

## CHAPTER ONE



# *THE SULTRY VOICE*

**T**here was a jolt, a zap, a fizz.

The night I decided to go to the edge of the lighthouse, it was a stormy night, unlike the one I am experiencing now. The wind that dawn was incredibly fierce. It pounded with such deep resonance that for a moment I

imagined the sound alone would knock down the very foundation of my shelter.

I loved that house with my whole heart. It had the appearance of a small castle.

What happened on that early morning wasn't a trick of the eye or the imagination.

It was the truth.

Most loved, was the flight of stairs leading up to the front double door. They were the stairs that lead up to the entrance way to my home that elevated like in a treehouse.

The front double door, designed out of oak with inlaid glass, creaked, and that was its most outstanding characteristic.

Antiquated as my home may appear, its interior was lovely. Being an antique enthusiast, I had collected beautiful sets of furnishings from a variety of antique shops. With vaulted ceilings and many rooms, I could have accommodated many guests quite comfortably.

But in those days no one came around.

Being of quiet nature, I loved the solitude that old house offered. I was ten years old when I first moved there with Grandpa Paul who was no longer with me.

One night when I was twenty-five years old, I was watching a late news broadcast. It may or may not have been Channel 9, but it was on the television alright. I was nervously contemplating how in recent days I was very much afraid of the TV. Being aware of many other electrical gadgets in my home, not even the old stenotype in the basement crept me out as much.

First, a bright white light flashed across the sky and then across the TV screen, and then I heard an urgent voice shouting out the bad news: "Many people are missing, and reports of strange lights across the skies..."

I felt unease and a sense of foreboding.

The signal then picked up something different, something bizarre. Distorted audio played through the speakers. I stood up mesmerized

and stepped closer to the television. The hair on the back of my head stood up as the feeling of being watched struck me. Doors were opening and closing, and lights were turning on and off.

“A local man named Tom Kave,” the news anchor reported, “has been missing for over a month now—if you have any information that could lead authorities to this man, please contact your local Police Department...”

I couldn't believe my eyes and ears as I stood looking at the skinny man from Tom's Liquor as his face was right on the screen! He was the man who had sold me my pack of cigarettes over the years.

“Hey, that's the guy from the liquor store around the corner! What is going on around here? Is he gone now? Missing or vanished?”

A loud thunder roared across the heavens, and the television automatically turned off, and in a split second, it automatically turned back on.

It turned off.

It turned back on.

More distorted audio sound played through the speakers.

A Month? Yes, it had been almost a month since I last bought a pack of cigarettes there, and that was the last time I saw Tom Kave! Now he was gone! Missing! Possibly deceased.

Another crack of thunder bolted through the sky, creating flashes of light through the window views. I stood staring out the window.

One moment I stood thinking about the disturbing news and suddenly I found myself looking at the weather woman's provocative outfit. I was no longer paying attention to the startling news, but rather noticing her shapely body, particularly her cleavage. The sight of her beauty enticed me, played with my imagination, tantalized my senses, and aroused my desire. I needed to admire the sensuous female to forget the horrors of reality. And she was seeping rapidly into my innermost being.

A wall spider crawled off the edge of my desk and scrambled up my shoulder. I screamed as I

brushed it off with my hand. I was still brushing with short, disgusting moans when my eyes returned to the bountiful weather woman.

But I needed to refrain. I lived alone. There wouldn't be a woman around for miles even if I desired one—so what would be the point of thinking about it.

It was just a fantasy—she was over there, I was over here.

I needed to take a cold shower to calm down my excitement. Maybe after doing that, I would be able to get some sleep as well. It wasn't a regular thing for me to be up this late. I usually drifted into a dreamless sleep the moment my head hit the pillow, and it was generally at an earlier time—9:00 p. m.

But after that night, sleep began to elude me.

I headed to the bathroom, twisted the doorknob, and entered. The soft rattle of a wind chime hanging on the porch caught my attention completely, stopping me in my tracks. As the wind intensified, the chime's sound of music

became rhythmically faster and louder. Suddenly, the angry gust of wind blew with hurricane force. I could hear some scraping sound probably a piece of aluminum metal being dragged forcefully across the street. The roofing was being bombarded too with loose objects that had been flying around. I was thinking: there will be more damage.

