

**Another Family Reunion Novel  
In The Wisdom of the Ancestors Series  
— Book 21 —**

*All That Glitters*  
**AIN'T GOLD**  
**Alex-Mont Kids Saga—Episode 4**

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*The journey continues and the struggle for literary perfection shall never  
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*I remain faithfully yours,*

*Ann Jeffries*

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*Another Point of View*

*Northern Exposures*

*Uncommon Choices*

*An Unguarded Moment*

*Moments To Remember*

*The Better Part of Valor*

*Walking On Uneven Ground*

*Ask Me No Question . . . I'll Tell You No Lies*

*Touch Me In The Morning*

*All Goodbyes Aren't Gone*

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*All that is gold does not glitter,  
Not all those who wander are lost;  
The old that is strong does not wither,  
Deep roots are not reached by the frost.  
From the ashes, a fire shall be woken,  
A light from the shadows shall spring;  
Renewed shall be blade that was broken,  
The crownless again shall be king*

**John Ronald Reuel Tolkien**

3 January 1892 – 2 September 1973





# CHAPTER I

“Samantha?” a woman’s voice called out in the well-appointed, private, Adventurer Executive Airline (AEA) waiting room. “Samantha Montgomery?” Others in the jetport suspended their conversations and turned their heads to watch.

Samantha’s head came up to look away from the soft, yellow, and grey blanket she was absently knitting. Her velvety brown eyes focused on a young woman coming toward her who she hadn’t seen in many years. After frowning and shutting off the audiobook novel she was listening to, she pulled the earbuds from her face. “Paulette? Paulette King?” Samantha questioned, surprised. Paulette’s face had filled out to the point that she was a bit overweight and almost unrecognizable from the young girl she remembered.

“It’s me,” Paulette King acknowledged as she moved forward. She bent and awkwardly hugged her former private-school chum and then sat beside her. “I wasn’t sure it was you because I called your name several times. You’ve cut your hair, and you seem so different. Wow, you look like that actress, Halle Berry. I apologize if I interrupted you. Were you on a call?”

Samantha capped her knitting needles and put her work and cell phone aside in the oversized canvas bag at her feet. Then she focused on the woman who had once shared her most closely held secrets and betrayed her. “Uh, no, Paulette. I wasn’t on a call. I didn’t hear you. I was listening to my sister’s guy friend’s novel, *Rising Eagles*.”

“Oh, yes, I saw it on the Best Seller’s List, but I haven’t read it yet. I hear that Tina Justice and her company, Sweet Justice Productions,

optioned the story for a movie. According to the trades, Bill Chandler will be the executive producer, and Miguel Menendez-Gaza will take the leading male role. King Advertising is competing for the contract to do the marketing for the movie. They're not quite ready to take meetings yet, though. They're still looking for a female star. The novel is by Simon Wilde, isn't it?"

"It is, yes."

She furtively looked around them, winked, and conspiratorially whispered, "Simon is such a hottie, but I didn't know that he was dating one of your sisters. Which one?"

"Geneviève. They've tried to keep their relationship low key." She needed to change the subject, so she did. "Wow, it's been years since I've seen you. How have you been?"

Paulette shrugged. "Fine, but not as well as you, I hear."

"I have no complaints," Samantha tentatively smiled. She wasn't exactly sure about her relationship with Paulette...or her former friend's family.

"I saw on the world news that you've been on the continent with your textile show."

Samantha sighed, slowly coming to grips with her discomfort. It appeared that she was going to have to carry on a conversation. Her only other option would have been to get up and move to another seat, but no matter what, her parents taught her to be kind even to those who were not kind to her. *Hopefully, she wouldn't have to wait long before her flight was ready to board*, she thought while trying to assure herself that she could hold out for a few more moments. Inwardly, she sighed and put on a professional smile to get her through this uncomfortable experience. "I have, yes, and I'm finally on my way home. Madrid is my last stop on the tour."

"I can't get over how much you seem to have changed. You look so stylish, chic, and sophisticated. Your look is marvelous. You seem to have changed so much compared to when you played tennis on the amateur circuit back in high school. You set records which no one has been able to break," Paulette gushed.

“Thank you,” Samantha offered, knowing her appearance was the result of having a sister, Linda, who is a prima ballerina, and an aunt and close friend, Angelique, who is one of the top supermodels in the world. Samantha and all of her sisters were taken under Linda’s and Angelique’s wings and taught first how to take care of their bodies and faces to perpetuate a healthy glow. Then they learned how to use makeup, style their hair to their best advantage, and dress for success. Those lessons came in handy when she went away to college at the University of Washington-Seattle and had to learn how to take care of herself away from home. She ate junk food and drank sugar-filled sodas from time to time like everyone else in college and grad school, but never to excess. She kept to a healthy diet and a strict exercise routine. For an energy outlet, she took up racquetball and found that she liked it. “Now, enough about me. What are you up to these days?”

“I’m working for my brother in our family’s advertising agency.” Paulette looked up and around as if searching for someone. “There he is over there.” She waved at someone at Samantha’s back.

