

The Collection

A Story Bible

By Jaidyn A. Carlile

A town shrouded by evil that hides in plain sight...

The mysterious paint trail to catch the person responsible for several disappearances of women in the area between the mid 1993 and 2004. As paintings show up around town that depict the locations where bodies have been found detective Joy Anderson and her rookie partner have taken notice and is out to catch the person who committed these heinous crimes. The paintings are just a piece of a larger puzzle she must solve. Is the painter leaving clues or just taunting that they're getting away with this?

The killer's accomplice a young woman who was bought by the rich man behind the gruesome murders to be his artistic protégé when she was a girl. Her family were poor druggies and were selling the girls paintings at flea markets, so he offered them money for her instead on day. She would spend the next decade painting for him, but there's couple different collections he has her working on two of them are directly linked to a string of missing women a collection of beautiful local landscapes that are sold and donated the locations where he buries the bodies and a much more disturbing private collection.

Background

The small city of Regus a bustling little place of culture and corruption. Bult from an empire of crime, gambling, and other nefarious businesses. The Mirani family being one of the founding socialite crime families (allegedly) who had been there since the city became a boon. They are owners of the Silver Star Casino, a favored place to stay and gamble for those with money in town or passing through. The son of the owner Dr. Dennis “Denny” Mirani a charismatic and well-liked man in the small city who is a known benefactor of many local artist. He seemed to have stepped back from his relations with his family and their alleged unsavory businesses and pursued the path of psychiatry. Denny is a charming and well-respected member of the Regus community. Nobody seems to be aware of Denny’s dark side, nobody beside his protégé Zilphia.

Dennis all being a collector and enjoyer of local arts had taken interest in Zilphia’s art when her parents, both of whom were drug addicts who were constantly in and out of jail, began to sell her paintings at flea markets as an added source of income. Dennis offered the farmer a large sum of money in exchange for his daughter who was just a teenager at the time. Promising stability for their family and a life of luxury for Zilphia. As is the unfortunate truth with many cases, Zilphia just slipped through the cracks and was never reported missing. Almost no one in town knows about Dennis Morrison’s relationship with Zilphia, let alone the existence of the young woman he keeps locked away, making sure she puts her artistic abilities to use.

As the city of Regus grew and became a spot on the map for people traveling through and a steadily increasing amount of people moved to the state Regus had grown exponentially in population. Which was great for the economy, but worse for crime. Of course, with change comes both bad and good things.

As of the last decade Regus has been shrouded by an evil that walks among them. Over a nearly thirty residents have been reported missing and over the last year seven of the missing people's mutilated bodies have been found discarded in various state parks and nearby hiking trails running from Rose Mountain along the Silver River. The local police force believes they are now dealing with a serial killer and believe their culprit is one of the city's new residents.

Of course, to avoid mass hysteria the Washington County Sheriff, has advised the Regus police force to keep quiet about the idea of a potential serial killer on the loose. Frequently sending his deputy out to the city to make sure the Regus detectives are staying in line.

The lead detective on the case is Joy Anderson an experienced detective and the daughter of the Regus Chief of Police Eugene Anderson, along with her partner officer Michael Russo a rookie detective who seems to have a bit of a personal attachment to the case. Joy wishes the Sheriff would get off her back and let her work.

The Painter Zilphia Mirani

A tormented artist Zilphia Mirani (formerly Zilphia Reznik) is the unwilling accomplice to Dennis Mirani's heinous crimes. After being practically sold to Dennis when she was only a teenager Zilphia has been held hostage in their shared home for over a decade. She is soft spoken and mostly keeps to herself, not that she has much of a choice. The only people she has really interacted with in the last several years is Dennis, the people he hires to maintain his home, and his victims.

Zilphia is incredibly meek, the only thing she really knows in this life is fear and pain, at least that how it seems. She plays the role of Dennis' compliant apprentice to his likings so she can live another day. She often wonders if she is a coward, but what could she really even do? She could never out match Dennis in anything he was master manipulator and far from a weak man. All she's good for to him is her paintings anyways. If he could find another artist that could capture the feeling of suffering on a canvas the way she could Zilphia knew she would be discarded in life and turned into a piece of Dennis' private collection.

