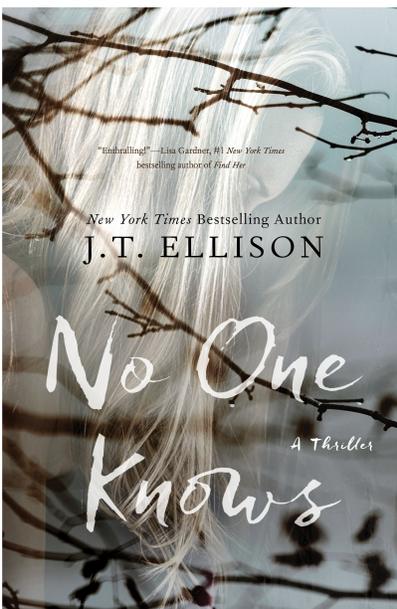


Original Ending to

NO ONE KNOWS

By J.T. Ellison



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A Note from J.T. Ellison

Dear Friend,

I am so pleased to share the original ending to the book, one that was edited out in favor of the current epilogue. It might give you a touch of insight into Aubrey, Josh, and Chase from a slightly different perspective.

I couldn't do this without you. Thank you again for all your help and love over the years.

All my best,

J.T.

Epilogue

Two Years Later

“Mail, Hamilton.”

Josh accepted the plain cream envelope from the guard, smiled curtly at him, then returned to his bunk. As jails went, it wasn't so bad. It just killed him to be locked inside, locked down, unable to see the sun when he wanted. To be on someone else's schedule.

The envelope had a Nashville postmark on it, and an address on Stewart's Ferry Pike.

He recognized the handwriting, felt his heart kick into gear.

He didn't have to worry about opening it—that had been taken care of by the censors, as he liked to think of them. He liked to imagine he was in a Russian prison instead of medium security in the middle of bum fuck,

Tennessee. Club Fed. What a joke.

He pulled the single sheet of paper from the envelope, and as he read the words, he heard her voice, sweet and soft, in his ears. Just like when he read all the others. She'd mailed him once before, or had someone do it, a huge package of letters. Some handwritten, some printed from the computer's email. Five years of agony, just in case he didn't really understand what he'd put her through.

His punishment.

This one, though, broke him in two.

Dear Josh,

I thought of you today.

I was walking on the beach, (yes, I'm out) and a rock washed up. Landed right at my feet, perfectly round and polished. It was eerie, actually, so much like right after you disappeared, when I finally accepted you were dead. I picked it up and put it in my pocket. I will keep this, a stone, not brilliant or shiny, but heavy and dense, as a remembrance. It will have a place of honor on my mantel, and when I see it, I will do my best to remember only the good times we had.

I'm getting married. I know you will hate to hear this news, but I felt like I needed to tell you. We've been through so much, you and I. From the time I was seven and you were nine and you chose me to champion. I couldn't have survived

my childhood without you. You were my savior, my knight in shining armor. The love of my life. You will always hold a special place in my heart.

But my life, my future, is with Chase. I hope you understand, and someday, that you'll forgive me. We could have been amazing, you and I. Could have been one for the ages.

Take care of yourself.

Always, Aubrey

He laid back on his bunk, on his side, facing the wall. Tucked the shabby pillow under his head and stared at the picture of his wife, sunny and curly-headed and blond, smiling at him from their wedding photo. The one little piece of her he still had. He traced the outline of her face with a finger, and smiled.

"I won't be in here forever, Aubrey."