



There was a duck in my dream, and it would not stop farting.

I was strolling on the banks of the Mississippi River, the revelry of Mardi Gras festivities carried across the night air from the French Quarter behind me. The duck splashed in the muddy water while the sun set. Beyond the bridge skyline were the tops of trees in the town where I grew up.

This was a memory, more than a dream. I'd stood in this spot just a few months prior, so it was more detailed than my normal anxiety dreams. A band played like it was the first time they'd picked up instruments. Someone banged a drum with a pattern that had no rhythm. The guitar's stunted twangs buzzed like a chainsaw, and even in my sleep I understood it was the sound of me snoring.

The dream was so vivid I smelled sweat and fried chicken. Without turning my head, I knew the crowd was a hoard of drunks, crawling over one another to catch plastic beads that were inexplicably sticky and stuffed animals coated in beer. Typical Mardi Gras. At least in the French Quarter.

But I'd managed to find a moment of respite, a sort of detached peace along the river bank, while a duck looked me square in the face and farted, over and over. What was wrong with it? Had it eaten a polluted fish or been fed too much king cake?

I mulled over the possibilities in my sleep while my snoring played like a terrible song.

Quack twang fart. Quack twang fart.

The treetops in the distance made me long for the home I hadn't seen since high school. It was peaceful, if a bit nostalgic, until the sensation of being watched lifted the hairs on my neck. I squinted toward the bridge. Underneath it, partially hidden in shadow, a wolf whose eyes glowed green watched me. He was massive, taller than me by at least three feet even from this distance. And he was familiar in a way that made my heart ache and my throat clog, like old tears yearning to be shed.

When he opened his mouth, bright white teeth shimmered in the moonlight. But the sound that came out was neither howl nor growl. It was the halfhearted quack of a duck about to swim into the great beyond.

He quacked again, and I jolted my head upright at my desk, suddenly awake. I blinked at my watch until the blurred numbers cleared. It was just after one, I'd had a heavy lunch, and fell into a starch coma right there in my office. The sights and smells of Mardi Gras faded. But the warped quacking remained.

It was coming from the welcome area of my clinic. Whoever was ringing the doorbell, which apparently needed new batteries, was insistent.

I scrubbed at my face and slipped on the dress flats under my desk, then half-jogged/half-hobbled to the front office, as both my hip and knee protested my decision to move. The knee pain was new, and I was not a fan. But my hip-ache was an old friend, a remnant from my days as a runner in college. After a few steps, my body figured out it was a body and I opened the front door, hoping I looked less like Igor and more like a proper professional.

"Hi there, I'm Simone Bardot. I apologize no one was here to greet you. My receptionist has the week off." My receptionist had found a better job six months ago, but the woman in front of me didn't need to know that.



I tried to flash a reassuring smile, even as I ran my hand over the knotted hair at the back of my head. Since I'd woken up with a post-it note on my cheek and a crick in my neck that indicated I'd slept sideways, the bedhead was a bit of a mystery.

"Hello. Your sign in the window reads Walk-Ins Welcome, and I'm in need of immediate assistance. You are a therapist, correct?"

If my doorbell was a dying duck, this woman's voice was a thriving songbird, and she might have been the most put-together person I'd ever seen. I'd always heard the word stately, but this woman defined it. She was at least a foot taller than me – granted, I just kissed the 5' mark so that wasn't difficult to achieve – with a perfectly coiffed bun of flame red hair giving her a few more inches. Silvery gray strands weaved through, the only hint of her age as her milky white skin was unmarred by even the smallest wrinkle.

It was almost too smooth, as if a filter had been applied to a selfie. I half-expected her to have silly cat ears and whiskers.

"Yes, ma'am. And the sign on the door is correct. Would you like to come in?"

"If you have availability?" Her full lips, painted in a shade of daytime red that matched her hair, curved into a polite smile as she flicked her eyes toward the reception desk. It was covered in a layer of dust, and I was just noticing the entire welcome area had a musty odor to it.

"I can squeeze you in." My throat tightened at the small lie, one of my least favorite traits about myself. It was like my body revolted anytime I tried to do something that went against my natural tendency. My throat hated it when I lied so much it closed itself up, as if it could stop me from speaking it.

