

# RIVULETS OF BLOOD

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# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**PROLOGUE**

**CHAPTER 1**

**CHAPTER 2**

**CHAPTER 3**

**CHAPTER 4**

**CHAPTER 5**

**CHAPTER 6**

**CHAPTER 7**

**CHAPTER 8**

**CHAPTER 9**

**CHAPTER 10**

**CHAPTER 11**

**CHAPTER 12**

**CHAPTER 13**

**CHAPTER 14**

**EPILOGUE**

## **PROLOGUE**

### **MOUNTAIN DAILY**

*May 24*

*Another dead body of a young woman, who was reported missing three weeks ago, has been found next to the Highway, her head tightly wrapped in a plastic bag. This is the sixth body in as many months. All of the dead young women had been tortured over a period of time, raped viciously and killed by suffocation.*

*A police spokes-person said at a press conference that numerous leads are being followed.*

*For how long are young women going to be terrorised .....*

### **PIONEER NEWS**

*June 8*

*A distressed local family fear the worst. Their daughter, who came for a visit to spend a weekend with them, has gone missing.*

*Still no arrests in the case of one of the most horrendous crime waves in our state.*

*Police keep mum on possible clues .....*

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The room is dark and dank. A young woman is lying in a corner on top of a filthy mattress, her hands tightly bound and her legs are spread-eagled, tied by ropes from her ankles to iron rings bolted to the cement floor.

Her breathing is shallow and she appears to be semi-conscious. Her face is a swollen mess, black, blue and bloody. Her nude body is battered, her breasts mutilated and the inside of her thighs are crusted with dried blood.

The door opens with a screech and the silhouette of a big man is outlined against the dim light.

"Hi honey, I am home" he croons. The voice sends a tremble through her body as she tries unsuccessfully to move even further into the corner, whimpering.

"Look who is happy to see you" he says, opening his pants to release his erect cock and waves it in front of her face.

The woman looks at him with dead eyes, there is no shred of emotion left in them anymore.

"Missed us?" Running his tongue over his lips he bends down and roughly pulls her legs even further apart. "You women are all the same" he snarls "leading me on, teasing, teasing and then rejecting me. But not anymore. I'll show you again what a real man can do, I'll show you as I've shown all the others before you".

His breath comes in ragged bursts, spittle flying from his mouth. "Look what you do to me", he leers at her while stroking himself to get even harder.

Her mouth opens in a soundless scream as he gets between her legs and pushed himself into her with all his strength.

Good! Good! Fuck the whore, ram her, kill the slut with it! Show her, show them all. Yeah that's it, I can feel her inside tearing apart, the warm wetness of her blood on my cock, more, more, he rams and pounds until he can feel himself spurting all his rage into her.

He rolls of her motionless body, gets up and kicks her between the legs, she does not even flinch anymore.

"Guess it's over between us, honey" he giggles, takes a plastic bag and pulls it tightly over her head.

Sitting in front of her he watches with amusement as she gasps for air, her ravaged body still fighting and trying to hang on to whatever is left of her pitiful existence.

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## **PIONEER NEWS**

*June 30*

*The body of the young woman who was reported missing at the beginning of June has been found.*

*She is presumed to be another victim of the "Savage Ghost" as the perpetrator has been dubbed, pointing to his seeming invisibility when abducting and discarding his savagely abused victims .....*

## **MOUNTAIN DAILY**

*July 20*

*Police confirmed to have arrested and charged a suspect in the "Savage Ghost" case with the rape and murder of seven young women.....*

## **OREGON TRIBUNE**

### **Sentence handed down in the case of the "Savage Ghost"**

*After a sensational trial that had gripped not only our State but the whole nation, Chase Cotter, a 39 year old semi-employed farmhand and sometimes lumberjack, has been found guilty and sentenced to a prison sentence of thirty years to life for each of his victims, whom he raped, tortured and killed during his crime spree lasting eight month, adding up to 210 years before he would be eligible for parole.*

*The prosecution, described Cotter as a psychopath without a conscience and as someone who showed no penitence, subjecting young women to unimaginable sexual torture and abuse for days and sometimes weeks before killing them by suffocation, was asking for the death penalty to be imposed.*

*The lawyer for the defence countered with a request for leniency, reminding the court that Cotter had been rejected at a very young age by his mother, fomenting a hate against all women and was brought up in a string of abusive foster homes with no opportunity to learn social skills or respect for people, in particular for women.*

*The Judge took this plea for mercy into account when sentencing and pronounced in closing:*

*"Although Mr Cotter's upbringing was not conducive for him to lead a normal and productive life, he cannot be absolved by any means from taking responsibility for having committed the most brutal and savage crimes against innocent women.*

*I therefore sentence Mr Cotter to thirty years to life for each of his victims, sentence to be served at a maximum security facility".*

*The horrific details that emerged during the trial had even hardened crime investigators breaking down during their testimony of what had been done to the victims.*

*Cotter expressed no remorse throughout the trial and showed no emotion as the judge pronounced the sentence.*

*Chase Cotter will be transported to a high security facility and held there in solitary confinement, as his safety can't be guaranteed within the general prison population.*

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## **CHAPTER 1**

Sheriff Bill Logan was looking out the window of his office into the pouring rain. "Long time we didn't have weather like this" he said to his young Deputy Brad Spencer "better go home before it gets any worse".

"Are you sure Sheriff? My shift is not over yet".

"What are you expecting? A sudden crime wave?" Bill snorted.

Major crime is unknown in the quiet little town of Arrowhead. Nestled in the mountains of Oregon, with a permanent population of about 500 people, not counting the influx of city folks during the holiday season, it is a haven of tranquillity, appreciated by the mostly retired people, who enjoyed their golden years in comfortable cabins spread throughout the surrounding woods.

A sprinkling of younger people make some troubles now and then, like stealing small items from the one and only convenient store, racing their cars up and down Main Street, having loud parties and getting drunk and disorderly.

"Everyone will be hunkered down in their homes in this weather, so git going, I'll see you tomorrow".

"Ok Sheriff, thanks". Brad rammed his Stetson on his head, put on a slicker and disappeared through the door.

"Well, well" he mumbled to himself "and I just know what to do with my extra free time". Brad, with his twentythree years of age, fancied himself somewhat as the town's most eligible and irresistible bachelor.

Bill Logan grinned after him, knowing exactly what thoughts went through his young Deputy's mind.

'Nice to be that young' he mused 'but then again I have nothing to complain about'.

To be Sheriff in this peaceful town had a lot of advantages for a law enforcement officer close to retirement. Nice bungalow, a comfortable salary and no major crime to worry about. Yeah, Sheriff Logan was a happy man.

He got his lean sixty year old frame out of the chair and ambled over to the door that divided the Sheriff's office from his bungalow, following the appetizing aroma from his wife's cooking.

Annie, his wife of thirty years, was welcoming him with dinner already served on the table.

"Let's eat early tonight and have a quiet evening, just the two of us enjoying being cozy indoors in this horrible weather" she said smiling.

Bill Logan grinned fondly at his wife. 'I am a lucky man' he thought 'look at Annie, after thirty years of putting up with me, we are in love more than ever. She is still the most beautiful woman to me. After Brad's example I feel horny like a youngster and will show her a thing or two later.'

Annie, a small but comfortably rounded woman who always has a smile on her still smooth face, liked the way her husband was looking at her, she knew exactly what he was thinking about and after all the time together she still could not hide the blush creeping into her cheeks.

"Sit down you old lecher" she laughed "and eat. First things first, better keep your strength up". Her eyes twinkled at him.

They had just finished their dinner and Bill started to light his favourite pipe when the phone began to ring. He let out a sigh, put his pipe aside and went to answer the persistent ring.

"Bill, we have trouble", the deep voice belonged to the Head of the Area Marshalls Office, John Bailey.

"I am talking big emergency, been calling all the local Sheriff stations. Remember the "Savage Ghost" case, the trial that finish recently? Chase Cotter is the bastards name and we just got word that he escaped during transport to the high security prison facility, killing the driver and guard.

I don't know how he pulled it off, the details are still very sketchy.

Quick description, Cotter is a 39 years old Caucasian, six five and built like a tank. Square shaped face, brown eyes, hair blond and short cropped. The escape happened five miles outside your town about three hours ago.

Call all your people in the more outlying cabins to be on guard, I think he might be trying to hole up somewhere close by. He took the dead officers guns, so warn everyone that he is armed, dangerous and has nothing to lose."

Bill Logan took a deep breath "How could something like this happen?" he exploded and then "Ok John, I am on it".

He replaced the receiver and found Annie standing close to him. "Something important?" she asked.

"Yes" he sighed, "the 'Savage Ghost' is on the loose and he might be heading our way".

"Oh, my God" her eyes widened in shock "guess you're going back to the office. I'll bring your coffee over there".

Bill nodded in appreciation, got up and went back to his office to make a list of all the people he had to warn.

"There goes my plan for a romantic evening' he thought. 'Bet Brad got lucky already'.



He dialled his Deputy's home phone, got no reply and his mobile seemed to be out of juice.

'Damn the boy' he thought 'which bed is gracing now with his presence' and picked up the radio.

Brad in the meantime was having the time of his life with Jessie, the daughter of the local convenient store owner, her on top, riding him like a bronco. Her hips were bucking up and down, meeting his every thrust with a shout of "yeah baby, faster, fuck me harder, I want all of you". Brad thrust deeper and deeper "You drive me crazy" he managed to moan before he spilled himself into her. "Don't stop, don't you dare to stop" she cried when she felt him going softer and then .... his radio crackled into life.

