

CHEROKEE MURDERS

Sample Chapter

CHAPTER ONE

Kymberlee Shannon parked her dusty car beneath a crimson maple tree in front of the Cherokee Inn. She slid out, locked the door, and breathed in the Ozarks fall air. Tired from the long drive, she trudged into the lobby, her feet scuffing over the braided rug to the registration desk. The clerk watched a loud TV game show behind the desk. She clicked her polished fingernails on the counter and glanced across the room at the Norman Rockwell prints hanging on the pink paisley wallpaper. Pausing a moment, her fern-green eyes shifted to the pair of loveseats under a multi-colored Tiffany lamp in the corner closest to the door.

Slanted shadows from the late-afternoon sun poured through the large front window and fell on her blonde hair, pulled back in a ponytail, accentuating her high cheekbones. She tapped her nails again and smiled at the hunched old man behind the desk. He slowly turned to her, perked up as he stared at her beauty. His wire spectacles slid down his nose.

“Yes, may I help you?” He stood now.

“I’d like a room,” Kymberlee said.

“How many nights?”

“I’m not sure.”

“Sign here.” He scratched his bony chin, pushed the ledger toward her. “Any luggage?”

“Yes, in my car. Do you have a bellman?”

“You’re lookin’ at him.”

She signed the register, then hesitated a moment. *He didn’t ask for her address. Anyway, she didn’t have one.* She frowned at her gold watch.

The old man swung the book around, looked at the blank line and plunked the room key down on the counter. He turned back to his television program and sat down.

“Coffee at Seven in the mornings,” he said over his shoulder. “And . . . no men.”

“Thank you. I’ll get my own bags.”

The old man never moved. The TV blared on. Kymberlee turned, walked back to her car, and pulled her suitcase out of the trunk. She did not look at the clerk when she passed the front desk, but felt his eyes as she climbed the stairs.

She opened the heavy mahogany door and entered her room. “What a day . . .”

Hardly glancing at the cranberry and white antique furnishings, she kicked off her shoes, threw her suitcase and coat on the bed, then flopped down next to them. The fading sun streaked through the torn window blinds and felt warm on her face. She yawned, turned on her side, and drew her knees close to her slender body, still clothed in brown khaki slacks and a silk blouse. She pressed a cozy pillow against her cheek and sighed. Her long eyelashes began to flicker toward sleep when she heard the voice again. The voice she hated to hear.

“Well, another town, another school—so soon.” It echoed into her.

Kymerlee did not know if she was awake or not, but she answered. "That other place was terrible. I had to leave. Please, just go away—leave me alone."

"Boys again?"

"Boys—what boys?"

"Don't be coy," the voice sounded closer. "*The little boys—the ones you like so much. Where was it—Chicago?*"

"I don't . . . really." Kymerlee's eyes opened wide now.

"*You always look at them—like that . . .*"

"Like what?"

"*You know, like you want to touch them,*" the voice whispered.

"I do not."

"*Okay, you don't . . .*"

"Why do you always ask me things like that?" Kymerlee lay on her back, fidgeted with her hands, twisted her legs back and forth.

"*You know why.*"

"No, I don't. Why did you follow me here? Stay away from me."

"*You seem to want me here.*"

"If Daddy were here . . ."

"*Ah, yes, Daddy. What about Daddy?*"

"He loved me."

"*Is that why he watched?*"

Kymerlee gripped her thighs. "Watched?"

"*Yes, he watched you.*"

"I told you, he loved me."

"*What did he want?*"

"He didn't want anything."

"*Yes he did.*" The voice snickered. "*You know what he wanted.*"

Kymerlee jerked up. Her eyes blazed; sweat poured off her forehead. "Disgusting!" She turned on her back, stared at the ceiling.

A half-hour later she stirred, glanced around the room anticipating an image to appear. Nothing happened and she raised on one elbow. "Thank goodness."

"*Did he ever catch you?*" the eerie voice asked.

Kymerlee's elbow gave way and she was on her back again. "Catch me?"

"*You know—playing . . .*"

"I didn't." She dug her nails into the comforter.

"*Yes, you did and he watched.*"

"Mother caught him looking at me in the bathtub one day. She ordered him out of the house. I was only twelve. Then she told me about men—how they always want favors."

"*Did you understand?*"

"Not at first." Kymerlee relaxed, unzipped her slacks. "Daddy came home a couple weeks later. He was quite sheepish then."

"*But you changed him back.*"

"I was naked. I put my fingers . . . down there. I heard his hard breaths."

"*How many times did he watch?*"

"Lots, it excited me when I knew he was staring."

"*What about your mother?*"

“She didn’t catch him again. I did it when she was gone. She never got him hot.”

“*How do you know?*”

“She was mean to him all the time. Sometimes I felt sorry for him. Once I got him really hot.”

“*Weren’t you scared, Kymee?*”

“A little.” She rubbed her fingers across her stomach. “But I could feel him squirm.”

“*You just liked to tease him?*”

“Yes, but he couldn’t control himself. He burst out of his hiding place. His pants were unzipped. He tried . . .”

“*What did you do?*”

“I screamed, buried my head in my hands. He ran out of the room. I kept screaming.”

Kymberlee blinked, sat up. She rubbed her eyes, felt her clothes sticking to her clammy skin. Her hot head throbbed. She unbuttoned her blouse, fanned herself. Glancing down, she saw her slacks were unzipped. She wiggled out of them and stared at the ceiling again.

Puzzled, she remembered an eerie voice, but it sounded so far away. She turned, gazed around the room until her reflection bounced back at her from the mirror on the dresser. Kymberlee sat up and peered deep into the mirror. That same breathy feeling came over her as she slowly unhooked her bra. Her nipples grew erect when she drew a finger across the tips. Edging off the bed, she slipped out of her light blue panties and walked into the bathroom.

Kymberlee bent over the old fashioned tub, turned on the hot and cold faucets. She tested the warmth pouring out of the single spout and stepped into the soothing bath. Unwrapping the small bar of soap, she dipped it into the water, laid back against the tub, and slowly worked the soap into a lather on her stomach while the water inched higher. When the water covered her stomach she pushed off the faucets with her toes. The warmth relaxed her back and legs. She closed her eyes. After a few minutes, she gently caressed soapsuds over her full breasts and opened her eyes. Her nipples hardened as a quick shiver pulsed through her body. With a shudder, Kymberlee squeezed her legs together, lightly pinched her soapy nipples. Her legs twitched; she kneaded the soap into her pubic hair, and rotated her hips. With one finger on her nipple and another on her soft mound, she inserted her other finger a touch into the soapy crevice. She squirmed, touched herself harder and faster, but could not quite attain the needed climax. Then she wiggled down the slippery tub and spread her legs to each side of the faucet. She turned on the water, let the warm current hit her waiting opening. Laying her head back, Kymberlee relaxed as the water sprayed her rotating mound. She closed her eyes, let the tension flow from her body. A long satisfying breath eased from her half open lips. “If only Daddy . . .”