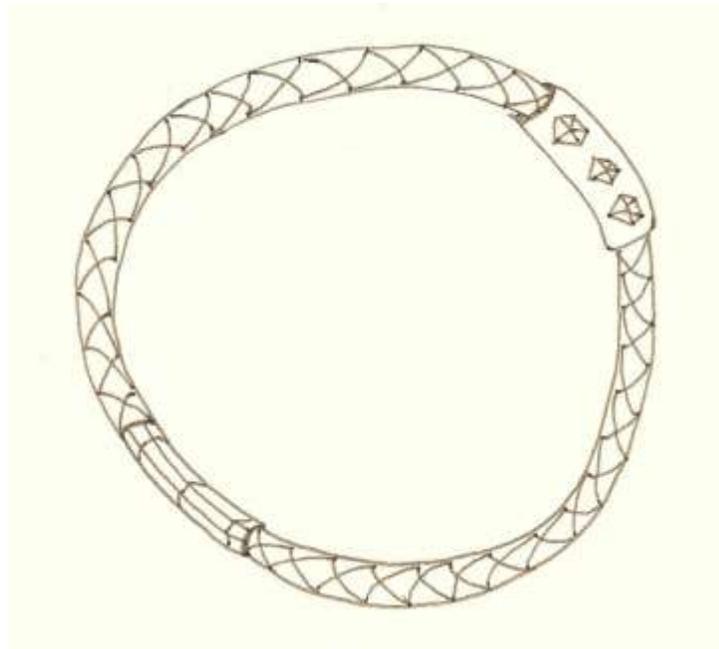




## Hearing Things

In Sugar's world, hearing voices in your head is a normal occurrence. Her grandmother used to hear things all the time, but not weird voices that told her to do bad things, like you hear on the television news stories. No, she heard things that helped others find meaning in what they are experiencing. She helped policemen find lost boys and she somehow handed down this gift to Sugar.



Copyright © 2019 by CAA

All rights reserved. Except for the use in any review, the reproduction or utilization of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereinafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the written permission of the author or illustrator directly.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

For questions and comments about the quality of this book, please contact us at [dailyreader.caa@gmail.com](mailto:dailyreader.caa@gmail.com)



Sugar learned from her grandmother how to connect and open herself to the afterlife. A wonderful gift they shared. Sugar realized this gift was hers the day her grandfather died in a car accident. The police came to their house one night and told her father his name is in her grandfather’s phone as an ‘in case of emergency’ contact.

They handed a bag of her grandfather’s belongings to her mom, who handed it to her unconsciously trying to take in the whole scenario. Items found on him at the scene of the accident, items from his car’s glove compartment. Sugar had looked into the bag and saw the leather band that her grandfather always wore. She took the band out of the bag, hoping that no one would miss this small item.

When she went to her bedroom later that night, she had a heavy heart. In fact, something was pounding in her head very hard. She assumed that this was depression from losing her grandfather. He and Sugar had always been very close. They shared everything together. All their thoughts and all their fun trips were shared. Every event of her life, he knew about things even her parents did not know.

Sugar remembers sitting in her bed that night and holding onto the leather band. She held on to the item tighter and tighter. The stronger she held on, the more she calmed down. When she thought she was calm, she realized she was in a trance-like state. ‘Hello Sugar’ her grandfather had said to her.

‘Hello Gramps’ she said in her mind.

‘I need a favor from you, and this has to be done right away’ he told her.

‘Ok gramps anything for you.’ She told him

‘Go to my house, now, don’t wait, tell Grandma she needs to find my blue shoes right away’ he says.

‘Blue shoes, right away, got it.’ She says.

‘Then look in her car, in the spare tire, go baby, do this before anyone calls her, before anyone can get to Grandma’ he said urgently and then she was awake.

She looked around the room then held tighter to the leather band. She kissed the band and then put the band on her left hand as her Gramps wore. She got dressed in sneakers to make sure she was quiet. Her parents were still awake downstairs, she looked at the clock and it was only 9:00. How can she leave though? She will need to take the car.

Suddenly her father called her, she ran down the rest of the stairs. “Yes sir?” she said

“Oh, good you’re still dressed. Please, go to Grandma and pick her up. I don’t want her alone and I surely don’t want her driving,” he said.

“Ok Dad, anything to help,” she said and grabbed her keys and ran over to her grandparent’s house.

As soon as her grandmother opened the door, Sugar pushed her in and closed the door, then double locked the door. Grandma assumed she wanted to be held but instead she ran around the house making sure all doors were locked and no one was home with her, not even an aide.

“Sugar, what did he say?” she asked her granddaughter calmly, realizing what must have happened. Sugar looked at her grandmother, of course she would know. Sugar told her but not by speaking by writing the information down, Sugar remembers being afraid someone was listening. They went upstairs and found his shoes, they found the computer memory stick hidden in the heel of his shoe, then they went to Grandma’s car and opened the back. Ever so thankful for having an attached garage. No one was able to watch what they were doing.

They found all that Gramps told her to find. “Now the police.” She mouthed to her grandmother.

Her grandmother shook her head, “I know exactly who to call.” She got her phone and dialed an old friend. “Hello Marcel, I think the time has come for me to get that payoff.” Is all she had to say.

“I can be there in ten minutes, you know what I want? Warm chocolate chip cookies,” he said.

Copyright © 2019 by (CAA)

All rights reserved. Except for the use in any review, the reproduction or utilization of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereinafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the written permission of the author or illustrator directly.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are either the product of the author’s imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

For questions and comments about the quality of this book, please contact us at [dailyreader.caa@gmail.com](mailto:dailyreader.caa@gmail.com)



"Yes, of course I have all the ingredients, you are in luck." She hung up and looked again at all the doors and windows to make sure everything is closed up tight. Even the upstairs windows.

In the kitchen they proceeded to make chocolate chip cookies. A double batch of course. Sugar had called her dad to tell him they are baking cookies, he laughed at his mother and said it was no problem, that she probably needs to bake out some anxiety. By the time the first batch were going into the oven there was a knock at the door and then the knock came again and even a third time. Sugar waited with her grandmother, her grandmother shook her head no. The phone rang, her grandmother answered slowly and put the call on speaker. "Hello?" she says.

"Ah Cybil you are home, good. It's Albert, I need to speak with you, something has happened and you need to be informed by a friend," he said.

"I know already, my husband is lying in the morgue at St. Barnaby's hospital. I will call you with information about the funeral when I'm up to talking to people." She said sternly and coldly.

There was heat emanating from the leather band Sugar wore, then she heard, 'no way you can let him in, he did this to me' Sugar shook her head no and pointed to the band, her grandmother indicated she understood.

"Cybil, you need someone to be with you, please come open the door. Let me help you through this trying time," he had said.

"Albert, you know what? The truth is, I've never liked you. You would not be a comfort to me right now. My granddaughter is here and we are baking cookies together. Leave my porch before I call the police." She said maintaining her stern voice.

"I understand your emotions are talking right now Cybil. You know and I know that I am the only other person who has known Jack as long as you have."

"Cybil who is this man at your door?" another voice interrupted.

"The wrong one," is all she had said and hung up the phone.

They heard a scuffle, then a few voices and a couple of screams from male voices. The phone rang again. "Ok Cybil open the door," Marcel had said.

Sugar and her grandmother go to open the door. They see someone being dragged by two other people to their police car. He walks in and closes the door behind him. "I smell cookies." He said. Sugar walked into the kitchen to take out the first pan and put in the next. She plated a few cookies and brought them into the living room and handed them to this new man. "I'm Marcel Sugar, I've known your grandparents since I was a child. Your Gramps saved my butt a time or two and I'm forever grateful. Wouldn't be standing here if he hadn't intervened in my life. I've heard all about you since the moment you were born.

This is the first time your grandmother has called me to tell me I can pay her back now. I heard over the radio that Gramps died in a car accident, then I got your call Cybil I knew this was no accident, was it?" he said.

She handed him the memory stick as well as the file that was hidden under the spare tire of her car. He glanced through the pages. "How did you know?" Marcel asked, he always asks her, curiosity gets the best of him when she 'sees' or 'hears' things.

She looked at Sugar, and Sugar showed him her hand. Marcel held Sugar's hand in both of his hands, one on top and one on the bottom of her hand. "You are very blessed Sugar. Your grandmother's sight or insight if you would, has helped the police department numerous times. We always report her findings as anonymous tips. Gramps talked to you tonight, did he not?" he asked.

"Yes sir, he did. Grandma I'm sorry." Sugar had bowed her head.



“No, you should not be sorry Sugar dear. I know my son does not like this, but this gift, and yes this is a gift, does not take away from the special person you are, no, this will enhance your life if you let it. Or burden you. The decision will be yours as to how you want to deal with this newfound ability.” Her grandmother had told her.

“He could not get through to me Sugar, too much emotional interference today.” Her grandmother then vowed to teach her to use her gifts to help people. She can choose to say or not say as much as she wants. The decision will always be hers.

Marcel stood to leave, “Always the best cookies. I don’t know what is in the memory card but the file alone will lock this man up for a long time to come. This is proof that this accident was premeditated murder. Gramps knew this was coming and insisted that you stay home today Cybil, didn’t he?” she shook her head in agreement, “He saved you, so you can teach Sugar. He always believed in you, and so do I. As usual, I will call on you only if absolutely necessary,” He said.

Grandma nodded and closed the door behind her. “Come Sugar let us finish these cookies and head to your house. I’m done here,” she had said.

They left that house and her grandmother never looked back. She moved in with her son right after that night. Once word was out that his own partner had him killed, Sugar’s father agreed to have his mother live in their first floor guest room suite. He no longer felt she would be safe living alone. Who knew who else this man had twisted to think his father knew information or had access to said information, when he didn’t.

~ ~

All this happened so many years ago. Sugar’s grandmother taught her a lot about how to listen to people and how to listen to the voices that she may hear in her head. When to listen, when to tune them out. When to tell the truth, and when to only give a clue. The most important part she taught Sugar is about when to call the police and whom to call, very few believe in what her grandmother could do. They have since learned to trust Sugar as well as they did her grandmother.

Like her grandmother, Sugar keeps her gift to herself. Those who need to know, will. People who are looking for validation or conversation with those who have passed, they find her, either by accident or on purpose. But always in silence.

Yesterday, a woman came up behind her and handed her a bracelet. Sugar turned and smiled at her. The woman followed her out of the store and the two of them sat down on a bench nearby, there, Sugar ran the bracelet through her fingers a couple of times.

What she felt disturbed her and she has been mulling over that feeling ever since. She decides to call Marcel. “Marcel, Sugar here.”

“Hey, nice to hear from you. You up for dinner?” he asks.

“Love some. I happen to be near the chicken place in the mall. Care to join me?” she asks

“I can meet you there in ten minutes. Can you order me a dinner box? I’ll pay you back when I get there.” He hangs up and begins to worry.

“Mmmmm, my favorite. I’ll order two,” Sugar says out loud. She walks into the restaurant and places the order then waits at an obvious table for Marcel.

“Hi Sugar, thank you for ordering. I happen to be starved. How does it feel to live on your own these days?” he asks.

“Sometimes I love being alone more than other times but I suppose that is part of growing up. Dad and I agreed that the time had come for me to move out and be more independent. Clearly you know that is not why I called you. Let me get this off my chest,” she pauses.

Copyright © 2019 by (CAA)

All rights reserved. Except for the use in any review, the reproduction or utilization of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereinafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the written permission of the author or illustrator directly.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are either the product of the author’s imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

For questions and comments about the quality of this book, please contact us at [dailyreader.caa@gmail.com](mailto:dailyreader.caa@gmail.com)



Marcel shakes his head because his mouth is full of chicken. “Yesterday a woman approached me and handed me her bracelet. She said this piece belonged to a loved one. Only after I held the object, there was no love there. The woman asked me to try the bracelet on, she said she heard I’d get a better reading that way. I obliged her; the first thing I noticed was the heat radiating into my arm, then someone was holding onto my wrist like this.” Sugar takes a moment and puts her fingers around his hand and squeezes. “The owner of the bracelet is dead and I’m afraid, I feel a violent death. I did what Grandma told me to do, I told her only bits and pieces nothing that would make total sense.

Because the pressure and heat on my hand was actually more than I could tolerate I slid it off and told her that sometimes when the person closest to the object wears it, I can get an even better reading. She happily put the bracelet on and smiled at me a knowing smile. I put my hands on the bracelet on her wrist and the object felt cold, but not a regular cold but the kind that sent chills straight up my arms and into my back.

