

## FORGED IN STEELE SNEAK PEEK



**Romantic Suspense** – Print, E-Book, and Audio

**Steele Guardians Series** – AUGUST/2022

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**When a baby goes missing...**

The ink was barely dry on the contract Bristol Steele had signed for Steele Guardians to provide security for a metro hospital when a baby is abducted from the birthing center. Horrified and devastated for the family, Bristol puts everything in her life aside to find the abducted child and return the baby to her devastated parents. But when FBI Agent Jared Wolfe steps in and tries to shut down her efforts, Bristol isn't prepared for the emotions that resurface from their long-ago summer romance.

**She'll risk everything, even her life.**

Bristol can't back down and soon finds herself working alongside Jared. She struggles to make sure her growing feelings for him aren't a distraction, but as she tugs at Jared's heart and he makes his feelings clear, she's not sure she's succeeding. Maybe she does need to back off for the good of the missing baby, but that might leave her company's reputation in the dirt and proving her abilities to her father has always been her driving force.

### Chapter One

Bristol Steele believed in perfect days. Today wasn't one of them. Not even close.

She raced through the big Victorian house she shared with her sisters and cousins, trying hard not to topple over in the high heels she rarely wore. Today was the most important day of

her adult life, and she'd failed to set an alarm.

But she had plenty of backup. Two sisters and three cousins, all knowing this was her big day with the family business. Why hadn't one of them woken her before leaving for work?

Now she had just enough time to make it to the hospital for the press conference.

Barely.

She skidded to a stop by the back door and flung it open. She ran across the lawn, meticulously manicured by her sister Peyton. Bristol's heels sank into the soil wet from morning watering, and she hoped her hair wouldn't frizz up in the unusual morning humidity. She remotely clicked open the doors of her blue Chevy Bolt.

"No. Oh no. Not today." She came to a stop, her heels threatening to unsettle her, and she grabbed onto a nearby cherry tree to keep from falling. She stared at her front tire.

*Flat.* Flat as the paper targets hanging at the end of the lanes at her favorite firing range.

This couldn't be happening.

She continued on closer just to be certain. Yep. Flat. Totally flat. This car was going nowhere without a tire change, and she didn't have a spare.

She could just hear her dad lecturing her about buying a spare for a car when the manufacturer didn't provide one. She'd claimed her self-sealing tires would do the trick, but clearly she was wrong. She must've run over something beyond the tire's limit to seal the leak.

*Why, God? Why? I have to get to the hospital. Now!*

Panic settled in, and she looked around for her next move.

“Get a ride. Quick. But who?”

She could call one of her sisters or cousins but their work locations were too far to get here in time. She dug out her phone and opened a rideshare app. She found a driver only five minutes away and booked the ride then tottered toward the front of the house for the pick-up.

Under the tall maple trees by the road and out of the bright sun on the warm August morning, she dialed her cousin Teagan who was the chief operating officer of the family business. For three more weeks, Bristol was still a full-time deputy with Multnomah County Sheriff’s Office, but then she would join Steele Guardians as the sales and marketing manager.

“Where are you?” Teagan demanded. “The press conference starts in thirty minutes.”

“I know.” Bristol worked hard to keep sarcasm out of her tone. It wasn’t Teagan’s fault that Bristol was in this spot. “I overslept and no one thought to wake me up.”

“I didn’t have a clue,” Teagan said. “I parked out front last night, or I would’ve seen your car and come to your rescue. Not sure why everyone else let you sleep.”

“No matter now. But on top of being late, I have a flat tire. I called a rideshare, and I should be at the hospital within fifteen minutes.”

“That’s cutting it close, but you should be fine. I’ll update Mr. Coglin and then meet you in the lobby, so we can arrive at the conference together.” Teagan disconnected.

Bristol shoved her phone into her purse and scanned the road ahead for her ride. She tapped her foot and rehearsed her upcoming speech. After what felt like a lifetime, a small car

pulled to the curb, the windshield holding a rideshare company sign.

She plunged into the backseat and rattled off the address for the hospital to confirm the driver had received it from when Bristol had booked the ride.

“I need to get there fast,” Bristol said, ignoring the strong smell of coffee in the car. She hadn’t gotten even one cup in her system this morning and craved the caffeine.

The driver looked over the seat, his dark eyes searching. “Are you sick or something?”

