

**A sample of**  
**HALLOWEEN IS MURDER**  
**by Carolyn Arnold**

A MCKINLEY MYSTERY

*Halloween  
is Murder*



CAROLYN ARNOLD

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Halloween  
is Murder

## CHAPTER 1

### THE GRIM HOUSE OF HORRORS

SCREAMS AND RUNNING FOOTSTEPS FILLED the house. Following them were the hushed reassurances of parents or guardians. Sometimes peals of laughter bounced off the walls as the children came to realize their fears weren't real and that the ghosts and goblins were just there for fun.

Sean and Sara had rented the two-story brick house with the specific goal of transforming it into the best haunted house in Albany, New York, with the proceeds going to local children's foundations. They were absorbing all the expenses associated with the endeavor, including the actors and actresses who were playing zombies, ghosts, and witches, as well as the sets, props, and fog machines.

It was the week before Halloween, and they were standing in the front entry, off to the side, and next to a doorway that opened to a room full of baked goods from a local bakery. Christmas wasn't the only holiday with an abundance of confections.

In a short time, a local news station would be showing up

to do a story on the haunted house. It would air that night.

“We need to do something for Christmas this year,” Sara said to Sean, her mind already on the next major holiday. “The kids are having so much fun. I’m thinking Santa Claus and elves.” She was gesturing like mad. “We could get a snow machine and make it look like the North Pole inside!”

“Sounds like a good idea. We should just buy this house, and use it for the holidays.” Her husband was serious, but she found herself laughing.

“What is it?” he asked, brow furrowed.

“It’s hard to take you seriously when you...” She gestured to his Frankenstein’s monster costume and then up to his face, which was painted a pale green. She giggled again. “When you look like that.”

He looked down at himself and splayed his hands across his chest. “This handsome, you mean?”

“Yes, Sean, that’s it. That’s exactly what I was thinking,” she teased.

“Well, you, my darling, make a beautiful witch.”

She playfully narrowed her eyes at him. “Be careful.”

He put his hands up. “I’m just talking about your outfit.”

“Uh-huh.”

“Hey. You used to love my compliments.”

“They sound better when they don’t include the word *witch*.” She was just playing it up and giving him a hard time, though. Being able to razz your partner was just one benefit of a happy marriage.

“Why, I ought to—” He enveloped her in his arms.

She pretended to fight him off. “Help! Help! I’ve been captured by Franken—”

Sean planted a kiss on her lips.

She pulled back, looking him in the eyes. “Huh.”

“What?”

“I’m surprised you didn’t look to *Magnum, P.I.* for a costume.” He was certainly handsome enough with his fair complexion, dark hair, and brown eyes—even more so, if she was honest. But she supposed today was all about dressing up, and they had done that during some investigations for their PI firm, Pay It Forward Investigations. One time, Sean had tacked on a fake mustache in true Magnum fashion, but that had probably lost its appeal when removing it claimed skin.

“I kiss you, and you say, ‘Huh, I wish you looked like Magnum?’” He pouted.

“Oh, I never said that.”

He placed a finger vertically under his nose, mimicking a mustache. “Come on. You can be honest with me. You loved the ’stache.”

“Yes, I loved it when you had a bushy caterpillar living above your top lip.” She didn’t pull out sarcasm too often, but this moment called for some.

He laughed and kissed her on the lips again.

Sara felt a tug on her robe and looked down to see Mia standing there. Mia was six years old and had practically

become family when she and Sean had hired Mia's mother, Helen, to help them at the PI firm. Mia was dressed up as a princess, complete with tiara.

Sara touched the points of her crown. "You are so beautiful."

Mia flashed a wide grin and twisted her hips, swishing her skirt and crinkling the crinoline. "Thank you."

"You're welcome," Sara said, smiling at the girl.

The front door opened then, and Sara looked up just as Chloe Parsons, a reporter with Your Source News, entered the house followed by a cameraman. Chloe spotted them and headed over.

