

*Rachel Chance is looking forward to a vacation at the beach with her husband Will, but a friend from her past needs help. When a missing person case turns into a murder, Rachel races to unmask a killer who always seems to be one step ahead.*

**Murder on Greyhound Beach:**  
**A Rachel Chance and Will Keller Mystery**  
By Randall Wisheart

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A Rachel Chance and Will Keller Mystery

# Murder on Greyhound Beach



It was supposed to be the perfect honeymoon...

**Randall Wisheart**

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# Chapter One

Jack Brown took off his sunglasses and ran his hand through his short blond hair, something he did when he was nervous. He was dressed casually in blue jeans and a black short-sleeved shirt because he hoped anyone who saw him would mistake him for a relative visiting a resident. He entered Turtle Bay Retirement Community, where he worked in fundraising and public relations; strolled through the lobby, past the front desk, which was empty on a Sunday evening; and proceeded down the long hallway to the administrative offices wing. The chandeliers lining the hallway were turned down, making it seem like twilight, and he could hear his footsteps on the thin carpet as he walked down the wide hallway. He looked behind him, but no one was there. That was Sunday evening at a retirement community for you. Quiet and lonely.

Jack unlocked his office, then shut the door behind him. He settled in behind his desk and turned on his computer. Even after it booted up, Jack stared at the computer screen. He had come in on Sunday evening knowing the office area would be deserted. He stared at the folder he had labeled KC—for his girlfriend Kim O'Connor. His finger hovered over the keyboard. He brought his hands back and folded them in his lap as he again stared at the screen. Finally, he let out a deep breath and opened the folder.

He scrolled through the files containing information about Kim's background. He reviewed the information about relatives, including the aunt who had just died and had left a substantial inheritance to Kim—nearly half a million dollars. Next, he reviewed her work history and friends, including the friend he'd be meeting tomorrow night, Rachel Chance. Kim and Rachel had both been social workers in Indiana and had remained close.

He then opened the most important file—the one that listed who else had been looking into Kim’s inheritance. He hacked into the internal email system and looked for any new emails to Kim. He found one and opened it.

*Hello Kim,*

*I wanted to make sure you received my last email. This opportunity is time sensitive. If you invest the entire inheritance amount, you’ll be amazed at how much it will grow! Not without risk, of course, but that’s true of any investment. I’m happy to help you set this up. But remember, the window for this opportunity will close soon.*

First, congratulations, then “advice” about how she might invest her inheritance. Jack stared at the email as he wondered: *How far would you go to get your hands on Kim’s inheritance?*

There was a knock on the door. Jack was startled; he barely had time to minimize his screen before the door opened, and Bill Jordan walked in. Bill didn’t fit the stereotype of a technology nerd but sported a military style buzz cut; his broad shoulders and large biceps suggested he worked out regularly. He always wore a tie and long-sleeved shirt, which surprised Jack. In his experience, tech guys were more likely to go for a more casual look. He wondered if Bill was trying to impress corporate and was angling for a promotion. Not for the first time, Jack also wondered why Bill Jordan had also been given the responsibility of dealing with security issues for Turtle Bay Retirement Community.

“Mr. Brown? Sorry. I was called in to check a technology glitch. I just happened to notice a light underneath your door and thought I’d better check it out. Can’t be too careful. Security, you know.”

Jack squirmed as Bill studied his face. He could sense Bill's unstated question about why he was here. "I'm just catching up on some paperwork, so I'll be ready to go first thing tomorrow morning. Thanks for checking." Jack stopped talking, hoping Bill would leave and frowned when he didn't. "You're right. We can't be too careful."

Bill ambled to the side of the room and straightened a book in the bookcase, then glanced at Jack's desk.

Jack reached for his monitor and moved the screen so Bill could not see it. "Did you take care of the glitch?" Jack asked, staring at Bill, trying to assess whether he was just being curious or if he was actually trying to determine what was on Jack's screen.

