

*I'll Be  
Seeing You*

A NOVEL

ROBIN LEE HATCHER



THOMAS NELSON  
*Since 1798*

*I'll Be Seeing You*

Copyright © 2022 RobinSong, Inc.

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, scanning, or other—except for brief quotations in critical reviews or articles, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Published in Nashville, Tennessee, by Thomas Nelson. Thomas Nelson is a registered trademark of HarperCollins Christian Publishing, Inc.

Thomas Nelson titles may be purchased in bulk for educational, business, fundraising, or sales promotional use. For information, please e-mail [SpecialMarkets@ThomasNelson.com](mailto:SpecialMarkets@ThomasNelson.com).

Scripture quotations in historical scenes are from the American Standard Version. Public domain.

Scripture quotations in modern scenes are from the New American Standard Bible® (NASB). Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. ([www.Lockman.org](http://www.Lockman.org))

The quote in chapter 70 is from the movie *Chariots of Fire* (1981).

Publisher's Note: This novel is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are either products of the author's imagination or used fictitiously. All characters are fictional, and any similarity to people living or dead is purely coincidental.

#### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Hatcher, Robin Lee, author.

Title: *I'll be seeing you* : a novel / Robin Lee Hatcher.

Description: Nashville, Tennessee : Thomas Nelson, [2022] | Summary: "In a captivating split-time romance from beloved author Robin Lee Hatcher, will one family's biggest secret haunt the generations to come or will God's grace be free to shine?"-- Provided by publisher.

Identifiers: LCCN 2021056846 (print) | LCCN 2021056847 (ebook) | ISBN 9780785241416 (paperback) | ISBN 9780785241423 (epub) | ISBN 9780785241430

Subjects: LCGFT: Novels.

Classification: LCC PS3558.A73574 I45 2022 (print) | LCC PS3558.A73574 (ebook) | DDC 813/.54--dc23/eng/20211119

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2021056846>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2021056847>

*Printed in the United States of America*

22 23 24 25 26 LSC 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

*To the One who brings beauty from ashes.*



THOMAS NELSON  
*Since 1798*



# Chapter 1

PRESENT DAY—JANUARY

Brianna Hastings slipped into the rear of the classroom, choosing the corner with the poorest lighting. Perhaps she wouldn't be noticed by the professor back here. She'd registered for this class because, first, it would fulfill one of her requirements. Second, her mom had badgered her into it.

*"History is interesting. Give it a chance. You'll love it."*

Right. Fascinating. Sure.

She sank onto the chair and pulled her laptop from her bag, setting it on the table in front of her. After connecting to the college Wi-Fi, she clicked to open her messaging app. Quickly, she typed a text.

Meet for lunch at Dairy Queen?

She watched the moving bubbles indicate her best friend, Hannah Smith, was reading the message. Seconds later, the reply came.

👍 12:30

Other students continued to file into the classroom. Lots of them. Apparently this was a popular course. Maybe it was an easy A. She shook her head. Probably not. But an easy C would make her happy.

“Hey, Brianna.” Adam Wentworth, one of her best friends since childhood, slid onto the chair to her right. “How’s it going?”

“Okay.”

Some girls in the row ahead of them turned, smiled, and greeted Adam, then Brianna, before facing forward again.

Adam leaned toward Brianna. “I’ve heard great things about Professor Meyer. This should be a good semester.”

Adam was one of those guys everybody liked. He was average looking but had a smile that made friends in an instant. He was smart too. But what made him stand out was how nice he was. He was the sort of guy who stood up for the weird kid getting bullied in school. He was the guy who would set aside something he wanted to do in order to help someone in need. She’d seen all of that for herself ever since they’d become friends in elementary school.

She slid down in her chair. “I’ve never cared much for history.”

“Really? But it’s fascinating to learn how people used to live, used to think. Dad likes to say that the more things change, the more they stay the same. That’s what I’ve seen when I study history. We’ve got things to learn from both the bad and the good of other times, other cultures.”

He might have gone on, but he fell quiet, along with the rest of the room, when a man with glasses and salt-and-pepper hair stepped to the front. Professor Joseph Meyer, Brianna presumed. As soon as he began to welcome the students to his class, she zoned out. All of her professors had basically said the same thing for her past three semesters. She didn’t expect Professor Meyer to break the pattern.

