



The McCaffertys: Randi (The McCaffertys Series Book 4)

By Lisa Jackson

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But in uncovering her guarded past, Kurt was forced to confront his own well-hidden desires: he wanted the very woman he'd been entrusted to protect. Yet Kurt feared having Randi in his bed would leave them both vulnerable to a force neither had ever imagined....

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Lisa Jackson is the #1 New York Times bestselling author of more than seventy-five novels, including *Afraid to Die*, *You Don't Want to Know*, *Running Scared*, *Without Mercy*, *Malice*, and *Shiver*. She has over twenty million copies of her books in print in nineteen languages. She lives with her family and a rambunctious pug in the Pacific Northwest. Readers can visit her website at www.lisajackson.com, become her friend on Facebook, and check out her blog at <http://lisajacksonauthor.blogspot.com>.

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"Hell's bells," Kurt Striker grumbled under his breath.

He didn't like the job that was set before him. Not one little bit. But he couldn't say no. And it wasn't just because of the substantial fee attached to the assignment, no, the money was good enough. Tempting. He could use an extra twenty-five grand right now. Who couldn't? A check for half the amount sat on the coffee table. Untouched.

Because of the night before. Because of his secret. He stood in the living room, a fire crackling and warming the backs of his legs, the sprawling snow-covered acres of the Flying M Ranch visible through frosted windows.

"So, what do you say, Striker?, Thorne McCafferty demanded. the oldest of three brothers, he was a businessman by nature and always took charge.

"Have we got a deal? Will you see that our sister is safe?"

The job was complicated. Striker was to become Randi McCafferty's personal bodyguard whether she liked it or not. Which she wouldn't. Kurt would lay odds on it. he'd spent enough time with the only daughter of the late John Randall McCafferty to know that when she made up her mind, it wasn't likely to be changed, not by him, nor by her three half brothers who all seemed to have developed a latent sense of responsibility for their headstrong sibling.

She was trouble. No two ways about it. the way she'd hightailed it out of here only a few hours earlier had clearly indicated her mind was set. She was returning to Seattle. With her child. To her home. To her job. To her old life, and the consequences be damned.

And she was running away.

From her three overbearing half brothers.

And from him.

Striker didn't like the situation one bit, but he couldn't very well confide in these three men, now, could he? As he glanced from one anxious McCafferty brother to the next, he didn't examine his own emotions too closely, didn't want to admit that the reason he was balking at the job was because he didn't want to get tangled up with a woman. Any woman. Especially not with the kid sister of these tough-as-nails, overprotective brothers.

it's a little too late for that now, wouldn't you say?

Randi was a sexy thing. All fire and attitude. A strong woman who would, he suspected, as any self-respecting child of John Randall McCafferty, bulldoze her way through life and do exactly what she wanted to do. She wouldn't like Striker nosing around, prying into her affairs, even if he was trying to insulate her from danger. In fact, she'd probably resent it. Especially now.

"Randi's gonna be ticked." Slade, the youngest McCafferty brother, echoed Striker's thoughts, even though he didn't know the half of it. In jeans and a faded flannel shirt, Slade walked to the window and stared outside at the wintry Montana landscape. Snow covered the fields where a few head of cattle and horses huddled against the cold.

"Of course she'll be ticked. Who wouldn't be?, Matt, brother number two, was seated on the worn leather sofa, the heel of one of his cowboy boots propped onto the coffee table only inches from a check for twelve thousand five hundred dollars. "I'd hate it."

"She doesn't have a choice," Thorne said. CEO of his own corporation, Thorne was used to giving orders and having his employees obey. he'd recently moved to Grand Hope, Montana, from Denver, but he was still in charge. "We agreed, didn't we?, he was saying as he motioned to his younger brothers.

"For her protection and the baby's safety, she needs a bodyguard."

Matt nodded curtly. "Yeah, we agreed. That won't make it any easier for Randi to swallow. Even if Kelly's involved."

Kelly was Matt's wife, an ex-cop who was now a private investigator. She'd agreed to work with Striker, especially on this, her sister-in-law's case. Red-haired and quick-witted, Kelly would be an asset. But Striker wasn't convinced Kelly McCafferty would be the oil on troubled waters as far as Randi was concerned. No—having a relative involved would only make a sticky situation stickier.

He glanced to the window, toward the youngest McCafferty brother. the friend who had dragged him into this mess. But Slade didn't meet his eyes, just continued to stare out the frosty panes.

"Look, we've got to do something and we don't have time to waste. Someone's trying to kill her," Thorne

pointed out.

