

Enjoy a look at the first chapter
of the first book in the
Chance O'Brien Mystery Trilogy.

When an Angel Whispers

by

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Chapter 1

“Give light, and the darkness will disappear of itself.”

Desiderius Erasmus

Ba Boom! Ba Boom! Ba Boom! The noise was deafening. A drum or a clock. Yes, a tick but no tock. Not a clock. Not a drum. Louder. Hammering. Beating. Ba Boom! Ba Boom! Ba Boom!

Macy moved her head from side to side and tried to open her eyes. Where was she? What was that sound? She was in a terrible dream. The kind that you have when you want to scream and scream, but you can't. You try to run and your feet won't move. It's as if they are glued to the floor. Why couldn't she open her eyes? Why couldn't she see?

Macy reached to cover her ears. Her chest ached from the vibrations. Her hands refused to move. Her legs were paralyzed. She realized her eyes were already open and she gasped for air.

She could hear the pounding even louder coming from deep inside. Inside of her. Macy realized the pounding was her own heart beating inside her chest. “Oh God! Oh God! Oh God!”

Darkness! “Oh my God!” She exhaled slowly. Was she blind? Or was she just trapped? Would she stay in this darkness forever? Once, when she was a teenager during a truth or dare game, somebody asked her to name her worst fear. She hadn’t told the truth then. To do so would have made it real. Make it something that could really happen. But, it did happen. This was her nightmare. The one she’d had since childhood. To be trapped, in darkness with no one. Alone. Left to go insane for all of eternity.

Macy sucked air into her lungs. It hurt to breathe. She could only manage small puffs. Tears poured down her face, and she sobbed in desperation.

Again, she pulled at her arms, but they were held down. She couldn’t move. Confused and bewildered, she cried harder. Her body shook with spasms. What had happened to her? Was she dead? She began to recite her childhood prayer.

“Macy,” a soft voice spoke to her from the darkness. A woman’s voice. “Macy, hush.” The voice caressed her. “You aren’t alone. I am here with you.”

The woman’s voice was low and raspy, and Macy strained to hear her. She spoke with an accent Macy didn’t recognize. Macy often heard Cuban or Mexican accents since she moved from Florida to Houston, Texas, but this was different. She felt someone hold her hand and rub her arm. The woman’s touch was like silk. It soothed her and Macy found that her tremors lessened.

“I’m dead aren’t I? Am I in hell? No, can’t be. I don’t believe in hell. Where am I? What happened to me? What have I done to deserve this?” Macy began to sob again and found it difficult to swallow. Her throat was raw from her screams.

“No, my little one, not dead.” the voice whispered. “You are very much alive, and I will help you stay that way. But, you must listen, Malyshka, and do what I tell you. He will be back soon.”

Macy pulled her arms again and discovered why she couldn’t move them. Her wrists were bound above her head, and it felt like her feet were bound as well. Because of the soothing voice and calming presence of the woman, her horror eased.

“Please, oh please, untie me,” she pleaded. “ I can’t move. I can’t breathe. I can’t see. Am I blind?”

“No, not blind, but blindfolded. You are in a dark and evil place. I would gladly free you if I had the power, but I do not. I cannot. I can only be with you and guide you.”

The voice seemed to be moving away, getting softer, and became more difficult to hear.”

“Oh, don’t go. Don’t leave me. Please don’t leave me,” Macy begged.

A whisper in her ear. A soft flutter on her skin. “I will not leave you. You are a strong girl. You will survive. I know this. I have seen it. Hush now. He is back and you must pretend to be asleep.”

“But, who are you? Where am I?” Macy was building toward hysteria again.

“Shh. Evil is here. Close your eyes now. Be brave,” the voice whispered as it moved away.

Macy swallowed and listened for whoever *he* was. She heard what sounded like a door open and was about to scream for help when she heard a man say in a sing-song voice, “Macy, oh Macy. I’m here. I’ll bet you can’t wait to see me!”

Macy swallowed again, closed her eyes, and followed the woman’s warning. She pretended to be asleep.

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Martin Sabien turned and unlocked the padlock on the outside of the large steel door and swung it open into the dark garage. He flipped up the switch just inside the door and the small, yellow light from the ceiling blinked on revealing walls that were soundproofed with two layers of sheet rock and fiberglass insulation. In the far corner of the garage was a white Chevy van that Martin inherited when his father died from a stroke two years earlier. Martin also inherited the small one-story home set on two acres on the outskirts of Spendor, a small town about thirty-five miles north of Houston. Martin had been bringing his women to the garage for the better part of a year.

Martin blamed most of his bad luck on women. They seemed to always get the plum positions and all the breaks. His mother took off when he was seven, and his daddy always said it was because Martin was a little pussy pecker. Just a mamby pamby like her. He didn't know what that was, but knew he didn't want to be like that, so he did everything he could to make his daddy happy.

Martin stood only five-foot-seven inches with his boots on, but he worked out regularly and had plenty of muscles to impress the ladies. His scruffy whiskers and black-framed glasses made his face appear what most people would call unremarkable. Women walked right by him as if he were invisible.

