

LEGENDARY BLUE DIAMOND  
THREE

CHAPTER ONE

Australian autumn: 2014AD

Not far from a beachside suburb of Melbourne.

PEYTON HAYES lifted her young naked body off her boyfriend Zac Forland. In the silver glow of the rising crescent moon seeping through the open upstairs bedroom window, she walked quietly across the thick carpeted floor. Pushing her ear against the locked door, Peyton listened for the noise that woke her. Muffled laughing coming from the bedroom at the end of the hall made her giggle. She lifted her hand to her mouth to muffle the noise.

“What are you up to?” whispered Zac. “When I woke I discovered you weren’t in the bed.” He pulled the sheet away to show off the fact he looked ready to make love again.

Peyton raised a finger to her lips, sending him a scolded look.

Zac slipped off the dark blue silk sheet, making his six-foot frame walk across the room. He swiped a cigarette from off the computer table. Placing it in his mouth he lit the end and sucked in the smoke before dropping the white paper stick in the ash tray. He stepped over, pushing his manhood against Peyton’s thigh while simultaneously slipping his arm around her waist. He immediately started to kiss her shoulder before moving his lips higher up her collar bone.

“Your parents are home early from the restaurant,” Peyton explained. “They’re doing what we did earlier.”

“Twice,” corrected Zac. He shifted his lips and began kissing her neck. He made a point of lifting his hand so he could grope her breast. “I think we should try for a third time.”

“Your parents are no more than six metres away. I don’t think so.”

Zac flashed Peyton a mischievous expression. “I love to live on the wild side.”

“I don’t.”

“Trust me they won’t care.”

Peyton squared herself to Zac. She gave him a quick kiss. “Well, I do.”

“Can I entice you back into bed if I said happy eighteenth birthday?” whispered Zac.

“I have four days left of being seventeen. I want to enjoy the remaining time.”

“I couldn’t wait another four days. Making love to you felt wonderful.”

“I have to admit, I enjoyed my early birthday present,” whispered Peyton, lifting her arms so she could push her body hard against Zac’s. She instinctively buried her fingers in his short dark fashionable haircut.

“What about the round three I mentioned?”

“No,” answered Peyton sternly. “Your parents left us in charge of looking after your ten-year-old brother. If they discover what really went on when they weren’t home I’ll be banned from this house. If it happens, we’ll never know if you’re capable of three times in one night.”

“I’ve known you for three years,” pouted Zac. “From the moment, I saw you on my first day at the school I’ve wanted to make love to you.”

“Now you have,” whispered Peyton.

“After I get a job and save some money, I’m going to ask you to marry me.”

“We have to finish the last six months of school first.”

“It’s a mere formality. I have tried to wait until the last day of school before I told you my secret. However, I can’t wait any longer. I’ve already snagged a job at the tax office.”

“Congratulations,” snorted Peyton moving his hand off her breast. “I’m impressed by your eagerness to find work.”

"I want to earn the big bucks sooner than later. I have big plans for us. The minute I step inside the building I'm going to start climbing the corporate ladder. They'll be amazed at how fast I got to the top."

"I can only imagine how you'll be pushing your way past the other workers."

"What about you?" Zac asked.

"I'm still sending out my resume," confessed Peyton. "I've heard back from a couple. They sound promising."

"Good."

Peyton's eyes sparkled as she grinned.

"What's the look for?"

"I have a secret too."

"Don't keep me in suspense, tell me."

"I've an interview next week at Bridgeway lawyers. The building's right in the middle of Melbourne. If I land the job we might be able to have lunch together most days."

"Well done. I hope the interview is enjoyable. Snagging a job or not it really doesn't matter. Being a tax accountant I'll make enough money for the both of us."

"So you want me in the kitchen, barefoot and pregnant?"

"Of course not," he replied. "What I'm trying to say is you don't have to worry if you can't land a job. Come what may I will still love you."

"If you love me, help find my clothes. I have to go before your parents enter the room and see us naked."

"The room's locked," moaned Zac.

Peyton gave him an agitated stare. She dismissed his comment for an off the cuff three-word statement. Zac quickly iced the comment by sending her a caring smile. He playfully tickled her earlobe before starting to search the room.