Zilphia never got to finish school, but she did educate herself, Dennis had a rather impressive collection of books she would help herself to while he was at work. She had read many of his books on psychology and had picked up on his tricks of manipulation, quietly using them against him too. She knew he had begun to sell the landscape paintings he had her paint, and she knew by the way he marked the victim's initials on the photos he gave her what exactly she was painting. So, Zilphia began to add her own touch something she knew Dennis would overlook. A symbol she saw frequently on his badge and his paperwork.

She had to try something, even if no one ever caught on she had to try.

Detective Joy Anderson

Detective Joy Anderson is a brilliant investigator with an insatiable thirst for solving mysteries. Her goal is to uncover the truth behind the brutal murders in Regus City and bring the killer to justice. She has worked hard her entire life trying to do the right thing and make up for dark things in her own past. Many of those dark things she felt directly responsible for even if they were not her own doing.

Joy is a witty smart-mouthed woman who isn't afraid to speak her mind, something that has often caused her trouble over the years. She is very stubborn and unwilling to budge if her mind is set on something. Which can be both an admirable and unfortunate trait that may cause some conflict.

Raised by the chief of police Joy has a strong sense of justice and always has. While many people believe Detective Joy Anderson has her position solely because of her father's position that is quite far from the case. She is a stellar detective and has earned her authority and her respect.

Joy cares deeply for the people in her community and is willing to do whatever it takes to try and bring some closure to the families of the victims and justice to whoever is behind this. When the prospect of the killer and the painter being two separate people is brought up Joy is conflicted. She had been very set on the idea that the killer was the monster behind these paintings, but her partner begins to believe otherwise. It does take a lot of convincing, but she knows Russo is a smart kid and reluctantly listens to his perspective.

The Mastermind Dr. Dennis “Denny” Mirani

A keen eye for art and a heart of pure rot. Denny is charismatic social man a manipulative cold-blooded killer with little regard for other people. His cover is his outstanding role in the community as a psychiatrist in Caris City and his generous donations to local artists and Local Charities. Dennis has a great façade of being a genuine caring man, but underneath that is something much viler and more twisted. He gets his trill from the pain of others, a true sadist.

He is the man behind many of the disappearance in the town of Umbra, he takes them home to torment them for his own sick pleasure keeping them alive for as long as he sees fit then disposes of their bodies in varying locations in the nearby forest. He forces Zilphia to paint the victim’s agony as he wants the feeling, he gets from these acts to be immortalized in his own private art collection, each piece becoming more “abstract” than the last. He takes pictures of the scenery in the areas where he dumps the bodies as a keepsake to have Zilphia paint. These paintings he sells and donates to people and local business and churches, he even has one in his office at work.

Sheriff Ethan Blackwood

Sheriff Ethan Blackwood an uptight alcoholic that Joy Anderson believes has a stick way to far up his rear. He is in his mid-fifties and has earned a lot of his respect by his ruthless enforcement of the law, even if he may bend the rules for himself. Currently the sheriff is more concerned with the protests in the state capital and uprising crime and drugs in the county than he is with whatever is going on in Regus. Although, he isn't taking the situation too seriously he doesn't like being left out of the loop and he isn't particularly fond of the detective they have investigating this supposed serial killer. He has his deputy keep an eye on the situation in Umbra in case he feels the need to step in and be a glory hound.

Chief of Police Eugene Anderson

Chief Anderson is a complicated man with a questionable moral code. Now, into his “golden years” he has mellowed out in comparison to his days as an officer. The man has used his power to do questionable things for his own strange case of what he thought was fair or just, and his questionable actions have always been an obstacle in his daughter’s life. He has always been incredibly hard on Joy and disagrees with many of her choices in life, but he respects his daughter as hard-working individual and made sure she worked hard to get to where she is.