"Huh? Oh, right. Internet was down. You know how these old crows get when they can't stream their favorite shows. I just had to reboot the system. It was fine."

Jack nodded. Bill's explanation made perfect sense.

"Just thought it was a little strange. All three of you working on a Sunday," Bill said, scanning the contents of the bookcase. He reached out to touch a book that was partly pulled out when his cell phone buzzed. As he pulled it out, he bumped into the bookcase, knocking off one of the books. "Sorry," he said as he picked up the book *"50 Ways to Raise Funds for Non-Profits"*. I didn't realize there were fifty ways."

Jack did not respond.

Bill put the book back and made sure it was exactly even with the edge of the shelf. He looked at his cell phone. "Wouldn't you know it. Old Lady Johnson is having trouble with Netflix again." He stuffed his phone back into his pocket. "She can just wait."

"You said all three of us?" asked Jack, frowning.

Bill ran his hand along the top shelf of the bookcase, pulling books out so they were all exactly even with the edge of the shelf. “You, Ms. Clinton, and Mr. Burkett.” Bill continued to straighten the books.

Jack looked at Bill fidgeting with his bookcase and held back an urge to yell at him to stop. Jack leaned back and placed his hands in his lap, attempting to appear calm as his mind raced. “I think I’ve seen Susan Clinton here before on Sundays.”

Bill spoke without turning. He started to move books on the second shelf, so all the tall books were together on the left, shorter books on the right. “Oh, yes. No doubt some kind of emergency involving one of her physical therapy patients.”

“I’m surprised to hear that Ray Burkett is here, though.” Jack leaned forward and put his elbows on his desk.

Bill took a step away from the bookcase and studied it, then nodded in approval and turned toward Jack. “I’ve heard him mention that he’s been spending lots of time on a fiscal year report due soon. I imagine that’s what brought him here today.”

“That makes sense, I suppose,” said Jack, feeling as though it did not make sense at all. Ray Burkett did not strike him as the kind of person to ever work on a weekend.

Bill took one last look at the bookcase. He started to reach out to move another book but changed his mind and stepped away. “Well,” said Bill as he walked back toward the door. “If you don’t need anything?”

“No, Bill, I don’t need anything.”

“Okay, then. I’ll see you tomorrow. Want me to shut the door?”



“No,” said Jack. “I’m about ready to pack up and head home. Just leave it open.”

Bill nodded and walked out. Jack stared at the open door and whispered, “Were you really just passing by and happened to see a light under my door? Or did you somehow know what I was looking at on my computer?” Jack shook his head. “Get a grip. Like he said, he was just being careful.”

Jack stood suddenly and walked toward the bookcase. He moved the books that Bill had arranged by height and walked back toward his desk. Then he stopped and smiled. He turned around and shoved a half-dozen books on the top shelf back so they were no longer even with the other books. “Take that, Bill. I hope you come back and see this, and it drives you nuts.”

Jack returned to his desk, pulled a flash drive out of his pocket, and inserted it. He clicked on the documents folder on his computer and saved the file with the information about Kim’s inheritance to the flash drive, then deleted it from his computer. He looked at the flash drive and said, “You’re right, Bill. You can’t be too careful.”

## Chapter Two

Kim O'Connor parked her red Chevy Camaro convertible at the far end of the parking lot for Turtle Bay Retirement Community. In the area reserved for residents, she passed a BMW convertible, a Cadillac SUV, and a Lexus sedan. After intentionally parking in a space without any other cars nearby, she got out, carefully smoothing her emerald-green short-sleeved V-neck summer mini dress with puff sleeves. She looked in the side view mirror, pleased at how her red hair looked with the green dress and, satisfied with her appearance, walked toward the main building.

She smiled as she imagined her boyfriend Jack Brown gaping at her in surprise when she popped in unannounced mid-morning on a Monday. He'd ask her why she was there, and she'd say "No particular reason. I just wanted to remind you about our dinner date tonight with my friend Rachel Chance and her husband." Then maybe he'd walk her to her car, and they'd steal a quick kiss. They'd been going through a rough patch, and she needed the reassurance of that warm Jack Brown smile today.

