

Chapter 1

“Russell Quant, will you marry me?”

I gulped.

The old vine fortified aperitif I’d been blissfully sipping, along with our shared Grand Marnier and Lilikoi soufflé, suddenly turned sticky in my throat. I wished for a draft to cool my rapidly crimsoning cheeks. Although only seconds passed before I responded to the unexpected question, it seemed as if the world around me had slowed to half pace. Visions of my life passed before my eyes. Or at least the last seventy-two hours of it.

The telephone call had been unexpected. There are no sweeter six words than: come to Hawaii for the weekend. With the possible exception of: Your ticket is paid for, Russell. That’s when the cyclone first hit. After that, it was such a whirlwind, I hadn’t even been aware that I was being swept off my feet—until those final six words: Russell Quant, will you marry me?

We were staying on Waikiki beach in Oahu, at the plush Halekulani Hotel. Halekulani means House Befitting Heaven. And from what I’d seen so far, I was so becoming an angel. Our days began with boogey boarding or kayaking in the

mornings. Afterwards we'd grab a bite at House Without a Key, the hotel's outdoor gathering place immortalized by the Charlie Chan novel of the same name. Then it was time for lazing on the beach or around the pool with its stunning orchid mosaic. In the early evening, after cleaning up, we'd return to House Without a Key, wearing our tropical whites and shirts that billowed in the perfect breeze and find a spot under the kiawe shade tree. From that glorious place, we'd sip on surprisingly strong maitais (regular ice, not crushed), watch the sunset, and enjoy a former Miss Hawaii perform the hula. And this wasn't the hip-rattle-roll stuff you get at the tourist luaus either. This was graceful hula, accompanied by ukulele, steel guitar, slack key, and lilting falsetto vocals unique to traditional Hawaiian music. Later we'd have dinner at popular eating spots like Keo's or Alan Wong's. But tonight, the eating experience had been ratcheted up a notch or two.

We were dining at La Mer, on the second floor of the hotel. The menu featured neo-classic French cuisine. I didn't know what that meant, but I liked it all the same. I liked it a lot. It might have been the champagne they served us before our butts were in our chairs. Or the unimpeded view of Waikiki beach, the Pacific Ocean, and Diamond Head. Or the fact that they brought a little stool just to set my camera on. Or maybe it was the fillet of opakapaka baked in rosemary salt crust. And still, despite it all, I was completely oblivious to the portentousness of all this luxury and excess. I thought he was just *really* happy to see me.

Then came THE QUESTION.

Even though I never took my green eyes off his cocoa brown ones, I was acutely aware of our waiter, Raymond, standing not far off. He'd obviously been in

on the whole thing. I could feel his ear-to-ear grin even though I couldn't see it. And I was pretty sure a few of our neighbouring diners were also monitoring the drama at our table. How could they resist? Two well dressed men seated at the best table in the house, a tropical paradise as our backdrop, the sultry haziness of too much, too-expensive wine that begs close acquaintance from perfect strangers, romantic island music, one of us with a ring in his hand and hopeful look on his face, the other with a wide open mouth and shock on his (that would be me).

For a second I looked away. At Raymond. He gave me an encouraging nod. My eyes fell back on Alex Canyon. I gave him my answer.

“Yes.”

I had a couple of hours to kill at the Honolulu International Airport after seeing Alex off on his flight to Australia, before my own flight home to Canada. Alex is a private and corporate security specialist and had been working a job in Melbourne for the past couple of months. Hawaii had been playing the role of handy halfway point for our not-regular-enough liaisons. It was going to be weeks before we saw each other again. That seemed like a good enough reason to head for the nearest bar to drown my sorrows.

The place had a name, I'm sure, but I decided to call it Hawaiian Kitsch. It was stuffed to the rafters with everything Hawaiian, from surfboards to drinks served in fake coconuts. It was also stuffed with haole (non-Hawaiian) customers. It seemed everyone was desperate to get one last hit of island flavour before they returned to their real lives, sadly lacking in plumeria leis, grass skirts and *kālua* pig burgers.

There wasn't even an empty stool at the bar to be had. My eyes jumped from table to table assessing whether anyone was about to leave. It didn't look that way, so I decided to forgo the drink and simply find a comfy spot near my gate and dig into the Josh Lanyon book I'd been saving for the plane.

