

The Murder Plot

By Marilyn Reeves

When I was in my early twenties I was hired by a mid-sized company to become part of their clerical staff. While the senior staff members had private offices, the clerks and secretaries were assigned to little cubicles. Despite the isolation of our individual workspaces, the people were friendly, and several of us would go together for a mid-morning break at a little coffee shop across the street.

On my first day of work, Connie and Julie, both senior staff members, stopped by my desk and invited me to tag along. The group, consisting of men and women of different ages and status, all gathered around a big table, where they would tell jokes, talk about sports and politics, and flirt a bit with members of the opposite sex.

By about the third week, I noticed that Connie and Julie, who had been especially nice to me the first few days, were absent from the gathering, and when I passed by Julie's office on the way back to my work station, I could hear the two of them murmuring about something sotto-voce. Not being one to eavesdrop, I didn't think much about it until I heard my name mentioned, and I wondered what they were saying about me.

The next day, the same thing happened, and I quietly paused to listen through the crack in the door. I didn't hear them mention my name again, but they were saying things like, "Outrageous flirt ... dresses like a tramp ... she's better watch herself!" ... and things along that line, so I was a bit taken aback. Surely they can't be talking about *me*! I admit I enjoyed kidding around with some of the fellows during our coffee break, but didn't think I was an "outrageous flirt." And I thought I was wearing appropriate office attire – nothing particularly revealing. So I didn't know what to think.

The next time I overheard bits of their conversation, they were saying things like, "She thinks she's so darn hot! Money grubber! And a married man, no less! I'd like to kill that woman!"

What? That's definitely not *me* they're talking about!

But the following day I heard my name again, along with words like "maybe arsenic ... no, knives are too messy ... no, definitely not a gun!"

Oh my heavens! They were plotting to *KILL* me! I was truly frightened! So I tried to avoid those two women as much as possible. I never left my water glass unattended, and I even started carrying a can of pepper spray in my pocket ... just in case.

A couple of days later Connie and Julie stuck their heads around the edge of my partition. My heart leapt into my throat when I saw who it was and I started fumbling around for my can of pepper spray!

"Hi, how's it going?" Connie said. "We were wondering if you'd like to buy a ticket to the play our Downtown Theater Group is putting on this coming weekend. It's called "The Plot to Kill Marilyn Monroe." We've been rehearsing our lines during our coffee breaks. The cost is only ten doll ... "

But I didn't hear the rest of her sentence, because I fainted dead away.