

Adventures in McCloudland

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Chapter 35

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Midweek, midsummer in a stalled project. I'd wander the halls wondering if it was ever going to happen. Knowing it had to, or my mood would shift from black to hopeful with a new phone call from the bank, back to black when told of a new demand before they could commit to a loan.

I answered the phone and the caller identified himself as Officer somebody and, in an official manner, told me, "We are informing you that we've finished an investigation and feel obliged to inform you that the complaints were not valid."

"Excuse me?" "Who?"

"We've been conducting an investigation of your activities at the hotel, Mrs. Ogden, but you don't need to worry. We've finished, and will not be filing any charges."

"Charges? What kind of charges?"

"We had reason to believe that you intended to burn the building."

"Burn the building?" All I could do was repeat what he was saying. I couldn't comprehend any of it.

"Yes, we had reason to believe that those were your intentions. We conducted an investigation, and have cleared you of any suspicion at this time."

My mind raced past "reason to believe" right through to "at this time." "What are you talking about? Why would you believe we were going to burn down the hotel? And what kind of investigation?"

“We received a complaint, Mrs. Ogdenor rather some information. We felt it was legitimate and we were required to look into it. We talked to several people associated with the hotel and believe the accusation to be unfounded.”

“What kind of information? From whom?” What in the world could anyone have said that would lead the police to think we would burn down this building? And who?

”I can’t say, Mrs. Ogden. But it was reported that you had not been able to secure funding for the project and had recently doubled the insurance.” His voice was official and totally devoid of emotion.

Mine, however, was filled with emotion. I was about to cry, and I really didn’t want to do that.

“And who did you talk to about our intentions, Sir?”

“Well, we contacted your insurance carrier, banker, and some local people you’ve been dealing with.”

“You called our insurance agent in the Bay Area? You called him and asked about us? You told him you were conducting an investigation of us? I don’t believe this is happening. You had no right.”

“We did, Mrs. Ogden. We had information.”

”Nobody can just double the insurance on a building,” I countered. “They’ll only insure it for its value. How could you have believed such a thing?” “Who else did you question?”

“We contacted your banker. Let’s see, I think it is Truckee River Bank?”

I was choking down tears and anger by then. They had talked to Truckee River Bank. The one we were desperately working with to finance the project. We’ll never get the loan now. This has got to be a nightmare. “And just what did you tell them?” I asked. I know my voice was shaking. It would have been screeching, too, but I struggled to sound calm.

“We discussed your plans and asked some questions about your intentions as they understood them.”

”Uh huh, who else?”

“We questioned several people in town who you’ve been talking to.

I thought, my God, he's talked to our new friends... neighbors. People who don't really know us yet but who are going to be part of our community for the rest of our lives. He told them he was investigating us. Now I was crying.

"You don't need to be concerned, Mrs. Ogden. You've been cleared. We're closing the investigation."

Could he really have totally not understood why I should be upset? How could he not see how damaging this is to our reputation? A new town, new friends being told we're under suspicion.

"Just what was this information you were acting on, Sir? Where did it come from? Why can't you tell me?"

"It was anonymous, Mrs. Ogden. We were obliged to investigate."

"You mean you contacted our agent, our banker, and our friends on some anonymous tip? You can't be serious. Do you mean to tell me that you conduct a thorough investigation of every anonymous tip you get? You actually create havoc with someone's reputation with no real reason? Just some anonymous tip? Don't you think you might have called us first? Did it ever occur to you to ask us to respond before going to every important person in our lives?" I think I was screeching now. I know I was shaking with disbelief

"I just felt you had a right to know, Mrs. Ogden, that you've been cleared. You let us know if we can be of further assistance to you." He hung up.

That the Sheriff's Department investigated such an outrageous tip was inconceivable. That some new neighbor would make such an accusation was baffling. For what purpose? We reasoned that perhaps the person really did believe the building was in danger, and were trying to save it.

To believe it was done out of some perverted malicious intent did not occur to us. It should have. Because there would be more.