



# Final Betrayal

by Elaine Taylor

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### Synopsis

“Of the two genders, women have a greater ability to experience sexual pleasure. But as the bookies will tell you, without the right jockey, even a triple crown winner is nothing but a nice looking horse.” Much to her surprise, that was the hokey come-on line that intrigued Catherine on the day she met Stephen Forsster, investment banker and self-described sexual connoisseur.

Catherine Calabretta, CEO of Emerging Technologies Consulting (ETC), a San Francisco-based computer security firm, is crowned “Guardian of Privacy” in a Business World cover story. Subsequently, she undergoes a personal make-over to transform herself from a nerdy “breed that woofs, to one that purrs”... and comes face-to-face with the bleakness of her personal life. Two failed marriages and limited dalliances with the opposite sex have convinced her fornication is like playing the slots in Vegas: “You keep plugging those coins, feeling your pulse dart with eager anticipation when a two-dollar hit starts plinking those eight piddly quarters into the tray, knowing in your gut there’s gotta be a bigger pay-off.” So it seems logical she should accept Stephen’s challenge to engage in “Sex Ed 301”, never for a moment imagining an innocuous seduction will end with her the primary suspect in his murder.

The media clamor works to her advantage: Because she’s a high-profile suspect, the D.A. won’t file charges until Inspector Harry Hiller strengthens his case. As Catherine’s defense attorney starts laying out the evidence the cops have accumulated – including a “home video” of her with Stephen that she believes cannot possibly exist – she realizes she’s being aggressively framed.

Faster than the dot-com era went bust, Catherine goes from “America’s Guardian of Privacy” to tabloid headlines. Inspector Hiller plows through her private life like a roto-tiller through a fertile field. An unidentified informant drip-feeds incriminating phony evidence to the cops. Videos of Catherine’s most intimate moments are selectively distributed to the people she least wants to see

them. And Catherine realizes it's up to her to find Stephen's killer before the law rolls her up and puts her away.

Catherine enlists the aid of two ETC hackers (Joel Hodges, a gay man who is the sole guardian of his four-year-old niece, and Wilson Ramsey, a young opera-loving, African American); and Maureen O'Malley, a wheelchair-bound former Homicide Inspector whose only goal for her own life is to end it.

Following trails of data – accessed legally or otherwise – Catherine realizes she was naïve to believe Stephen's carnal escapades were confined to the “missionary position” end of the sexual preferences spectrum. She discovers there are a lot of people – including his widow, a former business associate, and a socialite playmate with a penchant for sex play with minors – who won't devote a lot of time to grieving Stephen's death.