Striker's jaw tightened. This was no joke. And deep down he knew that he'd take the job; wouldn't trust anyone else to do it. For as bullheaded and stubborn as Randi McCafferty was, there was something about her, a spark in her brown eyes that seemed to touch him just under the skin, a bit of fire that scorched slightly. It had gotten his attention and hadn't let go.

Last night had been proof enough.

Thorne was agitated, worry evident in the lines of his face, his fingers jangling the keys in his pocket. His stare held Striker's. "Will you take the job, or are we going to have to find someone else?"

The thought of another man getting close to Randi soured Kurt's gut, but before he could respond, Slade finally spoke. "No one else. We need someone we can trust."

"Amen," Matt agreed, before Slade nodded toward the window where a Jeep was plowing down the lane.

Trust? Jesus!

His teeth clenched so hard they ached. Slade nodded toward the window where an SUV was steadily approaching. "Looks like Nicole's home."

The tension in Thorne's features softened a bit. Within minutes the front door burst open, and a blast of cold Montana air raced into the room. Dr. Nicole McCafferty, still shaking snow from her coat, crossed the entry as the rumble of tiny feet erupted upstairs and Thorne's two stepdaughters, four-year-old-twins, thundered down the stairs. Laughter and shouts added to the din.

"Mommy! Mommy!" Molly cried, while her shier sister, Mindy, beamed and threw herself into Nicole's waiting arms.

"Hey, how're my girls?", Nicole asked in greeting, scooping both twins into her arms and kissing them on the cheeks.

"you're coooooold!" Molly said.

Nicole laughed. "So I am."

Thorne, limping slightly from a recent accident, made his way into the entry hall and kissed his wife soundly, the girls wriggling between them.

Striker turned away. Felt he was intruding on an intimate scene. it was the same uncomfortable sensation that had been with him from the get-go when Slade had contacted him about helping out the family, and Kurt had first set foot on the Flying M. it had been in October when Randi McCafferty's car had been forced off the road at Glacier Park. She had gone into premature labor and both she and her new baby had nearly died. She'd been in a coma for a while and when she had awoken she'd struggled with amnesia.

Or so she claimed.

Striker thought the loss of memory, though supported by Randi's doctor, was too convenient. he'd also found evidence that another vehicle had run Randi's rig down a steep hillside, where she'd plowed into a tree. She'd survived, though as she'd recovered and regained her memory, she would say nothing about the accident, or guess who might have been trying to kill her. She'd incriminate no one. Either she didn't know or wouldn't tell. the same was true about the father of her kid. She'd told no one who had sired little Joshua. Kurt scowled at the thought. He didn't want to think of anyone being intimate with Randi, though that was just plain stupid. He had no claim to her; wasn't even certain he liked her.

then you should have let it go last night—you saw her on the landing, watched her take care of her child, then waited until she'd put him to bed—

In his mind's eye, Kurt remembered her sitting on the ledge, humming softly, her white nightgown clinging to her body as she cradled her baby and fed him. he'd been upstairs, looking down over the railing and moonlight had spilled over her shoulders, illuminating her like a madonna with child. the sight had been almost spiritual, but also sensual, and he'd slowly eased his way into the shadows and waited. Telling himself he just wanted to walk down the stairs unnoticed, one of the floorboards had creaked and Randi had looked up, seen him there on the upper landing, his hands over the railing.

"Come on, let's see what Juanita's got in the kitchen," Nicole was saying, bringing Kurt crashing back to the here and now. "Smells good."

"Cinn-da-mon!" the shier twin said while her sister rolled her eyes.

"Cinn-a-mon," Molly corrected.

"We'll find out, won't we?, Nicole shuffled the girls down the hallway toward the kitchen while Thorne returned to the living room.

The smile he'd reserved for his wife and family had faded and he was all business again. "So what's it gonna be, Striker? Are you in?"

"it's a helluva lot of money," Matt reminded him.

"Look, Striker, I'm counting on you." Slade gave up his position near the window. Lines of worry pinched

the corners of his eyes. "Someone wants Randi dead. I told Thorne and Matt that if anyone could find out who it was, you could. So are you gonna prove me right or what?"

With only a little bit of guilt he slid the check into the battered leather of his wallet. there wasn't really any point in arguing. there hadn't been from the get-go. Striker could no more let Randi McCafferty take off with her kid and face her would-be killer alone than he could quit breathing.

He planned on nailing the son of a bitch. Big-time.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Dawn Hicks:

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