Anyway, here is how I see this one, the person who owned the bracelet is buried in a wooded area by a corner gas station. She is connected to the person who handed me the bracelet because, I assume, that person wants something from the deceased. Then, when I took my hands off of her, I saw three diamonds. Loose ones. I’m assuming they are on the dead person but the person who gave me the bracelet doesn’t know where the body is. When I held the bracelet to my heart I felt beating, very quickly. Grandma used to tell me that a fast heartbeat indicates fear as well as excitement. I’m going out on a limb here and assuming that if she is buried, she may have felt fear at the end or fear of this person who handed me the bracelet. No way for me to know the difference of these two I’m afraid.

I don’t know what to do with the information. There are so many corner gas stations around this area aren’t there? I have a picture in my head of what the woman looked like who gave me the bracelet, as well as the one who owns the bracelet. What do I do with these pictures? I would draw them, if only I knew how.” She sighs and then continues to eat.

Marcel looks at Sugar, still learning the ropes, he knows what needs to be done. “Sugar, I can get the forensic artist to listen to you. She can draw out for you the images you describe and you can agree or disagree with how she puts things together. Help her make things exactly the way you see them. We can meet at the park if you want. I know Grandma always kept things quiet. I am happy to do the same for you.

Was there any indication that the woman with the bracelet caused this death?” he asks, finishing his ramble.

“No, the bracelet’s owner is young, I’d say in her early to mid-twenties. The fear or excitement was very strong but there was someone else coming through who said ‘not her’. This can get very confusing you know.” She tells him.

“Yes, I’ve had to deal with a few of these before. Sometimes the ‘not her’ means that it could be not her, as in, that person didn’t do it; or not her, as in don’t tell her anything. How about this, we will go follow the lead that you gave us and see if we can find the body you mentioned. After that, we’ll do the artist route and see what turns up.” He watches as Sugar internalizes all that he has said.

“That sounds like a logical way to do things. Yes, let’s do that. I’ll wait for you call then,” She says. Sugar stands up and kisses Marcel on the cheek and walks away.

It’s been a few days since she met with Marcel and Sugar has become very agitated. Last night she had a really bad night’s sleep. She has been restless all day. “I need to get out. Ah, how about if I call a friend?” she says out loud. “Barb? You up for a museum today?” she asks.

“Love to, oh my you read my mind. Can we go to the one next to the park and have lunch there afterwards? They say the weather will be perfect for an outdoor lunch today,” she says.

Copyright © 2019 by (CAA)

All rights reserved. Except for the use in any review, the reproduction or utilization of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereinafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the written permission of the author or illustrator directly.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are either the product of the author’s imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

For questions and comments about the quality of this book, please contact us at [dailyreader.caa@gmail.com](mailto:dailyreader.caa@gmail.com)



“Sure, you want to meet there, or should I pick you up?” Sugar asks.

“ooo, if you can pick me up that would be awesome, car is in the shop again, they gave me a rental, but I hate how the thing runs. The car is green. Green! Who drives green cars?” Barb asks.

Knowing Sugar has some plans now, has helped her relieve some of her stress and anxiety. She proceeds to get herself ready for her outing with her old friend. Barb and she have been friends since they were in their mid-teens. She is the only friend who understands her gift and doesn’t tease her or try to use her to get lottery numbers or something like that. Barbara respects Sugar for her ability to help people.

Once out of the house and in the car, Sugar begins to feel uneasy again. By the time she makes her way to Barb’s house she is in full blown panic mode. Barb runs out to the car as she pulls in, she grabs the door open and sits down, one look at her friend and she reaches over and turns off the car.

“Sugar, what is wrong? Who can I call?” she asks.

Sugar looks to her friend and appreciates her even more now. “I, I, I’m not sure Barb, I almost feel like I’m experiencing a panic attack,” she says.

“Give me your phone.” Barb begins to look through Sugar’s phone. “Hello Marcel? This is Barb, Sugar’s good friend. She is experiencing a serious panic attack. Where are you and what is going on with the case she last mentioned to you? Don’t sound so surprised. We share all,” she says.

“I’m at the third corner gas station within a five mile radius of where she met the woman. The dogs smell something. Ask her if Bleaker St. rings a bell,” he says.

“Bleaker St.” she says and watches Sugar to see if anything happens.

Sugar looks at her with a faraway stare in her eyes. She reaches out to hold Barb’s hand. Sugar is falling into a trance. “North” she whispers

“Sugar just whispered the word north,” she says.

Marcel looks around at the gas station they are at, he determines the north side and sees that it is opposite of where the dogs are. “Hey, try on the north side, there, behind the garbage bin,” Marcel calls to his men. “What is she doing now?”

Barb looks to her friend, her hand that is not being held is making a digging motion, faster and faster, her face has become very sweaty. “Stop!!” she calls out.

Barb relays all this to Marcel as things happen. Marcel calls to his men to stop with the shovels and use their hands and the dogs. One of the dogs starts to whimper and lays down on top of the dirt the men had been digging. He won’t let the men get to the spot.

Marcel describes this to Barb, she, in turns relates this information to Sugar. Sugar turns to her and says, “I knew she was young, but now I see, she is a child. Holding on to her mother,” she says still in a trance.

Marcel walks over to the dog and works hard to coax the dog away from the dirt. He uses his own hands to uncover some of the dirt, the dog has decided to help. All the while whimpering. “Ok my dear, we will find answers now, you dig and I will dig,” Marcel tells the dog.

In another minute the dog actually cries, everyone around watches as this police-trained dog is crying, there is no other word for the sound she is making. One of the trainers has to come over and pull the dog away gently. He sits down on the ground with the dog and they watch as Marcel uncovers a small child. Marcel looks up and then picks up his phone, “We found the child, is the mother here?” he asks.

“Sugar?” she relates the story of what has taken place. Sugar is still in a trance, “upside down, broken, bear, diamonds,” she says talking barely above a whisper.

“Got it, heard her, thanks Barb, keep the line open, don’t move from where you are. Maybe put the phone on speaker,” Marcel says as he looks around the area.



He mentions the words to his crew, after a few minutes, “Captain, over here!” one man calls. Marcel walks over to where the man is standing, in front of him there is an upside down broken sign. The old sign of the station. They bring the dogs over again. The dog next to the child won’t move away from what they uncovered. He is laying on top of the uncovered child and not moving.

The other three dogs quickly find what they are looking for. The men and women dig and find the other body. Mostly digging with their hands, all the dogs are there digging as well. Marcel has never seen this before. Why the dogs?

“She worked with dogs,” Barb says.

Marcel didn’t realize he asked that out loud but glad he did. “A name?” he asks.

“Sugar, does she have a name?” Barb asks.

“Pocket. Bear,” she says.

“Did we find the bear yet?” Marcel asks.

The trainer with the child and dog, gently moves the dog to the side and tries to find the bear, assuming it is something the child is holding. He brushes the dirt away carefully, what he finds surprises him. The child does not have a stuffed bear but is wearing a headband that has three bears on it. The trainer feels around the headband and feels three bumps. “Captain! I have the bear and what is inside it!” he calls.

One of the women who has been digging with her hands around the waist of the woman in the ground, finds something in the woman’s hand, cloth, she pulls it out from the gripping hand. “Captain, we have something here.”

Marcel looks over at the dog trainer with the child, “Hold on. I’ll be right there.” He looks in front of him at the woman in the ground and the officer who has something in her hand. “What do you think that is?”

“Not sure, something inside this cloth, feels hard and rectangular.” She peels it open and sits in shock, she looks up at Marcel, “Its Marna,” she holds up the police ID identifying Marna as a trainer of police dogs. Someone they thought went back to her hometown after saying she was looking for a change.

“That explains the dog’s reactions. Call this all in. Get the coroner down here immediately, let them know who we suspect we found.”

Marcel walks over to the other trainer and reveals what they have figured out. “Marna? Then this must be Nina. Her only child from a brief marriage. There is something hiding in the headband Captain. I’m afraid they might be stones of some sort. Her husband was a jeweler, he had a sister who hated Marna and was the reason they got divorced. She always told Marna that she would never get anything from their store. She co-owns the store with her brother. If you ask me, she sounds like one of those obsessed women, jealous of Marna taking her brother’s attention away from her.” He tells his captain all the while petting his dog to comfort him.

“You know all this because?” he asks.

“Marna and I used to talk all the time, she was easy to talk to and we had no secrets. None at all, really. I shared things with her as well. She was talking about leaving because she wanted to travel and was looking into different careers but when she left us, the timing was too abrupt, I knew something was off, but had no evidence to prove my hunch. Oh Captain, the dogs are feeling her too. We need to let them grieve. They are going to need to be in the room with the coroner, I hope he understands that,” he says in all seriousness.

“I understand, I’ll let him know when he gets here. This tip came from someone who had an encounter with a woman. Could be the sister. We need to get on this quickly. By the way, did Marna own a



silver charm bracelet? Do you know Marna’s family that we can contact as soon as confirmation is made?” He mentions to his fellow force member.

“Yeah, I have that information. She had mine as well. We were each other’s emergency contact other than family, its officially listed on our record. As soon as you need, I will give her information to you. What should we do with this headband?” he asks needing to change the subject. “Oh, no bracelet, Marna wouldn’t wear anything the dogs would pull off of her or choke on if broken.”

“I’ll have the guys bag this as evidence,” he says as he walks back away, “Barb, how is Sugar?” he asks.

“She is still shaking, not speaking though; staring out toward the front of her car. I’m scared, nothing has ever lasted this long. What do I do?” she asks.

“There is more she needs to say, tell her we found Marna, see if that makes a difference.” He says.

“Sugar, they found Marna and her child, the bears, everything,” she says, “You can calm down now, Marcel has everything under control,” she says still holding her friend’s hand.

Sugar shakes her head once, twice but can’t get herself out of the trance, she is fighting to though. Barb is becoming nervous herself. “Sugar?”

“Ties, ropes, crying, baby is crying, woman laughing,” suddenly Sugar takes a deep gasping breath. “Barb! The woman with the bracelet, she did this, she laughed at someone else killing the baby! Or harming a child in some way.” She puts her hands on her mouth and then begins to cry out of relief and out of being let go from the trance.

“Did you hear that?” Barb asks.

“Yes, but now we have to figure out who this was and why and everything else legal that we can,” Marcel says. “She was one of our own dog trainers Barb, the force will be working this very hard, I assure you. The investigation has now turned internal and very serious, very serious indeed,” he says. “Tell her to meet me at the diner, she will know which one, I’ll be there within an hour or so.”

“Ok.” Barb says.

Barb decides that Sugar should switch seats with her so she can drive and give her friend a moment to catch her breath.

“This isn’t over, is it Sugar?” she asks as they start to drive, not to the museum but to the diner Marcel told her to go to.

“I’m still anxious. Something is not right, I don’t think that Marna is the owner of the bracelet, I think the owner lead us to her, but she is not the owner of the bracelet, someone else is. Someone else who is in a lot of trouble. I need to do the sketch with the artist, they will see, I’m not seeing Marna, I’ve met her,” she says nervously.

Barb pulls over and calls Marcel to tell him what Sugar has said, even though it sounds very disjointed to her. “Ok, but finding Marna is important too and we did that. I’m assuming she will hear something else from this person again, either via the same lady who brought the bracelet in the first place, or from the spirit all alone now that she knows she can reach Sugar,” he says quietly. “The coroner is here already, they found her jacket from the force as well, things are looking good that we found Marna at least, that will put a lot of people’s minds at ease. I’ll be there sooner than later,” he sighs.

“Sugar, he will be there soon, do you want to go? We can go back to my place if you’d prefer,” Barb says.

“No, Grandma always said to keep visits in public. I don’t know why, but that is what she said, keep them public. She said this many, many times. Barb, who is this woman with the bracelet? What happened to her? Was she there when Marna was killed? What if she was there? What if she is trying to make things



right that she did wrong? I don’t want to be attached to a bad energy. I need this to leave me. I don’t want this in my mind. Help me think, what did my grandma always say was good to do about detaching oneself?” She pleads with Barb.

“Sugar, she used to tell you to always do things that made you happy. Remember, she said being happy will always ruin negative feelings. Let’s go order a huge order of fries and onion ring combination and eat the whole things ourselves.” Barb says knowing this is Sugar’s favorite junk food ever.

