

Hostile Contact

by

Tamala Callaway

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Love was meant to be a healing emotion....
Without it, we don't stand a chance against hurt and pain.

Tamala Callaway

Prelude

When Symone is faced with a stranger infiltrating her life, she finds herself wondering just whom can she really trust? Much of the evidence is pointing to her best friend and a new man that's pursuing her,

... leaving her confused and afraid.

With the danger proving to be more serious than she had first believed, Symone has no choice but to put her trust in the one person she wanted nothing to do with.

Chapter 1

“Why don't you watch where you're going, freak!” Symone snarled as she bent down to pick up her phone and keys from the pavement.

Almost getting trampled by unaware patrons of the outdoor shopping center, she quickly drew her hand and phone from under a foot that was coming down at a speed that would have surely broken her fingers.

The man stumbled to catch his balance after withdrawing his foot from the path that would surely cause damage to her. “I'm sorry Miss. I didn't see you there,” he said as he fumbled to catch his own phone and the tablet that he was busy web surfing on to see her in his path. He stopped and faced her, suddenly intrigued with her full rustic tan glossed lips, baby blue eyes, and strawberry blonde short bobbed hair cut that framed her artfully freckled face. When she looked up at him, he began to smile, however, the scowl on her face was that of a woman damaged by a hardened heart.

“Whatever! Get out of my way!” she scoffed and brushed past him as her lime green platform heels pounded the sidewalk in steady clacks, heading toward the coffee shop.

He turned to watch her walk away, but quickly darted inside the candy shop when she turned back to see if he was still there. He exhaled a heavy breath when she continued with her stride and turned to enter the glass doors of the coffee shop.

Since there were eight people ahead of her in line, she looked down at her phone and tapped the screen to start a text. It didn't light up so she pressed the button to open the start screen. *It's dead?* She thought to herself as she continued to press and hold the start button to get any activity. She growled to herself and popped the back of the phone case off and pulled out the battery then reinserted it. The phone glowed to life, but took a moment to restart back to the menu screen. By the time she was able to pull up her best friend's name

to began a text, she was at the counter.

“Um ... I'll have a medium black coffee and a toasted bagel with cream cheese. Oh, and don't fill it to the rim,” she rambled, then looked down and started her text. *Where the hell are you?*

“That'll be five eighty-three please,” said the clerk.

Symone pulled her wallet from her purse and fingered through a stack of bills until she found a ten. She pulled it out and handed it to the clerk who was already ringing up a payment. Her face hardened in confusion as the young girl handed change to the person behind her.

Symone turned to see who had paid her bill and gasped with an appalled look at the man who had bumped into her only moments earlier.

“I figured I owed you that much, since I apparently ruined your day,” he said with his shoulders raised in a hopeful gesture.

Her eyes narrowed as her jaw clenched, then she turned to retrieve her coffee and bagel. When she turned to walk away from the counter, she paused momentarily beside the guy, “I can buy my own damn breakfast, thank you!” she snapped and stepped to one of the bar tables, then sat her coffee and bagel down to put her wallet back in her purse. She angrily added sugar and flavored cream to her coffee, stirring in the mix and placing the top back on her cup.

The man stepped up to the counter to face a highly irritated clerk that frowned at Symone for her lack of appreciation and her very rude behavior.

“Some people,” she commented with a sympathetic look for the man.

He shrugged, “She's just having a bad day. I'll have a mocha with extra cream please,” he smiled at her, while handing her a five dollar bill. “Keep the change,” he told her as she turned to make his drink then handed it to him.

“Have a nice day, and come again,” she smiled at him. He nodded and turned to walk outside and realized that the angry woman had taken a seat in one of the bar stools at the table and was heavily engrossed in a texting

conversation.

“Ahem,” he cleared his throat. She didn't look up, but he could tell that she had heard him, but fully intended to ignore him.

“Excuse me, Miss?” he called politely.

“What?” she snapped without looking up.

“Never mind,” he stepped around her table and started out the door. He glanced back and she looked back down at her phone and continued to text back and forth with someone. The sidewalk was pretty congested and fairly dangerous to walk and drink at the same time, so he decided to take a seat at one of the outdoor bistro tables and finish his drink before he headed to work. He pulled the strap to his laptop case over his head and sat it in the chair next to him and laid his tablet on the table and began to scroll through his emails. He was half way through his mocha when a shadow towered over him.

“Why did you do that?” she demanded.

“Do what?” he turned to look up at her.

“Pay for my breakfast?” she still spoke with dryness, careful not to implement any emotion.

“I told you, because I bumped into you and ruined your day,” he said kindly. Apparently, he wasn't easily intimidated by rude behavior and this intrigued her.

“Well ... thank you. And ... sorry for being so rude in there. Enjoy the rest of your day,” she said and turned to walk away.

“Wait ...” he called out to her.

“Don't push your luck,” she replied without pausing her stride. He was able to watch her for a long time as her lime green platform heels stood out from the rest of the crowd. She crossed at the walkway to get to the other side of the shopping plaza and met up with another woman. This woman was a few inches taller than her with thick blonde shoulder-length hair. The two of them stood and talked for a few moments, when suddenly they both turned to look

back in his direction. He played it off by dragging his fingers across the screen of his tablet, seemingly engrossed in his emails. He took a chance and looked back up at them, but they were gone. As his eyes roamed the plaza for a glimpse of the lime green heels, he realized that he'd lost sight of her. He drank the last of his drink and stuck his tablet in his case and draped the shoulder strap across his torso and started toward the sky-rise building that he worked in and went inside.

“Good morning Trevor, I mean ... Mr. Harrison,” the receptionist chimed with a smile.

“Morning Roni,” he smiled in return as he passed her desk. He continued to the elevator and the door opened just as he reached it. He and a few other associates stepped on and the doors began to close.

“Hey, wait!” a woman's voice called out, but the door had closed. She turned and approached the front desk on a mission.

“Excuse me, Miss?” she got the receptionist's attention.

“Yes, may I help you?”

“Who was that guy in the navy blue suit that just got on the elevator?” she panted, almost out of breath.

Symone was more than a little irritated with her friend's behavior. “Faye ... oh my goodness, seriously? You are so freaking embarrassing!” she complained, just before the receptionist answered.

“Who, Mr. Harrison? He's one of the partners of the firm on the 21st floor. Harrison and Moore, attorneys to the rich and famous,” she rattled proudly as if this should be information that any breathing human being should be aware of.

Faye turned to look at Symone with a scowl on her face. This much she had guessed, just from the quick glance she had caught of him, while Symone was complaining about the presumptuous jackass that bumped into her, who then had the audacity to buy her breakfast as a peace offering.

Symone shrugged her shoulders completely unimpressed and started back out the door.

“Okay, now that you know who he is, we're late for work. Let's go!” Symone demanded as she walked off, leaving Faye rushing to catch up with her.

“Do you have any idea who that is?” asked Faye.

Symone snorted, “Yes. Attorney to the rich and famous. I heard her, and who cares? I sure as hell don't,” she snapped.

“I do, that's who.”

They were rushing to get to the next building and catch the elevator to the 12th floor. Symone and Faye increased their pace and caught the next set of open doors just before they closed. On the way up, Symone looked down at the sound of someone's shoe tapping on the floor of the elevator and followed the attached legs up with her eyes until she stopped at Faye's scowling face.

“What?”

“You really need to lighten up. Stop being so stuck up,” she folded her arms across her chest.

The doors opened and they entered a lobby that led to their department which housed a horde of cubicles. Symone stopped in front of hers and spoke in angry whispers, “The last time I lightened up with a man, he took everything I had, including my heart and stomped it into the ground. He emptied my bank account and left me for an eighteen year old!”

“Okay, so that was just one Jackass. Not every man is like that,” Faye tried to get her friend to see reason.

“If you want him, be my guess. I, however, don't need another headache! Now drop it and get to work before you get the both of us in trouble,” Symone snarled through her teeth.

Faye sighed and turned to walk two rows over and three cubicles down and sat at her desk.

Immediately, the phones began ringing as the girls started their day of handling technical support for an electronics company where the hours passed by quickly. Before they knew it, lunch hour was upon them and Faye came to retrieve Symone to head down to the lobby to eat. The restaurant there, served the best toasted flat bread sandwiches and they always shared one and each got a fruit smoothie to wash it down.

They sat at one of the tables and chatted about their plans for the weekend.

“Okay, so there is going to be a live band at Club Ridley tonight. I am officially on the market and am looking to get some action,” said Faye.

“Good luck,” said Symone, taking another bite of her sandwich.

“You really should loosen up and get your feet wet again, Symone. It's been what ... three years since Brent broke your heart?”

“It's been two years, eight months, three weeks, and four days. No thank you, I'm better off alone,” she rejected.

“Damn Symone, why are you keeping up with the exact time and day? It's done, time to move on, girl.”

Symone sighed as she took a small sip of her fruit smoothie, then looked to be in thought of her next comment.

“Look Faye, I have moved on. I have worked hard to rebuild everything I've lost, and now I want to get to work on starting my own Interior Designing business. I have to be able to rent office/store space, find an investor, and fill the store with design ideas. Not to mention, advertise and build a clientele. I really don't have the luxury of trusting another man to set me back another three or four years on my dreams,” she complained. “I'm only going out with you, because I really need a night out to de-stress. *Not* to find a man. You do your thing and I'll do mine.”

Noticing that their co-workers were all getting up and heading back upstairs, the girls took their trash and disposed of it in the trash receptacle and

followed the crowd back to the second half of their work day.

Five o'clock came and everyone packed up to leave for the day. Symone removed the headset and placed it on the hook on the wall next to her computer and shut down her system. She picked up her phone and grabbed her purse and started for the elevator in such a routine type behavior, that she needn't look to see that Faye was right behind her.

The girls reached the lobby and headed outside to walk the very long sidewalk to get to the parking lot where they were both parked. As they passed Mr. Harrison's building, Faye gazed through the wall of windows hoping to catch a glimpse of him so that she could introduce herself and Symone. There was no sign of him and Symone sighed impatiently as she picked up her pace.

“What are you in such a hurry for?” asked Faye.

“I'm tired and I have some research to get done. Not to mention a ton of laundry to get down to the laundromat before Mrs. Teal brings down her family of twelve's laundry and occupies all of the washing machines.”

“I told you that you were more than welcomed to bring your laundry to my house,” Faye offered.

“And have to listen to your mom scream at your dad about leaving water rings on the furniture with beer bottles and then get in my business about how a young lady shouldn't be living on her own in this day in time? No thanks. I'll take my chances with Mrs. Teal,” she rejected.

“Well, the offer still stands if you change your mind,” Faye shrugged. “See you tomorrow night, be safe,” she waved as she got into her car and headed home.

Symone dug through her purse for her keys and couldn't find them. She emptied everything on the hood of her car to be sure before having to head all the way back to her job to check her desk. Today was just not her day, so she threw everything back inside her purse and started back up the sidewalk.

As she came upon the coffee shop that she was in earlier, she thought

that it was possible she'd left them on the table in there. She jetted inside and approached the counter.

“Excuse me, did anyone find a set of keys in here from this morning?” she asked the young boy behind the counter. He looked behind him in a tote labeled lost and found and rummaged through it, only finding electronic devices. He turned to face her and shook his head no, then continued to help other customers. Symone inhaled a deep breath and turned to leave but halted her advance when she saw the guy from earlier walking past the coffee shop. He was accompanied by two other men in power suits and they were heavily engrossed in what seemed to be a business meeting on the move. They continued down the sidewalk and she quickly rushed out and headed back to her building and went up to her place of work. The keys weren't there either and she leaned back against the wall of her cubicle and raised her hand to her head in frustration.

“This is officially not my damn day!” she screeched. Figuring that she needed to catch Faye before she made it all the way home, Symone rushed back downstairs and hurried down the sidewalk while putting in a call to her best friend.

“You're home already?” Faye answered her phone.

“No. I can't find my keys. Can you come back and pick me up?”

“Sure, but you're going to leave your car?”

“I have another set at home. I'll get my landlord to let me in to get them, then I need you to bring me back to get my car,” she explained.

“You'd better be glad you're my best friend Symone, or your crabby butt would be walking,” said Faye.

She found a place to turn around and headed back to the Plaza while Symone went to wait by her car.

“What the hell?” she snarled. “What are you doing at my car?” she demanded.

“I tried to tell you this morning that you dropped your keys at my table, but you refused to hear me out,” he smiled.

“How did you know this was my car?” she snatched the dangling keys from his hand.

“I pressed the panic button on the remote and followed the siren,” he chuckled at the look of disbelief on her face. “I would have brought them to you earlier, but I don't know your name.”

She sighed, rolling her eyes at him as she unlocked her car and tossed her purse inside. Just as she was about to call Faye to cancel, she was already pulling up, smiling at the fact that the man she was chasing this morning was now standing by her best friend's car.

“I don't need a ride anymore. I have my keys now,” she dangled them in the air.

“So you're not going to tell me your name?” he asked, seeing that she was getting into her car without so much as a thank you.

“No. I seriously doubt that you'll need it in the future,” she rejected and closed her car door as she started the engine. She put the car in reverse to back out, but a car stopped behind her.

Symone let down her window and leaned out, “Faye! Please don't start, I am really not in the mood for this right now!”

Faye ignored her rant and smiled at Mr. Harrison. “So ... what's *your* name?” she asked.

“Trevor ... Trevor Harrison,” he reached to shake her hand causing her to smile harder. “... and yours?” he asked.

“I'm Faye, and this is my best friend Symone,” she smiled victoriously.

Trevor turned to face Symone, but she had slumped back in her seat and dropped her head. He stepped to her car door.

“So Symone, may I buy you dinner, for keeping your keys all day?”

he asked.

She didn't respond to his request, but reached to the controls on the door, letting up her window, then locked the doors. Refusing to look at him, she fumbled with the radio and sporadically looked in her rear view mirror at Faye, with a glare that threatened to end her life if she didn't move from behind her so that she could leave.

Faye shrugged a sympathetic shrug toward Mr. Harrison then pulled off and headed out of the parking lot. She didn't want to push her friend when she clearly wasn't ready, so she gave up.

Trevor stepped away from Symone's car, allowing her room to back out of her parking slot without the chance of her running him down and leaving him for dead.

Symone backed up without looking in his direction and began to pull away, but stopped suddenly and partially let down her window.

"Trevor?" She called out to him as he was walking toward his Range Rover with his hands in his pockets, and he stopped and turned in response.

"Thanks for returning my keys," she gave him a once over, then continued out of the parking lot.

He chuckled and grabbed his brief case off the hood of his ride and got in and headed to the Bravo Plaza where the valet took his car after he grabbed his briefcase from the back seat and headed inside the open doorway, getting greeted by the doorman.

"Thank you Howard," he spoke and stopped by the front counter to retrieve his mail.

He then headed up to his fourth floor condo and dropped his briefcase on the sofa, then headed through his bedroom to the bathroom and started the shower. After stripping down, he stepped inside the steaming hot shower, letting the water soak his his finger length, dark brown wavy hair. His tanned skin reddened as the sting of the hot water draped his body, trickling down to

the floor of the shower. Once his body braved the initial burn, he lifted his head and let the water massage his face as he reached for the shampoo bottle and squeezed a small dollop into his palm and sat the bottle back on the shelf. He began to lather his hair, massaging his scalp for a few minutes then rinsed away the shampoo. He looked through the several choices of body washes and chose one that was more vitalizing as he still had some work to do once he had dinner.

His phone rang just as he stepped out of the shower and wrapped a towel around his waist, and he rushed to retrieve it.

“Mr. Harrison? Sorry to disturb you, but you have a visitor in the lobby,” said the receptionist.

“Who is it?” he asked. He wasn't expecting anyone, and it was highly unusual that anyone would show up unannounced.

“She said her name was Brimmer.”

“I don't know of anyone by that name. What does she look like?” he was curious.

“She's about five foot six, medium build, blonde hair,” the receptionist rattled off.

Trevor thought for a moment of the clients he'd met during the day, and skimmed his brain for past clients, and felt that it could be any number of women.

“I'll be down in about ten minutes.”