Martin's father, who worked as a guard at one of the local malls, came home every day wearing his rent-a-cop uniform and swaggered into the house. Right then, Martin decided he would one-up the old man and be a real cop. He was a fair student in high school and made good enough grades to get accepted into college. His father would never say it, but he was proud of his only son.

As soon as Martin turned twenty-one, he applied to all of the local law enforcement agencies in Houston and the surrounding counties. He was not accepted and decided it was because they were hiring women and queers, and not good, solid, educated men like himself. With no prospects for a job after he graduated with his Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice, he decided to work on his Master's Degree and was hired as a teaching assistant. Suddenly, the world looked different. Women that never looked his way before would smile at him because they knew he graded their work. But Martin was not a forgiving man, and he wasn't interested in what the ladies wanted to give him. Now, he was only interested in taking.

Martin walked to the back of the garage where a large, old, rectangular wooden box sat upon a sturdy work table, and called out again to Macy.

Suddenly Macy's world was flooded with light. She wanted to open her eyes wide to prove that she could still see, but she remembered the words: "Pretend to be asleep." She tried to breathe evenly and not flinch when she felt a hand engulf her neck and then travel down her breasts and come to rest between her legs. It was only then she realized she was completely naked. His other hand roughly grabbed her breast and pinched the nipple until Macy thought she would cry out.

"You're good. Let me tell you." He roughly pulled off her blindfold. "All my other girls started begging and crying as soon as I opened the lid. You stay in there long enough; you'll do just about anything I want. Huh, Macy?"

When she didn't respond, he brought the flat of his hand down quickly and slapped her hard on her left cheek forcing her head to nod and her eyes to pop open. Tears of pain swam in her blue eyes.

“There now. I didn’t think you were still out. I didn’t give you enough to last long. Won’t do any good to pretend. I know all your tricks.”

Macy licked her parched lips and said, “Who are you? What do you want with...?”

Martin brought his hand down harder. This time the force of the blow across her face caused Macy to bite her tongue. Blood began to flow from between her lips. She could taste it, salty and metallic.

“You don’t talk. Not unless I tell you to talk. Do you hear me? I am the one in charge here, not you, Macy.” He said her name drawing out the last syllable as he reached down and smeared the blood over her chest.

Tears were flowing freely now, and Macy could no longer contain herself. She began to sob uncontrollably.

“Not so strong now, are you?” He reached into the box and freed her hands and feet that were tied to the pine box. For a small man, he was exceptionally strong. He easily lifted Macy’s five-foot eight-inch frame from her prison and roughly deposited her feet first on the concrete floor. She teetered unevenly and almost fell until he pulled her up and steadied her with his hand around her neck again. Her hands and feet were still bound together; the ropes cutting into her skin were blood soaked from her unsuccessful attempts to free herself. Macy tried to look around to see where she was but he pulled his hand back to slap her again and she flinched.

“Got, ya, huh? Never know when it’s coming. You know, I usually wear a mask and don’t let the girls see me. But, you, you’re special. I picked you out a long time ago. Gonna have a really good time for a long time with you, sweetheart.”

Macy looked at the man standing in front of her and tried to recall who he was. Something was familiar about him, but she couldn’t place him. He wasn’t ugly. He was

just nondescript. If someone asked her to identify him, she would say he had dark hair and dark, soulless eyes. He was young. Probably about her age and she had just turned twenty-four in January. She doubted she would see twenty-five.

He dragged her across the floor toward what looked like a daybed with a brass frame across the back and sides. She choked back a laugh. A cherry red quilt with matching pillows covered the bed. He was quite the homemaker.

“Something funny?” he asked as he dragged her across the room and threw her face down on the cover.

He pulled her arms up above her head and tied them to the frame, loosened her feet, and tied them separately to each side of the foot of the bed. She could smell sweat and his unwashed body. Panting and sweating now, he discarded his clothes haphazardly on the floor and climbed on top of her.

“No, no. Please. Please don’t do this to me.” Her whimpering, begging sounds quickly turned into piercing screams.

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She lay crumpled on the bed for what seemed like hours, and when he finally loosened her arms and legs from the bed frame she sat up and vomited all over the floor barely missing his naked legs. He yanked her hair so hard she thought he would pull it out and slapped her twice more in the face. Blood poured out of her broken nose.

When he returned her to the box, it was almost a relief. Although she was still terrified of being left alone in the dark she was exhausted and hurt. Her face burned where he hit her, and she could feel her swollen lips when she licked them with her tongue. She was thirsty and would probably have been hungry if she wasn’t so sick at her stomach.

Martin leaned down inches from her face and spoke, “Night night. Well, not the whole night. I have some things to do, but I’ll be back.” Although Macy’s mouth was dry she managed to produce enough saliva to spit in his eyes.

“Bitch,” he yelled and punched her hard in her stomach. The air left her lungs, and she struggled to breathe. He punched her again and then slammed the lid down and hammered it into place.

She slowly sucked air into her lungs between clenched teeth and listened. Finally, she heard the door open and then close.

She was alone.

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