Sugar smiles at her, “HmMMM, fried therapy – I love the idea. Let’s go.” She smiles.

Sugar and Barb head over to the diner and get a booth in the corner of the diner, “We’d like an order of fries and onion rings combined please and if you can give us some melted cheese on the side that would make our day,” Barb says to the waitress.

“Sounds like you’re celebrating something or recovering from something, either way, I love it. I will get you the exact thing you need.” She smiles and walks away.

Only moments later the waitress brings them back a pitcher of homemade lemonade and a stack of napkins she knows they will need with the fried items and the cheese sauce.

“Barb, I’m already feeling better. Best I’ve been all week. I’m sorry, I should have called you sooner. Maybe you’re right, maybe I need to live with someone to keep me sane, keep me safe. My home is bigger than yours, when can we become roommates?” Sugar asks simply.

“Oh Sugar!! That would be amazing. I would love to live with you, but you know I have Gerry in my life now – would that cause you any undo discourse?” she asks because she knows Sugar is not always comfortable around surgeons or businessmen for some reason.

“Gerry is great, he makes you happy, as long as he doesn’t bring his big dog over. Not sure I can handle the dog right now. Is that too much to ask, at least at first?” Sugar looks to her friend.

“Dogs see your gift, they will respond to you quicker than a human.” Marcel says as he sits down on the booth. “Your grandma loved her fries and onion rings too, mind if I take a couple?” he asks.

Sugar looks over at Marcel and smiles, “The waitress thinks we are celebrating something. Are we?” she asks.

“Sugar, this is hard on you, I know. You must have been losing sleep these past couple of days, I know I have. We’ve been scouring all possible corner gas stations and when we found this one on Monday, the owner wouldn’t let us in without a warrant to search, sometimes those take time, especially when I couldn’t provide them with a specific case. While we were there today though, the owner was watching the whole time. When we found the child, he lost his composure. Called his wife and all of his children to make sure everyone was doing well.

This is going to lead to something else I have a feeling. Do you have any clues? Something I can take with me?” he asks.

“Um, the woman with the bracelet, you need to know what she looks like, the woman I saw was not Marna, I met her once when volunteering down at the pound. I need to meet with the artist, I think that will help get her out of my head too. Does the word sparkle mean anything to you?” she asks Marcel.

“Sparkle? In what reference?” he asks.

“Ummm, hard to say, she keeps referencing sparkle and now every time I try and put on my watch, I feel that same warmth and feeling around my wrist. I think she may have been pulled away from something. Forcibly. Marcel, is it possible she is trying to tell me things that she was involved with? I heard the laughing again, a woman laughing with a child. Who laughs at that?” she asks.

“Someone who is sick in the head, or maybe so much fear that laughter comes out instead of tears. Being in that situation, both things can happen. That laugh can be a nervous laugh and not a laugh of enjoyment.” He explains.

Copyright © 2019 by (CAA)

All rights reserved. Except for the use in any review, the reproduction or utilization of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereinafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the written permission of the author or illustrator directly.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are either the product of the author’s imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

For questions and comments about the quality of this book, please contact us at [dailyreader.caa@gmail.com](mailto:dailyreader.caa@gmail.com)



“Marcel, was Sugar’s grandmother ever hurt for her words or sightings?” Barb asks.

“No, all information was brought in anonymously, like when we receive a call on our tip hotline. Some people don’t believe in this type of information, however, once they see them being true and they investigate that the person turning in the information has absolutely no connection at all to what the tip was, they still don’t always change their mind. Sometimes they simply take the information, and in the back of their minds, put it on the tip hotline,” he says.

“Oh, ok. I want to make sure my best friend is safe. Obviously, Grandma had a long life.” Barb says.

“Sugar’s grandmother was one of a kind. We’ve had others come to us, their information was followed up on, but her grandma’s, well, she had a 95% positive outcome from what she told me. Who knows what she told anyone else, I can only go by what I’ve known and seen.

Sugar, if you’re hanging on to this woman now, then your gift is as strong as hers was. I would consider myself blessed knowing you trust me with the information.” Marcel stands a moment to collect his own thoughts.

When he first met Sugar’s grandmother, he was only twenty-five, now, he is thirty-seven and he has a new friend. Someone closer to his own age. This is making things harder, as he looks on this beautiful woman. However, he promised her grandmother to never form a bond beyond professional. May be a hard promise after all.

“Sugar, I’ve texted the artist, let’s get this down now, ok?” He says as he walks back to the table with some sandwiches for everyone.

“ooo deli, good call,” Sugar says.

Within the next hour and a half, the girls finished their meals and Sugar gives over the picture of both women in her head, on the way home, Sugar says, “Barb, when is your lease up?” she asks.

“Next month, you crazy woman,” Barb teases.

“Fantastic, you can move in, and we can celebrate your birthday at my house with all of our good friends, and maybe even some family. You know, I feel so much less shaky since giving over the pictures than I have all week. Thank you for being there today, I knew you’d be the right choice of people to love,” Sugar smiles to her friend.

~ ~ ~

Marcel and the police artist sit in the booth staring at the pictures, they know who the lady is who is speaking to Sugar, she is one of the most wanted women they have listed in the station.

“Hard to believe she is dead, not hard to believe she was responsible for Marna’s death though. He, the man suspected of always being with this woman, definitely would have been someone who would have laughed at a child being hurt. The biggest puzzle is, who is the woman looking for Sugar, and why is she looking for this woman? Why does she know about Marna’s diamonds? This is kind of twisted if you ask me. We need to put a watch on Sugar but it will be hard to do without her knowing.” He says more to himself than to the artist next to him.

“What do we do now? We have her picture up in the precinct already. But this other woman is the bigger mystery,” she says.

“Hold on.” Marcel takes a picture of the drawing and sends it to the trainer he spoke with earlier, the one who knew Marna well. “Ring a bell?” he asks and then waits, after a half an hour he receives a call.

“How did you get that drawing?” he asks nervously.

“Witness gave it to us this afternoon. Who is it?” he asks sternly.

“Where are you? I’d rather talk in person.” The officer says.

Copyright © 2019 by (CAA)

All rights reserved. Except for the use in any review, the reproduction or utilization of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereinafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the written permission of the author or illustrator directly.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are either the product of the author’s imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

For questions and comments about the quality of this book, please contact us at [dailyreader.caa@gmail.com](mailto:dailyreader.caa@gmail.com)



Marcel tells him and waits. Roughly fifteen minutes later the trainer comes in, dressed in plain clothes this time.

He takes the picture from the artist and stares. Long and hard. Sure, he knows who this is, but he had to see this in person to make sure his picture wasn’t distorted. A tear rolls down his cheek and he lets it fall, his head hung low.

“Adrienne is my cousin. She hooked up with Marna at the pound, said she wanted to learn how to use dogs to find things, was going to train her own dog. She told Marna that she already had a big dog and that he is some kind of hound so smelling things should be natural. Adrienne has had numerous brushes with the law, as you can easily find out. Her recent contact with Marna? I thought was because she was actually trying to reform. I don’t know where she is now if that is your next question,” he says softly.

“We need to find her, she may or may not know about Marna, is there any way you can contact her? Meet her for coffee? I only want to know why she has what she has,” Marcel says.

“What does she have?” he asks.

“I can’t tell you that, you know that already. Come on, who does she hang with, give me a hint where we might find her if you can’t meet her.” Marcel gives instructions.

The trainer sits back in the booth and picks up his phone. “Hey Mom. Weird question, do you have any idea where Adrienne is these days? I saw someone carrying a crazy purse like she used to have and thought of her,” he says simply. He waits for an answer, then he bows his head again. “Thanks Mom. I’ll check out that as a possibility. You doing ok?” he continues to talk to her for a few minutes to make the conversation feel normal. When he hangs up, he looks at Marcel and says, “She is living with a new boyfriend in Hudson County she said, that is the best she remembers. Oh, she said she met the guy at the last family bar b que and that he has a weird tattoo over his eyebrow that looks like a snake. Does this help any?” he looks from one person to the next.

Marcel knows exactly who this is. The woman speaking to Sugar was this man’s accomplice many times over, they never found him or her, but they know they worked together for several break-ins that resulted in deaths. But why Marna? How is this even connected? Who is Adrienne and why does she have this woman’s bracelet? Where is this woman? He thinks to himself.

“Thank you Officer, you’ve really helped us. Both with Marna and with this. The coroner said they should have validation on Marna’s body very soon. If you have family contact information, you may want to stop by and tell him.” Marcel explains.

~ ~ ~

Sugar and Barb have lived with each other for a week already. Gerry has been over only once, he could tell his presence was creating tension with Sugar so he made an excuse to leave early.

“Sugar?” he asks.

“Yes Gerry? What do you need from me?” Sugar asks uncertain as to why he would call her out of the blue, and during business hours.

“Hear me out Sugar, only for a moment, then I will leave you alone, I promise,” he says.

“Ok. I’m at work right now, let me walk out and take a break. I’ll call you right back when I get outside,” she says.

Gerry waits for Sugar to call him back, “Hey, thank you for taking the time to listen to me. Your time means a lot to me. I have to ask you an honest question, when I was over the other day, I know I was making you uncomfortable, did you feel a presence around me?” he asks.

Sugar is not sure how to answer this question. What does he know about her? “Sugar, my aunt used to be able to see a presence around a person. These are the days that would be quite hard for her.

Copyright © 2019 by (CAA)

All rights reserved. Except for the use in any review, the reproduction or utilization of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereinafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the written permission of the author or illustrator directly.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are either the product of the author’s imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

For questions and comments about the quality of this book, please contact us at [dailyreader.caa@gmail.com](mailto:dailyreader.caa@gmail.com)



When she actually saw them, she would be tense and very quiet,” he says, “The same way you were behaving around me when I was there,” he says.

Sugar takes a deep breath. “You carry with you a dark aura Gerry, I’m sorry,” she says.

“Guilt. My aunt used to tell me that my guilt will carry a heavy weight on me. Can I come clean to you?” he asks.

“If you think this will help you, then yes,” she says.

“I cannot make things work with Barb the way I want to until I clean up a mess with my first wife. Yes, I had a first wife. Barb knows about her. No children, but I still hold her as a dependent because she is not mentally well. I spend a lot of money on keeping her safe in a facility. She makes me feel guilty about putting her there every day.” He takes a deep breath.

“That doesn’t seem like enough to hold you so darkly Gerry. I think you’re missing the point your aunt was talking about. Your ex-wife has no one but you to talk to, so she blames you instead of herself. Do you have to apologize to someone? You did something a long time ago, maybe something old needs to be resolved. But don’t stop coming over because of that, you are good for Barb, you are a good person, if you weren’t, your dog would not stay in your home.” Sugar tells him.

“A fight with my brother when we were young, we haven’t spoken since. I will make this work. I will make Barb work too. Thank you Sugar, I know why Barb loves you so much. You’re a special person.” Gerry hangs up with Sugar and gets in his car to make a long, long overdue drive.

~ ~ ~

Marcel sends out some of his people to scour Hudson County in search for the man they’ve been looking for, along with Adrienne. Before she seeks Sugar out again. A few people have come back to him already telling him that they have confirmation that both people have been seen in the neighborhood. They are bringing in more people now to follow up and find these people after all. Maybe catch them before they do more harm.

“Captain, I have a positive identification on both people, been following them for the past few hours, we now have them in a house, walking around as if nothing in life could be better. They came home together and are in the house. I have one man getting close to the house right now trying to hear anything he can. We saw them both carrying a large bag into the house together. Appeared to be heavy. How should we proceed?” he asks.

“We need to bring them in. I’ll get a warrant for searching the house immediately. Don’t let anyone leave. If they go back to the car you can apprehend them immediately since they are on a wanted list,” Marcel says and hangs up shaking.

“Oh Sugar, I hope you’re ok today. At least we know both people are not near her.” Marcel sends a text to Barb, *‘go bring Sugar lunch and stay with her please. Something is going down with the people she pictured.’* He writes, needing to know she is safe and not alone.

“On it.” Barb answers. She calls Sugar, “Hey you up for lunch? I have a taste for some really good Italian salad,” she says.

“Wow, that sounds great. We can get some soup too. I’ll meet you there,” Sugar says.

“No, don’t bother. I got my car back, I’ll pick you up. I need to drive her a lot and make sure things are all working well now.” Barb says. If Marcel asked her to be there, he doesn’t want Sugar alone. Damn, damn and damn and of all days, today Gerry called to tell her he needed to leave town for a couple of days to settle some old business. “You can do this, Sugar is your friend” Barb says to herself in the car.



