

Twins - International agents embark on missions of murder, intrigue and suspense with a little romance thrown in.

The Agency One

By Del Uvon Bates

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DEL UVON BATES

THE AGENCY-ONE



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Chapter 1

Our story begins in Malibu, California, where twins Elaine and Lou Richard are on track for an adventure of their lives. The siblings are returning to their beginnings in a conjoined bid to take a break from their exhilarating, yet secretive, lifestyles!

Nanny Brown, who practically raised the twins since infancy, is awaiting their arrival at the Richards' Southern California home. The compassionate and dedicated sixty-eight-year-old nursemaid has always handled the family's affairs. One of her most valuable qualities is her undying discretion. Nanny Brown has been safeguarding the secrets of the family for decades, including, if not most importantly, what the twins do for work.

You see, without knowing the truth, at first glance, Elaine and Lou seem like any other twenty-six year olds trying to figure out their young adult lives. However, underneath the cover, are two highly trained agents, each skilled in their own deceptive ways. Just two twin sisters working for The International Agency [TIA].

In an attempt to momentarily step away from their elaborate lives, the twins are planning to return home and go on a vacation together.

As always, Lou is the first to arrive. Religiously checking the time on her phone throughout the day, Lou maintains a strictly followed schedule. Her visit begins with a taste of nostalgia. Nanny greets Lou at the steps of the estate, as she has always done. A warm embrace by her childhood caretaker reminds Lou of the comforts of being home. “Surprise, surprise!” Lou says as she pulls away from Nanny. “Elaine is going to be arriving late.”

“The Agency?” Nanny sarcastically asks, already knowing the answer.

“Elaine is finishing up an investigation before she can officially take some time off,” Lou says as she takes Nanny by the hand, strolling into what appears to be a castle of a home.

Nanny guides Lou into the kitchen, insisting she eat something. “You’re too skinny, Lou. You need more meat on your bones,” Nanny says as she reaches into the oven, grabbing a warm batch of freshly baked muffins.

Lou scarfs one down, thinking, *There’s nothing like home cooking*, as the last bite slides down her throat and into her stomach. “I’m going to go freshen up in my room,” Lou tells Nanny, who is already walking toward the hallway where Lou’s bags are perched up against the wall.

“Please, Nanny,” Lou says as she lunges toward her bags, almost knocking Nanny Brown out of the way. “I’m quite capable and grown now. I can carry my things myself!”

Nanny smirks, replying, “You know why they call it luggage, right? Because you’ve got to lug it everywhere you go!” Laughing at her own joke, she asks Lou, “Are you sure you don’t want me to grab ‘em?”

Lou chuckles, responding, “No, Nanny, I’ve got it. You don’t have much help around here these days, do you?”

“Not since you and your sister were recruited by the TIA. They won’t allow me any extra help other than the maid, chef, and groundskeeper,” Nanny replied. Nanny, also bound to secrecy by the agency, can only work the property with limited secret cleared support personnel.

“We’ll have to change that. You shouldn’t be stuck doing all this work on your own,” Lou says, knowing how hard her childhood caretaker works to keep the house in order.

“Oh, no! The TIA has these rules for a reason Lou. Plus, your parents travel so often, there’s really not too much work to get done around here these days,” Nanny replies.

Lou smiles down at Nanny as she makes her way up the spiral staircase, bags in each hand. “Well, regardless of the agency’s policies, please keep what I said in mind. We can get you more help here if needed.”

After ascending the stairs, Lou walks into her room, tossing her suitcases onto the bench at the end of her large bed. Lou freshens up in her ensuite and then moves to sit on a chair beside an open window. She slowly runs her hands up her legs, smoothing the Coco Chanel body cream into her skin. Lou slips into something more comfortable, and makes her way downstairs, just in time to catch the sunset. Golden in its glory, Lou stares into the godly horizon remembering why she missed home.

As the sun sinks into the ocean, Lou thinks of Elaine, who is preoccupied by the duties of the Agency. She gives Elaine a call to check in.

“Hello?” Elaine says frantically as she answers her sister’s phone call.

