

Misty Lake

Chapter nine:

Barbara had hoped that they might make love after Bill had awoken her so early in the morning. Instead he had chosen to head down to the basement and get his usual workout in before heading to the office. Bill was all about routine, and in many ways so was Barbara. She figured she might as well text Mary and see if she was up and willing to get an early workout in, but when she texted her there was no reply.

She wore her standard walking garb that included black yoga pants, black toque and black jacket over top of a sweater. The only color in an otherwise dark, damp and cool misty morning was her runners, but she was warm and dry and that's all that mattered to her.

Her pace was quick as she was just trying to get through the walk, but without her friend to feed off of every step seemed tedious. She pulled her phone out to see if maybe Mary might have texted her back, realizing that her phone had no service, which was a regular occurrence for the area in which she lived which was close to the American border.

It wasn't as though she hadn't gone out on her own before, but her mind was filled with thoughts about Bill's aloofness. Where she would normally have stuck to the main roads when she was by herself, she had somehow unwittingly taken the route down to the park where it was stone quiet. No traffic, no pedestrians. No nothing, just the sounds of

her breathing and the slightest trace of ocean waves breaking on the rocky shoreline some distance away.

A smile ran across her face, as she had to laugh at herself for being so tuned out. The fact was she had some concerns about her relationship with her husband and there was that missing underwear that she had completely forgotten to ask him about. That was a strange one to her.

She hadn't walked more than a couple of miles when she decided to turn back for home. It was then that she suddenly heard a strange noise.

At first, she wasn't sure what she heard. Maybe it was footsteps. Not from hard-soled shoes hitting the sidewalk like somebody walking to their car, or someone hurriedly marching to the bus stop because they were running a few minutes late, but more of a soft sound like the soles of running shoes walking carefully so as not to disturb the ground beneath them.

Barbara did a quick look around. The visibility was poor from the foggy dampness of the marine air and she had difficulty seeing more than a couple of hundred feet in front of her. She didn't want to appear nervous but decided to pick up the pace as the sound, though barely discernable, was now constant.

'Stupid', she thought, for putting herself there.

Undoubtedly, she was imagining things anyway. She was getting caught up in her own thoughts. It was probably just a raccoon looking for something to eat, or a stray dog wondering around lost, but it didn't sound like a four-legged creature. The cadence suggested two feet.

'Fuck,' she chastised herself, 'she should have stayed on the main road.'

But before she could figure out what to do, she had turned the corner of the block and had come face to face with a taller female figure. There was a gasp as her heart skipped a beat, and then recognition set in.

“Mary?”

Mary had stuck her arms out in a reflexive action, her hands resting on Barbara’s shoulders.

“Are you okay?” she asked.

Barbara took a step back regaining her composure.

“Jesus! You scared the shit out of me. What are you doing down here?”

“What do you mean? You texted me to tell me you were going for a walk.”

“You didn’t answer. I figured you were still sleeping and then my phone service kicked out.”

“I thought I would catch up to you on the main road but when I didn’t see you there I figured you must have come this way, which by the way is pretty fucking stupid at this time of morning.”

A sense of relief had come over Barbara. She was quite happy that her friend had come to find her.

“Tell me about it,” she agreed.

The two of them began walking back up the slight hill to the main road a few blocks away. Barbara kept a vigilant ear for any suspicious sounds, but there were none.