



# DANGEROUS ATTACHMENTS

A PSYCHOLOGICAL THRILLER

AUTHOR OF THE BESTSELLING SERIES

**SARAH LOVETT**

"Chilling."  
—*The Washington Times*

DANGEROUS ATTACHMENTS

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This book is for  
my beloved daughter Pearl and my partner John  
And for Lupe Baca and Jacqueline West  
And last but not least for Reilly Johnson

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## Author's Note

In the late 1990s, I worked for the New Mexico Department of Justice under the Attorney General. Part of that work took me inside the Penitentiary of New Mexico's infamous "Old Main," the site of the catastrophic 1980 prison riot, as well as the North and South Facilities that continue to house maximum-security inmates today.

The investigation was sprawling and intense, tied to the July 4, 1987 escape of seven high-security inmates from the prison's North Facility. After walking those corridors and hearing those stories, I was very happy to go home at night.

Dr. Sylvia Strange began taking shape the moment I stepped inside "Old Main."

Like me, Sylvia believes in justice, redemption, and the complicated humanity that exists inside the criminal justice system. We both know people can change. We both know some cannot. And we both understand that fear, trauma, violence, and survival rarely fit into simple categories.

Sylvia's closest friend, Rosie Sanchez, was inspired by a remarkable woman who led the Penitentiary of New Mexico's Office of Criminal Investigation for many years. Rosie is fictional—but her grit, intelligence, and fierce loyalty are rooted in someone very real.

Although Sylvia's adventures are fiction, the emotional world she inhabits grew from my experiences in New Mexico: the landscapes, the prisons, the investigators, the long shadows of violence, the shimmering sun, and the beauty and resilience of the people who survive it.

"Old Main" closed in 1998 and today serves as a training site, tour location, and film and streaming set for productions including *Breaking Bad* and *The Longest Yard*.

At its heart, *Dangerous Attachments* is a psychological thriller. I've always been more interested in emotional tension than graphic violence, and I aim to balance darkness with humor, loyalty, friendship, and moments of warmth and resilience.

I'm grateful to welcome new readers to Sylvia Strange's world—and deeply grateful to those of you returning to it.

You can reach me on my website and via email:

[sarah@sarahlovet.com](mailto:sarah@sarahlovet.com).

I'd love to hear from you.

Warmly,  
Sarah Lovett

*“We are all dangerous — it is important to recognize it in ourselves.”*  
— Graham Greene

*“There is no safe investment. To love at all is to be vulnerable.”*  
— C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves*

# DANGEROUS ATTACHMENTS

A

Dr. Sylvia Strange  
Psychological Thriller

Book One

Sarah Lovett



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# CHAPTER ONE

*Santa Fe, New Mexico Winter 2017/2018*

—THE JACKAL—stood on the second tier of cell block one and stared down at the activity below. In the common area, four inmates were playing a round of bridge. A fifth inmate sat rigid in front of the TV and whispered to Brooke, a regular on *The Bold and the Beautiful*. The Jackal sighed. An honest day's labor was rare in this world.

He closed his eyes and silently recited the words of St. Ignatius Loyola. "Teach us, good Lord, to serve Thee . . . to toil and not to seek for rest; to labour and not ask for any reward save that of knowing that we do Thy will."

It was a lesson most of the occupants of CB-1 had not yet learned. And there were other lessons: thou shalt not steal. . . thou shalt not kill.

He turned back to gaze into an open cell. The small square window was already charcoal gray, the light fading behind the razor wire. Each day another two minutes of daylight were lost.

It would keep on that way—getting darker and darker—until the winter solstice.

Day and night, just like his own two selves. He'd grown so used to them, he hardly noticed the transformation anymore. Day getting shorter. Night, longer and longer, ready to take its due.

It was the killing that made him split apart in the beginning. Or maybe the split was the reason he had begun to kill.

Thou shalt not kill. Finally, after doing so many bad, hurtful things, he had learned: thou shalt not kill.

Unless you are doing His will.

*To labour and not ask for any reward  
Save that of knowing that we do Thy will.*

The Jackal had been offered a task, but had not even considered it, until the Lord intervened. The Lord said, "Accept the task, jackal, and be rewarded." His will be done.

The task was to kill. Not a senseless, selfish kill like some of the men had done—like he himself had done, long ago. This kill was part of the Lord's divine plan.

On earth as it is in heaven.

The reward was great: it would become the crowning glory of his work for the Lord.

He sighed and gazed down at the sheet of paper he'd been clutching in his right hand. Things had been going so well.

But then, a snafu. Somebody was nosy. And now he had twice the work.

One hit had become two hits.

The second name was written in pencil—faint but legible. His own handwriting. Over and over. Just the way the nuns had taught him to write *Be sure your sin will find you out*—on the blackboard one hundred times.

The second name covered the page ninety-seven times. The Jackal thought it was an odd name. He took the stub of pencil from his pocket, licked the tip, and smoothed the sheet of paper over the rail. In minute script he added the last three repetitions:

Sylvia Strange

Sylvia Strange

Sylvia Strange.



SARAH LOVETT worked as a researcher at the New Mexico State Penitentiary. Her other novels in the Dr. Strange Psychological Thriller Series: *Acquired Motives*, *A Desperate Silence*, *Dantes' Inferno*, *Dark Alchemy*, and *Malicious Influence*. Raised in California, she's lived in New Mexico forever because she loves it. Visit her Web site at [www.sarahlovet.com](http://www.sarahlovet.com).