

# **THE EDITOR (3)**

## **A Daphne Taylor Mystery**

### **Plot Summary - Chapter by Chapter Breakdown**

Notes: We have left several details of this story vague, so you can give them a personal touch. You can tailor this outline in several of the following ways to make it unique, without changing the main plot. 1) Daphne Taylor could be much younger and a magazine editor instead of a literary editor. 2) The story may be set in any town, village or community of your choice. 3) Detective Stanton and Daphne (if younger) may be involved romantically. 4) Agent Dorset of the CIA may have played a bigger role in the story. 5) Irma Adolph is still on Bowen Island discussing Louis's latest book with him when Daphne joins them for a day of sailing – Irma kills Louis later in the day.

#### Part One - Rising Tension

##### Chapter One

CH 1/ Scene 1 – Daphne Taylor lives a quiet life. She is retired but still working. Perhaps it was an odd concept some years ago, but for Daphne it had been her plan all along. She bowed to the exigencies of her bosses for too many years. Now, however, she is free to work at her own pace, doing what she loves best: editing and writing books. From her apartment's exceptional vista, she can watch the fickle ocean moods, the sandy beach bathing in the sun or soaking in the pouring rain, and the people going about their own lives.

CH 1/ Scene 2 – Today however, Daphne is nowhere near English Bay or her favorite beach promenade. She has been invited to spend the weekend with a friend of hers on Bowen Island. This particular rock protruding from the Pacific Ocean is endowed of a variety of reputations. Some say, it's the drunkard's paradise, some others will say is the most peaceful place on earth, and others yet find it the most inspiring island for artists and writers alike. Daphne has not decided yet on a label for the island. She finds it peaceful and void of the city din. Every time she visits the island, Daphne delights in her strolling along the marina's walkway, having an excellent meal at the local seafood restaurant and sleeping in a loft at the Bee's Nest B&B.

CH 1/ Scene 3 – This time, her friend, Louis Evans, wants her to spend the whole weekend aboard his yacht, a beautiful forty-footer moored at the Bowen Island marina for the summer and fall seasons. Daphne has known Louis for years. Although they share in their taste for writing and reading, Daphne does not enjoy sailing these days as much as she used to. She prefers staying on terra firma as much as possible. Daphne proposed a compromise: the two of them sail around Howe Sound on Saturday and Sunday, but she spends the night at the Bee's Nest. Louis knows that he has no choice: if he does not agree to the compromise, Daphne is liable to let him sail on his own for the whole weekend.

CH 1/ Scene 4 – Daphne arrives on the island by the first ferry on Saturday morning and immediately recognizes Louis's white head of hair among the people waiting for friends and family to reach the pier. As soon as Daphne disembarks, Louis gives her a big hug. He seems very pleased to see her. Daphne is all smiles. She has known Louis since childhood and they always have been comfortable with one another. They walk together to the Bee's Nest and talk about nothing in particular until they reach the loft. Daphne invites her friend to take a seat on the terrace and to tell her why he invited her – truly this time.

CH 1/ Scene 5 – Louis tells her that he didn't want to say anything on the phone, but since he's submitted his latest manuscript about his time at the CIA, he's received menacing letters and threatening phone calls from someone who does not want that book to be published. Daphne is surprised. How could the content of a book be leaked to the public (or anyone for that matter) before its publication? These days, publishers receive manuscripts through digital communications; internet or emails. Rarely do they want to see any paper copy of the submission. When Daphne questions Louis about it, he tells her that yes, he has sent his draft by email, but the publisher asked for a hard copy of the final version to be sent by the post.

## Chapter Two

CH 2/ Scene 1 – While Daphne and Louis are sailing around Bowen Island – the weather is rather beautiful and the ocean relatively calm, which makes for an enjoyable sortie – Louis shows Daphne the two nasty letters he’s received from the person who does not want his book published. The letters are directing Louis to withdraw the manuscript or his days are counted. Daphne does not like this sort of menacing communication. In her experience with criminals or deranged individuals; the people writing such things want to frighten the recipient and enjoy the mental and emotional torture they impose upon the person before they go for the kill.

