

## Chapter 7

*This plan is as simple as I can make it but because this is life, there are bound to be surprises. Hopefully they'll only be small and trivial, but we have to be ready. Obviously, by the very nature of them being surprises, we can't plan for them. But if everyone keeps their eyes open and stays alert, maybe you can see it coming a little bit sooner. Then we can hopefully deal with it before it becomes a problem.*

Danny Ferris had found the two loves of his life. He had just graduated from the police academy two months ago and just four months before he had met Janet. He was surprised by how quickly he fell in love with her. She was so beautiful, intelligent, and fun. She made him laugh and it turned out she was also a great cook. She was everything a man could want. His life seemed perfect, and he intended to keep it that way by marrying her.

He asked Janet to a late lunch on his day off from work. He couldn't afford to take her out to some upscale restaurant for dinner, but he could afford lunch at such a place.

"Order whatever you want," he told her as the waiter brought over a half bottle of sparkling wine.

"What's the occasion?" she had asked.

"First off, I love you," he told her.

She had heard it before but it always made her happy to hear it again. She smiled, "I love you, too."

He had a big plan to wait until they had ordered dessert to ask her, but he just couldn't help himself. "Janet, I can't imagine my life with any woman but you. Any time I think of you I end up walking around like an idiot with a huge smile on my face. I want you to marry me."

She was shocked and it showed on her face. "Oh no," he thought, "I've blown it! I should have waited until I knew she'd say yes." But then her shock turned to joy and both tears and a smile splashed forth from her face.

"Yes! Yes! Yes!" she said.

It had been the happiest moment of his life. He then had to explain to her why there was no ring. "I'm a complete oaf when it comes to jewelry and fashion and I want to make sure you get the perfect ring. I thought the two of us could go pick one out together after lunch."

"I can't wait," she said, "Let's skip lunch and go right now." Danny smiled and agreed. They paid the check and made directly for Dante's Jewelers.

"Open all of the cases right now," Riley told the old jeweler. He sent Will around the counter to empty every tray directly into a satchel. The entire time Toby kept his gun and eyes on each of the hostages. Riley held the detonator in one hand and his pistol in the other. He kept a close eye on everything. All three of the armed men remained calm. They did not shout or bully. They acted like professionals working toward a single goal and everything was going better than even Riley had expected.

Once the cases had been emptied, Riley said, "Now the safe."

"It's in back," the old man said.

"Will, you follow him back there, and sir," he paused until Dante made eye contact with him, "no tricks and you'll be just fine. I'm sure you've got insurance so there's no need to risk your life or anyone else's in this room."

Will and Dante disappeared through a small door. Will then wedged the door open. "Everyone," Riley said, "this is almost over and then you can all go home. Just sit tight for a few more minutes."

About four minutes later Dante emerged from the open door with Will directly behind him. Will's gun was aimed directly at the man's back. He nodded to Riley to let him know the safe was cleaned out and all was good. Will led the scared, old man out from behind the counter into the main room.

"Sit down with the rest," Riley told him as he picked up the silver briefcase holding the bomb. "We're going to leave now but I want you to know that this is not the only detonator for this bomb. I have two more people with me: One in front and one out back."

Don't bother to look for them, you'll never notice them amongst all the people outside. Each of them has their own detonator to the bomb. If they see any of you leave within 10 minutes or see any cop cars rolling into this shop, they hit the button and you all go boom. But if you sit tight for 10 minutes, they'll walk away and so will you - alive and well. Any questions?"

The room was silent except for a small sob from Janet.

Danny went to put his arm around her a little tighter and as he did so his jacket swung part way open revealing the holstered pistol he wore even when he was off duty.

"GUN!", Sutton screamed from her position on the other side of Janet.

Will swung his pistol around until he himself saw the pistol hanging from Danny's side. He didn't take time to notice the shocked look on Danny's face. He didn't hesitate. He squeezed off two rounds directly into Danny's chest. Danny rattled back against the glass case he had been sitting by. Janet screamed and flung herself on Danny's dying body.

"No! No! No!" she screamed and sobbed. The rest of the room was frozen in place. No one moved or spoke at all. Riley's mind was racing with what to do next. He stood there for about 5 seconds thinking, *no need to react rashly out of haste*, he thought. *I've got a minute to figure this out*. Just then, Janet pulled the pistol from Danny's holster. Will and Toby both saw the steel flash from out of the dead body's jacket and immediately aimed their own pistols at her. She managed to fire off a single round before both Will and Toby fired. Her head snapped back from the impact of Toby's bullet through her forehead. She then slumped over and joined her new fiancé in death.

Will, remaining calm, dropped the sack of diamonds to the floor and sprang forward to grab the pistol from in front of Janet. As he picked it up, he heard a thud behind him and turned to see Riley laying on the floor. On his chest was a bright red spot that continued to grow. He had been hit right through the heart. He was dead.