

A man searches for truth. Life tells him lies. The man finds the God of Love in the pain of life.

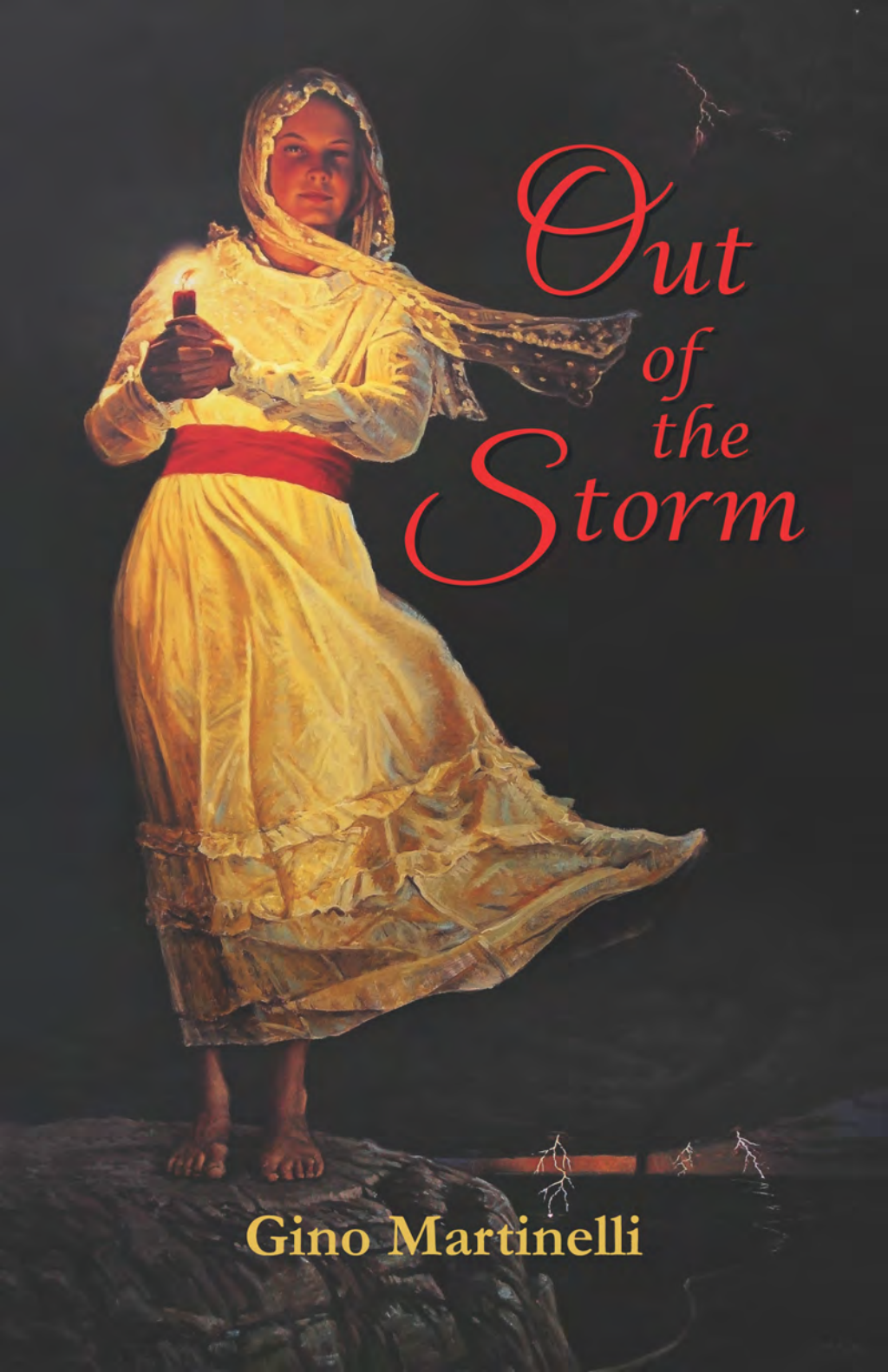
Out of the Storm: Book 1 - Fever

By Gino Martinelli

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A woman in a white, long-sleeved dress with a red sash and a white headscarf stands on a dark, rocky outcrop. She holds a lit candle in her right hand, which illuminates her face and the folds of her dress. The background is dark and stormy, with faint lightning bolts visible in the distance. The title 'Out of the Storm' is written in a large, red, cursive font on the right side of the image.

