

*Retribution is the second book in this sensual trilogy, moving from the Yorkshire Dales to the beautiful landscapes of Saudi Arabia*

# Retribution

Landscapes of Love

PHILIP TYLER



RETRIBUTION  
LANDSCAPES OF LOVE

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## Dedication

**T**his book is dedicated to the Park Rangers who risk their lives every day to protect the mountain gorillas in Virunga National Park and the rhinos in the National Parks of Kenya.

In the year ending March 2021 alone, twenty young Park staff in Virunga were murdered in a ‘ferociously violent and sustained attack’ by armed poachers.



*Mountain gorilla and baby in Virunga*

*“If we do not do something to prevent it, Africa’s animals, and the places in which they live, will be lost to our world and her children forever.”*

Mandela

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## PROLOGUE

### Tattersall's Thoroughbred Sale, Newmarket – England

The previous lot, an exquisite filly by Galileo, had just made two and a half million pounds plus commission. Knocked-down to Coolmore; naturally. Charlie and Anne Marie were sitting high up on the plain wooden benching where generations of the world's richest horse-lovers had spent king's ransoms on colts and fillies, in the hope that they were destined to grace the winner's enclosures at Ascot in England, Meydan in Dubai or Keeneland in the United States.

"Ours is next," whispered Anne Marie nervously; her hand holding Charlie's forearm tightly.

"Not yet it's not," smiled Charlie.

"Lot 1235 is a filly by Dubawi out of one of the best families at Juddemonte Farms," informed the Tattersalls auctioneer with serene confidence. "Her dam was an Oaks winner and she is an own sister to the black type colt, Dreams of This. Who'll start me off at five million? Three bid."

"I think my heart is going to explode," said Anne Marie. "When will Alistair bid? I don't want to miss her. She is the dream start to my new stud."





*The Newmarket Stallion*

“Three five, three six. Four bid. Make no mistake, my bid is in the passage at four million pounds.”

“Is Alistair bidding? I can’t see him,” Anne Marie was starting to panic.

“New bidder on top. Four two.”

“Don’t worry that’s Alistair.”

“Four five in the passage.”

“Five million on top. Does anyone else want to join in?” joked the auctioneer.

Anne Marie smiled at Charlie and gripped tighter. “That’s my limit.”

“The bid is five million on the top rail. Are we all finished at five million pounds? ..... Six million guineas bid – new bidder.”

A lonely tear of disappointment trickled down Anne Marie’s cheek, falling onto page 1235 in the catalogue. Charlie put a consoling arm around her shoulders.

“Seven million..... Eight million..... Nine million bid. The sport of kings, ladies and gentlemen. One final time. Nine million guineas for this lovely filly by Dubawi.”

The wooden gavel hit the sound block and the echo resonated around the stunned equine elite. “Sold to Macmillan Stud Farm in Yorkshire.”

A spontaneous round of applause echoed around the gallery. Charlie and Anne Marie turned round and looked up at Alistair. He shrugged his shoulders with upturned palms and shook his head.

“What’s going on? I don’t understand,” said a very shocked Anne Marie. “That’s my stud. What’s going on?”

“I don’t know,” said Charlie hesitantly, “but this keeps happening to me and there is only one explanation.”

“Where is he?” asked Anne Marie, looking around.

“He is meant to be in Mexico.”

“Did he know we were coming to the sale?”

“No, I didn’t tell anyone. I wanted it to be a secret... except I did mention it to Mac,” said Charlie reluctantly.

“You didn’t tell him which lot by any chance?”

“Err. It may have slipped out. Well, you know how good he is at asking questions.”

Alistair arrived behind them. “What the hell is going on? I stopped at five million as you said.”

“We don’t know... but we think Mac might!”

“What’s he got to do with buying bloodstock? He’s the bloody gamekeeper!”

## CHAPTER ONE

### *The Quotidian Landscape*

“**W**hy are we going south? Yorkshire is north!” enquired Charlie quizzically, as Anne Marie turned her brand-new Range Rover Autobiography onto the M11 heading for London.

