

Fiona vs. the Foot Tickler

A Fiona Blake Mystery

By Theresa Cramer

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Chapter 1

“You know, I’ve been hearing rumors about this guy for twenty-five years. I thought it was a load of bull. Just one of those stories old-timers tell...Now look at me.” Mrs. Mulcahy held out an arm covered in goose bumps. “It’s like someone is dancing a drunken jig on my grave.”

Fiona couldn’t take her eyes off the liver spots on the woman’s hands. She knew she was supposed to ask a question, but all she could think to ask her former teacher was, “When did you get so old?” But she didn’t see how that line of questioning would fit into the story she was supposed to be writing about an alleged foot-tickling.

“He was just standing there, tickling my feet, like a complete pervert.” Mrs. Mulcahy sucked on a cigarette, her short, gray hair frizzing in the humidity. Somewhere along the line, the woman had started to look like David Letterman. “When I woke up, he ran like hell out the front door.”

“Is that how he got in?” Fiona scribbled in her notebook. She felt almost as ridiculous as the crime itself.

“Must’ve been; I fell asleep with it open, watching *CSI*. My screen door squeaks like the dickens, though; I don’t know how I didn’t hear him.”

“And he didn’t take anything?” Fiona twirled a strand of black hair around her index finger until it turned from its usual rosy pink to a sickly purple. She imagined the headline: “Algebra Teacher’s Foot Fondled.”

Mrs. Mulcahy sighed and Fiona let the blood back into her finger. They stared at each other from opposite sides of an antique farm table—not the kind you see in rich people’s homes, but the sort you find in the crumbling kitchens of the frugal. Judging from wear, it had probably been in the family for generations.

“Weird.” Fiona shrugged and looked into the foyer; a room even more sparsely furnished than the rest of the colonial. Someday, when Mrs. Mulcahy sold the place—or



died, whichever came first—a nice preppy couple would move in, rehab the kitchen and bathrooms, start popping out kids, and then sell it for a tidy profit before moving to a newer, bigger house. It was the Oakfield way—or at least it was these days. Fiona couldn't help but frown at the thought.

“Was there anything familiar about him?”

“Not really. I mean, like I told the cops, he was dressed like half the guys in the neighborhood. Nothing unusual, except it's a bit hot for corduroys and flannel. And he had a baseball cap pulled down, practically over his eyes,” she replied, absentmindedly picking at a snag in the tablecloth. Despite the gray hair, she looked a little like a daydreaming kid; just the kind Fiona had been when she was getting Cs in the woman's algebra class.

“Well Missus Mulcahy, unless you've got anything else to tell me I think I can take a few pictures and get out of your hair.”

“It just doesn't seem real, ya know?” The teacher took a drag off her cigarette, and then coughed.

“Can I get a picture of you in your chair?” Fiona asked and the woman obliged, settling into her recliner just as she had two nights before when the legendary Oakfield Foot Tickler resumed his questionable and maybe, sort of, illegal activities.

Carolann, the waitress at McCabe's, was sitting on a stool not too far from Vic Flanagan, but not too close either. Vic wasn't the town drunk exactly. He napped more often than he drank, but almost never left his barstool. Carolann was leaning on one elbow, watching the Red Sox game, waiting for Vic to snap back to life and ask for another beer. The bell over the door jingled as Fiona Blake stumbled into the bar. She waved limply at Carolann, and then threw herself into a green vinyl-upholstered booth.

“Hey, Fi, you hear about Beth Mulcahy?” Carolann asked, setting a Sam Adams



on the table.

“Yeah, I’ve been working on the story all day,” she answered, raising the beer and tipping it to her lips. Fiona had dropped her ancient Subaru off at home, and walked down Main Street to McCabe’s—as was her custom on nights she expected to drink more than the law allowed. She didn’t want to have to put her own name in the newspaper’s DUI column.

“You think it’s that creep, Irv?” Carolann asked.

