

# EVERYWHERE TO HIDE by Siri Mitchell

## Excerpt

The door was difficult to open. The tropical storm had transformed the alley into a wind tunnel, funneling the muggy air from one side of the block to the other. I raised a hand to pull my hair off my face and turned into the wind to keep it there, quickly turning my ponytail into a bun. As I stepped away from the door, I was surprised to see someone sprawled on the pavement in front of me.

He was lying face up. A red puddle had formed a halo around his head.

He wasn't— was he— he wasn't— was he *dead*?

As I stood there trying to process what I was seeing, the wind sent a recycling crate skidding across the cracked pavement.

I jumped.

I glanced up the alley, then down. Nothing was there. Nothing but the wind. And a dead man staring up at the cloud- streaked sky.

Behind me, I heard something scabble across the low, flat roof.

I pivoted and glanced up. Saw a form silhouetted against the sky. Shock gave way to panic as I realized he had a gun in his hand. As I realized that *he* had also seen *me*.

I should have lunged toward the door.

But a familiar numbness was spreading over me. The prickle on my scalp, the sudden dryness in my mouth. I was living my nightmares all over again.

As I had done too often in the past, I reverted to form. I froze.

*Please. Please. Please.*

My thoughts latched onto that one word and refused to let it go.

If I could just punch my code into the keypad, I could slip back inside and pull the door shut behind me.

But I couldn't do anything at all.

My fingers wouldn't work.

*Please. Please. Please.*

I willed them to function, but they had long ago learned that in a dangerous situation, the best thing to do was nothing. Any movement, any action on my part had always made things worse.

And so I just stood there as my thoughts stuttered.

Fragmented.