The last item of clothing happened to be Peyton's pink button up shirt. She discovered it between the sheets at the foot of the bed. She finished dressing before giving Zac a hug.

"I'll see you at school in the morning," advised Zac. He opened the door a tad to make sure the hallway looked clear. Confidently he stepped out of the room. Checking to make sure his parents were still busy in the main bedroom behind a closed door, he beckoned Peyton to follow.

Thick dark green carpet on the spiraling staircase easily masked any noise the pair made. Peyton's right hand caressed the highly polished balustrade as she trotted carefully down to the front door. The sensor lights came on when her foot touched the first step.

At the entrance to the house, the solid marble flooring sparkled in the LED down-lights. Zac opened the solid wooden door, being careful the metre tall bronze statue behind the door didn't topple over. His mother won second prize for sculpturing it twenty years earlier.

Peyton walked into the lounge. Reaching out she swiped her coat from the back of the antique chair facing the large flat screen TV bolted to the wall. The old black and white movie playing looked boring.

Standing at the front door Peyton gave Zac a quick kiss before stepping outside into the fresh air. Goosebumps erupted on her arms. Walking off she glanced over her shoulder. Zac always stood at the entrance to the house watching till he couldn't see her anymore.

Hiding behind a large tree growing close to the road on the east side of the property Peyton counted to five before returning to the house. She spied Zac still looking where she'd gone.

Smiling, Peyton blew him a kiss before running off down the road.

## CHAPTER TWO

AT SCHOOL the next morning Peyton and Zac were eyeballing each other at the lockers. Countless teenagers were swarming the corridor. The school bus arrived as the forthcoming bell to start the first class was imminent. The late students were in a frenzy trying to grab their books and get to class before they were caught by a teacher.

Slipping his hand behind Peyton's head, Zac leaned in for a kiss. She did the same. They didn't know the principle of the school stood watching them from the doorway of the office.

"I want you two to get to your classroom," he growled, timing his interruption to perfection.

Peyton peeled herself away from Zac. Pushing past Principle Wooten she glanced at him through deep blue eyes. She entered the closest room, leaving Zac to create an excuse of why they were about to kiss. Peyton grinned at the clumsiness of her boyfriend.

"What have you got to say for yourself?" growled Wooten, marching over to Zac.

"I thought I might get to know Peyton a little more."

"You have ten seconds to find your room and a seat before I give you an hour's detention."

Zac walked past Wooten, giving him a cold heartless stare. They'd rubbed shoulders more than once over trivial matters. The first time they spoke happened to be on his second day at another school four years ago. He'd slept in. Principle Wooten bailed him up as he stepped into the main building. He wagged his finger under his nose and threatened to expel him, just like the last couple of principals did at two different schools across the state of Victoria. Six months to go and Wooten will be out of his hair for good.

Zac shouldered the closest door. Fifteen pairs of eyes watched him enter the room. In seconds, he sat in the back row adjacent to Peyton. Several of the girls giggled at his antics. They were quickly silenced the moment Wooten stepped into the room.

Standing in the exact center of the blackboard Wooten glared at each of the students in turn. He snarled in delight at the news he was about to share.

"Class, I'm taking over this subject for today. Your usual teacher is absent. I'm personally setting you an assignment I'm sure will more than tickle your fancy."

Peyton called out. "Do you think it's a good idea? When our regular teacher returns she'll be upset at knowing we've been given extra work."

Wooten straightened his black suit and tie before looking down his nose at Peyton. "I don't really care what Miss Griffin thinks. I'm the principle of this school. I say what goes on."

The students, including Zac and Peyton, fell quiet keeping a close watch on Wooten as he turned to face the blackboard. In large bold letters, he commenced writing the assignment. When he finished he faced the class.

"You will follow the words on the blackboard to the letter. Do I make myself clear Miss Peyton Hayes?"

"Perfectly," she replied, sinking deeper into her chair.

Wooten gave a curt nod, gazing around the room at the students. Eventually, he spoke.

"Now I have given you ample time to read the board the most important part of the assignment is as follows. I expect you all to work in pairs. This is a team effort. To make myself crystal clear you will pair off."

"Do we have to?" asked a thin fair-haired lad at the back of the room.

