

# Shadows of the Past

by Alison Reid



As Nathan stood at Robert Monroe’s funeral, dressed in a sleek black tailored suit, the weight of the past settled heavily on his shoulders. His posture was composed, his expression unreadable to the crowd around him—but inside, his heart thudded with the force of memories he hadn’t summoned in years.

And then he saw her.

Amanda.

She stood beneath a wide-brimmed black hat, her face partially obscured by a veil, but it didn’t matter—he would have recognised her anywhere. The girl he once loved had transformed into a woman of quiet power and impossible beauty. She was more poised than he remembered, more self-possessed, but still achingly familiar. Her elegant frame held an unnatural stillness, like a porcelain figurine placed delicately at the centre of grief.

Nathan’s breath caught.

Eight years. Eight years since she had whispered that she loved him... then disappeared without a word. Eight years since she had broken him with a truth that didn’t make sense then and still didn’t now. And in all that time, he had believed he’d buried the hurt—locked it away with the naïve boy who had

dreamed of forever with the daughter of a wealthy rancher. But standing there, looking at her now, the pain rose up like a ghost, fresh and sharp and maddeningly alive.

But this was not a moment for sentiment. He had not returned to mourn.

He had come to reclaim what was his.

Robert Monroe's carefully constructed world had crumbled. Behind the opulent gates and manicured pastures lay a legacy of corruption, debt, and moral rot. The man had died clinging to a reputation built on lies, and Nathan had waited patiently for it all to collapse. With Robert dead and the Monroe estate drowning in creditors, Nathan saw his opportunity—not just for retribution, but for justice.

He would dismantle everything Robert had built. And Amanda, the woman who had shattered him and then inherited her father's kingdom, would be forced to watch it all burn.

As his gaze lingered on her, something dark stirred within him. The fire of vengeance had long smouldered beneath his success, fuelling every deal, every land purchase, every strategic move that had brought him back to this moment. And now, finally, it was time.

She would feel the sting of betrayal as deeply as he had.

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