



## The Hill (Brody Law Book 4)

By Carol Ericson



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When P.I. Judd Brody agreed to safeguard socialite London Breck, he expected a fluff gig filled with parties and paparazzi. But the bombshell blonde was nothing like the wild princess he'd seen in the media...and his undeniable attraction to her was as real as the threats to her life.

The missteps of London's past didn't compare to the fear she now faced. With her sexy bodyguard by her side, she vowed to confront the conspiracy haunting her family. London couldn't imagine surviving this without Judd. She'd help him get the answers she needed. But she had no intention of watching him walk away once he did....

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## **The Hill (Brody Law Book 4) By Carol Ericson Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

#### About the Author

Carol Ericson lives in southern California, home of state-of-the-art cosmetic surgery, wild freeway chases, and a million amazing stories. These stories, along with hordes of virile men and feisty women clamor for release from Carol's head until she sets them free to fulfill their destinies and her readers' fantasies. To find out more about Carol and her current books, please visit her website at [www.carolericson.com](http://www.carolericson.com), "where romance flirts with danger."

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"Your father was murdered. You could be next."

London Breck jerked her head up from the slip of paper and caught the waiter's arm as he turned away. "I'm sorry. Who gave this to you?"

The young man's eyes widened and London released her death grip on his white jacket.

"Like I told you, Ms. Breck. I found the folded piece of paper on my tray with your name written on the outside. I—I don't know who put it there...and I didn't read it."

She crumpled the note in her fist and dropped it into her evening clutch, trading it for a ten-dollar bill. "That's okay. Thanks for delivering it to me."

The waiter pocketed the money and scurried away without looking back.

Someone had decided to play a joke with that note, or it signaled the opening gambit of some sort of scam. London tucked a stray strand of hair behind her ear. If this con man believed he could pull a fast one on her or Breck Global Enterprises, he hadn't met their legal team.

She straightened her spine and turned to face the room, smiling so hard her cheeks hurt. It was an occupational hazard—if one could call glad-handing and raising money an occupation. But it was the only one she'd ever had, the only one she'd ever trained for.

She swept a champagne flute from a passing tray with practiced ease and turned her attention to the crowd jamming the Fairmont Hotel's ballroom. Which well-heeled donor or wannabe had left that note? Scanning the room, her gaze tripped over the hottie in the corner.

Even though his crisp tux conformed to the dress code for the evening, he had *outsider* scribbled all over his amazing body. The tux couldn't mask the sheer power of the man, and it had very little to do with the way the material puckered and stretched across his massive shoulders, crying out for a good tailor.

His stance, his demeanor—okay, the dark sunglasses—marked him as a member of the bevy of body- and security guards that littered the room, jealously watching their clients or their clients' jewels or both. Probably not the author of the note, but definitely worth a closer inspection.

The note almost forgotten, London squinted at the pretty people bedecked in diamonds and designer duds and wondered which one had invited that powerful panther into the midst of the pampered trust-fund babies

and oily politicians.

"Don't you know squinting like that will bring on the wrinkles, my dear?"

London rolled a sip of champagne on her tongue as she eyed her cousin. *Speaking of trust-fund babies...*

"Have you seen Roger tonight?"

"Your square-jawed, preppy suitor?" Niles shook his head. "For someone practically running the company, he sure misses a lot of soirees, doesn't he?"

She drew her fingertip around the rim of her glass. She didn't want to talk about the company. "Did you bid on something fabulous, Niles?"

"Of course I did. It's all rather too late, though, isn't it?" He plucked a cracker brimming with caviar from the tray on the table and studied it before popping it into his mouth.

"Too late?" She steadied herself for one of her cousin's acidic barbs.

He brushed his fingers together. "Here we are raising all this money for heart disease, but your father, Spencer Breck, already bit the dust, leaving you gazillions of dollars and handing you the reins of Breck Global. Should've had this fund-raiser *before* he kicked the bucket."

"I can always count on you to say the right thing at the right moment, bringing light and comfort."

Niles clicked his tongue, a decidedly feminine gesture she was sure Mr. Dark Sunglasses over in the corner had never made in his life.

Then Niles leaned in, his booze-soaked breath tickling her ear. "This is your cousin Niles. You don't have to pretend with me, my dear. I know you despised the man as much as I did."

He threw his silk scarf over his shoulder and waltzed away, throwing a kiss at a dowager across the room.

Maybe Niles had written that note to stir up trouble. She wouldn't put it past him. His own father had left Niles gazillions of dollars, but it was never enough for Niles.

Besides, Niles and his father, her late uncle Jay, might have despised Spencer, but her relationship with him had contained many more nuances than simple dislike.

She placed her champagne glass down next to the plate of caviar. The abrupt action caused the sparkling liquid to slosh over the rim. A waiter appeared as if by magic, whisking away the glass, replacing it with a fresh one and blotting the drops of champagne from the white tablecloth with a thick napkin. He even swapped out the plate of caviar, although none of the liquid had touched it.

The dull throbbing in her head from earlier in the evening made a repeat performance. She had to get away from the chatter.