"Yes. Each team of two will be pigeon pairs. Zac Forland, to explain to you further, each pair will have one girl and one boy. Girls, you have ten seconds in which to decide who will be your work partner. If you fail to choose someone I will nominate a boy for you."

"Why do we have to work in pairs?" asked Peyton seriously.

"I have an underlying agenda. I want to finish writing my Masters-degree by exposing why male and female teenagers can't finish a basic assignment together in harmony. For example, when you are drawn together in a personal way neither of you will keep the temporary relationship business like; I don't have to explain to you the personal side."

Every girl in the class giggled. The boys chuckled knowing the man standing in front of the blackboard wearing a grin was more than likely correct.

Wooten clapped his hands together. An instant hush descended on the class.

"The time has come for the girls change seats."

Everyone in the room heard banging and scraping of chairs across the wooden floor when eight girls stood in unison. Each one eyeballed the boys as they walked about the room trying to decide. Peyton missed out on sitting next to Zac by only a few seconds. The girl who beat her to the seat smirked sarcastically. The last boy happened to be Tom Granger; a quiet student who seemed to have few friends. The long mouse colored haired, tall rake thin lad chose to remain by himself at lunch and always walked home alone. On several occasions, Peyton tried to begin a conversation. Tom explained he felt the happiest when he didn't have to talk to anyone.

Wooten enthusiastically studied the pairs. He seemed satisfied till he discovered Zac and Peyton weren't together. He stood to full height, pointing at Erin Polska sitting next to Zac.

"Swap with Peyton Hayes," he ordered.

"Why should I?" barked Erin.

"I have the authority to change what I like in this school," growled Wooten. "If you don't change seats you will automatically fail the subject. I want you and Tom to be partners. Don't look at me like I'm from the last century either. You have five seconds to get off the seat you're in and sit next to Tom Granger."

Erin Polska happened to be in the top ten percent of the most popular in the school. Monday morning everyone waited to see what new color hair or style would be the trend for the week. Her natural hair color happened to be honey blonde. This week she'd dyed her long hair a sharp Grey. Her parents never hid the fact they were rich. They splashed their money around like there was no tomorrow.

"The reason I want Peyton and Zac to pair off, I'm more than interested in how they will study together. If their work isn't in on time or up to my satisfaction I'll expel both of them," advised Wooten calmly.

Zac pushed his hand into the air.

"What's your question?"

"Why are you picking on Peyton and me?"

"Peyton and I," corrected Wooten. "I'm not, just you."

"It's a little drastic."

"I can do what I like. Don't forget it."

"Why pin your attention on me?"

"I want you out of my school. You're a trouble maker. Your future prospects are a tad on the dull side. Take it from someone who knows, I predict you'll live on the wrong side of the tracks. Before you've turned thirty you'll be in jail. As for the remainder of the class, I can tell you will all prosper and live on the right side of the tracks in a nice home."

Zac wanted to yell at the man. Instead, he faked a smile before commenting.

"I've read the blackboard. Do we have to copy the words onto a sheet of paper?"

Wooten reached behind him to swipe a pile of white standard size papers off the tabletop. He strolled over to the closest desk, handing the pile to the girl.

"Take one and pass the rest on. I don't want anyone to waste time on copying the blackboard. Your work will be in on time. No exceptions. Read the instruction sheet you've been given. The words are self-explanatory. For those of you who have Zac's intelligence and can't be bothered to read the assignment, you will trace your family tree back to the start. I want to read what you uncover. You have forty-eight hours to complete this assignment. I expect you to start right now. Seeing how this is the last half an hour of school and I have an important meeting in the staff room I'm cutting everyone a break. Digest my generosity. Go home; make a start. You might think you have a mountain of time. In fact, you don't."

Wooten turned his back on the students, stowed the remaining pile of papers in his black briefcase before following the teenagers filing out of the room. Peyton and Zac were the last to leave. Wooten locked the door. Pushing his nose into the air he marched off to the staff meeting.

Peyton and Zac slowly made their way to the lockers to collect their books. Seeing how the bus wouldn't arrive for half an hour they commenced to walk the fifteen minutes home.

"Wooten seemed to go out of his way to aggravate us, especially me," mentioned Zac.

"He sure did. He made no secret in wanting us to pair off either," added Peyton, frowning. "I wonder why?"