Deputy Peggy Sue Marlow

Deputy Peggy Sue Marlow is a by the books woman who doesn't take anyone's crap, not even from the Sheriff. She has been watching the case in Umbra and has found some interest in keeping tabs on Detective Joy Anderson and her partner Michael Russo, constantly giving the detectives "reminders" that they should be reporting any findings to her or the sheriff and is constantly annoyed when the two act as if they have nothing new to let her in on. She is not particularly fond of the detectives but can't help but admire Joy Anderson as a woman dedicated to her work.

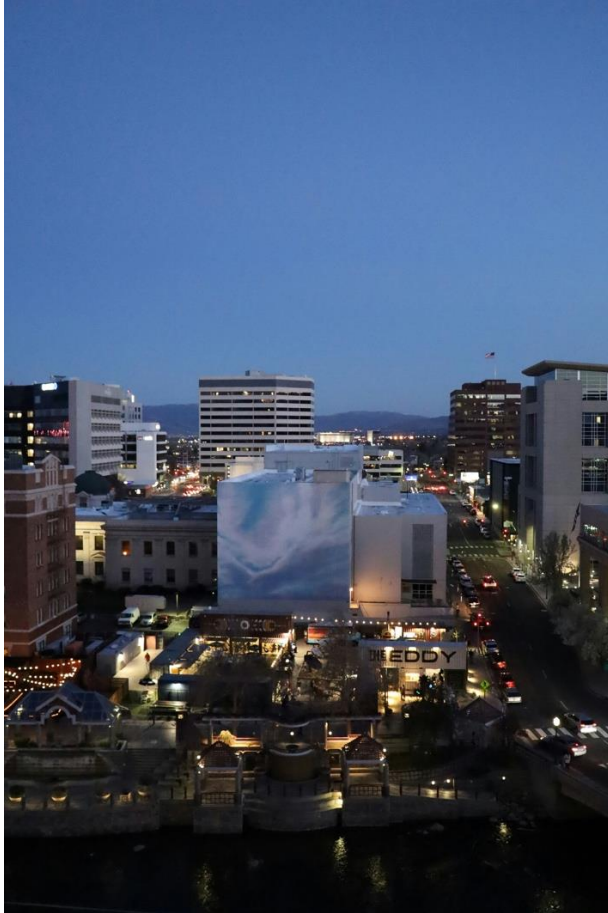
Officer Michael “Rookie” Russo

Michael “Rookie” Russo is Joy Anderson’s partner, and she has a great deal of respect for the kid and his sharp mind even if he still holds a lot of naivety. Michael is young in his mid-twenties, and he has a strong sense of justice even if his judgement can be a little misplaced. He is very invested in helping Detective Anderson solve the case behind the slayings and missing peoples in the town of Umbra.

As time goes on and the mystery unfolds it is revealed that Michael was childhood friends with Zilphia. Detective Anderson worries his newfound personal attachment to the case may be an obstacle and a conflict of interest, but “Rookie” Russo believes it’s an asset.

Locations

Many locations are based off the city of Reno which I grew up in and my home state of Nevada.

