



*Departure*  
FROM *the* SCRIPT



JAE

# OTHER BOOKS BY JAE

Conflict of Interest

**The Moonstone Series:**

Something in the Wine

Seduction for Beginners

**The Oregon Series:**

Backwards to Oregon

Beyond the Trail

Hidden Truths

Lessons in Love and Life

**The Shape-Shifter Series:**

Second Nature

Natural Family Disasters

Manhattan Moon

True Nature

Nature of the Pack

*Departure*  
FROM *the* SCRIPT

JAE



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As with any creative project, there were a lot of people who had a hand in bringing this novella into existence, mainly Erin and Astrid, who kicked my butt when I wanted to end the story after the first kiss, and my critique partners, Alison Grey and RJ Nolan, who helped me revise with their invaluable feedback.

I also want to thank my test readers Betty, Henriette, and Michele for their time and their constructive criticism.

A big thank-you goes to Nikki Busch, editor extraordinaire, for her thorough yet fast work.

I'm more grateful for their help than I could ever express. Thanks!

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

*Departure from the Script* started out as a short story, which has been published under the title “The Morning After,” but Amanda and Michelle demanded more attention, so I extended it into a novella. At 52,000 words, some would even call it a novel.

Whatever you call it, I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I did writing about these two!

## CHAPTER 4

...

...

\*\*\*

Amanda knew something fishy was going on as soon as her grandmother opened the door, dressed in the skirt and blouse she wore on bridge nights, even though it wasn't

Tuesday. Grandma usually changed into her nightgown and robe after dinner if she wasn't expecting company. Had she dressed up, just in case she'd bring Michelle along?

"Hi, Grandma." She bent to kiss her grandmother's soft cheek and then stepped aside to let Michelle enter. "Grandma, this is Michelle Osinski. Michelle, this is my grandmother, Josephine—"

"Mabry. I know. It's an honor to meet you. I'm a big fan." Michelle stepped past Amanda and gently held Grandma's hand between both of hers. For a moment, she looked as if she was about to kiss it.

"I heard quite a lot about you too," Grandma said.

Michelle lifted one brow. "Oh, really? Is that so?" She sent Amanda a curious glance.

Amanda blushed. "Grandma, hush. Don't listen to her, Michelle. I didn't tell her a thing."

Her grandmother took Michelle's arm and tugged her toward the living room. "True, and that speaks volumes. So, tell me, dear, how did the two of you meet?"

*Oh, shit.* Amanda hurried after them. She didn't want her grandmother to know that Michelle had rescued her as she had stumbled about in a club's parking lot, too drunk to remember her own address. "Um, I... We..."

"We met at an Anti-Valentine's Day party," Michelle said before Amanda could stutter out a complete sentence.

"An Anti-Valentine's Day party?" her grandmother repeated. "I didn't even know there was such a thing."



“Yeah, well, what can I say?” Michelle shrugged. “I haven’t been very lucky in love so far. But I hope that’s about to change.”

Grandma squeezed her arm with both hands. “I’m sure it will, dear.”

“So let’s take a look at the TV,” Amanda said before they started making wedding plans.

Michelle led Grandma over to her armchair and, once she was safely seated, took off her vest and rolled up the sleeves of her ivory-colored shirt, instantly drawing Amanda’s attention to her muscular forearms.

When her grandmother looked at her and grinned, Amanda wrenched her gaze away and checked out the TV instead. Pictures of today’s news flickered across the screen, but there was no sound.

Without paying attention to the damage it might do to her elegant clothes, Michelle squeezed behind the TV stand in the corner of the room.

Amanda moved closer and craned her neck to be able to watch her.

Michelle slid her long fingers along the cables, checking for any damage or loose connectors.

*Magic.* Unbidden, images of those fingers sliding over her skin flashed through Amanda’s mind.

“Hmm, weird,” Michelle mumbled. “Everything seems to be just the way it’s supposed to be, but I still can’t get it to work. So much for inheriting my grandfather’s skills. I bet he would have fixed it in two seconds flat.”

“Let me see.”

As Michelle slipped out from behind the TV, their bodies brushed.

Amanda's breath caught. She wanted to lean even closer, breathe in the scent of Michelle's cologne, and feel her heat, but under her grandmother's observant eyes, she hastily stepped past Michelle. Hidden behind the TV, she took a trembling breath. *Wow*. When had she last met a woman who made her weak in the knees like that, without even really touching her?

*Hey, you're here to fix the TV, not to lust for a woman!* With fingers that felt unsteady, she unplugged the A/V cable and connected it again.

Still no sound.

"I give up. I'm sorry, Grandma. I'll call someone to come over and look at the TV first thing tomorrow morning." When she climbed out from behind the TV stand, Michelle offered her a hand, and she grasped it gratefully, holding on to keep her balance.

Even once she was safely in the middle of the living room again, Michelle didn't let go. Not that Amanda minded. That strong, warm hand felt good against her own.

"That's all right. Don't worry about it, honey. I'll make do without *Ellen* for one night." Her grandmother reached out and patted Amanda's free hand.

As Amanda bent to kiss her grandmother goodnight, her gaze fell on the remote control on the coffee table. Normally, it was buried beneath a stack of TV guides, celebrity gossip magazines, and puzzle books, but now it lay on top of the pile. It couldn't be that easy, could

it? Probably not, but it was worth a try. She took the remote control, pointed it toward the TV, and pressed the mute button.

A news reporter's excited voice blared out of the TV's speakers.

"Oh my!" Her grandmother clapped her hands. "I must have accidentally pressed that button without realizing it."