Kim pushed through the front doors and walked through the lobby, marveling at the high ceilings and chandeliers. "This place seems more like a luxury hotel than a retirement community," said Kim.

"I'd have to agree with you about that," said a voice from behind her.

Kim turned. An elderly man with white hair was pushing himself forward with a walker. "Sorry," said Kim. "I didn't realize I'd said that out loud."

The man smiled as he stopped next to her. “Just wait till you get older. You’ll be talking to yourself all the time.” He chuckled and shuffled past her.

Kim smiled at the man’s back, and she continued into a long hallway. As she turned a corner, she walked by an alcove where a woman with white hair and a wrinkled face was sitting on the edge of a blue and white flowered couch, fingering a strand of pearls. She was laughing at her companion, a younger woman with brown hair streaked in gray, leaning back in a sky-blue wingback chair. The older woman’s laugh turned to a scowl as she noticed Kim.

“Nice pearls,” said Kim, smiling as she walked by.

The woman clutched the pearls protectively. Kim bit back the urge to tell the woman she wouldn’t want her pearls no matter what they were worth.

Kim turned left past the dining room. She exited into a breezeway and then walked through the large courtyard, past a pickleball court and an outdoor pool. She cut through another breezeway and then walked into the smaller one-story building that housed the assisted living residents and areas for rehab and physical therapy.

Kim veered to the left, past a waiting area, toward an open door where Susan Clinton, the director of physical therapy and occupational therapy for all the facilities in the consortium, worked when she was on-site. Kim waited in the doorway while Susan spoke on the phone.

Susan looked up and frowned when she saw Kim. She swiveled her chair so her back was to Kim, then quickly ended the phone call. She swiveled her chair back and stood.

Kim was surprised by Susan’s appearance. The pink business suit with a pencil skirt was hanging off her skinny frame. Her prematurely

white hair was cut in a pixie hairstyle and framed a gaunt face. Kim thought the total effect was that she looked like a scarecrow, and she wondered if Susan had an eating disorder.

Kim stepped fully into the room. “Hello, Susan. I had an unexpected break in my schedule and decided to stop by and say hello to Jack.” She flashed a bright smile toward Susan. “As long as I was here, I thought I’d check and see if we have a timeline for training our first Greyhound therapy dogs.”

Susan kept her eyes on Kim and her face expressionless, but she didn’t respond for several seconds. Finally, she said, “Actually, we might have to hit pause on that project, Miss O’Connor. I’ll let you know when I get confirmation.”

Kim stared at Susan and waited for her to explain.

Susan sat and turned toward her computer monitor. She clicked on a file and studied the screen.

Kim shook her head in confusion. “Wait a minute. What do you mean about hitting pause? Everything was all set. What happened?”

Susan didn’t take her eyes off the monitor. “I’m not at liberty to say. Confidential.” She moved the mouse and clicked it. “Please shut the door after you leave, Miss O’Connor.”

Kim couldn’t remember the last time she had felt so...dismissed. She continued to stare at Susan for several more seconds, then sighed heavily and stalked out of the room, slamming the door behind her. She heard a gasp from behind the door and smiled in satisfaction. She waited for a few moments, tapping her foot angrily. When the door remained closed, Kim could feel the anger subside. “I’ve gotta watch that Irish temper,” she said as she walked away.

Kim walked back through the breezeway and into the main building for independent living. She approached the suite of administrative offices and at first thought Turtle Bay had hired a new receptionist. Then she smiled as she realized it wasn't a new person after all. Clarissa Ashcraft had cut her previously long brown hair and now sported a blonde curly bob with bangs. Kim wondered why Clarissa was staring into Jack's office as she repeatedly clicked a ballpoint pen.

"Hi, Clarissa," said Kim as she walked by, nodding at Jack's open door. "I'm just popping in on Jack. I'll only be a minute."