He quickly dried himself off, then stepped inside his closet and opened one of the drawers in the center island dresser and took out a pair of boxer briefs and slipped them on, then pulled a pair of dark blue jeans from a hanger and stepped into them as well. He then sat on the foot stool and put on a pair of sneakers and continued to search his mind to remember who this woman could possibly be. He got up and reached for a polo style shirt and pulled it over his head and started for the door. He grabbed his keys on the way

out and stood at the elevator door and waited for it to open. He finger brushed his wavy hair backwards and stepped onto the elevator as the doors opened.

When he reached the lobby, he started toward the front desk in search of this woman and looked to the receptionist for her assistance. There were at least thirty or so people moving about the lobby and he needed to know who came looking for him. The receptionist nodded toward the woman and he looked in her direction. She stood and smoothed her pant suit and approached him with a smile.

This woman looked familiar, but he just couldn't quite place her face from where he'd seen her.

“Hello Mr. Harrison, I'm Faye Brimmer ... from earlier today?” she sort of checked his memory, since he didn't seem to recognize her. The sudden realization of their encounter flooded his memory and he smiled and reached out to shake her hand.

“Yes, I remember you now. The parking lot at the Plaza,” he confirmed.

“Yes. I know that this is quite forward of me to visit you at home, but ...” she looked down at her feet for a quick second, then looked back up at him plainly nervous about what she needed to tell him.

He was curious of why she came, as he hoped that it had something positive to do with her friend, Symone. He gave her an encouraging look to continue.

“Well ... I know that you have an interest in my best friend, um ... Symone,” she sighed and took another deep breath. “I'm here to help you win her heart,” she confessed.

Trevor raised his brows and began to wonder what did this woman have to gain from hooking the two of them up. He gestured her to a pair of chairs that were located in a semi-private area and sat down to hear the rest of her plan. He wasn't sure if he wanted to use her help, as he was certain that

given time, he could win Symone over on his own. As an attorney, he could very well read people's personalities and knew that she was broken and just needed time and reassurance, and he was definitely a patient man.

“What makes you think that I need help or that I want to pursue her?” he sat down.

“Usually, Symone is so hateful toward men, that they run in the other direction immediately after their encounter. But, when she told me about your incident this morning, and that you bought her breakfast, I knew that you had to be special. This afternoon, when you brought her keys to the parking lot and still attempted to reach out to her, I knew then that I had to do something to help her,” she breathed, then waited for his response.

“So, why exactly is she so opposed to meeting men?” he wondered just how bad she was broken and how hard would he have to work to break down the steel walls she'd built around her heart.

“It's a long story, but here's the short version,” she began, taking a long draw of wind into her lungs.

“Symone was in a very serious relationship a few years ago. She invested almost four years in this man and completely trusted him with everything. I even believed that they would be inseparable forever. That wasn't the case, but skipping all the details, he took her for everything she had and left her for an eighteen year old and all of this happened without any warning. He kissed her goodbye one Friday morning when she was on her way to work, just as he had every morning for the entire time they were together, and told her that he loved her. When we got off work that afternoon, I came home with her because we were all going out later. But, when we got there, her apartment was completely emptied,” she sounded angry at the thought, but continued. “Furniture that she'd paid for, personal items that belonged to her and things that were her mother's, who is dead now, were gone. I couldn't believe that this jackass even cleaned out the pantry and refrigerator! Who does that?” her true

emotions surfaced.

Faye was shaking her head at the remembrance and could hardly speak further on the matter as she didn't want her confession to sound like she was throwing a pity party for her friend.

Trevor spoke, "Where did he go, and was she able to get any of her things back?"

She has only heard from him once, about three months later. He had the nerve to call and ask her to mail him her copy of the key to his car," she growled. "He knew that she would try to find him to get some of her things back, but the post office box number was in some little small town near Jacksonville Florida. I called to see if I could get some information on the owner of the box, and all they could tell me was that it was in the name of some guy named Harry Henderson ... like the movie, Harry and the Hendersons?" she paused to see if he'd heard of the movie. He nodded and waited for her to continue.

"Anyway, they said that the post office box was a go between address. Anything sent to that particular box, was diverted to another address that was undisclosed to the public and the guy on the phone couldn't give me any more information than that," she finished.

Trevor looked to be in thought, pulling at the stubble on his chin. Faye waited while he came to grips with what she'd just told him and had to wait longer than she wanted to. Trevor leaned forward, resting his elbows on his knees and extended his hands out in front of him, intertwining his fingers together.

Without looking at her, he asked, "What's your deal, Faye? Why are *you* determined to put your friend and me together?" he wondered if his background as a high powered attorney had anything to do with it.

"Well ... Mr. Harrison," she started.

"You can call me Trevor."

“Thanks. I'm doing this for two reasons. First, it's obvious that you like Symone ... a lot,” she waited for confirmation, but he didn't give it to her. He urged her to continue.

“And second, I think that you could help her in more ways than one,” she bit her lip as she was about to drop a bomb on him that he was already expecting.

“How would that be?” he asked.

“Well, you seem extremely tolerant of her anger issues, which is not the real Symone. My best friend is nothing like she used to be, before her ex snatched her heart out and ground it up like meat. Also, if you did fall for her, maybe you could use your connections and resources to help her get her mom's cookbook back. It holds sentimental value like you wouldn't believe,” she breathed.

“So, let me get this straight. You're here to get legal help for your friend to get back some items that were taken from her nearly three years ago? And possibly at no charge?” he turned only his head to look at her. Hearing it come out of his mouth in that manner, did make it sound opportunistic and shallow. She gulped big, but nodded with a sigh and dropped her shoulders and waited for him to go off on her.

“Faye, I can assure you that just from what I know about Symone in only one day, she will not accept any type of help from me. I'm almost certain that she would be highly upset that you are here right now making this suggestion to me. Also, I can't imagine that she would be okay with you exposing so much of her personal business to anyone, let alone a perfect stranger that she refuses to have anything to do with,” he sat back and let her meditate on his words.

She sighed audibly and shook her head. Her thoughts were, *I have possibly ruined any chance at Symone's happiness with my big mouth.* “You're right Mr. Harrison ... um, Trevor. I am so sorry that I came here and laid all of

this drama on you. Symone would be furious with me, and thank you for your time,” she expressed, then stood and started toward the entrance. Once at the door, she turned back for one final glance at him, but he was getting on the elevator.

She went outside and walked down the block to a parking lot and got in her car and headed home. All the way there, she hoped that he would find a way to avoid making contact with either of them in the future, to save her from any further awkward moments.

The next morning, Symone had gotten up and went about her normal Saturday routine, watering her plants and vacuuming the carpet in her apartment. When she was done, she opened the cabinet in search for her can of ground coffee and found that there was none.

“Ugh! I forgot to get more,” she complained, then thought that maybe her morning coffee wasn't quite the necessity that it had been before.

“No, I need my caffeine if I'm going to deal with Faye all day,” she semi chuckled at the thought of how sickeningly bubbly her best friend is. She turned and headed to her bedroom closet and found a pair of jean shorts and an orange, loose fitting, designer blouse to put on, then searched through her insanely large collection of platform heels for the matching orange pair to slip on. Her thighs and calves were very toned, due to the fact that she ran three miles a day on the treadmill in her building's gym.

Symone took the stairs as she normally would and headed out to the parking lot to get into her car. Heading to the grocery store to buy another can of ground coffee and a few other items she needed in her kitchen, she came upon a traffic jam. Traffic was backed up as far as she could see, but still too far away to see what caused the jam. She decided to take a detour once she reached a side road that would take her the long way around to the grocery store, but the cut through from that road was blocked as well. She continued straight, coming out to the main road that led to the Plaza where she worked.

“I guess I’ll just grab a cup of coffee from the coffee shop and try the store later on then,” she sighed and pulled into the customer parking lot, which was much closer than the employee parking lot and got out in front of the shop. Apparently, she wasn’t the only one who needed to have coffee bright and early on a Saturday morning as the line was very long. Symone stepped in line behind two women who were talking annoyingly loud to be in such a confined space, but tried to ignore the conversation. To help pass the time, Symone sent Faye a text ...

Symone- *what are you doing right now?*

Faye- *having breakfast with mom.*

Symone- *why didn't you answer your phone last night?*

Faye- *I was busy. Why? What did you need?*

Symone- *Busy doing what?*

Faye- *It's personal.*

Symone- *Come over when you're done eating. I'm at the coffee shop. Be home in a few.*

Faye- *Okay.*

She finally made it to the counter to place her order. “Large black coffee and a toasted bagel with cream cheese. Don't fill my cup to the rim, thank you,” she rambled off what seemed to be her usual.

“Not much for a variety, are we?” an all too familiar voice said from behind her. Symone dropped her shoulders and turned slowly to face Trevor.

“Can't you find someone else to harass?” she rolled her eyes at him and returned to her earlier position and paid for her coffee and bagel and walked away to the table to add a few teaspoons of cream and sugar to her coffee this time. By the time she put the lid back on her cup and turned to leave the coffee shop, Trevor was waiting outside the door with a smile on his face.

“Symone ... wait, please,” he called after her as she breezed past him. She stopped, but didn't turn to face him. As her head fell back as though she

looked to the sky for some magical way to just disappear, he chuckled and came to stand beside her.

“I don't mean to harass you, or upset you in any way. I sincerely apologize if I'm catching you at a bad time. However, I can't help wanting to get to know you better,” he paused, her head dropped forward and she turned to glare at him. Somehow, when she really looked into his eyes, she saw something that made her halt her rant.

She sighed with slight irritation, but tried to be more diplomatic with her reply.

“Look, Trevor ...”

He smiled that she was actually showing signs of wear.

“Please don't take this the wrong way, but ... you're not my type and I don't have time for this. Actually, don't waste your time trying to get to know me better, because it's not going to happen,” she partially turned to walk away, but something about his smile, slowed her exit move. It wasn't until her phone chimed with a text, revealing that Faye was on her way, that she was able to pull herself out of the daze he'd captured her with.

“I understand,” he said with a defeated sigh. “I hope that whoever broke your heart, is grateful for the power you allow him to have over your life. If you somehow ever decide that you want to take your life back and live abundantly, please give me a call,” he said, handing her one of his business cards, then turned to walk toward his building.

Symone scowled at this man's assumption about her life and his presumptuous belief that he would ever become the man she would next give her heart to. She watched him walk through the glass doors and disappear, then she continued to her car. Before she pulled off, she sent Faye a text, *on my way*.

Chapter 2

Trevor headed up to his office for a meeting with an actress to start proceedings on her divorce from her well-established movie producer husband. He had to put on his game face, as he was somewhat distracted by Symone's potential break through.

“Come on in Mrs. Dennis,” he spoke.

“That's Miss Henry now. I'd prefer not to be associated with my soon to be ex-husband any further,” she spat viciously.

“Hmm, well Miss Henry ... I've been looking over your deposition and the files from his accountant, and I've found a few errors in your findings of Mr. Dennis' finances,” he began. His client sat straight up, stretching her neck to look across his desk at what Trevor had outlined in red.

“What errors?” she screeched. “My husband has two business accounts here in the states, and three off shore accounts. We own three homes in the states, one in California, one here in Texas, and the one in New York. We also have a vacation home in the Cayman Islands. He surely can't deny any of this with all of the evidence I've provided,” she complained.

“No, he surely can not deny owning the properties, nor the accounts. However, I've run the figures according to the accountant's copies of your husband's tax records, assets and properties, and they just don't add up,” he raised an eyebrow at her.

She sat back in her chair, slumped at what she feared would happen. Her husband was going to fight her on her request to take ownership of their home in Texas, partial ownership of the vacation home in the Cayman's, and the sum of one hundred, twenty-five thousand dollars a month indefinitely.

“Mrs. Dennis ... sorry, Miss Henry?” Trevor pulled her from her internal rant. “Didn't I tell you not to worry or lose faith in your case?” he questioned her defeated attitude that she currently displayed.

“Yes,” she frowned.

“What I was trying to tell you, was that your husband has *eight* off shore accounts, two condos, two more homes, and three more vacation homes that you were unaware of. At the moment, he has several mistresses to which whom are currently occupying a few of the other properties, two of which has children by him all under the age of ten,” he explained.

She stood aggressively to her feet and almost ran out of his office, but he reached out to restrain her.

“Wait, don't leave like this. I know that this is hard for you to hear, but you already knew about one of them and this is your reason for divorcing him, correct?” he asked, pulling her back to return to her seat.

“Yes,” she said quietly as tears began to fall from her eyes.

“Well, this is why you hired my firm. It is our job to know everything about our clients and their opposition,” he breathed, then took a seat on the corner of his desk and faced her.

“I know that you are upset right now, and all you wanted was to look out for the welfare of your three children. However, they will become adults one day and should be guaranteed trust funds to begin their lives according to how they have become accustomed. With that being said, I have a plan that will not only ensure *your* future, but your children's futures as well,” he smiled a reassuring smile.

“Why aren't you looking out for your fellow man, may I ask?” she sounded disbelieving that this man would go after another man who is living what many would consider having the cake and pie.

“I fight for what's right. Your husband has built an empire fit for a king, and should live as such, with the exception of taking more than one wife. Bigotry is illegal and frowned upon. It hurts people ... a lot of people,” he rolled his eyes as the thought of Symone came to mind. “Mr. Dennis not only created a hostile environment for you, but your children, the other women and

any other children he may have out there. His behavior is disruptive, and frankly ... it's men like him that make it hard for the good men out there to have a fair chance to create a successful life in this day and time. Women that are subjected to this type of behavior become hardened and guarded and reject sincere courtship, afraid of being taken advantage of in the future. So, Miss Henry, I am going to make an example out of Mr. Dennis and hit him where it hurts most. His finances and his indulgence of women," he finally finished, giving her a reassuring smile.

She stood to her feet and felt more confident in her decision to get out while she had the upper hand as Mr. Harrison had strongly urged her to. She reached out to shake Trevor's hand and hesitated as if in thought. She wanted to say something, but she shook it off and turned to walk away.

"What was that look for, did you need something?" he asked her.

She cleared her throat, "Mr. Harrison ... I was just wondering ... are you married?" she bashfully looked down.

"No," he sighed with a chuckle.

"Really?"

"Really."

"Why not ... if you don't mind me asking?" she was extremely curious why this handsome young man, who was well dressed, intelligent and kind, hadn't been snatched from the market.

"No, I don't mind," he stood and stuck his hands in his pockets, and looked right at her.

"I'm not married because I've spent most of my time studying law and building my firm. I intentionally put all of my focus on my dream so that when I do find the one that I would spend the rest of my life with, she would not suffer through my long nights of studying and many stressful hours of me working all of the time. Now that I am fully established with a team of very capable associates, I can better manage my time and give a woman, well, my

wife the much needed attention she deserves,” he explained.

The look of awe and respect on Miss Henry's face, made Trevor smile bashfully. She sighed and said her last peace, “I can tell during your explanation that there is someone that you have in mind. I wish you all the best Mr. Harrison, and really hope that this woman you'll make your wife someday, will appreciate what she has,” she smiled and bowed her head as she turned and left his office.

Trevor inhaled deeply, then turned and walked over to the wall of windows behind his desk. He looked down at the crowd of people walking from store to store with shopping bags.

His mind wandered to Symone and wondered what could she possibly be doing right this very moment.

“Knock, knock,” someone called out, interrupting his daze.

The sound startled him out of deep thought. “Vince,” he acknowledged.

“Where were you just now?” his partner asked as he entered Trevor's office.

“In another world,” he shook his head. “So listen, we have the go ahead on the Dennis case to pull out all of the stops. As this is going to be a high profiled case, we'll need to put together a team and get a court order to obtain all of Mr. Dennis' personal and business records of finances and activities for the last twelve years,” he spouted off. “I'll talk to our investigating team and get a trail put on our lady's man and see what he leads us to. But I need for you to implement security on the comings and goings in this building. I'm sure once Mr. Dennis' attorneys gets wind of what we've accomplished so far, they will retaliate with a vengeance on us and our client. We have ten days to file a motion to take this case to trial. Have Jeremy schedule an interview with the nanny and the rest of the staff at the Dennis residence. Let's make it rain for Miss Henry!” he spoke with enthusiasm.

Chapter 3

Faye parked and headed up to the second floor and pounded menacingly on Symone's door. She had just walked in and kicked off her shoes when she was startled. She tip toed to the door, careful not to make a sound and peeked through the peep hole. Exhaling a groan, she snatched open the door.

“Damn-it Faye! You scared the hell out of me!” she stepped aside and let her in. Faye shrugged nonchalantly and gave Symone an *awe poor baby* pout and tossed her purse and keys on the entry table.

