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By Danielle Steel

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Fleeing to New York, she fights to build a new life for herself and her son, as they discover new worlds and a new life together.

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## Editorial Review

From the Inside Flap

In Rome, Isabella and her husband, Amadeo, have created an idyllic marriage and the House of San Gregorio, the most exciting name in European high fashion. But in an act of terrorism, Amadeo is kidnapped and taken from Isabella forever.

Fleeing to New York, she fights to build a new life for herself and her son, as they discover new worlds and a new life together.

About the Author

**Danielle Steel** has been hailed as one of the world's most popular authors, with over 650 million copies of her novels sold. Her many international bestsellers include *Country*, *Prodigal Son*, *Pegasus*, *A Perfect Life*, *Power Play*, *Winners*, *First Sight*, *Until the End of Time*, *The Sins of the Mother*, and other highly acclaimed novels. She is also the author of *His Bright Light*, the story of her son Nick Traina's life and death; *A Gift of Hope*, a memoir of her work with the homeless; *Pure Joy*, about the dogs she and her family have loved; and the children's book *Pretty Minnie in Paris*.

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### Chapter One

In every city there is a time of year that approaches perfection. After the summer heat, before the winter bleakness, before snow and rain are even dreamed of. A time that stands out crystal clear, as the air begins to cool; a time when the skies are still bright blue, when it feels good to wear wool again, and one walks faster than one has in months. A time to come alive again, to plan, to act, to be, as September marches into October. It is a time when women look better, men feel better, even the children look crisp again as they return to school in Paris or New York or San Francisco. And maybe even more so in Rome. Everyone is home again after the lazy months of summer spent clattering along in ancient taxis from the piazza to the Marina Piccola in Capri, or they are fresh from the baths in Ischia, the sun-swept days at San Remo, or even simply the public beach in Ostia. But in late September it is over, and autumn has arrived. A businesslike month, a beautiful month, when it feels good just to be alive.

Isabella di San Gregorio sat sedately in the backseat of the limousine. She was smiling to herself, her dark eyes dancing, her shining black hair held away from her face by two heavy tortoise shell combs as she watched passersby walking quickly through the streets. Traffic was as Roman traffic always is: terrifying. She was used to it, she had lived there all her life, except for her occasional visits to her mother's family in Paris and the one year she had spent in the States at twenty-one. The following year she had married Amadeo and become a legend of sorts, the reigning queen of Roman couture. She was by birth a princess in that realm, and by marriage something more, but her legend had been won by her talent, not only by acquiring Amadeo's name. Amadeo di San Gregorio had been the heir to the House of San Gregorio, the tabernacle of Roman couture, the pinnacle of prestige and exquisite taste in the eternal international competition between women of enormous means and aspirations. San Gregorio--sacred words to sacred women, and Isabella and Amadeo the most sacred words of all. He in all his golden, green-eyed Florentine magnificence, inheriting the house at thirty-one; she the granddaughter of Jacques Louis-Parel, the king of Paris couture since 1910.

Isabella's father had been Italian but had always taken pleasure in telling her he was quite sure that her blood was entirely French. She had French feelings and French ideas, French style, and her grandfather's unerring

taste. At seventeen she had known more about high fashion than most men in the business at forty-five. It was in her veins, her heart, her spirit. She had an uncanny gift for design, a brilliance with color, and a knowledge of what worked and what didn't that came from studying her grandfather's collections year after year. When at last in his eighties he had sold Parel to an American corporation, Isabella had sworn that she would never forgive him.

She had, of course. Still if he had only waited, if he had known, if...but then she would have had a life in Paris and never met Amadeo as she had when she set up her own tiny design studio in Rome at twenty-two. It had taken six months for their paths to cross, six weeks for their hearts to determine what the future would be, and only three months after that before Isabella became Amadeo's wife and the brightest light in the heavens of the House of San Gregorio. Within a year she became his chief designer, a seat for which any designer would have died.

It was easy to envy Isabella. She had it all: elegance, beauty, a crown of success that she wore with the casual ease of a Borsalino hat, and the kind of style that would still make an entire room stop to stare at her in her ninetieth year. Isabella di San Gregorio was every inch a queen, and yet there was more. The quick laughter; the sudden flash of diamonds set in the rich onyx eyes; her way of understanding what was behind what people said, who they were, why they were, what they were and weren't and dreamed of being. Isabella was a magical woman in a marvelous world.

