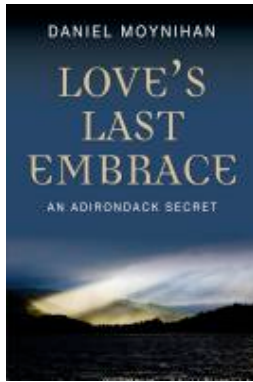


DANIEL MOYNIHAN

# LOVE'S LAST EMBRACE

AN ADIRONDACK SECRET





*In this pulse-pounding sequel to *Time In The Mist* and *Dreamscape*, Tom and Lindsey Miller's Central Adirondack home on Fourth Lake is broken into by militant soldiers from mainland China. What secrets do the Millers hide that would make a Chinese leader so desperate to uncover? As the world is rocked with earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and wars, the Millers must once again learn to adapt and survive while being pursued by an unrelenting Chinese general.*

## **Love's Last Embrace**

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**Love's Last Embrace**  
**An Adirondack Secret**

**A Novel by Daniel Moynihan**

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# 1

Tom Miller held his 14-month-old daughter on the shore of his Fourth Lake home and pointed to the other side. “Do you see that, Mary? Nothing but the color gray over there. That’s all you will see until it snows. We call October “stick season”. All the leaves are gone, and everything is dull. In April or so, it will all be green again.” His daughter simply turned in his arms and looked at him with a smile. “It’s okay though, it’s still prettier than anything you would ever see in the city, that’s for sure. Just don’t tell your mom I said so.”

“Don’t tell me what?” asked Lindsey Miller as she came up behind him.

“Uh oh, busted,” whispered Tom into Mary’s ear. Turning to his wife, he said, “I was telling our darling daughter that even though we have entered into the drab colors of stick season, it is prettier than what she will see in any city.”

“Well now,” replied Lindsey as she took Mary from her husband’s arms, “there was a time I would have argued with you. But I think you are well aware that I see things differently nowadays.”

“You’re right,” replied Tom. “You are no longer the city slicker I married.”

“Sixteen years living in historical times will do that to you,” she said, smiling. “I’m going to feed her one more time. Then hopefully she will fall asleep when we start the trip.”

“Okay,” replied Tom. “The car is all packed. I’ll be inside in a minute.”

Tom turned to look out at the lake. *I’m going to miss this place*, he thought. He tried to envision the drive to California. Lindsey’s sister lived just outside of San Diego. She had not seen the baby yet, and Lindsey had been campaigning for a nice long vacation drive out there for the past six months. Now that the busy summer/fall real estate season was over for him, he had no more excuses. He was doing well at selling properties. Lindsey had stopped teaching at the Town of Webb School after she gave birth to Mary. Tom was making more than enough money, so financially it did not matter whether she worked or not. In addition, they had sold off some of the land they had acquired from Charles. This had given them more than an adequate nest egg.

Charles. The thought of the angel who looked like an old man brought back a flood of memories for Tom. It had only been two autumns ago that he and Lindsey had left their stress-filled jobs in Rochester to come for a week’s vacation in Old Forge. On their very first day, they had been walking from the Water’s Edge Hotel to the Marina when they had ambled into the morning mist coming off Old Forge Pond. They were consumed by the thickness of the mist as well as the sparkling colors and heavenly aroma all around them. When the mist rose they found they were in 1898. It was then that an old man dressed in a red-and-blue plaid shirt identified himself as Charles. He was in fact an angel of The Lord appearing in a form they could relate to. They found out later the angel’s heavenly name was Golius.

Lindsey had been in such shock that she was sick for nearly two days, and would not speak to Tom, seemingly blaming him for their predicament. Lindsey had been raised in Manhattan and came to Old Forge on vacation once a year only on the insistence of her husband. However, when Tom was been beaten to a pulp by a town bully named Pierre LeClair and an accomplice, Lindsey snapped out her funk. From then on they both did what they needed to do to make a living and

survive, initially believing their stay in the old era was to be short lived.

His thoughts were interrupted by the sound of a motorboat sputtering to an idle engine sound. Looking out, he saw the boat had stopped about 100 feet out from shore. He could see two men in business suits staring at him. One had a set of binoculars. As he squinted his eyes, it appeared to him that they were both Asian. *I wonder what they want*, he thought. He reached out with his right hand and gave them a vigorous wave. In return, the two mysterious men kicked the boat back into gear and sped away.

Shaking his head, Tom grabbed a flat stone and, flicking his wrist, whipped it out into Forth Lake. He was pleased that he counted five skips through the sluggish waves. *Who the heck goes boating in a business suit? Didn't seem too friendly*. Continuing his travels down memory lane, he thought to himself how his and Lindsey's time in the past had indeed not been short. In reality, they were there from 1898 until 1914, when they were just as unexpectedly transported back to their own time in 2012. Incredibly, they found out that only seconds had occurred in 2012 during the time they had spent sixteen years in the past.