“We’re collecting Nzinga from Heathrow at eight o’clock tonight.”

“I thought she was in Chyulu looking after the rhino project for Daniel.”

“Evidently not.”

“When did he arrange it with you?”

“Ten minutes ago, by text.”

“Have you any idea what’s going on?”

“Less than you.”

“That’s nothing then.”

“Why do we just do whatever he says, like two helpless teenagers?”

“Because you love him and I love you,” smiled Anne Marie. “Anyway, it’s fun!”

Anne Marie’s mobile rang. “Can you grab that, Charlie? I’ve got my foot down.”

“Hello. Hi Alistair. Is everything OK? What did the accounts desk say when you went to see what was going on?”

Alistair on speaker phone. “It’s really odd. Our stud evidently opened an account with Tattersalls yesterday and put a twenty million credit in.”

“Twenty! But what name did they give?”

“They just said it was someone from our office called Sebastian. Do you know anyone called Sebastian?”

“I knew it!” said Charlie. “Yes, we know Sebastian. It’s fine Alistair; don’t worry. Have you sorted the transport out?”

“Yes C&C will drop them off tonight on the way to the Irish ferry. Tell Anne Marie I got the Frankel filly she wanted as well, for two and a half.”

Anne Marie’s face lit up with a huge grin. “That helps the averages! Thank you so much Alistair for all your help today. See you in the morning. I can’t wait to see them in the new barn. Have a good trip back.”

They arrived at Heathrow Terminal 2 with five minutes to spare, and a speeding ticket. Anne Marie hastily parked in the VIP car park and they ran into the crowded arrival’s hall.

Nzinga dropped her bag and ran up to Charlie and gave her a big hug.

“It’s lovely to see you again so soon,” said Charlie. “Did you have a good flight?”

“Yes, it was all a bit last minute and I am not sure I have got the right clothes!”

“Don’t worry we can lend you some till we can go shopping. This is Anne Marie. I know you have spoken on the phone before.”

“Hi. Delighted to meet you at last Nzinga. Daniel has told me so much about you,” said Anne Marie, stunned by

her beauty; not what she was expecting for some illogical reason. "Let me get your bag. The car is just outside."

"Daniel said I was staying at your house Anne Marie. Is that OK with you? I sort of got the impression he hadn't asked you?"

"It will be really nice to have your company for a few days. We can compare notes on Daniel!"

"Do you know why Daniel wanted me over here in such a hurry?"

"We were hoping you were going to tell us!"

\* \* \*

Charlie and Daniel were now living in the old mill which Anne Marie had given them as a present but Charlie still went up to the Hall, where her parents lived, for breakfast every day when Daniel was away. Which was a lot.

She had tried ringing him on his mobile whilst they were driving back to Yorkshire but had got no response. She tried again in her Range Rover, not an Autobiography, on the way up to the Hall the following morning, but still to no avail. She turned into the drive off the Leyburn Road and scattered a herd of roe deer grazing the verges between the ancient oak trees lining the gravel. As she pulled into the stable yard, Mac appeared with his two loyal black labs, Bess and her daughter Molly, at his side.

"Morning Charlie. Did you have a successful trip to Newmarket?" he smiled.

"I'm sort of losing track who you are working for!"

"Oh, definitely you Charlie," he laughed. "Always been scared of ladies!"

"Very funny. So, I assume you told Daniel the lot number of Anne Marie's filly?"

“Not exactly. He had already worked that out. He just wanted to make sure that you and Anne Marie were happy and had a nice day out.”

“You better pray it breeds something or you’re in for a half share on a very expensive hack!”

“Yes ma’am. You’ve got a visitor in the house.”

“Why did you call me ma’am? You know I hate it and there is only one person who calls me that.”

“He arrived half an hour ago in that old Shelby Cobra over there and asked if he could see ma’am. I assumed he meant you because he had a bunch of red roses. He was wearing a leather flying jacket so he must be an American!”

