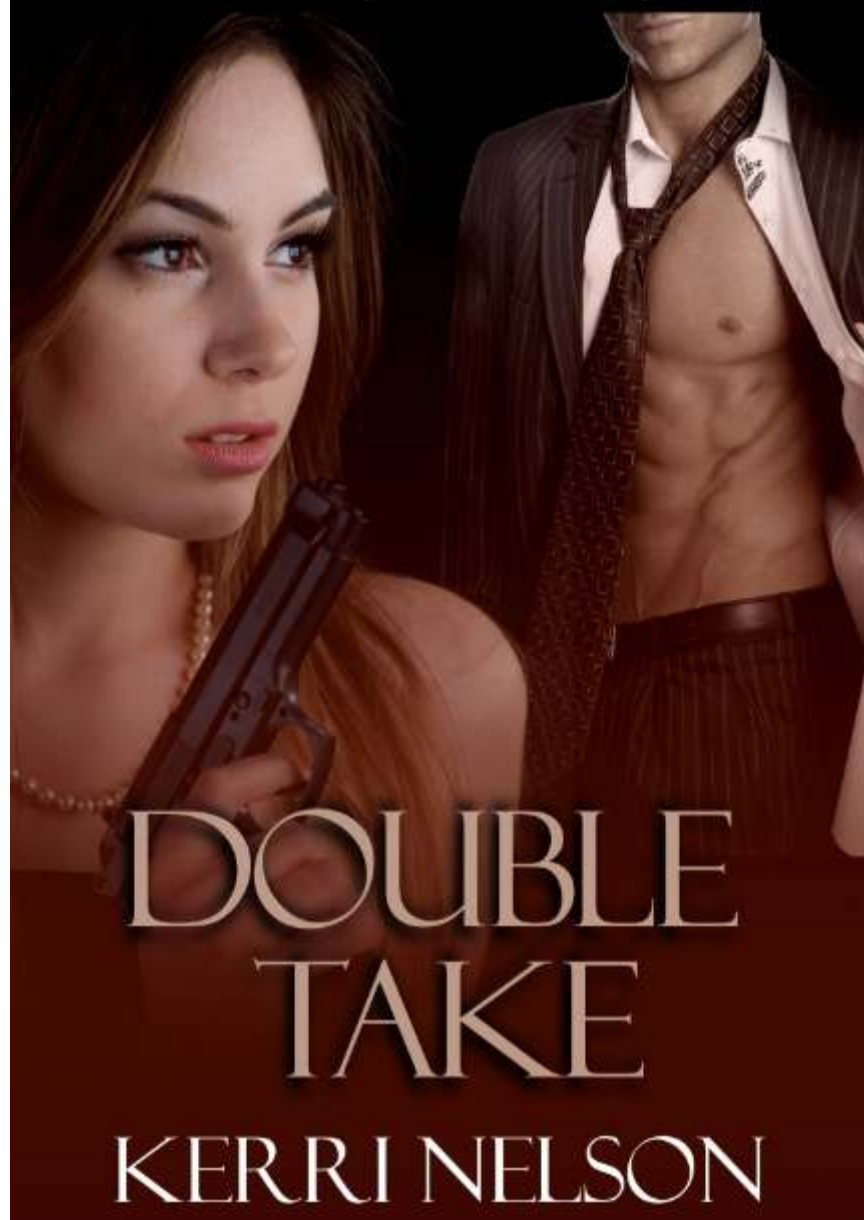


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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to all the twins I've loved (or just liked) before. From those television identical cousins to those girls in high school who shall remain nameless to my mother-in-law who endured the birth of twins both in breech position and the set of twins I almost birthed (one is my guardian angel now). And to my closest friends who've become as in sync with me as twins would be, you know who you are and this one is for you. To the real Dana and Damon—wherever you are—I wish you well.

DOUBLE TAKE

Kerri Nelson

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Chapter One

“A priest, a prostitute, and a cop walk into a bar...”Chi said as he paused for effect.

Agent Kennedy Wolfe glared at her partner of ten years with a smirk reserved only for him.

“And the bartender says, ‘is this a joke?’”

Raucous laughter erupted from the room full of men around her. Kennedy crossed her legs at the ankle and leaned back against the wall. She tried to stifle a smile but couldn’t resist one when her partner doubled over with laughter as he swiped the tears from his eyes. She could honestly say he was the only person who could make his own self laugh harder than anyone else could. Now that her retirement date was swiftly approaching, she was going to miss seeing him every day and that was no joke.

Agent Chiba Saito, more commonly known as Chi, was sort of the class clown of their field office. But in all her years in law enforcement, Kennedy could easily confess she’d never felt safer than when he had her back.

Her sentimental thoughts were quashed when the door to the meeting room opened and Deputy District Chief Shands breezed into the room.

“Thanks for gathering here on short notice, folks. I won’t keep you long.”

The room quieted down as the Chief placed a notepad on the podium and paused for a sip of steaming coffee.

“As most of you are already aware, there was a raid on a narcotics ring in Monroe County last month that has left one agent dead and two others seriously injured from the Buffalo field office. Since we are the next closest field office to them, here in Albany, I’ve offered our assistance in handling their other cases until new agents can be assigned.”

A couple of coughs and a small groan emanated from the room but were quickly silenced when Kennedy stood up and shot a piercing glance around the room.

She was the Special Agent in Charge of this field office and her men would not show disrespect to a District Chief. This hard as nails attitude gained her the reputation as a ball buster but it had taken her to the top of her field and as a woman in a male dominated profession—this was no small task.

Chief Shands cleared his throat and then continued, “We have several cases that need immediate assistance. The first requires no less than four agents to assist in clearing up the paperwork and follow-up work of the bust itself. The second is an ongoing investigation into a tri-state embezzling scam and requires around the clock surveillance teams. I recommend two teams be coordinated and they alternate paperwork duty with surveillance duty for the next couple of weeks while we try to get permanent agents assigned to the office.”

Agent Wolfe stepped forward. “Carter. Montez. Edmonson. Gibbs. Acquisition two vehicles and see the secretary for your travel orders.”

The four agents scrambled together and out of the room with no further discussion or dissention.

Special Agent Wolfe was known for being a no nonsense agent and after almost twenty years with the agency rarely was she surprised. But the next few words out of the Chief's mouth left her utterly speechless.

"The last case that needs immediate attention is right outside of Rochester in the small burg of Greece, NY. Apparently, there's been a kidnapping of a local woman...one Dana Divine Mescado."

Kennedy stood at the sink of her loft's kitchen sipping a glass of water and staring down at the coffee ground stained invitation she'd dug from the kitchen garbage just moments earlier.

She pressed the glass of water to her forehead and let the coolness seep into her pores. When the invitation had arrived in the mail earlier in the week, she hadn't given it a second glance. She'd sworn she would never set foot in that town again and she'd kept her word for well over two decades.

The mere thought of going to her high school reunion was enough to make her break out in hives. She scratched the back of her neck as if she felt one coming on now.

Knock it off, Kennedy.

It was silly to even consider taking on this case. There was no way she could head up this operation and not get pulled back into the small town world of Greece and the heartache this town was sure to cause her. She wouldn't be able to remain anonymous and she would definitely have to see *him*.

Images of Damon Divine burned through her brain now. His blond hair in the sunlight. Muscled torso under tanned skin at poolside. That breathtaking smile just below flirtatious eyes. Those warm lips pressed against hers as he pushed her against the door to the pool cabana. Her breath caught in her throat as she'd lost herself the delectable taste of him.

She opened her eyes and gave the invitation a snarl.

Dammit.

She'd know from the second the District Chief had uttered the name Dana Divine she was going to take this case. And that meant only one thing; she was going to have to face the only man she'd ever given her heart to.

After twenty-five years on the run from her past, Agent Kennedy Wolfe was going home.

Chapter Two

District Attorney Damon Divine paced the floor of his office.

“What do you mean, you have no leads?” He all but screeched into the speaker phone on his room hogging wooden desk.

“Just what I said, sir. There were no finger prints or other tangible evidence recovered from the scene. It was as if she vanished into thin air.”

Damon slapped the palms of his hands down on this desk top and leaned closer into the phone’s microphone.

“Don’t even hint to me that you are about to suggest she just ran off.”

Chief of the Greece, New York Police Department, J.D. Wiggins, let an exasperated sigh escape his lips.

Damon felt his face grow hot as he loosened the tie around his neck to give himself a moment to calm down before he tore into this man yet again.

“Mr. Divine, as I’ve already told you...we are looking at every possible reason for your sister’s disappearance but with no contact being made by her *kidnappers* and no evidence at the scene...there’s little more we can do right now.”

The way he’d said the word *kidnappers* had told Damon all he needed to know.

“I understand, Sherriff, that you’ve done all you can do. With such limited resources in Greece, I’ve decided to call in outside help on this case.” Damon said as he sank down into one of the guest chairs in his office and removed his tie completely, opening the first two buttons on his shirt while he was at it.

Silence met his ears from the other end of the phone line.

“What sort of help are you referring to?” J.D. asked, not hiding the aggravation in his voice.

