

CRISIS SHOT

JANICE CANTORE

PRAISE FOR JANICE CANTORE

“The final volume of Cantore’s Cold Case Justice trilogy wraps the series with a gripping thriller that brings readers into the mind of a police officer involved in a fatal shooting case. . . . Cantore offers true-to-life stories that are relevant to today’s news.”

LIBRARY JOURNAL on *Catching Heat*

“Cantore manages to balance quick-paced action scenes with developed, introspective characters to keep the story moving along steadily. The issue of faith arises naturally, growing out of the characters’ struggles and history. Their romantic relationship is handled with a very light touch . . . but the police action and mystery solving shine.”

PUBLISHERS WEEKLY on *Catching Heat*

“Questions of faith shape the well-woven details, the taut action scenes, and the complex characters in Cantore’s riveting mystery.”

BOOKLIST on *Burning Proof*

“[In] the second book in Cantore’s Cold Case Justice series . . . the romantic tension between Abby and Luke seems to be growing stronger, which creates anticipation for the next installment.”

ROMANTIC TIMES on *Burning Proof*

“This is the start of a smart new series for retired police officer-turned-author Cantore. Interesting procedural details, multi-layered characters, lots of action, and intertwined mysteries offer plenty of appeal.”

BOOKLIST on *Drawing Fire*

“Cantore’s well-drawn characters employ Christian values and spirituality to navigate them through tragedy, challenges, and loss. However, layered upon the underlying basis of faith is a riveting police-crime drama infused with ratcheting suspense and surprising plot twists.”

SHELF AWARENESS on *Drawing Fire*

“*Drawing Fire* rips into the heart of every reader. One dedicated homicide detective. One poignant cold case. One struggle for truth. . . . Or is the pursuit revenge?”

DIANN MILLS, bestselling author of the FBI: Houston series

“This hard-edged and chilling narrative rings with authenticity. . . . Fans of police suspense fiction will be drawn in by her accurate and dramatic portrayal.”

LIBRARY JOURNAL on *Visible Threat*

“Janice Cantore provides an accurate behind-the-scenes view of law enforcement and the challenges associated with solving cases. Through well-written dialogue and effective plot twists, the reader is quickly drawn into a story that sensitively yet realistically deals with a difficult topic.”

CHRISTIAN LIBRARY JOURNAL on *Visible Threat*

“[Cantore’s] characters resonate with an authenticity not routinely found in police dramas. Her knack with words captures Jack’s despair and bitterness and skillfully documents his spiritual journey.”