CH 2/ Scene 2 – Upon their return to shore that evening, Daphne decides to enlist her friend, Detective Michael Stanton’s help. He would have the resources to assist in the investigation of this case before it’s too late. Stanton tells Daphne that if her friend Louis is willing to take him sailing the next day, he is willing to take a look at the letters and discuss the case with him. Daphne could not be more pleased. She has lent Stanton a hand on a couple of occasions and she is always pleased to see him. “He’s got a good head on his shoulders this one,” she tells Louis when he asks her if he can trust Stanton.

CH 2/ Scene 3 – That evening, Louis takes Daphne to a famous fondue restaurant near the marina. Although fondue is not found on many menus these days, this particular bistro serves the best fish and cheese fondues in Western Canada – or so they advertise. Daphne would have to agree. The dinner is excellent and the company even better. Louis and Daphne spend the rest of the evening with some acquaintances of hers at the pub, playing a game of bridge. At around eleven o’clock, Louis accompanies Daphne to the Bee’s Nest and returns to his yacht.

CH 2/ Scene 4 – In the morning Daphne has a nice breakfast and then walks down to the ferry pier to wait for Detective Stanton to arrive. Louis was to meet her on the pier. He is not there. Daphne figures he is still asleep and she does not want to go and wake him before Stanton arrives – in the next few minutes. As soon as the detective disembarks, Daphne hardly takes time to explain Louis’s situation in detail before leading Stanton toward the marina and the spot where the yacht is moored.

CH 2/ Scene 5 – When they are in sight of the boat, Daphne notices that all the hatches and window louvers are closed. She tells Stanton that it’s highly unusual for Louis to do that. Normally he’s got at least one or two cabin windows open. But given the circumstances, perhaps Louis was afraid to have an intruder catch him unawares. As soon as they reach the boat, Daphne and Stanton climb aboard. Nothing seems amiss. Stanton opens the cabin’s hatch and goes down the stairs first. When Daphne wants to go down after him, he tells her to get back on deck and not to touch another thing. Louis is dead. At first glance his head has been bashed in.

## Chapter Three

CH 3/ Scene 1 – Daphne can hardly believe this has happened. She is devastated. She wants to go home but then Stanton tells her that she might be able to help him and the forensic team while he carries his investigation with the assistance of the local RCMP officer. The latter arrives soon after Stanton called him and filled him in with the basics of the crime. Jean Damien is a muscular man, with a towering stature. Yet he’s gentleness personified according to Daphne. He’s never seen a body or heard of a homicide being perpetrated on the island. He’s got his hands full with drug addicts, or the occasional drunkard, but never had anything to do with “major crimes”.

CH 3/ Scene 2 – Stanton tells Damien to relax; if the latter does not mind, he’s going to handle the case with his captain’s permission, of course, and will help seeing this case through to the end. Damien is relieved and happy for Stanton taking over the case. First things first: Stanton asks Damien to call the local GP and have him come to the marina to examine the body. After that, Damien should accompany the corpse to the Vancouver morgue and talk to Dr. Riddle. Stanton will phone the ME in advance of Damien’s arrival and fill him in.

CH 3/Scene 3 – Meanwhile, Daphne has been hard at work. Since she always brings her laptop where ever she goes, she has been able to re-open Louis’s latest manuscript and scan through it. She is in the middle of reading the more “hair-raising” passages dealing with an intricate strategy used by the CIA in years gone by to extract some spy or other from an unfriendly country, when Stanton shows up at the loft. He is happy to sit down for a minute with his friend and discuss the case with her.

CH 3/ Scene 4 – He wants as many details about Louis’s life and work as he can. Daphne is happy to oblige but since it seems that the content of Louis’s latest book is probably the motive for killing the dear man, Daphne gives Stanton a flash drive containing a copy of the manuscript, which has been submitted to the publisher. Until that moment, Stanton had not realized that Daphne had been Louis’s editor. He stares at his friend for an instant and then tells her to pack up her gear and to catch the next ferry with Officer Damien. He does not want her to stay anywhere near this place.

## Part Two - Main Action

### Chapter Four

CH 4/ Scene 1 – Daphne argues that she could help in the investigation.... Stanton will have none of it. Daphne is in danger. As soon as he realizes that Louis’s editor is on the island, the killer is likely to want her dead. Deflated in her purpose, Daphne packs her bag and accompanies Stanton to the pier. On their way down, Daphne recalls something she noticed on the two threatening letters Louis received before his death. The watermark in the paper was that of the publisher. Someone in the publishing house had probably read the manuscript and did not like its content. She does not say anything to Stanton – he’s got enough on his plate for now.

