

**DANGER
ABOVE**

Chapter 1

Shanin Specter had seen some terrible things. Never as they happened, always afterward.

Families appeared at the lawyer's door months, even years after a tragedy. He tried to bring some measure of...something—compensation, justice, closure—to a grieving mother or father, husband or wife, son or daughter. He had been doing this for nearly 30 years now, and he had come up short every time. Every single time. No compensation could equal the loss of a loved one, no legal result could make the sadness dim any faster, no jury verdict or settlement could erase the memories. But what he did was all that could be done.

Specter had seen broken and twisted bodies, children left paralyzed and palsied by a mishap at birth, by a careless doctor or an inattentive nurse. He had seen so many cases of missed cancer diagnoses lead to prolonged, painful deaths. He had seen simple mistakes lead to tragedy—a young man left in a vegetative state because of a misplaced endotracheal tube, a girl left paralyzed because of an inadequate and defective automobile seat belt, a teenage boy who was crippled and eventually died when a BB fired from a defective rifle lodged in his brain.

Specter had seen all kinds of calamity, some gruesome, all heartbreaking. But this, his latest case, was the worst.

Chapter 2

People were aware of electricity thousands of years ago. Egyptian texts dating back to 2750 B.C. refer to fish that produced an electrical charge. (Electric eels use chemicals in their bodies that can manufacture as many as 650 volts, or about five times the shocking power of a household outlet.) The ancient Egyptians believed the charges had curative properties, and they used catfish and sea rays to shock people out of maladies such as headaches or gout. In this effort they also first learned that this mysterious power could travel through conducting agents, and into humans.

Chapter 3

For previous summer vacations, the Goretzkas—Mike, Carrie and their little girls, Chloe and Carlie—had rented a beach house at the shore in Rehoboth, Delaware, and invited the entire family to make the trip down from suburban Pittsburgh. Many of them came, packing the house with relatives, plenty of food and lots of fun.

But this once, Mike wanted to get away with just his wife and kids. It was actually his brother Chuck's idea. "Michael, you can't keep taking everybody. You've got to go somewhere yourselves," he'd said more than once.

So this year, 2009, Mike had booked a trip to Disney World for the first week of June. But then he changed the plans. Mike had found out that week was marked "Gay Days Orlando," a time in which more than 150,000 gay celebrants made the trip to the Florida city. Mike was no homophobe, but he felt that might not be the perfect atmosphere for his daughters, aged four and two. So he changed the trip to the end of May.

The family had a wonderful time, going on the rides and seeing the sights, eating junk food and staying at the Wilderness Lodge, a theme hotel on the Disney World grounds. "For the first time, you look at each other at the end of the day and you're alone. It was a great feeling. It really bonded us four," Mike remembered.

They were home by the first week of June. "Going earlier was my choice. We could have gone that first week in June. We could have been at Disney that week," Mike said years later. "It haunted me for a long time."