“I dunno.” Fiona shrugged. “Maybe it’s an isolated incident.”

“I think it’s Irv; always have.”

“Why’s that?” Irv Pizzotta was a local nutcase. Pale, good at math—in a Rainman kind of way—and prone to harassing his neighbors over the length of their grass and suing town institutions, including but not limited to Fiona’s employer *The Oakfield Tribune*, Breton’s Grocery, the police, a Town Plan and Zoning commissioner, and the animal control officer. (There had been a dispute over one of Irv’s elderly cats, and a stay in the local pound possibly hastening its demise.) When she was little Fiona would see Pizzotta riding around town on his bike—complete with a banana seat—and always thought of Elmira Gulch, that mean lady from *The Wizard of Oz*. He even kind of looked like her, with a hooked nose and sallow skin. Over the years he had grown bald and gotten thinner—and bought a new bike—but was generally still regarded as the local loon.

Carolann looked around and then slid into the booth across the table. The only other customer in the bar was Vic, who was still nodding. From the way she was acting, Fiona half expected Carolann to ask her to meet her out behind the bar after dark, and to come alone. She leaned in and began to whisper.

“When I was fifteen I was coming home late one night...I was a bit wild back then. I thought I was in deep shit.”

Fiona pulled her notebook out of her bag. “Do you mind if I write this down?”



She had once been stuck in a traffic jam caused by someone hitting a black bear on Route 17 and had been caught without her camera or even a notebook; she'd carried them both with her ever since.

“Sure, Sugar, go ahead. Anyway, like I was saying...I came home, went creeping up the front steps. It was May, I think...The television was on that late-night snow stuff, and my mom was asleep on the couch. So there I was all creeping in and trying not to get busted, and standing beside the couch was this skinny guy in a hat and corduroys, with her slipper in his hand.”

“She didn’t wake up?”

“She was a drinker, dead to the world after a few bourbons,” Carolann said, flipping her curls back over her shoulder. Fiona would bet Carolann’s hair had been exactly the same since she first ran into the Tickler. “Anyway, he didn’t seem startled. I just stood there as he walked past me and out the door. Couldn’t see his face, but he smelled like paint thinner.”

“Paint thinner?”

“Yeah, and Irv was always buying junky old furniture he thought was antique, refinishing and repainting it, then putting them out on his lawn with ‘For Sale’ signs. Most of it was crap.”

“Weird.”

“Damn right. Anyway, I told the cops but they said that wasn’t enough to arrest him. A few years later the foot tickling stopped. Most people in town these days don’t even know it ever happened.”

“Any of his other...uh... victims still around?” Fiona asked.

“Oh sure. Kim Lester and Margot Schultz. Oh and...uh, Cal Farrow.”

“Cal Farrow? As in *Mister* Cal Farrow?”

“Yup, there were a few guys who got their feet tickled. Back then things were different; just about everyone left their doors and windows open during the summer. All



sorts of people got tickled.”

To Fiona's mind, there wasn't much on Earth more disgusting than a man's foot. The smell was just the beginning: then there was toe hair, and athlete's foot. The list of reasons to never touch a man's foot was damn near endless. Fiona had always assumed the Foot Tickler had a foot-fetish, which was sort of reasonable—at least if you considered a manicured woman's foot in a sexy shoe—but she was baffled by anyone with a thing for men's feet.

Slapping the table and sliding out of the booth, Carolann asked, “Well, you gonna eat or what?”

She gulped. The whole foot conversation hadn't exactly wet her appetite. “I'm waiting for Pete.”

“I'll bring you some bread.”

Fiona had already polished off her beer and was working on number two when Pete Ross came barreling through the door of McCabe's and stood glancing around, appearing even sweatier and angrier than usual. College had left him with a beer belly and a scar above his left eye from a fraternity prank gone awry, but Pete looked more or less the same as he did as a kid—same curly brown hair, same rosy cheeks—like a younger, less jolly Santa Claus. He wiped the perspiration off his brow with his sleeve. He was still dressed for work—gray slacks and a blue shirt—and had two pieces of beef jerky poking out of his pocket. He loved gas station food.

