

YESTERDAY CALLING

A Sam Dawson Mystery

STEVEN W. HORN



Cheyenne, Wyoming
www.granitepeakpress.com

Copyright © 2022 by Steven W. Horn. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system—except by a reviewer who may quote brief passages in a review to be printed in a magazine, newspaper, or on the Web—without permission in writing from the publisher. For information, please contact Granite Peak Press, P.O. Box 2597, Cheyenne, WY 82003, or email: info@granitepeakpress.com.



Granite Peak Press
www.granitepeakpress.com

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, businesses, corporations, organizations, and incidents either are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously without any intent to describe their actual conduct. Any resemblance to actual events or locales or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

First printing 2022

ISBN: 978-0-9991248-8-8

LCCN: 2022930957

ATTENTION CORPORATIONS, UNIVERSITIES, COLLEGES, AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: Quantity discounts are available on bulk purchases of this book for educational purposes. Special books or book excerpts can also be created to fit specific needs. For information, please contact Granite Peak Press, P.O. Box 2597, Cheyenne, WY 82003, or email: info@granitepeakpress.com.

Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

*For those who read and share—
Book Clubs*

CHAPTER 1

September 2011

“Hello,” Sam said, slightly out of breath, pressing the cool receiver to his sweaty ear. He swallowed the mouthful of potato chips he had grabbed on the way in and swept the salt from the corners of his mouth.

“Is this Sam Dawson?” The man’s voice was distant and weak.

“Ye-es.” Sam drew out the vowel impatiently. He paid the phone company extra every month for an unlisted number. Still, he received unwanted solicitations. This one was interrupting his plans. Anticipating a hard winter, Sam had been pushing to finish splitting the jag of wood he had unloaded the day before. The *Farmer’s Almanac* warned of below-average temperatures and above-average snowfall for 2011, and September had borne that out with early fall colors.

He glanced at the kitchen clock. It was just past 11:30, almost time for lunch. *Wrong again*, he thought as beads of sweat slid down his face. Sam sighed. He tilted his ball cap back on his head and dragged a dirty sleeve across his forehead. The caller did not speak. “Hello?” Sam repeated.

“This is Hank Thompson.”

Sam waited. He had to remind himself to breathe. It was his turn. He stalled. “Who?” he lied. He knew exactly who he was. Sam had never spoken to the man but he had waited a lifetime for this call.

“Hank Thompson,” the man repeated softly, then cleared his throat.

Sam’s mind raced. He was tempted to tell him he must have the wrong number, hang up, pull the phone from the wall, and cut the line. Instead, he inhaled deeply and said, “Yes?” He was surprised by the weakness in his own voice. It was an acknowledgment of the past, an admission of guilt.

“Val died on Tuesday.”

Sam did not respond. He waited. What could he say? What was he supposed to say? Grief would come to him later. So would all the things he should have said.

“I thought you should know.”

Sam still could not find the words. He closed his eyes and inhaled slowly.

Hank Thompson hung up the phone with a gentle click, then silence. Valentina Thompson was dead.