Charlie was now even more confused. She walked into the great hall and there, sitting next to her mother on one of the sofas in front of a roaring log fire, was Max. He leapt up and gave Charlie a big hug and a kiss on both cheeks.

“How is my favourite landscape photographer?”

“I am fine, it’s lovely to see you again Max and quite a surprise!”

“I adore your home. I love these old English stone houses; they have got such history.”

“Max has been telling me all about your adventures in Hydra dear. He has brought me these lovely roses. Aren’t they beautiful?” said Charlie’s mother, Elizabeth.

“Are you here on business or were you just passing?” enquired Charlie cynically.

“I got a message from Daniel yesterday, to say come over for a few days, so here I am. The Master calls and all that. Managed to borrow the Cobra off an old friend near Reading. Really cool!”

“So, you have no idea why you are here?”

“Not a clue, but it involved seeing you, so happy to cross the planet. Did I say how beautiful you looked this morning?”

“Mummy just ignore him; he is the world’s greatest flatterer.”

“I can see where you got your good looks from, Charlie,” said Max smiling at Elizabeth.

“Shall we have a cup of tea?” asked Elizabeth. “Would you like Earl Grey Max?”

“My favourite. How did you guess!”

“Max, do you know when Daniel will be back?” enquired Charlie returning to more serious matters.

“He is flying into Leeming, sorry Teesside, tomorrow night about six. We are all meant to be meeting up for dinner at Anne Marie’s new mansion. Can’t wait to see the place.”

“Well at least I have learnt something. Does Anne Marie know?” asked Charlie.

“Knowing Daniel, probably not. You know he is not very good at domestics!”

“That’s a very acute observation Max. Where are you staying tonight?”

“Not sure. Was going to ring a B&B in Leyburn.”

“Don’t be ridiculous. You must stay with us. We have plenty of space for a handsome American!” laughed Elizabeth, enjoying the repartee.

“That’s very kind of you ma’am. How can I refuse such a generous offer from a beautiful lady?”

\* \* \*

The following morning Charlie rang Anne Marie. “Morning Annie, did you manage a lie-in?”

“No. Nzinga and I got up early and went down to the new barn to see the two fillies we bought yesterday. I am so pleased with them. They have settled in really well and have eaten up their morning TopSpec feed. We might let them out into one of the small paddocks later, so can you bring your camera over please and we can get some nice pictures.”

“Of course. Is Nzinga OK? She had a long trip yesterday.”

“Why didn’t you tell me how beautiful she was! We’re having a great time. She’s been telling me all about the rhino project and how wonderful Tsavo is. Why hasn’t Daniel taken me to Africa? I am very jealous. You will have to take me next time you go.”

“I will – I promise. Did Daniel tell you Max was here and we are all coming over to yours tonight for a meal?”

“God he is hopeless, without us to look after him. Don’t worry, I will get Jill, my new housekeeper, to go into Leyburn and get something exciting. Why don’t you bring Max over for lunch and we can try and get some pictures afterwards?”

“Ok. That sounds great and the sun is meant to be out then, so we might get some nice landscape shots in the background. We will get to you about one o’clock. I am just going to give Max a quick wiz around the estate because he’s not been here before. OK – see you soon!”

“All sorted. Would you like a quick tour Max?”

“That would be wonderful. Do you fancy a ride in the Shelby?”

“Never been in a Shelby with a ski instructor before!” smiled Charlie referring to their previous meeting on the slopes of Verbier.



They turned into the gates at Anne Marie's new mansion just as the sun came from behind the cumulus clouds drifting lazily across Wensleydale. The stone pillars had a large stone barn owl perched on each one. Anne Marie thought eagles would be vulgar in Yorkshire. The lake had grown five times and the drive was lined with mature Canadian Red King maple trees supplied by Wycombe Estates, as Anne Marie had specified on the first day. Anne Marie and Nzinga were waiting under the grand, newly steam-cleaned portico.

"Hi Max. Long-time no see!" said Anne Marie, kissing him on both cheeks briefly. Then she kissed Charlie – for a little bit longer, Nzinga noticed.