“No. I have the most important meeting of my life, and I overslept. Then I got a flat tire. So hurry. Please.”

“You got it.” He booked it out of the space. “You might want to try taking a few deep breaths.”

“I’ll breathe after I get there.” She looked at her watch. Twenty-three minutes and counting.

“What kind of meeting is it?”

She really was in no mood for chitchat, but talking would keep her mind off being late. “It’s a press conference, actually.”

He glanced in the rearview mirror. “You gonna be on the news?”

“Could be.”

“What for, if you don’t mind me asking?” Suspicion laced his tone.

“An uptick in crime has hit the hospital lately, and they came under fire in the news for

their lax security.”

“Yeah, I heard about that.”

“I signed a contract for our family company, Steele Guardians, to provide security guards for them. It’s all part of the hospital’s new focus on security. Today’s our company’s first day, and we’re announcing it this morning at a press conference.”

“Impressive.” He turned onto the main thoroughfare, and she wanted to press her foot to the gas. “Sounds like it’ll be a big account for you.”

“My first account.” She let her mind drift to the day Mr. Coglin, the hospital administrator, called to say the board had approved their contract. One of the largest contracts Steele Guardians had ever secured. She hoped it showed the family that she was more than the baby of the family and was up to the new job.

She’d learned of the hospital troubles while on duty when she’d responded to a theft call. She’d gone to her family and asked to approach the hospital as her first client. Her father and uncle, who founded the company, thought it was too big of a contract for her first one, but she convinced them to let her have it.

And now she was going to be late.

She leaned forward. “Can you go faster?”

“Sorry. I won’t get a speeding ticket.”

As a deputy, Bristol understood—she really did—but she didn’t like it.

She sat back but kept glancing at her watch. As they neared the hospital she had seven

minutes until the press conference. Just enough time to run through the hospital to the room near the back. Maybe she should take her shoes off so she could move faster. Nah, that would be unprofessional and the hospital administrator put the word profession in professional. He was old school to the max.

She lifted a hand to nibble on her fingernail and jerked it away. She had to break this habit if she didn't want to have jagged nails. She made sure she was always well-groomed as a deputy, but no one getting a speeding ticket cared if her nails were bitten to the quick. As a sales manager, she had to present a much more professional front.

The hospital signs came into view on the tree-lined street.

*Yes!*

She leaned forward. "Go to the main entrance and drop me at patient unloading."

"You got it." He clicked on his blinker. "And hey, good luck with the conference. Hope you're on time."

She checked her watch again. Four minutes. Her heart dropped in her chest.

The driver pulled into the circular patient loading area, and Bristol bolted out, nearly getting her heels tangled in the small vehicle. She rushed inside and spotted Teagan in a wide courtyard with tall plants and a trickling fountain.

They came together and ran for the back over a slick tile floor. Bristol concentrated on her steps so she didn't face-plant. That was all she needed.

She got out the ID badge provided by the hospital, giving her access to most areas and

enabling her to monitor her guards today.

Teagan focused her dark eyes in Bristol's direction. "I hope you know what you're going to say."

"That's why I slept in." Bristol wanted to groan but held it back. "I was up all night getting it just right and then fell asleep at my desk without setting the alarm."

They approached the door and slowed in unison to a clipped walk. Bristol ran a hand over her hair as did Teagan. They were cousins and both had long, near-black hair and were often mistaken for sisters. Teagan was four years older, and Bristol had always taken a back seat to her cousin. Not today. Today Bristol would shine. She had to.

If her faith wasn't so weak right now, she'd ask for help.

Teagan opened the door, and they stepped into the room. Surprisingly, the space was filled with reporters and photographers, the air humming with conversation. Bristol hadn't expected the media would find this story interesting. Maybe it was a slow news day. Either way, she felt lightheaded.

"Just breathe," Teagan whispered over her shoulder. "You'll be fine."

Bristol listened to her cousin and took a few breaths as she approached Roderick Coglein. She'd always been struck by the hospital administrator's perfect posture and stylish attire for a man nearing retirement. Today he wore a serious-looking gray suit and pale blue shirt fitting with the list he'd given her of colors that came across best on the TV screen. She'd chosen a blue suit with a blouse much the same color as his shirt from her oldest sister, Londyn's overflowing closet.

“Sorry to hear about your flat tire, but glad you could make it on time.” Coglin gestured at the long table with a podium in the middle. “We’ll be right over there. You and Teagan first.”

