



We Do (Viva Las... Oh, Sh!t #14)

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Category: Romance

Description: She saw something she shouldn't have. Now she's stuck with two men who won't let her go... in more ways than one.

Fancy Grace's life as a coat check girl in a glitzy Vegas nightclub is anything but glamorous—especially the night she steps out back for a break and witnesses a brutal murder. Panicked, she bolts into the first open door she can find: a tacky wedding chapel on the Strip.

Seconds later, two dangerously hot men storm in after her. Before she can explain, the drunk officiant mistakes the chaos for cold feet, slurs a few vows, and declares them all married.

DEA agents Kade Hart and Enrico Rivera are deep undercover, building a case against the city's most violent crime boss. Fancy just blew it wide open—and walked straight into their world. Taking her into protective custody was the only option. Accidentally marrying her? That part wasn't in the manual.

Now they have to keep her hidden, keep her safe... and keep their hands off her. Which proves harder by the hour.

As the walls close in and the killer gets closer, their bond turns into something fierce, forbidden—and unbreakable.

She was never supposed to need them.

They were never supposed to love her.

Viva Las Oh, Sh!t Series A Spicy Accidental Marriage Romance Series

Total Pages (Source): 23

Page 1

Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 7:41 am

Fancy

“Fancy, where are you going?” my manager shouts out as I head down the hall. “You can’t just take off. I was coming to see you. We need to talk about something.”

“It’s been dead for the last twenty minutes. All the tables are in play. I texted you. My relief girl is late again, and I need to pee.”

“Wait...”

Damn, I hate this job. I hate the jerk who pretends to manage. I hate the owner and his sleazy buddies. I hate my life.

Hitting the bathroom, I take care of business then wash up. Glancing in the mirror, I take in the uniform I’m forced to wear. Like a Playboy Bunny wannabe. One more thing I hate.

It pays the bills, mostly, I remind myself.

Being a hat check girl is better than working the floor and trying to navigate all the grabby hands.

My mother tried to get me to be a stripper with her.

She thought it would be cute until one of her friends pointed out the men would realize how old she was when they found out I was her daughter.

Then she was going to try and pass me off as her sister.

Hell no. Not only did I not want to be her sister, I wasn't crazy about being her daughter.

Not totally fair. She loved me in her own wacky way.

She just loved all the male attention more.

At least she always gave me fair warning when she was bringing someone home and I'd have time to lock myself away in the upstairs rooms of our house.

The older I got the more I just stayed there, living separately.

I study my image. She had bottle blonde hair, I've got chestnut brown hair. She had brown eyes. I have dark blue. At five foot eight I was an inch shorter but had bigger boobs until her implants. I love to read and learn. She loved men, and attention.

I miss her. She wasn't much of a mom, but she's all I had. Damn my life.

Pushing from the counter I go to my locker, grab the piece of fruit I brought and head out the alley door. Screw it. By law I get a fifteen-minute break.

Finishing my apple, I walk a few feet down the alley to the dumpster and toss in the core. As I turn, my heel gets caught in the crumbling cement. Flailing, I catch the side of the dumpster, my foot comes out of the shoe, and I slide down landing on my ass.

Can this night get any worse?

Gently wiggling the shoe so as not to break the heel, I finally get it free. Grasping the side handle of the dumpster for support I stand, lean forward and slip the stiletto back

on.

I hear the back door of the club open and mumbling voices. Preparing myself for a lecture from my manager, I debate how long I can stay hidden. Although the voices sound familiar, it's not my manager. Shoe secure, I stand, glance over the dumpster, and freeze in place.

Two of the bouncers are holding a struggling man in front of them as a guy I've never seen before punches him repeatedly. I recognize the victim as Phil, an old boyfriend of my mom's. My friend.

Shit. What kind of trouble has he gotten himself into? He's normally harmless unless drowning in the bottom of a bottle. Suddenly the new guy reaches into his pocket and pulls something shiny out. He thrusts the item into Phil's gut and drags it upward.

"NO!" I scream.

All three men turn toward me.

Oh shit. RUN!

Spinning, I race the opposite direction kicking off the stiletto's as I go. Taking the first side street to my right, then the next left. They don't shout but I hear heavy steps echoing behind me. Two more sharp turns. I glance back, but don't see or hear anyone.

Get inside. Get around people. They won't kill you with witnesses.

The third door I try opens and I rush in from the alley. I'm in a short hallway with two doors on each side and a dressing room curtain tied open at the opposite end of the hall. The first two doors I try are locked. To my relief, the third opens.

A dressing table with an array of makeup, hair sprays and boosters as well as decorative fake pearl and diamond tiaras. A chaise lounge is in front of me and to the right is a clothes rack with more than twenty wedding gowns.

I've ended up in one of the wedding chapels.

Perfect. Locking the door, I rifle through the dresses until I find one that will fit.

Stripping off my strapless corset and shredded black fishnet stocking I shove them into the trash.

The dress is torso hugging with a wide V-neck bodice.

I'm only able to zip the lower part of the dress and button the top two buttons at the neck on the back of the bodice.

Screw it. It will have to do. The veil will cover the gap.

I just wish it would also cover my face.

I'm debating if I can reverse a second veil to cover my face when the doorknob rattles.

Less than a minute later the door flies open and two men in leather jackets push through the entrance.

"Darlin' you look lovely. No more primping. It's almost time for the ceremony. Come along," the one with dark hair drawls with a cheeky smile.

Shaking my head I step back, running into the wall.

Page 2

Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 7:41 am

Rico

Closing the door behind me I walk forward. “You’re safe, Fancy. We can protect you.”

She shakes her head. “Who are you? Ho-how do you know my name?”

“I’ve seen you at the casino,” Kade says softly, stepping forward. “We saw someone chasing you and followed to see if you needed help.”

She continues shaking her head. “No. No, I’ve seen you,” she points at me. “You’re with him. With Adorno. He sent you here to...”

“No,” I say. “It’s not what you think. We aren’t with Adorno, we’re after him. Look, we know what you saw. If you give us the name of the guy...”

“Phil. They killed Phil. I knew him. He drinks a little too much sometimes and practically lives at the casino playing poker with that damn machine. But...but he was a good guy. Never any trouble. Just a harmless drunk. He didn’t deserve what they did to him. Why? Why would they do that?”

“Who did it to him,” I ask. “We need the name. That’s who we’re after. Him and Adorno.”

She looks from Kade to me. He nods my way, giving me the go ahead.

“We’re undercover. We’re trying to lock Adorno away.

Phil was supposed to meet us tonight on the rooftop across from the Casino.

He told us he had information to share. We came in from the other direction, by the time we saw what was happening it was too late.

We also couldn't see who killed him. You must have.

He looked right at you. We'll put you in protective custody. Just tell us who it was?"

"I don't know the killer. I've never seen him before tonight."

"Would you be able to identify him if you saw him again or a picture?"

"Yes. Yes, I think so."

"Okay then..."

There's a knock on the door. "Next up. You got fifteen minutes. You're paying the fee whether you go through with it or not."

Kade pulls out his phone and opens the door. "I'll get us set up. A fake marriage is the perfect camouflage to get us all out of here without being noticed." He glances back. "Watch over her, and finish getting her dressed."

After he closes the door, Fancy slides along the wall to the dressing table. She gropes the table top and clasps a brush. "I don't know you. I'm not going anywhere with you or him. You may look smarter than the other thugs on Adorno's payroll, but you could still be his men. Show me some proof."

"I'm glad you're being cautious. But that's a little difficult to prove right now.

We're undercover and don't carry anything that could get us killed.

Once we get you to a safe place, we can show you proof and have you talk to our handler.

They'll also make arrangements to get you out of town and into protective custody. "

She shakes her head. "I can't trust you."

"Fancy, if you leave on your own, you'll be dead before the night is over. Stick with us and help us find who killed your friend."

She glances up at me with fear filled eyes. "I don't understand. Why would they do that to Phil? He was just a bookkeeper for a local restaurant chain. He wasn't a crook. He didn't know anything."

"He knew, or I should say, saw more than you're giving him credit for.

He was a people watcher. I would sit next to him at one of the poker machines.

He always sat at the same machine and he'd feed me info.

Point out people we didn't have records on and give me information. We always met at the same machine."

"He liked the female video image on that machine. She reminded him of — of someone he once loved."

I nod. "I was letting myself be seen and working my way into the scene, subtly trying to get Adorno's attention.

After a couple weeks Phil asked what I was really doing.

Then point blank asked if I was undercover.

” I can’t help but smile. “The old guy gave me some subtle tips I’d never thought of for staying in the role.

A few days later he gave me information about Adorno that proved solid.

Two nights ago, he told me to meet him tonight and that he'd have something big. Something that would help us.”

Tears slip from her eyes, and she swipes them away with a palm. “He dated my mom when I was little. He’d bring me toys. He always knew what I liked. I guess I never realized how much attention he paid.”

“I know this is hard. What you saw, the shock, the danger. Now I’m asking you to trust a stranger. Please, just go with us tonight and I swear we’ll get you out of town tomorrow. Once we get someplace safe, we’ll show you proof.”

“I want a selfie of you. If they find my body somewhere, my friends will know it was you.”

Clever girl. “Okay.”

I wait until she’s done. “Now turn around Fancy, let me finish buttoning your dress. We’ll explain everything once we’re out of here and in a safe place.”

After helping her find shoes and adjusting the veil so her face is partially covered, we’re ready when Kade returns.

Taking her hand in mine, I raise it to my lips. Kade follows and puts his arm around her shoulder. Leaning in, he whispers near her ear.

“We got you. We won’t let them hurt you. We’ll use this as camouflage and get you to a secure house.”

“I am not testifying. No way. That’s a guaranteed body bag.”

“We won’t force you. If you could identify the guy tonight that would be a big help. Even if you won’t do more, we can still get you into protective custody and have you relocated.”

“Like witness protection? Some place out of this damn town?”

“Yes. Just play along for now,” Kade says.

“Give us a chance. Let us take care of you,” I add.

Leading her to the waiting area there are still two couples in line ahead of us for the Elvis look-alike officiant.

Good. That should give us plenty of time to stall and then make our exit before we’re called to make our vows.

Elvis finishes the wedding in progress, pronouncing them man and wife.

Toasting the couple, he throws back his glass, emptying the contents and nods for a refill as the next couple are led forward.

A young woman approaches, arms filled with pink, red and white bouquets. “It just wouldn’t be a wedding without flowers,” she smiles tentatively. “Especially for

someone as beautiful as you. These dark pink roses match your lip color and would be perfect.”

Fancy shakes her head. The young flower girl’s expression drops, and she glances nervously over my shoulder. “Please,” she whispers. “I haven’t sold any tonight, and I’ll lose my job.”

Kade pulls a wad of cash from his pocket, peeling off a couple of Benjamins. “Keep the change for yourself,” he says softly.

Her eyes light up before the money disappears underneath her money apron and into her jeans pocket. “Thank you, sir. Thank you. I’ve got a kid.”

Handing the flowers to the woman now under our protection the girl skitters away. More couples enter from the dressing area. A young man is going from couple to couple, a black velvet tray in his hand. Leaning down I whisper to our witness. “I’m Rico, that’s Kade. Is Fancy your real name?”

She nods.

“Okay, just play along.”

Page 3

Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 7:41 am

Kade

Rico and I have worked together for ten years. Became best friends almost immediately. We know each other, how we'll act or react. It's like looking in a mirror sometimes, even though he's dark and I'm light. Brothers, family, bonded by danger and experiences.

We always get the job done. Our superiors noticed and have left us mostly to our own devices as long as we don't stray too far outside the lines.

Tonight is going to be one of those nights.

This time, Rico's the player in our operation. He's been at a table or in front of a machine the whole time we've been on location. Hobnobbing with our known targets, getting noticed, standing out with just the right attitude.

Intent on getting the lay of the land, finding ways into places we needed to see and assessing exit routes on the first night of this assignment, I noticed her as I scoped out the casino.

She was behind the hat check counter, alabaster shoulders exposed, her black and gold corset hugged the most perfect body I'd ever seen. An old guy with stooped shoulders and shaggy white hair was talking to her. Her smile was perfection.

Then she laughed and I heard her speak. My god, that voice went straight to my dick. Husky, rich, seductive.

Over the next three weeks, I loved learning the different facets of her personality just by gauging her smile and customer interactions. Sometimes sweet, sometimes kind, when she greeted the average customer or engaged with all the old folks, giving them her best smile and friendliest tone.

Occasionally sultry if the gentlemen was polite or someone she appreciated.

Frosty as hell when some schmuck thought she was fair game and tried to get handsy. And if pushed, downright ferocious.

Sweet and sassy. Just how Rico and I like 'em.

I told Rico how perfect she was and I've been talking her up to him since. But there's nothing like seeing her in person and experiencing her draw firsthand. Playing his assigned role, he hasn't been able to see her in person until now.

Now, when she's in danger. Fate. Sometimes it works in our favor, sometimes not. Damn, I'm hoping this is a good one. This woman totally does it for me. Now that he's finally seen her in person, I can tell by the glint in his eye he's interested too.

Somewhere along the path of our years working together, Rico and I realized sharing an occasional woman was part of our dynamic. I mean hell, we're always hot for the same ones. We've had a few short, shared relationships, just nothing that's stuck. We still hope for something more someday.

I refocus on the mission at hand. First line of business is us sticking by her side until she's safe. If something more comes of it....

The young man with the tray of rings pauses in front of us and gives us his schmoozy smile. "Who's taking this lovely lady as their bride?"

“I do,” Rico and I simultaneously respond. I look over Fancy’s head, meeting Rico’s gaze. He raises an eyebrow and smirks. I know what he’s thinking.

“We do,” I reinforce.

The young man shrugs and opens his case. “These are?—”

“We’ll take three of the titanium bands with the milled infinity mark if you have the right sizes,” I cut him off.

Fancy’s eyes go wide. “But?—”

“We’ll get you a nice diamond later, babe. But we want there to be rings tonight to signify our union.” The jeweler looks at me as I continue schmoozing it on. “I don’t want there to be any doubt who’s watching over you. You’re ours now.”

Shaking her head, she drops into an empty seat while the salesman sizes and fits her ring.

“She’s the one I was telling you about,” I whisper to Rico. “The hat check girl. She’s got spunk and sass. I’ve also seen her help out some of the younger women just starting at the casino. Giving them advice and tips for staying safe. She’s a good person.”

“Not to mention those mile long legs, tight ass and—damn those tits,” he adds.

“I’m not blind, but she’s more than looks.”

Rico covers his smile with his hand while muttering, “Works for me.”

Sobering, he glances around. “She’s scared. Doesn’t really trust us. Smart girl. We

need to get her out of the open. I say we go to the hotel suite tonight since it's closest and wait a couple days to move her to the secure house."

I nod, glancing around the hall, looking for anything threatening and making sure we're still safe.

The jeweler comes over and fits our rings and hands me hers as well.

She's sitting quietly, head down, clasping and unclasping her hands in her lap.

A shiver wracks her shoulders. The night's events are catching up to her.

"It's not going to be legal." I remind Rico. "But I got one of the guys to get us a marriage license that will pass. It's enough for now and we can do all the legal shit later, if this sticks. I think it will." I pause, "It also gives her an out if she wants."

"And if we convince her to stay?"

I smile. "Already got that planned out."

"Doesn't have to be immediately. Tonight, we play the part, so does she," he says. "When this assignment is all settled, then the three of us work it out. It doesn't matter to anyone else. If the three of us ultimately agree, it's just between us anyway."