“I'm just keeping you on your toes Symone. Being single and female living alone is not the safest situation to be in,” she chastened her.

“Well, you could always move in with me. My offer still stands,” Symone closed and locked the door.

“Daddy doesn't think its a good idea for me to move out until I get married,” she explained, taking off her shoes as she sat on the sofa and curled her feet up behind her. Symone's head fell forward and she came to sit beside her friend.

“Faye ... you are twenty-eight years old. Don't you think that's a little old school?” she asked, but before Faye could answer, Symone continued. “Is that why you're on a man hunt?” she grinned.

“Why else? I mean seriously, how am I supposed to get to know a man when I have to bring him home to be subjected to daddy's boxers and his *I'm sexy and I know it* extra small T-shirt?” she giggled.

“No offense Faye, but you are never going to get a guy to take you seriously, still living at home at twenty-eight,” Symone took a sip of her coffee, then a bite of her bagel. She held it out to Faye, offering her some. She leaned forward, biting wildly almost taking out Symone's thumb.

“That's my finger retard,” she began to laugh hysterically. Faye had accomplished her first goal of the day. She turned to lay back against Symone,

propping her feet on the arm of the sofa and began to twist a small section of her hair.

“So, I was thinking about that Mr. Harrison guy ...” she was interrupted.

“He would be great for you!” Symone playfully squealed.

“Not that I wouldn't jump at the chance, but he is obviously jonesing for you, my dear.”

“I thought we were discussing getting you hitched so that you can move out of your parents' house?” Symone rejected the idea of entertaining a conversation of her personal life.

Faye sat up and moved beside her friend and placed a hand on her knee, and Symone drew back a huge breath and exhaled it harshly.

“Please Faye, I just can't do this right now. I know you only have good intentions, but I am not interested in Mr. Harrison or anyone else for that fact of the matter,” she got up and began to nervously rearrange her decorative accessories. It was something she did often to take her mind off of stressful things, and it worked in her favor as it helped her creative placement abilities to grow stronger.

“Okay, okay, I get it,” Faye held her hands up in a surrendering gesture. “Anyway, I was thinking of going darker. Being a blonde isn't as much fun as it used to be. I think that's part of the problem. I keep attracting men that just want to play,” said Faye. Then she had a thought, “Why don't we get complete makeovers? We both could use a new start,” she suggested.

“Actually, I think you're right. Maybe I won't be so noticeable in the coffee shop, if I changed my hair color too,” she went into thought mode. They both stood and headed out to go to the Plaza's hair salon first, to change up their styles.

In the mean time ... Trevor was working diligently on his high profile case, gathering and studying pertinent information. He was leaned forward at

his computer as his fingers caressed the keys, simultaneously lifting his right hand to cradle the mouse as he searched from page to page.

The hum of the intercom on his office phone went off, with a message.

“Mr. Harrison, there is a Mr. Strozier on hold. Would you like for me to put him through?” Gloria, his secretary asked.

Trevor sighed, pinching the bridge of his nose with slight irritation. He surely didn't want to be bothered with the opposing attorney in the midst of his research.

“Yes Gloria, put him through,” he breathed as he picked up the receiver and spoke, “Mr. Strozier, what can I do for you?” he asked sarcastically.

“My client would like to settle this case quietly and skip the media circus for the sake of his children. He doesn't feel that it is necessary to have a long drawn out case when he is willing to be reasonable,” he suggested.

“Oh? And what exactly is reasonable in Mr. Dennis' mind?”

“Samuel knows that his wife wants their main home here in Austin, since that's where they currently live and the children love their schools. He's also willing to allow scheduled use of their vacation home in the Caymans and ... fifty thousand a month in child support and alimony,” he finished.

Trevor paused in thought, then answered Mr. Strozier. “Gene ... you know that I don't bargain. Your client's idea of fair compensation is both ridiculous and an insult. Good day!” he slammed the receiver down. Trevor knew that Mr. Dennis had no idea that the *Harrison & Moore* firm already knows of his many accounts and properties valued at seven, point, five billion dollars, even exist. To think that this man's wife of fifteen years and three first born, legitimate children deserve less than what he is already dishing out to his mistresses, added fuel to an already blazing fire that burned deep into Trevor's mind. This caused him to want, not to only make and example out of the

arrogant Mr. Dennis, but to send out a message and invitation to others out there trapped in the same situations, that these are the type cases he takes pleasure in. Assuring abandoned spouses that there is someone in this world, passionate about ending this type of disruptive behavior.

Trevor pulled himself out of his internal angry rant and delved himself back into his research. He was putting together a case that would gain his already flourishing firm, national attention.

Night had fallen and Trevor's eyes were weighing heavy. He needed a hot bath and light, yet filling dinner. He called a local restaurant and placed a to go order and stopped on the way home to pick it up. Once he arrived home, he took his dinner to the kitchen and sat it on the counter and slowly drug himself to the bathroom to run his bath. After soaking for what seemed to be hours, but was only twenty minutes, Trevor was a little more relaxed, slipping on a pair of pajama pants and slippers, then picking up his mail as he made his way to the kitchen where he put his food on a plate, and stuck in the microwave on one and half minutes, while getting a fork from the drawer.

Sitting at the table, going through his mail as he ate, his eyes lit up to see a pale blue envelope that obviously was a card, with the return address of his mom on the back. He smiled big as he slid his finger under the flap of the envelope and pulled out the card. It was one of the weekly, just thinking of you, humorous cards she sent him that always put a smile on his face. Some how, she always knew just what he needed to hear before he needed to hear it and made his day.

He stood and rushed back to his bedroom to retrieve his phone and dialed her number on the way back to the kitchen.

“Hi Trevor!” she squealed as she answered the phone. “To what do I owe the pleasure of this phone call?” she teased, knowing full well that it was routine after he received her cards.

“Hi mom, how are you?”

“I'm just wonderful son. So ... what are you up to?” she asked slyly.

“Long story short, I have a new case that I'm working on. It is a high profile case, and I'm sure it's going to get ugly,” he told her.

“Does this mean that you could end up on the news?” she sounded worried.

“Possibly.”

“Trevor, son ... I'm not so sure about this. For some reason, I'm not positive if its your case or something else, but I'm not getting a good feeling right now,” she complained.

“Everything will be fine Mother. Do you doubt me?” he asked.

“Never! I know that you will undoubtedly get what you're after, it's just ...” she went into thought and he waited for the rest of her concern.

“It's just that I was wondering, how are you going to meet my daughter-in-law if you keep taking on these high profile cases? When will you have time to court her?” she finally admitted her true concern.

“Mother, the right one will be accepting and understanding. She will be strong and supportive, and I will make her my priority,” he explained. Somehow, the tone in his voice set his mother off on a quest filled with excitement.

“You've already found her! I can tell, Trevor!” she began to squeal again. He could only chuckle at her excitement and truthfully give her hope.

“I believe so, Mother. She just doesn't know it yet.”

“Oh she knows. I know my son like the back of my hand, trust me, she knows!” she declared. “I'm so excited! What can I do to help?” she offered.

“Nothing. I need no help winning her over. She only needs time, patience, and reassurance of her value. I'll admit I have my work cut out for me, but this case will give me the opportunity to show her some things about who I am. She needs to know my position on the type behavior she's been hurt by,” he explained.

“So she's damaged ... brokenhearted?”

“Yes, pretty much,” he answered. He stood and emptied his plate and sat it in the sink, then turned off the light as he headed to his bedroom.

“Trevor, son I know that you are very capable of mending this girl's heart, but I just want you to be careful. Something about this case and this girl is making the hairs on my arms stand up,” she warned him.

He sighed heavily. His mother was always on the money with everything about his life up to this point. Her intuition got him through college and starting up his now extremely successful firm.

“Yes Mother. I will be careful ... on guard,” he promised her, then let out a yawn.

“Okay, well get some sleep and call me if you need my help. Well ... with the girl, not your case,” she chuckled.

“Yes Mother. Good night and thanks for the card. I love you,” he let out another yawn.

“You're most welcome, good night Trevor.”

Chapter 4

Monday morning, Symone was awakened by a text coming through.

Faye- *I'm sick. Can't go to work today.*

Symone- *What's wrong?*

Faye- *I think it's a stomach bug. Nausea and diarrhea all night.*

Symone- *Eww! I'll bet it was your mom's meatloaf soup. Lol :)*

Faye- *Don't tell her that. I have to go. Call me on your break and tell me everything.*

Symone- *About work?*

Faye- *No. Mr. Harrison.*

Symone- *Whatever! Hope you feel better. I'll bring you chicken pot pie and ginger ale after work. Get some rest. TTYL*

Symone got out of bed and headed to the shower. It was hot and muggy during the night and she needed to refresh herself before work. It was going to be a long boring day without her best friend there to annoy her with her insanelly bubbly attitude.

After parking in her slot at work, Symone checked her new dark brown, short and edgy hair cut in the rear view mirror before opening her door. She grabbed her purse and phone, then locked her car and headed around to the front of the Plaza and started down the sidewalk. Not wanting to disturb Faye during her healing process, Symone was suddenly forced to look around her at all of the workers of the Plaza rushing into their places of employment to get ready for the start of another Monday.

She approached the coffee shop cautiously, trying not to look obvious that she was looking for Mr. Harrison, wanting to avoid contact with him. Her new hair do was sure to disguise her appearance, she thought as she stood in the very long line. With no one to text at the moment, her eyes wandered around the coffee shop, noticing more of her surroundings. It was torture,

seeing as the line was moving so slow this particular morning, so she held her phone up in front of her face and decided to play a game of solitaire to keep her occupied. With her attention on the game, she continued to move forward as the line did and ended her session just as she stepped to the counter.

“I’ll have a large coffee, toasted bagel with cream cheese, and ...” she was interrupted by a voice behind her.

“Please ... whatever you do, do *not* fill her cup to the rim,” he sort of chuckled.

Symone turned her head only, looking back over her shoulder at the sound of his voice and looked down her nose at him. She sighed and turned to face the girl who was already in the process of getting her coffee and bagel for her. She returned to face him with a scowl on her face, but was halted in her tracks at the look of wonder on his. His smile was that of someone looking at a sun setting across the ocean. The way her hair complimented her facial features took him by surprise. She had bangs, arched eyebrows, and nude, wet looking lip gloss. Before she could insult him, he complimented her.

“Wow, your new look suits you. I almost didn't recognize you, but your posture and unique wardrobe style, gave you away,” he smiled.

“What do you want?” she demanded.

He took an invasive step toward her, making her uncomfortable, yet breathless, as he leaned forward handing a twenty dollar bill to the girl behind her. The move was captivating and Symone was paralyzed by his scent and closeness. He was invading her personal space, which would normally set her off on an explosive tirade. Somehow, she just couldn't bring herself to let loose on him at the moment.

She finally broke loose of his hold on her and turned to face the girl at the counter. She reached for her coffee and bagel at the same time the girl was handing Trevor his change. Symone could feel him move closer behind her, his arm almost cradling hers as he reached for his change. She could smell his

cologne as she heard him audibly inhale her scent, while feeling his suit jacket brush against her back. It sent chills down her spine, and for the first time in her life, she was speechless. It took a moment, but she was finally able to move her lips.

“Thank you,” she said without looking at him or waiting for his response, then side stepped to turn and walk out of the coffee shop. She rushed out of the door and stopped on the sidewalk.

“Ugh! I forgot my cream and sugar!” she said to herself.

Not wanting to go back inside and face a possible conversation, she decided that the plain cream in her office building would have to do for today. She darted into her building and stood at the elevator door, waiting for the doors to open.

“Symone?” his voice was becoming all too familiar. Her head dropped, then fell back as she sighed with irritation. He was walking toward her as she silently willed the doors to open before he reached her.

“You forgot your cream and sugar,” he held out the small containers of her favorites to her.

She finally looked at him just as the doors opened and glared at him.

“Do they know you stole their containers?” she snarled sarcastically.

He smiled. I don't steal, and I paid probably three times what they're worth before I took them. He continued to hold them out to her, waiting for her to take them, which she couldn't resist getting her favorite flavor added to her morning cup of pick-me-up. She took them, stepped onto the elevator, then rolled her eyes at him as the doors closed.

He shook his head with a chuckle, then headed to his own office. He was greeted by Gloria handing him a stack of files that were dropped off by one of his paralegals early this morning.

“Morning Mr. Harrison,” she chimed as she followed him into his office.

“Good morning Gloria. How was your weekend?” he asked, sitting his briefcase on the desk, and laying his laptop bag in his chair. He skimmed through the top file, apparently the one with the most important information in it, then sat them on his desk. He took off his jacket and draped it over the back of his chair and stopped to face her as she patiently awaited his instructions for the day.

“It was uneventful just like I like it. I'm well rested for this upcoming case, so let's get to it,” she smiled and gestured for him to continue.

“First, I need all of the witnesses on the list contacted to set up interviews. Try to get me at least three a day for the rest of the week. Also, draft a copy of the legal form instructing the strict releasing of information for Miss Henry's children at each of their schools. This type of case always turns up a backlash of the absent parents wanting to “stick it to them” type behavior. I don't want Miss Henry worrying about her kids being taking out of their normal routines,” he began to pace back and forth as he made sure to cover all of his bases.

“What about the coaches of their extracurricular activities?” she reminded him.

“Yes, get a letter to them as well. Although it's going to be difficult to not let this case affect the children, we are going to do our best to keep it as non-invasive as possible.”

“Knock-knock,” Vince entered Trevor's office, capturing his attention. He stopped pacing and turned to his partner.

“Security has just informed me of a suspicious guy across the Plaza. He's wearing khaki pants and a navy blue polo shirt. He's been reading the same page for over thirty minutes, while checking his watch and periodically glancing in this direction,” he started toward Trevor's wall of windows with him and Gloria following. They all looked out and spotted the man, who in no way could see them through the mirrored tinted glass.

“He's under cover private surveillance,” Trevor assumed with surety.

“Who has us under surveillance?” asked Gloria.

“My guess is Mr. Dennis and his attorney,” Trevor answered.

“Why?” she asked.

“He wants to know of all the comings and goings of this case. Witnesses, what we're doing, et cetera,” he breathed.

“I'll get to work on this, and you be careful Mr. Harrison,” Gloria turned to go out to her desk.

“Wait ... Miss Gloria?” he called out behind her.

“Yes,” she half turned.

“Set those meetings with the witnesses up at the hotel conference room. Then I need for you to rent me a car for the week, a dark colored sedan,” he finished and she nodded and continued out to her desk.

“So, it begins?” asked Vince.

“It appears so. What do you have so far?” asked Trevor.

“Well, I've had our surveillance watching Mr. Dennis, his attorney and his team, and the mistresses. I'll email you the findings and video footage in a few. Right now, I need to brief you on another situation,” he raised his brows. Vince went to close the door to Trevor's office and came to stand across the desk from him.

“So what's up?”

“Miss Henry received a bouquet of roses on Saturday along with a gift box and a card.”

“From Mr. Dennis I take it?”

Vince nodded, then continued. “The gift box contained a framed photo of her and a man looking seemingly chummy at a restaurant on Friday,” he explained.

“So,” Trevor shrugged. “They've been separated for eight months now. What she does in her personal life at this point, as long as it doesn't

involve upsetting her children, is her business,” he retorted.

“That's true, however, the dinner was with her son's football coach who is married,” Vince waited.

Trevor did a dramatic sigh, then asked for more information of the situation.

“Well, here's the thing. It's not as damaging as the opposing team would have anyone to believe, seeing as the coach's wife was there, but excused herself to the ladies room. They were there to show support to Miss Henry in her upcoming divorce case, and were hanging out with her on a much needed night out. What the problem seems to be, is Mr. Dennis is using this picture to threaten our client. The card attached to the roses accused her of having a fling with the coach prior to the divorce case and states that he has it in his power to make everyone, including the coach's wife believe the same thing. He suggested that she settle out of court on his terms if she didn't want to cause problems between the coach and his wife,” said Vince.

Trevor reached for the phone on his desk, about to make a call.

“Don't bother. We have the note and the framed photo. Also, Miss Henry should be here at ten this morning,” Vince smiled, then walked out. This was his partner's specialty, dealing with these type antics in divorce cases.

