

In this novel of money, murder, and postponed romance, author Jack Nease combines an insider's knowledge of Wall Street with a colorful rendering of the South Florida scene to reveal what can happen when no one is following the money.

Day and Night, Forever

**Buy The Complete Version of This Book at  
Booklocker.com:**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/2505.html?s=pdf>

Day and Night, Forever

Copyright © 2006 Jack Nease

Paperback:

10-Digit ISBN 1-59113-947-3

13-Digit ISBN 978-1-59113-947-8

Hardcover:

10-Digit ISBN 1-59113-949-X

13-Digit ISBN 978-1-59113-949-2

Library of Congress Control Number: 2006903418



All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author.

Pompano Press 2006

Distributed by [booklocker.com](http://booklocker.com)

On sale at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com), [barnesandnoble.com](http://barnesandnoble.com), [booklocker.com](http://booklocker.com), [borders.com](http://borders.com), [booksamillion.com](http://booksamillion.com), [walmart.com](http://walmart.com), and other fine webstores.

Printed in the United States of America.

# Chapter One

Go was there waiting, on-time as Maureen knew he'd be, standing just beyond the security gates at the Lauderdale airport, thinner and tanned but otherwise exactly the same as before, his black hair mussed in front, arms and chest almost too big for his legs, a little gold ring in his ear. Thirty-five but didn't look it, not to Maureen, anyway. And until he moved, neither she nor anyone else could see one leg was shorter than the other.

He limped toward her, and Maureen walked faster. Finally she was past the last guard. They hugged, touching only above the waist, the way distant relatives greet at weddings and funerals. She resisted an impulse to kiss him on the cheek, and a real kiss was out of the question.

"You look great," Go said, and Maureen smiled. So much better to hear him say it than someone at work. There'd been no time to change so she wore the same black suit skirt and light green blouse as at the office, but on the plane she'd added her favorite necklace, gold with a platinum angel, and matching earrings.

He said, "I've rented a car."

"Why not use yours?"

"They won't let me have one down here. Rules of the rehab program."

"How's it going?"

"Six months next week. Then I can get a real job."

"Where?"

"That's what I want to talk to you about. Come on."

Go—she always thought of Gregory by his nickname—took her carry-on, and they walked toward the parking garage. Calls of jungle birds screamed from loudspeakers in the terminal ceilings. Flat video panels flashed rotating photos of beaches, boats and homes on canals, even stunt planes. Palms and tropical plants grew everywhere. Already she felt she'd entered another world. The misgivings of the morning began to fade.

Maureen's job being what it was—partner in mid-sized Wall Street brokerage house—she always kept a small suitcase in her office, packed and ready to go. She believed in keeping things simple. She dyed her hair herself, a reddish-brown shade of Clairol called Burgundy Borgia, and never spent more than twenty-five dollars for a cut. A woman's worth, she was convinced, is inversely proportional to the amount of time and money spent at a beauty salon.

Thirty-nine now and proud of it. If people wanted to think she was younger, that was their problem. She didn't tell them how far she jogged almost every morning before work. Just as she hadn't told anybody about this rush trip to Florida. Most of her friends and the people she worked with would think it was foolish. She'd know soon enough.

They drove along A1A in a yellow Mustang convertible, one Maureen called gaudy but which Go said was regulation outfitting for tourists and visitors. The Atlantic Ocean passed by on their right, the beach separated from the road only by a low wall curving along the sidewalk, a strip of neon lighting making a continuous wave of pink, blue, and green in the barrier. On the other side, new condominiums and buildings full of restaurants rose into the sky, not at all like the tawdry bars and T-shirt shops she remembered from twenty years before. Spring Break. Seemed like a million years ago.

Some things had stayed the same. The smell of salt water still filled the air. Out in the ocean, cruise ships and freighters floated in place, their bright lights forming little cities at sea. The street lights were new—electric but made to look like gas lamps—and shielded so light didn't go out to sea. Something about turtles, she'd read.

Maureen said, "Now will you tell me what this is all about?"

"You ever hear of Providence Place?"

"Read about it." In some sort of trouble once, she remembered.

