



Jaclyn's Ghost

Ghosts, Mystery, and Fashion
Can this diva solve her own murder?
Or will she stay in limbo forever...

Dorlana Vann

Jaclyn's Ghost

Dorlana Vann



Pixie Punk Press

Chapter 1

Another One Bites the Dust

Jaclyn Jade felt the sensation of a trillion tiny needles prickling just beneath the surface of her skin. She opened her eyes to darkness. “Why am I standing on my bed?” Gradually, the tingling faded, but the overwhelming contentment made it difficult for her to shake the suspicion that something was terribly different. She squinted and blinked her eyes as she searched her bedroom for answers.

The room seemed normal. Even the earliest of the morning brought an orange glow through her sheer curtains; obviously, she had woken up in the middle of night. Jaclyn’s scan stopped abruptly when she spotted an unfamiliar six-foot silhouette in the shape of a man. It moved, causing an involuntary shriek to burst out of her mouth. As she attempted to run, she stumbled over a huge lump in her bed and fell, face first, onto the floor. She recovered to her feet in a flash, turned to see what she had tripped over, and then dashed out the door.

She stopped in the hallway, right outside the bedroom door, already doubting what she had seen. No one followed her out. “Stupid.” After a moment, she put her hand on her chest trying to regain her composure. *Oh man, I slept in my party dress.* “Keten’s going to kill me.”

“I didn’t mean to scare you.”

Jaclyn looked up to see a man standing right across from her. She sucked in a deep breath and responded appropriately with another piercing scream and ran back into her room.

“I know you’re confused,” the man said from behind her. “If you will give me a moment, I can explain everything.”

She looked for something to use as a weapon. “If you don’t get the hell out of my house this instant,” she cried and turned around, “you’ll be explaining everything to the police.”

The intruder stood in the doorway, his face covered by the shadow of his hat.

If I can just get over to the table by the bed, I can get my phone. However, as soon as her focus drifted toward the bed, the heap that had caused her to trip earlier grabbed her attention. *Is someone under there?*

“What’s the last thing you remember?” the man asked from the doorway. “Give yourself a moment. It’ll come back to you.”

She had to force herself to concentrate. Frustration and fear made it difficult for her to rummage through her memory. *I feel so strange.* “Why can’t I remember anything?”

All of a sudden, as if someone had smacked them into the back of her head, her memories of the night before emerged. “The party,” she blurted. “That’s it, the champagne.” She nodded her head in satisfied realization. “I just partied a little more than I should have. Keten must have brought me home and just stayed over. He does that all the time. I must have been sleepwalking and caught you in the middle of, who knows what. I suggest you disappear before I wake up my boyfriend and he—”

“Pretty shoes,” the man said and nodded toward the bed.

“Excuse me?”

“I say, your boyfriend sure has pretty shoes.”

Jaclyn stared at the foot that stuck out from under the blankets. When she recognized the shoe, she looked down at her own feet. She wore the same exact pair of pink, pointy-toed sling-backs. Not Keten. *Did a friend, who was wearing the same exact shoes, come home with me?* She would have noticed that before. She would have remembered shoe duplicity.

“OK,” she said. “That’s it. I’ve got to get this over with.” She took a small step toward the bed. “Poor bunny, are you sure you want to go over there?”

Jaclyn stared at the stranger. Nothing made sense. He wore a black jacket over a double-breasted vest and dress pants. Clearly it had been bought off the rack, but still, it was a bit much for a burglar. She also wondered why he hadn’t left when he had the chance. If he wanted to hurt her, why hadn’t he even tried? The way he leaned against the doorframe, his arms crossed, he almost seemed to be amused by her chaos. “Did someone hire you to pull a prank on me? Is that it? Are you an actor? Just tell me what’s going on and who’s in that bed, and maybe I’ll tell the cops to go easy on you.”

“If that’s truly what you want.” He held up his hands and took a couple of steps inside the room.

“Now you’re starting to piss me off. Just tell me who is in my bed!”

He grinned. “It’s you. Well, the former you. You see, now you’re you, and that’s just a body.”