She opened her email app. Her friends rarely communicated that way, but the college did, so she’d learned to check at least once a day during the term. Nothing of importance showed up in her in-box. She

## *I'll Be Seeing You*

closed the app and was about to open her browser when the professor's words caught her attention.

"This assignment will count for 50 percent of your grade and will have several parts."

Brianna glanced at Adam. "What assignment?"

He gave her one of those looks that said, *You should have paid attention*, before turning his eyes toward the front again.

"You'll find more information about it on page five of your syllabus, and more detailed instructions will be included in the weekly modules you'll find online."

Something told her she could say bye-bye to an easy A, B, or C.



Later that afternoon, Brianna sat at the kitchen counter, slicing carrots, while her mom peeled potatoes opposite her.

"At least you don't have to wonder who you'll interview," her mom said. "The oldest member of our family is GeeGee. Interviewing her will be a delight."

"A *delight*?" Brianna loved her great-grandmother, but spending hours listening to a ninety-eight-year-old woman talk about the past didn't sound like much fun to her.

If only she could have gone away to a university in another city like several of her friends. They got to do what they wanted, go where they wanted, study when they wanted. If only she wasn't stuck living at home with her parents, Mrs. Thrifty and Mr. Practicality.

Her mom took the prepared potatoes and placed them into the pot on the stove. "Would you like me to call Grandma? Set up a time for you to meet? This doesn't sound like a project you can put off. An early start will serve you well."

"Fine."

The look her mom sent her wasn't all that dissimilar to the one

Adam had given her that morning, and it made her want to grind her teeth. Who were they to judge her? She had a right to her opinions, to her likes and dislikes.

*It's not fair. None of it.*

It would serve her parents right if she failed everything. All that tuition, all those fees and textbooks, wasted. She could bail on her classes and just hang with friends until another semester was over. Only, all of her friends were in college or had jobs. Nobody would be free to hang with her. And she didn't *really* want to flunk her classes. Nor did she want to disappoint her parents, especially not her dad.

Life wasn't fair. That's what Dad would tell her if he knew her thoughts. Hadn't he said it a million times to her already? And that wasn't all he liked to say. *"You have it easy, Brianna. You don't know what hard is. Your parents aren't rich, but you've never spent a winter's night without heat. You've never known real hunger. You've never had to do without any real need and not very many wants either. I love you to death, Brianna, but I'm afraid you and your whole generation have been spoiled."*

"If you keep frowning like that," her mom said, intruding on her thoughts, "you're going to get a horrid crease in the middle of your forehead."

She sighed. "I can't do anything right."

"Oh, sweetheart. What a thing to say."

Brianna got up from the kitchen stool. "I'll call GeeGee. I might as well get started. Like you said."

Her mom smiled as she returned to chopping more vegetables for the stew.

## Chapter 2

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1941

“Come on, Daisy. I swear, you’re slow as molasses.”

Daisy Abbott turned her attention from the downtown department-store window to her older sister, who’d stopped near the entrance.

Lillian gave her an impatient look. “Are you coming or not?”

“I’m coming.”

Lillian pushed open the door and stepped inside. Daisy followed right behind her. She was thankful for the warmth awaiting them after the bitter cold of outdoors and paused long enough to enjoy it.

The store was busy on this first Saturday in December. Other Christmas shoppers moved about the aisles, and the air was richly scented with perfume from a display to their right.

Daisy sneezed into her gloved hand. “Let’s get away from here.” She sneezed again.

Her sister released a sound of exasperation. Lillian loved perfume, but she had to know Daisy wouldn’t stop sneezing until they were well away from the fragrance counter. With a slight toss of her head, she hurried down an aisle.

“Why are we here?” Daisy asked as she trailed behind. “We bought everything on your list already.”

“Not everything. I still have to get Brandon’s gift.”

As usual, Daisy’s heart skipped a beat at the sound of Brandon’s name. He was coming home on leave for Christmas, but of course he wasn’t coming home to see her. Brandon Gallagher was Lillian’s boyfriend. Still, Daisy would get to see him when he came to their house.

Lillian stopped at the display of men’s watches. “Father prefers a gold watch, but I think silver looks better on Brandon.” She looked down through the glass. “Don’t you?”

*Perhaps it’s his blue-gray eyes. I love his eyes.*

“Daisy, are you listening to me?”

“Yes, I’m listening.”