"There's one here on the beach, one in Orlando and a few up North. They take care of homeless kids."

She nodded, not caring that with his eyes on the road Go couldn't see her. He seemed to know her thoughts, no matter what.

"Without them, the kids would be out on the streets begging and prostituting themselves. Boys and girls alike."

"So?" Maureen said.

"The nuns who run it want me to go to work for them when I finish rehab. As a counselor."

"You'd be good at it." Gregory had excelled at all three of his professions—a nurse practitioner, a hospital administrator, then a youth counselor. All interests, she was convinced, he'd absorbed when she helped nurse him back to health when they were kids. It's good to help people. That was the message he'd picked up. But it's possible to do too much for others, too. Had he learned that yet?

She said, "The woman, tell me about the woman."

"There's no woman."

"When you phoned, you said there was."

"Oh, Bridget," he said. "She's a girl, really."

"You're involved with girls now?"

Gregory didn't say a word. Maureen knew what he was doing. Breathing deeply, starting over, so the interruption wouldn't bother him. She liked that about him. She'd never seen him get angry or shout or scream, but he always insisted on explaining things his way.

Finally he said, "I'd work with the boys. Someone else would counsel the girls."

"So what's the problem?"

"There's a philanthropist who wants to give fifty million dollars to Providence Place so they can build a larger building."

"Doesn't seem like a problem," Maureen said, but she felt something tickle the back of her neck, much like what happened at the

office that morning. She lifted her hand to push aside whatever had touched her, but there was nothing there.

“The nuns who run Providence Place want to accept the money. But the kids somehow got word of it, and they’re in revolt.”

“Why?”

Gregory turned left onto a wider road. “They say he’s evil.”

“What’s his name?”

“You’ll see. He’ll be at the party.”

“Why do you care what the kids think?”

“They’ve got the nuns worried. They say kids sometimes sense things adults don’t.”

“And Bridget?” Maureen said.

“She’s their ringleader.”

Gregory turned left one more time, drove to the end of the street where it dead-ended at a tall rock wall, and pulled through an open gate. A two-story house, vaguely plantation in style, old and substantial, a mansion by anyone’s standards, stood before them, the structure and surrounding grounds brightly lit by floodlights.

Maureen said, “Is this Providence Place?”

“This is headquarters of a trust fund. They call it Trust House.”

Again Maureen felt something in her neck, but this time the warning didn’t puzzle her. She was beginning to form an idea, still fuzzy but getting clearer, about what was going to happen. The man had been on her mind all day.

Gregory surrendered the car keys to a guy with a pink Mohawk, valet parking their only option. Maureen took his arm, and they walked down a flower-lined path at the side of the house, Gregory body’s swaying as his short and long leg alternated on the paving stones. She was exactly his height but knew she appeared taller. Five nine, tall for a woman but an advantage in what until recently was strictly a man’s business.

Sounds of a jazz band and a babble of voices floated in the air. They entered into a large garden at the rear of the house. Men and women, stood in clusters, drinks in hand, most wearing their work clothes—suits and ties for men, jackets and skirts for women. Then

Maureen saw the whole set-up, and despite herself something inside said, Wow!

Stunning cascades of purple, red, and pink bougainvillea vines grew up sides of the house and spilled over walls. Small electric lights twinkled overhead. Gas torches illuminated trees and bamboo stalks in the shadows. A scene from a fairy tale.

Before the dragon arrived. The thought came out of nowhere.

“There he is,” Go said. “The man I want you to tell the nuns is OK.”

Roland Pettigrew walked toward them, glasses of something bubbly in each hand, his arms held high and away from his body, as if in greeting. Midas Man. The last man on earth Maureen wanted to see. Or talk with. Even be close to. She’d flown a thousand miles to meet him?

## Chapter Two

Pettigrew looked older and smaller than his photographs. Early to mid-fifties, thin gray hair combed back at the sides, a cream silk blazer over a lavender shirt open at the neck. Physically frail. Even so, there was an aura of power about him. Maureen thought of Aristotle Onassis.

