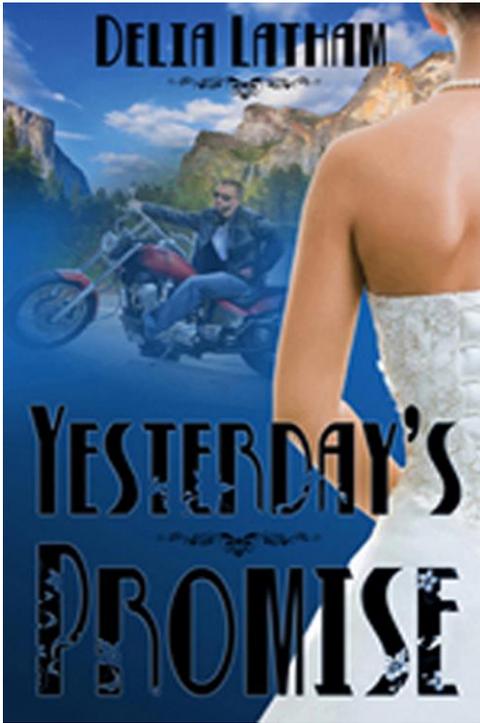


# YESTERDAY'S PROMISE



A whirlwind romance amidst the natural splendor of Yosemite National Park. A spur-of-the-moment wedding near Bridalveil Fall. A young bride who awakens the morning after to find her new husband gone with the mountain wind.

Songbird Hannah Johns supports the child born of that ill-fated union by singing in a dinner lounge. Her dream of someday owning the elite establishment and turning it into a venue more suited to her Christian values is shattered when an unexpected transaction places it in the hands of Brock Ellis, the handsome biker who abandoned her in their honeymoon suite.

Ensuing sparks fly high, revealing buried secrets and forgotten pasts. Seeking to find peace with her painful past, Hannah returns to Yosemite, and Brock follows hard on her heels. Back where it all began, she finds herself in danger of losing her heart yet again to the man who shattered it the first time around

(Note: Print copies are available only through me. \$10.00 + \$3.00 SHIPPING. [E-MAIL ME](#) to order.)

## Reviews

### [E.A. West](#), Inspirational Romance Author

Delia Latham's writing style is vibrant and realistic, evoking emotion and bringing the story and the characters to life

### [Rebecca Lynn](#), Christian writer

The theme of redeeming the past, and providing healing for trauma was strong in this book, and I always appreciate it when Inspirational authors take the opportunity to tell stories where not only the message and the characters are Christian, but the theme is something theologically relevant to people both inside and outside the Christian faith, so I definitely appreciated that Delia Latham took the opportunity to develop that theme in her book. All in all, this was an interesting read. I would say, if you like contemporary inspirational romance, if you like musical heroines, and if you like to read stories about redeeming the past, you should pick up this book!

[Read the rest of Rebecca's review](#)

### [Julie Arduini](#), Christian author & speaker

...This book aches with grief, loss, hope and love. The writer in me tried to figure out the premise in whole right off the bat, and it wasn't possible. That's a great thing.

**[Angela Breidenbach](#), Inspirational Author & Speaker**

... Delia Latham has written a book that has a little of every woman in it and a bit of the wonder of a past love.

**[Clare Revell](#), Inspirational author**

Yesterdays Promise arrives on today's doorstep with a huge thud, knocking Hannah's world for six. Ms. Latham weaves an enchanting tale that mixes both past and present together in an eclectic mix of laughter, tears and heart stopping moments. Hannah and Brock's story is an enticing one, that keeps you reading to the end.

## Excerpt

### *Late September*

Hannah Johns' sultry voice faded into the last soulful note of one of her favorite melodies.

She sang no less passionately for the practice session here in the empty dining room than she would for a full house. But the song was over, and even before the final echo died away, she dropped the cover over the ivories and whisked her handbag off the floor beside the piano stool. Her self-imposed hour of rehearsal completed, she threaded her way through the maze of linen-covered tables toward the big double oak doors. She was halfway there when her employer's voice halted her flight.

"Hannah! Wait up."

With a regretful sigh, she stopped and turned back. She hoped to spend some extra time with her son, Davey, before coming back here for the evening's performance. This interruption threatened those plans.

Despite her irritation, a familiar twinge of sadness clutched at her heart as she watched the wiry white-haired man make his painful way across the polished wood floor. Kip Cavaness had birthed the elite Porterville establishment some thirty years ago, nursed it through its delicate infancy and made it a huge success. Kipper's Dinner Lounge was a popular spot for upper echelon visitors, and not only on a local level. Every night brought in visitors from as far away as Los Angeles and Sacramento, all of whom appreciated the tasteful décor and fine menu.