"Max, have you met Nzinga before?"

Max took her left hand in his and kissed it chivalrously on the back. "It's an enormous pleasure to meet such a beautiful lady in such a remote location."

"Max this is Wensleydale not Wyoming. Anyway, the two of us are jealous aren't we Charlie," laughed Anne Marie. "Come into the kitchen and we can have some lunch."

The kitchen had been transformed, with Charlie's guidance, into a Farrow & Ball citadel. With every possible pot and pan to go with the seven-oven dark blue Aga, it held every conceivable culinary utensil. The large pine table was laden with fresh ham, cold sirloin and salads of every description.

"A glass of Chapel Down rosé everyone?" asked Anne Marie, being the perfect hostess, tending to her guests and stimulating the conversation as she circumnavigated the lunchtime feast.

“Has anybody any idea why Daniel wants us all in Yorkshire so urgently?” asked Nzinga.

“I know there is an issue with Dimitri but I think it must be something more urgent than that?” replied Anne Marie.

“Who is Dimitri?” asked Nzinga.

“We had better let Daniel explain that one,” said Anne Marie realising she did not know how much Nzinga knew about Daniel’s ‘other’ activities.

“Sorry. I didn’t mean to pry. I just don’t want to look stupid in front of Daniel.”

“Don’t worry, we all look stupid in front of Daniel all the time!” laughed Charlie.

The conversation turned to the new house and what a lovely job Anne Marie had made of designing it.

“It is all Charlie’s ideas. She is amazing at matching colours and styles. I will show you all the other rooms later. I particularly like the library. It’s very colonial.”

“Oh, Charlie loves colonial things don’t you ma’am?!” joked Max and they all burst out laughing.

“Right. Who’s for apple pie and custard?” asked Anne Marie. “You see I have become parochial already!”

After a cup of Earl Grey, they all donned a green Schöffel coat each from the brass hooks in the boot room and went out into the bright autumn sunshine. The Dale sides were ablaze with yellow and golden leaves of every hue, as the trees prepared for their winter hibernation. The cottonwool clouds had evaporated and the clear azure blue sky created a perfect palette for Charlie’s photographs of the new arrivals at the stud.

Aiden, the new stud manager, poached from a top stud in Ireland, lead out the top-priced Dubawi filly with her

smart English leather halter. The halter had a gleaming brass plate with the filly's new name registered with Weatherbys – Wensleydale Princess. She was on her toes, coming out into the beautiful autumn sunshine and feeling the grass beneath her feet. Aiden had groomed her dark bay coat so it shone richly in the mellow sun's rays and her mane flowed in the light breeze.

"That is some fantastic filly," observed Max. "She tracks up superbly and I love her limbs."

"I didn't know you were a connoisseur of bloodstock?" asked Charlie quizzically.

"Not really, but my uncle has a stud in Kentucky and I enjoy spending time there whenever I go to the States."

"Can you ride then?"

"Born in the saddle! I love riding out in the mornings."

"That's great. We will have to get you up on the moors one morning."

"What's the other filly?" enquired Max, as Aiden's assistant, Jenny, led out the chestnut.

"She's a Frankel filly out of a Sea the Stars mare. We just loved her walk and she has a wonderful pedigree. We hope that the two of them will be a good foundation to my new stud," said Anne Marie.

Aiden and Jenny led the two fillies into a small paddock surrounded by a tall beech hedge faced with an immaculate post and rail fence. They stood the fillies up so Charlie could photograph them against the stunning backdrop of the Dale sides bathed in the afternoon sunshine. When she was happy with the images, Aiden and Jenny took them into the middle of the small paddock and unclipped the lead ropes.

“This is always a tense moment,” said Anne Marie with a worried expression. “I hope they get on together and don’t injure themselves.”

The fillies took off with their tails held high, just like their historic Arab ancestors did before them. They cantered around the perimeter of the field for a couple of circuits, before coming to rest in the far corner, heads down to sweet meadow grass.

“They’ll be fine now, to be sure,” said Aiden. “I will keep an eye on them for half an hour and then they can come back inside for today.”