Sara's heart ticked up as her gaze fixed on the camera. Despite having been interviewed on several of America's popular daytime shows, the thought of all those eyes out there watching made her palms sweat.

"Good morning." The standard greeting came smoothly off Chloe's lips.

"Good morning," Sara replied, feeling self-conscious.

This woman was classy from her sleek, blond hair to the black suede boots that came to her knees. Chloe had to be barely twenty-five, if that, but she was dressed in a charcoal-gray skirt suit that gave new meaning to an older look. It was stylish and trendy with bold lines, and oversized lapels and pocket flaps on the jacket. Her shirt had a rounded neckline that framed a chunky beaded necklace while the pencil skirt went to her knees and hugged her trim figure.

Chloe bent down and brought herself level with Mia. "And

who do we have here?”

“I’m a princess.” Mia’s voice was low, and she hugged Sara’s leg.

Sara smiled. “This is Mia.”

“She’s beautiful.” Chloe returned to her full height. “A relative?”

“Pretty much.” Sara looked down at Mia, and the little girl was looking up, eyes wide and sparkling.

“Do you want to be on TV?” the reporter asked Mia, excitement infusing her voice.

“Sure.” She seemed to be overcoming her shyness as she stepped out in front of Sara.

“Would it be all right if we included her?” Chloe asked, directing the question to Sara. “Maybe she could join us for a tour after we talk?”

Sara glanced at Sean.

Mia steepled her hands. “Please, please, Sara.”

Sara hated to agree to this and have Helen upset with her, so she excused herself to make a quick phone call to Mia’s mother. A few minutes later, she returned, a smile on her face. “Your mother says it fine.”

“Yeah!” Mia squealed.

“All right, excellent.” Chloe smiled, adding to her beauty, but the expression faded fast. Turning more serious, she addressed Sean and Sara. “By the way, the place looks wonderful, even from the sidewalk. The way you’ve set up the front lawn is quite professional. *Wow* is all I’ve got to say.”

“Most of this was Sara’s vision,” Sean told Chloe.

“He’s being too modest.” Sara’s cheeks grew hot. She’d never quite gotten used to accepting praise, and now, in her thirties, she doubted she ever would. Besides, the haunted house might have started off as her vision, but Sean had been essential in seeing it through.

Chloe turned, gesturing to her cameraman. “This is Jackson.”

“Hey ya.” Jackson dipped his head forward. He was far more casual than his counterpart, but Sara had to focus on something other than the camera. Butterflies were fluttering in her stomach.

“Nice to meet you,” Sean said.

Jackson addressed Chloe. “Where did you want to tape this?”

Chloe looked around before directing her attention past Sean and Sara to the room with the baked goods. “How about we do some in there and then move outside?”

Sara touched Sean’s arm for support and nodded. “It would be nice to highlight the local bakery that is involved with this project.” The nervousness was starting to abate as it was being overridden by the strong desire to get their message out to the community.

“Sounds wonderful. We’ve already taken some amazing shots coming up the walk,” Chloe said. “The robotic Frankenstein’s monster out there was a great touch. As I see, you’re a fan.” She gestured to Sean.

The robot outside bent at the hip and opened his arm toward the house, inviting people inside. It had been a specialty piece that Sean had custom made from a company he'd found online.

"I also liked the live zombie."

"Me too," Mia spoke up.

A wave of pride swept through Sara. Hiring an actor to play a zombie had been her idea.

"Did you want the tour before we film?" Sean asked.

Chloe shook her head. "We'll just run through quickly with Mia afterward." She consulted the watch on her left wrist and turned to direct Jackson to follow her. Sara, Sean, and Mia entered the room after them.

Chloe headed straight to a table of sugar cookies in assorted shapes and sizes, behind which Susannah, the owner of Sweet Tooth Bakery, was standing.