Zac glanced back at the school half expecting to see Wooten watching them. "What a lousy assignment."

"It mightn't be so bad," hinted Peyton. An excited expression quickly replaced her frown. "Think about what we might discover."

"I'm not interested in knowing my family history," growled Zac.

"Don't be so heartless. This assignment has ignited my curiosity," reported Peyton. "Besides, it's only for two days. All I know is my mother and grandmother happened to be born on a farm near Bendigo."

"Exciting stuff," groaned Zac. Focusing on Peyton he continued. "Instead of doing the homework we could always make love?"

"I might keep you to the suggestion," giggled Peyton. "Seeing how we're out of school early how about you buy me a hot chocolate down at the local cafe? I'm sure a few of the class will turn up. We can discuss the assignment as a group."

A two-minute detour, a four-minute walk from the school, Zac opened the door to the café. The pair sat at a small table at the rear of the shop, watching.

“This place resembles a morgue,” snarled Zac, after being seated for only three minutes.

“I’d have to admit, I’ve never seen this place so empty. Everyone in our class must be at home working on their assignment.”

“Exactly where we should be,” added Zac. “Come on, let’s abscond this place.”

Zac took hold of Peyton’s hand. They marched out of the café and across the road, quickly settling into a brisk walk.

House styles changed fast, from the expensive three storey brick dwellings where Zac lived to the small working class homes of the poor. Peyton knew deep down Zac didn’t like where she lived. If he didn’t bump into her at school more than likely they might never have met. If by chance they crossed paths at a nightclub she felt positive he’d dump her extra quick if he knew which neighborhood she lived in. Except for the stigma of a bad reputation, Peyton loved the area. The trees smelt nice in the spring and the old houses reeked of a time of long ago.

Leaning against the rusting car parked in the drive, Zac waited for Peyton to check the letterbox and take the front door key out of her pocket. The single storey house she lived in looked to be older and more run down than most in the street. Glancing at the weatherboard home next door Zac scrunched his nose. He loathed this area. How he longed to get back to his home where the driveway split the manicured front garden. The smooth dark green grass resembled a putting green at the local private golf course. The in-ground pool where he cranked up the music most Saturday nights so his rich friends could come to have a good time looked inviting. Their neighbors never complained; they were always invited for free booze.

Peyton opened the front door. She walked into the lounge-room, dropping her door key back into her pocket. Sparse furniture sat in the corners of the badly painted lounge. The dilapidated kitchen not only needed painting the white goods should have been replaced years ago. Even the fridge looked ancient. When the motor switched itself on it made a clunking noise. Zac scoffed quietly behind Peyton’s back at the layout of the house, deciding his bedroom looked nearly half the size of the entire home.

Zac closed the front door and followed Peyton down the hall to her bedroom. He closed the door before walking up behind her. Gathering her long blonde hair in one hand he pushed it away from her neck before kissing her earlobe. Peyton giggled at the feeling. Instead of responding too soon she flicked the computer switch on, soaking up his touch.

Zac licked his lips at seeing the single bed. He gently pushed Peyton on the shoulder. When she looked at him he winked. A quick nod at the bed relayed what his intentions were.

“We have to make a start on the assignment. You don’t want Wooten to expel you. I certainly can’t afford it.”

Zac sighed heavily. He sat on the seat at the desk. Peyton sat on his knees in front of the computer. The screen lit. Peyton leaned closer.

“Are you sure I can’t persuade you into forgetting about the assignment for a while?”

“Yes, I’m positive. I think it’s good to make a start before our romp just in case Wooten wants to see how much we got done today. He did let us out of school early,” hinted Peyton.

“I don’t care for Wooten or his stupid assignment.”

“I do. I want good grades so I can land an exciting job.”

“I’ve already mentioned you don’t need to worry about a career. Soon I’ll have earned enough money to take you away from this area. In a few years, I’ll own a mansion, an extra large boat to sail anywhere and this suburb will be no more than a distant memory.”

“I love this area. The people are nice. Each one is a hard worker and down to earth,” explained Peyton.

“This suburb has a lousy reputation.”

“I don’t know why.”

“It’s old. The entire suburb should be torn down.”

“You sound like if you were rich enough you’d buy the whole area so you can build mansions.”