The wind chime that had rattled music into my ears earlier had been yanked free of its string and gone, probably sent fifty-yards away.

The silence fell again. The sound of my heartbeat was fast like a cat's heart rate.

I heard noise in the living room. When I turned toward the window, which I had securely shut, I found it was wide open. I pondered with the probability of danger for perhaps a minute. The fierce wind had somehow managed to open the window too, and the curtains were flapping violently.

I stopped in my tracks. I knew I had secured every lock on the windows and doors—I never missed.

How could this be possible? Someone tactically opened the window. I was sure of it.

I wrestled with a thought in my mind, pushing against the wind as I paced forward as if I was doing a bodyweight exercise. But with a bit of exerted effort, I managed to get the window closed again. And I locked it.

Everything is good so calm down, I thought.

The wind would have shattered the glass if it had been blown open. Wouldn't it?

I took a deep breath, but with half full lungs I recoiled...I distinctly heard tapping footsteps going into the kitchen.

“What the hell was that?” I asked in a half-raised voice. Those weren't human steps at all!

Surprisingly, the wind ceased its turbulent flow and grew less intense once again.

“Thank you very much!” I uttered to no one.



But what made those stepping sounds sound so shrilling? I was still on edge, and my ears pricked.

As I started to leave the living room, I heard a strange noise: “Pssssh!”

At first, I thought it was the massive pressure of gas leaking from the propane tank. Dumbfounded I realized that I didn't have one anymore. I was using an electric stove for cooking since, a few evenings ago, I had detected the odor of propane gas.

It was probably nothing, I thought. Maybe just the unstable wind!

I checked the window once more making sure I'd secured it properly.

I took another deep breath—this time more relaxed—and stretched momentarily. Assured that it was close, I started toward the bathroom for a shower.

“Well, I guess, I don't need a cold shower after all,” I said, looking at my reflection in the vanity mirror. The color of my skin was ashen. The

emotional excitement was gone thanks to the bitter wind and eerie noises. Feeling wide awake, I thought maybe I should go to bed and lay there.

As I felt a yawn beginning to build, I heard the strange sound again: “Psssssh!”

Whoever it was it was desperately seeking for my attention. I ignored it by walking away—

“Psssssh!” Again.

The sound was like a tail vibration.

I reached my bedroom door. Just as I was about to turn the doorknob, I heard a sound behind me, the sensual whisper of a female: “Liam it's me!”

How could I comprehend such a ludicrous act? At first, I didn't turn around. Tight congestion built up in my chest, and I couldn't breathe, or something.

According to Grandpa Paul, construction in this house ended in 1919. Grandpa Paul acquired and purchased it in 1944 during the World War II era. That was the only detail I had acknowledged of its origin.

I may be living amid desolation. This vast, devastating industrial acreage around me was a junkyard, but I was sure that this area was not haunted or abandoned. And neither was the inside of that house.

The voice sounded so familiar that it made me run back into the living room the way a kid runs back to the television screen when he hears his favorite cartoon has just started. And as I hurried in, I tried to recall to whom that voice belonged. I was... so sure I'd heard it before.

Yes, it was her. That female voice. Somewhat like—

“The seductive weather woman! The one who announced Tom’s disappearance on the television news!”

How could it have become so obtrusive?

With that in mind, I hurried my steps throughout the rooms to find her, as if she could be hiding behind a couch. I went everywhere looking for her—except the basement (I only

went there if necessary). That very moment, I felt a cold hand strike the back of my neck.

It caused hex, which did not permit me to think rationally.

What sane person—female, for that matter—would come into a stranger's home at this ungodly hour? Odd, very odd.

Then, I heard her voice again: “Liam.”

It was her alright, and I was very certain of it.

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As my mind drifted deeper into the realm of wonder, the fierce wind came banging at my window once again, opening it by force and tearing the curtains into long strips like an old pirate's bandanna. By then, it was precisely 1:40 a.m. on that dawn of Saturday when I peered out the window. But the moment I stood there, the wind calmed.