He pauses. "This is fast. But the look in her eyes, I—it's like the first day you and I were assigned and shook hands. I knew we'd be partners, brothers, for life.

I trust his feelings, they've saved our ass more than once.

"We need to protect her," I say. "The symbolism is one way. It also buys us the time to see if this could work." I watch as she fingers one of the roses. "I got a feeling,

too.”

Together we join her.

It’s as much a hope as a feeling. I’ve been drawn to this woman for a couple weeks. So much so that when I’m working, I need to catch a glimpse of her often during my night’s work. I’ve been frustrated when she’s slipped out before I can check on her one last time.

Rico and I deliberately started this assignment separately.

I’m the ghost, he’s in the limelight. At some point we’d plan to make it look like we met up at the club and are beginners planning a ‘recreational business’ and looking for contacts.

We wanted to seem like easy prey for Lorenzo Adorno to recruit or use as his lackeys. We just need a foot in the door.

The clerk approaches us. Stopping to fill out the paperwork, with the clerk who is now three hundred bucks personally ahead and has our paperwork to file.

We stand before the officiant and proceed to repeat our vows.

If Elvis wasn’t so drunk, he might have questioned the three of us saying ‘I Do’ and exchanging rings, but he was feeling no pain at the time and just scribbled his signature next to the three of ours.

Leading Fancy and Rico toward a different side exit I stop.

“I ordered a limo. Fancy, Rico is going to carry you. Keep your arms around him and snuggle your face into his neck so you’re hidden.

We're taking you somewhere safe where we can talk.

"I look over her head meeting Rico's eyes.

"Give me a second to make sure the streets are clear."

Because of our precious cargo we switch cars once before making our way to our own vehicle and then our hotel suite. I do a quick sweep of the hall and then the inside. None of our sensors or trip wires have been disturbed. Rico hands her off to me and goes down the hall for a few minutes.

I carry her across the threshold. She feels so right in my arms. Crossing to the couch I sit with her cradled across my lap, her back against the arm cushion. "What do you need, babe?"

"A do over on tonight."

Page 4

Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 7:41 am

Fancy

“Talk to us, what’s wrong,” Rico says as he approaches from across the room.

“Hmm, let me think. I witnessed the beating then murder of a dear friend. Ran for my life from a mobster. Got fake married to two total strangers. Don’t dare go back to my job.

Now I’m in a hotel with a potential price on my head with the same total strangers.

What do you think could possibly be wrong? ”

“I didn’t mean it quite like that.” He has the grace to look sheepish. He hands me a flute. I stare at his proffered hand. “Orange juice with just a splash of vodka. Not trying to get you drunk, just want you to relax a bit. If you don’t trust me, you can make your own.”

When I still stare at him, he drinks half the glass and holds it out again.

Oddly enough, I do trust him, them. Their tactics are bizarre, but they did get me quietly and discreetly away.

I take the glass. He puts an unopened bottle of water in front of Kade, then pulls two wallets from his shirt pocket and hands them to me.

“We’re asking you to trust us, but we need to trust you aren’t going to out us as well.
”

I flip the wallets open and scan their credentials. Two slightly younger, yet familiar men stare up at me. I hand them back.

“You knew the man who was murdered?” he asks.

I nod. “He was a friend. I’ve known him most of my life.”

“Tell us about Phil,” Rico asks.

“I—Phil was a good man. A little into the booze, but a good guy. But then his drinking was my mother’s fault.”

“How so?”

“She was going to marry him then changed her mind at the last minute.”

“How long have you known him?” Rico asks.

“I remember him from about the time I was four. That’s when she, Mom, started bringing guys home and locking me in my room. I don’t really remember anyone from before then. Something he said once made me think she knew him before I was born. So, twenty or twenty-one years.”

“Bringing them home?” Rico asks.

“Mom was a stripper and would occasionally bring guys home for fun or extra cash. Phil was the only one who ever hung around for long. In the beginning I hoped maybe they’d stay together but Mom was never good at exclusivity.

They’d be a thing for a few months, and he’d come around a couple nights a week.

Then she'd find someone new. She kept going back to him because he let her.

I'm sure he gave her extras besides money.

"For as long as I've known Phil he was a bookkeeper for the DeStefano family restaurants. Hard worker. Honest. When I was older, I asked why he put up with Mom. He shrugged and said he had to. He loved her. Sharing her was better than never having her."

"Where's your mom now?"

"She died in a drunken car accident eleven months ago. The bank wanted to have me kicked out. Something about a second mortgage. Phil went and talked to them. He said there was a misunderstanding, accounts got messed up and the house was paid for and in my name. After her death, he started drinking heavier. The poker machine he played for years had a video image of a woman that looked a lot like Mom."

Rico cocks his head. "Yeah, she looks a little like you, too. That's where I met Phil. I was playing the machine next to him."

"How long ago?" I ask. "I—I thought he was looking better the last few weeks."

"I met him for the first time about a month ago. He was always at that same machine starting about the same time each night. We struck up a conversation. About a week in, I thought he seemed less drunk, too. The next week he asked me what I was really doing. Two days after that he gave me my first real lead. He'd pass me what he could every night or so. "

"You got him killed. You had him doing your job for you!" I stumble off Kade's lap and confront Rico. "This is your fault."

Rico stands. I try to ignore the anguish on his face.

“I never asked for his help, never told him what I really do, and I specifically told him to stop. I told him it was none of his business and what he was doing was too dangerous.”

“He texted me earlier today. Said he had important information I needed to have and that it was the last thing he could give me. He told me to meet him on the rooftop by the AC unit. We had just gotten there when we heard a commotion in the alley and looked down. We saw them kill him.”

I rub my forehead. “It’s not your fault. I—Phil always did what he was going to do. And if he was drinking you couldn’t always reason with him.”

“Enough for tonight. You need some sleep.” Kade stands and with his hand on the middle of my back leads me to a partially closed door.

Pushing it open, he nods toward the right.

“The bathroom is behind that door. There are extra toothbrushes, towels. The basics. Not a lot of feminine stuff but we can get that tomorrow. Take a shower, bath, whatever you need. I’ll put one of our T-shirts on the bed for you to sleep in and we’ll be in the other room when you’re done.

“If you need or want anything, just call out.” He pauses. “You’re safe here, Fancy. We’ll watch over you.”

I stand under the waterfall shower head and let the tears fall.

Phil was good to me. Even when Mom treated him like shit.

Of all the men she'd bring home he was the only one that even tried to interact with me.

He'd bring me little gifts when he came to visit.

There was a two-year period where I thought maybe they'd get married, but Mom blew that going after a bigger fish.

I'd talked to him earlier this evening. He seemed sober, not as blurry eyed. He even said he'd been doing better. Found a new purpose. He said he'd take me to dinner next week. He said he loved me.

Covering my mouth to muffle the sobs, I lean my head against the shower wall and cry.

I'm so tired of this town. Of working so hard to get nowhere.

Knowing how much Phil loved Mom somehow kept her alive in my own heart and life.

Now they're both gone and I have nothing. My mind keeps replaying his death.

This damn town has taken everything from me.

I don't realize the water has gone cold until someone reaches around me to shut it off and wraps me in an over-sized towel then carries me from the room.

A deep voice croons words I can't comprehend but give me comfort.

Lost in my grief I don't struggle when they dry me and dress me in a soft shirt and shorts.

I'm settled on a lap wrapped in strong arms while my hair is being dried and gently brushed.

Then I'm stretched out in the middle of a bed, snuggled under blankets.

Someone is rubbing my back, and my hands are clasped against a hard chest.

"Sleep, Fancy. Just sleep. We'll be here when you wake."

Page 5

Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 7:41 am

Rico

We heard her sobs. When they got harder instead of dying out, we couldn't ignore her pain any longer. Pulling her from the shower, we worked together to tend to her then we both snuggled against her in bed until she finally fell asleep.

I knew right then and there this is what I wanted for the rest of my life. The three of us. I see the same certainty in Kade's eyes.

"One step at a time," I whisper.

He nods.

"Stay with her. I'm going to check in with the office. Let them know what happened. See if the body's been reported or recovered."

After checking in, reporting what happened and learning that the alley cameras weren't working so there's no street film, I find myself staring out the window at the bright lights below.

At first glance Phil had appeared to be a rheumy-eyed drunk.

When we first met, he seemed to have a slight slur to his words, but the more time I spent next to him the less I heard it in his speech.

In fact, he was always quite articulate with me.

Too late, I'm wondering if the drunkenness was as much show as fact.

He'd said something when we first met about watching what I drank and who I drank with. He even toppled a couple of our drinks one night.

At the time I just thought it was a drunken accident.

What if he was trying to warn me even in the beginning?

Sitting next to him at a table or one of the machines.

He always seemed more astute than you'd think for as drunk as he portrayed himself.

He'd pegged me pretty quick even though I denied it.

What the hell did I miss? I message the office and ask them to get me everything they can find on Phil Clark, Fancy Grace and her mother and her mother's death. I spend the next two hours going over my case notes.

After checking our security, I head back to the bedroom where Fancy and Kade are sleeping.

Crawling in on the opposite side of Fancy, I lay on my side and snuggle up against her backside.

I could go to the other room, but I'm not going to.

The standard king is a tight fit for the three of us, but better to cuddle.

As I'm dozing off, I feel Kade leave. With everything Fancy has been through the last forty-eight hours we need to give her some rest. Protecting what's ours comes first.

We've waited a long time to find the right one.

Fancy is ours. Now we just need to convince her to take us both.

It's late afternoon when I crawl from bed.

Kade is pouring coffee when I get to the table. I down half the cup before opening my computer.

"I think Phil could have been the anonymous tip the office got that Adorno's organization was the one marketing and selling the laced drugs," he says.

I rub a hand down my face. "Never thought of that. What makes you think so?"

"The files you asked for came in. Mic DeStefano is second cousin to Lorenzo Adorno. It doesn't look like they were close, but DeStefano had a much-needed influx of cash about twenty months ago.

Phil was the bookkeeper for the DeStefano restaurants, he was too smart not to wonder where the money came from. "

"My mother was Mic DeStefano's mistress when she died," Fancy says from the open bedroom door.

"Adorno introduced them. The last time she broke up with Phil was for Adorno. Adorno promised to marry her if she'd help him out a few times.

She'd sleep with who he told her to, always hoping he'd keep his promise someday. He paid her well regardless.

"She hadn't been home or called me in two nights.

We had a deal that we'd always check in at night.

I kept leaving her messages. I got one response saying she was working and would get back to me.

I got a call the third night. The cops said she ran her car into a tree up the mountain and died.

There was a fire. Her body was burned pretty badly.

People who were with her earlier in the evening said she was drunk when she left.

“When she died, Phil and I were both shocked. Mom had a strict rule about driving drunk. She'd take ride-shares all the time for the shortest distances. He couldn't believe she would take a chance like that after all these years.

“I think it broke Phil's heart the way she was being used by Adorno. Phil really loved her but he didn't have the extravagant lifestyle she craved, didn't have the money she wanted or host the lavish parties and the fancy dresses she could get from Adorno.

“Phil and I have stayed close since he dated her when I was little.

He went on a couple week bender after she died, then was sick for a few weeks with a stomach flu, but he checked in on me every couple days.

Like I said he helped me with the house and getting the bank straight.

I really thought he was doing better the last couple months.

“Have they found his body?” she asks. “I need to get him a proper burial. I have some ashes from Mom. Maybe... maybe I can put them together. That would make him

happy to be with her.”

Her eyes go wide. “Wait, they will release his body to me, right? There is no one else. How do I claim the body, how?—”

“Don’t worry. We can help with that. We’ll make sure you get control.”

“Phil’s a bookkeeper,” I continue. “Numbers and facts. If he is the one who contacted the department, he had to have proof. He wanted to meet with us for a reason. He said on the rooftop. I didn’t notice anything, but we were distracted by what we witnessed. I think we need to go back and check.”

“I’m coming but I need clothes, or at least a belt. This shirt is long enough I could make it look like a dress,” Fancy chimes in.

“No,” Kade and I both snap.

“Of course I’m going with you. You don’t know where he’d hide anything, and if you leave me. I’ll just follow after you’ve walked out the door. Now, get me a belt.”

Truth, I’d rather have her with us than trust she’d be okay alone. Crossing to the room I’ve been using, I grab a military style web belt with ratchet buckle, a pair of sweatpants and a baseball cap. “Don’t make it look like a dress. Try to look like a boy. It will be safer.”

Kade glances up when I walk out of the bedroom. “I called in and told the department we have her in protective custody and need clothes delivered for her. They’ll have them here later tonight.”

“Any news on Phil’s body?” Fancy asks.

He shakes his head.

“They were busy chasing me. They probably dumped him in the closest dumpster and put trash over him.” Her voice catches. “Could you?—”

“Already on it. The department sent a truck through and picked up the whole street early this morning. You’re right, Adorno’s men are pros at disposing of things. There won’t be any admissible evidence, but hopefully we’ll recover the body for you.”

She nods before heading back to the bedroom to change.

Page 6

Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 7:41 am

Kade

Our girl is strong and a quick thinker. I worry that she's burying the trauma and it's going to destroy her from the inside out. "This isn't good. We need to get her out of town."

Rico nods. "Let's see what she can help us find today. Then ask for an actual team at the secure house and we'll move her there then out of town."

"Now that they have a name, the department has started a background investigation and are pulling phone and bank records on Phil. But it will take time to do it legally with court orders and such."

"I just want to know the guy's general background."

What about that hacker guy we heard about who knows your friend on the police force here in Vegas?

Could Diego reach out to him? Just for some quick info?

I know it won't be admissible. But it might help us know what we're dealing with and the agency doesn't have to know. I'll pay."

"We'll pay. Diego left the local PD. He's in private security now working with that hacker."

I'll call." Pulling my phone, I continue talking as I type, "The office is sending photos

of all Adorno's known contacts and associates that they have for her to look at tonight.

Hopefully she'll be able to identify the killer. "

I glance up. "I don't think you should go back in. We don't know what set them onto Phil. You may have been made."

"Hell, no. I am not giving this up. We're bringing these bastards down. I'll go in tonight and see how it feels. You'll need to stay with Fancy."

"I heard you." Fancy says from the doorway of the bedroom. "I don't think that's a good idea. You need Kade to cover your back. Unless there's a reason you think this place is no longer safe?"

"No, but I don't like you being here alone," Rico says.

We both look toward her. If I didn't know better, I'd swear she was a boy. The way she'd dressed in sweatpants, a long sleeve t-shirt, a Raiders tank top, with her hair stuffed into a ball cap, and shoulders slumped. No one would recognize the woman beneath the outfit.

"What happened to your breasts?" Rico gasps.

She laughs. The husky sound goes straight to my cock and I have to shift, stepping behind the couch to cover my reaction.

"I raided your closet to see what I could use for a disguise and found your resistance bands. They'll keep the girls mostly flat for now."

"That can't be comfortable," I add.

“Well, neither are bras, corsets, or stilettos, but a girl does what she has to do. So, we’re going to Phil’s house.”

I nod. “We’ll give it another thirty minutes, and the sun will be almost down. We’ll be able to drive around to make sure his place isn’t being staked out first before sneaking in.”

“Phil lives—” She clears her throat. “Lived, in a duplex. A quiet street with not a lot going on. Mostly older couples and middle-class families. His next-door neighbor is pretty feeble and hard of hearing so Phil could play his sports as loud as he wanted and not disturb him.

“I think he helped the guy out here and there too. As well as some of the other older couples. Phil was always helping.” Turning away, I see her brush a hand over her eyes.