As Sugar waits for her friend in her office, trying to finish off some work before lunch. Her boss comes by her desk, “Sugar do you have things settled for tomorrow’s meeting?” he asks assuming she has not.

“Of course, I do, I handed the file to your secretary two hours ago. I would never leave you hanging without time to go over a presentation. I’m headed out to lunch now, would you like me to bring you something back?” she offers.

The boss, somewhat shaken that he has the material and doesn’t know or remember this, looks at Sugar, “Um no I think I’ll be good for a while,” he says.

“Don’t be silly. You need to eat lunch. Any allergies?” she asks. Sugar feels the man needs to eat but she doesn’t know why.

“Cheese,” he says.

“Ok. I’ll see you in about an hour, ok?” she asks.

“um, sure,” he says and walks away to his office to check on that presentation papers.

“Hop in Sugar.” Barb calls to her.

“Marcel is in trouble, or troubled I’m not sure which. But I hope things settle up with that bracelet woman sooner than later. Do you know if they verified Marna’s remains?” Sugar asks.

“I don’t know, he doesn’t tell me these things.” Barb says. “Don’t spoil lunch with police talk.”

~ ~ ~

Marcel drives out to the house with the warrant himself. They have five police cars now surrounding the house. There is no way the two of them can leave without anyone knowing.

“Fire!” Sugar says and holds her mouth quickly. She looks around to make sure that no one hears her. Barb looks at her and before her thoughts have time to register what Sugar said she somehow sends a text to Marcel and tells him what Sugar said.

Marcel looks down at his phone and then signals to everyone to converge on the house and be prepared for a problem. Two officers go to the back door, two of them go towards the front door; there are two who have found their way to the cellar doors on the side, the rest are waiting around the house to make sure no one comes flying out of the house.

On his signal, everyone walks towards the house together.

“All we want is the location of the jewels, how hard is that to say?” Adrienne asks the woman as she walks towards the woman tied up. “You’re not dead, you can still speak, or at least blink. The woman with the bracelet told me you are connected to the number three. Is that an address?” she asks waving the lit torch in front of her very closely.

He laughs again, he trained this one well. She has no remorse at all. Poor girl, he thinks of the one tied up, he used to really like her, until she started stealing from him. Once he found money on her that he didn’t give her, he taught her a lesson in betrayal. She has been mumbling all kinds of weird things that make no sense.

“Where is the jewelry bitch, we need to get more out of her.” he yells and then laughs again as he sees her roll her eyes in the back of her head. “Hey don’t pass out on me again, I’ll only wake you up.” He laughs.

Two words come out of her mouth, “kill me” she says.

“Soon, give us her address bitch,” he says.

Marcel and his men and woman are moving slowly through the house, they suddenly hear laughter. Sugar had said something about laughter. The kind that doesn’t come from enchantment but something



more sinister. He indicates with his head that everyone should head towards the laughter. Slowly they move towards the back room door.

One of the men kick the door down and they all move in, “Police! Freeze!” They rush in and find one woman with a lit torch, a man standing watching and a third, being suspended by one arm with both feet tied to the ground so she can’t move at all.

The woman with the torch flings the fire towards the hanging woman, Marcel watches this and realizes that death to this woman is probably a blessing. If she was close enough to death to speak to Sugar, then most likely she is welcoming death. Probably isn’t even feeling this anymore. One of the officers runs over to put out the fire though.

The other two have been apprehended easily enough, the look of shock on his face is making Marcel happy. One of his officers throws a second blanket on top of the fire while another one is trying to release the bonded woman. Marcel walks over to the stricken woman. He leans down and looks into what is left of her face, “Kill me” she whispers again.

Marcel would like to relieve her from her pains and what she has been through but she is also wanted for doing the same to other people. Possibly Marna included. At least right now, this is what is being assumed. Maybe he has been torturing her all this time, maybe she isn’t so bad, but it will take a long investigation and he is not sure she has enough time left for him to forgive her.

“If she lives till tomorrow, we will talk to her. If not, we won’t mourn.” He says simply and walks away. Adrienne starts screaming, “You can’t arrest me! I’ve done nothing!” she screams

“Really? As I see things, you were standing here torturing this woman, we will start here move on as we find more reasons.” One of the officers says as she starts to read both of them their rights.

“I had nothing to do with this bitch! She was here when I got here. All fun and games, we’re into that kinky kind of stuff, you know?” she says a lot more calmly.

“Really? Not the way you are in bed. A third person? You can barely satisfy yourself let alone another person and you’re trying to get them to believe that you and I wanted to do a threesome? You’re twisted bitch.” The male perpetrator in the room says.

“Take them both out of here before I get sick,” Marcel says.

“Yes Captain,” they say.

“Ooooo Captain, I must be really important to be arrested by the big guy. Made a name for myself, have I?” the man asks. The officer pushes him along quickly, careful not to punch him, although he’d love to right now.

~ ~ ~

“Marcel?” Sugar asks.

“Here, Sugar are you ok?” He takes a breath of relief, “We found the people we were looking for, arrested them. Weird part is that the bracelet owner is not quite dead, she is close though, her head clearly ready and waiting for death. Welcoming the thought probably. Oh Sugar, I’m sorry I should not have been telling you any of that. I’m sorry. Really, I am,” he says exasperated.

“I saw the fire, I suppose she sent me what she was seeing. Why Marna?” she asks.

“We don’t know the answer to that yet or even if they are connected,” he says.

After lunch, Sugar and Barb go through their day as they normally would and find themselves arriving back at home at the same time.

“How was the rest of your day?” Barbara asks.

“Weird. My boss, well, one of them, is having difficulties he won’t admit to, medically speaking. Marcel keeps sending me messages of apologies and I think the woman hanging on the edge of living and



dying is still trying to reach me. But I don't know why. But part of me is starting to think that Marna is not related at all, I think she knew where she was because of something else. I think she found them when she was burying something else; that is the feeling I keep getting. What do you think?" Sugar asks.

"Sounds plausible to me," Barb says. "Should we tell Marcel your thoughts?"

"Grandma said not to get involved with the end, she always told me only to give information that I actually hear, no conjecture," Sugar says.

"But you're still hearing her, or at least feeling her Sugar. What do you do then?" Barbara asks.

"I don't know, and she isn't even all the way dead," she says, only now she begins to shake.

There is a knock on the door. Barb answers and sees Marcel there, she lets him in and he runs to Sugar, "Tell me what it is, I know she is trying to reach you. She has been mumbling all this time in the hospital, no one knows what she is saying. They say at the hospital she is trying to speak and they gave her a sedative to calm her. Please, this could be important Sugar. I'm sorry I'm in your home, I'm so, so, so sorry. I'll never let this happen again," he pleads with her.

Sugar falls into another trance, "Husband, husband.....saw all.....hiding, bury everything under oak, poor baby, woman laughed." Sugar gasps awake again. "sorry, so sorry" one more gasp and Sugar finds herself in her living room. She looks up to Barb.

Barb is at her side. "You are amazing. I love you girlfriend." She holds her friend and Marcel stands to walk around processing all of this information. Marna's husband killed her, now he has to look back at him and the sister as well. They also have to go back to see what this woman buried under the oak. He is hoping for other clues, something to help others with closure. Maybe even help put her accomplice away for good. Wishful thinking Marcel, get a grip, he thinks to himself.

"Tell her to go on Sugar, in your mind, as much as I'd like to hang her for all the offenses we have on her, or assume are on her, right now I'm not so sure anymore, either way, tell this woman it is time to pass on and let go and to leave you alone. If you tell her she did good; she will leave you alone. Tell her now while she is still in your head." He says softly before he lets himself out.

Sugar thinks clearly and concentrates on the voice she heard only moments ago, in her mind she tells the voice, 'Go, everything will be ok. We will find what you buried, go, in peace. We already found Marna. You've done a good job here. Shhh.'

Sugar gasps and puts her hand on her heart, "Oh Barb, I think she let go. He is right, she needed permission and validation. Did I kill her?" Sugar asks.

"No, you allowed her to go, that's not killing her, Oh Sugar, people do that all the time to loved ones, you know that. They visit at the hospital and tell them they love them and tell them to let go. Come doll, let's make ourselves dinner and celebrate life as we know it. We have so much in our lives. Friends, jobs, I have a boyfriend, you need to find one." They both laugh at that statement.

~ ~ ~

Marcel and his team are back at the gas station. They find the oak and see that from this vantage point, looking to where Marna was found, the other convict, or victim as she may be, would have seen everything happening and been perfectly hidden. They begin to dig around the tree.

"Captain, I hit something already." One of the officers calls out.

Marcel walks over, "What is it?" he asks.

The officer pulls at the ground in front of her until she unearths a box. She pulls at it hard and finally gets the box out of the ground. "A box?" she looks.

"Let's look around and make sure nothing else is here," he says.



They bring the box back to the precinct for a cursory look. Marcel has been looking over all of what this woman had saved. They had her wrong all this time, he was afraid of that. According to these papers, she put her own child up for adoption in a private adoption to make sure he wouldn’t hurt her. As long as she “Behaved” he left the child alone. That was his promise. There are copies of prescription drugs here, he obviously forced her to take, these types of drugs would make her submissive.

Quickly he sends a message to the hospital and to the coroner because he doesn’t know where she is right now, to test for this particular kind of drug. Then he goes back to the papers in the box, some of them are pictures of the man they caught, pictures of him performing acts he shouldn’t have been doing to another woman, and one where he is with a child. They are dated, all of these photos are within the last six months. Marcel begins to think, she had enough and wanted out. Maybe when he started to work with Adrienne, he became lax in giving her the drugs.

“This is so twisted up. If I had a weak stomach, the contents would surely be empty by now,” he says out loud.

“I agree.” A voice from behind says. The dog trainer is standing there, “What happiness did you find in the box sir?” he asks.

“Help yourself.” Marcel tells him. The trainer walks over to the table and begins to look through the evidence before him. He reads them and reads them again. He finds an envelope stuck at the bottom of the box and opens the flap, the trainer’s look of shock has Marcel curious.

“This is a photo of a different kind of woman, not who we are used to seeing. Look how happy she is, look at her child in her hands, so beautiful. I believe she wants this child to know she was loved. That life circumstances made this happen, not hate or anything negative. What she did was done out of love and protection?” He turns the picture around and Marcel takes a breath at what he is looking at.

“She was very pretty, very pretty indeed. Oh, that poor child. She is probably about five or six, old enough to remember being handed over to another set of adults. No family? We need to check into this adoption as well as her family. After turning all this in, she deserves that, don’t you think?” He asks.

“Whatever you say Captain,” the trainer says.

“I’m asking your opinion, not for you to kiss up to me, I already like you,” he says more authoritatively.

“Sorry sir, my day has been off as you can imagine. Yes, I believe that child needs to find grandparents and those people who adopted her may have bought her from the guy we have locked up. Or worse, he could have known all along where she was and is paying them. Therefore, his threat was always current. Please sir, I know I’m not always on the street these days, but can I please help in this?” he asks.

“Officer, you’ve shown me a great deal about who you are with this case, you’re a lot more than a dog trainer. Not that being a trainer isn’t great, but I’m happy to have you on my side. Yes, let’s sit down with this information and make a plan. Call the district attorney’s office, and let’s call in Donna.” Marcel says.

“Ooo, sir, not to contradict you at the start but Donna is being investigated for taking bribes, she may know where the child is, but not for good reasons. I thought you knew. Can I call in Marty? He is the best of the best. By the way, my name is Cruz,” he says.

“Cruz, go with your gut. You contact Marty, I’ll handle legal. Let’s get this done, and done quickly before those people find out their money train is in jail.” Marcel begins to tag each and every piece of new evidence that he has. Cruz takes the picture and the, now considered fake, adoption papers with him.

~ ~ ~



Sugar passes so many children today on her way to work today, each time she hears the words ‘thank you’. This is very confusing to her. A week has passed since the woman had died and she hasn’t even heard from Marcel at all.

She will pay closer attention to the next child and see what happens. Of course, all the rest of the way to work, she does not pass one single child. Not even one. Her phone rings as she walks into her building “Hello,” she answers softly.

“Sugar, Gerry here. I’m sure Barb has told you that I have been quite aloof for a couple of days. I want you to know, as her best friend, that I am still madly in love with her, but I followed your advice. I found my brother the day I spoke to you.

