boy." Deeks eased off Kort's windpipe but kept Kort pinned to the wall. "I will be happy to speak to anyone at Langley about your asset who was a suicide bomber." Deeks was aware of some commotion around him but really didn't care. "I will be happy to tell anyone who will listen about how dismissive you were about this assignment, including some Senate subcommittee wondering where Janvier's payoff money went. I'd be happy to discuss the brave American spy who was sold out by his government and a half-ass rescue by you and the CIA with CNN, MSNBC and FOX News. I'll be sure to use your name over and over again. I'm guessing someone could find a picture of you, plaster it all over page one of the Washington Post or New York Times." Deeks took a deep breath. "And if I see you anywhere near my wife, I'll kill you. She said you were weird and creepy. Perhaps I can give my debrief to Gloria Allred for a sexual harassment lawsuit. The CIA would probably love her showing up for a presser at the Hay-Adams."

"That's ridiculous." Kort scoffed.

"Mr. Weiss filled a report just before he left for Baghdad." Morales was just behind Deeks's right shoulder. "He voiced his concerns about your demeanor whenever you were around Mrs. Kennedy and whether the Agency would be vulnerable to a lawsuit if you continued with this operation. He had a list of other agents and contractors who had issues with you in the past." Morales put his right hand on Deeks's shoulder. "I'll be more than happy to walk Mr. Kort out of the facility and then have a discussion with hospital security to make sure Mr. Kort is barred from this floor as a matter of Mrs. Kennedy's safety."

Deeks stepped away from Kort. "Keep him away from Ira, too."

"Elaine Stern was on Mr. Kort's flight. I'm sure he's already giving her a wide berth." Morales grabbed Kort by the arm, "And we're walking. I'll be back in a few minutes Mr. Kennedy, you'll definitely need some food by then."

Deeks leaned against the wall again but managed to remain standing this time. Closing his eyes, he started counting backwards from one hundred just to regain his bearings.
"Mr. Kennedy?" Colonel Carter interrupted just as he got to sixty-three.

Deeks took a deep breath before looking at her. "I'm very sorry, Colonel. If I need to surrender my weapon to someone..."

"What weapon?" Carter smiled. "Put it away. Believe me, we've been instructed by our superiors time and time again that Mr. Kort is never here and we've never seen him. Why would today be any different? If he wasn't here, there would be no incident in the hall. And if there was no incident in the hallway, how would I know that you have a gun?"

Deeks put his weapon back in his waist holster. "Colonel, you truly are an angel of mercy."

"And Mr. Kort is a prick."

Deeks laughed out loud.

"Now that's a good sound to hear. When Mr. Morales returns, I'm going to get some food to Mrs. Kennedy if Dr. Jacobs says OK. You're going to the cafeteria with him. Are we clear?"

"Yes ma'am." Deeks watched her walk away.

"Mr. Kennedy?" Dr. Jacobs opened Kensi's hospital door a few minutes later and walked out.

"How is Kelly?"

"Excellent responses. She's alert, she's aware and she's engaged. We'll get her a little food. Tomorrow morning, if she's up to it, we're going to bring her downstairs for a PET scan. But Mr. Kennedy, so far, so good."

"Can I see her for a minute? I didn't get down for lunch, Miguel needed to handle a situation and I'm waiting for him."

"Just a minute. Remember, while she's awake, Mrs. Kennedy is still recovering from a significant trauma."

"Thank you." Deeks opened the door and walked back in. Kensi's bed was more upright though she was still reclining.

"What happened? Were we in a plane crash?"

"What's your name?" Deeks sat on the side of her bed, taking her right hand in his.

"My name?"

"Birth certificate name."

"Kensi Marie Blye."

"Who are your parents?"

"Master Sergeant Donald Blye and the former Julia Blye."

"Who am I?"

"Martin Deeks, Marty to some, Deeks to most. MMA fighter, LAPD, NCIS Liaison Officer, surfer, friend, boyfriend, fiancé, husband."
"Good answer, good answer." Deeks clapped "Family Feud"-style before picking up her hand again and kissing it. "What do you remember of Thursday?"

"Thursday? What's today?"

"What do you remember about Thursday?"

"We arrived Wednesday night flying in from London. Ira picked us up at the airport with Gunny, oh God, what was his name, Martinez?"

"Morales, ma'am." He walked into the room, giving a quick head nod to Deeks.

Kensi looked at Deeks, unsure about continuing. "I'll explain everything in a little while. The Gunny's on our side," Deeks told her.

"We got to the hotel, had room service. Watched CNN International and then went to bed. I, I, I don't remember..."

"There was an explosion," Deeks told her.

"Was anyone hurt?"

"You." He held up his left arm. "Me. The Gunny's got some bruises but everyone's alive." Deeks figured she had time to learn about Ira.

"I've got lunch for Mrs. Kennedy." An orderly brought a tray in. "And Colonel Carter wanted to remind you, Mr. Kennedy, that you were supposed to get lunch with Mr. Morales. And Mr. Morales, Colonel Carter told me to tell you 'ass in gear Marine.'"

Deeks kissed Kensi on the forehead. "I'll be back in a little bit. You eat and sleep and if you're good, I'll get you a treat."

Deeks and Morales walked down the hall and to the elevators, a similar trip they made over forty-eight hours earlier but without the nearly deadly results. "Did Ira really file a report about Kort?"

"Don't know. But I'll get his laptop from CID tonight, write one and backdate it."

"I like you, Marine."

"You're not too bad for a hippie lawyer."

Once in the cafeteria, Morales sat Deeks down and returned with two trays. Chicken, vegetables, small cup of minestrone, even some Jell-O made a perfectly nutritious lunch. Morales's beverage choice, Yoo-Hoo, had Deeks raise an eyebrow but all the Marine said was "Sixteen ounces of home grown goodness."

"What happens now?" Deeks asked once he was finished eating.

"Now. You, Mrs. Kennedy, Ira all heal. Jafari's got a one way ticket to Gitmo and if they threw his ass out of the transport over the Atlantic, I wouldn't mind."

"What about Nate?"

"Officially, they'll continue to look for him."

"Unofficially?"
"If Dr. Getz was to be captured, a trade could be made through back-channels. Dr. Getz for Jafari and one or two others the Iranian government would like back. All the men would be sent to a third country and the swap would be done there. That's if Dr. Getz lives that long. They'll get their pound of flesh for him lying to them."

"The Agency wouldn't run another..."

"Mr. Kenn...What should I call you?"

"Deeks is fine."

"Deeks, the Agency was embarrassed when it couldn't get to Dr. Getz before his name was sold to the Iranians. When parts of Makisig Cruz started showing up, they assumed Dr. Getz wasn't far behind. The rescue has always been a midlevel priority. I think they'd be fine if he was captured and a prisoner exchange was made."

"That's why this has taken so long."

"Look at Mr. Kort today. Didn't check on Ira, didn't check on Mrs. Kennedy. Wanted a debrief so he could start covering up for his mistakes and for the Agency. Ira mentioned to me he may have had a lead. I need to get his laptop not only for the Kort memo but to see what he had on it."

Deeks was relieved Ira mentioned the lead. Helped reassure him that Morales was an ally. "How long have you known Ira?"

"I met him on the streets of Baghdad in March of 2003. I was there with the 1st Battalion, one of the first units in Iraq and there's Ira. He was looking for a good shawarma and yapping on his satellite phone."

"Shawarma?"

"It is sort of a sandwich wrap with different meats. Ira likes the lamb. Walks blocks with tanks running through the streets, wearing a helmet and a bulletproof vest to find the one guy on one street that makes the best lamb shawarma."

"Yeah, that's Ira."

"My Gunny, who outside family members is the best man I ever met, said I should work with Ira on a few assignments. Summer of 2004, I'm on leave back in Greenpoint..."

"Brooklyn?"

"Yep. I'm sleeping in my old room at my folks' house when I get a call from Ira asking if I'd like a nice steak dinner at Peter Luger's. My dad made a good living and we did better than just getting by but there wasn't money for things like a dinner at Peter Luger's. Hell, three boys in Catholic schools growing up, there wasn't money for Peter Luger's steak sauce. Anyway, day before I'm supposed to meet with him, I get a FedEx package from the Marines offering me training and a position with MCIA. I ate the best meal of my life to that point while Ira sold me on a life in the intelligence field. I'd already decided that I was staying with the Marines..."

"You didn't always want to be a Marine?"

"Nope, ADA in Brooklyn would have been fine. Maybe I watched too much 'Law & Order' as a kid but I was in my final semester at St. John's when the Towers were hit. Finished school at my father's request and was on my way to Parris Island a week after graduation. You?"
"Wanted to be a cop, wanted to be a lawyer. Got to be both." Deeks looked at the clock on the wall. "Now, I want to get back to my wife."

"And I need to get to Ira's laptop. See what he had on Dr. Getz, make Mr. Kort into a candidate for a couple of sexual harassment seminars."

"Would Ira be OK with that?"

Morales got very still and spoke quietly. "Mr. Kort is not pinning this clusterfuck on Ira, especially when Ira can't defend himself. I know some people - some people who owe me, some people who owe Ira. I'm putting a team together and using his intelligence to rescue Dr. Getz."

"Is my laptop in my backpack?"

"Yes, sir."

Deeks pulled the thumb drive out from the thumb flap in his wrist brace. "Ira gave me this before it all went to hell. I'll e-mail you a copy. And when Operation Locate 'n Repatriate Nate is on, I'm in. So is the talented Mrs. Kennedy if she's up to it."

x-x-x

Fisher House
United States Army Medical Command
Landstuhl, Germany
January 27, 2013, 1:30AM

Deeks sat with Kensi after they both had lunch. She remembered nothing - not even the world's loudest hair dryer. She worked hard not to cry when he told her about Ira. He gave her a full run down about not-Gunny Morales. When Morales dropped by, she introduced herself as Kensi Blye, NCIS Agent and cop's wife. That made Deeks's day.

When Colonel Carter threw Deeks out for the night so Kensi could eat dinner, shower and rest, he went to see Ira in ICU. Only family and "chain of command" could enter the unit but a nurse got Elaine Stern for him.

Elaine Stern was a tiny woman. Not quite Hetty or Nell tiny but not much bigger. Maybe 5 foot 2, maybe 90 pounds. She wore a dark blue tee-shirt that read "Mo Knows Saves" with a New York Yankees logo and a fleece jacket with an ESPN "Baseball Tonight" logo. She spoke a mile a minute with mostly multisyllabic words.

Deeks was able to coax her to go for dinner in the cafeteria. He sat her down just as Morales did with him earlier in the day and got them dinner. She blanched at what they considered a Chicken Caesar Salad - "Tomatoes? Really?" - and teared up every time she spoke of "Uncle I."

She told Deeks she was briefed about the operation. Thought the rescue had a strong likelihood of success and followed it up with a series of multisyllabic swear words for Trent Kort. Deeks learned she even knew Nate. The two worked together on some threat assessment projects, Nate looking into the psychology of those making the threats, Elaine the variables behind the threats and the probability they’d all come together and work.

Morales set them up with rooms at the Fisher House near the base. Elaine was already taking an inventory of the food available and what meals were possible when Deeks made his way to his room. With both his and Kensi's backpacks in his room - compliments of Morales - he took a real shower with his left hand and arm in a garbage bag. Morales also left instructions on how to send
Ira's files to him through the Marine's secured data cloud.

Before going to bed, Deeks decided to look through Kensi's bag. He found some comfortable clothes for her, a couple of pairs of socks - his feet were freezing for his entire post-shooting hospital stay. He pulled out her toiletries bag, a little worse for wear but mostly in one piece. He opened it and the international burn phone she picked up in London fell out. That's my girl, he thought as he tossed the phone on his bed. Forget creature comforts, Kensi wasn't that type.

Taped to the inside flap of he found a photo he never saw before. It was a couple of years old, he guessed. He was wearing a tuxedo, dark grey tie standing by the stairs at the Mission. Maybe the night they were on the Queen Mary, he thought. He remembered trying to put a night on the town together after the bad guys were in cuffs. He was willing to tolerate Callen and Sam all night if he could have some time with Kensi.

Kensi.

The clock radio said 1:30AM. He didn't need Elaine to figure out what time it was back on the East Coast. Picking up the phone as he sat on the bed, he took a deep breath and dialed.

"Hello?" The voice on the other end of the line answered. After a pause, "Hello, Mom, is that you?"

Closing his eyes, he started, "Nell, it's Marty Deeks."

There was a loud gasp followed by an "Oh my God."

"If you're busy or something, I know it's a Saturday night there..."

Sounding a little choked up, Nell replied, "Oh, thank God you're alive. Is Kensi..."

"She's alive. A little banged up but you know Kensi, she's always fine."

"Oh my God. I saw the first intelligence report out of Baghdad and they mentioned injuries to Quicksilver and Xena and you two being medically evacuated to Ramstein. I tried to get more information but..."

"Let me guess, CIA shut it down."

"They're good at that."

"About the only thing they're good at." Deeks rubbed his eyes, exhaustion finally setting in. "Look, it's a Saturday night and I'm sorry I called..."

"No, I'm so glad you called. I was so worried and I just couldn't talk to anyone. I never told anyone..."

"Thank you for that Nell. Thanks for answering, too."

"Do you need anything? Can I do anything to help you?"

"No. I just... no, just forget it."

"Deeks, I want to help. what do you need?"

"I just needed to hear someone who gave a damn that Kensi and I were still alive. Someone who was OK with it, you know."
"Oh, Deeks."

"Listen, I shouldn't have called. I'm sorry, I'm sorry for everything."

"Get well, get Kensi well and come back. I can start telling people..."

"No! There's one last assignment. Then we're coming home and we're never looking back."

# # #
Eleven

Chapter Summary

Timeline: Memorial Day Weekend/Late May 2012 - Marriage; Opening of Olympics/Late July 2012 - Escape; Labor Day Week/Early September 2012 - Explosion; President's Day Weekend/mid-February 2013 - OSP closes.

"Work it, make it, do it, makes us
Harder, better, faster, stronger
N-n-now that that don't kill me
Can only make me stronger
I need you to hurry up now
'Cause I can't wait much longer

I know I got to be right now
'Cause I can't get much wronger" - "Stronger" by Kanye West.

Chapter 11

Matthews Consulting
17 Enterprise Avenue
Secaucus, New Jersey
February 14, 2013, 7:30PM

Admittedly, sitting with a recovering Kensi in the back of a town car being driven to The Outlets area of Secaucus, New Jersey was not how Deeks saw spending his first Valentine's Day as a married man. In the roundabout ride from Manhattan, the song "Born to Run" started to make perfect sense to him. But after the explosion in January, he was happy to be anywhere or everywhere with Kensi.

While Kensi was taking one last MRI at Landstuhl, the CIA told both Deeks and Morales that they were conducting an internal review to discover what went wrong in the Behrooz Jafari recruiting process. What, if any, degrees of culpability would be assigned to Trent Kort and Ira Weiss would be discussed once the review was complete. Deeks, Kensi and Morales would all be brought to Langley at the appropriate time for a full debrief. While the review was going on, Morales was to return to MCIA. Deeks and Kensi could rehab and recover, returning to their duties back in Quogue when they were cleared by approved medical professionals.

An angry Morales told the CIA he'd make damn sure MCIA would run their own investigation. He and the JAG officers could have been killed flying to Kuwait with a CIA approved suicide bomber. Morales made it clear that if the CIA thought they could brush this one under the rug, the Marines had no problem lifting that rug.

"They're running out the clock on your contracts," Morales explained on a medical flight from Ramstein to Washington DC. Deeks, Kensi and Morales traveled with about half a dozen wounded soldiers going to Walter Reade on February 1st. "At best, you'll be offered desk jobs, maybe even keeping you where you are on Long Island but mostly, they're going to do their damndest to bury
you and bury this entire operation."

Deeks was cleared almost immediately for all work but the most physically taxing. The pins would likely stay in, the damage to his wrist was quite extensive. Kensi was confined to desk work until her ribs and skull were completely healed. The skull fractures were considered hairline but doctors were concerned. So was Deeks. Kensi, not so much. She was back in Kelly's home office working within a week. She said she was sore but she was fine. Deeks saw her struggle more than she let on.

Morales told them he was due some leave and he'd call once he had the rest of a new team put together. A man of his word, he called one of their burn phones with instructions to spend Valentine's Day in Manhattan. Do the tourist thing and plan for a late dinner. Morales even had a hard to get reservation for them at Pastis compliments of Elaine Stern with a recommendation to try the salmon. No, things weren't getting better with Ira, Morales reported. He wasn't conscious, still too weak to be flown back to America.

Deeks and Kensi left for Manhattan at two, did a touristy Valentine's Day in a cold New York City. Around six, they were sent a text with directions to the underground concourse at Rockefeller Center. Once there, Morales found the two, walking them a nearby town car complete with driver. He had his own transportation plans - a 2004 Harley Road King, cherry red and "awesome" according to Morales.

They were off to a strip mall storefront that once sold handbags and shoes. Now Matthews Consulting had its name etched on the smoked glass front door and windows, a keypad lock, a mailbox, a buzzer, an outside security camera and nothing else of note. Their driver, Damon Werth, entered what Deeks thought was a ten digit password on the front door lock. A second door in the back of a small, empty reception area required a retinal scan by Werth to open to a small cubicle farm. Walking through, Deeks noticed a lot of the cubicles still had people busy working.

Deeks, Kensi and Morales were taken by Werth to a conference room near the back of the office. It was a largely generic setting. At first blush, Matthews Consulting could be anything. That changed when Tony Matthews walked into the room.

"You wouldn't happen to have a younger brother?" Deeks asked as Matthews walked over to shake his and Kensi's hands. "Former Navy SEAL, muscle car aficionado and Lakers fan?"

"Sorry, no front-running Lakers fans in my family." Matthews's voice sounded like it started in his toes and rumbled its way up his six foot two inch frame. "We bleed sports blue here - Yankees, Giants, Knicks and Rangers."

Morales handled the introductions. Werth was a former Marine and the top field man for Matthews Consulting. Matthews was Morales's former gunny and "the man who made sure I didn't get my ass shot or captured in Iraq."

"You did just fine, College Boy," Matthews handed his guests all bottles of water while they found seats around the conference room table. "And it looks like the three of you did okay after the Tigris Hotel bombing."

"A little bruised and battered but ready to do what needs to be done," Kensi answered.

"Good to know." Matthews pulled a remote from his sports coat pocket. The conference room front wall opened to a 73-inch plasma screen. Another point of the remote and a series of photos appeared. "Damon is just back from Iran. According to the intelligence provided by Migs and Ira, we believe your target is living in an agricultural area in the north. He's not far from either the Iraqi
"The person providing us the official CIA intel thought the target was in more populated locations. The CIA thought Tehran and the areas surrounding it," Kensi told them.

"Which would make sense in the days immediately after he was outed," Matthews explained. "Try to blend in while waiting for the extraction team. But if it was me, after a week, I'd figure I was on my own. Your target isn't military, he's civilian intelligence. He probably sat for a little longer before he came to the same realization. Light on funds and growing more paranoid by the day, well, I'd get a map and calculate how many hours a day I could walk."

"Or night. The target is a tall man and more likely to stick out even with some effort to look like he's a local," Werth added. "In the center of the farming village, I towered over most of the locals and your Dr. Getz has an inch or two on me."

"So you didn't see Nate?" Kensi sounded disappointed.

Werth shook his head. "No, but that town exists because of one family. There was an old tribal lord for the lack of a better word who ran the place into the ground forty years ago. One farm survived, the owner being an educated man who sent his son, Harun Amir, to Ag School here in America. Harun Amir took over a barely breaking even farm and now is one of the wealthiest men north of Tehran. Everyone in that town either works for the Amir farm or works in businesses that support the farm."

"You think Nate is farming?" The idea sounded incredible to Deeks.

"No. The locals were talking about a private instructor who was working with Amir's teenage twins and with a few other local kids whose parents were looking to send them to college. The farm owner is a big believer in education and that feeling is trickling down to the locals. Amir offered to pay for medical school or AG school for the bright local kids as long as they return home and take care of their family, friends and neighbors. We think Dr. Getz is working with those kids."

"Makes sense," Deeks said. "The fact that the locals were talking to you, no insult intended, could that be a problem for Nate? Chatty locals could be tipping off the government."