“Thank you, Aiden. I am so lucky to have all your experience to help us,” said Anne Marie genuinely.

“No problem. It’s a privilege to work with such lovely families. Did you get any nice shots of them moving ma’am?” asked Aiden.

“Don’t call her ma’am,” said Max, “it’s a bit colonial.” They all collapsed laughing again.

“Charlie’ is fine Aiden. We’re all on first names here,” smiled Charlie.

\* \* \*

They all wandered back towards the house, now surrounded by immaculate Chocorua gardens similar to the ones at Anne Marie’s house in New England. The young Crataegus trees, covered in russet red fruit, lined the gravel path from the stable barn across to the house. The new pond was filled with koi, which had travelled from the pond in America, and they seemed unconcerned with their transatlantic journey to nowhere.

“I think we had better be going back to the Hall, Max, so you can have a rest before dinner. I will pick you up in the

Range Rover about seven and bring you back across here. Is that OK with you Annie?”

“That will be great Charlie. Jill has done a beef casserole and dumplings which I hope tastes better than it sounds. Anyway, she says we can eat it at any time to suit when Daniel arrives. I assume he will come straight here from Leeming, sorry Teesside.”

“Where is Leeming Airport?” asked Nzinga naïvely. “I’ve never heard of it.”

“Oh, it’s just a local name for Teesside,” said Anne Marie hastily covering her indiscretion.

Max opened the car door for Charlie and she slid gracefully into the bucket seat. He jumped in the driver’s side and fired up the V8 muscle. The engine growled, as only Shelby’s can, and they roared up to V1 before reaching the owls.

\* \* \*

Charlie had not seen Daniel for a few weeks and wanted to look nice for him so she took a quick shower and stood thoughtfully in front of her now extensive wardrobe in their bedroom at the mill. She had spent more on new clothes in the last twelve months than in the rest of her life put together. She was fiercely independent and a successful business woman on the outside but her love for Daniel had melted her inner self and all she wanted to do was please him. She had tried to analyse it, one lonely evening whilst he was away, but gave up after ten minutes deciding the pleasure she felt when he was returning, just overwhelmed any feminist ideals. Physiology always beats psychology she concluded.

She went for a bright green cashmere top with a roll neck and her new Saint Lauren flared legged trousers in camel. And her gold St Christopher bracelet which Daniel had given her for Christmas when they first met. She decided to put her hair up with the artisan clip she bought in Hvar when Daniel had blown up the ‘bastard’s’ multimillion-pound yacht for her. When she was totally happy with her appearance for her lover, she drove up to the Hall and walked into the warmth of the great hall where Max, and her father Edward, were stood in front of the blazing log fire talking about the Shelby. What else?

“Wow you look amazing ma’am. Can I take you out for the evening?”

“Just ignore him, Daddy, he is always full of flattery.”

“Don’t worry darling, I have already had a lecture from your mother about how wonderful Max is and how she wished I could be so attentive!” he smiled.

“Your father’s cellar is a wine connoisseur’s dream. This Château Pétrus Merlot is fabulous,” said Max holding his glass up to the light.

“Well, are we going to Anne Marie’s or are you staying here?” joked Charlie.

“Close decision but your smile just beats the Merlot,” said Max finishing off the glass.

“Thank you for the drink, Edward. We will go for that spin in the Shelby when Charlie gives me some time off!”

“I will look forward to it and I’ll get one of the lads to give it a clean tomorrow.”

“Come on you, or Daniel will get there before us,” urged Charlie.

\* \* \*

Anne Marie's kitchen was alive with culinary creativity and conversation, when Charlie and Max walked in. Charlie's eyes flashed around the room but there was no sign of Daniel. Jill was busy protecting the new Aga from unskilled chefs and Nzinga was preparing the carrots for an orange reduction. Anne Marie was laying the table and looking stunning in a white, silver-threaded blouse and grey skinny jeans. She rushed over and kissed them both on the cheek.

