SYNOPSIS

“Waltz into Darkness”
A summary.

In the book, Waltz into Darkness set in 1880, the male character named Louis Durand is a successful businessman in New Orleans. He is 36 years old and has never been married. He feels the urgent need to get married now or else it will be too late. A marriage agency arranges a bride for him in St. Louis. She is to come by boat down to the Mississippi River and he is to meet her at the boat dock. He is very excitedly goes to the boat dock to greet her but when the passengers get off the boat, she is not there.

He returns to his carriage and there is a woman that has been waiting for him. She introduces herself as Julia Russell, the woman he is supposed to marry. However, she looks nothing like the picture of the woman that has been sent to him. The woman in the picture appears to be in her 30s and a plain woman of average appearance. However, the woman he meets is a stunning beauty, small, about 5 feet 1 inches tall, with long curly golden locks and fair skin.

He asks her about this and she explains that she had sent the picture of a friend. She did this because she did not want a man to marry her for her beauty. She wanted a man who would marry her for her inner qualities. So, she had sent a false picture of herself. She apologizes and says that if he rejects her she will understand and go back to St.Louis.

He says that to the contrary he is happy about his good fortunate to have a beautiful wife when he was only expecting a woman of average appearance.
However, he too has misled her. In his letters to her he had portrayed himself as just an average working man of modest means. In reality, he is an extremely wealthy man. He has $100,000 in the bank (a lot of money in 1880 when this is taking place). He did not tell her about this because he did not want a woman who would marry him for his money. So, he now offers to withdraw from his agreement, as he too has deceived her.

In spite of this difficult start, he agrees to marry her even though she is beautiful and she agrees to marry him even though he is rich. They proceed straight away to the church where the wedding has already been scheduled and they get married the same day.

Louis Durand falls deeply in love with her. However, he notices strange things about her. She has brought a pet canary with her. She does not feed the canary properly and when it dies she does not seem concerned. She has brought a large trunk with her, but she refuses to open it, saying that it just contains old things she does not want anymore. Because of his great love for his wife, he takes her to the bank and gives her joint signing authority over all of his bank accounts. He is concerned when she receives a letter from her sister complaining that she has not written since leaving St. Louis. She wants to sluff this off, but her husband is concerned about this and insists that she write her sister back. He even stands over her while she writes this letter to her sister, making sure that the letter gets written. He insists that he take the letter to the post office himself, in spite of her protests that she wants to do it, so the letter gets mailed.
He is shocked when, a few days later, he receives a letter directly from the sister. The letter says that the letter his wife has written is a forgery. The handwriting is completely different from the handwriting of the real Julia Russell. The sister demands to know what has happened to Julia. He rushes home and learns that his wife has left earlier in the day and has not returned. He rushes to the bank and learns that his wife withdrew all the money from both bank accounts and has absconded. He rushes back home and breaks opens the trunk of his wife's things which has been sitting mysteriously unopened since his wife arrived from St.Louis. The trunk has the initials J.R. on it standing for Julia Russell. What he finds inside the trunk are the clothing for a much larger woman. His own wife is a small, petite woman standing not more than 5 feet one inch tall. The clothing in the trunk is for a large sized large breasted woman standing at least 5 feet 6 inches high.

He becomes aware that he has been the victim of a scam. The woman he married was not Julia Russell but another woman impersonating her. He goes to the police. The Chief of Police, after studying this case, finds there is nothing he can do. There is no proof that any crime has been committed. It was not a crime for another woman to call herself Julia Russell and impersonate her. Also, he took the woman, by whatever name, to the church and married her there. That woman is now his wife, even though she used a false name. As far as taking the money, she had every right to do that. He had given her signing authority over his bank accounts. She did not forge a signature. That was her own real signature. Thus, she had the right to take the money and she is still married to him.
Louis Durand says that he thinks that the real Julia Russell must have been killed. The Chief of Police replies that if he can find any evidence of that, then come back, but as of now there is no evidence that a crime has been committed. Louis Durand now goes to St. Louis and meets the sister. The sister confirms that she took the real Julia Russell to the boat dock and saw her off. Thus, the real Julia got on the boat in St. Louis. However, she did not get off the boat in New Orleans. Something must have happened to her in between. The two of them go and hire a detective to investigate. The detective promises that he will solve this case. He says that, no matter what, he will continue with this case until it is solved. Both the husband and Julia's sister pay him a substantial sum of money. Having hired the detective, the husband goes home which, in the case of the book, is New Orleans. He continues to search for Julia, while going about his regular business.

Louis Durand visits houses of prostitution in New Orleans, searching for Julia. He finds many beautiful young women in these houses of prostitution, but none of them are Julia. More than one year later, while in Biloxi, Mississippi on business, he meets a man aged 46 who is raving about this fabulously beautiful girl aged 22 that he is about to marry. He tells Louis that he will not believe how beautiful this girl is. He even invites Louis to go on a double-date with his future wife and her friend.