Clarissa's blue eyes widened, and she dropped the pen. "Uh, you'd better wait until I can—"

Kim ignored Clarissa and stopped just short of Jack's door when she heard the voices. Ray Burkett, a CPA for Turtle Bay Retirement Community was standing next to Jack poking a finger in his chest. "It doesn't matter how I know, but I do know. I'm going straight to Roger Preston with this. Corporate needs to know when employees are falsifying expenses—and doing personal information searches on company time."

Kim froze as she took in the scene. Jack stood still in his navy-blue lightweight dress slacks and a light-blue short-sleeved dress shirt as Ray jabbed at him, missing his chest. Jack had put his hands into his pockets, and Kim had the impression that it was to make sure he didn't slug the man in front of him.

Ray Burkett's beer belly bounced as he again jabbed his finger toward Jack. Sweat from his forehead was running down his face and dripping onto his tan suit. Kim leaned forward and saw one more person in Jack's small office. Cowering in the corner was Sofia Perez, the medical billing specialist. Sofia was tugging at her dangly earrings, her dark wavy hair cascading down her back.

“First of all,” said Jack, “I explained that the expense you’re talking about was legitimate. I bought a fan for my office because the air conditioning never cools my office enough. Plus, what are you doing snooping into my work? How do you know what I’m doing?” Jack pointed toward Sofia who was standing in the corner, back pressed against the wall. “And you didn’t need to bring Sofia in here while you made your accusations. You could have—”

Ray smiled wickedly as he interrupted Jack. “I needed a witness. In case you got,” he looked directly at Sofia, “violent.”

Kim glanced at Sofia who flinched when Ray said “violent.” She thought Sofia looked as though she would rather be anywhere but here.

Kim turned her attention back to Jack. His face was turning red. She worried when she saw Jack take his right hand out of his pocket and make a fist, but he shook his head and said, “You’re a real piece of work, Burkett.” He flexed his hand and carefully ran it over his short blond hair.

Kim gasped when she saw Ray start to poke his finger toward Jack again, but Jack stared at the hand, and Ray dropped it.

Kim let out the breath she’d been holding and looked back and forth between the two men.

“Ray,” said Jack, “if you want to waste Mr. Preston’s time with this, then fine. He’s the CEO. But I’m warning you, I’ll—”

Jack stopped when he heard Sofia gasp behind him. “Mr. Brown,” she said as she pointed toward Kim. Both men stared at Kim while Sofia rushed out of the room.

Jack did a double-take when he saw Kim. He turned toward Ray. “We can take this up later.”

Ray Burkett tugged on his suit jacket. “Hmph. Or maybe you’ll just be hearing from Mr. Preston. About this and about that other matter.” He walked out of Jack’s office and disappeared around a corner.

Jack took Kim’s arm and guided her out of the room. Clarissa kept her eyes focused on her desktop as they breezed by, but Kim was sure Clarissa had not missed a word. Neither Jack nor Kim spoke as Jack continued to guide Kim out of the office area and through the lobby, walking so fast that Kim nearly stumbled trying to keep up.

“Jack, what in the world...”

“Not here,” said Jack through clenched teeth. He guided her through the lobby and out the front sliding doors.

Jack took a deep breath and let go of Kim’s arm. “I’m sorry, Kim, but this is a really bad time.”

Kim crossed her arms. “I’d say that’s an understatement.”

Jack sighed. He looked around, nodded, and smiled at a man using a cane walking just ahead of a woman using a walker. He pulled Kim away from the doors. “I can tell you about this misunderstanding later, but for now, I need to get back.”

“Misunderstanding? Jack?”

“Sorry. Gotta go.” Jack walked back toward the entrance.

Kim watched him walk through the doors without looking back. “Seriously, Jack?” she said softly. “That’s it? First, Susan won’t say why the dog therapy project may be in trouble, then you won’t talk to me?” She shook her head and started toward her car, more confused than angry.