“The FBI field office in Buffalo is sending along some of their finest to help with the case. They’ll be here this afternoon.”

“Mr. District Attorney, I’m pretty damn sure you don’t have the authority to call in the FBI on my case.”

Damon crossed his arms over his chest.

“Actually, you are totally correct. But I’m pretty damn sure you’ve forgotten the way the law works. You see, kidnapping is a federal crime and the FBI can intercede on any kidnapping case of their choosing with or without a request from local law enforcement.”

The Chief sputtered out something under his breath that sound to Damon like something of the four letter variety but he didn’t ask for clarification.

“Speak with you soon, Chief. Hopefully you’ll have some actual news for me about who took my sister. If not, I’m sure the feds will be able to lend a helping hand.”

Damon leaned forward and pressed the off button before the Chief could launch into a tirade.

He’d had enough of waiting for them to do their jobs. He’d never liked J.D. Wiggins. He was a southern transplant to the area. He’d married a local girl, Christine Jessup, settled in here by charming the locals with his southern drawl and getting elected into an office he had no business running.

He had this good old boy mentality and seemed to believe his department ran the town. What they always seemed to forget was that they only made the arrests.

It was up to Damon to convict the criminals and he couldn't do that if their police work was shoddy. Nevertheless, he'd managed to work his magic for the last ten years and had a perfect conviction rate despite their occasional incompetence.

Now, he was struggling being on the opposite side of the law. Since his twin sister Dana was abducted from her home just forty-eight hours ago, he'd taken on the role of the victim's family. Scared. Wanting answers. Wanting justice. And left in the dark by the officials.

He stood up and walked to the mirror over his office's fireplace mantel. Looking at himself in the mirror, he saw the tired lines along the side of his eyes. He saw the terror behind his own reflection.

He didn't like being the victim and he wouldn't sleep until his sister was home safely. As a twin, they held a special connection and he knew it as clearly as he knew his own name, his sister had been kidnapped and she was anything but safe.

The department issued sedan hugged the road as they drove along the shores of Lake Ontario and into Monroe County.

"Can you believe I got us our favorite vehicle?" Agent Chi Saito asked as he leaned forward and patted the dashboard tenderly with his free hand.

Kennedy looked away from her partner and watched the scenery as it became more and more familiar to her the closer to town they drove.

"You all right?" Chi asked her, his voice clearly concerned.

She shrugged in response and he let it drop. Her partner knew her well enough to know she wanted to be left alone and he obliged.

She hadn't laughed at any of his jokes for the entire ride. She hadn't even yelled at him to knock off his lousy jokes. She hadn't said anything at all. Her mind was on facing the ghosts of years past.

Dana Divine had been her best friend since the days of Ms. Gilmore's class at *Tree Time Kindergarten*. The tiny blond girl with the enormous blue eyes had taken a liking to the dark haired, shy Kennedy Wolfe. When all the other kids teased her because her mother had shown up at school in bedroom slippers to bring her forgotten lunch, Dana had offered to sit with her at lunch.

When all the kids had laughed at her when she showed up in seventh grade health class with a box of maxi pads her mother had insisted she share with the class, Dana had asked her over to her house to swim in their pool.

And when Kennedy had fallen in love with Dana's twin brother Damon, it was Dana who had played matchmaker and gotten Damon to ask her to their senior prom.

Now, it was Dana who was missing and it was Kennedy's turn to be there for her.

Chapter Three

Shortly before dark, Kennedy and Chi arrived at the Mediterranean Inn. Kennedy knew she'd probably have to give her partner more than a few details about her past before this assignment was over. That was something she wasn't looking forward to in the least.

An extremely private person who prided herself on keeping her past behind her, Kennedy was already feeling a particularly unpleasant squeeze in her chest as they approached the front desk to get a room for the night.

A perky blond girl who reminded Kennedy immediately of a sophomore aged Dana Divine turned and smiled warmly at the federal agents.

"Good evening and welcome to the Mediterranean Inn. What name is your reservation under, please?" Her eyes darted between Kennedy and Chi seeming to take in their business attire and gun holsters that bulged beneath their jackets.

Kennedy wanted to ask if she was related to the Divines. She could almost hear her best friend's voice coming from this clean faced youth. But how did you begin a conversation like that when you might possibly be talking to the child of the victim? Maybe she was imagining things.

Chi jumped in with an answer, obviously sensing Kennedy's unease.

"I don't believe our office made any advanced reservations as our assignment was made last minute. We were hoping you'd have two rooms available for the night though."

His voice was tender and smooth, just the type of voice that often soothed and coerced a suspect into spilling the beans.

She looked back and forth between them, the ear to ear grin never leaving her face.

“Wait, is this a joke? I told Paulie not to try and pull one of his pranks this weekend. What with all the class reunion folks coming in and all...it is absolutely no time to be trying to punk me out.”

Kennedy shot a glance over at Chi who was already pulling his badge out of his back pocket.

She knew just what he was about to do. Her partner was famous for “pulling rank” and when it came to getting a room for the night, he wouldn’t stop until he had the police commissioner himself down here to gain them admittance. Even if it meant leaving some of her classmates without a room for the weekend.

Oh, joy.

She reached over and touched his arm ever so slightly—stopping him mid action.

“That’s all right. We can just stay over in Rochester. It’s a short commute.”

The girl continued to smile but seemed to be lost on just what exactly the punch line of this joke was supposed to be.

As they turned to leave, Chi reached in his pocket and retrieved his cell phone.

“What are you doing?”

He eyed her as he scrolled down his contact list.

“You’re not seriously going to make us drive more tonight? We’re here on official business. I don’t care about any class reunion. We can easily get some of these jokers bumped, no sweat. I’ll just call...”

“No!” Kennedy’s voice rang out a little more loudly than she would have liked.

Chi stopped walking and looked at her full on.

“Wait a sec...this isn’t *your* class reunion is it?” His wicked grin began to emerge revealing bright, white teeth behind his full lips.

Kennedy looked around them, the sudden feeling as if she were being observed nearly overwhelming her.

Chi started giggling and Kennedy tugged on his arm as she struggled to get them closer to the door and out into the parking lot. She didn’t want anyone to see her standing around the lobby with her loud, cackling partner.

She had to be calm and cool and collected at all costs.

“Yes...it is...and let’s get out of here, please,” her voice hissed at him as she scurried towards the door.

She could hear him behind her laughing as she pushed out onto the front portico and towards their unmarked sedan.

“This weekend is going to be so good.”

Her partner’s voice sang out mockingly behind her as she pulled open the car door and slid into the passenger’s seat.

Oh, double joy.

Back in the car, Kennedy waited impatiently while her partner continued his chuckles as he moved the car slowly through town.

“Why in the world would you take this assignment when you knew your entire senior class was going to be here this weekend?”

I'm asking myself the same question.

Kennedy watched the familiar store fronts out the window as they crept through town at a painful snail's pace.

"Look, I know the victim. I realize this is not exactly following protocol but she was my best friend in high school and I feel like I owe her or something."

Her voice trailed off as his laughter finally settled down. A couple of silent beats passed by and then he pulled the car up in front of *The Greecey Spoon Café* and shoved the gear shift into park.

Kennedy sat up and looked at him.

"What are we doing here? Let's just go on over into Rochester and get something there."

"Kennedy, I'm starving and I'm not driving another second in this piece of crap car until I get something to eat."

Kennedy slid down in the seat a little, her eyes still darting around.

"What is up with you? You're acting like a complete nut ever since we crossed the town limits. What happened to you here? Were you the class nerd or something?"

Kennedy shot him another tortured look.

"I don't really want to recount my school days with you. Let's just suffice it to say I'll wait here while you go inside."

"Are you serious?" Chi asked, looking at his partner as if she'd finally gone over the deep end.

"Dead serious." Kennedy inched down a little further in the seat.

“Whatever.”

Chi climbed out of the car and started to swing the door shut but then leaned back inside the car.

“Can I bring you anything, scaredy-cat?”

Kennedy squinted her eyes at him, unamused.

“A tuna salad on wheat...extra mayo...extra pickles....and....”

“Extra jalapeños. I know. Why did I even ask?”

He smiled at her and closed the door behind him.

Kennedy stared down at her close cut fingernails. She’d forgotten just how much she hated her years in Greece. Just this short time in town had suddenly seemed to suck away all her confidence.

She was a well-respected federal agent and the Special Agent in Charge of her own field office. This was a huge deal for anyone, but for a small town girl who’d been considered the poor daughter of the town’s white trash drunkard mother...it was something of which she was doubly proud. Being an SAIC was definitely not something to be slinking down and hiding in the car seat about.

With a sudden renewed burst of pride, she straightened herself up in the car seat and looked out the window and into the face of Damon Divine.

Chapter Four

Her heart thumped against the back of her sternum as she saw him standing in front of the car looking inside at her.

She had the sudden urge to scuttle over into the driver's seat and speed away from the scene. But a glance at the ignition told her that her partner had tucked the keys in his own pocket before heading inside.

Taking a deep, calming breath, she opened the car door and stepped out into the crisp evening breeze.