The man stood a handshake away. Jaclyn tried to ignore the hazy luster around him—too much to think about at that moment—but she couldn’t disregard his attractive face, his square jaw, and his deep black eyes, which at that moment seemed insanely sincere. “Oh... my... goodness.”

“I know... it’s really crazy.”

“No. You’re psychotic.” Without giving herself another chance to chicken out, Jaclyn marched over to her bed and tossed back the bedspread.

Her mouth fell open as she took a step back. *It’s just a trick. It’s just someone who looks a lot like me and went to a great deal of trouble to play a joke.* She had the same long dark hair, the same skin tone, the same nose and the same... everything.

Jaclyn decided to wake the imposter and tell her to take her boyfriend and get the hell out of her apartment. But when she reached down to shake the woman, her hand went smooth through the shoulder like it was made of smoke. She jerked her hand back immediately and took an apprehensive breath.

“It’s screwy seeing yourself like that.” She heard the man say.

She stood there, examining her body in the bed as a calm embraced her. “Why am I not freaking out? Shouldn’t I be upset, screaming, and freaking out?”

“When you die, the psychological need for your physical body ends. You instinctively know that you don’t need that body anymore.”

“I look really pitiful,” she said. “What happened? I’m not sick or anything.”

She looked around to see if she noticed any hints as to what took place. She eyed the phone, close enough now that she could grab it and call someone if she wanted, and laughed to herself. Who? What could she say? She noticed a container of pills and a bottle of champagne beside the phone on the nightstand. She tried to pick up the pills. Yet again, her hand had no substance and went through the bottle. “Ahh, this is driving me crazy. Can you pick those up?”

The man stared at her blankly, and then a small, concerned expression seemed to grow across his face. “What?”

“Something’s wrong with me. Would you mind?” She moved out of the man’s way so he could get to the table. He inched his hand really close to the bottle and then snatched it back again.

“Oh, just forget it,” she said.

“I’ll get it.” He grabbed the bottle and studied it, turning it one way and then the other.

“Well? Does it say what they are?”

“No. There’s no marking of any kind. The torpedo must have left them. I apologize. By the

time I arrived—”

“Torpedo?”

“Hit man, assassin, hired gun... torpedo.”

“Hit man? That’s ridiculous. I’ve accepted every ludicrous thing you’ve said so far, but now you’re actually trying to tell me... what? That I was murdered?”

“You must have your share of enemies.” The man nodded as he looked down at the body in the bed.

Jaclyn stared at the man, not believing his gall. “Wait... who are you, and why are you in my house?”

“The name is Logan Smith.”

“OK... and why are you here?”

“I live here.” Logan crossed his arms as he leaned back against the wall. An arrogant smile appeared on his lips as well as in his eyes. “Just your friendly resident ghost.”

“As in boo?”

“I suppose.”

She ran her hands through her hair and exhaled in defeat. “Well, that would explain your glow.”

He shrugged his shoulders.

“Does that mean I’m a ghost, too?” Jaclyn looked down at her hands. “I look the same.”

“But you’re not.”

Jaclyn thought about it for a moment. *OK... I’m a ghost.* This warranted sitting down, but when she went to sit on the edge of the bed, she fell through to the floor. She just stayed there with her head poking up through the mattress. She crossed her legs under the poof of her cream-colored gown and sighed as she considered her demise. “You’re wrong,” Jaclyn finally said. “I don’t have any enemies. At least not ones who would want to *kill* me.”

Logan sat on the bed. “Then, it’s a mystery.”

Jaclyn glared at him. “How did you do that? How come you can sit on the bed?”

“There are things you’ll have to—”

“And where the hell is my light... and tunnel and stairway to Heaven?”

“It’s complicated,” Logan said. “Well... not really. Some people go straight to Heaven and others, for some reason or another, are rejected.”

She stood up and faced him. “Rejected? You’re telling me I didn’t make it into Heaven. What then? You can’t seriously be saying I’m going to—”

“Hello,” a man’s voice spoke from behind her.

Jaclyn shook her head and turned around. *What now?* She had her hands on her hips, ready for combat, but was ambushed by the new man’s appearance. His beauty rivaled Logan’s masculinity. *What is this? An audition for a Calvin Klein ad?* She opened her mouth to protest his intrusion, but her voice turned out to be just as flabbergasted.