Samantha tensed again and thought, *If she turns around right now, like Lot’s wife, she might become a pillar of salt.* She didn’t want to look back at her Sodom, otherwise known as Paulette’s twin brother, Samuel King, or Sam the Slugger to his multitude of tennis fans.

From their early days in a Georgetown private elementary school academy in a fashionable section of Washington, D.C., his tennis prowess was clearly evident. Sam and she had been close for all of the years they played tennis together. She had shared her first of many kisses with him up until high school graduation. They used to joke that Sam and Sam went together like M&Ms. However, on prom night, she prepared herself mentally and emotionally to go beyond kisses, but he never came to escort her to dinner and the dance. Instead, the next day it was all over the academy school campus that Samuel escorted Pamela Halstead, another classmate, to dinner at a posh restaurant and then to the prom. Now it was Sam and Pam instead of Sam and Sam. Nine months later, the newlyweds, Samuel and Pamela King, welcomed a son into their hasty marriage.

Being dumped on the night of the prom, she supposed, wasn't as bad as the possibility of being left at the altar on some future wedding day. She could philosophically assure herself of that now looking back to yesteryear. Still, she braced at the thought of seeing Sam again and was glad she was sitting. The disappointment of that singular event irrevocably changed the trajectory of her life. Although she, too, had a promising career as an athlete, she gave up the game and rarely played tennis now except on occasion with her siblings.

"Look who I found," Paulette chirped up all grins and giggles.

Sensing someone behind her, Samantha galvanized her emotions against the impact of seeing Sam, stood, plastered a polite smile on her face, and turned to face her past. "Hello, Sam—" she began and then faltered.

Quentin King noted the momentary hesitant expression on Samantha Montgomery's gamine face. It was a face he hadn't been able to get out of his head for too many years. She was a cute preadolescent, a pretty teen who was a bit on the shy side, and now a lovely, sophisticated-looking young woman. Because of her poised personae, he sensed that over the intervening years since last he saw her, she developed style and grace. Now, she was simply breathtakingly gorgeous. He felt that she embodied a kind of vivacity and enthusiasm, an effervescence found only in a rare, choice sparkling wine.

As he gazed at Samantha, he thought she had changed so very much since those early years when she and his younger brother, Samuel, played tennis together. They teamed up and won nearly all of their mixed-doubles tennis matches throughout high school. Quentin expected Samuel and Samantha would continue in the same way in college if his father, Quentin King, IV, hadn't stepped in to break up their relationship. Quentin didn't want to think of the past now. Seeing Samantha again was a pleasure in and of itself.

"Hello, Samantha." He took the hand she offered before it went limp.

"Quentin." Momentarily, she got caught up in his dark chocolate, Morris Chestnut-like gaze. *His hair has always been ebony-colored,*

*healthy-looking, and wavy, but have his eyes always been so mesmerizing?* she wondered. *If so, how did I not notice that before?* Well, he and his younger brother did look alike, and back in the day, she only had eyes for Sam.

Dismissing the errant thought and summoning a brighter professional smile, she affected a warm, two-handed shake. "It's good to see you, Quentin. I trust that the rest of your family members are well." *When he drew me into a loose embrace...the hug was a surprise, too,* she thought. They had never been that familiar with each other.

He held her for a brief moment longer than necessary so that he could draw in more of her enticing scent. Before releasing her, he noticed his brother and nephew, Samuel Junior, approaching from behind her. Quentin didn't know whether Samantha had residual feelings for Samuel, but he hoped not. Even when Samantha was a teen, and he was in college, he enjoyed her sweet and somewhat shy personality. He was friends with her older brothers at the prestigious, exclusive, private school they all attended in the Georgetown area of Washington, D.C. When he graduated and went away to college and grad school at UPenn, they hadn't kept in touch. Although Samantha's older brother, Brian Montgomery, was an underclassman at UPenn while he was a senior, they didn't run in the same circles or renew friendships. Everyone in Samantha's family knew how Sam betrayed her in a way that was not easily forgotten or forgiven.

Similarly, when their father forced Samuel to dump Samantha, her relationship with Paulette also came to an abrupt halt. According to their father, Samantha's background made her undesirable as future marriage material for Samuel. However, Pamela Halstead, a member of the über-wealthy Halstead family of Northern Virginia, was considered to have an impeccable pedigree. *What an error in judgment that had been,* Quentin thought as he watched his younger brother and nephew draw nearer.

"Hi, Aunt Paulette and Uncle Q," piped up a little person.

"Hi, Sammy," Paulette acknowledged while smiling down at the youngster. "Do you know who this is?"

“Nuh-uh.” The little boy curiously peered up at Samantha. “She’s pretty.”

“She is,” another voice reverently added to the conversation. *She is even more attractive now than he remembered*, thought Samuel King. When they first met, she had a Princess Dianna sweet shyness and innocence about her. Even in his preadolescent years, he wanted to be her friend, and they became very close. Throughout high school, they shared a love of the game of tennis and teamed up to help improve each other’s skills and abilities on the tennis court and circuit. No matter when or where the events, they made efforts to attend each other’s singles matches and were always teamed together for mixed doubles.