But that wasn't the only reason my throat had tightened. She stepped inside as the last dregs of my impromptu afternoon nap wore off. Above her polish, her smart navy suit and expensive heels, she had her own layer of dust. Except it wasn't dust at all. What swarmed around her shimmered and moved, creating concentric circles that alternated between two and three dimensions. When they rounded into full spheres, there was a faint point at the tip, and the points angled toward her face.

The wedge in my throat lodged itself, refusing to back down no matter how many times I swallowed. Not that I could swallow for long, as my mouth was suddenly desert dry.

Her eyebrows were manicured. Her shadow, mascara, and liner magazine-perfect. There were no crow's feet or dark bags, nothing to indicate she was older than she appeared.

But the eyes themselves told a different story. Age made them cloudy. Wisdom exuded from them, as if the pupils themselves were a deposit of knowledge. And the iris was nearly incandescent, shimmering in time with the specks that swirled around her. Like magic and moonstones lived in her eye sockets.

It was the most rare of eye colors. I only knew one other person who shared it. My mother's old boss back home who, if she was still alive, had to be pushing a hundred. Searching her face, I found no other resemblance. I didn't want to ask if she was a relative.

A car alarm sounded outside, distracting me. When I turned back to the woman, the illusion had disappeared. Nothing glowed or encircled her. She looked like a normal, well-off, middle-aged woman. Just like me. But, unlike me, her eyes were a dull shade of brown.



She cleared her throat, and her polite smile thinned. I'd been staring at her for longer than I'd realized, mouth half-open as I absently rubbed my protesting hip.

"I'm so sorry. I was deep in thought when you arrived, and I'm afraid it deprived me of my manners." I tried to mirror her smile, but the lift of my cheeks told me I was probably leering. I angled my body and gestured toward my office.

"My desk is through there. Shall we get settled? Can I offer you some tea or coffee?"

"I'm fine with a glass of water, thank you." She went into my office while I shuffled to the kitchenette. Good thing she hadn't wanted coffee or tea, because I had neither. I'd taken to grabbing a venti latte on my way in, and since no one but me had been here for who knows how long, I hadn't thought to keep refreshments on hand for patients.

She was standing in the middle of the room with her lip lifted in a sneer when I returned with tap water in a Mardi Gras plastic cup. She took it with two fingers, as if touching it might taint her.

"Where's your couch?"

My office barely fit the desk, small bookshelf, and two chairs I kept reserved for patients. Why would she be asking about furniture?

"Have you been to therapy before, Ms...?"

"You can call me Stella. Proper therapists have a couch."

There was something in her voice I couldn't place. Her words sounded critical, but the tone underneath them conveyed fear rather than judgment. For some reason, the fact that I didn't have a couch in my office worried her. I took my own chair and dropped my forearms to my desk.

"The couch was very popular in earlier days of therapy, but not all methods use it. Believe it or not, it was a tool rather than just somewhere for patients to lie down. I use a variety of tools, but the couch is not one of them." I gestured toward the opposite chair. "Would you like to sit down and discuss what's brought you in, Miss Stella?"

She hesitated a moment longer, and the air around her seemed to swell. Then she took the seat, crossing her legs and cupping her palms on her lap, leaving the water on my desk.

That's when I faltered. It had been so long since I'd had a client that I couldn't remember what to do. There was probably paperwork she had to fill out, and a copay or something. I pressed down on the slow sliver of frustration and sadness that threatened to slice through me.

Had I become so inept at my job I didn't know how to start it? Gaping at the composed woman in front of me, I was overcome with a sensation of incompetence so great I became nauseous. I'd call it imposter syndrome, but that term applied to capable people who had actual achievements and success.

Most of the past year had been spent caring for my husband after a sudden illness. I'd been forced to refer my regular clients to my colleagues, and in the past six months I'd worked to rebuild what I'd lost.



It wasn't going well. Sitting in front of me was the first patient I'd seen in six months, and if I did this right I might actually have business. I couldn't screw up. Pulling every bit of courage I could, I took a pen and my yellow notepad and settled it in front of me. Where did I begin? Right. A general assessment.

"What's brought you in to therapy today, Stella"

"May I call you Simone?" At my nod, she drew in a deep breath and continued. "Simone, I've been under terrible stress the past six months as I'm running out of time to make a very important decision. I'm hoping you can help me make it."

"That sounds difficult," I said. My training, blessedly, was kicking in. "What's causing your stress?"

