

Drayden Chronicles

Introduction

What's in that bottle on the dresser? "Health formula." Breast milk? Nipple of deception. The child-proof cap is a clear-tell sign that the evil corporation behind this scheme doesn't see the value behind a strong set of bones. If they knew what was good for them, they'd take the cap away altogether. It would fit in perfectly with their plan to "strengthen" the child labor that probably goes into the construction of a fine-lookin' bottle like that.

See, it was 6:12 a.m. and I was waiting for the call. The one I get every morning, telling me that some poor kid had been shot in the head, some crazy mother had thrown her baby out the car window, some poor soul had jumped off a bridge and plummeted to his death.

The perks of being a "free-lance" Coroner. The only one in town.

I gazed out the 3rd-story window facing a dirty alleyway known for its circles of gambling and prostitution that made the big names in this city filthy rich.
Welcome to the big city, Drayden.

My cell tip-toed a couple inches across my desk because I had left it on vibrate mode. I swung my head round and stared at it for a few seconds. Buzz. Buzz. I wondered who would be on the other line.

I grabbed it, held it in my hands. Maybe if I didn't answer another innocent soul wouldn't have to die. Maybe if I just...held it in my palm for awhile everything would be O.K. Maybe I could quit my job and move to Santa Barbara. Maybe. Or maybe it was time for another cup of coffee. I flicked my wrist, snapping back the phone's receiver.

"Drayden here," I croaked into the phone.

"Mr. Drayden, you don't sound so good," the voice on the other end was tinny and distant. I wanted to tell him about my health formula conspiracy theory, but Coroners aren't supposed to have a sense of humor.

"Maybe I should move to Canada. Free health care. Keep this nasty cough in check. Y'know, other times I wonder if I'd be better off on dialysis. Never get sick. No sickness means I can do my job. I do my job, everyone's happy. Well, except for the dead, of course."

Long pause.

"Mr. Drayden, are you or are you not the only 'freelance coroner' in town?" The man drawled inquiringly.

“Well, if that’s what it says in the phone book, then I guess somebody’s been reading my business cards.”

“So it would seem,” the voice mused. “Mr. Drayden, I don’t mean to be abrupt, but are you aware that a gang of thieves has just taken over a nearby blood bank?”

I paused, wondering if this was some sort of a sick joke.

“Uhh...anybody dead yet...?”

“No Mr. Drayden,” the voice was nearly whispering, “not yet.”

“Then I should advise you to call your local law enforcement officer. You know, in case these guys get frisky and decide to go on a jaunt towards the third street sperm bank. And while you’re at it, you might want to inform the receptionist that I’ll be by on Monday for my weekly donation....not Tuesday. She likes to know when I’ll be popping by.”

“Mr. Drayden, I don’t think you understand what I’m saying. We’ve broken into a blood bank. One that just happens to contain a vile of some very precious O negative.”

The phone nearly slipped out of my hand.

See...sometimes, as a part of my job, I get asked onto some scenes that not even the Crime Scene Investigators will touch. “Too risky,” They tell me. “Especially this side of town.” So, naturally, I tend to see and hear some things that might be considered ‘incriminating evidence’. The kind of shit that will bring you lots of enemies. Bribes, lies and blood don’t mix.

Gotta make a buck.

Someone spilled the beans.

I was in for a long night.

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