

Chapter One

At four in the morning, a shrill buzz jolted Coria Brien from her deep sleep. Raising her head and squinting into the blackness, she groped for the offending alarm clock, slamming it off. She rolled her head, cradled in a tangle of long ginger curls, back into her pillow.

She rubbed her button nose, arms stretching over a bare blond headboard. The flight to Glasgow would be long with a two-hour layover in New York's Kennedy International. Her first semester at Detroit's Wayne State University had been more challenging than she anticipated, it wasn't her first choice, but a decision she didn't regret. It was also an opportunity to reconcile with her dad, something opposed by her mother, but what her heart wanted. Now it was back to mum for the Christmas holiday, and perhaps a chance to soften what kept her parents apart. She pulled the covers snug to her chin and rolled over on her side, thinking about her mum's Christmas cake, holly and red ribbon everywhere. She closed her eyes, remembering their dining table with so much decoration on it they had little room for plates. Those thoughts and more lingered until she remembered. She had a plane to catch.

She threw off her covers. It was five, her plane departed at eight. Shower, or straight to it? She grabbed the outfit planned for the day, assessed her hair in the mirror. She contemplated a shower, but the process of washing, drying, and brushing her hip-length tresses would take too long. She gave her hair a hard brush, corralling it into a ponytail. She considered makeup. Her mouth drawn tight was small, barely stretching the width of her button nose, her cheeks freckled, she decided that with a daunting flight, anything she applied would only smear or run into her eyes. She was dressed in a simple white collared blouse and a tan corduroy skirt, adding a thin wool sweater in case of a chill. A quick mirror check, she was an hour behind, but if she didn't wait for a car service, but used the Audi A4 her father had lent her, she could make it.

Coria put her carry-on in the backseat and draped her coat over it. Her dad's four-year-old dark blue Audi was showing its age. It was five-thirty when she pulled out of student parking onto Warren Avenue and then I94. In regular traffic, it could take thirty to sixty minutes to reach the Detroit Metropolitan Airport, but at this time in the morning, Coria judged it would take twenty. That was okay, had her ticket, just the security check to worry about and, the way Metro was spread out, the long run to her gate. Coria double-checked her return flight, assuring herself she would arrive in plenty of time for her association board meeting. She had joined the local chapter of the Association of Women's Rights in Development as soon as she registered for classes. In Glasgow, she was elected president of her AWRD

chapter and found herself propelled to activity chair at Wayne. She was an outspoken critic with an extreme dislike for local politicians trampling on women's rights.

Five forty-five, humming along doing sixty on the interstate, and the drizzle turned into a dense fog fed by the waters of Lake Ontario. She slowed to thirty as the taillights ahead blurred to a pink glow. Anxious about traveling any faster, she became irritated with herself for not checking the weather, or fifty other things, she imagined she should have done. Tightly gripping the wheel, she forced herself to press down on the accelerator.

Traffic was light, and as she accelerated, she became aware of a black truck in the left lane hovering just within the visual range of her mirror. A red semi-tractor trailer loomed through the fog, she tapped the breaks and instinctively turned the wheel to maneuver into the left lane. Her blind spot alert sounded, and she quickly adjusted. The black vehicle slowly stepped past her. It was a flat-bed tow truck. She waited for it to pass, and then she pulled behind it and around the semi.

Six-ten, the lane in front of her cleared. Where the tow truck had gone, she wasn't aware. Not that it mattered. Coria realized she had passed Willow Run Airport, and she was more than halfway to Metro. She was also at a curious juncture in topography, where the Ann Arbor hills gave way to the flat plain leading to Detroit, and where the population thinned to a rural area. She would be in

long-term parking in fifteen minutes. *A little tight, but first flight out, I should be okay.*

Then it happened. Headlights out, a wall of pitch in front of her; Coria scanned her dash for a clue. The instruments black. Instinctively she attempted pulling off to the breakdown lane. The steering wheel wouldn't budge. With both hands gripping the left side, she tugged it to the left. The car slowing drifted to the shoulder. It headed for the guardrail. She struggled with the wheel to the right and pressed on the brake. She didn't slow. She didn't turn enough. The shrill scream of metal grinding metal, she strained, pushing both feet on the brake pedal. After an eternity of seconds, her vehicle came to a stop.