I found him Sugar, but he is not well. He has been without a job for too long so he has no insurance right now, and I’m working things out to take care of him. I’ve been to every doctor known in his area, no one will help. Damn insurance is making this next to impossible. I need to get back to my own work. Working remotely only works for so long with what I do.

I wanted to let you know he forgave me and I him. We talked for hours and hours that first two days, cried, talked some more. Now we are at the stage of planning again. But now we are stuck.” He takes a breath.

“Gerry, she knows this right?” Sugar asks.

“Some, yes,” he admits

“Ok, you are in the area now, right?” she asks.

“We came back last night, how did you know?” he asks.

“You drove by three times, I felt you, not important. Listen, come to my office, I’ll have the doctor look at your brother,” she says.

“Sugar, how can you do that? You work for one of the most sought after diagnosticians around, that’s not why I’m calling. I really wanted to know if you thought Barb would be ok if after we got married, my brother lived with us. My house is big enough. I can’t let go now, not ever,” he says.

“First bring him in, come around 11:00 this morning, and second, you had better not be joking about getting married or I’ll string you up by body parts you won’t want visible to the rest of the world,” she says sternly.

“11:00” is all he says, as he crosses his legs.

Sugar knows it is a lot to ask but she also knows her boss, while he loves doing presentations, he prefers dealing with patients. The other boss who has been quite aloof himself lately, has finally admitted something is wrong and is having himself checked out by a colleague.

~ ~ ~

Marcel has been scouring through all the papers and pictures and bank numbers and everything else this brave woman buried for him. She was going to somehow send a message to him, he is not sure how, nothing ever came in the mail. Doesn’t matter now, he has this and that is all that counts. He finds the envelope that had the picture of her child, he looks inside again, there is a piece of paper that Cruz didn’t see.

He reads it the quickly calls Cruz, “Get over here,” is all he says.

Minutes later Cruz is at the door, “Captain?” he asks. Marcel hands him the letter.

*My Dearest Sadie,*

*If you are lucky enough to see this letter it will bring you sadness and hopefully joy. The sadness is that it means that Mommy, your mommy, the one who loved you with all her heart and soul, is no longer alive. It means the bad people who took you away from me, also took me away from you.*

Copyright © 2019 by (CAA)

All rights reserved. Except for the use in any review, the reproduction or utilization of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereinafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the written permission of the author or illustrator directly.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are either the product of the author’s imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

For questions and comments about the quality of this book, please contact us at [dailyreader.caa@gmail.com](mailto:dailyreader.caa@gmail.com)



*But don’t be sad, if you are reading this, I hope it means the police gave it to you. That would mean that you found the picture, the one I’ve always kept of the two of us from when we went to the circus. Do you remember that day? We were so happy.*

*Please Sadie, please believe me when I tell you that whatever I did, I did so that the evil man who took me, would not do any harm to you. I gave you away so that he could not touch you, I hope that was true. I hope no one ever touched you in the wrong way.*

*I gave up living with you and loving you every day so that you could have a chance at living a good life. I hope that happened. But if not, if you are even a little bit sad. Call your grandparents, they will want to meet you again, you only met them when you were a baby. They are Mr. and Mrs. Cal Laster, they live in Sussex County. They will smother you with the love you need. They are the best people I’ve ever known. I was on my way to taking you to them so we could live a happy life with them together, when the evil man caught me. I wanted you to grow up with them around all the time. I missed them very much.*

*The evil man who took me away, would not let me give you to them. Go, be happy, live a life full of love and affection. Know I love you and will be watching over you to make sure no evil men come into your life. I can promise you that. Go to religious services with them, learn how to live a good life.*

*I love you Sadie girl, you’re my world.*

*Yours always,*

*Mommy*

Cruz looks up at Marcel, “A name, that means that there may be a missing person’s report on this woman don’t you think? Maybe they put one out when he no longer allowed her to contact them. They must have known she was on her way to them. One can only hope. I already have the adoption papers being checked. Marty says they aren’t real and he can contest them easily in front of any judge, if we have family that will make the legalities even easier.

But to show this to a child? That will be up to the grandparents, I would think. Huh?” he asks, holding up the letter.

“Yeah, I won’t show this to her personally. Maybe a psychologist can do this for them, tell her what all of this means, what this all means for her, in a safe setting. Son of a bitch. This man is worse than we thought, look at this picture.” He shows Cruz a picture of him doing something to a child that he had no right to do. This is the third picture of this kind.

“I haven’t called the district attorney yet, guess I will now. Along with my own superior, I think this is bigger than both of us. You work with Marty, get those grandparents, then get that child immediately before they find out he has been arrested and do something to the child. Go!” Marcel is now nervous for the child. “She was saving her child from this.”

Cruz runs out to give the information to Marty. Marcel dials his boss. He sits down and waits. He holds his phone wondering if he should call Sugar and let her know what is going on.

He needs to check on Marna’s case as well. These past couple of weeks, really suck. He sits and waits. His boss, concerned by the voice that called him, comes running down the hall to where Marcel is. Marcel shows him all that they found, “How did you get this evidence?” the boss asks.

“Does it matter?” he asks. Knowing that if he told him how the man would balk at him.

“Not really, you uncovered all of this with an anonymous tip I presume,” he says.

“Sure, go with that, the same tip who told me Marna and her child were killed by her husband and his sister,” Marcel says.

“Damn. Have you called that in yet?” the boss asks.



“No sir, I needed a moment to process this and they aren’t going anywhere, so I figured another couple of hours wouldn’t hurt. A child is involved in this one, she is alive, under forced adoption, in this evidence we found real family. Marty and Cruz are working on the reunion.” He says.

“Two of the best, good choices Marcel. You want to walk? I’d understand. I’ll call this in. You can go work on Marna’s case. This one needs to be turned over to special victims’ unit. By the look at these papers, maybe even the federal prosecutors.” He looks at Marcel who simply nods and walks out of the room shaking his head.

They were so wrong about this woman, so wrong indeed. She had been under his spell for four years, that is a long time, but she was in full protective mode all this time. Then Adrienne showed up, and the perp realized he didn’t have to persuade her much to do his bidding. He doesn’t know how people find Sugar, they do, same as it was with her grandmother. Sugar’s grandmother took him under her wing and showed him how to really think about cases. He misses her as he would miss his own grandmother. She once told him to watch out for her Sugar, she forgot to tell him to be careful not to fall in love with her. Or maybe she did, and he never heard all her words. Maybe he isn’t in love, maybe he is in awe. That is more likely what he feels.

Walking into his real office, he sits down and mulls over all of the news they have on Marna’s ex-husband and his sister.

~ ~ ~

11:00 comes quickly this morning. Sugar had spoken with the good doctor before he saw the first patient. “Of course, I’ll see him, what time did you say?” he asked her

“11, is that a problem?” she asks, knowing this is when he usually calls patients.

“Not this time, no, he deserves to be seen. Everybody does, I hate the fact that insurances make a doctor’s job harder than it has to be sometimes. Do you know what is going on at all? Oh, and before you ask, my partner’s personal medical scare, was only that, a scare. He worked out what he needs to change and do with a colleague.” he mentions to her calmly, he knows she knew.

“No, Gerry, only said he is sick and has been without a job so no insurance. He mentioned something about his coloring being off and running fevers a lot though.” Sugar explains who Gerry is and the good doctor understands.

Now that it is time for Gerry to be here, she is nervous that he is late. At 11:10 he walks in with a man who can barely stand. “Sorry, bad morning,” he says.

Sugar runs over to help him and they pull Gerry’s brother into the back room for the examination right away. The doctor spends a moment taking his vital signs, “Sugar call over at the Wellness Clinic on 6<sup>th</sup> street, tell them I’m sending them a special patient who needs immediate care, no questions asked.”

Sugar walks out of the room and makes the call, she repeats verbatim what the doctor said because she believes this to be code for something. They tell her when to come and whom to ask for.

In the exam room the doctor looks at Gerry, “He is very sick Gerry. His color is off because I believe he is having some failure in his organs, we need to figure out why. Possibly we caught the beginning of the end, or simply a neglected item that can be easily fixed, well not easily, but you know what I mean. We won’t know until the tests are done. They are already being ordered by the message I gave Sugar to relate to the clinic. I’m a blunt person, I should have said that at the beginning.” He notes the look on Gerry’s face.

Sugar walks in and says, “They say his room will be ready in half an hour.”

“Gives us plenty of time. Can you send Nurse Yang in please?” Again, Sugar does as the doctor asks.

Copyright © 2019 by (CAA)

All rights reserved. Except for the use in any review, the reproduction or utilization of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereinafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the written permission of the author or illustrator directly.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are either the product of the author’s imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

For questions and comments about the quality of this book, please contact us at [dailyreader.caa@gmail.com](mailto:dailyreader.caa@gmail.com)



The nurse and doctor work quickly to start an IV in Gerry’s brother’s arm. She takes some blood from him next. He has not stirred much since they came, but now that the IV fluids are getting into him, he has begun to become more responsive to what is around him.

“A good sign,” the doctor says to Gerry. “Now let’s get him over there. We’ll take the ambulance there. Nurse, can you handle things here?” he asks.

“Nothing much coming in today, if I need you, I’ll call,” she says.

“Great. Gerry, let’s get this brother of yours healed.” He smiles and Gerry follows behind him. He looks to Sugar and mouths the words ‘thank you’ to her.

~ ~ ~

Marcel has been working night and day on figuring out why Marna’s husband would want to kill her, and the child no less.

He has come up with nothing. He has a witness who is dead and he found Marna’s body, they have the diamonds that were hidden in the child’s headband, they’ve been thoroughly looked at to make sure they aren’t stolen or anything. No robberies reported by the ex, nothing to suspect them.

But right now, with all the other evidence she turned in, he has to believe she witnessed this. Finally, he decides to get a warrant to search the brother’s store as well as his home to see if they can find mud from the same place on his shoes. Or possibly blood, Marna may have witnessed her own child’s murder or the child hers, there is no way to know. Surely it wasn’t done at the same time. But maybe it was, maybe that is why the woman was laughing because they did it together. “Stop it Marcel, people aren’t that depraved,” he says out loud.

“Sometimes they are,” Cruz says.

“How are you always around when I’m talking to myself?” Marcel asks.

“Maybe you shouldn’t talk so loud,” Cruz smiles. “Listen, we found the grandparents. I was right, there was a missing person’s report filed shortly after she allegedly hooked up with him.

They couldn’t believe she is dead; but are waiting eagerly to see if the child will come to them. They are making arrangements to have the body brought to them to be buried in the family plot. Good people, both young grandparents. She was only eighteen when she had the child, Marty says they will be able to get the child. With all those drugs, and who knows what else he gave her, she aged a lot. She is younger than both of us. Excuse me, she was. The pediatric social services are picking her up today, the family has been on surveillance since we found out who they are. Not really foster parents, they don’t seem to be friendly, makes this even more believable they were getting paid by him to keep her alive. Marty is sure they will hand her over quickly and happily. Especially when shown that the police know the situation. Could still be charges on them, but that is not my concern.

Hey Marcel, this is good news, take it for what it is, will ya?” Cruz looks at his new friend very sorrowfully.

“I can’t figure out why Marna is dead. We don’t have evidence except that a dead woman saw them there. No security cameras at the gas station either. The owner said, after they broke, he was too cheap to fix them, when I reminded him we found a body of a woman and child, he broke down and cried again. I have a crew going out with a warrant to search for blood and mud at the ex-husband’s place. Business, cars, homes, anything they own. Marna’s death seems senseless. I mean three small diamonds? They were appraised for a total of five thousand dollars, that’s all. They had to have been looking for something else. But what?” he asks.

“Damn, that is an awfully small amount in diamonds but if they really thought it was theirs, that she stole them, or something like that. I don’t know. Can I see what we know about them?” Cruz asks.

Copyright © 2019 by (CAA)

All rights reserved. Except for the use in any review, the reproduction or utilization of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereinafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the written permission of the author or illustrator directly.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are either the product of the author’s imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

For questions and comments about the quality of this book, please contact us at [dailyreader.caa@gmail.com](mailto:dailyreader.caa@gmail.com)



"Help yourself," Marcel turns his computer around and Cruz sits down to look.

Sugar sits in her office, still hearing a child say thank you. All day, no matter where she is. When Gerry called to say his brother is being admitted and that he has some sort of kidney malfunction, she seemed relieved for him. The doctor told him that they were almost too late. But he should be able to recover without losing the kidney. The doctor is cautiously optimistic. Things can always turn but losing one kidney is not losing your life, so Gerry is comforted with that.

