

# THE FORGOTTEN GIRL

---

DACO S. AUFFENORDE



**INKUBATOR  
BOOKS**

A sudden flash of light wakes me. I'm lying in a bed in a white-walled prison cell. I try to move an arm, a leg, but I'm paralyzed. *Help!* I cry out, but only a muffled hack passes through my dry, chapped lips.

*A trumpet blares; hooves pound across grass; a woman slaps a child. A man says, "Don't get caught."*

They caught me.

Something metallic scrapes against the floor. Seconds later, a large man is looming over me—a stranger. I flinch. A heavy weight is pressing against my chest. I kick and flail, trying to free myself.

The man puts a hand on my shoulder. "Don't move."

"Let go," I rasp.

"Stay calm. You're in the hospital."

*What?*

"You had an accident. Can you tell me your name?"

I stare into the man's eyes.

"Your name?" he repeats.

"Blue?"

A door opens, and a woman dressed in green comes into

view. Before I know it, the heavy weight is gone. I feel so exposed. The woman leans over me and she reaches for my legs, which feel as if they're tied into knots.

The woman gently rubs my arm and says she's a nurse. The bright lights dim. I look down at my body. I'm wearing a hospital gown. My head throbs like someone is hammering inside of it, trying to escape.

"You're all right now," the man says.

"Doctor?" I rasp.

"Detective Matteo DeLuca, NYPD. Homicide division."

My heart skitters in fear.

A gray-haired man with a white coat and complexion to match enters the room. He has a stethoscope around his neck, old-school physician style. He looks to be around seventy. A slew of younger white coats follow.

The nurse greets them, then takes the older doctor aside. They're talking about me. Telling secrets. I've done something wrong. *Did I kill someone?*

The doctor comes over to my bed. He places a bony white hand on the bedrail. "I'm Dr. Whitaker, your neurologist. I understand your name is Blue."

"Why am I here?"

"You suffered a tremendous fall. You're fortunate to be alive, young lady."

I don't remember falling. The people gathered around me glare down as if I'm a sewer rat about to be dissected. I'm so cold; I shiver. "I want to go home," I whisper, holding back the tears.

"Where do you live?" Whitaker asks.

Where do I live? I ... All I know is that my name is Blue.

The nurse leans forward. "Do you remember where you live, honey?"

I look into her kind eyes. "I ... I ... I don't know. I don't know who I am."

The one who says he's a cop steps forward. Any comfort I might have felt vanishes.

Is this some sort of con job? I have to get out of here. Now! I reach for the bedrail, trying to sit up. Then, with all my might, I thrust myself forward and try to escape.

"Nurse!" the doctor shouts. "All of you. Now!"

Feet shuffle and pound the floor. Bodies move in every direction. Arms and hands fly—mine and theirs. I slap at them, claw at them. Can't let them hog-tie me. *Stop!*

They don't stop.

I'm falling. Falling into nowhere, back into that white-walled prison.