"Dr. Getz looks like he's under the personal protection of Harun Amir. If he is where we think he is," Werth tapped the remote on the table and put up an overhead shot of a large estate on the screen, "he's found about the safest place in the Kurdistan Provence."

"Smart move by Nate," Kensi noted.

Werth continued, "Amir is big on his family and his workers learning English, preparing them for when and if Iran reopens to the West. Amir was in America when the Shah fell. He remembered pre-Islamic Republic days in Iran. He talks about all the good he was able to do with his Cornhusker education. He may be the only man in Iran with a Ndanukong Suh Nebraska football jersey. He's about as pro-American as you'll get in country. Then again, what I got from the locals there is what I usually get in countries that are supposedly anti-American. Government hates America. Locals love Americans."

"How did you get in country?" Kensi asked.

"Matthews Consulting has a presence in Northern Iraq," Matthews explained. "I bought my first property there in 2005. I've got an airfield, some aircraft and a handful of vehicles. I'm not as big as some of the name brand military contractors but being smaller has its advantages."
"Such as?" Deeks was impressed with what Matthews and his organization did with Weiss's intelligence, and Morales seemed on board, but he wanted - no, needed - to know more.

"We may have gotten kids back from foreign countries in custody cases. We may have facilitated financial payoffs when executives have been kidnapped in troubled areas. We may have cleaned up some international messes left behind when business deals go wrong." Matthews raised his hand, "Nothing overly illegal. Certainly never overly violent. Just things the government would probably frown upon if we were on a CIA retainer. Instead, we get paid for what we do and we get left alone. It's great to be left alone when you've got to get people in and out of unfriendly countries."

"Who is paying for this?" Kensi asked. "The CIA hasn't been helpful after the explosion in Iraq."

"Of course not, this is their clusterfuck. They're just not dealing with it," Matthews chuckled. "Look, I've known Ira Weiss since Panama in 1989..."

"Is there anyone who doesn't know Ira?" Deeks asked.

Matthews chuckled, "No, that's the point. This wasn't a hard operation to put together pro bono. Damon here got himself involved with a military contractor that gives us all a bad name. Knew Ira from Iraq, Ira called me to see if I needed a good man with skills and ambition. Now I've got someone I really depend on, Damon's got a good, steady job and Ira's got two favors in his back pocket that he'd probably never use even if he survives all this."

"I owe Ira a lot." Werth said quietly.

"I got a pilot lined up to fly the rescue helicopter gratis because when his daughter returned from college, the freshman fifteen was really her pregnant with his first grandson. Ira was able to book the Rainbow Room for a quickie wedding reception at cost with three phone calls. I'll have a Gulfstream 650 on standby once you're back in Iraq that will take you wherever you want. The man who owns that plane is a Russian ex-pat who made a fortune wiring Wall Street companies back in the late 1980's, early 1990's for what would be the internet and fiber optics. Vladdy and Ira go to the Knicks game at the Garden every year on Christmas Day before going to some dive bar in Brighton Beach to celebrate the fall of the Soviet Union by getting blind drunk."

"So this is all being done for free for Ira," Deeks figured he and Kensi were part of Team Ira.

"Oh no, I'll send a bill to the CIA once your Dr. Getz is free. Weiss isn't the only CIA Agent I know. Trent Kort is a prick."

"I've heard that." Deeks chuckled.

"And they can take the cost of this assignment out of Kort's expense account. Now, my fine former young lieutenant Migs here," Matthews pointed to Morales, "gave me a full run down on you two and what you can and can't do. I'm with Ira on this - Dr. Getz would probably only leave with people he knows. I'm not sure Harun Amir would let him just leave with anyone either. Weiss had the right idea, just working with the wrong case officer on an assignment nobody wanted to succeed."

"You really believe that?" Deeks asked.

Matthews sighed. "I don't think Kort actively wants Dr. Getz captured. It just isn't much of a priority for him. He's in trouble at the Agency. That eye he lost was from a program gone wrong and that program took down the Secretary of the Navy."

Kensi disagreed. "Davenport retired for family reasons. A female family member was an assault
victim and she was like a daughter to him."

"Yeah, his niece was kidnapped by a psycho super-soldier created by a covert Naval project Davenport ran with the CIA in some joint bit of business. Nasty business made worse when they figured out that the super-soldier was the Port-to-Port Killer."

"Port-to-Port killed a couple of NCIS agents." Deeks tried to remember the details of the case. He was busy with Ray's relocation at the time.

"NCIS agents, retired admirals, active duty captains - Guam, Rota, Norfolk, DC. Busy guy," Werth said. Deeks could see how uncomfortable Werth was with this conversation.

"Was Kort the CIA end of the operation?" Kensi asked.

"Kort was involved. He's always involved. Case work like what Ira and Dr. Getz were doing in Iran is what the CIA is supposed to be doing. Kort freelances with gun-runners, drug dealers, whatever he can do to build his resume and cache with the Agency," Morales told them. "You two were even going to be resume building material."

"Oh, this should be good," Deeks said. "Let me guess, he took an idiot and a talented but green NCIS agent and made them stars."

"Not far off," Morales confirmed. "A contact at the Agency said once Agent Callen was too hot to get on the CIA payroll. Kort wanted NCIS out of the job. When Callen recommended you, Marty, Kort was against it. You could be the best undercover cop in the history of law enforcement - you're a cop which to Kort means you're a gloried meter maid."

"Charming," Kensi rolled her eyes.

Deeks raised his hand. "For the record, I've never written a ticket or handed out a summons. I have, however, gotten a few."

Matthews smiled. "I know. You LA types can't drive for shit."

"Back to Kort," Morales continued, "Ira was pushing the rescue with you working with me. We'd have your neck bandaged. I'd do all the talking, you'd do all the Dr. Getz retrieving. The CIA recalled Ira suddenly. Your marriage license jogged Kort's memory about working with you, Kensi."

"I didn't work much with him. Callen and Sam Hanna had the most contact with him."

"Kort's always looking around and without sounding like a pig, you're hard to miss in a room Kensi," Matthews said respectfully. "Besides, you worked with Callen, you worked under Hetty Lange and anybody who works for Hetty Lange has to have skills."

Deeks put his hand up again. "Except for the meter maid here."

"Yes and no," Morales explained. "Ira saw your undercover work and knew you were up to the job, even if you didn't have all the DoD training and language skills Kensi has. Kort saw you as a pacifier for Kensi. He wanted Kensi on this one, you were part of the deal." Morales smiled. "Breaking Jimmy Sanderson's nose on your second day of hand-to-hand made you more than just Kensi's trophy husband."

Kensi laughed though Deeks could see a little hitch in her breath. She was putting on a good show but he knew she was still hurting.
"The big plan for you two," Matthews joined in, "was to really set you up for life as the documentary maker and the novelist. Great lifestyle options – cool cars, big house, handsome monthly stipend. Neither of you have much family outside of each other. In a short while, you wouldn't be missed. You'd be able to travel the world, meet and greet all sorts of officials and society types. The CIA and all the military intelligence teams have enough men like Migs who can grow a beard, speak Farsi and Pashto and move around those hot spots as needed. You two could be made into wealthy and upscale spies, making movies while targeting officials for the CIA to recruit. You'd move around with little suspicion."

"Like Ira use to do," Deeks said.

Matthews shook his head. "Ira likes to shovel that shit that he was a soundman for the CIA. He was a soundman for Susan Lucci. He did a lot more than just wire embassies for sound."

"What do you need from us?" Kensi asked.

"I need you two to get better. Get healthy," Matthews told them. "I saw your medical records and while you're lucky to be alive, you're also lucky that we're targeting the first week of March for the rescue. Do what you need to do to be in the best shape possible."

"Why early March?" Deeks knew they needed recovery time but that was weeks away.

"Louie Rossi is the helicopter pilot for this little adventure and he likes to fly operations like this when there is a little sliver of moon but not much. The area where Dr. Getz is hiding ain't Times Square." Matthews put a night aerial shot of the farm and the surrounding area up on the television screen. "Almost no lights at night, surrounded by mountains and tough terrain. Going in with no moon would probably be best but since there won't be much help from air traffic controllers and our maps are good but not that good, March 8th is our target night to fly you two and Migs in. Werth will be waiting for you with transportation help and a place to stay. You'll pick up Dr. Getz on March 9th and hopefully be back in the States on the 10th. Around St. Patrick's Day, I want to buy you to a beer and talk about your futures. Screw the CIA Marty and Kensi, I could use operatives like you two."

x-x-x

Waldorf Astoria Towers
Suite 2612
March 2, 2013, 5:15PM

"Migs, it's us," Deeks said as he knocked on the door, "open up."

Kensi kept her eyes on the elevator bank. The two were sure they weren't followed but decided to be careful.

The door was opened by Morales wearing almost the identical suit to the one Deeks had on and matching glasses. "Good to see you both. Come on in." He smiled as they entered.

"Miggy, are your friends here?" a young woman walked from the bedroom to the sitting room.

"Miggy?" Deeks mouthed to the man as he frowned.

"The Kennedys know me as Miguel or Migs, Vita. Dean, Kelly, this is my fiancé Vita Figueroa."

"Nice to meet you Vita," Deeks and Kensi said in unison.
"Mrs. Kennedy, this dress is beautiful. Are you sure you don't want it back?"

Kensi looked at the Ralph Lauren black cashmere tie neck dress and shook her head no, "I picked up the dress last fall but the fit was just never right. Always found something else in the closet to wear so I'd much rather you have it. You look beautiful. Besides, it is the least I can do for what you're doing for us tonight. And it's Kelly, please. He's Dean."

Vita nodding her head. "I can't thank you and Dean enough for the room and for the play tickets. Usually when I get a weekend's leave with Miggy, we're hanging with his family, playing Madden in his parents' basement in Greenpoint."

Deeks reached into his jacket pocket. "Here are the tickets for 'Once' Miggy," Deeks teased as handed the envelope to Morales. "You have my Amex, please make sure you get a drink at intermission. Ginger ale for you, white wine spritzer for Vita. We'll meet you after the show at Blue Fin for a late dinner. There is a restroom..."

"At the Marriot where Vita can go back to looking like Vita. I know." Miguel took the tickets and slipped a key to Deeks. "Are you sure you don't need back-up?" Miguel asked. "Vita and I could follow..."

"You and Vita go enjoy the show. Kelly and I will be fine. We're just going to see an old boss of Kelly's but our friends at the Agency really don't need to know that."

"Of course, sir. Ah, Dean. Thank you again for the tickets."

"10:30 at Blue Fin. You two have fun tonight. Public fun," Kensi told them as they walked to the door.

"And later have some private fun too. Enjoy the room." Deeks smiled and winked at the other couple before leaving. Taking Kensi's hand, the two walked to the elevator.

"She seems nice," Kensi told Deeks.

"You two could be sisters."

"Wig helps. You think they can pull it off?"

"He said she's Naval Intelligence. If she's anything like the fiancé I had," Deeks kissed her as they got off the elevator, "we couldn't have better decoys. Though, I still think you'd looked better in that dress."

"It really never did fit right and I'm not a huge fan of that much cashmere." Kensi looked down at her DKNY black lace covered dress. "This is much more comfortable. A little room to breathe."

The Waldorf doorman found them cab almost immediately. The ride to the Apthorp was uneventful but Deeks could see small signs that Kensi was getting anxious. He was too. He was also concerned they were making a terrible mistake. That feeling, however, had been with him for months.

Outside the massive apartment building, he pulled her to him. Deeks turned to deadly serious. "Listen to me."

"Deeks? What the hell?"

"Listen." He took an envelope out of his jacket pocket. "There is money and a plane ticket to
Reagan National here. Inez's driver's license, too."

"Deeks?"

"When we get to the Hetty's apartment, I'm going in first. If it is all good, you come in. If it isn't, if I yell for you to run, run. Get a cab, go to LaGuardia and get on the 7:30PM shuttle to Washington."

"I'm not leaving…"

Deeks just kept talking. "Go right to Nell's. She'll get you to Vance…"

"Dammit Deeks, I am not leaving you anywhere. We're…"

"Probably fine but I want to make sure you're safe. I need to make sure you're safe."

"Stop it. I'm not leaving you and you're not going anywhere alone. I am not made of glass."

Deeks knew he'd sound desperate. "I am."

"What?"

"I'm made of glass. I can't do another hospital Kensi-watch over you. After I was shot, when we decided to see if we worked, what did you tell me?"

"You're being an ass." Kensi gave a dismissive wave of her hand.

"No, you tell me that every day. What did you tell me that night at my place?" When she didn't answer, he started to, "you said that everything changed when you saw me in that hospital bed."

"It did," Kensi said quietly.

"Fine. So you can have life changing epiphanies looking at me out cold for two hours but I get to watch you unconscious for two days and just have to pretend it didn't happen."

Furious, she glared at him. "You know, you're not a hundred percent either. Or are you wearing that wrist brace as a fashion accessory?"

"No, but it makes an awesome club if I want to take a swing at someone," Deeks tried to break the tension.

"Hetty will be on our side," she pleaded.

"Maybe. Maybe she contracted someone and we're in more trouble than we've been in since Jafari showed up. We are dead after all." He put the envelope in her hand. "Please take this," it was his turn to plead. "We go up, you hang out by the elevator. I call you in as Kelly, all's good. I call you as Kensi, be careful; as Inez, run. If I yell run, run like hell."

"This isn't right."

"Then we're going straight to the TKTS booth, getting tickets for 'Once' and we'll join Migs and his girl."

"You're being …"

"I know, an ass," Deeks kissed her. "Kensi, I can't. I just, I can't. Way too much is out of our
control. You're not all the way back and the one thing I can try to do is protect us."

"You mean protect me, not us."

"No, us. If this goes south, you get to Nell, she gets to Vance and you'll save this ass's worthless ass."

Kensi nodded, a bit defeated. He hated the look in her eyes. He was afraid of the look in his own.

At the Apthorp, the man at the desk called Miss Silver to announce Tracy and Jason. Once on the elevator, Deeks pulled out the key Morales gave him, slipping it in the fire chief's control when the elevator hit the seventh floor. When the door opened, he turned the key, guaranteeing the elevator would stay put.

"Kelly, good; Kensi, careful; Inez run," he reminded her as he showed her the key.

"Still an ass," she reminded him as he left her at the elevator.

Deeks wiggled his ass as he walked down the hall to the slightly ajar apartment door. He looked back, winking and smiling. Putting his hands up, he laced his fingers behind his head. Toeing the door opened, he walked in Lois Silver's apartment. "Hello?"

-30-
Twelve

Chapter Summary

Timeline: Memorial Day Weekend/Late May 2012 - Marriage; Opening of Olympics/Late July 2012 - Escape; Labor Day Week/Early September 2012 - Explosion; President's Day Weekend/mid-February 2013 - OSP closes.

"I'm not afraid, I'm not afraid
To take a stand, to take a stand
Everybody, everybody
Come take my hand, come take my hand

We'll walk this route together through the storm
Whatever weather, cold or warm
Just lettin' you know that you're not alone
Holla if you feel like you've been down the same road." - "Not Afraid" by Eminem

Chapter 12.

Apthorp
390 West End Avenue, Apt #9L
New York, New York
March 2, 2013, 6:20PM

"Mr. Deeks?" Deeks smiled at Hetty's surprise when he walked into her living room. Not quite the deep undercover cop as MMA fighter she recruited nearly three years earlier. "Good evening, Hetty. I don't clean up half bad." Deeks turned his attention to an angry Sam Hanna. With Sam's gun tracking his every step as he moved across the living room, Deeks said, "And it's good to see you too, Sam."

"Deeks?" Sam's confusion had no impact on his ability to keep his weapon trained on its target.

"Amazing what some grooming and a good suit can do for a man's outlook on life."

"This time, Mr. Deeks, we really thought you were dead," Hetty stated calmly. "Are you alone? Michael at the desk said Kensi, well Tracy, was with you."

"She's in the hall. I was making sure we were welcome before having her come in." Deeks broadened his smile at Sam, "And what a warm welcome it's been."

Sam took several steps closer to Deeks. "Are you armed?"

"Heavily." Deeks saw a quick smile from Hetty before she schooled her expression. "Sig in a shoulder holster, Beretta in the waist holster, switchblade in my right boot."

"That's quite the arsenal," Hetty commented.
"Been a rough few months."

"For us all, Mr. Deeks. For us all."


As Deeks started to comply, Hetty suggested, "Just drape it over the back of the couch. Ralph Lauren?"

"Supposed to look like it. Custom made to hide the weapons." Once the coat was folded and dropped on the back of the couch, Deeks put his hands back up. "The suit is a Hugo Boss. Kensi is wearing Donna Karan."

"Don't move," Sam warned while he put his weapon away. He slammed his hands into Deeks's ribs as he started the pat down. Deeks tried not to wince but Sam was being painfully thorough. Emphasis on pain. Sam removed the Sig and the Beretta, dropping the magazines to the floor while handing the weapons to Hetty.

When Sam got to the switchblade, Deeks heard the elevator ping and the doors close. "I think Kensi is getting a bit antsy. If it's alright, I'd like to call her in. She has a gun in her purse, stun-gun in her coat pocket. I'd prefer you don't treat her to a pat down."

"You're not in a position to give orders here, Deeks."

"True," Deeks realized Sam's leg pat down was getting a bit too close to an area he didn't want given rough treatment, "but she's recovering from an injury and as pissed off as you are, I know you'd never want to hurt her."

That earned Deeks a scowl from Sam. Finishing his pat down, Sam stood up. "He's clean."

"Mr. Hanna, Mr. Deeks has been very cooperative. Let's tread carefully with Kensi."

"Kensi, come on in," Deeks called, praying she remembered that Kensi meant caution.

She did. Kensi walked in with her hands up. She held her Birkin bag in her right hand. When she was about three feet from Deeks, Kensi bent her knees and carefully placed the bag on the ground. "Hi, Sam. Hello, Hetty." Kensi smiled as she spoke to them.

"Miss Bl... Kensi, Mr. Deeks just told us you have a gun in your handbag and a stun-gun in your coat pocket. Any other weapon we should know about?" Hetty inquired.

"No. There is a bottle of wine in the bag but it's not intended as a weapon."

Locking the apartment door behind Kensi, Sam took the weapon from her bag, again dropping the magazine to the floor before handing Hetty the gun, the stun-gun and ultimately the bottle of 2008 Levy and McElhanan Cabernet Sauvignon. While Sam collected the magazines from the ground, Deeks moved deliberately to Kensi, helping her out of her coat.

"Why don't you two get comfortable on the couch," Hetty suggested as she held Deeks's overcoat. Taking Kensi's coat as she passed the bottle of wine back to Sam, Hetty added, "we have a lot to talk about."

"This is an expensive bottle of wine," Sam said. "Those aren't the clothes we use to see you wear to work. I'm interested to hear you two explain this."
"As am I, Mr. Hanna." Hetty put the coats in the closet.

Kensi picked up her bag with her right hand as Deeks took her left. The two walked to the couch, sitting directing across from two Queen Anne chairs. The interrogation, Deeks thought, was about to begin.

Hetty returned with wine glasses, Sam the opened bottle. Deeks politely declined as did Kensi when Sam poured. "Keeping your wits about you?" Hetty asked.

"Probably the best course action right now," Deeks offered as the start of their defense.

Hetty sat down and took a deep breath, "I believe best wishes are in order for your nuptials." Hetty lifted her wine glass as a toast. "You could have told me," she said as she took a sip.

"The plan," Kensi tried to explain, "before Callen, before everything, was to get through the summer working together and prove to you that nothing in our partnership changed..." And then Kensi's phone rang.

After the third ring, Hetty asked, "Are you going to get that?"

"I am so sorry," Kensi pulled the phone out of her bag. She read the name on the phone and then turned to Deeks, "It's Elaine." Addressing Hetty and Sam, "I am so sorry, I have to take this." Kensi stood and walked back to the foyer.

Deeks adjusted his tie, smiled at Sam and Hetty, saying, "Well, this is uncomfortable."

Sam didn't smile back. "How long?"

"Excuse me?"

"How long?"

"You're going to have to provide a bit more Sam. Enough has been going on that 'how long' could answer a lot of questions."

"You and Kensi, how long?"

"A while. Probably longer than either of you think."