The office has been relatively quiet today, sometimes that happens. Sugar is thankful, usually on these days she catches up on all her paperwork and reports that need to be done. 'thank you, Mommy says thank you too'

Sugar sits up, that was a whole sentence. In her head, she says, 'you're welcome, but why thank me?'

'You heard the lady, you found us. We are together now, holding hands'

'You are Marna's child?' Sugar asks.

'Yes, Momma wants to talk to you'

'ok' Sugar says

'Thank you, Sugar, thank you for listening to her, she was troubled, she saved her baby, I didn't', Marna says. Sugar recognizes the voice

'You did what you could, but why?' Sugar asks

'Cruz has the papers, I have to go. The women who reported us to you, she is a good lady, a big heart, we like her. Tell them we will watch out for her here, me and my daughter.' Marna says

Sugar gasps for air and realizes she has been in a trance again. She looks around, the doctor is watching her, "You ok?" he asks. He knows her gift.

"Yes, how is Gerry holding up?" she asks.

"He will be good. Shaken up, seems these brothers only recently found each other again. I'd say good timing. He will be fine, long road ahead, some life changes, but he will be good. I'd send Barb over if I were you," he smiles knowing the connection.

"Good idea, I'll tell her to come pick up Gerry's car here and drive over. Good excuse," She says.

"Ok, then take a break yourself, you were pretty gone this time Sugar," he says.

"I'm sorry sir," she says embarrassed.

"Don't be sorry, I'm glad you weren't on the front desk," he smiles at her. One, because he knows Sugar has a gift, and two, because he knows as soon as someone would say hello, she'd be out of the trance and sometimes she needs to finish them. "Take a break, go out and get yourself some fries," he laughs and walks away.

"Barb? Are you sitting down?" Sugar calls her friend and gives her the information she has.

"I've got his spare keys. I'll walk over now. I took the bus in today as you know. Not sure why, I was in the mood. I'm not stopping in, I'll get the car and go," she says.

"Good idea, hold on to him Barb I think he wants to stay permanently," Sugar hints to her.

"Now *that* is a good thought," Barb says and hangs up.

Sugar takes herself out of the office a few minutes later, she finds herself walking around aimlessly, she passes some girls selling cookies and buys two boxes. The next thing she knows, she is in her car driving, Sugar drives to the police precinct. "I'm here to see Captain Marcel," she says.

"Hold on." The man behind the counter says.

Marcel comes running out when he is told a beautiful woman with a birthmark under her left eye is here to see him. He knows this is Sugar. "Come in, come in, follow me," he says hurriedly.

Copyright © 2019 by (CAA)

All rights reserved. Except for the use in any review, the reproduction or utilization of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereinafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the written permission of the author or illustrator directly.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

For questions and comments about the quality of this book, please contact us at [dailyreader.caa@gmail.com](mailto:dailyreader.caa@gmail.com)



"We need Cruz," she says.

Marcel doesn't question her, he calls Cruz, who comes quickly. Sugar relates the news to them and looks from one to the other. Cruz sits there thinking a minute or two. "Oh, holy hell. I've had this the whole time? Around the time Marna started talking about leaving we started talking about the future. One time she told me that the two of us would make great partners. I told her then that if we are both thirty-five and not married, we will hook up. The two of us laughed about that for a long time, knowing full well it was a line from some movie or television show we once saw, at the time, we couldn't remember which.

The last time we spoke, as I said, she said to me that since we are only a few years away of being permanent that she thought I should have a copy of her important papers. I took them with some humor and never looked at them. We used to joke around a lot. One time she handed me an official envelope and looked me straight in the eye and said not to look at it until I got home.

When I opened the envelope there was a note that said, 'gotcha' on it. Naturally, I thought this was more of the same. They aren't even home, they are in my desk. Damn, why didn't I think of this? Let me go get them." Cruz gets up and walks to his office. He finds the envelope and pulls it out of his desk. Before going back, he looks to see if there is anything private in there for him to see.

Then he walks back into Marcel's office and plops the envelope on the desk. Marcel dumps the contents out. Sugar sees a blue piece of paper and hands it to Cruz quickly. He looks at her and she looks to him with understanding.

He turns it over, it says *My Cruz* on the front

He opens it: *If you are reading this I'm either dead, or we're married. Which by the way, I would have done before thirty-five if you ever asked me ☺ but we wouldn't have been happy.*

*You are the only one I told anything to. Thank you for being you Cruz.*

*Love always*

*Marna*

Cruz sits with tears in his eyes reading this note, over and over again. He loved her too. But she always made jokes about relationships because he knew how much she hated the first one. His Marna, now he can say this, she was his. Sugar reaches over and holds his hand, he accepts this gesture and looks to Marcel.

"We all loved Marna but you were her chosen one it seems. In many ways. The three diamonds Sugar? They aren't the ones we found in the child's headband. That may have been a coincidence. Those she actually may have taken for the simple fact that her ex was, is actually, a jackass and the sister a bigger one.

No, The Three Diamonds is the name of the online company she owned. He must have gotten wind of her success and wanted his fair share. Only he has no claim to this company, but you Cruz, are named on here as the silent partner. Congratulations my boy, seems Marna has quite a successful business she has been running all this time. I don't think she was leaving here, as in the area, I think she was leaving here, as in police work is all.

The company was started right after her divorce, the divorce papers are in here too to prove the date. I looked into his business recently, to see his financials, they are ok, not great for being a jeweler but enough for him and his sister to survive on, neither one has an extended family, to worry about. No spouse or 'other side' to share the wealth with.

My guess is, they figured out she has a lot of money and wanted some. When she wouldn't give them any, they must have pressured her. But death?" Marcel asks.

"Silent partner you say? Marna and I would discuss this business all the time. We would have, what I thought, were hypothetical discussions. She asked questions that way, for example, 'What would happen if

Copyright © 2019 by (CAA)

All rights reserved. Except for the use in any review, the reproduction or utilization of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereinafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the written permission of the author or illustrator directly.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

For questions and comments about the quality of this book, please contact us at [dailyreader.caa@gmail.com](mailto:dailyreader.caa@gmail.com)



you needed to reach a vendor who didn’t like you?’ and so we would discuss this and she would then say, ‘sure that makes sense’ or some other day she’d ask me something about keeping the books straight. I always thought it was about her dream job, her vision of opening a store one day. Oh Marna, I let you down,” Cruz says.

“I wouldn’t say that.” Sugar has her hand on his but her look is strange, her voice sounds different right now, “You helped the business grow, The Three Diamonds is as much yours as mine. They claimed I stole the business idea from them, that I heard them talking about the concept in the store while married. Believed I owed them money, I gave them a check to shut them up. They kept coming back. All on my phone, all the threats.” Sugar sits back and shakes her head.

She feels drained and doesn’t even know why, she looks at Marcel and Cruz, they are staring at her. “What happened?” she asks.

“Marna talked through you. Do you remember hearing her?” Marcel asks.

“Now? No. Oh, that’s not good.” She says and sits back needing a rest. In her head she hears, ‘sorry, I had to. I’ll leave you alone now and forever. They will settle this. I’m so sorry Sugar. I really loved you too you know.’ Sugar smiles. Grandmother once told her that if a voice is persistent enough it will push all the way through. I have to close my mind a bit. Grandmother taught her how to do that too. She is too open. “I won’t let that happen again.” She says out loud.

“I don’t think it will. I think because you were so close to this case; that she came through. We have our answers though. We have Marna’s phone, don’t we?” Marcel asks.

“Don’t need to, but yes the phone was on her at the time. We can check her finances to see how often she was being blackmailed by them. I suppose I need to read up on this business I own now,” Cruz tries to laugh.

“Gerry can help you. He is great at what he does. I’ll introduce you.” Sugar says, but this time she does not touch him. She is afraid to right now.

“Cruz, let’s get the phone, if we can compare the texts and emails to her from them and the money transfers, we may have them sooner than dinner time,” Marcel says.

“ok” he gets up with a heavy heart to go and find Marna’s phone. His Marna, the woman he loved and she loved him. The child he adored; they were both his. His loss is very deep right now. He falls into his chair and takes some time to mourn properly.

~ ~ ~

After meeting with Gerry, Cruz takes a drive out to the cemetery to meet with his now very silent partner in this business they created together. The concept is everything she ever said her business would be, she is doing all of the things they spoke about.

“Hey Marna, hey Nina. It’s me Cruz. I heard you found a new friend there, I’m glad you have someone. I found your papers darling. A business, you really came through. You came up with a dream and you made that exact thing come true. How do I go on without you though? You know I loved you right? If you asked, I would have married you too. How do I know how to go on?” he begins to cry again.

‘We loved but we couldn’t marry. It wasn’t meant to be’ Marna says in his head. Cruz looks around, did he hear that?

‘Yes, you heard me. I’m being given one moment and that moment is now. We are ok, don’t worry about us. You carry on your life. Carry on the business or sell, I don’t care, just don’t give them any. I loved you. I did, but we’d kill each other if we are honest. The child you saved, Sadie, her mom says thank you, she says she likes your blue tie. I have to go Cruz, no more of this for us. Apologize again to Sugar from me. Live a full life for me and Nina.’

Copyright © 2019 by (CAA)

All rights reserved. Except for the use in any review, the reproduction or utilization of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereinafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the written permission of the author or illustrator directly.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are either the product of the author’s imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

For questions and comments about the quality of this book, please contact us at [dailyreader.caa@gmail.com](mailto:dailyreader.caa@gmail.com)



And she is gone, but this time, he has closure, this time he has answers. “You’re right, you hated the way I kept my house and I was not too fond of how you cooked. We’d be a disaster if we were married. I’ll talk to Gerry and see how we should handle the business. Maybe the money earned will all go to charity, maybe we’ll start a college fund for Sadie.” Cruz leans down and kisses both headstones which he and the department paid for. Marna has no family but him. He will visit again.

As he gets to his car his phone rings. “Cruz, we got them both. We asked if they knew where Marna was, said she was a missing person and they surprisingly had no idea, but she had a smirk on her face I almost wiped off personally. Then we told them about the three diamonds found on the girl’s body and we assumed they belonged to them.

However, I wasn’t going to show them to him, he had to come collect them down at the precinct. He said if Marna had them they were probably garbage because she never knew how to pick anything good. Then one of the officers there said, ‘yeah that includes husbands?’ I nearly died on the spot.” Marcel comes up for air.

“We quoted a few of their texts and emails to Marna and asked them again if they’d like to change their story about knowing where she was and they had nothing to say. To which I began to read them their rights. She quickly asked for a lawyer and we said they could call one after they were processed downtown. Then I looked at them and asked ‘what would happen if we looked into your safe before we left’ they both turned pale. Cruz you there?” Marcel senses the man is not listening to him.

“Marna would tell you that you did good. Want to meet for dinner tonight? I kind of need company.” Cruz admits.

“My preference is a good steak, I’ll meet you at the Parkside Grill. My treat, we both could use one,” he says.

~ ~ ~

Sugar didn’t sleep much last night or the night before. She is worried about Gerry’s brother she supposes, but when she asked the doctor about his condition, she is told that he is being released this afternoon to go back to Gerry’s place with a daily visiting nurse until things are calmer. They were given specific instructions and both are very compliant.

The big case has been solved, Marna has been solved. Cruz and Gerry are working on the business together and even found a way for his brother to be involved and earn a living from his bedside. Everyone comes out ahead there. Cruz can be the silent partner still and Gerry’s brother will run the business with his input when necessary.

Barb and Gerry are so much in love that she will soon be without a roommate again. Gerry, true to his word, proposed, but only after he asked if she would live with his brother. They are going to have a simple service in three months.

Marcel has been out of town these past couple of weeks working a case with an old friend or partner, she couldn’t remember what he said, so what could be bothering her so much? She decides to go out and visit her grandmother’s grave. Maybe she will be able to speak to her.

“Hey Grandma, it’s me Sugar,” she says out loud not worried anyone will hear her. She begins to tell her all about the twisted way they found Marna and how they solved two cases at once because of one brave woman who gave her life for her child.

Sugar sits and waits, she waits and waits. When she is about to walk away, she puts her hand on the headstone, then leans her head down on it and says, “Help me please”

‘You don’t need my help baby girl, you’re doing fine’ her grandmother answers

‘Something is wrong, I can’t find the problem,’ Sugar says.

