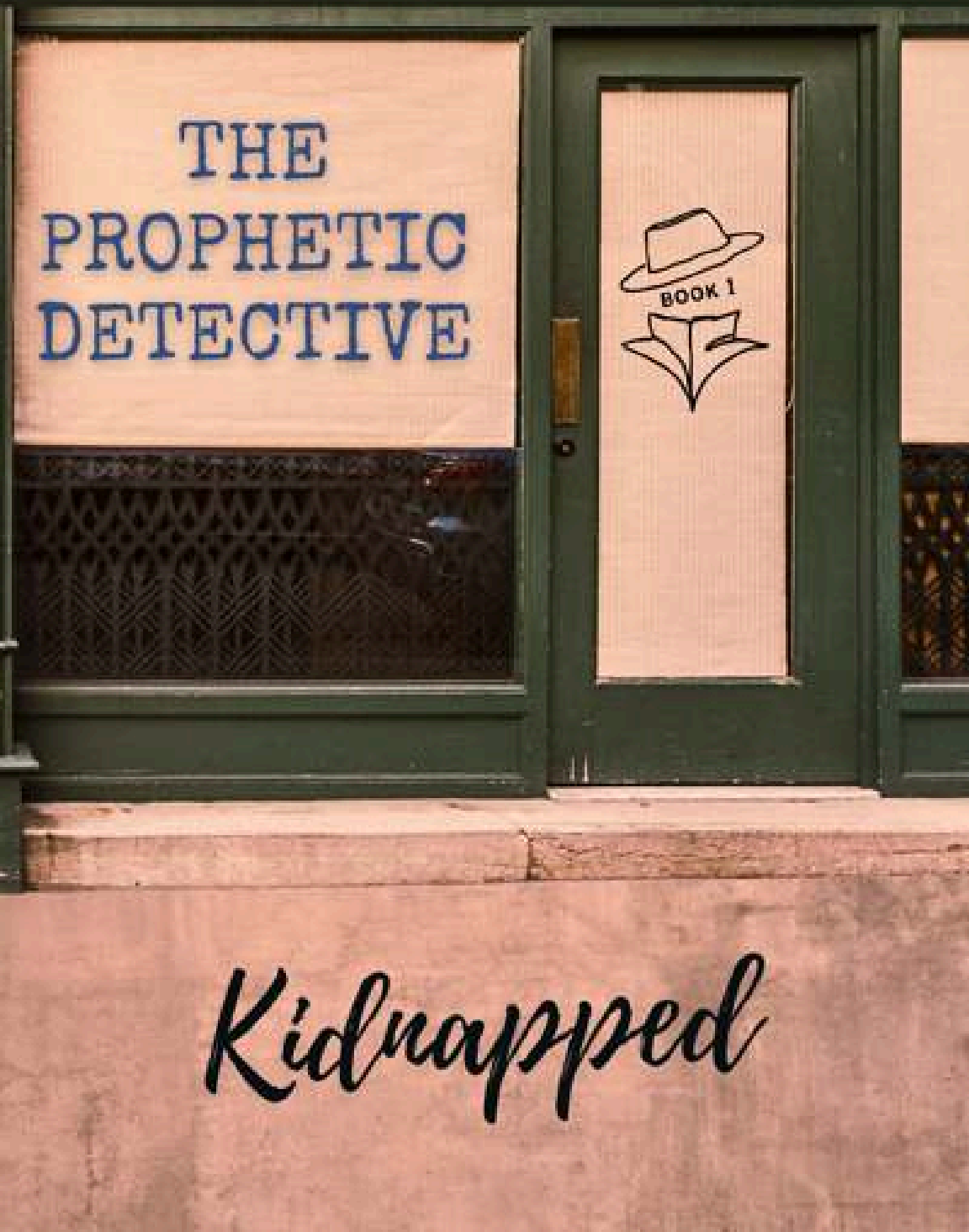
ANN-SOFI K. JOHNSON



Kidnapped

The Prophetic Detective – Kidnapped: Book 1

A Riveting Blend of Mystery and Divine Insight!