"Chloe, this is Susannah. She owns the bakery that is providing the desserts while the haunted house is open," Sara explained.

"Hello," Chloe said to her.

Susannah looked at Sara. "Should I...?" She pointed toward the door, as if she thought they'd want her to leave.

Chloe stepped up to the table. "We'd like to mention your bakery if that's all right."

Susannah smiled. "Thank you. That would be nice." Susannah was timid and mild-mannered, and her hands were shaking as she rested one over the other in front of herself.

Chloe gave a barely perceptible nod. “We’ll start by talking about the concept that made the house come to reality and the charities you represent. From there—” Chloe looked at Susannah “—we’ll discuss the baked goods. Jackson will do a scan of the table, and then we’ll record some film inside the haunted house itself. Any questions?”

Sara glanced at Sean and hitched her shoulders.

“I don’t think so. That all sounds great,” Sean replied.

“Perfect. The segment will air tonight during the six o’clock news.” Chloe swept her gaze over the room. “All of you are going to be wonderful. I can feel it.” While her words were kind, they carried no warmth. “Jackson.”

His name alone must have been enough of a prompt as he set his camera down on the floor and pulled out two small mics for Sara and Sean. “Just pin these somewhere near your neck.”

“Give one to— What is your name again?” Chloe held out a hand toward Susannah.

“Susannah.”

“Ah, yes.” Chloe looked at Jackson. “Give her one, too.”

“Yes, Chloe,” Jackson droned. It was clear that he didn’t take too kindly to being bossed around by her, but given the glint in his eyes, Sara detected there was an underlying friction between the reporter and cameraman.

“What about me?” Mia’s young voice cut through the room.

Chloe walked over to her. “We only have so many with us, but you’ll have one when you show us the house, okay?”

“Okay.” Mia scrunched up her face. She didn’t sound too convinced.

“But you can stay,” Chloe assured her. “Just keep quiet for now.”

Jackson handed a mic to Susannah, but when she didn’t take it from him, he leaned over the table and started to clip it onto her shirt collar.

Susannah paled. “Oh, I don’t need to talk, do I, Mrs. McKinley?”

“Not if you don’t want—”

“I’d love for her to tell the viewers about the bakery herself,” Chloe cut in, “if she’d be so kind.”

Susannah’s gaze drifted to Sara, her eyes full of panic. Sara made eye contact with Sean and tilted her head toward Chloe.

“You don’t need to speak if you’re not comfortable, Susannah.” Sean’s tone challenged the reporter.

Red bloomed in Chloe’s cheeks. “Jackson, still wire her up. Just in case she feels inclined to talk.”

“Thank you, Mr. McKinley,” Susannah said softly.

Sara looked at Sean and blinked slowly to communicate a thank-you.

Jackson trudged over to his camera and perched it on his shoulder. “We’ll start shooting in twenty seconds. Twenty, nineteen, eighteen...”

As he counted down, Sara looked over at Chloe and caught her rolling her eyes. Chloe must have sensed her watching as she turned to Sara and said, “You’ll be great.” Then Chloe’s

gaze slid from Sara to Mia.

“One... Go.” Jackson sliced his arm down through the air.

“This is Chloe Parsons with Your Source News. I’m here with Sean and Sara McKinley at the Grim House of Horrors, where they’ve opened their doors to the public. Good evening, Sean and Sara. Thanks for joining us.”

“Good evening. We’re happy to be here,” Sean said.

It was odd hearing them say *good evening* given that it was morning, but when the viewers saw it later that day, it would make sense.

Chloe went on, asking them questions about what inspired the house, all the while tossing in loads of huge smiles for her audience. “This is not your typical haunted house for many reasons, though,” she said eventually. “Actors and actresses have been put in place to play iconic Halloween characters; the settings and props are Hollywood-quality. And all of this was done out of your own pocket?” She looked at Sean for an answer.