Trevor rolled his eyes with a chuckle, then sat behind his desk. He began going over the stack of files of evidence when suddenly there was a knock on the door. Time had gone by and Miss Henry was standing behind Gloria as she entered the office.

“Morning Mr. Harrison,” said Patricia.

“Morning Miss Henry. Please ... have a seat,” he gestured her to a pair of chairs in front of his desk.

“Do you need anything else, Mr. Harrison?” asked Gloria. He shook his head no, but then looked to Patricia, checking with her.

“Nothing for me, thanks,” she responded.

Gloria headed back out, closing the door behind her. Trevor closed the file he was heavily engrossed in earlier, then leaned back in his chair.

“I guess I need to explain my side of things behind what you must now know about?” she smiled shyly. He nodded.

“Well, to ease your mind, there is definitely nothing going on between Coach Warner and myself. We've known each other since high school. Stacey, his wife and I are and have been best friends for twenty years. We used to go out as couples before Sam decided that my friends weren't high class enough for him,” she sounded sad. Clearing her throat, she continued. “Mr. Harrison, I'm sure you can understand how important it is to keep great friends, even when you become a celebrity. I've never let the fact that I'm an actress, control whom I choose to associate with. I love my friends and want to keep them in my life. Is that so wrong?” she asked, almost in tears. Trevor could tell that this issue had more than likely caused some of the problems in their marriage.

“Miss Henry, there is absolutely nothing wrong with keeping great friends close to you. After all, they were there before the fame, right?” he smiled a reassuring smile. She looked up through her lashes and partially smiled.

“Miss Henry?” Trevor started, capturing her attention.

“Yes,” she responded in a whisper.

“I hear what you are telling me about your friends, but ... I somehow think you have more to tell me? If so, it would be in your best interest to disclose any information, even if you think its damaging to your case. I can guarantee you that if its something your husband knows about, his attorney will bring it out in court. It would be beneficial if I'm aware so that I can prepare for a rebuttal in such situations,” he cautioned her, sensing more under this story.

She dropped her head and inhaled a deep breath. Her hands drew together as her fingers nervously intertwined with each other. Without looking

up at Trevor, she began to tell what she thought would hurt her case.

“Back before I auditioned at a casting call fifteen years ago, I was engaged to Keith ... um, coach Warner. When I got the part, which was for a film that was being filmed in California, I had to call off our wedding plans,” she looked down, then up at Trevor who urged her to go on.

“Well, after three months of filming, I ... sort of got caught up in Sam's romantic courtship. He wined and dined me and showed me things I'd never experienced before. Every time Keith would call to check up on me, I found myself avoiding any direct answers and then, I just couldn't do it any more. Before I could go any further with Sam, I had to tell Keith what was going on. He was hurt, very hurt, but because of how he felt for me, he understood. My happiness is all he wanted. After we were through shooting the movie, I had the option to go back home, or stay with Sam while he jumped right into another movie project. I felt bad for hurting Keith, so I wanted to visit him and at least talk to him face to face, out of respect. He was my friend before anything. We met up for lunch, and I began to tell him what and how things happened between Sam and I. Keith told me that if I changed my mind, that he would always be there for me. When I returned to California, Sam had taken a week long break from filming and whisked me away to Denver to get married on top of a mountain. We spent three days in a cabin, then had to get back to California to finish shooting the movie. It was almost a year later, and I had just given birth to our son Ethan, when I received a phone call from Stacey. She sounded nervous, but I could tell that she had something important to tell me,” Patricia paused momentarily to take a much needed breath.

Trevor's cell phone kept going off with apparent email messages, which he only looked to see if they were important enough to interrupt Patricia's story, but he needed to know everything in case her husband's attorney tried to use any of it against her in court.

“I'm going to make the rest of this story short, but to the point because

I know you're busy, and I'm supposed to eat lunch with my youngest daughter, Taylor. So ... Stacey was calling to get my approval to go out with Keith. I was stunned at first, but then thought of how close all of us were. They were friends too, and I'm sure with the hurt I caused Keith, he talked to her and she in turned consoled him. Of course that would bring them closer and eventually start something more. I gave her my blessing and two years later, stood up for her as her Matron of Honor in their wedding. My third child and their first child were born two days apart. We all remained friends and there was never anything more than just friendship between us all. I can laugh and joke with Keith just as much as I can with Stacey. Nothing is ever awkward between us, because I would never do anything to hurt my friends. What I'm going through right now, I would never want to put anyone else through. So you see Mr. Harrison, the picture is nothing more than a ploy to make me seem like I have the potential to do what my husband has been doing for years," she finally finished.

Trevor stood to his feet and walked over to the window and folded his arms across his chest, then raised his right hand up to chin in thought. As he looked down at the sidewalk, he saw Symone sitting on one of the outdoor benches, with a sandwich and a drink, texting someone. He turned quickly to face Patricia and spoke with urgency.

"Miss Henry, I have all I need. This is something I will address and you should clearly be cautious of your public activity. Although this particular incident was purely innocent, we may not always be so lucky. Just for now, be careful," he approached her, then gestured her toward the door, insinuating that the meeting was over. She smiled and thanked him for reassuring her.

Once she was gone, Trevor stopped at Gloria's desk and asked her to hold all of his calls, that he would be right back.

He rushed to the elevator, then out of the building, heading toward Symone. She'd sat her phone down beside her and took the last bite of her

sandwich, tossing the wrap that it was in, into the trashcan right across from where she sat. Just as she raised her fruit smoothie up to take a sip from her straw, the sound of a voice caused her to tense.

“Hi there,” he spoke softly, but loud enough for her to hear over the hum of passing conversations. She looked back over her shoulder in the direction of the voice, then rolled her eyes as she turned to stand and walk away.

“Symone, please ... may I have a word with you?” he asked.

Why is this man so persistent in bothering me? She thought. The look of chronic irritation on her face was that of a woman on the verge of punching someone and claiming self defense.

Trevor felt that he needed to be direct and quick. He breathed his thoughts in hopes of making his intentions known. She only looked at him with a suggestive glare that meant he'd better get on with it or she would walk away.

“Look Symone, I would really like the chance to get to know you better. I know that I come off presumptuous, and this is not a normal trait for me when dealing with people outside of work. What I want you to know is, you are the first woman I've pursued since high school. I don't exactly know why you just feel right, but I do trust my instincts. If you would only forward me the chance to prove to you, that you would be happy with someone like me, I promise to make it worth your while,” he paused to get her up to the moment reaction.

She turned to completely face him, looking directly into his eyes, causing him to hold his breath, then spoke.

“Mr. Harrison ...”

“Please, call me Trevor,”

“I don't have time for this. I don't want to date and I surely don't want a relationship with ... anybody. I just want to be left alone. I'm sure you're a nice guy, and with your career and stature, you could have any number of

women,” she paused at a question coming to mind. “Are you after me because I pose a challenge?” she raised an accusing brow at him, a condescending smirk on her face.

He looked to be in thought, then smiled his answer. “Yes,” he chuckled. “Of course not,” he shook his head. “I would like to first, just get to know you. Then, if you turn out to be as smart as I think you are, I would like to take you on a real date. But ... if you're a menacing lunatic, I would have to put out a restraining order on you and find a way to have you fired so that I wouldn't have to cross paths with you anymore,” he folded his arms across his chest and glared at her for a response.

The dramatic drop of Symone's jaw accompanied by the scowl on her face was comical. Trevor almost lost the firm look of seriousness he tried to hold on to, as she seemed to be at a loss for words.

Suddenly, she rolled her eyes at him once more, then turned to look behind her as if someone had called her name. The slight jerking of her body, proved that she was now laughing, but didn't want him to see. She composed herself, then faced him.

“Mr. Har ..., excuse me ... Trevor. If I allow you to harass me with permission by giving you my number, will you go away at least for three days?” she challenged his skills.

“No. If you give me your number, I'll take that as an invitation to harass you starting immediately. Further more, if we become friends, I will feel the need to protect you from here on out,” he stated.

She frowned at his presumptions, then exhaled. “Protect me from who or what?” she demanded.

“Whatever has hurt you so bad that I had to work up a sweat to get this far,” he said seriously.

“I'm sorry, but you can not possibly protect me from that train wreck. No one can.”

“Yes, I can and I will. I told you before, if you'll let me, I will make it my personal goal to make you happy and keep it that way,” he said with confidence.

Secretly, she wished that this man and his promises were real. Her mind was screaming *No, walk away!* but her heart was desiring the very thing he promised. She reached for his hand that held his phone in it and took it from him. She tapped the screen and the icon that pulled up his phone's keypad. She began to tap in her digits, quietly saying them as she entered them. After saving the contact under her first name only, she handed him back his phone, then turned and walked away.

“I have to get back to work,” she continued inside her building, disappearing from his view.

His smile was accompanied by shock and excitement. He looked at his phone, checking to see if she had given him a correct number and decided that he would check. He sent her text that read,

Trevor- *Just verifying that this is you?*

Symone- *It's me, Jackass!*

Trevor- *Okay. Have a great day.*

He shook his head and felt compelled to look up. He noticed that the man in the khakis from earlier, was still there, looking directly at him. He quickly folded his paper and stood, sticking what looked to be a cell phone in his pocket, but then he took another device from his other pocket and began to dial a number. He put the phone to his ear and started a conversation as he headed in the direction of the parking lot.

Trevor quickly retreated back inside his building and up to his office.

“Gloria, call Vince and have him to meet me in my office ASAP.”

He went to his window, checking once more for the man in the khakis with no sign. Trevor sat at his desk, when Vince rushed in, closing the door behind him.

“What's up? You look stressed,” said Vince.

“I was just marked ... while I was talking to someone,” he said, a tinge of anger in his voice.

“Who is this someone?”

“The woman I told you about last week.”

“Do you want her trailed?” asked Vince.

“Yes, but I'll pay for it. I want to know of anything suspect. She's quick, so make sure who ever is on her, does not invade her space, but take no chances either,” Trevor rattled off.

Vince furrowed his brows, then had to ease his curiosity. “Why are you suddenly so protective of this woman that won't give you the time of day?”

“She laughed at me, then gave me her number ... it's a long story. I can't get into it right now, just do as I ask and lets get the ball rolling on this case.”

Chapter 5

After getting off work, Symone called up her best friend before heading to the store to see if she needed anything else other than the chicken pot pie and ginger ale.

“Hello?” Faye sounded exhausted.

“Hi Faye, you sound terrible,” said Symone.

“I feel like crap. I don't think it's a good idea for you to come around me, Symone. Mom is already feeling a bit ill, just from taking care of me. I don't want you to get sick too,” Faye warned her, coughing every few words.

“Okay, what if I just drop off some goodies for you with your dad, then call to check on you hourly?” Symone renegotiated.

“Sure. Oh ... and Symone?” Faye started, her voice becoming raspier the more she spoke.

“Yes?”

“Did you run into Mr. Harrison today?” she sounded hopeful.

“Yes.”

“And ...?”

“He said that he liked my new do.”

“Aww ...” she began coughing again.”

“Okay Fay, you need to get some rest. I'll bring some goodies by for you, then we'll talk later,” said Symone. She ended the call, then pulled out of the parking lot and headed to the store. Looking in her rear view mirror, she noticed a car that seemed to be making all of the same turns. When she turned into the parking lot, the car continued past the entrance, so she parked and went inside the store. As Symone gathered a few items from her shopping list, she couldn't help but feel the burn of a pair of eyes watching her. She looked up, then around herself at all of the other shoppers in the store, but nothing seemed out of sort. Her phone chimed, as it did when a text was coming through. The

number was unfamiliar to her. The message read,

Anonymous- *You looked beautiful today.*

Symone- *Who is this?*

Anonymous- *Your admirer.*

Symone- *For the last time, who is this?*

Anonymous- *It's me.*

She grunted, then continued shopping, not willing to give this person any more of her time. Her phone chimed again. She looked at it, seeing that it was the same number. It was another text.

Anonymous- *Are you upset?*

Symone- *Go to hell! Lose my number Jackass!*

Anonymous- *Awe, don't be that way.*

Once again, Symone decided not to continue to reply to this person. She began to worry, was it such a good idea that she gave her name to Trevor. *“Could it be him? He seems pretty straight forward in his attempts to get my attention. Why would he suddenly become so childish?”* she thought.

Now at the register, she placed all of the contents of her shopping cart on the automatic belt and everything moved toward the sales clerk. She swiped her debit card, collected her receipt, then took her bags out to her car. She checked her phone again, but there were no new messages.

Symone decided to call Faye to let her know that she was on her way, but after many rings, she got her voice mail. Thinking it had to be a mistake, or maybe she was just out of the same room as her phone, she decided to try again. Still no answer, but got her voice mail again.

“Faye, I just wanted to let you know that I was on my way. I guess I'll talk to you a little later,” she ended the call and headed to Faye's. When she got there, she gave the bags to Faye's father, who looked to be pretty worn out.

“How is Faye and Mrs. Brimmer?” she asked him.

An exhausted sigh escaped his chest. “Faye's out cold from the meds,

but Jenny can't seem to keep anything down, even the meds,” he explained. “It would be best if you stayed clear of this house for a few days. I don't think Faye will be going in to work for the rest of the week,” he continued.

“Yes sir. Please tell Faye that I came by, and if she feels up to it later, to please give me a call,” Symone gave him a sympathetic look, then went back to her car. She worried about Faye and about the text messages she received earlier.

Now exhausted, she finally made it home and decided to take a hot shower, then ordered takeout. Although it wasn't her favorite, pizza sounded really good with minimum effort on her part at the moment.

Halfway through her second slice of pizza, she received another text. This time it was Faye.

Faye- Hi. Just wanted to thank you for the pot pie. I have laryngitis now, that's why I didn't call. I feel a little better and would really like to know how your day was.

Symone- It was fine. I'm more worried about you.

Faye- No more nausea and diarrhea at the moment, but my stomach is still tender.

Symone- Do you want me to come over?

Faye- No. I'll be fine.

Faye- You said earlier that you saw Mr. Harrison today and he liked your new do?

Symone- Yes. He did the same as always. Paid for my breakfast and annoyed the crap out of me. Then he came to bother me some more during my lunch break after I talked to you.

Faye- I think that the two of you would be great together. He's powerful and you're strong. Please, at least talk to him.

There was a long uncomfortable pause. One that took too long for Faye's patience. She wondered why Symone hadn't responded to her and sent

another text.

Faye- *Are you there?*

Symone- *Yes.*

Faye- *What happened?*

Symone- *Don't get too excited, but I gave Trevor my number after he made an ass of himself. He had the nerve to text me as soon as I walked away to make sure I didn't give him a bogus number.*

Faye- *Yayeeeeeeee! I don't blame him. You are really difficult. I'm rooting for Team Trevor!*

Symone- *Good night Faye. I'm tired.*

Faye- *Awe booooo! Okay, good night. Get some rest so that you don't look tore up in front of Trevor tomorrow. Oh and wear those fitted low riders and your hot pink heels, with that see through floral cold shoulder blouse.*

Symone- *Actually I thought about that very ensemble, but since you brought it up, I think I'll change my wardrobe plans.*

Faye- *Symone!!!!!!!!!*

Symone- *Faye!!!!!!!! Good night. Feel better. Love you.*

The texting conversation was over. Or so Symone thought.

Trevor- *Hello?*

Symone- *What?*

Trevor- *Do you have a few minutes? I would like to talk to you.*

Symone- *No.*

Trevor- *Please. I promise to be brief.*

Symone- *What is it?*

Suddenly her phone was ringing and it startled her. She didn't want to actually talk to him, but now she contemplated not answering and just sending him a text.

“Ugh!” she grunted. Then answered her phone.

“Yes, Trevor?” she sounded irritated.

“Wow, that was easy. I called to ask you out to lunch tomorrow, but since you said yes before I could even ask ...”

“No! That's not what I meant. I can't have lunch with you,” she rejected.

“Why not?”

“Because you're an immature jerk, that's why!”

“What do you mean? I thought we parted on good terms today?”

“The messages you sent. They were childish and I don't have time for that type of behavior,” she continued to complain. “I don't want you to call or text me anymore. I really don't need this.”

“Wait Symone. I'm not sure of what you're referring to, but I only sent you a text confirming your number. That's it, I had a busy day with my case today. It's why I'm just now contacting you,” he explained.

“Don't give me that bull Trevor. I received a text from an unknown number, telling me how great I looked, then when I asked who it was, you refused to tell me. No one has my number but Faye, my job, my landlord and now you. Who else would say something like that?”