Stella uncrossed her legs and leaned forward, fixing her eyes on mine. The dull brown faded and, once more, I was looking at moonstones. When she spoke, her words hovered between us, almost as if they had a life of their own, and if I weren't so transfixed by her face I might have checked to see if they were actually visible.

"I'm dying at midnight, and I don't have anyone to leave my estate to."

The lightest feather could have knocked me over. This is what I got for having a "walk-ins welcome" sign and no receptionist to screen patients before I saw them. I was awkward in the best of situations. When I'm caught off guard?

When I'm caught off guard, I'm straight-up useless.

"I see." I scribbled on my yellow notepad, furrowing my brow as if I was writing something profound and not scrawling *what the actual hell* over and over like I was Jack Torrance.

I berated myself, again, for failing to gather even the most basic information from Stella before I let her in my office. I didn't have a record of her medical or psychiatric history. I didn't want to ask my only patient if she was planning something. But she could be a danger. To me, or more importantly, to herself.

"Do you have a medical or, uhm, mental condition that is giving you reason to believe you will die at midnight?"

The smile that lifted her cheeks was as eerie as it was enigmatic. On the plus side, it gave me something to write on my notepad. *This woman might be screwing with me.*

"I have no specific medical condition other than being a very, very old woman. And I can save you the embarrassment of having to ask. I have no desire to make this prophecy come true. At least not yet." She gave a shrug meant to imply dismissiveness, but her sadness was almost palpable.

I took a deep breath and continued to write nonsense. She watched me scribble, definitely toying with me, holding her smile. She was not an old woman by any stretch of the imagination, unless I considered myself old, which I didn't. The silence had gone on too long, so I asked the dumbest question I could think of.

"Stella, how do you feel about your coming death?"



“How do you think I feel?” The timbre of her voice shifted as she raised it to answer me. The smooth, polished quality of it wore off, leaving a voice cracked and weary. “I’m sure not ready to give up my possessions. But done is done, isn’t it?”

She shrugged again, and as she did the red of her hair faded.

What would I want someone to say to me if I told them I was dying at midnight? Would I want them to question me? She’d said it was such self-assurance that it was hard not to believe her. Then again, people can be absolutely sure about something and still be wrong. After all, this morning I was absolutely sure I was in for another boring day with no patients.

And yet the wealthiest, most put together looking person I’d ever encountered was calmly telling me she was about to die.

No, questioning the validity of that thought didn’t make sense. I flipped through my mental file of therapeutic methods, wondering which might be the most beneficial for this. Cognitive restructuring? Ground techniques? None of that seemed useful at this moment.

At last, I landed on the miracle question. It was designed to create action, and it sounded like she needed some. But first, I wanted to find out more about this woman’s family, in case I had to report this very strange session.

“Stella, that must be very difficult for you,” I began. “Perhaps the answer to who you can leave your estate to is found by eliminating the people you can’t leave it to. Would you like to walk through some of the potential candidates?”

Her smile was so fraught with approval that my shoulders sagged away from my ears and the steady thump of my heart silenced. There was a sensation, a small nagging at the back of my mind, that I was being tested.

Addiction. Family issues. Self confidence. Eating disorders.

Those were my wheelhouses. The very areas where I could not-so-secretly admit to myself I struggled as well. Maybe it made me a better therapist because I knew what they were going through.

The room seemed hotter to me. New Orleans was sweltering in the quiet season. The bulk of the festivals were over, and summer still stubbornly clung to the air. I’d opened a window earlier in the day only to save on my electricity. Remarkably, the air was still crisp. When New Orleans offers you a chance to enjoy fresh air, you take it. And thankfully I was far enough away from Bourbon Street here in the Garden District that the stench of Carnival couldn’t reach me.

But the breeze was landing on skin I now found to be clammy. I might have dismissed it as a hot flash, except the hairs on the back of my neck were raised, as if someone were standing behind me judging. I was nervous, overly conscious of my own actions, and I couldn’t understand why.

She was talking, but I wasn’t listening. Yeah, I was a great therapist.

“I’m so sorry,” I tapped my pen, as if it was somehow responsible for my lack of attention. “Could you repeat that?”



“Of course, dear.” The words could have been patronizing, but she laced them with compassion. “I was saying I was unmarried, and had no serious romantic relationships, so there is no husband or wife to leave my estate to.” She paused, her bottom lip trembling. “And I never quite got around to having children.”