This far ahead of departure, I had plenty choice spots to pick from, and selected one with a good view of the tarmac. Even tarmacs in Hawaii somehow manage to look tranquil and tropical. I settled in with a bottle of water (poor replacement for a double gin and tonic) and a bag of licorice I always keep in my carry-on.

Half an hour later, having difficulty concentrating on my book with my head full of this and that, I heard the loud voices. Someone wasn't happy. I looked around to find the source, half-thinking I wanted to shoot them an irritated look for interrupting my non-reading. What I found were three guys, about a hundred metres off; two Hawaiians and a haole.

The one Hawaiian was much smaller than the other two guys, short and wiry, with a tortoise-like face, and looking extremely jumpy. He was the one doing all the caterwauling. The other two were showing him something—ID maybe? Weapons?—and I guessed they were either some kind of airport security or the Hawaiian version of mafia hit men. From my experience as a once-upon-a-time-cop, and something about the stance of the two big guys, I was betting on the former. Either way, things did not look so good for the tortoise.

And just like that, the jittery-looking guy took advantage of a passing parade of Japanese tourists, and, using them as a shield, made a dash for it, heading my way.

I heard a muffled “Stop! Police!” come from one of the pursuers, temporarily waylaid by the tourists. I instinctually leapt to action. Things were happening so fast, I didn’t have much time to make plans, other than to decide I had to do what I could to stop the fleeing man. He was barrelling (not very tortoise-like) toward me at breakneck speed. I was either going to have to get into a footrace with him through the airport terminal, or find a way to stop him.

I never made the high school football team. It wouldn’t have been difficult, though, growing up in Howell, Saskatchewan. Most graduating classes numbered under a dozen, and were half female, a statistic that practically guaranteed a spot for whoever wanted to suit up. But despite being built as sturdy as a tree by grade nine, it just wasn’t for me, so I never tried out. But I do know a thing or two about tackling goons from my days in the police academy.

My airport runaway was moving too fast to assure a quick take down from behind. Instead, I needed to break his momentum. That’s the thing about speed—the faster you’re moving forward, the faster you go down when you meet with an obstacle. I decided to be that obstacle.

Timing myself as carefully as I could, with bowed head and hunched back, I propelled myself into tortoise’s path.

He never saw me coming. I felt the man’s body fold over mine as I rolled over the floor, and looked up just in time to see two legs flailing in the air. Success!

I’d barely come to a stop before the two cops were on the guy like icing on cake. For big fellows they moved like cheetahs. In one slick move, the haole had the

smaller guy up and in cuffs, while his partner pushed his nose into the tortoise face and said some words that probably weren't very nice.

I stood up and was brushing myself off when I saw the Hawaiian cop coming over.

“Hey,” he said as he approached, his dark eyes covering every inch of me.

He was tall, well-built, and casually dressed for a cop, in nice fitting jeans and a worn, surfer's t-shirt, the kind *The Gap* sold to kids who'd probably never been on a board. But something told me this guy was one-hundred-percent authentic. And he certainly wasn't a kid. The face was handsome, and on closer inspection didn't look all Hawaiian after all; there was some other influence in his exotic features. Strong jaw. Sharp cheekbones. Nice lips. I only noticed the lips because I thought I detected a slight grin there.

“I'm sorry,” I said, palms out. “I know I shouldn't have interfered. It's just that I used to be a cop.”

The guy cocked an eyebrow. “Instinct, right?”

I nodded. “Yup. Never goes away I guess.”

Surprising me, he reached out and took my left hand in his. Aw crap, was I gonna get a set of stainless steel bracelets for all my trouble? Was I about to share a cell with tortoise man?

Instead, the cop turned my hand palm up and inspected a scrape I must have gotten from my tumble.

“You need some medical attention.”

“Nah, nah,” I said looking at the wound. “It’ll be fine. I’ll just clean it up in the bathroom.”

“Uh, if you’re done chit-chatting over there,” the other cop called over with a funny look in his eye, “maybe you could pay some attention to the perp we got over here?”

The Hawaiian released my hand and shot his partner a well-practiced look of annoyance just as the other officer’s radio beeped for his attention.

“You’ll have to excuse Ray,” the Hawaiian said. “He’s not real good in public.”

I smiled. He smiled back. I felt an odd tingle in some odd spots and inwardly chastised myself. I really needed that drink.