Sam was not deterred. "When?"

"March..."

"After she found out what happened to her father," Sam tried to fill in the rest.

Deeks shook his head no, "Well, that's when we decided to get married. We sorta started up after I got home from the hospital."

Sam looked shocked, "After you were shot?"

Deeks nodded. "Yes."

"That long?" Hetty also seemed surprised. Score one for the two least experienced operatives on Hetty's old team.

"There were a handful of near misses before that. We had a couple partnership building dinners out
"Obviously," Sam nearly spit out the word.

"I'm actually surprised you are both surprised," Deeks started to explain but Kensi returned to the living room.

"He woke up," she told him, smiling. It was maybe the best news he had since Kensi came to weeks ago. "They don't know the level of brain damage but he's awake."

"Would this be good news or bad news?" Hetty asked.

"Very good news, Hetty," Kensi told her.

A memory of Ira saying "Henrietta" hit Deeks. "Ira said he knew you, Hetty."

"Who?"

"Ira Weiss. He told us he worked with you. That you saved his life early in his career." Deeks looked at the expensive rugs throughout the apartment, "That he helped you bring back maybe one or two of these rugs."

Hetty smiled. "I know Ira. I've known Ira for a very long time. What happened to him?"

Deeks lifted his arm and showed the brace on his wrist as Kensi started to explain, "It was a small article in the papers here but there was a bombing at the Tigris Hotel..."

Sam knew the story. "Yeah, a suicide bomber tried to kill a Marine and three CIA agents in a hotel room."

"That's the official story. Deeks and the Marine were by the elevator, I was at the hotel room door, the suicide bomber was in the bathroom when Ira accidentally triggered the bomb," Kensi filled them in on the particulars.

Deeks shook his head sadly. "Ira suffered massive internal injuries, burns. He was hit by shrapnel. They removed a section of his skull because of the brain swelling. He's in bad shape."

"And you two?" Hetty was a bit shaken.

"We're fine," Kensi answered a bit too quickly.

"That apparatus on Mr. Deeks's arm suggests otherwise."

"Kensi has several hairline fractures of her skull, broken ribs and some other impact injuries." Kensi glared at Deeks as he spoke. "I broke my wrist. It was broken when I was a kid so it's kind of a mess."

"I saw the intelligence reports. Your injury was from when the canister ashtray in the hallway became a missile," Sam said.

"Yet another reason not to smoke." Deeks looked at the brace. "I have a couple of pins holding everything together. The brace keeps everything stable. Right now, it hurts less with the brace on."

Deeks could see it was all coming together for Sam. "You're Quicksilver..."
Deeks pointed at Kensi. "...and she's Xena."

"You were supposed to rescue Cherokee," Sam finished his thought.

"Nate." Hetty confirmed she was still in the intelligence loop.

"Oh good, so much less explaining to do," Deeks let a second of relief wash over him.

It was just a second because Hetty said, "No, you still have a lot of explaining to do Mr. Deeks, Miss Blye, or is it Mrs. Deeks now?"

"We never really got to that conversation before the CIA..." Kensi just waved her hand.

"From the beginning. Not your beginning, though I'd like to know all about that too," Hetty told the two of them. "Start with the CIA."

Deeks looked at Kensi, who nodded and he began, "I got a call in early June from an old snitch who was in Lancaster with Callen. Callen requested I visit as his attorney. Told me not to tell anyone."

Deeks saw Sam react but was saved by Kensi, "Sam, you were on your leave of absence. If it makes you feel any better, Deeks didn't even tell me."

"Callen told me just before we were sent to get blown up in that warehouse, Granger got a call from a friend in Navy Intelligence telling him to keep Callen back at the boat house. Ira Weiss, who worked with Callen when Callen was CIA..."

"And worked with Granger when Owen was with the Agency," Hetty added.

"Not surprising," Deeks shook his head. Not surprising at all. "Weiss told Callen that Janvier could not go free. Once Atley was returned drugged and useless, disclosing the names of people like Nate and other CIA operatives, Janvier's plan was to have an auction for the intel on the rest. Callen ended the auction."

"Did you help him escape?" Sam asked. "Do you know where he is now?"

"No to both. I got home from my LAPD undercover assignment that night and found Ira sleeping my couch. He told me the CIA had nothing to do with the escape either."

"But they did," Kensi told them. "After we were relocated, we learned that the CIA actually arranged for Callen's escape but he went rogue. Not that you owe us any answers but have either of you heard from him?"

"Other than you two and Mr. Hanna, nobody is quite sure where I am."

Sam's quiet "no" meant Callen just disappeared.

"You knew all last summer you were leaving?" Hetty asked. "And how you were leaving."

"There was always the hope that Nate would just turn up. Once that didn't happen, I always thought we'd be gone for a few weeks," Deeks tried to explain. "I thought we'd be home long before Christmas, maybe by Thanksgiving."

"What have you been doing?" asked Sam.

"The CIA sent us to Langley. I'm fluent in Farsi, can read and follow along in Arabic. I've been
studying Pashto in the last few weeks. Deeks has gotten Eric-like in his computer skills and he did a wonderful job of annoying our CIA minders."

"The annoying part isn't a surprise," Sam commented.

"A man has to play to his talents," Deeks joked.

"We were being useful while Ira and our case officer put together the rescue plan," Kensi said.

"If I used the world 'prick' and CIA, would anyone in particular come to mind?" Deeks asked.

"This time you're going to have to provide more information, Deeks," Sam told him.

"Trent Kort," Kensi told them. "He provided us with the guide who was really a suicide bomber."

"And nearly killed you and Mr. Deeks."

"I'm fine, Kensi and Ira were the ones badly injured."

Sam frowned, "What happened to the bomber?"

"He was packed up and sent to Gitmo. I think we mentioned he was in the bathroom when the bomb went off. Except for being hit by some debris running out of the burning room and then being stopped with extreme prejudice trying to escape by one pissed off Marine, he was mostly uninjured," Deeks was still filled with rage when it came to Jafari but decided to keep his head about him.

"He was a CIA asset in Tehran working in one of the ministries. Once the Agency realized he was not on our side, which was about two minutes after the 18th floor corner suite at the Tigris Hotel was gone, Nate lost his CIA rescue."

Hetty shook her head in disgust. "Are they going to leave him there?"

"Officially or unofficially?"

"Officially."

Kensi and Deeks looked at each other and replied in unison, "At this time, the Agency is looking for the best way to retrieve the asset in a timely fashion. Once a proper plan is in place, all resources, both financial and human, will be made available for this endeavor."

"Oh, my God. They're going to let him be captured and make a trade." Hetty brought her hand over her mouth. "Those bastards."

"I think 'prick' is the preferred term for the CIA but bastards works," Deeks said.

"Do you know where he is, Mr. Deeks, Miss Blye?"

Deeks decided to play the heavy here and keep both Hetty and Sam out of the loop. "We have an idea. It is being handled."

"I want in," Sam demanded predictably.

"No," was Deeks's only answer.

"There's a team, Sam," Kensi explained, glaring at Deeks. "They've worked on this for weeks and
you better than anyone know that a last minute change to a rescue team can have a negative impact on team dynamics."

"But you and Deeks are going."

"Yes," Kensi confirmed. "Nate isn't going to leave with strangers."

"Is he going to recognize you two? I'd have passed either one of you on the street and not know it was you."

"Women cut and dye their hair all the time Sam, you know that. And I can take the contacts out at any time. Deeks can't wait to go back to his natural blond state," Kensi teased. "He actually combs his hair before leaving the house now."

"Thanks for all your love and support, dear." Deeks patted Kensi's knee. "I lose the glasses, stop gelling up the hair, stop dressing to impress, I'll be mostly me."

"When is the rescue?" Hetty asked.

"Next few days." Deeks had an idea. "Sam, do you really want to help?"

"Nate, yes. I'm still not sure about you two."

"Fair enough," Deeks told him. "If this goes as planned, we'll have Nate back in the States in about a week to ten days."

"What are you thinking?" Kensi asked Deeks.

"I'm thinking it may not be the best idea to turn Nate over to the CIA."

"Mr. Deeks?" Deeks saw the wheels beginning to spin for Hetty too.

"This has all been about burying Nate. The delayed rescue, the indifferent investigation into the Jafari."

"Jafari?" Sam was confused.

"The bomber," Kensi clarified.

"We hand Nate back to the Agency and God knows what happens. What if we hand him back to Leon Vance instead? Nate is NCIS."

Kensi lifted an eyebrow. Deeks knew she was in. "And our friend the Marine would fall under the purview of NCIS too," she told him.

"Sam, if we called on short notice and needed transportation from a private airfield in Chester, Delaware to the Navy Yard, would you arrange it?" Deeks asked.

"How big a vehicle do you need?"

"Nate, Kensi, a Marine who's been quite helpful, some gear and me." Deeks knew Werth was staying in Iraq for another assignment. "Something where there wouldn't be a lot of windows. Keep the fact that the missing guy and two dead people aren't missing or dead until we're at the Navy Yard."

Sam flashed a sly smile. "I can always put you in the trunk?"
"Only if I have Kensi to keep me company." That comment earned Deeks another Kensi glare - this one with a bit more affection.

Hetty smiled at the slight detente, taking the final sip of her wine. "What do you need from me?"

Kensi tried to smile, "I think we just needed to see you. What happened, what we did..." Kensi shook her head as if to start again. "It all made perfect sense in the beginning. Save Nate, everything would be fine after that."

"But it won't be fine, will it Miss Blye?"

"Deeks really thought we'd be home by Thanksgiving. I figured Christmas was more likely. Now we're into March. OSP closed last month. Hetty, you're in some sort of hiding. Nell and Eric and Sam are here on the East Coast."

"Granger is here too. He has an office in the Navy Yard," Sam told her.

"We ruined everything," Kensi tried to explain. "Callen left a mess but we were all still together as a team. I was so sure that we were doing the right thing."

"Mr. Deeks?"

He had no explanations. He knew that. He had reasons and that was all he could offer. "I, we, trusted someone, Ira, who in turn trusted all the wrong people. He was lied to and nearly died. Still might. You've all moved on, maybe not where you want to be but not to awful places. We're stuck in these fake lives which were used for a different CIA agenda. And Nate's still on his own in Iran." Deeks pulled his right hand over his goatee. "Three years ago, I was a cop working a drug case in an MMA gym. Six weeks ago I was in a medevac helicopter with an unconscious Kensi and a dying Ira Weiss in Iraq. None of this has gone the way I thought it would - before Janvier, certainly nothing has after Janvier."

"So why did you try to find me? Why did you risk what you did for this visit?"

"Because you're you, Hetty," Kensi answered. "You deserved to know. Maybe, because we were keeping our own secrets. Maybe because Granger made that place toxic sometimes and he was there because of me. Maybe we were easily led astray by the chance to save a friend. We should have told you and we didn't. We're telling you now so if something goes wrong, you know we tried."

"Owen Granger was there for a lot more than you Miss Blye, believe me. If he didn't target your investigation into your father's death, he would have found something with Mr. Callen's work or Miss Jones's. You were a convenient way in but Granger was there to change my position with NCIS. He was coming, Miss Blye. He was always coming."

"Granger's riding a desk in the Navy Yard. While the CIA and Naval Intelligence don't think Chloe Janvier knows he was involved, Vance wasn't taking any chances."

Deeks saw Kensi out of his right eye and was glad she didn't react. The useful lie of Chloe Janvier continued to be the gift that just keeps giving.

"What do you want Mr. Deeks?"

"I want to finish what Kensi, Ira and I started and then go back to being Marty Deeks." He looked down at his clothes, "This isn't me."
"And you Miss Blye?"

"Rescue Nate." She leaned over and kissed Deeks on the cheek, startling him just a little. "I have everything else I want."

Deeks looked at Kensi and smiled. God, he loved her. Turned to a slightly amazed Sam and Hetty, raised his eyebrows and shrugged his shoulders.

Sam shook his head in disbelief. "You two fought like cats and dogs during the Vaznev case. You each spent your entire time in that house complaining about the other's habits and behavior."

"And you'd know that how?" Deeks smile grew wider.

"You were fighting about chores and ruined laundry in Ops. She ruined one of your shirts," Sam waved a dismissive hand.

Kensi was equally dismissive. "Play acting. Giving the people in Ops exactly what they wanted."

Deeks knew he was going to enjoy what happened next. "And you said we spent the entire time in that house arguing. You never were at the house when we were there."

Kensi looked at Sam, "But the old PowerTech power strips with hidden cameras were in the bedroom, the living room and the den."

"Mr. Hanna?" Hetty turned her attention to Sam.

"I don't know what they're talking about."

In for a penny, in for a pound Deeks thought. "So when Eric told me it was you and Callen who put the power strips in just to make sure I didn't take advantage of Kensi, he was lying?"

"I'm gonna kill him."

"Don't bother," Kensi told Sam. "We never asked Eric. But if you ever run surveillance on a co-worker again, make sure the equipment you use is not the identical gear that same co-worker use to put in suspects' homes because it was easier for her to get in and out of tight places. You know, under desks, behind entertainment centers or next to night stands."

Deeks laughed. Kensi was furious that week, wanting to work on last minute wedding plans with less than a month to go and stuck in house with everyone watching.

"Don't blame us for being suspicious. Turns out, we were right." Sam was getting back on the offensive.

Deeks thought the word "suspicious" told him all he needed to know about how their relationship would have been received. "Well, we were getting more and more obvious toward the end."

"Obvious, Mr. Deeks?"

"The only person to use the phrase 'my girl' more than me last spring was the lead singer for The Temptations," Deeks chuckled. "Kensi and I were arriving at and leaving work within minutes of each other."

"So that freak out when Kensi and Nell had girls night out?" Sam asked Deeks.

"Who do you think got us the tickets?" Kensi asked. "Deeks had a cop buddy working as an usher
at the Staples Center that night."

Sam continued to challenge them. "The woman who was sleeping over with Deeks but was allergic to that mutt?"

"I said she was staying at my apartment. She was. I was staying with Kensi that week."

Hetty joined the questioning. "And Monty? You told me..."

"Hetty, I told you he was gone and that I didn't need the NCIS badge anymore. He was gone, off in a kennel in Maryland waiting for us to arrive. After you told me to keep the badge, I did. Didn't think a photos of either of us would work but remembered the badge and thought of Monty. Through all this, I was very careful about the language used with you. Lies of omission or artful phrasing."

"Well played, Mr. Deeks. Is Monty well?"

"Doesn't understand why we can't play catch in the ocean right now but otherwise fine."

"You're living near a beach."

"Yes," Kensi answered.

"Are you happy, Miss Blye?"

Kensi and Deeks looked at each other. She had a wonderfully peaceful smile before she gave her answer. "I'm with the person I love the most and the person I trust the most in this world. The fact that it is the same man makes me happy. When Nate is rescued, we're going to start the next fifty years of our lives."

Hetty smiled and then shook her finger at Deeks, "That letter you left..."

"Was a variation of about a half-a-dozen letters I've written since you offered to be my next of kin. That last one was just spell-checked on my laptop as I wrote it. And just like with that note, I want you to know what I thought. I want you to know that we thought we did the right thing and we still think we did the right thing despite all that's gone wrong. Going forward, I still think we're doing what's right. That's why we're here."

"I'm glad you are, Mr. Deeks. I'm glad you both are."

-30-

Author's note: If you are unfamiliar with New York real estate, the Apthorp is the apartment building used in the exteriors in the new ABC "666 Park Avenue" series. Cue "The More You Know" music.
Chapter Summary

Timeline: Memorial Day Weekend/Late May 2012 - Marriage; Opening of Olympics/Late July 2012 - Escape; Labor Day Week/Early September 2012 - Explosion; President's Day Weekend/mid-February 2013 - OSP closes.

"Keep it undercover
Keep it all out of sight
Keep it undercover
Keep it all out of sight
Undercover
Keep it all out of sight
Undercover
Keep it all out of sight
Undercover of the night" - "Undercover Of The Night" by the Rolling Stones

Chapter 13

Radan Farm
25 miles north of Baneh, Iran
March 9, 2013, 5:30AM

The CIA was fine with Deeks and Kensi taking a few days to go skiing. Deeks had a feeling if their time away lasted until their contracts expired on June 30th, the CIA would have been fine with that too. Miguel Morales arrived at the house in Quogue with Vita Figueroa and one of Tony Matthews's staffers, Justin Freeman, early Wednesday morning. Vita, back in her Kelly Nessler-Kennedy wig, and Freeman would drive to a rented condo near Stratton Mountain. They'd be sure to have a few dinners out, rent some equipment - leave a credit card trail. Vita was earning her Master Degree in Military History at Duke and needed the weekend to focus on finishing her dissertation. Freeman would be skiing and enjoying the cold after nine months in the Philippines. Unless they were told otherwise, they were staying until Tuesday.

Morales had fake Canadian passports, an assortment of travel visas and IDs for the trip. He'd be traveling as Miguel Martinez, Deeks as David Martin and Kensi as Karen Martin, all NGO charity workers. A bogus passport stamp from Toronto to New York was followed by real flights from New York to London, London to Iraq. Bad weather had an Iraqi-based Matthew Consulting driver taking them close to the Iranian border with the three illegally crossing on foot. The storm was moving out so the Saturday night rescue was still on.

Werth was waiting at 6:30PM just over the border with a 2005 Toyota Hilux complete with a camper shell. The three fit easily with Werth in the front cab. Werth told Kensi that in this part of the country, she just had to keep her head covered with a hijab to conform to local customs. Coat, ski-pants and a long sleeve shirt were all necessities in the cold weather anyway.

Matthews Consulting, through a number of shell companies, owned three small properties in Iran. A small warehouse outside of Tehran, a small boat house off the Gulf of Oman and farm twenty-five miles north of Baneh, Iran. Werth explained this was Tony Matthews's way of doing business
in hostile areas - buy or lease small farms, warehouses or store fronts. All were good operational bases. Nobody noticed people coming and going, making it easy to hide in plain sight.

The Radan farm didn't look like much - a small house with a shed and garage. Looks were deceiving. Bullet resistant glass was used for all the house's windows. The hall closet stored an impressive inventory of weapons - guns, ammo, smoke and explosive hand grenades, two rocket propelled grenade launchers and a flame thrower. "Every home should have one," Morales joked. Werth, Deeks noticed, did not joke.

Small security cameras were placed all over the property and connected to a series of monitors tucked in small group of kitchen cabinets. Under the kitchen was a functioning panic room where six people could live for about a week. There was a massive first aid kit. Werth showed Kensi and Deeks a bullet wound scar he had on his side and told them one of Matthews's men patched him up using a similar kit in Pakistan. Deeks wasn't sure if that made him feel better about their chances or worse.

The shed had about every tool Deeks remembered seeing selling Craftsman's products while working at Sears one summer in high school. There was also an acetylene torch and some welding equipment. In the corner were six back-packs, matching sleeping bags and a large fold-up tent. "In case we ever need to leave in a hurry," Werth explained. Deeks saw Kensi's eyes light up with the idea of camping. He preferred a private cabana at the Wynn Casino's European Pool in Las Vegas for his outdoorsy fun.

The garage held real farm equipment - ever the businessman, Tony Matthews has a local family work the farm and splits the profits with them without the government knowing. There was also a "storm cellar" with a prison cell if needed. "Once again, every home should have one," Morales said.

There were enough rations for dinner that night and breakfast Saturday morning but the bad weather kept Werth from making a supplies run to the city of Baneh. They didn't need much - just some food for the next few days and a go-bag for Nate. The plan was have Kensi do a last minute intelligence report with both the staffers monitoring the rescue at Matthews Consulting and her CIA contacts in the field as part of selling the Vermont ski vacation to the Agency. Werth would drive Morales and Deeks to Baneh, stay with the Toyota while the Marine got food. When Deeks asked why was he going, Morales said "muscle" while Werth answered "back-up," so that was that.

The travel and long hike had Kensi, Deeks and Morales wiped out by 10PM. Werth left "the honeymoon suite" for Deeks and Kensi, the one actual bedroom on the second floor of the house. There was a small office with a mobile satellite dish and an impressive computer set-up in the other bedroom. Morales and Werth would be fine on cots in the living room.

