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*PROLOGUE*

*The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function.*  
—F. Scott Fitzgerald

Death hung in the air that day. On September 11, 2001, I drove my husband, George, to our brand new four-story townhouse in McLean, Virginia, twenty miles from the Pentagon. Terrorists had flown airplanes that morning into the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon killing thousands of innocent people.

As an Air Force officer, George's career had been defined in many ways by his assignments to the Pentagon, the last time in the late 1960's, before leaving for Vietnam. He had told me that people who worked there viewed it as America's iron fortress. As a fighter pilot, he was deeply moved by the attack.

Holding the hand-railing tightly, George walked in the front door of our townhouse with a soft smile and little assistance. After we explored the first floor, I heard him sigh, and saw his chest heave as his face turned gray.