“Well, hello Elaine, glad I called at a good time,” Lou jokingly responds back to Elaine. “Sorry, I didn’t mean to bother you when you’re busy. I just wanted to check in and see when you will be arriving home?”

Elaine lets out a stressful, yet sincere laugh. “Oh, Lou. It’s so good to hear from you. I’m going to be later than I anticipated.

The last mission went long. I'm just now getting back to Arizona so I can tie up some things with my latest property acquisition and feed Benny before I head to the airport."

"See, now what did I tell you about getting a cat? How do you expect to work for the TIA and maintain your busy cover as a real estate agent, all the while having a pet to look after? You're already too busy as it is," Lou says to Elaine who is rolling her eyes on the other end of the phone.

"Lou, with the crazy lives we live through the TIA, Benny is one of the few things that keep me grounded amid the chaos. He makes me feel like I'm a normal human, living a normal life," Elaine replies to Lou. "But I do wish I had Nanny here with me so I could get some of this stuff done faster."

Shortly, before being called away on her last mission, Elaine had invested in a new property. After purchasing some new furniture and knickknacks so the house could be staged, she hired a cleaning company to thoroughly sanitize it so it could be put on the market for resale. With the mission over, Elaine finds herself back in Arizona with several things commanding her attention.

"Alright, Lou. I'll give you or Nanny a call when I'm on my way to the airport. I've got to scramble to get things done here so Benny and I can make my flight. I love you, Bye for now," Elaine said.

“I love you too,” Lou says as she hangs up the phone. After nibbling on the World-Class crackers and cheese left out by Nanny, Lou makes her way inside. She finds Nanny alongside a wooden box labeled “imported” in the kitchen.

“What’s this?” Lou asks as her curiosity peaks.

“Wine,” Nanny replies. “A whole case of it. Mark Andrews heard you were coming home and brought over this case of mixed bottles earlier, including your favorite Sauvignon Blanc.”

Mark Andrews, one of Lou’s romantic interests, has been in love with her since the day they met in the 5th grade. “He was very disappointed earlier when you had not yet arrived...as was I,” Nanny tells Lou. “Mark said he would stop by a little later when they got home.”

Nanny pulls three bottles of wine from the case, asking Lou, “Would you like me to decant the 2013 Red Opus or uncork the 2019 Chardonnay or the Sauvignon Blanc? But, knowing you . . . I better whip up a martini.”

“You know me too well,” Lou replies, as she grabs a couple of glasses from the cabinet and sits back down to reminisce with Nanny. “You know, I remember when I was a young girl...I would sneak a sip of your martini when you weren’t looking. I always admired the way you seemed to know it all. You made

everything seem so sophisticated. I really wanted to be a woman you would approve of when I grew up. You taught me that brains, combined with class is the perfect recipe for a well-adjusted, independent person. I adore you for that!”

Nanny gives Lou a warm embrace. “You know how proud I am of you, right?” Nanny asks as she wipes away several tears that have made their way from her eyes. “Never stop being you, Lou. No one else does it better.”

With Elaine in Arizona, Nanny mentioned to Lou, “Whatever you do, when Elaine arrives, you must promise me that you will take a vacation together. Both of you have been working too long at TIA without a vacation. I can tell you from experience, TIA will take advantage of you if you allow them to. That is why I semi-retired, well at least from the University to become a Nanny for your parents. Others would say, working twenty-four seven is not their idea of retirement. To me, you twins are my children and I am what one might call a stand-in for your parents, plus I get paid for it.”

Lou looked at Nanny and asked, “Would you like to split the last bit of martini with me and then turn in for the night? I’ll leave a note for the maid to clean things up when she arrives in the morning.” They enjoyed the rest of their drink and joining hands went up to bed.

Chapter 2

Nanny was up early before the maid arrived, so she cleaned up last night's mess.

The maid entered the kitchen and Nanny instructed her to set up the casual food bar in the outdoor patio that faced the ocean. "Be sure and set out the silver dishes for cold food, as well as for hot serve. Probably service for four people just in case someone stops by. In the flower cooler you'll find there are several flower arrangements for the area. We should also open the bar for breakfast drinks."

