JANA RICHARDS

ROMANCE SAMPLER

ROMANTIC SUSPENSE NOVELS

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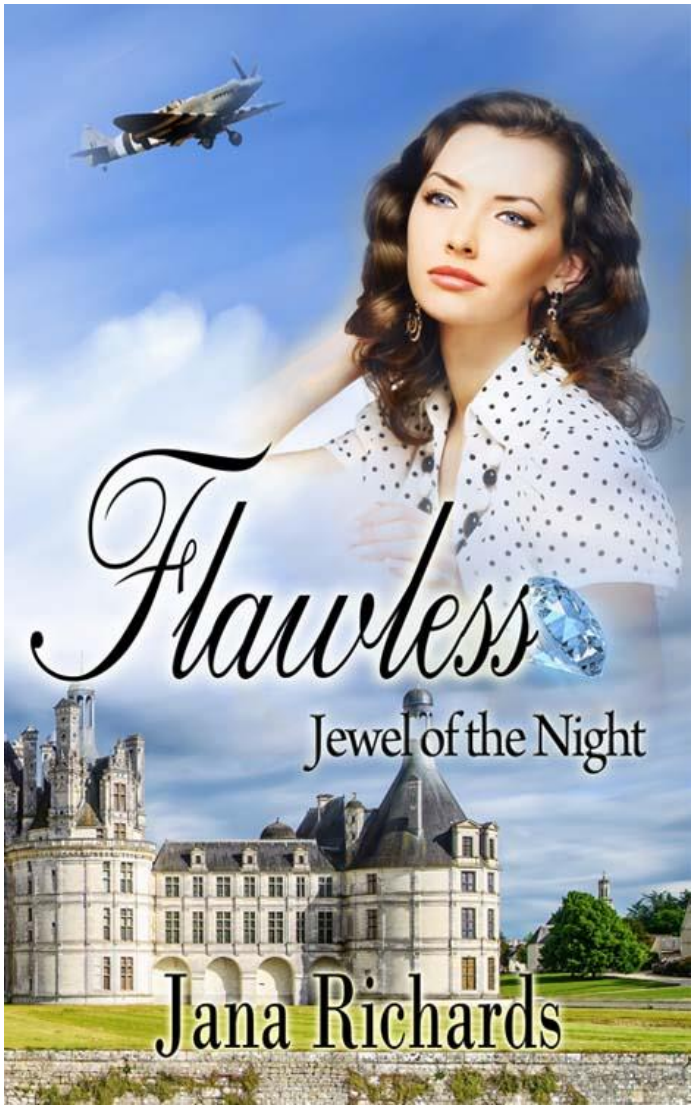
Flawless

France, 1942. The world is at war. The Nazis have stolen the infamous blue diamond, *Le Coeur Bleu,* intending to barter it for weapons that will destroy the Allies. Jewel thief Hunter Smith is given a choice; help the French Resistance steal back the diamond and avenge the death of his best friend, or stay locked up in an English prison. He chooses revenge.

Resistance fighter Madeleine Bertrand's husband died when he was betrayed by Hunter Smith. How can she now pretend to be married to the arrogant American? How can she betray Jean Philippe's memory by her passionate response to Hunter's kisses? Neither is prepared for the maelstrom of attraction that erupts between them. To survive they must uncover the mysteries of the past and conquer the dangers of the present. But first Madeleine must decide if her loyalties lie with her dead husband and the Resistance or with the greatest love of her life.



Chapter One

Pentonville Prison, London, April 1942

Down the hall, the heavy iron door creaked open, then closed again with a clang. Footsteps echoed on the stone floor, growing louder as they approached his prison room. When the footsteps suddenly stopped, Hunter Smith opened his eyes, surprised. In the eighteen months he'd been in this God-forsaken place, no one had visited him, not his so-called friends, and certainly not his parents.