Like a well-trained dog, pointed in the right direction, his head turned and he threw the girl off him to answer.

"Deputy Spencer" he barked, looking at Jessie, who was lying on the bed with her legs spread wide, breathing heavily and glaring at him.

"Brad we have an emergency, move your butt and get back to the office now" he heard the Sheriff's voice before the connection was cut.

Brad, jumped off the bed and pulled his pants on.

"What the hell are you doing, remember what we were busy with just now? What about me you bastard?" Jessie yelled.

"Help yourself or wait until I come back" Brad called over his shoulder, throwing on the rest of his clothes before he rushed out of the door.

Pulling up at the Sheriff's station he put his head down and ran through the pelting rain to get inside.

Sheriff Logan was talking on the phone, so Brad took off his slicker and gave him a questioning look.

Bill waved his hand to indicate for Brad to sit down and as soon as he finished his call he filled his Deputy in on what had happened in the last hour.

"Here is your share of the list I compiled of the people we have to call and warn" he said, handing over some pages to Brad.

Most of the people they phoned wanted to know more, but were cut short with "just lock your doors and windows and be careful, I still have lots of others to warn".

Because of the weather almost everyone was at home and answered the call, but one phone kept on ringing and ringing.

"The Millers are not picking up" Brad Spencer said, "do you think they went out?"

"In this weather? I doubt it. Have you tried all their phones?"

"Yes, I called the home number and both their mobiles, but nothing".

Sheriff Logan shot at worried look at his Deputy "you don't think ...." He didn't even want to finish the sentence.

Deputy Spencer had already grabbed his hat when the Sheriff said "you better get over there and have a look-see, it's probably nothing to worry about, but better safe than sorry".

Brad nodded while he put on his slicker.

"Be careful and stay in touch at all times, I'll be listening on the radio".

"You bet" and Brad went out into the never ending rain.

As the door closed behind him, Bill called the Marshall's office to inform John Bailey and request back-up for his Deputy.

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The drive to the Miller's home, a log-cabin, situated in the surrounding woods on an unpaved road, was not an easy one in the downpour.

Evan and Mary Miller were one of the younger long-time residents of Arrowhead. They moved here ten years ago when Evan struck it lucky on the financial markets, decided to quit the rat-race at a fairly young age and rather live a peaceful and quiet life with his wife Mary, surrounded by nature, something that both of them had always enjoyed.

The drive which normally takes about twenty minutes took Brad close to an hour, slipping and sliding in the mud.

Good thing he took the Jeep, the Sheriff should really press for a second four-wheel drive vehicle for the station.

As he approached the Miller's property he saw lights on in, what he knew from previous visits, to be the living room.

Brad stopped the car in between the trees, switched off the engine and head lights and decided what to do next.

"I am close to the Miller's cabin now" he informed the Sheriff over the radio "going to check on them now".

He got out of the car pulling the brim of his Stetson down for more protection against the rain and let out a string of swear words as he stepped into the mud up to his ankles. Putting his hand on the gun he slowly approached the cabin.

'Everything looks fine, I reckon I will look like a fool disturbing them at nearly midnight'.

As he got closer and not seeing anything suspicious, he started to relax even more until he caught a glimpse of the front door standing half open.

'Now that can't be good' he thought, considering his next step.

"Sheriff, something is not right, the front door stands open, on a night like this with the rain still pissing down".

"The Marshall has already sent two of his Deputies, better wait for back-up" Bill Logan replied.

"Ten-four Sheriff, but I am just going closer to have a look-see".

"Be careful Brad".

Deputy Spencer took out his gun and approached the open door carefully, while looking left and right.

'Damn it all' he said to himself, 'the rain is not helping, I can't see or hear a thing'.

He stepped on the porch and called through the open door "Deputy Spencer here, Mr Miller, Mrs Miller are you ok?"

Nothing, not a sound. He felt the hair on his neck raising and his palms getting sweaty.

"Hello, can anyone hear me? Deputy Spencer here, I am coming in" he called out again.

Brad used his foot to slowly push the door more open and pointed the gun in front of him as he entered the living room.

Behind the door, like trying to get away, was the body of Mary Miller. Her torn clothes were pushed up over her hips, exposing her nudity from the navel down and blood was pooling between her spread-eagled legs. Lifeless eyes were staring up at him from a bloody and battered face. He could see clearly strangle marks around her throat.

Brad felt his stomach heave but managed to control himself.

Looking further into the room he glimpsed her husband Evan lying between the couch and the coffee table face down. His hands and legs were tied with his own belt and suspenders. He was shot in the back of his head, execution style.

Young Spencer felt his legs giving way, but held himself upright on the mantelpiece.

"Sheriff", he shouted into the radio with a panicky voice, "they are dead, Evan and Mary are both dead".

"Are you sure? Are you alright? Any sign of Cotter?" and "get back to the car now, Brad, the Marshalls are on their way".

Brad Spencer could not control his revulsion any longer. He had never seen a dead body before and definitely not one that was ravaged like the poor woman lying at his feet.

He only managed to turn away from her before his body convulsed in the act of retching and his stomach gave up all its contents. As he was bending over, heaving, he missed see or hear the giant figure of a man approaching him from behind.

Brad felt a rush of air and then something hit him hard on his head once and again. He tried feebly to fight off his attacker as his hat, slicker and gun belt was being removed. The last thing he heard was the Jeep starting up and then his world went black.

"Brad, Brad" his radio kept squawking "are you there, what is happening, are you ok?"

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Sheriff Logan hit the desk with his fist in frustration. What the hell had happened at the Millers. Why could that young fool not have waited until assistance had arrived.

"John" he called the Marshall's radio again, "last thing I heard from my Deputy is that both, Mary and Evan Miller, are dead and now I can't get hold of Brad anymore. How far away are your men?"

"They lost their way in the rain and had to retrace, it'll take them about another hour to get there, stay on the radio".

Sheriff Logan cursed at the rain, the fugitive and the world in general loudly, he had enough of this messed-up situation, can't anyone do anything right? He could not wait any longer for others to assist his Deputy and he called to his wife "Annie stay on the radio, I am going over there to see what's going on".

Annie rushed into the office, planted a kiss on her husband's cheek "please Bill don't do anything stupid, watch out and be careful".

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The drive to the Miller's cabin was treacherous and again he used some choice swear words about having only the one four-wheel drive Jeep, Brad was using, available.

Finally arriving at the cabin there was no sign of the Deputy or the Deputy's car or any Marshall.

Bill Logan stepped out into the mud, like Brad earlier on, but did not even feel it he was so anxious. He drew his gun and went towards the log-cabin. "Brad" he called softly "it's me, where are you?"

Getting closer he got more and more worried by the absolute silence, only broken by the hiss of the never ending rain. "Brad" he called again "let me know where you are, I am coming in".

He put his head through the door, the gun pointed in front of him and the first thing he laid his eyes on was the young Deputy lying motionless on the floor, a pool of blood starting to congeal around his head.

Sheriff Logan quickly scanned the room and finding it empty of any living being, kneeled next to him and felt for a pulse. Nothing – nothing!

“No” he groaned, “not you too Brad, I should have never let you come alone”.

He felt a burning anger rising in him and lifted his head when he heard a vehicle arriving. The car doors slammed and Deputy Marshall Mason and his partner Butler entered the cabin with guns drawn.

“Where the hell have you been. You were supposed to back-up my Deputy and now he is dead” Bill Logan growled. “That bastard Cotter slaughtered the Millers, killed Brad Spencer, took his gun, hat and slicker and drove off with the Jeep, all while you two were pissing around on the road”.

Mason shook his head to keep his partner quiet and got on the radio to inform his superior about the situation they were finding themselves in.

“John, we are at the Miller’s place with Sheriff Logan and he is livid. Can’t say that I blame him. There has been a massacre here. The owners of the cabin are dead, the wife got beaten and raped before she was killed. The husband was shot and the Sheriff’s Deputy killed with a couple of blows to his head.

His gun, hat, slicker and Jeep are gone. You know what that means. Get an APB out immediately, but in this weather and with the time advantage, it looks like this scum of the earth got away for now.”

John Bailey told his Deputy Mason to secure the crime scene until the homicide unit and forensic team could get there and then meet him at the Sheriff station.

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In the meantime, many miles away, Chase Cotter was navigating the Sheriff’s Jeep through the driving rain, wearing the Deputy’s hat and slicker with the three guns he had ‘liberated’ next to him.

Did those fool really think that he would go meek and mild to spend the rest of his life locked up? They can have another guess.

He whistled softly to himself, content with his day's work and, for the time being, felt safe from pursuit and capture.

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## **CHAPTER 2**

As Jason Hadley drove onto the Highway, rain was pelting down hard. The windscreen wipers of the rental car were hardly able to cope with the deluge of water. 'Damn' he thought to himself 'it's worse than I expected'.

Should he turn back and stop overnight at the airport hotel before going on to his mountain cabin as he had planned? No. He's had enough of hotel living to last him for a life time.

While listening to the country and western music coming from the radio, he reflected on the chain of events that has brought him to this point.

Jason, a slightly built, handsome man, had just turned forty some days ago. His black hair and startling blue eyes were a heritage of a distant Irish ancestry. The slight grey starting to show at his temples only added to his physical appeal and he had always prided himself on being able to handle all life can throw at him, to be at the helm of all situations, to be on top of everything - until lately.

He had not always led a charmed life. Born into a blue-collar working class family, Jason had fought hard for a better life, better education. His reward was to achieve top honors at school, being in the top ten of his class, even in college.

Everyone had predicted big things for him and everyone was expecting a lot of him, what the heck, never mind everyone, he was expecting a lot of himself.

