

Chapter 1 *The doctor*

I met Dr. Jack Daly in August.

It was a Saturday afternoon. I was at a party in Denver at my friend Judy Kaplan's house. We were in the backyard and it was hot. It's always hot in the summer in Denver. It was a good party. About fifty people were there and there were drinks and good food.

I walked around the backyard and talked to people. I had a drink and tried some food. And then, I met Jack Daly.

"Hi," he said. He had black hair and blue eyes. "My name's Jack. Jack Daly."

"Hi," I said. "I'm Flick. Flick Laine."

We talked a little. He told me he was a doctor and that he worked at the University of Colorado Hospital in Denver.

"What about you?" he asked me.

"I'm a detective," I said. "Denver Police Department."

"Oh, a cop!" he said with a smile. He had very white teeth.

I smiled back at him. "Yeah," I said, "a cop."

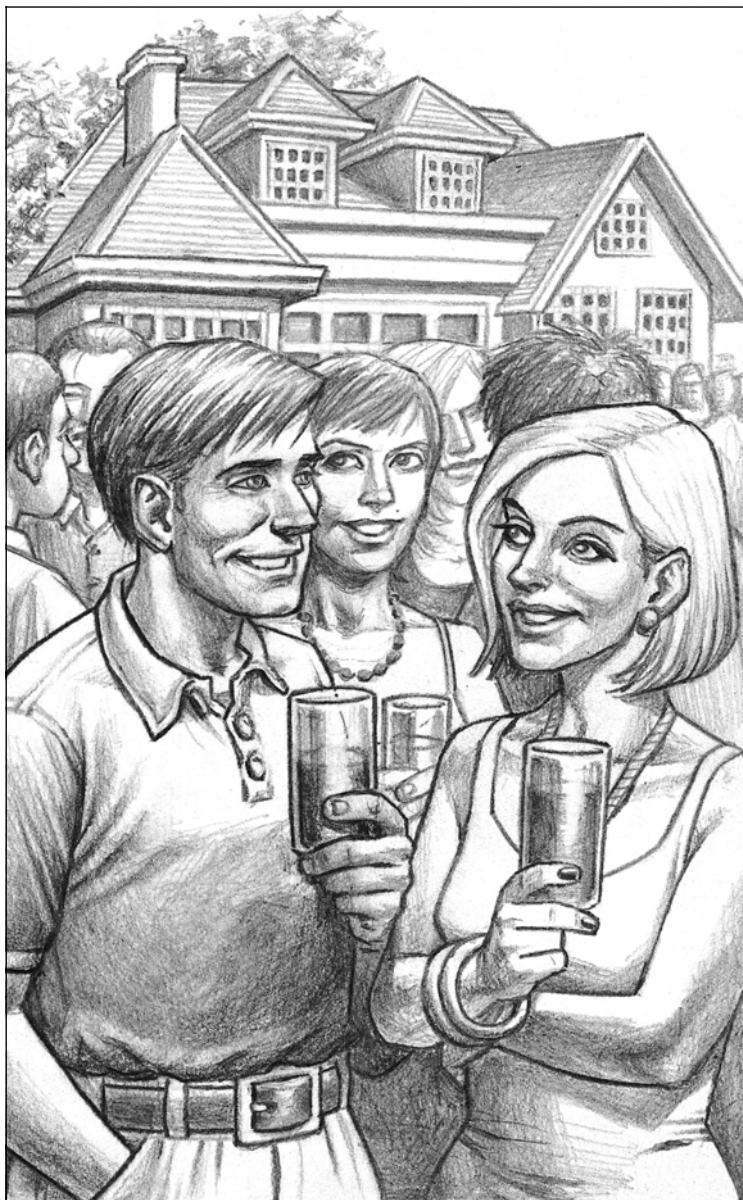
"So where's your police car?" he said.

"That's my car, over there," I said. "It's the red 1957 Chevrolet."

"A '57 Chevy! That's a beautiful car!" he said. "I love old Chevies."

We talked some more about cars. Then, "OK," he said, "now tell me more about *you*."

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“Well,” I said, “my first name’s . . . er . . . Felicity.” I laughed.

“Felicity?”

“Yes,” I said. “My dad liked it. But please call me Flick.”

We talked a little more. After some minutes, he said, “Well, I’m leaving now, Flick. Can I see you again some time?” He smiled again. He had a beautiful smile.

I smiled too. “OK. Sure,” I said and gave him my phone number. He walked slowly out of the backyard and I watched him. “Tall and dark. Nice!” I thought.

Later, after the party, I talked to Judy about Daly.

“Tell me about the doctor,” I said.

“Jack Daly?” Judy looked at me. “He’s a very good doctor. All the rich people go to him; you know, movie stars, sports stars. He’s famous at the hospital.” Judy is a doctor too, at the university hospital.

“Oh, famous, is he?” I said. “I don’t often like famous people.”

Judy looked into my eyes. “Oh, come on, Detective Laine,” she said, “you like *him*! I watched you with him. All the women like him.”

* * *

The next Monday, Jack Daly phoned me.

“I want to talk to you about something,” he said. “How about coffee?”

“Sure,” I said.

“Friday, eleven o’clock at the Black Cat coffee shop on Broadway?”

“OK,” I said. “See you on Friday.”

But I never saw Jack Daly again. On Wednesday my

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boss, Leo Cohn, chief of the Denver Police Department, called me into his office.

“Dead?” I said. “Jack Daly?”

“Did you know him?”

“Not very well,” I said. “I met him at a party four days ago.”

“Oh,” said Cohn. “Well, now he’s dead.”

“How?” I asked. “Was it at the hospital?”

Cohn stood by his desk with some papers in his hand. He was a thin man who worked too much. He never sat down.

“No,” said Leo. “He died in his office downtown. Reno’s there now.” Reno was Danny Reno, a detective in the Denver Police Department. “He thinks Daly killed himself.”



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“Killed himself?” I felt cold.

“Reno thinks so,” said Leo.

“But Daly phoned me on Monday, Leo,” I said. “He wanted to talk to me about something – this Friday. A man who wants to kill himself doesn’t do that!”

“Well, Reno says he’s dead and he has a gun in his hand,” he said. “Reno’s waiting for you. Go and have a look. The office is at 1237 Sherman.”

I looked at my watch. It was nine o’clock. I took my car key and my gun and got into my red Chevrolet. I drove to Daly’s office on Sherman.