

THE WORTHINGTON DESTINY ▪ BOOK 2

# A POWERFUL SECRET

A NOVEL

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This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the authors' imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

“To those who are given much, much is required” is a paraphrase of Luke 12:48.

“It is when you are weak that true strength comes” is a paraphrase of 2 Corinthians 12:10.

Edited by Ramona Cramer Tucker

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To all those curious enough  
to seek, question, and forge their own path in life.

And to those who choose to do the right thing,  
no matter the consequences.



# Glossary

**AF:** American Frontier

**AG:** Attorney General

**API:** American Petroleum Institute

**DA:** District Attorney

**DHS:** Department of Homeland Security

**DOJ:** Department of Justice

**DSCC:** Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee

**EPA:** Environmental Protection Agency

**FBI:** Federal Bureau of Investigation

**GJ:** Green Justice

**GOP:** Grand Old Party (Republican Party)

**IPO:** Initial Public Offering

**NGO:** Nongovernmental organization

**NYPD:** New York Police Department



# 1

## NEW YORK CITY

“I don’t get you. I don’t get you at all.”

Sean Thomas Worthington hurled the words at his brother, Will. The two faced off outside the door of Will’s three-bedroom suite on 71st, overlooking Central Park’s west side.

Sean thought he knew his brother. William Jennings Worthington VI always identified his goal with laser-like clarity and then relentlessly pursued it, never letting anything or anyone stand in his way. But that very day, just when Will had been prepared to launch his bid to represent New York in the US Senate, he’d disappeared from their campaign headquarters. He hadn’t answered Sean’s texts either.

Then, with only a minute to spare before the scheduled start of the campaign launch and media briefing, Will had reappeared. He strode briskly past Sean and the other members of their family in attendance and mounted the platform.

The speech he’d given wasn’t the one he and Sean had polished for hours until it was a pristine masterpiece. Instead Will

said with little preamble, “I’ve decided not to run for the United States Senate seat in New York.”

Shock skittered down Sean’s spine.

“I’ve made this decision for personal reasons,” Will added with the steely calm that was his trademark. “I don’t intend to discuss those reasons now or in the future.” Then he exited the stage while the media whipped into a feeding frenzy.

For the past several hours, Sean, Will’s campaign manager, had handled the unanswerable questions from reporters with professional but vague responses. He had no answers himself as to why Will had suddenly backed out of the race. Will hadn’t confided in him.

Now Sean was beyond furious. Evidently it showed, for one glimpse of his face at the door of Will’s home, and Laura, his sister-in-law, had held up a hand.

“Look,” she warned, “you two have to work this out. But don’t do it in front of the kids. I’ll tell Will you’re here.”

Then she closed the door firmly and left Sean in the hallway. Laura didn’t care that he was a Worthington. Her first priority, always, was to make sure that their home was a safe and loving place for their children. There would be no war of words in their home.

Two minutes later, with Sean pacing all the while, Will opened the door, slipped out, and closed it carefully behind him. Instead of his impeccable Giorgio Armani suit, he was dressed in his usual running clothes for his daily miles through Central Park.

“You drop out of the race now, after all our work?” Sean’s anger flared even hotter. Their mom’s Irish heritage was showing, but he honestly didn’t care. What had gotten into his brother?

Will didn’t reply. He merely took a step back—away from Sean, away from the fight. An indiscernible emotion flashed

into his dark eyes. For a second, it looked like pain . . . pity . . . sadness . . . or fear.

Fear? Sean frowned. His brother had never been afraid of anything. As Worthingtons, they'd learned early to face down bullies and not only hold their own but win. Their father said it was good practice for when they'd assume their roles in the family business, Worthington Shares.

"So, are you going to tell me why?" Sean demanded.

Will raised his chin. "I said publicly that I didn't intend to discuss the reasons now or in the future."

Sean crossed his arms. "And that goes for me too? Your brother? Your campaign manager? You just walk away into the sunset and leave me to pick up your mess?"

Will tilted his head. Sean felt his brother's piercing gaze sweep across him—the one that had intimidated Sean and their sister, Sarah, in childhood, making them acquiesce to whatever Will wanted.

But instead of the final brief words that usually ended any fight in his favor, Will relaxed his stance. "I did what I needed to do," he said stoically. "For me, for you, for our family. That's all I can say."

At that moment Sean knew what he'd hoped for was over—the opportunity to work arm in arm with his older brother on a venture where Will actually needed Sean's well-honed networking talents. He shook his head. He'd mistakenly thought that this time he could make their father, William Jennings Worthington V, proud. That instead of bypassing Sean to zero in on Will as the one the Worthington name depended on, Bill might give Sean the long-awaited "well done, son" he longed for.

It was not meant to be.

"So that's it," Sean huffed.

"That's it."

With those few words, Will walked toward the elevator.

More than anything, Sean wanted his brother to do something normal, like force him into a headlock or tell him to shut up, like he used to when they were growing up. Instead Will was strangely calm, distant, like he was in a business meeting.

But what bothered Sean even more than the eerie detachment was that indiscernible emotion in Will's eyes. That frankly terrified him.

What could invoke that kind of emotion in his brother, who wasn't afraid of anything?