ROMANTIC TIMES on *Critical Pursuit*

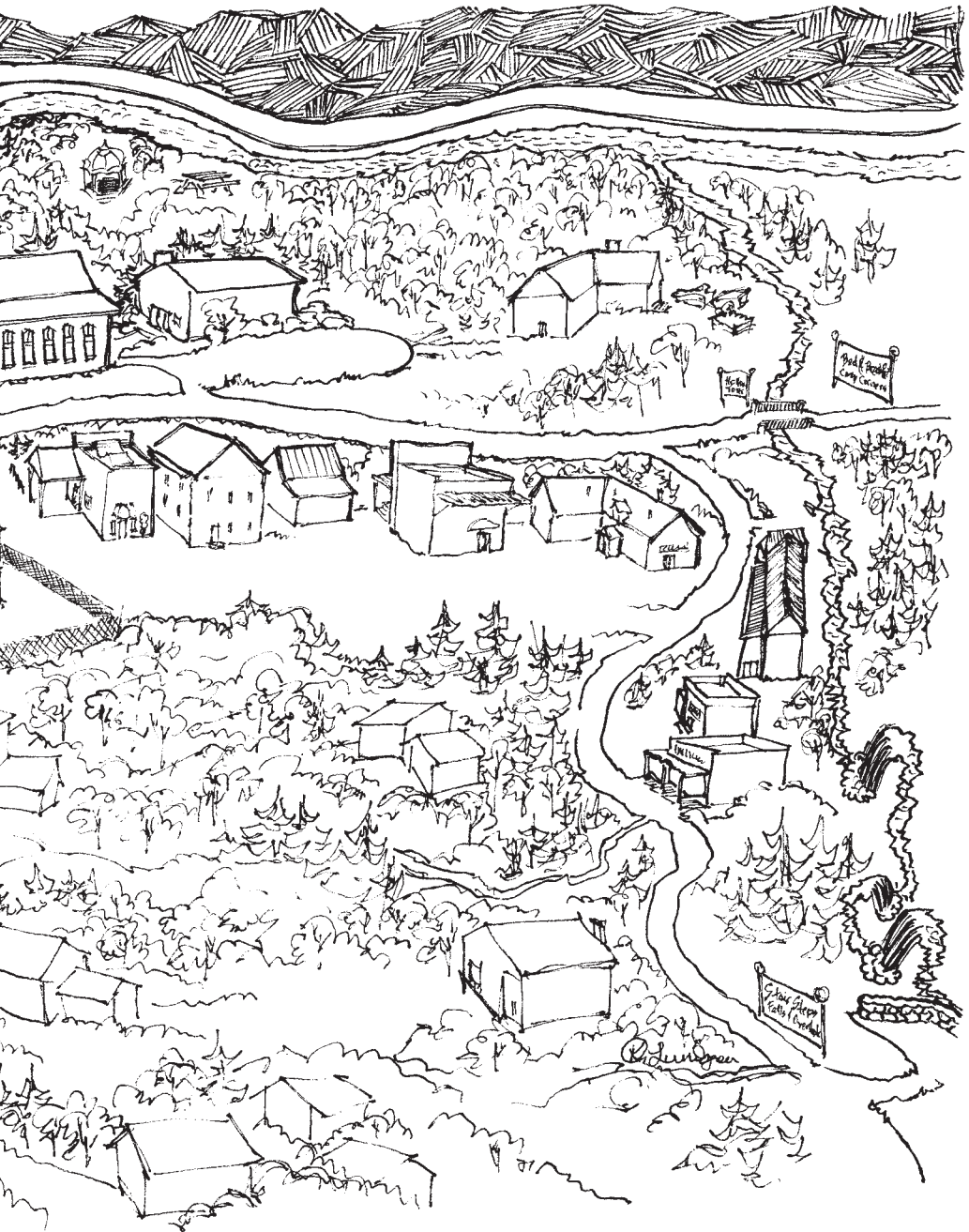
THE LINE OF DUTY SERIES



BOOK ONE

Rogues Hollow





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Crisis Shot is a work of fiction. Where real people, events, establishments, organizations, or locales appear, they are used fictitiously. All other elements of the novel are drawn from the author's imagination.

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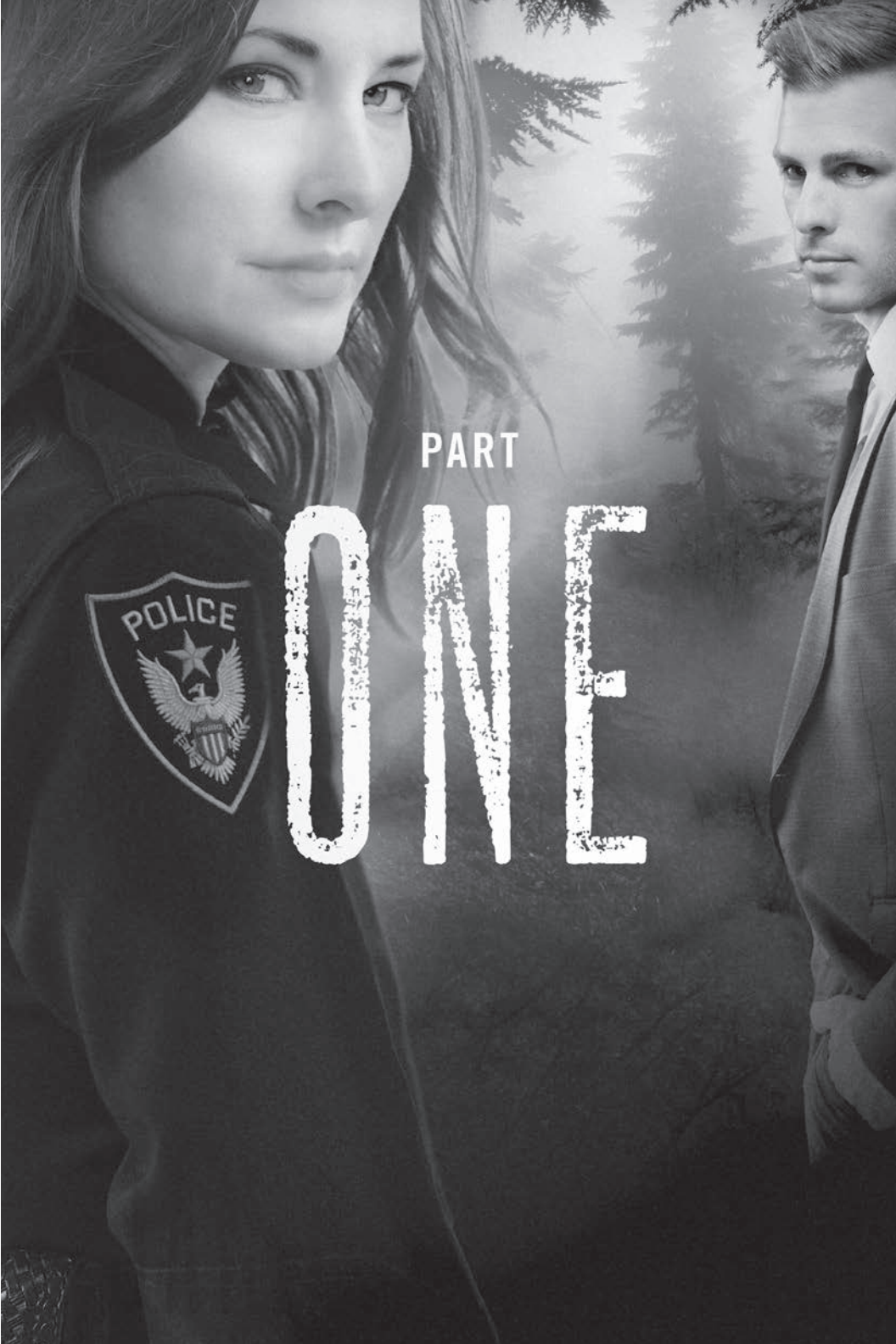
**TO THE MEN AND WOMEN OF LAW ENFORCEMENT,
KEEPING PEOPLE SAFE REGARDLESS.**

