

Based in Florida, Lilies of Death is loaded with tension, mystery and intrigue along with a smattering of romance. Jordan Hall's third novel is littered with twists and turns, and keeps you guessing right until the end.

Lilies of Death

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Lilies of Death

Jordan Hall

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Chapter 1

Myrtle Bixby cast her eyes around the dingy room and had no idea that this was where she would end her life. She gawped at the dirty, rumpled bed.

“This is gross, couldn’t you find anywhere better?”

“Not at this short notice. You know how I’ve been on about us trying this new sexual position. It’ll do this one time.”

Myrtle lumbered over to the bed and snatched back the covers. “I’m not getting in those filthy sheets. We’ll have to do it on top of the bed.”

“That’s fine by me. Look what I bought today.” He held out a gun.

She stared, her mouth slack. “Is it real?”

“Nah, it’s just a replica. I got it to go with my camouflage gear.” He waved the gun in the air. “It really makes me look like a professional mercenary now, doesn’t it?”

She ran her eyes over his army combat clothing and raised her shoulders in a shrug. “Yes, I guess so.”

“Wanna hold it?”

“What?”

“The gun.” He offered it.

She stroked the cold metal and lifted troubled eyes to him. “Guns scare me.”

The man flung an arm around her shoulders and crushed her body to his. She snuggled closer; laid her head on his chest and he placed the gun on the edge of a table.

He bowed his head and spoke in a low tone. “Are you ready for the ride of your life, honey?”

She nodded. He lifted her chin with his forefinger and gently kissed her lips. She responded by flinging both arms

around his neck and pressing close so that the full length of their bodies touched from chest to knee.

He recoiled, not wanting her to contaminate him again and he could hardly stop himself from balking and shrinking from her hot, sweaty body. She repulsed him. After weeks of wooing, she'd at last agreed to try a new sexual position and he didn't want her to back out now. He was in the mood to kill, but he disliked killing unwilling victims. There was no fun in that—it was more exhilarating when they had no idea they were going to die.

His excitement mounted as his mind turned toward his next victim and he couldn't wait to begin the pursuit. The thrill of snuffing out a life in a gratifying dance of death ripped through him. He'd taken extra special care choosing this next prey, she was different from all the others. It had taken him years to find her; he had a valid reason to want her dead. Killing at random was not as satisfying as when he had a score to settle.

Hot color rushed to his face and he tried to hide his escalating irritation. “Then get on the bed and lie face down.”

“Face down?”

Her consistent, nasal whine grated on his nerves. “Yes, that's what the book says.”

“If I don't like doing it this way, I won't have to do it when we're married will I?”

“Married?” His brows twitched in a frown. “What do you mean?”

She gave a giggle and nudged him. “Oh, come on, you said that if I did this, we'd be together forever.”

“Right, yeah, that's what I said, honey.”

He wanted to get this over. Anger rose in him like a tidal wave, but he compelled himself to speak in a pleasant tone. “Come on then, get on the bed—I'm as horny as hell.”

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She screwed up her fat, ugly face and giggled again. “You say the cutest things.”

He watched her take three, short steps to the bed in the corner, her wide ass jiggling. She waited by the bed, looking over her shoulder with a small smile, the corners of her mouth quivering. He nodded with encouragement. She hitched up her skirt, dropped her panties and crawled onto the sagging mattress, burying her face in the torn, dirty pillow.

“Is this okay?” was her muffled inquiry.

“Perfect.”

By now, the crotch of his jeans was tight with his erection. He unbuttoned his pants, rummaged in his pocket and pulled out a small foil packet. Tearing it open with his teeth, he rolled the condom over and down the length of his swollen member. With the gun in his hand, he strode over to the bed. She had her legs closed, so he pried them apart with one knee and climbed on top of her. One thrust and he was inside her.

She wriggled. “Ow, that hurts.”

