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# DEADLOCK DEADLOCK

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SARA PARETSKY




## DEADLOCK

Vic Warshawski's relations tell her she should stay at home and get a husband and children to keep her busy. Vic doesn't listen to them. She just gets on with her work – as a private detective. And there's no problem in finding that kind of work in Chicago, where murder happens all the time.

When Boom Boom, a former ice-hockey star, dies in an accident by falling under a ship, the city mourns. Nobody suspects murder. But Boom Boom was Vic's cousin, and she was very fond of him. She doesn't understand how a strong young man can just slip and fall into the water like that. Then she finds Boom Boom's girlfriend going through his personal papers in his apartment. Vic didn't even know that Boom Boom *had* a girlfriend . . .

Soon Vic knows that she's on a murder investigation. Somebody else knows it too, because another murder quickly follows, and some rather strange accidents. But Vic has a very personal interest in the case. Nothing is going to stop her . . .




  
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*Crime & Mystery*

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*Retold by*  
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## I Death of a hockey player

More than a thousand people attended Boom Boom's funeral. Many of them were supporters of the Black Hawks ice hockey team. Boom Boom, one of ice hockey's biggest stars, was a player with the Black Hawks until he shattered his left ankle three years earlier. For a long time he refused to believe that he wasn't going to skate again. But in the end he accepted medical opinion and got a job with the Eudora Grain Company. It was Clayton Phillips, Eudora's vice-president, who found Boom Boom's body floating close to the wharf last Tuesday.

Boom Boom's father and mine were brothers, and we'd grown up together in South Chicago, closer than many brothers and sisters. His real name was Bernard, but his childhood friends had called him Boom Boom and the name followed him from childhood into his days with the Black Hawks and beyond. He loved the name and everyone used it.

I was out of town when Boom Boom died, and by the time the police managed to contact me, the funeral had already been arranged by our Polish relations. Boom Boom had made me his executor, but I knew he wouldn't care how he was buried so I didn't argue with the arrangements.

After the funeral, Lieutenant Bobby Mallory fought through the crowd to me, wearing his police uniform. My father had worked for the Chicago police and he and Bobby had been good friends.

'I was sorry about Boom Boom, Vic. I know how much you

two cared about each other.'

'Thanks, Bobby.' A cool April wind made me feel cold in my wool suit. I wished I'd worn a coat. 'Are you going to the party? May I ride with you?'

Bobby agreed, and helped me into the back seat of his police car.

'Bobby, I couldn't get any information from the Eudora Grain Company when I phoned. How did Boom Boom die?'

Bobby frowned. 'I know you think you're tough, Vic, but do you really need to know the details?'

'I just want to know what happened to my cousin. He was young, strong; it's hard to imagine him falling into the water like that.'

Bobby's expression softened. 'You're not thinking he drowned himself, are you?'

I moved my hands uncertainly. 'He left an urgent message for me on my telephone answering machine. I wondered if he was feeling desperate about something.'

'I suppose you'll go on asking questions until you get an answer.' Bobby paused. 'A ship was tied up at the wharf and Boom Boom went under as she pulled away. His body was badly chewed up. It was a wet day, and that's an old wooden wharf - very slippery in the rain. I think he slipped and fell in. I don't think he jumped.'

We stopped in front of Aunt Helen's tidy brick house. The next two hours were difficult for me. The small house filled with cigarette smoke, with the smell of Polish cooking, with the noise of children. Some of my relations told me it was a pity I didn't have a family to keep me busy. Others told me I should go and help in the kitchen.



Boom Boom's grandmother, aged eighty-two, fat and dressed in shiny black, caught my arm. She told me that Boom Boom had been in trouble at Eudora Grain. 'People are saying he stole some papers from his boss,' she said.

My eyes burned. 'It's not true! Boom Boom never stole anything in his life, even when he was poor.'

Grandma stared at me with watery blue eyes. 'Well, that's what people are saying,' she repeated. 'They're saying he threw himself under the ship so that he wouldn't be arrested.'

I shook my head and pushed my way to the front door. I went out into the cold spring air. While I looked doubtfully along the street, wondering whether I could find a cab, a young woman joined me. She was small, with dark hair falling straight just below her ears, and gold-coloured eyes. She wore a fashionable grey silk suit, and I thought I'd seen her somewhere before.

'You're Boom Boom's cousin, aren't you?' she asked with a quick smile. 'I'm Paige Carrington.'

'I thought I recognized you. I've seen you dance a few times.' Carrington was a dancer with the Windy City Ballet.

She gave the triangular smile audiences loved. 'I'd been seeing a lot of your cousin the last few months. I think we were in love. I wanted to meet you. Boom Boom talked about you all the time. He loved you very much.'

'Yes. I hadn't seen him for some months . . . Are you driving back to the city? Can I beg a ride?'

'Of course.'

I followed Paige Carrington down the street. She drove a silver Audi 5000. Either the Windy City Ballet paid extraordinarily well, or she came from a wealthy family.

She didn't say much on the drive back to town. I was quiet