“I asked if you think a silver watch is better than gold for Brandon.”

“Yes. You should get the silver.”

Daisy knew it didn’t matter how she answered. Lillian didn’t want her opinion. She wanted an audience. All her life, Lillian had enjoyed being the center of attention. She was the beautiful Abbott sister. She was the sister who could walk down the street and stop a man in his tracks.

The same way she’d stopped Brandon in his tracks when she was sixteen.

Jealousy coiled in Daisy’s stomach. Speaking softly, she said, “You think he’s going to propose when he’s home for Christmas. Don’t you?”

“Of course he’s going to propose. Why wouldn’t he?” Lillian met her gaze and smiled. “We’re in love. He’s got his college degree, and soon he’ll finish his aviation training. Marriage is the natural next step for us.”

“He hasn’t seen you in months. Maybe he found a new girl in Louisiana.”

For a moment, Lillian’s smile faltered. Daisy didn’t feel like smiling either. It was bad enough that Brandon loved her sister and barely

## *I'll Be Seeing You*

knew Daisy was alive. It would be even worse if he fell for someone so far from home. What if she never saw him again?

Lillian tilted her chin. "I know Brandan. He would never betray me. Never. He's devoted to me. By summer, he'll be a pilot in the US Army Air Corps. A second lieutenant. That's what he's worked toward all these years, and I've waited as he asked me to. Now the waiting is almost over. Wherever he's posted next year, he'll want me with him."

Daisy wondered if her sister was as confident as she sounded.

A salesclerk stepped to the opposite side of the display case. "May I help you, miss?"

Lillian turned her gaze on the man. "Yes, thank you. I would like to see that watch." She looked down and pointed at the item beneath the glass.

"Of course."

Daisy leaned close and whispered, "Lillian, how can you afford that?"

"I've saved for it."

"Maybe Brandan doesn't need a new watch. If his watch still works, he won't want to replace it."

"What do you know about what Brandan wants?"

The words stung. Daisy knew a lot about Brandan. Much more than Lillian would ever guess. She knew he liked the attention that other girls gave him. She knew that he was ambitious and meant to follow his plans to achieve success with continued resolve. She knew he didn't mind going without something now if it meant having more later. She knew he was smart, sometimes caring, and sometimes careless. And she knew he wouldn't want a new watch if his old one worked.

Lillian looked at the salesclerk and all but batted her eyelashes at him. "My fiancé will want this watch, won't he?"

"Yes, miss. It's the best model we offer." He draped the band over his fingers and began to detail the watch's features.



After the dishes were washed and dried that night, Daisy took Jupiter, the family dog, for a walk. It was dark and cold outside, but she didn't care. She needed some time to herself.

Lillian had gone on and on about Brandan during dinner. He was scheduled to return to Boise in a week, and Lillian had made plans for nearly every minute of his leave. Daisy hoped her sister remembered that Brandan had a mom, a dad, and a couple of brothers who wanted to see him too.

*And me. I want to see him.*

She wiped away a tear with the back of her knitted glove.

Like it was yesterday, Daisy remembered the first time she'd seen Brandan Gallagher. She'd been not quite fifteen, a sophomore in high school, and hideous looking, her mousy brown hair too curly and her nose too long. Brandan was eighteen, a freshman at Boise Junior College, and as tall and handsome as a Greek god. He hadn't noticed her at the time. Why would he? She'd been just another kid in the crowd at a football game.

"Years later, and he still doesn't notice me," she said to Jupiter.

Somehow, before Daisy had had a chance to change from a girl into a woman and learn to tame her hair and apply makeup, her own sister had set her cap for Brandan, and he'd fallen hard for her. They'd been a couple ever since. Everyone—especially Lillian—believed they would get married soon.

Even Daisy believed it. "If only I didn't."

"Daisy? Is that you?" Todd Kinnear, the Abbotts' next-door neighbor, appeared in the light from his front porch.

She stopped and answered in a loud voice. "Yes. It's me."

Daisy didn't remember a time when the Kinnears hadn't lived next door. The two families had been close while Todd's parents were still living, everyone going back and forth between yards. Todd had been

## *I'll Be Seeing You*

more like a big brother than a neighbor. More than once she'd gone to him with a problem she hadn't felt ready to share with Lillian or their mom. Six years her senior, Todd had seemed wise and steady. She still thought of him that way, although he didn't joke with her the way he had when she was younger. He was much more serious now, perhaps because he'd been managing Kinnear Canning ever since his father's death. At sixteen, he'd started helping his mom run the business, then had become the owner after she passed away when he was twenty-one.

