

# [PDF] Fugitive (Love Inspired Suspense)

**Shirlee McCoy - pdf download free book**

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## **Description:**

### **About the Author SHIRLEE McCOY**

began writing her first novel when she was a teenager. A busy mother of five, Shirlee is a homeschooling mom by day and an inspirational author by night. She and her husband and children live in the Pacific Northwest and share their house with a dog, two cats and a bird. You can visit her website, [www.shirleemccoy.com](http://www.shirleemccoy.com), or email her at [shirlee@shirleemccoy.com](mailto:shirlee@shirleemccoy.com).

**Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.** Just another step.

That's all he had to take. Another step. And another. Wind howling.

Blood dripping on fresh white snow.

Fire behind. Darkness ahead. Only one way to go. Up.

Deputy Sheriff Logan Randal pushed through winter-dry foliage, moving as quickly as his handcuffed wrists would allow. Fifteen minutes and rescue units would be at the wreck. A little longer, and the state police would know he was missing.

Missing and presumed responsible. For the wreck.

For the officer lying dead in the culvert where Logan had dragged him before he'd realized it was too late to help. And for Officer Camden Walker, who lay bleeding beside him, unconscious and shivering beneath the jacket Logan had wrangled off Camden's deceased partner. If not for Walker, Logan would still be locked in the back of the burning police cruiser. Everything in him demanded that he go back and wait with the injured man until help arrived.

But, going back meant death. For Walker *and* for Logan.

A bullet slammed into the snow beside him, bits of earth and ice splattering his face. He ducked behind a towering pine, then kept moving through deep forest and blowing snow, praying the gunman's aim would prove as terrible now as it had been when Logan exited the cruiser.

His foot caught on a snow-covered root, and he fell, hot white pain shooting through his head, blood still dripping from a gash on his temple. An inch closer, and the bullet that had grazed his head would have bored into his brain.

He'd be dead.

*Get up. Keep moving away from the wreck. Give Walker a chance. Give yourself a chance.*

The words chanted through his mind, a mantra that brought him to his feet, his orange prison jumpsuit too bright against the dark shadows of the woods and the whiteness of the snow.

Sirens screamed, the sound growing closer with every heartbeat, every breath.

*Please, God, let them be close enough to chase the gunman away from Walker.*

He didn't need another life on his head, didn't need someone else's blood on his hands. Didn't need anything but a chance to prove he was innocent. Not just of arranging the ambush that had freed him from prison, but of the crime a jury of eight had just convicted him of.

A half a million dollars' worth of heroin missing from the evidence room. A hundred thousand dollars in an offshore bank account in Logan's name. A paper trail of evidence that led straight to him.

Someone had worked hard to frame Logan for the crime.

Whoever it was had succeeded.

Apparently, that same person now wanted him dead.

But that wasn't going to happen. No way did Logan plan to die a felon and a murderer. No doubt that was exactly what his enemy wanted. If he was caught by the police, he'd be tried for the murder of the fallen officer. If he was caught by the men in the SUV who'd run the cruiser off the road, he'd

probably be killed and left to rot where no one would ever find him. A lose-lose situation.

He had to escape. Had to prove his innocence. Had to get back the life he'd worked so hard for.

He shoved through snow-covered foliage, ducking under pine boughs, aiming up the mountain. The wind whipped through his jumpsuit, snow blasting against his face.

Sirens pierced the air, their endless shriek joining the wild howl of the wind. A fifteen-minute head start wasn't much, but it was something, and in this weather, it might just be enough.

He struggled up the steeply inclined ridge, snow falling heavier and harder, the swirling white making him dizzy. Blood loss making him dizzier.

He looked back, saw a speck of orange fire in a gray world, flashes of red and blue reflecting on pure white ground. He was making progress, but to where? Miles of wilderness could hide him. It could also kill him.

He glanced around, searching for signs of civilization. He knew the area well, but that didn't mean he could find his way to safety. This part of eastern Washington was sparsely populated, the mountains dotted with hunting cabins. If he could find a hunting trail, make his way to a cabin, he'd live through the night. If he couldn't..

He refused the thought and kept slogging toward the top of the ridge, breath panting, body shaking with cold. The sirens faded, the wind's howl the only sound in the deepening storm.

