



Paul's
D'Marco

Leiland Dale

CRIME SCENE DO NOT CROSS

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By Leiland Dale

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DEDICATION

I would like to thank two very special close friends that have helped me during the writing of this book. Without you it wouldn't have been possible! Thank you for your support, encouragement and guidance.

~PROLOGUE~

~ M ~

For the last seven years, my every day routine has included working for the Sequim Police Department. Work, home, eat and sleep. Now it's affecting my marriage. Shelby and I have been spending less and less time together and when we *are* together we constantly argue over everything. According to her, *my* problem is that I don't make enough money. Well, the biggest problem is, she's a bitch with an outrageous spending habit.

Walking into the precinct with the newspaper under my arm and coffee in hand, it's the start of another day in my normal routine. I put my coffee and paper down and notice my name plate proudly on display, Officer Matt D'Marco. I sit at my desk while my fellow officers walk by and say their good mornings.

Leaning back in my chair, I can't help but think about last night.

As usual, I'm alone at home. Shelby's been out all night without even calling to let me know she won't be home. She didn't even bother making dinner. I remember her mentioning something about Shaun sleeping over at a friend's house.

I'm sitting on the couch watching TV when the front door opens and Shelby walks into the living room. She picks up the remote and turns off the TV before I can say a word.

She stands there, staring at me then snaps, "we need to talk". Now I'm pissed because of her tone. She walks around the coffee table and sits on the chair opposite me. Looks me straight in the eyes and says, "I've filed for a divorce."

"What?" I'm shocked. Sure, things haven't been great lately but a divorce is the last thing I expected.

"Matt, I haven't been happy in our marriage for a very long time. You're constantly working, we don't get to spend time together and most of the times, Shaun is already asleep in bed by the time you get home. I've had to ask my parents for money just so we can have food in the house. You know I've asked you several times to get another job that will pay better and give you more time to spend with your son." She's pissed and annoyed.

My anger begins to boil. Now I'm fucking pissed.

"Well if you would spend less money on things you don't need then we might have more money for food!" I could feel my temper rising by the minute. "And I spend a lot more time with my son than I do with you seeing that you're always off doing God knows what! You know I love my job. I've told you that over and over again. I've taken more time off so we can spend more time together. I've even applied for a promotion that will give me more time with my family. Obviously, none of it means anything to you! I've worked my ass off to support you for years!"

"Oh well, I thought I'd at least tell you. Shaun and I will be staying with my parents in Port Angeles until I can find a place for us to stay."

"Well, at least that's a fucking relief. At least if I get this promotion I'll still be able to see my son." Getting up from the couch and walking out of the living room, I slammed the bedroom door behind me.

"D'Marco!"

I get up from my desk, walk into the captain's office and sit in one of the leather chairs. The captain sits behind his desk and hands me a white envelope. *Great, now what?*

"Congratulations son." The captain looks at me with a huge smile on his face.

Taking the envelope from him, I immediately notice it's labeled as internal correspondence. I rip open the envelope and unfold the letter. I got it. I got the promotion. I know I should be ecstatic about being promoted but after reliving last night's conversation, I just don't get the thrill. I look over at the captain and summon up my best attempt at a smile. Or at least something close to it.

"Thank you, sir." This is something I have always wanted. I should be jumping for joy but my marriage has fallen apart, Shelby and Shaun are moving out today and there's nothing I can do about it.

We both get up from our chairs. The captain walks around his desk and slaps me on the back. "The Port Angeles Police Department is expecting you a week after next. Good luck and again, congratulations." The captain shakes my hand.

Walking out of the office and back to my desk, fellow officers approach me and congratulate me on my promotion. Everything is going to change now. New job, empty house, and now a divorce. So much for the fucking routine.

~CHAPTER 1~

~ M ~

I've been working at the Port Angeles PD for the past two weeks and still feel like an outsider. Weird looks, cold shoulders, even one guy looking at me like I'm yesterday's trash. What a difference from the Sequim PD.

"Petersen...D'Marco," Captain Steve Bougard calls from his office door. The captain, in his late thirties, is a force to be reckoned with. He just doesn't take shit from anyone. *Gotta respect that.*

As we walk into the captain's office, he motions for us to each take a seat.

"D'Marco, I have a case for you. I'm assigning Petersen here to assist you." The captain looks at us with apprehension. "We just got a call from the superintendent over at Lexington Heights. He was showing some prospective tenants an empty apartment when he came across a body covered in blood. Police officers are on the scene already." The captain hands us the case file with a note attached to the front. "The description of the body matches that of a kid who was reported missing over a week ago. All the information you'll need about the Missing Report is in that file. The note on the front is the address to the crime scene." The captain gives us one of his intense looks. "Let's catch this perp quick. And, by the way, I want you to play this case close to the chest. Keep it quiet. Ok?"

"Got it, sir," we both respond as we walk out of the office.

"Are we taking your car or mine?" Petersen asks.

"We can take yours. Next time it's on me." I give Petersen a friendly slap on the back and follow him out to his car.

Getting into the passenger seat and buckling up, I open the file and start perusing it. I take the photo of the kid out of the file and began memorizing the boy's features. He has bright blue piercing eyes, short curly blonde hair and looks roughly about 9 or 10 years old.

"All the leads in this file came back empty." I said looking over at Petersen. "The kid was playing in the park, the nanny turned her back for a couple of minutes and when she looked again, the kid was gone. There were no other witnesses. According to the nanny there were only one or two other people around."

"Well, let's hope we find something at the crime scene." Petersen says as he pulls up to the apartment complex.

~ M ~

Entering the apartment, we see two police officers standing in the living room. I immediately recognize Tomás Salis and his partner Thompson, the weird guys. They

don't work late or come in early, but always seem to be the first one on site and have all the details. *How the hell do they do that?!*

Salis comes over to give us the rundown. "Hey guys. Well, let's see." Looking down at his writing pad, "this apartment has been vacant for a while now. The superintendent brought a couple up to show them the apartment and when they entered the bedroom they found the body. We've checked the lock on the door but it doesn't look like it's been tampered with. The forensics team tried to get prints from the door handle but it looks like it's been wiped clean."

Salis leads us into the bedroom where the body is located. The young boy is lying on the carpet in a pool of blood. *How can someone do this to a child?*

"We found this though." Salis holds up a knife in an evidence bag. "They checked it for prints too but....nothing. Clean as a whistle."

I look down at the body and recall the photo from the file. He's the same boy from the missing child photo. Taking care to not tamper with the crime scene, Petersen and I put on our gloves and move closer to the body to investigate. The boy's throat is slit from side to side. We step away from the body and I look around the empty room. There doesn't seem to be anything out of place. The only disturbance is the dead boy in the middle of the room. And his body looks as if it was placed in the center of the room after he died. No struggle, no disturbance, nothing that might leave a clue or lead.

I turn to Petersen and give him the "Missing Person" case file. "It's the same boy." I feel sick to my stomach knowing someone did this to a child. The coroner, Lacey Saunders, arrives with a gurney and zipper bag for the boy's body.

"We'll need to inform the parents." Petersen says, moving to stand next to me.

Turning away from the body, I walk over to Salis. "Make sure we have any witness statements and the coroner's report as soon as possible." I look over at Petersen and signal him with a head motion to come with me. I need to get out of here before I get sick.

It's as if Petersen and I are on the same wavelength. We both head out of the apartment complex and don't say a word until we get to his car. Petersen looks at me and we both say, in tandem, "let's inform the parents." We smile at each other. *Funny how we know what each other is thinking.* Ironically, this is the first time since arriving on the new job where I don't feel like an outsider.

~CHAPTER 2~

~ M ~

For the next couple of days, Petersen and I have been arriving to work early and leaving late following up on leads. Here we are, a week later and still, we have nothing.

As I'm going over the case file, my ringing phone interrupts me.

"D'Marco," I answer.

"There's been another murder," the captain says.

Crap. Another one. I jot down the information he gives me, then hang up the phone. I start rubbing my eyes hoping to wake up from this nightmare. Petersen walks over and just stands there, staring at me. I can feel his eyes on me. I stop trying to rub my eyes out and look up at him. We just look at each other and he finally asks, "another one?"

"Yeah," I reply, exhausted and the day has just begun. "Let's go," I say as I grab my coat and we make our way out of the station.

~ M ~

Arriving at the scene, everything is in total chaos. People cluster together everywhere and police officers are trying to keep spectators at bay. I'm tired and

annoyed. The day's already gotten worse and it's not even 9am. As soon as we identify ourselves, the police officers point us towards the alley nearing the end of the street.

Reaching the end of the road, we can see the row of dirty dumpsters framing the alley between the warehouse buildings. Beer bottles, wrappers and general trash are scattered everywhere. It's easy to imagine the late night hooker or drug dealer trying to make a score in the middle of the night down this passage. I can already feel my stomach rolling. This is the part of the job I hate the most, especially when kids are involved.

Working our way down the alley, I see police officers and the coroner standing at the far end. As we approach the crime scene, I can see the body is lying between two of the dumpsters. To the left of the body, I recognize the two police officers standing nearby.

