

# ***Maladjusted***

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*A Murder Mystery*

By

Robert J. Potter

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# *Dedications*

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*With Gratitude*

Barbara R.,

Gayla B.,

&

TLB

And to all the lonely, disheartened souls who  
seek a better world, I dedicate this work.



# *Acknowledgements*

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# *Preface*

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The primary purpose of this work is to entertain an audience of readers with an interest in mysteries—especially, those mysteries that acknowledge, to a certain extent, the extrasensory abilities that lie within most of us, whether they are spoken of in such terms, or rather, addressed as “hunches,” “gut feelings,” “instinct,” “intuition,” “radar,” “second-sight,” “sixth sense,” or what St. Ignatius referred to as “the discernment of spirits.” Furthermore, it is my hope that this book will serve as an inspiration to all those who read it, and teach them to respect and acknowledge the ability of the human spirit to triumph over all things evil—especially, when guided by a “Higher Power.”

Because of the personal preference and style of the author, British spellings are used throughout the novella, and in the appropriate passages, British idioms are used as well. I anticipate that this literary choice will not be offensive to my

readers, and I sincerely hope that they find this work to be both enjoyable and provocative.

Even though this story, and the characters named herein, are fictitious, that does not invalidate the inherent truth: All individuals are capable of seeing beyond themselves, and in the process, they are able to accomplish what others might deem impossible. As an aside, I should also mention that the historical accounts are, to the best of my ability, accurate.

Regardless of one's own perspective—be it political, religious or philosophical—I do hope that the reader will find this book to be entertaining, if nothing else. ***Please, enjoy the story!***



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## Chapter 1: The 1959 Breakup

“Bonnie, what happened? What did I do? Huh? **Please tell me!** We’ve been together for a year and eight months, *and now*, you want to end our relationship, just like that... ..no notice or anything?” exclaimed the man, almost in tears as he made his plea.

“You didn’t do anything... It’s not you; it’s me. I... I just need to move on... I think it’s for the best! Forget about us and pursue your career; that’s all you really care about. *Admit it!* Besides, it’s what I want. *I’ve made up my mind!* **Get on with your life and forget you ever knew me!**” shouted Bonnie, all the more determined not to stray from her course. Her sudden decision came as quite a shock, and her lover could hardly believe what he was hearing.

“Bonnie, **please**, don’t leave me. *I love you... I really do! And I think you know that!* **Can’t we talk about this?**” begged the man, desperate for a reconciliation or a meeting of the minds.

Without wanting to delay or wait a moment longer, Bonnie acted on impulse and spouted, “Don’t you get it? *I don’t love you... I never did!*” but her words were a lie. While trying to

conceal her tears, she scurried out the door, got into her car, and whispered to herself, “*Please, forgive me...* I’ll always love you, till the day I die.” Then, Bonnie drove off, without looking back.

Soon after her departure, the sun set in the sky—thereby, marking the close of their romance. The two, star-crossed lovers would never see each other again. And the man that Bonnie left behind... He was nothing, but an empty shell, and no longer capable of real love.

## *Chapter 2: 1963*

Enter *anno Domini* 1963... How would one best describe that year? Well, although I have no direct recollection of that time, I do know that our nation were in political turmoil, as I later learned in school and through the anecdotes of my parents. Incidentally, I am Zackary Webster, but my friends call me “Zack,” and you are welcome to do the same. Now, getting back to 1963...

For one thing, the US continued to feel the aftershocks of the previous year, resulting from the US Supreme Court’s ruling that prayer and Bible study were not to be permitted in public schools (June 25, 1962; *Engel v. Vitale*). Whether right or wrong, no previous ruling had ever made such an enormous impact on our society and the way we look at the world. Suffice it to say, the USA would never be the same again.

Besides the poignant restructuring of education, the US were still reeling from the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, not to mention the ongoing Vietnam War. Among other changes, there was an increase in first-class postage—from four cents to five cents per

ounce—beginning on the 7<sup>th</sup> of January, 1963. Exactly one week later, *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath, was published under the pen name *Victoria Lucas*, but regrettably, Ms. Plath committed suicide a month after the date of publication, on the 11<sup>th</sup> of February—coinciding with the premiere of Julia Child’s *The French Chef* on WGBH in Boston, Massachusetts.

By the 21<sup>st</sup> of March, Alcatraz prison in San Francisco Bay was closed—mainly, due to the high costs of maintaining the facility. One week after that, Alfred Hitchcock’s thriller *The Birds* was released, starring Tippi Hedren, Rod Taylor, Suzanne Pleshette, and Jessica Tandy.

While movie companies were exploring cutting-edge scripts, such as the one just named, the US government scheduled periodic nuclear tests at the Nevada Test Site. At the same time, there was growing political unrest in the American homeland and throughout the world. Perhaps, Hitchcock’s *The Birds*—a monster movie featuring a normally benign antagonist—was making a socio-political statement, in that it showed nature rising up against humanity and our destructive ways...? One can only speculate.

Outside of the governmental arena, musical groups, like The Beatles and The Rolling Stones, were rapidly gaining in

popularity throughout the UK, as well as in the United States. But again, this movement towards “next-generation” rock-and-roll may have reflected **not only** a change in musical tastes, **but also**, the current *Zeitgeist*, or spirit of the times. This, too, remains unclear. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the 1960’s were about freedom of expression and out-of-the-box thinking. The year 1963 was no exception to this trend.

By the 1<sup>st</sup> of May, Gloria Steinem’s exposé, “A Bunny’s Tale,” was published in **Show** magazine, and the consequences of her publication were a boost to the feminist movement, though the May 8<sup>th</sup> release of the James Bond film **Dr. No** seemed to run counter to that effort, being that “Bond girls” were often portrayed as beautiful playthings, subservient to men. Yet despite these contradictory ideas and values, the 1960’s were ultimately about freedom of expression, and on some level, liberation—making it one of the most turbulent decades in history.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November, 1963, at 12:30 p.m. CST, John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas, while riding in a presidential motorcade through Dealey Plaza. Immediately thereafter, Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson was sworn in as the 36<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, replacing the late JFK.

Then, two days following Johnson's ascension, the alleged assassin of President Kennedy, Lee Harvey Oswald, was shot dead by Jack Ruby. Truly, the nation were in a state of shock, left to wonder what to expect next.

As for my parents, they were never convinced that Oswald acted of his own accord, though that seemed to be the final conclusion of the Warren Commission, who submitted their 888-page report on the 24<sup>th</sup> of September, 1964. In any event, I was born in Tampa, Florida, on the 8<sup>th</sup> of November, 1963—exactly two weeks prior to that ill-fated Friday: the day of Kennedy's assassination. Hence, I was a child of the 1960's, born under the sign of *Scorpio*, and subject to all the music, television programs and progressive attitudes of the decade.

As for my homelife, I had a typical childhood, with one younger brother, Todd, and one older brother, Dan. When we reached our teens, it was up to Dan to smuggle in...