

Rise of the Iron Eagle (Book One) by Roy A. Teel

From the opening of Chapter 8:

John walked into Starbucks at the corner of Topanga and Lassen just before six thirty a.m. He got a coffee and a copy of the Daily News, and the headline said it all, “‘Billy the Kid,’ Crips Gang Member and Serial Rapist, Body Found in Legion Park: Iron Eagle Said to Be Killer.” He shook his head, “I should really start looking for the people who leak this stuff.” He walked to a flower shop a few doors down to purchase a dozen long-stemmed red roses. His truck was parked in front of Country Deli, a local landmark for nearly fifty years. He knew the area very, very well, but he knew it for all the wrong reasons. He pulled out of the lot and headed west through the neighborhoods of oak and eucalyptus trees, following Lassen as it turned from a busy thoroughfare into a quiet neighborhood of post-World War II homes and horse properties, until he reached the entrance to Oakwood Cemetery.

He parked his truck outside the large black wrought iron gates and the ivy covered brick walls of the cemetery and walked through the entrance and up the steep incline of the main road. He walked past a blue and white striped tent; a small backhoe sat quietly where fresh earth had been moved, and a concrete burial vault sat on the ground next to the newly-opened grave. He walked out into the cemetery grass and stopped in front of a grave marker set beneath a huge California Live Oak. He looked at the gray and white granite and its inscription, ‘Amber Lynn Swenson.’ He knelt and brushed away the fresh cut grass, so the whole inscription was revealed. ‘Loving Wife and Beautiful Soul. April 8, 1978 – March 20, 2003.’ Placing the flowers on the stone, he sat down, leaning his back against the tree. “I miss you, honey. I miss my best friend. I’m sorry I’ve been away for so long.” He heaved a sigh as a tear rolled down his face, and he whispered, “I’m still looking for him, Amber Lynn. For the man who took your life and our life together away.” He wiped the tears from his eyes, his lower lip quivering. “I know I’ve told you, and I don’t know if you are somewhere where you can hear me or not, but I’m sorry. If I had just been on time that night, he wouldn’t have gotten you.” He wiped the stone with a handkerchief from his pocket and laughed. “You always made fun of me for being old fashioned ... but you were glad I had it the night I asked you to marry me. How could I know that this same piece of linen that dried your tears of joy at our engagement would later dry my tears of sorrow at your funeral.” John paused for a moment, his anger rising up. “He’s still out there, Amber, hurting women and children. I can’t let that continue. I will find him...and I will avenge you and all the others he’s tortured and killed. He’s a sly one; so far below the radar not even law enforcement sees his pattern or knows that he even exists. The randomness of his killings and the large area that he covers is his protection. I thought I had him with Roskowski. He was evil but wasn’t the man who did this to you.”

He stood up and walked toward the unmarked piece of land next to Amber’s headstone. “This is my spot, baby, right next to you. I’m not afraid of death...I’m afraid of dying before I catch him and bring him to justice.” He leaned down on his

hands and knees and gently touched his lips to her name. "Rest, my angel. The next time I come back, it'll be to tell you that I got him."