I drive, making sure we aren’t followed. Dropping Rico off a couple blocks away, I wait until he pulls on a ski mask and disappears between the houses. He’ll make his way in through the back door first and check for cameras before signaling us in.

Inside, the home is almost sterile. No pictures or decorations. An expensive recliner with a small table beside it is centered across from a big screen TV hung on the wall. The kitchen is immaculate. The laundry basket is empty.

We enter the bedroom. The bed is made with military precision. Clothes hang neatly in the closet by color then type. Nothing is out of order. It’s almost too pristine.

“Did he really live here?” I ask.

She turns to face me. “Phil was a simple guy. He never talked about his past or anything except maybe sports. The last twenty years he worked, hung out at whatever

club Mom was working at, and he gambled. I don't even know if he has any family nearby."

Pausing, she smiles. "When I was about fifteen, I got a job at an ice cream shop. Once a week he'd stop in and buy a two-scoop cone.

He swore he wasn't checking up on me, but I knew he was.

I'd see him drive by almost every night I worked.

It was comforting to know he cared. Hell, Mom never even came once.

"He'd always stop and check in on me when I was at the club. After Mom died, he stayed in touch more often. We'd go to dinner every couple of weeks, and he helped with the house issue.

"I've only been to his home a few times. I do remember there was a laptop usually on the side table next to his recliner. I didn't even notice, was it there?"

I shake my head crossing the room. On the table beside the bed is an eight by ten picture frame with a photo of a woman who looks a lot like Fancy. In one lower corner is a snapshot of Fancy as a little girl and in the opposite corner is a current day snapshot of Fancy.

A simple man. A man who loved deeply.

He was an accountant. From what Rico learned meeting him at the casino, he loved researching things, information, and spent a lot of time on his computer doing sport team stats.

I pull the drawer open hoping for the laptop. Inside is a calendar and a red pen. Days

have been marked off and the word treatment with a time has been entered periodically over the last five months.

“What is that? What do those entries mean?” Fancy whispers beside me.

Rico comes out of the bathroom, carrying a small bag. “There were prescription medicines in the bathroom. Was he sick?”

She shakes his head. “He never said anything. Maybe they’re old.”

“They were filled recently. They have the prescribing doctor’s name. We’ll find out what they’re for. Right now, we should go.”

Fancy pauses at the dresser and rifles through the shirts until she finds what she wants. Hugging a couple to her chest, she grabs a bottle of cologne from the top, along with the photo and calendar before following Rico outside.

“I’m taking the two of you back to the hotel. Then I’ll climb up on the roof where we were supposed to meet Phil and see what I can find.”

“No. We go together,” she snaps.

“I don’t think....”

“I don’t care what you think. I care about catching Phil’s murderer. I can help. Now take us there.”

Using the easiest access, we climb the fire escape attached to a building marked for sale and make quick work of crossing from one roof top to the next.

“I don’t think Phil planned on getting killed. Something went wrong. He was smart

and if he had proof to give us, he would not have had it on him. I'd bet he dropped the proof off then went inside to burn time until we showed up," Rico offers.

We spend the next forty-five minutes trying to find something, anything that he could have left behind on the rooftop. "Maybe we're wrong. Maybe it wasn't physical proof, maybe he just had something to tell us. Information we could use."

Frustrated, we head back to the hotel. I stop at the desk and get the clothes that were delivered for Fancy. When I get up to the room, Rico's on the phone and she's hovering nearby.

"Ask them what these medicines are for. What was wrong with him?"

My phone rings. I turn away to answer. "What the hell did you guys walk into?" our boss snaps, not waiting for me to say anything.

"We found his body. But it wasn't the only one.

There was a young girl as well. She'd been strangled.

She was a mess, so probably more happened to her but we have to wait for the autopsy. "

Fuck. We know the bastards are into drugs, kidnapping, prostitution, sex trafficking. Murder.

"Our man got some photos and grabbed what forensics he could but there were witnesses at the dump and they notified the local authorities which is going to blow up in the news," he continues.

"We've got a contact in internal affairs.

She's helping us navigate local jurisdiction and taking a little of the heat.

Be careful, she's not sure who to trust right now either.

Adorno has been kissing up to a lot of the local authorities and handing out paydays like candy. Somebody is on his payroll.

"Watch your back. We're trying to get you some additional help on the ground. I'm of half a mind to pull this whole operation. It's getting too dangerous. You may have been made."

I pause, taking a deep breath. "He was a good guy. We can't, won't let this go. Not after what happened. Put a hold on the bodies so that no one can claim either one. Can you get us pictures of the girl? See if we know her."

"Will do."

Something niggles at the back of my mind. "Phil made Rico pretty quickly. How? Who knew we were here? What officials were aware you had a team coming to town?"

"None that I know of. We started getting anonymous tips three months ago. They escalated to some verifiable info for us to know we were on to something. Because of your history in Vegas, we waited a month for the two of you to get free to take the investigation."

"Are you sure your contact at the Vegas department can be trusted?"

"I'd trust her with my own life."

"What about our office? Are we clean? Have you checked?"

He's silent so long I know he's thinking the same thing I am.

"I'll get back to you. Stay frosty and I want daily check-ins from now on."

Page 7

Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 7:41 am

Fancy

“His computer should have been at the apartment. Maybe once we have it we can find out about the medicines,” I say to Rico. “We need to go back and look again. He took it everywhere except the casino.”

“The team will get back to us. Everything has to be requested legally if we want a case against Adorno to stick. We need to give them a little time.”

“Damn it! I want answers. I—I need them to pay for what they did. I want that bastard to get gutted just like he did to Phil, and I don’t care if that makes me a bad person.”

“I know, babe. We want payback, too. But if we’re going to put them away, and catch everyone , not just the killer, but the assholes pulling the strings, we need to do it legally.”

Turning I cross to the window. None of the pictures they’ve shown me have been of the killer. There’s a guy that’s the right height, but it’s as if he knows there’s a camera on him and always seems to turn at the last minute.

Rico explained that he hasn’t been invited to the big table yet.

A couple meet and greets as Adorno walks his empire, and a show and tell of how important he is.

Head nods when I’ve been playing the higher tables.

Hints about my past had him investigate me.

An invite has been hinted at. Once that happens things will move quicker.

There's a buzz at the door. Kade passes us and whispers, "It's probably the food I ordered when I picked up the clothes, but..."

Taking my hand, Rico leads me into the bedroom where I slept last night.

Pushing the door almost closed he stands in the opening of the cracked door, his weapon drawn.

It hits me, these men are always on. Do they ever get to let their guard down?

Not only have they been watching each other's back, they've had mine since we met.

The bellhop pushes the cart into the room. Kade has him lift the covers making sure he got what was ordered before handing him a tip.

"Last time for food service. We'll need to start food runs from now on," he says.

Rico nods.

"What does that mean?"

"Letting them bring food to the room exposes us. Either to attack or food tampering. We've never done it in this hotel. I figure we're safe this one time.

"We don't know how much of the town is under Adorno's control," he continues. "He's not the biggest fish but he wants to be." He looks at me. "Come eat before it gets cold."

Kade's phone dings just before we're done eating. He glances at the message then goes for his laptop and sits back at the table.

"Diego's hacker friend just sent an encrypted file."

Both Rico and I go to stand beside him to look at the files. The first file shows a much younger Phil in a military uniform. "Phil was in the service? He never told me."

Kade skims quickly. "Army intelligence officer. Good computer skills for his time. Purple heart. Medal of honor. Retired after twelve. Returned to his hometown of Vegas. Never married."

"Does it say about him being sick? What's wrong with him?"

"Not yet."

Rico moves up behind me and wraps his arms around me as we watch Kade scroll.

"Your mother died eleven months ago, right?"

"Yes."

Kade starts switching back and forth between two different files. Finally, he pauses and turns to face us. "This is me skimming and until we can get access to his computer we won't know if my guesses are even close."

"The hacker said Phil's search patterns took a drastic change about eleven months ago. That would have been right after your mom died."

"He was on and off the dark net, researching his boss, DeStefano and Adorno and

their businesses. Collecting intel.

“Five months ago, our office started getting anonymous tips. They stopped for a month but restarted with entries almost daily after that. Once the office verified the info as much as they could, Rico and I were assigned.

“If I’m reading everything correctly, that month with no contact is when Phil went to the doctor and found out he had advanced stomach cancer. There was no cure for him, only medication to ease the pain.”

“That could have affected his speech and made him sound drunk. Good cover.” Rico says thoughtfully.

“I’m speculating that’s why he started pushing our department to act,” Kade says. “He knew he was running out of time to bring Adorno down for the murder of your mom. He wanted it done or at least on the way before he died.”

Kade pauses and looks up at Rico before dropping his gaze back to me. “After your mom died, do you remember signing some papers for Phil?”

“He—he offered to identify the body. He didn’t want me to remember her that way. I signed some papers for that and to have her cremated.”

“Did Phil tell you one of the papers was for an autopsy?”

“No. I—Mom didn’t leave any money. I couldn’t have afforded that.”

“He did. Your mom showed a high level of drugs in her system. Drugs laced with fentanyl.”

“No! No, Mom never did drugs. She drank, but no drugs.”

“That information was in the anonymous files he sent to our office.”

“That’s why he spilled a couple of my drinks,” Rico says. “He must have known somehow that there was something in the drink. He told me I’d get better quality if I ordered while at the bar.”

“There are two bartenders on staff at the casino that are tight with management and the bouncers,” I cut in. “Phil told me to never take a drink from them. Ever. Not even water. Actually, he insisted that I bring my own drinks from home.”

“He’d bought and paid for your mother’s house years ago. He didn’t realize she’d taken a second mortgage against it. He paid that off and signed the title over to you so you’d always have a home,” Kade continues.

“Why didn’t he tell me? Tell me everything he’d learned? What he’d done for Mom? That he was sick?” I push away from Rico and go to the window to stare down at the alley.

It was him. It was always him watching out for her for me. Not her richy rich important boyfriends who she claimed did so much for her.

She wouldn’t see Phil for months, then she’d be calling him up inviting him over for dinner and a few nights of fucking.

Then she’d have a new car, or wardrobe, and no more time for him.

I knew it hurt him. The last few years there was no hope left in his eyes.

He’d resigned himself that her on and off again was all he’d ever have.

Still, he came every damn time, because he loved her.

How could I not know he was dying? I saw he'd lost some weight and looked more tired, but he always blew it off that it was just work.

After everything he did for me. I never helped him.

I met him when I was four. He came for my fifth birthday bringing gifts, cake and ice cream and every birthday after. He'd always slip me cash on the side and tell me to keep it hidden. He'd meet me for lunches or dinner when Mom wasn't around and ask if I needed anything.

As a pre-teen, I knew he watched out for me. I'd see his shadow in a shop doorway as I walked home, or his car in an alley. Never interfering but making sure I got home safely. I'm pretty sure he warned off some guy in high school.

There's no father listed on my birth certificate. Mom told me she didn't have any idea who it was. I wanted Phil to be my real dad.

Scrubbing the tears from my eyes, I look down into the alley below. He died in another alley trying to get revenge for her death. Oh Phil, I wish you would have told me. I would have helped. We could have done it together.

"Where's his car?" I ask. "It wasn't in his carport. He may have hidden the evidence inside it."

"Do you have a license plate number? I can get it but it would be quicker and more secretive if we don't have to."

I rattle it off. "He let me use it whenever I wanted. It's an old Lincoln. Navy blue, white interior. He said it was a classic."

I turn toward them. "I need to see him. I need to... say good-bye."

Page 8

Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 7:41 am

Rico

“Why don’t you take a shower and try on the clothes. Let us do a little work and see what we can arrange. We’ll catch you up when you’re done.”

She nods and heads to the bathroom.

Kade speaks first. “I can’t stand seeing her hurt like this. These fuckers have to pay.”

“Phil was a good guy. I liked him. Now some of what he said makes more sense. He was a man bent on a mission. We need to finish this for him and Fancy.”

Running a hand down my face, I look at Kade. “Can Diego help us out again?”

“I’ll check.” He picks up his phone and heads to the kitchen.

By the time Fancy rejoins us we have everything arranged.

“A friend can get us into the morgue at shift change in an hour. He’ll meet us and have a mask and wig to disguise you. It will have to be quick. We’ll only have a few minutes. Adorno may have eyes there, too.

“Another body was found in the same dump truck which makes us suspect the same dumpster. It’s a young woman. Would you be able to look at the picture? See if you recognize her?”

“Yes. Anything I can do to help.”

Kade has the photo showing on his laptop. Fancy looks at it. “That’s Susie. She’s new in housekeeping. She was having a hard time finding her way around the back halls. The bruising on her neck? She was strangled?”

“Yes,” Kade says.

“I wonder if she got lost and saw something she shouldn’t have.”

“Exactly what we suspect. Maybe the killer when he walked back in covered in blood,” I add. “Can you change into something dark, put your hair up in the skull cap, and wear the hoodie? We need to leave in five.”

Working our way through the back alleys we take one of the alternate vehicles we have hidden around the area. Following Diego’s instructions, we pull up behind the morgue where the trash cans are. Kade nods at me. “You go with her.”

In the morgue, I can’t hear the words she’s softly speaking.

Her expression shows her pain, the tears and her grief.

She smooths the hair from Phil’s forehead before kissing him goodbye.

Back outside, we drive a couple blocks to where we agreed to meet Diego.

“Watch your back. Adorno and some of the other low life recently lost their inside legal man, Belcher. It won’t take too long to replace him, but they’re more vulnerable right now so their fangs are showing. Watch your backs and stay frosty.”

“Roger that.”

Back at the hotel Fancy goes to the bedroom and shuts the door.

“She needs time,” Kade says. “We’ll let her be for a while.”

I stalk to the window. This is the part I don’t do well.

I hate stake outs. I hate waiting. I want to be in the middle of it, knocking heads.

Someone is going to pay for this. For hurting her.

Thirty minutes later I’m still prowling the room while Kade calmly sits at the computer working.

I can’t stand it any longer. I press my ear to the door.

“I think she’s crying. You have to go to her. Make sure she’s okay.”

“You’re right there. You go.”

“I’m not good at that and you know it. You’ll be nice and know what to say.”

“And you’ll make her forget. Go.”

“We both go. Now.”

I stare him down until he nods, shuts the computer and joins me at the door. I knock twice. “Fancy we’re coming in. We want to check on you.”

Without waiting I turn the knob and push the door open, reassuring myself that if she cared she would have locked the door. She’s curled into a ball in the middle of the bed, head buried in the pillow as her shoulders shake with the force of her tears.

Kade climbs on the bed in front of her and wraps her in his embrace. I crawl in

behind, cloaking her with my body. “Ah babe, don’t cry.”

“He was a good man. He didn’t deserve that.”

“We know sweetheart,” Kade whispers.

“We’ll make them pay, babe. I promise they’ll pay.

“Let us hold you while you sleep,” Kade says. Right now, you need to rest. You’ll feel better in the morning.”

Rolling to my side, I reach behind me and grab the box of tissues, holding it out to her. After she wipes her eyes and blows her nose Kade cuddles her to his chest, her face secure in the hollow of his neck.

I snuggle to her back, one hand on her hip. As her breathing levels out and she drifts to sleep, I feel something settle in myself. She’s a fighter. She’ll get through this. We’re kindred spirits.

In some ways my background isn’t so different from hers. Left alone to my own devices as both parents struggled to make ends meet with six kids to feed. We lived in a small Portuguese neighborhood in Massachusetts. Everyone worked to benefit the family.

I was a surprise, shock really, the last of the litter. One of those rare freak occurrences since Mom was in menopause. By the time I came around the rest of the family was tired. Of course, me being stubborn as hell and a fighter by nature didn’t help.