“Relax and tilt your butt up,” he continued his movements, laying the gun at his side and taking his body weight on braced arms.

As his climax approached, his body collapsed on hers and his hands grasped her neck squeezing as tightly as he could. She made a gurgling sound and struggled. He constricted her airflow until she was still and his body jerked in a climax. He lay for a moment, panting. Scrambling to his knees, he yanked up his pants, his insides contracting and his whole body tense while he delved into his pocket. He pulled out a silencer and twisted it onto the end of the gun’s barrel, held his arm straight out, took aim and squeezed the trigger. A wooly, dull thud resonated around the small room as the bullet smashed into the back of her skull, splintering bone. His arm jarred with the recoil and his face creased in an evil, satisfied smirk.

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He blew into the barrel of the smoking weapon as he'd seen cowboys do in the movies while he bent to pick up the spent cartridge. Now all he had to do was move her body to another place, he couldn't risk someone finding it in this seedy motel. Before stomping out the door, he turned and looked back. "Stupid little bitch!" He spat out the words and quietly closed the door.

The man dumped the heavy suitcase on the creaking porch boards and kicked open the mobile home door. The young redhead looked around with curiosity. It was nice to see something of the way her colleague lived. Although she'd worked with him for five years, she knew very little about his personal life except that he was crazy in love with his wife.

"This place'll be a bit dusty we haven't been here for months," the man said, carrying her bag into the bedroom.

"No, its fine, thanks." She rolled her head to gaze out the window at the heavily wooded area outside.

"I'll run down to the store and pick up some groceries while you get the feel of the place." He closed the front door, but poked his head back in. "Relax, everything's going to be okay."

She smiled. How could things be all right when she was living with an abusive, controlling maniac? Without her friend's help, she'd never have plucked up courage to escape. Although she was still far from being safe, this vacation home was the ideal place to plan a new life.

The siding-clad building sat on a large lot bordered by live oaks, their heavy branches dripping with Spanish moss. With one large bedroom and a living room, the small house was a perfect haven until she made further arrangements. Once she'd made a decision, she'd call a taxi to take her to the airport.

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An hour later, she'd unpacked her things and had a shower in the small, well laid out bathroom when the man breezed in the front door carrying two brown, paper bags.

"It's going to be a cool night, so I'll chop some logs and bring them in before dark." He deposited the shopping on the counter.

"You mean you're staying tonight?"

"Yes, I told my wife I'll be out of town for an early meeting tomorrow morning."

She pulled her brows together in a frown. "You could have told her what we're doing. When I said not to tell anyone, I didn't mean your wife. I hate the idea of you lying to her on my account."

"She'll understand when I explain." His face split in a wide grin. "I'm the one guy whose wife *does* understand him."

He began unpacking the cans and packets while the woman stacked fresh items in the fridge. "Your wife sounds nice."

"She's more than nice. She's my best friend and soul mate as well as the woman I love. Do you want me to help you make the bed?"

She squirmed inside. Making a bed with a man was an intimate act. "No, I can manage thanks. Where will you sleep?"

"On the sofa, it may be old, but it's pretty comfortable. Anyway it's only for one night—I'll have to leave very early tomorrow—it'll take me a couple of hours to get to the office."

Her eyes lanced to his. "I can't thank you enough for what you've done. Without you, I'd never have had the courage to leave that...that...bastard and start afresh. You've been a good friend, how can I ever repay you?"

His face suffused with color and he jumped to his feet. "Just keep yourself safe and pick up the pieces of your life. Call us when you're fixed up somewhere and we'll come and visit."

"I'd like that, thanks."

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The words hovered there between them and he coughed. “Right, I’ll go and get those logs chopped.” The corners of his eyes crinkled as he gave a quick grin. A cool blast disturbed the air when he opened the door and she shivered.

