

# WISDOM

By Sebastian Roberts

## Preface

Valerie Foreman is the eldest daughter of FBI Agent Robert Foreman and DEA Agent Brandy Foreman. After graduation from the University of Missouri with a degree in criminology, Valerie finds work with the Orlando, Florida, Police Department. The events of her rookie year are related in *Traffic*, after which she earns a Masters Degree and takes the Detective's Examination. In *Wisdom*, Valerie is promoted to detective.

As in *Traffic*, her personal life remains ensnared in the seemingly lost love of GySgt. Harold Levindusky, no matter how hard she tries to break free.

Our story begins on July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2002, in Orlando, Florida.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Making Grade [July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2002]

“Really! I passed! Isn’t it great?”

Officer Valerie Foreman shifted the phone to her other ear, tucked it beneath her dark auburn hair, and tried to sound positive. She hoped that the shot of tequila that she sipped would help.

“Will you tell Dad?”

Tossing back the rest of her drink, she screwed up her face as her mother asked the question Val dreaded.

“No, actually...no. I won’t be getting a promotion right away. It seems that our Captain doesn’t care for women on his detective squad. There’ve only been a few and they all seem to leave after a year or two.”

Officer Foreman had spent her first two years on the Orlando Police Force doing what rookie cops do. First there was six months with her training officer. In hindsight, those six months had been the most interesting six months of her career, at least so far. With her training officer, Marcus, she had responded to all sorts of calls: from domestic disturbances to homicides. The attack on the Twin Towers had happened during that time too. After the attack in New York, the mood at the Orlando Police Department changed dramatically. The heightened sensitivity was institutionalized shortly afterwards with the Anthrax incidents in southeast Florida. Things eventually settled down, however, and Officer Foreman had caught the assignments that newer cops caught. Mostly, she worked traffic, which she hated. Sometimes she was assigned to the airport to assist the TSA. As part of the Mayor’s program to make officers more accessible to the community, she had been assigned the job of attending neighborhood association meetings. Part of the job was to be friendly and open about what the police were doing.

The assignment she liked the best, though, was working at the school. After the attack in New York, school security had increased dramatically. Officers had been assigned to each school and given the new job title of School Resource Officer. Val liked working with the children, even if the work consisted of just being pleasant. Over the years, she had worked hard and, at the expense of her already meager social life, had continued her education. Today was the day that she learned that she’d passed all the requirements for detective. Tomorrow, she’d need to go buy detective clothes.

As she listened to her mother, she poured herself another shot and stretched out on the couch. Val nodded to no one and replied, “No. There haven’t been any lawsuits or complaints. He’s pretty subtle about it. I think he just assigns them the shit jobs and gives them ... or should I say us ... a hard time.”

Val listened intently to her mother's advice, her eyes narrowing, and her brow becoming furrowed as she did.

"Okay. Good idea. I'll do that first thing in the morning and let you know what happens."

After a moment of silence, she added, "Let's not tell Dad until tomorrow. Bye. I love you."

Disconnecting the call, Val stared at the screen wondering how she would face off with Captain Glynn. She knew that her mother was right. She also knew that she would have eventually come to the same conclusion. The Foreman women were not the type of people to quietly put up with improper behavior.

By morning, she had a plan. By noon, she had enlisted the aid of Sgt. Marcus, *Caesar*, Bennett, her former training officer, to help her carry it out.

A few minutes before twelve, she followed Caesar into the break room. The early shift was rotating out and the late shift was coming on, so there were quite a few officers present. Val found it ironic that one of the better policies that Captain Glynn had adopted was now providing her the opportunity to overcome his prejudice. When Glynn took over, one of the first changes that he had made was to stagger the shifts so that new officers came on duty every four hours. The shifts were still eight hours long, but there were always fresh blues on the street. As usual, Glynn had come into the break room to mingle and show support for them.

Caesar banged on the table nearest the door to get everyone's attention. "Hear ye, hear ye!" he called loudly. "You all know Officer Foreman," he said gesturing to Val. "Well today I'm pleased to announce that she has passed the detective's exam!"

The room broke into applause and shouts of congratulations, but Caesar held up a hand to quiet them again.

"What you may not know is that she scored higher than any other candidate has in the past 4 years: best score since 1998." The applause began again, but Caesar beat it down by waving his arms. "Of course that was to be expected if you know anything about her. She graduated at the top of her class at the University of Missouri, graduated at the top of her class from the Police Academy, interned with Interpol and at the morgue, and recently received her Masters Degree in Criminology from the University of Central Florida. On top of that, she holds a black belt and is the best shooter I've ever had the pleasure of taking to the range."