Bristol hurried across the room and scooted to the far end of the table to sit in the stiff plastic chair. She settled her shaking hands in her lap as Teagan dropped down beside her, and the three hospital representatives dressed in conservative suits took their seats.

Mr. Coglin stood at the podium and adjusted the microphone, emitting a squeal from the speakers. “Ah, sorry about that. Thank you all for coming. I’m eager to share our newest security plans with you. I’ll give you an overview of the plan, and then you’ll hear from the representatives of Steele Guardians, the firm we chose to provide our guards going forward.”

He held out a hand, gesturing at Teagan and Bristol. She forced a smile and hoped it didn’t come across as stilted and wooden like the fear freezing her insides.

He continued on with his speech, his deep tone soothing, doing an excellent job of engaging the audience. He’d be a tough act to follow. Could Bristol do the same thing?

Nerves peppered her body and nausea formed in the pit of her stomach.

The door burst open, and Coglin’s assistant came barreling into the room. The short blond raced across the carpet, her sights set on Coglin like a locked and loaded missile.

*No. Oh no.* Something was clearly wrong, but what?

She pulled him away from the microphone and whispered in his ear. Coglin went white and gripped the podium. He took a long breath then stepped back to the microphone. “I’m sorry, but we need to cut this press conference short.”



An agitated hum of conversation buzzed through the reporters and gazes locked on Coglin.

*Okay. Good. Seemed like a problem that didn't involve them.* Bristol sagged in relief. She didn't need to talk after all.

She breathed deeply for the first time.

Coglin whipped his gaze to her, grabbed her arm, and towed her out of the room and down the hall to an alcove. Teagan followed them.

Bristol had celebrated too soon. Her heart started beating at lightyear speed.

“We have a Pink Alert,” Coglin whispered. “Pink Alert. Room 332 East.”

“Pink, no.” Bristol had memorized this hospital's codes and the facility backwards and forwards and Room 332 East was in the birthing center. “A baby is missing!”

“Shh,” Coglin said. “We need to keep this quiet until your guards lock this place down. We'll see if your company is up to the task of protecting our hospital.”

Bristol didn't waste time responding, but kicked off her heels, pausing to scoop them up, and charged toward the security office. She tried to breathe normally as she worked out what she needed to do, but her mind seized up.

It was the first day of their hospital contract and a baby had been kidnapped.

**Kidnapped!**

She couldn't imagine a worse first day in history, and she was the only person in the

family to make things right.

\*

“Pink Alert. Room 332 East,” the announcement sounded over the speaker in the hospital birthing suite.

Jared Wolfe came to his feet, his gut clenching. He shoved back his suit jacket and reached for his sidearm—a movement almost as natural as breathing to him.

“Pink alert means a baby, right?” Debra, his buddy’s wife, clutched her newborn son close to her chest. “Someone kidnapped a baby. But how? The hospital just revamped the security, and it was supposed to be better than ever.”

“I don’t know, but I’m going to find out.” At least he would do his best. Not like last time when his best hadn’t been good enough.

Deb blinked. “You can just do that? Go ask? What about jurisdiction?”

“No asking. Telling. They’ll be glad to know an FBI agent is on scene.” Or they would once he convinced them. “The sooner the bureau takes charge of the investigation, the sooner this baby is safely returned.”

The door opened, and Deb’s husband, Tim, rushed in. A former sailor, he’d served with Jared, and they’d become good friends. Tim now served as a Portland police officer. He carried himself with authority, and Jared didn’t worry about leaving his friends and their baby behind with a kidnapper on the loose.

“I heard the announcement,” Tim said. “A baby. Man. That’s rough. Thankfully I was in

the hallway before they locked the center down.” He furrowed his forehead. “Glad it’s not in our wing, but it’s still too close for comfort.”

“Agreed,” Jared said. “You stay here with Deb. I’m going to take charge and see if I can find this baby before it’s removed from the hospital.”

“I should help.”

“I know you want to, but your place is with Deb and your son right now.”

“Yeah.” He didn’t sound convinced. It wasn’t because he didn’t love his family, he just possessed the profound sense of duty of a good law enforcement officer.

Jared pounded fists with Tim on his way past. “Pray for the family.”

Jared lifted them up in prayer too as he stepped into the empty hallway.