He turned his head. A neat little man in an impeccable black suit and bowler hat waited patiently for the guard to unlock the barred gate of his cell.

"He shouldn't give you any trouble, Guvnor," the guard said as he opened the grate. "Not like some is in 'ere. Quick to steal your purse and slit yer throat for yer trouble, most of 'em. But I'll stay close by, just in case."

"That won't be necessary." The little man's voice reflected British public schools and a cultured upbringing. Hunter hated him immediately. "Please wait behind the outer door. I'll call you when I'm ready."

"If that's what you want, Guvnor." The guard shrugged, relocked Hunter's cell, and retreated beyond the iron door with a clanking of keys. When the door had banged shut behind him, the little man spoke again.

"I have a proposition for you."

Hunter sat up, wincing as his feet touched the floor and his back protested in pain. The lumpy, too-short cot caused him no end of aggravation. "Is that so?"

"I want you to steal a diamond for me."

Hunter couldn't restrain a burst of mocking laughter. The irony of the little man's request would be funny if it weren't so pathetic.

"You want me to steal a diamond?" He rose and swept an arm around to encompass his prison cell. "I'd love to accommodate you, sir, but I'm afraid I'm a bit indisposed at the moment."

The little man surveyed the room, wrinkling his nose in distaste as his gaze met the bucket in the corner that served as Hunter's toilet. "If you agree to my request, I can have you released."

Hunter's heart rate tripled, but he kept his face neutral. He'd do almost anything to get out of this hell hole. Anything but steal another diamond.

He resumed his prone position on the cot. "I'm sorry you've wasted your time in coming here. I've turned over a new leaf. Seen the error of my ways." He flung one arm over his eyes. "Besides, I'm a lousy thief. That's how I ended up in here. I'm no longer interested in stealing jewels."

"I'm sorry to hear that."

Hunter waited to hear the man call for the guard, waited for the footsteps that would signal he had left the cell, but all remained silent. He lifted his arm and opened his eyes. The little man stood patiently, waiting. Hunter rose to his feet once more.

"Who the hell are you?"

"Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Alastair Campbell, and I am the head of the Special Operations Executive."

"Bully for you." Hunter had no idea what the Special Operations Executive was, but despite himself he was intrigued.

Campbell read his mind. "The SOE sends operatives to France, where they make contact with the French Resistance. We supply the Resistance with arms and two-way radios. The information they've supplied us on the movements of the Nazis in occupied France has been invaluable."

"Perhaps if I were British I might be interested in joining your little band of merry men. But I'm not British, and I'm not interested."

Arms folded, Hunter stared down at Campbell. His best efforts to intimidate the much smaller man were having little effect. Campbell smiled indulgently, like a kindly head-master at a stubborn and not very bright student.

"I'm well aware of your American citizenship. I'm also aware that you've spent a good portion of your life living in France and that you speak perfect French."

That he'd lived in France wasn't exactly a secret, but the idea that someone had gone to the trouble to find out unsettled Hunter. What else did this little man know about him?

"Dropping into occupied France to have tea with the Resistance doesn't exactly sound like a good career move. I hear the Nazis don't take kindly to spies. I'm afraid I'll have to decline your lovely offer." Again Hunter lay on his cot and closed his eyes, waiting for Campbell to leave.

"Not even for *Le Coeur Bleu*?"

Hunter's eyes snapped open, his blood pounding in his ears. "What do you know about The Blue Heart?"

"Only that it is one of the most famous and rare diamonds in the world, over 30 carats, and said to be flawless."

Hunter rose from his cot and paced his small cell, heart racing. "Ah, finally something you don't know. *Le Coeur Bleu* has a small flaw, an inclusion visible only with a jeweler's loupe."

Campbell inclined his head. "My mistake. I bow to your superior knowledge of the stone."

He met Campbell's calm stare. He doubted this man ever made mistakes. "What else do you know about the diamond?"

"I know the diamond is reputed to have magical powers. Some even say it is cursed."