“Holy Christ, it's hotter than balls out there,” he said—loud enough to make Vic look away from the television—and then flopped into the booth and stared at Fiona.

“Nice; it's good to know Oakfield's youth is in good hands,” she said, shaking her head. Pete was a fifth grade history teacher.

“Murph said she'd stop in. You find the Foot Tickler yet?” He took a strip of jerky from his pocket, and started to tear into the packaging.

“Not quite.”



“It’s Irv, everyone knows that. Just go ask him.”

“And get sued?”

“What’s he going to sue you for? He gonna take your shit-box car and your cat?”

He took a bite of the jerky.

A hint of anger flashed across Fiona’s eyes. “He doesn’t much care what he actually gets, Pete, and fuck you, by the way.”

“We going to eat or what?”

“Hi Peter,” Carolann said, bringing a Bud Light and setting it down.

“Hi Carolann.” He smiled, trying to charm the waitress. “How’s the family?”

“Just fine,” she said. “You two ready to order?”

“I am,” Pete said. “Cheeseburger, no tomato, no lettuce.”

Carolann scowled at him.

“Please,” he added. Fiona ordered a BLT and Carolann headed off toward the kitchen.

Pete’s family had moved in next door to Fiona in the first grade. He’d put a worm down her shirt and she’d kicked him in the crotch. They had been friends ever since.

He drank half of his beer in one swig, then burped. Fiona, practically impervious to Pete’s more disgusting traits, barely noticed.

“Hey bitches,” Murph said, sweeping into the bar in a short pleated skirt, lavender Lacoste shirt, and a head band that held her long, auburn hair out of her eyes. Dana Murphy was Fiona’s only married friend, and generally resembled a J. Crew advertisement. Once a week or so she had Fiona and Pete over for dinner, because she knew Pete wouldn’t ever eat vegetables if she didn’t feed them to him. Most importantly, she could drink the average sailor under the table.

“What the hell are you wearing?” Pete asked, laughing so hard he nearly snarfed his beer.

“I started tennis lessons today,” she said and twirled, showing off the bloomers



under her skirt. “So, I hear the Foot Tickler is back in action. Everyone at the club was talking about it,” Murph said.

“Well if the WASP rumor mill is already in full swing, I don’t need to write a story.”

“You know,” Pete said while gnawing on his jerky, “Missus Mulcahy always was kind of hot.” Fiona grimaced but Murph ignored him. Carolann dropped off another round of beers, along with a red wine.

“You eating, Dana?” she asked.

“Just the Caesar salad for me. Thanks Carolann.”

Behind the bar Matt Dawson was just starting his shift. The one good thing about today’s Foot Tickler drama had been the distraction; for the first time in weeks Fiona hadn’t filled her day with (mostly dirty) thoughts of Matt. He was like a beer slinging ballerina, moving around behind the bar with such grace Fiona thought she might ask him to marry her, just to have someone artfully pour her whiskey for the rest of her life.

“A round of shots?” Fiona asked her friends. They both nodded and she headed to the bar.

“Hey there, little lady,” Matt said, flashing a smile and winking.

“Can I get three shots of Tullamore Dew?”

“Anything for you,” he said.

“Really? Well then, you want to come over tonight?”

“Sorry,” Matt said, pouring the shots, “I can’t tonight. I’ve got a baseball game in the morning.” The thing about Matt was that he was as aloof as he was flirtatious. It drove her mad.

“Screw baseball,” Fiona said.

Matt pushed the shots across the bar, leaned toward Fiona and whispered in her ear: “I’d rather screw you.”

Fiona blushed. This had been going on for weeks.



“Put it on my tab,” she said and floated back to her table.

“Christ Blake,” Pete said to Fiona, “you get laid while you were at the bar or what?”