About 8:30 a.m., Lou entered the kitchen giving Nanny a kiss on the cheek. She was immediately handed a cup of piping hot black coffee. Lou sat on the stool and proceeded to talk to Nanny as she whisked Lou's favorite pancake batter.

The cook arrived in time to take over the kitchen duties and sent Lou and Nanny out of his kitchen. "There is fresh coffee and whatever you want to pass the time, while I create food fit for queens," the cook said.

They all laughed as they made their way to the patio. They sat down and took a sip of their drinks and both said with a sigh, "Wish Elaine was here."

Nanny's cell phone rang and it was Elaine calling from Arizona. "Your ears must be burning? Lou and I just said we wished you were here."

Elaine replied with a smile in her voice, "I'll be flying out shortly to visit you. I called to tell you I'll fly into Santa Monica airport and TIA will have a car waiting. They have my itinerary should you need it and will inform you of my ETA."

Before she hung up, she remembered an earlier conversation she had with TIA, asking her to take a case. Elaine's cell phone rang the special ring only TIA had. The voice on the other end asked, "Are you able to answer our questions at this time?" Elaine softly answered, "Yes, but briefly." The voice continued, "We need you to handle a specific case (which meant...top secret with special circumstances)." Elaine said, "That can be arranged if I can do it while on vacation." They agreed.

"Lou, I can't wait to hear what you have decided about going on a trip with me. You'll have to travel my way instead of first class like you usually do. Little ole me cannot, for obvious reasons travel that way, as I have to be less conspicuous," Elaine laughed.

Elaine added, "Nanny, I have a message for you from Harry. He has a package of goodies from TIA (objects for self-security beyond physical contact). He'll be traveling with me."

Harry was a university professor where Nanny taught before semi-retirement. They both did work at the university for the TIA, collecting valuable information. Harry was always a part of the twin's life, as long as they could remember.

“Nanny, Harry would like to take you out for dinner this evening. Oh, the movers are here. Sorry, I have to go,” Elaine abruptly hung up.

Elaine was having boxes delivered to the turn-key home she had purchased in Arizona. She had them place the boxes in the specific rooms where she needed them to begin staging the home for sale.

Lou called Elaine back when she thought the movers would be finished and said, “With Nanny and Harry gone we have the house to ourselves and, my dear Elaine, it's time for fun and games for a day or two. After a couple of days at the estate, we can then start on our trip.”

Lou continued: “I checked the road map and I would like to travel along the California coast and up to Washington state where a friend of mine has a small cottage in Copalis Beach, WA. We can stay there awhile and see the Fourth of July festivities. I understand everyone who's anyone goes to the beach. There are lots of local food trucks, bands, and hopefully

we can make a new friend or two. On a different note, is Harry seeing that we have a car full of goodies?”

Elaine answered, “Of course he is.”

Lou continued with excitement, “We are traveling a long way and I hope to stop now and then to shop. You know I’m not the camper type, so a nice quiet hotel and good restaurants with great food will help make up for my traveling in a car.”

They both chuckled.

Lou mentioned to Elaine, “Your specialty as a forensic psychologist and criminal psychologist, must be the reason you are needed for that TIA case.”

Elaine replied, “Now Lou, you know we can’t discuss cases with each other! It should be a no brainer though.”

Lou didn’t tell Elaine that she was also on a case. Lou and Elaine, as twins, always seemed to sense when each other were involved in top secret activities (cases).

Lou was happy her specialties required undercover traveling in jets...first class all the way, of course. “The office thinks of me as an expert in foreign affairs or wealthy eye candy who takes notes and translates in many languages for the person she is

assigned to. I am expected to protect and keep my clients away from the media without alerting anyone that there is ‘more afoot than meets the eye.’ (to quote Sherlock). My work is top secret even to the person that is escorting me to fancy functions.” Lou said, “We’ll talk more about the trip when you get here.”