“Well, I would say something like that. But I did not text you other than what I just told you. You have to know by now how forward I am. I'm not big on wasting my time,” he assured her.

“Anyway, it's late, I'm tired, and I don't want to talk anymore,” she rattled off.

“Okay,” he breathed, but had more to say before ending the call. “Symone? Will you please have lunch with me tomorrow, then you can show me the text messages and I'll see what I can do to find out whose sending them to you?”

She took a long drawn out breath, then exhaled. “I don't want any fast food,” she demanded.

“Whatever you'd like, I can order something and you can meet me in my office.”

“Why in your office?”

“Don't worry. I have a dinette set for the many meals I've had to eat there. It's just more quiet and private. I'll order anything you like and make sure it's there when you arrive. I know that your break is only forty-five minutes and I would like as much time as I can get,” he smiled through his words and she could tell.

Not wanting to seem too eager, she had a plan to be a little difficult. “You can't have the entire forty-five minutes. I have to check on a sick friend. That's at least twenty minutes right there.”

“I'll take it. Great! See you tomorrow. I'm on the twenty-first floor, suite three. See Gloria,” he finished before she could interrupt him.

“I guess,” she ended the call before things became too uncomfortable for her.

Chapter 6

The next morning, Symone had awoken to the sun shining brightly through her window. It was unusual for it to be that high so early. As she squinted her eyes, trying to focus in on her alarm clock and wondered why it hadn't gone off yet, she jolted upright in her bed.

“It's eight o'clock?” she screeched. “What the hell!” she jumped up and rushed to the bathroom to freshen up. Splashing a cupped hand full of cool water on her face to help her fully awake, Symone began to rush through her morning routine. She didn't have time to put together an outfit, so she decided to go with her earlier ensemble that Faye had suggested.

Twenty minutes later, she was in her car headed for work. This was already turning out to be a bad day for her. Now that she wouldn't have time to get her morning cup of pick me up, Symone was sure to be cranky all day. She arrived at work with just enough time to catch the elevator up to the twelfth floor, then trek through the maze of cubicles and clock in at her computer just before the clock changed from 8:59 to 9:00.

“Whew!” she sighed and leaned back in her chair. The sound of her computer chiming for her first call of the day, irritated her. No coffee, no breakfast, equaled no patience.

“Hello, thank you for contacting support, my name is Symone, how may I be of assistance?” she tried to sound ready. The caller was angry and frustrated, which meant Symone was about to be tested on her professionalism. She took a deep breath, then began to ask routine questions and patiently walk the customer through the first level of procedures to unlock his device. With relief, the task was handled quickly.

Someone called her name from behind her, when she turned, there was a gofer waiting with his hands extended, handing her a large cup of coffee and a toasted bagel with cream cheese. Her brows raised in confusion.

“Courtesy of Mr. Harrison,” he said, then turned to walk away.

Surprisingly happy about the gesture, she felt the need to thank him, but it would have to wait until a bathroom break, as they were not allowed to have personal cell phones out at work.

She helped more customers, then it was finally time for her restroom break. Symone grabbed her phone and rushed out to the hall and saw that there were quite a few text messages on her phone. Two from Faye, one from Trevor, and sixteen from the anonymous texter. She started with Faye, since she didn't get a chance to call and check on her this morning before work.

Faye- *Good morning. Have a great day.*

Faye- *Tell Mr. Harrison the same from me, please.*

Trevor- *Saw that you were running late. Thought you needed your usual. Hope your day gets better, looking forward to lunch.*

Anonymous- *Good morning.*

Anonymous- *Are you there?*

Anonymous- *Did you sleep late?*

Anonymous- *Don't hurt yourself running in those heels.*

Anonymous- *Why aren't you answering me?*

Anonymous- *You are being really rude right now!*

Anonymous- *Guess I'll see you at lunch.*

That was all she could take. Symone decided to skip the thank you to Trevor and save it for their lunch date later. She called Faye, hoping to hear her voice on the other end.

“Symone ... what happened, why didn't you call me this morning before work?” she could talk, but her voice was quite raspy.

“My alarm clock didn't go off this morning. I didn't wake up until eight o'clock and had to rush to work,” she explained in hush tones.

“I'm so sorry. I know you didn't get breakfast. How's work so far?” she coughed.

“Actually, I did get breakfast brought to me...”

“What!” Faye screeched, followed by a series of coughing.

“Calm down. A gofer brought my usual to me courtesy of Trevor,” said Symone. There was silence, but she could hear wind blowing through the phone.

“Hello ... Faye?” she called out, but only heard more wind.

“I guess you're out of sound for now. Get some rest, and I'll text you during lunch,” said Symone. She ended the call and headed back to her cubicle and placed the headset back on her ears.

After helping what seemed to be hundreds of customers fix their own self induced problems with their electronics, it was finally lunch. She grabbed her purse, keys, and phone, then headed down to the lobby.

Just as soon as she stepped out of the building, she received a text. It was from a familiar, yet unknown number.

Anonymous- Wow! That is one sexy outfit.

Symone didn't answer. She began looking around her for someone watching her. Nothing seemed out of sort, but she kept a cautious eye as she went to sit on her favorite bench next to a shade tree that allowed just enough sun light through. Another text came through.

Anonymous- I thought you had a lunch date?

Symone- Who the hell is this?

Anonymous- He's not right for you. It would be safer if you ended it now.

Symone- You don't scare me. Stop texting me!

She couldn't concentrate any further. Worried that she was being watched, she decided to go ahead and enter the Genesis building and head up to Trevor's office.

Meanwhile, he was just coming in from meeting with the last of his witnesses for the day. She was waiting in a chair at Gloria's desk, trying to

have a texting conversation with Faye while she waited. The anonymous person continued to text her, sending Symone into an irritated rant that startled Gloria.

“Is everything okay, Miss?” asked Gloria.

Symone looked up, her eyes wild with anger, trying desperately to calm herself. The elevator doors opened and Trevor appeared, surprised to see her this early. He smiled, but then became concerned at her body language. She was stressed and he quickly opened the door to his office and led her inside. Just before he stepped in behind Symone, he turned to Gloria.

“Please have lunch sent up and hold all of my calls.”

“Yes, Mr. Harrison.”

He closed the door to his office and Symone was standing at the wall of windows, looking down on the street.

“What is it? What's going on?” he asked her, coming to stand beside her, careful not to invade her personal space since she was already tense.

She only glanced back at him, then pulled up the messages she'd been receiving all morning and handed him her phone. He took it and began to read through them.

“You have no idea who this could be, do you?” he asked her.

“No. Well ... um, it could be Brent,” she sighed.

“Is he a friend of yours?”

“My ex.”

“Oh,” he sighed. As he came to the last of the messages, he paused at one in particular. The one that read, *He's not right for you. It would be safer if you ended it now.* Trevor tensed. He never took any type of threat lightly.

“Symone, would you mind if I had someone to check your phone, to trace this number?” he asked. Someone knocked on the door.

“Come in.”

Gloria entered with a delivery person from the Italian restaurant down the road. He came in with a large bag and began placing the dishes on the table, then asked if they needed anything else. Trevor walked over to the table to inspect the contents, then handed the delivery guy money from a wad of bills he pulled from his pocket and told him thank you. He closed the door behind him, then turned to gesture Symone to the table.

Still shaken up, she slow walked to the chair he pulled out for her, then took a seat. Seeing that she was more upset than she let on, he needed to assure her of his promise from before.

“You haven't given me an answer. May I have someone look at your phone?” he urged her.

She shrugged. “I guess. I don't see how that's going to help.”

“Well, first we'll trace the call, see if we can find out who the number belongs to. Then I'll strongly suggest they end the messages or the they'll be charged with harassment.” he stated. Then he knelt beside her, getting eye level with her. She looked away, then folded her arms across her chest.

“Whatever. You might as well get out of this mess while the getting is good. See what you've gotten yourself into?” she snapped.

The tone in her voice was more fearful than she wanted him to believe, but Trevor was very intuitive and noticed right away.

“Symone ...” he reached for her hand and pulled it away from her body. “Did I not promise to protect you yesterday?” he checked her memory.

She looked up at him, curious of his explanation of this promise. “So you knew something was going to happen? Did you set this up to get me to depend on you?” she demanded as she scooted her chair back, intending to leave.

He placed his hand on the back of her chair, keeping her from moving any further while he explained his position.

“Symone, as an attorney, that would be self destructive to practice such reckless behavior. I told you before, I'm a straight forward man, a man of my word. When I said that I would protect you, I meant your heart. I want a chance to rebuild what has been damaged. This person that is sending you these messages, I don't know who they are. However, I want to put a stop to it right away,” he explained.

He then went over to his desk and pressed a button on the phone, “Gloria, please call the tech team and have Mike to come up immediately,” he said then released the button.

“Yes sir. Right away Mr. Harrison,” said Gloria.

He turned back to face Symone, who had worked to put her game face back on. She looked at her watch, then pulled herself back toward the table and took the lid off the plate in front of her. He joined her and right before he took a bite of food, there was another knock at the door.

“Come in,” he said, looking back over his shoulder. It was Mike, the amazing technical wizard of all time.

Trevor handed him Symone's phone and showed him the number. “Find out who it is and get back to me.

“How soon do you need it?” asked Mike.

“Right away.”

“Okay, this will only take a few minutes,” he said and walked to the other side of the office to give them privacy. He pulled his satchel over his head and sat it on a table by the wall. He dug through it and pulled out several cords and found one that fit Symone's phone and plugged it into his tablet. He began scrolling, tapping, and taking notes. He pulled the plug from his tablet and phone, then walked over to Trevor and handed him a piece of paper and Symone's phone, which Trevor then returned to her. Mike retrieved his tablet and stuck it in his satchel and flung it back over his shoulder.

“Will there be anything else Mr. Harrison?” he asked.

Trevor looked at the paper and was once again amazed at Mike's abilities.

“Not at the moment, but be on standby,” he nodded, excusing him. He continued to eat while looking over the information.

“So did he find out who's harassing me?” she asked, as she pinched off a piece of her roll. At the moment, she didn't have much of an appetite.

Trevor nodded, as he continued to study carefully, the information while eating.

“Okay, so Mike has blocked this number and set up your phone to reject any incoming calls that are not registered to a name. This is a pre-paid calling card number that traces back to California. These are cards that have random numbers that can't be traced to any particular person. However ...” he continued after having to take a sip of his water. “Mike shot out a satellite signal and found the signal bouncing off of a cell tower locally and back to a phone here in the Plaza,” he finished.

Symone choked on her bread and gasped. “So whoever it is, really is watching me?” she suddenly became more afraid than ever. She stood to her feet, preparing herself to walk out of Trevor's office.

“Wait Symone. I don't want to scare you, but I believe awareness is better than being unaware. I have more information that you need to know,” he stood and came to get face to face with her.

Her breathing became heavy, filled with panic. All sorts of things were coming to mind as she thought of someone possibly following her home. She lived alone and in a building that was unsecured.

“You've been traced. All of your information has been scanned and even your bank account has been compromised,” he had to stop her from bolting from his office. “Please, let me tell you what I can do to help you Symone. Don't leave yet,” he pleaded with her.

“I'm going to be late for work. I have to go!” she screeched and

pushed past him. Her steps were swift and purposeful. She stood at the elevator, prodding the down button until the doors opened. She stepped inside and just before the doors closed, a hand pulled them back open. It was Trevor, stepping inside, then stood next to her as the doors closed. Something about the finality of hearing that sound, meant she was headed to the outside world where she would be watched by whomever was texting her. Although she tried not to react, the gush of air she released from her lungs was broken.

Against his own rules, Trevor reached out to her, pulling her into his embrace. She broke as she lay her head against his shoulder, he rested his head on top of hers.

“I promised to protect you and I will. Mike has already done a lot, but out of practice of our way of doing things, he doesn't say much out loud. The paper he gave me was in fact all the findings, but also what he's done to protect your accounts ... phone, email, bank, etc. He's blocked all outside interference and canceled out your passwords,” he paused because they'd reached the lobby and the both of them stepped out. He walked with her to her building and that's where she stopped him.

“You can't come any further. I'll be fine ... and, thanks for what Mike did. How will I access my accounts now?” she asked.

“I'll have that information for you after work,” he said and gave her a strong look of caution, wanting her to be careful of what she said out loud. Becoming paranoid again, she looked around the lobby floor of her building.

She shrugged, then gave him a once over and started for the elevators. She felt his presence, smelled his cologne, then turned to see him standing right behind her.

“I told you ... you can't come any further. I'm a big girl and I can handle myself,” she growled through her teeth.

“That may be so, but I'm escorting you all the way to your job. Let me handle whoever tries to stop me,” he stepped on the elevator after her. She

refused to look at him, but just had to ask.

“Why are you doing this? You don't know me or owe me anything. What are you after?” she demanded.

“I promised, I care, and your heart,” he said simply.

Her head dropped. She sighed and remained quiet the rest of the way up. The chime of the elevator reaching the twelfth floor was a sound of relief. He would go back to his own building and let her get on with her day. She would find a way to separate herself from him and go back to having a normal life. He stepped out behind her and she snapped around to face him.

“Look!” she almost yelled, but then spoke in whispers. “I'm not worth the trouble, just go back to your cushy life and leave me alone!”

“Hi Mr. Harrison. Haven't seen you in these parts lately?” asked the security guard on her floor. She looked to him with confusion of why he would know Trevor.

“I haven't had much of a reason to come by until now,” he smiled at Symone.

The security guard raised his brows at Symone, then looked back to Mr. Harrison. “So, does this mean you'll be coming by more often?” he asked.

“It looks that way,” he smiled and stuck his hands in his pockets. “Do me a favor and keep a protective eye over Miss Lassetter,” he said with a seriousness that only the security guard would understand. He nodded, then Trevor stepped back onto the elevator.

“See you when you get off work,” he said to Symone and the doors closed.

Symone looked to the security guard full of questions, but only had time for one.

“How do you know him?” she asked.

“He's part owner of this company and two others on the top floor.

Mr. Harrison is cool people and treats us all good,” he replied, smiling at the stunned look on Symone's face. She'd been working in this building for six years and never knew that.

She shook it off and headed back to her cubicle and clocked back in. One of the things she loved about her job was that when it's busy, the day goes by really fast. After her last customer, she shut down her computer and hung her head set on the hook behind the monitor and grabbed her personal belongings and boarded a crowded elevator. When the door opened, everyone filed out and rushed out of the building.

Symone was suddenly feeling self-conscious and stopped just inside the glass doors of her building. *Okay, get it together Symone. No one is after you. It was only a pervert with no life, trying to scare you.* She said to herself. Someone tapped her on the shoulder, causing her to scream loudly, practically jumping out of her skin.

“Sorry, I didn't mean to scare you,” said the man in a dark navy suit.

“Who are you?” she demanded, her guard up.

“I'm Blake ... Crowley. Head of security for Mr. Harrison,” he said proudly.

Symone wasn't impressed, nor did she believe him. He could be the psycho that's been harassing her for two days for all she knew.

“What do you want?”

“Mr. Harrison is caught up in a conference on his case. He sent me to walk you to your car and to make sure you get home safely,” he explained.

“No. I don't know you and I'm not comfortable with that. You can leave now,” she rejected.

Symone started out of the door and looked back at Blake to see if he was following her. He stayed put, but would discreetly follow her once she got further away. Halfway down the side walk of the Plaza, she became nervous, not able to shake the feeling of someone following her. She

continued to walk, but began to look around her, sneaking a peek over her shoulder.

Blake was indeed following her, but she didn't see him. Her heart began to pound as she picked up the pace, taking her keys from her purse to have in her hand once she reached her car. Her phone rang and she looked to see that it was Trevor.

“What?” she sounded breathless.

“Symone, please allow Blake to see you home. He's the best of the best, and I need to know that you're okay,” he said.

“You really sent him?” she asked.

“Yes. He's trusted and has been with our firm from the beginning. He's ex-Secret Service and will take a bullet for you,” he said.

“Oh yeah? Then where is he?” she questioned sarcastically.

“Just say come forward,” he told her.

She looked at the phone with a disbelieving smirk on her face, then looked around for Blake. She took a deep breath, stopping at her car and bit her lip. “Come forward,” she said, gasping at the sight of this man stepping from around the building.

“Do you see him?” Trevor asked, but already knew that she had.

