

So...

What About Love?

Dan Arrow



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*May love lead you,
and guide you,
to where mind,
body,
and soul long to be.*

One

David D. Thornton sits, wondering why he's allowed himself to step back into an industry he has such intense disdain for. Working to protect clients you wouldn't normally tolerate was an acceptable way of earning a living at one time. But now, if it weren't for the money, he wouldn't be wasting his time trying to train drivers of dignitaries and high dollar celebrities how to survive a deadly assault.

Dignitary protection gigs weren't too bad, but fussy celebs with some big gumba for muscle attached at the hip, touting a loaded weapon, was too much to stomach. Blockheads claiming to be somebody's bodyguard. David had to leap Hollywood politics way too much in order to get a client some real protection. He had a reputation, often jesting, "I'll have to snuff the bodyguard in order to get any real work done." There are few left like him, willing to place his life on the line for the sake of the profession—not just the all mighty dollar.

These days, David finds his career as a high school social studies teacher just as challenging as his glory days as a

protection specialist. Sounds funny, but dealing with today's teens can be just as volatile and unpredictable. The down side is teaching pays pennies on the dollar for all the work to be done. So, to support a trip to Jerusalem over spring break, he's moonlighting again in his past lucrative career. He might even be able to extend the trip to swing over to Greece if his patience holds out for just a few more weeks of tactical instruction.

David doesn't hold back when he's instructing a driver. He begins with a standard disclosure, "In order to immobilize the vehicle, an assassin will kill you. Any questions?" Usually not, just an awkward *deadly* silence.

Like a drill sergeant, David barks...

"Accelerate!

Faster! Faster!!!

Hit the brake!

The brake you knucklehead!

We're cornered!

Back out!

Quick! Quicker!!!

Bullets are bouncing off the hood!

What are you gonna do, just sit here?

Move the wheel you slug!

Punch it!!!

Come on, man. Get the lead out!

The *Principal's* not out of danger yet!

Turn here!

Hard! Harder!!!

Your tail's swingin' out!

Turn into the skid! Turn into it!!!”

The sleek black stretch comes to rest facing the direction it just came from—not anywhere near acceptable.

“We’re dead.”

“You’d better listen up to every word that comes out of my mouth if you want a meager chance of survival. Let’s do it until you **can** get it right!” Harsh? Not really, considering the messy results of a potential mistake in a real ambush, but this isn’t instructing high school students and he’s not worried about being well-liked. Although, you can see why the youth at his inner city school like him. They get the real deal. Someone who’s been around the track a few times. Someone, not afraid to lay it out for their benefit before they go back to the reality of their sorted home lives.

Enthusiastic, confident, and self-controlled all in one package. A mixed bag, but still up for an occasional challenge to spice up his single life. Once married to who he often proclaims as “the most awesome woman in the universe,” now he’s a widower with two grown children, still wearing a band around his finger to disclose the fact he’s not quite ready to put himself back on the market. Also, a reminder to him that marriage was a good thing and that he isn’t quite sure he’s done with the idea—yet. There could be another, right? Someone like Jen, who loved him exactly like he wanted to be loved . . . free and easy, without much difficulty. Like they were supposed to be together—forever.

The slight gray in his short combed-back brown hair goes well with his caramel colored eyes. For having been through so much in life, they still sparkle if you take a chance to look

deep. Silver rimmed professor's type glasses and a herringbone tweed overcoat give him a studious appearance with a pleasant demeanor, an unassuming kind of character—a writer.

Underneath the conservative look is a 5' 9" tri-athlete full of endurance. His smile is warm and genuine these days and lets everyone know how thankful he is to simply be alive to see another day. If you knew his story you'd discover he's almost been dead several more times than he cares to count. Anything else of those memories has been left in a country where he'd been detailed to snatch and grab Americans from embassy's coming under attack. Night Stalker's Never Die! Hoorah!

Later that evening, David retires to his study where shelves are crammed airtight with every kind of leadership book and religious doctrine known to mankind. Even an assortment of romance novels known to womankind to get a hint of what the other side might be interested in. A self-taught student of psychology, theology and every kind of *ology* one can think of, David has currently put all the daily reading on hold in order to place finishing touches on his latest novel. Seven others before this one and he still has yet to see any one of them crawl onto the Best Seller list. His writing pushes his audience to take an introspective look, which can become

heavy and uncomfortable for most that are still stuck in working through their problems in life. Probably why the dip in sales after a short initial run on most of his published material. He's gone through three traditional publishers so far and has had to take a different tactic with this latest book in order to generate interest, publishing it himself.

David prefers to do his writing the old fashioned way. Just a handful of sharpened pencils and a couple of steno pads on an architects slanted drawing table. A swing-out lamp for late night encounters with his thoughts. He shackles himself to an old high back leather office chair he picked up at a garage sale years ago, supporting the many hours of intense labor he spends in a writer's trance. He's had his "lucky chair" from the beginning of his writing adventure and will be hard pressed to send it to the junkyard when it's time for chair heaven.

David's latest work has caused a tremendous amount of sleepless nights. He's forged a relationship with the newspaper guy who shows up around 4:30 every morning and takes a few minutes out of his route to talk. It gives David a much-needed break to peel his carcass from the leather and step outside for an early morning breath of fresh air, stretching all the stiff and aching bones which have come to haunt him after many duty injuries. But, he's grateful he still has all his fingers and toes.

Walking out a few minutes before the paper arrives with one cup of smokin' hot Joe in each hand, he looks up to marvel at the clarity of the stars. He stops on the Big Dipper, reminding him God has poured his grace and mercy upon him. How else could he have survived all the things he now writes about. Reality Fiction.

After his morning meeting, David spends another hour toiling over a chapter and finds some rest right before daybreak on a velvety orange retro couch in the living area. Ah, the memorable seventies. Or, was it the sixties? Too long ago to even care.

About the Author



Much of my life experience is relived in the character of David D. Thornton. In this novel, I take on the challenge of creating a female character hardened by the use-you-up industry she is very much a part of creating, turning her into someone worthy of true love. My concentration wasn't spent on trying to develop the male half, but to recreate the mentality of many of the women I served while driving limousine in the Beverly/Hollywood arena. "Me" was easy to write! Connect on Facebook at Dan Arrow.