

THE RHINESTONE NECKLACE

A Miss Tiffany Leavitt Mystery

Plot Summary - Chapter by Chapter Breakdown

Notes: We have left several details of this story vague, so you can give them a personal touch. You can tailor this outline in several of the following ways to make it unique, without changing the main plot. 1) The story may be set in any city, town or community of your choice. 2) You may want David's partner (his sergeant) to have a bigger role to play in the story. 3) Tiffany may be already married to the inspector 4) George may show his murderous hand way before the end of the story 5) The Interpol agents may have a bigger role to play in the story.

Part One - Rising Tension

Chapter One

CH 1/ Scene 1 – Miss Tiffany Leavitt can be best described as a world traveler. She takes every opportunity to devote her free time to traveling to the strange or extraordinary corners of the globe. From Tibet to Machu Pichu, from the Galapagos to Ayres Rock, from the Gobi desert to Botswana's diamond mines, Miss Tiffany has "been there, done that". Tiffany owns a travel agency which provides her with many occasions to tour the places she has not yet visited. Today, however, Tiffany is home in New Orleans – with a cold. She rarely gets sick and hates it as most people do.

CH 1/ Scene 2 – Still a bit under the weather, Tiffany decides to head to her office the next day and see what's going on. Although she could stay home and do most of the admin stuff she needs to do, on her computer, she prefers to be where people are. She hates being alone. As she arrives at the agency, she notices a woman arguing with one of the agents. The young man has been working with Tiffany for three years and is everything she expects from an agent: polite, answering the client's questions knowledgeably even if he has never been to any of the places advertised in the latest pamphlets. However, the discussion does not sound as one that concerns travel or even the purchase of a ticket. It sounds as if the woman wants to know why George does not want to accept her gift.

CH 1/ Scene 3 – The client, a Miss Micheline Adams, has just come back from Germany and has brought back a rhinestone necklace, which she is intending to give to George. George is not married and does not have a woman in his life (he lost his mom last year) who could feasibly accept such a present. After listening to Miss Adams' reasons for wanting George to have the necklace, Tiffany invites the client into her office, to George's obvious relief.

CH 1/ Scene 4 – Micheline Adams explains that she would like to get a discount on her next trip. She's just got enough money for a ticket back to San Francisco and she needs to fly to Mexico from there, but since she's maxed her credit card, she was hoping to get a cheap flight.... Tiffany listens to Miss Adams' financial woes patiently and then asked to take a look at the rhinestone necklace. No denying that it is a beautiful piece of jewelry. When Tiffany asks Miss Adams why not selling it or dropping it at the nearest pawn shop, Micheline Adams mumbles something about not getting enough money for it.

CH 1/ Scene 5 – Tiffany is getting very suspicious. On the one hand, she is not going to authorize George to give the lady any discount at this time, and, on the other, she is going to give a call to her friend Detective Inspector David Andrew before she does anything about the necklace – like buying it perhaps. Tiffany asks Miss Adams to wait in the front office while she makes a couple of calls before deciding whether she wants to buy the necklace. As soon as she gets David Andrew on the line and explains why she called, David tells Tiffany to keep the lady right where she is. Rhinestone jewelry are really priceless these days and he's received a report from Interpol stating that a pouch worth over a hundred thousand dollars has been stolen from a reputable jeweler in Bonn – where Micheline Adams was staying before returning to the States.

Chapter Two

CH 2/ Scene 1 – In order to prevent Micheline Adams from leaving the agency, Tiffany asks her to have lunch with her. She says that a friend of hers is interested in buying the necklace, and he'll be coming over after lunch. Micheline agrees. While they eat their salad and chicken wings, which Tiffany ordered from the restaurant across the mall, Micheline explains that her boyfriend surprised her with the necklace before they left Germany. She is not really a jewelry type of girl, but she sure would like to get to Mexico before Christmas to spend it with her boyfriend.

CH 2/ Scene 2 – Tiffany concludes that the boyfriend has gone to Mexico with the rhinestones and is probably selling them already. When looking closely at the necklace once again, Tiffany notices a couple of the stones being rather more sparkling than the others and lacking in reflective colors. She does not say anything to Micheline. Tiffany believes the two odd stones are diamonds – not rhinestones. She is getting impatient for David Andrew to arrive.

CH 2/ Scene 3 – When the inspector finally reaches the agency, Tiffany introduces Micheline to her good friend, David Andrew. She tells her that David knows a thing or two about jewelry and may want to buy the necklace. As soon as Micheline pulls the necklace out of its velvet pouch, David exhales a whistle. Obviously he is impressed. He fingers every stone and stops at the two odd ones. He pulls a jeweler's loupe out of his jacket and looks at the gems closely. He nods to Tiffany and tells Miss Adams that he's interested and wants to know how much she wants for it.

CH 2/ Scene 4 – When Micheline tells David Andrew that she wants the cost of her return fare to Mexico, the inspector shows her his police badge. Deflated in her purpose, Micheline is nonetheless visibly curious to know why the inspector wants to arrest her. He replies that the necklace is part of the loot stolen from a renowned jeweler in Germany. Micheline soon realizes that her boyfriend is the thief and has given her a stolen necklace.