"Hey!! D'Marco. Late night?" Salis asks as he nudges his partner, Thompson, standing off to the side. Shaking hands with Salis, I'm always surprised by the man's grip and the power he exudes. He's sharp, into details, and always on top of everything by the time we get to a scene. *Why isn't he a detective?*

"Nah. Just this case getting to me a bit. Kids you know." I force myself to look at the body, then turn away to look at the surroundings. Again, it looks as if the body is placed nicely in the location. No force. Dumpsters perfectly lined. Nothing looks out of

place in this shithole alley. Even the garbage doesn't look cleaned up or stained with blood. Nothing. "Did you get to the scene first?" I ask.

"Yeah. The man with the baseball cap and red t-shirt, over there, came out the back door of this warehouse," Salis says as he points to the warehouse door on the right. "He immediately noticed the kid's legs and shoes sticking out between the dumpster. He went back inside and called the precinct."

"Were there any witnesses?" I turn and look to the sides and up along the warehouse building walls scanning the alley. *No security cameras.* I have this nagging feeling I'm missing something vital but can't put my finger on it.

"No. It looks like the body's been here for a couple of hours before he was found. We found his backpack further down towards the end of the alley. His name," pointing towards the body, "is Trevor Dwight, 9 years old and attends Bright Elementary. He was reported missing 4 days ago," Salis says as he turns back to face me after reciting the details. "When I'm done here I'll go inform the parents."

"Thanks," I turn back looking down at the body of the little boy. Blonde hair, blue eyes, clothes intact. My stomach is turning. Two cases, two boys, both with blonde hair, both with blue eyes, and both around 9 years old. Both bodies obviously placed nicely on the floor after being killed. The victims both share the same physical characteristics. *A serial child killer.* I start to feel lightheaded. Shit. I quickly turn away from the scene and try to race to a nearby dumpster far enough away from the crew. I

pop the lid of one of the dumpsters and empty my stomach. *Great. Can this day get any worse?* I haven't even had my second cup of coffee yet and there goes my breakfast!

I lean against the dumpster while I try to get my shit back together. The cold metal actually helps me gain my focus again. Turning around, I see the coroner loading the boy's body onto a stretcher already in a black bag. Did you find anything?" I ask, hoping someone can see something I know I'm missing that's nagging the hell out of me.

"There's nothing consequential on the outside. No cuts or bruises. He's been dead for approximately 7 or 8 hours. The cause of death looks like asphyxia but I'll only be able to confirm that once I'm back at the morgue. You'll have my report on your desk as soon as possible, detective," she answers.

Looking in and around the dumpster for anything of importance is a lost cause. There is nothing left behind that gives any indication to who the perp is or why he's killing these kids. Frustrated, I slam the lid shut on the dumpster startling one of the nearby POs. I need to get out of here so I look for Petersen. I guess he must have seen me looking for him because he's right there by me within seconds as if I've got a GPS on my ass. Finally out of the alley, we make our way towards my car and notice the captain has arrived on the scene. He spots us and signals us to come over.

"Anything?" he asks.

"Nothing. One thing that is bothering me is this guy knows what he's doing. He's careful as hell and never leaves any evidence behind. Hopefully the coroner will have better news by the time we get back to the precinct." I'm frustrated. My lips begin to curl in anger and I feel like punching something. My knuckles begin to turn white.

"Let me know when you've got something", he says as Petersen and I get into my car.

I finally let out a deep breath, relax my fists, and climbed into the car. The moment I shut my car door, my cell phone rings. Looking at the caller ID, I just want to slam it against the dashboard. I didn't think it was possible, but now I'm feeling worse than I did back at the dumpster. *Why can't this bitch just leave me alone!!!* I flip open the phone and try to control my rage as much as possible. "I don't have the time for this right now Shelby. I'm at work and you know I can't talk. I'll call you back."

"I've heard *that* before. You need to call me otherwise you'll speak to my attorney," she snaps.

Rather than respond, I just close the phone and turn on the car. Petersen just stares at me. "What?!" I bark out at him.

"Ex's are a bitch. Had one of those once," he says calmly.

I just look at him and can't help but laugh. "Yeah, you can say that again."

"Bitch."

We look at each other and just start laughing. We start the drive back to the precinct to try and see if we can figure out what we're missing so we can catch this killer.

~CHAPTER 3~

~ M ~

In the past week Petersen and I have worked extra long hours. Arriving early in the morning and leaving late at night working every possible angle, investigating every tip however small, and even reviewing old open case files to find any possible relation to other serial kills. Nothing.

I arrive at the precinct Monday morning with my coffee in one hand and my newspaper under my arm hoping today will be different. I hope for something, anything for a break in the case. Four weeks on the job and I feel useless.

As I approach my desk I see the coroner's report waiting for me. I immediately put down my coffee and paper and start skimming the file.

"...Using gas chromatography and mass spectrometry, four different antipsychotic drugs were identified in the whole blood and tissues in the following quantities: (a) perphenazine = 0.69; (b) chlorpromazine = 1.91; (c) promethazine = 1.23

The cause and manner of death are attributed to toxic levels of the above listed medications resulting in blood accumulating in the airway leading to asphyxia and death."

"Shit!"

"What is it Matt?" Petersen asks as he starts to read over my shoulder.

I point to the results of the toxicology report. As Petersen finishes scanning the same text he looks over to me, "I think we may have our first lead," he says with a half smile.

"Hell, yeah! At least we've got something to go on. Now we've got to get a list of names of people who have filled this drug lists in the last 6 months and see if anything comes up." I get this stupid grin across my face and Petersen just smiles and slaps me on the back. I turn to my desk phone and start making a call when the front page headlines catches my attention: *"THE PHANTOM STRIKES AGAIN!!"*

"Crap." I dart up from my desk and head to Captain Bougard's office. With a brief loud knock I enter the office without waiting for permission. The captain looks at me with a scowl on his face.

"D'Marco, what's the problem? I don't have the time to deal with bullshit today."

"I think we have a problem," I sigh as I drop the newspaper on his desk. He turns his attention to the newspaper and reads the front page news. "It looks like we might have a leak in the department. There's information there that hasn't been released to the press."

"This is all that we need right now. Goddammit," he leans his elbows on the desk, with his face in his hands. "We've been going around in circles with this case from

the beginning. Every lead we get turns to shit." his frustration showing on his face and looking grimmer by the moment. "Get Petersen in here."

Sticking my head out of the office door I call Petersen to the office. "Petersen, office."

A moment later, Petersen enters Bougard's office and closes the door behind him taking a seat on the far side of the room. I look over at Petersen and can tell he's immediately on edge.

"Is this about the coroner's report?" Petersen asks.

"What about the report?" Bougard asks as he lifts his head out of his hands.

I stop pacing. "We think we may have a lead in the case. The coroner's report shows several antipsychotic drugs were found in the second boy's body. It resulted in asphyxia which was the cause of death. So we figured we'd start by tracking down people who may have filled prescriptions for those drug mixes in the last 6 months."

"That's going to take a while and now with this other news, I don't want to take any chances," the captain says.

"What are you guys talking about - what other news?" Petersen asks.

"Looks like the newspapers have somehow gotten hold of information about the murders and have given them a nickname. Guys, what have you got on this so far?"

"There's nothing that stands out with either case other than the toxicology report we received this morning. We've re-interviewed all the witnesses and gone over the evidence multiple times. The links between the two cases are the physical traits found in both boys, the way their bodies are cleanly placed, and the lack of evidence on the scene." I answer straight away.

"All the leads we got ended with nothing. It's like the trail went cold." Petersen interjects. "We're hoping the information we received this morning will help give us some leads."

I walk over to the window and look out onto the street. I can see people going about their daily lives as if all is normal. But out there, somewhere, is a person kidnapping children, killing them and dumping their bodies in the most unlikely places for someone to casually find.

Bougard puts his coffee cup down and leans back in his chair. Just as he begins to say something, the phone on his desk starts to ring.

"Bougard," he answers.

Turning away from the window, I intently listen to the one sided conversation. I begin to worry as I see the captain's face ashen further by the minute.

"We'll be right there." Hanging up the phone Bougard looks over at me with frustration on his face. "We have another murder. From the description the officer gave of the victim, the MO fits the two you guys have been working on."

~CHAPTER 4~

~ P ~

Being Paul Whittington is not easy.

Wednesday morning and I wake with another splitting headache. Being bombarded with dreams and constantly waking during the night leaves me exhausted and irritated. And this all has to happen today, of all days, when I'm fully booked with clients.

Going downstairs into the kitchen, I start my morning gourmet coffee. The aromatherapy of hazelnut works wonders on a spitting headache. Walking out towards the back deck, I glance over at the clock on the living room wall, "10:30 am". My first client is due to arrive in thirty minutes. Standing out on the back deck, I love admiring the view of the lake, shining almost silver in the light casting off it. The tall trees surround the property like a forest. I can hear the call of the birds deep within the trees. Their colors so magnificent like a rainbow when the sun's rays hit them. The flowers in the backyard bloom with bright colors everywhere. No neighbors close by for miles to disturb this peace. The smell of hazelnut begins to fill the air. *This is heaven.*

The loneliness begins to envelope me. Days like this, I wish I had someone to share it all with. Unfortunately, life has never been easy for me. I knew as a child, at the age of thirteen, that I was gay. If that was all, I would have been fine and I would have been partially happy, at least. But it just never works out. I have no control over my

visions. My partners fear me because of what I see so they usually leave me because they're scared. I want a partner who can love me and accept me for both who and *what* I am. I've come to accept that I just may be asking for too much. The thought of having a lover and partner, a white picket fence, a dog and two and half kids always makes my heart ache. Especially knowing it may never happen.

