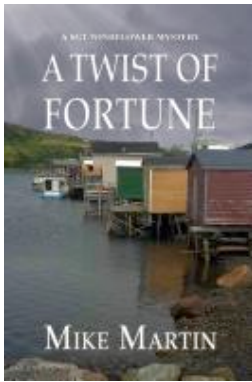




A SGT WINDFLOWER MYSTERY

A TWIST OF FORTUNE

MIKE MARTIN



A Twist of Fortune is the fourth book in the Sgt. Windflower Mystery Series and it continues the adventures of Sgt. Windflower as he tries to solve crime and experience the joy and the sadness of life in a small maritime community. Follow along as he feels the sometimes bitter taste of an east coast winter and the unique culinary delights of this part of the world.

A Twist of Fortune

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A Twist of Fortune

Mike Martin

A Twist of Fortune
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ISBN 978-1-63490-380-6

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ALSO BY MIKE MARTIN

The Walker on the Cape
The Body on the T
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Chapter One

Sergeant Winston Windflower blinked twice. He was sure his eyes were deceiving him. He doubted it was Sheila, his girlfriend and the love of his life, being led away in handcuffs. But when he saw her distinctive loving smile as she stepped into the RCMP van, he knew it was her.

“I can follow them over to Marystown to make sure she gets a ride back,” said Corporal Eddie Tizzard, Windflower’s second-in-command.

“No, I think she’s on her own on this one,” said Windflower as he scowled and walked away.

Windflower decided he needed to regroup because his spirit was as gray as the early December sky. He headed for the local café, the Mug-Up, for a cup of coffee and a reprieve from the gently falling snow. When he got there, he took a seat by himself but found the only warmth that greeted him was the steam from the coffee.

The reasons for both the dearth of goodwill and Sheila’s arrest were likely the same. For the past few weeks the small community of Grand Bank had been aboil, first with rumours that the fish plant had been sold to new owners from Nova Scotia, and now that they would be dismantling the refrigeration equipment and shipping it to other plants they owned around the Maritimes. People knew what this meant: their fish plant was gone, and that part of their life in Grand Bank was over. It was never coming back.

This had led to escalating emotions and reactions from the locals who started with a community meeting that developed into a committee to try and save the fish plant. It continued with daily protests and then a call for what community activists were calling ‘direct action’ to block the fish plant gates to prevent New Wave Fisheries from moving the equipment to Lunenburg. That call had been answered swiftly, loudly, and in great numbers by local citizens

who were gathering each morning at the entrance to stop any trucks with the equipment on board from leaving the fish plant.

Windflower had been away for the past few days when this 'direct action' had begun. He was working on a special assignment with Acting Inspector Bill Ford in Marystown but got regular updates from Eddie Tizzard. At first, the RCMP allowed the protesters to assemble and delay the trucks from leaving, but when they started blocking access to the fish plant, the RCMP stepped in and started arresting people. About 40 locals had already been arrested and released on bond with conditions to stay away from the fish plant.

And now 44. Windflower sipped his coffee in the corner.

Finally one person emerged from the coffee klatch on the other side of the café. It was the Mayor of Grand Bank, Bill Sinnott. Windflower wondered what he wanted, but the Mayor's open smile disarmed him, and he quickly smiled back.

"Mornin', Sergeant," said Mayor Sinnott. "Looks like we're in for a bit of snow. Forecast says we're getting a little, ten centimetres I think they said. But my old bones tell me there's more blowin' in from offshore than dat."

"Good morning, Mr. Mayor," said Windflower. "You may be right about the weather. I never know what to expect anymore, except that we will get snow, and sometimes a lot of it. And a big snowstorm that keeps everybody at home for a few days might help defuse the situation around here."

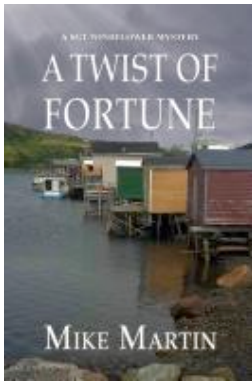
"It might," said the Mayor. "But you know **tings** have a way of working themselves out. Sometimes we have to sit back and let nature run its course."

Windflower just sat quietly again with his coffee as he pondered the Mayor's quirky, but often correct philosophy on life.

"And sometimes we have to let the people we love make their own way in life," Mayor Sinnott continued. Before Windflower could respond to this bon mot, Sinnott lumbered his way back to his constituents to continue his informal consultations.

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Windflower suspected that he'd heard about Sheila. He was still in a state of melancholy and amazement that the woman he loved was now in the back of an RCMP paddy wagon, on her way to being booked for trespassing and public nuisance.



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