She turned and collided with a brick wall—a brick wall in a fine wool suit. The man with the sunglasses caught her arm with a surprisingly gentle grip.

"I'm sorry." His voice was a deep baritone that sent shocks of awareness up her spine.

He wasn't wearing sunglasses anymore and she stared into the bluest eyes she'd ever seen. "M-my fault."

He released her arm and strode past her.

She watched his broad back as he cut a swath through the partygoers. He landed in front of Bunny Harris and ducked as the older woman whispered something in his ear.

Watching the exchange, London sucked in her lower lip. Was he one of Bunny's escorts? If so, the old dame's taste in men had gone up several notches.

London slipped out of the room and headed for the ladies' restroom. On the way, Captain Williams from the San Francisco police department stopped her.

"This is a wonderful benefit, London. I'm sure your father would've been proud."

"Thank you, Captain."

He shook a finger in her face. "How many times do I have to tell you to call me Les? I've known you since you were a little girl, but you're a grown woman now. Les will do."

"I'll try to remember that...Les. If you'll excuse me." She'd been inching away from him during their conversation and was able to turn and make a break for it. If Captain Les Williams thought she had any pull to get him the chief's job, he'd better start kissing someone else's backside. Her father, with his connections to the SFPD, hadn't been able to do it, so she sure as hell couldn't.

She pushed through the ladies' room door. A couple of women were primping at the vanity and stopped their gossip long enough to smile at London in the mirror.

She nodded and swept past them to the restroom. Leaning against the tile counter, she dug into her clutch for an ibuprofen. She cupped some water in her hand from the faucet and swallowed the gelcap.

The voices of the women in the outer room rose and then a man burst through the bathroom door, holding his hand in front of him. "Don't be alarmed, Ms. Breck. I'd just like to ask you a few questions. Ray Lopez from KFGG. You might've seen my show."

She'd need to pop another ibuprofen at this rate. Instead she wedged a hand on her hip. "Really? You're following me into the ladies' room to get an interview?"

"Just a comment."

"You can't call my office?"

He spread his hands as he smiled. "You know and I know it's not that easy to reach you at your...office. Just a quick question about your father's death."

One of the women from the other room had followed the reporter into the bathroom and skewered him with an icy gaze. "Security is on the way."

He shrugged and stepped closer to London.

"I've already done that interview, Mr. Lopez—just not with you." She turned toward the mirror and ran the pad of her thumb over one eyebrow.

"You didn't answer this question. Did you find your father's death suspicious?"

"Not at all." She backed away from the mirror and tucked her bag under her arm, brushing past Lopez. Had he written the threatening note to manufacture some story? Why would he ask that question? She wouldn't give him the satisfaction of asking him about his motives.

As she took one step out of the lounge, a security guard barreled past her. "Sir, you're not allowed in the ladies' room. I'm going to have to escort you out of the hotel."

Lopez craned his head over his shoulder to give her one last look as the security guard hustled him toward the escalator.

She blew out a long breath. She couldn't even escape notice in the ladies' bathroom. She'd had enough, enough of the pretense and the fake smiles and the eager reporters...and the vaguely threatening notes. Her father had passed away just last month—of natural causes. Surely she could be excused for having a headache and leaving the shindig early.

She plucked her phone from her purse and called her driver. "Theodore, I'm ready to go. Meet me in the side alley. I don't want to go through the front entrance."

"Paparazzi stalking you again, Ms. Breck?"

"You have no idea."

"On my way."

When she entered the ballroom, she located her cousin, who was telling some risqué story and taking liberties with the truth. She crooked her finger at him and he broke away from his adoring audience.

"I'm getting out of here. People already think I was terribly brave making an appearance so soon after Dad's death."

"Especially since he did go off rather abruptly."

Was everyone drinking the same water? Lifting her shoulders, she said, "He *did* have heart disease."

"Although all his money allowed him to manage it quite well."

"Did you send me a note tonight, Niles?"

"A note?" His tweezed eyebrows shot to his hairline. "What are you talking about?"

"Nothing. Never mind." Had she really expected him to confess? Of course, maybe she'd just put him on notice.

She flicked her fingers at the room, still buzzing with activity. "Could you please do the honors for me? Announce the winners of the silent auction, thank everyone for coming and so on and so on."

He patted her arm with his long, thin hand. "I'd be happy to, my dear. You go home and get a good night's sleep and dream of your billions."

She sighed. "You're not exactly in the poorhouse, cousin."

"Ah, but your father was the lucky one—and the greedy one."

"I already have a headache. Let's not get into family politics." She kissed the air somewhere near his cheek and pivoted on her heel.

She nearly bumped into Bunny Harris at the coat check, hanging on to a much younger man's arm, but not the man with the sunglasses. "So sorry, Bunny. Are you off already?"

"Don't worry, London. I made a sizable donation to the cause. Your father was one of my oldest friends. I'll miss him."

"Thank you." London's gaze strayed over Bunny's shoulder to her model-handsome companion lounging against the coat-check window.