Kensi and Deeks were sound asleep by midnight but Deeks was up just a bit after five. Kensi felt so good, so right by his side. She was smart, capable and so much better suited for what they were doing. Yeah, he was there with her to get retrieve Nate but if he wondered again what would be different if he could have sold Weiss on making this a joint NCIS/CIA operation...

"Please tell me you haven't been up all night," Kensi asked while yawning.

"Oh honey, it is our fabulous dream weekend in rural Iran. How could I sleep? I don't want to miss a minute," Deeks joked.

"Deeks," Kensi sighed, looking right at him.

"You gonna miss calling me Dean? I kinda liked it. Made me think professor and hot coed
thoughts." Deeks wiggled his eyebrows at her.

Kensi smiled and tried to set him up for a joke, "Deeks is just fine."

He was having none of it. "As opposed to meter maid, trophy husband and now muscle and back-up."

"Don't do that. We're a team. I'm not here without you."

"You're not here, you're not in Landstuhl, you're not explaining yourself to Hetty and Sam."

"I'm with the man I love, doing the work I love, rescuing a friend. That's what you're responsible for. You got me to this place. You're not Janvier selling out Nate, you're not Jafari, you're not Kort and the CIA. Stop blaming yourself for this operation not being perfect," she told him. "Did all of your LAPD assignments go like clockwork until I walked into that MMA gym and rocked your world?"

"Rocked my world, did you?" Deeks lifted an eyebrow.

Kensi beamed with pride. "Yes, I did."

"Yeah, you did. And no, most of my LAPD assignments had their rough moments but they were my assignments. This is you; this is Ira, Migs, Migs's girl, Werth. I screwed the LAPD stuff up, maybe my cover's blown, maybe I'm in physical danger. Now, I screw this up, you think the CIA is trading Jafari for me? I'm not really going to enjoy twenty years in an Iranian prison. And you, I can't even deal with the idea of you…"

"I'm getting Nate tomorrow night. I'm getting on Rossi's helicopter and flying in Vladdy's private jet back to the States. I'm not screwing up. You're not screwing up. We're doing what we started back in June."

"Then what?"

"Excuse me?"

"Everything since June has been about tonight. Great, we're back in America. Maybe the CIA pays, maybe they don't. You told Hetty that after this is over we start the next fifty years. I'm looking forward to every minute of them with you but do you have any idea what we're doing?"

"Nope. Maybe for the first time in my life, I don't have a plan past tomorrow and it is awesome," Kensi's smile was glorious. "And that's how you rocked my world."

Deeks looked around the room, finally lifting the covers, "Who are you and what have you done with my wife?"

"You know why I said yes this time last year when you proposed?"

"My devastating good looks, wit, charm, sexual prowess..."

"Are you done?"

"Only if you have nothing else to add."

"I said yes because after all that went on with the investigation into my father's death, there you were. You had no idea what was going on, you just kept going with the flow. Going with me on blind faith."
"Kens, not blind faith. I know you, I love you. Can't go wrong with that."

"That's exactly it. Wherever I'm going, I'm going with you, who I know. Who I love. And I can't go wrong with that. It's been a long time since I've had someone who has as much faith in me as I have in them."

Deeks smiled and shook his head. "Everyone has faith in you."

"To shoot. To investigate. To pretend to be someone else. To do something here and now in an assignment." Kensi kissed Deeks. "You had faith in the future with me. I have complete faith in you. I never thought I'd have that with someone."

"Come here, you," Deeks pulled Kensi close. Just as he started to kiss her, a rooster greeted the morning's sun.

Kensi just started laughing. "OK, one request about our future. No roosters."

"My dreams of a life on a small Kansas farm," Deeks sighed dramatically, "dashed."

"How about a nice place back in LA by the beach?"

"You had me with back in LA."

Kensi's stomach rumbled. "When are you guys going on the food run?"

"There were enough eggs and bread for everyone's breakfast. I'll shower, start breakfast for you and me. My guess is our Marine buddies won't mind breakfast ala Deeks." Deeks reluctantly got out of bed, kissing Kensi as left. "I can add cook to muscle and back-up on my future resume."

"Deeks," Kensi called to him. When he turned back she told him, "I've never needed blind faith in you. You've never let me down. Not once. And tonight is what you and I do best. At least professionally." She leered at him before throwing a heavy sweatshirt on.

"Tease," Deeks told her, carrying his wrist brace as he made his way to the bathroom, smiling all the way.

Breakfast ala Deeks comprised scrambled eggs, with onions and tomatoes and some local hot sauce on the side which Werth loved. It nearly melted Deeks's fork. There was plenty of instant coffee - "Marines run on coffee," was Morales explanation.

After breakfast, the four reviewed the plan one last time. The Amir farm was ten miles north of where they were staying. Werth had photos of Nate walking from the main family home to a small cabin. Werth learned from the locals that when Dina Amir, Harun's beloved wife, was sick with cancer, he built the small cabin as a hospital at home. After she lost her two year struggle, Amir donated the medical equipment to the local hospital and had a series of nannies live in the cabin. Once the children were past needing nannies, the cabin was empty until Nate was there as a tutor.

Amir had a small office for the farm right on the edge of the property, near the only road in and out. He had a security guard who lived in a few small rooms in the back with his teenage son. The guard, who was a veteran of the Iran-Iraq war, also lost his wife to cancer.

Werth found a place to leave the Toyota with a half mile walk to the cabin. He admitted he almost grabbed Nate himself a week earlier - two days after he arrived - but Amir's teenage children appeared and that opportunity was lost. On the trip back to his vehicle, he placed electronic beacons along the path. With night vision goggles and an electronic tracker, Werth thought they
could do the half mile walk with ease. There were no wild animals in the area, just cows, goats and chickens.

They'd leave around midnight. The plan was to get Nate, get back to the Radan farm where an uncultivated field behind substituted as a helipad. Lou Rossi was leaving Iraq just after two in the morning with the hope of being back no later than four. Vlad Titov's Gulfstream is waiting at Matthews's airstrip. "And it is sweet," according to Morales. If all went as planned, and Werth calculated the time differences properly, the rescue team would all be back in the states before lunch on Sunday.

Almost all of the team would go back. Werth would stay in country two more days to reset the Radan farm for the coming planting season. Matthews didn't want the family using the land to be too curious about what went on there. One of Matthew's associates would drive down from Armenia and the two would drive to Zvartnots International Airport before flying to Paris and from Paris to Newark.

Werth suggested they all rest until around four. The men would go in town while Kensi filed her report from "Vermont" via a proxy server Vita told Morales she already had running.

Kensi told him she'd have no problem falling back asleep, Deeks had way too much nervous energy to even try. "I'll sleep on the plane ride home," he told Kensi as he closed the door. Instead, he sat in the kitchen reviewing the photos, the maps and even fooling around with the night vision gear. LAPD never had that kind of cool gear.

He wound up putting his head down on the kitchen table around one for a half-hour catnap. When he woke, a cup of Morales's instant coffee got him back in the game. Morales and Werth told Deeks they were ready to leave at three, Werth bored by his own rest and relax plan. Kensi admitted she dozed for a few minutes but mostly thought about finding a Dunkin' Donuts when they landed in Delaware and getting a Chocolate Kreme Donut.

Deeks announced that it was always dangerous not to feed the hungry Kensi so the three men left for Baneh. If Deeks thought traffic in Los Angeles was crazy, Baneh was absolutely insane. He remembered talking to Weiss about how densely populated Baghdad was. This made Baghdad look like downtown Los Angeles on the Friday before a three day weekend.

Werth found a place to put the truck - calling it a parking spot would be a generous description. While Werth sat with the vehicle, Deeks followed Morales through the street markets and local shops. They picked up food for a few days in case there was a problem with the operation and to handle Werth's plan to close up the farm. After dropping the groceries back with Werth, Morales found a shop where he could get a change of clothes for Nate and some toiletries.

While Morales was paying, Deeks waited near the store's front door. Outside was commerce that would make an American shopping mall owner envious. There were kiosks along the street selling goods, bigger real stores with electronics, clothing and supplies. Not quite the backwards country he probably thought Iran was. There was a café and ... holy shit.

When Morales joined him, Deeks told the Marine, "We have a problem." He nodded his head in the direction of a man drinking tea at the cafe, reading a newspaper. "We need him under our control."

The two left the store and started to the cafe. Deeks ducked into the doorway of a shop while Morales walked to the man. Seeming to know something was up, the man dropped a few bills on his table and started to cross the busy street bazaar. Deeks trailed him as the man got to the sidewalk while Morales called Werth to update the situation and provide description of the man in
The man was effectively boxed in – stores to his left, Werth at one end of the street, Deeks closing in on the other with Morales shadowing him to the right along the kiosks in the street. When the man finally got to Werth, he started explaining himself in Russian. Werth said nothing, waiting for Deeks to arrive. When Deeks got there, he grabbed the man with his good right hand. Werth made it clear he was armed while Morales gave instructions in Russian. The man got into the camper part of the truck, complaining the entire time to Morales.

As Deeks slammed the camper door closed, he asked Morales what the man said.

'Who are you?' was Morales's answer. "Over and over again. You in the mood to share?"

"I'm his lawyer," Deeks told the Marine.

"Excuse me?"

"That's your old charge in Lancaster."

"Callen?"

"Travel halfway around the world and still can't outrun the past." Deeks shook his head and got into the truck's cab.

x-x-x

Deeks walked into the second floor office as Kensi was powering down her laptop. "We have a problem."

Kensi's eyes grew wide.

"We ran into an old friend in town."

"Kort?"

"Callen."

Kensi smiled. "He's here?"

"Yeah, Werth and Migs are watching him in the kitchen. Werth is incredibly not pleased."

"Watching? Why wouldn't they be pleased?"

"We need to talk."

"The guys think Callen is going to be a problem."

"Werth, oh God yes. Me, well I think he can help but he needs to understand that this rescue has been planned without him and he if wants to help, great. If he wants to take over, I'm fine with handcuffing him to the toilet and picking him up when we're ready to leave."

"Deeks, he can be a big help."

"I agree. He also can shoot a man an unarmed man on television, disappear for months, quit and go off on his own...."
"...which is pretty much what we're doing here."

"Neither of us have ever shot an unarmed man. Look, we have a plan. We're sticking with it. I'm not kidding when I tell you Werth wants to handcuff him to the toilet in the shed right now. Migs thinks he can help if he is following orders. I'm pretty sure I know where you stand."

"He can help."

"He can. But help, Kensi, he's not running whatever plan he had for being here as an uninvited guest."

"You think he was here for Nate?"

"You don't? Because, honestly, downtown Baneh is quite modern but not someplace I thought he'd make home for his life on the run."

"Mr. Kennedy," Morales called up to Deeks. "Our guest is getting bored while our host is not."

"Coming," Deeks answered back. Looking at Kensi, "I'm fine with him helping, we need all the help we can get. But, if he wants to run this his way, I will help Werth with the handcuffs." When he saw Kensi nod, he added, "I told Werth and Migs that Callen doesn't know about us and I want to keep it that way."

"Why?"

"We have about six hours before we're going to rescue Nate, I really don't want to spend that time explaining ourselves."

Deeks and Kensi made their way to the kitchen. Callen, handcuffed to a kitchen chair, was speaking with Morales in Russian. Werth had his weapon out and was just staring at Callen. As Kensi stood in the kitchen doorway, Deeks walked in to the middle of the room announcing, "If everyone spoke English from this point forward, I can play along."

Callen looked at Deeks, obviously confused. He looked at Kensi, back to Deeks and then to Kensi again.

"Good to see you, Callen," Deeks started. "Handcuffed to a chair with a corrections officer nearby," Deeks pointed to Morales, "it's like déjà vu all over again."

Callen looked at Morales and then stared at Deeks. "Deeks?" He looked at Kensi, "Oh my God, Kensi, you're alive."

Kensi was smiling, "Yes, we're fine. How are you?"

"I'd be a lot better out of the handcuffs."

"No," Werth said.

Deeks was almost relieved he didn't have to play bad guy. "Why are you here?"

"Probably the same reason you are, Nate. Where's Sam?"

"Maryland, with his family." Deeks answered.

"This isn't an NCIS operation, is it? You're working for the Agency, they're finally getting Nate back."
"Not really," Kensi told him.

"The Agency's not involved?"

"They're fine with Nate being captured and traded for a few Iranian spies."

"Bastards," Callen shook his head in disgust. "I have a meeting with a farmer up north named Harun Amir on Monday. He thinks I'm a farm equipment salesman from Russia."

"Go on," Deeks was interested in hearing Callen's plan.

"I've heard that Amir has a personal tutor for his twins. A tall American, thirty-five-ish, very smart, soft spoken."

"Nate," Kensi told him.

"So you're doing this Monday?" Deeks asked.

"Yes."

"Interesting plan," Deeks said to Callen. "Nate should be back in America by then but I'm sure Mr. Amir wouldn't mind a thank you for all he did for Nate."

Callen looked surprised. "If this isn't CIA or NCIS, who is…"

"A private concern is interested in returning Dr. Getz to America," Werth told him. "This operation has been planned for weeks and is going to happen."

Callen looked at Deeks, "A private concern?"

"You can address me, Mr. Callen," Werth said. "You have friends in this room, I'm not one of them. My organization is running this rescue. Mr. Deeks and Ms. Blye bring special skills to the operation and have been assigned very specific tasks. Mr. Morales is a long trusted associate and has my back as he knows I have his. You are an unplanned wrinkle and someone I'm fine keeping handcuffed and confined."

"I can help."

Werth was forceful. "Can you take orders Mr. Callen? I've been briefed on what happened in Los Angeles and I've seen your record. I do not want to return here to get Mr. Morales, Mr. Deeks and/or Ms. Blye out of an Iranian prison. I'd live and full and happy life never being here again."

"Callen, if you want in, you have to do what you're told. We've got a small window not only to rescue Nate but to get the hell out of here," Kensi said walking into the room. "A lot of people are putting a lot on the line. We're all doing this for Ira as well as Nate."

"What happened to Ira?"

"This isn't the first rescue try," Deeks told him. "Ira is on about his twentieth surgery. Kensi spent time in the hospital; I got a little banged up." Deeks lifted his left arm to show the wrist brace. "This is our last, best chance."

"Tell me what to do, I'll do it."

"Mr. Werth?" Deeks asked.
"You're staying with me at all times during the operation. Then your ass is going back to America," Werth told Callen. "And if you do anything to impede the operation, I'm keeping the handcuffs close by and you can go right back into the back of the truck. Do you understand?"

"I do," Callen said. "Can I get the handcuffs off now?"

Werth pulled a key from his black jeans pocket. "One misstep Mr. Callen and you'll be handcuffed to the toilet in the shed." With the handcuffs off and Callen working on the circulation in his hands, Werth made his plans clear. "An hour before we're leaving, I'll give you a briefing." Werth turned to the others, "No one else talks about the operation. Am I clear?"

Everyone said a quiet "yes" before Callen asked "What time will we be leaving?"

"An hour after your briefing," Werth said before exiting for the shed.

"He's a ton of fun," Callen said as he stood. Kensi pulled him into a hug. "I read you two were dead."

"Long story. I'll tell you on the way back," Kensi winced as she pulled out of the hug.

"How badly hurt were you, Kens?"

"Badly," Deeks answered because he knew Kensi would not.

"Ah, my lawyer. You're still angry."

"Not angry, just done with all this. We're getting Nate. We're going home."

"Wherever that is," Kensi mused.

"Now you're sounding like me," Deeks told her.

"What does that mean?" Callen asked.

While keeping her relationship with Deeks a secret a bit longer, Kensi filled in Callen on what happened since he disappeared.

-30-

Sorry for the delay - plumbing nightmare to start the week and a gas leak Friday slowed things down. Living in an old building means nice, thick walls that keep the neighbors' noise on their side of the walls. Same walls have to be busted to bits when a pipe breaks or someone smells gas.

I had hoped to be done before the premiere. I also hoped to have a big PowerBall win to free up more time for writing. Neither happened. There are three planned chapters with maybe an epilogue. I'm getting there. Thank you all so much for following along and for being so kind with your feedback and follows. I am so very grateful.
Chapter Summary

Timeline: Memorial Day Weekend/Late May 2012 - Marriage; Opening of Olympics/Late July 2012 - Escape; Labor Day Week/Early September 2012 - Explosion; President's Day Weekend/mid-February 2013 - OSP closes.

"I've been knockin' on the door that holds the throne
I've been lookin' for the map that leads me home
I've been stumblin' on good hearts turned to stone
The road of good intentions has gone dry as bone

We take care of our own
We take care of our own
Wherever this flag's flown
We take care of our own" - "We Take Care of Our Own" - Bruce Springsteen

Chapter 14

Amir Farm
Kurdistan Province, Iran
March 10, 2013, 1:00AM

Operation Locate and Repatriate Nate added Callen as a look out. He was never to be out of Werth's sight and it was made clear if Callen wasn't where Werth expected him to be, there would be a problem. Kensi specifically asked Callen to do what he was told. Too many people invested too much in Nate's rescue to piss off Werth, the man running things.

Werth and Callen stayed with the Toyota half a mile from the farm house. Morales, Deeks and Kensi started out on foot. The three wore night vision goggles and personal trackers. If it all went to hell, Werth and now Callen could coordinate their recovery through the personal trackers. Everyone had a bluetooth headset. Deeks thought Eric would be so proud.

Kensi and Deeks carried several weapons - M4 Carbines in their hands, the standard Sig-Sauer for Kensi and Deeks's Beretta on their persons along with Kensi's stun-gun and Deeks's switchblade. Morales had a backpack with various night mission gear as well as extra weapons, ammo and grenades.

Kensi worked the digital tracker through the wooded area Werth marked near the farm. Once they got to within a hundred yards of the cabin, Morales set up a small base at the edge of the woods. From there, Deeks and Kensi had to cross a field behind Nate's cabin, get inside, get Nate and get back to the base. After that, a quick return run through the forest, a ride back to the farm with Werth and Callen and a helicopter trip back to Iraq meant it was over.

There was a small sliver of the moon and a sky full of stars as Deeks and Kensi cut quietly across an unplanted field behind the cabin. The cold, it was about 21 degrees Fahrenheit, had Deeks's wrist a little achy but the adrenaline from the operation kept the pain away. Deeks could tell by the way Kensi was moving she was running on pure adrenaline too. Neither Deeks nor Kensi could see
an alarm system on the cabin. A side door had a deadbolt lock that Kensi easily picked.

Once inside, Deeks walked toward where Werth thought was a bedroom while Kensi entered the living room. Deeks found a door ajar when he heard Nate walking to the living room. Deeks quickly followed.

"Don't move," Nate ordered, pointing a small handgun at Kensi.

Deeks reluctantly pulled his Beretta and pushed it to his back of Nate's head, "Don't shoot Kensi, Nate. If you do, I'll have to shoot you and that will just ruin all our rescue fun."

"Kensi?" Nate turned on a lamp, blinding Deeks for moment.

"Hey man, a little warning about the lights," Deeks complained while he pulled off the night vision goggles. Kensi's were off, of course, and she found his discomfort comedy gold.

"Deeks, is that you? Oh my God." Nate stared at Deeks, putting his gun down on an antique secretary desk in the living room. His hands were shaking. As Kensi pulled Nate into a hug, Nate whispered, "I am so glad to see you both." Nate held on tight.

"Seem to be a little more happy to see Kensi," Deeks grumbled before Nate turned to shake his hand. Deeks knew the look Nate wore. The relief and elation that a long undercover was ending fighting the fear that the person you were before the undercover assignment was gone forever. Deeks gave a still shaking Nate a bro-hug. "Good to see you, man. Good to see you."

After a moment, Nate took a step back and a deep breath. "Where's everyone else?"

"Long story, we'll tell you after we're gone. Grab your coat and some comfortable shoes..."

"Deeks, we got a problem," Morales warned. "There is a man with a shotgun walking briskly to the cabin's front door."

"We have company," Deeks said as he tried to grab Nate. Nate had other plans, walking to the front window of the cabin and looking out. "Nate, what the hell are you doing?"

"It's a friend," Nate assured.

"What the hell is going on, Deeks? Kensi, kill the lights," Morales ordered.

"We're leaving the vehicle," Werth joined the conversation. "Migs, we'll be with you in five minutes. Don't move unless Deeks and Kensi are taking fire."