She looked at him, felt her face flush again, and chose not to argue. She had learned to pick her battles. Instead she grabbed her shot and motioned for her friends to do the same.

“To the Foot Tickler,” she said with the tiny glass lifted above her head, “the key to my first Pulitzer.”

“L’chaim,” Pete cheered and the three of them put back their shots with ease. A couple of hours later, with their dinners finished and many drinks in their bellies, the group headed outside.

“You guys want a ride?” Murph asked.

“No thanks. I could use the exercise,” Fiona said, looking down Main Street toward home.

“I do,” Pete said.

Murph ignored him. “You sure, Fi? It’s late, and there’s a savage foot tickler on the loose, you know?”

Fiona dismissed her with a wave and stumbled off down Main Street.



Chapter 2

Katelyn crawled into bed, her window open so that Connor could climb up the tree, onto the porch roof, and into her room. She wore her pink cotton nightgown from The Gap, because this was *the big night*.

Up until now they had just been fooling around, making out and playing touchy feely, but Katelyn was ready for more. Tonight she would give her flower—as she insisted on calling it—to Connor. They had been dating for six months, he was an All-State swimmer, and her mother adored him. What more could a girl ask for?

On the television some fat girl from Texas was throwing a giant Sweet Sixteen party and demanding a new Audi from her father. Katelyn had turned 16 last March but her parents only let her have a sleepover in the basement, and she was still driving the family Volvo (when she could get her hands on her mom's keys).

The girl on the TV was having a cowboy and Indian themed party, and she was looking for a gown in New York City that incorporated both leather and feathers. Katelyn didn't understand how this was all going to work and even she knew it was tacky, but the more she concentrated on the show the less nervous she was about her impending deflowering. Before she knew it, she was sound asleep. She didn't even get to see the final party.

Katelyn giggled, rubbing the sleep out of her eyes and curling her toes.

“You know I hate being tickled,” she said and sat up, pushing her brown hair away from her eyes. The figure at the end of her bed stood up. With the hat pulled down close to his eyes she could not see the man's face, but the flannel shirt gave him away. This dude was not Connor.

“Rape! Rape!” Katelyn yelled. Genuinely shocked, the man went rigid for a moment before diving out the window, and rolling across the roof of the porch. Her bedroom door slammed open and her father, the accountant, came in swinging a golf



club.

“He went out that way!” Katelyn yelled and pointed toward her open window, but the man had leapt off the roof and into her mother’s tulip bed.

Fiona was just about at her driveway when she noticed something skulking in the bushes. She stood outside the Watermans' white colonial—complete with a faceplate that said it belonged to the Griswolds in 1768—staring at the leaves of the forsythia, rustling as though there were a persistent breeze on an otherwise perfectly still night. She was used to this sort of thing; she often encountered nocturnal creatures as she stumbled home to the carriage house she rented from the Watermans. Usually when this happened it was a skunk, or a raccoon. Once it was a fox, but tonight she wasn't so sure whatever hid in the bushes had fur. She thought it might be dressed in corduroys and a flannel shirt.

“Who’s there?” Fiona crept up to the bush at the corner of the yard. No one answered or moved. She thought about the possibility that this was, in fact, a skunk under the bush. She imagined herself bathing in tomato juice and white vinegar for the next couple of days, and wondered if it was really worth putting herself in harm's way. After all, the guy was just tickling a few feet. Did anyone really give a shit?

But she was kind of drunk, and feeling the same reckless urge that had led to the tiny scar hidden in her eyebrow—the result of a long night of college drinking too close to a piercing parlor. “Screw it,” she said. “I know you’re there, you foot-tickling freak!”

Fiona looked around for a weapon but couldn’t find anything. She wondered if getting sprayed in the face by a pissed off skunk would burn, which made her think of the pepper spray sitting uselessly in a drawer in her kitchen.

“Listen creep, you’ve got until the count of three and then I’m going to pepper spray your ass!”