Amanda narrowed her eyes at her, but her grandmother looked completely innocent. Then again, she hadn't been one of the most critically acclaimed actresses of the fifties and sixties for nothing.

She kissed her grandmother's cheek. "I'm on to you, you wily old woman," she whispered into her ear.

Her grandmother batted her big blue eyes at her. "Whatever do you mean, dear?"

Laughing, Amanda kissed her again and said goodnight before following Michelle to the door.

\*\*\*

"I'm glad we could solve your grandmother's problem," Michelle said when Amanda started the car. "Even though I was no help at all."

"Oh, you helped her all right."

At the sarcastic tone of her voice, Michelle looked over at her. "What do you mean?"

"My grandmother is not one of those old ladies who are completely clueless about everything that has to do with

technology. She's got a laptop, an iPad, and a computer with enough RAM to steer a spaceship."

Michelle frowned. "You mean...that harmless-looking old lady just pulled one over on us?"

"You bet she did. She wanted to check you out, so she found a way to lure us over to her house."

Michelle's laughter echoed through the car, a deep, low sound that made Amanda tingle all over. "She's something else, isn't she?"

Amanda smiled fondly. "That she is."

"And so is her granddaughter," Michelle said, her tone soft and earnest.

Amanda's gaze veered away from the street for a moment and met hers. Not sure how to respond to Michelle's words and the expression in her eyes, she quickly refocused her attention to the street.

When they reached Michelle's bungalow in the Hollywood Hills, Amanda stopped the car and turned off the engine.

For a few moments, they sat in silence.

"So," Amanda said when she couldn't stand to listen to her own too-loud breathing any longer.

Michelle looked at her, her gaze as soft as a touch. "So..."

The sudden sound of Madonna's "Hollywood" nearly made Amanda go through the roof of her car. "Christ." She clutched her chest. When she turned to grope in the backseat for her purse, her shoulder brushed Michelle's, starting that by now familiar tingling in every cell of her

body again. Finally, she found the ringing cell phone and turned back around, instantly missing the warm touch. “Can we make this short, Kath?”

“Uh, yeah, sure. I just thought you’d want to hear the good news right away.”

“What good news?” Amanda asked, more focused on the way the streetlamps threw shadows across the handsome planes of Michelle’s face than on the phone call. “Did they hire me for that footed pajamas commercial?”

Kathryn laughed, sounding giddier than Amanda had ever heard her. “No. Better. Much, much, much better. You’ve heard of *Central Precinct*?”

“That hot new crime show that won three Emmys for its first season?”

“Yep, that’s the one. Apparently, the female lead just quit—and they want you to replace her!”

For several seconds, Amanda just sat there and blinked. “But...but I didn’t even audition for a role on that show.”

“Doesn’t matter. They want you, sight unseen.”

“Oh, wow. That’s...that’s...” She dropped the phone onto her lap, bounced up and down in the driver’s seat, and started screaming like a banshee.

“Uh, what’s going on?” Michelle asked, her mouth quirking into a smile as she watched Amanda.

“They offered me a role as one of the leads on *Central Precinct*!” After one last bounce, Amanda whirled around and beamed at Michelle.

“What? Wow, that’s great! Congratulations!”

Amanda laughed giddily. Feeling so happy that she wanted to embrace the whole wide world, she threw her arms around Michelle instead and kissed her.

For a second, Michelle stiffened.

Instantly, Amanda pulled back. “Oh God, I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to... Christ, first I kiss you when I’m drunk and now—”

Michelle shut her up by pressing their lips together.

Heat flared through Amanda, and she wrapped her arms around Michelle to pull her closer. Drunk on happiness and the feeling of Michelle’s lips against hers, she deepened the kiss and moaned as Michelle’s warm tongue met hers. Her fingers slid up and into Michelle’s short hair.

Finally, after a minute or two, she became aware of a tinny voice coming from the cell phone on her lap. Breathing heavily, she pulled her lips away from Michelle’s and lifted the cell phone to her ear. “I’ve got to go, Kath. I’ll call you tomorrow to get all the details,” she said and hung up without waiting for a reply.

Then her lips were on Michelle’s again.

\*\*\*

### III

TO CONTINUE READING,  
PLEASE PURCHASE

DEPARTURE  
FROM  
THE SCRIPT

via  
Smashwords  
amazon  
Bella Books  
Apple  
and many others.

This excerpt is offered by Ylva Publishing.  
Its primary function is the orientation of interested readers.

Ylva Publishing | [www.ylva-publishing.com](http://www.ylva-publishing.com)

## ABOUT JAE

Jae grew up amidst the vineyards of southern Germany. She spent her childhood with her nose buried in a book, earning her the nickname “professor.” The writing bug bit her at the age of eleven. For the last eight years, she has been writing mostly in English.

She used to work as a psychologist but gave up her day job in December 2013 to become a full-time writer and a part-time editor. As far as she’s concerned, it’s the best job in the world.

When she’s not writing, she likes to spend her time reading, indulging her ice cream and office supply addictions, and watching way too many crime shows.

### CONNECT WITH JAE ONLINE

Jae loves hearing from readers!

E-mail her at: [jae@jae-fiction.com](mailto:jae@jae-fiction.com)

Visit her website: [jae-fiction.com](http://jae-fiction.com)

Visit her blog: [jae-fiction.com/blog](http://jae-fiction.com/blog)

Like her on Facebook: [facebook.com/JaeAuthor](https://www.facebook.com/JaeAuthor)

Follow her on Twitter: [@jaefiction](https://twitter.com/jaefiction)