

Behind the Second Gate

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Jennie stirs awake. Wedged between a brick wall and a dumpster, face down in the dark alley, she has been brutally attacked. Trying to escape, she finds herself in the pathway of a truck, culminating a catastrophic night with permanent scars etched onto her skin and into her soul.

Twenty-eight years later, the events of that night hold her life in paralysis. Every morning, a mirror reflects a collection of scarred wounds on her chest, face, and side.

Work is her only oasis from the tormenting memories. There, in her office, her workaholic tendencies shield her from the outside world. Claire, her dedicated assistant, has learned to protect this woman from all the paparazzi—and from life. A brass nameplate defines the world's view of her: Jennie Faris, Senior Vice-President, Chalcedon Media Conglomerate (CMC). But that same nameplate is just a façade, that while defining her power to the world, cloaks an exceedingly fragile persona.

On a rare day of vacation, on a distant beach behind the second gate of Kiawah Island, she happens upon a man and his dog peacefully playing. Jack Covington, the lone man, is recovering from the death of his wife on this barrier island. His journey is now defined by inconsolable sadness—bordering on depression.

One afternoon after work, while out with his dog, Jack and Jennie meet. The random rendezvous finds both protagonists ripe for stumbling into love, yet naïve

that their lives could be altered by a simple conversation. Their innocent words lead to a casual evening together, sparking an unlikely connection.

Jennie warily allows her heart to inch into this growing relationship. But caution controls her desires. For pursuing this man will inevitably bring to light her secrets—the ones that led to all her embedded scars. And divulging those secrets would require vulnerability—a concept foreign to her.

A leisurely conversation over Christmas unexpectedly exposes her secrets—revealing her hidden history to the man she loves. Surprisingly to her, the difficult but real confession leads Jack to embrace her all the more.

On the heels of her confession, an unforeseen twist is thrust into her life. The President, her immediate boss, becomes incapacitated, landing her in the presidential seat—a title that exacts unrelenting hours. After just weeks in her new position, she questions if she can actually perform this pressure-packed job at its needed level, while at the same time vigorously pursuing Jack—the man who now owns her fragile heart.

And Jennie grasps that her emotion has locked onto something uniquely sweet in Jack; a relationship that she has always coveted. She wants to give her all to this man, to Jack, a temptation dancing across her every daydream and thought. But can she indulge in this enticing relationship, accomplish every work responsibility, and offer both parties their requisite time? That is the battle raging in her soul.

Jack wonders where their future will take them when he unfortunately finds himself relegated to the role of patient pawn, as Jennie's work dictates every move. Ultimately, their romance becomes collateral damage, when work demands drive

Jennie towards CMC and away from her relationship—a truth that inevitably convinces Jack he cannot possess what he desires.

Jennie finds herself alone again, struggling under a weight of regret. She wishes for a way out, but cannot achieve it without sacrifice. What is she willing to sacrifice? A perplexing question with complicated answers—ones that are hard to accept.

But when she has all but given up on herself and Jack ever reconnecting, she is challenged to rethink it all by two friends, encouraging her to change the course of her life and pursue her soul's desires.

She travels back to Kiawah, and finds a way to give her heart to this man.