

GOLDEN GATE SECRETS



IN

*Times
Gone By*

TRACIE
PETERSON



BETHANYHOUSE

a division of Baker Publishing Group
Minneapolis, Minnesota

© 2018 by Peterson Ink, Inc.

Published by Bethany House Publishers
11400 Hampshire Avenue South
Bloomington, Minnesota 55438
www.bethanyhouse.com

Bethany House Publishers is a division of
Baker Publishing Group, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Printed in the United States of America

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—for example, electronic, photocopy, recording—without the prior written permission of the publisher. The only exception is brief quotations in printed reviews.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Peterson, Tracie, author.

Title: In times gone by / Tracie Peterson.

Description: Minneapolis, Minnesota : Bethany House, a division of Baker Publishing Group, [2018] | Series: Golden Gate secrets : 3

Identifiers: LCCN 2018020565 | ISBN 9780764219016 (trade paper) | ISBN 9780764231230 (cloth) | ISBN 9780764231247 (large print) | ISBN 9781493413812 (e-book)

Subjects: | GSAFD: Love stories.

Classification: LCC PS3566.E7717 G56 2018 | DDC 813/.54—dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2018020565>

Scripture quotations are from the King James Version of the Bible unless otherwise marked.

Scripture quotations marked (NIV) are from the Holy Bible, New International Version®. NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com

This is a work of historical reconstruction; the appearances of certain historical figures are therefore inevitable. All other characters, however, are products of the author's imagination, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

Cover design by LOOK Design Studio

Cover photography by Aimee Christenson

18 19 20 21 22 23 24 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

To Kimberley Woodhouse,
with thanks for all you do and for the friendship you've given
me over the years. I cherish working with you, but even more,
I cherish the honesty and love between us.

CHAPTER

1

APRIL 1906—SAN FRANCISCO

Everything smelled like smoke. Tasted like smoke. No matter how many times Kenzie Gifford washed her clothes, her hair, even her hands, the acrid scent lingered. Would it ever change?

She looked up from her work to gaze north. A good portion of the city had burned to the ground. The charred frames of buildings stood like blackened ghosts of what had once been a vibrant, beautiful town. Surrounding those were the crumbled stones and cracked foundations that the earthquake had left behind. San Francisco as many had known it no longer existed.

Early on the morning of the eighteenth, the earth had shaken with such tremendous force that Kenzie had actually thought the world had come to an end. Didn't the Bible speak of such things? Earthquakes, stars falling from the sky, the earth burning. Of course, the world hadn't ended, although the end had come for hundreds—maybe thousands—of poor souls.

She shuddered and tried to push aside the images of things she'd seen. Forgetting the earthquake and its aftermath was

impossible, especially when everyone seemed to gauge their existence from that day. It was almost like a strange rebirth. No matter where she went, people were talking about where they were and what they were doing when the “big one” hit.

San Franciscans were no strangers to earthquakes. Often they occurred with hardly more than a passing nod of acknowledgment. But not when they came with the intensity and length of this quake. Even the old-timers were saying it was the worst they’d ever known.

Kenzie returned her attention to the cast-iron kettle. Soon she would rinse the bed linens and hang them on the makeshift laundry lines. For a few minutes they would smell of strong lye soap and then revert to the familiar smoky stench. She took up her paddle and bent to stir the linens.

“This is the last of them,” Judith Whitley said, depositing a large wheelbarrow overflowing with sheets and pillowcases. “Mrs. Andrews said she and the other ladies would be out to take over as soon as they’ve finished their breakfast. Oh, and they said they’d hang the woolen blankets and pound the dust from them too.”

Kenzie put aside the paddle and straightened. “It’s good to see everyone pulling together.”

Judith pushed back her long blond braid, then wiped her forehead with the back of her sleeve. She glanced back at the warehouse. “Caleb said disaster brings out the best and the worst in people. I’m glad we seem to have those with better dispositions.”

Caleb Coulter, Judith’s fiancé, had purchased the large warehouse shortly before the earthquake. He and his sister Camrianne had intended to create a shelter for displaced women and children. They called it Solid Rock as a reminder of Christ being their firm foundation and of their desire to provide such a refuge for the downtrodden. They had arranged with Camri’s fiancé, Patrick

Murdock, a talented carpenter, to ready the building for residents. No one had anticipated they would need it so soon.

“I’ve heard all sorts of terrible stories about the relief camps,” Judith continued. “Of course, everyone is still in such a state of shock and disarray. So many people are still missing. Mrs. Gimble said she and her husband can’t find their children. Imagine, entire families just disappearing.”

“Like yours did,” Kenzie said, hoping her tone was more sympathetic than agitated. She didn’t like to think about so many people being dead.

“Yes. Like mine, although I hardly had a chance to know them.” Judith shook her head. “Sometimes I wonder if it would have been better to never have known them.”

Judith had come to San Francisco to find her long-lost family, only to lose all but one in the earthquake. Kenzie felt sorry for her friend. Not only for the loss of life, but for the threat that had come against Judith.