Six-fifteen, there were no lights on this desolate stretch. *Now, what am I going to do?* Punching the emergency flasher button, and that worked, she swept her hair back from her face. She took stock; it was ten miles at least to metro, the next exit was half that distance. Walking for help would eat up all her time. No westbound traffic and nothing was coming on her side either. Grabbing her trench coat from the back seat and LED torch from the car's glove box, Coria attempted to get out her driver's side door, but with the vehicle wedged against the guardrail that proved impossible. She climbed over the center console and exited into the mist. The chill cut through her clothes, and she slipped into her trench coat and turned on her flashlight. The fog consumed the light from her flashers and torch and

only illuminated three feet in front of her. Then it was a curtain of white.

Six-thirty, she walked around the front of her car. The rubberized bumper dangled above the concrete, and the entire driver side of her dad's Audi gouged and pierced to bare metal, said totaled. The thought of trying to restart the suddenly dead engine, but standing in front of her vehicle, she noticed the left front tire facing inward and the right straight. That dispelled any thought of driving her way out of this.

“Problem, ma’am?”

Coria screamed and spun around. The source of the question was a doughboy looking man standing next to her, his face framed in a thin shaggy beard, hanging like Spanish moss from his face. He wore dark green coveralls with ‘Sar’s Towing’ on a breast-side patch and black stained cap tilted back on his head.

Coria put a hand to the base of her throat. “Oh, I’m sorry. You startled me. I didn’t notice anyone pull up.”

“Fog,” he said with only his lips moving, his eyes staring ahead and beyond Coria.

“Yes, it is terrible weather. I’m lucky you came along. Will you be able to give me a tow? I don’t know what I’ll do with the ...”

He wasn't there anymore. His appearing disappearing act made her uneasy. Coria heard the snort of an engine and then blinding light. A large black flatbed tow truck crept passed her and pulled in front of the Audi and faded into the pall. More snorting and the red glow of taillights colored the swirling mist. Bright lights broke through the shroud illuminating the shoulder ahead, and spots of orange on top and sides of the truck defined its shape. Coria heard the clattering of chains. The doughboy stepped out of the white and approached her, carrying two lengths of chain with soup bowl size hooks in his hands. He stopped in front of her, the hooks on either side of her.

He drew in a deep breath. "Got t'put them on."

Coria's heart was beating impressions on her chest, or so it felt. "Oh, the car. Yes." She stepped to the left. The doughboy pried two square patches of plastic off the bumper and attached the chains to her vehicle."

He turned toward his truck, and as he passed her, she said, "I need to get to—"

"Airport. Figured."

Six-forty-five, the shrill whine of a large electric winch alerted Coria to step aside as the motor drew her vehicle towards the flatbed, it's rear tilted to the ground. *How much is this going to cost?* "Wait."

The whining stopped. “Ma’am?”

“I need to get my luggage from the back seat.”

She popped open the rear passenger door and lunged across the seat to her roll-on bag. “Got it.”

Seated inside the truck with her luggage between her legs, she rubbed her forehead and rechecked the time. She tried to calculate the time needed to check-in at the kiosk, security, the gate. But her mind wouldn’t focus, and what difference would it make. The driver was on the back deck of the truck. She rolled down her side window, but she felt the weight shift on the vehicle as he got down from the back. She rolled her window up and watched him heft himself behind the wheel.

Seven, if he dropped her off, could she make it? She smiled as he stretched the shoulder harness around him. Doughboy put the truck in gear as Coria slumped, releasing some tension. He placed an air mask over his nose and mouth. Coria looked puzzled, and he lifted the mask from his face. “Oxygen, asthma.”

He turned a knob on a tank sitting between them, put on his emergency flashers, and slowly accelerated onto the highway. Coria took a deep breath and then let out a sigh of relief. The truck rumbled to highway speed. Her shoulders, her eyelids drooped heavy. *Exhausted already, and my trip hasn’t even started.*

But it had.

She saw a sign ‘Airport 8 Miles’ and the truck pulling into a cross-over in the I94 median. That didn’t make sense, and it was the last she remembered.

Chapter Two

“Mace, there’s no heat.”

“I’m sorry, Sharlene said it was urgent, something about a missing friend. Relax, just go with it.”

It was cold, colder than anyone suspected for early September, and they were standing in the old waiting room of the abandoned grand old lady of Detroit, the Michigan Central Station.