“Yes, it was, but—”

“We believe in building a strong community and helping one another,” Sara cut in, knowing how much Sean disliked their money being brought up, as if it somehow made them better people. The point of publicizing the haunted house was to draw in money for charity, not to spotlight how they’d gotten lucky in life when Sean became the sole beneficiary of a billionaire’s estate. “That’s why the proceeds from the entrance fees will be going directly to charity foundations

that support local children,” Sara said, and went on to name some.

“We have set a minimum price at two dollars per child for entry,” Sean added. “But as I said, that’s the minimum.”

“What do you mean by that, Mr. McKinley?”

“Given this is all for charity, we don’t want to put a cap on how much someone can donate. We believe in giving from the heart.”

Sara’s own heart swelled listening to her husband say that.

“Aw, how beautifully put,” Chloe said. “And this here behind you—” she walked toward the baked goods “—did you two bake all these goodies, as well?”

“Actually, the Sweet Tooth Bakery is responsible for all that,” Sara said. “They baked some treats specifically for this event.”

“And Susannah here is the owner of the bakery,” Chloe said as a segue.

Susannah must have sensed it, too, her eyes darting to Sara. Sara’s stomach dropped. She had to rescue the poor woman.

“Susannah has volunteered not only her baked goods but also her time to support her community. The proceeds from her sales at the haunted house will be going to charity, as well.” Sara stepped up next to Chloe. “And she could have sent one of her employees, but she took the time to come herself, showing how important this cause is. Our children are our future.”

Chloe was staring through Sara.

Sara ignored the glare and continued. “Sugar cookies are one of her specialties, but they taste so good because of a special ingredient—love.”

“How lovely.” The dryness with which it rolled off Chloe’s tongue made the adjective sound repulsive.

Screams sounded from upstairs, and Chloe smiled. “As you can hear, the children love it. Let’s go speak with some of them, and take a look around with our host princess.” Chloe gestured to Mia, held the pose for a moment, and then ran a hand along her neck to tell Jackson to stop rolling. Once he lowered his camera, she turned to Sean and Sara. She first shook Sean’s hand, then Sara’s. She didn’t say a word to Susannah and went over to Mia and held out her hand. “Would you like to show us the house now?”

Mia looked at Jackson and flexed her fingers. “Mic, please.”

Sean reacted first, unclipping the one from his costume to move it onto Mia’s dress.

Mia’s eyes narrowed, and she ran her hands down the front of her dress. “Be careful with the gown.”

“I will be,” he said with a smile.

With mic in place, Mia lifted up her head, lengthened her neck, and lifted her nose toward the ceiling. “Follow me.”

## CHAPTER 2

### SHOCKING TURN OF EVENTS

IT WAS NEARING SIX O’CLOCK in the evening, and Sean and Sara were home in their media room on a large sectional couch, getting ready to watch their spotlight on the evening news with some friends and colleagues. They’d left the haunted house in the hands of some capable employees, who would be posted there until closing at eight.

Jimmy Voigt, their former sergeant when they worked for the Albany PD, also worked for them at the PI firm. He was on the couch next to his girlfriend, Meredith, for the viewing. Sara had told Sean more than once that it was a match made in heaven. He was pretty sure he’d rolled his eyes every time. Not because he didn’t believe in love—he was married to his soul mate—but he just found it hard to picture his former boss whispering sweet nothings to a lady love.

Helen was seated at the other end of the sectional, and Mia was on the floor at her feet, still dressed up as a princess. She really was a good kid—as far as kids went anyway. And it’s not that Sean had anything against children, but for now, he

and Sara had decided they weren't going to have any. And honestly, it was probably for the best, as they traveled a lot and solving crimes didn't leave much free time.

"I'm going to be on TV." Mia's face lit up as she grinned. "I can't wait!" She seemed more excited about this than she had been at the announcement that pizza was for dinner. Mia stared at the muted television. "That lady was so pretty."

