

LEGENARY BLUE DIAMOND TWO

CHAPTER ONE

Australian autumn 1850AD

THE BIG black man peeled himself away from his twenty-two-year-old wife. He stood next to the bed lustfully studying her white skin, long blonde hair, her womanly shape. For a long time, he watched her chest rise and fall. On a sigh, he walked to the open window. The early autumn breeze wafting in over the Australian sheep station, aptly named, 'The Rosedale' cooled his naked body.

Jessica Hayes couldn't move. She felt exhausted. Making love to the man trying to satisfy his lust for her was an experience she needed to learn. The physique of Lightning Dawn looked magnificent. His skin, the colour of the ace of spades wrapped his tight buttocks, deep chest, and strong abs into one six foot-four love machine. For a long time, she watched him standing side on to her, staring out of the window. Eventually, she tore her gaze away from her husband to glance at the sky.

'There's still three hours of darkness left,' she said inwardly

Looking around the barn's loft, she started to think back to their wedding night when they first made love. He was right, she'd never forget their night. Her gaze fell upon the didgeridoo in the corner. Lightning played the hollow tree branch for her many times. She could still hear the deep whoa-whoa-whoa noise erupting from the long pipe. Once in a while, when they enjoyed the evening air as a family he'd play it for her and fourteen-year-old Jarrah, his twin brother Cobar and their sister, ten-year-old Gip. The sound coming from the didgeridoo when air is blown through the tube sounded mystical, unique.

"Lightning Dawn, are you okay?" Jessica whispered, struggling to lift her weight onto her left elbow.

"There's something wrong."

Lightning Dawn's deep voice excited Jessica yet again. She patted the bed sheet next to her thigh. "Come back to bed. We haven't finished."

By the time Lightning walked from the window to the makeshift bed, he again was ready for her. Jessica kissed his thick lips, his neck then slowly made her way down to his naval. Before she could get lower Lightning flipped Jessica onto her back.

For a further half an hour they were locked in love.

At around four in the morning, the two lovers fell asleep. The loft which Lightning purposely made into a clean bedroom away from the three kids in the main house added to their privacy. Three blankets and a sheet helped to make the hay feel comfortable. Fresh cool air always blew through the narrow window. Nobody knew their secret. If folk in town ever found out Jessica and Lightning Dawn made love every night the scandal will drive them to another state. Jessica didn't want to be forced into selling the Rosedale over someone discovering they were anything more than boss and overseer. She wanted to stay at the Rosedale for the remainder of her life. Married in secret to an aboriginal man going by the name of Lightning Dawn from the Mullum-Mullum tribe felt like a great honour. He'd proven more than once to be a man who is strong, decent, and someone she could rely on in every sense of the word and when he came to her he remained gentle; quite the romantic. Behind closed doors, he revealed how much he loved her. Most nights she remembered their wedding ceremony they shared in front of the three kids and God, their only witnesses to the event. She never wanted to forget the words Lightning shared or the moment she realized she'd fallen in love.

They swam naked in a watering hole. He marched out of the water more than ready to make love to her. She didn't understand his meaning of his idea; he wanted her for his woman. They argued in the middle of the Australian bush. He left her alone to go walk-a-bout. When an aborigine decides to go walk-a-bout they never came back. To Jessica's surprise in minutes, he'd returned to explain exactly what making love to her meant to him. She'd never forget his words or their discussion.

"I came to you expecting to lay you down. I wanted to call you my woman."

"You have a strange way of asking me to marry you?"

"Knowing you're my woman is a great honour to me. You do understand what I mean by the word honour?"

"Explain to me what it means to you?"

"I will never do you wrong or allow anything or anyone to hurt or upset you. I will go so far as to say I'll lay down my life to protect you. When you decide the time is right, our wedding night, as you call it, will be a night you will remember all your days."

After Lightening Dawn and Jessica Hayes successfully tracked the bushrangers and then to devise the perfect robbery, Jessica married Lightening under the arch he'd cut in the pepper bush tree. Their lovemaking was intense. Now, curled in his arms in the barn's loft where they spent their wedding night, she felt safe.

The barn is perfect for its isolation. The small window on the east side of the barn overlooks one-third of the nine hundred acres and the one thousand sheep which makes up the Rosedale sheep station. Their closest neighbour lives in a mansion across the river five miles from the barn. On the map, the river was used for a permanent marker to separate the two properties. The single storey homestead, 'The Rosedale' lacked a lot of comforts their neighbour, Mr. Langston, across the other side of the river seemed to have. Mr. Langston built the two storey mansion himself. Every time he saw someone in the town he boasted he happened to own the largest property in the area. The Rosedale was marked on the map to be the second biggest. Jessica had never stepped a foot inside her neighbour's home and could only imagine what it might look like. Langston saw to it nobody ventured too close. Lightening and Jessica were warned many times not to cross the river. They owned sheep, their neighbour owned cattle. Langston explained to them in great detail every time they saw each other, cattle and sheep didn't mix.

Things were about to change.

Lightening Dawn and Jessica were going to visit Langston to give him the money they'd agreed upon the previous week. By the day's end his land and the cattle he'd owned for over forty years would have new owners.