“It’s a historical event, place hasn’t been used in decades, and Ford is giving it a new life. It’s their groundbreaking of sorts,” Mace said and moved behind Helyn. “Here, I’ll work on the heat for you.” He came up behind her, wrapping his arms around hers, and massaged her arms. “Not much of a start to the weekend, I admit,” he said and nibbled at the back of her neck.

Helyn drifted into his embrace, but as if an alarm went off, a rude memory pushing in on a warm moment, she twisted away from his arms. “I’ll focus on what you promised me would follow this, Joe Muir’s, an Irish coffee to warm me up, and broiled Lake Superior Walleye for dinner.”

“And don’t forget some great country-western from Sharlene and a visit backstage...

“What, behind a drapery.”

“Yeah, well, it’s a publicity event, okay? She insisted we meet right away, so I’ll get the gist from her, and we can leave. Can I get you a coffee, now? There should be a refreshment bar on the east end of the station where the old restaurant used to be.”

“No, let’s just walk,” she said, “I love what they have done with the windows - replaced them.”

Mace cringed. *I’ve said something that’s sharpened her tongue. Moving in, putting our marriage back together is all I mentioned on our way here. She wants that, right?”*

Helyn waved him off before he said anything. “Never mind, I’m sure we can find an overpowered monster car to pique your boyhood.”

Ford purchased MCS planning on transforming it into a high-tech research campus and saving it from the wrecking ball. Grand soaring graffiti-covered arches crisscrossed the general waiting room. A light show of marketing slogans for the famous trains that once departed here illuminated the massive thirty-foot columns supporting them. Dotting the football field-sized waiting room were concept vehicles and historical displays. *Helyn’s right, I could spend the night checking out the beastly*

concept vehicles, all high-tech, and begging for attention.

Helyn wrapped her long gray wool coat about her, her dense blond tresses draping over her shoulders. “How about that futuristic-looking car over there?”

She pointed to a cherry red Mustang with deep sculptured sides looking more like a jet in flight.

“So, what do you think?”

“That thing? You race it on the freeway or just fly over it?”

“Cute, Helyn. About our discussion on the way down here.”

“Oh, you mean your dissertation on the meaning of life, my life?”

“Getting a house together.”

Helyn traced her hand over the coupe roofline of the Mustang as she walked along the drive’s side towards the front. “Whose Sharlene McCrary?”

Mace shadowed her movement on the passenger side. “A favorite local country-western singer. We dated in high school. Haven’t seen her since. Kept in touch with social media, that’s all.”

“Serious?”

Mace stopped dropping his arms over the roof of the low-slung vehicle. “You’re bristling at going in on a house together, but what, your jealous of a woman I had a couple of dates with at Chandler High?”

“That so, then why are we here?”

“She’s performing after the dedication, and she wanted to talk, said she could use my advice.”

“Backstage.”

“Yes.”

“Behind the drapery.”

Mace needed a decision but felt this conversation wasn’t going anywhere but south. “It’s an event venue.”

“Looks very hot.”

“I wouldn’t know, I haven’t seen her in years.”

“I meant the car.”

“Right. Shar... Ms. McCrary is getting one just like it, except it will be an all-electric.”

“You did save my life, but—”

“You haven’t changed your name,” Mace said, rounding the scooped front of the vehicle. “You must at least be considering getting back together, admit it.”

Helyn crossed her arms and smiled. “Yes, Harper-Franklyn, Funny, how come you didn’t change your name? I’m a professional; you’re a professional. Kind of a sexist thing don’t you think, the name change thing when a woman gets married, but not for a man. Ever consider changing your name, to, I don’t know, Mace Franklyn-Harper?”

“Okay, Helyn Harper-Franklyn, point taken, set, and match. How about we look for the stage. They should begin soon.”

* * *

“Soundcheck, Mick?”

Mick, a tall stick of a man, flicked his shagging head of hair back and yelled over a bundle of wire on his shoulder. “All good, Sharlene.”

Sharlene was seated on a stool, one slender leg seductively jutting from a split in her tight blue sequined skirt. She felt good about herself, her workouts paid off, trimmed down again with all the curves in the right places. Sharlene adjusted her white blouse, the sequined design on it reflecting her western style, and pulled her white faux fur guitar strap over her shoulder. She fingered the strings of her Gibson Acoustic, silently running through her opening song, and then flipped through the music on a stand before her, the planned songs for the set. Then she remembered Mace. “Lesley.”