By "that lady," Sean assumed she meant Chloe Parsons. Sean had to agree that based on appearances and initial impressions, she was good-looking. But he didn't understand why she took such issue with Susannah when she didn't want to talk.

Mia turned to Sara and flashed another smile. "You looked great, too."

"Thank you." Sara returned the smile and swept her long brown hair over her left shoulder. "Did you have fun today?"

"Oh yeah. My favorite part was the mummy."

"That didn't scare you?" Sara laced her voice with concern but couldn't hide the underlying amusement.

Mia's expression faded, and her eyes enlarged. She nodded. "I was, but I like to be scared. And I love mummies!" She bounded to her feet and jumped onto her mother's lap. Helen let out a whoosh of air but quickly recovered.

"It's the other kind of mummy, though, sweetheart." Helen ran a hand over her daughter's silky hair.

"Oh, it's almost time," Meredith said, obviously getting swept up in Mia's enthusiasm.

Sean looked at the digital clock on the cable box: 5:59.

“It’s on!” Jimmy said, sitting up straighter.

Sean turned up the sound and sank back into the couch, putting an arm around his wife.

Mia wriggled on her mother’s lap.

“Come on, honey, back on the floor.” Helen’s voice strained with the desperation of her plea.

Sean smiled, not because of the woman’s discomfort but because he loved seeing how excited Mia was.

“My costume was the best. They have to show me!” The little girl’s eyes were wide and fixed on the screen.

“You are a beautiful little princess,” Sean said.

Mia glared at him. “I’m not *little*.” She held up both hands, fingers splaying as she counted them off. “I’m six.”

“My apologies,” he said with a slight bow of his head.

Sara laced her fingers with his, and he met her gaze, which said, *You’re aren’t the best with kids...*

Message received.

“Shh.” This came from Jimmy, and when Sean turned to look at him, he shrugged. “You want to hear it, don’t you?”

Sean increased the volume a bit more.

“We have some somber news this evening,” a chic reporter announced from the news desk. Based on the set of her mouth and the sad look in her eyes, she wasn’t reading from a script. “Your Source has just received word that one of our own has died.”

Sara tapped her fingers on the back of his, leaned in, and

whispered, “I have a bad feeling about this.”

He didn’t look over at her, but his wife had this way of sensing things. He wouldn’t label her clairvoyant, but she certainly had strong intuition.

“Tonight, we say good-bye to”—the reporter, while she kept her tone modulated, was clearly battling with her emotions—“Chloe Parsons.”

The news was a sledgehammer to his chest, knocking the wind out of him.

“What?” Sara gasped and covered her mouth.

Meredith was wide-eyed and staring at Jimmy’s profile, Helen’s gaze was fixed on the television, and Mia was looking around the room at the adults.

“She was with us just this afternoon.” Sara’s voice was small, full of disbelief.

“I know.” The death came as a shock to him, too, but at this moment, he found it odd how, as soon as people learned that someone died, they always reflected on the last time they saw the deceased. And if it was recently or the day was a beautiful and sunny one, it seemed incomprehensible that death could claim a victim.

In memoriam, a montage of pictures of Chloe played across the screen, with sound bites and video clips worked into the tribute.

“That’s the lady, Mommy!” Mia proudly pointed to the pictures of Chloe. “The one who I showed the house to.”

Helen slid her gaze to Sara and then to Sean. It was clear

Mia didn't understand, and Helen wasn't sure how to handle the situation.

"Chloe brings us one last story. It was recorded a couple of months ago." There was a bit of a lull before the feed cut to the video.

It was an exposé on a local contractor who had conned unsuspecting homeowners out of their money. It was a strange choice for a parting segment.

"Where am I?" Mia's brows furled, and she got up and stomped out of the room.

Helen trailed after her daughter. "That's no way to act, Mia."

"I was a beautiful princess." Mia's words carried back to the media room.

*Well, this evening certainly didn't go according to plan...*

Sean turned off the TV.