“Give her a break,” Logan said. “She just bit the dust.” He stepped beside Jaclyn and then gestured to the new arrival. “May I introduce Charles Charles.”

“Charles Charles?” Jaclyn said, coming out of her trance.

“I’m taking her now,” the man said.

“Taking me? Taking me where?” Panic caught in her throat. She had just found out about this rejection thing and needed more time to process what had happened.

“Exactly where you should be, Butterfly... Hell.”

Chapter 2

Life is Hell

At twenty-five years old, Jaclyn stood at the pinnacle of the modeling world, but in order to get there, she hadn't exactly followed the rules or even acknowledged there were any. No, Jaclyn could never delude herself into thinking she was the most virtuous person in the world, but HELL? "Tell him, Logan; tell him I'm not *Hell* bad."

Logan shrugged his shoulders. "I really don't know you that well."

"Come on. You can't be serious. You're not going to let the devil just take me. Are you?"

"I'm not him," Charles Charles said.

"Well, if you ask me..." Logan said.

The new man, Charles Charles, examined Jaclyn from head to toe. "I'm not the devil," he said, with a seemingly forced smile. "I'm only a messenger."

"For the devil?" Jaclyn asked.

Logan said, "Took his time getting here. I don't think he can make you go to Hell, Jaclyn. Looks to me like you get a choice. Am I right Charles Charles? Either that or he's falling down on his job."

She looked from one man to the other feeling completely confused. They had to be joking. "Who would choose to go to Hell?"

"We will discuss it in my office," Charles Charles said.

"Remember, don't sign anything until..." Logan said, but Jaclyn could no longer see him. Her bedroom had turned into frantic textures and psychedelic beams of color. Tortured souls cried out in pain as brutal flames burst at her feet. Charles Charles had his back to her at first, but as he turned, she screamed at the sight of his eyebrows and eyes sliding down his face.

"Think about something else," Charles Charles said with calm clarity, even though his lips hung from his chin by a thread.

Jaclyn touched her own face and felt no flesh, only hard skeletal bone. She heard Charles Charles talking, "This is all in your imagination. Think of something else."

My imagination? She wondered how such images could live in her head. *Something else.* The erratic colors started to take shape and fuse together. She could make out the normal sounds of people and music. Bright lights blinded her for a second, and then a tall skinny girl pushed past her. Her hand automatically went to her face, which thankfully felt normal again. She stood at the end of the long, narrow catwalk feeling the loud pop music thump in her chest. The crowd watched from their seats, cameras flashing, aisle after aisle, as far back as she could see. Jaclyn gave a pose with her hands on her hips and then twirled around, ready to make her way backstage to change into her next outfit, when disappointment landed in her lap again. Charles Charles sat in the front row.

"I'm not really here, am I?" she said.

He shook his head as the music began to fade into the background. "It's an illusion, just like Hell. We are actually in my office."

"You told me to think of something different, so I did. I thought about my job."

"It's a step up. Nevertheless, we do have some business."

"Well, don't get all uppity," she said. "Help me out here; it's been a very long night."

"Take a breath, such as it is, clear your mind, and close your eyes again."

A second after she closed her eyes, the music and the noise from the crowd were gone.

“Butterfly,” Charles Charles said, “open your eyes.”

Even though his voice was soothing, it was not what Jaclyn wanted to hear. She wanted to hear the birds outside her window and the gurgling of brewing coffee in her automatic coffee maker. She would then call Keten to tell him about her ridiculous dream. They would laugh, and she would swear off alcohol for the hundredth time.

When Jaclyn opened her eyes, she realized she stood on top of a desk. Charles Charles sat in a brown leather office chair with his hands clasped together in front of him. When he looked up at her, he said, “Please come down from there.”

Jaclyn had some difficulty maneuvering off the desk since she wore heels and a long dress, but finally she stood on the floor and took a look around. The fact that there were no windows or doors, only four bare white walls, seemed odd. But, other than that, it seemed like an ordinary office with a lamp, a bookshelf, and another chair that Charles Charles pointed at.

“You may take your seat.” He reached in the top drawer of the desk and took out a piece of paper and a pen. “I promise. Everything is going to be fine. Just relax.”