During their time in historic Old Forge, Tom had become a successful logging mill mechanic for all of the regional mills and eventually became the Old Forge Mill manager. Lindsey had become a grade school and high school teacher. She also bore their first child, Rebecca.

Tom took a deep breath. Even now, the thought of Rebecca still made both of them misty. She had been born in 1901. When they transported back to their era in 2012, Rebecca had not been with them. This had caused great anxiety and panic for both of them. The angel 'Charles' had once again appeared to them, and told them that Rebecca had died in 1930, after being a missionary to China. He assured them that their daughter was enjoying a blissful existence in the Kingdom of Heaven, and that she looked forward to when her loving parents would

join her. Charles had given them a book chronicling the history of the central Adirondacks. Within this book were several pictures from the era they had spent in historic Old Forge. One of them was a picture of the school building volunteers in 1907 that included a faint picture of Tom, Lindsey and Becky, as they liked to call her.

Even better, upon their return Lindsey remembered that Becky had buried a time capsule as part of a school project. Within the capsule was a professional family picture that had been taken. After retrieving the photo, it was framed and given a place of prominence on the fireplace mantle. Since Tom and Lindsey had declared to each other they would tell no one what had happened to them, it was always difficult to explain to visitors why they had an old-fashioned picture taken of them with what seemed to be a strange child. People assumed they had had an 'Old West' picture taken at the State Fair...but who is the child?

Tom walked into the house. Since the picture was on his mind, his eyes drifted over to the fireplace mantle. He took a deep breath as he stared at the family picture. *You are something, Lord.* Looking into the kitchen Lindsey was just pulling Mary out of the high chair. "We are just about ready to go. As I said, let's hope she falls asleep for a while."

"You know," said Tom. "We should stop at the Candy Cottage on the way out of Old Forge. Mary would love some of their Coconut Clusters a little later."

"Oh really. Mary would, huh?"

Tom laughed. Changing the subject, he said, "Linds, I just saw two Asian-looking guys looking at our place with binoculars from a boat. When I waved, they took off. Seemed kind of weird, they were boating with business suits on."

Lindsey turned around. "Come to think of it, I saw them yesterday when I was sitting out on the dock with Mary. They drove by slowly, glaring at me while they passed. I thought it seemed weird too. Two



guys who were way overdressed for the lake. I figured they must be interested in our property; I mean, we have already had three people want to buy us out in the past year.”

Tom threw his hands up in the air. “Yeah, what does it take to let people know we don’t want to sell? I know we have a pristine spot, but back off already, we like it here. Even my fellow realtors keep telling me I could make a fortune by selling. Hello...I know that! Leave us alone already. I hope these guys don’t buy any property near us, they looked cranky to me. I mean, business suits on the lake? Lighten up already!”

As the Millers’ fully packed Ford Explorer took a right out of the driveway on to the South Shore road, two men dressed in black were watching from the bushes across the road. “It appears they have left for a while, perhaps for the weekend,” said Chin Po, the younger of the two, with an excited smile.

“Then our plans have changed, at least for the time being,” replied Kwan Luck. “I knew we should have grabbed the woman yesterday. I should always remember to follow my first instincts.” Putting the binoculars down, he looked at his accomplice. “No matter. We shall examine their home completely and see if there is anything that will please the General. Then we will wait for their return. Our interrogation of both of them will then commence.”

“What about the baby?”

Kwan Luck sneered. “After we get our answers none of them can be allowed to live. An unfortunate casualty of events, I’m afraid.”

The training of the skilled intruders made access to the Miller home uneventful. Chin Po scanned the living room. “Look,” he said as he pointed to the fireplace mantle. Kwan Luck looked at the picture and smiled. “The General will be pleased. Keep looking.”

An hour went by, and Po saw his boss come out of the bedroom with the sneer he had become accustomed to seeing. He was holding a book and a manila envelope. "Yes," said Luck holding up his find, "General Tang will be pleased indeed."

By the time they drove past Utica, Mary was indeed fast asleep. Tom popped another Coconut Cluster in his mouth as he turned the music down. "Linds, when you went in to feed Mary, I thought about Charles for a while. In fact, I was playing everything about those sixteen years over again in my head."

"What brought that on?"

"I don't know. I guess I was thinking about how Charles gave us the land. Well, to be precise, the land that we bought and gave to him, and then he gave to us again once it was worth something ninety-eight years later."

Lindsey chuckled. "You mean the land that everyone now seems to want us to sell. Hey, I thought we weren't going to strain our brains anymore on how all this could have possibly happened. We just know it did and that's it."