Copyright © 2019 by (CAA)

All rights reserved. Except for the use in any review, the reproduction or utilization of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereinafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the written permission of the author or illustrator directly.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are either the product of the author’s imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

For questions and comments about the quality of this book, please contact us at [dailyreader.caa@gmail.com](mailto:dailyreader.caa@gmail.com)



‘It will find you, they always do’ her grandmother says.

‘Why does this one hurt?’ Sugar asks.

There is silence and Sugar takes this to mean her grandmother can’t tell her the answer to that.

“I know you said to be careful, but I like him Grandmother, I always have, even when he worked with you,” she says out loud.

‘There is one better’ Sugar hears her say and feels a kiss on her cheek.

Sugar shakes her head in acknowledgement. She will listen. Besides Marcel is married to his work, he loves her for her help. But if they went to the movies or to dinner, he would always look to her to see what she is doing, that is how he always sees her. As if she has the magic answers, not as a woman.

~ ~ ~

Marcel has been working this case around the clock, he could use some help but he has no one around here to call, this is not his town. He is here for a friend. She has taken his mind off of all that has happened back home in the most recent past.

“Marcel are you listening to me at all?” she asks.

“What? I got lost there, no, what did you say?” he asks now focused. She explains to him all that she has on a particular person and needs him to help her understand this kind of person. “I need a new perspective.”

Marcel looks again at the evidence on the board, he doesn’t know why he hasn’t done this before, he moves things around and instantly finds a loophole they didn’t see. Damn, he must be losing his touch already, why has it been this hard? “We need to find out who was actually invited vs. who actually came, there is going to be an answer there. And this? We need to see how these two are connected because up until now, we haven’t.” He says thinking that sometimes you need to move the evidence around to find your answers. He learned that from Sugar. But now that he thinks about this case more clearly, he should have been thinking like her all this time, he usually does, what has distracted him?

“Wow, a bit of paper pushing and you see all that?” she asks.

“No, I maneuvered the information and evidence around, it was not done haphazardly. Why did you really call me up here? This isn’t a difficult case and you and I both know that. Annoying yes, but not terribly difficult, I’m not sure why I didn’t see this before. Answer my question please.” He calls her out on the real reason because he wants to go back already.

She walks over and closes the door to her office. She really hadn’t thought of what he is proposing on the case. But he is right, this is not why he is here. “Marcel, I want to make this work. We dated when I worked in the same precinct but then never talked since I moved here.” Before he can answer she grabs his collar and pulls him in for a kiss to finish what she wanted to tell him.

Marcel finds his arms slowly making their way around her body, she feels really good. He misses this mouth, misses her body. As she pulls away, his arms are around her waist. “How do we make this work?” he asks.

“I want to ask for a transfer back to your area but not in the same place. I’ll take a desk job. I want to finish law school and become an attorney for the DA’s office. Less dangerous. More time to have a family if I chose to.” She says and looks at his eyes to see if he understands all she has said, she practically proposed marriage to him.

“I work with a lot of women, some more closely than others.” His mind is referring to Sugar. At this moment he realizes his love for her has been misplaced. He loves what she can do for him, but this, this is what he needs and he needs it from this very person.

“I know, her grandmother was great, I’m sure she is too. But aren’t we also?” she asks nervously.

Copyright © 2019 by (CAA)

All rights reserved. Except for the use in any review, the reproduction or utilization of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereinafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the written permission of the author or illustrator directly.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are either the product of the author’s imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

For questions and comments about the quality of this book, please contact us at [dailyreader.caa@gmail.com](mailto:dailyreader.caa@gmail.com)



Before he can answer his phone chimes, it indicates that this is from Sugar, he assigned her a specific tone on his phone. “Hold that thought,” he says as he kisses her and reaches for his phone.

“There is something about to happen down on Seventh Avenue, send someone around, maybe two cars,” she says and hangs up.

Marcel calls his boss to follow up on what Sugar told him, as he always does, he tells his boss this came from an anonymous tip. The boss thanks him and then dispatches two units to the area.

“Now, where were we?” Marcel asks as he pulls her in for a long, hot and meaningful kiss.

~ ~ ~

“Sugar? Are you ok?” Cruz asks worriedly

“I’m ok, why do you ask?” she asks him

“Don’t you usually take your walk around now? Around the shopping area?” he asks.

“Yes, but I’m not there now, I went this morning, why? I was restless this morning I suppose and I couldn’t find anything else to do,” she responds kindly.

“A bus accident, a lot of people are injured. The whole place is shut down. I’m coming by the office to check on you,” he says and hangs up.

That is why each day Sugar has felt jumpy, she felt as if she was on a bus, the bus she might have been on had she not changed her routine today.

Minutes later Cruz walks in and walks straight back to her office. “Oh, good, you are safe,” he says.

“Did you think I was lying to you?” Sugar asks.

“Sometimes I need to see things for myself.” He smiles at her, so relieved she is safe. His heart has been going at a hundred beats per second since he heard about the accident and looked at his watch, and realized the time and day.

“Cruz, have you had lunch yet?” she asks smiling.

“No, you want to take a break?” he asks.

“Not want, I need to leave here right now,” she says.

“Sure, grab your things we’ll go,” he says and as she walks around her desk he puts his hand on the small of her back and walks her back out the front of the office. Once outside she says, “Cruz, you know I don’t do bad news, why would you tell me that on the phone?” she asks.

“I assure you, that you handle bad news perfectly well. Come, there is a great deli I’ve heard about and want to try, about a block away. Yes?” he asks smiling, always smiling at her he has noticed.

The two walk in silence, Sugar notices that for the first time in days she is feeling comfortable. She was a ball of nerves because all those people, all the voices jumping in and out of her head this morning, not making sense, words muffled, now this, this makes sense. Cruz, his hand on her back. This.

“I heard them all this morning, there are several who didn’t make the crash. I’m sorry, you know, about saying what I did. I hate receiving bad news on the phone is what I meant to say,” she says quietly as they walk behind the waiter to a table.

“I knew what you meant. I always do for some reason. I went to visit Marna yesterday. I couldn’t hear her, only that one time I guess.” He reminds her of the time she spoke to him directly there. She is the only one he told about that event.

Sugar smiles at him. “I remember that. She gave you closure, most people don’t get that after a murder or sudden death. Had she not died, I think you two would have been partners in the business anyway. She gave you the papers for a reason. Probably assumed that when she left the force, she would have told you about the business and asked you to join her. Are you going to quit the force?” she asks.



“I don’t know, Gerry, well mostly his brother, is really working the business well. I would only get in the way. I know dogs, I know how to undo a mystery, running a business is not really my thing. We may partner up,” he says.

“I think you’re wrong, but you need to do what is best for you and your future. Do you want to retire after ten years as a cop or twenty-five? You know, working with Marcel, you will only be taking more risks not less, right?” she asks.

Cruz thinks on what she has said, the biggest risk he has ever taken was to give her his heart. Only she doesn’t know yet. He tried with Marna and that didn’t turn out well. He loved her dearly. Unconsciously, he reaches over and is holding Sugar’s hand.

Sugar notices that this gesture is done while he is thinking, he is not looking at her, only needing her. That’s a nice feeling. Usually someone is holding her hand because they want her to read something or feel something. Cruz is holding her hand for the sake of holding her hand. Oh Grandmother, there *is* a better one. Much, much better. She thinks to herself.

Sugar leaves Cruz to his thoughts and continues to eat with one hand. His warmth feels nice, not the kind of warmth she has to worry about, this gives her confidence that maybe, just maybe, she will one day be able to have a physical relationship with someone without worrying about how or why it feels the way it does. He is rubbing his thumb up and down her fingers, this is a warmth she could get used to.

Sugar feels she needs to interrupt his thoughts, hoping he won’t pull his hand away. “Cruz, Cruz you aren’t eating, and I’m almost done,” she says.

Cruz shakes his head and looks down at his food. “Wow Sugar, where was I?” he asks.

“In your own mind I presume. Do you need two hands to pick up that sandwich?” she asks wanting him to realize they are still holding hands.

Cruz looks down and sees why she asks, he looks at his plate and picks up half the sandwich in the other hand and takes a bite. “No,” he says with a mouthful of food and a smile on his face. She smiles back and continues to eat with him.

“Cruz, what would I do if I wasn’t me?” she asks.

“Probably the same thing you’re doing because you are you. Helping people. Some people are meant to be helpers. The doctor you work for is another one of those people. I think I will retire after ten years; that gives me only two more to go. In the meantime, I will continue to work as a silent partner with Gerry’s brother. So many people don’t stay at one job for ten years, people respect that when you do, especially on the force,” he tells her.

“Yes, I believe that is true. I am not on the force, I am like you, a silent partner,” she smiles at the joke.

“Yes Sugar, I believe that is the best way to think about your relationship with the force.” He smiles at her and they finish their lunches in quiet.

~ ~ ~

Marcel comes back from his trip and is charged with new energy, he had heard about the crash, thought it was going to be a robbery or something. If the cars weren’t there, he was told the carnage would be much worse. The bus would have hit the sidewalk and pedestrians.

His girl is coming back, his mood will forever be good now. He hadn’t realized how much he missed her until he was there. “Good morning Sugar, what brings you in so early in the morning?” he asks.

“Ah, you did what I thought you would. You reconnected. I see you no longer have a puzzle around you. I’m happy for you Marcel. But that is not why I’m here. While you were gone, I received this



in the mail,” she drops a box on his desk. “I haven’t opened it because I’m too nervous to, I wanted you to.”

Marcel carefully opens the box, inside there are two photographs. With a note that says, ‘please find them.’ “There is an address, I’m assuming this is where they are from.” He hands her two photographs of children.

Sugar takes a deep breath and sits down to hold them. One of them feels cold, the other is burning hot. A tear rolls down her cheek as she holds the cold one. Marcel realizes this child is not coming home. He sits down. “Where?” he asks.

Sugar holds on the picture between her two hands, she needs to feel the whole picture. “Baseball diamond, Mercy Park.” She puts it down and shakes her hands before she picks up the other one, “hmmmm, the heat grows and grows in her hands. The voice comes next, ‘my brother’ she hears, ‘they abuse him’, she repeats the words. ‘Marine towers, basement’ she gasps as she awakens.

“Oh Marcel, these poor dears.” Her head shakes again, as if someone is knocking on a door, she closes her eyes and listens, ‘I ran to get help, he found me, bat is in dugout, I fought, scratch on his face.’ She touches her cheek.

Marcel writes this all down and calls Cruz, “You ready for a ride?” he asks.

Cruz looks over and sees Sugar is shaken. Damn, someone is not alive. He walks to her and squeezes her shoulder a bit. “Sure, where to?” he asks.

The men leave Sugar there to recover alone, she prefers it that way, Cruz will check on her later. He sends a message to Barb though.

~ ~ ~

Cruz has been uneasy this whole day. First, they find the child buried, they find the bat still having blood on the side, then they find not only his brother, but many other children tied up in the basement of the building. Depravity knows no bounds, they are using these kids as lures to blackmail some people and do other unsavory activities with the rest.

Not one of them had eaten in two days, they were told. Hopefully, this brings closure to some families. Apparently, only the one boy had ever tried to escape. All the rest were still there. The one there the longest had no problems telling them all that has happened. He cried the most, wanting to go back to his mother, he only had his mother. Missed her terribly.

Cruz and Marcel personally delivered the news about the child who died, they told the parents that he was the one who tried to run and save everyone else. This gave them some solace. Now Cruz heads for the only place he can find solace. Sugar.

The day has been long, he knows Barb is at Gerry’s these days even so close before the wedding because she has a lot to do there, the place is not very fixed up and if she doesn’t do the fixing herself, no one will. She doesn’t want guests to walk in and see a place falling apart, especially her parents. Her father is a contractor. She learned a lot about doing things yourself in your home while growing up with him.

The knock on the door startles Sugar, no one comes at this hour. She runs to the door, thinking the worst. She looks through the peep hole and sees Cruz, a very beat Cruz.

“Come in,” she says softly.

Cruz takes one look at her and all he can think to do is hold her, he needs to be held. Sugar happily goes into his arms. He holds on for dear life. “What happens if I decide to stay for fifteen years?” he whispers into her ear.

“Then we delay the retirement party,” she says trying to lighten the mood.



Cruz looks down into Sugar’s eyes. He leans down to kiss her, really kiss her, not on the cheek this time, not a friendly glad to see you kiss either.