“Excuse me, Miss?”

Kim turned around. Two women with white hair approached. They might have been any age from sixty-five to seventy-five. The taller of the women reached out a hand. "I'm Wanda." She pointed toward her shorter companion. "And this is Wendy." Wanda was wearing a fancy turquoise sweatshirt and matching turquoise sweatpants. Wendy was wearing a baggy gray sweatshirt and loose-fitting black slacks.

Kim shook Wanda's hand, then turned to Wendy and shook her hand. "I'm sorry. Do I know you?"

Wendy giggled. "Goodness no. We couldn't help but notice the commotion inside, and we wanted to let you know that we've been noticing things recently." She looked at Wanda.

"We're going out on a limb trusting you," said Wanda.

"But we like Jack Brown, so we figure you're all right," Wendy asserted.

Kim followed Wanda's eyes as she checked over both shoulders. "Not all things are as they seem around here."

"And your young man, Mr. Brown," Wendy reached out and touched Kim's arm. "He needs to be careful."

Kim didn't know what to say. She stared at the two women.

"Wanda and Wendy. There you are." Susan Clinton approached, a forced PR smile pasted on her face. "We've been looking all over for you. You're going to be late for occupational therapy."

"We have plenty of time," insisted Wanda.

"Not if you continue to stand here bothering a visitor." Susan turned to Kim. "I'm sorry, Miss O'Connor. We won't keep you." Then, putting



one arm on Wendy and the other on Wanda, she ushered them to the front door.

Kim shook her head and got into her car. Her mind was spinning at what she had just seen and heard. First, Jack in a confrontation and then two women with a mysterious warning. She dug the car key out of her purse and started the car. She glanced at the clock on the dashboard. *Just a couple of hours before I meet my friend Rachel Chance. I hate to dump this on her, but maybe a fresh perspective is just what I need.*

## Chapter Three

Will Keller drove past a Wal-Mart, every fast-food restaurant imaginable, and at least a dozen gas stations looking for a coffee shop. With the help of his wife Rachel Chance, he followed the signs and pulled into a strip mall with a Great Cuts Hair Salon, Bruno's Pizzeria, Best Bytes Computer Repair, and the Rock and Roast Coffee Shop they were looking for. He glanced past their fawn Greyhound, Abby, whose head was nearly resting on his shoulder. His wife, Rachel Chance, was petting the head of their black Greyhound, Zane.

"It feels nice to be on vacation, doesn't it?" asked Rachel. "I could feel the stress leave the further we got from Indiana. Now that we've spent a night in Alabama, I really feel excited."

Will pulled into a parking space in front of the coffee shop. "You had a pretty intense spring selling houses, and I was teaching a full load of intro history courses. A week on the beach sounds great."

Rachel took off her baseball cap, shook out her shoulder-length hair, and put a hand on Will's shoulder. "I'm especially looking forward to this since it's our first chance to get away since we were married last summer." She squeezed his shoulder. "It's our delayed honeymoon."

Will opened the door. "And we're only about five hours from the beach. Let's get some coffee and get on the road."

Will held the door for Rachel and followed her in. A seating area on the right was crowded with a group of white-haired people, the men in shorts and well-worn T-shirts, most of them advertising rock groups: The Rolling Stones, The Beach Boys, Jefferson Airplane. The women were wearing psychedelic tie-dyed T-shirts, and all had long straight hair.

On the other side, tables and booths were crowded with a younger crowd. Will noted two groups of men dressed in business casual, drinking coffee and eating bagels, and three groups of young women drinking coffee or tea. The walls were covered with posters featuring sixties musicians and rock bands.

Will nodded toward the group of senior citizens. "Are we interrupting a reunion of some senior citizen hippies?"

Rachel looked at the group, deep in conversation, all with serious looks on their faces. "If they hold hands and start singing 'Blowin' in the Wind,' I'm out of here."

