

*"The impact nearly knocked her over, sent her reeling, grabbing her forehead, now gushing blood, triggering an avalanche of adrenaline. It did not occur to Kate to think. Some animal possessed her body and took over processes she usually reasoned through. It did not matter in that moment whether her attacker was following or if she was OK, if she would get away, if she would live...or heal. Or if the Cheshire moon would ever rise again through the ironwood trees that danced on the lagoon's edge. She simply fled."*

Within hours Kate Richards lies alone in a small island hospital, remembering how it all began.

An adventurer and hard-working professional, Kate lives in suitcases, brokering islands and resorts throughout the South Pacific. Flashbacks weave her character and career into an island fabric, filled with sunny chapters, fascinating characters, and learning curves in the islands of Samoa, Fiji, Tahiti, Vanuatu and Hawaii, hydroplaning to remote villages, drinking kava with chiefs, crunching numbers and planning marketing campaigns on sparkling beaches. A former surfer, she is always in search of a great break. Kate is, after all, an island girl.

The introduction to Mr. Tsang, a Hong Kong shipping magnate, comes from her friend, part time lover, and award-winning journalist, Brad Johnson, who catches up with Kate in New York on her way to a conference in Geneva. Tsang becomes an important client, purchasing a Fiji resort through Kate's firm. Further complicating the relationship and her loyalty, Brad seduces her into delivering some documents for Tsang on her layover in Paris, then before she leaves and as a token of his love he gives her a beautiful diamond watch, and Kate becomes unwittingly involved in international intrigue and espionage. While staying with friends in Paris, she delivers the documents as planned then is followed by a tall dark man with Picasso eyes.

Kate continues to squeeze a few well-rewarded 'favors' for Tsang into her busy schedule, but questions and misgivings build, and she begins to unravel when in Monte Carlo she meets several others involved with 'T', including the tall stranger from Paris. Then Brad turns up dead on a winding road in northern Italy, and as she mourns her friend's sudden death, more questions arise – along with a growing paranoia for her personal safety. Yet like her addiction to work and waves, Kate is compelled, returning reluctantly to do yet another job, until in Port Vila she finally finds a way, a reason, and the motivation for saying 'no' to Tsang. But will it work?

Still vulnerable and nursing emotional wounds from Brad's untimely death, Kate releases her guard, falling in love with Andrew Hawkins, a hotelier from Vila. Reshuffling her priorities, she finds that creating boundaries can actually open her world, that interdependence can be even more interesting than her fierce independence. She slows down to the speed of light in order to choose love and a new life over her cherished freedom. Assuming Andy is not involved with Mr. Tsang, Kate makes life-changing decisions. Pulling the reader full circle back to the beginning, she pours a cup of coffee, boots up her computer and settles in to write a new chapter.

*"She couldn't sleep, and she usually slept well..."*

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**Bio:** As a passionate entrepreneur, I created several businesses on the US mainland, in Hawaii and throughout the South Pacific, and for many years I brokered sales of private islands and boutique resorts, working with clients and investors from Europe to Asia. I love islands and places unique and wild, lured and charmed like Gauguin, Stevenson, Brando and so many artists. Traveling to over 80 islands, doing business in many, I have tales to tell. Stories from magical places – Bora Bora, Port Vila, Aitutaki, Rarotonga, Fiji, Maui...and more – pepper my writings, and my articles, poems, photography, stories and novels are autobiographically inspired and informed. Visit One Foot Island and Saturday markets; watch quick-hipped dancers, hear tribal drums, feast on coconut cuisine and taste the essence of island places, island lives.