

NIGHTMARES OF MURDER

© Dana Pride

SUNDAY

CHAPTER 1

Kori rushed around the corner in the dark night as quickly as she could, walking, though, not running, so she wouldn't arouse suspicion. She glanced at her surroundings without exposing her face. Nobody had seen her: no one knew what she had done. She had to get away from the scene immediately, away from the incident, away from the memory she had just created by being there. She had never before been in this area, in this part of town. This was not the type of place to come in the middle of the night – why had she come here? She hurried down the cold, shadowy street, past the tall brick buildings, her face looking at the ground. Steam rose from a nearby manhole as she scurried by it. Not another soul was on the street; but she couldn't risk running into a police officer who might ask where she was going or a good Samaritan who might try to offer her some help, or anybody at all.

Her life would never be the same. She had done the unthinkable. She didn't want to think about it. She couldn't stop thinking about it. Her mind and her conscience would never again be clear. From this night until the moment of her death, she would know she was guilty of murder. She had killed someone.

She couldn't remember the details of the murder. Who was this person? Why had she been there? How had she killed this person? She didn't know; she just knew she had ended a person's life, and she had had no right to do that. She would have to carry this burden with her for the rest of her life, a burden so heavy it made her struggle just to put one foot in front of the other. She began to concentrate on her feet, left in front, pulling right to the front, pulling left to the front, wondering how all her life she had been able to walk without consciously making each foot take turns pulling her entire body forward. Her feet were so very heavy, as if each one were pulling a ball and chain.

She had murdered someone. She had committed the worst crime, the worst sin. Nobody else knew what a terrible thing she had done, but she knew it. She could never tell anybody. Now she would never be able to get married, because she couldn't marry a man and then keep such a horrible secret from

him – and if she ever told him, he wouldn't be able to accept her. No, she could never tell anybody anyway. She turned another corner and inhaled the scent of fresh bread baking as she shuffled by a bakery. It smelled so good, much better than anything she deserved to smell. She should only be allowed to smell the odor of the garbage from the overflowing bin across the street or the rotting banana peel in the gutter. Oddly, she couldn't smell these things, she could only smell the bread, still, even though now she was more than two blocks away from the bakery.

She had to put as much room as possible between herself and the scene of the crime. Why couldn't she remember it now? What did the crime scene look like? All she could recall was rushing down several flights of stairs to get away from the dead body, escaping through a back door into an alley, and rushing between buildings to get to the street. She was so scared. She didn't want to be here. She didn't remember why she had come here or what had driven her to commit this crime. She was freezing on the outside but burning on the inside; so very cold, yet at the same time, she was on fire. She couldn't feel her lips or her fingertips. Her skin was growing clammy in the muggy darkness. She was so thankful she didn't meet anyone on the street – her hair was probably a frizzy mess by now. Wait, her hair should be the least of her concerns. If someone were to see her, she could be arrested! She quickened her pace.

As she scampered down the block, it seemed to lengthen. She instinctively knew she was heading in the direction toward her home, but how could she ever get there if she couldn't get to the end of this block? Was she going the right way? She had to get out of this part of town, to a familiar area she recognized, and at the same time she had to avoid being recognized. She suddenly had the feeling someone was behind her, getting closer to her. No, it couldn't be the person she had killed... but it could be someone who wanted to kill her! She had to get out of here!