

THIRTEEN DIAMOND LAKE POINT - A SPIRITED MYSTERY

Janet is hired as a personal assistant to Hollywood's daughter, Ava Fleming. Ava is enmeshed in the extravagant lifestyle of an eccentric heiress living somewhat reclusively on a semi-hidden stretch of Diamond Lake. Alone, during an overnight housesitting stay, Janet experiences the eerie feel of a restless presence and is drawn into communion with the spirit world. *What do the spirits want from Janet?* She allows her instincts to guide her through Ava's strange new world of privilege and need.

Janet contemplates the evening sky's orangey glow with a surreal calm that fills her with a profound sense of purpose and meaning. The mix of party sounds grows hushed, distant, and forgotten. She picks a hibiscus flower from a nearby planter and places the red flower behind her ear while remembering that in fairy tales and myths, people are warned not to eat from the strange place they've lost themselves in, or they won't be able to leave it.

As the sun disappears from the horizon, she wonders if this is where she is truly meant to be. She senses someone standing beside her.

"Hello," he says.



Mary K Crawford-Lorfink graduated from the University of Minnesota with a BA in English and has been published in *WINK: Writers in the Know*, *Creatopia magazine*, and Amazon books. She is an ongoing student at The Loft Literary Center, Minneapolis, MN, and a WOW Women of Words member. "Writing is a mystical experience—turning story into wonder."

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Thirteen Diamond Lake Point – A Spirited Mystery

By Mary K Crawford-Lorfink

Size: 8.5 x 5.5

Page Count: 344 pages

Publication Date: October 16, 2023

Paperback price: \$16.95

Paperback ISBN: 978-1-955541-27-5 | \$16.95

eBook ISBN: 978-1-955541-28-2 | \$4.99

Hardcover ISBN: 978-1-955541-29-9 | 24.95

Printed in the United States of America

Published by FuzionPress

FuzionPress.com

*The book is available on Amazon and
Amazon Kindle*

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EXCERPT FROM CHAPTER TWO - THE HOLLYWOOD HEIRESS

Diamond Lake was well-known for its excessive wealth and spectacular lakeshore estates. Still, it had been several months since she had ventured outside her downtown neighborhood and close ring of suburbs, and it left her with a mixed air of uncertainty as to whether she would be able to follow the directions Elaine provided.

Will she be able to navigate the private, secluded roads around Diamond Lake? Will she blend into this wealthy, established community?

Downtown, with its fast-paced, nerve-racking wail of sirens, its pounding reverberation of ongoing construction, and low groaning back-up beeps of dump trucks, is chaotic like New York City. Janet had grown accustomed to the halting motion of downtown traffic, interspersed with the daredevil dart of pedestrians.

As excited as she had been about this job prospect the day before, she now feels less certain of her ability to understand the privileged lifestyle of a Hollywood heiress, of visiting the stylish home of a well-known socialite.

Janet drives toward the boundless expanse of stark blue horizon. Adjusting her rearview mirror, she looks back at the hazy downtown Minneapolis skyline, smoldering under a smoggy brown cloud that hovers like a lost soul floating in purgatory. The city is in a state of fatigue due to the overuse of electrical circuits, power surges, and seemingly endless brick, concrete, and steel structures, blocking any hope of a passing breeze.

It then surprises Janet to realize that the further away from the city she drives, the happier she begins to feel as the peripheral scenery whizzing by gradually transforms into a carpet of greenery. There is little to obstruct her view of the wide-open suburban landscape, with the exception of a raised American Flag snapping in the wind above a GM car dealership, a rectangular six-story apartment complex, and one building still under construction with streams of daylight poking through in a myriad of angles.

Then, passing a distant grove of trees, she sees the glittering reflection of a small pond. Checking her odometer, she is now twenty-one miles outside of downtown Minneapolis and turning onto a curving two-lane road that follows the winding shoreline of Diamond Lake. A jagged-edged wooden street sign indicates she is driving along Blue Heron Drive. After another mile or two, she turns right onto Ladyslipper Lane, and her car bumps up onto a shaded, narrowing road reinforced with heavy fresh layers of velvety black asphalt. She tunnels through a quiet spread of ancient cottonwoods, the mighty tree trunks dividing into thick branches and shading the road ahead with their leafy canopy of dark foliage.

Janet slows down, afraid she might miss an upcoming turn and cautiously cruises through a private community of homes hidden behind brick walls. Tendrils of white and blue morning glories attached to the red brick walls are offset by rambling rose bushes and one man-sized Grecian lawn statue of a virile winged Cupid, poised with bow and arrow, knee-deep in tufted, native prairie grass. The weathered statue with its streaked greenish-brown complexion appears to have been forgotten, and it's impossible to determine which sequestered home this naked messenger of love might belong to.



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