“No, no, no!” a high-pitched voice said. “It’s just me, Fi!”

“Who’s ‘me’?”



Connor Waterman announced himself and came snaking out of the bush on his belly, with a look like he might have just peed himself but wasn't totally sure. He was an awkward kid—good looking, with broad, swimmer's shoulders, but, in that distinctly adolescent way, was just a little too skinny, and a little too tall. Shaggy haired, and trying fruitlessly to grow a goatee, he stood nearly a foot taller than Fiona, but stooped a little. Covered with yard debris, he looked like a yeti with a good razor.

“What the hell are you doing?”

“Um...just...taking a walk.”

“At midnight, on a Thursday...in the bushes?”

“Yeah, I like to walk.”

They both turned at the sound of a scream coming from the Belzers' house, two down the road on the opposite side of the street.

“Katelyn?” Connor croaked.

“Rape! Rape!” they heard, and then there was a commotion. Together they stood dumbfounded, watching as a shadow passed across the road, out of the reach of the streetlights.

“The Foot Tickler,” Fiona mumbled.

“The what?”

“The Foot Tickler, kid. Jeez, don't you know anything?”

Fiona looked at her skinny neighbor, a zit sprouting on his forehead while she watched.

“Were you sneaking out to see Katelyn?”

“No,” he said, looking down at his feet and stuffing his hands in his pockets.

“Yes you were, you little Lothario.”

“Lo...what?”

“Nothing,” she said as a couple of police cars came flying down the road, lights on but no sirens, unnecessarily screeching to a halt.



“Well, you better get back inside before someone knows you were out here.”

“What about Katelyn?”

“She’s fine.”

“But...”

“Get inside, retard!”

Connor hesitated for another moment and then ran up the driveway, climbing the drainpipe by his bedroom – clumsily trying to maneuver around the bulge Fiona had inspired in his pants. She watched, trying not to laugh but failing. She was drunk, after all.

Fiona was still doubled over, grabbing her stomach when Connor finally dragged himself through his open window, and fell onto the floor inside. Once he'd pulled his screen down she started wondering what she was supposed to do next, but then she heard jack-booted footsteps.

“Officer Sanchez,” she said. “What are you doing on foot?”

“I’m patrolling the neighborhood,” he said. Greg Sanchez was a patrol officer, new to Oakfield’s overstuffed force. Fiona liked him more than the rest of the department for being young, good-looking, and not very smart.

“Looking for the Foot Tickler?”

“I guess.” She could always count on him to say slightly more than he was supposed to.

“Well, he just ran that way, into the Bennetts’ backyard a few minutes ago,” she told him, pointing down the road.

Sanchez laughed.

“I’m not kidding.”

“Oh,” he said.

“He could have gone anywhere. Looked pretty fast, too. Probably too late to catch him now.”



“Yeah,” he said and kicked a stone. Sanchez wore his dark hair cropped closely to his head like a Marine, and had the same hard jaw as the guys in the posters. In his eyes, though, there was no intensity, just confusion.

Fiona walked with Sanchez to the Belzers’ house. He was still too new to know that reporters were not welcome at crime scenes, even the most ridiculous ones. The front door was open and inside Katelyn was having a fit on her couch, sobbing and blowing her nose, loudly, while mumbling something about a pervert and cowboys.

Fiona tried to be invisible and took a seat in the dining room, where she had a perfect view of Katelyn’s hysterics. When her nose wasn’t bulbous and red, she was an adorable kid—small and just a little plump with bouncy, sandy brown curls, Katelyn looked innocent in a way too few teenagers did anymore. Fiona liked that about her.

The police were so distracted by the girl’s intermittent screams, and her flimsy nightgown, that no one noticed Fiona for nearly 20 minutes. During that time she learned Katelyn had fallen asleep watching a reality show and woke up to find a creep fondling her feet. She also learned that Katelyn had asthma and it mysteriously got worse every time someone asked why the window had been left wide open.