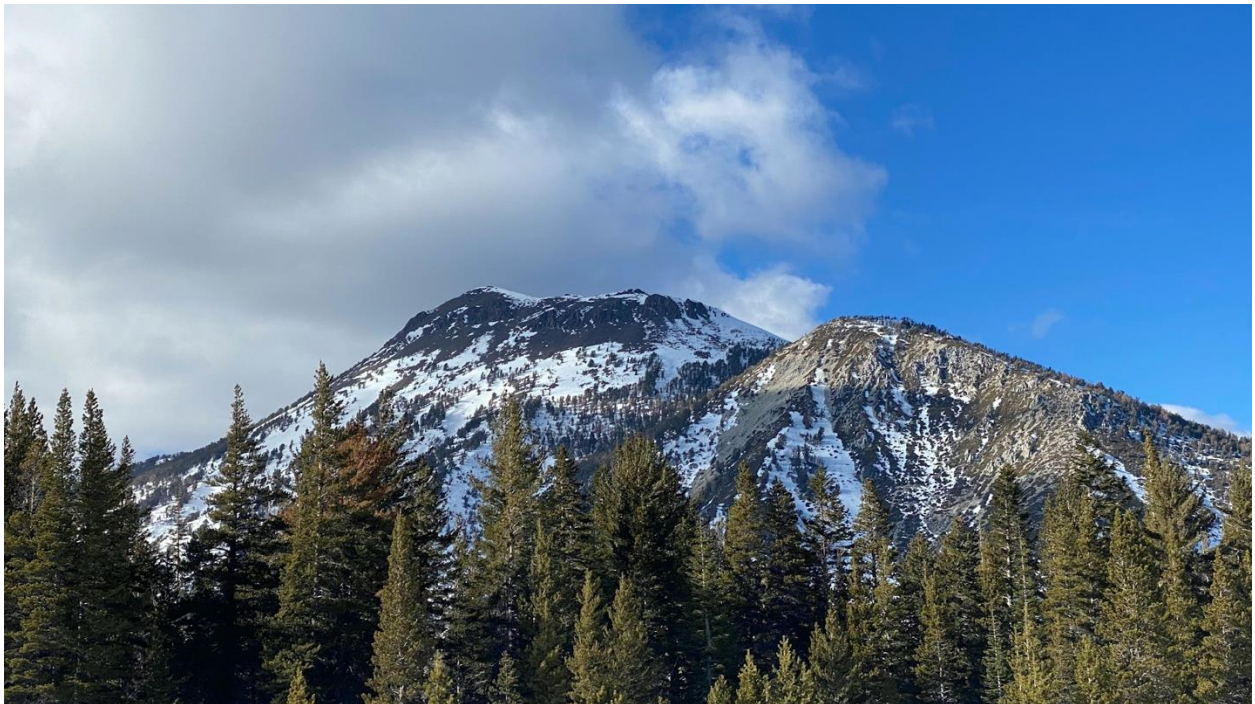


Regus City

Inspired by the “Biggest Little City,” Reno, Nevada. A smaller city, Regus is quickly growing in size. A mini sin city if you will. A town founded during the silver rush. A lot of people became wealthy of the riches of the desert and gambling always had a home in the city from its start. The birth of casinos and the rings of crime built the small mining town into a bustling little city. A town enthused with the arts. Located an hour outside of the state capital Caris City. As people continue to disappear and some of these people return to them in body bags the town begins to grow weary of a lurking evil living among them.

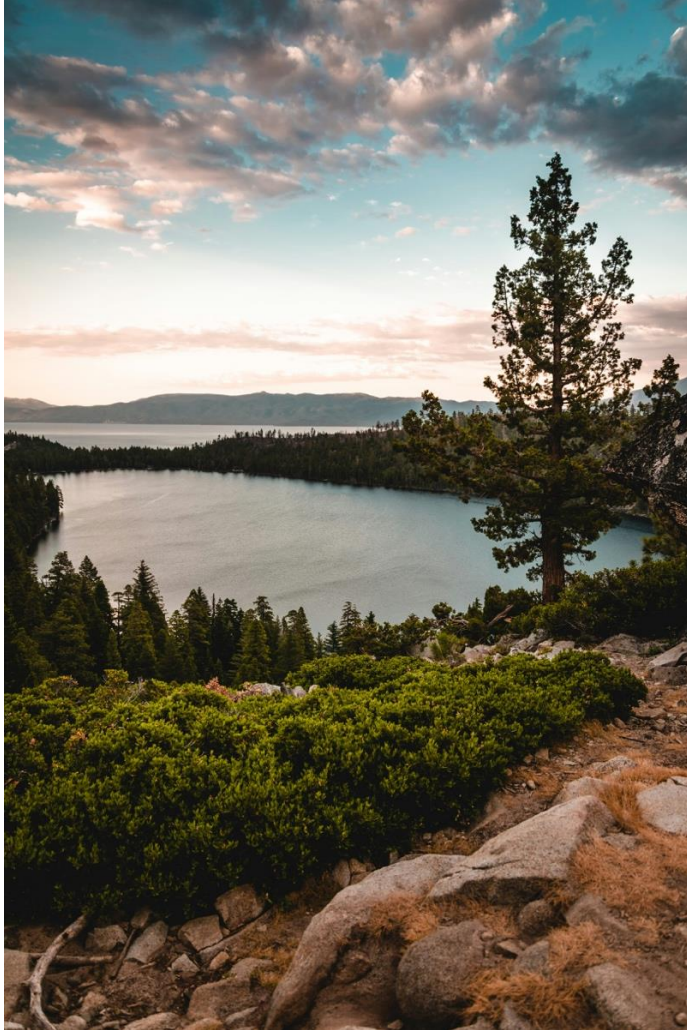
Caris City (Capital city)