Ann-Sofi K. Johnson

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Chapter 1

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1

SHOPPING

'I was sitting in my car, wondering when he'd show up. I'd been there for a few hours and my snacks were starting to run low and my eyes were growing tired. I let out a breath of air and laughed to myself as I realized I'd forgotten to ask God about it.

So, I did. I closed my eyes and instantly felt a tug. I got out of the car and followed where the tug was leading me. I walked down the block to the right and saw an alley ahead.

I stopped before peaking into the alley and there he was. He was stumbling right towards me, clearly affected by something. I waited until he was close enough before I made myself known.

"Hey, I thought you had an injured leg and couldn't walk?" I asked him.

He stopped and stared at me, trying to figure out who I was and if I was someone to be scared of.

I smiled at him with my most benign look, "Are you trying to scam an insurance company or something?"

After a moment his puzzled look turned into a grin.

"No, I'm suing a company. They had some trash stacked up in the back and I fell into it while drunk one night and was taken to the hospital. I figured I could get a pretty penny from them if they think they did some real damage to me. They seemed so apologetic, it's like taking candy from a child!" he slurred his words as he spoke proudly.

"Cool," I said and held up my phone that I had secretly been filming him with the whole time. "I guess you don't mind if I send this to their lawyers then, right? As it's like taking candy from a child, I'm sure they'll still give you whatever you want, right?"

A flash of anger crossed his face and he launched toward my phone while spewing curse words at me. I simply outran him, got back into my car, and drove out of there, leaving him, angrily screaming and stumbling in the middle of the street.'

"Faith?" a female voice asked gently.

Faith jumped as she was pulled out of the report she was writing for Dennis, her P.I. mentor and boss, and back into The Coffee Shop that was buzzing with voices and the sound of a coffee grinder finishing a grind.

She looked up at the tall, young lady in her early 20s with long blonde hair that was pulled back into a high ponytail, adorned with a bright pink apron with 'The Coffee Shop' written on it.

"Yes…?" Faith asked suspiciously.

"How would you like to go grocery shopping with me?" Skylar asked, giving Faith a nervous hopeful smile.

"What's the catch?" Faith asked as it was clear to her that her best friend wasn't just asking for a casual shopping trip.

"Fine," Skylar said and rolled her eyes jokingly as she decided to give up the act. Faith was way too aware to get fooled that easily, anyway.

"Well?" Faith asked and raised her eyebrows as a smile spread across her face.

"My grandma's coming to visit this weekend. She's reached another level! She sent a grocery list in advance so that when she gets here she can start feeding us at once. It's like she thinks Dad hasn't been feeding us since Mom passed. Sure, there was an adjustment period in the beginning, but it's been years, and we're all adults now. Cole and Ethan don't even live at home anymore," Skylar said while gesticulating wildly.

"I bet you they'll be home when they hear your grandma is cooking, though," Faith said and winked at her friend.

Skylar rolled her eyes again, "Yes, you're right, they totally will be! I wouldn't be surprised if they end up staying over just so they don't miss her breakfast," Skylar said and laughed.

"Is it a lot? On the grocery list, I mean?" Faith asked, bringing them back to the original topic after their laughter died down.

"Yes, and some of the items are really weird. Like, what even is 'Romanesco broccoli?!' Faith, will you help me? You're so good at finding things," Skylar said and gave Faith her most innocent and

pleading face.

Faith laughed and answered, "Sure, I'll help you, but it's gonna cost you."

Skylar narrowed her eyes, "Is the price perhaps a Chai latte?"

Faith pretended to gasp, "Oh, you know me so well. Yes, large, please," Faith said and smiled, showing her bottom teeth.