Her boyfriend had turned out to be a monster. She’d met him at a darts tournament where both companies they worked for were having an evening get-together for their employees. It was obvious he was a leader the way he organized the players into teams and presided over the scores. She’d felt his eyes on her most of the evening and when she eventually made eye contact with him, she was smitten.

They started dating and when he urged her to move in with him a few months later, she jumped at the chance, because by then she was crazy about him. Their love life was imaginative and fulfilling and it never occurred to her that he wasn’t happy or that he needed more than one woman. However, when he began coming home late smelling of perfume, she realized she wasn’t the only one and that the honeymoon was over.

She opened the freezer and reviewed the stack of neatly packed boxes. The Lasagna looked good, that would heat them up. Once dinner was in the microwave, she paced around the room, trying to keep warm. The strange sounds of the countryside unnerved her. Each time a squirrel ran up a tree or a raccoon scampered about, she tensed. She released a pent up sigh, crossed to where a portable television languished on a shelf and tuned to a news channel.

Cold air breached the room as the man carried in a large wicker basket piled high with split logs. He knelt in front of the brick fireplace and soon a roaring fire filled the grate. By the time the microwave beeped, tall flames with blue tongues licked the dry, crackling wood, radiating heat into the room.

They sat on the sagging sofa with trays on their laps eating dinner and watching TV.

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“How long did you know this man before you began living together?” He asked between mouthfuls of food.

“Not very long, but he was so kind and charming then. After we’d been together a few months, he changed, always going out alone at nights. The first time I asked where he’d been, he went berserk and beat me.”

“Did you ever find out where he went?”

“No, but he often came in smelling of perfume. I’m almost sure he was seeing other women.”

“That’s tough, but when did you first suspect he’d really hurt someone?”

She laid down her fork and leveled a scared look on him. “A few months ago, he came home late with his clothes spattered with blood. I pretended to be asleep, but I watched him hide a gun at the back of his sock drawer. Now you see why I had to get away—he’s dangerous—he may even have killed someone.”

“Well, you’re quite safe here. By spring, you’ll be in a new place and making friends. Let’s clear this lot away and get some sleep.”

She carried their trays through to the kitchen while he crossed to the bedroom, emerging with a pillow and a quilt rolled up in his arms.

“Are you sure you don’t want me to help you make the bed?” He requested again.

In the doorway of the bedroom, she gave a negative motion of the head. “Goodnight and thanks again.”

“Goodnight, sleep tight. I’ll try not to wake you in the morning. Take care and remember to call when you’re somewhere safe.”

“I will bye.”

He gave her a wink and she closed the bedroom door.

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She ambled over to the window gazing up the street at the neighboring yard lights twinkling in the dark. Overwhelming feelings of being free from her boyfriend's clutches made her want to sing. The lights of neighboring mobile homes glimmered, the nearest one a few hundred yards away. Dancing in and out of the clouds, a sliver of a moon glinted in silver strips on a nearby creek. Trees in silhouette wafted in the gentle breeze, their branches reaching out surrounding the home. The atmosphere was one of tranquility. No phone and situated at the back of a large mobile home park in the center of the state at the bottom of a mile long dirt track, this place would be hard to find unless you knew it was there.

A loud thud woke her. She sat up, gripping the covers. By the bright shaft of moonlight streaming in the window, she peered at her watch and noted it was one-fifteen. Much too early for her friend to be dressing to go to the office. She strained her ears, but silence encompassed her.

Sliding out of bed, she pulled on a thin robe and padded over to the bedroom door. She reached out for the handle, but before she touched it, the door burst open. A tall, dark form advanced. Her heartbeat thundered in her ears. She turned to run. The man grabbed her robe and swung her hard against him. She screamed. Then her head jerked with the force of a backhanded slap that sent her flying across the bed.

"You fucking little whore! Did you think I'd let you get away from me? I've been following you and your stupid lover for months."

Fear kinked her insides into knots, as she inched across the bed. Quick as a flash, he was round the other side, hauling her by the hair onto the floor. The side of her head struck the nightstand, her cheekbone cracked on impact and an excruciating pain seared through her head.

