

The First Two Pages *of Bears With Us*

I chose this earlier book in the Deputy Tempe Crabtree series to analyze the first two pages, because I enjoyed writing it, and many enjoyed reading it.

The opening line:

The phone ringing at night usually meant bad news. On Tuesday evening, the phone rang right after Tempe and Hutch settled into bed.

Of course this is the introduction and lets the reader know the time and that Tempe and Hutch are the major characters. And, I hoped it was enough to hook the reader to continue on.

Hutch rose up on an elbow and lifted a curious eyebrow. “What do you suppose is going on now?”

Usually after midnight the small mountain community of Bear Creek quieted. And it was Tempe’s second night off of her job as resident deputy of Bear Creek. If there was an emergency in town, the 9-1-1 dispatcher should have directed the call to her shift replacement. However, her husband’s number was listed in the phone directory so she often received calls directly from the person in distress. As pastor of the local church, Hutch was as apt to receive a middle of the night phone call as she was.

These two paragraphs give an explanation of who Tempe and Hutch are. (Since this is a series, many readers will already know, but anyone new to the series will be brought up to speed)

Tempe answered. “Deputy Crabtree.”

The female voice on the other end sounded frantic. “Someone or something has broken into the house.”

“Who is this? And where are you?”

“Rachel Yates.” She paused. “Oh my God, they’re tearing the place apart.”

The name didn’t mean anything to Tempe. “Where are you? What’s your address?”

“I’m the Hamptons’ daughter. I’m not sure of the physical address, I only know their P.O. Box.”

Tempe knew where the Hamptons lived. “Okay. I know how to get there. Where are you right now?”

“I’m in an upstairs bedroom. So are my folks.”

Tempe now knows where she has to go and a little bit about the situation.

“Stay put. Don’t come down until you hear from me. I’ll be there as quickly as possible.” She replaced the receiver and jumped out of bed.

Hutch sat up. “Oh oh, sounds bad.”

“A break-in. Someone who isn’t quiet about what he’s doing. Maybe he thinks no one’s home. In any case, I’ve got to get there fast.” She pulled on her uniform trousers and closed the zipper.

“I’ll go with you.” Hutch headed for the bathroom before she could protest.

Though she didn’t encourage civilians to go along on a call like this, she’d welcome his presence.

Having Hutch go with her, gives her some back-up.

Both were dressed and out the door within minutes. Hutch’s auburn hair stuck up in tufts. Tempe’s dark hair hung down her back in a long queue, no time to fasten it up like she usually did while working.

A bit of description of the main characters is worked in.

They climbed into her official white Dodge truck with the words SHERIFF printed on both sides and the Tulare County logo on the door. Before she backed out of the driveway, she radioed her destination to the Dennison sheriff’s office.

And some police procedure.

She drove over the bridge that crossed Bear Creek and out onto the highway where she turned right.

Hutch said, “I don’t know the Hamptons well, just seen the two of them in the grocery store a couple of times. Besides the fact they are elderly, do you have any other information about them?”

“I don’t know much. Once about a year ago the son called and asked if I’d check on their welfare, which I did. He made a few comments like he thought they ought to sell their home and move closer to town. I got the idea that he wanted me to confirm his suggestions.”

“So what did you think?”

Next is some information about the people that they’ll soon see, and an introduction to the fact that the wife might have a problem with dementia. This will become more important as the story moves along.

“The husband seemed quite capable. Though the wife was pleasant enough, I had the feeling she might be in the early stages of dementia. All the more reason to get there in a hurry.” She switched on her emergency lights. No need to put on the siren, the road ahead was empty of cars.

A peek at the village of Bear Creek and beyond.

They sped through the little town of Bear Creek, passing the Saloon, the Café, the gas station and grocery store, a couple of gift shops, and the Bear Creek Inn. All was quiet. A bit farther along they drove past the A-frame Community Church where Hutch served as pastor.

The highway twisted more and more the higher into the mountains they drove. Tempe slowed to turn into one of the few roads that left the highway. Also two lane and much narrower, it wound around even more. “Watch for the mailbox with their name on it. I think it’s a shaped like a house with a shingle roof.”

“I will...”

Tempe switched off the emergency lights. No need in alerting a burglar of her approach.

“There it is,” Hutch said.

The destination and its description.

She pulled into the lane, pine trees bracketing either side. The lane climbed a bit before widening into a flat spot. A silver Scion sat off to the side of a three car garage. A wide porch ran around the front and sides of the two-story cedar structure. All the windows were dark.

Tempe grabbed the shotgun from its holder under the dash. “Don’t shut the doors. Be as quiet as possible.”

Chimney smoke scented the pine and cedar laden fall air. Holding her flashlight in her other hand, she kept the beam low as she climbed the three steps leading to the front door. It stood open. Unfortunately, many people living in the mountains didn’t think it necessary to lock doors.

Here is the beginning of what’s going on in Bear Creek.

The minute Tempe stepped inside, she knew what was happening.

The tell-tale snorts and slurping sounds told the tale. It was no longer necessary to be quiet. “Bear.” Bears had gotten smart over the years, learning how to open trash cans and open doors. Sometimes just leaning their heavy bodies on the barrier popped the latch. If a window was left open, a screen never stopped a bear.

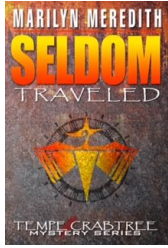
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A quick note: At the time I wrote this book, over the years there’d only been an occasional bear sighting in the foothill town where I live. This past late summer and fall, the drought brought many bears out of the mountains scavenging for food and they played havoc with people’s trash, broke into houses, much the same as I’d written about.

Marilyn

Seldom Traveled Blurb:



The tranquility of the mountain community of Bear Creek is disrupted by a runaway fugitive, a vicious murderer, and a raging forest fire. Deputy Tempe Crabtree is threatened by all three.

Buy links:

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Marilyn Meredith's Bio:



Marilyn has had so many books published, she's lost track of the count, but it's getting near 40. She lives in a community similar to the fictional mountain town of Bear Creek, the big difference being that Bear Creek is a thousand feet higher in the mountains. She is a member of Mystery Writers of American, three chapters of Sisters in Crime, and is a board member of Public Safety Writers of America.

<http://fictionforyou.com>

<http://marilynmeredith.blogspot.com>

New Contest:

Winners will be randomly picked from those leaving the most comments on the blog posts. Each winner can choose one of the earlier books in the series as either a print book or e-book.

This is the last blog in the tour. I'll be randomly picking winners and I'll let each one know and post the names of the winner on Facebook and my own blogsite.