The ringing of the phone interrupts my thoughts. Walking back inside, I pick up the phone on the kitchen wall. "Hello, Paul Whittington speaking," I answer.

"Hi Paul. It's Steve."

"Hi Steve. How are you doing?" I immediately become apprehensive.

"I'm doing well, under the circumstances. How's life out there over yonder?" I could hear the hesitation in his voice.

I begin to wonder about the purpose of his call. "It's really beautiful. Nice and quiet. I love it here. But Steve, we both know that's not why you called. What is it?" I boldly ask.

"Hey!! Can't I call my brother-in-law just to say 'Hi'?" He sounds anxious and skeptical. "Although...I do have another reason for calling," he adds.

"*Spit it out already!!*" I say in frustration. I am not in the mood to play twenty questions or chit-chat.

"Well, you see, we have this case we're working on.....and um.....we're not getting anywhere with it. We've hit a dead end. We've got one possible lead but it's taking too long to get a result and we really need to start making some headway. You know I'm not into all the ghosts or spirits or whatever you want to call them, but right now I'll take anything I can get. Please. I need your help. I wouldn't have called to ask if it wasn't important. Please," he sighs.

"Well, I'm fully booked for the next couple of days. I can most probably come out there next week some time." I say as I hear the beep of the fax machine behind me. Walking over to see the fax that arrives, I see the pictures of three little boys with blonde hair and blue eyes. I gasp.

"Paul, I need you here now. This is really important. I just faxed you something. Please."

"You knew I couldn't say no after seeing those pictures. What's the story with them?" I ask, defeated.

I swear I can hear the smile of triumph in his voice. "They were kidnapped and killed with no evidence left at the crime scene or any witnesses."

"Okay. I'll be there. You know I could never turn my back when kids are involved," I answer.

"I'll make the arrangements for your flight and email the details to you. I really appreciate this, Paul." He still sounds skeptic but relieved.

"Fine. Let me know." I hang up the phone, head to my office and begin rescheduling my client appointments.

~CHAPTER 5~

~ P ~

Walking into the terminal of the tiny airport, I don't get that feeling of coming home. Yes, this is my hometown, but it's just too much. Tired of people unable to decide if they want to approach me or avoid me, I left for the preferred isolation of Forks a year or two ago. I find people either avoid me because they're homophobic or approach me because they're curious to find out if a deceased relative has a message for them.

All the hustle and bustle of the airport reminds me why I left in the first place. Dealing with the residents of the town is difficult enough but still having to deal with spirits of the dearly departed on top of that, is just too much. The crowds are probably the most difficult with so many spirits so close together. It always feels like they are screaming at the top of their lungs directly in my ear.

Collecting my luggage at the carousel I keep an eye out for the police officer my brother-in-law has sent to pick me up. This is just what I need, a babysitter with a badge.

As I step out to the front of the terminal, a police car pulls up to the curb. I wait patiently for the police officer to get out of his car but I'm slowly becoming irate with the spirits talking in my ear.

When the officer steps out of the car and turns to face me, I let out an audible gasp. Never in my life have I ever seen a man this big. A commanding six foot four god towers over me. Muscles like huge irons bars, shoulders wide enough to hinder him from entering a doorway easily. Short light brown tousled hair and those eye.....those brown puppy dog eyes. This was definitely the most beautiful man I have ever seen. I can't take my eyes off the gorgeous Adonis approaching me. Without realizing it at first, I lick my lips. I can't move. I stand there, staring, unable to speak.

"Hi. Are you Paul Whittington?" The officer holds out his hand as he approaches me.

"Umm...Yes," I stammer. I braced myself, knowing I will have a vision the moment we touch. I reach out and shake his hand. Nothing happens. Confused, I pull my hand back. This has never happened to me before.

"The captain sent me to pick you up and bring you to the station before you get settled." The gravelly voice was giving me goose bumps. Still at a loss for words, I quickly divert my gaze to my luggage. I can't believe the instant desire I feel when our eyes first connect. I can still feel the trembling of my knees as I try to bring myself under control and shake off the desire surging within me.

"Let's get your stuff loaded in the back so we can head to the station. The captain wants to speak to you." I hear the officer mumble something under his breath as he gets into the car but I can't make out a thing he says.

I turn to the officer. "Are you always this rude, officer? Or is it just part of your charm?"

"Listen, my name is *Detective* D'Marco not *officer*. And just so that we understand each other, I'll make it clear and simple. I don't believe in the hocus pocus you do and honestly I don't give a shit. Stay out of my way and I'll stay out of yours. I have a case to solve and having you hanging around is just giving me more work than I already have. I don't have the time to be anyone's babysitter," he answers rudely as he pulls away from the curb.

I sit staring at the detective in shocked silence. *My God*. Detective D'Marco is probably the most insufferable and uncouthly person I have ever met. He might be a breathtakingly beautiful Adonis, but still an insufferable ass.

It looks like my life has just become a bit more complicated.

~ M ~

The silence in the car is a welcome reprieve from the chaotic thoughts going around in my head. *What the fuck just happened?* The moment I get out of the car and see Paul standing at the curb, I'm overwhelmed with lust like I haven't experienced since I was a teenager. *What the hell?*

Paul, with the long brown hair with red and blonde streaks falling just below his shoulders, the greenest eyes and the most luscious lips I've ever seen on any human being literally makes my knees weak. Remembering Paul bend over, throwing his suitcase in the back of the car has my cock hard in seconds. The five foot seven man sitting next to me in the confined space inside the car is much more impressive than the picture the captain showed me earlier. Much more beautiful than any woman I've ever dated, *including* my ex-wife.

Never in my life have I thought of a *man* as beautiful.

What the fuck is happening to me? I'm shocked. I divert my attention back to the road trying to get the uneasiness in my stomach and the hardness of my cock to subside.

"So, are you one of the detectives working on this case?" he asks, interrupting the awkward silence and my uncomfortable thoughts.

"Yes. This is a very delicate case and it looks like there might be a leak somewhere in the department. Since the article hit the front page news a couple of days ago, Petersen and I, and now you, are the only ones assigned to this case. We're keeping a tight leash on it." I say as I try to keep my attention off the beauty occupying the passenger seat. *What?!? I just thought of a man as a beauty!* I try to keep my eyes and mind on the road.

Catching movement out the corner of my eye, I turn my head and glance over at Paul and see him looking out the side window trying to discreetly wipe a stray tear from his cheek. I have the intense urge to pull the car over and hold the man in my arms to soothe him. Turning my attention back to the road ahead I wonder what has upset him to bring tears and the sad look to those beautiful eyes.

After a moment of silence I hear him shift in his seat and I can feel his eyes watching me, intently.

"Well, I'll help where I can. I can't promise that I'll be able to give you any information. We'll need to see where it goes," he says. I grip the steering wheel tighter, and my knuckles begin to turn white. The urge to reach out a hand to clasp the one on Paul's lap is overwhelming. I don't understand what is happening to me. I've never felt this way.

My thoughts go back to the latest crime scene, seeing the bodies of the blonde haired boys bring back an uneasy feeling in the pit of my stomach.

"Yeah, we'll see." I grunt. "We'll be at the precinct soon."

Focusing on the road again, not another word is spoken. I struggle with my thoughts and try to understand why I feel this way and where these feelings are coming from. This is new and I feel shaken. This is far from anything I've ever felt in my life. *Why do I feel this attraction to another man?* It doesn't make any sense to me. These thoughts begin to cross my mind at a million miles per hour.

Out of the corner of my eye, I can see he's still lost in thought, looking out the window. I'd give anything to know what he's thinking about right now.

~CHAPTER 6~

~ M ~

Arriving at the station just after four in the afternoon, I walk directly to the captain's office with Paul trailing behind me. Catching Petersen's gaze, I incline my head towards the captain's office signaling him to follow us.

"Come in," the captain responds to my knock.

I walk in and take a seat in the chair closest to the window. Paul enters with Petersen closely following behind. "Hi Paul," the captain says and he immediately rises from his seat and shakes hands with Paul while giving him a warm smile. They seem oddly familiar with each other. *What the hell is that all about?*

The captain looks at Petersen and I, "Paul is my wife's brother and should be treated with the utmost respect." The captain returns his attention back to Paul, "I'm glad you came on such short notice and thanks for doing this for me. Anything you can do to help would really be appreciated." The captain's hands were fidgeting by his sides. He's obviously a skeptic just like me. I looked over at Petersen with a smirk on my face.

"I'll do what I can but I can't promise anything." Paul looks at me with an ireful look in his eyes. The captain turns his gaze on me scrutinizing me with a frown.

"So what is it exactly that you do?" Petersen asks crossing his arms while leaning against the wall watching Paul with skepticism.

Paul decides to take a seat in the chair next to me. "I don't know how much Steve....umm...Captain Bougard told you about me. I'm what they call a psychic and medium." Paul's eyes jump from the captain back to Petersen. "Normally, when I touch something or touch someone, I get visions of the person. When I say visions the best I can explain it is to say it's like watching a movie playing behind my eyelids. When it's a physical item of a person I'm touching, it all depends on the strength of the connection that person has to the item. The stronger the connection, the better the chances are that I can actually get a 'vision' from it," he answers without hesitation. He obviously believes what he's saying or has delivered this same speech to everyone who asks.

