

## CHAPTER ONE

September 8, 1898  
Mackinac Island

Alexandre O`Keefe stared out at the glittering black water of Griffin Cove. In the night sky above him, thousands of silver stars twinkled and the full, yellow moon shone brightly. The cool breeze that washed over him carried the scent of autumn and the promise of winter with it.

Which meant it would not be long now.

Not long until all the high-stepping folks would be checking out of their rooms at the Grand, closing their summer cottages and returning to their mansions in the more civilized places like Detroit, Madison, Chicago and leaving the island, and all those who call it home, in peace at last.

Something Alexandre was looking forward to greatly.

Downing the last of the whiskey in his glass, he turned from his view and crossed the floor of the second story balcony. When he opened the ornate stained glass door and stepped inside, he was greeted by the strains of a violin weaving the melody of a waltz.

As he walked down the hall, the music grew louder and as he started down the stairs, he could hear the murmur and laughter of his guests.

That night the parlor served as the ballroom and it was crowded. People stood at the doorways on each side of the room and watched as a solitary violinist played and a half a dozen dark-suited men and pastel-gowned women swirled and swayed in perfect time with his music. In between the dancing couples, Alexandre spotted a dark-haired woman in a flaming orange gown standing in the center of the floor. Although he had never seen her before, he felt as though he knew her and he was drawn, much like a moth to a flame, to her.

As he neared, he saw the woman was quite beautiful. She was tall and slender, with a generous bosom that rose and fell with her rapid breaths. Her skin was sun-kissed, with light freckles peppering her pert nose and across her high cheeks. Her long black hair was arranged in a rather simple bun atop her head and her full, black eyebrows were arched high over striking blue eyes that were opened wide and unblinking.

Stopping before her, Alexandre bowed and bestowed her with a charming grin. "I confess I am at a loss. Although I feel as though we have met before, I am certain I would remember having met such a beauty. Therefore, I must ask, have we or have we not met before, Lass?"

The woman licked her full, pink lips and swallowed hard before she opened her mouth and said, "No, we've never met, but I know all about you Captain O`Keefe. You built Shadowbrook Manor and you were murdered here over a hundred years ago. A *hundred and twelve*

*years ago*, almost to the day, and you've been haunting me for the last two months, but you must go. You're dead and Shadowbrook is mine now."

Instantly, the light faded and the dancing couples, the violinist and spectators disappeared, leaving only him and the woman in the orange gown standing in the candle-lit room.

Thunder boomed overhead and lightning flashed through the room as Alexandre threw his head back and laughed out loud. "Oh, I beg to differ, Lass. Shadowbrook Manor will always be mine!"