He had started his career at the bottom of one of the biggest advertising agencies and married his high-school sweetheart Shelby shortly after her graduation from law school.

Life was wonderful for the next decade, with him working his way up the corporate ladder to become one of the youngest executives in the agency, with Shelby, his beautiful and beloved Shelby by his side, herself now a successful career woman as a well-known lawyer and partner in a prestigious law firm.

They had the world at their feet.

Jason stopped the train of his thoughts to concentrate on his driving under this dangerous weather condition.

"Damn it" he said aloud "maybe I should have listened to the people at the car rental desk. They did warn me about this rainstorm".

Lighting struck down from the sky like a flaming sword in front of the car, blinding him for a second. The loud clap of thunder that followed made him flinch and he opened the glove compartment to take out the bottle of bourbon he purchased at the airport and took a swig. The warmth shot through him right away and settled his nerves. He felt better immediately.

'As long as I don't overdo it I should be fine' he mused and then 'stop right there'. What was he thinking? Too much alcohol was part of the mess he is in now.

Jason rolled down the window, cursed at the rain pouring in and hurled the bottle of bourbon as far as he could into the darkness beyond.

The radio kept on crooning about love lost and love found.

Life should be that simple and easy, Jason heaved a sigh and went back to his dark thoughts.

'When did everything go so wrong' he questioned himself for the hundreds of times 'what did really happen?'

Maybe life was too good and he had considered himself to be invincible.

Thinking back now, he realised that while Shelby was getting more and more busy with her career, spending less and less time at home, he was spending more and more time having too many parties with too many wrong people, hangers-on, who called themselves 'friends' but who only



wanted a slice of the good life in Jason's wake, feeding on his success. He was listening to too many false compliments, starting to believe them.

He began to have a little affair here, a one night-stand there, after all this was the accepted and expected behavior in his new circles of 'friends'. But then again most of them had already a couple of divorces under their belts, their present wives not minding them having affairs as they had their own.

That was not the relationship he had wanted for Shelby and himself, but by then he was on a rollercoaster he could not stop and it became an avalanche of events he could not control anymore.

'Why' he asked himself again 'why, when I have a wife like Shelby, beautiful, sexy, clever and classy, did I have to put everything on the line for nothing more than to be 'one of the boys'.

Shelby kept on warning him, wanted nothing to do with his new set of friends, but he was the "Golden Boy" wasn't he, so why should he listen to the warnings of the one person who had his best interest at heart.

'You bloody idiot' he thought 'how could you have fallen so deep so fast?' He could not come up with an explanation or even an excuse for his stupidity.

It was all his fault! Who could blame Shelby for having put up an invisible barrier between them, a barrier he felt he was not able to penetrate.

But still.... And then came the day when Shelby finally had enough...

He remembered with shame the one night he got home, fresh from the bed of one floozy or another, something he had never done before, but he was drunk out of his mind and there she was, Shelby, gorgeous, sexy and his wife. It was her wifely duty to give him his dues, wasn't it? Or so he thought at that moment and demanded to have sex with her, right there and then, right in the living room. When Shelby had tried to calm him down and appease him by letting him have his way, the ultimate nightmare happened. He could not perform and with his mind being befuddled with alcohol, he had lost control.

'Oh, fuck, fuck, I don't want to think about it anymore' but the images how he had attacked her verbally, calling her an Ice Queen who would turn any man impotent and no wonder he had to find solace in the arms of other women and that even the cheapest whore could give him more satisfaction than she ever could ... would not go away.

He had carried on and on, ranting and raving not hearing or listening when she begged him to stop, until she was silent, tears running down her face quietly.

But he was not finished with her, oh no not him, not yet. Not being able to get any other response from her, he had lifted his hand and slapped her hard across the face.

He will never forget the disgust and something that looked a lot like disappointment and hurt in her eyes.

And oh, the shame he felt when she just got up without giving him another look, went into the bedroom and locked the door.

He had sobered up quickly enough and standing outside the closed bedroom door, tried to apologize again and again, begging her to forgive him once more, promising to change his life around to the way it used to be. Trying to explain that he had not been himself, that he did not know what had happened to him, what got into him. But he was talking to a locked door, with the love of his life on the other side not wanting to have anything to do with him anymore.

The next morning, early, he packed a few things and left their home. He was so ashamed, how could he have expected her to look at him if he could not even face himself in the mirror?

For the next couple of weeks he had tried to make amends, tried to contact Shelby, win her back, but the damage he had inflicted on their relationship was too great and hurtful, he understood that. She needed time and distance.

And there was bloody Ben Franklin, her partner in the law firm, always around, always attentive and protective towards Shelby.

That's when he decided to give him and her even more space, before making a final decision about their relationship and to move to the cabin in the mountains for a few days to clear his mind, to plot a course to win Shelby back and win her back he had to – life without her was worthless.

The plan was to contact her in a couple of days and invite her to join him at the place they had spent so many wonderful times together and made so many special memories. What better venue to put their marriage back on track and show his wife that he was again the man she had fallen in love with, the man she had married.

'And here I am, in this bloody mess of a rainstorm in the middle of nowhere. Can life get any worse?' Oh yes, it could. A future without Shelby would be infinite worse than some rain on a Highway. Shame about how low he had sunk washed over him again. If it takes the rest of his life to atone, so be it.

'Stop it' he thought 'you have to stay positive and watch out for the turn-off to the road leading up the mountain and to the cabin'.

Squinting through the windscreen, he saw a flashing light in the middle of the Highway.

'What the fuck' he tried to get a clearer view through the rain washed windscreen, 'what idiot is standing out there in this downpour? Must be some poor bastard whose car broke down and who needs help'.

Jason rolled slowly to a stop, not knowing what to expect.

The light came closer and he could see the Stetson and yellow slicker of the police officer who knocked on his window.

"Yes officer what seems to be the problem" opening the window and getting rainwater all over himself, Jason asked, turning his head not to let the officer smell the alcohol on his breath.

"Drove my car off the road in this pissing rain and I need a lift" a rough sounding voice replied.

"What about your radio, can't you call for assistance?"

"Radio is bust and there is no signal for my mobile out here, just open your door and stop asking questions, I am already soaking wet".

Jason had a bad feeling about this, but after all here was a police officer who needed assistance, so reluctantly he opened the passenger door and the man slid in, dripping water all over.

"Where are you going" he grunted, keeping his face shadowed by the Stetson.

"To my cabin about ten miles up the mountain, but I can keep on going to Arrowhead and drop you off at the Sheriff's station".

"Turn up the mountain road and keep going" was the gruff reply.

"What ..." Jason turned his head to question the man further, when he saw the gun pointed at him.

## CHAPTER 3

Shelby Hadley is a striking looking woman, the sort of woman who turns every man's head as soon as she walks into a room. Of medium height, she has a figure to die for, legs that go on forever. Her face is not beautiful in the conventional sense, but it is attractive, accented by expressive green eyes, framed by shoulder long auburn hair and what is more, her face shows character. Here is a woman who knew her worth and was secure in herself.

She lifted the wineglass to her company and smiled.

"What a day it had been" Ben Franklin, her friend and partner in the law firm, returned her smile "but at the end it was worth it. We won the case, our client is firmly off the hook and got a big settlement to boot".

"Yes, we are a good team, aren't we?"

Ben gave her a quizzical look and said "you do know of course, how much I would like to extent our partnership permanently into our private life as well".

"Oh Ben" Shelby sighed "you know how much you mean to me as a friend, but I am married to Jason and even if our relationship is going through a rough patch at the moment I am not looking for anyone else".

"Has he not hurt you enough" and he added quickly "sorry, I did not mean to say that" when he saw a dark shadow flicker across her face.

"Let's not spoil the evening, let's rather end it. We both have another long day ahead tomorrow".

Ben could have kicked himself for his remark but drove her home in silence. He walked her to the door, still hoping for an invitation to come in, but after unsuccessfully trying for a good-night kiss, he turned away and walked to his car.

Shelby watched him driving off and closed the door.

'I am not leading Ben on' she thought 'am I? He is a nice person and I value his friendship, but no one would ever be able to replace Jason' and 'what am I thinking about? I do not want to replace Jason'.

She filled a glass with wine and settled down on the couch with her legs curled beneath her. Closing her eyes she started to remember .....

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What a weekend it had been. She had just graduate from law school on top of her class and was about to start her first job with a prestigious law firm while studying for the bar exams.

Jason and her had been inseparable since high-school and with him already climbing the corporate ladder at his firm, they had planned a weekend away, for the two of them to celebrate.

They had flown to Mexico and booked into a small hotel directly on a quiet and secluded beach.

It was during this weekend that he had proposed to her and oh, we were so much in love with each other.

The night that followed the proposal was etched into her memory forever.

The feel of his lips on her mouth, the way their tongues intertwined and teased each other and later the feeling of his nude body on hers, his hands and mouth teasing her breasts and nipples until she could stand it no longer and begged him to enter her and, oh yes, they have had sex before, but this was different, this was making love, their bodies were tuned to each other like never before, they were in unison, his thrusts deeper and deeper and her hips moving and matching his rhythm faster and faster, his hands all over her body and the final orgasm perfectly timed.

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Shelby opened her eyes with a sigh. What a wonderful memory, just thinking about it now made her feel a wetness between her legs.

'Sex was never the problem, at least not for me' she thought 'and I do not believe the vile accusations he was throwing at me at our last argument. We never discussed what happened, what went wrong, why he felt the need to look for other women'.

Not only that, but he also took to drinking. It never became very obvious to anyone else, but in the last drunken episode he went overboard, insulting her with words and also ....