"Cold night for a walk," he said.

"Yes." She pulled up the collar of her coat. "Jupiter needed some exercise."

"How's your family?"

"Everyone's well."

"Ready for Christmas?"

She thought of Brandan coming home on leave. Home to Lillian. "Yes, we're ready."

"Good. That's good." Todd cleared his throat. "Well, I won't keep you out here freezing. Good night."

"Good night, Todd."

He turned and went inside, and she and Jupiter continued on their way.

Daisy entered the back door of the house a few minutes later. The dog ran on ahead of her while she removed her gloves and stuck them into her pockets, then took off her coat and hat and hung them on the coatrack in the corner. By the time she reached the living room, Jupiter was lying on the rug in front of the fireplace. Her father sat near a lamp, reading a newspaper while smoking his pipe, and her mother was on the sofa, knitting a scarf.

"Did you have a nice walk?" Her mother's needles paused midair as she waited for an answer.

"Jupiter liked it." Daisy sank onto the sofa beside her. "Where's Lillian?"

“In her room. She said she had gifts to wrap and some cards to write. I’ve never seen her this excited for Christmas. Not even as a child.” She resumed knitting. “I suppose it all has to do with Brandon, not Christmas itself. She is so head over heels for him. I hope she doesn’t get her heart broken.”

“He’s a sensible young man.” Her father turned a page in his newspaper. “Brandon knows it’s important to stay focused on his studies until he graduates. Priorities. A man with his priorities straight will do well. He’ll make a fine officer, and he’ll make Lillian a good husband when the time is right.”

Poor Brandon. It must be hard to stay focused with Lillian doing her darnedest to distract him.

A log tumbled in the fireplace, sending up red and orange sparks. Jupiter groaned as he shifted position on the rug. Her mother’s knitting needles clicked at a steady pace.

It was a winter evening like so many other winter evenings gone before, and Daisy suddenly felt stir-crazy. Would her life go on like this forever? The family finances didn’t allow for college. Not that it mattered. Most girls got married and stayed at home, whether or not they’d continued their education. After graduating from high school the previous spring, Daisy had found a job in a drugstore three blocks from the house. She worked there five days a week from nine to four. The money wasn’t great, but she couldn’t complain. Not after others had been out of work for years because of the Depression. What she could complain about was the sameness of the job. Nothing about it challenged her. Nothing occupied her mind. It was simply the same dull work, day after day after day.

As for boys and the possibility of marriage . . . Well, that was another problem, wasn’t it? She wasn’t interested in boys her own age. She wanted a man. Someone with something interesting to say. Someone who would sweep her off her feet. She wanted a man like Brandon Gallagher.

## *I'll Be Seeing You*

*But there isn't anybody else like Brandan.*

"Daisy, dear," her mother said, intruding on her thoughts. "Is something wrong?"

She shook her head. "No."

"Well, do stop frowning. If you don't, you'll have a crease on the bridge of your nose before you're thirty."

*Who would notice?*

She pushed up from the sofa. "I think I'll go to my room." She stepped to her mother and kissed her forehead. "Good night." She repeated the action and words with her father, then made her way up the stairs.

She stopped at the door to Lillian's room, intending to knock. After a moment's hesitation, she instead moved on to her own bedroom.

Daisy couldn't remember a time when she hadn't tagged along everywhere with her older sister. They'd shared a bedroom for a while. They'd played with dolls and taught school to their teddy bears. They'd been as close as two peas in a pod—until Daisy fell for Brandan. If only Daisy had told her sister how she felt about him, way back at the beginning, maybe Lillian wouldn't have felt the same. Then again, would Lillian have taken her seriously? Who cared about the romantic crush of a fourteen-year-old except for the fourteen-year-old herself? And besides, Lillian did tend to get what she wanted. And she'd wanted Brandan.

Daisy flopped onto the bed and stared at the ceiling. "I have to stop thinking about him. He doesn't see me except as Lillian's little sister. He'll never see me the way I want him to. Give up. Give up. Give up."

Tears welled again. They trickled over her temples and into her hair.

"Why can't he love me instead?"

