

HONORABLE PROFESSION by Andy Kutler

EXCERPTS

A waiter removed the unfinished salads and set down their main courses. Tilapia for him, penne pasta in arrabbiata sauce for her. Neither reached for a fork, and Anna sat expressionless, her eyes burning into him. Finally, she moved her plate aside and rested her chin again on her folded hands.

“Forty minutes now, we’ve known each other. Every political instinct in my body is telling me to laugh off your question. Tell you you’re misreading things and assure you I’m going to Washington because I believe I can do more good there, and better serve the people of my state.”

It was like he hit a nerve. “I didn’t mean to suggest you don’t care about people. You have—”

“I’m far from perfect, Dan, and I have my share of shortcomings. But dishonesty isn’t one of them. I’m going to Washington because I believe I can do far more good there, and for far more people.”

She paused, taking a long sip from her wine as she contemplated her next words.

“And yes, you’re right, there’s more to the story. But sharing that with a stranger would be more than reckless. Just like it’s unwise, if not self-destructive, to continue this conversation.”

“And yet we’re still talking.”

“And yet we’re still talking.”

“Vic is a phone call away.”

Anna leaned forward again, her eyes exploring his. “What is this between you and me? Or do you not have any idea what I’m talking about?”

He knew exactly what she was talking about. “I – I don’t know.”