Exhausted, the cops finally gave up on Katelyn and noticed Fiona. Lieutenant Scott Barsky had been woken up from a nap to respond to this incident. Tired and in a bad mood, when he saw Fiona his face turned roughly the shade of a baby squeezing out a turd.

“What the Christ are you doing here?” he bellowed.

“I came with Sanchez.” She pointed at her escort.

The young cop looked mortified.

“I saw the guy. He thought you might want to talk to me.”

Sanchez exhaled. Behind Barsky, Katelyn had gotten out her cell phone and was frantically texting half of Oakfield High School.



Chapter 3

“Pssst...” a voice hissed. “Fi!”

Fiona looked up and, in the dark, she could see Connor moving in his bedroom.

“What?”

“Is she OK?”

“She’s fine. Her asthma is acting up a little, but she’s fine.”

“Did he, you know... touch her?”

“Well, he tickled her foot...that’s kind of what he does. She’s texting half the town; haven’t you heard all this already?”

“I think I dropped my phone in the bushes.”

“In the bushes?”

“Yeah, out front. She’s gonna be so pissed that I didn’t show up.”

Fiona stood in the driveway as Connor wrung his hands over his predicament. She laughed a little. Teenagers are idiots, she thought.

“Do you think you could look for it?”

“What?”

“Could you look for my phone so I can explain what happened?”

“Shit, Connor. It’s late. I’ve had a long day.”

“I know, but...”

“But what?”

“It was kind of...um...a big night,” he stage-whispered.

“Oh, Connor, c’mon, the guy just tickled her feet.”

“No, I mean for us!” If she could have seen his face, she would have noticed the desperate look in his eyes, the unreleased tension in his jaw.

Fiona was still confused.

“C’mon...Fiiii...puuhleeease!” he begged.

“No!” Fiona suddenly felt old, and had to refrain from giving the boy a lecture.



“If I don’t explain myself she’ll be mad for days...weeks even!” His voice was growing more frustrated, and high-pitched. “Please, Fi, I can’t wait ...”

“Oh, for fuck’s sake, fine! I’ll look for your damn phone. Lord knows I have nothing better to do than help you get in a 16-year-old, asthmatic’s pants,” she complained, heading back down the driveway with her hands twitching.

Under the bush, on her belly, Fiona found a tennis ball, a glow-in-the-dark Frisbee, and an empty water bottle, but no phone. Suddenly, she felt a vibrating where her thigh met her crotch. She waited a moment longer than she should have, then reached down and grabbed the phone. On the screen was a message from Katelyn:

WHERE THE HELL R U?
I’VE BEEN VIOLATED!
WHAT KIND OF MAN R U?
UR SOOO NOT GETTING MY FLOWER!

The girl had more spunk than Fiona would have thought, and she felt a small flush of pride as she started to wiggle her way back out of the bush. Covered with lawn clippings and rotting leaves, she headed back up the driveway.

“Did you find it?” Connor asked as he lifted his screen and leaned out.

“Yeah, but I don’t think you’ll be getting laid for a while,” she said, tossing the phone into the kid’s hands.

“Oh,” he said, despondent. “Thanks anyway.”

She finally made it into the backyard and found Edna, her Siamese cat, pacing nervously back and forth near her car. She meowed loudly and walked a circle around her feet. Fiona scooped the cat up but it continued to meow.

“What’s up, Ed?” she asked, nuzzling the cat’s head. Several of the leaves tangled in her hair fluttered to the ground.

“Home late, aren’t we?”



Tired and still a bit buzzed, she wondered when the cat had learned to talk and why it had a man's voice. Then she realized there was someone sitting on the patio of the carriage house—and that someone was Chaz Honaker, the biggest mistake of her life.

“Oh, for the love of God! Will this night never end?”