*Out
of
the
Storm*

Gino Martinelli

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Chapter 4

The front steps of the library during the centennial year of the New Oxon Upper School (founded in 1736) had recently been covered in white marble. Tall Corinthian columns supported a gabled roof with walls of red brick and mortar. A typical upper-class boarding school in upstate New York. The year was 1836.

Walking toward the library on the sidewalk was a beautiful, dark-haired Jewess with olive skin and piercing green eyes. Her name was Sophie Namath.

Off to the side of the front steps were three young men: Jeremiah Belmont, Lamentations Fossellman, and William Dodd. Jeremiah and Lamentations came from wealthy Jewish families and had been close friends since birth. Jeremiah, who had bushy black hair and a mildly transparent complexion, was just slightly below average height. His face was strikingly friendly and his eyes welcoming. Lamentations also had curly hair, but it was more on the brownish side; he was a bit pudgy with a more Middle Eastern complexion. Bill Dodd was a tall, handsome young man of Anglo-Saxon descent whose blond hair was long and well-coifed. They were all bantering about being upper-classmen this new school year and discussing everything they planned to accomplish.

All three became entranced by Sophie as she approached. Looking straight ahead, she paid them no

mind. They stopped their discussions and watched her continue to walk forcefully toward them.

Bill said, "Oh, my! Who is that?"

"Her name is Sophie Namath," said Lamentations. "I found out—yes, Bill, I have ways—a day or so ago when I first saw her. I intend to pursue her affections. Her eyes are so inviting—deep, yet transparent, even though she has not noticed me at all."

At that point, Sophie walked by, still not acknowledging them. Bill took a step toward Lamentations.

With a self-confident smile, Bill announced, "Well, Lam...I guess Sophie will just have to choose one of us since I will also pursue her affections. I know what is behind those eyes. I know what Sophie is thinking. I guarantee she noticed we were staring at her and talking about her. Her eyes tricked you, not me."

Jeremiah just kept staring at Sophie as she was walking away. He seemed to be profoundly affected.

He said to no one in particular, "Does she not seem as fragile as china to you both? On the other hand, she seems to be hiding some kind of strength as well. I believe both of you will never know for sure what she is thinking. I wager she is conscious of the way men perceive her and takes advantage of our slightest doubts. She is aware of the power that lays hidden in her eyes. I must say, she reminds me of Rachel."

"Ha-ha! She does not look anything like Rachel," said Lamentations. "By the way, do you know

what happened to Rachel? So many of our New Oxon classmates are not here anymore, and I have not seen her.”

Bill responded, “I believe she came down with some kind of illness a couple of years ago.”

“She did?” Jeremiah turned toward Bill quickly. Then he dropped his head to his chest and sighed. “Hmm...”

Bill turned to Lam with a big smile. “Lam, shall we make a wager on who wins Sophie’s heart?”

Jeremiah raised both arms in the air, shaking his head at Bill. “Bill, offering a wager like that is despicable.”

“Explain,” demanded Bill.

Lamentations stepped in. “Yes, Jeremiah. What is wrong with a little friendly bet?”

“Lam, do you remember Bill’s first day at school?” Jeremiah asked.

“Yes.”

“You introduced him as ‘a great actor.’”

“Yes, and if I remember correctly, he predicted he would win the lead part in the spring play,” Lamentations reminded him.

“Yes, that he did,” Jeremiah admitted. “But—”

“And if I remember correctly, Jeremiah, he actually *did* win that part, did he not?”

Jeremiah tensed up and shook his head slightly while clenching his teeth. “But if you remember, when you introduced him to me, he was far more interested in Rachel than even shaking my hand. You remember that?”

“And you find fault in seeing a beautiful girl and showing some interest in her?” Bill asked incredulously.

Jeremiah spun away from Lamentations and shoved his face closer to Bill’s. “I am not speaking to that point. I am speaking about how much like a cad you were with Rachel when she rebuffed your advances.”

“I merely kissed her hand and asked if she wanted to take a stroll with me. When she preferred not to, I simply bid her, ‘Good day, m’lady.’”

Lamentations grabbed Jeremiah by the shoulders and pulled him back. “Uh...Bill, that is not quite what happened. If you remember, I introduced you to Rachel as the next lead of the school play. She seemed to register a little doubt about that claim. That is when you said something about how little talent there was to compete against here at Oxon.”

Jeremiah added, “Correct. And *that* is when you asked to take a private ‘stroll,’ as you call it, with her. To which she said, ‘No, thank you.’”

“Well, Jeremiah...I remember Bill telling her that he regretted her making that choice,” Lamentations pointed out.

