

### Chapter Nineteen

"Sorry about the restaurant," Mick said, "I would have liked to have taken you to a fancier place but ... you know how it is."

"It's OK, Mick," Melanie replied, "I don't need fancy."

"How's your boyfriend?"

"Thanks for asking but he's OK."

Mick nodded, then turned to gaze out of the window as Melanie sat staring at him in silence. He blew a burst of hot air onto the glass and began drawing circles in the moisture.

"I know you, Mick," she said, finally, "something's really bothering you. That's why you needed to see me tonight, isn't it?"

"My agent called," he replied, with a feigned smile, "said I got the Frisco gig and I need to be there in a few days."

"That's great, Mick. So, is this about the loan you said you might need?"

"No," he said, while shaking his head, a tear falling to his cheek.

"What is it, Mick?"

"I think I'm goin' crazy."

"What do you mean?"

"It's Vigo, he's scared the shit outta me and I don't know if I should be tellin' you this but, he thinks I'm two frickin' different people."

"Two different people?" she asked, with a shocked expression.

"Yeah, can you believe it?"

"Whew, yeah, I think I can."

"Is that why you sent me there?" he asked angrily, while bringing his face close to hers.

"No, it isn't."

"Then what did you mean?"

"It isn't worth discussing but why don't you tell me about it, if you can."

"You know, you piss me off sometimes," he said, while turning towards the window once again.

"Why is that?"

"You start somethin' an' then leave it, half said."

"You mean about my believing what Vigo said?"

"Yeah."

"I know something about that stuff from reading my case law."

"Oh really. So, it's not from any conversations you've had with Vigo?" he asked, with a snarl.

"Of course not, so, tell me about it."

"I don't know what to say."

"Alright, let me help. Do you have any knowledge of this other personality?" Melanie asked, while using her fingernails to artfully scrape the label from a ketchup bottle.

"What do you mean by that?"

"Well like, has it ever made its presence known to you?"

"You know," he said, rising to leave, "you're full of shit."

"Sit down, Mick, and explain yourself."

"What's there to explain, you've been talkin' to Vigo behind my back."

"I told you, I learned a lot from case law and ... other experiences."

"Bullshit!"

"I would never lie to you."

"You sure about that?" he asked, while nervously bouncing his leg on the wooden floor.

"Yes, of course."

"Then how come you never told me about the Sands Foundation?"

"Ouch, Vigo told you, didn't he?"

"Yeah, an' it made me feel like a total dumb ass for not knowin'."

"I wanted to be accepted for who I am not for my family's money."

"But it's your money now, isn't it?"

"See? That's exactly what I wanted to avoid."

"So, you thought I would be after your money?"

"Don't be angry, try to see it from my perspective."

"OK, but how come the Foundation's interested in my shit problem?"

"That's a long story and what difference does it make, anyhow?"

"OK, I'll give you that but you're the only one I trust, Mel, no one else. So, can you help me, give me some ideas?"

"How can I help you? After all, that's what Vigo is for."

"You said you've read about this stuff."

"Yes," she replied, tentatively, "I know something about it but you really shouldn't be asking me."

"So?"

"OH Alright, Mick," she hissed, while reaching across the table to take his hand, "I'm going to ask you something that may seem strange but try to bear with me."

"Shoot."

"Have you ever thought that someone was talking to you when you were all alone?"

"Ugh, yeah," he replied, with alarm, "Vigo asked me the same thing."

"Have you heard it more than once?"

"Many times."

"Is it always the same voice?"

"I think so."

"Are you sure, Mick, it's really important?"

"Wait a minute, let me think ... now I'm not sure."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, there's this voice with a phony soundin' British accent an', mostly, I can't always understand what it's sayin' but sometimes, it sounds like the voice is talkin' to someone else."

"Hmm, that could be important. Have you told Vigo?"

"Don't remember him asking but why is it important?"

"I don't feel right talking to you about this stuff but at your next appointment I would definitely tell him."

"And that's how you're gonna leave it? Shit, I'm more scared than before."

"I can't, Mick, I just can't."

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The following morning, Wednesday, Mick called to cancel his next appointment with the psychiatrist. To his surprise, Vigo answered the phone himself.

"Dr. Vigo, it's Mick. I didn't expect to speak to you but ..."

"My secretary is out with the flu and I hate temps," Vigo interrupted, "is there a problem?"

"I need to cancel my next appointment."

"Not a good idea at this stage, especially now that we're making some progress."

"I have an out-of-town gig and I need the money."

"I don't think you are ready to go it alone, Mick."

"But I can't pass this up, doc, it could jump start my career."

"I can't stop you but I don't think you are mindful of the potential consequences."

"Meaning?"

"What if you have another night like the one you had with Melanie's boyfriend?"

"C'mon, doc, I don't know anyone in Frisco."

"And therein lies the problem. There will be no one to turn to, no support."

"Look, I promise that if I get into trouble, I'll call you."