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“It’s not what it looks like,” she managed to stutter between little staccato gasps. “I’ve been helping clear this place out as a surprise for his wife.”

“Liar!” he leaned down and wrestled her closer, still holding her hair. His face was inches from hers as he hocked up a glob of phlegm and spat in her face. “You’ll never lie to me again, bitch.”

His eyes were wild—wilder than she’d ever seen them—and she knew at that moment he was capable of killing. Her eyes skittered to the open door and she drew in a shocked breath. A pool of dark, red blood ringed the crumpled form of the man on the tiled floor in front of the sofa.

“What have you done to him?” She shrieked, bile rising in her throat. Her skull hurt and her knees felt boneless, they threatened to give way at any moment.

He bracketed her jaw and forced her head back round. “Go on, look at your dead lover.”

“You’ll go to hell for this!” She yelled through a curtain of crimson pain in one last attempt to stand up to him.

A raucous laugh thundered from his chest. “Not me, honey. You’re the one who’ll burn with your lover.”

Her legs wobbled and she collapsed to the floor, hanging her head. The hopes of a new life seeped from her in abject defeat. All her plans had been for nothing. This monster was going to kill her, too. A stream of cold air swished past her as something sliced through the air. Bone and cartilage crunched as a searing pain bombarded her brain and darkness engulfed her.

He unscrewed the silencer and placed the gun on the nightstand before he went through to the living room to begin his clean up. First, he ransacked the man’s jacket pockets pulling out a pair of nail clippers, some coins and a folded piece of paper with phone numbers written on it. Next, he rifled the

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pant's pockets, which revealed a wallet with credit cards, his driver's license and two bunches of keys. He deposited these items on the table before he went outside and crammed the only one that looked like a car key into the lock of the car parked under the carport. Once he'd established it unlocked the car, he scraped the key along the side of the pristine, shiny paintwork in a deliberate, vandalistic gesture before re-entering the house.

The man was a big sucker, so he dug in his heels, grabbed his ankles and dragged him face down across the tiles nearer to the door. A smeary trail of dark blood followed, glistening in zigzag patterns on the beige, tiled floor. Feeling uncomfortable in his pants, wet from his ejaculation during the killings, he bent to retrieve a small bag containing a change of clothes he'd hidden when he'd pried open one of the mobile home's windows. He re-entered the bedroom. Positioning the bag on the bottom of the bed, he gave the woman's body a swift kick as he crossed to another door poking his head in to check it was the bathroom.

He gathered up a bottle of mouthwash, floss and toothpaste, stuffing it into a cosmetic bag sitting on the counter. In the medicine cupboard, he discovered her perfume and deodorant, stashed those in the bag, and placed it beside her purse on the dresser. While the thought was still in his head, he retrieved one spent cartridge from the bedroom floor and the other from the tiles, pushing them down the side of the woman's purse. He prowled around the room, his eyes scanning it for evidence of her presence. Her glasses, a paperback book and her cell phone were on the nightstand, so he moved those over to the dresser. Last of all, he straightened the covers and made the bed.

He fired a hasty glance at the dead female and decided that he'd better get on with his work otherwise dawn would creep up on him and the last thing he wanted was to be seen around this neighborhood. He moved toward her and flipped her over so

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that she was on her back, her fixed, open eyes staring unseeing at the ceiling. She was a good-looking broad, flaming red hair, expressive green eyes a man could drown in, and a slim body with curves in all the right places. What a pity. She'd been a good fuck, but when she got suspicious about his comings and goings, he knew he had to silence her.

Her body was lighter than the man's was, and soon the two were prone together on the tiles near the door. He went outside and craned his neck making sure no one was around. The nearest property was several hundred yards away and plunged in darkness. He sat in the driver's seat of the car and backed it as close to the home as he could. Next, he climbed out and opened the passenger door.