Lesley Jenner, a thin girl, clutching a clipboard to her chest, her face tilted, was talking to a heavy-set man, his face framed in a thin shaggy beard, and wearing a blue Ford jacket. Her head snapped toward Sharlene, her short black hair lagging the movement and wrapping around her face. “Yes, Ms. McCrary.”

“Come here, darling, I want to show you someone.”

Lesley came alongside Sharlene, who moved to the stage curtain and was peaking around the edge. “Take a look. You see that broad-shouldered guy with the to-kill-for tight curls for a head of hair?”

“Yes, ma’am, the one standing next to the older looking blond?”

Sharlene nodded. “I need to talk to him as soon as we finish the set. Keep an eye out for him, okay?”

“Yes, ma’am,” Lesley said and walked back to the off-stage Ford man.

Sharlene, returned to her stool and reaching down for her guitar, brushed her cinnamon-red hair off her face as she straightened. Something was missing. She felt her neck.

“Mick, where is my choker, my pearl choker?”

Mick raised his head above a pile of equipment. "I laid it out for you in the bus."

"Best laid plans... Lesley!"

"I need my choker, it's my signature song, and we go on in twenty minutes, get it from the bus for me, will you."

"Yes, Ms. McCrary." Lesley said, and whispered, "But uh, it's Mr. Bigelow, says he is from Event Marketing. I asked him to wait, but he insisted on talking to you."

"It's okay, Les. Just please find my choker."

Lesley pointed Mr. Bigelow to Sharlene and scampered off the stage toward the exit.

Sharlene stood and leaned her guitar against the stool. She extended her hand, "Mr. Bigelow, what can I do for you?"

"It's what I can do for you," he said as he shook her hand. He presented a clipboard holding some papers. "It's about your car."

"Oh, golly, the promotional payment, yes. I'm so excited."

"Yes, of course. I'm sure they explained all the terms and conditions, but if you could sign here, then it's yours."

"What now? I thought—"

“After the show, yes. But well you see, your Mustang is the last on my truck, and I have eight others to deliver in Petoskey.”

“A long drive.”

He stroked his beard, and his face seemed to tuck into his shoulders. “Yes, could we, I mean, possibly do it now?”

“I’m on in less than twenty minutes, Mr. Bigelow.”

“Yes, of course, that’s a big ask, I understand, but if you could sign now, I’ll wait. Not a big problem.”

Sharlene smiled and signed the invoice. “Give a copy to Mick, and thanks.”

“Okay, and by the way, it is the same color as your dress, a midnight blue.”

Sharlene turned away and rolled her eyes as Bigelow walked toward Mick, still busy with cabling at the equipment pile.

The first all-electric Mustang, they were going to deliver it days from now, but now, ooh and a photo op after the show, well, maybe.

“Mr. Bigelow.”

* * *

Mace and Helyn moved from the ornate waiting room to an equally-sized but the more functional architecture of the concourse. The room had a reconstituted black and white marble floor and rooms and walls showing signs of renovation progress. The white tented stage, a precaution against the somewhat-suspect ceiling, occupied a large corridor that once led to elevated rail platforms. The roof over the concourse, once a crystal wonder of glass and steel, was now a rusting skeleton picked clean by the vultures of time and weather.

A carpeted platform in front of the stage had VIP seating for a hundred, and a cluster of them, dark-suited and in animated conversation, gathered in a narrow aisle between two sections. A tall silver-haired woman in a white hooded coat, seemingly ready for a sleigh ride, stood out and gestured to Mace to join them.

Mace waved back. “Cassandra’s over there,” he said to Helyn.

“Always nice to see the Lieutenant Governor,” Helyn said.

Mace hesitated in front of the platform. “Brings back memories.”

“Not pleasant ones. You go.”

“Meiler is still big in Michigan politics, and she is my boss, sort of.”

Helyn looped her arm around Mace's. "How nice. Over it is."

Cassandra stretched her arms for a Hollywood embrace. "The Franklyns, how nice to see you both. What brings you here to Ford's big splash?"

Mace returned the gesture. "Sharlene gave us backstage passes."

"For behind the drapery."

"Helyn has a thing about that," Mace said, "but Sharlene and I went to high school together."