When I was ten, I heard some asswipe trying to rape my sister.

She clearly said no. I picked the lock on her bedroom door and broke his nose with

my fist. At twelve, when my oldest and only brother died of an overdose, I went after the guy who sold him the drugs.

I used my brother's phone to record a dozen sales, then found a local narcotics officer who would hear my story.

I volunteered to make a buy so they could arrest him.

From then on, I was hooked. I knew exactly what I was going to do the rest of my life.

Four years in the army paid for my criminal justice degree.

Once I got out of the service, I went straight to the DEA.

Six months in I was assigned with Kade. We make a perfect team.

His finesse, my 'in your face'. We've been looking for the right woman to complete us for a while. Fate may have finally stepped in.

Fancy's breathing has evened out. I glance over to Kade. As if reading my mind he nods. This is personal now. We'll protect her from the bastards who hurt her mother and Phil.

Then if she's willing, we're gonna keep her.

Page 9

Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 7:41 am

Kade

I see the resolve in Rico's gaze. My brother in all ways but blood, as he claims.

I smile to myself. He's made a decision. Once that happens, there is no backing down. He hasn't even kissed her, but he's decided Fancy is the one for us.

He came from a loud outspoken lower middle-class family. I was the obligatory offspring of two entitled rich kids, who never wanted to be bothered with a child.

Our friendship started out with being paired together on a case.

The connection was instinctual. It's like we're two sides of the same coin.

Intuitively we know how the other will operate.

I have two years on him in the agency but from the first assignment we've synced.

They tried to put me with other agents but never with the same success rate.

After the third time, Rico walked in when our supervisors were trying to assign yet someone else with me and said, "Do you want this operation to be successful? If so, quit the bullshit and just let Kade and I handle it. Done deal."

And it has been ever since.

I meet his gaze over the top of her head and nod. I'm in. I close my eyes and let sleep

claim me. He'll get me when it's my turn to take watch.

When he finally wakes me, I shift Fancy into his embrace and climb from the bed. Something's been niggling at my memory. DeStefano. Something about DeStefano. I need to get to my computer.

The first thing I notice is a message from Diego.

He and some friends found Phil's car in a parking lot six blocks from the Casino.

They inspected it and could find nothing inside except a parking pass dated early evening the night he was killed.

But there were scratch marks near the passenger door handle. The car might have been opened.

Going back to the beginning, I review my files.

ICE has raided the DeStefano warehouse looking for illegal drugs twice in the last six months, making the local newspapers.

Although nothing was found, much of the imported food was damaged in the search, which necessitated the loan from his cousin.

But what if nothing was really ruined? What if DeStefano was importing the drugs and getting them out before ICE showed up?

Or were the agents on the take and let the drugs go for a payout?

What if that was part of what Phil caught on to and started digging deeper. He was on a mission to take down the people who murdered the woman he loved. He would

have followed every thread. Damn, I need his computer or at least his logins.

Pushing from the table, I pace the room. We need the info he left in order to protect Fancy. Nothing can happen to her. Men like we're dealing with don't let go until they get what they want, or their victim is dead. Right now, they want Fancy. I want them.

Before long, I find myself at the bedroom door and crossing the threshold. The room is illuminated by the full moon's glow.

I crawl into bed in front of her. Rico lifts his head. "You ready now?"

"She's ours."

"Who's what," she mumbles.

I cup her cheek when she opens her eyes and stares at me. "We want you to be ours."

Sliding my fingers into her hair along the side of her head I lean forward and press my lips to hers.

Soft, so soft and sweet. She flattens one hand on my chest but doesn't push.

Gently running my tongue over the seam of her lips, she gives me entrance.

Our tongues dance. Advance, retreat. My heart races.

My need goes from zero to one hundred. Slowly, I disengage.

Leaning on my elbow, I still cup her cheek. "You are so perfect. So beautiful."

Rico slides his arm around her urging her to lie back on the bed. Splaying his palm on

her sternum he slowly lowers his lips to hers. A gentle brush, then another, both a promise of more to come. Then he deepens the kiss letting her understand his passion before pulling away.

He gently presses his forehead to hers then straightens enough he can look down on her.

I slide my palm up the side nearest me and press my hand to her abdomen below Rico's.

"You're so beautiful," Rico says, his voice filled with need and honesty. "So brave and strong. A warrior queen. You'd fight for your men, wouldn't you?"

"I—" her gaze flicks from one to the other of us. I'll never forget the moment realization dawns in her eyes. I wait, praying she doesn't reject us.

Her gaze turns warm. "Yes, I'd fight for what's mine. My men."

Sliding the T-shirt up and over her head I toss it to the side. Rico shimmies down her panties off. Then we both strip.

"We're both clean. No sex since our last test."

"I'm on the shots and haven't had sex in a year. Three months ago, at my annual checkup, I tested clean."

Rico leans forward and kisses her left shoulder while I cup her face and taste her lips again.

Kissing a path down her sternum, I pause to suckle her breasts.

Her pleased moan is music to my ears. Shifting slightly, I settle my hips between her legs, slowly kissing and lapping my way down her body.

Her body stiffens beneath me, and I glance up. Rico is teasing her right nipple with his fingers, while sucking hard on her left. Our girl is going to know what it means to be well loved by us.

Reaching my destination, I hook her legs over my shoulders and study her bare pussy.

Her soft flesh is soaked in the sweetest nectar.

I lap over her hood then using my thumbs spread her open exposing her bud.

Flicking the tip of my tongue over her hard little nubbin, I tease her before sucking her into my mouth.

Her moans grow louder, her gasps quicker.

“Feels so good doesn’t it, babe,” Rico croons. “You like how hard your man is sucking your pearl. He’s going to fuck you with his tongue now. But you don’t get to come. Not until I tell you, you can.”

Sucking her nub hard, I finish with a gentle nip before plunging my tongue into her again and again.

“Oh my god. Oh my god,” she gasps. “I need... I need.”

Rico rolls to his back. “Now! Take her now.”

Sliding up her body I notch my cock, then hook her legs with my forearms spreading her wide. “You ready, sweetheart?”

“Yes, Kade. Please I need....”

I plunge into her, burying myself to the hilt. A myriad of emotions wash over me at once. The rightness. How good she feels. Her warmth. Coming home.

I lose all control and thrust into her again and again. “So perfect. So beautiful. Damn, Fancy, you are everything.”

I keep pounding until she screams her release and I follow.

Home.

Fancy

I have no idea how long I lay there lost in the euphoria. Never have I experienced an orgasm like that. Was it an anomaly? Or have I never had a man who knew what he was doing?

Make that two men. Not something I ever thought I'd do. I'm not a prude or naive. I've just never thought about it for myself. But now I can't think of one of them without the other.

Oh no! I open my eyes. "Rico!"

"I'm here, babe. Relax. Everything's good."

"No. It's your turn."

He smiles down at me. "This isn't a game of Go Fish. There are no rules on who goes first and how often. This is a relationship that's gonna be built on trust and need. Have you ever been with two men before?"

I shake my head.

"And you admitted that it's been a year. I am not taking you so soon after Kade. I'm not taking a chance that we hurt you and ruin what we have. There will be time. We don't plan on letting you go. Get used to that thought."

Kade comes up on my other side, placing a warm washcloth over me and gently

cleaning me. Sliding one arm under my back and the other under my knees he lifts me.

“What are you doing?”

“You need to go to the bathroom. I’m taking you.”

He releases my legs, and my feet make purchase on the bathroom floor. I shove his shoulder. “Get out. I can handle it from here. I need a minute.”

I need more than a minute. Two men. Okay, two hot men. Different from each other but both... Intelligent. Intense. Protective. Thoughtful.

They both want me. I want both of them.

Can you deal with what people will say?

My mother was a stripper and a hooker. Duh, people have always talked about me. Will this really be that different?

They’re in a dangerous line of work . One or both of them could die.

Everyone dies. Life isn’t fair. Phil loved my mother so much he spent his life accepting what crumbs she gave him. I didn’t understand. Now I do.

They’ll leave you behind, maybe for months at a time.

Oh hell no. I’ll learn to be their getaway driver.

I am not giving this up. Not without trying. But if this is a threesome. It needs to be equal. There needs to be expectations and ground rules.

I finish cleaning up. At the door I take a deep breath before opening it and walking out as naked as I was carried in.

Kade is sitting up in bed and Rico is slouched in the wingback chair next to the bed sipping from a tumbler. His eyes light up and he smirks. "I definitely like that look on you. Please feel free to wear it any time we're home."

"Good." I saunter across the room and drop to my knees in front of him, then sit back on my heels. "I have questions for the two of you."

"Ask away," Rico says.

"Do you do this often?"

"If you're talking about sharing a woman," Kade says, "We've enjoyed it multiple times randomly, but we don't always share. We both have hooked up on our own as well. There's nothing between us."

"If you're asking if we've ever shared an exclusive relationship with a specific woman, the answer is no," Rico adds.

"We've talked about it, wanted it, but never found anyone that completely fit us.

Until you. Now we both agree we'd like to try a relationship.

It would be just the three of us and we'd all be exclusive.

Faithfulness, honesty, is important to us. "

"To me as well."

He nods.

“If this is going to work,” I continue, “I feel each of us should enjoy some amount of pleasure the times we’re all together. How does it work if there are only two of us.”

“Let’s say I get sent on an assignment,” Kade says. “The two of you are left home together. Feel free to enjoy each other. Just no other partners unless we all agree. And if someone has a headache, they don’t have to participate. Their choice,” he grins.

“And each person gets input into what they would like or want, correct?”

“Yes,” they both agree.

“Okay, then since Rico had a point about me being a touch sore, and he is still at half-mast, I would like to suck him off, of my own free will. But he should also be allowed to ask for attention, too. Correct?”

Rico groans. “Fuck babe, you can suck me off any time. I will always get up for you.”

“Just trying to get the rules down pat.” I smile at both my men. Sliding my palm up Rico’s thigh I drag it over the ridge tenting the boxers he’d pulled on. “I think I can help with this if you’re interested.”

“Fuck yes.”

He eagerly slides them off. A touch shorter and a little thicker than Kade, he’s the first man I’ve known who wasn’t circumcised.

“It all works the same babe, just feels a little different for me, so I’ve been told.” He pumps his shaft a couple times with his own hand. Wrapping mine around his girth I

slide my palm up and down his length before taking him in my mouth.

He gently cups the back of my head and groans in pleasure. “Hot damn that feels good.”

The tension builds, his thighs tense, his breath comes quicker. He’s close to exploding.

“Oh fuck. Oh damn. I’m almost there. You can pull off if you want. But do it now!”

I continue to stroke and suck, and he gives me his all. I swallow it greedily. The connection we’re building feels so good, so right. Mine. My men.

Kade is gazing at me as I pull off. “That was beautiful. Both of you. I wish you could have seen your faces. And the contentment.”

There’s happiness in his voice. Giving and receiving, both of these men. Their concern and attention to making sure we’re all satisfied. I’ve never felt more cherished.

Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 7:41 am

Rico

My eyes are closed and I'm trying to decide if I've died and gone to heaven. I'm almost afraid to look. Afraid this was just a dream. Glancing down, our girl is still there. We have a lot to talk about, but not now. Now we all need to cuddle and rest.

"Kade, check our security then we're all going to sleep for two hours."

I stand, lifting Fancy and cross to the bed. Laying on my back, one hand under the pillow, Fancy cuddles to my other side, her head on my chest. Kade snuggles to her back, pulling her butt into the cradle of his hips. I smile to myself before dozing off. Yep, she fits us perfectly.

Two hours later I wake to my internal alarm and a head full of questions. The first thing is that we haven't checked Fancy's home. Is someone watching it? Waiting for her?

Second, we need to check the roof again closer to the time Phil would have been arriving at the Casino. He was like clockwork. Always arriving at seven pm.

Third, what set them on to him that night? Did he get sloppy on his research? Leave a trail from his hacking? That doesn't feel right. Something else had to have happened.

Kade and the bosses aren't going to like it, but I need to go back into the Casino. Show up like normal. I'm confident they didn't see us on the roof or when we were tailing Fancy when she ran away. Maybe I can learn something

“What’s got your brain spinning so loud?” Kade asks.

Throwing back the covers I stand. “We’re missing something.”

“Yeah. DeStefano.”

“DeStefano is a jerk,” Fancy mumbles, sitting up and rubbing her eyes.

“I always thought he took advantage of Phil. Phil didn’t see it because he was paid well and he felt bad for the guy because he’d been hurt in the war, supposedly.

Now that you tell me he’s related to Adorno, I’m sure he’s just as rotten. ”

“Wait, you said your mom was DeStefano’s mistress because Adorno told her to do it. Did Phil know his boss was...”

“Fucking my mom? I don’t think so. Mom was smart enough not to risk her two golden eggs. Remember, Phil was always her fall back. Phil trusted his boss until recently. I’m not sure what triggered the change.”

Kade looks at me. We both have a pretty good idea. Her mom’s death. Phil was smart, he must have known who she was fucking. “Babe, I want to check your home. Do you have a security system?”

“We didn’t, but Phil put one in after Mom died.

I don’t know much about it except I have a code that I use to unlock everything.

Once inside I have to reset the lock. If ever I came home, and the light was white instead of red, I wasn’t to touch anything and get as far away as I could, then call him.

“Although if it was white, I’m sure he’d be calling me before I ever noticed to warn me not to go home.”

Sitting on the edge of the bed, Kade reaches for the lamp near him as I ask, “Did either of those things happen?”

She looks between us then pushes up and leans against the headboard.

“No. Well, sort of. A few days ago, there was a delivery driver on my porch when I got home from the store. He was all upset and apologizing. Said he didn’t mean to mess with the lock, but the box hit it, then it started flashing and he was just trying to shut it off.

By the time he got done telling me, Phil was calling.

He had me tell the kid the cops were on the way.

The kid panicked, yelling he’d lose his job and ran off. ”

“What kind of delivery?”

“The box was plain brown with just Mom’s name and our address.”

“Something for your mom? Didn’t that seem strange?”

“Yeah, but Mom was always ordering things, custom made fancy dresses or trinkets mailed to her with no return address. It was just hard that it came so long after—after she was gone.”

“Did you see the delivery guy’s vehicle? Was it the post office?” Kade asks.

“I never saw where his truck was parked. He ran down the street for a couple blocks then headed south. He was dressed in a brown shirt, but I don’t remember tags. Phil told me to put the box aside and not to open it. That he’d come and get it and have it tracked somehow. So that’s what I did.”

“When was this?”

“A couple days ago.”

“Two days before he was killed? Or the night before he was killed?”

“It came Saturday afternoon before I had to be at work. It was still there Sunday when I got home. I went to work again at three. Phil came and checked on me like he always did before he hit the tables that night. He didn’t say anything about the package. That was the night... You know the rest.”

“I need to go to the house. I need the code. All the research he was doing was methodical. He figured out who I was and that we were investigating. I wonder if something in that box set him off.”

She sits up and climbs from the bed and grabs clothes from the dresser.

“What are you doing?”

“If you’re going to my house, we’re all going. You need Kade to cover you and me to get you in and show you what you might need to see.”

“That’s not how this works. Kade stays here to protect you and I go investigate.”

“I know—big, bad, secret agent man. Except, I get the role of thorn in your side. It was my mother they killed. My friend, only friend really, and father figure who they

killed in front of me. I'm going and so is Kade so we can all watch each other's back.

"If you leave me behind, I'll follow. You could tie me to the bed, but that would not be as much fun as if we all did that together.

And it would leave me in a very vulnerable situation.