“Well, if you’d never known them, your cousin Bill wouldn’t have tried to kill you. On the other hand, had he not tried to kill you, then you wouldn’t have been rescued by the man you love.” The wind came up, and Kenzie wriggled her nose. “I’ll be so glad when we get rid of the ash and stench.” She pulled out a blue bandana and wrapped it around her head. “I just washed my hair, and I won’t have it filled with ash.” She secured her auburn hair beneath the scarf.

“I am glad I had a chance to know Grandmother,” Judith continued, her voice taking on a mournful tone. “I would have liked to know her better. Now she’s gone, along with so many others. Caleb said the numbers will probably climb into the thousands.”

Kenzie tried not to think about that number, which perhaps included her mother’s cousin, George Lake. Cousin George had given Kenzie, Judith, and Camri jobs at his chocolate factory

when they'd first come to San Francisco in November. George was still unaccounted for, and Kenzie had encountered little luck getting anyone to let her go into his burned-out chocolate factory to search for him. She had sought the help of the army, only to be refused. "That area was completely destroyed," an officer had told her. "If your cousin was there when the earthquake hit, most likely he's dead. If not right away, then the fire got him."

It was terrible to imagine poor Cousin George pinned in the debris and burned alive. So many had died that way. Thankfully, the damage at the warehouse had been minimal, and the fires had been stopped before spreading this far.

". . . after that she was just fine," Judith said, looking expectantly at Kenzie for a response.

Kenzie shook her head. "I'm sorry. My mind wasn't on what you were saying."

Judith smiled. She had the sweetest disposition. "It's all right. It wasn't at all important." She patted Kenzie's arm. "I'm sure he's fine."

"Who?" Kenzie had said nothing of her worries about Cousin George, although everyone knew he was still unaccounted for.

"Micah. I'm sure he's safe."

Kenzie felt her mouth go dry. Even though she had discouraged him repeatedly, Dr. Micah Fisher had pursued her since her arrival in the city. At least it felt that way. Tall and handsome, Micah was a sought-after bachelor and Caleb's best friend. Truth be told, she *was* worried about him, despite her determination not to think about him. She wasn't sure how to react to Judith's comment without hurting her friend's feelings. Judith was in love, so naturally she thought the rest of the world should be too.

"I'm sure he is." Kenzie hoped her voice didn't sound too clipped. "You might let Camri know that we're going to need

more firewood.” She turned back to the kettle and began moving the clean sheets to the rinse water.

When she turned back around, Judith was gone. Kenzie let out a sigh of relief. She didn’t want to discuss Micah and risk thoughts and feelings coming to the surface that she’d just have to explain away later. She cared about his well-being, of course. But nothing more. Nothing.

Kenzie glanced toward the warehouse. It wasn’t much to look at. The exterior was in bad need of a paint job, but Patrick had made sure the structure was sound. He had also arranged to add a few more windows, for which Kenzie was very grateful. The small private rooms that they had arranged for themselves had been dark and cramped when she’d first been shown the warehouse.

Camri had insisted that each of the rooms have a window. “Even if we use them for nothing more than offices,” she had told her brother and fiancé, “we’re going to want the extra light.”

Kenzie smiled at the memory. Camri was good at getting what she wanted, and the windows had served them well. Life would have been much worse if they’d all had to take up residence in one of the relief camps. Tent life was not at all appealing, and neither was the idea of living under the army’s thumb. Although at the moment, it seemed the entire city was obliged to do the military’s bidding.

Once she had transferred the clean sheets to the rinse water, Kenzie put new dirty sheets into the soapy water. Sheets were a small luxury that Camri had decided on when planning for the warehouse to become a home for women and children who were down on their luck. She had thought it would add a homey touch to the simple cots. Kenzie admitted that it did, but it also added extra work. Especially since Camri had decided that sheets needed to be washed once a week. She had no doubt

read somewhere that this was the optimum schedule for the best hygiene. Camri was college educated and seemed to have a vast amount of knowledge about many things. Kenzie admired her genius, although at times she found Camri more than a little exasperating.

A shriek of laughter drew her attention as a group of children ran around the corner of the warehouse. Three little girls pursued a scruffy dog. The brown-and-white mongrel held a ball in its mouth and apparently was winning a game of keep-away. Kenzie couldn't help but smile. In the midst of disaster, it was nice to see such happiness.

With her work done, Kenzie decided to grab a quick bite to eat. She made her way to the opposite side of the warehouse, where their outdoor dining and kitchen had been arranged.

"Miss Gifford," a woman called from where she sat at one of the tables.

Kenzie went to her. "Yes, Mrs. Clark?"

The gray-haired woman held up a bowl of oatmeal and gave her a grandmotherly smile. "I know you haven't eaten yet."

Her kindness touched Kenzie. She took the bowl and smiled. "Thank you. I wanted to get the first batch of sheets washed."

"Well, you needn't worry with anything else." Mrs. Clark rose from the bench. "Gladys and I will take it in hand."

Kenzie put the bowl of cereal on the table, then reached out to help the old woman up. The long trestle tables and benches suited the feeding of a great many people but were difficult for the elderly to manage.

"Thank you, dear. Now you sit down and eat. You're far too skinny."