"Dammit, Nate, get down," Kensi moved to the side of the secretary desk, trying to find the switch for the lamp. Deeks crossed the living room, pointing the M4 at the door, trying to keep Nate out of harm's way.

"Guys, Harun is on our side," Nate opened the door just before Harun Amir knocked. "Harun, come in, I have news."

"Grab your coat and shoes, Nate. There is a strange car near the office. Farid called. We need to move you to the main house." Amir stood in the door way, looking around.

"Harun, come in, we need to speak." Nate turned to Deeks and said forcefully, "Put that away."

Harun Amir was surprised to see Kensi holstering her gun and shocked seeing Deeks with the large gun. "It's Mr. Amir. We're good for now," Deeks told Morales. "Stand down."
"Are you sure?"

"For now. Get the boys back in the truck. We'll be on our way soon."

"What is going on here?" asked a confused Amir. "Who are you?"

"Harun, these are my friends..." Nate started the introductions.

Deeks finished them. "I'm Dean Kennedy, that is Kelly Nessler. We're old friends of Nate. When we lost contact with him, we put together a team to find him."

"Wonderful news. Nate, I know you've been ready to leave for a while. Are you comfortable leaving with your friends?" Deeks admired the way Amir was watching out for Nate while playing it polite and cool.

"Yes. I didn't know this was happening tonight and I'm sorry I would have left without saying goodbye."

"Your safety is paramount. I told you that the day you came to work with us."

"I can never thank you enough for what you've done."

"Nate, I've told you before, I believe the good you do for others comes back to you in blessings. You are a blessing to my family. The arrival of your friends is a blessing to you." Harun hugged a surprised Nate before turning to Deeks, "Do you have safe passage from here? I can have some of my workers help..."

"No sir, we've been working on this for a while," Kensi assured him.

Nate pulled a pair of sneakers from a small closet near the door along with a coat, his hands still shaking. "Harun, when the children come to America..."

"They will have a friend there as soon as they get off the plane," Harun Amir was smiling, a man happy and at peace with what was going on. "You know how to contact me if you need anything."

"Harun, thank you. Tell the twins it was an honor working with them and they are blessed to have a wonderful father."

"You two take care of my friend." Amir requested as he walked to the door. "I will be indebted to you as I am indebted to him. Are you sure you don't need help off the property?"

"We have a plan sir," Kensi told him. "Thank you for all you've done."

Amir waved as he left the cabin. Deeks watched until the farm owner returned to his own home. "Now Nate, we've got to go now."

"We're coming out," Kensi told Morales.

"Kill the lights," Morales said just before Kensi switched off the lamp. Deeks gave his night vision goggles to Nate before taking Kensi's hand.

When they found Morales, he handed Deeks a second pair of night vision goggles for the half-mile run to the truck. As they got closer to the vehicle, Deeks noticed Callen was sitting in the front seat of the truck with his left arm up. A longer look told Deeks that Werth was good to his word. Callen was handcuffed to the exit handle over the window on the truck's passenger seat.
Werth opened the backdoor of the truck, "Morales, Dr. Getz, Deeks in the backseat. Kensi, can you fit in the back area behind the seats?"

"Sure." Kensi looked at Deeks and just shook her head.

"You can probably release Callen and Kensi could fit up with you two," Deeks suggested to Werth.

"No, Mr. Callen is in a time out," Werth told him in what was likely his best effort to make a joke since they arrived. "Unless you'd rather put Mr. Callen in the sleeper again."

"Hey, it's not a problem," Kensi jumped into the storage space in the back as the men took their seats. Morales keep the backpack on his lap while Kensi took the M4 Carbines and kept them with her. Within minutes, the Toyota was on the road back to the Radan Farm.

"Can I ask what happened?" Kensi inquired from her location in the in-cab storage space.

"No," both Werth and Callen said simultaneously.

"Ah, common ground," Morales kidded, trying to ease the tension. "You boys will be BFFs before you know it."

"Let me guess," Deeks joined in on the fun. "When I said 'stand down,' Callen still wanted to storm the cabin."

"You could have been in trouble in there," Callen offered as his defense.

"Because 'stand down' is such a confusing order," Werth countered.

"Callen doesn't usually take orders from me, that's the problem." Deeks felt Kensi tap him in the back of the head. "What?" he whispered to her. Felt like old times.

The rest of the ride to the farm was uneventful, just Callen glaring at Werth and Werth returning some withering stares. Nate was quiet, as was the entire backseat group.

Back at the farm, Werth pulled the Toyota into the garage and reluctantly took the handcuff off Callen. "It was a pleasure working with you, sir," Werth said sarcastically.

"Yeah," was all Callen said, rubbing his wrist.

Morales and Nate got on the passenger's side while Deeks helped Kensi out of the back. Werth collected the big guns and returned to the house while Morales started to store some of the rescue equipment in the garage. Kensi walked around the truck to talk to Nate when Werth returned.

"Chopper is about five minutes out. Anyone need a last minute trip to the head?"

Nate raised his hand and started walking toward Werth. "Where's…"

"I'll take you," Werth said as he started back to the house. "Your bags are in the back of the garage. Morales, Rossi may need a signal when he gets close."

"Got it," Morales answered, moving to the back of the garage. Picking up his backpack and a high powered flashlight, Morales told Deeks, Kensi and Callen, "the bags are here. When you hear the helicopter coming close, grab your gear and let's get this show on the road."

"Nate was awfully quiet on the ride back," Kensi said.
"We all were. Besides, he most likely went to bed three hours ago thinking he survived another day here. Now when the helicopter's here, he's going home. He probably still thinks he's dreaming," Deeks told her.

"It's hard getting pulled out of an operation in hurry," Callen added. "As long as he's been here, as sudden as this extraction is, he has to be a bit overwhelmed."

Deeks could hear the helicopter in the distance. "Sounds like our ride is here." Kensi and Deeks took their gear, Callen picking up Nate's "go bag." When the backdoor to the house opened, Nate exited with Werth. Werth was carrying a camera with a big flash.

As the helicopter started its descent, Morales returned to his travel companions. Werth turned a light near the home and picked up the camera. "I want to take a picture of you guys for Ira. Show him that his hard work succeeded."

Morales and Kensi each put his arm around a dazed Nate, who stood in the center, Callen and Deeks were on the end. Werth took a couple of pictures with the helicopter landing in the background. Once the chopper landed, Werth yelled "go" to the five but grabbing Morales before he left. Werth whispered something to Morales - as much as someone could whisper with the helicopter noise.

Callen and Nate were first to the helicopter with Kensi and Deeks just behind them. Morales sat in the front with the former members of the NCIS team in the four seats in the back.

Before the helicopter took off, Morales handed Nate a bottle of Gatorade. "Drink this, Dr. Getz." Nate started to shake his head no but Morales was having none of it. "Sir, we can't have you getting dehydrated. Please." He opened the bottle and handed it to Nate.

The helicopter took off with Nate doing as he was told. Deeks saw Werth turning off the light at the back of the house, making a mental note to get a copy of the rescue team-rescuer photo. While it was dark inside the helicopter, Deeks could see the big smile on Kensi's face. He was smiling too.

"How long is the flight?" Callen asked the pilot through the head set.

"Fifteen minutes to the border," Lou Rossi answered. "After that, another ten minutes to base. In and out, no problem."

And for the first ten minutes, there were no problems. Deeks couldn't see much outside the windows - the rural area did not have the street lights of a Los Angeles or Manhattan. He did look at Kensi a few times during the flight, she practically glowed. Nate was staring at his half-empty bottle of Gatorade with Callen watching him.

A voice came over the headset in heavily accented English. "You are in Iranian airspace without authorization, please state your business."

Deeks could hear Rossi's "oh, shit" in the chopper cabin but not over headset.

"You are in Iranian airspace without authorization, state your business," the voice demanded.

"Callen, how good is your Russian?" Morales asked.

"Good," Callen answered.

"Real good," Kensi added.
Morales swapped headsets with Callen. "Tell air traffic that you took a wrong turn, read your map wrong and are trying to return to Iraqi airspace."

As Callen spoke to air traffic control, Kensi asked Morales "What happens now?"

"We're going full speed ahead to the boarder," Rossi answered instead. "I have no interest in an Iranian prison cell."

Deeks saw Nate's eyes were wide with fear. He guessed his eyes didn't look all that different.

"We're four minutes out," Rossi provided a countdown.

The voice on the headset spoke to Callen in Russian. Callen's reply included what Deeks thought was the word "American."

"Three minutes out."

"What's Callen saying?" Kensi asked Morales.

"He's complaining about the maps he was provided. How the Iraqi air controllers were using maps given to them by Americans." Morales had a small smile. "Bitching about America is never a bad move here. The air traffic controller is guiding him to the border and trying to keep the military planes away."

"That would be a big help," Rossi said to nobody in particular.

Callen and the air traffic controller continued their conversation in Russian while Rossi kept counting down. After another few minutes, Rossi gave them the announcement they were all waiting for, "Lady and Gentlemen, welcome to Iraq and the beautiful Iraqi airspace. I have no idea what the exact local temperature is but local time is going home time."

Kensi let out a 'woohoo' and raised her arms like someone scored a touchdown. Deeks started laughing, as did Morales. Callen wore a huge smile. Nate had no real reaction other than exhaling loudly.

"Good work, Callen," Morales switched headsets once again. "My Russian is so-so at best. Understand it better than speak it."

"Just glad to help," Callen told the Marine. "Just glad to help. The air traffic controller said something about a mountain on a map that confuses people."

"It's why I flew out the way that I did. There was a slightly more direct route that would have gotten us out two or three minutes faster but it's not worth annoying our unsuspecting Iranian hosts," Rossi explained. "And look at what's up there." Rossi pointed to a well-lit airfield in the distance. "Baby, we're back."

Kensi turned to Nate. "Nate, how you doing?"

"Good," he answered automatically.

"Nate, we've got a plane waiting at the airfield. We're getting on, off to London to refuel and then back to Washington. Are you with me?" Deeks asked.

Nate nodded yes.

"OK, once we're back in the States, we're going to the NCIS offices at the Navy Yard. Sam's going
to bring us from the plane to the Navy Yard. Then we're walking you into Leon Vance's office and waiting with you until he gets there. You're safe."

Nate nodded again. Kensi leaned over, rubbing his back.

"Sam?" Callen asked. "I thought this was a private rescue."

"Kensi didn't quite tell you everything," Deeks told Callen in an understatement of the year candidate. "We saw Sam about a week ago. The company running this rescue has a private air field in Delaware. He agreed to help us to return Nate to NCIS."

"Makes sense. No CIA?"

"And according to everyone we've dealt with since Ira was injured, Trent Kort is a prick. The CIA nearly got Kensi killed. We're done with them."

"Good plan," Callen smiled, "And Trent Kort is a prick."

Nate finally spoke. "Ira's hurt? Kensi, you got hurt?"

"Nate, everyone's fine," Kensi lied. "Just a bump in the road."

The helicopter set down near the edge of a full runway. There was a Gulfstream waiting. Thank you Team Ira, Deeks thought.

Kensi popped her door opened only watch Nate jump out first. Kensi turned to Deeks. "What? I'm…"

"Go check if he's OK, Kens," Callen looked around in the helicopter cabin. Finding a blanket he handed it to her. "He might be cold."

Kensi took the blanket and followed. When Deeks and Callen got out of the helicopter, Morales told them, "Dr. Getz got sick at the house. That's why I was pushed the Gatorade during the flight over."

Kensi got to Nate about fifty feet from the helicopter. When she tried to put the blanket around his shoulders, he grabbed her and held her tight. The two sank to ground, Nate obviously weeping. Kensi looked at Deeks, her own eyes filling with tears.

"The last nine months are catching up with him," Callen said.

"And nine months is a long time to think every day you're gonna either be captured or killed," Deeks added. He watched Kensi pull the blanket around Nate as she held him.

"I have to ask," Morales looked at Nate and then Deeks and Callen, "is he going to be OK on the plane? I have a feeling Rossi and Vlad's pilot are going to want to get out of Dodge quickly. The Iranian air traffic controllers following up would be a bad thing."

"He'll be fine," Callen said. "He and Kensi were partners for a short while when this guy," Callen pointed to Deeks, "was called back to the LAPD. We'll have him ready to go."

"Do you have a phone where I can call Werth?" Deeks asked Morales.

Morales looked confused but tossed his phone to Deeks. "Speed dial, 23." Looking again at Nate and Kensi, Morales said, "I'll see when we're leaving." Morales jogged to the airplane hangar next to the helicopter pad.
Deeks punched in the speed dial code. "It's Werth."

"It's Deeks. We're at Matthews's landing strip but we had company getting here. Iranian air traffic control was our constant companion for about half the flight."

"That's not good."

"Didn't figure it was. Do you have someplace to stay if they have some way to follow how Rossi and his low flying helicopter landed?"

"I'll grab the camping gear."

"I have a better idea," Deeks turned his attention to Callen. "Where were you staying in town, Callen?"

"Hotel Baneh. Room 327."

"Callen was staying in the Hotel Baneh in Room 327. Since his plan had him meeting Amir Monday, you could lay low there waiting for your ride."

"Hmmm. Callen have anything in the room I need to worry about?"

"No, he's a rather Spartan guy." Deeks saw Callen's eyebrows shoot up.

"He offer this or your idea?"

"What do you think?" Deeks chuckled. "Take the room. You don't need to be camping in the cold."

"Agreed. Thanks for the head's up."

"We owe you," Deeks told Werth. "If you're out in LA, I'm sure your people can find Kensi and me. We'll have a dinner for Ira."

"Sounds like a plan, sir. It was good working with you and your wife."

"Good working with you too, man. Be safe." Deeks disconnected the call.

"You gave him my room?" Callen feigned being annoyed. "He handcuffed me to a chair. And in the truck."

"He wanted to handcuff you to a toilet at one point but didn't. Consider it repaying his kindness," Deeks smiled. "Besides, you still want a room in Baneh?"

"No, probably not."

"Listen," Deeks got serious. "If the plan hasn't changed, we're refueling in London. If you don't want to go back to the States…" Deeks saw Callen look out at the Iraqi night. "I mean, if you want to come back, I went to law school with Marc Greene."

"The hot shot defense lawyer…"

"…who couldn't pass real estate law at Pepperdine without some help. Hilarious since his mother is one of the top real estate agents in Brentwood."

"So he owes you."
"Not so much owes. He's a good guy when he's not getting scumbags off on a technicality. He'd be interested in your case, I'm sure."

"No, thanks for the offer, though. There's an NCIS agent at the Navy Yard. We worked together a long time ago. I'm going to surrender to him and explain myself. See where it goes from there."

"DiNozzo?" Deeks remembered Kensi's long recap of her trip to Washington, which seemed like a million years ago.

"No, Leroy Jethro Gibbs."

"Awesome name."

"Straight shooter, in more ways than one," Callen looked at Deeks, "You still bothered by what happened?"

"Janvier was a piece of human filth and the world is better without him. Before this adventure all started, I don't think I could have done what you did. But about a month ago if you put me in a room with Trent Kort, I probably would have beaten him to death with my bare hands. I don't know if I'm in the judgment making business when it comes to all this." Deeks pointed to a calmer Nate, now just sitting with Kensi.

"You got to give him credit for keeping it together for so long."

"I thought a suspect wanted me, well not quite dead but meant me some real harm while I was working a joint case with LAPD and FBI. LAPD believed me, FBI didn't and big-footed their way into keeping me undercover. I spent a week waiting to die, basically. No sleep, couldn't eat, I was a mess. Nine months of that? I can't even imagine."

"What happened?" Callen asked.

"To me?" Deeks pointed to the now visible scar on his jawline. "Son of a bitch stabbed me in a restaurant full of people. Fortunately, LAPD was raiding the place with my old handler running the raid. He grabbed a clean bar towel, tried to stop the bleeding and drove me himself to the hospital."

"So you were right."

"Would you tell Hetty you thought your life was in danger if you didn't think you were absolutely going to die?"

"No."

"Same here."

Kensi stood, pulling Nate up with her. Just in time, since Morales arrived with orders. "We're going. Now."

"We got an ETA for the USA?" Callen grabbed Nate's bag while Deeks took his and Kensi's.

"Werth figured we'd land at a private air field in Delaware around nine or ten in the morning local time." He smiled, "As long as we get Kensi a doughnut, we'll be fine."

Kensi and Nate trailed Deeks and Callen. There was no time to store their gear in the jet's baggage area, instead just stuffing it under the seats throughout the plane. Kensi stayed with Nate in the seats with a table. Morales handed Nate another bottle of water and told him to drink it. Callen sat
in the back near the bathroom, Deeks and Morales up near the cock pit each in their own three seater.

"We're off people," was the only thing they heard from the pilot as the plane taxied down the runway. Deeks shook his head and smiled, catching Kensi's eye. "We did it," she mouthed to him as Nate chugged down his water. He gave her a quick wink before closing his eyes. As the plane left the runway, he felt the adrenaline he was running on, maybe running on since June of last year, just drain from his system. An early flight nap would probably be a good idea, he thought before actually dozing off.

-30-

Note: Obviously the season premiere changed this to AU. Should be finished in three more chapters. Thank you so much for reading!
Chapter Summary

Timeline: Memorial Day Weekend/Late May 2012 - Marriage; Opening of Olympics/Late July 2012 - Escape; Labor Day Week/Early September 2012 - Explosion; President's Day Weekend/mid-February 2013 - OSP closes.

Chapter 15

"I'm coming home.
I'm coming home.
Tell the world I'm coming home.

Let the rain wash away
all the pain of yesterday.
I know my kingdom awaits
and they've forgiven my mistakes.

I'm coming home.
I'm coming home.
Tell the world that I'm coming...
Home" - "Coming Home" - Diddy

Vlad Titov's Gulfstream 650
March 10, 2013
6:45AM ET

Deeks had been surfing for a while. The water started off cold, he started off cold but he warmed up and was just enjoying the morning. Deeks saw Kensi walking to the beach as he found a great wave. He rode in, watching Monty jump up along next to her the way the dog usually acted when he was happy. Smiling in her LA Kings hoodie, yoga pants and flip flops, she was perfect.

Kensi was waiting for him at the shoreline, taking a step or two back every time the water got close, watching Monty romp in dying waves. "You should have gotten me up," she told him as he kissed her good morning.

Pushing his surfboard into the sand, he told her, "You looked so peaceful."

"I'm happy," she told him.

"Promise me you'll stay that way," he asked. "That we'll stay that way."

"Deeks," she reassured him, "good times, bad times, we have each other."

He shook his head, "No more bad times. We're safe and we're free."

"Not free. You're not going anywhere without me."

For the first time in his life, he had someone. "Never going anywhere without you."
"Then I'm happy," she told him again with a smile.

A cold wave hit them hard and Deeks was suddenly awake.

He remembered closing his eyes to rest just as the plane was taking off. Now, the lights throughout the plane were dim, the window shades all pulled down and he had a nice fleece blanket covering him. Kensi was curled up with a similar fleece blanket in the seat across from him where Morales sat when the plane took off.

As he went to rub the sleep from his eyes, he had a Post-It note stuck to the palm of each of his hands. One read "Wake me when you get up" while the other said "I'm not kidding" - both in Kensi's very precise script.

Standing and stretching, he took a look around. Morales was sitting alone at the four-seat table where he remembered Kensi and Nate were when the plane was taking off. Headphones on and tapping away on his laptop, Morales gave Deeks a small wave and a smile before returning to his work. Callen was stretched out in a fully reclining seat, wrapped in his own fleece blanket sound asleep while Nate was out cold in the pull-out bed near the back of the plane. It looked like nap time at a daycare center.

Deeks saw a bottle of water sitting in the cup holder on his seat's arm rest. He took a sip before walking over and waking Kensi. "Hey," he whispered as crouched down beside her, tracing his finger gently down her cheek.

It took Kensi a second to wake but when she saw him she smiled. It was the smile from his dream, the smile that got to him every time. "Hey."

He held his hands up. "I got your notes."

Kensi started to sit up, still smiling. Pulling the pieces of paper from his hands, she told him, "We did it."

"Yes, we did. Some help from strange places but yeah, we did it." He looked at his watch but it obviously wasn't working. "When do we land in London?"

Kensi looked at her watch. "Five hours ago."