Jessica will never forget what he said to her when she was a child. 'If a woman is to come into my life she will knock on the front door.'

Recently Lightening Dawn overheard women talking in town about Langston wanting to live in a room in the middle of Ballarat to drink away his last few remaining years. He'd never married. The few women who came into his life quickly moved out. They all left him a shattered man. He described each one as a fox dressed in a lamb's woolen coat. They were cute cuddly things on the outside, cunning to the bone on the inside.

It's ironic that Jessica and Lightening's reward for successfully stealing back Jessica's guns and blue diamond ring would net them a fortune in money and gold nuggets the bushrangers initially stole from the bank. The last of the three bushrangers died in their paddock. Gip, the ten-year-old aborigine girl, saved Jessica's life by shooting the bushranger dead. She had decided to follow her brothers when they went walk-a-bout. They left the Mullum-Mullum tribe the same way Lightening did, ending up working on the Rosedale. When Jessica arrived at the homestead the passion the three kids displayed for hard work took her by surprise. She quickly explained to the children they were free to do whatever they wanted. It was Gip's idea they should be a family.

Jessica and Lightening buried the bushranger they nicknamed Dusty Beard then placed a dead sheep in the hole on top of him. Even the law couldn't unearth the truth.

They'd pulled off the perfect robbery and murder.

It has been two months since Jessica and Lightening Dawn were secretly married under the pepper bush tree and came to each other in bed.

Jessica rolled off Lightening. "Melbourne isn't far by train. I'd like to go visit the ocean," she whispered. "I reckon we should take the boys and Gip."

"Yes, I'd like to see the ocean again too," replied Lightening.

"Maybe we could visit your tribe."

"I'm not too keen on seeing the Mullum-Mullum people."

"What about your mother, your father?"

"I guess it's something we should do," said Lightening, changing his mind. "When I decided to go walk-a-bout years ago I knew I'd never see them again. Perhaps changing the term might be a good thing." He again marched across the wooden floor to the window. Leaning on the window frame he stared out over the land.

Jessica stepped up behind him, cuddling into the man's back. "What's wrong?"

"There's trouble on the way."

"I understand you believe you and the bush are one. In this instance are you sure?"

"Yes."

"Have you ever been wrong?"

"Yes."

"How can you be so positive this time?"

"Listen to the wind in the trees."

Jessica stood motionless listening to the breeze, cooling her naked body. "I can't hear anything different."

"The trees are talking."

"What are they saying?"

"Visitors are coming. They are bad men," whispered Lightening. "They have murder in their hearts."

"You're scaring me."

"I will protect you."

"I know you can predict the weather, however, what you've just stated is hard to accept."

"At sunup on the third day they will be here," advised Lightening.

"If you're right are they coming for the blue diamond?"

"Yes. They also want the solid silver colt 45's."

"What about the gold, the money? How did they know? I'm positive we haven't aroused any suspicion," whispered Jessica. A worried expression etched her forehead.

"We have covered our tracks perfectly," explained Lightening Dawn.

"I suppose the only thing we can do is finalize the buying of our neighbour's house and wait for their arrival." Using the push-pull method Jessica helped Lightening to turn square to her. She pushed her body against his, displaying a mischievous grin. "Seeing how we have three days to prepare for their arrival and the sun isn't up, I thought maybe we could make love one more time?"

Lightening swept Jessica from the floor and easily carried her to the bed.

CHAPTER TWO

A FEW minutes before sun up Jessica slipped out of bed to watch the stars blink out. Lightening felt her get out of bed. He dressed, walked over to the window, giving her a quick kiss on the neck.

"It's time for breakfast," he stated.

In less than half an hour Jessica and Lightening Dawn finished breakfast. He marched off to the barn. In no time, he returned, two horses in tow. They were saddled. A long rifle was pushed into each saddle pouch. The moment Jessica saw him approaching the verandah she faced Gip and her brothers.

"We'll be gone most of the day. I need the three of you to take care of the homestead. Jarrah, Cobar, Gip, there will be no arguing, you have your work to do. Don't forget the horses and the chickens need feeding. Once the chores are done I want you to relax, have some fun."

"We family," chirped Gip. She reached up to hug Jessica.

"Yes, we are," replied Jessica, pushing her fingers through the girl's thick black curls.

The boys watched her walk towards Lightening Dawn. After mounting their horse, Jessica and Lightening waved at the kids, gave their horse a slight kick and both horses trotted off in the direction of the river.

The two riders weaved their way through the sheep. When they got to the mound of dirt where Dusty beard lay under the old ram they changed direction and trotted past the shearing shed. The moment the slow flowing river came into view Lightening looked directly at Jessica.

"You seem quiet this morning."

"I've been thinking about what you said earlier. 'Trouble is on the way,'" replied Jessica.

"If Forland sends any more men to find the blue diamond, I'm more than confident they'll end up buried under a sheep next to the dead bushranger," advised Lightening Dawn.

"I have to admit the old ram did a great job hiding the bushranger's body. The police still have no idea we buried the man under the animal."

