

# *Karma*

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# One

## 1.

“JJ, I DIDN’T COME to visit, only to witness you travelling solo through the galaxy. I wonder where those pearly whites I’m accustomed to have hidden?” Anna points toward her own smile, forcing a mirrored grin.

Again, a full diaphragm sigh starts as JJ says, “Anna, I want to share a scary story. But I can’t unless I have an idea how you’ll react.”

“So sad for such a beautiful woman. You can tell me anything your precious little heart desires. Besides, you’ll always be a hero to me.” Anna adjusts to the chair edge for comfort while soft hands trap JJ’s.

Although JJ is older, she and Anna are sisters who should have been born within minutes of one another. Twins arriving three years apart, they share everything. The Shore siblings, ironically, lost both parents offshore when the sailboat they were in sank. A Pacific Ocean rogue wave sent them to the bottom before the occupants knew what happened.

The main distinguishing trait between the sisters, JJ loves a magnificent piece of marinated flesh or a burger that requires a handful of napkins. While grow-

ing up, Anna refused to sit at the same table as anyone eating meat. Since the deaths of their parents, Anna has accepted the circle of life and ignores the cheek full moans from her sister.

They come as a package of two; each having built brick walls, reinforced with steel plates. Strangers trying to connect with one must dismantle both sisters' barriers. Today, their individual constructions will get tested.

“Alright, but I haven't been this scared since Dad's coma.” Eyes drip, while a slight heaving bounces the flow of tears. A slide gives JJ a view of storm clouds as they rally for attack.

“Again, with the dramatics. It's okay, JJ. Calm, deep breaths, then start with the little things? Besides, he died years ago. And you remember his favorite quote, right?”

Sniffles continue with uneven breaths. Tissues act as thirsty dogs playing in water while soaking up fluids. “I know; twenty seconds of courage is all it takes to change the world.”

A glance at an imaginary watch draws smiles as Anna says, “Tell me anything. I'm here to help you get through whatever bothers you.”

Deep, pulsed breaths consume the twenty seconds. Then JJ whispers, “Hmm—I need your help to get revenge for a secret I've been keeping.”

Clouds rumble with periodic cracks in the aftermath of JJ's admission. The skies are ready to let loose what they hold back, as the secret-baring sister comes clean.