"What?" Deeks voice was a little louder than a whisper. Maybe his watch was working after all.

"We landed in London about five hours ago. We were there for about an hour. The plane was refueled, we have a new pilot and co-pilot. We were supposed to have a flight attendant but she didn't show so if the plane has any trouble, we're all supposed to listen to Migs."

"Like that wasn't going to happen anyway."

"True."

"Five hours? How long was the flight from Matthews's airfield in Iran?"

"About four and a half hours. You were wiped."

"No kidding. God. " The funny thing was he could return to his chair and sleep for another few hours. The last nine months hit Nate when they got back to Matthews's farm and again when the helicopter landed. Deeks wondered if weeks of sleepless nights were catching up with him.
"There's a bathroom in the back," Kensi pulled him back to reality. "Everyone's sort of cleaned up, freshened up, whatever, while you were sleeping. Elaine had the flight catered."

"Of course she did."

"Awesome deli from Zabar's, cookies and cannolis from Veniero's. Ira would be proud. I saved you some turkey and a kaiser roll. The chocolate chip cannolis may be gone, though."

"I wondered what happened to those," Deeks teased. After Kensi stuck her tongue out, he told her the truth. "You take good care of me, Kensi."

"We take good care of each other."

"We do." Deeks stood. "I'm going to clean up. I'm suddenly hungry after hearing about the food. And Kensi…"

"Yeah."

"Ira would be proud. We did it."

Deeks took his backpack from under his seat. Walking back, he watched Morales stand and join him. "Hey man, you up for good?"

"I'm up for good since I've been sleeping my life away here."

"Good, I've wanted to start a pot of coffee for about an hour but didn't want to drink it all alone."

"Why didn't anyone wake me?" Deeks and Morales walked to the back of the cabin, past a sleeping Nate and Callen. There was a galley kitchen and what Deeks thought was a bathroom in the back.

"You've looked tired since Germany. When Kensi said to let you sleep, I wasn't going to argue and Dr. Getz and Mr. Callen seem to do what she tells them."

"They've learned, as I have, that doing what Kensi says is probably a good idea. And it's just Callen, not Mr. Callen. The use of that title belonged to someone else. Deeks pointed to the bathroom. "You need to use?"

"Nope. Vladdy doesn't have a shower back there but there is hot water if you want to rinse off."

"I've had cases where I've been a homeless person. I've cleaned up in park bathrooms and fast food restaurants plenty of times. This is fancy livin'." Deeks chuckled as he walked into the bathroom.

And it was fancy living. The bathroom on the plane was bigger than the bathroom in his first few apartments. There was no shower but there was plenty of room to move. He pulled open the backpack and took out an old pair of jeans, a blue flannel shirt and a grey tee-shirt. It was what he wore on his "last day" as an LAPD Detective and the NCIS Liaison officer. Six months of Dean Kennedy's black slacks and khakis, the endless supply of custom made dress shirts and monogramed sweaters he wore with someone else's initials, the brown hair and the goatee – all on their way out.

A quick rinse, brushed teeth, a change to his clothes and suddenly he was feeling more himself. As he left the bathroom, Kensi replaced Morales in the kitchen. "You made me a sandwich," Deeks was stunned. "I'm perfectly capable of making you something to eat."
"The last two years could easily disprove that." He picked up the sandwich and eyed it carefully.

She opened the mini-fridge and took out what was left of the cookie plate. "I'm also getting food for the guys." Kensi pointed to the jet's main cabin. An awake Nate and Callen were sharing coffee on one side of the four-seat table, Morales moved to where Kensi was sleeping. "I figured we should tell them together."

"Great."

"Not just us, the whole rescue Nate plan. Callen got the Cliff Notes yesterday."

"Have we heard from Werth?"

"Cleared out of the farm but left the security cameras on. So far, so good." Kensi handed him a can of ginger ale as she closed the mini-fridge.

"Hopefully it stays that way." He took the can and the sandwich and followed her.

"Sleeping Beauty is up," Callen said as they walked to the table.

"I was kissed by the beautiful princess," Deeks sat across the table from the two men, setting down his plate and soda can. Kensi put the cookie plate on the table and joined him. "Then she made me a sandwich."

Callen smiled, "Kensi, you going to let him talk about you like that?"

Deeks looked at Kensi. "I did call you beautiful," he offered up as a defense.

Kensi looked at him, turned to Nate and Callen before looking at him again. She pushed up the arm rest between them, leaned over and kissed him right on the mouth. Oh, did she kiss him. When she was done, because he was completely letting her run this, Kensi cuddled up close to him, lifting his right arm and wrapping it around her. "Now he's been properly kissed by the beautiful princess."

Deeks looked at an amazed Callen and a confused Nate. He wiggled his eyebrows at them and started eating his sandwich with his left hand. The wrist brace made that a little less elegant than Kensi's floor show.

"OK, how long has this been going on?" Callen asked.

Deeks had a mouth full of turkey sandwich and Kensi was enjoying herself satisfied smile so there was no immediate answer. "A while," Nate offered.

Swallowing his food, Deeks said "Do tell."

"A few months back, Hetty called. She was worried about you two."

"Any particular reason?" Kensi asked.

"Deeks was supposed to lie to you," Nate answered.

Deeks cut him off. "Yeah, let's not go there."

"Why not?" Callen was fascinated. "You hated that case. Intensely. Wow, now I know why."

"I would have hated it anyway." Deeks took another bite of his sandwich.
"Did Hetty know?"

"Nope," Kensi said. "I mean it was obvious we cared about each other."

"Oh yeah," Callen said. "It was very obvious."

"And you were very comfortable using that against me," Kensi shot back. "Fine, since you're so smart, how long you think this was going on?"

"Well, you're a nice girl…"

"And I'd be real careful about where this is going," Deeks warned. Holding up his wrist, "This makes an excellent club to beat CIA types with."

Callen seemed a little surprised by Deeks's reaction. "You're a nice girl so you wouldn't fall for his surfer drawl charm right away."

"Oh here we go again. No drawl."

"You two were delayed in London coming back from Romania. That'd be my guess."

"Do you have an opinion, Nate?" Kensi asked.

"You look happy. You both do."

"Excellent opinion." Deeks said before taking the last bite of his sandwich.

"I'm right, London."

"No, but good guess. Sam thought March after Kensi got some answers about her father."

"He said that?" Kensi turned to Deeks.

"You were on the phone with Elaine. Very uncomfortable. Speaking of phones, Migs, you have your cell?"

"You're not going to tell them the rest? Because this has been endlessly entertaining." Morales asked as he walked behind the chairs where Nate and Callen were sitting. "Werth?" Morales wondered as he passed Deeks the phone.

"Nope, our ride to NCIS."

"You're calling a cab?" Nate asked.

"Not quite." Deeks dialed the number and put it on speaker.

After three rings, a familiar voice said "Hanna."

"Deeks."

"Where are you?"

"About thirty-thousand feet over the Atlantic. Did I wake you up?"

"I've been up since five. You in trouble?"

"Oh, I've been in trouble for months. Wanna say hi to Nate?"
There was a pause and then some laughter, "You got Nate."

Nate started to answer but Callen was waving his arms. He wanted no part of this conversation. "Kensi and Deeks got me, Sam."

"And we want to bring him back to the Navy Yard. Hi, Sam," Kensi said.

"Hey Kens. How many people do I need to bring to the Navy Yard?"

"The three of us, two people who assisted in the rescue and our gear," Kensi answered.

"Where am I going?"

"There is a private landing strip off Mud Mill Road and Brook Lane in Delaware." Deeks looked at his watch. "We should be there in a little over two hours."

"I've landed there in the past," Sam said cryptically. "Who should I call at the Navy Yard?"

"Nobody, Sam. We have that covered," Deeks told him.

"Nate, glad you're safe."

"So am I Sam, so am I."

"OK, where at the landing strip will I meet you?"

"There is a hangar for Matthews, Inc., Mr. Hanna," Morales joined in on the conversation. "If you bring your vehicle to the entrance and say you're there for the Matthews cargo, they'll get you there. I have them looking for a Sam Hanna."

"One of your minions, Deeks?"

"I wouldn't call a Marine Major a minion."

"But I like the alliteration," Morales shared a smile with Deeks.

"Two hours, Matthews Inc. Hangar in Delaware. You need anything?"

"Doughnut for Kensi would be nice. She's plowed through about half the sweets we have up here and she's looking for more," Deeks teased.

"Deeks, you gotta learn. Want to be a happy man? Don't make jokes about your wife's eating habits."

Callen's eyebrows shot up, so did Nate's.

"Sam, I need to go, we didn't mention the whole wedding thing to Nate," Deeks quickly disconnected the phone.

"Oh, I gotta see this." Morales said as Deeks unwrapped his arm from Kensi and toss the Marine his phone. "You two are endlessly entertaining."

"You're married?" Nate and Callen said in unison.

Kensi flashed her wedding ring at the men. "Yes, we never got to registered so when we get back, I guess we'll be at Neiman Marcus if you guys want to pick up something for us. You can send a
wedding gift up to a year after the ceremony. We're going to need everything. Being dead means we need a lot."

"When did you get married?" Nate asked.

"Last May."

"Before or after my arrest."

"After."

"You got married without me?" Callen sounded almost hurt.

Deeks shrugged his shoulders. "Sorry, we were getting married without you, arrest or no arrest."

"We had a small ceremony on May 25th." Kensi stood and walked to her backpack. She pulled out her wallet and returned to the table. She passed a photo over to Nate and Callen. "I'll look like that again when my hair grows back," she told them as they looked at the wedding portrait. "I'm beginning to think Deeks likes the goatee, however."

"No, I'm sick of shaving."

"How long did you think you could keep it from everyone?" Nate asked.

"The plan was to keep things quiet through the summer. Before everything went to hell with Janvier, we were going to be on our best behavior to Hetty and the team that we weren't going to be a distraction."

"Then I became a distraction." Callen said.

"The biggest worry was that Hetty could send Deeks back to the LAPD," Kensi told them. "But since we report to different chains of command, we thought if we could prove that things between us didn't change..."

"How could things change? You were carrying on a clandestine relationship for some time, now you just have a piece of paper."

"More than a piece of paper, Callen. She means everything to me. That piece of paper means everything to me."

"I love him, Callen. I have for a very long time."

Deeks kissed the top of her head and pulled her close.

"So what happens next?" Nate asked.

It was their turn to answer simultaneously. "The next fifty years."

x-x-x

Marydel Airfield
Matthews Inc. Hangar
Marydel, DE
March 10, 2013
9:45AM ET
The remainder of the plane flight had Deeks and Kensi providing Nate and Callen all the exciting details of their secret affair. No, they never had sex at the office. No, they never had sex at Justin and Melissa's house – though Kensi gave Callen the same treatment Sam enjoyed on that one. No, they never had sex on a stakeout. Morales thought the line of questioning was rather limited. He was far more interested in the logistics of being together when they were both called into the office. Deeks said answering the right phone was the priority.

The pilot and co-pilot separately walked back to use the restroom. Both men had a story about how Weiss helped them. The co-pilot needed romantic restaurant to propose to his girlfriend – she said yes at the River Café in Brooklyn with the Manhattan skyline as a backdrop. The pilot's wife wanted a fancy catering hall for her father's retirement party. Dr. Jacob Weinstein had a surprise retirement part in the Radio Room at the Rainbow Room just before it closed.

Morales called Vita and told her to get out of the rented cabin in Vermont. It was all about to hit the fan and she didn't need to be caught impersonating Kensi. Morales also told the group that Weiss suggested the River Café for when he proposed to Vita. They liked it so much they were going to have their wedding there. He issued unofficial invitations to all.

Just before the plane landed, Deeks took Kensi and Morales to the sleeper couch in the back. "We've broken about a dozen of international laws in the last two days. I can't see the CIA backing any of our stories. We need a legal strategy."

"Nope, you got something better. You'll have the Marines on your side," Morales said.

"Excellent," Kensi said.

"I cut my hair once for this assignment. Your cut would look ridiculous on me."

"No doubt. Seriously, I had a visit with my commanding officer last Monday."

"What did Ira do for him?" Deeks asked.

"Nothing. Colonel Issac Johnson never needed a single thing from a single person. Ever. Total team player but he does for others, nobody does for him."


"Colonel Johnson during Desert Storm ran afoul of the CIA. I'm not at liberty to discuss what happened but let's say that the Colonel should be a Brigadier General at least by now and maybe more. The Marines are moving him up as they can but this one incident is holding him back."

"Let me guess," Deeks said. "Trent Kort."

"No, but a man like Kort. Last Monday, I visited with Colonel Johnson. I'm on leave until April 1st but if this action was successful, and it was, it is now an MCIA mission with some help from the CIA."

"What does that mean for us?" Kensi asked.

"Nothing, really. Colonel Johnson has an official file with all of Ira's notes on the rescue, backgrounds on you two and Dr. Getz. With Ira's laptop, we've made this a joint operation instead of Ira borrowing me as his favorite Gunny."

Deeks thought he knew where this was going. "MCIA running this operation keeps Matthews out of it."
"Exactly. Tony Matthews saved my life in Iraq about a dozen times. He served under Colonel Johnson. You mentioned something about Matthews having a brother who was a Lakers fan when you met him. Think of Colonel Johnson as Tony Matthews's brother from another mother. Under no circumstances will Matthews Consulting come up in all of this. I'm responsible for the plane, MCIA approved of the rescue and this was done under the banner of the three of us completing our January CIA mission. Ira's laptop had the back-up plans. Just like it had the Trent Kort harassment letter."

"A magical laptop. You've been a busy man." Deeks smiled. Morales was the real deal. "Well, the reason I wanted to talk to all of you is what once we get to NCIS, it would probably do us all the world of good to invoke our right to remain silent while Nate tells his story."

"While you guys were sleeping, I contacted Colonel Johnson. I'll have a JAG lawyer at NCIS by noon. I was planning on keeping my mouth shut."

"A physical impossibility for Deeks," Kensi joked.

"I'll say enough to keep NCIS East Coast entertained but not a word about Matthews Consulting."

"I called Tony before we left Iraq. He's thrilled." The plane touched down as Morales spoke. "Werth sent him the photo right away. Sent it to Elaine, too. Tony's going to put the farm up for sale Monday. Send a local crew in to clean the place out and scout out a new location."

"Is he angry about that?"

"A couple of former enlisted men like Tony and Werth, a dead NCIS Agent, a dead cop and a Puerto Rican Marine from Brooklyn managed to do what the entire CIA couldn't - screw over Iranian Intelligence. I'm sure once this is done Tony will have you two in for a celebratory dinner at Sparks Steakhouse. And then he'll bill the CIA for that too."

"So NCIS won't know about Matthews Consulting but the CIA will."

"Once we in NCIS custody, Trent Kort gets the rescue picture emailed to him personally from Tony. Tony has no love for the CIA either but is happy to take their money."

"Lady and Gentlemen, welcome to the great state of Delaware," the pilot said over the PA system. "The local time is 9:52AM. It is 51 degrees. It was a pleasure flying you from London. Don't make us do this again."

Kensi laughed, as did Deeks. She was laughing, he was wearing his own clothes and they were about to get as much of their own lives back as possible. Life was good.

"Sam's here!" Kensi smiled as she turned back from the window. She leaned over and kissed Deeks. "We did it."

"Yeah, Kens, we did." He kissed her back.

"Hey, enough of that in the back. Do I have to separate you two?" Nate teased.

Deeks stood as the plane stopped. He thought Nate looked good but he knew what it was like to keep your act together long enough to fall apart in private. Nate was use to helping others, the reaction in Iran probably just scratched the surface of what was going on inside. Deeks knew. Oh, did Deeks know. "I got a piece of paper, affirmed by a minister and the great state of California that I can do this," Deeks pulled Kensi to her feet before sweeping her into his arms for a grand gesture kiss.
"Oh, enough of that," Callen said. "Open the door and get me out of here!" He threw up his hands in mock disgust.

"Kensi, why don't you get off first with Nate," Deeks whispered in her ear. "I need to have a chat with my former client."

Kensi nodded, grabbing her backpack and Nate's go-bag from under the table seats. "Hey Nate, what do you want to eat? I'm sure I can talk Sam into a quick run to a drive thru. Dunkin Donuts? Starbucks? Oh, IHOP. I've missed IHOP."

Deeks caught Callen's eye and tilted his head back. Callen shuffled to the back of the plane while Kensi moved up.

"What's up?" Callen asked as Deeks passed Morales the Marine's backpack.

"If you're really turning yourself in..."

"I am."

"If you are, get a lawyer. Call Marc Greene. Drop my soon to be back from the dead name. He'll get you someone here to handle your extradition back to California."

"Gibbs will help."

"And how many suspects have we helped right into a jail cell. Get a lawyer. You have a right to remain silent. Use it."

The plane door opened with Nate walking down the stairs first quickly followed by Kensi.

"You two coming?" Morales asked.

Deeks picked up his backpack. "Callen, get a lawyer. As a co-worker, as a friend, as whatever, trust me. Get a lawyer."

Callen nodded and pointed out the plane's back window. Deeks and Callen saw Nate and Sam hugging. Deeks knew Kensi was trying not to cry.

"Let's go before Nate uses up all of Sam's hugs," Callen said.

Deeks left the plane first, seeing Kensi hugging Sam. Callen was about three steps behind Deeks. Sam was about to say something to Deeks when he saw Callen.

"Oh my God," Sam whispered. He looked at Deeks, "How did you..."

"Got skills, Sam, got mad skills." Deeks watched as the two former partners hugged. Deeks walked to Kensi and slipped his hand in hers.

Kensi moved in close, whispering in his ear, "We are awesome."

###


We're in the final stretch. Two chapters and we're done! Thanks so much again for all your kind words and feedback. You are all so generous with the time reading and sending feedback. I'm so
honored.
Chapter Summary

Timeline: Memorial Day Weekend/Late May 2012 - Marriage; Opening of Olympics/Late July 2012 - Escape; Labor Day Week/Early September 2012 - Explosion; President's Day Weekend/mid-February 2013 - OSP closes.

Chapter 16

"Victory's within the mile
Almost there, don't give up now
Only thing that's on my mind
Is who's gonna run this town tonight
Hey, hey
Hey, hey
Is who's gonna run this town tonight" - "Run This Town" by Jay-Z

NCIS Navy Yard
March 10, 2013
12:00N

It seemed to Deeks that the rescue of Nate required less negotiating than the seating arrangements in the Sprinter passenger van Sam borrowed from a friend at the Naval Academy.

Callen wanted to ride up front with Sam. That idea was easily shot down by Sam, Kensi and Deeks. Traffic cameras with facial recognition software were all over the areas leading to and inside Washington D.C. Those cameras could pick up Callen, report his fugitive status and location. If they were going to arrive at the Navy Yard without a fuss, it was safer for all involved for Callen to sit in the back. Nate volunteered to sit with him.

Morales wound up in the front with Sam since he was neither a wanted fugitive or believed dead. Kensi and Deeks sat in the middle row of seats with Deeks insisting on being closest to the door. He had a thought or two about how they'd be leaving the van but kept them to himself. He also kept his backpack nearby.

Deeks and Kensi surrendered their weapons to Sam. Morales kept his. A Marine Major might be able to walk into the Navy Yard armed, two people back from the dead might not be extended the same courtesy.

Sam brought coffee, bottled water and an assortment of pastries. He announced the chocolate eclair was for Kensi. She was delighted. As they got near the Memorial Bridge, Deeks borrowed Morales's phone one last time.

"Now what?" Callen asked.

"Our key to the kingdom," Deeks said as he punched in the last number.

"This is Nell Jones."
"This is Marty Deeks."

"Oh, wait, don't say anything. Hold on." Deeks heard some movement, including a door closing. "Where are you?"

"The 301, on our way to the Memorial Bridge. Wanna talk to Nate?"

Deeks did not have the phone on speaker but everyone in the van heard Nell's scream. Moving the phone from his right ear to his left and cupping his now ringing right ear, Deeks told her, "I'm going to assume that's a yes and give Nate the phone. I need to talk to you when you're done. Try not to make Nate deaf."

"Deeks, I am so sorry," she said to him before turning her attention elsewhere. "No, Eric, I'm fine. I'll tell you everything in a minute."

