

Chapter 1

It's not as though she thought about death often; in fact, she hardly ever used to. That changed five months ago. Having a stalker will do that. You are constantly on the lookout and never feel entirely safe.

She traveled 3,000 miles away to escape her determined pursuer. Much to her relief, rebuilding her life in San Diego is going smoothly. She loves her new job working for a thriving online magazine, has a new car, and even has a few new friends. And yet, the fear of him finding her looms heavily over her head. She maintains her diligence to be aware and is careful not to let her guard down. In her heart, she knows she'll never be entirely happy until she has done everything in her power to be free of him and his unending stalking and threats.

Lola Howell loves fast cars and drives her maroon 5.0 Mustang Convertible like every road is Le Mans. She likes to drive fast and feels fearless and daring on the road—similar to how she lives her life as an intelligent, confident, and, yes, sometimes reckless 29-year-old woman who has found success in her career, if not in her love life.

She tries to listen to the internal voice watching out for her—some people call it their guardian angel—keeping her from speeding too much, tailgating too often, and not paying attention when she is behind the wheel. This guidance is invaluable, and she pays attention when her spidey sense flags certain men as too dangerous or not in her best interest to get involved with.

Not only does she drive fast, but Lola does everything fast, and she worries that someday it might just be her downfall. Planning has never been her strong suit. She excels at thinking quickly on her feet and reacting with full conviction, so sure she is right. She rarely stops long enough to fully contemplate the potential consequences.

When she gets too cocky, she likes to remind herself of the time she was alone at a business meeting in Las Vegas. One night she was antsy to get out and hear some live music and have a drink, but wasn't in the mood for the hotel's bright lights with the constant sound of the gaming and slot machines all around.

She looked up local bars with live music and found one only four blocks away from her hotel. It was a chilly night, and all she had brought was a sweater, but four blocks shouldn't be too far to walk. Once she was off the main boulevard, the streets turned darker, and there was less evidence of nightlife. She pulled her sweater close with only two more blocks to go and kept walking.

A taxi went by her slowly and stopped a few feet in front of her. The driver rolled down the window and asked if she needed a ride. She replied no, "I'm just going to Sullivan's Bar a couple of streets from here."

He shook his head and said, “Lady, do you know where you are? This is a dangerous area to be walking alone. And that bar, Sullivan’s, has been closed for over a year now. There is nothing around here. Let me give you a ride back to your hotel. It isn’t safe to be out here alone.”

“Oh, wow, I didn’t realize. Thank you so much, But really, I am only a couple of blocks away from where I am staying.” She saw him shaking his head and said, “OK, if you are sure, then I will take you up on that ride.”

“I am sure. I couldn’t drive off and leave you out here alone with a clear conscious.”

Once she was in the cab, he said, “I didn’t want to scare you too much, but this place is for hookers and drug dealers, and the type of people who hang around are not very nice. I couldn’t believe my eyes when I first saw you walking and realized you weren’t a hooker. I could tell by how you held your sweater around you, not advertising your wares. I am just happy I came along before you got much further.”

By then, they were back at her hotel, and Lola reached in her purse to pay him. “He laughed and said, I don’t want any money, Lady. I am just happy you’re safe. And please stick the Boulevard from now on.”

Thank you so much. I promise I will!”

Yep, that was reckless for sure, Lola Howell!