“So, no immediate family.” I crossed two invisible lines off my paper. “What about siblings?”

“One.” Her mouth puckered and she scrunched her nose. “She has sons.” She waved the air in front of her. “They are not qualified.”

“Friends? Neighbors? What about employees or business partners?”

“No. No. And definitely not.” She folded her hands in her lap and squared her shoulders. “I’ve lived a solitary life. I took my work quite seriously, you see, and did not have time to suffer fools or love. Not for some time, at least.”

She spoke as if she were a hundred, and the naked loneliness in her voice made me both sad and curious. She hadn’t mentioned what her work was, or anything about this estate she was protecting so fiercely. I was about to ask for details, but the air around her shimmered with her sadness. She was barely hanging on. So, I led with compassion.

“Well, Stella, I can see why this is a predicament for you. After all, you’ve spent your entire life building this business into something you’re proud of. You clearly invested more than the average owner would, and you wouldn’t be able to rest without knowing it was in the hands of someone who felt the same way.”

For the first time since Stella had entered my office, a sliver of true emotion seemed to break through her facade. The air shimmered in front of her again, flashing those eyes that were just like mine to a dark oak that reminded me of a tree trunk. The lips she’d kept pressed together trembled. A single tear, silver against the light sneaking in through my mid-afternoon open window, cast a shadow through her makeup.

I handed her the box of tissues I kept handy, and she nodded in thanks as she took it.

“You’ve a way with words Simone. Thank you for seeing to the heart of my dilemma.”

“Of course. That’s why I’m here.” That was the first bit of truth I’d spoken since she came into my office. Helping people break down large emotions into smaller, manageable chunks was my specialty. And I enjoyed it, the actual physical relief that followed an anxious person’s foray into hope. I might be out of practice, but that spark of joy I felt whenever someone felt seen still lived deep within.

And now that we’d broken through the initial block, we could take steps toward progress. Pleased with myself, I grabbed my favorite tool from my mental toolbox: the miracle question.

“Stella, will you play a small game with me?” At her nod, I continued. “Can we pretend that magic is real?” Stella’s chuckle seemed to escape her involuntarily. She clamped her hand over her mouth, but her shoulders shook with it. “Is that funny, Stella?”

Stella reached for her water, took a sip and smacked her lips at what was probably not the best tasting tap water, then dabbed a tissue at the corners of her mouth.

“I apologize, it did catch me off guard. Okay, Simone. I’m ready to play your game.” Her eyes twinkled again, flashing between colors. “I am pretending magic is real.”



“Great.” I lifted my pen and waved it in the air, swishing and flicking like a proper student at a magical academy. “My magic wand has waved this problem away. It fixed everything in the blink of an eye.”

I swished the pen a few more times.

“Magic is real, Stella. My magic wand has waved this problem away. You can relax. Everything has been fixed. My magic wand found the answer inside of you, and brought it to the surface, Stella. Isn’t that wonderful?”

Stella’s body began to sway with the pen. It wasn’t a hypnosis, but it was close enough. Her shoulders softened, and the fingers she probably didn’t realize she’d clenched, relaxed to her sides.

“Stella, how did my magic wand solve the problem?”

“It told me to trust in change.” Stella blinked and looked around the room. “Oh, my.” I smiled when she finally landed on me. “How did you work that spell?”

“No spell, Stella.” I reached across the table to pat her hand. “The answer was inside of you all along, but I sensed your defenses might be keeping you from accessing it. I just helped you relax enough that your defenses went down.”

“Magic,” Stella whispered.

“Not exactly. It’s more real than that. Stella, how are you feeling about your answer?”

“I’m not sure.” Stella stared down at her lap and let out a long sniff. “I don’t know what to do with it.”

“Change can be very difficult. Sometimes, we don’t even realize how stuck in our own ways we are. Perhaps your fear of change kept you from seeking an alternative answer. Would you like to discuss some options with me?”

“Yes.” Her manicured eyebrow lifted over teary eyes. “Would you please lay them out for me?”

“Of course. I have three thoughts. One,” I held up my pointer finger. “Disband the company and liquify your estate. Do you have an attorney?” I waited until she nodded to continue. “Great. This would take time, of course, but perhaps he could revise your will to begin the process and make clear the instructions for, uh, after midnight.”

“I see.” She closed her eyes, her lips moving with words I could not hear. “That’s not my choice. What else?”