The pressure on her lips is sending signals all through her body she has never experienced. All are good. This is good. He pulls away and her head falls to his chest. She needs to catch her breath. She takes a deep breath and looks back up at him.

“Grandmother said someone good will come,” she tells him.

Cruz smiles at her and this alone does things to her insides she didn’t know would happen. “I loved Marna you know, but not like this, things were never like this between us,” He assures her.

“I know, Marna was the type of person who made it easy to love her. I rather like this too,” she says pointing to herself then to him.

“What do you hear when I touch you?” he asks nervously. He doesn’t mean to be cruel but he has to know.

“Truth?” she asks looking into his eyes, he nods, “I feel silence. That is a wonderful thing to me. Do you understand that?” she asks.

Cruz finds himself unable to stop the tear from rolling down his cheek. With him she hears silence. He can make things quiet for her. There is no better reaction he could ask for. He leans down and kisses her again, this time with a lot more gusto.

~ ~ ~

The morning of Gerry and Barb’s wedding, Sugar’s house is full of excitement. Barb’s parents are staying with Sugar, her sister and her sister’s fiancé are staying here too. Barb’s brother and his family are staying by Cruz. The house is bustling already at 6:00 in the morning. Barb walks into the kitchen and sees Sugar sitting on the floor with her head in her knees. Oh no, not today Sugar. She thinks to herself.

“Sugar, please tell me you are only tired, I know we were all up and loud in your house last night and you are used to quiet,” she leans her head to her friend’s as she sits next to her.

Sugar doesn’t speak, she can’t tell Barb what is on her head. She reaches for her friend’s hand to comfort her. “Tired is sooooo true,” she says but not because of Barb’s family. She will have to call Cruz soon. She can’t take another night like this.

He has become her calm. She has never had that before, and now she is craving calm desperately. “You know Sugar, I would love to attend your wedding one day.” Barb says lightening the mood.

Sugar looks up to her friend. “Would you? Do you think that will ever happen? I am not the easiest to live with you know,” she jokes.

“I am aware,” Barb grins, “but there are some good benefits. Your heart is about as large as they come. I can easily see you with a dozen or so kids all vying for your attention, and all getting enough from you too. That is who you are. I’m not as giving, but from you, I’ve learned to be more than I ever was. You picked out the perfect day for the wedding, everyone made their way here. You guided me through which wedding dress to wear because some of the used ones had a bad aura. Sugar, I can’t ask for a better friend. And, having had only one sister, one who was always too busy for me, I’m glad I’ve had you in my life.” Barb begins to tear up.

“Oh no you don’t, your mom will kill me if you have swollen eyes today.” The two women laugh.

“What is so damn funny so early in the morning?” Barb’s father asks.

“Tears of joy, would you like me to make some breakfast Mr. Harding?” Sugar asks as she begins to sit up more.



“No dear, that is why I am down here so early. Tradition, you know. The father of the bride always makes the breakfast in our family, for the brides and anyone she invites.” He smiles at his daughter. “I’m glad I only have a couple of them though,” he smiles again.

“Really? Now that is a tradition I can get used to,” Sugar says.

“I’ll come back and do for you all there is to do, when the time comes.” He reaches out his hand to help the girls up from the floor.

Each one kisses a cheek at the same time and he laughs. “Now go you two, pancakes and eggs take some finesse and I don’t want you bothering my rhythm.” Barb goes running out to get her mother and sister.

Sugar looks at Barb’s father with sadness, he hasn’t told his children. He looks back at her and he realizes she knows, of course she does. He nods and she walks over and hugs him again. As she pulls away, she says, “I guess I’ll have to get married sooner than later,” Sugar says, he smiles at her and they part quietly.

~ ~ ~

“Cruz? Oh Cruz.” Sugar begins to cry in her room.

“Not today Sugar, what could be bringing you down so much today?” he asks.

She tells him that she knows Barb’s dad will not be around past Barb’s first few months of marriage, he confirmed this. She neglected to tell him the part of her getting married quicker though in order to have Barb’s father make the bride breakfast and walk Sugar down the aisle, she doesn’t have her own father around anymore. Her father died shortly after she moved out. She knew this was coming and she also knew the idea of her feeling what was going on annoyed him and he needed her out of the house. Sugar respected that as her father learned to respect her gift for what it was, a gift.

Cruz’s heart breaks a little. His Sugar is going through this hell and he can’t help her right now. He picks up the ring box he has, the one his mother handed him before she left the country to get married herself. He did not realize she would never return, ‘you will need this one day’ she told him.

He holds in his hand the ring his parents shared. The one filled with a lot of love and laughter. His mother asked for a second chance at love and he let her go. It is what she needed to do. Too hard to live here she told him, too many memories, so she and her new husband moved to her new husband’s homeland. He has only seen her twice since then, but they do talk at least once a week.

“Sugar, I’m holding your hand right now, do you feel me?” he asks as he puts one of his hands into the other.

Sugar hears the question and waits a second, “Yes, yes I do Cruz, thank you for bringing me down, you always know what to do. You bring the silence I always seek. You bring calm to my crazy and make me feel I am a normal woman. Grandmother would have loved you almost as much as I do,” she says, then holds her hand on her mouth. She did not mean to admit that to him right now.

“That’s funny, because I always feel you bring calm to my crazy. Sugar. Go take a shower my love, think of me holding you while you’re in there. Relax and get ready for the wedding of all weddings. I already went by the hotel this morning, everything is set there. Gerry and his brother are going nuts, Marcel is there to keep the calm. I’ll see you soon as I bring over everyone for breakfast,” he pauses. “I love you too, very deeply,” he says, then he hangs up before he begins to tear, again, she will hear the emotion in his voice.

He calls his mother before he wakes the house to get ready for breakfast.

~ ~



Marcel never wanted a big fanfare wedding, he hates being the center of attention. Now he has to be a groomsman and he is at his wits end. Up until now he thought his job was to keep Gerry calm and his brother calmer. He did not realize he had an actual job until Gerry’s brother handed him a tuxedo.

He calls Suzie, “What the hell and I supposed to do with this?” he asks after sending her a picture of him holding the tuxedo up.

“Wear and enjoy. What color is the cummerbund?” she asks.

“Um, hold on, let me check, ah, here.” He takes a picture and sends.

“Oh good, I have the perfect dress that will match that.”

“This is a joke to you?” he asks.

“Actually, I don’t want to outshine the bride, maybe I’ll wear black like a funeral you seem to think this is,” she says annoyingly.

That hit home, Marcel has now been knocked into reality. Damn this girl is good for him, “Ok, I’ll stop complaining. You will probably look good in this color actually. You do look good in any color, even white. I’d love to see you in a white dress,” he says unconsciously.

“Marcel, did you just propose to me on the phone?” she asks.

He shakes his head, damn, did he say that out loud. “Not the way I had planned, but I suppose the words are out there, can’t take them back, don’t want to,” he says honestly.

“Coming from you that is the most romantic thing I could have asked for. The answer is yes Marcel but the real excitement in me will have to be shown in person. By the way, I was going to tell you today I received my acceptance letter to law school but the acceptance from you means so much more.” She can no longer contain the tears in her eyes.

“So much to celebrate today. I will wait impatiently.” He smiles and hangs up.

~ ~ ~

Everyone in Sugar’s house has been very busy since breakfast, each person tending to their own needs and the needs of each other. Cruz and Sugar had only a mere minute to say hello and then they were lost in the shuffle of the day. Sugar doesn’t mind, it is not her day after all, it is Barb’s.

Getting everyone to the hotel became somewhat of a joke, they had so many cars leaving at once, that they look like a caravan. Everyone showing up together at the hotel threw everything in motion. Photographer, flowers, wedding planner, people running from the ceremony room to the dining room and back again.

When the ceremony finally takes place, Sugar takes a breath of relief as she walks down the aisle as Barb’s only bridesmaid. She sees Marcel standing tall under the canopy looking straight at Suzie with a giant smile on his face. Before Sugar reaches the end, she turns to Suzie and reaches over to her, Suzie stands and walks the rest of the way with Sugar. No one seems to question this.

The whole room stands when Barb and her parents are walking down, she looks elated. Even though they have been living together for the past month or so, their lives have been so busy, they haven’t had much time to actually spend with each other, alone.

The new couple will leave tonight on a two day honeymoon, then they will be back to tackle all that life has for them, together. Sugar knows that Barb’s house will be even fuller before long. She is so happy for her friend but she can’t tell her this, this she will learn on her own.

She holds onto Suzie’s hand the whole time during the ceremony. They stay there after the new couple has been formed and they watch them as they make their way back down the aisle, and the crowd follows them out to the reception area.

The only people left in the room are Marcel, Suzie, Cruz, Sugar and Suzie’s mother and younger brother. The clergy turns to them and asks, “Are you sure this is what you want?” he asks.



They all smile and say yes. “Need to get the most out of these flowers.” Marcel says and besides, he really would hate to have to do this, even standing here for Gerry made him sick in the stomach before he saw Suzie sit down. She kept him calm.

“Yes, but a woman looks forward to a big wedding, don’t they?” the clergymen looks to the bride. He wants to make sure this is not a rushed or pushed wedding.

“Many do, that is true sir, however, this one does not. My daughter is probably the only woman you’ll meet who has always promised me she would elope and take the money we would have spent on an affair, to put down for a house. The photographer is here, we are all here, you may proceed.” Suzie’s mother says smiling. She is so happy her daughter thought of this today. The perfect day, she will tell Marcel later why it is so, but for now, her mother gets to watch her daughter get married on her own anniversary. The way her daughter always wanted her wedding to be, quiet.

Marcel had brought the ring with him because he had planned on getting engaged tonight, but this seems so much better. He has no family except the guys on the force, now he has a real one. Here with Sugar, Cruz, Gerry, his brother and Barb, the only ones he would celebrate with anyway. He kisses his bride as he slips on her own mother’s gold band to her finger. A tradition in their family. Good thing they only had one girl.

When all is said and done, Marcel leads his wife out of the room and they head towards the dining room in time to hear the new couple being announced and brought in. During the dinner Marcel stands and knocks his glass with his spoon to get everyone’s attention.

“As a groomsman I’ve been told I had the responsibility to make a toast. To my good friends, may they be this happy for many years to come, may your family grow as strong as the two of you are together and may we celebrate together often.” The crowd applauds but sees he is not done so they quiet down quickly.

“One more thing to say, I hope you don’t mind that we will have the same wedding pictures as you. While you were away for a few minutes of seclusion we borrowed your clergy as well as your canopy and Suzie and I became man and wife.” The crowd cheers louder and Gerry and Barb jump up from the seats to hug their friends.

~ ~ ~

Sugar is finally home, everyone left after the wedding, her home is quiet, she has a lot of linen to wash now but laundry can wait. Right now, she wants quiet. Cruz lets himself in to her house and locks the front door. “Sugar,” he calls out.

Sugar comes running from the kitchen. “What did you see this morning, was it more than her father?” he asks.

She nods. “Is it still there?” he asks.

She nods again, “Then let us get this out together because we have other things to talk about tonight.” He reaches for her hand and she takes his, they walk to the couch.

“He is sick, that much is true, but the children keep coming to me, all night long the past two nights already. The one’s from the bus. They want to tell their parents things. I can’t shut them up. They are all crying,” she says.

“Ok, one at a time, let them in, tell me what they say, we will write each one down and send them each a note anonymously to each parent,” Cruz says and holds her hands.

“I’ll try,” she says. She gets up and hands him a pad of paper. She closes her eyes and lets the voices come in, one at a time. With each one she feels lighter and lighter. The last one needed to tell her



father that he had better come clean about his affair. That was a hard one. Cruz pulls Sugar onto his lap and they sit there a moment together.

“I could do this every night you know. Help you through these. Each and every night, for the rest of our lives.” He slides the ring onto her finger. Sugar looks down at the ring, she feels how the ring is filled with love, she can feel the warmth penetrating all the way to her own heart. “Are you sure?” she asks.

“Never more,” he smiles and kisses her fully on the lips.

“That’s the best thing I’ve ever heard.” Sugar smiles at him and leans in to kiss him again.

Copyright © 2019 by (CAA)

All rights reserved. Except for the use in any review, the reproduction or utilization of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereinafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the written permission of the author or illustrator directly.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are either the product of the author’s imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

For questions and comments about the quality of this book, please contact us at [dailyreader.caa@gmail.com](mailto:dailyreader.caa@gmail.com)