She knew all the reasons, of course. Lillian was the beauty in

the family. Lillian had a sparkling, irresistible personality. Men were drawn to her like bees were to honey.

And Brandan was drawn to Lillian. He would never belong to Daisy.



Todd Kinnear settled into the comfortable chair beside the fireplace and picked up his book. But he didn't open it. Instead, he listened to the silence filling the house. Most of the time, the stillness didn't bother him. He was used to it. But tonight it did. Maybe he should have asked to join Daisy and Jupiter and gone with them to the Abbott home. He was always welcome there.

Todd had a vague memory of the day he and his parents had moved into this two-bedroom house on Eastman Street. He'd been four and a half at the time. After that, he couldn't think of a time when the Kinnears and the Abbotts hadn't moved freely back and forth through the gate that joined their backyards. The men helped each other with home repairs. The women shared recipes. When Lillian and Daisy were sick with the mumps, Todd's mother had made a huge pot of chicken soup for them. When Todd had the accident that left him with a bum leg and less-than-perfect hearing, Nancy Abbott had taken turns with his own mom, sitting next to his hospital bed, reading to him, comforting him.

Todd had been sixteen when his father died from a heart attack, and Carl Abbott had been there to advise Todd as he struggled with finishing high school while trying to help his mom make sure the cannery didn't fail. Carl and Nancy Abbott had been there for Todd again when he buried his mom three years later.

As for the little Abbott girls . . .

He closed his eyes and rested his head against the chair back.

The Abbott girls weren't little anymore. Lillian was twenty and

## *I'll Be Seeing You*

hoping to get married soon, and Daisy was eighteen. Or was she nineteen by now? No, still eighteen.

He smiled as he pictured the younger sister. Daisy wasn't the natural beauty that Lillian was, but she had a sweetness of spirit that he'd always found far more attractive. Lillian's beauty seemed only skin deep. Todd had caught more than a few glimpses over the years of her self-centeredness. Any man who took the time to really look would see the difference between the two sisters.

*If it were me, I'd choose—*

He broke off the thought before it could fully form. Daisy would never be interested in a guy like him. Not as anything more than a surrogate big brother, the way she'd always seen him. And he couldn't blame her. She was special and deserved somebody special. Not an ordinary working stiff like Todd.

Annoyed at the direction of his thoughts, he straightened and set the unread book on the nearby end table. Then he turned the knob on the Philco. Music came through the speaker, chasing silence into the corners of the small living room.

THOMAS NELSON  
*Since 1798*

## Chapter 3

PRESENT DAY—JANUARY

Daisy was nodding off to sleep when she heard the doorbell ring. For a moment, she expected to open her eyes and find herself in the living room of the house that had been her home for more than seventy years. But, of course, she didn't find herself there. These days she lived with her daughter, Elizabeth, and had for the past six years. *Six, already? Yes, six.*

Glory. How the years could blend together in her mind.

"Look who's here, Mama." Elizabeth led the way into Daisy's spacious bedroom.

"Hi, GeeGee." Brianna crossed to Daisy's recliner and gave her a kiss on the cheek. "Thanks for agreeing to talk to me."

"And why wouldn't I? There's nothing I like more than spending time with my family. Since most of them are scattered from here and gone, I welcome your company all the more." She reached up and patted the girl's cheek. "You're doing me a favor just being here."

"Can I get anything for you, Brianna?" Elizabeth asked.

"No thanks, Aunt Liz. I'm good."

"Mom?"

Daisy shook her head. "Thank you, dear. No."

## *I'll Be Seeing You*

Before settling onto a second chair, Brianna took her ever-present phone from the back pocket of her jeans and set it on the small table between the two chairs. "I'm supposed to record the interviews. Hope that's okay."

"Of course. Of course it's okay. At my age, it's nice if anybody wants to hear what I have to say. Let alone record it for a history class."

"GeeGee, that's not true."

Daisy smiled rather than attempt to correct the girl. Brianna wouldn't understand. She was so young, so fresh and innocent. Even in this age of the internet and the constant bombardment of information, even in a time of confusion and conflicting ideals, those of her great-granddaughter's age could never completely understand. That took living and experiencing. It took disappointments and heartaches. It seemed to Daisy, in some ways, that the young of today were even more . . . not innocent but . . . What was the word she wanted? Oh, yes. *Unprepared*. Unprepared for the realities of life. Entitled, she'd heard young people called. Perhaps it was true.