As Deeks handed the phone to Nate, Kensi whispered in his good ear, "You have a way with women."

"Later on, maybe I can have my way with you. See if I can make you scream too," Deeks whispered in her ear.

Kensi turned a little red.

"Do you two want to share with the class?" Morales asked.

"No!" Kensi answered for both.

Nate kept telling Nell he was fine, he was healthy and he was coming in. He told her not to call someone, Deeks thought it was "Michele" but wasn't sure. He was just getting the hearing back in his right ear. For a little woman, Nell had quite a set of lungs on her. Deeks finally got the phone back. "OK, Nell, we're coming in and we need your help."

"I'm so sorry about the yelling. I think I scared Eric."

"Well, you can bring him. We're on our way to the Navy Yard. I've been asked to ask for a specific NCIS Agent to be present."

"Who do you need?"

"An Agent Gibbs."

"Of course. Good choice."

"I'm trusting you on this one. This is probably presumptuous but I'm not interested in, for the lack of a better term, transferring custody of Nate to Agent Gibbs. Is the Director in town? Because if he's not, I'd have no problem making a pit stop at the Washington Post and leaving Nate there with one hell of a story to tell."

Sam started shaking his head no. "You can't do that."

"I was going to have Director Vance there as a matter of national security," Nell told Deeks. "I wouldn't want to see Nate turned over to anyone else. Agent Gibbs is a great agent and a good man but Nate's importance in this assignment means the Director."

"Excellent. We're all on the same page." Morales handed Deeks a piece of paper. "All the background information on Nate's rescue is in a Marine Intelligence Officer's data cloud. You got a
"pen."

"I do."

"The file is Paul Henry David Zebra Tom Edward George One Two One One Three. Read it back."

She did. "You're still using the LAPD alphabet."

"I'm LAPD Nell. The password is Two Three David Boy Boy David John Two King. Read it back."

She did again. "And I know you're LAPD Deeks. It's who you are."

Deeks smiled. "Thank you."

"Do you want Agent Gibbs's team there too?"

"I have a feeling when Director Vance sees that file, it may be all hands on deck."

"Got it. Deeks, I..." Nell's voice cracked.

"Hey, we'll be there in a little bit. You have a lot of work to do. Let's make sure the last leg of this goes as smoothly as possible."

"Tell Kensi I'm so happy for both of you. And proud."

"Thanks Nell, we're just getting off the Memorial Bridge. You have a lot of people to shock."

"Yes I do. See you soon."

Deeks handed the phone back to Morales.

"Who is Michele?" Kensi asked Nate.

"My sister," Nate answered. "She's married to Nell's oldest brother Harry. They're doctors in the Mayo Clinic in Phoenix. That's how we know each other. I mean I think we would have met along the way with our career paths and all but I was a junior in college and groomsman when I met Nell as a high school senior and bridesmaid."

"Oh, we need pictures of that," Callen joked. "Were you two paired up?"

"No, she was one of the first ones down the aisle. I was pulling up the rear with one of Michele's high school friends. Nell was cute, all the girls were - pink dress, pink gloves, pink shoes, pink parasols. Michele is the original girly-girl. Makes the whole eye surgeon thing really odd."

"We really need pictures of Nell in that dress," Callen said.

"Don't be like that. I bet Nell looked lovely," Kensi defended her friend.

"Any pictures of you in pink taffeta?" Deeks asked.

"Only a bride, never a bridesmaid," Kensi smiled at Deeks. He smiled back.

"How did you two keep this relationship quiet again? You're like teenagers," Sam grumbled.

x-x-x
They pulled into the Navy Yard at noon. When the van drove close to the entrance, Deeks saw Director Vance, recognized Agents DiNozzo, David and McGee from Kensi's photos. He figured the older man was Callen's Agent Gibbs. Nell's smile was a mile wide and Eric looked awfully pleased too.

"I'm out first, Nate second, Migs third, Kensi and then Callen. Sam, you're the only one with any real deniability here. Anytime you want to go out, I'm good."

"Why are you getting out first?" Kensi challenged.

"You don't think they're going to be happy with all this, do you Deeks?" Callen asked.

"Well, if they're unhappy, I'd rather they're unhappy with me and not Kensi." Deeks picked up reached under his seat for his backpack. He added the one last item from his last day in his Marty Deeks garb - his LAPD badge. He hooked it on his belt. "Properly dressed for the first time in months."

"Dapper Dean had his moments," Kensi told him.

"I'll see if the CIA will let me keep the tortured but earnest independent filmmaker glasses." Deeks smiled and winked at Kensi. "Showtime."

When Deeks opened the van door, Gibbs, DiNozzo, David and McGee all had their guns drawn.

"Step out slowly," Agent Gibbs told Deeks.

Deeks took a step away from the van, putting his hands behind his head. "I'm not armed. Agent Hanna has my weapon as well as Agent Blye's."

"It is you Detective," Director Vance was shaking his head in disbelief as he spoke. "Remarkable."

Agents DiNozzo and David walked up to him. While she kept her weapon trained on him, Agent DiNozzo patted him down rather thoroughly.

"I told you Agent Hanna has my weapon," Deeks said after they were done.

"On your knees by the curb," Agent David ordered. "Next out of the van."

As Deeks sank to his knees near the curb, Nate walked out. He heard the Director's "My God" before Nell broke free from the group and ran to Nate. She was in his arms faster than any of the agents could stop her. "Nate!"

Nate's eyes filled with tears. Deeks's might have, too.

"Miss Jones," Director Vance said after a minute. "Why don't you take Dr. Getz to your office." He waved to the front door and four uniformed officers appeared. "Please remain there until I come down personally to see you. Are we clear?"

"Yes sir," Nell composed herself. She looked at Kensi inside the van. "Thank you," she said. Turning to Deeks, she told him "Thank you so much."

Sam walked up to Agent Gibbs with evidence bags with Deeks and Kensi's weapons. "They're not armed."

"Oh, now you tell him. I get the full pat-down, seat on the cold ground," Deeks complained.

The front door of the van opened. "Major Miguel Morales, Director. I believe you know my
commanding officer, Colonel Johnson at MCIA."

Director Vance eyed Morales carefully. "Yes, I got a call from him about ten minutes ago just before Commander Austin arrived as your JAG attorney."

"I'd like to see Commander Austin before I give you my report."

"Agent David, please take the Major to Interview Three. The Commander is waiting there." The Director tuned his attention back to the van. "Agent Blye, please come out."

"Sir, Agent Blye was injured during..."

"I was made aware of Agent Blye's injuries this morning. If Agent Hanna says she is not armed, I'm going to have Agent McGee take her to Interview One and Agent DiNozzo take you to Interview Five. That is if it is OK with you, Detective."

As Kensi stepped out, hands up, Deeks told to the Director, "Thank you. But there is one person left in the van."

DiNozzo, Gibbs and McGee all pointed their weapons at the open door.

"He's not armed either. He asked for you in particular Agent Gibbs," Deeks said as Kensi pulled him to his feet.

"Callen," Agent Gibbs finally spoke.

"I'm turning myself in. Agent Blye and Detective Deeks found me two days ago and brought me here."

"Invoke your right to an attorney, Callen," Deeks told Callen as Agent DiNozzo started to walk him to the Navy Yard's front door. Kensi and Agent McGee were just behind them. "You too Kensi."

"That's enough," Agent DiNozzo said, opening the front door and taking them inside.

"Mission accomplished," Kensi whispered to Deeks just as Agent DiNozzo took him to the left while Kensi and Agent McGee walked to the right.

Bored in the Interview Room, Deeks put his head down on the table and just rested. A few minutes later, Agent DiNozzo walked in the room with a fairly thick file folder.

"Where's Kensi?" Deeks asked.

"I'll be asking the questions," DiNozzo told him.

"If you expect me to answer any of them, you'll answer mine. Where's Kensi?"

There was a knock on the door and Agent McGee walked in. "Please put your thumb on the screen," he said, holding what looked like an overweight iPhone. Deeks complied. After the equipment beeped, McGee nodded to DiNozzo and left.

"You are who you say you are. Who Nell says you are."

"Kensi?"

DiNozzo flipped opened the file. "But I have all this paperwork saying you're dead."
Deeks smiled. "Kensi?"

"How you and Agent Blye were killed in an explosion."

"Kensi?"

"Are you going to keep repeating Agent Blye's first name?"

"Where's Kensi?"

"You think this is a joke?"

"Kensi?"

DiNozzo sighed. "Agent Blye is being interviewed by Agent David. Do you think she's chanting your name, Detective Deeks?"

"Oh, a man can dream. Can I ask you one other question and then I'll answer whatever I can?"

"Go on."

"This building was attacked almost a year ago and I'm guessing there was serious damage."

"There was."

"So I'm a cop nearly ten years and this is the first interrogation room I've ever been in with mirrors." Deeks pointed the mirror behind DiNozzo's head. "There are video cameras here but you still have the mirrors. LAPD has video cameras in their interview rooms. Special Projects has, sorry, had a video set up in their interrogation room where we'd watch in an adjoining area with an old Norge refrigerator, a table and some chairs from the Reagan administration. The mirror set-up is very old-school Agent DiNozzo."

"There is an appreciation for old-school here, Detective. We're not the glitzy LAPD."

Deeks pointed to the folder DiNozzo held. "If that's my service record, glitzy doesn't come up much. You had questions."

"According to your records, you're dead."

"Obviously not."

"Who died in that gas station minimart in Victorville?"

"They were already dead. You'll have to ask our case officer their exact names but Agent Blye and I were told that they were cadavers of long dead people who were about my size and Kensi's size."

"Who is your case officer?"

"Trent Kort." Deeks hoped for a reaction. After a quick frown from DiNozzo, Deeks asked, "If you had to describe Trent Kort in a single word, maybe beginning with a 'p', what would that word be?"

DiNozzo lifted an eyebrow at Deeks, who shrugged. DiNozzo took a deep breath. "Where have you been since September 9th?"

"In no particular order, Maryland, Virginia, Long Island, Miami for a long weekend around New Year's, London, Baghdad, Germany, Washington DC, back to Long Island and then well a
weekend ski trip turned into finding Nate and running into Callen. You know how plans change at the last minute when friends are involved."

"Of course," DiNozzo played along. "Where were you on Long Island?"

"Quogue."

DiNozzo seemed impressed. "Near Dune Road?"

"On Dune Road. Nice undercover house. Probably a lot nicer in the summer months. The ocean mocked me."

"California boy not use to the East Coast cold?"

"Not use to being so close to the ocean but unable to surf."

There was a knock on the door. The door opened a crack, causing DiNozzo to take the file folder and leave.

"I'll just wait here," Deeks said to whoever was on the other side of the door. "Really, I've got no plans for the next few hours."

Deeks was alone for a few minutes when the door opened again. Agent David brought Kensi with her. "You two stay here," she told them as Kensi sat next to Deeks.

"Hello, dear," Deeks gave his wife a small peck on the cheek. "Look, they have observation mirrors. I haven't seen these things since old school "Law and Order" episodes."

"Before Hetty found the boathouse, the old interrogation room was in a failed auto repair shop. That place had observation mirrors and video like here." Kensi pointed to the small video camera in the corner. "Think there are people on the other side of the mirror?"

Deeks waved at the mirror and said "Sorry to bring you in on a Sunday." Deeks waited for a knock of acknowledgment but none came. "Did Agent David have any interesting questions?"

"No. Just why aren't you dead, who are the dead people in the minimart, what have you done since the minimart - those type of questions."

"Same here." Deeks closed his eyes and exhaled. "No questions about Nate. I'd be interested in Nate if I was asking questions."

"Nate could be telling them everything."

"Nate knows about the last twenty-four hours. Callen the last two days. Even Migs doesn't know much before January."

"What are you getting at?"

Before Deeks could answer, the door opened. Agent Gibbs told the two of them to "Follow me." They did, walking down a long hall and out to a bullpen area.

Deeks saw a photo of himself and Kensi on a big screen monitor. He thought it was from the Medina fundraiser not long after they started seeing each other. He remembered that dress on Kensi. He remembered that wet dress coming off Kensi. Agent Gibbs's team looked up at them for a second but returned to their work.
Agent Gibbs started climbing stairs with Deeks and Kensi in tow. On the second level, MTAC according to a rather large sign, Gibbs got to a door and used the retinal scan to open it.

"Why didn't we have those back in LA?" Deeks asked Kensi in an exaggerated whisper.

Kensi looked at him. "You're that tall." She pointed to the scanner as they passed it. "Hetty is not."

"Good point." They walked down a ramp into a dark room. There was a giant video screen against the wall and several rows of seats behind the screen.

"Wait here," Gibbs told them before he left. As he exited the room, Eric Beale entered.

"Eric," Kensi ran over and hugged him.

Eric hugged back. "It is so good to see you, Kens."

"Glad I wasn't missed," Deeks muttered, pretending to be unhappy. Just as he and Nell showed up around the same time, Kensi told him that Eric started about a month after she did at OSP.

"You," Eric pointed his finger at Deeks as he pulled away from Kensi, "don't make Nell ever cry again."

"I made Nell cry? She made me half deaf this morning," Deeks defended himself.

Eric gave Deeks a handshake and a bro-hug. "I knew something was wrong in January but she keeps things to herself."

Deeks looked at Kensi and lifted and eyebrow. "I don't know any women like that," he said before turning his attention back to Eric.

"I go by her place a few Saturdays ago and she's crying because you just called and she was so happy you two were alive but so worried that you Deeks were hurting and alone. She had me drive her to the Lincoln Memorial and told me everything."

Deeks was touched by Nell's concern. "Did President Lincoln weigh in?"

"Nope, just sat there while she unloaded. I couldn't believe it but here you are. Thank God."

Eric's cellphone chirped. "Excuse me for a second," Eric took a seat at one of the control desks. "Look up there," he told them as the large screen came to life.

"Why is there stadium seating here?" Deeks asked Kensi.

"Shhh," Kensi chided as the two moved in front of the large screen.

"No, seriously, there are like a four rows of seats. Do they have cup holders? We were always standing in Ops."

"Hello?" Elaine Stern's face popped up on the large screen. She looked much better than when they saw her last. "Hey you two!" Elaine finally saw them.

"Elaine! How ya' doin'," Deeks asked.

"I'm great," she smiled. "Someone wants to say hello."

She turned what Deeks figured was a laptop and sitting in a hospital chair was Ira Weiss. He wore
a sweatshirt that said DJ3K, a pair of black sweatpants and slippers. There was a huge bandage on his head, compression bandages on both arms but he was alive, awake and aware.

"Ira!" Deeks and Kensi yelled at the same time.

"If it isn't my beautiful niece Rachel and her husband Tom.'

"Wait a minute, they played your niece and nephew? I'm not feeling all that special anymore," Deeks heard Elaine complain off camera.

"Elaine, you'll always be my favorite niece," Ira advised. "Who took you to your first Yankees game? Who got you national security clearance?"

"He never got me national security clearance, Elaine," Kensi tried to help. "No Yankee games either."

"But I heard you got something for me last night. Is it true, is Cherokee's home?"

"He's with the Director of NCIS," Kensi told him, beaming with pride. "We'll give you the details when you come back."

"When are you coming back?" Deeks asked.

"I wanted to go back after they put my skull back together but the burns on my arms are slowing me down."

"Nothing is going to slow you down Ira," Kensi assured him.

"Something will, the food here. It is awful. Really bad. Listen, are you two going back to New York anytime soon?"

"Yeah, I guess." Kensi answered.

"Good, I'll get you and Migs a list of places that ship food, I'm dying here."

"Uncle I," Elaine sighed.

"Oh for God's sake, they had a glorified English Muffin with a hole in it yesterday and tried to pass it off as a bagel. Go to Ess-a-Bagel on 21st Street and First Avenue as soon as you get off the plane. Tell them you're shipping stuff to me, they'll know what to do. The food here is awful. They're killing me."

"No Ira, they saved you. Patched Kensi and me up as well."

"I am sorry you two got hurt but I'm more thrilled with what you did since. You promised me a fair hearing once Nate was back. When I'm back in the New York, how's about a nice dinner at Per Se."

"How about we go back to Neptune's Net?" Deeks told him, "I miss L.A."

"Deal." Ira was smiling broadly, "I want a full report on how you two did what you did - not the bullshit you're gonna sell the CIA - but I couldn't be prouder. You both were everything I'd hope you be and more."

The camera went back to Elaine. "The nurse at the door is getting a little aggravated." There was a pause "OK, Colonel Carter says hello and that I'm going to have to cut this one short. I'm going to
be out L.A. over the summer for the Yankees-Angels series. We'll grab a bite, I'll get you into to the game, up in the press box if you want."

"Awesome," Deeks said. Kensi was nodding too.

"Thank you for everything." Elaine said.

"Love you guys," was the last thing they heard from Ira before the screen went dark.

"Now that the reunion is over, if you two would come with me." Gibbs, at some point, returned to the room.

"Stealthy dude," Deeks really whispered to Kensi this time.

"You have no idea, Detective," was Gibbs's reply.

Deeks was pretty sure he heard a "good luck" from Eric as they left the room. He and Kensi followed Gibbs to a large executive office with a small table and chairs across from a desk.

"Wait here," was Gibbs's instructions before he left. Kensi just shrugged her shoulders but pointed to a few picture frames on the credenza behind the desk. Deeks squinted to see what looked like family photos belonging to Director Vance.

The door opened again, this time with Morales walking in with Gibbs and Vance. Gibbs took a seat at one end of the table, Vance the other. Migs sat directly across from Kensi while Deeks sat next to her.

"There are so many questions, I don't know where to begin," Vance told them.

"A simple thank you would be nice," Deeks decided the best defense would be a good offense right now.

"Excuse me, Detective?"

"A joint task force with Agent Blye, myself, Major Morales and others just returned Nate safely to the U.S after months in Iran. A simple thank you would be nice." Deeks was able to get his answer out before Kensi kicked him under the table. Obviously, she did not believe in his defense/offense theory.

"You're right, Detective," Vance said. "We knew Nate was lost and feared the worst. You three brought him home. That's something his family and this agency is quite grateful for. Thank you."

Deeks smiled.

"Where did you find him?" Gibbs asked, taking over the meeting.

"Iran." Morales answered.

"We know that, where?"

"Family farm in the north, near the Iran/Iraq border." Morales said.

"How did you illegally enter Iran?"

"Don't answer that," Deeks told Morales.
Vance stood and walked to his desk. He returned to the table with a folder, handing Deeks, Kensi and Morales each a piece a paper. "This is a blanket immunity agreement I've had our legal division draw up and the SecNav has signed off on it. You have full immunity for any crimes that may have been committed in connection with rescuing Dr. Getz."

Deeks read over the document, which looked like a lot of the immunity agreements he prepared while working with the LAPD's legal bureau.

Morales held his up. "I'd like Commander Austin to see this."

"She was the one who had the idea for the immunity agreement." Vance handed Morales his cellphone. "Feel free to call her."

Morales was on the phone for less than two minutes. "We illegally entered Iran by foot," Morales told Gibbs and Vance once he got the OK from Austin.

The door flew opened with Trent Kort barging in the room. "This meeting is over," he advised. "I'm taking Mr. Deeks and Ms. Blye into custody and I demand to see Dr. Getz immediately."

-30-

Sorry again for the delay. More apartment woes. One chapter left so we're moving in the right direction, I promise.
Chapter Summary

Timeline: Memorial Day Weekend/Late May 2012 - Marriage; Opening of Olympics/Late July 2012 - Escape; Labor Day Week/Early September 2012 - Explosion; President's Day Weekend/mid-February 2013 - OSP closes.

Chapter 17.

"Too bad it belonged to me
It was the wrong time and not meant to be
It took a long time and I'm new born now
I can see the day that I bleed for
If it's agreed that there's a need
To play the game and to win again

I'm winning
I'm winning
I'm winning
I'm winning and I don't intend losing again" – Winning by Santana

Director Vance's Office
NCIS Navy Yard
March 10, 2013
12:30PM

The door flew opened with Trent Kort barging in the room. "This meeting is over," he advised. "I'm taking Mr. Deeks and Ms. Blye into custody and I demand to see Dr. Getz immediately."

A stunned room looked at Kort. Deeks raised an eyebrow and turned to Gibbs. "We're not going anywhere with him," he deadpanned.