" Turning toward the bathroom, she calls over her shoulder.

"Hurry up. We want to get there while it's still dark. "

I look at Kade as the door closes. "We are so fucked."

Page 12

Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 7:41 am

Kade

I nod. And we both love it. Give us a headstrong woman with fire who knows her own mind and we're goners.

Quickly dressing and checking our weapons, I grab some basic lock picks and surveillance tools and shove them into my backpack.

We take the staff elevator to the lower level, and I go ahead to check the car then pick them up. Head and hair covered in balaclavas we leave the car the next block over from her home. Fancy stays with me while Rico goes to inspect the outside of the house.

He rejoins us a few minutes later. "The light on the security panel is white. But I didn't hear any sounds like it had been tripped. They may have figured out the code. The upstairs addition, does it have inside stairs from the main floor? I saw the outside stairs."

"Yes. That's where I really have lived for the last few years. I'd go in from the outside when she had company. She and I didn't always coexist well. The upstairs had become my home."

"Okay. You two stay put."

"No, I'll go," I cut him off. "I'll check for cameras as I go and set interference if I need to."

Rico taps his ear. “Your mic on?”

Heading out, I tap my own. “Roger.”

“Oh, I want one of those ear thingies. Tomorrow, you have to get me one,” Fancy says as I slip away.

I smile. Yeah, definitely a handful.

Night goggles in place, I sweep the lower level before heading up to Fancy’s rooms. What I see has anger engulfing me like a fire storm. “Mother-fuckers.”

Rico must have heard me. “Where are you? Talk to me.”

“I’m in her bedroom. I’m pretty sure I know what set Phil off.

There’re a few holes in the wall where he literally ripped out video cables.

Looks like one was hidden in a picture, another behind a plant, one above the bed.

There’s a hole in the wall in her bathroom too.

I’m not getting any reads on my devices so I’m pretty sure he must have been doing the same type of check I am and caught them all.

There’s a brown shipping box on the bed, the part of the label remaining has her mother’s name.

Next to it are a couple sexy negligees, lingerie and a red dress.

Hold on, while I use my phone to read the handwritten note.

“It says, ‘I want to see you wear these for me, sweet’. No signature. These arrive months after her mother died. I don’t think so and I doubt Phill did. These were meant for Fancy. Some asshole was making his move. Phil must have had the same thought.”

“Take pictures. Bag what you can and get out of there,” Rico snaps.

“Wait, I want to go in. There are things I need. Please,” Fancy begs. “I’ll be quick.”

“Someone broke in and made a mess. I don’t think it’s safe,” Rico responds

“If they already made the mess and Kade is ok, we should be, too.”

“Let her. Maybe there’s something important missing,” I cut in. “We’re gonna have to tell her anyway.”

I meet them at the door. “Keep to the pen lights and point them down. “Fancy, tell me if you see anything out of place.”

She leads us through the lower level; kitchen, living room, past a bathroom with a sunken tub and shower. Pausing at the closed door, she takes a deep breath before entering.

Obviously, her mother’s boudoir. A showplace of sexy design.

Raised bed with fluffy duvet and several pillows, lace canopy delicately threaded with mini lights.

Ice bucket with glasses on the bedside table.

A dressing table to the side, artfully decorated with perfumes, makeup and

hairbrushes.

A lace robe cleverly draped over the chair.

Two French doors lead to an expansive closet filled with clothes guaranteed to turn a man's gaze.

"Anything disturbed?" I ask.

"I haven't looked in here for months. But I don't think so. Phil and I went through it together after she died. Nothing was missing...except her. We planned on cleaning it out sometime. We just never got to it."

She turns and heads up the stairs. She gasps as I shine the flashlight beam around the room. "What the hell?"

Stopping at the bed, she lifts the ripped box.

"Is that the box the delivery guy had?" I ask. She nods. "Are those clothes your size or your mother's?"

"Our height was about the same," she picks up one of the negligees and holds it to her front where it's almost a perfect fit. "After her implants, Mom was at least two sizes larger in the bust."

"Having been her lover, Phil would have figured that out too. The holes, the cables hanging out of them, those are for hidden cameras. I'm guessing that when Phil went through the box, he put two and two together."

She sees the note. "Shine your light on this."

“Do you recognize the writing?”

“No, but I have some papers we can compare it to later.”

“You said Phil put in the lock. Your safety and security were important to him. I’m guessing once he found what was in the box he got suspicious.”

Fancy looks at me. “He found cameras in Mom’s room once. She laughed. Made cracks about being a porn star and maybe making extra money. He was furious. After that he always took her to a swank hotel. I know he checked the house from time to time but never found anything again. Until now.”

“We need to go. We’ve been here too long. We can talk in the car,” Rico cuts in.

“Just a minute, I need a few things. Give me the light and push the bed aside.” She heads to the closet, pulls out a backpack, grabs a couple clothing items and shoes and stuffs them inside, then goes to the dresser and does the same.

Necklaces hang from the dresser mirror. She takes a few before turning back to us.

“Phil gave me these. “Push a little farther. Five inches.”

Kneeling on the floor she shines the light back and forth until she finds what she wants. She presses a spot and the floorboard pops up revealing a hidden box and pouch. Grabbing it she stands. “Put the bed back while I get this in my bag.”

Once everything is back in place we head downstairs. Rico pauses at the living room window. “We’ve got company. Someone just pulled up across the street.”

Page 13

Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 7:41 am

Fancy

Moving behind him I see the parked car and two men climbing out.

“Bastards. That’s one of Adorno’s cars that his goons use. I think one of them was holding Phil the night they murdered him.” Crossing to the coat closet, I grab the baseball bat I keep there.

“Whoa, whoa, slugger.” Kade wraps his arms around me from behind, trapping my arms. “We want to get out of here without being seen.”

“Aren’t they here because they know we’re here?”

Rico shakes his head. “No. Watch their body language. They just climbed out of the car and are talking. No urgency. Not even paying attention to their surroundings. My guess is they’re here to check the house out or see if maybe you’re here.”

He pulls a cheap looking phone from his pocket, hits 911 and hands it to me. “Tell them someone is breaking into your neighbor’s house and you’re afraid. Give them your address twice and hang up.”

I make the report as instructed.

At the back door he pauses. “Stay between us. If something goes down you hang on to Kade, he’ll get you out.”

Outside, we hear sirens in the distance. We get to our vehicle without incident. Rico

and Kade in the front, I'm in the back seat of the SUV.

"Now what?" I ask.

"We're taking you to our secure house. It provides better security, and it will be easier for Kade to watch over you. The department is sending a protection detail to get you out of town late tomorrow."

"No."

"Yes," he says.

"No. I am not going anywhere until I identify Phil's killer. I am the best bet you have. Have they sent you any new photos of Adorno's men from the casino?"

"Not yet."

"Diego's friend is still trying to help?"

"Yeah, but there's no camera access that he can get to inside or outside by the doors. Adorno's smart. He doesn't keep any online records of staff or business either."

"All the men involved with Phil's death were at the casino that night.

I don't know their names, but I've seen the two that were holding Phil around for a long time.

I would be able to identify them in pictures or a line up.

The man who actually killed Phil, I don't think I've seen before, but I can identify him.

The overhead door light shone right on him when he looked at me.

“What about a sketch artist? Would that help you search for them?” I ask.

“Maybe.”

“So if I can identify them, you can arrest them, right?”

Rico clears his throat. “Once the office has names and photos they’ll start building a case.”

“We both know that Adorno didn’t get where he is by being sloppy. He’ll destroy any evidence and loose ends will disappear, bodies never found.”

“We’ve got a pretty good track record, babe. We’ll get Adorno,” Rico says.

“I know you’ll try. I want Adorno. But I really want the killer and the two holding Phil to pay. One way or another.”

Preferably my way, my hand. They took my mother and Phil. The anger inside me is like a festering wound that started with mom’s death and now is spreading like cancer. Phil was all I had left. My one bright spot of a shitty childhood.

Kade, looks over the seat. “We’ll take care of this, Fancy. Trust us.”

“I do.” But you shouldn’t trust me.

We arrive at a moderate ranch house in a middle-class neighborhood. Rico drives into the garage and Kade immediately climbs out. “Stay put until we check all is clear.”

A few minutes later they return and grab all our bags. I’m still clutching my

backpack.

Inside they show me to what looks like the master suite. “Get comfortable. You want to sleep?”

“No. I’m too worked up. I think I’ll shower and change. Is that okay?”

‘Sure, sweetheart.” Kade says, leaning in and kissing my forehead. “We need to check in then we’ll start breakfast. Take your time.”

Rico gives me a hug before they both walk out, closing the door behind them.

After putting away the clothes they bought me and the few I grabbed from home, I take my backpack into the bathroom and lock the door.

A jacuzzi tub and multi head shower stall big enough for a party are on the opposite side of the room. The custom-built vanity with makeup mirror is aligned with the double sinks. After my closet-sized bathroom, I could get used to this.

Setting my backpack on the countertop I pull out the lock box I’d retrieved from under the bed and open it. A picture of Mom, Phil, and me wearing my graduation gown lays on top. My almost family. Mom broke it off with him less than a month later.

There’s a few more photos, one of Phil and me when I turned twenty-one and below that a couple of him and I when I was little that he’d printed from his phone for me.

After Mom died, he shared a bunch of photos he’d taken.

I don’t know if Mom even knew he had them.

Photos of her, a few of him and her, me as I aged.

Elementary school, playground, junior and senior high.

I hadn't realized how many pictures he had of me from over the years.

I was surprised at how important they were to him.

Only then did I realize I was like his child as much as he was like my father. The father of my heart. We became even closer after that with weekly dinners and more phone calls. He became the father I'd longed for, looking out for me, loving me. And it got him killed.

God, I hope the photos are still on his computer. We have to find it. Maybe Kade or his friend can somehow retrieve them for me from the cloud. I have so little... The tears wash over me like a tsunami.

Shoving the box back into the backpack, I strip off my clothes and stumble into the shower, giving in to the loss, the pain, the dreams.

Page 14

Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 7:41 am

Rico

“She’s crying.” Kade looks over at me from where his ear is pressed to the bathroom door. She’d been quiet for so long, we both came to check on her.

“What do we do?”

“Try the door?”

“Locked.”

“Get your pick.”

Making quick work of the lock he looks up at me.

“Get the bed ready, as soon as I get her dry, we’ll be there.”

We deliberately gave her the master suite, knowing if we had our way the three of us would be sharing one Wyoming King bed. Sex or no sex, our girl needs cuddling.

I strip off my clothes. “Fancy, I’m coming in.”

Pushing the door open, she’s huddled in the corner under one of the sprays, hair half suds.

So lost in herself, I doubt she even knows I’m here.

Lifting her in my arms I sit her on the bench and gently massage her scalp then grab a handheld to finish rinsing her.

Shutting off the water, I wrap a towel around my waist, pat her dry and wrap a towel over her hair before settling her on the bathroom counter.

Gently massaging her scalp before I grab the hair dryer from the drawer, I dry her long chestnut brown tresses, carefully brushing out the tangles.

When she's dry, Kade carries her to the bed. Drying myself, I follow. Kade is on his back, and she's snuggled against his chest. He mouths 'asleep'.

Checking security once again, and the outside cameras, I bring my laptop and phone to the room and crawl in on her other side snuggling up against her back. We all need rest. Knowing the earbud will sound any alarms, I allow myself to doze off.

A few hours later she shifts between us, rolling toward me. She gasps and leans up against my chest to look back at Kade. "Oh."

"We're here babe. You aren't alone," I say.

"I slept? I thought I was dreaming that the two of you were holding me."

"No dream, we're here. We're both holding you."

She looks between us. "I don't know what to do."

"Whatever you want." Smoothing her hair, I kiss her forehead. "Or nothing at all. You don't have to do anything. Just let us be with you, watch over you."

"But I need—I want you." She glances at Kade again. "Both. I can't—won't choose."

I want both of you.”

I meet Kade’s gaze over her head. She has no idea how that makes us feel. She’s the one. I knew she was out there. Now that we’ve found her, we won’t let her go. “You don’t have to choose. We’re good with sharing. It’s what we want. If it feels okay to you. Can you be happy with both of us?”

“Yes, I think so.”

“No pressure. Let’s just see where this takes us.”

Lowering her lips to mine, her kiss is tentative at first then needy, hungry. I spread my palms over her ass cheeks and lift her astride my body. Holding her in place, I deepen the kiss. She tastes so sweet, her response is engaged and just as ravenous as mine.

Kade is leaning on his elbow watching. Fancy pulls from my lips then cups the back of his head, urging him in for his own taste.

While they’re kissing, I’m playing with her clit, teasing and tugging with my thumb and finger, before burying two fingers as deep as I can in her channel.

Her groan goes straight to my cock, and it jumps against her thigh. I keep pumping my fingers inside her.

“Oh, damn. Rico I need... I need you inside me.”

I lift her hips over my cock. “Guide me in.”

She does and as she sinks down my rod, I realize it has never felt this good. Everyone else was just practice before her.

Riding up and down my cock, she squeezes her internal muscle on and off.

She's so tight and slick, I'm gonna lose it before I want to.

Before she's ready. As if reading my mind, Kade straddles my legs behind her and cupping her breast, he starts tweaking her nipples and suckling her neck in that ultra-sensitive spot.

"Oh my god. Oh my god. Yes. Yes. Harder." She explodes and I follow.

She drops her head to my chest.

"I never... I mean that was amazing."

"You never got off with a guy before?" I ask.

"Kade was my first time. And now you." She blushes, shaking her head. "I don't really understand."

"You have if they gave you oral, right?"

Her blush proceeds her negative head shake.

"But you have with toys?"

"Yes."

"You know that you're normal? A lot of women have the same issue. It's about the guy knowing what he's doing and not just worrying about himself. It's about communication and knowing what to ask for."

“How do you know so much?”

Kade snorts. “He has several very liberated, outspoken sisters who had no problem expressing their frustration to him, or anyone in the vicinity, of their complaints about their lovers.”

“All my mom ever said was be prepared to take care of yourself,” Fancy says.

“You can when you feel the need, sweetheart. But with us, we prefer to be the ones giving you pleasure,” Kade says.

I smile at her. “Oh babe. Challenge accepted.”

Kade lifts her and carries her to the bathroom.

“Get out, Kade. I can do this myself.”

I laugh when she slams the door in his face. He’s also grinning. He flops on the bed. “She is so perfect for us. Innocent in many ways, yet worldly and spunky too.”

Adjusting the pillow behind me so I’m sitting up with my back against the headboard, I run a hand through my hair. “I’ve been thinking, maybe it’s time to go out on our own after this. Have more control over our schedule.”

“I talked to Diego,” Kade says. “The company he works for, Hardcore Security, is hiring. They have offices all over the country now. Here, Love Beach, Chicago, outside of Annapolis to name a few. Said he’d put in a good word for us if we’re interested.

“We’re gonna find these assholes and make sure they can never get to her again. I don’t care how we have to do it.” I meet his gaze. “You hear what I’m saying?”

“Yes. But one of us has to be around at the end to take care of her.”

“You. You’re easier.”

“NO. No one’s taking any chances over the other. We do this together like we always have. I’ve talked to Diego. He’s on standby to take care of her if it goes south.”

Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 7:41 am

Kade

“Who’s going where in the south?” Fancy asks as she crosses the room to the bed. “Or did you mean south Las Vegas?”

I hold out my hand to her. When she takes it, I give a gentle tug, and she lands on the mattress between Rico and me. “I’m going south and you’re gonna love it.”

