

Chapter Twenty-Eight

Same Night, Friday, Chicago

The facilities of Cook County Jail rose formidably against the South-Chicago skyline. Building after building presented a menacing, barbed-wired front to the people of the city, as if to say, ‘Don’t screw up. You don’t want to be here.’

The huge complex would have intimidated another man, but Jake knew it by heart. He knew where to go, where to park, who to talk to, and who not to talk to. He waited in his car with the engine running. The second shift, 11:00 PM, would be over in a few minutes. Watching the main building, he recognized the sturdy build of his friend, Sergeant Madden, walking toward the street. Jake got out of his car and waved. She spotted him and walked up to his car.

“Thanks for picking me up,” she said. “I didn’t feel like taking that cab again.”

Jake got out, went around to her side, opened the door like a gentleman, and ushered her in. “I’ll pick you up every night and drop you off every day.” Sergeant Madden got in on the driver’s side. Jake said, “Buckle up, Hon. *It’s the law.*”

Sergeant Madden chuckled at the irony. She retorted, “Don’t you ever work?”

“Sure, I do. Fed Ex, I told you. I’m a supervisor. Besides, I got investments. I told them to handle things without me. They need to learn how to do that. I got to pick up my girl, I told them.” He sped up California Avenue and careened onto the tollway.

“Jake, slow down.”

Jake swerved in and out of vehicles at eighty mph.

“Jake. Jake!”

Jake snickered, “Hey, Hon, I just want to get you to bed... I mean, home. You know, you must be tired.”

“I said, slow down.”

"It's Ok. I told you, I have a black car."

Sergeant Madden clutched her holstered gun and kept her hand on it. "You know what I'm holding, don't you?"

Jake looked over and saw her hand on the gun. He slowed down.

In the New Jersey motel room, Ben sat at the desk and studied the Salem County map. The road on the map that he counted on was straight, no discernable bends, but it was a low-detail map. He retrieved his internet-printed map. There was a bend. Ben began to doubt the roads, and his plan. Maybe Miller's Chapel wasn't there after all. How could two maps be so different? He wished he'd brought his laptop.

Angela came out of the bathroom in just her bra and panties and stood beside Ben. He looked up at her. "Oh, my God."

"What? You found it?"

"No. You're, you know, you're..."

"Hitting on me again, huh?"

Ben stammered, in a trance, at a loss for words. He gawked at Angela in her underwear.

Angela said, "I need to get to bed."

Angela helped Ben get up. He stumbled toward the chair with his eyes continually fixed on her. Angela walked Ben over to his chair, then went to the only bed in the room and casually turned down the sheets. She made sure that the two blankets were perfectly aligned, and that the sheet was folded over neatly. The maid had already done that, of course, but Angela wanted to make sure. Besides, the pillows definitely needed fluffing. Angela took her time, fluffing the pillows, her backside pointing to Ben. She bent over a couple of times.

Angela grew eyes in the back of her head. She sensed Ben's predicament. This was a test. Would Ben rush over and grab her, make furious love to her, satisfy himself, and then do what

men generally did? Would he just turn over and go to sleep after he was done? That would be normal, of course, and expected. That's what Jake would do, or any other man she ever knew. They just couldn't help themselves.

Angela smoothed out the pillows and blankets for what Ben thought was a very long time. Ben sat in the chair, his bed for the night. He got undressed and stared at the most beautiful girl he'd ever known while he took his pants off. He resigned himself to sleeping in the chair, but he didn't have a blanket. That seemed odd. Angela should have thought of that, a blanket for him. Both blankets were on the bed, and Angela was arranging them. She wouldn't deny him a blanket, would she?

Angela finished with the pillows. "Over here, Benny."

Ben walked over to the bed. Angela waited for Ben to get in and pulled the covers and blankets all the way down to the bottom of the bed. She got in on Ben's left. They turned toward each other and kissed.

Still kissing, Ben reached for Angela's bra fastener in the front. Clip, undone. Angela's bra fell away. Ben stopped kissing, looked at Angela's breasts, and touched her there lightly.

Angela said, "I'm sorry."

"What?"

She looked down at her own chest, then back to Ben. "Your wife, you know. She's a lot bigger. She's beautiful, Ben. I understand."

Ben said, "I have a theory about that. Do you want to hear it?"

"What?"

"I have a theory about breasts."

"What are you talking about?"

"About large breasts and small breasts. I have a theory. Do you want to hear my theory?"

"Is it going to take a long time?"

“No. It has to do with electricity. You see, large breasts induce resistance because there's more fatty tissue, and therefore more voltage. Small breasts, like yours, create current from stimulation, so there's more amperage, more 'oomph,' so to speak, although that's not technically part of my theory, but it's definitely relevant if you allow for conduction.”

Angela shoved her hand into Ben's shorts. “I have a theory about men.”

Ben gasped.

“It has nothing to do with electricity. Do you want to hear my theory?”

Ben sucked in his breath at the touch. “Maybe later.”

They made love.

Ben leaned over and kissed her fondly. “That was wonderful,” he said.

Angela said, “You know, Ben, when we get married, will you buy me a car like the rental we have? I love that car.”

Ben faked a panic attack, “Well, Angela... Uh, well, this is pretty sudden. Uh, I don't know. I don't know if I can do that. Can you give me a little time? I mean, do I have to buy it that very day?”

Angela laughed and pulled him in. “Ah, you're such a nut.”