The limousine slowed in a last traffic snarl at the edge of the Piazza Navona, and Isabella sat back dreamily and closed her eyes. The blast of horns and invective was dimmed by the tightly sealed windows of the car, and her ears were too long accustomed to the sounds of Rome to be disturbed by the noise. She enjoyed it, she thrived on it. It was a part of the very fiber of her being, just as the mad pace of her business was part of her. It would be impossible to live without either one. Which was why she would never leave her business life entirely, despite her semiretirement of the year before. When Alessandro had been born five years before, the business had been everything to her, the spring line, the threat of espionage from a rival house, the importance of developing a boutique line of ready-to-wear to export to the States, the wisdom of adding men's wear and eventually cosmetics and perfume and soap. All of it mattered to her intensely. She couldn't give it up, not even for Amadeo's child. This was her lifeblood, her dream. But as the years had gone by, she had felt an ever greater gnawing at her soul, a yearning, a loneliness when she returned home at eight thirty and the child was already asleep, tucked into bed by other hands than hers.

"It bothers you, doesn't it?" Amadeo had watched her as she sat pensively in the long gray satin chair set just so in the corner of the sitting room.

"What?" She had seemed distracted as she answered, tired, disturbed.

"Isabellezza--" Isa-beauty. It always made her smile when he called her that. He had called her that from the first. "Talk to me."

She had smiled at him sheepishly and let out a long sigh. "I am."

"I was asking you if it bothers you very much not being here with the child."

"Sometimes. I don't know. It's hard to explain. We have--we have lovely times together. On Sundays, when I have time." A tiny tear had crept out of one of the brilliantly dark eyes, and Amadeo held out his arms to her. She had gone to them willingly and smiled through her tears. "I'm crazy. I have everything. I...why doesn't the damn nurse keep him up 'til we come home?"

"*Alle dieci?*" At ten o'clock?

"It isn't, it's only...." She had looked at her watch in irritation and then realized that he was right. They had left the office at eight, stopped to see their lawyer at his home for an hour, stopped for yet another "minute" to kiss their favorite American client in her suite at the Hassler, and...ten o'clock. "Damn. All right, so it's late. But usually we're home at eight, and he's never awake." She had glared at Amadeo, and he had laughed gently as he held her in his arms.

"What do you want?" One of those children that movie stars take to cocktail parties when they're nine? Why don't you take off more time?"

"I can't."

"You don't want to."

"Yes I do...no, I don't." They had both laughed. It was true. She did and she didn't. She wanted to be with Alessandro, before she missed it all, before he was suddenly nineteen and she had missed her chance. She had seen it happen to too many women with careers--they mean to, they're going to, they want to, and they never do. They wake up one morning and their children are gone. The trips to the zoo that never happened, the movies, the museums, the moments they meant to share, but the phones were ringing, the clients waiting. The great events. She didn't want that to happen to her. It hadn't mattered so much when he was a baby. But now it was different. He was four and he knew when he didn't see her for more than two hours in three days, he knew when she was never there to pick him up at school, or when she and Amadeo spent six insane weeks planning the next collection or the line for the States.

"You look miserable, my love. You want me to fire you?" To Amadeo's astonishment as well as her own she had nodded. "Are you serious?" Shock registered in his eyes.

"Partly. There must be a way for me to work part of the time and be here a little bit more too." She had looked around the splendor of their villa, thinking of the child she hadn't seen all day.

"Let's think about it, Bellezza. We'll work something out."

And they had. It was perfect. For the past eight months she had been chief design consultant to the House of San Gregorio. She made all the same decisions she had always made, she had her hand in every pie. The unmistakable hand of Isabella was still recognizable in every design San Gregorio sold. But she had removed herself from the mechanics of the business, from the nitty-gritty of the everyday. It meant overburdening still further their beloved director, Bernardo Franco, and it meant hiring another designer to carry out the interminable steps between Isabella's concepts and the final product. But it was working perfectly. Now Isabella came and went. She sat in on major meetings. She pored over everything with Amadeo during one marathon day each week. She stopped in unexpectedly whenever she had an appointment nearby, but for the first time she felt she was truly Alessandro's mother now too. They had lunch in the garden. She saw him in his first school play. She took him to the park and taught him nursery rhymes in English and funny little songs in French. She laughed with him, ran with him, and pushed him on the swing. She had the best of all possible worlds. A business, a husband, and a child. And she had never been happier in her life. It showed in the light that danced in her eyes, in the way she moved and laughed and looked when Amadeo came home. It showed in the things she said to her friends as she regaled them with tales of Alessandro's latest accomplishments: "And my God, how that child can draw!" Everyone was amused. Most of all Amadeo, who wanted her to be happy. After ten years of marriage he still adored her. In fact, more than he ever had.