“Yes, he's here,” she sort of chuckled.

“Will you allow him to escort you home?” Trevor sounded desperate.

“I guess,” she sighed. “I have to go. Faye's waiting to hear from me,” she hung up on him before he could say anything. She got in her car and headed home.

Blake had followed her in a black unmarked Crown Victoria and parked in an empty slot. She walked over to his car to tell him she was okay from there, but he was getting out to escort her all the way to her door.

“Thanks for the escort, but you're no longer needed,” she repeated.

“Mr. Harrison said to sweep your apartment then watch until he calls me back.”

“You're not coming inside of my house!”

“It's my orders,” he said.

She grunted under her breath, then turned to storm up the stairs to the second floor. She stuck her key in and unlocked the door, then went inside. She stood waiting for him to come inside so that he could get on with it, then leave.

As he went from room to room, checking closets and her patio, she wondered why Trevor was being so dramatic. People get anonymous calls or text messages all the time, and she was only freaked out because she feels watched too.

“Okay Miss Lassetter, everything is clear inside. Be sure to call Mr. Harrison if you feel the slightest bit afraid or threatened in any way. He'll contact me and I'll come check things out,” said Blake, then he was gone ... at least from her apartment.

After closing and locking the door behind her, she got comfortable and called Faye.

“It's about time! What's been going on?” Faye demanded. Her voice had returned and she sounded back to her normal self.

“I guess you're feeling better?” asked Symone.

“Yes. Much better. So ... what's been going on?”

“Well, I'm not sure where to start. So I guess from the beginning it is,” Symone exhaled.

Knowing Faye, if Symone didn't give her all the details to what she was about to tell her, she would end up telling the story twice.

“Yesterday, after I talked to you before work, Mr. Harrison approached me and asked me to have lunch with him tomorrow, well ... today. Of course I said no, but he insisted and sort of intrigued me, so I gave

him my number ...” she was interrupted.

“I knew it! I knew it! I’m so happy for you!” Faye squealed. “Okay, you may continue,” she breathed.

Symone shook her head and sighed deeply. “Well, after I gave him my number and headed back to work, he texted me to make sure that I didn’t give him a bogus number. Then I started getting texts from an anonymous number that creeped me out. I thought that it was Trevor, so I told him not to text me any more. Well after checking up on you and finding out that you were out for the count, I went home and called it a night. This morning, I woke up late, missed my coffee and bagel, but someone brought it to me at work. Trevor had sent a gofer to get my usual and my day was saved,” she paused to take a long breath and to let Faye have her say, which she knew she was dying to.

“Symone, do you have any idea what this means? He is so perfect for you, I can feel it!” she chimed.

“Well before you get too ahead of yourself, there’s more,” said Symone.

“Do tell.”

“At lunch today, I was about to call you before heading up to Trevor’s office for lunch, to check on you and to let you know about my lunch date, but then I got another text message from the anonymous number. Whoever it is, has been watching me. He knew things, like that I had a lunch date and said that it wasn’t safe for me to be around Trevor. It sort of scared me, so I went into his building and up to his office and waited for him,” she explained then finished her story up until she got home with the body guard up until their current phone call.

“Symone, you need to pack a bag and come stay here for a while. I don’t like the sound of this. If Trevor, a high powered attorney feels this strongly about putting protection around you, he must sense something bad

too,” Faye pleaded.

“I’m not going to let anyone force me out of my own home. It’s probably just some lonely freak with nothing else to do besides harass others. I’m more worried about who it could be, and how they got my number. Now that they are blocked, there shouldn’t be any more texts.”

“I still don’t like this one bit Symone. I’m worried about you,” she cautioned. “At least I’ll be back at work tomorrow. I’ll feel better keeping an eye on you.”

There was a knock at Symone’s door, and Faye heard it through the phone. Symone got up from the sofa and looked out of the peep hole and saw that it was Trevor.

“Faye ... I’ll call you back.”

“Wait! Who’s at your door?”

“It’s Trevor.”

“Really?”

“Faye, I’ll call you back.” she hung up the phone.

She opened the door only a little. She stood in his view of her apartment, but partially behind the door as she was in her comfy baggy shorts and a tank top.

“Why did you come here?” she asked.

“For three reasons. One, I brought you some important information I told you earlier that you would be getting today. Two, I wanted to check on you to see for myself that you were okay. And three, I really just wanted to see you. May I please come in, just for a little bit?” his smile was sincere, and somehow she trusted it. Yet, her head was screaming *No!* He could be the perverted jerk that’s been texting her so that he could pretend to swoop in and save the day and win her over.

“I don’t think so. It’s late, I’m tired, and I don’t know you well enough yet,” she said without looking into his eyes. She feared the

smoothness of his tone of voice, the deep penetrating gaze from his eyes, and his too hot to not touch body, would obscure her common sense.

He only looked at her, a smile beginning to appear on his face as his eyes dramatically drew down her body to her very large fluffy tiger slippers. After remaining focused on her house shoes a moment too long, Symone drew her foot back behind the door, causing him to suddenly look back up at her face guiltily.

“So, thanks for the security again, good night,” she diverted and started to close the door.

“Can I at least give you the information you need?” he asked.

“Give it to me,” she breathed. Just then her phone went off with a text. She looked at it and there it was again. Another anonymous number with a chilling message.

Anonymous- You'll never get rid of me. If you don't take me serious, then I'll just have to make you.

Symone took a dramatic step back. Her hands shaking, her face pale as a ghost. Trevor came in, closing the door behind him.

“What is it Symone?” he asked.

Her hand was violently shivering as she handed him her phone. He read the message, but his knack for keeping his cool won over the anger he was now feeling inside. His phone rang, revealing his partner's number. He answered, wondering what would have him calling this late when they'd just parted from the office.

“Hey Vince?”

“Trevor, there's been an infiltration at the firm. Security is pulling video footage, but we have to veri-check everything. Can you come back to the office?” he sounded panicked.

“Give me ten, then I'm on my way,” he agreed, then ended the call. He faced Symone who's face wore worry and suddenly fear at the look on his

face. “Symone ... I'm going to ask you to do something for me. It's imperative that you trust me on this and do as I ask,” he nodded his head toward her, giving her a stern look of caution.

She bit her lip, her hands still shaking, her breathing challenged. Taking a long deep breath, she let her head fall forward. A sign of surrender that he took as conformity; something he never thought he'd see from her for at least another year or so.

He reached out a hand to her, realizing just how fragile she really is. However, by nature, she tried desperately to hold on to the level of courage she'd worked so hard to build, but failed. She placed her hand in his and allowed him to embrace her. Something she's secretly wanted to do, but didn't want to fall prey to another man.

His smell was captivating, his body firm but not hard. The way he held her was comforting, safe and reassuring. When his lower jaw caressed the side of her head, she knew that he was sincere. A shallow man would be more sensual than comforting.

“Okay Trevor,” she spoke with her lips against his collar bone. “What do you need for me to do?”

Taking a deep breath, then exhaling it cautiously, he gave her two options. “Symone, you're going to need to pack a bag and stay either with your friend Faye, or with me,” he paused, waiting for the tantrum.

She pulled back and looked up at his face. It was nervous, but for a different reason than assumed. He looked desperate and worried.

“You have got to be joking? You don't seriously expect me to come stay with you? I don't know you, well ... not enough to trust you in that way,” she rejected and pulled away from his touch. She turned her back on him and walked toward her kitchen, but paused when he spoke.

“It's not at all what you may be thinking. I have a second bedroom, and my building is secured and monitored. Also, I will feel more at ease, if

you were somewhere I can protect you,” he breathed, taking a few steps closer to her. He glanced at his watch, his time was up and he needed to get back to the office.

She turned to face him, “Why do you care what happens to me? I mean, just last week, we were complete strangers. You were the jackass that kept harassing me and buying me breakfast. I don't know what to think right now, but ... I'm more than a little freaked out. One, by this nut job texting me, and by you; a high powered attorney with a sudden obsession with me,” she shrugged, her palms up in a surrendering manner. Symone's emotions were erratic and it was difficult for her to wrap her head around everything that's happening now.

“I know. It sounds very odd and you don't have to trust me, but I really wish you would,” he looked at his watch again. “Look Symone, I have to get to my office to handle a situation, but I'm going to send Blake up here to stand watch outside of your apartment. Which ever you decide, he will assist and accompany you. Either way, it's not a good idea to stay here,” he was urging with his looks toward her. He didn't press his luck reaching for her again, he half turned, giving her a final look of caution then approached the door. He dialed a number and held the phone to his ear. “Blake, I need you at Miss Lassetter's door. Keep watch and if she needs help with anything at all, please assist and take her where ever she tells you to,” he ended the call and opened the door.

He stepped into the hall and only let the door partially close behind him. He waited until Blake arrived, then pulled the door shut. Symone went to the door and peeked out of the peep hole, seeing the two men still standing there. She carefully lay her head against the door to listen to their conversation. Trevor was issuing orders to the bodyguard.

“Blake, it is of utmost importance that you protect her with your life. I'm not sure if this has anything to do with my upcoming case, or something

totally different. Until I know what we're dealing with, use extreme caution," he started to walk away, but Blake stopped him.

"Of course Mr. Harrison. If you don't mind me asking ... well, is Miss Lassetter involved in your case somehow, or is she something else to you?" he wondered about not knowing of her or their connection prior to last week.

"No. She has nothing to do with my case. She's important to me because ... I believe she's going to be a part of my future. And, well, I received confirmation from my mother," he smiled guiltily. "She's never wrong and I trust her judgment," he chuckled lightly, then his phone went off again. It was his partner, Vince.

"Keep her safe, I have to go!" he ordered and answered his call as he rushed to the stairs, taking them two at a time. His strides were athletic and swift. He was in his car, peeling out of the parking lot headed back to his office. Once he got there, three squad cars were pulled up in front of the building. Two officers were standing on the sidewalk, guarding the entrance. He parked and got out, flashing his I.D. and building badge at the officer, as he rushed by them.

He decided to take the elevator since it would be quicker than running up twenty-one flights of stairs. As the doors of the elevator opened, the office staff were all frantically reorganizing the mess that used to be the file room.

"What happened? Who did this?" Trevor demanded. He stood over an investigator that was dusting for finger prints. Before anyone could answer him, Mike, the technical genius of the firm was bringing him a tablet with the video footage of the time the break-in had occurred. They both watched with the investigator leaning in as well, at what seemed to be a woman in a power suit. Her hair was dark and covered most of her face. Probably intentional, yet she seemed to know exactly where to go and what to do. She entered a

number on the key pad of the file room and walked right in. She pulled a file from a particular drawer and sat it on top of the cabinet. She then began yanking other files from the drawers and throwing them to the floor in a wild-like manner, sure to mix everything together. The camera from inside of the file room showed through the small opening of the door that other employees were walking back and forth past the door, going about their normal business. This meant that the infiltration happened while everyone was still at work and had completely gone unnoticed.

“Vince! Come look at this!” Trevor called out.

His partner came quickly and began looking at the video as well.

“Do you recognize this woman?” asked Trevor.

Vince looked intently at the footage, then up in thought. His sudden revelation became disturbing the more he thought about it. He looked nervous to tell Trevor his thoughts, but saw that he had no choice.

“Well?”

“She looks sort of like your new friend's friend. The one that hasn't been at work all week,” he raised his brows at Trevor.

He frowned, but didn't want to jump to any rash conclusions. “It can't be her. She's been home sick,” said Trevor. This was not something he was willing to let blow up in his face later. His already non-existent relationship with Symone was too fragile to handle any type of misunderstanding. Faye seemed to be the only person in Symone's life she trusted. She had no one else except him, and they weren't that far along yet.

“It must be someone else. Faye has no reason to want any of our files. If anything, she wants to see things develop between Symone and me. What logical reason would she have done something like this for?” Trevor was really asking himself as he went into thought mode. He took the tablet from Mike and went into his office and watched the video several more times. At first, the woman did pose great similarities to Faye, but as further

scrutiny of the figure progressed, he remembered that she was a blonde. Also, this woman seemed stealth and focused, whereas Faye seemed to always be relaxed and informal with her movements. Trevor had to find a way to quickly rule out the best friend of the woman he had already felt connected to.

“Mike!” he called out. “Could you come in here? And ... close the door behind you.”

“Yes sir?” he asked, ready to be of assistance.

“I need you to pull up video footage of the sidewalk for up to thirty minutes prior to this video. Then get me the footage of the customer and employee parking lots as well. I need to see what type of vehicle this woman arrived in and if she was wearing the same thing the entire time, or did she change clothes once inside the building,” he rattled off, then waved Mike off to get to work. He watched the video again, getting interrupted by a call.

“Yes Blake?”

“Miss Lassetter decided to take your advice. She called her friend to inform her of her whereabouts, now we're at your condo. She's making herself comfortable in the guest suite,” he reported.

Trevor was taken aback. He was shocked and severely excited. This woman he so desperately wants to get to know is in his home. He cleared his throat and inhaled.

“Thank you. Let her know she's welcomed to anything in the fridge or she can call room service. I think we'll be wrapping things up here in the next thirty to forty minutes or so, then I'll be on my way home.”

“Will do, Mr. Harrison.”

Trevor shivered at the thought of her, then pulled himself together. He had less than a week until trial for Miss Henry, and now he was faced with an anonymous caller to Symone, a break-in of the file room of his firm, and hoped beyond hope that none of this was Faye's doing.

Mike returned to Trevor's office at the same time he was receiving a call back from Blake. He reached for the tablet and answered his phone at the same time.

“What's up, Blake?”

“She's gotten three more texts. The caller knows she's here,” he reported.

“I'm sending extra man power to the building. Whatever you do, don't leave her alone!” he hung up. “Damn it!” he snarled.

“Do you need to leave Mr. Harrison? I can view the footage and just email copies to you, then we can compare notes later?” Mike offered.

“Email them to me now,” he said as he stood to his feet. He was gathering important information on the trial to take with him. The staff had recovered all of the contents of each file and found everything except one particular case. It was a case from three years ago, for a lawsuit between a song writer and a music producer. Things still did not make sense for someone to want anything from that file since the case was a win/win for both parties.

After procuring extra security for the firm and the building, Trevor headed down to his car, escorted by the officers that were on their way out. Once he was in and on his way home, he put in a call to Miss Henry to check on her.

She informed him that other than the ridiculous attempts at low ball settlement offers from her soon-to-be ex-husband, she and the kids were fine. He was relieved and needed to focus on Symone's case for now. His team was already researching the witnesses and fact checking their information and stories, and now he could put some energy toward finding Symone's anonymous caller.

He arrived home, turning his Range Rover over to the valet, greeted Howard the doorman, collected his mail from Roni the receptionist, then

headed up on the elevator to his condo. He was nervous and had no idea what to expect from Symone once he opened the door.

Greeted by Blake, who was waiting with more information on Symone's anonymous texter, Trevor entered and sat down his briefcase and laptop. Blake hadn't allowed her to respond to the messages, which was irritating the texter. Trevor reached for the phone he was handed, while also looking for signs of Symone.

"She's in the bedroom, working on her design portfolio," Blake informed Trevor.

He nodded, then scrolled through the text messages.

"I think there must be a tracking device on either her car or something personal of hers. When you switch out security for the night, have her car swept for devices. I'll personally drive Symone to work, but because of my case load, I'll need you on watch duty for her in the evenings until we get this situation resolved," said Trevor.

The anonymous caller had made it clear that she could not hide from him, that she was making things worse by continuing to see Trevor. Also, that he'd taken pictures of her sleeping from outside of her window with a telescoping camera. It put her on edge and all she could do to keep her sanity was to sketch out her designs.

Trevor knocked on her bedroom door, but didn't get a response. "Symone? It's me, may I come in?"

"It's your house," she said dryly.

He slowly turned the knob and eased the door open. She was sitting with her legs crossed in front of her, center of the bed, with a large sketch pad in her lap. She refused to look at him, as she was engrossed in shading and bleeding her markings into an artfully designed sketch of a master chef's home kitchen.

He came a little closer, leaning in to get a better look at what she

was doing. Surprised at the level of skill she possessed, he became instantly intrigued with her work.

“May I see what you have there?”

Her hand halted, sitting the pencil beside her as she wiped her finger tips with a dampened cloth, then handed him the sketch pad. While he studied her work, Symone changed positions and drew her knees to her body and wrapped her arms around her legs. Her chin rested on her knees and she began to rock back and forth.

