

Chapter Twenty-Eight in which hidden things are found and a habit of hiding saves a hide.

The police let Sylvia back into the condo the following morning. The investigation had been short-lived, there being little to investigate, and she had spent the night at her sister's after being discharged from the hospital. While the police had wanted to suspect murder, it just looked impossible. And everyone interpreted James' forgotten shoes as a sign that it was an intentional act ... she had told them about the scotch and Ambien, and a toxicology test had confirmed both, but people hated to believe in accidents, and the coroner had written suicide on the death certificate. Sylvia was weirdly relieved that she wouldn't be getting an insurance payout, and as she walked back into the unit that she had shared with James she wondered again at the madness that had taken her over and let her get involved with such a monster.

Sylvia shuddered and shook it off. She had to keep moving or she would get paralysed. Making straight for the balcony she was immensely relieved to see her plants sitting undisturbed, and gently lifted the oleander up by its trunks. There was her box, there was the backup drive and there was her stash. She quickly tucked the box inside her jacket and tidied up the plants. She would get movers in to pack up the furniture after she removed the few personal things she loved, including her painting, *Mist Fantasy*. But these things would have to wait. She had forgotten to cover up the television, and as the painting slid back into place she felt as if her life was coming back too.

Now to get somewhere safe to look at his files, she thought, although she really didn't know what she was looking for. *Proof that the investment house had knowingly sold junk securities rebundled? Certainly.* But could there be more? The news had said that Blankenfields had lost a cool nine billion dollars ... technically they had that kind of money to lose, but it had shocked the nation. Did James have prior knowledge? Was there worse to come? With the speculation Sylvia could feel her body begin to panic and stuffing all thought aside she went into the bedroom and got her own laptop out of the cupboard where she kept it away from prying eyes. Even the police seemed to have

missed it: at least they hadn't asked for her password and it appeared untouched.

Sylvia plugged in the backup drive and started copying the files over while she packed a few personal things into an overnight bag. She was worried that the police, or worse people, were far from done with her and did not intend to leave the apartment without having reformatted the drive. It seemed like hours but was only minutes, and after checking that the ghost of James' drive was on her laptop, like a real ghost with unfinished business, Sylvia reformatted the portable drive and with an audible sigh slid it into her bag along with the laptop.

Her original plan had been to go back to her sister's but she was reluctant to cause her any more trouble and had decided instead to head off into the woods and camp, something she loved and would seem reasonable to those who knew her or were trying to know her. She would feel safer out of the city and knew the perfect spot, a gem on **crown land** that could be accessed through logging roads where she could find peace and quiet to sort this all out. Her camping gear was in the storage unit in the basement of the condo building, packed up like her previous existence she thought, as she rode down in the elevator. She would need a vehicle as well. James' car had been impounded by the police, and even if she could get it back she knew she would never sit in it again. Their bank accounts had also been frozen, **as the one thing police are quick to seize is any property, especially cash**, that they see lying about during an investigation.

But they hadn't thought to seize the jewelry she was wearing, or the gold she had taped inside her Coleman stove. It had taken some time, but she had accumulated almost fifty ounces, and even with the price of gold where it was today, her hiding habit was going to save her hide.