Shelby shook her head, she did not want to think about this anymore, the last couple of weeks had been hell for her, maybe for both of them.

Again Jason's attack on her crowded into her mind, it had been so uncalled for, so vicious and hurtful, so demeaning, it had left her feeling helpless and in tears.

Yes, he tried to make amends, but she had been in no way ready to even look at him. He moved out the next day and Shelby feeling very vulnerable turned to Ben, whom she always considered to be a good friend.

Shelby never crossed the line with Ben, as much as he showed her how ready he was for it.

Ben had never compared to Jason, but no man ever would.

Already for the last few months, even before that final argument, Jason and she had lived separate lives.

'Now Ben wants more, he has made it abundantly clear. How can I make him understand, that Jason will always be the love of my life, without losing his friendship?'

Shelby pulled herself together 'it's about time I stop to live in limbo like this' she said to herself. 'All those unresolved issues between Jason and me have to be worked through. Tomorrow I will contact him, meet face to face for an honest talk and we will sort out our relationship and if possible move forward together'.

## **CHAPTER 4**

Annie Logan looked worried.

Since her husband, the Sheriff, came back from the Miller's property, where he had found not only the couple killed and the woman raped in the most brutal way, but also his young Deputy Brad Spencer dead, he seemed to have aged by ten years.

"Bill" she said, "you have to let the Marshall handle the chase after the killer. You need some rest".

Bill Logan just looked at his wife, but his thoughts were far away.

"I should never have let Brad go alone. He was too young and inexperienced".

"Bill" Annie said again "it's not your fault. He was young and ambitious. Remember when you were a young detective".

He sighed heavily. "Yes, I remember". He was always in the forefront of going after the perpetrators until the day a drug bust went bad, got his partner killed and he himself landed up in hospital badly shot up. It had been touch and go for him. It took six months in hospital to get him on his feet again. But he had survived, Brad did not.

When he was released from hospital, the captain assigned him to desk duty and Bill was grateful for that, he had no appetite for all the violent street action anymore.

Bill Logan had lost all his ambitions, first while lying bleeding in the street and then during recovery from what could have been the end of him, so when the position as Sheriff in the quiet little town of Arrowhead opened up and was offered to him he gladly accepted. That was nearly two decades ago and he was Sheriff here ever since, unopposed and with the blessing of the town.

He was happy here and content to deal with small time crime and criminals, without having to face the dangers big city crime brings and was satisfied to stay in this post until his retirement without making any waves.

Until now!

"This murdering swine will not get away with what he did in my town" he said "if it's the last thing I'll do on earth".

It was at that moment that the door to the office was flung open and John Bailey stomped in accompanied by his two Deputies Mason and Butler.

Annie swallowed the sharp reply to her husband's words she had on her tongue.

'There will be time later to talk some sense into him' she thought, something she did not even believe herself.

"Sheriff" John Bailey growled "we have roadblocks all over and the area is tightly sown up, he won't get away".

"We need all the available law enforcement in the area on full alert. What are you going to do about a new Deputy?"

His word still hung in the air, when the door crashed open again and a tall man stormed in bringing with him a gust of wind and rain.

Jake Spencer was in his early thirties, slim, but muscular with broad shoulders. His head was topped by an unruly mop of hair, the color of which could only be described as a very premature silver-grey. His appearance looked dishevelled and unshaven.

"Sheriff" he said with a catch in his voice "is it true about my brother Brad, is he dead?"

Bill Logan swallowed once "I am so sorry Jake" he said softly "I should have called you sooner, but I still don't quite believe it myself".

"So where is that mother-fucker of a killer" Jake demanded "I want a word with him".

"He got away in your brother's vehicle" John Bailey said "but we will chase him down. All the roads are blocked and the Sheriffs in the surrounding counties have been kept abreast of the latest development".

"Not good enough" Jake growled "I want in. I want to catch the bastard and tear him limb from limb".

Sheriff Logan looked at Jake, whose normally pleasant face was now a grimace of anger, his dark-grey eyes holding a murderous expression and the muscles of his jaw were knotted so tightly, it seemed they would break through the skin at any moment.

He asserted himself "I don't want to hear talk like this" he said "there will be no vigilante stuff going on, not on my watch".



Jake glared at him "So what are you doing to get him behind bars? Waiting for him to walk in here and surrender?"

"Now look here" the Marshall interrupted "this is official business...."

"Hold on" Bill Logan cut in "Jake you are an ex-Marine and a sniper ain't you? So if you can hold your horses and control your anger, I'll swear you in as my temporary Deputy, ok?"

Jake looked at the Sheriff for a moment and put out his hand "you have yourself a deal Sheriff".

John Bailey gave them both a worried look while Mason and Butler shook their heads.

The Marshall's mobile rang "Yes" he barked into it "what's the latest?" He listened, exploded with a string of explicit curses and said "Ok, I will inform Portland" when he had calmed down.

He turned towards Bill Logan to explain "your Deputy's Jeep was found next to the Highway, crashed in a ditch, a couple of miles before the county border. No sign of Cotter. The general consensus is that he high-jacked another car and either took a hostage or killed the driver outright. He most likely is on his way to Portland and out of your jurisdiction as we speak."

"What if he headed out on foot and is still holed up in the woods?"

"That seems unlikely. Let's see what we can come up with in the morning".

"Listen John, nobody knows this woods and trails here like I do, so any search conducted I have to lead."

John sighed "It's in our hands now Bill. Get a good night's rest, we'll talk tomorrow".

"Ok, let's head out" John Bailey addressed his Deputies Butler and Mason, turning his head again towards Sheriff Logan "just stay put Bill, there is nothing you can do right now, we'll keep you informed".

The three men picked up their dripping wet slickers and headed out into the dark and the relentless rain.

"So you let those Marshall downs side line you and run the show on their own" Jake snorted, throwing a look of contempt in the Sheriffs direction.

Bill Logan scrutinized the younger man. 'Can't really blame him to be so frustrated' he mused, 'usually Jake is steady and thinks before he acts, not like Brad who was always too impulsive, too quick to get into the action. Must have something to do with Jake's training and experience as a Marine, I can trust him not to go off half-cocked once he has calmed down a little'.

Aloud he demanded "did I not tell you to hold your horses? Tonight we plan and tomorrow we act".

## **CHAPTER 5**

Jason felt a shiver going down his spine. What was going on? Why is a Highway trooper pointing a gun at him? He needed some time to process the situation.

His foot lifted from the gas pedal and the car slowed to a crawl.

"Didn't I tell you to keep going" the man next to him barked, "it's the same to me to kill you right now and take over the driving".

Jason's hands on the wheel started to shake, his palms getting sweaty. 'I am not equipped to deal with this' he thought, but he obediently increased the speed as much as the rain and the now unpaved mountain road allowed him to.

"So tell me about your cabin" Chase Cotter said in a conversational tone like he had a chat with an old acquaintance.

"Where is it, what is close by and who else is there?"

Jason swallowed and said in a quivering voice "it's just a little holiday cabin on the mountain, very basic and secluded. There is no one else up there" and 'what the hell' he resolved 'I must pull myself together and not let this guy, whoever he is, get the better of me'.

"You lie, you die. That's how it's going to be, short and sweet".

Jason swallowed again and nodded submissively "it's the truth, that's all there is to it".

With cold sweat pouring down his back he concentrated on his driving until he found the opening between the trees on his right that led steeply up to the cabin.

His brain was working overtime to find a way to get out of this frightening situation.

'I have to go along with everything he asks for now and get him to relax before I can think of making a move'. What this move could be he had no idea.

"That's it" he said when they finally arrived at the log-cabin. "There is no one here as you can see".

"Get out of the car slowly and you better pray that you have not lied to me".

Jason reached out to open the glove compartment and heard the sound of the gun being cocked and felt the pressure against his temple.

"I need a torch" he said meekly "it's pitch dark out there".

"Hand me the torch slowly and point the car with the headlights towards the cabin".

He did as he was told, got out of the car slowly, searched for the key under the flowerpot next to the front door and unlocked it.

He walked in and felt the gun poking into his back. The interior was dark and clammy.

"I need to light some candles", he pointed out "there is no power up here".

"What about a telephone?"

"No, no lines".

"Ok, light the candles, very carefully, I want to see your hands at all times".

The torch gave enough light for Chase to see Jason's movements.

"Give me your mobile".

"It's in the car, there is no reception on the mountain".

Chase grunted, went out the door and locked it from the outside.

Jason felt as if his bones had turned to water, he had to sit down and collapsed onto the couch.

The noise outside indicated the car being driven and parked next to the cabin, then the engine was switched off.

'Who is this man' Jason thought 'obviously a criminal on the run, but will they find him here and what's going to happen if they do? This man is armed and dangerous.'

He turned his head when he heard the door opening again. "I am Jason" he said "what do I call you?" trying to put the man at ease.

"Nothing" was the curt reply "you only open your mouth to answer when I ask you a question. Get that?"

Jason nodded.

"And here is what I want to know. Are there any supplies?"

"Yes there is a stocked pantry and a gas-operated ice-box".

"Who stocks it and who does the chores when you are not here?"

"A local woman comes up once a month to clean and stock-up".

"When does she come again?"

"She does whatever needs doing every first weekend of the month, so she was here only a few days ago".

"Good" Chase grunted "we don't want anyone to disturb us now, do we?" He grinned, prodded Jason with his gun and said "get up and sit on that chair over there. I need some rest, can't watch you all the time".

Jason did as he was told and Chase tied him expertly to the chair with a rope he had found in the Jeep.

"Sweet dreams" he chuckled before he crashed on the couch, the gun firmly tucked at his side.