"Probably a smart move," Gibbs replied dryly.

"Mr. Kort," Vance stood, smoothing his tie, "I'll decide when my meetings with my staff end. I'll also decide who attends my meetings." The emphasis was on 'my' all three times. Deeks found some comfort in that. "Major Morales, Agent Blye and Detective Deeks were about to debrief me on their rescue of Dr. Getz. I'm sure you're as interested in their stories as Agent Gibbs and I are." Vance pointed to the one empty chair at the table, directly across from Deeks. "Sit down, be quiet or leave."

A furious Kort removed his coat and draped it over one of Vance's guest chairs. He sat across the table from Deeks and next to Morales, glaring at both men. As Vance sat, Gibbs returned to his line of questioning. "When did you enter Iran?"

"Friday, after eighteen hundred local time," Morales answered.

"When did you leave?"
"This morning, before oh-two hundred. Iranian air traffic control could tell you the exact time."

"Why would Iranian air traffic control know about your departure? Did you create an international incident? Are you prepared for any repercussions?" Kort demanded.

"Gee, you kept telling everyone at the CIA you're the go-to guy for Iranian intelligence. I would imagine if there were no reports to you this morning about our time in Iran, we all managed to get out of the country without that international incident you're worried about," Deeks told Kort before turning his attention to Vance. "Callen was able to convince the authorities we were slightly misplaced Russians with a bad American map."

Kort looked at Morales, Kensi and then Deeks. "Callen was with you?"

"Oh yeah, Sam Hanna droves us here from the airport, Nell Jones and Eric Beale were around to say 'hi' to Nate. Someone should probably call Hetty. We're getting the band back together," Deeks grinned as he answered. Morales cracked a smile.

"Agent Blye, when did you learn about Dr. Getz's location?" Vance asked as he tried to take control of his meeting.

"Our operations manager at the CIA had information that Nate was in a farming community in the north near the border with Iraq," Kensi answered. "The intelligence provided by Mr. Kort, who was our case officer, and the CIA for our first attempt to rescue Nate was both wrong and self serving."

"It also nearly got Kensi killed," Deeks added.

"Kort?" Vance looked for a rebuttal.

"If you truly believe I'd knowingly allow the three of you or Agent Weiss to be purposely harmed, you are mistaken."

"Ira Weiss?" Gibbs asked. "Was that's who you were talking to in MTAC?"

"Yep. Let me guess, you've worked with him in the past," Deeks was now sure he and Kensi were the last people on earth to actually meet Weiss.

"In Russia, he was partnered with Callen." Gibbs almost broke a smile.

"Did Agent Weiss recruit you?" Vance asked.

"Ira Weiss contacted me last June to replace Agent Callen on the mission to rescue Nate," Deeks decided this was the time to save Kensi's job. "Agent Blye got pulled into the plan because of her relationship with me."

"Oh, and that's just a load of crap," Kensi said dismissively. "Ira approached the two of us while we were having lunch in early June. We were eating and Ira showed up. He knew that Deeks and I were a couple, he knew our backgrounds and that we'd work better as a team than just one of us alone."

"Noted, Agent Blye." Vance turned to Deeks. "Detective, why did you agree to take part in the rescue?"

"Two and a half years ago, my cover was blown on an LAPD operation but I didn't know that. As I was on my knees in an abandoned power plant waiting to be executed, Callen caused a distraction,
Kensi took out one of the gunmen, Sam Hanna provided back up all at the location Nate and Eric Beale found back at the operations center. I'm probably still missing and presumed dead if it wasn't for their efforts. I owe them all." Deeks paused for a second, "But you know that Director. When it comes to these people, to Hetty's team, I'll do what's needed to help them."

Vance nodded, obviously remembering the detective's non-resignation about two years ago. "Major, when did MCIA take over the rescue mission?"

"The minute I tackled Mr. Kort's Iranian asset in the hallway of the Tigress Hotel. After the suicide bomb was accidentally detonated, this became an MCIA operation. I could have been killed if Jafari's plan worked. Agent Weiss was gravely injured, Agent Blye was badly injured, Detective Deeks was also hurt." Morales pointed to the brace on Deeks's wrist. "There did not seem to be much interest from the CIA in rescheduling or even revisiting the idea of a rescue mission. As a Marine, I know it is my duty to see every mission through."

"Why wasn't there another attempted rescue?" Gibbs asked Kort.

"There were plans being made. Agent Weiss's injuries, the injuries to Agent Blye and Mr. Deeks made any long range plans difficult."

"We were doing scut work for the Agency as they waited for our time as contractors to be over," Kensi told them. "We heard from multiple people in the intelligence community that the CIA wouldn't mind Nate being captured by the Iranians so they could do a behind the scenes trade. They were interested in finding out which one of the men in Gitmo was a valued enough agent for the Iranians to swap for Nate."

"You can't prove that," Kort mumbled.

"But you won't deny it," Deeks replied. "Ira felt responsible for Nate being in Iran. Ira was lied to about the Agency's involvement in Callen's escape from prison. He was desperate to get Nate back."

"Why didn't you immediate tell Hetty about Agent Weiss's offer?" Gibbs asked.

"My chain of command would actually take me to LAPD but either way, Nate was sold out by someone inside the government. I, we, trust Hetty implicitly but Hetty would have to report what happened with Nate to others..."

"Such as me," Vance told Deeks.

"Director, I'm sure you would have done what needed to be done to get Nate back. That's what Deeks and I did with the Major's help." Kensi looked straight at Kort, "I can't say the same about everyone else. Getting Nate back was all that mattered to us."

"You should have told NCIS the minute you were approached," Vance pressed.

"At the time, the entire office was under investigation. I had both NCIS and an LAPD Internal Affairs investigation going on. Hetty was back but largely powerless because of the presence of Owen Granger. Granger made it clear to me that the liaison program wasn't a high priority to him. Callen was in jail, Sam on a leave of absence. After Agent Blye, I didn't know who else to talk to."

"And LAPD?" asked Vance.

"While I think my boss would be sympathetic, unless Nate had unpaid parking tickets I can't see their jurisdiction in this," Deeks replied.
"Deeks and I were out there on our own but we had each other. Nate was alone with a terrorist state looking for him. First, last and always, that was our priority," Kensi added.

The room was quiet for a minute before Gibbs spoke, "Agent Blye, how have you and Detective Deeks been spending your time since last September?"

"The CIA decided we needed special skills for the rescue. Deeks's past training was LAPD and not DoD. He was given some general DoD classes along with some additional training in intelligence gathering with computers. He's a whiz assessing situations using human and video gathering intelligence. My training was more language. I now speak Farsi and can get by in Arabic."

Vance asked, "Were any of these skills used in the rescue?"

"No. Well, some of the computer stuff but I probably could have struggled through with what I knew before the training. But no, nothing the CIA provided was needed in the rescue," Deeks answered.

"How long was your training?"

"Almost three months. The CIA was also establishing us as a documentary filmmaker," Kensi pointed to Deeks before pointing to herself, "and spy novelist. Deeks and I have kept journals tracking our training and everything after that. And before you send someone to the house on Long Island Kort, the journals are not there. They're in a safe place."

Morales added, "MCIA believes Agent Blye and Detective Deeks were being set up to become their undercover assignments - Dean and Kelly Kennedy - full-time after Dr. Getz's rescue. Agent Blye has been on their radar for quite some time."

"That's not true. Agent Blye first came to my attention when it was obvious Mr. Deeks would not be able to just replace Callen in the planning stages of Dr. Getz's rescue."

"We met nearly three years ago," Kensi reminded Kort, "during the Amy Taylor-Hannah Lawson case. You were looking for some SAVAK money."

"Because you're all about the money, aren't you Kort?" Deeks asked.

"I have no idea what you're talking about," Kort sniffed.

Deeks turned to Gibbs, "Ask Kort about Chloe Janvier."

"The woman everyone thought killed you two? Kort, what is he talking about?" Gibbs asked.

"I have no idea."

"We've got agents in France, Switzerland and Monaco looking for Ms. Janvier. If you know where she is Kort, I want an answer," Vance demanded.

"Probably in the North Pole next to Santa or somewhere near the Easter Bunny or the Tooth Fairy," Deeks was happy to share.

"Excuse me," Vance was starting to do a slow burn.

"After we were out of California and in a CIA safe-house, we learned that Chloe Janvier was a ruse that could support Deeks and I being murdered, Callen being kidnapped from the hospital in L.A. His whole escape by the way was another botched CIA job. Back to fictional Chloe and her real
Uncle Emile, the CIA took the payoff money to Marcel Janvier. Brother Emile got a few bucks for his retirement but the CIA got the rest."

"This agency has spent millions trying to hunt down the woman who killed Agent Blye and Detective Deeks," Vance was trying to keep his temper in check.

"And you have them back," Kort pointed to them as he spoke, "everybody wins."

"Agent Wells has been running through Europe looking for Chloe Janvier, who I now know doesn't exist. Are you responsible for the Interpol sightings?"

"Not that you can prove." Kort dismissed Vance's question. "Where is Dr. Getz? I need to debrief him."

"Dr. Getz has been taken to Bethesda Naval Hospital for a full medical work-up. He has several NCIS Agents with him as security and is giving a full debriefing when he's up to it to Intelligence Agent Jones," Gibbs was almost daring Kort to try something.

"My people will want a full debrief as well."

"Here's a simple debrief, Mr. Kort. Dr. Getz was in trouble in mid-May. He survived alone in a hostile terrorist state until just after midnight local time this morning when Detective Deeks, Agent Blye, Agent Callen and myself got him out. I'm sure working as a private tutor in a farm community didn't give him the same access to the high power, government officials he had as the darling of the Iranian government's anti-American set," Morales told Kort. "It is a credit to his NCIS training and to the man he is that Dr. Getz survived this at all."

"His friendship with Harun Amir didn't hurt." Kort said dryly.

"You knew he was with Amir?" Kensi was stunned.

"He couldn't have been in better hands."

"You knew where he was?" Gibbs was as stunned as Kensi. "And you left him there?"

"He was safe as long as he was with Amir. We'd have gotten to him once the weather turned. And if he was captured, our intelligence that Amir was someone with the power and respect who could be a valuable asset in the north of Iran would be proven incorrect."

"You would have gotten to him?" Deeks just shook his head. Turning to Kensi, he said, "Ira can save his pitch."

"Absolutely," she agreed.

"Mr. Kort, I'll be in touch with your office. You're done here."

"I expect a detailed after action reports from you two," Kort stood and pointed to Deeks and Kensi. "I also expect a copy of Dr. Getz's full statement to your Intelligence Analyst." Picking up his coat, Kort left.

"Is there any word that comes to mind when Agent Kort is around? Begins with 'p'?" Deeks joked. Morales smiled. Vance and Gibbs, not so much.

Gibbs started the questioning again. "When did Callen join the rescue?"

"He was in Baneh, a city in the north of Iran," Deeks told him.
"I know where Baneh is, Detective," Gibbs told him.

"Smart man. I didn't know it even existed until we got Agent Weiss's intelligence on Nate. Anyway, the Major and I were in town and ran into Callen."

"You just ran into him?"

"Well, we stuffed him in the sleeper of this truck we had but yeah, we just ran into him."

"And you had no idea where he was prior to Baneh."

"Nope. When Kensi was here at that seminar you had for new agents, Callen escaped. Ira Weiss told me the CIA had nothing to do with his escape the night of the escape. The CIA lied to Ira. Ira shared those lies with me."

"You had nothing to do with the escape."

"No. I was investigated forty ways to Sunday on that one, including having LAPD Internal Affairs and the US Marshals parked outside my apartment for weeks. Made seeing Kensi incredibly difficult."

"So you didn't see each other outside of work for a while? I can't see you without her or her without you for very long," Morales said.

"No, saw her all the time. If you have food delivered to the surveillance van, they have to stop watching you for a few minutes to deal with the delivery guy. That gave me a small window to either get out of or get Kensi inside my place. Kensi's place had a back door by the kitchen which the Marshals never covered," Deeks smiled, remarkably pleased with himself. It was the one covert action that entertained him all summer.

"You had a lot going on, didn't you, Detective?" Deeks guessed Vance's question was more of a rhetorical one. "Why didn't you tell Henrietta that you were approached by the CIA? Whether you believe she was neutered by Owen Granger or not, she is a considerably resourceful woman."

"Who I begged to return to the Special Projects," Kensi answered for Deeks. "That office, in a matter of days, went from a group of highly trained undercover operatives capable of doing whatever was needed to solve a case to being investigated by NCIS, FBI, LAPD Internal Affairs for Deeks. There was no way to say a single word in those offices at the time we were approached without someone finding what was going on. I wasn't, Deeks and I weren't, willing to risk anything that would rescue of Nate. We lost our homes, we've no doubt lost friends but I'll trade it all for that hug Nate gave Nell when he got out of the van." Kensi paused for a second. "Every single time."

"One thing I've leaned from my time with NCIS when it comes to a team," Deeks added, "no man's left behind. They rescued me, I'd have done whatever was needed to rescue Nate. We did what was needed to rescue Nate."

"Major, was anyone else involved in this rescue?" Gibbs asked.

"That is classified by MCIA. I'm sure if you contact my office, your request will be given all due consideration," Morales answered cheerfully.

"I'm sure. Detective, Agent Blye, your journals are in a secure location?" Vance asked.

"Yes sir," they answered together.
"What are your plans now," Gibbs asked.

"I guess I have to call my old boss and tell him I'm not nearly as dead as he thinks I am."

"I was thinking more long-term, Detective."

"I'd like get my job back with the LAPD. If that happens and NCIS choses to reopen the Office of Special Projects in Los Angeles, I'd like to resume my position as the Liaison Officer. But whatever I'm doing, I'm doing it with Kensi. Where she goes, I go."

Gibbs turned to Kensi, "Agent Blye?"

"If I'm able to keep my position with NCIS and Special Projects, I'd like to go back to Los Angeles and start the rest of our lives. For years, I've heard that I'm a good agent but lacked a long-term undercover assignment on my resume. Six months undercover, presumed dead while rescuing a high profile CIA asset and fellow NCIS agent fills that career track hole."

"I'd sign 'em up quick, Director," Morales commented, "Ira loves them. They may be angry at Kort, I'm angry at Kort, but Ira can close a deal."

"Noted, Major." Vance said. "Detective, I want you to call your boss at LAPD, a Captain Bates."

"Oh, he got promoted, good for him."

"He's been advised that you are alive."

"How long ago? Long enough to get a good rant going?"

"I don't know, Detective. After that, I'd like you both to write up after action reports. Once they're complete, we'll be putting you two up in a safe house. Tomorrow, after we hear from my counterparts at the CIA, MCIA, Nate and review your statements, we'll have some sort of plan going forward."

"Sir, I've been instructed to return to Quantico today for a full debriefing," Morales told Vance. "MCIA considers this mission a success. Nobody died, nobody was injured, Dr. Getz is home."

"Can't do better than that, Director," Gibbs added.

"No you can't."

"What is going to happen to Callen?" Kensi asked.

"From what Callen has told us, what you've told us Agent Blye, what we know about Janvier, I'm inclined to believe that he was acting on CIA orders. The video of the shooting has disappeared from the television stations and has been ruthlessly scrubbed from sites like YouTube," Vance said.

"Ira Weiss can provide support on a lot of Callen's claims," Deeks offered.

"I have a message from Elaine Stern telling me her uncle would like to talk," Vance told him.

"You know Ira too?"

"No, but Ms. Stern has provided a great deal of support to this office in the past. She also got me tickets to see the Yankees play the Nationals last summer. My son is a big Derek Jeter fan."

"So Ira charms people with food, Elaine with baseball tickets." Deeks nodded his head. "Good
people to know."

"Agent McGee will take you back to MTAC so you can speak with Captain Bates. I want to see you two in my office tomorrow at noon." Vance stood. "Major, I expect to hear from you tomorrow at oh-eleven hundred."


As they got to the door, Gibbs stood and said "Major Morales, Detective Deeks, Agent Blye?" The three turned around to look at Gibbs. "There probably was a better way to do this but good work."

Deeks smiled, as did Kensi and Morales as the three walked from the office.

x-x-x

To: redacted
From: Leon Vance, Director, NCIS
Re: Office of Special Projects
April 1, 2013

Effective today, NCIS's Office of Special Projects is reopening in Los Angeles at location redacted.

Name redacted has agreed to return from her leave of absence to resume all duties as Operations Manager. As per name redacted's request, her team will be rebuilt as she sees fit. Agents C, H and B have all agreed to return to the Los Angeles OSP in their former positions. Lieutenant name redacted has also agreed to resume his duties as NCIS's Liaison Officer with for the Los Angeles Police Department.

Agents C, H, B and Lt. D are available for undercover assignments after April 15th. Their reporting in the chain of command remains unchanged. Lt. D will still report to the Los Angeles Police Department. His promotion makes it unlikely he would be recalled for any long-term assignments with the Los Angeles Police Department.

Intelligence Officer name redacted will move from the Navy Yard to OSP in Los Angeles. She will retain all duties performed while working at the Navy Yard. Technical Analyst name redacted will also move from the Navy Yard to OSP. He will no longer retain his cyber-crime duties as technical support for OSP's ongoing operations will take priority.

Finally, on June 3rd, Dr. name redacted will return to OSP in a limited role. There are continued concerns for his safety due to his time in location redacted. In conjunction with the U.S. Marshals Offices, Dr. name redacted will do threat assessments from his secure location. As needed and with the assistance of the Marshals Service, Dr. name redacted will attend strategy meetings, interrogations and work with the active agents, providing psychological insight.

Dr. name redacted's return to our agency is a tribute to the hard work and selfless efforts of members of the OSP team. Despite their time away from the physical office in Los Angeles, members of OSP, especially Agent B and Lt. D, worked tirelessly to bring Dr. name redacted home. Their efforts have not gone unnoticed and are a reflection of the excellence of name redacted's team.

With the Office of Special Projects back on-line and name redacted's team united, I anticipate a return to the past successes this office provided our agency and the country.

LV
The Residences  
Pacific Coast Highway, TH-2  
April 6, 2013, 7AM  

Marty Deeks looked out from the balcony just off his bedroom. The Atlantic never quite had the pull the Pacific has for him. Morales tried to explain that the winter Atlantic was cold and grey but the water was great in the warmer months. Deeks explained that Los Angeles was months and months of warmer months and great water every day.

"Has the ocean stopped mocking you?" a sleepy Kensi asked as she joined him on the balcony.

"The Pacific Ocean never mocked me," he told her as she wrapped herself around him, putting her arms around his waist and resting her head on his shoulder.

"The furniture guys should be here before ten."

"Good, beach chairs, a milk crate, an old lamp and an air mattress were fine in law school, sort of sad as a married man and his beautiful wife just weeks away from their first anniversary."

She kiss him just below his earlobe, "The air mattress had its moments."

"It did," Deeks smiled, running his hand up and down her arm, "but it also scared poor Monty to death." He looked down as his faithful dog was reclining on balcony's lounge chair. "Do you miss Dean and Kelly?"

"No. Deeks and Kensi work fine for me."

"Sweet house, cool cars, international man and woman of mystery."

"Our new home is pretty sweet, I love my new GL SUV and we're still a spy boy and spy girl, just for an agency that cares about us."

"Cop boy and spy girl."

"Yes, Lieutenant but as the co-head of the LAPD Intelligence Division you're still sort of spy boy." Kensi moved to face Deeks. "I'm hungry."

"You're always hungry, Kens."

"Make me some breakfast and I'll wait out the furniture guys while you surf."

"Deal." Marty Deeks kissed his wife good morning the walked to the kitchen. Monty jumped from the lounge chair on the balcony to join them.

-30-

This chapter was about 80% done when Sandy hit. If you hadn't figured out why I moved them to New York, I was following the old line to write what you know. I've been to LA but I live in New York, downtown to be not so exact. Five days without water or power (and I was lucky) and eleven days without heat or hot water had me moving anywhere with a warm bed and a working shower. Thrilled to be home, so sad for what was lost.

Thank you all for following along. I am so grateful for the follows and feedback. You were all so generous with your kind words. Someone even made a graphic. That's just amazing to me. Thank
you so much.

Hope to be back sometime soon. These folks are just too fun not to play with them again.

Thanks again!
Tess
November 13, 2012

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!