



Lady's Name

C.W. Myers

LADY'S GAME

A PRICE DENOTTA MYSTERY

INSTALLMENT 20

Price awoke to the whining crescendo of a wailing siren and found it hard to focus his thoughts. What had happened? He remembered being at the entrance to the mental hospital where the pinched face of the guard dog/receptionist, her eyes unusually small and waspish, had refused him entrance.

“He’s awake.”

“Don’t let him thrash about.”

“Take his pulse again.”

“All right, but why are we slowing down? We’re not at the hospital yet.”

The voices floated above his head with little meaning. Were they talking about him? Why was he lying down anyway? He needed to be up doing something—he felt very strongly about that, even though he couldn’t quite remember what that something was.

“Just some guy refusing to move over. There, he’s moving now.”

The pungent odor of antiseptic reminded him of his recent stay in the hospital with its clean air of white sterility. He tried to move his arm, bringing a sharp stitch to his back that took his breath. What had happened to him—to his back?

By the time the ambulance had pulled into the hospital emergency ramp, Price had again drifted into unconsciousness. When he opened his eyes several hours later, his mind was clear—his memory functioning normally.

“How bad is it?” he asked the man standing patiently beside him.

“You were lucky,” Daniels answered. “An unexpected turn most certainly saved your life, forcing the bullet to graze your skin instead of gaining entry where it would have caused some real damage.

“Did you get who did it?”

“Yeah, a paid thug. Hasn’t given us anything yet that we can use, but he will. Did you find out anything from the mental facility?”

Price smiled for the first time. “A couple of things. First of all, Stedman is a major contributor to the state hospital, and secondly, one of the Stedman women has been a resident there.”

“Know which one?”

“No, but a photograph should establish the identity pretty quickly.”

“Good work. I’ll get a court order for the records. Did they say why she was there?”

“No, I might have been able to find out more if the woman at the desk hadn’t threatened to call security,” he said grinning.

“And then there was the matter of the gunshot.”

“Maybe they only meant to scare me off.”

“Right. Scare you to death is more like it.”

“But why now? I’ve been out for a couple of days. Why chose a time when the neighborhood was covered with cops to make their move?”

Frank paused a minute to think. “You must be getting too close,” he said finally. “I wish I knew which of Stedman’s wives had been admitted.”

“I had assumed it would be his current wife.”

“Which current wife, Denotta? Didn’t I tell you my news concerning the case? Both of the women are registered as his current wives. The man was a bigamist; we can prove that, but can we prove that he was also a murderer?”

End of Installment Twenty

C. R. Myers is an award-winning author of more than fifty published novels, including the BobbiCat children’s books, and a long-time Bullard resident. www.crm Myers.com