"You don't really believe in magical powers, do you?" Hunter scoffed.

Campbell lifted one shoulder in a delicate shrug. "Perhaps, perhaps not. Do you think your friend Jean Philippe Bertrand believed in magic?"

All the air rushed out of Hunter's lungs and he struggled to breathe. "What do you know about Jean Philippe ?"

"That he came into possession of *Le Coeur Bleu* and was murdered for it by the Nazis."

Hunter dropped heavily onto his cot, shock and pain turning his knees to water. Snippets of the telegram he'd received from his best friend a few weeks before his arrest flashed in his head. *Need to buy Heartstone times two from Jewish refugee. Desperate. Send cash.* Hunter had immediately wired JP the money to buy the Heartstone, the name by which *Le Coeur Bleu* was sometimes known. He never heard from Jean Philippe again. In all the months of his captivity he'd clung to the hope that Jean Philippe was safe. But now that hope was dashed.

"Dead? You're sure?"

"Yes. The SOE is very well connected in France. I can assure you, your friend was killed for *Le Coeur Bleu*."

Guilt flowed through Hunter's veins like a poison. If he hadn't sent the money, JP wouldn't have had the diamond and the Nazis would have had no reason to kill him.

Campbell stepped closer to Hunter's cot, determination glittering in his eyes. "I'm giving you the opportunity to avenge your friend's death. Will you take it, Mr. Smith?"

Anger filled Hunter, making him pace his cell once more. How dare this man use JP's death for his own purposes? "How is stealing The Blue Heart going to avenge Jean Philippe's death? It's just a stone, Mr. Campbell. Very pretty, very valuable, but just a rock. Is stealing it going to bring him back?"

"No, it won't," Campbell conceded, "but it will hurt the Nazis immensely. I can assure you that taking *Le Coeur Bleu* from them will reduce their capacity to fight, Mr. Smith. It may even shorten the war and provide the turning point we're looking for. Is this not what your friend would have wanted?"

As Hunter stared into Campbell's round face, he remembered the last stinging conversation he'd had with his friend. *"If you used your God-given talents for good instead of squandering them on party tricks, perhaps you'd be a lot happier. It's time to grow up, Hunter. For once in your life, be a man."*

Perhaps the time had finally come.

"How soon can I get out of here?"

Campbell smiled in satisfaction. "Follow me."

* * *

The full moon lit the night sky, showing the way. When the co-pilot turned in his seat and grinned at Hunter, he looked more like a boy on an adventure than a soldier on a deadly-serious spy mission.

"This is where it gets interesting," he said. "We're now over occupied France. We should be at the rendezvous point in approximately ten minutes."

Hunter nodded and stared out the window of the rear cockpit to the land below. Not a single light burned in the French countryside, giving the eerie impression of abandonment, as if everyone had fled. Or been killed.

He shook off the disturbing sensation. He knew that somewhere down there his French contacts waited for him and for the load of arms and ammunition accompanying him. The plane itself had made several of these excursions into occupied France to pick up or drop off operatives and bring much-needed supplies to the Resistance. The sturdy little Lysander had the advantage of being able to land and take off on short, make-shift runways and could fly low enough to be invisible to radar. The perfect spy plane.

The pilots consulted their maps and compasses, their only navigational aids aside from the full moon. Suddenly, the co-pilot pointed toward the ground below.

"There's the spot. Prepare for landing."

Hunter peered out the window once more. Four lights flickered beneath them, marking a crude landing strip. The plane circled once before making a bone-jarring landing on what must have been a farmer's field.

