

ONE-HANDED CARPENTER SERIES

BENEATH THE VEIL



NICHOLAS IFILL

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Introduction

The One-Handed Carpenter: Beneath the Veil continues the heart-pounding saga of Andrew Martin—a master craftsman with one arm, a bronze prosthetic, and a legacy that refuses to stay buried. In Book Two, Andrew’s quiet world is shattered by sabotage, betrayal, and the rise of a mysterious tech syndicate that wants more than just control—they want history rewritten and the future dominated.

As he fights to protect a young disabled boy named Micah, uncover the origins of his own prosthetic, and stop a powerful prototype from falling into the wrong hands, Andrew must confront everything he fears: loss, legacy, and love.

Packed with suspense, raw emotion, cinematic action, and the powerful theme of perseverance, Beneath the Veil raises the stakes in ways no one expected. This isn’t just a story of tools and invention—it’s about identity, justice, and what it means to build something that lasts.

Chapter One: Fire in the Grain

It began with smoke.

Thick. Acrid. Crawling under the door like a warning whispered in ash.

Andrew sat upright in bed, heart pounding before his brain could catch up. The air stung his eyes, and the faint scent of burning wood curled in his nostrils.

Then—a pop.

Then another.

He was already moving.

The back door swung open, bare feet slapping against the dew-soaked grass as he raced across the yard.

The shed—his sanctuary, his heart—was ablaze.

Flames flickered through the windowpanes, licking the edges of the roof. Heat poured through the seams like steam from a boiling kettle. The door had been ripped from its hinges.

No accident.

This was a message.

“Call the fire brigade!” he shouted behind him. “Now!”

Janice’s terrified voice echoed from inside the house.

Andrew didn’t wait.

He yanked the fire extinguisher from beside the garden crate and charged into the blaze.

Smoke clawed at his lungs.

The interior glowed red. His workbench—the one his father built by hand when he was just a boy—was engulfed.

And beside it?

The suit.

The mobility prototype he'd been crafting for Micah.

Gone.

Melted like wax.

Andrew's grip on the extinguisher tightened. The bronze arm whirred to life, adjusting as he forced his way deeper into the heat.

Not the archives. Not the vault drawer—

He sprayed furiously, clearing enough of the flames to see the wall behind the cabinet.

His breath caught.

A symbol.

Burned into the wood.

Three black slashes in a crooked triangle—jagged, brutal.

He recognized it.

So did Helen.

The mark of the Syndicate.

The fire was out within minutes. But by then, the damage was done.

The press arrived before sunrise.

Andrew stood in the wreckage, soot-streaked and silent. His mother cried in the kitchen, Janice's hands shaking as she clutched the scorched blueprint of the children's suit.

Helen arrived just after dawn.

She didn't speak at first.

Just walked into the blackened shed and traced her fingers over the carved symbol.

"They've found you," she said quietly.

Andrew stared at the melted frame of the suit. "I thought I was done fighting."

Helen turned to him, her expression grim.

"They're not after you. Not directly. Not this time."

He frowned. "Then why destroy this?"

"Because they want to control the future of prosthetic technology. And you're building something they can't patent, weaponized, or claim."

Andrew's jaw clenched.

"They burned it," he whispered. "They burned it like it was nothing."

Helen looked him dead in the eyes.

“Then you rebuild it louder.”

Later that evening, Andrew returned alone.

The fire department had cleared the site. Police tape hung limply across the doorway, fluttering in the wind.

But it wasn't the tape that stopped him.

It was the envelope.

Tucked under a scorched plank on the floor.

Unmarked.

He picked it up with his bronze hand.

Inside — A photo.

Of Micah.

Walking home from school. Smiling. Backpack slung over one shoulder.

And on the back, in thick black marker:

“Finish it—and he burns next.”

Andrew didn't sleep that night.

He sat in the dark, eyes locked on the blueprints pinned to the wall.

Callie hadn't returned his messages in three days.

The mobility suit was gone.

And now Micah was being used as leverage.

His fingers curled into fists.

They thought they could scare him into silence.

Into submission.

But they had forgotten one thing.

He didn't build to impress.

He built to protect.

And this time, he wouldn't just rebuild the suit...

He'd weaponized its purpose.