Damon walked towards her, stopping just a beat or two away and watching her with those brilliant blue eyes that could still make her hormones rumble after all these years.

"You're here for the reunion?" He asked in gravelly voice that made her throat constrict.

Why did he have to be so damned sexy?

She cleared her throat before replying, afraid her voice would squeak in a most unattractive manner.

"No, I'm here on Dana's case."

His eyebrows shot up in surprise but his face otherwise remained as stoic as ever.

"You're FBI?" His voice sounded impressed and his head tilted ever so slightly to the left as he seemed to be appraising her body from the starched collar of her blouse down to her sensible pumps beneath grey trousers.

Despite the sudden twinge in her nipples as they pressed against the inside of her bra, her heart sent a twinge of pain through her chest as she realized he hadn't kept any tabs on her throughout the

years. Whereas she knew just about everything there was to know about Damon Divine, the District Attorney of Monroe County with the unbeatable conviction rate.

Perhaps it was just a hazard of her job, that she could do searches on individuals from her life. But she couldn't help but hope that he would have known what she'd become despite her past.

Straightening her posture further she studied his tired face, the dark circles under his eyes—
evidence of sleepless nights, and the worry lines that creased the corners of his eyelids.

"I'll be heading up the investigation as soon as we check in with the Greece police. You know this Wiggins character?"

Damon nodded but remained silent for a beat.

"I knew it was you out here. When that guy inside ordered a tuna salad sandwich with extra mayo and extra jalapenos...I could just feel you nearby. It was so strange."

Kennedy blinked at him. He'd remembered her favorite sandwich and all the particulars of it. He hadn't written her out of his mind completely. A little of the earlier internal warmth started to flow back inside her.

"That's my partner. We'll be staying over in Rochester. It appears that our classmates have already booked up all the rooms at the Inn."

She motioned behind her with a tilt of her head.

"Ah...I hadn't thought of that. Guess I should have made arrangements for you when I put in the request for federal help."

Now it was Kennedy's turn to be surprised.

"You called in the fed request?"

Damon nodded. He rubbed his hand across his unshaven jawbone and looked at her with palpable pain in his eyes.

“The locals...Wiggins...complete idiots. They are saying she might have just run off but I know Dana and I know she’d never do that. They’re not taking this seriously. Time is wasting and the longer it takes to find a lead, the more chance they’ll never find her.”

Kennedy heard the grief breaking in his voice. Dana and Damon had always been extremely close. Not just because they were twins, but because they’d genuinely liked one another as friends. They had similar interests and were always taking care of each other in an almost parental way.

Perhaps that was why Dana had been such a good friend to Kennedy. She’d had more than her share of love and adoration from her family, more than enough to spread around to friends.

“We’ll find her, Damon.”

He looked into her eyes. He seemed to be searching for answers...hope...something that would put his mind at ease.

The bell over the door of the café chimed as Chi made his way back to the car, balancing bags and Styrofoam cups in his arms.

“We ready?” he asked as he piled the food on the hood of the car and fished for keys in his pocket. He was keeping a close eye on Damon as he spoke.

“Ready.”

Kennedy turned away from Damon and started to open the car door but his hand on her arm stopped her cold.

She looked back at him and his eyes were soft, tender, filled with longing.

“Thanks for coming,” he said and a small smile flitted across his face.

Kennedy felt her gut clench. She knew she couldn’t let him see the affect he still held on her after all of these years. It could compromise both her investigation and her heart. So she did what any tough as nails field agent would do. She kept it strictly professional.

“I didn’t come for you. I came here to work the case...just like any other case.”

With that, his eyes seemed to fill with more pain.

Kennedy turned away and sank into the car, closing the door behind her.

Chi backed the car out of the spot and Kennedy kept her eyes averted away from the man named Damon Divine who stood there all alone.

“That was brutal.” Chi said as they sped back out of town.

Not nearly as brutal as what he did to me.

Kennedy leaned her head back against the seat back and closed her eyes. The next few days would be much tougher than she would have thought.

After checking in and spending a restless night at *Reen’s Bed & Breakfast*, Kennedy was in anything but a good mood as she sat by the bay window and sipped bitter coffee prepared by their hostess.

Kennedy had spent the night with her mind whirring through memories of her high school days in Greece, her long talks with Dana and her mad love for the swim team star Damon Divine.

Then, her adult mind had battled for control with thoughts of how to proceed with what sounded to be a stone cold case.

Now that she knew Damon had been the one to make the call for federal help, she was sure this Sheriff Wiggins would not take kindly to their interference. This would make things more difficult for everyone involved but it certainly wouldn't stop Kennedy from working this case with her full influence and enthusiasm.

She did another quick check of the time and saw it was already after seven in the morning. She would have to give her partner another wakeup call if he didn't shimmy his lazy buns down here.

Almost as if he'd heard her thoughts, she saw him round the corner looking well rested, freshly shaven and already laughing.

How anyone could be in that good of a mood this early in the morning would forever remain a mystery to this agent.

"Ready, partner?" Chi exclaimed as he chomped into a shiny red apple and motioned towards the front door.

"Yes, I am but we're not stopping off for breakfast so you'd better eat here." Kennedy knew she sounded grumpy even to herself but Chi didn't seem to notice.

"I already ate with Ms. Reen in the kitchen. She makes the most scrumptious cinnamon buns I've ever consumed."

Kennedy turned back and shot a nasty look at the crummy toast and jam she'd forced down with her less than stellar coffee.

"I heard that, you sweet devil you!" An elderly female voice rang out from the kitchen area.

Chi grinned and opened the front door for Kennedy.

Kennedy grumbled under her breath. Her partner was famous for sweet talking little old ladies into feeding him like royalty. Somehow he'd already managed to have a much better day than her and the sun was barely up.

*Office of the Chief
Greece Police Department
Irondequoit, NY*

J.D. Wiggins was the type of man Agent Kennedy Wolfe despised.

He had a superiority complex about his position in law enforcement and an inferiority complex about his short stature. The two made for a deadly combination and one that required special handling.

What she wanted to do was to snap his spine like a twig and march through his office barking out the orders that needed to be made to get this investigation moving. But what she chose to do instead was sit patiently while he leaned back in his leather desk chair, booted feet propped on desk top as he stared at her bosom.

Her partner was pretending to carefully digest the contents of the non-existent case file that had been reluctantly produced by Chief Wiggins minutes earlier. The thin, paperless file folder was a joke and it meant only one thing...they were not taking this case seriously.

Kennedy could feel the time slipping away. In criminal investigations there was a concept known as The Golden Hour. Those trained properly knew the first few hours of any investigation are the most crucial. During this time, the offender hasn't had time to get far from the scene of the crime. Potential witness recollections are the freshest and the earlier you can follow up on a clue the better chance you have of it actually leading somewhere.

Obviously, Chief Wiggins either didn't understand this concept or didn't care to practice it.

"You do realize that Dana Divine Mescado has been missing for going on seventy two hours now."

Her question really came out as more of a statement as she watched the man's face for any sign he actually gave a hoot as to the whereabouts of the local nurse and mother. She saw none.

He grinned at her and then winked.

Kennedy felt her blood begin to boil and she clenched her teeth together more tightly as she made an effort to contain her burgeoning anger at his cocky incompetence.

"Lookie here, Ms. Mescado is a single woman. Recently divorced. And a damn good looker, from what I've seen. If she wants to run off for a long weekend of debauchery and pleasure, why should the police track her down and embarrass her?"

Kennedy flew to her feet and leaned in as close to his face as she could possibly withstand.

"Chief Wiggins, your blatant disrespect for this woman and her family is absolutely outrageous. But from this moment on, you won't have to take another second out of your precious day to worry with this case. The Federal Bureau of Investigation is hereby declaring this case a kidnapping and as a federal crime under our jurisdiction, we'll be handling the matter from here on out."

He removed his feet from the desk and met her face to face over the desk top. Little bits of spittle shot from his mouth as he barked back at her.

"Who do you think you are? You can't just come into my town and take over my case."

Kennedy stood straight up and extracted her FBI badge from her pocket. Flipping the case open and pressing it only a centimeter away from the man's nose.

"I am Special Agent in Charge Kennedy Wolfe and you just watch me."

By the time lunch had rolled around, Kennedy and Chi had revisited the crime scene and spoken with Dana's neighbors. Thankfully Kennedy hadn't recognized anyone from her class during the neighborhood canvas. Her nerves had been raw ever since her run in with Chief Wiggins this morning.

Between that and the feeling she'd be running into Damon again before the day was out, she had to force her mind to focus on the case at hand.

Despite their best efforts, she and Chi hadn't been able to turn up any new leads or information as to Dana's whereabouts. But she knew this woman...or at least at one time in her life, she'd known her better than anyone.

Even though Kennedy hadn't spoken to her since the night she left town in an angry huff more than two decades ago, it just didn't seem likely that a woman like Dana would leave two children, her doting mother, her twin brother, and her career as a home health nurse behind without a word. It was well out of character for her and Kennedy just had the gut feeling they were missing something big here.

"We need to check into this ex-husband."