Bill started laughing. “Oh...come now, boys. What is this all about anyway? All is fair in matters of love.” He walked over to Lamentations, put his arm around his shoulders, and started walking off with him. “Lam, now, how much are we going to make this worth?”

Jeremiah shook his head in disgust as they walked off.

Chapter 5

It was one of those lazy afternoons in the fall when the temperature outside was warm enough to forget about jackets and mufflers. Most relished the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors just before the ominous winter arrived as the new jailkeeper. Walker Pond, a small body of dark hazel water due to its isolation from a flowing stream, was surrounded by trees just starting to turn. The leaves were tinted in amber, crimson, and yellow. The crisp wind filled Lamentation and Sophie's senses with the aromas of autumn as they walked around the pathway surrounding the pond. Lam was too busy scheming how to get Sophie to agree to let him read a poem about her to engage in normal conversation. Suddenly, Lam stopped walking and noticed a bench that was also overlooking the pond. This was his opportunity.

Sophie walked a few more steps, stopped, craned her neck, and looked back at him, eyes narrowed.

"Sophie? May we sit for a moment?" he asked, pointing to the bench.

"Well...okay."

"I have written a poem about you. May I read it?"

Sophie looked away and sighed ever so slightly. Then she looked at the bench while Lamentations sat down. He patted the bench and looked at her, eyes

wide, both palms up and pointing to the bench seat. She stayed put.

Lam, undaunted, began to read his poem.

“Oh, deep beauty, why do you hide?

Why do you keep yourself from my sight?

*In the mountains, in the sheltered
meadows*

I can almost touch you. When I—”

“Lam! We have known each other for only a few weeks! How could you know enough about me to write something like that?”

“Well, you seem to be hiding something behind that beautiful face. It inspired me. Do you not like it?” He paused, his face reflecting mild hurt. “Please, Sophie, allow me to finish. And please, come sit down with me.”

Sophie took a deep breath and walked quickly over to the bench and sat down, crossing her arms. Then, Lamentations looked back down at the paper to find his place.

“Ah yes, here we are...

When I lay my head in my hands

I see the clouds in their sphere

Roiling chaotically without bound

The stream nearby

With its comforting whisper

*Gives a peace that no one has found,
save me*

The grass so soft, that life-giving source

Comforts my body, without cost

Fever

*This is the essence of love and beauty
To come without price, without duty
Oh, beauty, why do you hide?
Ah, it hides not! In you, it resides.”*

Sophie looked at Lam eyes wide, mouth agape, shaking her head. She was speechless.

Chapter 6

Bill came to Sophie's dorm to invite her to go on a walk through the merchant district of the city. However, when she came down to the reception area, she wore a frown. There was a chill in the air outside and just a few straggling leaves left on the trees lining the street. Not a great day for a stroll. But after some consideration, since both Lam and Bill had an increasing interest in courting her, she decided that it would be fun to enjoy all the attention while it lasted. She went back to her room to get dressed warmly.

"I love to walk down here almost any time of the year," Bill said as they embarked on their stroll. "It is the commerce that makes the world go around. All these merchants and dealers of goods... It gives me gooseflesh sometimes." Bill stopped and spun around, arms in the air. "It really lifts my spirits just to walk around it."

Over the course of their walk, Sophie lost track of where they were but kept that to herself. She responded, "Is that so? Business activity makes you feel alive?"

"Quite! Without it, we would all still be in the dark ages."

Sophie stifled a chuckle.

"What? You think that is funny?"

Sophie wiped the smile off her face and stopped walking. "Well...to me, business activity is all about the hard work one must engage in to earn a living. I

do not think about it as an uplifting experience like you do.”

“Hmm. We will see about that.”

Suddenly, Bill stopped walking and looked to his left at the door of a jewelry store. He feigned surprise, pretending that their stopping there was quite a coincidence. “I don’t believe it!” He looked at Sophie, then back at the door, then opened the door for her and motioned for her to walk in. Sophie pulled back hesitantly, wondering what this was all about. Finally, she shrugged and walked in. They were immediately greeted by the proprietor.

“May I help you?”

Bill, without hesitation, announced, “I am looking for a silver necklace with an emerald medallion.”

“I think I have exactly what you are looking for!”

Sophie immediately saw that Bill and the proprietor were acting like they were rehearsing lines from a play.

The proprietor winked at Bill, went into the rear room, and came back with a small black case. With a big, knowing smile, he gave it to Bill with both hands as if handing him an award. Bill, in turn, handed it straight to Sophie without explanation. Sophie, astonished, was without words.