When Louis Durand is approaching and can see her from a distance, he realizes that the wife-to-be of this man is none other than his Julia. Rather than approach her in public, he hides himself. He then sneaks into her hotel room and
hides behind a curtain, waiting for her there with a gun, planning to kill her when she arrives.

She arrives in her hotel room and is seated, taking off her jewelry. He approaches her from behind and puts his hands on her neck. She does not seem startled or surprised. It is almost as though she knows who this must be, as only one man would approach her like that, and that is Louis.

She turns around and they confront each other. She does not scream and run away as a woman in this situation normally would. Instead, she acknowledges that he is her husband and she recognizes that they got legally married, even though she used a false name. Finally, he shows her his gun and says that he is going to kill her. She removes most of her clothing and tells him to go ahead and shoot, saying that she accepts that as her fate.

He says that before he kills her, he wants to know the truth. Why did she do this? Did she ever really love him, or was she faking it? She tells him the story of her life. She was a foundling, a baby left on the steps of a church. She has no idea who her parents were, nor does she know when or where she was born. She was raised in a foundling home in the Philadelphia area. At age 15, she escaped from the foundling home with the help of the other girls who helped her climb the wall but were not brave enough to escape themselves. After that she worked as a petty thief, a washer woman and a seamstress. Finally she reached the Mississippi river where she fell in love with a riverboat gambler and hustler. They traveled up and down the Mississippi together, robbing the passengers or performing various scams. For example, her accomplice would play poker. She
would sit behind his opponents at the poker table where she could see the hands. If the opponent had a certain kind of hand, she would touch her necklace. If it was as different kind of hand, she would touch her finger ring.

She had met Julia Russell as a passenger on the riverboat. Julia had told her story. She was engaged to be married to a very wealthy man. Although he had pretended to be a common working man, Julia had researched him and had found out that he was very rich. After telling her all about this, they had both gone to their rooms. The next morning, her accomplice had woken her. The Real Julia Roberts had suffered a terrible accident. She had fallen off the river boat and drowned. Therefore, the accomplice had told her to go to Julia's room and occupy it and say from then on that she was the real Julia Russell. Meanwhile, the accomplice would remove her real belongings from the other room and, as many passengers were entering or leaving the boat, nobody would notice anything wrong.

While she was explaining all this to the husband, she was slowly removing her clothing. When a man is in trouble, he has his strength and his muscles to protect him. A woman does not have that, but instead she has her beauty. So, while telling him all this, she removed all of her clothing above her waist. Her husband was still standing before her with a gun in his hand, but he could see that he had before him a woman of outstanding beauty, with her fair skin, her ample breasts, her beautiful curly golden hair, and so he started remembering what had caused him to love her so much in the first place. While still not giving up the plan to kill her, he decided to have sexual intercourse with her first.
Now, Louis is compromised. He is involved. He cannot escape. So they must quickly leave together. They must go to some other place, far away, where nobody knows them. Now they are stuck together. She cannot leave him because he knows that she was involved in the presumed murder of the real Julia Russell and will inform the police. He also cannot leave her, for much the same reasons.

Everything seems OK. They spend months, possibly years like this, always moving from place to place, running and hiding. They must keep running, because she is so beautiful that she attracts attention. Because of his wealth, they always have money, so they have no need to work.

However, there is one person they have forgotten about in this equation: The Detective. Remember, He promised that once having started on this case, he will never quit. He will continue investigating this case until he has solved it.

One day, he finds Louis. Louis runs away and tries to evade him, but the Detective finds him again. The Detective says that it is no use to run. He has solved the case. He knows everything. He found the dead body of the real Julia Russell, washed up on the shore of the Mississippi River. She had no air in her lungs. This proves that she did not fall in the river and drown. Instead, she was murdered and then her dead body was dumped in the river. The Detective tells Louis that he has nothing to fear. He was not involved in the actual murder. He did not meet Bonnie until later. So, the detective is only going to arrest Bonnie and turn her over to the police. He is not going to bother Louis.

Louis does not want to lose Bonnie whom he now loves very much. So he tries to bribe the detective. He offers him first $20,000 and then $50,000 cash to
drop the case. But, the detective refuses to be bribed. He says that, no matter what, he must arrest Bonnie and turn her into the police. So, left with no other choice, the husband pulls out his gun and shoots and kills the detective.

Now, they are both murderers. Bonnie is implicated in the murder of the Real Julia Russell and Louis has killed the detective. They find a loose floor board in the house where they are staying and they bury the detective under the house. They are then being chased by the police and finally cornered, Louis saved Bonnie’s life by sacrificing his, and that is the moment where Bonnie realize she had love him so much yet she never realize it.