Just then, the sound system started playing "Help Me Rhonda," and one of the men started singing along before a woman put her hand firmly over his mouth and said, "One more word, Brennan, and you'll be wearing your coffee." She pulled back her hand.

"Sure, Rhonda," mumbled Brennan, his eyes sparking.

Will couldn't help it. He started laughing. Rachel yanked his arm playfully. "Want some of what Rhonda just gave to Brennan, husband?"

Will stopped laughing. "Nope. I'm good."

They moved to the counter and stood behind a couple holding hands and a young woman looking at Facebook on her cell phone. They both looked at the chalkboard behind the counter with drink options and the food menu.

"This is a fun place, don't you think?" said Rachel as she read the board. "I'd much rather give our business to a local coffee shop than a big corporation." She turned back toward the front window and could see their SUV. Abby's tan head was poking out one side, Zane's black

head with a white stripe down the middle the other. “I think they’ll be okay with the windows down for a few minutes, don’t you?”

“Definitely,” said Will, concentrating on the coffee selections. They were next in line now. “But we can sit at that booth by the front window where we can see them if that makes you feel better.”

“Good idea. I’ll sit there now, and you can order for both of us.” She looked at the chalkboard above the counter where the choices were listed. “Get me a large ‘Pecan’t Resist.’ It says it’s a southern pecan brew.”

Rachel slid across the black vinyl seat and started to put her purse on the pressed wood table but changed her mind and put her purse on the seat. She pulled some wipes out of her purse and wiped up spills from the previous customer.

As Rachel finished wiping, Will put two coffees on the table. “A ‘Pecan’t Resist’ for you and a ‘Just Right Light Roast’ for me.”

Rachel took a sip. “Not bad.”

They sat across from each other, sipping coffee and looking at their cell phones. Rachel put down her phone and asked, “Is there ever a good reason for lying to someone you love?”

Will nearly choked on his coffee. “Where did that come from?”

“That’s what Kim asked me when she called just before we left.”

Will glanced at her and watched Rachel tuck her auburn ponytail under the Cincinnati Reds baseball cap he’d bought for her, matching the one he was wearing. “There has to be a story behind that question. Why would your friend Kim O’Connor, whom you haven’t seen in a couple of years, ask you that two days before we’re scheduled to meet her?”

“It’s a little complicated,” said Rachel.

“We’re meeting her for a late lunch today in Gulf Shores, so don’t keep me in suspense.”

“You remember the story, right? Kim and I worked together as social workers, and we both got burned out about five years ago and left.”

“Right. But you stayed in Indiana while she moved away.”

“She said she wanted a fresh start and was tired of the cold and snow during the winter. She moved to Gulf Shores, Alabama, and became a realtor.”

“That’s right. Your stepdad Frank helped her get set up since he owned some rental properties down there.” Will took another sip of coffee. “I thought you told me she was involved with a guy, Jack something, and you thought maybe they were getting serious.”

“His name is Jack Brown, and things may not be quite so rosy after all.”

“Something to do with a lie?” asked Will as he looked at the blueberry muffins and bagels in a display case on the counter.

“Kim got interested in her family history recently and was doing some research on one of those genealogy websites. She thought it would be fun to involve Jack, so as a surprise, she typed in the information she knew about him but came up with blanks.”

“Brown is a pretty common last name. No surprise that she’d have trouble finding the right Brown family.”

“That’s what she thought. The problems started when she asked him about his relatives. She wanted names of his relatives to see if she could find out more.” Rachel paused.

“I’m guessing that didn’t go well.”

“That’s an understatement. Kim says first he was evasive, then angry. He said something about his sister and him needing privacy.” Rachel paused. “When she first met Jack, he said he was an only child.”

“Uh oh.”

“Yeah. When she confronted him, Jack told her he forgot.” Rachel scooted up in her seat and looked directly at Will. “Who forgets they have a sister?” Will didn’t answer, and Rachel didn’t expect him to. She slumped down in her seat and started scrolling absently on her cell phone as she drank her coffee.