Chi was making notes in his field book as he waited for Kennedy to tell him their next course of action. He hadn't even suggested taking lead on this one. It was her home town, her friend and her case. He was just here to support her and back her up. She

knew this about her partner without even asking. She was really going to miss him when she retired at the end of this year.

“Don’t suppose we can grab a bite before we meet up with Mr. Mescado, can we?”

He gave her his best puppy dog eyes as she clicked her tongue against the back of her teeth.

“Okay, fine. Let’s fill you up before we have a chat with this scum bag. You always kick butt better on a full stomach anyway.”

Chi cackled as he cranked the car and they headed back towards the café once again.

Chapter Five

Damon watched as Kennedy and her partner, a slightly pudgy Asian man, entered the café and took a seat in the corner booth.

He was perched on his normal counter stool where he could be found pretty much any weekday when he wasn't in court. He hadn't been able to get Agent Kennedy Wolfe off his mind since their encounter last night outside the café.

She was even more beautiful in her forties than she had been at seventeen and he could hardly believe that was possible. She'd been this dark, mysterious beauty back then. So different than all the other girls from Greece. So different than his sister even and yet the two had bonded as closely as if they were sisters themselves.

He'd spent many hours with her and Dana and had stolen several hot kisses from Kennedy's sweet lips by the pool that had told him she'd wanted him for more than a friend. But he'd been hesitant to start anything with her. As the popular swim team star, he had his pick of girls in school. If he were to mess around with Dana's best friend and things were to go south—it wouldn't have ended well.

As fate would have it, things hadn't ended up well despite his best intentions. Dana had convinced him to take her to the senior dance and give her the one thing she'd been missing in her life. He'd agreed and then...well...life had gotten complicated.

He'd wanted to explain but things had happened so quickly. She'd left town in a blur and he'd had to focus on his family. Just like he was trying to do now. But here she was...back in town. The same dark, mysterious beauty but now complete with a badge and a gun and apparently a whole hell of a lot of hostility towards him.

"Your Romeo is over there at the counter." Chi said around a mouth full of mustard soaked bratwurst.

“My what?” Kennedy said as she searched the café’s counter area to find Damon Divine staring at her.

Oh, joy.

Her stomach rolled and her appetite dwindled down to nothing as she waited for him to make his way over to their table. She knew he would just like she knew he’d ask to find out the status of Dana’s case.

She pushed her plate away from her and took a moment to search through her purse for an undetermined missing item.

She could smell the scent of him before she even looked up to see him standing over the table. It was a smell of soap and water mixed ever so slightly with the smell of freshly laundered cotton. It smelled like heaven to her.

“Are you gonna finish that?” Chi asked, indicating her half eaten sandwich and fries.

She shook her head in the negative and then looked up at Damon.

“We don’t have any news for you, Damon, but we are working the case.”

“Oh, I can see that...” he said, and the sudden sarcasm of his voice surprised her.

She pursed her lips at the obvious dig but she decided not to respond.

“Where did you end up staying?” he asked, changing the topic.

Kennedy wasn’t going to answer. It seemed like a bad idea to tell him where they were staying. Normally the victim’s family

would hound you night and day for results if they knew how to contact you. She couldn't see why they should treat him any differently. Besides, with his government connections, it was entirely possible he could find out where they were staying all on his own if he wanted to know badly enough.

"Ah, we're at Reen's. She makes these killer cinnamon buns. Have you ever had those?" Chi answered across the table as he polished off Kennedy's plate and reached for his glass of water with lemon.

She kicked his shin under the table and he winced ever so slightly but continued his downing of the thirty-two ounce water glass.

"She is a sweet little old lady. I helped her with a case once back when I was first practicing law. To this day, she sends me these chocolate covered peanut butter balls every Christmas."

As Damon went on about the owner of their accommodations, Chi's eyes lit up at the mention of more homemade food delicacies.

"We really need to get back to work. I'll be sure to let you know when we find something."

Kennedy rattled off the words in a staccato rhythm as she slid across the booth bench and stood to face Damon. Only the heel of her shoe caught on the table leg as she went to rise up and she stumbled forward into his chest.

A steady hand shot out and grabbed her around the waist. Bolts of electricity catapulted through her body at his touch.

She looked up into his eyes as those long eyelashes batted in time with the rhythm of her heart.

She still loved Damon Divine. After all these years, she knew it as clearly as she knew Dana Divine had not just run off on a wild weekend. She had to solve this case and get out of this town. She

had to get out of the arms of the one man who could break her heart...again.

Damon stood at the now empty booth and watched out the window while Kennedy raced down the sidewalk and away from the scene of their bodily collision. He'd felt more than just the tight, hot body of her against his chest.

He'd felt her heart racing at his touch. Her breath quicken in response to his hold.

He'd had the incredible urge to push her down on the table top and kiss her wildly and wantonly like they'd done so many times all those years ago. He wouldn't have cared if her partner was watching. Hell, to touch her and taste her again that way, he wouldn't have cared if the whole damned town was watching. And you can bet the word would have been circulated around town before the kiss had been completed.

He wanted the deliciously sexy Agent Kennedy and she wanted him. If only they weren't facing a possible life and death situation, he could focus his mind on just how to win her back into this life once again.

Chapter Six

“I’ve never seen you run out of a room as quickly as you just escaped from that one.”

Kennedy made her way down the sidewalk towards the car with Chi at her heels.

“I don’t want to talk about it, Chi. I just want to get this case solved. Reunite these kids with their mother and get the hell out of this town.”

Her partner whistled beneath his breath.

“I hear ya. You’ve been a total nut case since the second we drove into town. I don’t even recognize you right now.”

She stopped walking and turned back towards him. Anger flared in the pit of her stomach but she knew taking it out on him wouldn’t solve anything.

She turned back to the car and then decided to walk to the Mescado Motor lot. It was only a few blocks away from the café and she needed the fresh air to help calm her nerves.

Chi fell into step beside her. He’d refrained from making any additional comments. He wasn’t a stupid man. He knew when to shut up.

As they rounded the corner for the last few blocks to their destination, Kennedy saw the rusted gate of *Riverside Cemetery*.

Her throat clenched up and she could taste the remnants of her lunch in the back of her mouth.

Damn.

Had her mind and body led her to walk this way on purpose?

She stopped at the gate and stared past the thickness of the tree lined entrance.

Chi came up behind her but remained wordless.

“Would you mind going on ahead to the car lot? I’ll be there in a minute.”

He walked on ahead towards the brightly colored flags waving in the distance.

Kennedy pushed through the gate and up the stony path. The moss covered headstones and the smell of mint greeted her with a familiarity that took her immediately back to childhood.

She’d been to this very cemetery more often than she would ever admit. Her father was buried here and as a teen, she’d become obsessed with sitting by his grave and talking to him. Asking him why he’d had to leave her and why he’d left her with that sorry excuse for a mother.

A tear wound its way down her face but she swatted it away with the back of her hand.

Don’t be stupid.

She chastised herself as she walked closer to his final resting place.

As she stepped up to the gravestone engraved with his name, her eyes burned with tears as she saw the newly placed stone in the next lot.

*Janine Marie Wolfe
Wife, Mother, Friend*

“It happened just a few months ago.”

Kennedy spun around. Damon stood a few feet behind her.

“What are you doing here? You followed me?”

He smiled woefully.

“You always come here. Every day of high school you came here. Why would today be any different?”

She knew he was right but she desperately didn’t want him to see her falling apart over her mother’s grave.

“I didn’t know.”

She couldn’t believe her own words. How could a person not even know that their own mother was dead? It sounded ludicrous.

“She didn’t want you to know. She left specific instructions not to notify you.”

Kennedy buried her face in her hands. She wept.

A few beats passed and then Damon’s arms wrapped around her. She sobbed into his shoulder as he held her there under the tree. Where the sun was blocked but her heart was releasing all its pain and frustrations.

Finally, she pushed back. Grateful for his comfort but not eager to accept too much of it.

“How do you know all of that?”

“Dana,” His voice breaking with the mention of her name.

Kennedy waited for him to continue. Knowing he feared Dana’s grave would be the next one they’d stand over in this same place.

“She was a home health nurse. Your mother died of liver failure. It was long and painful and tough. Dana cared for her and was with her when she passed.”

Kennedy thought she'd been prepared to return to her home town but nothing could have prepared her for this news.

“I can't, Damon. I can't do this. I'll get the Bureau to send another team in. I've got to get out of here.”

She took off at a trot towards the gate.

“Kennedy, wait!”

She didn't stop at the sound of his voice. If anything, it propelled her faster towards the exit.

“Kennedy, it has to be you. You're the only one who can find her. I know it. She's waiting on you to find her. Please!”

His voice was broken. He was broken.

When she stopped and looked back, he was kneeling on the ground.

Her phone chirped in her pocket. She extracted it and flipped it open.

“Wolfe.”

It was Chi and he had more bad news.

Chapter Seven

As it turned out, Dana's ex-husband, one Mickey Mescado, had the perfect alibi for the past week. This included both the night Dana disappeared and the days that followed.