Why here of all places? Pettigrew's corporate holdings were scattered across the country. Then, from somewhere deep in her mind where not-yet-useful information was stored, Maureen remembered his holding company was headquartered in South Florida. No wonder her neck tingled. She'd been talking about him back in New York.

Go said, "He must have been waiting for us."

"Looks like it." Damned obvious, in fact.

"Have you met him before?"

"Never. But I've heard a lot about him."

Oh yes, Maureen knew all about Roland Pettigrew. A shark, a manipulator, a Wall Street operator who skated on the edges of the law. Probably shot right over them, but nobody had caught him yet. Magazines and television shows usually referred to him as a brilliant billionaire philanthropist. They had it backwards. He'd started with a charitable trust fund of a few hundred million, and built it into a billion-dollar powerhouse. Along the way he'd made himself a fortune.

Ruthless. Everybody on Wall Street said that about him. He bought and sold corporations like Monopoly pieces, gutted them, and forced once-profitable companies into bankruptcy. Or sent their assets and jobs overseas. Populations of whole towns were left unemployed, their divorce and suicide rates climbing, the pain and suffering reaching into every home. All completely legal, and no one could stop him. Not

that anyone on The Street wanted to interfere. Just give them a share of the millions to be made, Maureen's firm included.

Already the party seemed less glamorous. Those drinks in the flat, wide stemware in Pettigrew's hands, for example. Champagne, probably, but being served in the wrong glasses. Punch glasses, for God's sake. Somebody had no taste. Pettigrew, probably. Or someone he'd hired.

A big woman in a modern nun's habit—gray and white, the skirt at mid-calf and a sheer black veil on the back of her head—crossed Pettigrew's path. He stopped abruptly, and liquid spilled from the glasses. Pettigrew smiled, let the nun pass, then did a little dance step that ended with a foot stopping just short of her rump. People around them laughed, but by the time the woman turned to see what the laughter was about, Pettigrew had resumed his journey.

"They say he likes to kid around," Gregory said.

This could be a very long party, Maureen thought, Go already making excuses for the man, me biting my tongue.

Pettigrew reached them, handed her one of the glasses, and said he'd always wanted to meet her. The same thing all company officials said when Maureen showed up to question them. "When the nuns told me you were coming, I said, 'Wonderful.'"

Maureen looked toward Gregory, knowing only he could have tipped them off, but Go was looking away, holding up his palm toward Pettigrew, rejecting the other glass of champagne in Midas Man's hand. Pettigrew knew, she thought. His gesture was so half-hearted he knew Gregory would refuse the drink. How?

"And I've heard about you." Maureen's standard answer.

His smile. Good God! Practiced, calculated to charm, but a hundred percent phony. Then she noticed his thin white mustache. Another strike against him.

Maureen had theories about facial hair. Men with beards have something to hide. Men with mustaches are invariably vain. Also: The more of his face a bearded man concealed, the more secrets he had. And the vanity of mustached men? You could take it to the bank. She'd

seen her father looking in the bathroom mirror, admiring himself as he trimmed the tiny bit of hair on his lip.

“You’re quite a TV star,” Pettigrew said. “CNBC, CNN, Lou Rukeyser’s show. And now that I see how attractive you are—”

“It’s part of the job.” Maureen always cut them off when they sucked up with phony compliments. She felt the same way about make-up as she did hair styling. A little pink blush on her cheeks in the morning, a minimum of eye shadow and brow pencil, and that was that. Let other women try to make it on looks. She’d stick with brains and hard work. When people called her gorgeous, as they did from time to time, she pretended she hadn’t heard them.

“And now you’ve come to check me out.” Pettigrew let the words ease from his mouth. Again, the no-caret smile.

“Gregory wanted me to meet you.”

“I’ve known Mo since we were children,” Gregory said. “She helped nurse me through polio when I was a kid.”

Pettigrew studied him. “I didn’t know anybody in this country got polio anymore.”

“A fluke. There was a weird set of circumstances, and I didn’t get the vaccine.”

“Pity.” Pettigrew turned back to Maureen. “Anything I can do to help your research, please let me know.”

Gregory said, “Maybe Luther and Kennedy could help her.”

