

## Excerpt from Chapter 1

In 1983, at the age of twenty-one, she found forging relationships difficult, especially those with women, and hated thinking she did not have a ‘best friend’, as all other women seemed to, feeling like she had failed in some crucial task, that everyone else, by her age, had succeeded in. On numerous occasions she found herself sitting alone in coffee bars, covertly watching women gossip and giggle together, feeling pangs of immense jealousy, knowing she had never felt this bond, being at a loss to comprehend it. Although close to her older sister, she wondered if this was only because there existed no other women whom she could fully understand and tolerate. She envied the gossip other women thrived upon, but also often found it to be trivial and uninteresting. Consequently, Daphne had difficulty embracing women of her age who seemed to be immature, mirroring the men who found her attractive, preferring to retreat into her own company.

## Excerpt from Chapter 2

Years later, reflecting on this time, what surprised Kate most was how unemotional she felt. The termination of a life had been discussed, researched, rationally planned, executed in a way to cause least pain to everyone involved. The illegal killing, and it was just that, of a human being was conducted against the backdrop of intense celebrations, wild colours, games, competitions, singing, dancing, performances and parties. Olympic mascots strolled the various streets, which were full of young, fit athletes, residents, volunteers, visitors and the world’s media. Over six hundred and fifty thousand visitors descended on Vancouver during the two-week period. No one was sad. No one could imagine four women in a townhouse, only a short distance away from the lavish opening ceremonies for the 2010 Winter Olympics, were busy assisting a man they loved to die. The events were at opposite ends of the happiness spectrum. The Olympics, by their very nature, celebrate the human body and the lengths this

can be tested and challenged, what it can endure, the speeds it can achieve, the weight it can carry, the heights it can jump, how perfectly it can function alone or in unison with others. A terminal illness, such as ALS, painfully illustrates how easily and rapidly this body can fail; how fallible it is. How it need only be a matter of months before it is reduced to an empty vessel; to suddenly, without warning, break beyond repair, to become totally useless. No one wants to be exposed to this cruel fact.

## Excerpt from Chapter 3

The champagne was already on ice in the lounge area when they entered. The blue and green, silk, floral wallpaper with peacocks and other exotic birds mirrored the colour of the drapes and carpet. This lavish, opulent, interior design was not one Daphne specifically liked, but could easily tolerate. She excused herself to use the washroom, which was as large as any hotel bedroom she had stayed in. Sitting on the toilet, she stared and smiled at her reflection in the floor-to-ceiling mirror-tiled wall. Dressed, sober, about to enter a bedroom for maybe one hour (how she hoped not) or ten, she sat, wanting to prolong the inevitable, to drown in the moment. Studying her reflection, she grinned at the knowledge of what was bound to come next, wanting this brief 'before' time to last forever. The anticipation, the excitement, the sex with a body not familiar to her, the exploration, the not knowing what he would do next, nor what she would do next. Surely this was about to become the best day of her life.

## Excerpt from Chapter 4

Kevin woke at six a.m. The curtains were open, his suitcase untouched from where the porter left it. The telephone message was flashing and for the briefest moment he failed to remember where he was supposed to be. He adored this sensation. It reminded him of his teenage years and of going out with friends on a Saturday night, getting drunk, getting laid (if

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Excerpts from *Time To Take Flight*

he was lucky), returning home and in an intoxicated stupor, falling into bed. The next morning, maybe the next afternoon, he would wake, unable to recall immediately what occurred a few hours previously. Then his memory would gradually return, and he would lie in a glow, reliving the yesterday. That was a time of youth, of no cares, no commitments; a time vastly different to the adult one he found himself in now. He reached for the phone and pressed the message button.

## Excerpt from Chapter 5

He did not love her in the conventional husband and wife way: he had never loved her that way, but he did love her. Theirs had been a partnership — two people who met when young and who found it easier to encounter the world as a couple than as single beings. Two people pretending, wanting to share a home, to fulfil convention, to honour their Catholic faith and meet the expectations of their families, but in reality, fulfilling a pretence. This was certainly true in the early days and was equally true now.