

PROLOGUE

Sylvia woke with a jolt. She'd had that dream again: waxing moon, waves splashing, body bouncing on the ocean toward the beach. A nightmare or a premonition? Either way it was no good. Had the police found her coat with the pin? It could be traced back to her. Would salt water rinse off fingerprints? Guns sink, don't they? What if Ricardo's body washed up on shore?

She rolled over in the bumpy bed and tried to go back to sleep. "Hotel Monte Vista" blinked in pink neon through thin curtains onto the bedspread. The clock ticked. She cuddled her beagle-basset, Lucy, stroked the satiny fur and whispered, "Will the police find us?" Lucy hummed, then grew quiet.

Wide awake now, Sylvia switched on the light and sat up. Her shaky hands pulled a Lucky Strike from its pack. She lit it, inhaled and blew the smoke out through her nostrils.

She reached for the *Life* magazine from the bedside table and studied Grace Kelly's smiling face on the cover, cool blue eyes and luscious blonde hair. People had compared her own beauty to the movie star's, but Sylvia didn't see the resemblance. At least Grace had found her prince.

Lucy crawled from beneath the covers, blinked, and plopped at the foot of the bed with a sigh. Sylvia attempted to smile at her. "You can't sleep either girl?" Returning to the magazine, a recent one, she tried to calm her jittery thoughts as she flipped through ads for phonograph needles, beauty creams, Playtex Living Bras. She turned a page and stared at a picture.

"Oh my God!" The photo of her with Ricardo leaving their engagement party filled the entire page. Such a wreck that night, her blonde hair in shambles and mascara smeared, looking as if she'd been through a wind tunnel. Of course Ricardo appeared perfect with his neat hair slicked back. He had been sauced, but the picture didn't show that. Sylvia slapped the magazine shut and tossed it across the room not wanting to remember the last time she had seen him.

She had been certain it was love the way her heart loped every time he was near. When he smiled at her she thought she might fly. So naïve. She closed her eyes and held back tears. But in the end, right before she pulled out the gun, she realized it must not have been love at all.