Will continued to look back at the muffins and bagels.

“You know you want something to eat. We have time,” said Rachel without raising her eyes.

Will stood. “Maybe just a blueberry muffin.” Will took a sip of coffee and then returned to the counter.

When he came back with a blueberry muffin, Will sat next to Rachel in the booth. Rachel was still looking at her phone. “Do you ever get the sense that someone knows what you’re looking at on your cell phone or computer?”

“What do you mean?” Will took a bite of muffin. “This is pretty good.”

Rachel handed Will a paper napkin from the dispenser. “When Kim told me Jack worked for a retirement community with assisted living

options, I found the one where he worked and checked out their website. Now, I'm receiving ads for retirement communities and links to news articles about health care." Rachel reached over and broke off a piece of the blueberry muffin for herself. She kept reading. "This is interesting."

"What's that?"

"Give me a sec. Let me read some more." Rachel read more, then put her cell phone on the table. "I had no idea health care fraud was such a big deal. Did you know the FBI is in charge of health care fraud and that they recover two billion dollars or more per year? And that's just from the people they catch."

"We're talking doctors who do things like bill multiple people for the same service?" Will put another bit of blueberry muffin into his mouth.

"Also, billing for a service that was never received. Might be a patient turning in a fraudulent claim or even identity theft to use someone else's insurance benefits." Rachel looked up as a man dressed in hospital scrubs burst into the shop. He walked directly to a group of three young women and started yelling.

"That's a lot," said Will. "Two billion a year was recovered, you said?" Will put the last bite of muffin in his mouth and wiped his mouth with a napkin.

"A couple of years ago, it was actually five billion recovered." Rachel kept her eyes on the man in scrubs who was pointing at the women and speaking more loudly.

"You told me you'd be home when I got off shift, Brandy," yelled the man in scrubs, "but here you are with them!"

Now, all eyes in the coffee shop were drawn to the table. Even the senior citizen hippies in the front were looking at them.

Rachel gently put a hand on Will's arm. "Husband, do you see—"

"Yes," said Will, keeping his eyes on the scene. "I see."

Suddenly, Brandy, barely five feet with short blonde hair, stood and turned to confront the man. She took a step forward, and the man stumbled as he stepped back. Her words were clear and strong. "I wasn't home when you got off shift, Curtis, because I found out you're a lying cheat. You've been seeing that tattooed bimbo Jillian and lying to me, telling me you've been working extra shifts to help with the bills for Curtis junior."

"But I'm not.... I mean I wouldn't..." Curtis saw the determined look in Brandy's eyes. "It didn't mean anything," he mumbled. "It was just a fling."

Brandy took another step forward and jabbed a finger in his chest. Again, Curtis stumbled back. "You're a liar, Curtis, and I've had enough. I'm talking to my friends, and when I get home, I'm packing up and moving in with my parents. If you're smart, you won't be there when I'm packing."

Curtis looked around, and nearly every face in the shop was staring at him. He spun around angrily and stomped out of the store. The coffee shop was filled with applause as Brandy's two friends stood and hugged her.

"Lying to a wife can be hazardous to your health," said Rachel as she finished clapping for Brandy.



“Message received,” said Will. As the coffee shop patrons returned to their conversations, Will took another sip of coffee and looked at Rachel.

Rachel started to take a drink, but put down her coffee cup. “I know that look, Will Keller. You want to say something serious.”

“I was just thinking about how much I’m looking forward to getting to Gulf Shores and seeing the house where we’ll be spending the next week. I’m glad we’re getting some alone time.” He looked out the window. “Well, alone with Abby and Zane.” He reached out and took Rachel’s hand. “I’m really looking forward to this delayed honeymoon.”

Rachel raised her eyebrows. “Is that a hint that you don’t want to talk more about health care fraud?” She patted Will’s hand. “I agree. The house is in a complex of rental houses and just across from a building that has condos with a Gulf view. Being able to keep the Greyhounds on one floor and not having to deal with an elevator or steps seemed like a good idea. And we’ll only be a five-minute walk from the beach.”