"Max darling, can you be in charge of the wine. It's the Métras Fleurie on the sideboard. The glasses are in the old pine dresser over there."

"My pleasure. I love a nice Beaujolais."

"He spends half an hour with Daddy and suddenly he's a connoisseur of all good French wines!" joked Charlie. "Talking of connoisseurs, has anybody heard from Daniel yet?"

"Nothing so far but if he doesn't hurry up there will be no casserole left because it smells delicious," said Anne Marie smiling at Jill.

Nzinga had finished preparing the carrots and handed the pan over to Jill to reduce on the Aga. She came and sat next to Max and asked him what he thought of the tour of Charlie's estate.

"It was magical, driving around the magnificent Dales' countryside with a beautiful English lady in a Shelby. What more can a humble American man ask?!"

"I am not so sure about the humble," laughed Nzinga.

"No seriously, I love the English countryside. The colours are so vivid at this time of year and the landscape is so peaceful with all the sheep slowly munching away and the hedgerows seem alive with birds of every description.



*View of Wensleydale near Hawes*

Not sure they liked the Shelby but we can't all have good taste!"

"So how does a poor African black woman get a ride in this car?" asked Nzinga semi-cynically.

"Sorry, didn't notice your skin colour. All I could see was a beautiful, intelligent lady and I would be delighted to give you a tour of the whole of Wensleydale whenever you are ready," retaliated Max.

"Now I feel dreadful. Sorry," said Nzinga looking mournful.

"Don't be silly," said Anne Marie. "Just think what it's like for Charlie being born in Yorkshire!" And everyone laughed, just as the door opened into the kitchen.

"What are you lot laughing about?" smiled Daniel as he got swamped in hugs and kisses by the three ladies and an especially long one from Charlie. He shook hands with Max and walked over to the Aga.



“Hi Jill, I’m Daniel. I have heard a lot about your excellent meals from Anne Marie. I am really looking forward to some proper meals now I am back in England.”

“It’s a pleasure to meet you, Daniel. I will try and make some specials whilst you are here,” said Jill, flattered by the attention. “Right Anne Marie, I think you are all set now. I will leave you to enjoy your evening and I will see you in the morning. Have a fun evening everyone.”

“Now then you lot. What’s all the news from Wensleydale? Are all the badgers happy!” said Daniel as he walked back to Charlie and put his arm around her back and gave her a secret squeeze. Max supplied Daniel with a glass of wine and they all sat around the enormous kitchen table eating Jill’s red onion and fontal cheese pantofola.

“Is there a problem with the badgers?” asked Max naively.

“No. It’s just an in-joke. I will explain when you’ve got three hours to spare!” said Charlie nudging Daniel in the ribs. “Anne Marie’s two fillies are really lovely, Daniel; you must come over in the morning to see them. After all, one of them is half yours!”

“I have no idea what you mean,” smiled Daniel.

“So now Jill has gone, are you going to tell us why we have been summoned from across the planet to lovely Leyburn?” asked Max.

“That’s for tomorrow. Let’s just enjoy an evening together.”

“Crickey it must be serious!” said Max in a quiet low voice.

“So how are the boys in Chyulu? Are they behaving themselves?” asked Daniel.

“Yes, really good thank you,” said Nzinga. “The white rhino cow and calf are still around the Springs and doing really well. Two of the Maasai rangers helped Bomani and I to fit one of the new micro-trackers to the calf so we can see where they are and you can now watch them on your phone with the new satellite software we’re not meant to talk about. I will programme your iPhone tomorrow and you can have a look.”

“That would be good. And how are things up in Virunga?”

“All good, I think. Wamwarav hasn’t been able to track down the band with the female gorilla and her baby for a few days but the weather has been awful up there so they are going to have an intensive search when the mist clears a bit.”

“Well keep me posted. I don’t like it when they disappear like that,” said Daniel with a worried expression.

“Now who’s for dumplings!” asked Anne Marie with smile.

“It smells delicious,” said Max, “I could eat a horse. Sorry, probably not the best choice of words on a stud farm!”