
CAL'S LAW

Book One

PK COREY



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This book contains fantasy themes appropriate for mature readers only.
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Chapter 1

It was late, nearly midnight, as Sherriff Cal Bennett came wearily into his small office within the squad room. He'd tried to give the room a calm feeling. He wanted people to relax when they talked with him, not an easy feat in a sheriff's office. He had pictures of both the mountains and the coast on the walls, along with a few pictures drawn for him by his nieces and nephews. Cal sank into a chair beside one of his deputies. "Tell me why the hell I decided to run for sheriff in a small college town?"

"You're a stupid idiot?" suggested Jake Potter, his right-hand man.

"Thanks. I knew I could count on you for understanding and support." Cal and Jake had grown up together in the low country of eastern North Carolina. Besides going to school together they'd spent a lot of time camping and fishing. They both felt as much at home with the other's family as they did their own, since they lived only a short bike ride apart. Cal knew Jake shared his major frustration about their job.

"Honestly, you'd think a small private college would attract the elite but all we seem to get are the rich brats."

“You’ll survive. Pledge week can’t last forever,” Jake told him.

“It’s going on its third week now. It’s nearly February,” Cal griped. “I thought it was bad in the fall, but I swear this rush for the second semester is getting worse every year. It scares me, seriously. Somebody’s going to get killed – alcohol poisoning, drunk driving, drag racing, date rape – it’s a scary world out there. I don’t like locking these kids up, but nothing’s worse than contacting a parent about a dead kid.”

“It’s the parents I’d like to lock up,” Jake told him.

“We should,” Cal agreed. “Most of these kids would be fine if someone had busted their asses occasionally when they were younger. I know that’s not politically correct to say and you know damn good and well I’m not talking about child abuse, I’m talking about discipline and making these kids responsible for their own actions. You know my dad usually just talked to us when we got into something – one of his ‘I’m disappointed in you’ talks could nearly make a boy cry. But he used his belt on occasion and if the talk didn’t work, that sure as hell did.”

Jake laughed, “It was your mama I was scared of. You remember that time we were wrestling and knocked the clothesline down with her clean wash on it? She had us both dancing to her switch and I nearly got it again cause she sent me home to tell *my* mama what we’d done.”

Cal smiled at the memory. “And you’ll notice that despite what the experts now say, we didn’t grow up hating our parents or becoming serial killers. Now these parents come in to bail their kids out and tell them, ‘Don’t worry, precious. Mommy and Daddy will pay the fine and we’ll get this mean policeman. How dare he try to stop you from driving your new Porsche ninety miles an hour through that neighborhood. He’s probably just jealous *his* daddy didn’t get him a Porsche when he graduated from high school,” Cal mimicked in a simpering, high society voice.

“You got it. If we could get a judge to sentence some of these

kids to a trip to the woodshed, most of them would straighten right up," Jake agreed.

"I'll be sure to suggest that at the next town council meeting," Cal commented sarcastically as he got to his feet. "Oh well, I'll see you tomorrow and we'll do it all again."

On the drive home, Cal let his mind wander back to his decision to run for sheriff. Back when the idea had first crystalized in his mind, he knew he was much too young. He'd only been twenty-five. But he'd loved being in law enforcement and he couldn't stand the way Sheriff Talton Reins ran the county. Reins had been sheriff for nearly eighteen years when Cal decided to challenge him. Reins could have come from central casting had someone asked for a good old boy sheriff – pot belly included.

He had no huge scandals, but his friends were well taken care of in the way of dismissed speeding and parking tickets and all the way to the occasional DUI. He took care of Main Street, but did little to help the rest of the county, something Cal had noticed even as a boy. He'd talked it over with Jake first, then his family. Everyone seemed to like the idea. His folks explained that there was little chance of him winning, but it might just shake Reins out of his complacency. His dad had pointed out the most serious outcome, which was that when he lost, he and Jake and any deputies that outwardly supported him would lose their jobs.

"You're probably right," Cal had agreed, "so I guess I better win."

Cal and Jake had both enjoyed the campaign. Both men spent their days off low key campaigning. Cal had spent his spare time talking with folks, small business men, farmers, factory workers, as well as the college administrators and students. He listened to what they liked and didn't like about the way things ran under Sheriff Reins. If it was something he had no power to change he'd tell them. If they had a complaint about something that Cal planned to leave in place, again, he'd be honest. But often people gave him good

suggestions that he thought would help and he kept detailed notes.

Sheriff Talton Reins barely bothered to campaign, simply stating he wasn't worried about that little boy taking his job. He should have been. When the election was over Cal and his straight forward answers to all the people he'd talked to, carried him to a victory with a margin far larger than he'd ever imagined. Reins had angrily stated that more than half the deputies were completely loyal to him and they'd quit before supporting 'that boy'. He was wrong again. Cal had talked to them all in small groups. He explained the changes he would make right away as well as the changes he'd like to see come about over the next year. He told his deputies they were truly needed and asked them to give him six months and see what they thought before any decided to leave.

After his talk, one man quit and one retired. The rest stayed and now almost three years later, crime was down and morale was up and Cal loved his job. The college gave him the most trouble but even that seemed to be calming down as his deputies got better and better at calming situations as well as controlling them. Now if they could just survive pledge weeks...