It was useless to argue. Kenzie gave a nod. "I just put the last of the sheets in the wash water. You may need to add some more soap."

Mrs. Clark cackled. "Now ain't that something? A sweet

young girl like you tellin' the likes of me how to wash clothes. Been washin' them since I was able to walk. My ma saw nothing good to be gained in idleness."

Mrs. Andrews appeared from inside the warehouse. She was a short, stocky woman whose piercing blue eyes missed nothing. "I'm ready to tend to the laundry with you, Minnie. I had to speak to Penelope. She has her little granddaughters with her today. It seems their mama and papa are working to clean bricks. Anyway, I told her it was probably best if she helped with something else and we managed the laundry."

"Good idea, Gladys. I wouldn't want those little ones around the fire." Mrs. Clark nodded her approval. They continued chatting about the matter as they left Kenzie to her breakfast.

The oatmeal tasted bland. At least it wasn't smoky. Kenzie sprinkled a bit of sugar onto the cereal and dug in. Milk and cream were luxuries they couldn't afford, even when they could be found, so Kenzie did her best to swallow the thick porridge without it. She fondly recalled breakfast at Caleb's house, where his housekeeper, Mrs. Wong, would fix bacon and eggs, biscuits and gravy, and even the occasional pot of oatmeal. The difference between her cereal and this, however, was like night and day. Mrs. Wong put cinnamon and other spices in her oatmeal, as well as a generous helping of raisins and cream.

"I've been going over the books since five, and they still prove only one thing," Camri said, joining Kenzie. She put a cup of coffee in front of Kenzie.

"What's that?" Kenzie continued eating.

Camri frowned. "Coffee, of course."

"No, I meant what do the books prove?"

"Oh, that. We need more supplies. We have fifty-seven people, not counting ourselves and Judith, and of course Caleb and Patrick." She shook her head, and her hastily pinned hair threatened to come undone. Camri began fussing with the hairpins.

“Caleb is going to speak with Judge Winters and see if he can get us some help from the army without them thinking they need to send someone here to run things. The judge is good friends with General Funston, and since he’s in charge, Caleb is almost certain they can work something out.”

“What if they can’t?” Kenzie asked before she could stop herself. Camri tended to worry enough without her adding to the strain.

“That was my thought exactly. Caleb told me I shouldn’t fret about it until we had an answer one way or the other. Patrick told me that no matter what happened, he was sure I’d find a way to manage. As if he thinks I can call down food from heaven.”

Kenzie couldn’t help chuckling. “Well, we have seen you do stranger things.”

Camri straightened. “This took us all by surprise. No one expected such complete devastation. So many people have nothing to go back to. Providing a cot and blanket, a warm meal—even if it is watery soup—and a change of clothes means the world.”

“It does, and you’re managing it all very well, so stop worrying. As you once told me, the energy spent in worry is much more productively spent in prayer.”

Camri sighed and finally finished with her hair. “I know you’re right. I just want to do whatever I can to help these people.”

“As do Judith and I. Thank the Lord she knows how to cook. We might have had to endure my cooking, which even in the best of circumstances is only fair in quality. I can’t imagine trying to do it the way she has—with so little and for so many.”

“She is a godsend to be sure, and she comforts Caleb.”

“Comforts him?” Kenzie shook her head. “Judith’s the one who lost her grandmother.”

Camri’s expression grew serious. “Caleb is worried about

Micah. He's heard nothing. Neither have the Fishers. I heard him speaking with Pastor Fisher last night. It would seem Micah's doing a great deal of work away from the hospitals."

"But he's alive?" Kenzie tried not to sound overly worried.

"He was, but there have been so many buildings collapsing and people killed. No one has seen Micah since the earthquake, and you know very well that the fires have been deadlier. Caleb's terribly worried. I am too. Caleb said that one of the newspapers mentioned a doctor being killed a couple of days ago—they had found an unconscious man pinned in one of the buildings that hadn't burned. Apparently the doctor went to help, and he and the others were killed when the building collapsed. It didn't mention his identity."

Kenzie knew it was senseless to pretend she didn't care. Micah was just the sort to rush into an unsafe building to save a life. "I've been praying for him and for Cousin George."

Camri nodded. "Poor Mr. Lake. I hope he managed to get to safety. Caleb was going to speak to the soldiers in charge of that area and see if they'd heard anything. They've started posting notes at the relief camps. Someone came up with the idea to create a board where people could tack up the names of those they're looking for. We should probably send someone to put up your cousin's name. Micah's too. Oh, and then check with the people handling . . . the dead."

Kenzie's throat constricted. She hated to think of her cousin dead, even though the odds were good that he was. But to consider Micah dead was almost more than she could bear. It wasn't because she had special feelings for him, but she hated to think of someone so talented being killed. At least, that was what she kept telling herself.

"I'll go. I'll write up notes that we're looking for George and Micah and post them on the relief camp boards."

Camri seemed to consider this for a moment. "I suppose

that would be good, but let's wait until Caleb and Patrick get back from their meeting. They should be back anytime, and they might have word."

Kenzie pushed her unfinished oatmeal aside. "I'll go write up the notes."