





# BETRAYED

**Kidnapped, raped and left for dead—but Laurel  
Murphy didn't die! Now she must rebuild her  
spirit and her life despite her desire for revenge**

Morgan St. James



**Marina Publishing Group**

**Las Vegas NV**

**<http://betrayedthebook.wordpress.com>**

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Special paperback edition pricing for quantity purchases by book clubs. E-mail request to [marinapublishing@gmail.com](mailto:marinapublishing@gmail.com)

ASIN: B00FGFNKHE

Cover and interior design: Elaine McNeal

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# **Praise For Books By Morgan St. James**

## **SILVER SISTERS MYSTERIES**

“Morgan St. James and Phyllice Bradner are as entertaining as Nick & Nora Charles or even better. If you like the late Anne George's Southern Sisters Series you'll love these two crime solving quirky characters who know how to create merry mischief and it's in their blood.”

~Pamela James/Reviewer Mayhem & Magic website

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“I love to read Morgan St. James books, short stories and her column for the examiner.com! This book is fast, fun and easy to follow! I love that...:-) Another book Morgan St. James wrote that I absolutely love and relate to is "Devil's Dance" and "The Devil's Due"! Morgan has a way of writing that you can relate to or feel as though she is writing about you. This author is the best! I just love all of her books.”

~Wendy Mazaros, Author “Vegas Rag Doll”

## **LA BELLA MAFIA, CO-AUTHORED WITH DENNIS N. GRIFFIN**

“This book is the most heart- wrenching book I’ve ever read. It opens doors of understanding for those who have maybe not been through everything that this woman went through but parts of it. It also gives the reader an understanding as to why and how a person will allow themselves to be put through this Hell.”

~Martha A. Cheves, Author, Reviewer

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# Dedication

This book is dedicated to all of the young girls and young women who have suffered kidnap and rape experiences— those who survived and those who did not.

Although this story is set in the era from the 1950's to the 1970's, these travesties still exist in our society. We see them on the news, are horrified, and then rationalize that it could never happen to anyone we know.

# Introduction And Acknowledgments

Many of the scenes in *Betrayed* were inspired by events that really did happen, but not necessarily in the same time frames, the exact way or to the same people. That is what we authors do sometimes. We take experiences or events and turn them into fiction—products of our imagination.

An earlier version of the story was told in two books written under the pen name Arliss Adams, but when the publisher went out of business it was a wonderful opportunity to consolidate it into one book, change character's names and do what authors often want to do as their writing skills evolve—make extensive edits and changes.

Many of the events that happened back in the late 1950s and early 1960s were the inspiration for creating the fictional tapestry of what happens in the first half of *Betrayed*. These shocking things did happen to someone we knew although I don't believe it ever made the papers or news. They were relayed to my mother in letters sent from Chicago. Although I was a young teenager at the time my mother shared those letters with me. Maybe she did this so I would understand how important it was to be careful and evaluate people. I knew if I ever became a writer I wanted to tell the story somehow. It took many, many years, but at last my imagination took over and I had enough writing experience to handle a story of this intensity.

There are some people I must thank for helping me through the emotional rollercoaster of writing this book. A forensic psychologist, Morton Reed, who was an author of thrillers and has now passed on. Mort read the very first version so many years ago, way before I was even close to being a published author, and told me frankly it would never get published the way it was. Without that honest evaluation, I might never have

rewritten it...many times.

My family, particularly my sister Phyllice Bradner, who helped me edit the early versions of the book when I was very unsure of how to handle it, and my husband for having faith in me from day one.

Later, to members of Henderson Writer's Group, for their astute critiques as the tale continued to unfold and go through revision after revision.

A thank you to my friend, first reader Judith Deutsch, a mystery book collector and aficionado, for her suggestions from a woman's point of view when she read an earlier manuscript and offered her copy corrections. She has now edited several of my books including *La Bella Mafia*.

Then to J. David Webb, an author whose work I respect, for reading a later version and offering his expert critique and wonderful comments.

Most of all to my author friends Fred Rayworth and Mike Dennis, whose contributions and helpful suggestions helped to mold the characters and story.

Fred was fully invested in the life of Laurie Murphy, the protagonist and helped me revise some issues I was wrestling with.

To all of the readers who sent me emails after reading the original published version telling me how they had connected with the main character and wanted to protect her—how they wished retribution for those who hurt her. That was when I knew my characters were three-dimensional.

To those who encouraged me to keep this book alive, I thank you all.



## ONE

*A door slamming makes one jump, but it doesn't make one afraid. What one fears is the serpent that crawls underneath it. ~  
Collette, Cheri*

**CHICAGO, NOVEMBER, 1956**

Images raced through my mind like pictures in one of those flip books—the kind that look like animation when the pages are fanned. As those images swirled faster and faster, terror consumed me like a raging fire.

Flip. Flip. Flip.

Can't breathe. Arms... hurt. Legs...hurt. Move. Can't!

Panicked thoughts hammered at me non-stop. Mama? Where's Mama? Breathe. Breathe. Mary Margaret. Where's Mary Margaret?

I tried to cry out, but my tongue hit something wedged in my mouth. My eyes filled with hot tears that dripped onto the sheet already damp with my perspiration.

Concentrate!

