

# Time to Rise



Diane West

## Chapter 1

### Kitty Parker

A warm Cornish breeze blew along the path and for the woman walking down the lane, it was a welcome arrival. The Summer had come early again and taken her by surprise. It was probably her imagination, but she felt as if the breeze had a story to tell of places recently visited and left far behind.

“Oh, if only you could talk” she whispered, “Now that would truly be a story worth listening to.”

Kitty looked around her, to make sure no-one had heard her mumblings. She was well aware that sometimes words that were meant to be said in her head had often passed her lips before she could stop them. Feeling assured that the only audience she had was a little Robin that had been scouring the path ahead of her, she smiled to herself. The little Robin scurried away as she approached it and she could see it peering out from the hedges at the side, no doubt waiting to return to the path again as soon as she was out of view. As Kitty followed the path round, she soon had a view of the harbour. Colourful boats were moored along one side and at the other she could see the sea coming in, hurtling itself against the high rock built walls. The small waves seemed desperately to be trying to make an impression on the strong walls, trying to climb up the sides, as if with invisible arms and legs, but to no avail. She stopped walking and watched in admiration as they effortlessly lashed the rocks, only to fall back down and be swept out to sea again. It was a sight to behold and one she never tired of. Without realising it, she had started to walk again and was now at the bottom of the hill. The breeze had disappeared and the smell of the sea, freshly ground coffee and doughnuts, engulfed her senses. Suddenly aware she hadn't eaten that day, Kitty decided now might be a good time to stop and rest. Finding a welcoming little café/bistro, she removed the back pretty backpack from her shoulders, flipped her sunglasses to the top of her head and walked in through the open door. She was welcomed by the smell of strong coffee and the bubbling sound of the coffee machine being operated. After looking around for a small table (she would always avoid sitting at a bigger one in case anyone came and sat with

her and struck up a conversation) she popped her beloved bag on the ground, pulled out a chair and sat down. There was a freshly picked bunch of lavender in a small slim, orange vase in the middle of the brightly painted table. It was a mixture of colours, in a kind of tribal design and the two chairs, although, not matching, were painted in the same way. All the tables and chairs were the same colours, different shapes and sizes, but they all went well together, in a quirky kind of way. Kitty liked it, it felt fresh and bright and happy. If a cafe could feel happy, that is. In any case it made her feel happy, so that was enough. A woman, about her age or thereabouts came over and handed her a menu,

“Good morning and what a beautiful morning it is. Looks like it’s in for the day too. Take your time choosing what you like, no rush. I’ll be back over to take your order in a minute honey.” An enormous smile spread across her face and Kitty got the feeling this lady really loved her job. Her enthusiasm was contagious and she found herself smiling too, for no other reason than she wanted to. For the first time in a while, she relaxed. Her shoulders felt lighter and she settled down in the chair, which suddenly felt like the most comfortable seat she had ever sat on. A sigh escaped and she let it.

“I like it here, it feels friendly and welcoming. I think I’ll enjoy staying in this little village or at least I’ll enjoy my coffee breaks.”

She was still relaxed and smiling when the lady who brought her the menu came to take her order. She had decided on two rounds of toast, with a small pot of marmalade and a large Americano coffee. Normally, she would order a medium or a small, but today she needed the extra caffeine, besides sea air always helped her sleep and she was sure she would sleep well tonight. In fact, she knew she would. Something about this place made her feel at home, she didn’t know what or why, she just knew.

After a short wait, her toast and coffee arrived. The woman who took her order brought it and after a brief conversation, Kitty learned that she was also the owner, the cook and the cleaner. She introduced herself as Molly. She ran the place herself. She was also responsible for the decorated tables and chairs, the paintings on the

wall and the little crafted gifts that were on sale near the counter. She explained that she did employ extra help in the Summer months, but the rest of the year she managed it all herself. Admittedly, it only ever got busy in the Summer months, but even so Kitty was very impressed.

“I don’t suppose you’re looking for some part time work honey,” she looked directly at her as she spoke, “It’s already starting to get busy, now the nice weather is here and I’m looking to set staff on again.”

Kitty was taken by surprise, politely thanked her for the offer, but explained she already had a job lined up and had arrived there only that morning. She had yet to book into her accommodation and then wait for her luggage to arrive. She had booked a little cottage for two months, just to give her time to see how the new job suited her. She would be working for a local writer, illustrating and designing for his newest book. She was on a six week trial initially, but if all went well and they got on well, she would be offered the job on a permanent basis. Molly seemed impressed when Kitty explained why she was there.

“If by local writer you mean Troy Maxwell, then you’re a very lucky lady indeed. He is a well known character round here and quite a catch for a single lady. Not implying you’re single honey, a beautiful woman like you must have someone keeping her bed warm, but if you didn’t you couldn’t go far wrong with Mr Maxwell.”

Kitty laughed and shook her head,

“I am single, but it’s ok, I’m not looking for anyone to warm my bed right now, my hot water bottle will do me fine.” Molly laughed hard at this and patted her on the shoulder,

“Sounds like you’re as bright as you are pretty. Who needs a man anyway. I certainly don’t and I’ve managed quite well for the last 5 years without one, as you can see.” She looked around her as she spoke, as if to indicate her many accomplishments. “Besides, I don’t have time for one these days.” She laughed and winked, then left her alone with her breakfast and her thoughts.