"What happened to her, Sean? They gave us no clue as to how she died." Sara was shaking her head. "I knew it. I just... I felt it when she said it was one of their own."

"Something's fishy," Jimmy stamped out.

Sean cut his friend a look for him to tone it down. Sara was prone to getting sidetracked with cases when they had enough on their plate as it was. They had a stack of files waiting for them at the Pay It Forward Investigations offices, and besides, it was way too soon to assume something suspicious had caused Chloe's death. Yet, no details had been provided, and wasn't that what the news did? Share *the news*? They had to know that their audience would want more

answers, especially when it was one of their own who had died. But they'd disclosed nothing that even hinted at what had happened.

"Jimmy's right. And why didn't they feature our haunted house?" Sara asked and dismissed the unaired segment with a wave of her hand. "Not that it matters right now... Not in light of—" She gestured toward the TV.

A snake coiled in his gut. He didn't care for Sara's dismissiveness about the house. They'd worked hard to bring the haunted house together, and it had been to serve the community. Broadcasting their segment would have made no difference in what happened to Chloe.

"I need to find out what happened to her." Sara moved to get off the couch, but he held her back.

"I'm sure Your Source will update everyone when they're able to," he said.

She glared at him. "I think someone killed her, and that's why they're all hush-hush about it."

"They could be being vague for many reasons."

"Well, then we need to find out which reason it is."

"We don't need to." Sean didn't like how it had so quickly become their responsibility. He tried to keep the irritation from seeping into his voice, but was pretty certain he was failing. There were police for a reason.

"She could be right, Sean," Jimmy said. "Like I said, it seems fishy."

"Guess we should jump all over this, then," Sean snapped.

Now that his annoyance was out of the box, it was next to impossible to put the lid back on it. He leaned forward, taking in each person's face, stopping on Meredith's. "You've been pretty quiet."

"I speak if I have something worth saying," Meredith stated politely. "And I have nothing to do with what you all do. I leave these matters in the hands of the experts."

"The police?" he asked. "I agree."

Meredith winced and shook her head. "I meant the three of you."

Sara smiled, and Sean let her go. Maybe she'd make a phone call and find out there was nothing for them to concern themselves with. Either Chloe had died of natural causes, or the police were actively investigating. He could only hope that if it was the latter, it was enough for Sara to let it go.

## CHAPTER 3

### SHADOWS OF NIGHT

SARA WAS CALLING YOUR SOURCE from her home office *one last time*. That's what she told herself anyhow. She'd lost count of how many times she'd called them, but she had always met with a busy signal. And there it was again...

She lowered the receiver to its cradle. One could be certain that the station had plenty of rollover lines, so it had to be other people calling in about Chloe's death, too. Other crazy people like her wanting answers. At least, she was sure that Sean thought she was crazy, but she had a niggling sensation in her gut that they needed to look into Chloe's death.

Maybe it was because she and Sean were surrounded by murder wherever they looked and wherever they went. Even when they were supposed to be relaxing on their honeymoon, a case had found them. And the inclination to view any death as suspicious was embedded in her psyche from years working as a homicide detective with the Albany PD. Sure, Chloe could have died from natural causes, an accident, or even suicide, but it was also just as likely that someone had

caused her death intentionally. To quiet her mind, Sara had to find out which scenario applied to Chloe. And if her calls weren't making it through, there was another route she could take.

She flicked on the monitor, pleased that she had the habit of leaving her computer on most of the time. She brought up an Internet search engine and typed in Chloe's full name and *Your Source*. This brought up pages of results. The first entry was a post from the television station entitled, DEATH OF LOCAL REPORTER CASTS DARK CLOUD OVER ALBANY. Sara clicked to open the link.