Skylar shook her head and laughed. "I'll get you that Chai right away," she said and walked behind the counter to start making the drink.

"I take it she agreed to help you?" Spencer asked, raising his eyebrows and nodding towards the drink Skylar was making.

"Yep. How could you tell?!" Skylar asked with pretend shock before breaking out in laughter.

"Oh, I don't know. Lucky guess, I suppose," he said and laughed before turning his attention to the customer who just walked up to the counter.

Skylar brought Faith the drink and finished her shift before they headed to the store.

The outside of the store had large stone-covered pillars with big wooden trusses holding up the awning which created a grand entrance.

Inside the store, wooden signs marked the contents of each parallel aisle with the produce section on the left side of the store, the bakery section on the right, and the meat and dairy sections in the back.

Faith's eyes grew large as saucers as she watched Skylar unfold the list her grandma had sent.

"Wow, you weren't kidding about it being a big shopping list. How long is she staying for? Looks like she's going to feed a mob!" Faith exclaimed as she looked on in disbelief.

"I know, right?! I had to clean out the fridge just to make sure we'd have space for some of this stuff. I bet she's planning on leaving us with a ton of leftovers. At least some of that can go over to Cole and Ethan's place, but it's gonna be tight," Skylar said and exhaled.

"So, what's on there?" Faith asked and leaned closer to see better. She scanned the paper and then looked up and scanned the store aisles. "Let's start over in the bakery section and make our

way through the store, ending with the frozen section."

"Sounds good. Thank you again for helping me with this!" Skylar said as she squeezed Faith from the side before bouncing off towards the bakery section.

Faith laughed and followed, "You're welcome, but you did pay me with a Chai, so I'm basically your employee right now, so no need to thank me," Faith joked.

As they walked through the aisles, Faith used her naturally given ability to find things, by scanning signs, rows, types of items, and brand names, and it was working out pretty well, until they came across an item neither of them was familiar with.

"What even is this?!" Skylar asked, perplexed. "I'm glad she wrote the brand name, but that's not really helpful when I have no clue what it is!"

"I sense that it's over here," Faith said, as she felt an inner pull towards the right. She led the way and turned into an aisle they'd already passed through and began to scan the items on the shelves.

"I think it's a bit further down," she said and walked to about the middle of the aisle with her hand searching as she walked. She paused and looked at where her hand was pointing, and lo and behold, there it was.

"*'Patty's ultimate omega-3 mix'*," Skylar read, "Wow, you found it! How did you do that?! I mean, I knew you were great at finding things, but that was eerie. It's like you felt your way to where it was." Skylar stared at Faith in awe.

"Well, I suppose in a way, I did. I was using my spiritual senses, not my natural. It sure comes in handy in my line of work. Do you know how many times Dennis has asked me to get a hold of some informant who didn't want to show up, so I asked God for help, and used my senses, and there they were! It's awesome! Especially that one time when he'd asked me to do a stake-out by those dumpsters down on 3rd street!"

"Oh, right, I remember you sharing about that time. I didn't realize you did what you just did. I thought the person just happened to appear. Like God sent them around so you didn't need to stay there for too long."

"Well, I think it might have been partly that, but also, they didn't actually pass by the dumpster. I left the dumpster when I felt led to

go check out the back of a building, and there they were. So, yes, I used the same thing then as I just did to find this weird trail mix."

"Wow, I wanna know how to do that!"

"Really? 'Cause you can have it! I'll happily impart what I have to you, and after that, you just ask God to lead you in it."

"Yes, please," Skylar said and held her hands out, open to receive whatever Faith wanted to release.

Faith smiled and put her hands in Skylar's and prayed, "Lord, I impart my gift of finding things to Skylar right now. Let her notice your promptings as she develops this new skill. Amen!"

"Thank you!" Skylar smiled. "Now, I wanna try one!" she said and looked down at the paper. "Okay, Holy Spirit, where is the pancake mix?" she asked and closed her eyes.