CH 2/ Scene 5 – Micheline had no idea her boyfriend is a thief. Inspector Andrew tells her that in exchange for letting her go and not charging her with trying to fence stolen property, he wants to know where Micheline is to meet her boyfriend. She says that she lied when she told Tiffany and the inspector that Kurt was already in Mexico – he is still in New Orleans waiting for her to return to his hotel with a ticket to Mexico. When the inspector asks if he has a ticket already; Micheline says that yes, he only stopped in New Orleans so that she could buy a ticket from her agency – hopefully cheap.

Chapter Three

CH 3/ Scene 1 – As soon as the inspector hears the name of the hotel, he calls his sergeant and tells him to pick up Kurt Hauser, to charge him and see if he has the rest of the loot with him. In order to make sure Micheline hasn't sent the inspector on a 'wild goose chase', he asks her to remain at the agency until they hear from his sergeant. A half-an-hour later the sergeant calls to say Kurt Hauser has checked out that morning. Of course he's left no forwarding address.

CH 3/ Scene 2 – Micheline is dumfounded. The inspector tells her that she better go home and perhaps Kurt will contact her there. Tiffany proposes to accompany the young woman and to see that she gets to her place okay. David Andrew agrees because, to him, Tiffany is one of the best bodyguards he knows. She is not afraid of adversity and has beaten her opponent on more than one occasion. When Tiffany and Micheline arrive at the young lady's apartment, they notice Kurt's rental car parked in the front lot. Micheline is excited. She thinks Kurt is waiting for her somewhere nearby. Wrong! He is nowhere to be found and has left a note on the dashboard of the car asking Micheline to return the car to the agency when ever she has time.

CH 3/Scene 3 – After she's phoned the inspector with the news and left Micheline to get over the whole ordeal, Tiffany returns to the office and resumes her day. By nightfall, she is ready to go home. Her cold is almost gone but she's awfully tired. She has supper at one of her favorite restaurant and as soon as she arrives home, she jumps in the shower and retreats in front of the TV for an hour. In the middle of the night she is awakened by a call from David Andrew. Tiffany sits up in bed and listens to David telling her

that Micheline Adams is dead. He says that he will not ask her to come to the station at this time of night, but to be ready to have some answers for him in the morning.

CH 3/ Scene 4 – Tiffany is perplexed. She did nothing wrong. There was nothing she could do anyway. Micheline Adams was never a friend – just a client. She traveled every summer to some European destinations and worked all year at a dentist's office to save for her vacations. Apart from that, Tiffany does not know anything else about the woman. The morning comes far too soon for Tiffany. She has not slept well and has not gotten rid of her cold yet. She is not in the best of mood.

Part Two - Main Action

Chapter Four

CH 4/ Scene 1 – When Tiffany arrives at the police station, David is waiting for her. He shows her into an interview room. She answers all of his questions politely and as truthfully as she can. But when it comes to Micheline's relationship with George, her travel agent, she tells David he's got to ask him. Tiffany ends with saying that Micheline was perfectly alright when she left her the day before. She does not know anything else. Then upon reflection, she informs David that Micheline got a note from Kurt saying that she was to return his rental car to the agency. The car was sitting in the lot when they arrived.

CH 4/ Scene 2 – The inspector wonders why Kurt did not return the car to the airport himself. If he intended to fly out of the country as he told Micheline, it would have been the logical thing to do. Tiffany does not know if Kurt was waiting for Micheline in her apartment, since she only left her at the front door. Tiffany then asks how Micheline was killed. The inspector has not received the preliminary autopsy report yet, but he believes she was strangled.

CH 4/ Scene 3 – Tiffany is too preoccupied now to go back to the office. When she leaves the police station, she goes to her favorite café, buys a cappuccino and a newspaper. She takes both to the terrace and begins reading. Her attention is soon focusing on the snow storms whipping the Eastern Seaboard with incredibly low temperatures. What if Kurt wanted to throw everyone off his scent and instead of taking the car – after he killed Micheline – to the New Orleans airport, he took it to some other airport. In New Mexico maybe?

CH 4/ Scene 4 – Tiffany pulls her cell phone out of her pocket and punches David's number. She tells him what she believes happened to the car. David agrees that's probably what Kurt did. However, there are dozens of airports between New Orleans and Mexico.... "But what if he drove all the way?" Tiffany asks. That's another possibility, of course. David tells Tiffany that he's going to swing by her house that night before going home. They'll have more time then to go over the case. He'll bring dinner with him.

CH 4/ Scene 5 – Before Tiffany puts the phone down, she senses someone observing her. A blond, Arian-looking man is staring at her from his table at the other end of the terrace. He gets up and strides toward Tiffany's table. She places her phone back in her purse but leaves the line to David open. The man introduces himself as Kurt Hauser, and asks if he can sit down for a minute. Tiffany tells him to do as he pleases but that she's leaving anyway. When she moves to get up, he grabs her wrist and forces Tiffany back into her chair. He says that he really does not want to make a scene or disturb her, but he needs to know where the necklace is. Tiffany tells him that it's in a safe place. She says that she bought it from Tiffany and it's a very nice necklace indeed.