“Thanks for giving us a hand with Huei. He must have forgotten that the Honolulu police frown on people leaving the island when we have an arrest warrant with their name on it.”

“Maybe his memory isn’t what it used to be.”

“That must be it.”

“Hey, Kimo,” the other cop said as he dragged a sullen-looking Huei closer. “That was the chief. One of us gotta hang out here to unruffle the feathers of some airport guys who wanna know why we’re disturbing their passengers. They say they’ll be right down. Which probably means half an hour. You wanna do that while I take in our friend here?”

Kimo winced at the idea, but nodded. “But I’m only waiting ten minutes. After that I’m heading for the surf.”

Ray grunted agreement and led his charge away.

“Looks like I’ve got a few minutes to wait,” Kimo said. “Can I buy you a coffee to thank you for your heroics?”

I could tell he wasn’t exactly serious about the “heroics” part, but who was I to turn down coffee with a handsome surfer dude cop?

After scoring a couple of drinks from a nearby vendor, we returned to where I’d left my stuff and took spots next to one another.

“Let me see,” Kimo began in serious earnestness, “you’re at the airport, you have a carry-on, I see a ticket in your pocket; my superior detecting skills tell me you’re heading home.”

I laughed. “Yeah. I can see you must be one of Hawaii’s best and brightest.”

He smiled easily. “Where’s home for you?” he asked.

“Saskatchewan.”

He tried to repeat the name of the province. He blundered badly, but with a pleasing boyish smirk that made up for it.

“It’s a tough one,” I allowed.

“I can relate,” he said. “With a name like Kimo Kanapa'aka.”

I felt obliged to try it out. It came out something like: Kimokalawakala. I grimaced. “Sorry.”

“Just Kimo is okay.”

“I’m Russell. Russell Quant.”

We each took a sip of our coffees while regarding the other with inquiring eyes. That done, we laid our cups on our laps and tried out matching silly grins. We

were strangers cast together unexpectedly but somehow drawn to one another. The silence wasn't exactly comfortable, but I didn't care. There was something immediately likeable about this guy.

"I'm glad to see you smile," he finally said. "I was thinking you looked a little miserable when I first saw you. I hate to see anyone leaving Hawaii without a big, fat grin on their face."

"Could have been because I was on the ground after tackling your bad guy."

"Nah, brah, it was before that. I noticed you when we were staking out the terminal looking for Huei."

Had Mr. Hawaiian surfer dude he-man cop been checking me out? "Oh really?"

"We were about to apprehend a criminal," he explained. "As a former policeman, I'm sure you know that in a situation like that, a good cop is always fully aware of his surroundings and exactly who and what is in it."

"Oh," I said, a little disappointed. "Of course."

"So why were you sitting here looking so miserable? Bad book?"

He really had been fully aware of me and what I'd been doing. I was impressed. "I wasn't miserable really." I told him. "Just a little bummed out. I won't see my...fiancé..." The word felt weird coming from my mouth, as if I'd just made it up. "...for a few weeks. So I guess I'm a little sad about that."

Kimo bobbed his head in an empathetic gesture. "That's too bad. How come? Your *ku'uipo* from here then? That why you won't see her, she lives here?"

"She's a he," I told him, followed by a sip of coffee.

The man's eyebrows rose over his eyes.

I shrugged and grinned. "Yeah, that's right," I said, "I'm Canadian."

After a beat, he grinned back and said, "Me too."

I realized what he was really telling me. He was a *gay* Hawaiian surfer dude he-man cop. Very cool. We clinked coffee cups and drank a toast.

"Where's the wedding gonna be?" he asked. "Here on the island maybe?"

My eyes widened. Never even thought about it. "I dunno."

"When's the big day?"

"I dunno."

"Are you big, white wedding kind of guys, or into something small and intimate?"

Jeeppers! Who was this guy? A reporter for the Oahu six o'clock news? "I dunno."

Kimo frowned. "You have actually *met* the guy who you think is going to marry you, right?"

I gave him a face that said "very funny, smart ass."

He gave me an apologetic look. "Okay, okay. So what's your fiancé's name?"

And for one horrible moment that lasted an eon, my mind went blank.

Kimo let out a nervous chuckle. He checked his watch as if hoping it was time to go. "You're kidding me, right?"

"Alex!" I finally got out. "His name is Alex. Alex. Alex. Alex."

"Russell," he asked, his face suddenly serious. "Did you just meet this guy, brah?"