Skylar's eyes flung open, "I think I sensed something!" she exclaimed.

"Come on! Take me to it," Faith said and gestured for Skylar to lead the way.

Skylar walked out of the aisle and turned left. A few rows down she turned into another aisle. Faith looked up and saw that it was the baking aisle, but Skylar didn't seem to have read the sign.

Skylar walked to the end of the aisle, looked down on the left side, and squealed. "I found it! I did it! That was so cool!" She turned towards Faith and jumped excitedly!

"Good job!" Faith said impressed and bounced excitedly with her best friend.

"This is so much fun! Thank you, Holy Spirit! Let's do the rest of the list!" Skylar exclaimed excitedly as she put the pancake mix in the cart.

"I'm really impressed! I didn't really think you'd pick it up this fast, but I'm so happy you did. Isn't it fun?!" Faith asked, her eyes sparkling with emotion.

"Yes, it really is! Let's go get this one now," Skylar said and pointed at another item on the list.

They both felt exhausted when they finally got back to the car, even though it had taken much less time than they had anticipated since the Holy Spirit had helped them both out.

"Oh, let's get some of Rafael's Tacos!" Skylar exclaimed as she

closed the trunk.

"Sounds good to me!" Faith agreed and got into the passenger seat.

Rafael's Taco Truck was one of the most frequented restaurants in town, and Skylar and Faith's favorite.

They hurried over to Skylar's place and unpacked all the groceries before driving over to get dinner.

Rafael's Taco Truck was painted red, and even though it moved around for lunch, it could always be found in the same place for dinner.

The tables and chairs had become a permanent fixture in the little park after Rafael had started parking there for the dinner rush, and they had been well appreciated by the older people of the town who enjoyed people-watching in the park during the lunch hours.

"I doubt I'll be getting any tacos for a while, so I'm gonna load up. I think I'm gonna get *five* today!" Skylar pondered as they got out of the car and walked over to the back of the line.

"Wow, will you be able to eat all of them?" Faith asked, surprised.

"After all of that shopping? Yes, I sure will," Skylar said and laughed.

"Well, I'm just gonna have my normal three," Faith said and looked hungrily towards the end of the line where Rafael and his wife were handing out food to the customers ahead of them.

"Hello, chicas! How are you today? Getting your usual?" Rafael asked happily when it was their turn.

"No, I'll take five today, all beef. Thanks," Skylar answered him eagerly.

"Oh, the chica is hungry today," Rafael joked. "How about you, Faith?" he raised his eyebrows in anticipation of another big order.

"Oh, just the normal for me, please. I may be hungry, but that doesn't mean I have any more space," Faith said and laughed.

"8 tacos coming up," Rafael called out, and his oldest son started putting them together.

They sat down at one of the tables with their tacos and stuffed themselves.

"Oh, I feel so full!" Skylar complained and glared at the fifth taco on her plate.

"Are you saying you can't fit the last one?" Faith teased.

"Yes. You were smart, I should have ordered my normal, too," Skylar said in defeat.

"Are you gonna eat that?" a teenage boy asked and pointed at Skylar's last taco.

"You want it?! Please, take it. It's all yours, Isaac!" Skylar said and pushed the plate over towards the teen and let out a breath of relief.

"Thanks!" he said excitedly and sat down with them and started devouring the taco.

"Did your mom not feed you, today?" Faith asked as she watched Isaac munch down the taco.

"Nah, she's started a new diet and everything is made with cauliflower now. I just want some normal food. I really appreciate this, Skylar! Thanks a bunch!" he said as he wiped his mouth and stood up. "Are you done, too?" he asked Faith.

"Yes."

"Cool," he said and took their plates and threw them away before rejoining his friends.

"Do you mind if I chill at your place for a bit? I'm not sure I can make it all the way home after all this food," Skylar asked Faith.

"Of course," Faith said and stood up. "Let's go!"

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