

## Forty-one

It was 6:00 a.m. From the fog of sleep, I heard a phone ring.

"Hello," I answered in the dream. It kept ringing. Confused, I held the receiver in my hand. It rang again. I sat upright. It rang again; this time I answered.

"Hello," I said again, my heart pounding. No one calls at 6:00 a.m. unless it's a crisis.

"Mom." My son's voice sent an alarm through my entire being. He had been hired by the sheriff's office, and was now in a patrol car on his own. Being a novice, he'd been assigned a rural area no one else wanted, an area known for its marijuana grows and redneck survival mentality.

"Mom," he repeated with urgency.

"My God, are you okay?" I answered.

"Yeah, yeah," he reassured me. "Quick. Is there a woman and is she dead?"

"What?!"

My son the pragmatist usually pooh-poohed what he called "that psychic stuff."

"You're kidding," I said sourly.

"No. Quick. C'mon. What do you *see*?" he insisted.

I took a deep breath to regain myself.

"Well?" he pushed.

I closed my eyes until images appeared.

"Yes, there's a woman. She's hiding. She's scared. There are drugs and a knife," I reported.

"Where's she hiding?"

"In the woods. She's crouched down. Pulled branches or leaves down around her." I stopped *seeing* and demanded, "What's this about? You don't believe in this stuff. Why are you calling me?" I was irritated by the rude awakening.

"I know," he admitted, "but my buddy does."

He explained he'd been called to a rural convenience store. Around 3:00 a.m. a man had pulled up in a small pickup truck camper. After the man bought cigarettes, the clerk noticed he was pacing in the parking lot. After a lengthy time the clerk alerted the police. My son arrived and questioned the man, who seemed extremely anxious. My son looked through the windows of the truck. He saw a woman's clothing and a woman's shoe. The man denied having a woman with him. Knowing there was a nearby riverside park where people often went to drink or do drugs, my son called for back-up from the local police. His shift was nearly over and he wanted to hand the call to the locals.

As it turned out, the buddy he referred to was the local cop who'd lamented, "What we need is a psychic." My son just happened to know one.

"I'll pass this information on to John. He really believes in this stuff. Thanks, Mom. See you later."

Later that day John called.

"Excuse me, ma'am," he began.

I listened, wondering why cops always say 'ma'am.'

"I just wanted to give you some feedback on what you told your son this morning," he said respectfully. He went on to say they had dragged the river hoping to find a body.

"But because of what you'd *seen* we also did a grid

search. We found her hiding in the bushes, just like you *saw*. There were needle marks on her arms. She thought we were him. He told her he was going to get a knife and come back to kill her. She was strung out and scared.”

He paused and then repeated, “Thank you, ma’am. I do appreciate the work you do. When I was a kid, my mom always went to psychics.”

His enthusiasm and rare appreciation made me smile.

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