Leaning forward, with my elbows on my knees, I clasp my hands together and grunt.

Paul slowly turns his intense gaze at me. Yeah, he's pissed. *Damn, did I do that out loud?* "Sorry. Please, go on."

Paul clears his throat and continues. "I can also communicate with the dead. Sometimes, there are spirits still around of people who have passed over. Usually, they have some unfinished business or just want to communicate with a family member or a friend," he says looking wearier by the moment.

~ P ~

Looking at the three people staring back at me with uneasiness and disbelief in their eyes, I can't help but wonder what the heck possessed me to come back to this town.

"I know you don't believe in psychics and mediums," I retort, looking each man in the eye "but I'm not asking you to believe it. Let me do what I do and maybe I can get something that will lead to you to this guy. So far, you don't have anything to go by. No physical evidence was found at the crime scene or anything. Right now anything that could be done is better than nothing." Steve looks at me and nods. Petersen and D'Marco still look skeptic, but the resigned look on their faces indicate they're willing to give me a chance.

"You're right, anything is better than nothing at all. We'll still need physical evidence to catch this guy. So far he's been very slick to not leave anything behind. And, to be honest, following up on the antipsychotic drugs is taking longer than we anticipated," D'Marco answers, sounding defeated.

"Well, I think for now there isn't much more that we can do. I suggest you go home, get a good night's rest and we can get back to it with fresh minds in the morning. Paul, I know you don't like staying in hotels and as you know Tracy and I don't have any spare room at our place," Steve looks at me hesitantly, casting a glance between

D'Marco and myself. I immediately start feeling apprehensive hearing D'Marco shifting in his chair but I try to stay focused on Steve. "So, you'll be staying with D'Marco."

"What?!" D'Marco rises from his chair like a rocket. "Sir, I'm sure there's somewhere else he can stay that would be more...comfortable."

"No." I snarl at Steve, barely containing my displeasure. "I'm sure you can arrange for me to use one of the safe houses for a while. You know I don't like to be around people very much, especially living with anyone." I say, punctuating my last word directly at D'Marco.

"Paul, you know I can't do that. That will compromise the safe house location. Besides, you're now part of this investigation. You'll need protection and staying with D'Marco will give you that, especially if there's a leak in the department. It will give you more time to go over the case and allow you to do your thing without being interrupted," Steve says exasperatedly.

Getting up from the chair abruptly, I push the chair back, turn around and storm out the office. D'Marco catches the chair in time before it topples to the ground.

I make my way outside of the police station. I take steady breaths trying to calm my nerves and temper. The heavenly male scent wafting from the detective as he sat next to me in Steve's office just makes everything more difficult. I'm nervous, upset and consumed with lust. I'm barely able to keep my hands to myself and now I need to share the detective's home? Just when I thought things couldn't get any worse.

Looking over my shoulder I notice the detective is approaching. *God, he's gorgeous! How am I going to be able to keep my hands off him?*

~ M ~

Walking out of the captain's office, I see Paul through the front door, standing outside the station. *What the hell is he doing?* With his eyes closed and breathing heavy, I don't know if he's going to pass out or is attempting to do some yoga shit. *Man, why do I have to be stuck with an insufferable spoiled brat?* As if my ex-wife wasn't enough.

Before heading out the door, I grab the two boxes of files containing all the case information and witness reports. "Come on. Let's go get you settled in," I grumble as I pass Paul on the way to my car.

"I'm sorry for being such an ass in there, detective. I just don't like having people around me much. It can all get a bit much at times," he wearily sighs.

Storing the boxes in the trunk of the car, I turn back to face Paul. "Look, we obviously didn't get off on the right foot. Yes, I don't believe in psychics and mediums but at this stage, beggars can't be choosers. I'm not saying that you've convinced me that what you do is real, but I'm willing to give it a shot," I say as I attempt a subtle smile. "We'll be living together under the same roof for a while so we'll make the best of it. At least it will give us the time to go over some things about the case and maybe

you can see what you can come up with. And let's drop the formalities. My name's Matt."

Paul smiles at me, a dimple appearing on his right cheek. My breath catches in my throat. It feels like all the blood drains from my brain and ends up in my pants. My cock's instantly hard and aching with need. The urge to grab him and kiss him senseless is overwhelming. *I don't know what the hell was wrong with me.* I don't understand the undeniable attraction I feel for this *man*. *I'm straight.*

"That sounds good...Matt. You can call me Paul. I'll try not to get in your way. I don't want to be a burden to you," he says rather quietly.

The sound of my name coming from his mouth makes my knees weak. I hold onto the trunk for a moment to steady myself before closing it. I try breathing deeply to calm my raging libido. I finally get into the car and clip my seat belt in place. Looking out of the corner of my eye I notice him doing the same before I turn the key. My hands are clammy from sweat. *Dammit, get yourself under control D'Marco. What the fuck is wrong with you?*

Backing the car out of the parking lot, my cell phone rings. Looking at the caller ID I instantly recognize the number and I can't fight the first thought that comes to mind.

Bitch.

~ P ~

I look over at Matt with his cell phone ringing wondering why he doesn't answer. I can clearly see a look of disgust cross his face as he finally answers the phone. "Hello Shelby," he answers with obvious discontent. Matt looks over to me and mouths "I'm sorry" while he continues to hear the female squawking sound from his phone. "I said I'd call you as soon as I can. I'm at work. What's the problem?" He asks as he rolls his eye and shakes his head. *Who the heck is Shelby and why is he so upset?*

Matt hits the steering wheel so hard I jump in my seat. "We have an appointment with the attorneys in ten days. I know there are things that need to be settled. That's why we're meeting with the attorney. I don't know why you continue to harass me while I'm at work. I don't have the time for this Shelby." Matt's anger is clearly evident in his voice. *Why is this Shelby person harassing Matt?*

I look over at Matt with concern. He shrugs his shoulders and turns his attention back to the road and the conversation.

"Well, I'm sorry. No, I'll see you at the attorney's office." He slams his phone shut and turns to look at me for a moment.

"I'm sorry about that," he says quickly before returning his attention to the road.

Watching his hands on the gear lever I can't help but imagine what it would feel like to have those hands touching my body. To feel those fingers playing with my nipples, tweaking them to hard nubs. My cock is instantly hard. I shift in my seat and

turn my head to look out the side window trying, in vain, to stop my raging libido from getting out of control.

How can I possibly stay under the same roof with this man when I'm totally out of control and hard as a rock just sitting next to him?

~CHAPTER 7~

~ P ~

We finally pull into the driveway in front of a double garage of the most beautiful house I've ever seen. Staring wide eyed at the house, with my mouth hanging open, I didn't notice Matt already climb out of the vehicle and was waiting for me at the bottom of the steps leading to the front door.

The two-level rustic brick exterior house has decorative window with shutters and intricate carvings on the cornices. The colors and details were breathtaking.

Pulling myself together I get out of the car and head towards the walk way to the bottom of the steps where Matt is waiting for me.

"Wow. This place is beautiful." I say with total awe in my voice.

"Thank you." A red tint creeps into Matt's cheeks as he quickly looks away and walks up the stairs. Standing there in silence, while he unlocks the door, I can't help but admire Matt's ass. The jeans he wears fit his molded ass to perfection, making me want to grab his globes with both hands.

"Come on in. Make yourself at home." Matt says in a soft welcoming tone.

Walking into the house and looking around I notice the stairway leading up to the second floor. Next to the bottom of the stairs is an open archway leading into the

dining room. The archway on the right leads into an open kitchen with an island facing the living room.

Walking into the kitchen Matt asks, "do you want something to drink? I don't have very much in the way of food. I wasn't expecting company. I haven't gotten around to doing grocery shopping yet. How about we order a pizza?"

"Sure," I respond as I continue to observe the living room. The fireplace is beautifully centered with a TV credenza to the left, and floor to ceiling sliding door leading out to the back yard on the right. Lining the top of the mantel are several photo frames. "Beer would be good, if you have some. It's been a long day."

I sit on the couch facing the fireplace and begin taking off my shoes. "Ordering pizza is a great idea. After a day like today, I don't think either of us is in the mood to cook." Leaning back on the couch I casually turn my head and watch Matt walking towards me from the kitchen with two beers in hand. His gait is completely predatory and pure male. Wanting to be taken by this man overpowers me. *Why can't I control this desire?*

Taking the beer from Matt, our fingers brush for a moment. Looking up, my eyes riveted to Matt's. Time stands still and we're both unable to move.

~ M ~

Staring down into Paul's green eyes, I am totally mesmerized and unable to move. Our fingers barely touch and I want more. I reach down and cup his cheek with my empty hand. I caress his lips with my thumb. My cock instantly strains against my jeans wanting to spring out.

The backfire of a car outside breaks the sexual tension between us. His cheeks turn a beautiful shade of red making me moan under my breath. I quickly pull back my hand. I clear my throat and turn away heading back into the kitchen. "What would you like on your pizza?"

"Umm...pepperoni with extra cheese," he answers.