Scanning down the page, she found she was no closer to knowing what had happened to Chloe. There was no cause of death listed, but rather, the piece read like an obituary with a recap of Chloe's career accomplishments and brief mentions of her personal life—she had a sister and had died single. That was it. Somehow it seemed like a sad summation of a twenty-five-year-old woman's life that had been cut so short. There was so much that Chloe had yet to experience, and Sara hoped that Chloe had at least known romantic love at some point in her life.

Sara returned to her search results and clicked on many of the other links, but they were more or less copycats of the statement *Your Source* had published.

There was a soft knock on the door, and she switched the monitor off and swiveled her chair to face her visitor. "Come in."

Sean stepped into the room. “Were you able to get through to the station?”

She shook her head, feeling defeated. Sean came over to her, placed both his hands on her shoulders, and looked her in the eyes, his gaze searching hers.

“She was so young,” Sara lamented.

“It’s sad, I give you that. We’ll track down her family and send flowers to her funeral.”

She got up and stepped away from him. She wished she could fully explain to him how she was feeling and why finding out what had happened to Chloe mattered to her. But to do so, she’d have to understand it herself. “I just need to know what happened to her, Sean.”

“I get that.” He angled his head—a caring gesture of sorts. “But there’s not much we can do about it tonight. Come on. Let’s try to enjoy the rest of the night as much as we can.”

“Oh,” she blurted out. “Everyone must think I’m nuts.”

He shook his head. “I sent them all home an hour ago.”

Sara put a hand to her forehead. “I’ve been in here that long?” She looked at the clock on the wall: 8:20.

They said time flew when you were having fun. Apparently, it wasn’t contingent on that factor alone.

“It’s all right,” he said. “They understood. They know you very well.” A small smile touched the corners of his mouth.

“That’s a good thing?” she asked. Right now she wasn’t so sure.

“It is,” he assured her.

She put a hand over her upset stomach without thinking about it, but Sean had caught the action by the time she realized. His gaze drifted slightly. Her “feelings” could sometimes frustrate him, but it was just because he didn’t understand. Sean met her gaze again, and before he opened his mouth to speak, she knew what was coming. He’d offer something to pacify her, and she’d likely accept.

“We’ll go to the station in the morning and talk to the manager,” he suggested. “Will that work?”

“First thing.” She wanted to reinforce the stipulation.

“*First* thing.”

She hugged him tightly then, but she sensed a sadness coming from him. Or maybe it was more disappointment than sadness. The haunted house and their story, she realized.

“When we’re there,” she said, “we can also ask what happened to our piece on the haunted house.”

His shoulders lifted, and she sensed his spirits rising.

“We put in so much work and effort,” she continued. “The community needs to know about it so they can come out and donate.”

He nodded. “I agree.”

They’d been interviewed by the local paper about the haunted house, but they had both been looking forward to the reach that television coverage could provide. If only there was a way to reach more people... Radio could be an option, and there were other television stations in town, but her mind was headed in a different direction.

Not long after Sean had inherited his billions, they'd met Adam Laverty. They'd found him working as an assistant to the CEO of one of Sean's companies in New York City. Adam had proven himself a true asset many times over. He was in his twenties and a tech genius. And while he stayed at his full-time job, he also worked on a consultant basis for their PI firm. If anyone could take the Internet by storm, it would be him.

"I've got an idea," she said.

Sean raised an eyebrow. "I'm listening."

"Adam's so savvy when it comes to computers, why don't we see if he can create excitement on social media?"

"Buzz," he said.

"What?"

"You said create excitement, but they call it *buzz*."

She narrowed her eyes at him. "Brat."

He smirked, pleased with himself.

"Anyway, I'm sure he could handle something like that. Regardless, it certainly doesn't hurt to ask." She tossed out a smile.

He softly caressed her cheek. "I love your positive attitude."

Positive? Her?

While she liked to think so, she wasn't convinced. She found it easy to portray but not always easy to believe. And when it came to death, her outlook was never sunny. Her suspicions were always roused, and her curiosity needed satisfying for her—or anyone around her—to find any peace.

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