The handcuffs weighed him down, the freezing metal only adding to the cold bite of the wind. He was shivering convulsively, and he knew what that meant. He had to get to shelter, and he had to do it fast.

His feet were frozen logs, catching on every hidden rock and jutting root. He caught himself once, twice, fell the third time, going down hard. Winded, he lay where he'd fallen, the snow more comfortable than it should have been, the cold not so cold anymore.

He forced himself up, disoriented, not sure which direction he'd been heading or where he'd come from. Trees to the left, the right, up ahead□

He squinted, sure he saw a glimmer of light through the trees, distant but beckoning.

*God, please let it be more than a hallucination.*

He moved toward it, the trees blocking, then revealing, then blocking his view again.

Still there.

All he had to do was keep walking.

Gusting wind rattled the cabin's windows and howled beneath its eaves, the sounds shivering along Laney Jefferson's spine as she bent over the cold hearth and built a fire. Outside, fat snowflakes fell from the purple-blue sky and lay thick on the roof of the Jeep. It was stupid to have made this trip in the dead of winter, but putting it off wouldn't have made it any more appealing. Besides, Valentine's Day was just a week away, and she'd rather spend it cleaning out her parents' house than spend it

alone in Seattle.

Stopping at William's cabin on the way to Green Bluff had made sense when she'd been planning the trip to her childhood home. Clean out the cabin, clean out her parents' house, clean out the cobwebs of the past that seemed to be keeping her from moving into the future. She'd been praying about the trip since she'd gotten the letter from her father's attorney saying that she'd inherited Mackey Manor and the hundred acres of farmland that went with it.

She'd wanted to turn her back on the legacy, wanted to go on pretending that her life had started the day she'd left Green Bluff and run to Seattle, but she'd had no peace about it.

She'd spent three months planning and plotting and trying to convince herself that she should return to the place she despised. Those months had made her realize just how easily she'd shoved aside her childhood and how tightly she'd been holding on to the dreams she'd built with William. Dreams that had died with him.

*Move on.*

That had become her mantra.

So, it *had* made perfect sense to take a two-week vacation in the middle of February, make the trip back across Washington, tying up the loose ends of her life as she went.

She wasn't sure how much sense it made now that the storm of the century was blowing through the eastern part of the state.

She shoved paper under the fire log she'd brought from home, struck a match and tossed it in. If William had been around, he'd have taken care of that. He'd also have braved the wind and snow to grab logs from the back porch. He wasn't, so Laney went herself, pulling her hood over her hair and walking out the back door. Frigid wind cut through her coat and chilled her to the bone as she lifted an armful of wood from the neat pile that William had left on the covered back porch the last time they'd been there.

Two and a half years ago.

Had it really been that long?

They'd been married less time than that. Just eighteen months, and she'd thought they would have forever. Instead, she'd been without William for longer than she'd been with him.

She walked back inside, the wind slamming the door closed behind her. She ignored it as she chose the driest log and set it on top of the burning kindling. It was easy enough to make a fire. She'd learned the skill years ago, but doing this herself, *here* where she and William had once bent close and worked together, it hurt more than she'd expected it to.

She nudged the log deeper into the fire. Sparks flew, wood crackled and something banged against the back door.

She jumped, whirling to face the door and whatever was outside it.

The wind.

It had to be.

But her racing pulse said different. So did the hair standing up on the back of her neck.

*Bang!*

The door shuddered, the weight of whatever was out there seeming to press in, demanding entry.

She grabbed the fireplace poker and walked to the door. "Who's there?"

No one answered.

She hadn't really expected anyone to because she couldn't imagine that anyone was wandering through the mountains during a winter storm. A tree branch must have flown into the door.

*Two tree branches?*

The wind was certainly blowing hard enough to tear off pieces of old pine trees, and there were plenty of those around the cabin.

She opened the door, determined to prove it to herself.

A shadow lurched through the doorway, white and gray and strangely dead looking. She screamed, and screamed again as the figure stumbled into her, knocking her to the ground.

Breathless, she twisted, fighting against deadweight and icy cold, then realizing suddenly that she was fighting herself. That her attacker was limp and heavy and motionless. She shoved him sideways and scrambled out from beneath him, her breath panting.

The poker! Where was it?

She snatched it from the ground, backing away, her heart pounding wildly in her ears.

*Go! Now! Before...*

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