“Now you get the idea. I reckon I could buy the lot for about twenty million. I’d rebuild and rent the houses. I’d make a fortune.”

“In your dreams,” stated Peyton. “I know for a fact my mother will never sell.”

“She’d sell if the price happened to be right.”

Peyton shook her head before focusing on the computer. Under more protests from Zac, the moment she opened a page on a website she began reading.

“I think I’ve stumbled onto what I need. Mum’s name came up, so too has her mum’s name and my great-great-great grandmother’s. Her name was Jessica Hayes. She gave birth to a daughter in

1855.” Peyton leaned back against Zac’s chest. “The gold rush around the Bendigo area started in 1851.” She clicked the bottom of the page and sat waiting for several seconds to tick past before the next page opened. “Jessica Hayes gave birth in a house near Bendigo around the mid-1850’s.” Peyton paused to ponder over the information before continuing. “I wonder if she could have been a miner’s wife. The records don’t say who fathered the child.”

“Maybe she never married,” hinted Zac. “Imagine the scandal.”

“She must have been married. Besides, if she didn’t have a husband why am I here?”

“Good question,” jeered Zac sarcastically, wanting to relay the fact he felt bored doing the assignment.

A few hours into the assignment saw Peyton and Zac dumping the books for a romp on the bed. Zac wanted to make love immediately. Peyton could have easily jumped his bones if she knew her mother wouldn’t be home soon. Zac’s manly aftershave made her feel she wanted him again. He was tall, dark and handsome. He bragged constantly about having a hair cut every three weeks. Even if Peyton ruffled his hair the strands stayed perfectly still, unlike hers. When the wind blew her long hair flapped around worse than a flag in a storm.

Zac felt determined nothing will stop him from making love to Peyton. She couldn’t know if she refused his advances too many times he’d move on to the next one. So long as she put out he’d stay. If he ever felt too much resistance he’d dump her and move on to the next girl more than ready to take her place. The young ladies were lined up, feverishly pounding on his door.

Peeling his clothes off, Zac finally set to work on Peyton’s when they heard the front door open. Peyton pushed him off.

“Quick, get dressed,” she ordered, buttoning up her shirt.

Zac sprinted for his clothes when he heard footsteps in the hall. When the knock came at the door they were fully dressed and engrossed in reading the words on the computer monitor.

“Peyton I hope you’re doing homework?” called a female’s voice from the other side of the door.

“I sure am,” she called back. “Mum, you can come in.”

The door swung wide open. The woman standing at the threshold of the room looked tall. She brandished long blonde hair. Her smile looked friendly. Her body language, including the way she dressed told of the fact she’d never be an easy push over.

Peyton’s mother stepped into the room staring at Zac. “Hello.”

“I’m Zac Forland,” he said, standing. “I’ve been here a few times. Though I’ve known Peyton for a while you and I have never met. Peyton and I are in the same class at school.”

“I’m Audrey, Peyton’s mother.” She reached out to shake his hand. “At last, I get to meet the young man Peyton’s been telling me about.”

“Only the good stuff I hope?”

“Of course,” replied Audrey. “You both seem very busy. What’s the subject you’re working on? Maybe I can help.”

“Mum, we have to do our family tree,” explained Peyton.

“I see. How’s it going?”

“Good.”

“How far have you gone back?”

“We’re working on both our sides at the same time. I’ve discovered a woman going by the name of Jessica Hayes. Records indicate she never married. How can it be? Do you know anything about Jessica?”

“Maybe your research is a little off?” hinted Audrey.

“I don’t think so,” answered Peyton, scrunching her nose. “I’m a little puzzled. If I’m right, Jessica Hayes was my great-great-great grandmother. She gave birth out of wedlock. If I’m correct, do you have any idea of the father’s identity?”

Peyton stared expectantly at her mother. The silence in the room made for an awkward moment.

“We need to have a good talk later,” advised Audrey.

“What about right now?”

“Later, after Zac goes.”

“Why can’t we talk right now? Zac and I have to finish this assignment. We need all the information we can unearth.”

Peyton watched her mother march out of the room, closing the door behind her.

“I wonder what that was all about,” whispered Zac.

“Beats the hell out of me,” replied Peyton.