Some bits of dust nestled in a leafy design pressed into the plaster ceiling above me commanded my attention. The more I concentrated on them, the more they looked like furry caterpillars, undulating as though they were ready to spin cocoons. The terrible realization hit me like a sledgehammer. This isn't my ceiling! It's not my room!

Flip. Flip. Flip:

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Door hinges squeaked as though in need of oil and broke the suffocating silence.

Footsteps. Gardenias. Stale tobacco smell.

My heart pounded so hard I felt like it wanted jump right out of my chest. A tall woman walked to the foot of the bed and

stood there holding a tray. In one graceful move, she turned and placed it on the dresser, shrugged and came back to the bed. She bent toward me, blonde hair spilling over her shoulders like a glistening shawl. “Well, Laurie, I see you’re finally awake.”

*Sherry?*

Waves of relief cut through my fear until those familiar strange gold flecks in her hazel eyes flashed like caution lights. Full lips, painted brilliant scarlet, drew into a sneer. My jumbled mind shrieked that something was horribly wrong.

“Aw, look at that. The little ballerina is frightened.” She shook her head. “You know, you’re really a trusting idiot.”

She reached out and stroked my hair, her long fingers catching in the mass of tangled black waves. It was her cruel smile that scared me most. She held my chin in a vise-like grip and fixed me with a gaze as cold as ice.

“You know, you’re not only trusting, you’re awfully naïve for someone seventeen years old.” The sound of her high-pitched laugh raised the hair on my arms.

“You know how you said the Coke tasted funny at lunch yesterday? Well, that was because I slipped something into it to knock you out. Honey, you lost your cherry last night.”

Cherry? What was she was talking about?

She tightened her grip and her fingers dug deeper into my shoulders “Stop that damn crying. You’d better do exactly as I say or—”

Sherry had always been sweet and caring which was why I adored her. I didn’t recognize this terrifying stranger hovering over me.

“Damn you, quit wiggling! Just calm down! Her fingers traced a line along my cheek, and stopped at the fabric jammed into my mouth. “I brought you some toast and juice. Here, let me take that thing out of your mouth for awhile.” She untied the knot and the gag fell away. My mouth was so dry it felt like it was full of cotton balls.

“Sherry,” I pleaded. My voice sounded dry and raspy. “Get me out of here. I want to go home.”

Silence.

I became aware of a pain between my legs. It was only a dull ache at first, but one that increased as I became more alert until, finally, it hurt more than the time I fell on the edge of a wooden milk crate in kindergarten. Mama had taken me to the doctor back then and he told her my vagina was bruised. I remembered giggling through the pain because that word sounded funny.

Without warning, the tears welled in my eyes rolled down my cheeks and left damp tracks in their wake.

I couldn’t understand why my mind was so fuzzy.

“Sherry?”

She fixed me with a malicious stare. Not a word. The aura in this strange room chilled me more than a winter wind blowing off Lake Michigan.

“Sh-Sherry, you’re frightening me.”

She moved her face very close to mine. Hot puffs of breath peppered my cheek. “You’re a real pain in the ass, Pavlova. Quit bawling and drink this damn juice. Know why you’re here? Because Tommy Boy and I kidnapped you, that’s why.”

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As though from a distance, a goofy hee-haw kind of laugh sliced through my confusion, followed by, “Here’s what I think, Sher. I think that horny old goat is gonna just love our sweet little ballerina.”

That laugh. I recognized it instantly. Sherry’s boyfriend Tommy was in the room, too. “Yep. Just like I told you, the cops will think this sweet little thing ran away.”

I tried to focus on Sherry, but her face now appeared to be covered by a chiffon veil. Her voice drifted farther and farther away, “Yeah, if we’re lucky. I’m keepin’ my fingers crossed!”

For some reason disjointed memories of a horrible fight

Mama and I had the past November flitted through my baffled mind. I could hear Mama's nasty shouts as clearly as if she stood by my side. "I will never sign the contract. The only way you will go to New York is over my dead body!" New York City Ballet wanted me. No. No. Can't go.

After that day, every emotion I might have had faded away until there was nothing left but an empty shell. Oh, I still walked to the bus stop on Clark Street after school every day, and I took the bus to the Karakova Academy of Dance on Howard Street. Once there, I sat on a chair and watched the other dancers. My existence was that of a body without a soul because in my heart I knew I'd never dance again.



The first time I saw Sherry's boyfriend Tommy I was at the Academy sitting on my chair in the corner watching the others as I did every day. He winked and said, "Hey, gorgeous, how about a smile for the new piano player?"

I looked at him without smiling, more like a robot than a person. Nothing unusual about that. Since the fight with Mama, I was like that most days. You see, the robot-me could shut off feelings and that was much better than wanting to cry all the time. Every time Tommy saw me, he teased me about having the saddest eyes he'd ever seen, but he never got a rise out of me. Not once.



Sherry and Tommy both stood there staring at me as though I was a piece of meat in the butcher's case. My eyes darted around the room frantically looking for anything faintly familiar. The pounding of my heart echoed in my ears. I told myself it was okay and tried not to be so afraid. After all, the walking dead aren't supposed to care about anything, are they? It didn't work. I was petrified.

Tiny blood red specks blinked furiously, growing larger and larger on the dark blanket inside my head. Then everything turned pitch black.