



SLOW

BULLET

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*For
Meleaha
1 & 2*

"The older I get the younger everyone else looks."

Rick Daily

"For everything gained something is lost."

Anonymous

Part 1
Wrong Hand

1

The sound of Huey Helicopters in the distance meant the beginning. The ironic part was I never felt more alive than when I faced death. I checked my ammo and loaded a full magazine into my M-16. The barrel was cold and damp from a long night of silence. A slow wind brought a lingering smell of garlic that told me Charlie had arrived.

The rising sun silhouetted the hoard of gunships in the morning sky as they fired rockets at enemy positions. The screams of death fueled my basic instincts of survival and a feeling of exhilaration flooded my mind. Better him than me. I heard the dreaded sound of an incoming mortar round that exploded a few feet from me. The concussion of the blast knocked me down. I checked all my body parts. I didn't see

any blood, but my ears wouldn't stop ringing. I put my hands over my ears and the ringing still wouldn't stop.

My eyes popped open. I was in bed, the phone ringing. My pulse was racing, my brain speeding through a forty-year corridor from past to present. I switched on a lamp and fumbled on the table for my cell phone. I knocked an open bottle of Jack Daniels off the table and spilled most of it on the floor. I took a deep breath and said, "Hello."

"Colonel, it's Bobby Spicier. Sorry to wake you so early."

"Not a problem. I wasn't sleeping good anyway. How's my godson?"

"I have bad news...my mom and dad are dead," he said, his voice cracking.

I was wide awake now. "What happened, a car wreck?"

"No. The D.C. police called about 1:30 this morning. A neighbor found them sometime after 10 last night. Said it looked like dad shot mom then turned the gun on himself. That's crazy, he would never do that."

My mind instantly traveled back in time. My "A-Team" was dropped into a firefight by helicopter on a bloody hill in Vietnam. I was hit, blood gushing from my leg, Charlie closing in for the kill when Captain Robert Spicier charged up the hill, guns blazing. He lifted me on his back and outran Charlie to our lines, firing an M-16 over his shoulder to slow them down. He never got a scratch.

"Colonel, you still there?"

"Yes, Bobby, I'm here. I was thinking about your dad. Did they find a note?"

"Nothing, there was nothing. You think it had anything to do with the company?"

"Could be. Anything's possible when you work for the CIA. How's your sister taking this?"

"Don't know, I haven't been able to locate her. She may have seen it on the news. Last I heard she had joined the Army and was in Iraq. She never bothered to tell us what unit

she was in. She hurt mom and dad bad. They had a daughter in the war and didn't know where. That boyfriend of hers was over there. I think that's why she joined. I haven't talked to her in over a year."

"That's too bad. I'll see if I can find her."

"Thanks, Colonel. Can you come to Washington and help me sort this out?"

"I'll see when I can get a flight."

"I don't want to stay at the house," he said. "I'll rent us a motel room. Call my cell when you get there."

"See you in Washington," I said.

I got up and walked stiff-legged to the bathroom. The natural effects of a man soon to be eligible for Social Security made it harder to get everything working like it used to. I looked in the mirror and saw what was left of Clark McKay, a once-proud man.

I looked like shit. I needed a haircut and had a four-day-old beard. My eyes looked like a lightning storm and my hands were shaking.

I got dressed, cleaned up the best I could, packed a bag and booked a flight to Washington. I wasn't the man I used to be, or even the one I pretended to be, but I owed it to myself as well as Robert to try to find the courage to make one last run. I knew he would do it for me.

I was good at killing people, but finding a killer was a different story. It might be more than I could handle.

I picked up the whiskey bottle, shook it, turned it up and drank the last drop. I realized what I was doing and threw it against the wall, bursting it into a thousand pieces. I stared at the man in the mirror, looking for a sign of the old me but didn't see one. I wiped a tear from my eyes.

This was going to be hard.