*Lord God, let Brianna have more joy than sorrow in her life. Help her make good choices. Protect her from the temptations of the Deceiver.*

She drew a deep breath and folded her hands over the soft flesh of her belly. "So, where do we begin?"

Brianna checked something on her phone, then pressed the screen and set it down again. "First, let's talk about what it was like to live in Boise when you were my age. Not in general but for you specifically."

"Remind me how old you are."

"I'll be twenty on my next birthday."

Daisy squinted as she searched her memory. "A few weeks from now. Right?"

"Yes, February the thirteenth."

"Twenty. So young. So very young."

ROBIN LEE HATCHER

“It’s not all *that* young, GeeGee. You were married before you were twenty. Right?”

“Yes. I was.”

“At least you got to do what you wanted to do. You were lucky.”

Daisy heard something in Brianna’s tone that reminded her of her sister, Lillian. Dear Lillian. Lillian, the girl who’d wanted what she wanted when she wanted it.

*But was I so very different from Lillian back then? I wanted what I couldn’t have. Or at least what I shouldn’t have.*

“GeeGee?”

She blinked. “I’m sorry, dear. I got lost in thought. Where were we?”

“Tell me what Boise was like when you were my age. Or what the country was like.”

“Boise was all I knew. In a way, it *was* my country. I’d never traveled more than a hundred miles beyond its limits.” Daisy leaned her head against the chair, her eyes looking not at the wall above Brianna’s head but at the past. “I was a little younger than you as the Great Depression came to an end. My father was one of the fortunate ones. He didn’t lose his employment during those lean years, but it was still very hard. Everyone learned to do without, including the Abbott family. Mother’s garden helped keep us from going hungry, and there always seemed to be enough food for her to share when someone came to our back door, asking for help.” She smiled wistfully. “Very few girls went to college back in those days, and my family certainly didn’t have the money for it. It wasn’t like today. Girls grew up expecting to find some nice young man and get married.”

“What would you have studied in college, if you’d been able to go? Was there something you wanted to be?”

Daisy laughed. “Women didn’t have as many choices back then as you have now. Remember, we’d had the vote only twenty years by the time I graduated from high school.”

“Wow. I hadn’t thought of that.”

## *I'll Be Seeing You*

“But if I’d been able to go to college, I suppose I would have chosen to be a teacher because it would have meant I could encourage others to embrace learning.” She leaned forward in her chair to look directly into Brianna’s eyes. “Never stop learning, dear. And never be satisfied with the easy answer. Go deeper. Look closely at everything. Even what your college professors tell you shouldn’t be enough to satisfy you.”

Her great-granddaughter nodded.

“But I have wandered off the subject again, haven’t I?” Daisy laughed at herself. “I suspect that will happen often. Don’t be afraid to interrupt me if I go off too far.”

“Okay.”

“So let’s see. What was Boise like back then? In the spring of 1941, when I graduated, I suppose the population was a little over twenty-five or twenty-six thousand. The airport had moved from near the river out to its current location. Which back then seemed way out in the desert. Boise State was still a junior college, and the only high school was Boise High.”

In her mind she pictured many of her old school friends. She’d outlived most, if not all, of them. The downside to longevity, she’d learned, was losing people she’d known and shared memories with.

“In many ways I wasn’t so different from you when I graduated from high school. Despite the Great Depression, I had dreams. My world was smaller, but my hopes weren’t. The same was true for my friends.” She released a sigh. “Europe was already at war, of course, but we were all so sure that we would stay out of it. Isolationism, it was called. America was determined not to become involved in a problem we didn’t think was ours. How very, very wrong we were.”

## Chapter 4

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7, 1941

The news of the attack on Pearl Harbor reached Brandan Gallagher as he walked toward his barracks at Barksdale Field, Louisiana. The next hours passed in a blur—listening to the radio reports, listening to fellow cadets guessing what would happen next, listening to the cacophony of thoughts in his head.

*War.*

The United States was at war. Not declared yet by Congress, but it was true all the same.

Brandan hadn't joined the Army Air Corps to go to war, although he'd known it could happen. After all, Germany had invaded Poland in 1939, and by the time Brandan started his training, most of Europe had become embroiled in the hostilities. Still, his sole reason for enlisting had been to become the best pilot possible, and that's what he'd told Lillian last spring after making his decision to enlist.