I don't understand where this sexual tension is coming from. I've been with woman all my life and have never had any interest in men. I've had my share of one night stands but I've never experienced this level of lust in my life.

I try to remember what the hell I'm doing here standing in the kitchen like an idiot. *Oh yeah, pizza.* I pick up the phone and place the order for delivery.

"Pizza should be here in about forty minutes," I yell out as soon as I get off the phone. Looking into the living room I see Paul looking at the photos on the mantel.

"Cool. Thank you," he says and he turns to me. "May I?" he asks as he points to the pictures.

Moving closer, I nod as I watch him with interest. Paul closes his eyes as he holds a picture of Shaun and I playing in the park. A few minutes of silence pass when Paul finally opens his eyes. Turning his face to me Paul looks directly into my eyes. "This is your son." A fleeting look of confusion passes over his face before it disappears.

"Yes." *How the hell did he know that?!* The only physical traits I share with my son are dimples. All his other traits and coloring match those of Shelby.

He closes his eyes again and holds the picture frame close to his chest. A few minutes pass then Paul opens his eyes again and lets out an audible gasp.

"Why did you gasp like that? Did you..umm...*see* something?" I ask then realize a little too late how cynical I sound.

He just looks at me with this weird expression. As if... a deep sadness but it's not. I don't know what it is and now I'm freaking out. "What..what is it?!?" I ask frantically as I grab him by the shoulders and shake his smaller frame.

I see his eyes begin to well up with tears. "I...I just felt how much you loved him," he says. "I didn't know it could feel like that?" he says in a barely audible tone.

The ringing of the doorbell kills the moment. I realize I'm still holding Paul shoulders. "Sorry. I didn't meant to...uh...did I hurt you?" I ask releasing my hold on him.

"No. It would take a lot more than a little grabbing and shaking to hurt me," he says then turns a fiery shade of red.

Is he flirting with me?! "Good to know," I respond without hesitating. Wait a minute, am I flirting back. What the fuck?

The doorbell rings again breaking the spell. Turning around, I go to the kitchen counter, grab my wallet and head for the door.

Fucking pizza better taste like it came straight from Italy, dammit.

~ P ~

Returning the photo to the mantel, I sit back on the couch and wait for Matt to return with the pizza as I replay what just happened.

His touch is so gentle and tender at first. I can still feel his thumb rubbing my lips. Just the memory of his soft touch makes my cock twitch in my jeans. Then I remember how he grabs my shoulders, firmly. Not rough, just...held tight. I scared him. I can't believe I did that. Damn. It's no wonder they all leave and can't handle what I am. I throw my head back and close my eyes for a moment. *Why did I have to see how much he can love someone?*

Matt places the pizza box on the coffee table and flips it open as he sits on the far end of the couch. "Have some while it's still hot," he says. "I hope you don't mind I added some pineapples too."

I look over at him and smile. "It's my favorite. Thank you."

We sit for a while drinking our beers and eating pizza while the TV rattles off the local news. Breaking the silence, I finally ask, "so, the phone call you got earlier in the car, was that your wife?" Looking over at him I see his back stiffen and his shoulders become ridged.

"My ex-wife actually. We got divorced about a month ago. We're still working out visitation rights so I can see Shaun. Right now, with my work hours so hectic, I visit him on my off days which aren't too often lately." Matt sounded so dejected I just want to take him in my arms and comfort him.

We sit in silence for the next hour just watching TV and keeping each other company.

"Well, today's been a rather long day. I think I'm going to turn in for the night," I say rising from the couch while a yawn escapes me.

Matt stretches out on the couch and yawns. "The first bedroom on the left is the guest room. The door after that is the bathroom." Turning his gaze to me, he says, "I'll be heading off to bed in a few minutes myself. Goodnight. I'll see you in the morning."

He stands and takes the empty beer bottles and pizza box to the kitchen to dump them in the trash.

Gosh, he cleans up too. Damn that's nice.

~CHAPTER 8~

~ P ~

The past couple of days have been frustrating. I spend my time following Matt and Peterson around like a lost puppy. I'm included in everything but kept far enough away at the same time. So I'm not asked to help with the case. I can't help but wonder *why* I was asked to come. Not working on the case leaves me with too much free time to think about Matt, and it's driving me crazy.

I spend most of my time laughing and talking to his colleagues. I catch him looking at me sometimes. But most of the times, it's because I'm watching him. I can't help staring at him. He's so damn gorgeous.

Last night he decides to go out and I stay home, alone. It was the longest, loneliest night I've had in a while. I remember staying up for hours trying to find something on the television to watch to distract me. The thought of Matt leaving with his tight black jeans and sexy fitted henley to meet Petersen was driving me insane.

Where was he going and what was he doing?

He comes back a few hours later and I can smell the alcohol, and the woman's perfume. *Damn it, I thought he may have been the one.* I'm upset. For the past few days, I swear I feel sparks when I'm with him. I don't need to be a psychic to feel them! But I don't understand and I'm devastated. Surrendering, I decide to go to bed. I remember

him softly taking my arm and looking into my eyes. He tells me he's sorry. *Sorry for what? For making me think there was a chance at the white picket fence dream?*

I pull my arm free and go to bed, alone.

~ M ~

Lying in bed, alone another night I can't help but think of this past week since Paul's arrival. I can remember being overcome by lust the moment I saw him. And it's just gets worse every single day since then.

I can remember times when I look up from my desk and hear him laugh at a joke one of colleagues tell him. I catch my breath every time. I'm stunned by the way the sound of his laughter affects me. It's the most beautiful music I've ever heard. Many times, I catch him staring at me then he quickly looks away. The casual touches when we're close or pass each other in the doorway makes me gasp for air.

So many times I've had the urge to kiss him or take his hand. *I don't understand what's happening to me.* I've found myself checking out other men this past week, but none of them stir my senses, create the flutter in my stomach, or make my heart skip a beat like Paul.

Last night, I go to a bar and have a couple of drinks. I figured I'd take out Petersen and shoot the shit for a while away from the office and the case. I don't know

what to do. Petersen can tell something's bothering me but doesn't say a word. He just observes me like a damn science project. "What?!" I finally snap.

"What is it that worries you so much about it?" Petersen asks.

"I'm not even thinking about the case, I'm trying to relax."

"I didn't ask about the case, jackass. I asked, 'what is it that worries you so much about it?'" he repeats, like a fucking parrot.

"I know what you asked I just thought you were talking about the case," I tell him as I order my second drink. "What the hell *are* you talking about?"

"You know, smart ass." I look at him, perplexed. I had no idea. Petersen rolls his eyes and says, "just jump him you dumb fuck."

"I don't know what you're talking about," I respond, defensively. *Shit, is it that obvious? If Petersen knows, does that mean everyone else does too?*

"There's something there. Don't be afraid of it because it's new or different," he tells me.

I'm shocked that I've been so transparent. "It's tough to explain. I don't expect you to understand."

"Why?" he asked. "*What* do you think I can't understand? You think I don't know what it's like to be attracted to someone?"

"Another *man*, Petersen, you don't know what it's like to be attracted to a guy."

Petersen plays with his shot glass then finishes his drink and turns to me again. "When I said I knew ex's were a bitch, I never said ex-wives. You just assumed that," he says with a wry grin.

Well damn, I didn't see that one coming.

"Good night Matt. Now be a good boy and run home to your man." I'm completely speechless as I watch Petersen leave the bar.

This beautiful brunette with a rockin' body and huge breasts approaches me. *What man can turn this woman down?* She comes on strong and I'm a little drunk and stupid. We kiss and touch each other all over, but my cock doesn't even stir. So I walk away. I feel as if I just needed to know for sure.

On my way home, my thoughts turn to Paul and I'm rock hard in seconds. I want him, but it's more than that. Eavesdropping on a few conversations he has with some of my co-workers, I realize he's passionate about what he believes in, has a great sense of humor and a very soft heart.

I get home and Paul's awake sitting on the couch channel surfing. I want to touch him, hold him, but all I can do is approach him. At least, this way, I can be a little closer. He looks at me and he's obviously upset. *What did I do?* He starts to walk away from me but I can't stand it, I need to touch him. I grab his arm softly just enjoying the feel of his soft skin in my hand. He stops and looks at me with unshed tears in his eyes.

I don't know why, but I say "I'm sorry." I can't stand to see him sad or hurt and not be able to take the pain away. He pulls his arm free and goes to his room.

That's when I realize, I want this man and *only* this man. And no one else will do.

~CHAPTER 9~

~ M ~

I wake to a ringing phone, "D'Marco," I answer still half asleep.

"Matt, we've got another one. I need you to get your ass down here," Petersen says. I look over to my alarm clock and see it's a few minutes past four in the morning. Petersen gives me the address and a brief rundown.

"I'll be there as soon as I can," I say before closing my phone.

Damn, another kid. I get up from bed a bit shaken. I don't know if it's from the call, lack of sleep, mild hangover, or my morning wood. *Crap. I'm a damn mess. It's no wonder Paul pulled away from me last night.*

I finally get myself together and walk over to Paul's room. I knock on the door and wait for his response. "Paul, I got a call from Petersen. Seems we have another victim. I'd like you to come to the scene with us."

After a short pause, he responds, "I'll be ready in a few minutes." I'm tempted to open the door, but I don't think I can handle him pushing me away again. I work my way back to my room to finish getting ready to leave.