Mickey may have been a deadbeat husband but as luck would have it, he'd won an all expense paid trip to Vegas to attend a car sales convention. He had documented security camera footage of his whereabouts for almost every single hour of the past week. It was irrefutable proof he wasn't directly involved.

Although, Kennedy still had her suspicions about some indirect involvement.

"We're going to head back to Reen's B & B and regroup." Kennedy said to Damon as they stood over the computer screen in his office watching the security footage that had been linked to him by the LVPD.

"It was a good idea," Damon said.

Kennedy awkwardly patted him on the shoulder before turning to leave.

"Don't worry. We've got our forensic accounts combing through his finances. If he hired someone to do this, we'll find it."

He nodded absently but Kennedy could feel his disappointment.

It had been a quick lead that turned out to be another dead end. They were back to square one and she wasn't feeling her normal mojo on this one.

Something was definitely off with her. She had too many emotions in the way with this case. Maybe she should ask the home office to send in another team.

“C’mon. I called ahead and Reen’s prepared a heckuva meal for us. You know we always think better when we’ve eaten.”

Kennedy followed Chi out of Damon’s office but not before stopping to look back at him. Sitting behind his desk, staring at the computer images of his former brother-in-law, she realized something about him.

He was very much like her. It was obvious he’d devoted his entire life to his career and hadn’t focused at all on his private life.

Dana and her kids were probably his entire personal life all rolled into one warm and fuzzy package and someone had stolen that from him.

The past always had a way of catching up to you. Kennedy had seen that for herself today. Her mother was dead. She hadn’t seen her in years and now she wouldn’t get the chance to see her ever again.

The past always had a way of catching up to you.

Her thoughts echoed again. She’d been thinking as much when she had followed the lead of Dana’s ex-husband. But maybe it wasn’t Dana’s past that was catching up to her. Maybe it was someone else’s past.

“Hey, Damon. Have you had any cases in the past that might be coming back to haunt you now?”

His eyes widened slightly as he looked at her.

“Umm...I guess. It could be a lot of cases. I have a tendency to piss off a lot of people on a regular basis.”

Kennedy didn’t doubt it for a second. She had a similar past.

“How bout you dig out some of your case files that might have lingering grudges and bring them by the B & B in a little bit?”

He jumped up from his desk, the wheeled chair crashed backwards into the credenza.

“I’m on it.”

He seemed to suddenly have a renewed energy about him. She turned to see Chi watching her from the elevator door down the hallway. He grinned at her.

He knew her too well and he’d just read his partner like a book. Agent Saito knew she still had feelings for the District Attorney and his teasing would begin as soon as they reached the car.

Oh joy.

After a ridiculously huge meal as prepared by Ms. Reen, Chi and Kennedy had returned to their rooms to wait for Damon.

Kennedy spent a full half hour in the shower thinking about all the news her day had brought forth.

Her mother’s death. Her love for Damon. And the facts of this case. She really hoped they could gather a new lead tonight. If not, they’d be well past seventy two hours since Dana went missing. The clock was ticking and the case was growing colder by the minute. The water in the shower was growing colder, too.

If the food hadn’t been so wonderful tonight, she’d be the first to have been complaining to the management about the lack of a sizable water heater.

She looked at her wet hair in the mirror and began to comb the leave-in conditioner through it. She was lonely.

The thought struck her with enough force that she actually stopped combing and leaned forward to study her eyes closely in the mirror.

Sure, she'd dated here and there throughout the years. She'd even had one serious relationship with another field agent about ten years ago, but their careers had taken them in different directions.

When she'd been offered the SAIC position in the Albany field office it had been a chance to return closer to home. Although, even being that close to her home town, she hadn't made the effort to visit in all these years. Now, that decision would haunt her forever. She'd missed the chance to make things right with her mother.

She wondered if the end had been terrible for her. Why had she not wanted anyone to notify her own daughter?

Her thoughts were interrupted by a soft knock on the door. Assuming it was Chi, she crossed the room and snatched open the door.

Standing there, staring at her wet, towel clad body was Damon.

Damon's mouth fell open as Kennedy opened the door wearing nothing but a water soaked, white towel.

Her dark hair cascaded down around her shoulders in moist ringlets. Her silky smooth skin looked clean and utterly kissable.

At his gawking appraisal of her state of near nakedness, she appeared to grow self conscious and wrapped her arm across her breasts. Pulling the towel tighter she bit her lip in an almost adolescent response.

He smiled.

“I brought some boxes of files. Ms. Reen said we could set them up in the parlor.”

Kennedy nodded. Looking over towards the bedside clock as if to casually check the time.

He could feel the nervousness reverberating off her. He wanted to step into the room and take her in his arms. Plant kisses on that slender neck and furl his hands into the mounds of wet, orange blossom scented hair.

He knew it smelled of orange blossoms. Her hair had always smelled that way and it never failed to make him swoon with desire. Even now, just being this close to her, he was getting turned on more and more by the minute.

Almost able to let go of the mental anguish he been tormented with the last three days. Almost able to forget...if only for a moment. Almost.

“I’ll be down in a minute then,” she said, breaking his train of thought.

He nodded in reply and stood motionless as she swung the door shut and left him standing in the cold hallway all alone.

Chapter Eight

For the next three hours, they tore through the files. They'd separated out about a dozen potentials that needed further investigation. But they all agreed none of these potentials felt exactly right for this.

Of course, Chi had another appetite by this time and he'd headed out to pick up some pizza and beer for a midnight snack. After downing those, he'd admitted to needing a little shuteye and had left Damon and Kennedy to the files.

Another two hours and Kennedy had excused herself from the task. She needed to take a break, get outside and breathe in a little fresh air. Her gut told her they still hadn't found the break in the case she'd been hoping for. Perhaps they were still on the wrong path after all.

In the back yard of Reen's she found a small below ground pool. It looked clean and inviting but since she'd already had a shower, she decided to just sit on the edge and dangle her tired feet over the side.

Sitting there in the moonlight, a tender breeze wafted over the water and through her hair. She closed her eyes and took a few deep breaths. Something had to give on this case. There had to be something...just one clue. Just one thing.

"Thought you might want one more."

Damon's voice sounded behind her and she squinted open one eye to see him extending another ice cold beer towards her. She wasn't really a drinker but she'd managed to down one bottle with the guys during their earlier pizza break. Sometimes it was important to act like one of the guys when you were one of the few women in this particular line of work.

"Thanks."

Damon took a seat beside her and began to roll up his pants legs and join her with the foot dip in the pool.

“Remember all those night swims we took with Dana?”

Kennedy smiled at the memory. Dana had been terrified of the water—totally unlike her brother the competitive swimmer.

“You mean the night swims we took while Dana sat on the steps and continued her mother hen warnings about the dangers of drowning?”

Damon laughed heartily.

It was the first time Kennedy had heard him laugh like that since their school days. She missed the sound of it. She missed everything about him.

“I miss you.” His voice caressed her ears even as the same thought crossed her mind.

She turned to look at him. His face just inches from hers. The night was warm and perfect the slight beer buzz was all the encouragement she needed. *Time to be brave, Wolfe.*

She leaned in closer as if urging him to make a move.

He responded with fingertips on her cheek. Ever so gentle and caressing, ever so familiar and yet a faint memory of days long past.

She closed her eyes in silent anticipation. The kiss she knew was coming.

The sound of his cell phone chiming with an incoming message.

Her eyes shot open. The moment lost.

He grunted a sound of frustration but dug the phone from his pants pocket and flipped it open.

“Shit. I think it’s from the kidnapper.”

His words had sprung Kennedy back into work mode and she pulled out her phone and rung Chi. By the time he was on his way downstairs, she’d already read and reread the message at least a dozen times.

*You took my sister from me.
Now, I’ve taken your sister from you.
You didn’t save my sister.
Now you won’t be able to save yours.*

Damon was pacing back and forth at poolside. He seemed panicked, on edge.

Kennedy had already run through a litany of questions with him when Chi approached her and took the phone. He returned to the parlor to begin making phone calls and to set up a federal tracing of the message.

“Damon, I need you to focus. I need you to think about any cases that involved women.”

“I am. I am. Don’t you think I’m racking my brain?”

Kennedy walked over to him. Her FBI agent demeanor was back in full force now. Gone was the momentary sentimental exchange at pool side.

She placed a calm but firm hand on his shoulder and he stopped the pacing.

“Damon. You know this. You never forget the details. Who could this guy be referring to?”

He shook his head. Frustration written clearly across his face.

“C’mon Daring Divine. Dana’s counting on you.”

The words seemed to strike a chord inside him. His eyes opened and pierced right through her as if he were looking at her soul.

“Daring Divine? I haven’t heard that in years. Dana use to call me that when I was lifeguarding that summer.”

Kennedy grinned. “I remember.” An image of him in those red lifeguard swim trunks with that shiny metal whistle around his neck and that white, sunscreen covered nose flickered through her mind like a sexy home movie.

“Kennedy! This isn’t about my cases at all. This is about Margo Troy.”

Margo Troy had been a beautiful girl just a year younger than the three of them. She’d been everything Kennedy had despised in other girls their age.