Not a surprise. When a code of any kind was called, hospital staff responded accordingly, taking on any collateral duty as assigned in such a situation. But even before the code announcement was made, the staff and security would’ve taken positions at key locations in the event that panic ensued. Certain doors would’ve been locked down, not letting anyone in or out unless it was an emergency.

The Pink Alert was issued at the hospital, but the state police would issue an official AMBER Alert to the media and law enforcement only after a responding officer confirmed that a child had indeed been abducted. If specific additional criteria were met, this officer would call the state, and the alert would be issued.

Jared made a quick scan of the other hallway and noted a uniformed guard outside Room

332. No other movement. Too quiet for such a situation. He would've expected additional support to have arrived by now.

He marched up to the nurses' station located between the two wings. Two harried-looking nurses faced him, eyes cutting every direction as if looking for the kidnapper who had to be long gone.

Jared displayed his credentials. "I need to speak to whoever's in charge."

"That's me," the nurse with graying hair said. "But I'm sure our administrator is on the way up, and he'll take over."

"Who issued the Pink Alert?" he asked.

"All I know is Natalie—Nurse Johnson—called our supervisor. Natalie heard Mrs. Pratt screaming and went in to discover Luna had disappeared while the mother slept and Mr. Pratt had gone to get some coffee. She's still with them."

Babies didn't just go missing. Someone took the newborn. "And we're sure the father didn't, for some odd reason, take the child with him when he went for the coffee?"

"I saw him leave," the younger nurse said. "He had a backpack but wasn't carrying the baby."

"Did he have the backpack when he returned?"

They both nodded.

"And you didn't see the baby being taken?"

They both shook their heads.

“Anyone suspicious hanging around here?”

“I didn’t see anyone that didn’t look like they belonged,” the older nurse said.

“Me, either.” The younger woman picked at her nails. “But then we’re run off our feet all the time with the patients and trying to staff this desk too. Sometimes it gets too much, and the patients have to come before watching the door.”

“So there might’ve been a time today when there was no one at this desk. Say the time the baby went missing?”

They glanced at each other and nodded. There was a story there, but an agitated male voice came from outside the birthing center’s door. It clicked open, taking Jared’s attention.

An older man and a young woman stepped in. They had to be staff if they gained access without asking to enter. The older man wearing a gray suit looked like a stuffy businessman. The woman watched the floor as she walked so he couldn’t get a look at her face, but her blue suit and high heels weren’t all business looking like the man. More young, fresh, and curvy, but she seemed unsteady in the heels.

She looked up.

*No! No way!* He swallowed a gasp.

*What was she doing here of all people?*

“That’s Mr. Coglin, our administrator,” the older nurse said.

“Thanks for your help,” Jared managed to utter and tried not to gape at the woman as he stepped into Coglin’s path to hold out his ID and introduce himself.

“Roderick Coglin, administrator.” He shook hands with Jared.

Jared turned his attention to the woman and forced himself to take a long look. He hadn’t been conjuring her up from his past. She was here in the flesh. The woman he’d once loved and left.

“Jared? FBI? Really?” She didn’t introduce herself, but she didn’t have to.

Bristol Steele, his former summer girlfriend, stood before him. Just as gorgeous as she’d been that summer. All tan and toned. Now a woman. A fine-looking woman.

Words failed him. What could he say?

He resorted to a nod and gave her another once over. A bulge under her suit jacket could only be a sidearm. Did she go into law enforcement after all? She hadn’t wanted to, but her family pretty much expected it.

“This is our jurisdiction.” She hadn’t possessed such confidence the summer when they’d served as counselors together at a Christian middle school camp.

“Our?” he asked.

“Multnomah County Sheriff’s Office. I’m a deputy.” She met his gaze and held it. “How did the FBI get an agent here so fast?”

“I was visiting a friend in the other wing.”

“Someone who just had a baby?”

His tongue seemed glued to the roof of his mouth, so he nodded again.

She lifted perfectly plucked eyebrows over the big brown eyes that had mesmerized him under starry skies for two long months. “You’re not here in an official capacity, then?”

*Right. Get it together. Your brief romance was how many years ago? Nine, ten? So what? Time didn’t seem to matter. She had the same ability to disarm him and turn him into a babbling idiot as she’d done back then.*

*You’re an FBI agent for Pete’s sake. Act like one.*

He took a breath. “All it’ll take is a phone call to my supervisor, and we’ll be offering our services. I’ll also be lead agent.”