*“Lill, aviation is the future. Before long, trains will be the transportation of the past. People will fly all around the world. You’ll see. I want to be ready for it. The Army Air Corps is the best place for me to do that.”*

He hadn't mentioned the war in Europe at the time. Neither had she. His omission had been intentional. But Lillian? He wasn't sure

## *I'll Be Seeing You*

she ever thought about what was happening overseas. Her world was much smaller than that. She cared about clothes and music and the movies. And marriage. She cared about marriage a lot, beginning with an elaborate wedding. No one had to tell him she was hoping for a proposal soon.

Brandan loved Lillian. He did. And he wasn't opposed to marriage. Just not this soon. He didn't want to be rushed. And it felt like she was rushing him. After all, he'd gone off to university before entering the military. He and Lillian had been apart more than they'd been together. They needed to take their time. Especially now.

He frowned, imagining the arguments they would have when he went back to Idaho. He was good at making her see things his way, but it would be unpleasant at first. Lillian liked to get her way.

*Maybe they'll cancel our leaves because of the war.*

He should be so lucky.



Daisy wasn't a fool. She knew that a war had been happening on the opposite side of the Atlantic for over two years. But she'd felt untouched by it in her quiet Idaho town.

She didn't feel untouched any longer.

Her father's face was grim as he listened to the radio. "We won't get the whole truth yet," he'd said a short while before. "The government will edit what's reported so we don't accidentally give important information to our enemies during the crisis."

*"Our enemies."*

The words continued to shiver through her. There were enemies out there. Enemies who wanted to kill and destroy, to conquer her country. Innocent people who'd been going about their lives on a beautiful Sunday were dead or dying. Not only sailors and airmen. Nurses and wives, mothers and little children. Babies, even.

ROBIN LEE HATCHER

She looked toward the windows of the living room and wondered if those same Japanese airplanes could fly to America's mainland. Could they even fly this far inland?

A knock sounded at the door, startling her. "I'll get it," she told her parents.

Her friend, Martha Neville, waited on the front porch. "Isn't it awful?"

"Yes." Daisy grabbed her coat and stepped outside. Better to be cold than listen to the news drone on.

Martha seemed to understand. "My brother says he's going to enlist tomorrow."

"I suppose a lot of men will do the same."

"Boys we went to school with."

*Brandan won't have to enlist. He's already in it.* She'd tried not to think of him, of what war meant to someone already in the armed services. She couldn't ignore the thoughts now.

"My dad remembers the last war," Martha continued. "He still talks about how many people died before it was over. Civilians and soldiers alike."

Daisy pulled her coat closer about her.

Martha's voice lowered. "Do you think this war will last for as many years as the last one?"

A different sort of chill passed through Daisy. Years? Years of war. She remembered from history classes that the Civil War had lasted four years. The Great War had lasted four years too. The current war in Europe had already raged for more than two years, and only the Germans seemed to be winning.

Martha sank onto a chair on the porch. "Why did they do it? What did we ever do to the Japanese to make them want to attack us?"

"I don't know." She wondered if her father understood the why of it. Or did it even matter why?

"I'm scared, Daisy."

*I'll Be Seeing You*

"I'm scared too."

They fell into silence then, listening to a cold wind blowing through the leafless limbs of the trees, the faint drone of the radio reaching them through the closed front door.



THOMAS NELSON  
*Since 1798*

## Chapter 5

PRESENT DAY—JANUARY

Brianna closed her laptop, then crossed her arms on top of it and rested her forehead on her wrists. Facts and dates swirled in her head until she couldn't think straight.

"Are you doing homework or taking a nap?"

She lifted her head and watched Hannah Smith sink onto the chair opposite her.

Her friend pointed at the book near Brianna's right elbow. "History?"

"World War Two."

Hannah wrinkled her nose.

"You can't believe how much work this is. I mean, it's cool talking to my great-grandmother. I've always liked spending time with her. And the genealogy aspect of the assignment is interesting. It's kinda fun learning more about my family tree. But all of this other stuff the professor wants us to do? There's a lot to it. I'm wishing my oldest family member wasn't ninety-eight. Maybe another era would be easier. My mom was born in the seventies, so it was the nineties when she was my age. At least she probably had a cell phone."