Relax. That’s easy for him to say. She had just died, seen a ghost, found out she was a ghost, gone to Hell...

“I think I have everything in order. Now if you would just sign here.” He pushed the piece of paper to the front of his desk and then laid the pen on top of it.

“What’s this?” she asked. She went to sit down but remembered earlier. She decided to stand instead of risk the chance of further humiliating herself.

“Normal procedure. Sign, and then I’ll explain.”

“I want the explanation first, and then I will read the paper and decide if I want to sign.”

Charles Charles sat back as casually as seemed possible for him. He looked at Jaclyn with building impatience and exhaled loudly to indicate that very point. He stood up and walked to the front of his desk, close enough to Jaclyn that she could smell his sweet scent. “First of all, I need you to clear your mind of everything you have ever heard about Hell. Hell is not in the middle of the earth, nor is Hell a fire burning for all eternity. Life on Earth is Hell. When you are condemned to Hell, you’re condemned to Earth and to life... not to death.

“You start over and try again and again and again. It is all one massive continuous circle until you make it into Heaven. You, for example, have been in 223 different bodies.”

“No way,” Jaclyn said. “Out of 200 something times, I haven’t been a good enough person to get into Heaven? Wait, does that mean we’ve met before?”

“Yes, we’ve spoken many times, but you didn’t have any choices. You stopped in, I gave a short explanation, and then back you went. But this time, you are what we call an Open-Spirit, which gives you three options. Let me start with the most obvious, uncomplicated, and intelligent choice. Just sign this contract, and go back to Hell.” He pointed at the paper and pen on his desk.

“I suppose I won’t remember any of this, or who I am now, or anything about my life.”

“Do you miss being the notorious Black Chin Billy?”

“Who?”

“See, it doesn’t matter. But the pleasant news is that some of the lessons you learned along the way go with you. You may not realize the reason you don’t kill the mailman when he doesn’t deliver the mail on time is because you served 25 years and went to Hell for it, but you do know that it is wrong. The important thing is that you learned from your mistakes, and you won’t make them again. Who you *were* doesn’t matter anymore.”

“I understand, I guess, but I would still like to know what my other options are.”

“You can remain a spirit. You will see Hell, but you won’t be able to participate.”

“You’re saying that I can choose to stay a ghost.”

“Yes. However, every ghost has a predetermined area of existence. Your area is the apartment building you lived in. It will be like prison, and you will be just a spectator.”

Jaclyn blew air out of her closed lips. “To me, that sounds like Hell.”

“Then it’s settled,” Charles Charles said. He walked back behind his desk and opened the top drawer. He pulled out a manila file folder.

“That was only two options.” She began to pace around the small office. “You told me there were three. What’s the third?”

He said, “You have to find out the reason you did not make it into Heaven. You were intimately close this time, but alas, something was inaccurate. It could be a technicality, something so tiny you will never know. Why put yourself through all that? Let’s have a look at the families we have available at this time.” He opened the folder. “Here’s a lovely family in Virginia, expecting a girl, a very pretty girl. You won’t be rich, or have ambitions to be, but you will get to live a long and happy life.”

She stopped walking and stared at the blank white wall in front of her. “All I have to do is figure out why I didn’t make it into Heaven this time.”

“I don’t know many Open-Spirits that have made it into Heaven. Do you know how many ghosts roam the middle ground? I tried to tell them, but does anybody listen to me? And now they will be ghosts forever.”

She turned to face him again. “They stopped looking for the reason?”

“Some gave up, some decided to settle on being ghosts, some are Spectre, and some ran out of time.”

“There’s a time limit to get into Hell?” Jaclyn said. Now she had heard everything. Oops, too late to go to Hell.

“And into Heaven,” he said, his voice not as gentle as it had been, and his insanely smooth features were actually beginning to crease.

“What did you mean awhile ago when you said some are Spectre?” Jaclyn said.

“Spectres are people who were supposed to have been sent straight to Hell but were missed. They are not important. What is important is that you sign this paper. I’m positive one more trip to mortality and you’ll be at the gates next time instead of in my office.”