CH 4/ Scene 2 – Upon reaching Horseshoe Bay, the Vancouver landing port, Daphne leaves it up to Damien to accompany Louis’s corpse to the morgue while she takes a cab to get home. As soon as she gets there, she hears Joker, her dog, yapping through her neighbor’s front door. Daphne usually takes Joker everywhere she goes, but since sailing was in the books for this particular outing, Claudette, her long-time neighbor and friend offered to look after the little terrier.

CH 4/ Scene 3 – Although this is Sunday afternoon and Daphne does not want to disturb Mrs. Arnold, the executive editor at Louis’s publishing house, she decides to phone her anyway and leave a message in her office voice-mail. She does not want to send her an email – who knows who will be snooping in the office today. However, two rings into the call Lisa Arnold picks up the phone, to Daphne utmost surprise. When Daphne tells her what happened, Lisa is stunned. She cannot believe Louis is dead. This is a blessing in disguise actually – the sales of this last book will surpass all projections. Daphne has to agree with the comment. A dead author is like a dead painter – their works are more valuable once they pass away.

CH 4/ Scene 4 – Nevertheless, this is a homicide. Louis has been killed under very suspicious circumstances and what ever information Lisa might have about Louis and or the manuscript he submitted might be helpful to Detective Stanton. Lisa tells Daphne to come to her office the next day so they could have a chat about these menacing letters Louis received before his death. Daphne does not tell Lisa about the watermark on the paper used to write the letters. Instead she asks Lisa if she could bring Detective Stanton to the meeting. Lisa has no objection and tells Daphne that she’ll see the both of them the next day at ten a.m.

CH 4/ Scene 5 – Daphne then phones Stanton. He’s still on the island with the forensic team that has just arrived. He has taken over the loft and will stay at the Bee’s Nest for the night before coming back to Vancouver by the early ferry on Monday morning. When Daphne tells him that they’re expected at the publisher’s office at ten tomorrow, Stanton asks her why. “Isn’t that a little premature?” Daphne then tells him about the watermark on the paper. She hears Stanton whistle over the line. He had not noticed it. He tells Daphne that he’ll pick her up with his car at 9:30 the next morning.

### Chapter 5

CH 5/ Scene 1 – When the two arrive at the publishing house, Stanton is a little surprised by the size of the office – it’s not as large as he expected it to be. Daphne explains that this is not a magazine but a literary publisher. They only produce a few books a year. Besides, these days most books are only published on-line. As for those which are actually printed, the manuscript is sent to either New York or Toronto to the printing house. Stanton concludes from this explanation that they will be dealing with fewer ‘persons of interest’ than he might have expected.

CH 5/ Scene 2 – Lisa welcomes the both of them and invites them to have coffee with her at the nearby café. She says that since talking to Daphne yesterday, she would prefer not talking to them in the office. “The walls might have ears as they say,” she tells them. As soon as they are sitting around a small table in the café, Lisa pulls her phone out of her pocket and shows four pictures to Stanton and Daphne. These are the people – the only people – who have read the hard copy of the manuscript. The soft copy is still on a flash drive in Lisa’s safe. She checked it this morning: the manuscript is intact.

CH 5/ Scene 3 – Among the four people who have read the manuscript, one is a woman who, Lisa says, lost her father twenty-five-years ago during the fall of the Berlin Wall. The CIA apparently killed him. Her father was one of the East Germans who ordered the capture of the American agent trapped behind the wall. When the young agent was extracted, a CIA man shot and killed her father. When Daphne asks how Lisa is aware of the story, she replies that Irma Adolph told her about it after reading the manuscript.

CH 5/ Scene 4 – Stanton hates to jump to conclusion, but it looks like Irma Adolph has made it to the top of the list of suspects. He will need to interview her as soon as possible. As for the other employees – those in the photographs – they do not appear to have any particular interest in Louis’s story. But appearance can be very deceiving. Stanton will need to interview them as well. Daphne and Stanton leave Lisa to finish her coffee to go back to Daphne’s place. During their little powwow, Stanton shows the letters to Daphne again. She confirms that the watermark is in fact that of the publisher. She shows Stanton copies of her own correspondence with Lisa Arnold – the watermark is identical.