As the plane came to a stop, a car skidded to a halt beside them and three people jumped out. Hunter had been prepared for the landing by the SOE at his three-week training session. He grabbed his knapsack and the suitcase-sized two-way radio he was delivering and opened the rear cockpit door, descending as quickly as he could down the ladder that had been fixed to the port side of the plane for quick entries and escapes. Two men unloaded rifles from the large tank under the belly. Another person retrieved and extinguished the torches used to light the plane's way to the landing. In a matter of a few minutes, the arms were loaded in the trunk of the car, and the Lysander began its taxi down the field, picking up speed until it

lifted off the ground. Within seconds, the plane disappeared into the night sky, its black matte finish making it all but invisible.

"*Dépêchez-vous*! Get in the car!"

Hunter tossed his gear into the back seat behind the front passenger. The rest of the crew piled in, and the driver took off, tires spinning.

No one spoke as they raced away. Everyone knew the danger. Though the Lysander might be invisible to radar, the Germans would have heard its approach and were likely searching for them right now. If they were caught by a German patrol with arms stowed in the trunk, it was all over.

A few moments later the car came to a screeching halt, dust flying all around it. The driver turned to Hunter.

"Get out! Quickly!"

They hadn't mentioned this in the three-week training course.

When he hesitated, the driver shouted again. "Get out!"

Hunter grabbed the radio and his knapsack and wrenched open the car door, stumbling in his haste to get out. As soon as he slammed the door shut, the car took off again, pebbles and dirt flying. He shielded his eyes from the onslaught. What the hell was he supposed to do now?

When the dust cleared, he realized he wasn't alone. Someone stood just down the road, waiting. Hunter could only hope this was part of the plan, that this person was friend rather than foe. He straightened his shoulders, picked up the radio, and moved forward.

For a long moment the person stood watching him, saying nothing. In frustration, Hunter broke the silence.

"Hello? Can you help me?" he said in French.

"Monsieur Smith?"

Hunter hesitated, surprised. A woman's voice. He hadn't expected his contact to be a woman.

"*Oui*."

It had been a while since he'd spoken French. Hell, when he'd been in prison he'd barely spoken at all. The words still felt rusty on his tongue, but the French of his childhood, his childhood with Jean Philippe, was coming back to him quickly.

"We must get back to town before the sun comes up," the woman said as she started briskly down a dirt path off the main road, not waiting for him. Hunter hoisted his knapsack onto his back and picked up the radio, hurrying to catch up with her.

"You know my name, but I don't know yours."

"It's Madeleine."

"Where are you taking me?"

"To Lille. It is about five kilometers from here. You will stay with Monsieur Gagnon until he finds you another place to stay. You came here to look for work. You will present yourself at Chateau de Maisoneuve tomorrow as a gardener. The Germans are always looking for someone to do their dirty work for them."

Her words came out clipped, as if she were annoyed with him for not knowing all the details of his cover already. Her attitude irritated him.

"Look, Madeleine, in their infinite wisdom, Special Operation Executive didn't bother to tell me anything about my cover, so don't blame me."

"What exactly do you know about being a gardener?" She picked up her pace, and Hunter had to lengthen his stride to keep up with her.

"What's to know? I stick a shovel into the ground occasionally and spread manure. It's just a cover. I'm here for *Le Coeur Bleu*, not the roses."

Madeleine threw up her hands. "Ah, yes, *Le Coeur Bleu*. That's all you're really interested in, isn't it?"

"Of course I'm interested in it. Getting it away from the Germans is the whole reason I'm here."

"You mean stealing it."

What was her problem? "Yes, I mean stealing it. You don't think the Nazis are going to hand it over if I say 'pretty please,' do you?"

Madeleine stopped suddenly and spun to face him. The sky had lightened just enough for him to see the fury in her eyes. "You're nothing but a common thief. I know all about you, Monsieur Smith. I know you were imprisoned for jewel theft in London. I know the only reason you got out was because Monsieur Campbell needed you to steal this jewel. You think it is better to steal *Le Coeur Bleu* than to rot in jail. Do you think this is a lark, a game we play here, Monsieur Smith? I can assure you, you will soon regret coming to France."

