

## A GOLD SATIN MURDER

By Debra Purdy Kong

### SEVEN

Casey pulled into MPT's parking lot as Marie stepped out of her SUV. Sporting sunglasses, shorts, and a baggy T-shirt, she schlepped toward the entrance in flip-flops.

Grinning, Casey jogged up to her. "Aloha, Marie! Didn't expect to see you this morning."

Marie stopped and turned around. "Timesheet's due and I have to finish an incident report I was supposed to hand in yesterday. Why are you here?"

"Tons of paperwork."

Marie could have completed her timesheet and report at home. Had her kids been giving her a hard time about the hangover?

"You look pale." Casey followed her into the admin building, noting that Marie kept the shades on. "Maybe you need a Hawaiian vacation."

Marie spun around. "Zip it!"

She grinned. "So, you remember last night?"

"It was a dumb mistake, that's all. Not worth talking about."

"Okay, but just one question. Did you hear Brian or anyone mention drugs or the name Eduardo?"

Marie huffed. "I was a little preoccupied, Casey."

"*Preoccupied?*" Casey smirked. "Is that your Scrabble word for horny?"

"Stop!" She raised her palm. "You and I will never speak of this again, understand?"

"Come on, Marie, how would you react if I were in your shoes?"

Marie glanced around the parking lot. "Whatever." Her shoulders slumped. "By the way, I lost one of my earrings last night. It's a gold hoop about the size of a dime. Don't suppose you found it in your car?"

"No, but I'll have a look."

"Thanks. It's only gold-plated, but the earrings were a birthday present from the kids."

"If it's not in my car, it could be between the dumpsters in the alley or inside the venue."

"Oh, hell."

"I might have to go back there 'cause I need to talk to your Hawaiian. Got a coconut bra you can dust off in case you want another tour?"

Marie whipped off her sunglasses. "Keep pushing it and I won't give you something useful."

"Such as?"

"Promise you won't blab about what happened last night?"

"I have no intention of telling staff, although Lou knows."

"At least he's not a gossip." Marie removed a business card from her handbag. "I found this in my bra when I got home. I have no idea how it got there." She shuddered. "I mean, it's like his ginormous hands were everywhere at once."

Casey read the name Brian Kalolo, along with an email and phone number. She didn't look forward to talking with the sleazeball. For all she knew, Hawaiian Brian could be part of a

conspiracy to frame Eduardo, given that he wanted to be a headliner. No one connected to Man Cave could be ruled out, especially not Alden, or even RJ. Who knew what Eduardo might have inadvertently seen, heard, or done to threaten their interests? Casey dropped the card in her purse.

“What do you want to talk to Brian about?” Marie asked. “Not me, I hope.”

“No, and you probably don’t want to involve yourself in his business.”

“Damn right.” Marie trudged to the women’s locker room.

Casey headed upstairs to the security department and immersed herself in paperwork until Stan appeared.

“Okay, you two, I need your timesheets within the hour.” He turned to Marie. “What happened to you?”

Slouched in her chair, Marie slurped her coffee. “Late night,” she mumbled.

“Uh-huh.” He turned back to Casey. “What did you end up doing with the suspect’s phone?”

“I took it to lost-and-found.” Casey handed Stan her timesheet. “Eduardo’s been released and is picking it up later today.”

Stan peered at her. “You won’t discuss the murder with him, will you?”

“What’s this about a murder?” Marie perked up. “And who’s Eduardo?”

Great. The biggest blabbermouth at MPT wanted the scoop, and she wouldn’t let this go until she had answers. Casey’s look-what-you’ve-done stare at Stan sent him scurrying to his office. She turned and updated Marie, leaving out any reference to Lily.

“So, that’s why we went to the show. You were on a fact-finding mission, and now you want to talk to the Hawaiian.” Marie’s face grew pale. “Wait. Is he a suspect?”

“Maybe.”

Marie bent over and smacked her forehead on the desk. “I hate my life.”

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