Jaclyn stepped up to the desk, and for the first time since she had been in the office looked at the white sheet of paper. She felt a little disappointed in herself. She started thinking about Logan and what he had said right before she left with Charles Charles. “Why would Logan encourage me not to agree to anything?” she said.

“He’s been by himself for a very long time. Loneliness craves attention.”

“I guess.” *I don’t know what to do.* “Can I have some time to think about all of this?”

“If you leave this office without signing, you no longer get to choose who you will be on earth. Your identity will be randomly picked. Even this offer is only open for twenty-four hours. After that, I can’t help you. You will either remain a ghost for all eternity, or—unlikely—make it into Heaven.”

“What is the time limit for Heaven?” Jaclyn asked. “How long do I have to try and make it to there?”

“After the first twenty-four hours, you will be offered your last opportunity to go to Hell. If you refuse, you will be given another twenty-four hours to strive for Heaven.”

“Two days to find out what I did wrong my whole life.”

“If you miss that deadline, you stay in middle ground forever. Like everything, there are undisclosed rules and more regulations and a lot of things I can’t tell you.”

“That’s not fair.”

“That’s the first rule,” Charles Charles said. “You have to figure things out for yourself. Do you still want to take your chances, or are you ready to sign and get started with your new life?”

Chapter 3

Peeping Tom Ghost

-24 hours-

After Jaclyn decided to wait to sign the contract, she reappeared right back where she started, but she didn't receive the reaction from Logan she had expected. He stood with his back against the bedroom door, his arms crossed, and his black felt hat once again the focal point of his face. "What are you doing here?" the first thing he said. "Why would you pass up a golden opportunity like hand picking your family?"

Immediately, nauseating regret swept over Jaclyn. "I can't believe what you're saying. You're the one who told me I didn't have to agree to anything."

"Your choice, not mine."

"Excuse me?" Jaclyn may have been a little disoriented in the beginning, but now that she had been dead for a while, her head had become hers again. And it was clear that this guy was playing games with her. "I based my entire future on what you said. And what you said was not to agree to anything. So I didn't, but now you're telling me something entirely different. You should have said, 'take the offer,' or something."

"This isn't my fault, so don't blame your decision on me."

"Uuh!" Jaclyn screamed. "Are you insane? Every bit of this is your fault, and you are going to help me fix it!"

"Is that right?" He looked her in the eyes for the first time since she arrived back.

Where his words were poignant and sharp, his eyes told a different story. They captivated her, holding her attention with tender compassion. She quickly looked away so he wouldn't see that he had affected her. "Yes," she whispered with a softness she could have kicked herself for. She closed her eyes as she turned from him, her clear head, once again, becoming clouded with confusion.

When she reopened her eyes she faced a blank wall where her bed should have been. "Isn't this my apartment?"

"Yes, but Mr. Carta moved in last week," Logan said, as he walked over and put his hand on the hideous black metal bed frame that had replaced her antique dresser and canopy bed.

Upon further inspection, Jaclyn also noticed that the white walls were repainted hunter green, and her Tiffany lamp had been replaced with a silver desk lamp. *Moved in? How could that be? I didn't even move out.*

Jaclyn ran out of her room and down the small hallway to the living room. Sure enough, everything had been changed. Her elegant furniture and professionally decorated living area had been turned into a house full of rummage sale items. Nothing left of her.

"You've been away for six weeks," she heard Logan say from behind her. "Time here and time there are different."

"But Charles Charles told me I only have twenty-four hours before I have to decide if I'm going to Hell. Is it over?"

"Calm down, your clock started as soon as you arrived back. But you have already wasted about, oh, thirty minutes whining and complaining."

"You're right. I have wasted enough time talking to you." She gave a throat growl and then turned and stomped back down the hall. Since she really had no destination, she felt a bit relieved when she heard Logan on her heels.

“Wait, you’re right,” he said, with mock sincerity. “I apologize for letting you know you had a choice. I should have just let you go to Hell.”

She stopped abruptly and turned to face him. “What are you doing in my apartment anyway? Have you been waiting for me for six weeks?”

“Hardly. You just happen to arrive during my rounds; five, four, three...”

“What are you doing?”

He continued, “...two, one.”

