



Midwest Crime Writer

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Crime Fiction With Color

Chapter 1

December 10, 2015 4:13 p.m.

Detective Ariel Weeks stabbed at the small block of ice until it split into several pieces across the counter. She tossed the jagged cubes into the glass and made her client a drink.

In less than twenty-four hours, Ariel would no longer have to use the name Jasmine and keep men company to protect her cover. All she needed to do was make it through this last night, and she'd be allowed to be who she was; a mom just doing her job.

After gathering evidence and recording all the data she had, it would be hard to detach. Towards the end, she'd learned things she'd wished weren't true, leaving her stomach in tattered knots.

Back at home, there were two reasons Ariel would never take on another undercover assignment. *Click.*

Ariel ground her teeth as the door to Cabin D opened and closed. She could feel Mikey Surace, the mob boss's son, staring at the backless white dress she wore at his request.

The man who smiled at the sight of blood was standing behind her, breathing heavily.

She turned and handed Mikey his drink. "Your gin and grapefruit."

Mikey took the drink and pulled Ariel down on the bed next to him. His hand, smooth like velvet, traced over her dark brown skin, along the length of her arm and rested on her thigh. "I had a shitty day." He loosened his tie, removed his gun and put it on the ottoman.

Ariel stole a glance at the weapon, thinking of ways to grab it before he did. Just in case. "Wanna talk about it?"

"I had my talk with Pop. He wants me to get married and have kids so I can take over as head of the family soon. He wants our family to be seen as more law-abiding than the other three families."

“Nowadays, no one gets married to have a family. Would he accept a long engagement?”

“No way. My old man still believes in marrying now, ask questions later.” Mikey took a sip of his drink and sat it down on the nightstand table. “My father asked my mother to marry him on her seventeenth birthday.”

“I’m sure you’ll find a woman who’ll accept you for who you are, who won’t care about the lifestyle you lead, and who knows when not to ask questions about your business.”

“You always say the right things. Why won’t you let me take care of you?” he asked, planting a kiss on Ariel’s full lips. “This is my third time asking you to be with me.”

Ariel wanted to wipe off the lingering citrus taste from her mouth but didn’t out of fear. She had already been spotted by one of Surace’s men and couldn’t believe that she was still alive. Probably because Ariel, at any moment, could tell the boss things that the other person was doing, clearing herself from any suspicion and allowing her to keep her cover. Even that wasn’t a guarantee.

Drops of rain peppered the window facing out at the bare branches of a willow tree. Wind hissed against the cabin.

Ariel stared into Mikey’s almond-shaped eyes. The olive tint of his skin masked his fiery temper. Things were getting heavy and out of control for a first time U.C. like herself.

She undid the strap on her stilettos and let them drop to the floor. “Because your ex-girlfriend is in charge of my money and I need every penny. I wanna make my money and maybe one day get out. It’s a dream of mine to stop escorting and waiting tables at the club.”

“If you get with me, you won’t need money.” Mikey cupped Ariel’s chin and squeezed. “Why do you keep turning me down?”

“I’m not turning you down.” She pulled out of his grip and rubbed her chin. “I don’t want to ruin my friendship with your ex. She’s my bestie and the only one I can trust in this business.”

“You don’t trust me?”

“You’re a dangerous man.”

“I’m only dangerous to those who cross me.”

Ariel wanted to ask Mikey if he’d kill her but decided against it. It was best to redirect the conversation and talk about what he enjoyed the most. Him. “What’s it like to kill someone?”

Mikey pulled Ariel back on the bed and laid on top of her. “When I put my finger on the trigger, it’s like foreplay. With each pull of the trigger, that’s the build-up. Once my target is dead, I’m satisfied. For me, it’s a lot like sex.”

“Has anyone told you you’re crazy?”

“Yeah. They never lived to say it again.”