She’d come from a rich family. She’d had perfect, Country Club parents and as the shimmering beauty queen and cheerleader type, she’d had the ability to pick and choose among any guy at school.

But she’d been obsessed with Damon Divine and he was the one guy who just simply wasn’t interested in her.

Kennedy had thought at one time it might be because he really had feelings for someone else...hopefully herself. But the thing was, for all of Margo’s popularity and perfection, there had always been something slightly off about her.

She'd almost become stalker when it came to following Damon around. Of course, back then, they didn't really refer to stalkers the way they do these days. Kennedy had since worked many an obsessive stalker case throughout the years.

Normally it was male stalking female but it wasn't unheard of for it to be the reverse. That was the case with Margo Troy.

The problem came when she'd hatched a plan to make Damon fall in love with her by setting up the need to be rescued. She'd taken some of her mother's Valium and then she'd left Damon a note to meet her at the Country Club pool.

In her warped mind, she must have thought the pills would make her a little sleepy and she'd just wait for him by the pool. When she saw him coming, she'd fall in and fake a drowning. Her body would be sluggish from the pills and he'd rescue her—thinking he'd miraculously saved her life.

She'd win his heart and they'd live happily ever after. Or something to that effect.

The first problem came when she fell asleep at pool side waiting on Damon and then rolled into the water. The second problem came when Damon never received the note.

It was Dana who had found the note in Damon's locker. Seeing the now familiar scrolling purple ink of Margo's pen, after the barrage of love letters that were constantly being left for her brother, Dana had simply trashed the note before leaving school—not giving it a second thought.

The tragedy had shaken the town that year. Margo's mother had blamed herself for having the medication in the house in the first place and had checked herself into an exclusive psychiatric ward for the duration of the year.

Margo's father had run off with the housekeeper and moved permanently to Mexico, never to be heard from again. The town was

in uproar and Kennedy had not been surprised when Dana had declared she would go into nursing as a profession after graduation.

Kennedy had seen the pain Dana felt she had caused by not reading the note. She wanted to be the one to save others in the future. Hadn't Damon told her just yesterday how she'd sat by Kennedy's mother's side through the bitter end of her terrible illness?

What everyone forgot about was Margo's little brother. The shy, nerdy Clinton Troy who'd suddenly lost his mother, father and sister all in a matter of days. He'd had family in the area and had remained there but she imagined one never truly recovered from a shocking tragedy like this one.

"Did you find him?" Damon leaned over her shoulder as she typed in the search on the federal database.

There hadn't been any records of Clinton Troy remaining in New York all these years. In fact, since he'd graduated just three years after the Class of 1986, there'd been no trace of him at all.

"Not yet," Kennedy reluctantly admitted and she sat at her laptop scrolling through the search results.

"Could he have changed his name?" Damon asked, as his breath in her ear sending tingles across the base of her neck was not helping her in matters of concentration.

"To what?"

"Maybe he wanted to disassociate himself with the family name. Get a fresh start after he left school."

"It's a great idea but how would we find it?" Kennedy sat back in her chair and closed her eyes.

"Be quiet." Chi said from the nearby sofa.

Damon must have been about to say something else and Chi cut him off. Her partner knew better than anyone else she must concentrate fully when she was this close to breaking a case. She had to find it—just beyond her grasp.

He was obsessed with his sister's death. Blamed Damon for not showing up to rescue her.

She sat up and typed in a name search for the state of New York.

Troy Margo

The listing popped up. Right here in Rochester.

“Got him. He took his sister's name and inverted it. We got him.”

Chapter Nine

Due to the shortage of agents in the area and not wanting to waste any more precious time waiting for more federal back-up, Agent Wolfe had reluctantly instructed Chi to call Chief Wiggins for the necessary bust back-up.

Now, outside the modest home on the modest street just moments before sunrise, the local SWAT team waited for Agent's Wolfe command to enter the premises.

Beads of sweat trickled down her spine as the heat of the summer evening pressed down on her. Perhaps it was the anticipation of the hunt for a criminal or the fear of what she might find behind the doors of this seemingly normal house.

Whatever the case, Kennedy was more nervous than a seasoned agent of her experience should be during a routine take down. She'd been on more raids and busts than the average field agent. Always the one to take the tough assignments. Always the one to risk it all because she didn't have a family waiting for her at home like so many of the others.

She shook her head to ward off the self-pitying thoughts that were beginning to crowd her concentration. Now was not the time for self reflection. This case was too personal for her. She shouldn't be leading this team and she shouldn't have taken on this case when she had this many emotions coursing through her.

Too late for second-guessing your choices now, Kennedy.

She motioned a silent hand signal to the team behind her. Then she crept towards the house, careful to stay down and out of easy view from the windows.

A knock on the door and then silence. One more knock.

“Clinton Troy, this is the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Come out with your hands up.”

A few seconds ticked by. No response.

Her mind tried not to imagine a sick panicked mind behind closed doors and what he could be doing to her beautiful friend as she was forced to proceed with the proper protocol.

She turned to the SWAT team leader and gave a nod.

A few minutes later, it was over. Clinton Troy, now known as Troy Margo, had been taken into custody. A suicide note had been found already written along with various weapons of torture.

It appeared as if he'd planned to torture Dana and then kill the both of them before the day was through.

Kennedy watched from nearby as the paramedics examined Dana.

She'd been found bound and gagged in the dank basement of the home. Kennedy had been the one to untie her gently and had whispered words of calm to her as Dana had sobbed above her. Dana's fingernails ragged and broken and knuckles bloodied from failed attempts at freeing her restraints. The smell of sweat and urine permeated the room and made Kennedy's stomach turn with pity and anger.

When she'd gently helped Dana to her shaky legs, Dana had crumbled into her arms and cried as she repeated over and over again just three words.

“Thank you, Wolfie.”

The nickname only Dana had been permitted to call her way back when. No matter how many years had passed, some friendships would always stand the test of time.

Now, Kennedy watched as Damon stepped up into the ambulance and headed off to the hospital with Dana. She had some paperwork to complete with Chi and Wiggins and then she'd be along to check on her.

The case was closed. It was time to get out of town.

"She loved you. She was so sorry to have made your life so difficult and she just didn't want to bring you any more pain. She just wanted to disappear and leave you be."

Kennedy sat by Dana's hospital bedside where she was being treated for dehydration and some nasty lacerations to the wrists and ankles from where she'd been bound to the chair and unfed for days. Considering what could have been the end result, she was damned lucky.

Tears welled in Kennedy's eyes as Dana took her through the last weeks and days of her mother's life and tried to explain things to her.

"I'm glad you were there with her. I'm grateful to you for that." Kennedy told her as she stroked her fingers through her friend's hair.

"I'm glad you were there for me. You saved my life, Wolfie. You saved my brother's life."

Kennedy shook her head.

"I was just doing my job."

"Oh, stop it." Dana smiled at her and Kennedy's heart swelled with love for her friend.

“How did it happen, Dana? How did we lose touch and stay apart all these years?”

“It was my fault. It was all *my* fault.”

Kennedy hadn't been expecting that answer.

“What are you talking about? It was Damon who stood me up for the senior prom. It was him breaking my heart that forced me to head off to college a month early. It's *his* fault.”

Dana shook her head vehemently and then let out a little cough of pain as the abrasion on her neck must have scrapped against the pillow.

“Easy, there, DeeDee.” Kennedy said as she took Dana's hand in her own and squeezed it gently. Her friend had been through one hell of an ordeal and she was just thankful she'd been able to put this case to rest sooner rather than later.

But she was filled with too many damned emotions here in this town and she needed to get out of here. She needed to get back to her simple but lonely life. She'd be back for the trial against Clinton Troy but until then, she had to get as far away from all these feelings as possible. It was just too much.

“I got pregnant, Kennedy.”

Kennedy eyed her friend under thick lashes.

“Uh yes, I heard. You have two beautiful kids with this Mescado bum. We'll have to chat about him later.”

Dana shook her head again.

“No, I got pregnant our senior year. Sam Mallory. I slept with him after Margo died. I felt so guilty and he was just there. A shoulder to cry on. The new guy in school. No ties to any of the sadness.”

Kennedy's mind raced back to a dark, curly headed Lacrosse player that had swooped into their senior class midyear and hadn't made much of an impression on her. But it sounded like he'd made much more of an impression on her best friend.

She must have been too wrapped up in her Damon quandaries to have noticed.

"Why didn't you tell me?" Kennedy asked.

Tears fell from Dana's eyes and Kennedy handed her a Kleenex from the side table. She dabbed at her swollen eyes.

"I wanted to but I just felt embarrassed and silly. I was going through so much and knowing you were leaving for college and everything else. I just broke down and told Damon about it the night of the dance. I couldn't go and face Sam there. I'd already told Sam about the baby and he wanted me to have an abortion. You know I could never do that. I would never do that. There'd already been enough death. I just couldn't take it."

Kennedy stroked Dana's arm and smiled at her. "So, you got back at him by marrying that jerk, Mescado?"

Dana let out a bark of laughter. "No, I had a miscarriage only a short time later. It turned out the way it was supposed to, I guess."