She turned on her heel and marched off, leaving Hunter to stare at her retreating back, angry and dumbfounded at her holier-than-thou attitude. He stalked after her once more.

"I can assure *you*, Mademoiselle, I already regret coming to France."

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Seeing Things

When psychic Leah McKenna “sees” the abduction of a small boy, she knows she must help find him, no matter the danger to herself. David Logan, the boy’s uncle, doesn’t believe in psychic phenomenon. He believes Leah knows who kidnapped his nephew, and plans to stick close to her to discover the truth. As they search for Jeremy they uncover truths about themselves and the way they feel about each other. Can Leah convince him her visions, and her love for him, are real before time runs out for all of them?

Chapter 1

Leah McKenna swept out her arms, imitating the wings of a dragon. "Gertrude the dragon told Toby to have faith. But Toby was afraid of flying. What if she fell off Gertrude's back? What if she got airsick and threw up all over Gertrude's beautiful shiny green scales? "

She paused as her audience of four-year-olds hooted with laughter. She'd told groups of kids the story she'd created about Gertrude and Toby many times, changing bits and pieces in each retelling. But the pleasure she got from telling stories to children never changed.

"'Have faith, Toby, and hang on!' Gertrude said. Suddenly they were in the air. The dragon spread her giant wings and they soared over the edge of the cliff.

"Toby closed her eyes as tight as she could, too afraid to look.

"But Gertrude told her, 'Open your eyes and see how beautiful everything looks from up here.' Toby opened one eye, and then the other eye. She saw her village and all the people below waving at them. She saw the fields that looked like her mother's beautiful patchwork quilt, all different colors and shapes. And then she saw the ocean. It was such a beautiful blue-green color, exactly the shade of her baby brother's eyes. Toby threw her arms around Gertrude's scaly neck. 'Oh, thank you,' she said.

"And Gertrude said, 'You are very welcome. See what happens when you believe? You can fly!'"

Leah's young audience cheered and clapped. She laughed with them, their exuberance infectious. Contentment flowed through her as she watched their happy faces. How lucky she was to have a job that let her work with kids on a daily basis.

"Okay everyone, we're going to read one more book before snack time. This is one of my absolute favorite--"

The ground suddenly shifted beneath her as daylight turned to darkness...

Leah trembled on the edge of consciousness, trapped in the shimmer of light that marked the onset of one of her visions. She wanted to scream at the injustice of it all. The visions had been absent for two years, since the tragedy that had shaken the foundations of her world. She'd started to believe that she had finally been left in peace. Now that peace shattered into a thousand tiny shards.

The ringing in her ears reached a crescendo. Waves of panic and nausea rolled through her stomach. All traces of her normal, everyday life disappeared. In the next instant she was transported onto a quiet residential street. Leah shivered in the cold, rubbing her hands across her arms to warm herself.

The bare branches of stately elms canopied the snow-covered street, which was lined with older two- and three-story homes. The street looked familiar, almost like her own neighborhood in Winnipeg, the city on the Canadian prairies where she lived. A small boy wearing a winter parka and a bright blue knitted hat walked towards a deserted school.

Oh God, please not another child.

A car stopped at the curb. A man got out and stepped toward the boy, his hand outstretched. The boy shook his head at first and attempted to go around him, but after a few steps, he turned around. He listened with rapt attention. Finally he reached for the man's hand and together they walked to the car.

Leah tried to scream at the boy to run, but no sound would come from her closed throat. Her heart hammered in her chest as she helplessly watched the car pull away with the boy staring out the back window.

As suddenly as it appeared the scene vanished.

When Leah's sight cleared, ten pairs of anxious four-year-old eyes stared at her with a mixture of curiosity and fear. She knew only seconds had elapsed, though the vision had seemed to pass in a slow, dreamlike state. She took a deep calming breath, remembering that this was Friday and she was in the Winnipeg Public Library where she worked. Her regular Friday morning story-hour group sat in a semi-circle in front of her. Relief flooded through her when she caught sight of a well-worn copy of *Peter Rabbit* beside her on the floor, and she remembered they'd been about to read it. She picked up the book with trembling fingers, the familiar feel of it giving her a much-needed sense of normalcy.