“I’m glad you finally get some extended time to decompress after working so hard selling houses and also being pulled into the investigation of three murders. That’s a lot in less than two years.”

“I agree. Fortunately, not much chance I’ll be pulled into a murder investigation down here.”

“Although after what you told me about Kim, are you worried that you’ll be pulled into some drama in her life?”

“I’ve been thinking about that. I wonder if there is something off with Jack. I’m worried that he could be hiding things from her.” She

snapped her fingers. “What if he spent time in prison or is hiding from people he owes money to?”

“You sure this isn’t your imagination overreacting? Maybe seeing a mystery where there isn’t one?” Will kissed her on the cheek. “Isn’t this the way it started those times you got involved in murder investigations?”

“No, dear.” Rachel scooted forward and turned to face Will. She spoke firmly. “Those other situations were different.” Rachel held up her fingers and counted off. “One: dead body was found in a house down the street, and a friend was accused. Two: I found a dead body at a house on the Underground Railroad Tour. Three: My stepfather’s business was in danger when a former employee was murdered.”

Rachel paused, and Will added, “And four: just this past Christmas you helped a neighbor who was being pressured to commit a crime.”

“That one doesn’t count. No murder involved.”

“It doesn’t count if your life is in danger as long as there hasn’t been a murder?”

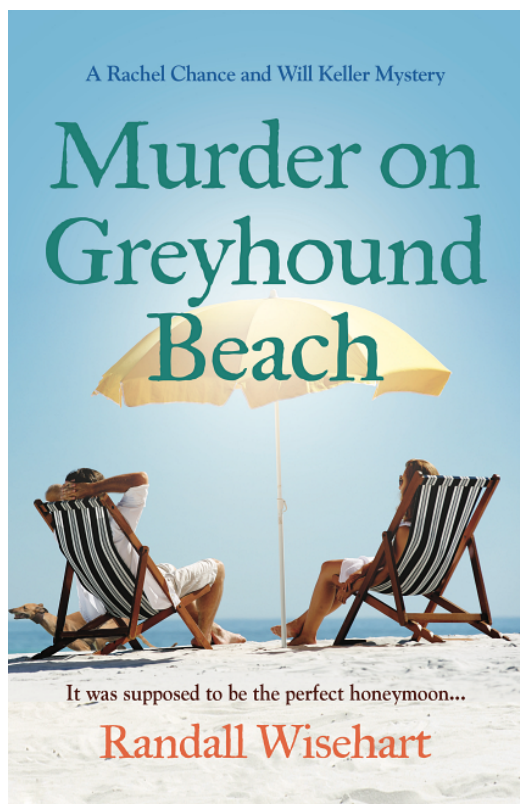
“I’m glad you agree,” Rachel retorted with a half-smirk, half-smile. “Besides, this is different. Kim is not in danger.” Rachel took a deep breath. “You might be right. Maybe I’m reading too much into an awkward phone conversation.” She reached over and held Will’s hand. “And my priority this week is on making this a delayed honeymoon.”

“That sounds great,” Will pulled back his hand and looked at Rachel, his eyes twinkling. “Can we record the part where you said I might be right? I’d like to have that for posterity.”

“Don’t get ahead of yourself, husband.” Rachel patted Will lightly on the cheek. “I said ‘might’ be right for a reason.”

Will laughed. “Of course you did. Fine. Just a dinner with your friend and her new love interest, Jack Brown. No drama.”

Rachel finished her coffee and scooted out of the booth. “Ready to go? I think our Greyhounds are getting restless. I’ll drive.”



*Rachel Chance is looking forward to a vacation at the beach with her husband Will, but a friend from her past needs help. When a missing person case turns into a murder, Rachel races to unmask a killer who always seems to be one step ahead.*

**Murder on Greyhound Beach:**  
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By Randall Wisheart

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