

Chapter Twelve

As the Fourth of July approached, I became very agitated. I couldn't sleep. I couldn't eat. I couldn't concentrate on my work for my clients, let alone the new book I was writing. I was cranky and couldn't have a normal conversation with June. Fortunately, she was understanding and stayed out of my way for the most part. We didn't discuss the situation, but we both knew what was in each other's heart.

"I'm going to Hesterville on the Fourth of July," I said to her one day.

"Adrian! You're not serious!"

"I am, June."

"But why?"

"To see my clients. There's paperwork to sign and a fee to collect."

"You're going for the money? Tell them to come to Manhattan on a business day!"

"Come on, June. You know why I'm going."

She didn't reply. Tears formed in her eyes.

"I have to keep an eye on David."

"Why, Adrian? What can you do?"

"I'll eat my heart out if I stay here, in the dark about what's happening there. Maybe I'll give him a hand."

"You're going to put *tefillin* on people?"

"I'm not going for that. I just want to be near David. He's excited that, as he believes, he's doing something meaningful. I want to share the moment with him. And I want to keep him safe."

"He'll be just as safe without you there. He'll be far from the demonstration. If you think it's not safe, why are you risking your own life? What about me? I don't want to be a widow again."

“You won’t be a widow. You said yourself that it was safe.”

“But you think it’s not safe. Don’t you have a responsibility to me? I don’t want to lose you. You’re my whole life!”

She was right. I was putting her at risk.

I sighed. “June, my dear wonderful beloved wife, I beg your permission to go. I can’t begin to tell you how important this is to me.”

“I know how important it is to you,” she said quietly.

She slumped in her chair and buried her face in her hands. She sat that way for a long time, not moving, not making a sound. Finally, she raised her head. I saw resolution in her eyes. She would accept no argument. But I was not ready for what she said.

“I’m going with you, Adrian.”

I was taken aback. “I can’t let you do this. I know you love David, but you have no need to go. Why put yourself at risk?”

“Don’t waste your time and effort, Adrian. I’m going to stand beside you on the deck of the *Titanic*, and if the ship goes down, we go down together.”