Kitty liked her, she had only just met her, but she felt at ease with her and thought the two of them might become friends. They certainly seemed to think alike. Since her break up with Glen, two years ago, she hadn't even thought about seeing anyone else. Like Molly, she had been too busy, intentionally so, throwing herself into her work and pushing any thoughts of Glen or any man to the back of her mind. She still felt guilty, even after two years. Telling him it was over, they were over, had been hard. He had taken it very badly too. She often wondered if he hadn't tried to pressure her into settling down and having children, whether things might have turned out different with them, but deep down, she knew it would never have worked out. Glen wanted a home, marriage and babies and she wanted to travel and further her career. She wasn't ready for marriage or babies. In fact, the more she thought about it, the less she liked the idea. The thought of being a mother scared her, if she was honest. She was only just capable of looking after herself, let alone a small child. She shivered inwardly at the thought. No, she was convinced now, more than ever that she had done the right thing. For weeks after the break up, Glen had tried everything to change her mind and wanted them to start again. He promised not to bring up the subject again and would wait till she was ready, but Kitty told him not to waste his time, she wasn't sure she would ever be ready. Their last conversation didn't end very well with Glen accusing Kitty of wasting his time and leading him on, as well as ruining his life. She was deeply hurt at that, she had never led him on at all and always made it clear that she wasn't even thinking about settling down and having children. Her career had just taken off and although she was aware of her biological body clock ticking away, she had worked too hard to give it all up. For years she had struggled to make a living as an artist and had learned to edit and proof read to enhance her qualifications. The same year she had split with Glen, she had been offered a contract with a publishing company, Barker and Jones. Sometimes just her editing skills were needed, other times she might only be illustrating, but the money was good and the work consistent. Eventually she had saved quite a lot of money and was thinking of buying her own place, instead of renting. Her apartment was nice enough, but she needed something bigger, possibly with a studio so she could focus more on her art work again. That was how she came across Troy Maxwell. She had heard of him, as he was a very successful

writer and had published many books. She and her friend Izzie had been looking at properties for sale on a display board outside a local Estate Agents and Izzie suggested they go in and pick up a couple of brochures to look through while they had lunch. They picked up some to take with them and then went to Café Paris, their favourite place to eat. They went there often and knew some of the staff, including the manager. It was a quaint little place with a very extensive menu. The decor was very French, as you'd expect with its name and all the staff spoke English and French. It was a nice touch. During their meal, Izzie noticed they'd accidentally picked up a brochure which was for rental property in Cornwall. How they had managed that, neither of them knew, but it was pushed to one side and they concentrated on the other properties, all local and within Kitty's price range. After looking through them, in-between eating lunch, she promised Izzie that she would get round to booking viewings and Izzie could go along with her. Strength in numbers she had thought at the time. They were just getting ready to leave when Pierre, the manager of the cafe came over to them. After enquiring if they had both enjoyed their meal, he turned to Kitty and asked her if she was interested in some extra work. He said it was well paid, really well paid, but it would mean her travelling to Cornwall each weekend, as that's where the work was. He explained that his friend Troy Maxwell who she had probably heard of, was looking for someone to help edit and illustrate his latest book. Kitty told him she knew of him, but that she didn't realise his books were illustrated too. He told her usually they're not, but Maxwell had decided to write a childrens book and had asked him if he could recommend anyone. He could've asked his publisher to find him one, but he preferred to find someone himself. His publisher was trying to talk him out of the venture, as she said he had no experience with children, so couldn't possibly know what their reading needs were.

“He was here yesterday and you walked in today. It seems like perfect timing to me. What do you think? Do you fancy spending your weekends on holiday? Maxwells place is quite close to the beach, he even has his own private little spot there.”

Kitty was taken by surprise and her initial thought was to say no, but then something stopped her. Suddenly, her eyes were drawn to the brochure they'd pushed to one

side. Wasn't that rental properties and in Cornwall too? It was just too much of a coincidence. She looked at Izzie, then at the brochure and put her handbag back down and stayed in her seat. Her friend knew exactly what the look had meant and picked up the brochure. Kitty told Pierre she needed time to think and could they please order two coffees. Instead of leaving, the two friends remained seated and started looking through the brochure. There were plenty of properties to rent for a holiday, but Kitty had another idea. What if she looked for a long term rental, she had seriously been thinking of looking for another job, maybe not so far away, but now it might be worth considering. She had not used any of her work holidays, so she could ask for some time off and go check out some places before making a decision. This was a big thing and shouldn't be rushed. She mustn't make rash decisions, she knew that, but also this proposition just seemed the perfect solution to all her problems. She could move away and make a new start. Okay, it would be hard to leave her friends and work colleagues, especially to move to a new place, where she wouldn't know anyone. All these thoughts were going through her mind when Izzie gasped,

“Look at the price of some of these places, they're really expensive to rent. You need to find out how much Troy Maxwell is willing to pay you first and where exactly he lives.” She was right of course. There was no point looking at properties if she couldn't even afford to rent them.

Pierre arrived with the drinks and Kitty asked him politely where his friend lived and how much he would pay, almost apologising for asking, but explaining that it needed to be worth her while.

“Aah, you are interested then? I have tempted you, like with the donkey and the cherry,” he laughed.

“It's a carrot Pierre, a donkey and a carrot and yes, I'm interested.”

Pierre told them his friend lived along a coastal route, just by a little harbour village called Kosel Teg. It's on the southern side of Cornwall, not far from Polperro. He lived in a large house with plenty of space and there was the option to live in the

house itself or a small cottage nearby. He assured her that Maxwell had told him he was happy to pay whatever the successful applicant wanted, but initially on a trial period. That way if they didn't get on or suit each other, neither party were obliged to continue working together. If she really was interested, he would give her Troy Maxwells telephone number and details. She nodded that she was and he went away and came back with a business card, complete with Troy's email address and mobile number. Just seeing the card with his name on had given her butterflies in her tummy and she had felt as if this was more than a crazy coincidence, this felt more like a sign. She felt she was being pushed in a direction that would change her life completely.

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