~ M ~

We finally arrive at the scene and I ask Paul to stay in the car. After giving me the evil eye, he agrees.

I find Petersen with Salis and Thompson. "Hey guys," I say as I join them. "Same thing?" I ask Petersen.

"Yeah. Blonde, blue eyed, 10 year old boy."

"Glad you decided to finally join us. Rough night?" Salis asks with mischief in his voice.

"Fuck you Tomás," I snap.

Petersen looks at me with a half smile. "I guess not," he tells me quietly.

"Fuck you, too."

We finish up at the scene and decide to head back to the precinct. "I'll meet you there," Petersen tells me as he gets in his car.

I get in the car and notice Paul is very quiet. "You ok?" I ask.

Silence.

I decide not to push the point. I turn on the car and head out to the precinct.

~ M ~

Captain Bougard is pissed. "Guys, we need something and we need something fast. This case makes four and we've spent *all day* trying to find something with this latest victim," he says in desperation.

Petersen and I are stumped. Again, no physical evidence is left at the scene and we've reviewed the reports multiple times. We've got nothing new to go on. We just look at each other, then at the captain.

Silence.

"Why did you ask me to come?" Paul asks softly.

"I'm sorry?" the captain asks.

Paul rises from his seat and takes a deep breath. "Why did you ask me to come back here if you're going to have me do nothing other than move in with your detective and be your police station jester to be laughed and joked at while there are children being murdered!"

Petersen and I just look at each other and we know we're thinking the same thing. *He's pissed.*

"Paul, why don't you calm down," the captain says.

"Calm down? Calm down! Do you want my help or don't you? It's a simple question," Paul asks the captain.

"Of course we want your help," the captain responds.

"Then let me," Paul responds, pleading softly. "Let me try to help. Let me get involved. I'm not sure if I'll be able to get you a lead or something to go on but I do know that I can't help sitting in a car while others are at the scene, or sitting at a desk while the detectives are reviewing case files and reports."

So that explained his silence in the car and throughout the day. We anxiously await the captain to say something. He looks at Paul, then at Petersen and me. "Give him whatever he needs," he finally says. "We're done for the day. It's time to go home and start fresh in the morning," the captain says as he dismisses us.

~CHAPTER 10~

~ P ~

We're finally home sitting on the couch watching television and finishing up dinner. And, it looks like Matt's staying in tonight. I notice he's been quiet for the better part of the day. I see the case boxes stacked on top of each other on the corner table which he brought over when I first arrived. "Are those the case boxes?" I asked pointing at the cartons.

"Yeah. And the ones I brought over today have all the clothing and other physical items we had from the different boys." Matt gets up and gathers all the boxes and places them on the coffee table. He clears out the remnants of dinner and begins opening them. "So how does this work? Do you want me to give you each item in there or should I just put it all on the table?"

"Either way works for me as long as I touch each of them." My curiosity about what is in the evidence box gets the best of me. While Matt is taking out the items in the box I glance inside to see shoes, t-shirts, a jacket and a back pack.

"I'll start with the jacket," I tell him. Matt hands me the small red child's jacket. The moment my hands touch the jacket, my attention is immediately drawn to fireplace. A boy, about 9 years old, with blonde hair and the brightest blue eyes stands there in silence.

"Hi. My name is Paul," I say and I hold up the red jacket. "Is this yours?"

The little boy nods as a slow smile appears on his face.

"Something tells me this is your favorite jacket." I smile back and am rewarded with a rapid continuous nod. The little boy's eyes sparkle with unshed tears.

"Do you know what happened to you?" A lump in my throat begins to develop seeing the sad look in his eyes.

"YYYes." He stammers. I can barely speak past my emotions. *Who could hurt one of God's purest beings?*

"What is your name?" I ask him.

"My name is Trevor. My mommy says I shouldn't speak to strangers," he replies. I smile at him but at the same time something is nagging at the back of my mind.

"It's nice to meet you Trevor." I look over at Matt who is intently watching me. "This is Matt. He's a detective. He works for the police."

Instantly Trevor is apprehensive. "It's ok Trevor. Matt isn't going to hurt you. You're allowed to speak to police officers aren't you?"

"Yes." He looks at Matt with fear in his eyes. "My mommy said if I was lost or in trouble I should look for a police officer and go with him."

"That is very good Trevor. Whenever you're lost or in trouble you should always look for a police officer." I smile at him. "So you see, you have nothing to be scared of."

Trevor is visibly shaking. "But he took me!"

My expression must have shaken Matt because he was immediately standing next to me. "What's wrong?"

When I turn my gaze back to the fireplace to ask Trevor what he meant, he's gone.

"What's wrong?" Matt asks again with a frantic expression on his face.

"He said 'he took me'," I answer. Concern was evident in my voice. "Could he mean a police officer took him?"

"Does he know what he looks like?" the expectant hope in Matt's voice almost brings me to tears.

"He's gone." I'm shaking with a knot in my throat and tears threatening to spill over. I feel light-headed. I slowly take a seat on the couch arm. The hurt and sadness in those blue eyes of that little boy leaves me feeling like an emotional wreck.

~CHAPTER 11~

~ M ~

I quickly pick up the phone and dial Petersen's number. "Hey, Paul just had a vision. Seems it could be a cop. That's all I got. I'll give you what I can if there's anything more. Night," I rattle off quickly before hanging up the phone.

Paul is sitting on the edge of the couch, as still as a statue. Looking at his face, I see the tears shimmering in his eyes ready to spill over. I notice the coloring in his face is paler. *Shit.*

I lean forward and take the small man into my arms and easily lift him onto my lap as I sit on the couch. Wrapping my arms around him, I hold him closely, resting his head on my chest.

"Everything will be ok. I promise," I tell him as I kiss the top of his head. His entire body shakes as he starts to cry in my arms.

The experience leaves me out of sorts. Paul hasn't read the case files or participated in any of the case discussions. Yet he knows the victim's name and knows the jacket is the victim's favorite piece of clothing. There is no logical explanation for any of this.

I continue to rub my hands up and down Paul's back and side calming the small man with my touch. Not long and the shaking in my arms subsides.

He lifts his head and looks into my eyes but doesn't attempt to move off my lap. Those eyes are definitely the most beautiful eyes I've ever seen. Reaching up I brush away a few stray tears from his cheeks.

"I'm sorry. I'm such an emotional head case," he tells me with a forced smile. "It never gets easier dealing with children. It's really hard for me to keep my emotions to myself when dealing with a child."

I hold his face between my hands. "It's ok. I know exactly what you mean." Wiping another stray tear from his cheek with my thumb I look into his eyes, and take a quick glance at his lips. The tip of Paul's tongue come out and wets his lips. I am totally mesmerized. Looking back into his eyes, I slowly start to lean forward and tilt my head slightly waiting for him to protest.

My lips touch his ever so slightly. The tip of my tongue flicks over his lips, tasting them. They taste like pure honey while the scent of pure male attacks my senses.

He gasps and I surge ahead. My tongue explores the cavern of his mouth searching for the taste that is uniquely his. I move one hand to the back of his head to hold him in place while my other hand wraps around his waist.

I feel like a starving man who hasn't eaten in weeks. I can't get enough. My cock is achingly hard, pressing against the zipper of my jeans. I'm light-headed with this new sensation overwhelming me.

Paul's hands wrap around my neck and he pulls me closer. I move my hands down to his hips, lifting him. Obliging he opens his legs and straddles my lap. Our tongues continue dueling and tasting, not wanting to let go.

His hands begin to touch my chest, touching me everywhere. I move my hands from his hips to his ass, cupping them, pulling him closer to me. I can't seem to get close enough. The touch of his rock hard cock touching mine through his jeans almost sends me over the edge.

I pull my lips off his and look into his heavily hooded eyes. "I need you. Please," I beg, not caring how desperate I sound.

I see the agreement in his eyes and before he can reply I kiss him, hard, holding him tight against me. The kiss is pure heaven. Like a rare treasure that, when found, should be cherished for a lifetime.

When Paul starts unbuttoning my shirt I pull away. "Not here. Bedroom," I say breathlessly.

I lift Paul from my lap as I stand from the couch. Holding his hand I lead us towards the stairs.

~ P ~

With Matt holding my hand so tightly leading me up the steps, I can't help but notice his ass on the same level as my face with each step. I lean forward and lightly nip at his butt cheek through his jeans.

"Hey!!" he looks over his shoulder, at me smiling. "Behave yourself!"

"Delicious," I say. Matt's gravely laughter assails my senses making my cock even harder.

Still holding my hand, Matt leads me into his bedroom. I can't help but notice the sheer size of the bed. Tugging on my hand he pulls me closer, resting one hand on my hip and the other cupping the back of my neck. I lift my hands and place them on his chest. I can feel the muscles ripple beneath them. *God I need to feel skin. I need to touch him.*

His mouth comes down on mine, so soft yet with a hunger like a blazing fire. I feel his tongue probing for entrance. He nips at my bottom lip with his teeth. It's all driving me crazy with need. The unexpected touch of his hand and fingers grazing my nipples has me gasping for breath.

His tongue plunges into my mouth and begins to explore. A moan escapes him. I move my hands to the top of his shirt and I start unbuttoning it. My hands are shaking with the need to get him naked and taste him.