With that, Caesar allowed the applause to rise again. Val had thought that it would be hard to blush under the praise that she had known was coming, but it wasn't. *I have done well*, she admitted to herself.

"Thank you!" she called out above the clamor. "Drinks are on me just as soon as I get the promotion that normally goes with passing the exam!"

Six hours later, with the ink still wet on the paperwork promoting her to detective, Val raised her glass and touched it to Caesar's.

"Thanks. You put a lot on the line for me and I appreciate it."

“You’d do the same for me.”

“I would. In fact, most of these guys in here would.” Val emphasized her statement by glancing around at the sea of off duty officers who packed Victor’s Vacation. She’d put a thousand dollars on the bar and told Izzi, the owner, to keep pouring until it was gone.

“Just for the blue?” she had asked.

Val had nodded. “The detectives and brass never come in here anyway, but if they do I’ll take care of them later ... after I decide which ones I like.”

The two women had shared a laugh and Izzi filled beer mugs for those who had already gathered. That was twenty minutes ago when the bar was nearly empty. As soon as the 6PM shift had changed, the place got real busy. Victor’s was only half a block from the station and Izzi knew most of the cops on the force. It wasn’t that the detectives didn’t get a drink after work, but they preferred the piano bar at the hotel down the street.

A hand slapped Val on the shoulder, followed by the question she’d already heard a hundred times. “You still gonna come in here? Or are you off to the Holiday Inn?”

Val grinned and said, “If I quit coming in here, Izzi would hunt me down and kill me.”

The officer wandered off, but it was only a moment later that another hand landed softly on her back. Val turned to see Detective Grady Washburn, grinning and expressing his congratulations. Grady was normally a quiet type of guy, and generally didn’t cause a lot of ruckus. A lot of detectives liked to tout their successes by announcing each bust as they returned to the station: not Grady. He had joined the Orlando PD about a year before Val had arrived and many people still didn’t know him that well. He just did his job. His physical appearance matched his personality. He was almost nondescript: medium height, medium build, bland features, bland hair, soft, grey eyes. Up to now, the only real exchange Val had had with him was that day he’d gotten her into trouble with the Captain. She’d been pretty mad at him at the time, but in hindsight, things had worked out pretty well.<sup>1</sup>

“Thank you, sir,” Val responded. “I didn’t actually expect to see you here.”

“I didn’t expect to be here,” Grady said softly. His hand started to make slow circles on her back as he continued. “You’re one of us now, though, and I thought I’d come invite you to dinner.” Seeing the look of surprise on Val’s face, he quickly backtracked and put his hand in his pocket. “You know, as my way of saying welcome to the detective squad.”

Val knew exactly what he had really meant and was rather shocked that this quiet, unassuming man would come on to her so quickly after the barrier between their ranks had been removed.

“Sure, I suppose that would be okay,” Val responded. She knew that even if Grady wanted something she was not willing to give, she could not be out-and-out rude. “We’ll talk about when and where tomorrow, when it’s a bit quieter.”

Grady smiled and turned to go, his spirits a little lower than they had been when he’d arrived. Like Val, he had no difficulty in understanding the true meaning of what had been said.

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<sup>1</sup> Read *Traffic* by Sebastian Roberts

Val turned back to Caesar. "He's nice enough, but ...."

"He's not the type to just give up," Caesar interrupted. "He'll make another run at you, but it might not be for a couple weeks."

"Why?"

"Why?" Caesar looked astonished. "You're hot! That's why. You know that!"

"No. I know ... no ... I mean ... I don't think I'm that hot ... no, I mean that ..." Val gulped her beer to help her recover while Caesar grinned. "I mean, why do men take rejection so poorly and then never give up?"

"No idea. Everyone knows you've only dated one guy since you joined the force."

"I did not date Julian."

"So you say. But you sure spent a lot of time together."

"We were in class together. He and I were both working on our Masters degree during our spare time."

"Uh huh."

"Aw, come on! I've got the degree to prove it!"

"And Julian had time to *study* with you and date two other women too."

"Well. He didn't study as much as I did. I will grant you that. But he's dead now, so let's not berate his lifestyle, okay?"

"To Julian," Caesar raised his glass.

"To Julian."