Bunny slid her ticket across the counter with one manicured fingertip. "Oh, this is."

"Lance." The man reached around Bunny, extending his hand. "Ms. Breck."

"Nice to meet you." She shook his hand and then dropped it. "Enjoy the rest of your evening."

Lance draped Bunny's fur around her shoulders and they descended the escalator to the lobby of the hotel.

Shaking her head, London dipped her hand into her purse for the claim ticket and felt the note. She pulled it out with the ticket and examined the block letters written with a black felt-tip pen.

She'd hold on to it for a day or two in case there was a follow-up and then turn it over to Breck Global's security team. It could very well be that reporter trying some angle.

The coat-check clerk plopped her leather bomber jacket on the counter. "Cool jacket."

London smiled, handed her a tip and headed for the escalator, hugging the jacket to her chest. When she hit the first step, she gathered the skirt of her long dress in one hand and lifted it.

She glided into the lobby and a bellhop sprang to life. "Do you need a taxi, Ms. Breck?"

"No, thanks. My driver's waiting." Technically, Theodore was her father's driver, but she didn't have the heart to let him go, even though she felt silly with a driver.

She stuffed her arms into her jacket and pulled out her phone to check the time. If Theodore had taken the car back to her father's Pacific Heights mansion, it shouldn't take him more than ten or fifteen minutes to get here.

She parked herself in front of a rack of flyers and studied the trips to Alcatraz and the wine country for a few minutes. Then she glanced over her shoulder at a few people crisscrossing the lobby. No photographers, no Ray Lopez, although they could be waiting for her out front. She pushed through the side door of the hotel. Lifting her skirts, she traipsed down the steps and shoved open the heavy metal door to the outside.

It slammed behind her.

The dark alley glistened with moisture. Theodore hadn't made it yet. She squinted toward the street, partially blocked by a Dumpster.

He must've taken the car somewhere else on his break. She turned toward the side door and grabbed the handle, pressing it down. The door didn't budge.

A footstep crunched behind her, but before she had time to turn around, an arm hooked around her throat.

She should've braved the paparazzi.

\* \* \*

Locked in a stall in the men's room, Judd slipped the velvet pouch crammed with jewels into the inside pocket of his dinner jacket. He patted his .45 tucked into the shoulder holster on the other side.

He had no idea where Bunny Harris would wind up with that gigolo she'd picked up tonight, but at least her jewelry wouldn't be with her.

He shoved out of the stall and nodded at the man washing his hands at the vanity, who'd caught his eye in the mirror. The dude had been talking to London Breck earlier—probably a relative. As far as he knew, the richest woman in the city didn't have a husband or even a boyfriend. The tabloids linked her with a new man every other month...not that he followed the tabloids except for business.

The man at the sink and London had the same look—blond, Nordic, cold. Although London was a beautiful girl, she wasn't his type, even with all those dollar signs after her name.

Judd washed his hands, accepted a warm towel from the attendant and slipped a five in his basket. He turned toward the door.

"Care for a spritz?"

Judd stumbled to a stop and glanced over his shoulder at the mirror.

The Breck relative held up a bottle of cologne, aiming it at him. "It's a good scent...manly."

"That's okay." Judd held up his hands. "I'm good."

He heard the hiss of the spray bottle behind him as he dodged through the bathroom door. *Rich people.*

Checking his watch, he jogged down the escalator. Bunny had told him she'd send her car back for him at the side entrance to the hotel. He waved to the hotel clerk and gave a fist bump to one of the bellhops.



"Later, man."

He took the steps down to the side door two at a time and pushed through to the alley. Darkness enveloped him as his shoes crunched broken glass. He tilted back his head to look at the lights on the outside of the hotel, which had been smashed.

His head jerked up at the sound of scuffling down the alley, and he noticed a car parked at the end, blocking the entrance to the street, contributing to the darkness.

He plucked a small but powerful flashlight from his pocket and aimed it in the direction of the noise.

A man wearing a ski mask looked up from the woman he was dragging behind him by the throat.

"Hey!" Judd sprinted toward the scene.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Carol McElroy:**

As people who live in the actual modest era should be revise about what going on or info even knowledge to make these keep up with the era that is always change and move ahead. Some of you maybe will probably update themselves by studying books. It is a good choice to suit your needs but the problems coming to a person is you don't know which you should start with. This The Hill (Brody Law Book 4) is our recommendation to help you keep up with the world. Why, since this book serves what you want and need in this era.

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them is this The Hill (Brody Law Book 4).

**David Fulton:**

In this age globalization it is important to someone to get information. The information will make professionals understand the condition of the world. The health of the world makes the information easier to share. You can find a lot of references to get information example: internet, classifieds, book, and soon. You will observe that now, a lot of publisher that will print many kinds of book. The book that recommended for you is The Hill (Brody Law Book 4) this publication consist a lot of the information of the condition of this world now. This book was represented so why is the world has grown up. The terminology styles that writer value to explain it is easy to understand. The writer made some analysis when he makes this book. Honestly, that is why this book acceptable all of you.

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