Even as the words left her mouth, Brianna knew she wasn't

## *I'll Be Seeing You*

speaking the whole truth. The assignment wasn't easy, for sure, but she'd found it far more interesting than expected. Even when she wasn't working on it, her thoughts often returned to World War II and the stories her great-grandmother had shared already.

"I doubt the nineties would be easier," Hannah replied. "Sounds like your prof wants you to have to work for your grade. What're the students without older relatives doing?"

"Professor Meyer is connecting them with someone to interview. I'm glad that didn't happen to me. GeeGee is sweet. I'd hate to have to talk to a stranger a bunch of times."

Hannah reached for Brianna's book and pulled it toward her. "So what're you reading this for?"

"I'm researching the attack on Pearl Harbor and what led up to it. Trying to answer why it caught America by surprise. GeeGee said nobody expected it. Not regular people anyway. Maybe a few in government thought it could happen, but nobody else."

"Come on." Hannah pushed back her chair. "Let's get out of here. You're starting to sound like a textbook."

"That's mean." Brianna grabbed both book and laptop and got up.

Outside, they were met with a blast of cold air that tried to drive them back into the building.

"My car's over here," Hannah said above the whistle of the wind.

Brianna followed her friend, pulling up the hood of her coat to avoid the stinging cold. When they reached the vehicle, she put her laptop bag and library book on the back seat and then got in the front, releasing a huge sigh as she closed the door.

"Let's go see a movie." Hannah put the key into the ignition. "That new Liam Hemsworth film is supposed to be good."

Guilt niggled at Brianna. "I should go home and study."

"A couple of hours isn't going to make any difference."

Maybe it wouldn't make a difference for Hannah. Like their mutual friend Adam Wentworth, Hannah was one of those students

who seemed to know and understand without a lot of late nights hitting the books. But Brianna had to work for everything. It wasn't just the history class that had proved difficult. Everything seemed to come harder for her.

*"Never stop learning, dear. And never be satisfied with the easy answer. Go deeper."*

GeeGee's words of advice had returned to her often in the days since their first interview. And recalling them now made up Brianna's mind for her. "You'd better drop me at home or let me out at the stop to catch the bus."

"Seriously? No time for Liam?"

"I can't. I've got to turn in some notes by Sunday night, and I'm not even close to having them ready."

"All work and no play makes a guy dull. Mom says something like that to Dad all the time."

"Gee, thanks. You think I'm dull." Brianna turned her gaze out the passenger window, starting to wish she'd stayed in the library.

"I'm sorry. That wasn't nice of me, and I didn't mean it that way. You aren't dull."

"Thanks again."

"Okay. No movie. I'll drive you home. I don't want you freezing to death at the bus stop."

"I appreciate it." She knew her tone belied her words.

Hannah waited until she was driving down the main thoroughfare. Then she turned on the radio, flooding the car with music instead of silence. It wasn't until the car stopped in front of Brianna's house that either of them spoke again.

Hannah lowered the volume on the radio. "Do you have classes tomorrow?"

"A couple online." Brianna got out and retrieved her things from the back seat.

"Want a ride on Friday?"

## *I'll Be Seeing You*

“Sure.” She started to close the door, then said, “Thanks for the ride home.”

“Glad to do it.” Hannah’s smile said she’d forgiven Brianna for her earlier surliness.

As soon as the car pulled away from the curb, Brianna hurried inside. The house was quiet. Normal for a Wednesday. Her dad was at work, and her mom volunteered at the senior center on this day every week. That was one of the reasons Brianna needed a ride to and from the campus with a friend or had to take the bus. She couldn’t borrow her mom’s car on Wednesdays, and Brianna’s car, bought with her own hard-earned money when she was seventeen, had died toward the end of last semester, only a few days after Thanksgiving.

Pepper, the family dog, came to greet her. “Hey, girl.” She set her bag and book on the kitchen counter and leaned down to ruffle Pepper’s ears. “Want a treat?”

The dog turned three quick circles, body language for, “Yes!”

Her spirits improving, Brianna laughed, and she reached for the plastic jug of dog biscuits. If it weren’t so cold and windy, she would take Pepper for a walk, but she supposed it was just as well she couldn’t. She truly did need to work on her history assignment.

Sighing, she removed her coat and hung it over the back of a tall chair. Then she took her laptop from its bag and carried it and the book to the kitchen table.