Chase closed his eyes and relived the events of the last day. 'Man, what a ride'. He thought about the couple he had surprised in their home 'The bitch wanted it, I could see it in her eyes. What a kick to do her there right in front of her husband. I did need it desperately, was too long without a woman' he chuckled to himself. Fucking that whore in front of her man, having her squirm, pretending she wanted to get away from

under him, what a turn-on. Well he stopped that fast enough with a few punches to her face. Still she kept on screaming and begging him to stop, while that excuse of a man she had married was tied up safely and had to watch his wife giving it up to him, a real man with an enormous cock, driving it into her so hard and deep that he could feel her almost tearing apart. What an experience, different, exhilarating – and then chocking her slowly with his hands around her neck, watching the terror in her eyes until the life went out of her, all that with her husband looking on, nearly going out of his mind. He licked his lips and touched his crotch while thinking about it.

And after that, the heady rush of shooting the husband execution style and killing the Law. He giggled softly to himself remembering. No, life was too much fun to waste it away in prison, waiting for it to pass slowly until the end comes.

Thinking about the bitch again made him go all hard. 'What a shame it was not a woman driving the car instead of that guy Jason' he thought, freeing his aroused cock from the restraint of his pants, stroking it and jerking himself off before sleep took over.

"How the blazes do I get out of this situation alive' Jason brooded, watching in disbelief his captor working his penis and listening to him moaning and grunting. 'Maybe if I offer him money and the car he'll leave'.

Looking around the cabin, searching for something to free himself with and escape, he started to remember all the wonderful times Shelby and he had spent up here in the mountains, in this very cabin.

Long walks in the dear mountain air, the romantic evenings by candle light in front of a blazing fire in the big stone fireplace, nights filled with exploring and loving each other.

He shook his head, how could he think about that now when his life was on the line. How could he picture his wife being right here with him when he better thank God on his knees that Shelby was far away and safe. He felt violent shivers running through his body at the thought of this snoring brute over there laying his hands on her.

How much time had passed he did not know, but exhaustion must have taken over and he slept despite his uncomfortable position.

He was jolted awake by a kick to his legs "Rise and shine sleeping beauty, I want to know more about what's going on around this place".

Chase untied Jason who stretched his legs from his cramped position.

"Now don't get too comfy" his captor barked "we have to talk but first I need food. Can you cook?"

When Jason nodded, he hobbled his feet together with just enough room to move around with small shuffling steps.

Outside the rain was still pelting down and any chance of a rescue seemed more remote than ever.

## **CHAPTER 6**

Jake Spencer paced impatiently up and down in the Logan's living room while Annie was busy preparing breakfast.

He had crashed on the Sheriff's couch for a couple of hours of shut-eye and was frustrated now with the slow progress of the day's preparation.

Bill Logan called Jake from the office "come in here before you wear a hole in my floor, I just spoke with John Bailey at the Marshall's office and it looks like the search has moved closer to Portland and into the city itself. I personally don't go with the notion that Chase Cotter is on his way there, not much traffic to high-jack last night on the Highway nor are there any reports of anyone missing".

The Sheriff took a swallow from his early morning coffee and continued "that bastard Cotter is more familiar with woods and mountains than with the big city. That's why I believe he is still holed up around here and I told the Marshall so. They promised to send some Deputies later on to search the woods, but I don't think we can wait for if and when that's going to happen".

Jake nodded in agreement "So let's git going" he growled "why are we still sitting around?"

"Because we are not going to rush off blindly, that's why" the Sheriff retorted.

"We made our plans last night to check on all the cabins unoccupied at this time of the year. Most of them belong to city folks who only used them for holidays. They are isolated and wide spread which doesn't make it easy for us in this weather to inspect them".

"Just wish that fucking rain would let up" Jake jumped out from the chair. "Let's go".

"Easy does it Jake. I told you before we are not going to rush off half-cocked. Cotter is armed and dangerous and after killing five people in the last twentyfour hours, that we know of that is, not to mention the crimes he got his prison sentence for, he has got nothing to lose anymore".

"You just wait until I get my hands on that murdering scum" Jake exploded "he'll see pretty fast what he still got to lose".

"Calm down boy, Annie has prepared some breakfast for us, so let's not disappoint her, ok?"

Jake mumbled some choice curses under his breath, but followed Bill Logan into the bungalow.

The Sheriff's wife was busy setting the table, her eyes red rimmed and her normally rosy cheeks were pale and drawn.

The death of young Brad and what had happened to Mary Miller and Evan had not only given her a sleepless night but also one spent crying.

Bill had tried his best to comfort her but it all had been too much for Annie. She did not believe that life could ever again be the same. Evil had touched their lives.

While they were eating, Bill and Jake went once more through the list of not permanently occupied cabins they had prepared last night and pinpointed them on the map.

"There are fourteen of them, more than half are closer by, but five will have to be accessed mainly on foot. By now all the trails will have washed out and the four-wheel drive was wrecked by the fugitive".

Bill Logan considered, "we start with the remote ones first, so we won't get stranded once it gets dark after sunset".

The weather looked still threatening and even more dark clouds kept on rolling in over the mountains.

"Annie, please man the telephone and the radio and if those extra people from the Marshall's office should arrive, I can direct them via the radio to investigate the closer properties".

"Are you sure you don't want to wait for reinforcement?" Annie's voice was filled with worry, but one look at her husband silenced any further objections. She had not seen that determined look on his face since a long time and knew better than to argue with him.

"Brad was my responsibility, Annie" he said softly "I can't sit back and do nothing".

She nodded, but the apprehension in her mind would not go away.

"Be careful and look after each other" she managed to whisper as the two men went out into the still pouring rain.

## **CHAPTER 7**

Shelby jolted awake with an uneasy feeling. She had no idea what was the cause of it and put it down to the pressure Ben had put her under yesterday about taking their relationship from friendship to more.

'Sorry Ben' she thought 'I know Jason has hurt me real bad, but he is still my husband and I love him. My priority is to be with him and work through our problems together'.

All those years of her and Jason not only having been husband and wife, best friends and partners, but also all the love they shared, she could not just forget about it, throw it aside and move on.

'Jason did try to talk to me after that disastrous evening, not only once, lots of times, but the hurt was still too fresh to even look at him. Maybe the time has come, to have an honest discussion and see where it will lead us to.'

She had made up her mind already the previous evening to contact Jason and meet with him face to face. Could she forgive him? Will the love she still feels be strong enough? Will his remorse be genuine and how deep are his feelings towards her now?



Lots of questions she does not know the answers to yet, but the thought of Jason not to be a part of her life anymore seemed unimaginable.

Shelby dialled Jason's mobile and got no reply. She then called the hotel he is staying in and was told that Mr Hadley had left yesterday morning and had not returned so far and no, he did not check out, the room was still his.

'Ok' Shelby thought 'I am going to grab a cup of coffee on my way to the office and try and get hold of Jason from there'.

When she arrived at her office, she called her husband's firm and was told that he took a leave of absence for two weeks and did not tell anyone where he was going.

Shelby asked to be put through to their mutual friend Oliver to find out what he knows.

"No, I have not spoken with Jason yesterday, very busy you know. Listen, while we are talking now, you really should sit together with him and have it out. He has not been the same anymore for the last couple of weeks. All he could talk about was you, how much he misses you and how he is going to try and win you back. I have no idea what has happened between the two of you besides his occasional philandering, but believe me, Jason is a changed man.

Oh yes, hold on, now that I remember, last time I spoke to him, a few days ago, he mentioned something about a cabin on the mountain".

At this moment Ben stuck his head into her office "Good Mor....." he started to say and then

"You look worried, has anything happened?"

She waved her hand towards Ben and said into the phone "please let me know if you hear from him ok?"

Ben lifted a questioning eyebrow.

"I am trying to get hold of Jason, but he seems to have fallen off the map. He has not been at his hotel since yesterday morning, he does not answer his mobile and I just heard he took leave from work as well".

"He probably went with one of his floozies on a pleasure trip" Ben muttered under his breath and then louder "so what's the emergency?"

"I have to talk with Jason face to face" Shelby said "where could he have gone too?"

Then it struck her. "He mentioned our cabin to Oliver, he always liked to go there to clear his head, that's where is, I am sure of it. Listen Ben, I need to take a couple of days off, will you please clear it for me".

"You mean you are going to follow him there?" Ben was aghast "Isn't that in the middle of nowhere? What if he is not there. I am going to come with you."

She looked at Ben standing there with what looked to be anger on his face.

Suddenly it was like scales were dropping from her eyes and she remembered something.

It was Ben who kept on telling her about Jason's real or not always real, as she wondered now, indiscretions. Ben who kept on whispering into her ear how bad Jason was for her and that at a time she was the most vulnerable.

'Friend Ben' she thought 'maybe expressed more self-interest than friendship after all, but I can't be bothered with that now'.

Aloud she said

"You will do no such thing. This is between Jason and me. Between husband and wife", she added.

Shelby left Ben standing glaring after her and left the office.

## **CHAPTER 8**

If possible at all it was raining more than ever and a strong wind whipped the water across the road in front of the Sheriff's car.

'Wish I had the Jeep', Bill Logan thought for the tenth time 'that four-wheel drive would have made our task so much easier, but it's lying in a ditch somewhere, damn that bastard Cotter'.

Aloud he said to Jake "You know the mountain trails nearly as well as I do Jake, watch for the first turn-off. We'll go up the mountain as far as we possibly can by car".

Having located the trail, he found the going at the start of the unpaved road surprisingly easy. Visibility was better being shielded from much of the rain by the canopy of tree branches. The road surface was rocky, so not much mud to battle with.