"Okay everyone," she said. She forced a smile, hoping to reassure the children. "When we finish the story it's snack time."

Why now, after two years? Why couldn't these visions leave her alone? All she wanted was a normal life like everyone else.

She struggled to keep the panic at bay.

But as she finished reading the book and watched the children jump up and head toward the snack table, she knew instinctively that what passed for normal in her life had just been irrevocably altered.

* * * *

As soon as Leah bundled the last of her young students into his snowsuit and sent him off with his mother, she sought out her supervisor. Should she tell Helen she was seeing things again, that the visions that had nearly destroyed her two years ago had returned? Should she insist she needed to rescue a child whose identity and location she didn't know, from an unknown man who may or may not be dangerous? She couldn't even say for sure that the vision was real. Why should anyone believe her?

She found Helen in her office. Leah knocked softly on the open door and stepped inside, closing the door behind her. She ran her suddenly sweaty palms across her jeans.

"Helen, I need... I need to take some time off."

Her supervisor stared at her computer screen. "Okay," she said absently. "Fill out the forms and I'll look at them tomorrow."

Leah felt close to tears. "No, you don't understand. I need to go now."

Helen looked up sharply. "What's happened?" She got to her feet. "Are you ill? God, you look as pale as a ghost. You're shaking."

"I'm fine. I just need to take a few days off. I don't know how long. For...for personal reasons."

"It's happening again, isn't it?"

Leah closed her eyes and nodded.

After a long moment Helen nodded. "Okay, go. I'll look after the paperwork. Don't worry about anything here." She pulled Leah into a quick hug. "Just take care of yourself, please."

"Thank you, Helen. I'm sorry to leave so abruptly--"

"It's okay. You take care of...whatever you need to take care of."

Leah rushed home, hurriedly dropping her winter jacket on the floor and kicking off her boots as soon as she stepped inside her house. She needed to know the truth. Had she just witnessed an abduction, or was there a less sinister explanation for what she'd seen? If a child was in trouble and she could help in some way, she had to step forward, no matter how frightening. She couldn't live with herself if a child suffered because she was too afraid to act.

There was one way to find out.

She flipped through her address book until she found the number she wanted, then picked up the phone and quickly punched it in before she lost her nerve. Her call was answered on the first ring, giving her no time for second thoughts.

"Winnipeg Police Service. Detective Hampton speaking."

Hearing the detective's voice again after all this time brought back painful memories. For a moment her courage faltered and she nearly hung up. But the image of the small boy kept her on the line.

She cleared her throat, her voice wavering slightly. "Detective Hampton, this is Leah McKenna. I... I saw something this morning. I need to know if it was real." She described her vision and the little boy.

Silence greeted her description. She held her breath.

"Leah, I think you'd better come down here right away. You've just described a little boy who went missing this morning."

* * * *

Less than an hour later, Leah sat facing Detective Hampton while he scribbled in his notebook. As he wrote, she tried to distract herself by taking a guess at the detective's age. Thirty-four, she ventured, old enough to look mature, but young

enough to appear lean and fit. He had a full head of dark hair, with no gray that she could see. Detective Hampton didn't strike her as the kind of guy who dyed his hair.

She clasped her hands together to keep them from twitching and looked around the detective's office. Files and papers littered his desk and overflowed onto the floor. The institutional beige walls were covered with posters, calendars, and sticky notes in bright neon colors. The office looked overworked and slightly rumpled, much like the detective himself.

He finished writing in his notebook, and then looked up at Leah. "Okay, tell me once more, from beginning to end, about this vision."