Inspired by Carson City, Nevada. The capital is where Sheriff Ethan Blackwood lives and where Dr. Denny Morrison works as a psychiatrist. At this point in time there is an influx of people moving to Caris City as well and crime and drug use is at large in the capital city as well as Regus.



Rose Mountain

Rose Mountain inspired by the beautiful Mount Rose. Miles of dense pine forest and rough mountain terrain very easy to wander off the beaten path and get lost and incredibly dangerous in the winter, but a great scenic place for skiing, hiking and camping if you stick to the trails and designated camp sites and great for skiing if you're experienced enough to attempt its steep slopes. Recently a few disfigured bodies belonging to missing people from Regus City have been found in the area by hikers. Of course, word of mouth is they got nabbed by a bear or mountain lion, but the detectives on the case know better.



Tenebrous Lake

Tenebrous Lake inspired by the lovely Lake Tahoe. A large and deep freshwater lake located near Rose Mountain. The area is lush and vibrant in the warm seasons but receives insane snowfall in the winter. Many quaint towns surround the lake.



Prism Lake

Prism Lake inspired by the Pyramid Lake. A bit more of a swampy desert lake located on Native American land. The area sees its fair share of illegal activities and local folklore covers up a lot of the mysterious deaths and disappearances in the area.



The Silver River

The Silver River inspired by The Truckee River. A river that runs from Tenebrous Lake at Rose Mountain through Regus City to Prism Lake in the state desert land. Many creeks, waterfalls, parks, and hiking trails run along the river.

Additional World Information

Major Geographical Features: Mountains, wooded areas filled with pines, juniper trees, and bustling rivers

Natural Resources: Silver, gold, and lumber

Weather Patterns: The state is constantly partly cloudy and time of year flowing from harsh winters to even harsher summers. The weather can never make up its mind.

Seasons:

Winter- Cold temperatures average around 20 to 40 degrees in the winter

Spring- Temperatures range around 45 to 80 degrees in the spring

Summer- The summer are hot averaging 90 to 110 degrees

Fall- The fall its chilly averaging 40-degree temperature, September is still in the 50s while November gets closer to freezing.

Wars and Conflicts: During the time period of the war on drugs and eventually the war on terror

Political Structures: The state's government is modeled closely after the government of the United States.

Level of technology: The technology aligns with the technology available in the early 2000's.

This goes for medical technology and forensic science as well.

System of Law: The state's government is modeled closely after the government of the United States.

Law Enforcement: Washington County Sheriff's Department and the Regus Police department

Crime: It was never known as the safest town but over as the city began to grow more crime came with it drugs, murder and an increasing amount of people have been going missing.

Recently a few mutilated bodies of missing persons have been discovered

Religions: Variety of religious groups

Economic structure: Overwhelmingly based on tourism, especially the gambling and resort industries

Currency: USD \$

Education: A mixture of strict discipline and creative exploration

The Arts: Art is HIGHLY encouraged in the community, lots of local music and visual arts. Local musicians play at local pubs and during the many festivals that happen along the Silver River throughout the year. Art is sold often sold locally and decorate many homes and businesses.

