

A SHOT OF MURDER by Brenda Gayle

EXCERPT

“Don’t scream,” he whispered against her ear. “I’m going to remove my hand now. I want you to be calm.”

Calm? Was he kidding? He’d just kidnapped her. Dragged her into an alley for who knows what nefarious purpose. And he expected her to be calm?

“Okay, now. Just take it easy.” Slowly, he lowered his hand from her face and released his grip on her waist.

Charley turned to face him, fists ready to pummel him, feet ready to kick him where it would really hurt. The scream she’d been about to issue froze in her throat as she found herself staring down the barrel of a .38 Special.

“Mrs. Hall, please. Just calm down.” His voice, no doubt meant to be soothing, was rough, like sandpaper across her ears—almost as if he hadn’t spoken in a long time.

He knows who I am!

Her heart was racing. In all the years she’d worked for the Trib, she’d gotten herself into her fair share of jams with people who’d been angry about something she’d written, but never had she faced anything like this. Never had she been so afraid in her life.

The clouds had cleared, and the just-past-full moon provided considerable light. He wasn’t all that tall—maybe five-ten. But he was broad. Powerful. He was wearing a dark overcoat and a dark felt hat with its brim pulled low to cover the top part of his face. She couldn’t see his eyes, but his nose looked slightly off-centre and his mouth was set in a stern line. She lowered her gaze to the gun. “Who are you? What do you want?”

“First things first. I need your word you’re not going to start screaming your fool head off if I lower my gun.”

Her brain trying to figure out if she could make it out of the alley before he had time to raise it again, take aim and fire. Her legs felt like lead and she could barely catch her breath.

Escape was unlikely. “Fine.”

“Fine, what?”

Really, he was going to make her say it? No point crossing her fingers this time. She knew she was going to keep to her word. “Fine, I won’t scream if you lower your gun.”