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So many people helped me with this book. As a newbie to Oregon, I talked to a lot of people: native Oregonians, newcomers to Oregon, and everything in between. I'd like to thank Idelle Collins, Donna Buck, Steve and Maura Lolandi, Matthew and Ila McAuliffe, Peggy Dover, John Brackett, Don Jacobson, Kristen Parr, Victor and Dianne Eccleston, Alana Fehrenbach, and so many more who have made Oregon, for me, a wonderful place to live and work.

**FOR ALL GOD'S WORDS ARE RIGHT, AND EVERYTHING
HE DOES IS WORTHY OF OUR TRUST.**

PSALM 33:4 (TLB)



PART

ONE

1

LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA FEBRUARY

“999! 999—” *Click.* The voice cut off.

Commander Tess O’Rourke was halfway to the station when the emergency call exploded from the radio. The frantic transmission punched like a physical blow. A triple 9—officer needs help—was only used when an officer was in the direst emergency.

Adrenaline blasted all the cobwebs from Tess’s brain. Dispatch identified the unit as 2-Adam-9, JT Barnes, but had no luck getting the officer back on the air.

She was early, hadn’t been able to sleep. Seven months

since Paul left and she still wasn't used to sleeping alone. After a fitful four-hour nap on the recliner in the living room, she'd given up, showered, and decided to head into work early in predawn darkness, at the same time all hell broke loose.

Tess tried to get on the radio to advise that she was practically on top of the call and would assist, but the click and static of too many units vying for airtime kept her from it. Pressing the accelerator, Tess steered toward Barnes's last known location.

A flashing police light bar illuminating the darkness just off Stearns caught her eye. She turned toward the lights onto a side street, and a jolt of fear bit hard at the sight of a black-and-white stopped in the middle of the street, driver's door open and no officer beside it. It was an area near the college, dense with apartment buildings and condos, cars lining both sides of the street.

She screeched to a stop and jammed her car into park as the dispatcher wrestled to get order back on the air.

Tess keyed her mike. Voice tight, eyes scanning. "Edward-7 is on scene, will advise" was her terse remark to the dispatcher.

She drew her service weapon and bolted from her unmarked car, cold air causing an involuntary inhale. Tess was dressed in a long-sleeved uniform but was acutely aware that she was minus a vest and a handheld radio. As commander of the East Patrol Division in Long Beach, her duties were administrative. Though in uniform, she wore only a belt holster, not a regular patrol Sam Browne. It had been six years since she worked a patrol beat as a sergeant in full uniform.

But one of her officers, a good one, was in trouble, and Tess was not wired to do nothing.

“JT?” she called out, breath hanging in the frigid air as her gaze swept first the area illuminated by yellow streetlights and then the empty car.

The only sounds she heard were the gentle rumble of the patrol car engine and the mechanical clicking of the light bar as it cycled through its flashes.

A spot of white in front of the car caught her eye and she jogged toward it. Illuminated by headlights were field interview cards scattered in front of the patrol unit as if JT had been interviewing someone and was interrupted, dropping the index cards.

Someone took off running.

She followed the line of cards between two parked cars and up on the sidewalk, where the trail ended, and then heard faint voices echoing from the alley behind an apartment building. Sprinting toward the noise across grass wet with dew, she rounded a darkened corner and saw three figures in a semicircle, a fourth kneeling on the ground next to a prone figure.

“Go on, cap him, dawg! Get the gat and cap him!”

Anger, fear, revulsion all swept through her like a gust of a hot Santa Ana wind. Tess instantly assessed what was happening: the black boots and dark wool uniform pants told her Barnes was on the ground.

“Police! Get away from him!” She rushed headlong toward the group, gun raised.

In a flood of cursing, the three standing figures bolted and ran, footfalls echoing in the alley. The fourth, a hoodie

partially obscuring his face, looked her way but didn't stop what he was doing.

He was trying to wrench the gun from Barnes's holster.

Was Barnes dead? The question burned through Tess, hot and frightening.

"Move away! Move away now!" Tess advanced and was ignored.

Sirens sounded loud and Tess knew help was close. But the next instant changed everything. The figure gave up on the gun and threw himself across the prone officer, grabbing for something else. He turned toward Tess and pointed.

She fired.