And the business was thriving, despite the slight change of regime. Isabella could never absent herself totally. It simply wasn't her style. Her presence was felt everywhere. The sound of her echoed like a perfectly formed crystal bell.

The limousine stopped at the curb as Isabella caught a last glimpse of people on the street. She liked what women were wearing this year. Sexy, more feminine. Reminiscent of her grandfather's collections in years before. It was a look that pleased her very much. She herself stepped from the car in an ivory wool dress, perfectly draped into a river of tiny, impeccably executed pleats. Her three long strands of enormous pearls hung from her neck at precisely the right depth of the softly draped neckline, and over her arm was a short chocolate mink jacket, a fur that had been designed just for her in Paris by the furrier once employed by Parel. But she was in too much of a hurry to slip it on. She wanted to discuss some last-minute details of the American line with Amadeo, before meeting a friend for lunch. She glanced at the faceless gold watch on her wrist as a sapphire and a diamond floated mysteriously on its face, indicating only to the initiated the exact time. It was ten twenty-two.

"Thank you, Enzo. I'll be out five minutes before noon." Holding the door with one hand, he touched his cap with the other and smiled. She was easy to work for these days, and he enjoyed the frequent trips in the car with the little boy. It reminded him of his own grandchildren, seven of whom lived in Bologna, the other five in Venice. He visited them sometimes. But Rome was his home. Just as it was Isabella's, despite her French mother and her year in the States. Rome was a part of her, she was born there, she had to live there, she would die there. He knew what every Italian knew, that a Roman was meant to live nowhere else.

As she walked decisively across the sidewalk toward the heavy black door in the ancient facade, she glanced up the street as she always did. It was a sure way to know if Amadeo was in. All she had to do was look for the long silver Ferrari, parked at the curb. The silver torpedo, she called it. And no hands touched that car, except his. Everyone teased him about it, especially Isabella. He was like a small child with a toy. He didn't want to share it. He drove it, he parked it, pampered it, and played with it. All by himself. Not even the doorman at San Gregorio, who had worked there for forty-two years, had ever touched that car. Isabella was smiling to herself as she approached the impressive black door. At times he was like a little boy; it only made her love him more.

"*Buon giorno, Signora Isabella.*" Only Ciano, the grandfatherly doorman in black-and gray livery, called her that.

"*Ciao, Ciano, come sta?*" Isabella smiled widely at him, displaying teeth as beautiful as her much celebrated pearls. "*Va b?ne?*" It goes well?

"*Benissimo.*" The rich baritone rolled musically at her as he swept the heavy door open with a bow.

The door shut resoundingly behind her as she stood in the entrance hall for a moment, looking around. As much as the villa on the Via Appia Antica, this was her home. The perfect pink marble floor, the gray velvets and rose silks, the crystal chandelier that she had brought from Parel in Paris after long negotiation with its American owner. Her grandfather had had it made in Vienna, and it was almost beyond price. A sweeping marble staircase rose to the main salon above. On the third and fourth floors were offices done in the same grays and pinks, the colors of rose petals and ashes. It was a combination that pleased the eye as much as the carefully selected paintings, the antique mirrors, the elegant light fixtures, the little Louis XVI love seats tucked into alcoves here and there where clients could rest and chat. Maids in gray uniforms scurried everywhere, their starched white aprons making crisp little noises as they brought tea and sandwiches to the private rooms upstairs where clients stood through arduous fittings, wondering how the models survived

entire shows. Isabella stood for a moment, as she often did, surveying her domain.

She slipped quietly into the private elevator, pressing the button for the fourth floor, as she began to go over the morning's work in her head. There were just a few things to take care of; she had settled most of the current business yesterday, to her satisfaction. There had been design details to work out with Gabriela, the chief designer, and administrative problems to discuss with Bernardo and Amadeo. Today's work wouldn't take her long at all. The door slid silently open and revealed the long gray carpeted hall. Everything about the House of San Gregorio was downplayed. Unlike Isabella, who was anything but. She was obvious and splendid and eminently visible. She was a woman one saw and wanted to see, a woman one wanted to be seen by. But the House of San Gregorio was a showcase for beauty. It was important that what they had to show there was not overwhelmed by the house itself.

## **Users Review**

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What do you consider book? It is just for students since they're still students or the idea for all people in the world, what the best subject for that? Only you can be answered for that question above. Every person has distinct personality and hobby per other. Don't to be forced someone or something that they don't need do that. You must know how great in addition to important the book To Love Again. All type of book could you see on many resources. You can look for the internet solutions or other social media.

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