She looked down at her bandaged hands and sniffled.

"I didn't meet Mickey until my sophomore year of college. I thought I'd made a better choice the second time and look how that turned out."

Kennedy laughed. "It's okay. We all make mistakes. I know I sure have. And I guess Damon really did what brothers are supposed to do. He put his family first. He did the right thing."

Dana took a deep breath.

“He loves you. He always has and he always will. There’s never been anyone else.”

Kennedy turned and stood from the chair. She walked over to the window and looked out at the beautiful Saturday morning that had blossomed right beneath all the darkness of their previous night.

“You just ran off so quickly. We didn’t have a chance to make it right. Won’t you give us a chance now?”

Dana’s words touched her heart but she knew she couldn’t do it. Couldn’t wait around to have her heart broken yet again.

“I’m sorry DeeDee. I just can’t.”

Kennedy left the hospital room and returned back to Reen’s to pack.

“Don’t you want to make an appearance at your big class function tonight?” Chi asked with glee in his voice.

Kennedy glared at him as she pulled her suitcase down the wooden staircase of Reen’s. Chi was standing in the foyer chomping on what appeared to be a huge box of homemade chocolate chip cookies.

“Uh, a world of no...” Kennedy said as she stepped up to the desk to sign the check out slip that had been carefully laid out for her approval.

“The fellas were telling me it was going to be this totally hip eighties dance thing. I would love to see you go to that. It would make some great camcorder footage for your retirement party video.”

Another glare from Kennedy in Chi’s direction. Followed by more chomping of cookies and chuckles from her hefty partner.

As she handed the paperwork back to Ms. Reen who seemed to be smirking at her over thick spectacles, she heard the sound of music coming from outside.

“What the...?” She turned to look towards the front door.

Chi opened the door and stepped back. She peered around him to see Damon standing in a t-shirt, jeans and trench coat that was a dead ringer for the scene from one of her favorite eighties movies. Complete with boom box overhead and Peter Gabriel crooning about the light in her eyes.

“You must be joking,” she said but she couldn’t stop her traitorous heart from speeding up to double time at the sight of him.

Chi started crying out with laughter and even set down the box of cookies to clap with enthusiasm at the night’s entertainment.

Kennedy stepped into the doorway, cocking her head to the side and eying Damon.

He put down the boom box and made his way up to the front porch.

“Hey, sexy girlfriend.”

Kennedy tried to stifle the smile but with Damon doing his Long Duck Dong impersonation, but she couldn’t control her reflexes.

“What are you doing?”

“I’m here to take my lady to the dance. I know I’m about twenty years behind schedule... but my twin assures me you have to give us a second chance.”

“Oh, does she now?” Kennedy grinned at him.

“Yes. She said you always thought we were double the trouble and so that equals at least two chances to make this right.”

“So, this is your first attempt then?” Kennedy stepped out onto the porch and Damon stepped up until he was just one step beneath her.

“I’ll keep trying as long as you’ll let me. I want to make it right between us more than anything in this world.”

She reached out and wrapped her arms around his neck, allowing him to pull her into an embrace and nuzzle his lips in her neck.

“Daring Divine, you and your sister are nothing but double trouble.”

She smiled and watched as his face blurred slightly when he leaned in to kiss her. This time she wasn’t disappointed. His lips touched hers and it was almost as if she were a teenager again. In his arms, kissing him, longing for him and the night they would have together.

His tongue danced against hers and she melted against him.

Chapter Ten

Kennedy and Damon spent the night at the reunion dance surrounded by all the faces and voices from their youth. The bittersweet night came to an end too soon. But somehow all felt right with the world for those few hours.

She'd opted out of wearing an eighties era costume as some of her classmates had gleefully donned. Instead she'd chosen a simple skirt and black sleeveless blouse. Feeling a little underdressed had made her entrance nerve-racking but her strappy stilettos with pointed toes had definitely been the right choice. Damon hadn't been able to stop staring at her smooth, bare legs all evening.

Now, sitting in Damon's car outside the school gym, Kennedy felt younger than she had in years. Yet despite the whirlwind sequence of events, she felt vulnerable in the moment of silence with him.

"Where do you want me to take you?"

His raspy voice broke the silence. She knew what he meant. He was asking if she wanted to go back to the B & B for the night or if she wanted to go home with him.

She also knew what she wanted to do. She wanted to spend the night making love to him—finally living out the fantasy that she'd kept in her mind all these many years.

Still she hesitated. She needed to get back to Albany tomorrow. She had to get ready for her retirement and subsequent job offer to teach at the FBI Academy at Quantico. She had plans, a whole new job to look forward to. She couldn't let allow herself to get lost in one moment of pleasure.

She needed to protect herself from anymore pain. She'd done what she came here to do and now it was time to go. She'd felt the magic. She'd spent the night in his arms on the dance floor. She'd

even started to make peace with herself for missing out on the last few years of her mother's life. Now she needed to move on, put Greece behind her for good.

She turned to Damon. To look at him, to tell him that she needed to go but when they made eye contact she forgot all her rational reasoning.

His blue eyes shown brilliantly in the moonlight as he leaned towards her, pulling her into his warm embrace. She leaned into him and nestled her face into the crook of his neck. Inhaling him deep inside her. She let all thoughts of resistance seep out of her mind and just breathed him deep inside.

His hands worked their way up her spine in a talented swirl of fingertips which emitted tingles up and down her body. She sighed with contentment.

Being held by the man who also held her heart was almost enough for her. She could almost stay like this forever and never move again. *Almost.*

Right now, she need more. She needed all of him. Wanted him to touch her. Taste her. Fill her with all that she'd been longing for.

"I want you to take me..."

He leaned back and surveyed her face, questioningly. Almost as if he were expecting her to tell him that she wanted to be taken back to her room for the night.

Her tongue jutted out from her mouth and flicked across her lower lip and then she tucked her lip inside her mouth and nibbled it nervously.

He smiled down at her. A naughty grin that made her breath catch in her throat as she watched him fully understand the meaning behind her words.

He reached down and tugged her onto his lap. With her body tightly positioned between his body and the steering wheel, there was no room to move. At least, she thought there was no room to move until she felt the hardness in his jeans pressing against her crotch.

Her panties were instantly wet at the thought of taking him deep inside her. Both of them, now in their forties, were obviously not novices in the ways of sex. Still somehow, it felt new and awkward with Damon.

Perhaps it was the trip down memory lane tonight or just the real feelings that were bubbling beneath the surface between them.

She closed her eyes for a moment and took in one of her calming breaths. If she was going to do this—it would be the best damn sex of his life. She made the decision and then all of her kick ass confidence returned.

She opened her eyes to find him watching her face intently.

“If you’re not ready for this...I’m cool with that.”

His voice was sincere but the raspy tone of lust still boiled beneath. He wanted her as much as she wanted him. He was trying desperately to be a gentleman and that made her want him even more.

“Just shut up and fuck me.”

Damon blinked back at her. He’d never heard Kennedy speak this way and it sent his already aching cock into a full on salute beneath his jeans.

He was known as a brilliant debater when it came to making arguments in court. But this was one case where he wouldn’t be putting up a fight. If the lady wanted him, he was damned sure going to oblige.

He pulled her head forward and reclaimed her mouth in a hard kiss. She began to writhe around on top of him, making the pain in his swollen balls all the more unbearable. It was a good pain but one that needed immediate attention.

He managed to reach one hand under her skirt and cupped her sweet ass in the palm of his hand. He was pleasantly surprised to find that she was wearing a thong.

The problem with fucking in the car, besides being damned uncomfortable, was that he wouldn't be able to see her body in all its splendor. And he knew that she had a fucking gorgeous body. He remembered the way she looked in a swimsuit back in school and he knew that she'd only improved with age.

He broke free of the kiss just long enough to make the offer to go back to his place. That was when she looked at him with a wild, almost feral heat in her eyes.

Fuck me.

He could almost hear the words as if she'd spoken them aloud again. Her face screamed the words at him in the silence of the car.

With one skillful motion, he tore the thin strip of panties from her and heard her gasp at the sensation.

She responded by pulling open her shirt and revealing her lace covered breasts that spilled over the delicate white cups of her bra.

He yanked down the straps and her full breasts heaved forward into his face. He took one breast into his mouth and began to press the nipple towards the roof of his mouth with his tongue. More writhing and grinding against his cock and he felt himself begin to perspire with the heat of their combined touch and proximity.

He moved his hand down her ass and began to press one finger against the puckered opening. She pulsed on top of him and

he thought he might come inside his jeans like a teenage boy with no control.

She was the hottest, sweetest thing he'd ever tasted and touched. He didn't know how much more of this foreplay he could take. He was ready and she was more than ready to be taken.

He released his hold just long enough to maneuver his hands down and unclasp his jeans. His cock sprung forth between them.

She leaned back against the steering wheel and took hold of his shaft with one small hand. As if holding a shiny new weapon, she stroked it gently and then pressed it against the tender folds of her pussy.

It was lengthwise against her clit and she moved up and down against it by pressing one foot against the door jamb and the other against the center console.