Trevor noticed her motion without looking away from her sketches. This was the behavior of someone feeling out of control of their life, and she was trying to refocus her fear onto something she did have control over.

“This is amazing work Symone. You truly have an amazing gift,” he raved.

He hesitated to sit down next to her, not wanting to overstep her boundaries. She was already timid, tense, and guarded.

“May I sit with you?” he asked.

She looked up at his face and wondered why was he being so polite to her. She was in his home, stalked by an unknown psycho, guarded by his security, and if he wanted to kill her right this moment, there was nothing stopping him. She shrugged, not sure what was to become of her. She'd called to let Faye know where she would be for a few days, so that if she didn't show up for work, someone would know of her whereabouts.

Trevor unbuttoned his jacket and took a seat at the foot of the bed, leaving enough space between them not to be in her personal space.

“I have your phone, and I will have Mike check into it again. It might be best if we get you a new one, with a new number,” he waited for her response.

“I'm not up for an upgrade in my contract right now. I'll just call the phone company and get a new number,” she returned to her earlier position

with her legs crossed in front of her.

“I’m afraid that might not be enough. I will take care of getting a replacement phone for you. Right now, I want to know what you’re feeling. Is there anything I can do to make you feel better right now?” he asked.

She dropped her head, sighing heavily. She shook her head no, then got up to peek out of the curtains again. It had become habitual for her since arriving at his condo a little over an hour ago.

“Would you like to talk about what’s going on?” he asked her.

“Don’t you have work to do? A case to prepare for?” she snapped.

“I do, but I also have a very capable team in place that is getting everything together. It’s pretty cut and dry and I’m confident that my client will get everything we want for her,” he assured her that he had plenty of time to tend to her needs.

“Look Trevor, I’m an adult. I don’t need a babysitter, and I really wish that I had followed my gut instinct and not let you get to me,” she spouted, without turning from the window. “My life was so much simpler when my only stress was Faye insisting that I develop a relationship with you. It’s almost like she has ulterior motives for us being together,” she turned to face him. He reacted to her thoughts of her best friend, and considered the video footage from earlier. Symone didn’t notice, and continued her complaint.

“When I called her to tell her what was going on and that you suggested I stay with her or you, she was almost too relieved to pass me off to you. Her excuses for me not coming to her house were weak,” she rolled her eyes and sat back down on the bed, this time at the head putting more space between them. Trevor was at a loss for words that wouldn’t alarm Symone of his sudden concerns at the moment. *If Faye did have ulterior motives for connecting her best friend with a high powered attorney, what would she need with a case file that was three years old, containing a law*

suit? He thought to himself.

“That does sound strange, but then again, she seems a bit strange anyway,” he sort of chuckled it off. “Have you eaten anything yet?” he asked.

She shook her head no. Not sure if she could eat anything while her stomach was tied in knots with worry. Symone didn't want to take any chances on getting sick and vomiting all over Trevor's immaculate bathroom.

“How about I make dinner?” he offered.

“You cook?”

“Yes. I know my way around a kitchen. I can definitely put a little something together if you'd like?” he smiled.

She was glaring at him, disbelieving, as she gave him a once over. The sudden smirk on her face was that of challenge. She had to see this, so she shrugged and got up when he did.

Trevor waited at the door of the bedroom for Symone, letting her lead the way to the kitchen. He took off his jacket and draped it over the back of one of the chairs at the dining room table. He then unbuttoned his dress shirt and took it off too, leaving on his white t-shirt. Symone had sat on a bar stool at the counter that was directly across the kitchen from the stove top and double wall ovens.

He took out a tender loin, a few large potatoes, two stalks of celery, two carrots, and a bag of green baby lima beans. Something he had obviously gotten recently for his next meal anyway. After washing off the vegetables and taking out a cutting board to began preparing dinner, he opened the cupboard beside the fridge and took out a can of broth, a bottle of red cooking wine, and a few seasonings. Symone was impressed with how much Trevor seemed to know how to handle himself in a kitchen. His next move had her wide eyed with her mouth opened in shock. He began to chop vegetables with such care and professionalism, she figured that he had to have taken a few cooking classes somewhere.

She had to ask, “Okay, so where did you learn to maneuver so well in the kitchen?”

“My mother,” he continued to chop, then peeled the potatoes and cut them into medium sized chunks.

“Your mom? Does she live near here?” she asked.

“No. I’m originally from Georgia. She lives in Smyrna, but she comes to visit three or four times a year,” he answered, putting the tender loin in the deep baking pan, along with the vegetables, broth, and wine. He then covered the dish with its matching lid and put it into the preheated oven, then turned to face her.

She looked as though she wanted to know more, but decided not to insinuate she wanted to get to know his story.

He felt differently and began to tell her a little bit about his life. “I have a brother, he’s seventeen with Down Syndrome. My dad passed away ten years ago in a car accident,” he paused because Symone gasped. She never thought of him as having a real life, family, or anything of the sort. When she looked at Trevor, all she saw was a well dressed, intelligent business man with colleagues. She never thought of him having parents or a brother. He suddenly became human to her; she was intrigued.

“How did the accident happen?” she asked.

“I was a Junior in college, here at the University of Texas, and the Longhorns were in the playoffs at the home field. My dad had never been to a college football game and was a fan, no matter who was playing,” he sort of smiled at the thought, then continued. “Since Drew, my brother, was terrified of planes, they decided to take a road trip. Drew was excited to be coming to Texas, mostly to see me. They had planned to stay a few days to do a little sight seeing. My brother is a huge fan of lizards and wanted us to have identical pets. So the next day after the game, we went to a pet store that sold bearded dragons and got two, and habitats for them. He was so excited that

mom and dad let him get a pet knowing they had a long road trip back home. When they packed up to leave, my mom began the early stages of an anxiety attack. That usually meant something was about to happen, but they were all anxious to get back home. I should have insisted they wait another day, because my mom has a knack for sensing trouble or just the opposite,” he paused, turning to check on dinner. He'd returned to stand on the other side of the counter from her and continued his story, seeing how intrigued she had become.

“Well, not to go into details, an elderly woman was traveling west on the eastbound lane of I-10. It wasn't until the truck in front of their car swerved to avoid the woman, when my dad saw her, but it was too late. With the both of them going about seventy-five in a head on collision, it was a miracle that my mom and Drew survived. My dad died instantly and so did the elderly woman. My mom suffered a broken shoulder and wrist, along with many cuts and bruises to her head, face, and arms. My brother only suffered mental trauma, but he's okay now,” he held back his true emotions and made her a drink. He took out a wine glass and asked her preference.

“Cranberry cocktail or orange juice and ginger ale?” he smiled at the surprised look on her face.

“I'll have the cranberry cocktail?” she smiled.

He reached inside the fridge and grabbed the bottle of juice and poured her and himself a glass, then handed one of the glasses to her. She took a sip and couldn't help but feel relaxed.

“I don't know why, but this is the best cranberry cocktail I've ever tasted,” she chimed with a giggle. He smiled too and took a sip of his drink as well.

“I don't drink alcohol, so I don't keep it in the house,” he explained.

“I used to when I was with ...” she withdrew. It was obvious that her past was extremely difficult for her to deal with. The hardened mask returned,

but Trevor quickly reacted.

“You're much too relaxed and fun to be around to need alcohol anyway,” he came to stand right across from her. The only thing between them was the bar counter.

“So can you tell me a little about yourself? ... excluding the hard parts?” he asked.

She shrugged. “There's nothing to tell. I have no one but Faye. She's my family and I earn money talking people through their technical woes,” she shrugged.

“What about your sketch? You seem pretty decent at that?” he cocked his head to the side sarcastically. She instantly became defensive and snarled her answer.

“Decent? Excuse me, I can throw down with a pencil and a sketch pad!”

Trevor chuckled at her rant and nodded in agreement. He turned to check on dinner once more and decided it was ready and took it out.

“I'd like to see more, if you have any,” he said without turning to face her. He had placed the dish on the stove top and took off the lid. Then began slicing the tenderloin until it was all sliced up.

“I have so many sketches that I have stacks of them everywhere. Not only do I design interior rooms, but I do floor plans and exterior home front elevations as well,” she boasted.

Trevor took out plates as she spoke and served the dish to the plates then took them to the table. Symone took her glass and turned to join him at the table while he retrieved his and they sat across from each other.

“I would very much like to see some of them if you don't mind? But, I have to ask you something?” he began as they both started to eat. Symone was pleasantly impressed with Trevor's cooking skills. He barely made a mess and cleaned as he worked. He was way too perfect to be single and

something was definitely up with him.

“Sure, I don't mind showing you some of them,” she shrugged.
“What's your question?” she looked to him.

“Why aren't you working for a design agency or a builder?”

“I have my CPA, but I'm working to save for my own business. I didn't want to develop my clientele through someone else and feel like I'm stealing them from whomever I worked for. I want to build from the bottom up,” she explained.

He seemed to be accepting of her explanation, but wondered how far along had she gotten.

“What do you need to get started?”

“Store and office space. Contracts with companies that specialize in furniture, accessories, drapes, and any other items I made need to set up a show room. People need to be able to see things in order to want them in their homes. I have to have excellent credit to order those things to sell on consignment. Plus I'll need a business license and insurance. I have a plan, but I really don't want to take out a loan,” she breathed. “I'm almost there, just another two years, and I'll be ready to rock and roll!” she sounded excited.

The look on her face as she spoke about her dream was breathtaking to him. He smiled at her smile as she drifted into her dreams.

“Symone, most people have to take out loans to start a business, or they have financial backing. You shouldn't put your own money into something this big up front unless you have a lot of it,” he began, peaking her curiosity.

“Yeah well, I've already pitched my business plan to six different banks, and they all say that it's a tough business to get started. I have to continue to build my credit, which is seriously handicapping my funds, and get at least two companies to sign an agreement to work with my business. I

can't even get an agreement from two distributors that would make things easier to get a good start. But ... I have a strong marketing plan, though," she didn't sound discouraged at all. Just anxious to get her business up and running.

Trevor was thinking, he would be talking to his financial adviser in the morning. Although his firm was flourishing beyond his initial ten year plan, his personal income accounts were seriously bloated. With nothing but a condo and a vehicle to spend his money on, he had nothing else to do with his own money.

"No!" she screeched loudly, startling him from his thought process.

"What? What happened?" he looked around for what brought about that reaction.

"I see that look in your eyes. I don't want your help Trevor. I can do this on my own!" she snapped. Symone got up and rushed off to her bedroom and closed the door behind her.

He decided not to go after her right away, allowing her to get past her rant. He took their plates and glasses to the sink to empty and wash. Then he put the leftovers in containers and put them in the fridge and wiped down the counters.

Taking a deep breath, he headed to her room and knocked lightly.

"Come in," she said, her voice shaky.

Trevor eased the door open and saw that Symone was lying across the bed, face down. She sniffled then turned over and sat up against the headboard.

"I'm sorry if I upset you Symone. What did I do?" he asked.

"You were about to make promises that you are sure to break," she said quietly.

"What do you mean?"

"You were about to offer to help, weren't you?"

“Well ... yes,” he was confused.

“I can't deal with another set back Trevor. I'm three years behind my original plan and I just can't deal with this anymore,” she griped.

“I'm not understanding you Symone. How would me helping you, set you back?”

“Brent ... promised the same thing, then took everything I worked for. He had access, because he was adding to my savings, and then the bastard robbed me blind. Eighteen thousand dollars of that money was mine! Most of it was left from momma's policy ...” she cried into her hands. Trevor wasn't sure if it was okay for him to comfort her, since she was rebelling against her ex-boyfriend at the moment, but he couldn't stand to see her this way. He moved closer with caution and realized that she hadn't withdrew from him.

He reached for her hand. “Symone, I won't use the word promise since you don't trust it, but I'm a man of my word. I have no reason to take advantage of you. I've already built my empire and have everything I could possibly want, except one thing,” he looked away.

“What in the world do you *not* have?” she demanded through her sniffles.

“Someone to share everything with,” he said softly.

Symone frowned. *How could someone as together as Trevor, not have someone to share his life with? What was wrong with him that no one would find everything he had to offer, attractive?* She thought to herself.

“Why not?” she asked.

“Not that there hasn't been offers, but I wasn't ready until now,” his tone was insinuating.

It was quiet for a long moment. Symone looked away just as Trevor looked up at her. He scooted a little closer, but when she leaned away, he returned to his position.

“Symone ...”

“It's late. We have to get up early,” she interrupted him. She pulled back the covers and slid her legs down under them. He didn't push, just got up and walked toward the door.

“Good night,” he said.

She turned over and pulled the covers up to her face. He turned off the light and pulled her door closed and went into his bedroom. He checked her phone for more messages, seeing there were more, a lot more. They were threatening, so he called to file a report. There was a protocol to handling these type situations. Notifying law officials would make it an official complaint so that if this person were to make a move that endangered Symone, self defense would be lawful.

He showered and went to bed, thinking good thoughts. He at least made great headway with her, since she was now sleeping under the same roof as him.

Chapter 7

Morning came and Trevor's wake up call came through. He stretched and yawned big, then sat up and rubbed the palms of his hands across his eyes. He remembered that he wasn't alone, then wondered how late did Symone sleep, or was she already awake? He didn't want to be rude or invasive by rushing to her room, and he really needed to relieve his bladder. He did that first and afterward, crossing in front of the large vanity mirror in his bath, he realized that he'd better brush his teeth and finger through his hair before he checked on her.

Not wanting to waste too much time, he ultimately did rush to her door and knocked, calling out to her.

“Symone ... are you awake?”

He heard her yawn and get to her feet. He stood at the door waiting as her approach was apparent by the sound of her slippers scuffing across the floor with every step. The door knob turned and she pulled it back open just enough to get an eye full of his bare chest and pajama bottoms draping across his feet.

“Good morning,” he smiled at her wildly tousled hair.

She quickly raised her hand over her mouth and spoke without breathing. “Morning,” she mumbled behind her hand. She turned and rushed to the bathroom and he let her get ready while he got dressed for work as well.

Surprisingly, she was ready when he was, and they headed out together along with the body guard that had changed out with Blake last night.

“Are you ready to talk business yet?” he asked her.

“What business?”

“You starting yours, and me investing in a sure thing,” he smiled.

“How can you be sure that I'm a sure thing?”

“Your sketches alone, give me confidence. Now, your people skills are a little on the *needs work* side, but your talent can't be denied or ignored,” he explained.

Symone snorted at the people skills jab, but knew that Trevor was right. She did need to become more sociable ... likeable, if she wanted to develop a relationship with clients that would get her word of mouth promotion. She inhaled and nodded in agreement.

“So ... does this mean we can work out an agreement?” he asked, seeing that she hadn't shot him down just as she had last night.

“We'll talk. No promises,” she tried not to smile. It was becoming more difficult to deny the trust she felt for this man. No matter what else was going wrong in her life, she felt safe in his presence. Now she needed to deal with Faye and let her in on the progress she's made with Trevor and get it over with.

He pulled into the parking lot and Faye was waiting by her car, sort of happy and mad at the same time. When Symone got out and started toward her, Faye rushed over to her.

“What is wrong with your phone? I called you six times last night and twenty times this morning. Its going straight to voice mail!”

Symone sighed, “The texts kept coming through, so Trevor has it now to see if he can get it traced again. He said I should get a new one with a new number,” Symone responded calmly.

She hooked her arm under Faye's and started walking with her. She missed her friend and actually wanted to talk for once. As they continued up the side walk, Symone randomly glanced back over her shoulder at Trevor with a partial smile on her face. He'd wink, then look down at his tablet as he walked whenever Faye would look back. It was funny to him, but he let Symone be the one to determine the status of whatever it was they had

together.

The girls reached the coffee shop and stood in line as they always had before, chatting away.

“So did you get a piece of that?” Faye got right to the point.

Symone gasped and glared at her. “Faye! Really?” she was offended.

She barely knew this man and didn't want him to over hear her friend being fresh. Instinctively, she looked around herself for any sign of Trevor, since he was known for sneaking up behind her in the coffee shop. Surprisingly, he wasn't there so she figured he had gone up to his office to get to work.

Faye elbowed her out of her trance. “Well? Did you at least see him naked?” she pressed.