“No! Of course not. It’s just all so new for me. He only asked me to marry him last night. I haven’t quite processed it yet.” I was beginning to feel a little uneasy with the way the conversation was going. It was time to take it on a less intrusive detour. “So you’re a cop?”

He nodded.

I eyed up the t-shirt and silver bracelet embossed with surfboards. “And a surfer?”

He gave me a strange look before answering, “I like to surf, yeah.”

“Is that...a good hobby?” It didn’t come out quite as I’d meant it to.

Kimo chuckled. “You mean for a guy my age?”

I gave him a mischievous smile. “Well, I’m sure there are many senior’s surfing competitions you’d do really well in.” Even in the short time we’d spent together, there was something about this guy that told me our senses of humour jived.

He made a move as if pulling a knife from his heart. “You wound me, brah.”

We shared a look. The kind that two people attracted to one another, but know it can’t ever go anywhere, share. We drank some more coffee.

During the nearly six hour flight from Honolulu to Vancouver, and the layover until I could board my plane for Saskatoon, I did more reading and eating than sleeping. So by the time I was winging my way home, I was ready for a nap. I snuggled into the CRJ’s seat with about seventy other passengers and prepared for some shut eye. But fate had another plan for me. It began with a series of sighs from the seat next to me.

I admit to being as curious as the proverbial cat. How can I not be, given my chosen career? So, although I was a little vexed by the noisy exhaling, it wasn't surprising that I found myself abandoning the promise of pleasant dreams for a peek at my neighbour.

The man sitting next to me was a little odd in appearance to say the least. If there was a human version of Mr. Magoo, he was it. Through the slit of one eye, I could make out a hugely bulbous nose, sticky-outy chin, wobbly jowls, sunken mouth, and a completely hairless, perfectly round head. His eyes, nearly hidden behind pouches of skin, sat below eyebrows shaped like inverted "V"s. Although it was summer, and the forecast for our evening arrival was balmy, he wore some kind of trench coat with a uniquely patterned scarf of orange and blue wound about his neck. If I had to guess, I'd say he was nearing seventy.

Just as I was about to lose myself back to sleep, the man sighed again. This time accompanied by a gentle but definite "harrumph." I saw that he was intently studying a piece of paper. His scrunched-up mouth was travelling from one side of his face to the other, as if worrying over a particularly recalcitrant piece of gum.

I saw a crew member making his way down the aisle with water. Deciding that wouldn't be a bad idea, I sat up and waited to be offered a glass. I exchanged a polite glance with Magoo.

"Good evening," he said. "I hope I didn't wake you."

"No," I lied. "I never sleep long on planes."

He nodded absentmindedly as he returned his attention to the paper on his lap.

Dropping my seat table, I accepted water from the steward.

After one more sigh, the man carefully folded the paper and placed it in the breast pocket of his coat. He looked over at me with a lopsided, lip-less smile. “Going home?”

He even sounded like Mr. Magoo. Or was it Thurston Howell III from Gilligan’s Island? “Yes,” I told him. “It’s nice to get away, but always nice to come back home too.”

“That’s refreshing to hear from a young person,” he said. “I suppose with the local economy booming the way it is, more and more youngsters like you are staying in Saskatchewan.”

I was enjoying being called a youngster. Especially since I’d just turned thirty-eight. A few years back, my ultra-stylish friend Anthony had cajoled me into using a line of Clinique skin products for men. I guess they were worth the ultra-stylish cost. Although I steadfastly refuse to wear a moisturizing mask to bed. “Yes, I hear that’s true.”

“What line of work are you in?”

“I’m a private detective.”

That answer is always good for a reaction. And Mr. Magoo did not disappoint. He shifted in his seat to get a better look at me. Although the flaps covering his eyes were nearly impenetrable, I spied a flash of blue, brilliant as a newborn’s.

“No!” he said, truly astonished.

I’d run into this before. I dug a business card (you never know when you might meet a potential client) from a pocket of my cargo shorts and handed it to him. He studied it carefully before burying it in his jacket pocket.

“So you investigate murders and that sort of mayhem?”