It still took them two hours to get close to the first cabin. Bill Logan pulled the vehicle to the side where the road widened a little and both the Sheriff and his Deputy got out, into the wet and rain.

"I am afraid the easy ride is over for now".

"Listen Sheriff, I have trained in the Marines for similar situations, let me go first and asses if we are dealing with any danger".

"No way Jake, I have decades of law enforcement experience under my belt and I will be damned if I let another Deputy go out in front while I hold back. You stay behind me and watch my back".

The two men started to scramble uphill through the trees to get to the first property they intended to check about a mile ahead.

All they could hear was the rain and an occasional rustling of leaves in the undergrowth, made by small animals trying to find shelter from the never ending rain.

Finally they saw the outline of a dwelling in the dim light through the trees and Sheriff Logan called for a stop.

"Ok, Jake, here it goes, you approach from the right and I go left, staying under cover as long as we can. We circle to the back while checking if there are any signs of a break-in".

Both men drew their guns and proceeded slowly and careful. When they met up at the back of the cabin none of them had anything suspicious to report.

After a second check they confirmed that the place was untouched and unoccupied.

"If we cut through the woods from here on foot, it's about three miles to the next property, again all uphill, but it will be faster than going back to the car and trying to find a road we can navigate".

It was heavy going, both of them slipping and sliding on the thick layer of leaves and pine needles that covered the ground, the few trails they came across had become waterlogged and muddy.

Repeating their approach at the second cabin, the two men satisfied themselves again that everything was safe and secure, no sign of any human having been near in quite some time.

"There is a third one downhill from here. We might as well look it over on the way back to the car".

By the time they got to their vehicle without finding anything amiss, the dark clouds had become nearly black and the canopy of trees that had protected them from most of the rain was cutting the visibility close to zero.

"There are still two cabins left up here, but they are much further out. So we are going to check the nine less isolated ones today. We will be able to get to them by car".

He called his wife on the radio to let her know where they were and their plan on how to proceed. He could hear the relief in her voice.

"John Bailey called" she informed him "there were some reports of someone who fits Chase Cotter's description having been spotted closer to Portland trying to flag down cars and all the Marshall's resources are concentrating on that area now".

Sheriff Logan swore under his breath.

"What about the men he promised for searching the woods?"

"That's on hold for the moment until they have followed up on the latest information. He said that he just doesn't have enough manpower for an extensive search of the mountain, but he promised to send a chopper as soon as the weather clears".

"Ok Annie, thanks. See you later".

He turned to his Deputy and filled him in on the latest.

"Looks like we are on our own for now", he added.

## CHAPTER 9

Chase Cotter belched and pushed his plate aside.

“What a way to live, that was some food you threw together, beats the prison grub any time”.

Jason’s heart missed a beat ‘so that was it is’ he thought ‘the Hulk (the name he had given to his captor in the absence of another one) is an escaped prisoner, but surely the Marshalls are looking for him. Are they going to find him here? And what will he do if he gets cornered?’ Jason was counting less and less on having a chance to survive the ordeal he was in. ‘Maybe I can negotiate with the Hulk’ was his thought when Chase said

“You and me have a serious talk now if you want to live. For starters I believe I am safe here for a day or two, but you listen good. Here are some ground rules. If anyone comes close to the cabin you get rid of them pronto with whatever story you can come up with, as long as it’s believable. My gun will be pointed at your head all the time. Understand?”

Jason’s gut knotted but he nodded.

“You try anything you’re a dead man, get it? To kill you or anyone who tries to stop me means nothing to me. I have killed others and will do it again before I go back to prison” he grinned a Jason.

“Now let’s get serious. I need money. How much have you got on you?”

Jason stared at him ‘that might be my ticket to survival’ he thought ‘money’.

Chase slammed his balled fist on the table, making the dishes and Jason jump.

“Hey, pay attention here. I ask and you answer pronto, get it?”

Jason swallowed “Y-yes” he stuttered.

“Back to the money, how much”.

“I’ve got a couple of thousand in a bag in the car” he stammered “but I can get you more”.

"A couple of grand is ok for now, don't you move while I look for the greenbacks and you better had not lied to me" Chase gave him a menacing look, unlocked the door and went outside.

Jason looked around frantically for something, anything he could use to defend himself. A knife, there must be a knife somewhere. He could not look earlier, while preparing food, the Hulk was always behind him, watching and not allowing him to use a knife. He hobbled to the kitchen cabinet that held the drawers, where? His brain felt numb, he could not concentrate. As he opened one of the drawers the door was flung open and Chase came in with the cash in one hand and the gun in the other.

He took one look and with three long strides was next to Jason.

"Did I not tell you to stay put" he barked and pistol whipped him across the side of his head. Jason collapsed and for good measure Chase kicked him in his ribs, breaking some.

"The next time I won't be so gentle" he growled at Jason who was rolling on the floor moaning with pain.

"Now git up and sit back on that chair and stop whimpering like a dog".

## **CHAPTER 10**

Shelby approached the car rental desk at the airport.

"I called to book a four-wheel drive" she said to the young woman.

"My name is Shelby Hadley".

"Yes of course Ms Hadley, the car is ready and waiting for you, just sign here please".

Shelby signed, took the keys and was about to leave when she turned back.

"I believe that my husband Jason also hired a car from you yesterday. Is that correct?"

"I am sorry Ms Hadley, but we are not allowed to give out any information about our clients" the young woman said with an apologizing smile.

"That's ok," Shelby smiled back and left.

Turning onto the Highway Shelby settled down for the long drive. 'Of course Jason must have gone to cabin' she thought 'just would have been nice to get a confirmation from the car rental desk'.

She started to think about the amazing times her husband and her had spent at the cabin, away from everything and everybody. No distractions, no phones, no radio, no TV, only the two of them. It was romantic and had strengthened their love. 'Until' she shook her head 'everything went wrong and Jason began to withdraw from me. I still don't know the reason'.

'Our life will change for the better from now on' she vowed to herself. 'I still do love him so very much. We will have to work through some issues and whatever it is that has divided us and overcome it'.

These thoughts made her feel like a weight was lifted from her shoulders, a dark cloud from her mind. She just knew now that nothing that had happened before will destroy their love and get in the way of the two them being together again.

Shelby eased her foot from the gas pedal and squinted through the misty windscreen into the relentless rain. Black clouds kept rolling in over the already dark grey sky.

The Highway look quite deserted, there was no other traffic.

She kept on thinking about how it would be when she will arrive at the cabin, Jason welcoming her with open arms and showering her with his wonderful kisses.

They will cuddle in front of a blazing fire, candles will be flickering with a soft light and her and Jason will be safe from the intruding world, all their problems will disappear.

'Stop dreaming girl and watch the road' she reprimanded herself 'you nearly missed the turn'.

Shelby swung the car carefully onto the unpaved road and realized that the drive up to the cabin will be challenging to say the least and difficult. They had never arrived in weather like this before and she will have to

apply all her skills to navigate what looked now not like a road or even a trail, but more like a quagmire.

She estimated that she had about ten miles to drive under those bad conditions, but there was no turning back now.

Shelby engaged the four-wheel drive, held on tightly to the wheel and began the treacherous ascent.

Over an hour later and wondering if she might have gotten lost, she spotted some faint lights shining through the trees up a slope on her right.

She remembered the steep approach and getting closer Shelby caught sight of the familiar log-cabin and the dark shape of a Jeep parked next it.

Jason is here, she exhaled a sigh of relief.

'It was the right decision to come up here after all' and with that happy thought in mind she opened the car door and rushed towards the covered porch of the cabin, towards the welcoming candle light shining through the windows and towards her husband's arms.

## **CHAPTER 11**

Having not found anything wrong with all the unoccupied properties they inspected, Bill Logan and his Deputy returned to the Sheriff's office long after sundown. The rain had stopped thankfully on their way back, but they still were drenched and exhausted.

Annie had hot coffee ready and told them to get first out of their soaked clothes before having their dinner.

Jake, wearing a pair of jeans and a shirt belonging to the Sheriff, not quite fitting his larger frame, got up from the table after the meal and said "I better get home to get some clothes that fit me" and then turning to Bill Logan "we are going to head out again tonight, yes?"

Sheriff Logan nodded "Now that that damn rain has stooped, it will be easier to check the remaining two cabins".



After Deputy Spencer left, Bill went back to his office to plan the route for later and was joined by his wife.

"How is he handling the death of his brother?" Annie asked "Jake has not been around much until the last couple of months, did Brad and him stay in contact during his time as a Marine?"

"Don't think they were ever very close, given the difference in their ages, but blood is blood" her husband replied.

"I had to fill him in about the sort of man we are looking for and also about what Brad had found at the Miller's, before he got killed. It really shook him up badly and he is more than ever determined to get hold of that murdering swine and get him back to where he belongs, into solitary confinement for the rest of his sorry life".

Annie looked at her husband and he saw a few tears running down her cheeks, tears shed for young Brad the tortured young women, for Mary Miller her husband and all the others who got killed by one savage man, by Chase Cotter.

She turned to go back into the kitchen to prepare and pack some sandwiches for the two men to take with, while waiting for Jake to come back.

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After a quick hot shower and a change of clothes, during which he could not shut off his brain and kept on thinking about his dead brother, Jake Spencer arrived back at the Sheriff's, finding Bill Logan in his office nursing a hot cup of coffee.

"Sit down" and then "Annie, get Jake some coffee please".

"Looks like the rain stopped, at least for now, but we can't expect the promised chopper until tomorrow" he grunted "but at least it will make the going somewhat better".