Pettigrew frowned. “Somebody who works for the holding company would be better.”

His words came out so quickly that Maureen knew if she ever wanted to learn Pettigrew’s secrets, her first step would be to talk to Luther and Kennedy. Whoever they were.

Gregory said he wanted to talk with the nuns, and Maureen motioned him to go ahead. Pretty obvious he wants to leave the two of us alone, Maureen thought, but who cares? Sooner or later she’d have met Midas Man somewhere.

Now there were only the two of them, a billionaire and a Wall Street skeptic standing in the middle of a party, no one else near. Maureen could see it as a movie, the camera somewhere above, the

crowd around them out of focus. How this came out depended on what sort of film this was. A western duel, a thriller, an adventure in the jungle? She decided to let Pettigrew pick the plot, at least the way the story began. *You can learn a lot by listening.* Who had told her that first? Her mother? Her father? Or had she discovered it herself?

Pettigrew touched his throat, put a hand to his mouth, then lowered it as he sipped champagne. Why so nervous? Maureen wondered. Surely the powerful Midas Man couldn't be worried about a lone analyst coming to town. Former analyst, actually.

"Do you plan to stay here long?" he asked.

"As long as necessary."

"I imagine you'll stay longer than you think. This is when spring arrives down here."

So they talked about the weather and the market, Maureen knowing considerably more was going on between them. Pettigrew was studying her, not even trying to hide his appraisal, a human calculator at work behind steel-blue eyes. Was she friend or foe? Could she be bought? Could she be scared away?

She knew what was coming next. She'd heard it before.

"Years as an investigative reporter, then straight into stock analysis." Pettigrew said. "You can't possibly understand finance."

"I've learned how to find out the truth. I do a lot more on-the-scene investigation than most analysts, and if I run into problems on financial sheets, I know a dozen people who'll help me," she said. "And remember it wasn't an MBA analyst who first caught on to Enron. It was a writer from *Fortune*."

Pettigrew leaned closer and lowered his voice. "Fuck with me, and you'll be sorry

"Better men than you have told me that. None have frightened me off."

"None had the clout I have. I could destroy you."

"Or maybe you'd be the one—" Maureen searched for a different word. "Demolished."

"Don't sell me short."

Maureen heard his words, but something didn't compute. Pettigrew's voice came out too gruffly, like a boy covering up fear. Why?

"Or you me," she said, intending to leave it at that. But remnants of the conversation she'd had earlier in the day were lodged in her head, and she abandoned professionalism. "Do you ever think about the results of your actions? The jobs lost. The town's destroyed."

Midas Man looked at her as if he'd never been asked the question. Further, it wasn't a question worth answering. "Our job is to make profits. We do a good job of that."

A textbook answer, Maureen thought. One she couldn't argue with under most circumstances. "But you and your Trust are supposed to be helping people."

Pettigrew shook his head, straightened up, and stepped back. "Duty calls."

"Don't let me keep you."

"Don't forget. You'll be sorry if you mess with me."

Pettigrew walked away, Maureen looking at his back, thinking mustached men must have a lot to hide, too. Especially ones who're so nervous. Why? Why is such a powerful man so insecure he must make childish threats? What was Midas Man afraid of?

Should she tell Go about Pettigrew's threat? Probably not. She wasn't worried, so why bother him? Too bad the nuns hadn't heard the exchange, though. It'd have shown them what their potential benefactor was really like.

## Chapter Three

About an hour later, Maureen and Gregory were walking through the garden toward the path they'd used to enter it. Maureen had had enough of the party and the people she'd met, and when she told Gregory she wanted to leave he didn't object. They'd seen some things neither could have expected, but Maureen wasn't going to get involved. This hadn't been a party; it was a circus. Or maybe a zoo, with the animals roaming wild. But none of it was any of her business. All she wanted to do now was find a hotel, get a hot shower, and sleep ten hours.

The flashing lights of police cars someone had called flickered through the mansion, entering front windows and leaving through the tall glass doors that opened into the garden. All the more reason to leave. They reached the lagoon Maureen had walked around earlier.