I breathed the scent of the ocean filling my lungs with its breeze and thought of only one thing—fishing!

Now that was a great idea! I could visualize the breakwater at the edge of the lighthouse, where the fish were apt to swim abundantly in large schools on the surface of the Pacific Ocean. From there the abandoned military base would be visible too.

Maybe.

The Pacific Ocean is our planet's most deep-water body, so calm and peaceful. Isn't the deep ocean supposed to be like a desert? It isn't. You could find 8-foot-long worms, giant octopuses, etc. There were all these ocean animals down there and extraterrestrial artifacts too for that matter, which had been one subject of research not only by NASA but by top secret military bases.

Then, just as abruptly as the idea came, the wind continued its violent howling, flapping the curtains in my living room, which looked like

living creatures, and I had to hold on to the lamp as I fell and went to my knees.

Again, suddenly the wind calmed. It grew quiet once more. My throat suddenly went dry. I felt a seemingly unquenchable thirst, and I needed a drink. I headed to the fridge for some water. As I opened the door of the refrigerator, I couldn't believe my eyes—there was no water.

“Impossible! I never run out of drinking water! I keep plenty to stay hydrated.”

Remembering the carton of beer I had stocked in my pantry, I hurried to find it and carried it to the kitchen counter. I desperately ripped the carton box open, took a beer, popped the cap off, and began to drink it uncontrollably. There was nothing wrong with the warm beer. It only foamed a little. It hit my throat like a blessing.

As I drank another one, I tried to make sense of things... I tried to figure out what could be happening. All these bizarre occurrences were haunting me: the opening of the window, not

once but twice, the strange aerial lights, the sudden disappearances.

I hoped the voice was gone now.

When I glanced toward the kitchen entryway into the darkness of that space, I saw blinking in the dark. A pair of bright ruby red eyes were staring back at me!

I took not one, but three steps back. Her aroma was magnificent. The odor. So much for clearing my thoughts. A person had a few seconds before a series of scary thoughts made a nest in his head and harmed him forever. Yes, her odor is mesmerizing.

How was I supposed to stay sane if it was clear what I had just seen in the privacy of my own home? I took three more steps back. I struggled to disregard the thought before it harmed me deeply. Neither did I want to develop the post-traumatic syndrome.

I had an idea of what was going on. I had perceived something would happen next. So, I began to prepare myself mentally for it. I was

shaking uncontrollably. Then, I stood there paralyzed in shock and fear, frozen in fright, and alarmed beyond belief.

I was curious. Extremely curious. Mesmerized by the glow of those ruby red eyes gave me goosebumps all over.

Her voice!

Her eyes!

Her aroma!

It was not just a thought or an illusion—someone was here with me, and it wasn't going away—it wanted to confront me. It waited for my next move in the shadows. She was close, very close!

I heard another strange noise. Like a chirrup, and then like two rough surfaces rubbing together. Still unable to move, I waited for the owner of those bright ruby red eyes to reveal its full form to me.

“Who are you? What do you want? Why are you here?”



I stared into the darkness assuming something might transpire. But nothing ever materialized. Although I trusted that voice very much, it still didn't reveal its form to me. And I didn't think it ever would.

I knew I was fooling myself into thinking that she could be a princess. Could she be a transient? Maybe it was just a rat—a big one—that had gotten inside the house somehow. Another nemesis! I hated rats and lizards or whatever critters invaded dwellings these days. I detested their smell, their scamper, their squeaky wining in the middle of the night trying to look for food—

It's not a rat.

Yes, it is!

No, it isn't!

It's something else! I thought.

The sound of the footsteps wasn't like that of a human. It was heavy. That was a fact. Whatever crept in there it sounded as if it was taking time to look around, to inspect my house because I

heard it pause several times, taking a step or two, and then a breath. I was sure it headed towards me, but then it turned and walked away, toward the far side of the living room, where it breathed within the deep malice of the darkened gloom.

End of this sample book.  
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Gabriel J.M. lives in Los Angeles, California. He has a B.A. in English Literature from California State University Long Beach. He is presently working on more novels, novellas, and short-stories.