I roll, bracing my forearms on either side of her shoulders and cup her head. Running my tongue over her plump lower lip, I suck it gently into my mouth and between my teeth, nibbling ever so softly.

Her hips arch up, her breath catches in her throat. “Like that, sweetheart?”

She nods.

“Words. Give me your words. I want you to tell me exactly what you want. How hard, how deep. Talk dirty to me in that sexy as fuck voice of yours.”

“I don’t—I need you.”

“Just like that. What you just did. Aha sweet, every time you open your mouth to speak that voice makes me hard. I cannot get enough of you.” I take her mouth again, nibbling her plump lower lip then suck it hard into my mouth.

Her groan has me arching my cock into the mattress. “Damn you are so luscious.”

Sitting back on my heels I take my time studying her. Her thick, rich chestnut brown hair, her round grey eyes, pert little nose. I know from last night her breasts fit my palms perfectly. Not too big, not too small. We were so careful with her. We need to know if she can handle the real us.

“Sweetheart, I want you to move over and lay on top of Rico so you’re looking up at me and your hips are cradled between his thighs. Can you do that?”

She gives me a quizzical glance but does as I request. Putting his hands on her hips he runs them slowly up her sides, pausing to plump her breasts gently then taking her hands in his, he draws her arms up and over their heads.

“Now grab the headboard spindles and do not let go. Understand?” I watch her eyes carefully, gauging desire versus fear. So far, we’re a total go. “We will never do anything to hurt you. We want to bring you more pleasure. Will you trust us?”

She nods.

“Use your words, babe.” Rico instructs.

“Yes.”

“Good girl.” He kisses her cheek then splays his palms on her belly below her waist. “Hmm, you feel so good.”

Stretching out on the mattress, I slide my arms under her thighs. I hold them open with my shoulders and use my fingers to spread her labia open so I can see her.

“Hmm, your little clit is puffy and begging to be sucked. You want me to do that sweetheart?”

She nods.

“Use your words. What do you want me to do?”

“Please Kade, suck my clit.”

I dig in, feasting on my girl. I’m gonna make her come so many times she’s never going to doubt her ability to orgasm again.

Her moans amplify, her hips are quivering and shaking. “Kade. Oh my god, Kade.”

Rico covers her breasts and gently pinches her nipples at the same time I suck her hard and gently nip her bud. Her body stiffens, her breath seesaws in and out before the tremors of release wrack her body.

Ever so slowly she drifts back to earth.

“Need you now, sweetheart. You okay?”

“Yes, please now. Take me now.”

Rico nuzzles her neck whispering encouragement and praise from behind. Sliding his palms down her torso he gently cups his palms around her thighs gently holding her legs open between us for my entrance.

Sliding up her body, I press into her. Her warmth embraces me like coming home. Knowing she’s probably still sensitized, I go slow at first. Before long she’s pleading, “More, more.”

Driving harder and deeper I slip over the edge and explode, taking her with me. She is so much more responsive than she knows.

She's exhausted. I carry her to the bathroom. Rico follows and prepares a warm cloth to wash her. Back in bed we center her between us and watch her sleep.

I must have dozed. The bed shifts and Rico heads out of the room and down the hall to where we put our clothes and equipment. The other shower comes on and I rouse myself and go to the kitchen to make coffee. I know what he's planning, and I don't like it. We're a team.

When he comes to the kitchen he's dressed in his casino clothes.

"I don't like this. You won't have any back up."

"Won't be the first time or the last. Sometimes it's what we do. There's a tracker in my watch and a couple others on me. You know how to find me."

"That's not a guarantee and you know it."

"Right now, we need to bring these bastards down. They're after our girl. Adorno and DeStefano have to know she's the witness. One or both of them already wanted to fuck her to replace her mother. They'll use her then kill her. We have no choice."

"You need back up."

"I need to know she's protected. That if something does happen, you'll get her out of here to somewhere safe. I don't trust her to anyone but you. I've got extra protection on me. I'll see you in a few hours."

"I'm gonna see if Diego has someone to send in. Be careful. We need you."

"Love you too, babe," he responds, blowing me a kiss as he walks out the door.

Cocky sonofabitch.

I call Diego. “So let me get this straight. You come to town on a case, go undercover, your contact gets killed, you pick up a girl and want to play house and now one of the worst crime bosses in town wants all three of you. You’re fucked.”

“We don’t know if he knows about us, but we are protecting our girl.”

“And your bosses are helping, how?”

“If we tell them about the girl they’ll want to put her in protective custody. Truthfully, I don’t trust her with anyone but us. We’re assuming Phil burned his own cover, but what if he didn’t. I won’t trust her to anyone I don’t know personally.”

“I’m not under the radar anymore. My wife, my testimonies. I’m known. I’ve got a friend. She’s in town. Let me see if she can help out. She may be on assignment. There’s a guy who’ll be here tomorrow. He’s a big mother fucker but surprisingly can blend in.”

“You said the company you work with might be looking for more agents?”

“Yeah. Are you serious?”

“This thing with Fancy is serious. Rico and I may be ready for some changes.”

There’s a blaring silence from the other side of the line. “You straight up with this girl?”

“She knows. She’s in.”

“Alright. I’ll vouch for you. Give me a day or two to see what I can do.”

“When the hell did I become an employment recruiter,” he mutters before hanging up.

Page 16

Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 7:41 am

Fancy

I wake up alone in bed. I hear Kade's voice but can't make out the words. He and Rico must be trying to be quiet so I can sleep.

Rico and Kade. Two men. Two lovers. I never saw this coming. Never felt this sexual if I'm honest. No one I've dated has ever appealed to me the way these men do. But gamblers and thugs have never been my thing.

Mom's example in love sucked. Most of the men she dated were assholes. Except Phil and she was too dumb to choose the good man.

I'm so over Vegas. I realize there are good people here but my memories, the influences I've had... I just want different. A clean slate.

Vegas has never been my ideal home. I dreamed of getting away, to go anywhere else. I snort back a laugh. I've barely been out of the city.

Now with both Phil and Mom gone, there's no reason to stay. I'm free to leave. The sooner the better as far as I'm concerned.

As soon as I get my revenge.

I want Adorno and DeStefano to pay. The rage inside me demands that I be the one to deliver retribution. They took from me. I want to be the one to deliver their downfall. My mother wasn't innocent, but she didn't deserve what they did to her.

Phil is... was a good man. He died trying to protect me. I have to make this right.

Climbing from bed, I go to the bathroom. Geez, my backpack is still in the corner. I check the box inside making sure I reset the lock. Everything will be there when I need it.

Dressing, I go in search of my men. A woman with thick red hair twisted on top of her head, held in place by hair sticks, sits at the breakfast bar eating an orange. She glances my way and gives me a very detailed head-to-foot inspection.

Kade turns. The warmth in his expression eases my—oh damn, is that jealousy?

Wrapping his arms around me he hugs me then gives me a quick kiss.

“Fancy this is Roja. Rico and I have worked with her a couple times. She’s a friend of Diego’s who’s in town.

They work for the same security company.

Although, she tells me he’s backed off quite a bit since he’s gotten with his woman. ”

I hold out my hand to shake. Her grip is strong, almost like she’s testing me. I refuse to flinch. Her tilted grin tells me she noticed.

“You want coffee?” Kade asks.

“Please.” I glance at the clock over the stove. “Is it really noon?”

Roja chuckles. “It’s almost midnight, sleeping beauty.”

“Almost.” Kade places the mug in front of me. That’s when I notice he’s wearing a

very high-end dress shirt and suit pants. Something akin to what Adorno wears. It looks a hell of a lot sexier on Kade. “What’s going on? Where’s Rico?”

Roja raises her eyebrow and looks at Kade. “Ooh, favorites already?”

I’m not doing this. I’m not playing games. I’m not— “Yes, Rico. My other man. In case he didn’t tell you, Kade, Rico and I are together. What’s your relationship here?”

She smirks. “I like this one. She may actually be able to handle you two assholes.”

Kade gives his head a shake. “Roja, give us a few.”

Taking her mug, she goes to the patio door and steps onto the deck.

“Kade?”

“It’s nothing. We met her briefly when we were on another case.”

I tilt my head. “Met? Or hooked up?”

He snorts. “Met, as in worked professionally together for a couple hours. She likes to unsettle people to see what they’ve got. She’s a good operative. I trust you with her. She’s here for a case of her own but it hasn’t started yet.”

“Where is Rico?”

“He’s at the casino. We need to finish this.”

“Then why the hell aren’t you with him?”

“I couldn’t leave you alone. She just got here.”

“The doors lock. You showed me the security system. I can take care of myself. Don’t do this to me. Don’t put yourself or each other in danger because you’re worried about me. I can’t deal with that. I can’t deal with losing you like I have Phil. I can’t live with any more guilt.”

“Sweetheart.”

He reaches for me and I step back. “Go. Go take care of Rico. Of each other. And you damn well both better come back unharmed.”

He grabs his suit jacket from the chair back and crosses to the door leading into the garage.

I rush after him, stopping him. Cupping his face in both hands I kiss him, pouring all my love and fear into that one action. “You damn well both better be home later. I need you. Be safe.”

“We need you too, sweetheart. I can’t tell you when, we may not be able to come back here tonight, but we’ll be home. Roja and Diego will be watching over you.”

I pull him in for another kiss and then he’s gone. I stand looking at the door.

“This is the life. It doesn’t get easier. You strong enough for this, princess?”

I face Roja, hands on my hips. “Princess my ass. Damn straight I’m strong enough. I’ve been fighting my whole life. I’m not stopping now that I found someone—two someone’s worth it. You know nothing about me.”

“Stripper and part time hooker for a mother who liked playing with the mob until they got rid of her. Probably tried to barter something she should not have had and got herself killed. You had a sperm donor dad and work as a hat check girl. I’ve also

got your GPA. What am I missing?"

"That's information. That's not me. Not the person I am."

"Tell me."

"I don't have to prove myself to you or anyone else. I don't care what you think. All I care about is bringing down Adorno, the man who had my mother and the man who was like a father to me killed. Before they can hurt my men."

"Then what the hell are we standing here yapping about? Show me what you got, tell me what you know and let's make a plan."

"You need to eat first and I need more coffee." She heads to the kitchen. "There's a notebook on the edge of the counter. While I cook, you start talking and writing. Let's start with the two weeks before your mother was killed."

Page 17

Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 7:41 am

Fancy

An hour later I have a whole new understanding of Roja than what I first suspected. Although she's an awful cook, I managed to swallow a couple bites of overcooked scrambled eggs and finish a slice of burnt toast that, with enough peanut butter, was palatable. Sort of.

Her mind is like a kaleidoscope, shifting and twisting each new piece of information, looking at it from all angles then coming up with an image I never expected.

"So your mom was getting worried about her age and how long she could keep turning tricks."

"That's not what I said."

"No, you said she turned forty-six. Her primary john recently gave her to his cousin. She hadn't had a lot of success finding new clients at the clubs where she worked as a stripper or hung out.

She kept changing her makeup every couple of weeks, her hair color each month, and ordered and returned at least two new wardrobes.

You caught her doing Kegel exercises and she had a recent appointment for breast assessment. She was scared. She wanted stability."

Slamming my coffee mug on the counter I stare her down. "Then why didn't she go back to Phil? The man was still besotted with her even after she treated him like shit."

“Because she treated him like shit. She rolled him for a bigger fish and going back to him would have been a step backward in her mind. She’d been with a top dog.

She couldn’t settle for less. Her ego would take a hit.

But she wasn’t getting younger. She needed security.

Tell me about the days leading up to her last night again.

You heard her arguing on the phone with someone about a key before she left. ”

“Keychain. I think she was talking to DeStefano but I’m not sure. She said something like, ‘ babe, I don’t know what you’re talking about. What is a gold ingot anyway? I haven’t seen a key chain laying around. That new housekeeper was cleaning. Did you ask her?’

“Which I can tell you was bullshit. Mom knew what a gold ingot was. She asked Phil for one at Christmas a couple years ago.”

“Keychain. Gold. Ingot.” Roja looks at me. I swear I see wheels turning. “You can buy a gold-plated flash drive that resembles an ingot. Would your mother know what a flash drive was?”

“No.”

“So, hypothetically, let’s say your mother did see one and lifted it thinking it was real gold. Did she have any hiding places at the house or otherwise that you know of? Like a safety deposit box? Or did Phil have one she knew about?”

“No....” Oh shit. Leaving the kitchen, I rush to the bedroom and my backpack. Pulling out the lockbox, I key in the code, open it and place the pictures to the side. I

feel Roja behind me.

“Mom didn’t have a lock box, but I had one that Phil gave to me.

I found it out of place a few months after she died.

I just thought it shifted when I opened the trapdoor.

I always use the same numbers for codes, on my phone, the door lock.

She was good at picking that kind of information up.

Phil had to change his code for his checking account on a regular basis. I should have known better.”

“Well, well, well, aren’t you a bundle of surprises,” she says, reaching around me and removing my Sig P365. Pulling it from the clip holster, she checks for a magazine. “Yours?”

“Phil gave it to me and taught me how to use it when I turned twenty-one. I’ve never carried it.

But it was at home if I ever needed it. He worried.

Mom would sometimes bring random clients home.

One got pushy with me. I think Phil handled it because the guy never came back.

But Phil wanted me to be able to protect myself. Magazines are under the false bottom.”

“I’m liking you better and better, girl. You may have potential.”

Since she already knows about the weapon, I dump the contents on the bed. As I’m pushing things around, I notice an unfamiliar coin envelope. Hand shaking, I reach for it. Unclasping the top, I tip the opening toward my open palm.

A gold ingot with a key chain attached to the corner slides out.

“Don’t touch it. They may be able to get fingerprints.

Drop it on the bed.” Reaching into the side of her cargo pants, Roja pulls out a very thin bladed knife.

Using the tip she examines the bar. “See this? I think that’s the lever for a flash drive.

We need to get this to the right people.

Hmmm. But who could that be. Don’t touch anything else.

Take pictures with your phone. I’m calling Diego. ”

Thirty minutes later she tells me a special courier is on the way to pick it up. “Why not the police or the feds?”

“Diego was a cop. His wife is in internal affairs here in Vegas. Local law enforcement has had a few issues of their own. They’re still cleaning house.

“Rico and Kade are DEA. This should be their find, but I’m not sure the best way to protect it until they get back. An expert needs to inspect it to make sure the device doesn’t have a self-destruct. Diego and I know a guy who could do it, but again, proper protocol.”

After taking pictures, she has me use the tip of her knife to slide it back into the envelope.

“Your mother was probably killed for this. Your friend, Phil, may have been part of the collateral damage or he found supporting information. I understand his laptop is still missing?”

“Yes.”

“There’s a safe in the basement. We’re securing your lock box down there with the drive. You, I and Diego will be the only ones to know for now.”

“How brave are you feeling?” she asks.

“Why do you ask?”

“I want to find that laptop. Don’t you?”

“Yes. And I want them to pay for what they did to Phil. Every last one of them.”

She smiles. “Welcome to the club, girlfriend. Payback is a bitch and there’s two of us. When was the last time you fired that weapon?”

“Four months, and I cleaned it after. Phil’s rule.”

“I’ve got a change of clothes in my trunk. Cover as much of yourself as you can in dark black. We’ll take my car, you drive.”

After parking, she hands me a balaclava and a pair of tactical gloves. I lead the way to the building across from the back of the casino and we climb the fire escape. The moon is brighter than the last time I searched up there with my men. We divide the

roof into quadrants.

I'm on my knees feeling around the base of one of the industrial air conditioners while Roja does the other.

The siding is loose on the corner and a thin chain hangs off a jagged piece of metal.