"Yeah, I think as I was playing with Mary I started thinking about how we are going to tell her all about this...I mean, how do we tell her she has a sister who died in 1930?"

Lindsey looked out the window. "Well, again, she is the only one we ever will tell. She deserves to know. And once she is old enough to understand, I think we have enough evidence to convince her it is all true."

"Yep. We have several copies of the historical Old Forge book with our picture near the school. We have the time capsule stuff, including the family picture on our mantle. And of course, we have already given her Becky's doll Molly..."

Lindsey sighed. "It is so surreal when I see her with that. She doesn't look exactly like Becky did when she was just over the age of one, but she looks darn close."

"Becky would be thrilled to know she finally has a sister to play with it."

"I think she knows."

"I think so too."

There was silence for a while. Then Tom said, "Hey, could you reach back into the cooler and get me an 'Uncle Herman's Root Beer'?"

Lindsey smiled. "Sure. That sounds good. Think I'll have one too."

Tom took a swig and laughed. "I still wonder what old Herman would think about his root beer being sold all over New York State, and now even in parts of Pennsylvania. He held that recipe so tight to the vest. He never gave it to me, only to Becky once we were gone; I'm so glad she added it to the time capsule."

"I think he'd be thrilled. I remember watching him every time someone tried it for the first time. He had a beaming look of satisfaction on his face whenever anyone said it was the best they ever had, which was often."

"I think you're right, Linds...I think you're right."

Lindsey took open the bottle of root beer and took a quick swig. "Tom, I've been thinking. When we do tell Mary, I want to be thorough. I even think we should go to the cemetery and show her the gravesites of some of our closest friends. We should tell her about our good friends Ray and Betty, and how we met them at the Mission church, and how that came to be our church. Of course we will tell

them about all about Herman and Beatrice and the Forge House, the root beer, and all of that.”

“How about Herman’s antler chandelier?”

Lindsey rolled her eyes. “Some things I think we can gloss over.”

“Well,” Tom said, “You know how I’m going to have to tell her how her mom beat up the town bully, Pierre LeClair, by using an iron shovel like Thor uses his hammer.”

“Cute,” responded Lindsey. “Good thing I’ll be around to put perspective on that story.”

They got as far as Erie, Pennsylvania. Tom had been hoping they could make Cleveland, but Mary woke up hungry as they passed through Buffalo. Stopping at a Marriott Courtyard, Tom went next door to get takeout from an Outback Steak House while Lindsey fed Mary. As they ate dinner, Tom continued the discussion they had started earlier on the ride. “So, as far as telling Mary about the people in historic Old Forge, will you ever tell her that she is not really named after your mother, but that she is really name after Mary Dupont, someone that was not exactly your BFF when you first met?”

Lindsey chuckled. “She is actually named after both, but of course my mom doesn’t know that, and it’s just as well. I will certainly tell her all about Mary Dupont. She is such an example of someone who completely changed upon coming to know Christ. And to be fair, I changed as well. My attitude towards her wasn’t the best in the beginning either.”

After a good night’s sleep, the Miller family continued their cross-country trek on a warm October Saturday. “Funny, said Tom, “I’ve been to California three times but never to San Diego. It’s going to be interesting to look around.”

“I am looking forward to hanging by the ocean for a while,” responded Lindsey.

“Can’t wait to see the San Diego Zoo. We are going to need a full day, from what I hear.”

“Or as long as Mary will hold out,” replied Lindsey. “We can rent a stroller there, at least. I am sure we will get some alone time too, Julie has already said she wants to babysit so we can go out one night.”

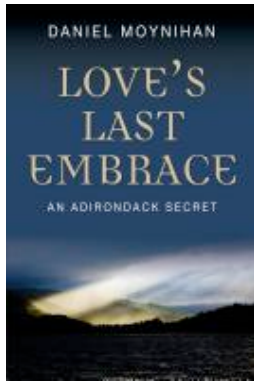
It was a full day of driving. Tom was hoping by the end of day two to at least get to St. Louis. They actually made it a few hours past that. At 9:00 P.M. they were starting to get weary on Route 44 in Missouri. “Ok gadget girl, put that Smartphone to good use. I’m about ready for a hotel now.”

“Hey, come on,” protested Lindsey. “I’m not as hooked on electronics as I was before our journey to the past. Not nearly as much. Take it back.”

“Okay. You’re right. You are not nearly as obsessed as you were. I will grant you that. But you are still good at using them.”

Lindsey shook her head. “Good. You better backtrack on that one. Anyway, I see there is a Hampton Inn about three miles ahead. Some little town called St. Robert.”

“Okay. If they have an opening we’ll stay there tonight.”



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