I nodded. It was the truth. I had been involved in at least a few murder cases—granted, sometimes peripherally—since leaving the Saskatoon Police Service several years earlier. There was Tom Osborn found afloat in Pike Lake. James Kraft shot in a New York City hotel room. The drag queen who looked like Phyllis Lindstrom from the Mary Tyler Moore show pushed off the side of an ocean liner. And Tanya Culinare who jumped from the eighth floor balcony of her Broadway Avenue apartment. Oh yeah, I investigated murders all the time.

“I wouldn’t have thought there’d be much call for that sort of thing in a city the size of Saskatoon,” the old man commented.

At about a quarter of a million people, Saskatoon is not a big city. And indeed, in between my higher profile cases, most of my time as a prairie detective is spent chasing down errant husbands, runaway kids, lost pets, and, in one instance, discovering whether a local restaurant had indeed used Mrs. Galabruich’s perogy recipe and passed it off as their own. But no one needed to know about that. I nodded again and said, “A hot economy has benefits for my line of work too. More people, more action, more crime.” Gosh I love prosperity.

His mouth made a chewing motion as he considered what I’d said. Then he asked, “You wouldn’t be interested in something a little less dramatic, then?”

I was very interested. Not only do I like being able to pay my bills (that damn Clinique stuff is expensive), as compelling as my infrequent murder cases are, they aren’t necessarily my favourite kind of work. Murder means death. Death means grief. Usually for many people. Death is gruesome. Death is just not a nice thing to

spend all your time around. So, although I might outwardly whine about being asked to find out if Sophie Underwill's beagle from down the street is responsible for the daily deposits of doody in Mr. Kindrachski's bed of prize-winning lilies, inwardly I rather enjoy the work.

Then again, sometimes there's nothing better than a good murder.

"I might be," I told Mr. Magoo.

"What about treasure maps?" he asked. "Are you any good with treasure maps?"

Now it was my turn to look astonished. Treasure maps? I suddenly had memories of being eight. I loved movies and books about adventurous pirates in exotic locations in search of treasure. I daydreamed of chests filled with gold and jewels and countless coins. But the man sitting next to me did not at all resemble a pirate. No eye patch. No bandana around unruly black hair. No peg leg or missing teeth. I was going to be disappointed. I was sure of it.

Magoo rifled around in his pocket and pulled out the piece of paper I'd spied him studying earlier in the flight. He pulled down his seat table and flattened the paper on top of it. Although I hate being snoopy—okay, that's a lie—I couldn't help taking a peek. It was a rather crude drawing, a few squiggles and symbols, interspersed with lots of words. The thing looked more like a poem than a treasure map. Treasure maps were supposed to have a north-south-east-west guide, a trail of arrows over sketched terrain which usually included mountains and valleys and swamps. And there should be a castle and a few warnings about quicksand or dragons or something good like that. So yup, I was disappointed.

“I don’t know what she was thinking when she did this,” Magoo muttered. “But I shouldn’t be surprised. Helen always was a quirky one.”

“I’m sorry,” I said. “What exactly is this?”

“Helen, my...friend...left this for me,” he said, his fingers busily fumbling over the surface of the paper. “It’s a map of Saskatoon.”

I leaned in and peered closer. “It is?”

“Sure it is,” he said, pointing at a blob that I suppose could have been a castle. “See, that’s the Bessborough hotel.” His finger moved from blob to blob. “And there’s the river. And the university campus. Downtown.”

I thought he was giving the artist greater credit than deserved, but geographically speaking, if I squinted and turned my head just right, I could see a general resemblance to the city we were about to land in.

“And what’s all the writing over top the map?”

“Those are the clues,” he whispered in a way that urged me to do the same. “You see, I have to figure these out in order to find it.”

“Find what?” I asked, my curious gene on full alert.

The man stared at me. For a moment he seemed uncertain, as if suddenly realizing that maybe he’d said—and shown me—too much. Finally, his cartoonish face broke into a conspiratorial smile. “A treasure,” he enthused quietly. “If I decipher the clues correctly, I find the treasure. Simple as that. It’s like a game.”

“I see.” The man didn’t need to hire a detective. He needed a playmate.

“I’ve been going over the clues,” he said, thick fingers pointing at the first stanza of the treasure map poem. “I think I’ve got some of them figured out. But the

rest, well, I just can't seem to. I need help. I guess maybe I'm getting a little too old for this sort of thing. The brain isn't working at top form anymore."

"Maybe you're just tired," I suggested helpfully.

He nodded. "Travelling does take the stuffing out of me these days. Perhaps I'll be more clear-headed in the morning."