The sound of keys rattling outside the front door of the apartment, followed by the jiggling handle, gave way to the opening of the door. “I’ll show you,” Logan said and then motioned with his head for her to follow him. “Come on.”

“Fine. Whatever.” She walked behind him to the living room.

A heavyset man with thinning, white hair walked into the dining room, stopping in the small kitchen.

“Who does that guy think he is, just walking into my house?” Jaclyn asked.

Logan said, “That’s the new resident, Mr. Carta, of course. He’s very predictable. Watch. First, he’ll go to the refrigerator and grab a beer.” The man did exactly as Logan had said. “And then he’ll come back in here and turn on the television.” Mr. Carta sat down in a brown, leather recliner, grabbed a remote control off the arm of the chair, and changed the channels until he seemed satisfied with a news show. “And then he’ll open his beer.” He did.

“How did you know what...” she stopped at her realization of the obvious. “You are just a disgusting Peeping Tom.”

“I am not.”

“Gross. I bet you watched me, too. Didn’t you? You’re sick and repulsive!” She walked back down the hall again, not believing she could have been so wrong about the guy.

“It’s not like that,” he said as he followed her.

“Yeah, right.” She had turned her head to talk, but when she whirled back around she realized she had walked straight through the wall and into another apartment. She stood still for a moment, allowing time for her head to catch up with the pain that was guaranteed to occur after someone walked through a solid object. But none came. *I’m a ghost*, she reminded herself with a slight grin. However, something else startled her. She heard someone talking behind her.

“I did the job, and I expect to be paid for it,” a man talking on a cell phone said. “No one suspects you or even knows that this was an assignment, but that can change if I don’t see my money at the drop by noon.”

“I’m not a pervert, if that’s what you’re thinking,” Logan said, as he followed Jaclyn through the wall.

“Shhh,” she said without looking at him.

“What?” Logan whispered. “It’s not as if he can hear us.”

“Shhh,” she said again, but this time she had her index finger up to her mouth.

“No, by noon, or I’ll make an anonymous call to the police about a pretty little brunette.” The man hung up the phone and placed it in his inside coat pocket. After that, he walked to the back of the apartment.

“Oh yes, your torpedo,” Logan said.

When Jaclyn went to sit on the only chair in the entire barren room, she fell through to the floor. It didn’t hurt, but it served as another reminder of everything that had happened. She felt like crying but didn’t know if ghosts could even cry. “I’m really dead,” she said. “Someone actually hired some jerk to murder me. I should just go to Hell and take whatever Charles

Charles will give me and not even try to get into Heaven. Maybe since it hasn't been that long, I could have another chance at that family he talked about. They seem nice. And if not, I'll just take whatever. I won't remember anyway."

"Sister, Logan said, "was I wrong about you. I thought you had courage."

"Most of the time I do," she whined. "It's just that I feel so absolutely alone."

"But you're not alone."

Jaclyn stared up at him as she clumsily stood up, her heels and long dress not working together as a team. "Oh no, you don't," she hissed. She wasn't going to let him entice her into his deceptive games again. "You? Maybe I would be better off being by myself than with Casper the Peeping Ghost."

"Would you stop calling me that? Look, I like to watch the television. I just go to people's apartments when they're going to turn on one of my shows. That's all. So if someone regularly watches, say, the news like Mr. Carta, at a certain time each day, I make sure I'm there. Sometimes I happen to notice their habits. It's inevitable."

"You've never spied on me when it was inappropriate?"

"I may be a ghost, but I do have morals," Logan said and sounded quiet offended.

"Fine," Jaclyn said, "maybe I misjudged you... a little, but it still doesn't account for how nasty you've been to me since I got back. I mean, I trusted you when you told me not to agree to anything Charles Charles said. Why would you do that if you knew it was my only hope?"

"I didn't think you'd actually listen to me," he whispered and removed his hat to run his fingers through his head full of brown hair.

The absolute annoyance Jaclyn had felt earlier turned into just a tired and weary mood. She would have done anything to just forget about Hell and death for thirty minutes while she took a hot bubble bath. "I blew it, didn't I? The most important decision of my two hundred lives, and I screwed up."

"We can figure this out." Logan had an amiable expression on his face that included a slender smile.