Another swift look around verified all was quiet. He entered the front door, bent over the woman's body, swung it over his shoulder and carried it out to the car. Dropping her upright onto the passenger seat, he wrapped the seat belt around her and clicked the buckle in place. One body moved and only one more to go. Although he was tall with a good physique and worked out regularly, getting the man into the car wouldn't be easy.

He decided to drag him along the porch, down the steps and stash him behind the front seat. That action done, he doused the house lights, locked the door with another key from the man's bunch, climbed into the car and drove off.

A pre-dawn mist swirled around as he applied his foot to the accelerator and the car glided along. Once he'd passed through the park gates and maneuvered the bumpy dirt track, he drove along the main road for ten minutes. He pulled over onto a grassy verge and left the engine running. Now came the hard part, getting the man into the driver's seat.

He piled out, leaving the driver's door ajar, and opened the back door. With one foot inside the car, he leaned toward the body pushing with all his might until the man was in a sitting

position. With sweat glistening on his brow, his arms encircled the body's chest and tugged until it bucked forward, knocking him off his feet. He pushed himself upright and rested, wiping perspiration from his brow and inhaling a few ragged breaths.

A cool wind rustled through the trees and an owl hooted somewhere, reminding him that he still had a lot of work to do before dawn broke. Springing into action, he lugged the heavy body along the damp grass and heaved it into the driver's seat. He buckled the seatbelt, cranked the steering wheel to the right and slid the transmission into drive. His last action before he closed the door was to toss in a plastic Calla Lily.

The vehicle crept forward, heading for the edge of a densely overgrown drop into a swamp. Wiping his bloodstained palms on his pants, he peeled his lips back in a reptilian grin and watched the wheels rotate, the front ones dropping from view. Damn. The car stopped, balancing on the edge. Without the momentum to send it over, the rear wheels remained on the grassy bank. He worked his face into a grimace and charged over, bracing his arms on the trunk. His face contorted with the effort of propelling the vehicle toward the edge until the mass of greenery consumed the car.

He inhaled a deep, restorative breath, dusted off his hands and started to jog. A few hundred yards down the road, he squinted back at the car's headlights illuminating the shrubs and trees creating a festive appearance. By the time the silver streaks of dawn heralded another day, the battery would be dead and all trace of the car and its inhabitants gone.

One hour later, he arrived back at the mobile home park, tired and sweating. Once he'd passed through the gates, he made a right-angled turn en route for the woods. He jogged slowly down the trails to the far side of the park and emerged a few yards from his pickup, which he'd hidden at the back of the home.

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All was still quiet, so he bounded inside. The hands of the clock on the mantle were at ten after four, so he trotted through to the bedroom and zipped open his bag. He extracted a spray bottle of cleaner, a plastic bag of disposable cloths and placed a towel on the bed. With great gusto, he set about washing all trace of blood and gore from the tiles. The fire was still glowing, so he slung on another two logs and absorbed the welcome heat when they caught fire.

He stripped off his blood-spattered clothes and pitched them into the fiery flames along with the blood-soaked cloths, watching them ignite and disintegrate into ashes. He knelt down on the tiles and stared into the flames allowing his mind to wander. The heat from the raging fire burned red blotches on the top of his legs and lower body while he lingered naked by the grate, deep in thought.

He rose, picked up his towel from the bed and headed for the bathroom. Hot water scalded his burnt skin, so he adjusted the flow. He worked the soap into a generous lather as the spray of cool water cascaded over his body reviving him.

Now dry and dressed in clean jeans and a sweater, he wanted no trace of evidence left in the mobile home or any form of I.D., so he bustled around stuffing the man and woman's belongings into a black, trash bag. His last task was to wipe every surface clean with his damp towel and pick up his gun. This took some time and when he was happy that he'd eliminated all trace of himself and the victims, he extinguished the lights and crept out.

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