Their closeness led to other more intimate encounters, but not to sex. Still, they believed their relationship in the future would ultimately result in marriage. However, it was not to be. His parents forced him to break off his bond with Samantha in the most cruel and unforgiving way, an experience he sorely regretted. Since he had not seen or talked with her since high school, he didn’t know what type of reaction to expect from her.

Years ago, on the night of their high school prom, as he was preparing to leave to pick up Samantha, his parents stopped him. He and his sister, Paulette, were forbidden to see or speak with her again. Their parents made it clear that she would not be welcomed into their home or their family. Instead, they arranged for him to escort Pamela Halstead to the prom because they determined that his future would be with her instead of Samantha.

Well, his parents got what they wanted but got duped in the process. So, too, did he. The only good thing to come out of the marriage to Pamela was their son Sammy. Much to his regret, he and Pamela were still husband and wife but had not lived together since their son was born. Sam could only think about how different things might have been if he and Samantha were permitted to stay together.

Awkward was an understatement for what Samantha felt, but the little boy with a smooth Hershey-colored complexion and dark-

brown, wavy hair—the spitting image of his father at the same age—was too handsome to ignore. It surprised her to see that he wore a diamond stud in his left earlobe like the one she gave to his father. His hair was thick, not as long, but tied with a rawhide at the back of his neck, again, just like his father's. She sat down to engage the child in conversation and give herself a moment more to settle before facing his father. "I think you're pretty handsome, too. You must have all the young ladies' attention. Where do you go to college?"

*His grin is lethal*, Samantha thought. *Again, just like his father.*

"I'm six. I don't go to college yet."

"No?" With wide eyes, she feigned shocked surprise. "I thought you had to be at least sixteen."

"Nuh-uh, but I'll be seven, and I'm going to have a big birthday party. My daddy said I could. You can come, too, if you want. I might even get a puppy this time." With that last revelation, he slid his gaze up over his shoulder to his father before looking at the pretty lady again.

"Why, thank you, kind sir. I'll put it on my calendar." Samantha offered her hand for a shake before standing again. She hoped she was ready to face his father after getting over the shock of so suddenly being in his company. She turned and faced Sam for the first time in nearly eight years. There was that face that had lived in her memory; it seemed like forever, but he had lost all of its boyish charms. His eyes were black and sharp, his face more narrow with a noticeable five o'clock shadow on a strong chin, which went well with the dark slash of eyebrows and curtain of long lashes. His hair was thick, liquid-asphalt black, naturally wavy, and tied in a bushy tail at the nape of his neck.

A diamond winked at her from his left earlobe, and she briefly wondered whether it was the same one she gave to him on his sixteenth birthday. She also gave one to Paulette and wore a companion one in her left earlobe until he dumped her. Somehow, he seemed taller now than before, so that she had to adjust to look up into his face. "He's a

real joy, Samuel.” She looked briefly into his eyes but then down and shared a smile with his mini-me. “You must be very proud of him.”

“He’s my best pal.” Sam ran his hand over the boy’s wavy hair, smiling down at his son’s upturned face.

“Ms. Montgomery?” a voice intruded.

“Yes?” Samantha turned to the uniformed pilot, Glen Kennard.

“If you’re ready, you may board now.”

“Thanks, Captain Kennard.” She reached for her carry-on luggage and was grateful for the intrusion. It spared her from having to continue conversing with the King family. *Old familiar pains*, she thought, *die hard*.

“I’ll take that for you.” The pilot stepped forward, taking the canvas bag from her hand, and stood by waiting.

Paulette gave Samantha a quick farewell squeeze.

“You’re still living with your parents, right?”

“I am, yes. We’re living at the ranch in Maryland, not the Georgetown brownstone in D.C.”

“Good. May I have your cell phone number? I’d like to contact you and arrange to get together over lunch or dinner.” Paulette offered her cell phone to Samantha.

“Certainly.” Samantha was reluctant to take it, but keeping in touch would likely be limited to a lunch date or two before Paulette and the rest of the King family would again disappear from her life. So, she accepted the cell phone, entered her business contact number, and sent Paulette’s info to her cell phone. Then she handed Paulette’s phone back to her. “It was good to see all of you. Take care and have a safe journey.” Samantha impersonally shook Quentin’s hand and then Sam’s, before running her hand over the youngster’s shoulder. With a little wave, she turned to join the captain, who put a guiding arm around her to escort her to the departure gate.



# *About the Author*



Ann Jeffries, the critically acclaimed author of the Family Reunion—Wisdom of the Ancestors Series, is a native of Washington, DC. As an only child, she enjoyed the benefits of a private school education at Allen in Asheville, North Carolina, and a public education at the University of Maryland. Ann began writing fiction for her own amusement.

Ms. Jeffries is the recipient of many awards for leadership and public service. A keynote speaker at colleges, universities, conferences, and conventions, she has extensively traveled the North American continent, Asia, and Europe. Among other endeavors, she is an entrepreneur, an avid supporter of public television, a genealogist, and a voracious reader.

Her pride and joy are her family, particularly her Fabulous Four grands. She lives in Maryland and South Carolina.

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