Hannah loved the outspoken old restaurateur like a father, and it was obvious he adored her. But every day his aging body surrendered more fully to the debilitating rheumatoid arthritis that held it hostage, threatening to force him out of the business far too soon.

They had discussed the possibility of Hannah buying the lounge when the time came. She pinched every penny, but at this point, her savings still lacked enough pennies to make it possible. She sighed again, watching the old man hobble toward her. Judging by Kip's appearance today, her dream of turning the place into a Christian bookstore-cum-coffee lounge stood little chance of coming true.

She greeted him with a fond smile. "How's it going, you handsome old devil?"

Ten years dropped off his lined face when he grinned. His answer borrowed words from the song she'd just finished. "Almost like a song, sweet pea!"

It was a lie, and they both knew it. Still, Hannah laughed and gave her friend a hug, a little over-long and a bit too tight. Blinking back tears, she noted the frailness of his body through the thin summer clothing which, typically for Kip, he continued to wear even though the trees outside showed the first hints of autumn in their changing colors. Losing her old friend would leave a huge empty place in her heart. *Nope, not going there. I'm far from ready to face that gloomy prospect.*

"You're a pretty good liar, sweetie." She gave his thin arm a gentle squeeze. "But you can't fool me. It's bad today, isn't it?"

Kip allowed the forced grin to slip a little. He rubbed a trembling hand over his face and nodded. "I've had better days. But I'll make it, don't you worry about me."

"I'm allowed to worry." Her mocking frown and bantering tone concealed the heaviness of her heart. "I care about you, remember?"

He waved a gnarled hand in dismissal, but the twinkle in his eyes revealed his pleasure at Hannah's concern. "Oh, yeah, that. Well, it'll just put lines on that pretty face of yours." His eyes narrowed as he cocked his head to the side in a patented Kip-ism. "Don't you have enough to worry about without adding me to the mix? How's Davey Crockett?"

Her three-year-old son's impish face flooded her mind, eliciting a doting smile. If Lori were here, she'd accuse Hannah of wearing her "dopey mama face"—and she'd probably be right on target. When it came to sizing up people, her best friend Lori Mahoney almost always got it right.

"Davey is wonderful." Just the opening she needed. "I was actually trying to sneak out the door and spend a little time with him before I have to come back for tonight's performance. Did you need something, Kip? 'Cause I really need to get moving."

"Well..." A troubled frown shadowed the old fellow's lined face. "I really do need to talk to you. Can you spare about ten minutes?"

His somber tone arrested her attention. "Of course I can. Let's go into your office so you can sit down."

"No, no!" Kip spun around. Moving as quickly as his painful joints allowed, he made his way to the polished ebony baby grand Hannah had just abandoned. Lowering himself onto the end of the bench he patted the space beside him and motioned her over. "Just sit right here with me for a minute. This won't take long."

She obeyed, her eyes fixed on her old friend's face. Kip never talked business outside his office.

What was going on? Hannah's heart beat out a funny little tattoo as her imagination shifted into overdrive.

Kip picked up her hand and patted it, chuckling. "Don't worry, sweet pea, I'm still good for a few more days. Get that look off your face!"

Hannah couldn't quite find a smile just yet. "You're not worse?"

"Nope. Fit as a fiddle." He twisted his lips sideways and hiked his brows, sending her a familiar, comical look. "An old fiddle, beat up some and a little worse for the wear, but still good for a song or two."

"Then what is it? What's wrong?" Something weighed heavily on his mind.

The cocky grin disappeared. When he raised his gaze to meet hers, she found herself fighting tears yet again. Kip's once-brown eyes, faded now to an odd amber shade, still held so much life. It hurt her to see his body wear out before his heart and mind were ready. "I've got news you're not gonna like, Hannah."

Kip cleared his throat then sat silent for a moment, staring down at the spotless floor with unnerving intensity. Hannah held her breath. Finally her boss heaved a dismal sigh and looked up into her eyes.

"I've sold the lounge."

Typical of him not to beat around the bush. "The easiest way to say a thing is just to say it!" How often had she heard him toss out that sage bit of wisdom? She had learned early on not to hem and haw when she talked to her boss, and he returned the favor. Always. Even now.

She felt the blood drain from her face. "S-sold the lounge? But...but...when?"

He took her cold hand and gave it a squeeze, his kind eyes never wavering from her face. Another classic Kip Cavaness trait. "Look a man in the eye when you talk to him, no matter what it is you got to say." She'd heard the words more times than she could remember.

"Today. Just minutes ago, in fact."