Chapter 5

CH 5/ Scene 1 – Kurt obviously wants the necklace back. He puts five hundred dollars in Tiffany's hand discreetly and asks her to show him where the necklace is. Tiffany does not say anything except for: "It's at home, in my safe." She hopes David has heard what she said. Kurt says that he'll go with her in her car and will get a cab later to get back to his own car. They leave together, but not before Tiffany drops one of the five hundred dollar bills on the table for the busboy or server. Someone will be bound to have noticed the 'generous' blond tipper.

CH 5/ Scene 2 – Having heard every word of the conversation between Kurt and Tiffany, Inspector Andrew sends a couple of cars to Tiffany's house. He would love to arrest the thief, if only to show these Interpol guys that the little inspector from New Orleans can nab big cats like Kurt Hauser. Heading a silent convoy toward Tiffany's home, David wonders when will be a good time to tell Tiffany how he really feels about her. One of the diamonds on the necklace would look so nice on her ring finger.

CH 5/ Scene 3 – When Kurt and Tiffany arrive at her place; she opens the door to let him in. He tells her to go ahead of him. That was a mistake. With the agility of a panther, Tiffany swings one leg around, which sends Kurt flying back onto the front lawn. By the time David arrives, Tiffany has saddled her victim and has him pinned down under her butt. David explodes in loud laughter while he pulls the necklace out of his pocket and dangles it in front of Kurt, asking, "Is that what you're looking for?"

CH 5/ Scene 4 – The officers lift Kurt off the ground, one of them reads him his rights and puts him inside of one of their cruisers. Tiffany is happy that David came when he did – she would not have known what to do with the 'Arian package' if he had not shown up.

CH 5/ Scene 5 – While the officers drive Kurt back to the police station, Tiffany asks David if he has time to have a quick word with her. As soon as they're inside Tiffany's house, David takes her in his arms and kisses his lady fervently. He does not allow himself the time for anything else than a kiss – he hates "quickies" – but tells Tiffany that he'll be back tonight. Tiffany is all smiles when she closes the door on him.

Part Three - Resolution

Chapter Six

CH 6/ Scene 1 – When David returns to the station, he finds Kurt in an interview room, sitting beside a person he's never seen before. He supposes the guy is a lawyer. As he enters the room, the lawyer introduces himself as Kurt's brother, Handel Hauser. He's also a lawyer, "yes." Throughout the interview, Kurt agrees to plead guilty to the charge of theft in Germany and to passing on stolen property to his fiancée, Micheline Adams, but that's all. He says that he did not kill her. He wanted the necklace back to give it to the police. "No," he did not kill Micheline. He left the car where she found it. He rented another car when he realized that he could not fly back to Germany from New York. He wanted to go to Houston and take a direct flight from there to Frankfurt. When the inspector asks if he knows who took the car he first rented, Kurt says that he does not know.

CH 6/ Scene 2 – If someone else is involved in this case, Tiffany is still in danger. David leaves the interview room and phones Tiffany. She has returned to the office to clear a few things before the end of the day. David asks her who else knew about the necklace. Only George: George Cavallies, one of her travel agents. Tiffany tells David what she heard when this whole affair started. George did not want to accept the necklace as a discount – but that's about the extent of their conversation. David asks Tiffany if George is in the office alone with her. She says that "yes, there's no one else here."

CH 6/ Scene 3 – David tells Tiffany that he's going to come in to pick him up – just to get his statement. In the meantime, the inspector wants Tiffany to act as normal and not to let him go anywhere if possible. As soon as she hangs up, Tiffany tells George to get her the latest air-freight set of regulations: she intends to open a side-business dealing with air-freight. *That will keep him busy for a while*, Tiffany says to herself.

CH 6/ Scene 4 – Since this is Thursday and all the shops in the mall are open until nine o'clock; George is not suspecting anything out of the ordinary when he sees two men come in the agency and sitting down across from his desk. Tiffany is slightly surprised. She does not know these men. She does not recall ever seeing them with David or even with his sergeant. She does not want to panic but she will feel better when David shows up. Tiffany comes out of her office and asks what the two men want: "How can we help you?" The older man says that he's waiting for David Andrew.

CH 6/ Scene 5 – Tiffany tells the two men that David should be here soon, but she insists: why are the two of them here? In the meantime, George gets up, rounds his desk and plants the barrel of a small gun in Tiffany's ribs. He then tells her that these gentlemen came to see him and that they're all going to wait for Inspector David Andrew. David and his sergeant burst through the agency's door and soon disarm George. The bust was a success.

CH 6/ Scene 6 – The two men were Interpol agents undercover. They knew George was going to do something about Tiffany – probably kill her at the first opportunity. George had followed Tiffany and Micheline to her apartment and had killed her when she told him that she didn't have the rest of the jewelry. Kurt had given the bag to one of the Interpol men, thinking they would meet later in Houston.

CH 6/ Scene 7 – That night, Tiffany and David go back to where they left off. A week later Tiffany is showing off a gorgeous engagement ring to all of her friends during their engagement party.

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