His hands slide down my chest. He tugs on my t-shirt and pulls it out of my jeans. He slowly glides his hands up my chest underneath my t-shirt grazing my belly button, moving further up. Each moment waiting for his touch on my nipples is agonizing.

Undoing the last button on his shirt, I put my hands on his chest. Pushing the shirt off his shoulders and letting it drop to the floor. Grabbing the edges of my t-shirt Matt pulls it up and over my head, separating our lips for an instant.

I trail kissing all along the stubble on his jaw and down his neck while my hands move over his chest. The moment my fingers graze his nipples, he lets out an audible gasp and arches his back. I make him visibly squirm as I play with his nipples until they harden.

“Oh my God. That feels amazing,” he says in a guttural voice.

I bend down and begin lapping his nipple with my tongue. He reaches out and holds onto my shoulders as if to gain support. Nipping and sucking on his nipples is making him breathe harder, faster. I can hear his heartbeat pounding in his chest. I pay the same attention to the other nipple and begin the process again. I can tell I'm driving him crazy with my tongue and I'm enjoying every minute of it.

Undoing the button of his jeans, the sound of the zipper is drowned out by his heavy breathing.

"Yes, oh God, yes," he whimpers. The moment the zipper is down, I hear him moan. I pull down his jeans and boxers in one swift movement. Immediately, his cock juts out at me. His pre-cum is running down his hard shaft, slicking it up. I take his shaft in my hand. His cock is so thick my thumb and fingers barely touch when I wrap them around him.

Hauling me back up, his mouth plunders mine, his tongue teasing me, tasting. I hear my zipper in between my harsh breathing.

Guiding me to the edge of the bed, he breaks the kiss and steps back. He quickly takes off his jeans and boxers, kicking them aside. I push down my jeans and underwear and kick them off too.

Looking at him completely nude, he is magnificent. He is a muscled god with a sprinkle of chest hair. There is a trail of hair leading down to his cock where it juts out from his body. Returning my gaze to his eyes, I'm overwhelmed with the lust, need, and want I see looking back at me.

He's just standing there, observing me and letting me do the same. "You're so beautiful. You're perfect," he tells me.

I feel the blush coloring my cheeks at his words. I can feel the heat in both my face and flowing through my body as I start to walk towards him. I slowly begin kissing his shoulders and continue down his chest. Licking and nipping at his nipples, moving further down following the trail of hair.

On my knees, I'm faced with the most gorgeous cock ever. In addition to the noticeable thickness, he's at least nine inches long. A pearly drop of liquid begins to form on the tip of his cock. I can't resist the thought of his taste. I run my tongue from the base of his shaft to the tip lapping up the pearly drop. His taste drives me mad. I open my mouth and take the head of his cock while my tongue teases the sensitive opening of the tip.

I relax my throat and take as much of him as I can fit in my mouth. Feeling the silky smooth skin on my tongue is like an aphrodisiac. Sucking, tasting, squeezing I take his cock in and out in a slow rhythm. His hands are in my hair, holding me in place as he grunts the most erotic animalistic sound I've ever heard, urging me to continue.

~ M ~

I'm insane with overwhelming lust, passion, and happiness. Feeling Paul's eyes taking me in, his lips kiss me, and his mouth on me makes me weak. I didn't know it could feel like this. It just feels...*right*.

As I look down and see my cock disappearing into his mouth, I'm almost ready to climax. "Stop! Not yet," I plead, not wanting this to end so quickly. Pulling him back to his feet, I kiss him ever so gently, barely touching his lips. Our mingled taste on his tongue drives me crazy with lust.

"Do you have any condoms? I haven't done this for a while and umm....I'm sure you know that I've never been with a man before," I ask him, feeling my cheeks burning.

A soft playful laughter echoes in the room. "Yes. I have some. I'll get the lube too." He smiles and races out of the room down the hall.

I'm lying on my back when Paul returns with condoms and lube in his hands, and a smile on his face. His eyes rake over my body making a pearl of precum run down my hard shaft.

I open my arms welcoming him to join me. When he's close, I pull him down on top of me. The condoms land on the floor and lube is thrown against the headboard.

As Paul crawls over me to grab the lube, his hard cock slightly brushes me. I close my eyes to try and control the desire flowing through my body threatening to explode. *Not yet, too soon.* I hear the click of the cap of the lube. I'm curious to see what he's doing. I turn and see him on his hands and knees. His ass up in the air and the rosy puckered hole facing me, contracts in invitation.

His fingers circle the puckered pinkish rosebud staring back at me, shining with the slick of the lube. His finger disappears into the tight hole, stretching it. I'm mesmerized. A second finger soon follows the first.

Our hard breathing echoes in the room. I can't control my desire anymore. My breathing and cock get harder. Nothing else matters but feeling him.

He looks at me over his shoulder. "Please. *Now*. I need you." A loud moan escapes me. Moving towards him I grab the lube, squeeze some out onto my fingers and move my hand from root to tip slicking my hard shaft.

I put my hands on his hips and guide him to the bed to lie on his back. I want to see him and every emotion on his face. My lips meet his in a pairing of two souls, so sensual and tender, yet still, all male. Parting his lips with my tongue and deepening the kiss, his legs wrap around my hips. Nothing else exists in this time and place.

My cock enters him slowly, his puckered hole surrounding me, squeezing me tight. I close my eyes and throw my head back enjoying to rightness of this feeling. I can feel his heat envelope me and I can't help but think I need to be closer to him, not just physically, but to this feeling of being *with him*.

I can feel him stiffen and I immediately open my eyes. "Are you ok? Am I hurting you?" He has a pinched expression on his face which quickly disappears.

"No. I'm fine. It's just been a while. Don't stop. *Please*." Lying there panting for breath, I couldn't stop now if I tried. I slide further inside him, bottoming out completely, my balls teasing his hole. The tightness around my cock is driving me insane. I close my eyes tightly and try to stay still in the moment to impede my raging climax. In this moment everything feels right...*it's perfect*. I feel as if I've finally found my home.

I open my eyes and look directly at Paul. With my eyes locked on Paul's, I start moving in and out of him. The precum running down his achingly hard shaft between us is slicking him up. The friction of our movement makes him squirm and moan uncontrollably beneath me. With deep even thrusts, I can feel my impending climax coming quickly. Staring into those beautiful green eyes I can see Paul isn't far behind. I can't wait any longer. "Oh God, baby.....I'm close."

"Yes...Yes." He throws his head back into the mattress and arches his back forcing me deeper. A loud groan escapes him while a stream of white pearl liquid fills the space between us. The pressure around my cock tightens, squeezing me so much I'm sure I'm going to pass out. The look of pure satisfaction and bliss on Paul's face has my balls drawing tight to my body. It's the most beautiful sight I have ever seen. I can feel my guts twist and the heat going straight into my cock. I throw my head back, stiffen, and with a guttural growl I orgasm, emptying myself deep inside.

A stray tear escapes my eye running down my cheek. I don't want to move or lose this feeling. I feel Paul's hand on my cheek as he wipes the tear away and smiles. The look in his eyes tells me everything I need to know. *He feels the same.* I see tears begin to form in his eyes. One escapes and I lick the tear away, nuzzling his neck just to get closer, to feel him, to smell his scent. No words are needed between us. I just want to hold him closer.

Falling back down onto the bed beside him I lay there and close my eyes. It could have been minutes, or hours, I'm lost in the sensation and lose track of time. I finally

open my eyes and turn to look at him. His eyes are on me watching me intently, a look of concern on his face.

I lean forward and kiss him softly. "Come here," I say as I pull him into my arms, and hold his head on my chest. A satisfied smile plays on his face. "We've had a long day. What do you say we get some sleep?" I pull the covers over us and turn to switch off the bed lamps.

"Ok," He responds softly. I can hear the contentment in his voice as I smile.

Everything is perfect in my world at this moment.

~CHAPTER 12~

~ P ~

Going over the case files with Matt the next morning on the couch, I playfully bump my shoulder against his and smile as he bumps my shoulder in return. There's no need for *spoken* words. We can see it in each other's eyes.

I think back to the day I arrived. I recall how strange it was to shake his hand, to touch someone, and not have a vision. With Matt I saw nothing. I've always been able to see the future with all my other partners, but not Matt. It scares me a little.

The ringing of the phone interrupts us. Matt gets up and heads to the kitchen to answer the phone. I can't seem to keep my eyes off of him.

"D'Marco," he answers as he looks at me with a seductive smile. I easily return the smile as I begin to blush.

His posture quickly changes from comfortable to rigid in a matter of seconds. The beautiful smile is replaced by agony and shock. I dart up from the couch and slowly approach him.

"When?" The clipped tone of his voice immediately puts me on edge. Something was wrong. Whatever it is has him rattled beyond anything I've seen.

"We'll be right there." He hangs up the phone and turns to me.

"What's wrong?" I ask.

"Shaun's missing. We need to go to the station." Matt grabs the keys from the counter and races out the door with me following hot on his heels.

~ M ~

As Paul and I enter the station I see Shelby sitting with Officer Thompson. Tears are running down her cheeks. As soon as she sees me, she gets up and walks into my arms and cries.

"Shh..shh. It's ok. We'll find him." Trying to soothe her is futile. I walk her over to the seat again and encourage her to sit down. "Where's Salis?" I ask his partner.