She used his cock to press against her throbbing clit and bring herself to orgasm. Her head thrown back, her throat exposed. Her breasts bobbing up and down before his face. He held her thighs to steady her as she used him like a dildo that you'd buy in one of the shops down on Lincoln Street.

But he'd never wanted to be used as much by anyone as he wanted to right now. She was taking what she wanted from him and he was willing to give her that and so much more.

She closed her eyes as she reached the boiling point of her climax. She screamed out and he watched her mouth open in pure pleasure. It was fucking beautiful.

Kennedy had never put her own pleasure first when making love. She'd always wanted to make sure that she looked attractive and pleased the man. It was something that had never really suited her tough exterior cop attitude but it had been the way she behaved

behind closed doors. Always becoming the submissive there and nowhere else.

But tonight, in this car and with Damon, she'd just taken him and used him on herself. She'd used his body to make herself come and now that she was coming down from the wild ride, she felt a small blush begin to burn on her cheeks.

Thank God it was so dark in here and he wouldn't be able to see her reaction. She felt utterly juvenile at her reaction.

"That's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen."

His voice flowed through her ears and down into her soul. She smiled delicately at him and then looked down.

Even in the faint light of the moon casting through the fogged up car window, she could see her juices glistening on the knob of his huge cock.

Her eyes must have displayed surprise at the size of his manhood. She hadn't really been paying that close of attention to his manly appearance when she was rubbing him against her moments earlier but now she couldn't stop staring at him.

He really is divine.

The thought crossed her mind followed by more blushing.

"Oh no you don't," he said, as if sensing her sudden embarrassment and thought of withdrawing from the moment.

He took the head of his cock and pressed it against her slick opening. Lifting her slightly and allowing her to settle down on top of him. Her wet cunt made for a smooth entry and despite his size, there was no resistance from her tight walls.

As soon as he'd filled her completely, she closed her eyes. Holding her breath from the sheer pressure of it. He was inside her,

to the hilt and she was full. So full of his hardness, so full of her feelings for him, and so full of pleasure that she could barely continue breathing.

He grabbed her ass and pulled her towards him. Forcing her to grind against him. Not really moving in and out of her but keeping a tight hold on her and forcing her to rock back and forth from the waist down.

In all her years of casual relationships, she'd had plenty of gratifying sex. But she had never had more than one climax in a night unless it had been at her own hand. Tonight would be different and she knew that the moment he started her on that delicious ride.

She swallowed back the moans that threatened to spill out from her. She bit back the screams that she wanted to continue shouting with every slow burn of their connection. She shook her head from side to side as she tried to control the mounting frenzy of her womanhood as he bit down on one of her nipples making her pussy tighten against him in response.

She fought the moment because...she didn't want it to end. She didn't want to think past this perfect moment. She wanted it to go on and on and on.

But he was only a mere man and it was only one night. Maybe there would be more but if not, she'd have this perfect moment that she could replay over and over again in her fantasies.

His breath quickened against her chest as his hair, damp with sweat nestled under her chin. His fingers digging into the flesh of her ass as he pushed her against him...harder...deeper.

She crushed his face against her as she wrapped her arms around his neck and held onto him as she allowed herself to let go. She screamed out again, for the second time tonight. She rode the waves of pleasure that pulsed through her body.

I love you. I love you. I love you.

Two months later
Quantico, Virginia

Agent Kennedy Wolfe stood before the classroom of new recruits and her stomach turned. She'd been feeling nervous and on edge all day.

Sure it was her first day of full lecture for her new job as an instructor at the FBI Academy but that shouldn't be making her feel so sick. This was the job she'd lived and breathed for years. It should feel like coming home.

Instead she felt like total crap.

She shook her head and then turned her back to the class to gather her thoughts for a moment.

She missed Damon and she missed Greece.

The thought crossed her mind as she stood in the room full of eager students. Her back turned to them as they waited in disciplined silence for her to fill their minds with her decades of law enforcement knowledge.

She stared at the blank dry erase board and her mind felt just as blank.

After their night in the car together, she'd spent two glorious weeks with Damon. She'd stayed there in Greece with him and Dana.

They'd shared meals together. Caught up on old times. And spent every single night in each other's arms making passionate love. She'd wanted it to last forever but ultimately she'd had commitments to fulfill.

Career obligations that she had to see through and a life waiting for her elsewhere. He would never leave Greece. She knew this and she would never ask it of him.

He had no reason to leave. He had family there. It was his home.

He'd asked her to stay. Begged her to stay. But she'd refused. There was too much pain here. Too much history. She'd never been good with pain. She needed to get back to her real life. The life that had served her well since she'd left Greece all those years ago.

So, she'd left. She hadn't returned his calls or e-mails since returning to Albany and then relocating to Virginia. She'd just left it all behind her once again. It was easier that way.

I'm a fucking coward.

The words crashed through her mind and she looked down at the crystal clean floor of the classroom. She'd spent her whole entire adult life running from the people in her life that she perceived as painful.

She'd been the best agent. The toughest cop. And yet the weakest person when it came to taking true risks in life. What kind of example could she set for these fresh minded cadets if she couldn't be brave enough to live her life without the constant fear of heartbreak?

She turned back to her classroom and opened her mouth to speak.

All eyes were on her, hands poised with pens and pencils.

"I'm going home now."

The words escaped her lips and before she could change her mind, she turned and ran from the classroom.

Damon sat at his desk. It was well after dark and he watched the traffic beneath his window begin to wind down from rush hour traffic to that of normal evening traffic.

He imagined fathers out for that much needed gallon of milk. He imagined mothers picking up their teens from swim practice or some other extracurricular activity.

He imagined coming home to find the woman he loved waiting for him. Taking her into his arms and kissing her with all the love he'd kept inside him for all these years.

He'd never loved anyone the way he loved Kennedy Wolfe. He thought she'd come back to him. Those weeks following his sister's rescue had been the best of his life.

He knew that if he could convince her to stay all would be right with the world. But she had run away...again.

For the second time, he'd screwed up somehow and she'd run from him.

This time, he wasn't going to let her get away. He'd follow her to the end of the earth if he had to. For weeks, he'd been calling her and trying to reach her. He wanted to tell her that he wanted to come with her to Virginia. He wanted to be with her no matter what it took to make it happen.

But she wouldn't take his calls or respond to his messages. He knew she was hiding from her true feelings. He knew that he had to be the one to make the grand gesture. He had to prove that she was worth giving up his job, his family and his career for. She was worth it all. It was time to show her that he would never stand her up again.

He swiveled his desk chair around and stared at his desk. It had been cleaned off earlier in the day by his secretary and his belongings sent home via their office courier.

This was his last day in Greece and after dinner with his sister, he was catching the late evening flight to New York City and then onward to Quantico in the morning.

Tomorrow would be the first day of his new life with Kennedy. He'd make her change her mind about being with him and if he had to use her own set of handcuffs to keep her still until he could convince her—so be it.

She might be the tough cop but he was in love with her hook, line and sinker and he didn't intend to waste one more day without her in his arms nor one more night without her in his bed.

He stood from his desk and took one more look out onto the streets of Rochester down below. This was his home and everything he loved was here...except for the woman that should have been here with him all along.

Now, he'd make it right. He'd show her she was worth loving and unlike everyone else in her life...he would stand by her until the end.

"Working late. Always working late."

Her voice sounded behind him but surely he was just imagining it. He'd thought of hearing her melodic voice every day for the past two months but other than her voice mail greeting, he hadn't spoken to her live.

There was no way she was here...now...in his office.

He turned to look. Maybe he was going crazy, but the image of dark haired beauty stood in his doorway, leaning on the doorframe with legs crossed at the ankle and hand on slender hip.

He smiled at her and she shook her head at him.

"I heard you quit your job and booked a flight to Quantico."

His eyes widened with surprise. How did she know?

Dana.

“I called DeeDee to see where I could find you. Part of me was terrified that you’d be out on a hot date or something.”

He grinned. She was jealous over the thought of him with another woman. This was a good sign.

“No. Just giving up everything here to be with the woman I love. That’s all.”

“I see,” she said as she glided into the room slowly and made her way to where he stood.

“You forget something here?” He wanted desperately to believe that she’d come back only for him.

“Yes. I forgot to tell you how much I love you.”

His heart filled with love and he closed the gap between them. Taking her into his arms and holding her tightly. Never wanting to let her go again.

“But there’s just one problem.”

He leaned his head back and looked at her. She could see the worry on his face. Feel his heart beating against her chest.

“What?” he asked, hesitantly.

“I sort of quit my job at the Academy and planned to move back here to be with you.”

He laughed and pulled her against him as they swayed gently together. Safe in each other’s arms and together again.

“You think Ms. Reen is looking for help over at the B&B?” Kennedy asked.

Damon stroked her hair and held her close.

This time they’d get it right. Second chances didn’t always come around but this one wouldn’t be wasted.

“I’m sure Daring Divine can work something out. I think Ms. Reen has a crush on me anyway.” He replied with all sincerity.

Now Kennedy laughed and then he kissed her in the way that only he could, making her toes curl and her heart ache with love.

Oh, Joy.

The End



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