Lifting the corner gently and using the light on my phone, I shine it inside.

Something is still attached to the chain.

Reaching in I gently untangle the chain and remove it from where it caught, then scoop up the metal pieces from the cement.

Dog tags and a miniature USB drive. I shine the light on the tags: Clark, Philip C.

Roja joins me, whispering in my ear. "Something's going on in the alley.

A blacked-out SUV just showed up with what looks like four hired guns. I want to get back to the alley so we can follow if we need to."

I nod. Shutting the light off on my phone I stuff my discovery deep in my jean pocket and follow her.

Page 18

Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 7:41 am

Rico

Something's off. Or maybe it's just me. I want to be home with our girl. I want these assholes behind bars.

For the last two hours I've felt like I'm being watched. Could I have been made? I've managed to dump at least two drinks I didn't order and turn away a private lap dance in a back room.

Muttering to the dealer about better play. I collect my latest winnings from the table and walk away. I want the table with the big boys. The back room. The room where deals are made.

Glancing up I see Kade dressed in his money suit being escorted down a hall. The guy to his left is a little too close. Fuck. We've been made.

About the same time, I get a text from Diego. Abort .

Too late .

I send him the tracker info on my bracelet, slip it off and into my pocket. They'll find the one on my watch but hopefully miss the bracelet.

I'm making my way around the edge of the room when a presence comes up behind me. "Ah Rico, we were just looking for you. Heard you were asking about any high stakes games in the back room. We got one for you. Come join us. Your partner is already there."

Entering the room, Kade looks up from where he sits in a straight back chair, arms apparently tied behind his back. A little rumpled, nothing visibly broken, no blood. Okay, that's a good start.

My arms are pulled behind my back and bound. My watch is wrenched from my wrist and my phone taken. I see Kade's on the desktop as well.

Adorno walks in with another man I recognize from pictures as Mic DeStefano, and two other men. The one right behind him looks the right size for Phil's killer.

"Fucking DEA," Adorno snarls.

"Shut up," DeStefano snaps. Walking to the desk and sitting down like he owns it, he places a laptop on the empty surface.

Leaning back in the chair he rubs his chin and studies us.

He taps the top of the laptop. "We've already got everything he had.

What he turned in and what he held back.

Tell me what you know and what you've reported, and we'll kill you quickly. Bullet to the head."

I glance at Kade. One of us needs to get out of this for Fancy. He's my brother in all ways but blood. She's the love I'd hoped to find. He'll take care of her like I would.

I nod toward Kade. We have deliberately never been seen together anywhere near the casino. "Well, I'm not sure who he is, so you aren't going to get much from him. You should let him go. He's probably so scared he's going to piss himself any minute. He'll be out of town before you can say bus."

“We were told there were two of you. We have photos.”

“Who’s the other guy? I only know about me. I work alone. Less explanations that way. Easier to keep my story straight.”

Knife man nods at me then points to Kade. “They’re tight. He’s trying to save his friend. We torture the quiet one and mouthy will talk.”

“You already killed my contact. Saw you gut him in an alley while two of your buddies held him down for you. How about you man up and take on someone who can fight back. Or are you a pussy?”

Kade gives me ‘the stare’. Yeah, I’m spoiling for a fight. They butcher an innocent man and are hunting our woman. Fuck yeah, I want to get my hands on someone.

“Who the hell’s your contact if he, she, isn’t smart enough to tell you what’s been reported,” I continue to press, keeping their attention. “I hope you aren’t paying much for such sloppy intel.”

“Enough.” DeStefano nods toward the door. The second flunky opens it and in comes the boy from the wedding chapel. The one selling the rings. “These the two?”

The young man nods. “Yes, Uncle. They married the girl you’re looking for.”

DeStefano nods. “Good boy. Tell my sister I’ll be by to see her soon with gifts.”

After the boy leaves, DeStefano turns his attention back to Knife. “Any luck on Fancy?”

Knife clenches his hands at his side and shakes his head.

DeStefano slams his hand on the desk and pushes to his feet. “They’ve hidden her somewhere. Fucking DEA. I can’t believe you lost her in the first place. What the hell do I pay you for? You better fucking find her and bring her to me.”

“The bitch. She’s smarter than her cunt mother. She may have.... She has something of mine and I want it back.”

“Boss, our contact at the DEA has it under control. They’ll have her location soon. We’ll know where to pick her up.”

I risk a glance at Kade. My gut twists. That’s how they knew about Phil. An inside man or woman. Information is for sale everywhere and the government you think you can trust is no exception. Greed, plain and simple.

They don’t know where Fancy is, we went off grid with her when we contacted Diego. She’s safe for now. She’s being protected by people we know we can trust.

“Take them to our place in the country,” DeStefano says. “You can play with them, but I want them alive when I get there. You already fucked up once losing the woman. I don’t like fuck-ups.”

Knife grabs my arm and he and his sidekick haul us out the back door and shove us into a blacked-out SUV.

One of us has to stay alive. We owe that to Fancy since she’s already lost so much.

“Rock, paper, scissors,” I whisper.

Kade grunts.

“How many?” I ask.

Needing to know how many are guarding our girl. I'm sure Diego is on it but I need to know.

"Roja and Diego on back up," he answers.

Diego has resources. I hope they'll be enough to protect our girl. I just wish I would have told her I loved her before I left. She was sleeping so soundly, I only brushed my lips across the top of her head.

Page 19

Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 7:41 am

Kade

Stop it, Rico. Stop egging him on.

I know his game. Draw the attention, sacrifice himself. But one of us needs to make it out alive for her. I can't let my best friend die for me. Not when I'm the one who fucked up.

I didn't want to leave our girl, he'd insisted I stay. My gut was screaming almost from the moment he left that he needed me to be there. Roja came as soon as she could. The minute I walked into the casino I knew something was off. I'd lost my chance to assist.

I got a mayday off to Diego's burner phone before they grabbed me. He'd already promised his first move would be to get back up on Fancy. He'll keep our girl safe. Our friends at HARDCORE will relocate her, watch over her.

They throw Rico and I in the back of an SUV. I refuse to count us out. This isn't the first time we've been in a tight jam. Neither one of us are quitters. Besides, now we have a reason to stay alive.

"Freaking Freddie," Rico hisses near my ear.

"What?" I whisper back.

"Freddie's the leak. I never liked his nerdy clothes."

What the fuck? We're on our way to our last breath without a miracle and he's talking about the jerk Freddie. Freddie with Urkel'esk pants. I snort at the irony.

That's Rico, taking the chances, lightening the mood. I relax a fraction. "What's your plan?"

"One of us has to play wimp. Sorry it's you. I already showed my cards as the asshole. There're three of them. We don't know how many more where they're taking us."

When the car stops and the hatch opens, I see the quarter moon and trees waving in the wind. The scent of water is on the wind. Seriously. Lake Mead? Could they be any more unoriginal?

They drag me out first. I glance up at the large cabin, surrounded by trees. Rico puts up a fight and ends up on the ground with a kick to the gut. He moans and rolls to his side. Shit, I wonder if he's already got broken ribs.

Dragging us inside, we're greeted by DeStefano himself. "Wow. That was fast. You fly here?"

"Sit down and shut up. I ask the questions. DEA? How did you guys get involved?"

"You know how."

"Damn, Phil. He was nothing but a second-rate bookkeeper, how the hell did he figure it out? All he did was come in, pay the bills, make the deposits I told him to and go home. He never dealt with anything big."

"Pretty sure he always knew about the money laundering. He stayed because someone he cared about was hanging around your family. But you knew that didn't

you?

I bet you played with her in front of him because you're an ass-hole.

Then you killed her, that's what set him off.

He set out to destroy you. And you know what, he has. ”

“No. I've got important contacts who owe me, this will all be cleaned up. Two weeks and business will be back to normal. I'll get rid of you two and all the evidence is gone.”

Rico snorts. “Man, you are so out of it. Your little business is so exposed they can see your tiny little balls. There are four different agencies aware of what you've been doing.

No way is this being swept under the rug.

I'm pretty sure your contacts are spilling their guts to get reduced sentences as we speak.

Two days, you'll be in custody and all over the news.

Anyone left that they haven't picked up as accessories will be long gone.

It's over. You'd be better off and safer to turn state's evidence.

Talk to us, give us names and numbers you may live through this.

You might want to plan for a little solitary time while you're at it. ”

Rico takes a few more hits for his outburst. Now I get to play mediator to keep us alive until Diego shows up.

“Let’s talk this through. We can help come up with a plan to save you jail time for cooperating, maybe even get you off altogether with a new identity and location. I’m sure you’ve got enough offshore assets to live off of. Your cousin, Adorno, was the one involved in the sex trafficking, correct?”

Knife snorts. DeStefano gives him a dirty look.

The rage simmering in my gut threatens to explode. “You were the one who put the cameras in her room. We thought it was Adorno. You’re the sick sonofabitch.”

I launch myself off the chair knocking DeStefano to the floor. Knife pulls me off and both Rico and I end up tied to the chairs. It’s going to be a long ass night.

Source Creation Date: July 30, 2025, 7:41 am

Fancy

We're in the alley watching the back door of the casino. Roja parked her vehicle where we'd have access to follow from either direction.

Three men went into the casino through the back door, leaving one with the vehicle. One reminded me of the man who killed Phil.

Roja slips her backpack off and removes something from the side pocket. "I need to get this tracker on that vehicle. Can you cause a distraction from the other end of the alley without being seen?"

I nod.

She indicates the earbuds we're wearing. "Just whisper when you're in place. I'll hear you."

After making my way down the street I cross back to where I need to be. Peeking around the corner I discover the guard has his back to me. Distraction. I need to cause a distraction. There are several booze bottles on the ground next to the dumpster. I pick up as many as I can hold. "Ready?"

"Yes."

"Go."

I scream as loud as I can. "You lying, cheating son of a bitch. I saw you!" I throw the

first bottle into the alley where the guard will hear and see it break. “Bastard.” I follow up with another bottle. “I saw you fucking that bitch and now you want to come back to me!”

I throw two more bottles and bang on the nearest dumpster. A soft chuckle comes over my earbud.

“I’m going to castrate you, you bastard.” Three more bottles into the ally, glass shattering.

“Retreat. He’s headed your way,” Roja whispers. “I’m good.”

I throw the last two bottles and run the other way banging on dumpsters as I go. Hitting the main road, I slow my pace and walk with the crowd.

“Good job. You’re a natural,” Roja says. “Meet me at the car.”

She’s waiting at the end of the alley where we’re parked behind a dumpster, a camera to her eye. “Stay behind me and watch the other end of the alley. These photos will be automatically sent to Diego and my boss. I’m taking shots of the car, the guard, and anyone who steps out that door.”

Suddenly she stiffens. “Fuck.”

“What?”

“They have your men. Get in the car quietly. We’re going to follow.”

Putting the camera and a phone in my lap, she adjusts another phone on the console. “This is our tracker on their car. We’re gonna follow. Open the phone I just gave you. It’s already cued for Diego. Call him. Put him on speaker.”

“Roja, where the hell are you? Where the hell is Fancy?”

“She’s with me. They got Rico and Kade. We’re following. I’ve got a tracker on the vehicle they’re in. Can you track the same phone?”

“I’ll see what my guy can do. Where are they headed?”

“Seems like Lake Mead or at least nearby. We’ll text you mile markers as we go.”

“Keep this line open, I’ll call back.”

Watching the tracker on the phone and the cars in front of us, Roja keeps her distance while my heart is pounding.

“I need you to focus. You’re breathing too fast. Ground yourself. Do you know the 4-7-8 technique?”

“No.”

“It works. I use it when I need to focus before action.

Place your tongue behind your upper front teeth and exhale completely making a "whoosh" sound.

Then, inhale quietly through your nose to a count of four, hold your breath for a count of seven, and exhale completely through your mouth with a "whoosh" for a count of eight.

“Do it with me, tongue in place, whoosh, one two three four...”

After the fourth time I do feel more focused.

She looks over at me. “I’m an operative, but I’m also human. What we do.... have to do, sometimes takes its toll. Every time I rescue someone, I get a little of my soul back.

“I consider these guys friends. Hang in there, sister. We’ll do this. Diego won’t be far behind. I know he was trying to get backup from some of the other guys who work for the same company we do. Our lawyer and CO are also on the way and have state connections.”

We drive in silence. Me watching the tracker move, her watching traffic around us. “They’re slowing down.”

“Yeah. Definitely Lake Mead.”

We see their taillights turn off.

“Wait,” I cry out as she goes past. “That was the turn.”

“I know, but the sign said private property. There was a gate that opened for them. They probably have cameras watching.” She drives a little farther and does a U-ie and pulls off the road out of sight of the driveway. “Hand me the phone.”

She puts it on speaker and dials. “Yeah,” Diego answers, already in mid-conversation.

“We’re pretty sure that property belongs to a shell company owned by DeStefano.

We’re working on search warrants but are talking to a judge and have stated exigent circumstances.

She’s given us the go ahead. We’re about fifteen minutes behind you. ”

“Do you have a map? If I go up the road to the property next door, can we cut through the woods on foot?”

“Not sure.”

“Fifteen minutes?” I ask. “We just need to distract them until you get here, right.”

“Stay put. We’ll be there in less,” Diego says.

“Okay. Hurry.” I jump from the car and run up the drive dodging under the fence.

I hear a car door slam. It takes no time for Roja to catch up. “This is really stupid.”

“Let me go to the door. I’m who they want. That way maybe you can sneak in another way and buy us time until Diego gets here.” I pull the dog tags from my pocket. “I found this on the roof. It’s Phil’s dog tags but there’s a flash drive, too.”

“Give me your weapon.”

“Why?”

“Because they’ll disarm you immediately if you walk in with one. If you have one, they’ll assume you know how to use it. Not having one, they may get sloppy around you.

“Take off the balaclava.” She pulls her own off as she speaks and removes the stick holding her top knot in place. “This is a very thin but deadly dagger. The blade is hidden in the stem, which is actually a sheath.”

She puts the covered hair stick in my hand and places the tip against her belly. “Strike under the ribcage and go for the heart. Push up and slightly angled from here.” She

lays it against her torso in example. “Hard and fast, do not hesitate.”

She shows me how to slide it out of the sheath. “You saw what he did to Phil. Don’t pull it if you can’t use it. You’ll only get one chance. Any hesitation and you’re dead. Or someone else is. If you can’t do it, get it to one of the guys.

“If they have sensors they’ll already know they’ve had a breach from the gate. We run as one, I’ll be behind and match your steps. Maybe they’ll think it’s just you. Stall, stall, stall. Diego should be here soon.

“Any shots, hit the floor and roll for cover. Kade and Rico will take care of themselves.”

Together we race up the edge of the dirt road. She stays in the shadows behind me. As we get close, she peels off into the forest behind a large tree then I lose her all together. I keep running until the house comes into view and charge up the broad porch stairs.

“Well look who’s here.” The porch lamp comes on. Phil’s killer stands behind me. “How’d you know where to find us?”

“My mom told me about this place.”

The door opens and DeStefano stands in the light. “I never brought your mother here.”

“Well, you know Mom. She was nosey as hell and always checking people and places out. She probably followed you one time.”

Phil’s killer pushes me through the door and into the room.

My men are tied to two wooden chairs in the middle of the floor with a plastic tarp under them. Rico looks the worst for wear. One eye swollen shut, a split lip and slightly hunched over to one side, as if favoring his ribs.

The mental anguish in Kades eyes says it all. His shirt is ripped open and a wound from shoulder to just under his heart is trickling blood. Bruises have already formed on his abdomen.