"He's still at the scene trying to gather more information," Thompson responds.

Realizing I'm not getting my usual rundown from Salis, I ask his partner, "tell me what happened."

"They were at the park. The kid was playing on the equipment and then Mrs. D'Marco was sitting on the bench talking to some other ladies."

"My back was turned away from him for not even two minutes!" Shelby says defensively between sobs.

"Did they find anything at the scene?" I ask as a sense of uneasiness fills me.

"No. There was nothing. Nobody saw anyone that wasn't normally there."

Looking over at Shelby the officer says, "the only thing that we have is the jacket he was wearing that Mrs. D'Marco now has."

I took the jacket from Shelby and look over my shoulder with a small thread of hope. Meeting Paul's eyes he nods and tilts his head towards the conference room.

"I'll be right back," I say to Shelby following Paul into the conference room.

Looking at him with desperation I plead, "please Paul. I need to find him."

"I'll do what I can, baby." Giving me a quick hug Paul takes a seat in the conference room. I hand him Shaun's jacket and he immediately closes his eyes.

Five minutes pass and still he sits with his eyes closed. I don't want to interfere but desperation begins to set in.

Ten minutes later still nothing. I'm so frustrated. I'm afraid to pace and distract him, afraid to speak and break his concentration, I don't know what else to do other than cross my arms and stare at him.

Two more minutes pass and now I'm terrified. I can't take it anymore. Finally, Paul opens his eyes. I can see tears pooling in his eyes. I feel my heart stop.

Paul begins to speak softly but rapidly. "It was a police officer from this department that took him. He was standing on the other side of the park. He's a very unstable individual, he has psychotic tendencies." His eyes take on a faraway look. "He

normally takes them to a warehouse in the same area where the other body was found and locks them in a room in the back. He gives them a glass of water that he laces with his medication causing them to overdose. The first murder was the only one that was different." The glazed over look on his eyes disappear and his eyes lock with mine.

"The number on the warehouse is 926. I can't see the officer's full name but it starts with a "T." He looks at me apprehensively. "There haven't been any kidnappings in any other county that fits the same MO. Boys, 9 to 10 years of age, blonde hair, blue eyes because.....*because of you.*"

"Me?" I look at him, confused. "What do you mean because of *me*?"

"Yes. He feels you've taken the job that he was supposed to get." He looks at me with confusion in his eyes. "How long have you been a detective?"

I walk over to the door and call out to Petersen who's anxiously waiting to know what's happening. "Petersen, ask the captain to meet us in the conference room and to bring the list of candidates that was up for promotion for the detective position I received. Also bring a map of the warehouse district showing the lot numbers."

"Got it," he says before rushing off. Taking a seat in the conference room across from Paul, my mind begins to register the information he's relayed. Paul watches me. I can see the concern in his eyes.

The captain comes in first with the list of officers and Petersen quickly following with the warehouse district map. "What's going on, D'Marco?" the captain asks as he hands me a copy of the list of officers. I signal to Petersen to shut the door.

Paul interrupts and relays his vision to them.

The captain peruses the list of candidates while Petersen and I look over at the map of the warehouse district. "Paul, was it the first or last name that started with the "T"?" the captain asks.

"How many you got?" Petersen asks.

"The dynamic duo. Tomás Salis and his partner Thompson."

"It's Thompson – has to be. Salis loves being an officer, likes the hours. Besides, Salis is stable. Paul, you said the officer was unstable, right?"

"Yes, Matt. Very unstable." I freeze. I can see the fear in Paul's eyes. *Oh God, please not Shaun.*

Heading towards the door the captain looks out over at Thompsons desk. I follow him to the doorway. "He's not at his desk." Walking to Thompson's desk, the captain turns to Shelby who's still sitting sobbing in her seat. "Mrs. D'Marco, I'm sorry this has happened to you. But do you know where Officer Thompson has gone?"

"Captain, thank you. The officer said something about having to attend a call and left about ten minutes ago." Shelby says.

"Got it!" Petersen calls out. We all gather around the table looking at the map where Petersen is pointing to the lot location.

We all head out of the office and race to the warehouse district.

~ M ~

Arriving at the warehouse, I see Officer Thompson's police vehicle parked outside. Paul and I get out of the car. I see Petersen and the captain drive up within seconds and exit their cars simultaneously.

I look over at Paul and plead with him, "whatever happens, stay by the car. Don't come close to the building." He nods at me in agreement, but I can see the terror in his eyes.

The captain, Petersen and I make our way towards the front entrance of the warehouse.

~ P ~

I watch the three men enter the warehouse building. I turn my back to the entrance but remain by the car as promised. I'm terrified. I don't know why I have this horrible feeling. Yes, in the vision I could feel Shaun's fear, but *I* am terrified and nervous. I anxiously turn to look up and down the alleyway.

I hear a faint click behind me. I quickly turn and see Thompson pointing his gun at me. "I should have killed you the minute you arrived," he says with a crazed look.

I hear a gunshot and a stabbing pain instantly follows. I'm dazed, my head begins to tingle. I look down and see my shirt turning red. I look up and see Thompson running to his car. I hear what sounds like a gunshot. I'm not sure, everything sounds faint. I see Thompson falls to the ground, face down. I feel myself slowly slip to the ground. My eyes feel so heavy as if I haven't slept in weeks. *Oh God, this is it.* I feel so cold. My vision begins to blur.

A moment later there is a shuffle of feet. Strong arms come around me holding me to a hard, warm chest. "No, no, no, no, no..." I can hear desperation and anguish in the beautiful voice before blackness claims me.

~CHAPTER 13~

~ P ~

I slowly open my eyes.

Looking around, my blurred vision begins to focus a little. I feel as if I have a huge weight on my chest. It hurts like a son of a bitch. I see a white ceiling, boring colored walls, and hear a constant beeping sound. I look over to my left and see the IV drip. I finally realize I'm in a hospital. I look over to my right and I see Matt in one of the side chairs with his eyes closed. His hair is more tousled than usual. And his clothes are ruffled. He looks like he hasn't slept in days. But he still manages to look devastatingly gorgeous.

I try to speak but my throat hurts and no words seem to escape me. My mouth feels so dry and my lips stick together.

"Hmmm," I grumble looking over at Matt. Matt immediately opens his eyes and moves to my bedside. He takes my hand, holds it up to his lips and softly kisses each of my fingers. He then opens my hand and holds it up to the side of his face and just looks at me as tears begin to form.

"Thank God. How do you feel?"

I try to speak but nothing comes out. I can't open my mouth it's so dry.

Matt immediately notices and grabs an ice chip from a cup on the side table. He slowly rubs the ice on my lips. It feels like heaven. Then he takes another ice chip and holds it up to my mouth. Sucking on the ice makes my throat feel a little better. He leans forward and softly kisses my forehead, and then each eye lid, the tip of my nose, then softly kisses my lips.

"Hurts like hell but I'm feeling ok," I manage to say with an unrecognized raspy voice. He takes my hand again and kisses my palm. "Did you find Shaun?"

"Yes. We found him in a room in the back, just like you said we would. He wasn't missing for long so we found him in time before Thompson could do anything to him." He smiles at me. "Thank you. We wouldn't have found him in time if you didn't help." I can see the tears in his eyes.

"What happened to Thompson?" I ask. The tears in his eyes and the softness in his face are replaced with an intense expression of rage.

"He's dead," he answers.

"Were you able to find out why he was kidnapping and killing the kids and what it has to do with you?" I was starting to feel tired but I needed to know.

"Thompson was up for promotion to detective but was diagnosed with Schizoaffective Disorder. They thought he was unstable so he was denied the promotion. When I was transferred to this department, as detective, he had this distorted perception that I stole the position from him."

"What happened to me?"

"Thompson shot you in the chest. I didn't get there soon enough. I heard the gunshot and ran as fast as I could but when I turned the corner, you were already shot. I had to shoot Thompson before he could run away. But when I got to you, you had lost a lot of blood." He can no longer control the tears streaming down his face. "I was so scared," he confesses softly. After wiping the tears and gaining his composure again, he continues. "You were rushed to the hospital and had surgery to remove the bullet. You've been out of it for a couple of days now."

Realizing he needs some assurance from me, I tell him, "I'll be ok. I'm just a bit tired right now. I think I'm going to close my eyes and sleep for a little while." I smile as best as I can. "Will you stay with me till I fall asleep?"

"I'm not going anywhere." He smiles back and leans forward and softly kisses me. I kiss him back and open my mouth for him. A soft moan escapes him as he deepens the kiss. Our tongues mingle before he pulls away. The look in his eyes tells me everything I need to know. *He's mine.* I smile at him and feel myself begin to drift into sleep.

"I love you," he tells me softly.

"I love you too," I respond before falling into a sleep filled with love, a white picket fence and a son.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Leiland's reading list is exemplary of the evolution of erotic romance. Initially, Leiland began reading Harlequin Romance and Silhouette Desire but later transitioned to Silhouette Nocturne. But after reading the first M/M erotic romance, tons of M/M material soon followed. As an avid reader, Leiland decided one day to take a stab at writing a book. These days, when not writing something new, Leiland can be found reading a steamy romance (shifters are a fav!), taking the pet dog for a walk or watching movies such as *A Walk to Remember*. You can find his website at

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