“Not exactly,” she smiled and her mind drifted to this morning, seeing him in only pajama bottoms. His body was that of an athletic man, but could have come from working out at the gym three to four times a week.

“Not exactly? How much of him did you see?”

Symone shrugged, but a blushing smile crept through.

“He came to my room to wake me up this morning, wearing only pajama pants,” her smile grew.

“Ah hah! I see that wicked bitch smile has returned. I'll bet Mr. Harrison is bringing that sexy back!” Faye chimed, leaning against Symone as they both began to rile up before breakfast.

“Well ... he is smexy. I could stand to look at that every day!” she giggled.

“What the hell is smexy?” Faye cocked her head to the side in confusion.

“Smart and sexy. My two favorite traits in a man,” said Symone.

“Thank you. I appreciate the compliment,” a voice said from behind them. The girls turned to see Trevor smiling as he looked Symone up and

down.

“Oh shit! You heard that?” Symone screeched. Her face blood red with embarrassment. Although Faye thought that it was cute how he responded to her friend, Symone was beyond humiliated. She stepped out of line, putting her hand over her face in shame, and walked back toward the glass doors.

“Symone ... wait!” he went after her.

She only stopped right outside of the door, but didn't look at him. He touched her arm, but she pulled away from him.

“Don't be embarrassed Symone. I'm flattered and relieved. I thought that maybe you didn't like my six pack,” he said, getting a smile out of her. She still refused to look at him, but now she was blushing. The movement of her facial muscles from trying to erase the smile on her face was comical. He chuckled and she finally looked at him.

“What's funny?” she asked.

“You make me smile. No matter what you do, I just want to embrace you,” he said and reached out to her again. This time she leaned toward him, with her arms folded across her chest and he cradled her in his frame. She finally relaxed and let her head lay against him, eventually moving her arms from between their bodies, returning the embrace.

“Awe ... how cute!” Faye squealed, standing behind them, with a drink tray and two bags.

They pulled apart and Faye handed Symone one of the bags with her usual bagel and her cup of coffee with a couple of packets of embellishments. Then she handed Trevor a mocha with extra cream, then pulled her cup from the tray and tossed it into the trash can on the side walk.

“Thank you,” said both Symone and Trevor.

“You're quite welcome,” she smiled. “I'm going up to flirt with the security guard to see if I can get him to use his season pass to get me into the

game this weekend. I can see already that I need to find something else to occupy myself with,” she smirked, then walked to her building.

Symone and Trevor were just about to take a seat at one of the patio sets outside of the coffee shop when Trevor's phone rang.

“Yes?”

“Get inside, now!” said Vince.

Trevor grabbed Symone's arm and rushed inside his building, getting greeted by security. She almost dropped her coffee, but quickly regained her grasp.

“What's going on?” he asked Blake.

“You're being watched, and a second male joined the lookout. He looked pretty upset, so we're going to have to change up your routine,” Blake suggested strongly.

“Okay, so what am I supposed to do? I have to get to work ... I'm going to be late,” Symone complained.

“We've contacted the police and gave them a heads up. Smith is going to follow them and hopefully get enough information to put a stop to whatever they're up to or get an arrest.

“You know as well as I do, an arrest doesn't mean much these days. He'll only get out in a couple of days and continue with his plan,” said Trevor.

Hearing Symone gasp at the possibility of never getting her peace back, he changed his position on the matter. “But, we will take care of it. Once we find out who it is and what he's after, we will be better able to establish a plan of action. Right now, all we know is whoever it is, doesn't want you anywhere near me,” Trevor spoke to Symone.

Clearly upset, she responded, “That's a problem easily rectified,” she snapped and stormed off toward the entry door. Trevor and one of the security officers rushed after her, catching up with her on the side walk. She

continued on to her building and went inside, both of them following behind her.

“Trevor ... just go away! Maybe we can both get our lives back, if you would just leave me the hell alone!” she whined.

The elevator doors opened and she stepped inside, pressing the button for the 12th floor. The security officer, grabbed Trevor's arm and pulled at him from further pursuing Symone.

He leaned close to him, “Mr. Harrison, stop!” he growled his whisper. “You're being watched. This may be what you need,” he continued to whisper. He spoke into the mic on his wrist, “She's on her way up. Keep a close eye on her. I want to know immediately when she comes back down.”

“How do you mean ... be what I need?” asked Trevor.

“Just follow me back to your building.”

The two of them went back to the Genesis building, Trevor more hesitantly.

“I have security on her, but we need to talk Mr. Harrison,” said the officer.

They all headed up to Trevor's office for a meeting. He was confident in his security team, but didn't want Symone upset at him. After closing the door behind him, Blake began to explain the plan.

“For now Mr. Harrison, you're going to pretend to not have this thing going on between the two of you. No lunch breaks together, no more riding together, and she has to go back to her place. We need to let whoever is watching her, think she's done with you,” he said.

“But what about her safety? She was being watched at home before she stayed with me. I can't risk her safety,” Trevor complained.

Gloria knocked and opened the door. “Mr. Harrison, your first appointment is here,” she informed him.

“Give me five minutes Gloria,” he said with frustration. She nodded

and closed the door behind her.

“I don't want her left alone for a single second!” he demanded.

For the first time in his life, he felt out of control of his destiny. If it were him this person was after, he could deal with it. He has before, but it's different this time. His heart spiraled out of control for Symone, and he was now distracted in so many ways.

“I've got it all under control. You just take care of your case, and let me take care of Symone. I won't let you down Mr. Harrison, I never have before,” Blake promised.

“You'd better not. There is no room for error with this!” he spat and took a seat behind his desk. “Send in my client on your way out,” he ordered and put his game face back on.

Blake and the other security officer left out, letting the client in as they left.

“Good morning Mr. Harrison,” said Patricia as she took a seat in one of the chairs across the desk from him.

“Good morning Miss Henry,” he breathed, then conjured up a smile.

“You look stressed. Is something wrong?” she asked.

“Everything is going as planned with your case Miss Henry. This shouldn't be a long drawn out trial. There is no way that Mr. Dennis can deny his assets and all account activity has been frozen pending the outcome of this trial. Trust me, he will not drag this out,” Trevor assured her.

She could tell there was more on his mind than her case, but didn't want to intrude, but she didn't want to withhold any information.

“Mr. Harrison?” she started timidly.

He perked up anticipating the question that was apparently on her mind.

“I've received several messages over the weekend,” she revealed.

“Why type of messages?”

“Text messages from an anonymous number. I know it must be Sam or one of his flunkies,” she said with irritation. This news grabbed Trevor's attention immediately. He sat forward and looked into Patricia's eyes.

“What did the messages say?” his demand startled her.

She fumbled to take her phone out of her purse and pulled up the messages. She began to read them one by one.

“You'll never win without your asshole attorney. You're wasting your money on Harrison, he's too busy getting busy. And ... by the way, watch your back.” she finished reading. He was already reaching for her phone, while buzzing his secretary.

“Gloria! Get Mike up here ASAP!” he ended the call.

“Miss Henry, you are supposed to tell me things like this when it happens. I need for you to file a report to the police, and your security will be tightened for you and your children,” he pinched the bridge of his nose, clearly stressed.

Mike came rushing in and without saying a word, Trevor handed him Miss Henry's phone. He did much the same to hers as he did to Symone's, only he placed a tracking device inside the back of this one.

“Wait right here Mike, I have an errand for you to run,” he said. Then he called Blake and asked for tighter security on Miss Henry and her children and informed him in code that she was under the same attack as Symone. He urged her not to take any chances or deviate from the rules he had in place for her with the security.

“Of course Mr. Harrison. They've been with me and my children every step of the way,” she assured him. “If this is Sam texting me, he's not going to make good on his threats. He just wants to scare me into backing down,” she said.

“I don't take chances with anybody, Miss Henry. Mr. Dennis is a desperate man and I'm sure he knows by now some of the charges that will be

brought up against him. Your divorce has turned into more than just a divorce case. Getting you everything you deserve has proved a lot more criminal activity, punishable by time in prison for him. Not only is Mr. Dennis a bigamist, but he will get time for racketeering and tax evasion. He could be going away for a long time. If he is threatening you, he's only sealing his fate with the maximum time he will serve for all of his crimes,” Trevor told her.

Patricia's mouth fell open. She had no idea that her husband was capable of the things Mr. Harrison was telling her. She suddenly felt relieved at the thought of prison time for her husband, but then it quickly faded when she remembered the word *desperate* coming from her attorney. He saw the worry on her face and assured her that if she followed the guidelines set in place for her with security, that she and the children will be fine. She stood and left his office.

Trevor turned to face Mike, “Symone needs a new phone. Preferably a new carrier, private number, and scramble any unknown interference. Block all numbers except mine, Faye's, and her job. No social networking or even emails on this phone until we have this mystery solved,” he ordered and sent Mike on his way.

He was able to get some work done on another case and time had gotten away from him. It wasn't until Gloria came in and asked if he wanted her to order lunch for him. He looked at his watch then stood quickly, closing the file he was reading.

“No. I'll get something while I'm out,” he answered.

He went out of the office behind her and headed down to the lobby and started for the door. He stopped in his tracks when he saw the man that had been watching him and Symone, on his side of the Plaza. He was in front of the coffee shop, sitting at one of the tables facing Symone's building. Trevor noticed one of the undercover security officers down the sidewalk watching the man. Just then, a patrol car passed by slowly, seemingly doing a

routine patrol.

Symone and Faye came out and started down the sidewalk toward the employee parking lot and the watcher got up and followed them. Trevor rushed outside, but was restrained and pulled back inside.

“What the hell, Blake!” he snatched away from him.

“We're on it, Mr. Harrison. It's all a part of the plan. Symone and Faye are both in on it, that's why they are going out for lunch today. We have to get proof that she is being followed and to what extent. We put a tracking device on Faye's car and Symone's new phone. Mike brought it to her just twenty minutes ago and explained the do's and don'ts,” Blake assured Trevor.

“Is she okay now, or is she still upset?”

“She's still upset, but not at you. She promised to call you to assure you she's okay, but her words will be limited. She's not to let on that she's talking to you,” he said, then made a suggestion. “How about we go get lunch?”

“I'm not hungry, I'm worried,” he stated. Then his phone rang, but the number came up private. He answered it. “Hello?”

“It's me, I'm fine, talk to you later,” she said and ended the call.

He looked relieved, yet sad at the same time. “I wonder if she meant it, by talk to me later?” he asked.

“Oh she meant it. Although it will look like she's going home, she will be crashing at your place at her own request. She will go inside her building, but another agent is already there. He will be staying the night there instead of her. She will change clothes in the elevator and be escorted out the emergency door at the back of the building and brought to your place in a rental car. Now, will you relax and let us handle this? It's what you pay us top dollar for,” Blake chastened him.

Trevor did sort of relax, but wouldn't be at peace until he saw her again. They did go to lunch and came back to find that things seemed a little

normal for a change. He engrossed himself in work, hoping to make the day pass faster.

At five o'clock, he looked out of his office window and saw Symone and Faye, and all of their co-workers leaving the building, heading to the parking lot. He also saw undercover security, and additional law enforcement in the Plaza. His nerves were on end, hoping everything went according to plan. He hung around for another hour, then headed to his car. He happily drove home, hoping to see Symone already there and relaxed after this very stressful day.

When the valet took his car, Trevor entered the Bravo Plaza expecting to see Howard the doorman, but there was someone new.

“Where's Howard?” he asked the doorman.

“He's out sick, sir. I'm only here for the day,” the guy explained.

“Oh ... okay,” said Trevor.

He walked over to the receptionist's desk and asked her what happened to Howard.

“He called in sick. Said it was a stomach bug, but he was taking care of it. He'll be back tomorrow,” she assured him.

Sighing in relief, Trevor headed up to his condo and went inside. It was quiet and undisturbed. He went to the guest room and found it empty, and his shoulders dropped. He sat his brief case on the sofa and headed into his bathroom to shower and get comfortable. He had no way of contacting Symone since her number came up private, and no one had given it to him yet. When he entered his bedroom, he was surprised by Symone sitting at the foot of his bed, with her legs dangling off the edge.

“Looking for me?” she smiled.

He almost ran to her, but calmed himself. He approached her cautiously, hoping this meant they could have another good night together.

“Are you okay?” he asked her.

“Just peachy,” she said sarcastically. “I figured since you spent all night in my room talking me to death, I would return the favor. We have some business to discuss?” she raised her brows.

He smiled and gave his word to be quick with his shower and join her. She offered to order room service and he agreed, so she took it upon herself to choose dinner. Trevor made good on his word and joined her in no time.

Now refreshed and relaxed, he held out his arms for her and she conformed. The feeling was so comforting to Symone, that she hadn't realized how much she wanted to be in a man's arms. Not just any man's, but Trevor's. The way he held her felt like a warm cup of coffee in the shelter from freezing rain. It was home.

The doorbell rang, followed by a gentle knock at the door. Symone hesitantly pulled away, and let Trevor answer the door. It was room service, and the food smelled delicious when he opened the door. The waiter gave Trevor the eye, wondering why he had dinner for two.

“So ... Mr. Harrison,” he smiled slyly. “I guess you have company?” he continued to smirk at the guilty look on Trevor's face. He brought in the food cart as he normally would and began setting up the dining room table.

“Yes, I do” he followed. “Thank you for being so prompt Liam. Everything looks and smells wonderful,” said Trevor.

His smile hardly containable. He handed Liam a tip and just before he made it to the door, Symone appeared and stood next to Trevor. Liam's jaw dropped dramatically and the smile on his face was a combination of shock and surprise. He teasingly gave Trevor the eye, then smiled at Symone, and turned to leave quickly. He knew that this woman had to be special to be so close to Mr. Harrison. The only other women ever seen in his condo were his mom and his secretary.

After closing the door behind Liam, Trevor took Symone's hand and

led her to the dining room and pulled out a chair for her. He then sat at the end of the table where they were each on the corner close to each other.

“How was your day?” he asked as they began to eat.

Symone had just stuck a fork full of pasta into her mouth and had to rush to chew it before speaking. The look of timidity as she quickly and discretely made sure to not have food stuck in her teeth when she spoke, was comical to Trevor. He chuckled a little, but looked away to give her the opportunity to get herself together.

“It was fine. Same as usual,” she shrugged. “And yours?” she caught him off guard, causing him to choke as he was in the middle of swallowing when her question was asked. He couldn't help but to laugh again, and she laughed at him in return.

“I had a lot to deal with. Two clients with major cases stopped by for routine visits to update additional information. But, in all honesty, I ... missed you. It was agony not getting the opportunity to aggravate and annoy you and get my daily cussin. The way you call me jackass, is so refreshing,” he chuckled and she burst into laughter. The awkwardness seemed to melt away, and their night could only get better.

Once dinner was over, they went into the living room and took seats next to one another and began discussing a business plan that would allow Symone to get a great start on her Interior Design business, while letting Trevor invest his personal funds, allowing him to build a separate business portfolio from the firm. By the end of the meeting they had a plan, and to assure Symone that he would never be able to take control or access her business accounts without her permission, he gave his word to have a contract drawn up stating so, giving her full and complete ownership of the business. He would only be a silent partner backing her financially, and using his connections to get her contracts with companies with an all access pass to the World Trade Center. A place that only established designers can shop in

and bring their clients.

Symone was ecstatic and could not wait until Saturday, the day they would shop for her store space. Her outlook on life was growing positive even with all the terrorist texts she's received. It had gotten late and they both decided to head off to bed. Giving each other another long embrace, they parted ways for the night.

Lying in bed, Symone felt battled with herself on whether she was getting in over her head with Trevor. Everything felt right, but her mind was constantly reminding her of how great Brent was to her until that one fateful day. She shivered at the memory and continued to look at all the differences between Brent and Trevor. Brent was a construction worker, who made a good living. He was always looking for the next hustle and ways to start his own remodeling business. Trevor, is already established with his own firm and is part owner of several other businesses that were all quite successful. One needed money to get a start, the other has more money than he knew what to do with. No, there was no reason for her to fear partnering up with Trevor. The only thing he wants from her, he has made abundantly clear, and that's to be with her.

Meanwhile in Trevor's bedroom, he was thinking of how much he wanted to make Symone happy and protect her from this person that is causing her so much grief. His plate was full and he intended on distributing his responsibilities accordingly. Right now, all he wanted to do was go to sleep remembering her in his arms. He closed his eyes with that thought being the last thought and fell asleep.

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