Gregory pointed. "Look."

But Maureen had already seen it. Something pink lay among the hyacinths ten to fifteen feet from shore. A pink beach towel simmering below the surface, she thought at first. No, not as substantial as that. A piece of light cloth. Like a frilly dress. That was it. A woman floating on her stomach, face down, almost still.

And then Maureen remembered. She'd seen the dress and met the woman at the party. Grace Pettigrew, Midas Man's former wife. His second ex, someone had said. The woman who'd heckled Pettigrew in front of the television cameras. The woman who'd been invited to the party only because of her lifetime appointment as a trustee of Providence Place. Dead. Maureen was sure of it.

Gregory jumped into the shallow water of the lagoon, his feet sinking into the slime, his body looking shorter. He sloshed toward Grace, every step an obvious effort, the floating hyacinths slowing him. He bent down and tried to spread the plants apart with his hands, but they sprang back into his path. He leaned forward and plunged ahead.

Maureen thought of getting into the water, too, but stopped herself. She knew Go could drag Grace's body to the shore by himself, then attempt to revive her with one of the respiration techniques he'd learned in nursing. Her job was to stand back and stay dry until he asked for help. No use calling 9-1-1. The cops were already at the front of the house and would be at the lagoon in minutes. They could call medics quicker than she could.

Finally Gregory got to Grace, reached out, and put his hands on her shoulders. Her body slipped deeper below the surface. Try again, try again, Maureen's thoughts yelled but she knew Gregory would anyway. He stuck an arm deep into the water, worked it under Grace's back, put his other arm over her chest, and pulled upward. Grace rolled over on her back but fell deeper into the hyacinths.

Maureen became vaguely aware that other people had reached the edge of the lagoon and stood on either side of her now. Someone jumped into the pond and splashed toward Gregory, shouting "Hold her up." Kennedy. Yes, that was his name. He'd said he was Midas Man's chauffeur but acted as if he were much more important. Well spoken. Knowledgeable. Likeable. But something mysterious about him, too.

Now Maureen saw Gregory point in her direction, and the other man seemed to understand. They began pulling Grace toward shore, but her body insisted on sinking. The voices on either side of Maureen grew louder. She looked along the edge of the lagoon, and saw the television crews, the ones that had been there for Pettigrew's speech, every camera lens pointed toward Gregory and Kennedy and Grace now, their microphones on booms reaching over water. How long had they been there?

Suddenly the water filled with blue uniforms, cops splashing toward Grace's body, Gregory and Kennedy in their way, one cop yelling, "Leave her alone." The two men held Grace above the water

until the police reached them, then waded toward shore. Maureen put her hand out, braced herself, and helped Gregory up.

He said, "Let's get out of here."

"I doubt they'll let us leave."

A man in civilian clothes, suit and tie, but something about him saying cop, pushed his way through the cameras. "What happened?"

"We found her floating there," Maureen said. Stupid thing to say maybe, but that's what came to her mind.

"Suppose you come along, and tell me all about it." He looked at Gregory's wet clothes. "Both of you."

"OK. But then we leave." Set some limits, Maureen was thinking.

"You'll leave when I say you can."

Maureen saw the cameras focus on the cop, on Gregory, and on her, then swing back to the uniformed men around Grace's floating body. She could see the future. She and Gregory and the police and poor Grace's body were going to be on the eleven o'clock news all over South Florida. Pettigrew's little speech and all the rest would be eclipsed by the discovery of his ex-wife's body and the arrival of the cops.

Then it hit her. Not just in South Florida. New York and the rest of the nation, too. How could the networks resist? A billionaire, a Wall Street figure of some repute, and a drowning, maybe a murder. The networks would love it. On the other hand, her partners in New York...

They'd hate it. Absolutely hate it. To hell with them. She hadn't done anything wrong.

In this novel of money, murder, and postponed romance, author Jack Nease combines an insider's knowledge of Wall Street with a colorful rendering of the South Florida scene to reveal what can happen when no one is following the money.

Day and Night, Forever

**Buy The Complete Version of This Book at  
Booklocker.com:**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/2505.html?s=pdf>