After a moment of awkward silence, Bill said, “Open it.”

She opened it slowly, reluctant to see what was inside. Then, unexplainably, a huge smile spread

across her face. She was excited. “It is beautiful, Bill. Who is it for?”

Bill arched back, astonished. Then he gathered his composure, along with a bit of enthusiasm. “It is for *you*, Sophie!”

Sophie took in a quick breath. “I, uh, I do not know what to say.”

Bill’s face oozed with pride. “Do you not think it lavish?”

“Ye...es. It is very nice.” Sophie was composed. “Now, why are you giving me this?”

“What do you mean, why? Is it not obvious?”

“No.” Sophie turned away from Bill, put her hand on one of the jewelry cases, and started to distractedly examine other jewelry.

“Sophie, why is it that you pretend not to know what my motivations are? I have expended time and resources for you. Yet, you act as if it were expected or an obligation to which I am indebted.” Bill patted his hand over his heart. “You never considered that there is something going on in here?”

“Bill, may we step outside, please?” She handed the necklace back to Bill, who returned it to the proprietor.

“Sure,” he agreed.

They excused themselves and walked back outside to the sidewalk.

“Bill, I have just started to become friends with you...you, Jeremiah, and Lam, yes?”

“Yes, but—”

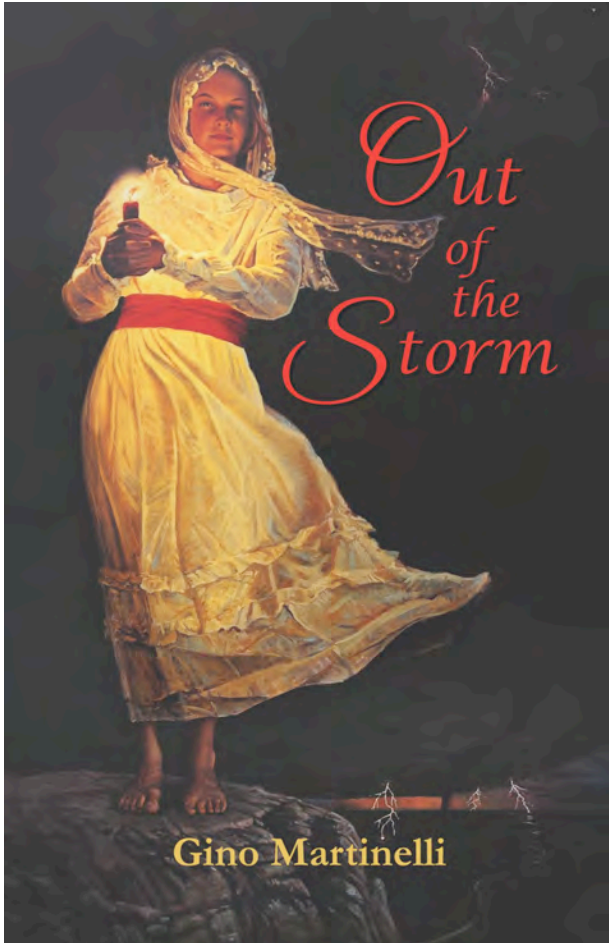
Sophie gently put her fingers to his mouth. “Just let me finish.” She paused to gather her

thoughts. “Yes, it is true. You have bought me an expensive gift. And indeed, I thank you for it. Many women would gladly exchange places with me for the affections I have received from men...er, I mean from you. Bill, you are a very handsome young man. To have someone like you pursuing me is a fantasy, really. I realize I am fortunate to be in the position I am in. But it...it...it is not enough.” She mulled those statements over, then shook her head. “No, those are wrong words. It does not fill me.” She imitated Bill’s previous motions, patting her hand over her heart with a look of hurt and compassion on her face. “The gift is wonderful, but it fills me not in the place where I am empty. Do you understand?”

Bill was crestfallen. Then, through slightly clenched teeth, he said, “You know, this cost me a lot of money. I had to make sacrifices, which I rarely do for just anyone. But I made a sacrifice for you. I made it because you are important to me. I need you to make *my* life complete. You fill that void in me that no one else can.”

Bill exhaled and turned away and looked down the street, now filled with shoppers. Sophie took a step toward him, her face again full of compassion. She smiled, turned his face toward hers, and gave him a kiss on the cheek. Then she put her arm through his.

“Oh, Bill. Will you ever understand me? I know that I am difficult. Sometimes I confuse myself. Do you know how frightening that can be? Maybe someday I will be better able to explain. Come with me! I have an idea.”



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