She tilted her head and eyed him. Did she think the FBI didn’t have a place in local investigations or was her non-verbal message a nod to their past? He would stick with the present because delving into the past would cause them both a world of hurt again.

“We have a missing baby,” he said, putting the self-assurance he’d earned in his four years as an agent into his tone. “We need to throw all resources at it and quickly.”

“I agree,” Mr. Coglin said. “We’re on our way to interview the mother. Please join us.”

“Hold up.” Jared lifted his hand. “No one goes in that room without booties, Can’t risk scene contamination.”

Coglin turned to the nurses. “One of you get surgical shoe covers, stat.”

The younger nurse scurried away.

“While we wait,” Jared said. “We can get started on arranging technical items. We’ll need to set up our command post for the initial investigation. Do you have a conference room we can use? One with access to a printer and copier would be best.”

“I can arrange that. Excuse me.” Coglin dug his phone from his suit pocket and turned his back on them to make the call.

Jared kept an ear out for Coglin’s conversation in case it revealed information he might need and gave Bristol a surreptitious look. Her professional suit resembled the ones female agents at his office wore, but her shoes looked like the designer types his sister liked to spend big chunks of her money on, and the heels were much higher than the women’s at work. Bristol had been wobbly as she walked, telling him she didn’t wear them all that often.

“You’re staring,” she said.

He liked her blunt approach. “Sorry. I just can’t believe it’s you.”

“Right back atcha.” Her tone dropped into the same husky pitch it had taken when they were making out down by the lake, and his heart tripped faster. She didn’t appear at all flustered. Or at least not as deeply as he was. Could be because he’d hurt her when he broke things off, and she was still angry.

He sure wouldn’t bring that up. He needed to get moving forward on finding out what happened here, and her lack of uniform told him she wasn’t on duty. “Are you here as a deputy or some other reason?”

“Other. As of today, my family’s company provides security guards for this facility.”



“I remember. Steele Guardians, right?”

She nodded. “And before you tell me it’s our guard’s fault that this baby went missing because we’re new at this site, many of our seasoned people are assigned here today.” She opened her mouth as if to add something then clamped it closed.

*Defensive much?* He would circle back to that later, but for now, he would find out more about her and the company charged with guarding this facility. “You work two jobs?”

“I’m leaving the force in three weeks.”

*One of those. Stay cool. Keep your opinion to yourself.*

No one needed to know how he felt about law enforcement officers who leave the job. Too many had jumped ship because of societal pressures. She likely had a good reason to go, and he shouldn’t think she was bailing like he’d done when things got serious between them.

“I’m assuming your staff is already reviewing the security footage.” He swallowed away the shock of seeing her and tried to impart in his tone that he believed himself in charge.

“They are.” She continued to eye him and not in a good way.

So she didn’t like him taking charge. If they ended up working together, they would need to have a talk to be sure their past stayed firmly there—in the past.

“The minute we finish with the parents, I’ll want to see anything your staff thinks is significant,” he said. “My team will also want to review all the feeds for this past week.”

“We can make it available *if* you’re assigned to the investigation.” She shifted on her feet, her ankle giving out, and she had to grab the counter to right herself. Her feet with pink

toenails constantly in flip-flips at camp came to mind.

“A week of footage will be a lot to cover,” she said.

“Can’t be helped,” Jared said. “Unless the parents give us conflicting information, we’ll start with the typical infant abduction premise.”

Bristol gave a sharp nod. “Suspect will be a woman who desires to have her own child. Maybe replacing a child or lost pregnancy. Or to appease a significant other who she thinks will leave her if she can’t have a child.”

“Exactly,” he said, impressed at her knowledge. “A typical abductor makes frequent recon visits to the hospital and birthing center before attempting the abduction. She could be recorded on earlier security footage. We’ll start with this week and then go back further if needed. She likely scoped out nearby hospitals too, and we’ll request footage from them.”

“I’m sure we’ll have the baby in hand long before that becomes necessary.”

He nodded, but his past experience with abduction proved such a statement could be untrue.

“If you’ll excuse me for a moment, I need to make a call.” She stepped away, moving well out of earshot.

Did she need a private conversation because she was trying to hide something from him? His trust in others hadn’t been the same for years, but surely he could trust her, couldn’t he?