CH 5/ Scene 5 – When Stanton arrives at the station, the captain is waiting for him. There is a gentleman in his office. They need to have a word. Stanton wonders what this could be about. The captain introduces the man as Agent Dorset of the CIA. Stanton can’t help but smile. The grapevine, in instances such as these, works faster than emails or text messages. Agent Dorset is aware of their ex-agent’s sudden death. He attributes it to some vandals living in and around the island. He makes it clear that “the US government does not want the twenty-five-year old episode brought back to light and put under scrutiny.” Stanton has to bow to the powers-that-be but can’t help thinking that the CIA has a little too much power in this instance. A murderer will go free if he does not solve the case.

CH 5/ Scene 6 – As soon as Dorset leaves the captain’s office, Stanton makes his views known to his superior. That woman at the publisher’s office will remain free from any sort of prosecution for as long as the CIA, which, by the way, has no jurisdiction in Canada, will keep on covering up the old story. Louis’s book is proof that he wanted to make light of what happened twenty-five years ago. And he’s now paid for his crime with his life. Justice will not be served if Irma Adolph is not interviewed – at least.

CH 5/ Scene 7 – The captain needs to have a serious chat with his supervisors and perhaps the head of CSIS in Ottawa. He is inclined to agree with Stanton, a murderer cannot go free just because the CIA decided they don’t like to bring their skeletons out of the closet.

### Part Three - Resolution

#### Chapter Six

CH 6/ Scene 1 – That evening, Daphne and Stanton have dinner together at Daphne’s place. Joker doesn’t seem to have enough of Stanton’s attention. He loves to lie down across his feet and snore the evening away. However, Stanton is not visiting his old friend *the editor* for fun only. He relates his discussion with his captain and with the CIA agent. Daphne’s first question surprises Stanton. “Has Agent Dorset read Louis’s book?” The detective has no idea. Daphne tells him that if Dorset knew about the book and the content, he could have been the one who decided – with the CIA’s blessing – to eliminate

the ex-agent. Stanton has to agree that it is an avenue worth exploring, even before they interview Irma Adolph.

CH 6/ Scene 2 – That evening, while the detective is still sharing a few memories with his favorite editor, he receives a call from his captain. The man tells him that he's sending a lady officer to Daphne's home. He has talked to a friend of his in Washington and according to him Daphne Taylor is in serious danger. When asked why that is, the captain tells Stanton that the CIA will stop at nothing to eliminate any possible "witness" to the event that occurred 25 years ago.

CH 6/ Scene 3 – Stanton cannot believe it. He argues that the CIA would have to kill no less than five people at the publishing house, plus himself and Daphne – all of those who have read Louis's manuscript. The captain says that yes, it sounds ludicrous, but until he's reached the top-ranking officers in the morning in Ottawa, he would prefer for Daphne to stay safe.

CH 6/ Scene 4 – As the first sunrays pierce Daphne's bedroom curtains, Stanton is already waiting for Irma Adolph to come out of her apartment in another part of town. By the time he's ready to give up on her coming out; Stanton receives a call from his captain. Irma Adolph is dead. She's been found dead by her neighbor. Stanton takes in a breath. The CIA has definitely something to hide. He waits for the police cruiser to show up before he asks the concierge to let him into Irma's apartment. When they get to the floor – the apartment door is open – they find the neighbor sitting on a chair beside the body of her friend. The woman does not say anything, but hands a letter to Stanton. "I've eliminated my father's killer – the CIA is the real culprit – I've nothing else to live for."

CH 6/ Scene 5 – Within hours of Irma's body being discovered, the media has received several press-releases from Lisa Arnold recounting the abridged story of Louis Evans and Irma Adolph. By nightfall the whole of North America is aware of the CIA's cover up.

CH 6/ Scene 6 – With a copy of Louis's book on her lap, a glass of wine in her hand, and her friend Michael Stanton at her side, Daphne Taylor, *The Editor* is sending a silent message to the ex-agent: "Keep them straight, Louis!"

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