

FINK



JL SNYDER

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By JL Snyder

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1: BEGRUDGE

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THE FROSTY CHILL OF WINTER ROLLS IN OFF THE MURKY OCEAN WATER. WAVES CRASH AGAINST THE OIL STAINED TIMBER LINING THE PIER IN THE OCEAN FRONT WAREHOUSE DISTRICT. MOON LIGHT PIERCES THE DARKNESS IN THE CITY . . . MY CITY.

Lifeless bodies lay scattered across the pier draped in a sea of make shift body bags. The boys from CSI examine the bodies and sift through the pieces looking for anything that might solve the puzzle. Do all the pieces connect? How? Why? Who committed such grisly murders?

I arrive late. Many of the bodies are already laying outside when I show up. I walk along the grim path. My jaw rattles. My pace quickens.

Steam bursts out between the cracks of my teeth with every clatter. A billowing cloud; thick, cold and heavy surrounds me. I'm gripped by an overbearing scent. It's not foreign to me.

I pause for a moment, cover my face and continue on. It's difficult to scratch out anything on my notepad. It's moist. My pen is frozen, like a Popsicle. My notepad rips and tears with every stroke of my pen. "Damn it, I should've brought a voice recorder!"

Confusion, shock and denial; three adjectives rolling around in my mind. The trail of foot prints ahead of me can tell many stories. But, hidden deep within those stories is a truth. One that I will uncover.

Pier 13, heh, I use to like the number thirteen. Now it only seems to carry with it all the superstitions and myths that history exposed.

I'm standing just outside a warehouse where they make some new type of energy drink. The one all the kids are injecting into their bodies lately. It makes them wired and loopy. More than usual. But, the kids think it's the greatest thing on the planet. They don't know the side effects. They

don't realize how it will hurt them when they get older. Or maybe they just don't give a shit?

This company is one of the many companies in this city with ties to the elusive fat bastard, Don Chato, the thorn in my ass. Don Chato has a tendency of sticking his filthy paws in the jar of everything going on in this city.

I stop, look up and sigh. A stream of water pisses down upon me from the roof top. "Shit! Really?"

I meet up with my partner Lorenzo "Lencho" Marquez. He's already on the scene.



“You said it Lencho. Heh. What do we got here?”

“There're about twenty dead employees. All immigrants, of course!”

He mutters. “They seem to be from all parts of the world. You got your Asians, Latinos, and even a few Africans. Heh, kind of looks like this company was trying to win some type of ethnic diversity award or something. Most of the workers in this area are immigrants, illegals to be more precise. You know, because of their knack for hard work and getting their hands dirty. Not to mention they'll do all of that for next to nothing. But, I found something strange; most of the victims have some type of a brand on their wrists. Look here.”

We turn over a couple of the victims. The marks on their wrists are all the same, located in the same spot, the same size and shape. It looks like blistered skin ready to burst. Like the ones those colored frat boys get burned into their arms. Maybe it's some type of club or gang affiliation? Or it could be some kind of claim of ownership or something.

“What’re they doing working out here on the docks in this part of town? After what happened a few years ago?” My mind flashes back to a time when . . .

A foul wretched odor hovered over the docks and crept into the city for weeks. Nobody could make heads of tails of where the stench was coming from. You could smell it from thirty blocks away. Maybe more. It was almost as strong in the center of town as it was back at the docks. The stench wasn’t from the fishing docks or boats. Rotten fish mixed with sea water has an unusually sickening smell. Remember when you were a kid and you fished off the docks for the first time with your old man? That rank smell crawled through your mouth and nose. Whether you covered it up or held your breath, the stench still managed to creep in. It was disgusting. You couldn’t get over the ripe scent of rotten fish scales, guts and bait that marinated the filthy, oil stained, sea soaked wooden planks. But to your old man, it was like the smell of freshly washed laundry or your mom’s favorite perfume. It didn’t really phase him at all. That poor bastard’s nose must’ve been broken, or so you thought. - End Preview