Leah took a deep breath and recounted what she'd seen. The vision had lost none of its clarity or strength. When she closed her eyes she saw every detail of the little boy's clothing and the shape of his face. He seemed so familiar to her.

"What about the man who took the boy? What does he look like?"

She opened her mouth to speak and then realized she had nothing to say. "I don't know. I didn't get a look at his face. The only thing I saw clearly was his hand when he held it out to the boy."

"How about the car? Do you know the make and model? How about a number on the license plate?"

She hung her head, feeling like a failure. "I was so focused on the child, nothing else registered with me. I'm sorry."

"It's okay. Maybe something will come to you later."

Leah didn't feel confident of that happening. Just as in her last case, she felt inadequate and useless in the face of crisis.

Detective Hampton asked several more questions about where she was when she'd had the vision, what the time was, who she'd been with. Leah answered the questions as best she could as he noted her responses.

"Do you think my description will help?" she asked when he finished writing.

He shrugged. "I don't know. It's pretty difficult without a description of the man or the car."

If only she could have seen something useful. What good were her damned visions if they didn't help anyone? These small, incomplete pictures only served to frustrate her and the people she tried to help. She'd rather see nothing at all.

A knock sounded at the door. A man with the bluest eyes she'd ever seen entered the room and stared at her.

Leah stared back, unable to wrench her gaze away from him. His dark hair just brushed the back of his collar, the thick waves mussed, as if his fingers had combed

through them in frustration. Stubble shadowed the elegantly formed jaw line. As he scrutinized her, his beautifully sculpted mouth turned down in a frown. But it was his eyes that captivated her. They were so familiar, dark blue, almost indigo, and framed by thick, black lashes. They were not the sort of eyes a woman could easily forget.

The answer flashed into her brain, causing her heart to triple its pace. This man's eyes were identical to those of the little boy in her vision. As she stared at him, another image raced across her mind, one of this man and the boy playing in the snow and laughing together as they tossed snowballs at each other. She knew with complete certainty that this man loved the child with all his heart and would do anything for him. She also knew, in that moment, she had to do whatever she could to reunite them, no matter how frightening it was to her.

Detective Hampton stood to make introductions. "Leah, this is David Logan. He's the uncle of the missing boy. Mr. Logan, this is Leah McKenna. We've worked together on missing person cases in the past."

David Logan extended his hand to Leah and she took it. His handshake was firm, his palms calloused and his skin cold. She noticed the lines of strain around his eyes and her heart went out to him.

"I'm very sorry about your nephew, Mr. Logan."

David murmured his acceptance of her sympathy but said nothing more. Detective Hampton cleared his throat and continued. "Ms. McKenna has been useful to us in cases of missing children because of her ability to 'see' things."

"See things? What do you mean?" David asked, frowning.

"She's psychic, Mr. Logan. In the past she's led us to the location of missing children."

David stared first at the detective and then at Leah, an incredulous expression on his handsome face. "Why are we wasting time with this? Are you telling me that the police with all their technology and skill are reduced to using this--this witchcraft to find my nephew?"

Detective Hampton spoke calmly. "We've checked your ex-brother-in-law's alibi. We've interviewed people at your nephew's school. We've conducted house to house searches in the neighborhoods of the school, your house and your sister's, and search and rescue is combing the riverbank for evidence. I've consulted with the RCMP and other police departments. We had every available officer in the city looking for him within three minutes of getting your call. We've found nothing. At this point we have no other leads to go on. It's not even clear whether the boy wandered off himself or was picked up."

David slammed his fist on Detective Hampton's desk. "My ex-brother-in-law took him. I know he did. I told you, Hal's been pushing for joint custody, and we've been fighting him on it. He's decided to get even by taking the boy."

"And I told you," Detective Hampton said with a weary sigh, "we checked his story. He has a witness willing to testify that he was working at his job miles away from where your nephew was abducted."

"It has to be Hal. Who else would want to kidnap him?"