"I'm surprised the cop wanted to dig into the hole. The old ram certainly smelled bad."

"I'm happy he wanted to stop. Seeing the slime on the Ram's carcass almost made me vomit," croaked Jessica. "The whole story will be passed on to our child. I'm sure he or she growing in my womb will be astounded over the tale of the Legendary blue diamond."

"It'll be the generations to follow us who will find it hard to keep the secret," said Lightning.

"I'm hoping they won't have to fight anyone to protect the items," whispered Jessica. "The moment the trouble you've spoken of has gone I pray it's the end of the nightmare."

The horses came to the crest of the bank. Jessica led the way down the slight slope to the barely moving water. She picked a place to enter, urging her horse to cross to the other side.

When the two horses bounded up the opposite bank Lightning pulled back on the reins. Instinctively his horse stopped. Lightning Dawn swiveled in the saddle to look for Jessica.

"What's wrong?" called Lightning.

Jessica urged her horse to cross the river and stop next to Lightning's horse. "At the moment life is perfect. I don't want to see it change."

"Yes, life is good," echoed Lightning. "The land the Rosedale was chosen to be built on years ago is perfect for sheep grazing. The river which floods occasionally helps the land to live. When it flows slowly the sheep drink from the low banks. The wildlife flock to the water's edge, even Gip, Jarrah, and Cobar know they can swim in safety. The river is a lifeline to the bush."

"Are you trying to say you don't want to purchase the Langston property?"

"Of course, I do. I think it's a wise move. At three hundred pounds, it's a bargain," advised Lightning. "Personally, it'll be good to see the back of Langston. He hates me."

"I don't know why," moaned Jessica.

"He doesn't like the colour of my skin or the fact I'm an aborigine."

"I reckon you are unique in every way."

"I hope it's not a biased opinion."

Jessica leaned sideways. She reached out, slapping him lightly on the leg. "It sure is. The colour of your skin shouldn't make any difference. If anything, I'm jealous of your dark colour. If I stay in the sun too long I burn."

"I've noticed," replied Lightning.

Jessica and Lightning chuckled at the sight of her red skin. Lightning shook his head knowing when her skin turned red he couldn't make love to her.

"I need you to understand even if we didn't know each other I believe aborigines are an amazing race of people. Your knowledge of the Australian bush is terrific. White folk has a lot to learn from you."

"I hope you never change," mentioned Lightning.

Jessica gave him a kiss. "I will love you for eternity. There is nothing to dislike in you. If there is a positive side to the bushranger, I'm thrilled he stole the gold and the money from the bank. He made it possible for us to buy the one thousand lovely acres of prime cattle ground separated by a river."

"You did bring the three hundred pounds so we can buy Langston's property?"

"Yes." Jessica tapped the brown leather bag strapped to her saddle. "It's all here. Owning the land and the homestead will help cement our prosperous future."

Jessica led the way deeper into the bush. The scrub under foot looked dry. The giant gum trees dotting the landscape kept a lot of the scrub in the shade. A few kangaroos bounded away from the riders and a couple of kookaburras took flight. A few minutes ride from the river they could see a small piece of cleared land. In the exact middle they spied Langston's mansion.

"Maybe we should move into the house before the weather turns bad," mentioned Jessica.

"It's a good idea. Hopefully, Langston will agree to move out sooner than later."

"There's only one way to find out," commented Jessica. She shook the reins making her horse start to trot.

The two riders made their way through the remaining scrub and the giant gum trees. The ground underfoot felt hard due to the low rainfall. Gum leaves littered the area. If a fire were to break out the homestead could burn to the ground in minutes. Keeping the area clear around the Rosedale was an ever-ending chore. Fortunately, the job was made easier when everyone pitched in to help.

Jessica studied the land and the trees from the river to the mansion in greater detail. She pointed to a couple of brown snakes coiled up in the sun at the foot of a large tree. Lightning changed the direction their horses were walking so they'd stay clear of the sleeping reptiles. Jessica grinned at seeing several koalas sleeping in the forks of a few large gum trees close to the home. A third kookaburra laughed then took flight. A set of five red kangaroos resting in the shade near the edge of

the scrub appeared on edge over the sudden noise. A seven-foot-tall red coloured male kangaroo stood. He viewed the riders closely, decided it might be time to move closer to the river and bounded away. In a giant leap, he'd crossed the river, waiting for the females to catch up.

Jessica sat on her horse staring at the sight of Langston's two-storey homestead. She marveled at the solid brick construction. Wooden slats covered the pitched roof, unlike the Rosedale which boasted a rusty tin roof. A narrow wooden verandah encircled the house. Windows on the second storey were open so the fresh air blowing across the land could enter and cool the entire house. A light billow of smoke wafted out of the chimney bringing an aroma of freshly baked bread. Jessica heard the distant moo of the cows. She guessed Mr. Langston will be watching over his two hundred head of cattle from a window on the East side of the home and more than likely knew visitors had arrived. He always boasted he could see riders coming from the moment they crossed the river.

Jessica and Lightning dismounted and tied their horse to the verandah post. Almost immediately a side door opened outwards. Langston stepped onto the verandah carrying a rifle.