Unwilling to believe her dream had flown out the window without so much as a feather of warning, Hannah shook her head. "But, Kip, I—" She swallowed hard and drew a deep breath. "I thought you were going to wait until—"

"Until I couldn't do it anymore?" He raised a bushy white brow. "That's what I did, sweet pea. I've lain awake nights trying to figure out what to do. Even took your advice and tried to pray about it some!" He chuckled, and Hannah smiled a little even as she wiped at a persistent tear. She'd spent the past four years delivering subtle messages of Christ to her employer.

"I wanted to hold on until you had the means to buy the place. Turning it over to you...well, that's what I would like to do. I wish I could just let you have it." A wave of dull red crept up his

neck and to his ears, revealing a familiar discomfort with voicing emotions. Hannah often wondered if that's why, handsome though he definitely was, Kip never married.

His grip on her hand tightened. "You know I would do it if I could. You know that."

Hannah nodded. Despite the undeniable success of the dinner lounge, the old gentleman's crippling illness had eaten up a large portion of what once was a sizeable nest egg.

"There's no one I'd rather see have it." Kip seemed almost to beg her understanding. "But the fact is, sweet pea, you don't have the money yet, and...well, much as I'd like to, I can't afford to let the place go without it. So I've been worryin' a lot, and prayin' a little, and well, today the answer just walked through that front door over there."

"The answer?" Hannah couldn't resist a little reinforcement of her spiritual time and effort. "Answer to what?"

He grinned. "To those practice prayers of mine, I guess. That what you wanted to hear?"

She nodded and kissed his leathery cheek. "Yep."

Kip shook his head, and Hannah bit back a giggle when a strand of flyaway hair, white as a bleached cotton ball, stood straight up and waved at her.

"You're something else, Miss Hannah Johns." Kip shook his head, his lips twisted in a lopsided half-grin. "In all my sixty-eight years, nobody else ever talked me into havin' a conversation with Someone I can't see or touch."

"But it worked."

"Well, something worked." His admission was grudging at best. "Because this afternoon, who should walk through that very door there but my old buddy Luke's son? My godson!"

Hannah had heard his late friend Luke's name a few times. She did not remember hearing about a godson, but it was possible she had. Kip sometimes went off on tangents of such mind-numbing detail that she couldn't absorb it all.

She shook her head. "I don't think I knew about him. But that's OK. Go on."

"Well, the boy's been gallivantin' off here and there for a lot of years, and as it turns out, he's done all right for himself. Not that he needed to, you know." He shook a long, gnarled finger in her direction. "Luke left his family well provided for. But anyhow, now he's back in town, lookin' to start a business and settle down at home."

Hannah closed her eyes, absorbing the shock as her fondest hopes died a sudden, wrenching death.

Kip went on, gently but without faltering. "He offered to buy Kipper's, and at a price I never would have thought I could get. I had to accept it, Hannah."

She swallowed hard, drew a shaky breath, and smiled at her boss. "Of course you did, Kip. I understand. Really."

He dropped her hand in favor of wrapping an arm around her shoulders. "I knew you would." The husky note in his voice wounded her heart. "I knew I could count on you."

She swallowed a gargantuan lump in her throat and dropped her head onto his thin shoulder. "When will it happen?"

"It's a done deal, sweet pea. We made a gentleman's agreement and shook hands on it just a few minutes ago."

Jerking upright, she fixed her eyes on Kip's face. "Well, but...how long before he actually takes over management?"

Kip bit down hard on one side of his bottom lip. Bushy eyebrows rose high on his forehead, and his eyes darted everywhere and nowhere at the same time. Hannah knew that look. No matter how justifiable his reasons, her boss was not happy about giving up his baby.

"I've already taken over." The voice was deep and resonant, and hauntingly familiar, supplying the answer Kip could not bring himself to give. Hannah sprang to her feet and whirled. Who had invited himself into this conversation?

He stood, one arm resting on the baby grand's closed lid, lazily taking in the cozy scene between her and Kip. Six-feet-two if he was an inch, the intruder sported a golden tan that surely meant hours or days beneath a tropical sun. He studied Hannah through half-veiled eyes.

Kip struggled to his feet. "Hannah Johns, I'd like you to meet my godson, Brock Ellis. I told you about Hannah, boy."

"Yes, I remember." The newcomer moved around the piano toward them, a cool smile touching his lips but not at all softening the steel gray eyes. His clipped tones scraped across her ragged nerves, and she wanted to scream in protest. "You can't possibly be the paragon of virtue Uncle Kip believes you are, Miss Johns."

As each step brought him nearer, Hannah flashed cold, then hot, and back again in rapid succession. A crushing wave of darkness pressed against her eyelids. The hand he stretched out toward her looked far too large for the rest of his body.

He reached her just as she crumpled to the floor.