They finished the coffee and Sheriff Logan instructed his wife to stay close to the phone and radio in case there should be any more news from the Marshall.

"Once we have to leave the car you won't be able to get hold of me, but I will check in when I can" he said, kissed his wife and the two men headed out into the night again.

Annie looked after them with tears in her eyes, she could not shake the feeling of impending doom that was threatening to overcome her.

## **CHAPTER 12**

Jason's body was on fire, not only was his head still spinning and hurting from being pistol whipped and his broken ribs were giving him hell, but in the situation he was in there was no relaxing. His mind was numb and his thoughts were going round and round like a Ferris-wheel.

Being tied to the chair for hours in a cramped position did not help either.

He had tried to talk to his high-jacker a few times, offering him more money, the car and whatever else he wanted, to just leave.

"Keep your mouth shut, I'll tell you soon enough what else I want from you" was the snarled answer "I have to think and your japing is not helping".

Chase paced up and down the cabin for most of the day and into the evening, mumbling to himself, making plans on how to get away and to safety.

'That's it. Tomorrow before sunrise I take the guy and his car. He'll have to drive me over mountain trails and back roads to the coast. I'll find myself a fishing boat and make my way down the coast to Mexico. The Law won't expect that move from me' he giggled to himself 'they think I'll go to the next large town and hide there. No Siree, not me, this boy got brains'.

'Will also be easier to get rid of that guy at some secluded spot on the coast', he mused. Yeah, life is looking up.

Chase started to dream about the señoritas in Mexico what he will do to them and the easy life he will live there.

'Good riddance to the US of A' he thought 'bet the Mexican police won't be as fussy about what I'll do to their whores'.

The thought alone sent shivers of lust and heat to his groin.

'The sooner I get there the better, I'm tired of jerking myself off, I need a woman'.

Not long to wait anymore, half of the night is gone already and the rain has cleared away for now.

He stopped his pacing, looked out of the window into the dark when he saw approaching headlight.

He turned to Jason.

"You better not expect someone you did not tell me about" his rasping voice and his eyes were threatening "whoever it is, you better get rid of them fast, you hear, or it's lights out for you and whoever else is arriving right now".

He untied Jason and kept the gun trained on his head "git out there and chase them off".

Jason went to the door when he heard an all too familiar voice calling "Jason are you there? It's me Shelby, we have to talk".

He rushed to the door, fumbled with the bolt and tore it open. For one second his eyes lit up and the thought of 'Shelby came back to me, she still loves me' went through his mind and then remembering who was standing behind him, not caring about his own life he shouted "get back into the car Shelby, drive away fast".

Shelby was standing on the porch looking at him in shock with a stunned expression in her eyes.

She got out only one word "what ...." when she saw her husband being viciously kicked to the floor by a brute of a man.

Shelby tried to turn and run but got no further than a few yards when she felt a hand grabbing her hair, hauling her brutally back, lifting her up and throw her into the cabin.

She hit her head hard on the floor and through blurred vision could just make out that Jason had suffered the same fate.

Chase slammed the door shut and shot the bolt. He turned and "Lookedy-look" he smirked at her "look what the cat dragged in and who might you be?"

Shelby tried to gather her courage together "I can ask you the same. After all this is my cabin and my husband you just assaulted".

"Assaulted?" he roared with laughter "you called that an assault? High fangled words we are using, you are a feisty one, I like it".

Jason shook his head to clear the fog from his brain and tried to get up.

Chase turned to him while holding his gun pointed at Shelby.

"Now don't you get any ideas little man" he barked "stay where you are".

He took the rope from the chair Jason had been confined to earlier, motioned with the gun for Shelby to join him next to Jason "git over there and tie him up". When Shelby made no move to obey, he again grabbed a handful of her hair and dragged her over to where Jason was still unsuccessfully trying to stand up.

"Hog-tie him and no funny business or I shoot him on the spot".

He stood over them giggling like crazy as Shelby tied Jason's hands behind his back and ran the rope down to his ankles. Chase bent down, took Jason's legs and bending them at the knees with a kick, pulled them up as close to his bound wrists as possible.

"That's how you hog-tie" he grinned "I see I will have to teach you a thing or two. Now finish it, I'll check".

Shelby was kneeling next to Jason "what's going on" her voice was trembling "who is this man?"

"No talking you two unless I ask you something. So what are you doing here? This man, you say is your husband, did not tell me he is expecting company. I warned him not to keep anything from me" he lifted his foot and aimed another kick at Jason.

Shelby tried to shield her helpless husband and took the kick meant for him on her shoulder. "He did not know, I wanted to surprise him, we have things to discuss" she gasped.

"Don't you touch my wife" Jason got out between clenched teeth.

Chase gave him an evil grin "Or what?"

“Get up” he said to Shelby looking her up and down “well, well, you are a beauty, not the usual fare I am used to. You are in luck, there is still time before we leave, might as well get me a taste of high-society cunt for a change”.

She could see the lust in his eyes, the slobber starting to escape the corners of his mouth and looked frantic for a way to get away, while Jason was shouting “leave her alone, I’ll give you whatever you want, money, I’ve got money, how much do you want”.

Chase turned to him, fished a filthy handkerchief from his pocket and stuffed it into Jason’s mouth.

“That will keep you quiet” and turned back to Shelby.

## **CHAPTER 13**

Sheriff Logan found the going on the mountain road much easier now the rain had stopped. They could even see some stars in the sky now and then when the clouds cleared a little and the tree branches moved in the strong wind.

“At this rate we might get to the first cabin by car” he said “at least we can stay in radio contact for longer”.

The deeper they got into the woods and higher on the mountain the more the vehicle started to slip and slide, but he was able to control it and keep it moving at a steady but slow pace.

Jake kept quiet, staring out into the dark beyond the headlights. The death of his brother had hit him more than he had thought possible and thinking about the kind of criminal they were chasing, the things he had done and is maybe still doing, made him wish he could jump out of the car and run and run until he caught up with that scum, tear off his cock, stuff it into his mouth and choke him with it until his eyes popped out of their sockets.

“How far,” he finally broke the silence “to the next empty cabin?”

“Another half hour or so if we don’t get stuck that is”.

Sheriff Logan had his own demons to grapple with. How could this have happened in his peaceful little town. Is he getting too old for the job at hand, did he get too complaisant? Had the easy life in Arrowhead blunted his ability to function properly as a law-man? Maybe if they had called the Millers sooner and he had gone with Brad, three lives would have been spared and that savage monster would already be back in custody where he belongs. Maybe ...

He shook his head. No good to ponder what he could not change anymore. Rather concentrate on the task before them.

'I am still convinced that the convict is holed up somewhere close by' he thought 'and no devil will be able help him once I get my hands on him'.

Aloud he said "the cabin should be about a mile or so ahead, looks like we are going to make it all the way by car".

When they arrived at the dwelling they could see it was another wild goose chase. The place looked and felt deserted and closer inspection proved it was exactly that. No one had been here either in quite some time.

Bill Logan checked in with his wife by radio, there had been no new development about the search for the escapee from the Marshalls.

"Bill why don't you and Jake come back, it's well after midnight and John Bailey promised to send the chopper bright and early in the morning if the weather holds".

"We are out here now, just one more cabin to inspect and we will be on our way back. Sorry, to keep you awake the whole night Annie, but as soon as I am back you can get some rest".

"Don't you worry about me, just be careful and come back safe". I love you and would not know how to live without you, she added silently.

"There it goes Jake, last cabin to look over. If he is not there, we'll have to leave it up to the Marshalls to locate and bring him in".

The strong wind that had risen already a few hours ago was a help to dry the mud on the trails and a good thing it was, the last property to check was the most isolated and inaccessible one.

The branches of the trees were shaking violently as the wind picked up even more, throwing leaves, pine needles and other small wood debris at the windshield.

The Sheriff and his Deputy were driving in silence, Bill Logan concentrating on his driving and what they might find ahead and Jake Spencer once more lost in his thoughts.

'Maybe when this is all over I should consider a career in law enforcement. I have been drifting without direction for too long now, since I was discharged from the Marines as a matter of fact' Jake mused. He lost himself in this, for him a new idea, when the Sheriff's voice disrupted his train of thought.

"Cabin straight ahead, up the hill. Better hoof it from here now, the last couple of hundred yards are very steep, don't want to run out of luck and get the car stuck". Bill Logan added "No gung-ho stuff now Jake, I have a bad feeling about this place".

Both men rammed their Stetsons onto their heads, loosened the guns in their holsters with the Sheriff taking the shotgun from the rack and started a careful approach, moving from tree to tree.

Getting closer they could make out flickering lights shining through the windows and the dark shapes of two cars. One next to the cabin and one in front.

"What the hell" murmured the Sheriff "what is going on here? Did we hit the jackpot now?"

## **CHAPTER 14**

Shelby had her back to the wall and was trying to think fast how to keep this monster away from her.

"I am a lawyer" she said "whatever your problem, whatever you have done, I will help you to sort it out. Let us leave together now and I promise you, I will find a legal way out for you".

Chase roared with laughter "a legal way out for me you crazy bitch? My LEGAL way out is a 210 years jail sentence and no parole" he snorted "can you make THAT go away?"

Shelby's eyes widened in horror and recognition. "You are Chase Cotter" she stammered.

He is the psychopathic rapist and killer who has shown no mercy to any of his victims nor any remorse for the crimes he had committed and Jason and her were at his mercy in this remote place.

But she had to try once more.

"Please, please take the money I have on me" she pleaded "take the car, you can be far away by daylight. All law enforcement agencies are searching for you in and around Portland. Your description is all over the radio and most likely TV, the sooner you leave here, now while it is still dark, the further you can go before they widen the search".