“Two,” I held up a second finger. “Assign a trustee - perhaps your attorney, if you have faith he can do the job - to conduct interviews until he finds someone he fervently believes meets your criteria. Keep in mind, I’m not a lawyer and can provide no legal advice, but I feel certain if you are explicit in your expectations you can, uhm, pass without concern for what you leave behind.”

A hint of a smile flickered across her face.

“That has potential. What is my third option, according to you?”



What the hell. I'd already passed into surreal valley just humoring this woman that she knew when she was going to die. I may as well wander around a bit and enjoy the scenery. I dropped my hands to the desk and smiled wide.

"Your third option is to wait to die until you're certain you've found the perfect replacement. Conduct your own interviews, take the time to train them, then, when you're ready, pass the business on and quietly fade away."

The warmth of the air disappeared, and the room felt fresh and clean. Much cleaner than it actually was.

"You know," there was something off about her voice. The formal lilt she'd held earlier had morphed into a cracked, aged tone. And her words had a cadence to them, as if she were singing a song rather than stating a fact. "I believe you're absolutely right. Though I won't have time to train them, unfortunately, I do believe the business will remain mine until the right person is ready to receive it."

"This was exactly what I needed, Simone." She rose to leave, a broad smile across her face. "What an interesting tactic you used. It came so quickly and felt so clear. How did you do that?"

"We did it, Stella. We made a miracle happen. Our meeting was a miracle." I rose from my chair and walked her to the front office on wobbly legs. I felt a little drunk when we said goodbye.

As soon as the door closed, massive pain throbbed behind my eyes, forcing me to double-over. My vision criss-crossed, everything was at once blurry and surrounded by tiny threads of light I couldn't follow. The lunch I'd gorged on did a slow roll in my stomach, like a long spoon in a gumbo pot, and for one horrifying moment I was sure I would retch.

It faded as quickly as it began, but a nasty headache remained. The entire session left me with an uneasy, sort of vulnerable feeling that, even after sitting at my desk for fifteen minutes, did not give any indication of leaving.

I wasn't due to close for another two hours. But I couldn't imagine sitting here, struggling to stay awake, with this incessant throb behind my eyes, this clog in my throat, and a feeling like oil was oozing in my stomach.

I grabbed my purse, locked the front door, and headed home early.

It was the decision that turned my life upside down.

Those weren't my shoes.

It was the first cohesive thought I'd had since I left my office. The drive home was primarily a blur as I'd tried to hyper-focus on making it there safely. Every light was a touch brighter, every noise hit a pitch that caused the insides of my ears to ache. There was a strange taste on my tongue, a coating like I'd slept for twelve hours and hadn't brushed my teeth in days. But drinking water didn't clear the taste, rather it added a metallic flavor that shrouded the inside of my mouth.

I vaguely wondered if the woman had drugged me. Or if I was still asleep in my office. Everything felt real and like a dream simultaneously.



Until I unlocked my front door, dropped my worn out maroon bag on the table in my entryway, and paused.

An expensive pair of athletic tennis shoes, clean and white despite the wearing on the soles indicating their age, had been laid neatly in the entryway. I could never keep a pair of white shoes clean, not even for a few minutes. Inevitably I'd scuff them or trip over something and mar the toes. But here they were, not new but still clean.

And they weren't mine. I couldn't afford a pair of bougie sneakers.

"Jeff?" My husband's car hadn't been in the driveway, so I'd assumed he was still with his physical therapist. His health scare had resulted in a massive surgery and loads of recovery. He'd been forced to take leave from his job. We were still working ourselves out of that hole.

A crash and a thump from our bedroom caused me to grip my purse. I paused, one hand on the door, and tried to listen over the steady sound of my heart pounding in my chest. Were we being robbed? Why would a robber take off their shoes when they entered, taking the time to untie them and align them? And what did we even have that they would want?

I surveyed our small, shotgun townhouse. Barely big enough for two, most of it was visible from the entryway. A modest sized living room with an older model television that Jeff never touched and I used to watch football. One long couch sat opposite it, a faded navy color covered by various patches where I'd covered up wear and tear. The clean but not sparkling kitchen looked untouched, not that I expected a shoeless criminal to carry out the second-hand yellow refrigerator full of leftover casserole and rotisserie chicken. Unless he liked spinach, which Jeff ate by the plateful, there was nothing in there to steal. It's not like we were stashing diamonds in the freezer.

crash

"I have a gun. And I'm not afraid to use it!" Both of those statements were ridiculously false. But fear kept me frozen in face, so I may as well confront the barefooted bandit that seemed to have knocked over a lamp.