"Yes, I'm sure you will," I assured him. "Why don't you give it another go when you're feeling better. If you still need help after that, you can give me a call. You have my card."

"Do I? Oh, my, yes I do. You just gave it to me! See what I mean? Dotty as a drunken donkey."

I chuckled. "I haven't heard that one before."

"Feel free to use it, my boy."

And with a ping of the seatbelt sign, we began our descent into Saskatoon. It was good to be home.

I felt the arm thread through my own just as we entered the second floor arrivals lounge that overlooks the main concourse—okay, the only concourse—of the John G. Diefenbaker International airport. I looked down at the little person who'd attached himself to my left side. It was Magoo.

"I hope you don't mind," he said, staring up at me with a sweet smile. "I feel like a doddering old auntie, but my gout is acting up, you see. Would you mind escorting me to where the bags come out?"

There was something odd about the smile on his cartoonish face. It didn't quite go with the look in his eyes. Was he ogling me? I couldn't be sure. But how could I turn him down? "Of course not," I said.

Together we traversed the short distance down the escalators to the luggage carousels. Within a few minutes the track began moving and my unexpected companion clapped his hands with glee when his one small, argyle-patterned bag was among the first to arrive. I pulled it off the carousel and handed it to him with a good bye at the ready.

"What about you?" he asked, seeming a bit discombobulated by the sudden farewell.

"I'm afraid my bags haven't come off yet. Do you need help getting to a taxi?" I offered. "I can come back for my bags after we get you set."

"Oh," he said, looking a bit vague. "No. I have my own car in the lot."

I wondered how he was going to drive if his gout was bothering him as bad as he'd claimed. My mother suffered intermittently with gout, so I knew about the pain associated with it. "Are you sure you can drive? Maybe you should take a cab home tonight. You could come back for your car tomorrow."

"Of course I can drive. Why not?"

"Your gout?"

"Oh. Oh that. Well, I'm suddenly feeling much better."

"That's good news."

He stood there, unmoving, a perplexed look on his face.

"Would you like me to walk you to your car?"

“I wouldn’t want you to go to the trouble. Are your bags here yet?”

I searched the conveyor for my luggage. Even though most of the other passengers had already retrieved their bags and began migrating toward the exits, mine were nowhere to be seen. This was not a good sign. The approaching Air Canada representative wasn’t either.

“I’m afraid that is all the luggage from this flight,” he announced to the half dozen of us left. “If you could follow me to the booth right over there, I can take your information.”

What followed was a chorus of discontent that I knew from past experience was utterly useless. I looked at Magoo and grimaced. “My bad luck, I guess.”

He nodded, looking even more disgruntled than I was. His eyes made a quick sweep of the concourse as if looking for something or someone, then he shrugged and said, “Well, m’boy, I guess I’ll be off then. It was a pleasure meeting you. I hope we get a chance to talk again soon.” And with that, he toddled off.

I joined the unhappy throng at the lost luggage counter.

Twenty minutes later, with Air Canada promising to home deliver my two suitcases as soon as they returned from their own getaway vacation to who knew where, I was in the airport long-term parking lot trying to recall where I’d left my silver, Mazda RX7. I usually park near a walkway, to make spotting the small vehicle a little easier. On the bright side, at least I wasn’t having to bother with hauling around a couple of heavy pieces of luggage after me.

It was getting dark out and I'd just spotted the car when I noticed a flurry of activity not far off. People were gathered in a dim corner of the lot, but something told me this was definitely more than just an impromptu tailgate party. There was unmistakable tension in the air. Voices were high. I thought I could hear crying. Something was wrong. I trotted over to take a look.

Squeezing through the circle of gawkers, I finally saw what the fuss was about. Someone had collapsed next to their car. He didn't seem to be moving. A couple of parking lot security guards were attending to him, but the situation didn't look good. Heart attack maybe? I could hear one of the guards talking to a 9-1-1 operator, asking for both an ambulance and police.

Although by nature of my chosen career I am a professional snoop, I try to hold it to a minimum in times of private misfortune. I was about to step away from this bad luck story when something familiar caught my eye.

An orange and blue scarf.

I drew in a sharp breath.

It was Mr. Magoo lying lifeless on the ground.

Then I noticed one more thing. Alarm bells started ringing in my head.

I charged forward, and yelled: "Seal off the parking lot!"