Chaz had once been the king of Oakfield High School. Handsome, funny, and a great lacrosse player, there weren't many girls who didn't want a piece of him—which wasn't a problem because Chaz wasn't very discriminating. Fiona never much cared for him, though. Back then, her tastes leaned more toward the tortured artist-type, but after she (barely) graduated from college she came home, newly single, to find a much thinner, much grungier, far more depressed version of Chaz moping around town. So, like any stupid 22-year-old girl prone to bad choices would have done, Fiona spent the summer letting him bang her on his mother's basement futon. It didn't take long for her to start to hate him, though. He was delusional, obsessive, and annoying—and those were just his non-criminal qualities.

One night, bored, she decided to hit the bars and spent the night making out with a rugby player. The next afternoon Chaz found Fiona at a diner where she and Murph were munching on toast and nursing hangovers. “You look like shit,” he told them.

Not in the mood to hold her tongue, Fiona said, “You're a jackass. And you're a lousy lay. So why don't you get out of my face so I can eat my toast without throwing up?” Chaz was, understandably, confused by her hostility, but for once, he'd taken a hint and left. Now, every time he got dumped, he showed back up in Fiona's life, annoying her until he found some new girl to take pity on him for a while.

Most recently he had been kicked out of the apartment he was sharing with the checkout girl from Zappo's Package Store—which would be awkward, since one of Chaz's least charming qualities was the fact that he was an alcoholic, in the most un-fun sense of the word, and Zappo's was the only liquor store in town. No one seemed to know where he was staying (or getting his booze) these days, but with all the Foot



Tickler commotion Fiona had managed to forget about him. Until now.

“Were you on a date?” Chaz asked, sitting in the dark.

“Are you retarded?”

He was silent.

“No, really, I mean it. Are you retarded? Clearly you have some sort of learning disability because you don’t seem to understand simple English! How many times do I have to tell you to piss off before you get it?” Fiona said, her voice getting more hostile as she thought about those weeks she’d wasted in Chaz’s basement.

“Oh, c’mon, Fi! I’ve apologized a million times.” Chaz stood up and walked toward her. Fiona took a step back, and the cat hissed. He had a hat on backward, putting his face front and center. Ten years ago that look worked for him. Now, it just made him look scrawnier and greasier than he already was. He lit a cigarette—the only person she knew who smoked Lucky Strikes.

“I don’t care if you’re sorry, Chaz. I don’t care if you’re not sorry. I don’t like you. We are not friends, and for the hundredth time...stay away from my house!” She was starting to yell.

“You all right, Fiona?” Sanchez asked, appearing from the shadows.

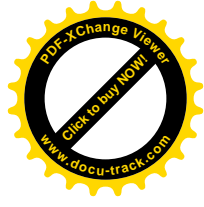
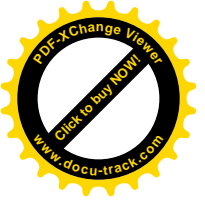
“No, Greg, this creep won’t stay the hell away from me.”

“I was just stopping by to see an old friend,” Chaz said.

“We’re not friends!” Fiona threw her hands over her head in exasperation. “I’d be willing to bet he’s drunk, and he’s definitely trespassing. Can you get him out of here please?”

Sanchez was distracted by suddenly finding himself busy in an official police capacity, and forgot to thank Fiona for saving his ass back at the Belzers’. He kept a loose hold on Chaz’s shoulder as they headed up the driveway. Fiona watched, Edna still in her arms. The cat had begun to purr.

The two men were almost to the Waterman house when Chaz suddenly broke to



his right, taking poor Sanchez by surprise, and making a run for it. For someone who looked so frail, Chaz still had speed. Greg Sanchez—who had been in prime condition before leaving the police academy but who had put on a few pounds now that he spent most of his time sitting in a squad car looking for speeders and drunks—lost him before they even hit the neighbors’ yard. Too tired to care, Fiona turned and went inside.

Want to know what happens? Buy the ebook now at [Amazon](#)

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