Jaclyn tried to read his eyes for signs of deception. "Do you really think so?" she whispered reluctantly.

"Sure," he said. "So the first thing we need to consider is if it'll be cash or check?"

Jaclyn put her hands on her hips as new annoyance began to take hold. "You want me to *pay* you to help me?"

"So to speak. Shall we kiss on the deal now or later?"

"You've got to be kidding. I should have known that this would come up. You are just like all the rest of—"

"Take it easy." He smiled a devilish grin out the corner of his mouth. "I'm just playing around. What do you say? Shall we start over?"

Jaclyn wanted to strangle him. This dead man was the same as any living man she had ever known; none of them had any sense of timing. She tapped her foot on the floor, still not clear on what to think about the insanely handsome, yet infuriating, ghost. "Fine. I didn't mean to snap, it's just that... well." She shook her head. "What do we do? If I'm going to actually try and figure this out, we need a plan." She began to pace. "I guess the first thing we need to do is find out who wanted me dead. If someone hated me that much, then what I did to them could possibly be the reason... right?"

"Sounds rational. Let's think about this. Don't get all bent out of shape, but the obvious question is, do you have any enemies?"

“I suppose it’s possible that I’ve *maybe* made a couple of people angry. I am in a very competitive business, you know. I’ve had to step on a couple of toes, but they’ve been attached to mostly ugly models who don’t know how to dial the phone, much less pay for a professional hit.” She put her hand over her open mouth, and then moved it away as she smiled widely. “I can’t believe the answer has been right in front of my face, and I didn’t notice it. I know the reason I’m still here... I’m a selfish and snotty bitch.”

Logan cleared his throat and wore an appalling, patronizing grin as he said, “As true as I’m sure that is, that’s not it.”

“I don’t see why not. How would you know, anyway?”

“Do you see a bright light? Are the Heavens opening up and welcoming you home?”

She shrugged her shoulders.

“Besides,” he said, “I really don’t think you’ll be able to redeem yourself that easily. You can’t just proclaim a fact or a part of your personality.”

“Wait, Charles Charles didn’t say anything about redeeming myself. He only said I had to find the reason *why* I didn’t make it into Heaven.”

“That’s Charles Charles for you,” he said as he sat down on the chair Jaclyn had tried to sit in before. “He’s a vague type of fellow.”

Jaclyn glared at Logan, who seemed so confident and comfortable in the chair. She put her hands on her hips. “This is getting silly. How did you just sit down?”

“It’s easy. I can do lots of things,” Logan said and moved his eyebrows up and down in a suggestive manner.

She overlooked his playfulness; it only proved that he had nothing to lose. No matter how she examined her situation, she was alone. “Then please share. Show me how to work with my surroundings. At least show me how to sit in a stupid chair.”

“It’s not something you can learn in a couple of seconds. It takes a lot of time and discipline.”

At that moment the hit man walked back into the living room. He didn’t look dangerous to Jaclyn. Just an ordinary man someone probably wouldn’t even notice unless he killed them. And even though Jaclyn knew he couldn’t hear her, she couldn’t help herself. “Hey, you stupid jerk, look at what you did to me.”

Logan smiled. “Now we’re getting somewhere.”

“I need to find out who murdered me, and if this apartment building is as far as I can go, I need this guy to chat. But if you have a better idea, I’m all up for suggestions.”

She followed the man into the kitchen. He opened the refrigerator, completely ignoring her. “You can at least tell me who you were talking to,” she said. “Come on. Who hired you to... give me pills?”

“I do believe you’re on the right track,” Logan said. “But if he can’t hear you, he can’t answer any questions. I say we ask in a way that he’ll be sure to hear, loud and clear.”

Copyright

Pixie Punk Press Houston, TX

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, incidents, and dialogue are drawn from the author's imagination or are used fictitiously and are not to be construed as real. Any resemblance to actual events or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

Jaclyn's Ghost Copyright © 2011 by Dorlana Vann. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced electronically or in print without written permission, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in reviews.

A *Pixie Punk Press* eBook

Houston, TX

www.dorlanavann.com

Buy an eBook copy:

[Kindle](#)

[Nook](#)