"Saint Claire?" Cassandra asked.

"Chandler," Mace replied.

"Yes, of course. Well, you would have been a few years before me in any case," Cassandra said.

"A few," Helyn said, casting her eyes to the side.

"Well, this is going to be great for Michigan, and a boost for Detroit."

"You're speaking, I take it," Helyn said.

"There are cameras, so of course, dear. But I wonder if we could chat a bit, Helyn. You are testifying before the State House Ways and Means, next week aren't you."

Helyn nodded.

A short black-haired woman touched Mace's shoulder. "Mr. Franklyn, I'm sorry to interrupt lieutenant governor, I'm Lesley, Sharlene's personal assistant, could we talk?"

"Politics is not my thing, so Cassandra, if you could excuse me."

The women locked eyes and began a focused conversation.

Mace and Lesley stepped a few feet away. Lesley started explaining with searching for Sharlene's choker. Mace half-listened and noticed a dark blue Mustang drifting through the east entrance to the building. While Lesley continued to talk, it struck Mace as odd. There were no other vehicles on the concourse.

A split second later, he forgot about the car.

"Mr. Franklyn, Sharlene is missing."

Chapter Three

With Mascara streaks trailing from her eyes, Lesley looked more clown than a personal assistant, but Mace felt her anxiety. He nudged her in the direction of the stage. “What do you mean, Sharlene is missing?”

“Oh, God, she’s on in five minutes, I’m going to get fired.”

“Lesley, pull it together. When is the last time you saw her?”

“Ten minutes ago. She needed her choker. I didn’t know where it was...”

They mounted steps behind the stage.
“Lesley, ten minutes, really?”

“You don’t understand; she is always on the stage a half-hour before. She never leaves.”

“Do you know why she did this time?”

“The Ford guy wanted to see her.”

“Ford guy?”

Lesley wiped tears with one hand, holding the pearl choker in the other. "I went to the trailer; I didn't know where it was, but ..."

"Lesley, what guy?"

"I had to find it. She never goes on without her choker."

Mace took hold of Lesley's shoulders. "Stop, just stop. Take a breath, Lesley. Now point out the Ford person to me."

Lesley sniffed and gazed around the room; her mouth opened, but she just shook her head.

"Did he have on a blue jacket?"

She nodded, confirming that he did. Mace saw Mick sitting on a pile of cables, his legs spread, and taking a long draw on something that its aroma said was not a cigarette. "Did you see which way Sharlene went?"

Mick jerked his head in the direction of stairs on the opposite end of the stage. "Parking, below."

Was this a case of new-toy-can't-wait-to-see-it, or something more concerning. Mace's gut said something was off. Mace jumped down the stairs taking two at a time.

A narrow corridor led to stairs for underground parking, but a chained gate blocked the stairwell after the first landing. Mace's jaw tensed.

He turned to retrace his steps but saw shoes protruding from under boxes stacked under the first flight of stairs.

Knocking the boxes aside, Mace found a balding man in a bloodied white shirt, a Ford nametag identified him as Roger Bigelow. Mace propped him against a carton and tapped his face.

“Mr. Bigelow, can you hear me? Are you alright?”

His eyes fluttered open; his free hand rose to the side of his head, clamping over a gash. A slight nod convinced Mace he was, and then blood oozing from his belt line convinced him otherwise.

Mace clamped his hand over the wound. “What happened?”

“I was...” He took in a deep breath. “I was coming from the carriage entrance, heard steps behind me, thought it was my partner. I turned...” Roger looked down at his side. “I think I’ve been stabbed.”

“Yes, you have, and you are bleeding badly. We need to get you help.”

Bigelow gave a slight nod and licked his dry lips.

Mace pulled his phone and dialed 911. “Do you remember anything? Any details?”

“Shaggy,” Bigelow said, and his eyes rolled back into his head.

“911, what is your...?”

“This is Mace Franklyn; I have a stabbing victim, a Ford employee at the MCS event in... hello?”

“Ple.. repeat.”

“He’s lost a lot of blood, MCS parking garage, east stairwell.” The static whispering back told Mace he wasn’t getting through. He moved his hand, and the bleeding increased. He clamped back down.

Mace set down the phone and tapped out a message to Helyn, giving her his location.

Car, there were at least ten on display in the general waiting area. Was the Mustang a ploy to get Sharlene? Or was there more?