Chase just grinned at her, "You stupid cunt you, I take your money and your car without your permission, but first I get you to shut up".

He kicked her legs from under her and then pulled her up onto her knees. Standing in front of her he opened his pants and before she could take any evasive action he shoved his already erect cock between her lips.

"That's the only use I have got for your mouth you bitch, now suck it".

He grabbed her head with both hands and pushed in with all his strength. He felt her gagging, heard her trying to scream.

He was blazing with lust. Yes! Yes! Fuck the slut with it. Ram! Ram! Fucking cunt, fucking lawyer bitch. He pushed and pushed, her fingers tore at him, he did not care. He felt her strangled scream as she tried to close her teeth.

Chase gave her one punch to the head and pulled out of her mouth, "Oh no, you won't" he panted, pushing her head down, tearing her jeans open he entered her from behind. Shelby let out one horrible, ear-piercing scream, dying away into whimpers of pain as he pounded into her again and again. His big hands found her breasts, squeezed them painfully with all his strength, mauled her nipples with his fingernails until blood started to dribble to the floor. And still his cock was driving into her faster, faster, deeper, deeper while he was moaning and grunting "fucking bitch, fucking whore" until he started to buck as he emptied himself into her.

Jason, bound and gagged, his eyes bulging with the effort to get free, could only watch helplessly as his wife, his beloved Shelby got brutalized by this barbaric monster.



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"Did you hear that" Jake said to Bill Logan "that was a woman screaming" and he was about to charge straight up to the cabin when the Sheriff put a restraining hand on his arm.

"You can't help anyone getting yourself killed. We have to check out what's going on inside first, without alerting Chase Cotter, presuming it is him in there".

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Chase, having spent himself inside Shelby, pulled out and snarled "You whores are all the same, pretending not to want it, but getting your kicks from of a real man fucking your brains out" and turning to Jason "you enjoyed the side show admit it. You can have your turn with this bitch of yours once I am finished with her, bet there won't be much left of her to enjoy" and he roared with laughter.

"But first we get a move on. You two come with me, will make the law think twice to shoot on sight in case the spot us and you better hope they don't, otherwise I kill your bitch first and you after".

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Logan and Spencer had made their way towards the cabin and avoiding the porch pressed themselves close to the log walls.

Lifting his head carefully Bill Logan glimpsed through the window and took in the situation with one look.

He moved away and motioned for Jake to follow. Both men silently retreated into the cover of the trees.

"Cotter is in there alright" he whispered "he has got two hostages. A man lying on the floor bound and gagged and a woman" he swallowed "by the

look of it she just became another one of his rape victims and seems in bad shape”.

“We can’t just charge in and get more people killed, Cotter is armed to the teeth” he carried on “go back to the car, call Annie and tell her to alert John Bailey with our location. It’s sunrise soon enough, they must get the chopper in the air as fast as possible. Then come back here, I’ll keep the surveillance up in the meantime”.

“But Sheriff ....” Jake started to argue.

“That’s an order, Deputy” Sheriff Logan barked “git going”.

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Cotter gave the motionless Shelby a kick and snarled “put your clothes back on or come like you are, all the same to me”. He cut the rope from Jason’s ankles “get up”.

Shelby moaned in pain as she tried to move and covered herself with what was left of her clothes.

“Please”, she whispered again “take what you want, but just go and leave us here. Even with us as shields, the Marshalls will not let you get away”.

“Did I ask for your opinion or permission of what I can take?” he snarled “you two come as my hostages in your car and I’ve got your money already. I’ll take my chances with the law and if I don’t make it, neither will you”.

“Now enough lip flapping, out you go” he opened the door and motioned them with his gun to get out and off the porch towards the car standing in front.

Sheriff Logan, heard the door open and saw the movement in the increasing light and against the candle lit opening. He lifted his shotgun and squinted to get a better look.

‘Damn, damn, damn’ he thought ‘was a bad move after all to send Jake away, that bastard is leaving with his hostages. Together we could have outflanked him’.

He tried to shift his position and in doing so stepped on a dried branch. Cotter heard the noise and went rigid.

He put his face up and sniffed the air like an animal. "Who is out there, show yourself". With one arm around Shelby's neck, her body sagging like a rag-doll's, her legs not able to support her, pointing the gun at Jason's head with the other he started to retreat to the cabin, but there was too much open ground to cover and the morning light was already increasing.

"Let them go Cotter, you are surrounded" Sheriff Logan knew that was a desperate move from his side, a gamble, but he could not let the convict get away.

Chase pushed his two hostages towards the car.

"Get in" he snarled at the same moment as Bill Logan pulled the trigger and the blast of the shotgun rang out.

The shot was aimed high as not to endanger the two hostages. Chase's attention was diverted for one split second. Jason took the chance, turned and tried to head butt him but Chase moving faster, trained the gun back to his head and pulled the trigger.

"No" Shelby managed a strangled scream as Jason's already dead body hit the ground. She collapsed on top of him, but Cotter wrenched open the passenger door, pulled her up, shoved her into the car and got in after her, forcing Shelby into the driver seat.

"Drive" he roared, drooling like a madman as she slumped over the wheel. He leaned over and started the Jeep.

Sheriff Bill Logan had only one thought in his head, he could not let that savage rapist and killer get away, not again. With that in his mind he threw all caution in the wind, left his cover and released another blast of the shotgun trying to hit the tyres.

Cotter saw the movement from the corner of his eyes, spotted the flash of the blast, turned and emptied his gun towards the moving figure of the Sheriff.

"Drive" he bellowed again. He pushed her limp foot down onto the gas pedal and the Jeep jumped forwards.

The wind stopped and the heavens opened up again with a cloudburst.

Jake was on his way back from having radio contact with the Annie, the Sheriff's wife, when he heard the boom of the shotgun once, the sound of a handgun, the shotgun again and then rapid handgun fire. It all happened so fast that by the time he managed to race the couple of hundred yards up the steep slope and reach the open ground in front of the cabin, his breath was coming in ragged gasps, he saw the Jeep roar away, already disappearing into the pouring rain.

His searching eyes spotted one dead body in front of the cabin and Bill Logan lying motionless in a pool of blood, with bullet wounds all over his chest, close by.

"Sheriff" he rushed to his side and went down on his knees. Sheriff Logan opened his mouth trying to speak, but only blood came spurting out. Jake had seen too many men with this sort of wounds not to know that any help was too late for Bill Logan.

The rain drummed against the sodden earth, joining the blood of Bill Logan and Jason Hadley, forming bloody rivulets cascading down the slope.

Jake turned his face to the dark and forbidding sky, cold rain pouring down on him and his mouth opened in a primeval scream of agony.

He got up jumped into the second Jeep and managed to start up the engine.

"You are not going to get away you scum of the earth" he screamed on top of his lungs while he put his foot down and roared after the fugitive's car.

Shelby was in shock, her mind paralysed. Jason, her Jason was dead, dead before she could tell him how much she still loved him, before she could tell him that she has forgiven him and ask him to forgive her for not being prepared to discuss their problems sooner. Problems that seemed so small, so unimportant now.

That slobbering monster in the car had not only violated her in the most brutal and vicious way, but also killed her man, the love of her life and now he is forcing Shelby to help him to get away.

'No, no, I will not help him to get to safety' was the only thought in her numbed mind repeating itself over and over. She tried to stop the car and did not care about the gun being put to her head.

"Drive" Chase bellowed, spraying spittle all over her.

"Kill me you bastard" she whispered, there was no strength left in her, but then her mind jolted awake and screamed inside her head 'no, no, no, even if he gets caught again, he will live while my Jason is dead' a thought she could not bear.

Her vision was blurred, but she remembered the sheer cliff dropping to a deep gorge just off and parallel to the trail they were on.

Shelby wrenched the car to the right with what little fortitude she had left, narrowly missing a rocky outcrop. She gathered the last bit of strength left in her abused and battered body, pushed her foot down, the car gathering speed, trees rushing past and before Chase realized what she was doing and tried to grab the wheel out of her hands the Jeep was airborne, shooting far out over the gorge before starting to tumble down, down, down.

'Jason wait for me, I am on my way to meet you' was Shelby's last thought before they hit the rocks below and exploded into an enormous fireball.

And then there was silence, broken only by the sound of the rain.

## **EPILOGUE**

The little town of Arrowhead buried its Sheriff with full honors. His widow Annie followed the procedure with a stony expression on her face. She had no tears left anymore, she had cried from the moment Jake called her on the radio to give her the tragic news, until the emergency service had brought his body down from the mountain and she had said good-bye to her husband of thirty years.

Annie had locked herself into the bedroom and eyed Bill's service pistol more than once with the thought of ending it all and joining her beloved husband.

But no, Annie was a strong woman and this was not what Bill would have wanted. She resolved to spend the rest of her life involving herself with charity work to help victims of criminals like the "Savage Ghost", help them to heal their wounds, heal their hearts, even if she herself will never be able to heal.

With her mind made up she unlocked the door on the day of the burial and looked straight into Jake's troubled face. He had not left the bungalow since the return of the Sheriff's body, he had kept watch over her in a silent vigil.

"Bill and I thank you" she said softly "but your job here is done. You still have a whole life to live".

The town council had offered Jake the position of Sheriff in the little town of Arrowhead, but Jake declined, citing too many bad memories to be able to stay on.

He however wanted to honor the memory of Sheriff Bill Logan by taking up a position in law enforcement somewhere where he will be needed and vowed to be relentless in hunting down anyone who set a foot outside the law.

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