The headache I carried home with me renewed its assault, turning my vision double. I squeezed my eyes shut, both to drown out the terror rising from my insides and the flashes of light blinding me.

The bedroom door swung open. Footsteps pounded the short distance from the bedroom to the front door, where I stood, eyes squeezed shut and panting like a dog in summertime, lying about my ability to defend my house.

"Simone? What are you doing home so early?" At the sound of Jeff's voice, I released my death-grip on the doorknob and pressed my palms to my eyes. The tension in my body drained like a sieve, and I let out a harsh laugh.

"Got a headache. And no patients. Where's your car?" I lowered my hands and opened my eyes. The tension returned. And it brought friends. "I thought you'd be at PT?"

Jeff wore his standard physical therapy clothes: a ratty pair of sweats that might have once been black and his *I Smell Bacon* t-shirt, with Homer Simpson drooling over a plate of bacon. Once upon a time, if you scratched the bacon, it smelled like bacon. Now, if you scratched the bacon, it smelled like old shirt.



Standing beside him was Bethany, his physical therapist. She stood a full foot taller than me, still just under Jeff's towering six foot seven, in a sports bra and a pair of spandex that, technically, covered her perfectly round ass.

Here's the thing. Both of their heads sported disheveled hairdos. Thinning brown hair, streaked with just a few grays, spiked around Jeff's bald spot. Bethany's shining raven locks were falling out of her ponytail, curling around her youthful face ... which happened to be flushed and rosy-cheeked.

"I had PT, but the Gua Sha broke when Bethany was working on my shoulder. Can you believe that? Snapped right in half! It's been aching so bad, you know how it's been keeping me up each night, so Bethany brought me home so we could grab mine." In the silence that followed, Jeff's swallow was audible. "Can you believe the thing snapped in half like that?"

For the second time in an hour, I was certain I would throw up. Part of me wanted to. Just throw right up in the entryway, right on top of the expensive and clean sneakers that the woman who was screwing my husband had taken off when they'd come in.

The woman whose car was not in our driveway, either, which means they'd been careful about the neighbors seeing.

The woman whose ponytail was falling out because she'd hastily put it back in when they'd heard me open the door.

The woman whose tiny sports bra was inside out.

"No, Jeff. I can't believe that." His mouth dropped open, ever so slightly, as if another excuse got stopped on its way out. I turned to Bethany, read the obvious guilt on her face, and cycled through every emotion under the rainbow in the span of thirty seconds. Nausea. Rage. Betrayal. Sadness.

"Do you know what I wonder?" Oddly, as I took in Jeff's twiddling fingers - a thing he only did when extremely nervous - and Bethany's eye flicks down the hall to the bedroom - where I was certain I'd find an unmade bed and the smell of their sex - my emotions settled into one prime one.

Pity.

"I wonder how bad the sex must be for you to take time and remove your shoes when you enter the house. After all, if you were so hot and heavy you couldn't make it through a single PT session without boning, surely you would have attacked each other the second you hit the doorway. But what do I know?"

I slung my purse over my shoulder, focusing my will on keeping my hands from trembling as I fished out my keys. I had to leave. Before I broke.

But I was too late. It all rose, and I decided not to fight it.

I leaned over and emptied the contents of my stomach - a heavy lunch and a late breakfast - all over Bethany's perfectly pristine On Clouds.

* * *






Hey friend,

Jen Lassalle here. I hope you enjoyed this little bit of extra Simone. By now, you probably know she landed on her feet. But things are still rocky at the Magnolia.

If you used this freebie to join my newsletter, you'll get a few more emails from me. If you're already on my mailing list, thanks so much for sticking around. I've got some amazing things planned, in Treater's Way, and beyond...

With love and light,

Jen

	<p>Witchful Linking</p> <p>A series of strange occurrences and a distant relative are wreaking havoc, and forcing Simone to spend more time than she'd like with her high school heartbreaker Ray Chase, who happens to be the head of security. And House's stubborn refusal to bind with Simone is only making matters worse. Find out more in book two of the <i>Midlife at the Magnolia</i> series.</p> <p>Click Here to Start Reading</p>
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