Leah averted her gaze, remembering another child and the kind of man who had kidnapped her. The detective cleared his throat.

"We have to be prepared for all possibilities at this point, including a kidnapping for ransom. Your family is pretty well known in this city. It's no secret that your father was a very successful and wealthy businessman."

David paced the room, as restless and angry, Leah thought, as a caged cat. The comparison was apt. With his dark hair, and lean, muscular build, he reminded her of a panther. She suppressed a shiver, thankful they were on the same side. David Logan would make a formidable enemy.

"Ms. McKenna is already on the case, so to speak," continued Hampton, taking off his glasses and rubbing the bridge of his nose. "She has some interesting things to tell us about the abduction."

David eyed him suspiciously. "What do you mean?"

Leah broke in, hoping to make him understand. "I spoke to Detective Hampton earlier about the vision I had."

"Vision?" His voice exuded anger and contempt.

Leah refused to be intimidated. "At approximately the same time that Detective Hampton believes your nephew went missing, I had a vision of a small boy being enticed into a car."

Logan found a chair and sat down wearily. He closed his eyes and massaged his right temple as if a headache was forming.

Leah found herself wanting to reach out to touch him, to bring him some small measure of comfort. The impulse unsettled her, and she clasped her hands together in her lap, as if that would prevent them from touching him of their own accord.

"How do you know that Ms. McKenna isn't in on the kidnapping?"

Detective Hampton straightened in his chair, annoyance flitting across his face before he carefully composed himself once more. "As I mentioned, Ms. McKenna has worked with the police before. I can assure you her background has been thoroughly checked."

Logan turned again to Leah, a challenge burning in his blue eyes. "I don't believe in psychic phenomena."

His skepticism didn't come as a surprise to Leah. Few people took her seriously.

"Perhaps if I told you what I saw," she ventured.

"Go ahead."

She didn't miss the cynicism in his voice. She took a deep breath and closed her eyes, her mind conjuring the image of the small boy. "He has dark curly hair which is hanging in his eyes and sticking out from under his hat. He really needs a haircut," she said, smiling. "He has blue eyes, big blue eyes. They're very beautiful. I think he's about six years old." She paused for a second and opened her eyes.

Logan still looked skeptical, but there was something else in his face, something Leah thought looked a bit like surprise. She closed her eyes again.

"He's wearing a blue knitted hat... it has a Toronto Maple Leafs logo on it. He has on black snow boots, jeans and a winter parka. The parka is black with red sleeves."

She opened her eyes once more and met David Logan's blue stare.

"Very impressive, Ms. McKenna, but you haven't told me anything you couldn't have gotten from the police or my nephew's school."

"We didn't give Leah your nephew's description. She came up with that on her own," Detective Hampton assured David.

"I haven't spoken to anyone at your nephew's school. To be honest, I don't even know which school he goes to," Leah said.

"What's my nephew's name?" David challenged.

"I don't know," Leah replied, looking unflinchingly into his eyes. "My abilities seem to be more with clairvoyance then with telepathy." David's blank expression told her he didn't know the difference and probably didn't care, but she decided to explain anyway.

"If I were telepathic, you could pick a card from a deck, look at it, and I could tell you which card you picked from reading your thoughts. As a clairvoyant, I have better success if you pick a card and place it face down without looking at it. I concentrate on the card itself to determine which one it is."

He appeared unconvinced, but Leah couldn't worry about that right now. Something nagged at her, something she'd missed previously. She closed her eyes once more.

"He's not wearing mitts. That's strange for February. There's something on his hand, his right hand. I think... on his index finger. It's a blemish of some sort. A

cut, I think, and covered with a band-aid. Did he cut himself with a paring knife?" She opened her eyes.

The color drained from Logan's face. He straightened in his chair, and after a long moment, nodded at Leah. "Yes, he has a small cut on his right index finger. His name is Jeremy."

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