She paced as she talked, her ankles wobbling a few times, and she shoved her hand into that thick mop of hair that he’d always loved running his fingers through. She’d had long hair

back when they dated and it remained as thick and shiny.

She abruptly spun and marched back to him.

“Anything wrong?” he asked.

“Maybe.” Her sharp tone warned him not to ask for additional information, and his unease grew.

He would press the issue, but Coglin ended his call and rejoined them.

The administrator shoved his phone into his jacket pocket and smoothed the pricey fabric. “You’ve got our executive room on the first floor. It’s private and has all the amenities you’ll need. After we talk to the parents, I’ll get you a key card. Bristol, yours will work there.”

This guy moved fast, something that could make a big difference in finding the baby.

The nurse came back with the shoe covers, and the three of them put them on while she bit her lip and watched. Coglin led them to Room 332, their booties whispering over the tile floor. He entered.

Bristol stopped near the guard. “Glad to see you assigned here, Damon.”

“Zeke had me in the atrium, but Teagan repositioned me here.”

Bristol gave a firm nod. “Good move on her part. She’s in the security center and will remain in charge while I conduct interviews.”

“Yes, ma’am.”

She cringed. The woman Jared had once known wouldn’t like the formality used by the

guard. She'd always been laid back and fun-loving. But she could've changed since they'd been together. She likely had. He sure had. A stint in the Navy and four years with the FBI saw to that.

"You see anything unusual while in the atrium or out here?" she asked.

"No, ma'am." He clamped his mouth closed as if he wanted to say something else but didn't.

Jared would keep that fact in mind for the formal interview that would come later.

She took a good look at him. "Let me know if something comes to mind."

Seemed as if she also thought Damon wanted to talk, but she went into the room, and an image of the last kidnap victim Jared had tried to save came to mind. Ten-day-old Wyatt. Jared drew in a long breath before stepping across the threshold. He had to wash away the pain from Wyatt's family. The pain of losing a lively baby to a kidnapper only to learn he'd died.

Not all the air in the hospital would erase such a memory from Jared's mind.

A gowned woman sat in bed, a pink and green plaid baby blanket clutched in her hands. Her eyes were red and swollen, terror mixed with the tears. She flashed her gaze to them. "Did you find Luna?"

"I'm sorry," Coglin said. "Not yet."

The woman wailed and pressed the blanket against her face as she drew her knees to her chest. The nurse whose badge clipped to her uniform read *Johnson* patted the woman's shoulder.

The man with a bracelet on his wrist, who Jared believed to be the father, stepped forward. "And who are you anyway?"

Coglin and Bristol introduced themselves.

Jared took out his ID and displayed it. "I'm very sorry this has happened to you."

"As am I," Bristol added. "And I'll bring your daughter back to you. I promise."

*Rookie mistake.* Never promise such a thing ever but even more so when she didn't know if she would be involved in the investigation. In fact, Jared doubted she would be. Not as a patrol deputy. She didn't mention that she worked patrol, but he doubted she was on the job long enough to have reached detective status.

The father eyed Coglin. "How could you let this happen?"

Coglin stiffened. "We have excellent security systems in place. We'll figure out how this happened and find those who did it."

*Right.* Spoken like an executive protecting his company's assets.

"You better do it quick." Nurse Johnson clasped her hands together. "We've been working to regulate the baby's blood sugar for three days now, and if she's not fed every few hours, it could pose a serious health issue. That's why Mrs. Pratt hasn't been discharged yet. We have to get Luna feeding right."

"Can you tell me more about that?" Jared asked, wanting to get the medical information before he split up the parents and the nurse to be questioned on their own.

Johnson nodded. "Because the baby was a larger size at birth and she arrived late, she burns through sugar at a higher rate and needs to have it replaced more frequently than many babies."

“How big is she?” Bristol asked.

“Eight pounds, eleven ounces,” Nurse Johnson answered. “We’ve needed to give her a few sugar supplements and make sure she feeds often. If she doesn’t get the sugar she needs, hypoglycemia can cause a myriad of problems that we don’t want to even contemplate. And worse, it might not present with any symptoms at all, and the person who has her might not see it.”

“Which means you have to find her fast.” The mother’s frantic cries cut into Jared like one of the big rotors on the ships he’d been assigned to in his Navy days.

So it was official. They were dealing with a missing baby.

Even worse, a ticking time clock was counting down until the child’s health could put her very life in danger.

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