Prologue

*I love prologues. They are the literary equivalent of foreplay, their words few but carefully chosen, those italics like a whisper—*come closer, I have a secret to tell you*. We lean in, tantalized. The mood is set. But like foreplay, prologues are all too often disregarded, skimmed past on the way to the real stuff. Which is unfortunate, because those few words, those first brushes of fingertips along skin, tell you everything you need to know about whom you are dealing with.*

Now, you might think it's unwise of me to be going on about a few introductory paragraphs at this point in our story. Right now, you're probably reading a sample on Amazon or standing in a bookstore, leafing through these pages, pondering your purchase. I should be offering something more sensational, spine-tingling—a scene of me, making my way up a dark and rutted driveway. Hoping against hope I won't be killed.

In a thriller, a prologue hooks. In a memoir, it establishes trust. If mine has done neither, forgive me. I am new to memoir (thrillers, too, for that matter—and it might). Up until now, my bread and sweet butter has been romance, that juggernaut of the publishing business. But sometimes life shoves you into a different genre. And honestly, it will be a relief to write the truth for once. Not easy, though—not just because of the subject matter, but because I am at heart a fiction writer. We who spin stories are often born with the desire to nudge the narrative.

But I would like to be a reliable narrator, your trustworthy guide as we go forward. So here are two true things—my name is Jayne, and everything in these pages happened. Even the part about the driveway.