Lou’s assignment is to ascertain the whereabouts of Diane Lane.

Diane Lane also works for the TIA as a field agent. Diane had a hunch about an illegal activity (her gut feelings usually proved worthwhile). Diane did not want to disclose her hunch to her bosses, so she requested a vacation. Why she got this feeling she couldn’t explain to TIA just yet.

The day before she was due back in the office, she left an encrypted message stating she would be extending her leave for reasons she’d explain later. This request was received two weeks earlier. “Later” had not come as soon as TIA wanted. She wasn’t answering her phone and there was no signal coming from her tracer. Worried that Diane may be in trouble, they contacted Lou. Lou has been assigned to look into this critical situation concerning one of their important agents.

Diane lives in an apartment with a girl she met at a local hangout, The Purple Pub and Grill, in the area of Ocean Shores,

Washington. She will have to start her search there, hopefully, speaking with Diane's roommate.

TIA wished Diane had left some clue as to what she was being so secretive about. Lou has a chance of finding out while posing as a tourist with a friend while on holiday.

Elaine and Harry are on their way to California with Elaine piloting the jet. They land at the Santa Monica airport and make way to the terminal for private airplanes. Harry says to Elaine, "Wait till you see your transportation."

There, in their special parking space, was a Range Rover Sport Dynamic SE from England. Harry said, "I will explain some of its added features when we are on our way to your estate." They loaded the Rover and got the okay from security to leave for Malibu.

Elaine was all excited with the color of the "Dead Black" exterior paint on the Rover. This paint absorbs all light with no reflection. Elaine entered the vehicle and was truly surprised with the luxurious interior highlights. Twelve-way driver's seat and ten-way front passenger seat, heated front seats, ebony-grained leather seats, auto high beam assist, led headlights with signature DLR, adaptive cruise control, and keyless entry.

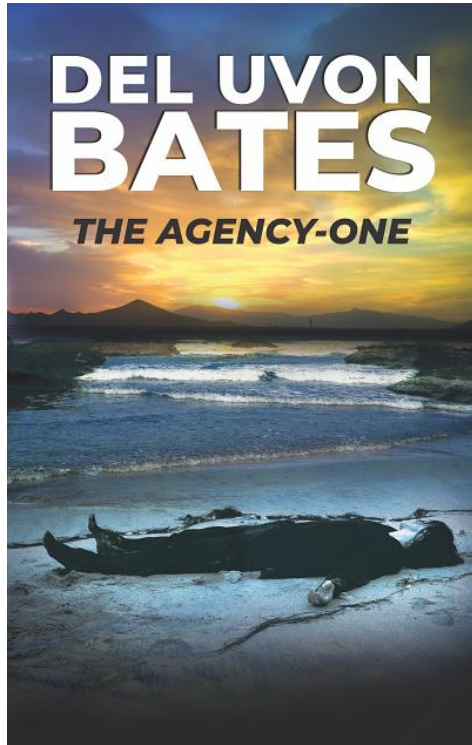
It was four-wheel-drive, sported bulletproof windows, a reinforced/bulletproof chassis, and a GPS tracker, which tracks anything that nears the car. It will send a signal detailing what it is with the information going directly to TIA.

TIA immediately notifies the operator of the Range Rover of pending or pressing problems. Elaine can hear what the problem areas are, what it is, and which switch to push to eliminate this situation. There is radar, lasers, and jammers to interrupt other electrical systems with cell phone reception in and out; flat proof tires from bullets to running over objects that might disrupt the operation of the rover. If necessary, the car will automatically switch to high-speed travel with automatic driving assistance if needed. “To tell you all the things I have installed, all at once, is too much,” Harry said.

Elaine drove through Santa Monica and down to the Pacific Coast Highway to the estate. The car was a dream to drive, Elaine told Harry.

Harry jumped out of the car as Nanny was running towards him and they embraced. Lou and Elaine hugged each other and all four went into the house. “Drinks all around?” queried Nanny.

“Do I have to tell you,” they all said in harmony, “you bet!” They ordered their drinks and Harry stepped in to help.



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