

SHATTERED: A STORY OF BETRAYAL AND COURAGE

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EXCERPT

I knew hearts didn't stop beating until you died, yet I was certain mine had just stuttered to a halt. I couldn't breathe. My lungs refused to expand. My throat went dry. I'd planned most of my life for this one year. I'd worked out, built my strength, gone to ski camps, kept at it until I'd made it through the selection process—until I'd almost made the US Olympic slalom team. I had my passport. I'd packed my bags weeks ago. Now, my mother was telling me I couldn't do what I'd lived for all these years?

My heart kicked in and air filled my chest. "Shut up! Shut up!" In my mind, I screamed, but that's not the way I heard my voice. Shut up sounded like a whimper.

"Libby, stop." Dad was back, his hand on my shoulder, his face filled with pain. "Please, stop."

His calm presence and the terrible sound of his plea brought me up short.

I gulped back the ragged clutch that filled my throat. "Why? Why can't I ski with my team?" Then I glanced down. Mom was lying across the foot of the bed. She was lying across my legs, and I didn't feel the weight of my mother's body.