Mace kept pressure on Bigelow’s wounds. It seemed an eternity, but his watch said it had been only five minutes when he heard the clicking of high heels. “Helyn, over here.”

Helyn and Cassandra rounded the bottom of the stairs, followed by two beefy men in black suits and comm gear, Cassandra’s security team. “Helyn, take over here. You two, get some EMTs here. He’s been stabbed.”

Helyn pulled off her scarf and pressed it against Bigelow's wound.

"EMTs are on the way, ma'am." One of the security men said.

Mace stood. "Cassandra, I think you should evacuate."

With that, her security spun Cassandra around, heading back up the stairs. Cassandra protested. "What, why?"

"Sharlene is missing, and it has something to do with a car," Mace said.

Her security prodding her forward, she twisted around to Mace. "A bomb?"

Mace brushed past Cassandra. "Possible, I might be paranoid, but better that than blown away."

"Notify DPD, Bob. We need to evacuate everyone, not just me."

"Yes, ma'am, and let's get you to your car."

Mace found a roll of paper towels at the back of the stage, ripped off some sheets, and wiped his hands. He scanned the scene around him. The VIP section in front of the stage was nearly full, and a small group of Ford officials gathered in front of the microphone chatting and smiling about their big day. A Ford security officer with stars on his collar interrupted the official's conversation. Their faces

whitened to stone; the officer approached the standing microphone. “Everyone, please your attention. Attention, please. I’m sorry, things like this happen, but we have received a bomb threat. It’s probably nothing, so please remain calm but do evacuate to the front of the building. We will try to clear things and get back to our celebration as quickly as possible. Please go, please go now.”

Everyone in the VIP section stood and began moving toward the doors. Mace looked towards the carriage entrance and saw visitors still browsing the exhibits. Due to the acoustics, they likely did not hear the announcement.

Security guards spread out intercepting visitors and pointing them towards the central front entrance. Mace remembered the dark blue Mustang at the carriage entrance end of the concourse. A small family group, kids with balloons and mom pushing a stroller, were headed that way. Mace leaped from the stage and ran towards them. The family group stopped and changed course, diverting to an ice cream cart several car lengths away. *That is not far enough.*

Mace caught up to the family. “I’m sorry to interrupt your visit, especially the ice cream part,” he said, smiling at a balloon totting little girl, “but some crank called in a bomb scare. You need to evacuate, just as a precaution.”

“But I want my ice cream,” the girl said.

“Yes, well, this nice ice cream man is going to take his cart outside with you so you can have all the ice cream mom and dad will let you have out there.”

The girl smiled and turned with her parents, who strolled towards the exit.

Mace turned his attention to the blue Mustang. Except for the windshield, its heavily tinted side windows obscured everything. Mace was on the passenger side. He walked within a car length, and through the front, he could see someone was lying across the seat. He took a few steps closer. A tall thin man sporting a leather biker jacket and a Van Dyke goatee approached the driver's side.

“Hey, don’t go near that car,” Mace shouted.

Flashing his middle finger, he reached for the door handle. Too late, Mace saw the wire. He spun and dove for the floor.

The room blazed to white. A deafening steam-behemoth’s roar slammed his head. Dust and debris roiled with the force of raging rapids, tossing him as if a log across the floor. The blast slammed Mace, face down, into the wall, and pelted his back with fragments of glass and metal. When it stopped, he could only hear the shrill ringing in his sensory saturated ears.

Mace rolled over. Forcing himself up from the floor, the effort akin to peeling sagging January

sap from a tree, he tried to focus. His eyes adjusting to a surreal haze, a soundless geyser of flame shooting from the car towards the high trusses of the concourse. Glass, metal, and exhausted plaster ripped from the walls by the blast, littered the floor. The charred body of the thin man sat blackened against the opposite wall like a macabre beggar. There was no sign of the family.

Mace stumbled towards the mangled metal that was the Mustang. The shrill ringing faded, replaced by screams of the injured and deep thrumming hiss of the flaming geyser. Eyes regaining their focus, Mace saw legs protruding, and raced towards the inflamed vehicle. He took hold of the shoeless feet just as a surge of flame slapped at him, tossing his battered body back across the room and into the wall. His head throbbing, his legs sprawled in front of him, Mace stared at his hands. His final thought as his body shut down yielding to trauma: What's wrong with my hands?