“Your mom was a greedy bitch. Never knew when to stop asking for more.” DeStefano looks me over. “You’re a damn sight prettier than her. You suck cock too, for pretty trinkets?”

Stall . The voice comes over my earbud.

I lift my chin. “No. That’s short-term employment. Information is my thing. It’s ever fluid. Hear it today, pass it on tomorrow. Being in the right place to learn things, that’s job security.

“Yeah, you’re a hat check girl in my casino. What you learn there?”

“Well let’s start with the fact you play the part of the bumbling cousin who’s really the brains behind everything.

Adorno likes to act like he’s smart and in charge while you’re really running things, aren’t you?

Keeping his ass out of jail and saving the family business.

Of course you’re also setting him up for a fall.

“On the other hand, Adorno hates you equally as much and wants you out of the way.

He was leaking stuff to the feds to put you away.”

“You know shit.”

“Yeah, that’s what you thought about Phil.

You thought he was a nobody. He was twice the man you are in intelligence.

He played the part the whole time he was collecting info on both of you.

His death automatically released everything he’d found to two federal agencies that are knocking on your door as we speak.

“They know about the money laundering in your restaurants, sex trafficking, the drug sales at the casino. Oh, and that little gold ingot that was so precious to you? They have it. And we haven’t even discussed all the murders.

“You’ll be out of business in seventy-two hours. And you didn’t even see it coming. All because of Phil.” I cock my head and widen my eyes. “Who doesn’t know shit?

“You bitch. You fucking bitch.”

“Were you the one who overdosed my mom or was it your lackey here?” I ask.

He looks at Phil’s killer. “Take her to my room and tie her to the bed. I’ll take care of her later.”

Phil’s killer grabs my arm and drags me across the room to a closed door. I can hear my men cussing and struggling. He shoves me into the room like I’m nothing more than a ragdoll. I go flying to the floor slamming my shoulder into the bed frame. Fuck that hurts.

Giving my head a shake, my topknot slides sideways, and I grab the stick. Don't pull it if you can't use it. You'll only get one chance.

"Your mom was a stupid cunt. She'd do anything for a fuck or a fix.

After she threatened the boss, I gave her what she wanted.

A good hard fuck and a fix she was guaranteed not to recover from.

Too strung out to move, you should have seen her face when I lit the car on fire and sent it sliding off the side of the road into the tree.

"After the boss is done with you, I'll get my turn. I've got something special planned for you, too."

The bastard. He killed them both, took both of them from me. "Guess you're good with sloppy seconds. Can't get any on your own?"

"Bitch, I get plenty of my own." He grabs my left shoulder squeezing painfully and drags me to my feet.

My brain registers a commotion and voices from the other room, but emotion has already set my path.

Bringing the weapon up along my side I replicate the move Roja showed me.

Warmth pours over my hand and forearm as I slide and lift the blade.

Everything else fades as he gasps, gurgles and falls back on to the bed clutching his chest. Blood flows from his chest and abdomen. All I can do is stare....

“Babe, it’s okay. Look at me. Look at us,” Rico says.

Warm hands on my upper arms turn me from my focus. I raise my gaze to Rico. Kade is beside him.

“They hurt you. I’m so sorry they hurt you. They hurt both of you. My fault.”

“We’ll be fine.” Kade says. He winces as he shrugs out of his shirt, using it to wipe the blood off my arm and wrap the blade. Looking past him, I see several people in different colored uniforms easing in the door. Diego stands outside looking in. Roja next to him. She meets my gaze and nods.

It’s hours before we finally get home. Cuddled between my men, wrapped in my man cocoon, sleep settles over me. Here I’m safe, warm, wanted. Here I’m loved.

Rico

“Did you hear from the doctor? I think we need to wake her. It’s been a little over twenty-four hours. She’s peed four times, but we’ve only gotten one glass of water down her. She’s so still and has barely moved.

“She might be sick.” I press my hand to her forehead. “Do you think she feels feverish? I think she does.”

“She’s not feverish. Doc said she might sleep a lot,” Kade replies. “After all the shock, the stress from the danger, the hours of debriefing. Her body and mind need down time to regenerate. We’ll give her another hour or so. If she’s not moving, we try to wake her.”

“She’s got to be starving. She needs fuel.”

“Vegetable Pad Thai, extra broccoli. Lots of vegetable samosas and two mango lassi-just for me. Get out of my way so I can shower before it gets here.” Fancy throws back the covers and heads to the bathroom.

Kade looks at me. “You order the food, get everything she wants and more. I’ll call Roja, she said she needed to be here when she woke up. Girl bonding or some such shit.”

We take turns standing outside the bathroom door, listening, making sure she’s okay. It feels like days, but when the water finally shuts off, it’s been less than an hour.

My phone app pings letting me know the food is arriving. I go to the door and accept delivery. Roja walks up as the guy is leaving.

“She’s been in the shower forever, but it just shut off. Kade is waiting for her.”

“You guys got a lot to learn. Get the food set out and make sure there’s fresh coffee.”

She heads to the bedroom and less than two minutes later Kade comes out followed by Roja.

“I’m gonna say this once more before I start knocking heads.

Give. Her. Space. She will talk or whatever she needs to do when she’s ready.

Act like normal. Put on a ball game, or a movie.

Turn the radio on. Ask her if she’d like to go for a run or maybe spar with one of you.

Kicking your ass would probably feel really good right now.

” Her gaze softens. “She’s strong. She just needs your love. ”

Lunch is filled with stories of how Roja first met Diego when they were both in the military which segues into her asking if the three of us are serious about applying to HARDCORE Security. The three of us?

“You seem to work well together. You’d make a good team. They have offices all over the country and offer training. You guys have already worked with some of us. I mean look how easy I am to work with.”

“Ball buster.” I shake my head, and she laughs.

Fancy looks at her, then runs her gaze over Kade and I. “I’d like to try something new, somewhere new.”

The three of us. In love, in bed, at work. Always watching each other’s backs. Keeping each other safe. It’s scary but somehow feels right. I glance at Kade. I see the same thoughts in his expression before he nods.

“Sounds like a win win to me. I’ll mention it to Diego. He was going to put in a word for us.” Shifting, I meet Roja’s gaze. “Will you do the same?”

“Already done. Our boss, lawyer, and the team’s leader are all in town helping with the clean-up of this situation since our tech team assisted.

They are also providing statements as to the leak in your department.

Some guy named Freddie. They’d like to meet with the three of you while they’re in town.

Say, dinner tomorrow night? Here, since it’s a generic location that no one knows about.

They may be bringing in their own chef, but everything will be taken care of. I’ll be the interface for now.”

The three of us look at each other and nod.

“Good.” She stands and glances out the patio door. “The deck has a really sweet view and a three-person daybed. Kind of romantic. You should check it out. I’m stealing your girl for five minutes, then I need to get going. I’ll text you the exact time for tomorrow.”

Night has fallen and we've just come in from prepping the deck for some star gazing. Candles are lit, champagne is chilling, fruit and cheese plated. Pillows fluffed on the circular day bed that will hold the three of us.

Fancy is sitting at the breakfast bar, laptop open, tears streaming down her cheeks.

"Babe, what's wrong?"

"Phil. He loved me. He loved me like I was his own." Holding up a chain with dog tags she goes on.

"Where they found the laptop he intended for you, he also hid his dog tags and a small USB.

They found the laptop but missed the dog tags.

I found those the night Roja and I searched before you were taken.

"Her tech guy made sure the USB was clean. When they realized what they had she brought it to me." She turns the screen so we can see.

A slideshow of photos is playing. All pictures of Fancy at varying ages, dates neatly written below each photo.

Some with gifts, some walking a sidewalk, some sweet ones of her sleeping.

Others are selfies of her and Phil throughout the years.

The most recent was our girl a week before we met her. She and Phil were out to dinner.

“There’s a letter he photographed. He said the original will be delivered in a couple weeks.”

“What does it say?” I ask.

She looks at us. “That he loved me. Always loved me. When he realized the true nature of my mother, he tried to adopt me, but Mom wouldn’t let him.

He admitted she used me to basically shake him down every time she needed or wanted something.

But his love for me, as the daughter of his heart, was always the defining factor.

When he found out he was dying it was too late.

He couldn’t tell me because he was already knee deep in exposing DeStefano and he didn’t want to risk anyone finding out and using his situation against one of us.

“He also didn’t want the end to be marred by sorrow. He wanted me to remember the good times. He left everything to me.” She glances up. “Well over a million dollars. He promised to keep watching over me until we meet again. He’s sending angels. He sent me the two of you.”

I scoop her into my arms, Kade comes up behind her and we all hold each other as she cries.

Thank you, Phil. We’ll always take care of her.

Kade

On the deck, with a light breeze, our girl snuggled between us, stars overhead, life could not be more perfect. We ply her with fruit, cheese, champagne and kisses. We even get a couple chuckles out of her with some of our foolish past antics.

Content for the moment, we all study the stars. “Are you guys really going to quit the DEA?”

“We’ve talked about it for the last year. We just didn’t have any great options. It’s time. We’ve checked out HARDCORE. They aren’t out for the money. They do good work for important causes.

“Yeah, they have some high-profile clients with deep pockets that help pay for some of their other clients. Pro bono work for people in need. We know people who work for them or with them and they have only good things to say. It feels right.” I look down.

“And we have you now. We want what we have together to get our attention. We’re in this for the long haul. ”

“Is it more or less dangerous than what you were doing?”

“In some ways the same, in others more so. They sometimes take on government jobs in high-risk areas. But we’ve already decided not both of us together on something like that.”

“I agree. We have to all be together.”

“Fancy...”

“No. If I decide to do this, do the training and become an asset too, we have to agree to work together and cover each other. No one else will do it like we will. I won’t hold you back, you can’t hold me back. If I’m trusting your training, you’ll have to trust mine when I pass.”

“I don’t like it either,” Rico says. “But if she does the work and passes the tests, we need to trust her. If I don’t question Roja or the other woman’s abilities, then I need to show our woman the same respect.”

“Would you be okay leaving Vegas?” I ask.

“Everything that meant something to me in this town is gone. Not to be gross, but Phil already set it up for him to be cremated. I can take him with me wherever I go.

“I want a clean start. A job that means something.”

“Then we take the leap together,” Rico says. I nod beside him.

Sliding off the patio daybed, I lift her in my arms. “I think we need to seal this deal. I know the perfect way.”

Rico slides the patio door open. “I’ll clean up out here, check the alarms and meet you there. Get our girl all warmed up.”

I carry her to the bathroom. “Why don’t you change into nothing and I’ll get the bed ready.”

Turning down the blankets, I stack the pillows, grabbing extra from the spare room along with the extra box of tissues. Lube, where the hell did we put the lube?

“Kade, we decided we didn’t need condoms since I’m on the shot, right?” I glance toward the bathroom. Completely naked, Fancy waggles the tube of lube between two fingers. “But definitely this, right?”

All the blood in my body rushes to my dick.

“Well, that answers one of my questions,” she says laughing. “If you could only see your face. I wish I had my camera.”

Rico walks in, “Camera? Oh, hell yeah, but just for our personal use. I swear there were a couple times I almost came from the look on your face, babe. I could definitely use video of our fun time for the spank bank when we’re apart.”

“We aren’t going to be apart, remember? We’re a family and a team.”

“You haven’t been on a twelve hour stake out yet when one of you has to get some shut eye and the other is left alone to keep themselves awake and occupied.”

“Rico, shut up before she realizes the perv you are. You need to take the bed. It will be easier on your ribs. You okay with that, sweetheart?” I lift an eyebrow.

Rico drops his drawers and climbs on the bed and strokes his engorged cock.

“Oh, I’m all over that,” she winks.

How did we get so lucky?

She smacks the lube against my naked chest. And crawls up Rico’s prone form like a

tigress on the hunt. She looks back at me. “I may be a backdoor virgin, but I’m not a novice or a prude. The two of you are mine, I’m yours.”

She flashes the ring she still wears. We both show ours. “I may not have known when we said, ‘We Do’, but I do now. We’re meant to be together. I love you both equally. I’m not letting you go.”

I climb on the bed and lean over her back to kiss her neck at the same time Rico leans up and kisses to the other side. “We do.”

Rico slumps onto the pillow with a groan. Fancy slides a palm down his chest. “Lay there and enjoy. Tonight, Kade and I will do all the work. You can make it up to us another time.”

“Let me help just a little.” He slips his two middle fingers into his mouth and gets them nice and wet, before sliding them over her clit and part way in her channel.

“Hmm, you feel so good. Nice and tight. Oh damn, babe I get in that tight little cunt and I’m not gonna last long.

Feed me one of those nice ripe berries on your titty.

Let me suck it till your juices flow and get you all worked up for Kade. ”

While he’s sucking her tit and pumping her channel with slick fingers, I lube up my cock and pour more on my hand. Her pleasure groans fill the air, the scent of her arousal almost sends me into a frenzy.

It’s her first time riding double, we need to go gently. Go slow.

She tenses when I first brush her opening, but true to her word our girl doesn’t back

down. Working the tip of one finger inside I tease and taunt before adding a second.

“More, I need more. Rico. Kade. I want more.”

Rico gives me a nod and lines his cock up. “Take me babe.”

Throwing her head back she slides down his cock. Once seated she wiggles back and forth a couple times dragging a groan deep from Rico’s chest.

“Lean forward, sweetheart.” She does, latching on to Rico’s head and kissing him like her life depends on it.

Gently I work my slick fingers deeper and deeper. When I feel her relax her muscles, I pull out and line up my cock. Slowly. I ease in.

“Oh my god. That feels.... That feels so good. So full.” Consciously we start a gentle slow rocking motion. Before long, her body is in rhythm with ours, the three of us working in tandem for release. Chasing our pleasure. Cherishing our union.

“More. I want more. Now, guys. Now. I need to come.... Harder.” Both of us holding her, wrapping her in our love, losing ourselves in her body. We give her what she needs, giving us all what we want. She crests the wave first, Rico follows, I finish us off.

Never have I felt so complete. So satisfied. So right.

“I love you. I love you both,” Fancy whispers. “I’m home. I’m finally home.”

“Us too,” we both say. “Home.”

Page 23

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Seven Years Later

Fancy

We've moved four times. We still all wear the same wedding bands. We legally changed our names a few years ago to Rivera-Hart. We are all equally listed on all accounts, policies, cars, home deeds, wills, everything that matters.

Are we legally married? Who cares? That's just a piece of paper. A marriage license will never replace what's in our hearts. Everything we own, everything that's important is rock solid.

Although, I still have that first marriage certificate for sentimental reasons.

The guys are running a new office for our home company **HARDCORE** Security. I'm taking a couple years off but still help with the paperwork, interviews and some training.

I have another job. One that's much more time consuming. But luckily operates out of the back room of the Security office.

"Momma, Momma, want toy."

"Papa, it's my toy."

I glance at the clock and see it's time to lock up anyway. Thank god it's Rico's night to cook. I'm starving. Kade and I are on bath time and nonstop laundry with twins.

Felipe looks just like Rico. Philly with her blonde hair takes after Kade.

Yep, fraternal twins with two donors. Didn't even know it was a thing with a long ass name, until we had our babies.

I glance at the urn that sits on my desk, kiss my fingertips and brush it over the center before standing.

My men stop at the open door and smile at me, each holding a child.

The love that shines from their gazes still takes my breath away.

Later I'll let them know we're expecting twins again.

Joining me all five of us exchange our ritual kissing round. The littles laughing gleefully.

"We have so much to be thankful for," Kade says, kissing the top of my head.

"Yes, we do," Rico agrees.

"Yes, we do."

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