Architecture: Ranges from historical houses, mid-century, craftsman, and modern (for the time period)

Fashion/Dress: Standard 90's and y2k fashion, some inspired by the punk rock and underground rap scene in the region

Food: A melting pot of food from many different cultures

Taboos: Regus is a city that thrives on Taboos although there are groups that oppose things

Music: alternative and punk rock

Postal System: Mailman walking door to door in most cases the suburban areas

Sports: local high school sports and University sports, skiing is pretty popular there

Theater: Movie theaters and live performance theaters are pretty common in the artsy city

Entertainment: Music, fairs, festivals, theater, and sports

Story Synopsis

Detective Joy Anderson had been working restlessly for the last few years trying to put the pieces together, but everywhere she looked there was more dead ends. She is investigating a case involving the discovery of seven gruesome murders of locals in the town of Umbra and with so many reports of missing people over the last few years it is assumed there is more victims yet to be found. The Washington county sheriff kept ensuring her it couldn't be the work of a serial killer, but Detective Anderson couldn't let it rest. It had been strange, after all Regus City was a place where gossip spread through bars like California wildfires.

Clues had begun to pop up eventually although the detective had overlooked it at first, anyone would, as art doesn't usually solve crimes. Although, the detective couldn't place what about these paintings made his skin crawl until it clicked. The painting in the local cafe, it was the location where they found one of the bodies.

No name, just an alias and no one seemed to have an answer as to who this mysterious painter was. The paintings began to act as a roadmap pointing in the direction of more mutilated bodies as there seemed to be more paintings than bodies found. People once members of the close community of Umbra, taken and brutalized by a monster. A monster who had the audacity to display hints of their work around town and call it art.

The artist in reality was a tormented woman kept captive in her own home an unwitting accomplice forced to capture the suffering of her husband's victims and then paint the scenery where he disposed of their bodies.

While, tracking down more of this artist's work a much older piece surfaces and Detective Anderson's partner Michael Russo makes a connection to who the artist may be; an old childhood friend of his who went missing in high school a woman named Zilphia Reznik.

A symbol is discovered on the newer paintings, those that are of crime scenes; a symbol that may be the key to finding the killer. The same symbol on the psychiatric institution where Dr. Dennis Morrison works.

As they peel back the layers of secrets, they unearth a connection between the killer's sadistic motives and the Zilphia's paintings- haunting artworks that capture the pain and suffering of the victims.

Story Excerpt

An aggressive fist pounded on the front door of the manor startling Zilphia causing her to flick her scrawny wrist in a wayward motion allowing a smudged line of green paint to muddy up the page. The house didn't often get visitors and she was advised by Dennis to never open the door, especially if he wasn't home. She was tempted to turn off the record that was playing but assumed that it was too late, and the person outside had likely already heard Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata resonating from within the house. Maybe if she ignored them the person would just...

"Zilphia! Are you in there?" One vaguely familiar voice called out. It did not belong to Dennis. No, this voice was much gentler than his.

She couldn't quite place why she recognized it or why this person would know her name. As far as Zilphia knew the people in Regus City had forgotten her years ago when Dennis had bought her like a prized cow on auction. Perhaps she was just hearing things, it would be fitting that she had begun going crazy.

There were more aggressive knocks on the front door. "Zilphia!"

Her heart pounded in her chest as the voice called her name again. The paintbrush she had been absentmindedly holding on to fell to the floor. She quietly crept down the stairs towards the front door her head spinning. She had to be going crazy.

She pressed her ear up to the door listening for any movements and she heard footsteps heading away from the door.

The door creaked as its lock fell out of place and an eye peaked through the crack from behind thick rimmed glasses. "Wait." Zilphia's voice came out much meeker than she intended it to, but she hardly had an ounce of courage in her. "Who are you and what do you want?"

“Zilphia?” Russo could not quite believe his eyes. Although the years with Dennis had drained the fire out of her eyes; Zilphia had the most unmistakable doe eyes that he ever saw.

“Zil, is that really you?”

“You’ve mistaken me for someone else. Now, please state your business.” Her voice cracked as she spoke.

“My apologies, you just look like someone...” Russo paused. “Well, never mind that. Is Dr. Mirani home? We have some questions regarding-”

“Dennis isn’t home.” Zilphia shut the door and quietly sank to the floor. Her heart sank and she fought the sickness in her stomach from rising.

She knew exactly who stood on the other side of the door, but he was too late. Several years too late. The Zilphia that Michael Russo knew might as well be as dead as the women she painted. Dennis killed her too. He just didn’t put her out of her misery; instead, she was trapped in hell.

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