



BODY GUARD

STELLA ANDREWS

A TWISTED ROMANCE

Bodyguard

By

Stella Andrews





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18+

Lucy

Sighing, I spin the cell in my hands and try to focus on a solution. I'm at a point in my life where I never wanted to be - backed in a corner with no place to go.

I'm brought back to the present by a cheery, "I thought you could use another, honey."

The empty mug before me is miraculously full again and I look up and smile. "Thanks, Donna, you're an Angel."

She cocks her head to one side and looks thoughtful.

"You wanna talk about it? You know I'm a good listener."

Sighing heavily, I grasp the mug and say sadly, "Talking about it won't help this time, Donna. This is a problem that won't go away and I'm fast running out of options."

She throws me a hard look. "Listen, honey. You've been sitting here for close on one hour. Three times I've filled that mug and yet you appear to be no further forward than when you sat down. Sometimes sharing a problem can make it seem less of one."

She looks around and then sits opposite me in the booth I've taken up residence in for the last hour.

"Come on, as I said, I'm a good listener and there's not a lot else to do around here. This place isn't exactly busting at the seams."

A small smile escapes me as I sit back in the seat and look at her sadly. "You ever wish you could turn back time, Donna?"

She laughs. "After a lifetime of regrets, sure I do. Trouble is, it doesn't work that way. You just have to face the mess you've made head-on and take the easiest road out."

The aching ball of despair in the pit of my stomach tightens and reminds me once again of the mess I'm in. I smile shakily. "Unfortunately, the road out of my problems is an extremely bumpy one. One of the most treacherous ones I've ever faced and all the lonelier because I have no one to travel with."

Donna fixes me with a hard look. "Listen to me, Lucy Armstrong. In all the years I've known you I've never met a stronger woman. Don't say it's all been a front because I don't believe you. If anyone can face this, it's you. Don't let the fear take hold and face it head-on. That's my advice, and you'd be advised to take it."

She smiles and then I see her eyes widen as she looks past me.

"For the love of Jesus, he has answered my prayers."

She scrambles to her feet in a hurry and as I look around, I can see why. The man that's just walked in is something else. Tall, rough and dangerous and clad completely in leather and he fills the place with the air of the invincible. He looks around him with menace and warns of

danger if approached. I absolutely can't take my eyes off him as he scans the room as if looking for something.

Donna is out of the gate like a bull in a rodeo. She races over to him and I'm guessing would tackle anybody between them to the ground. She is on a mission and despite myself, I grin.

I watch with interest as she reaches him and he looks at her and winks. I can't hear what he says but by the looks of her she's about to combust on the spot.

Then they turn and look in my direction and I see the envy in her eyes and the interest in his.

He holds my eyes from across the room and I squirm inside. My breath deserts me as I struggle to inflate my lungs and my world stills as he heads toward me, not breaking eye contact for a minute.

My head starts reeling as he bears down on me. This is it - my time is up. I know he has come for me - the trouble is... who sent him?

Jet

Four fucking days I've ridden with only my thoughts to keep me company. I'm tired, pissed and hungry enough to kill my own food. Fuck, Ryder. I've no idea why he chose to send me on some sort of babysitting duty but whatever it is he owes me big time. I never questioned it though why would I? He's the President and nobody ever asks why he does anything. I owe him my life and I would piss gold if he asked me. It doesn't make me like him though. He's a hard bastard that gives nothing away. Whatever this is for I won't mess up because when you're a Reaper, you take it more seriously than you do your own life.

Yes, that's me, Jet Cunningham. Ex-Navy Seal and now a fully-fledged member of the Twisted Reapers MC. Working alongside my brothers to do the government's dirty work behind the scenes.

Shaking my thoughts away I focus on the girl I've come to see. My mood improves slightly as I see she's kinda easy on the eye. Her eyes watch me approach blazing with fire. The cocky angle she holds her head tells me she's no pushover, and she sits straight and watches me with a hard expression. She knows I'm here for her and is facing me down like the enemy she thinks I am.

All I know is this little lady is covering for a friend who's upset the local mob and she is now the one in the line of fire.

As I draw near, I sense the animosity surrounding her and yet see the fear behind the challenge in her eyes. She is scared and yet presents a picture of a hard woman who takes no shit. She is perfect.

Long dark hair that falls to her shoulders in wavy curls. Dark brown eyes that sparkle with anger and lips that are full and begging to be devoured, set into a hard line. There is no warmth coming from this woman, just anger and my cock stirs as it wakes up and sees the interest before it. I smirk to myself. Maybe this won't be such a bad deal after all.

By the time I reach her an unspoken conversation has passed between us. She is on the defensive and wary of me. I, on the other hand, have a new interest in my task. Whatever her problem it won't matter to me. I'll deal with it like I do everything. I'll go in hard and fast and wreak devastation. Jet by name and Jet by nature. I don't mess around and she will be no exception.

She looks up as I tower above her before sliding into the seat opposite.

She says nothing, just raises her eyes and then the mug of coffee in her grasp to her lips. The silence sits between us like a shield and I lean back and fix her with a hard look.

"Lucy Armstrong?"

She says nothing.

Smirking, I lean forward until my face is inches from hers.

“Pleased to meet you, darlin’. Now, you can stay silent all you want, in fact, I would probably prefer that. Now listen up and listen good. I’ve been sent here by your friend Sydney. She feels you need a little protection while she’s gone and guess who’s the lucky guy?”

I grin as her eyes widen and she sets the mug down. She says in a whisper, “Sydney sent you?”

I don’t miss the relief enter her eyes and watch her shoulders sag a little. She looks at me with a new interest and says in a low voice. “What do you know?”

Leaning back, I shrug. “Enough. You can fill me in on the details later. What I need now is enough food to feed a small army.”

I click my fingers and the server rushes over. I smirk as Lucy’s eyes narrow and she hisses, “Don’t you have any manners?”

Laughing softly, I shake my head. “I don’t need manners darlin’. Never have done and probably never will. I get what I want without them.”

As if proving my point Donna smiles at me like a puppy dog with its tongue hanging out.

“What can I get you, honey?”

Fixing her with my brightest smile I order the works and watch as she scurries away eager to get back.

Lucy just glares at me and says in a hard voice. “I don’t know who you are or why the fuck you’re really here but you will learn some manners and fast. Donna deserves some respect and you don’t get to click your fingers and order her around like a slave. How dare you waltz in here and act like you own the joint? You may have been sent here to help, but we are gonna have a mighty problem if you don’t sort your shit out.”

She folds her arms and looks at me with such a disapproving look my cock strains at the leash. Fuck me, this woman’s impressive. I take a moment to picture the moment when I bend her over and show her how impressive I can be. I will savor the different look in her eyes when she realizes what I can do. Yes, this job has just got interesting. As challenges go, I am looking at a very attractive one and can’t wait to get started.

For the next thirty minutes, we sit in stony silence. I concentrate re-fueling my body and Lucy stares at me with the cold, hard look of disapproval that just makes me even more interested. She offers no polite conversation and doesn’t ask any questions. Donna fills her mug twice and she just watches me eat as she devours more caffeine than a body can stand.

Pushing my plate away I nod toward her mug. “You’ve got quite a habit there.”

Shrugging, she sets the mug down. “What are you, the health police?”

I reach for the glass of water nearby and down it one. “Just saying. Maybe if you lowered the levels of toxins in your system, you could deal with things better.”

She looks at me incredulously. “Says the man who’s just eaten a meal with absolutely no health benefits whatsoever. Maybe you should practice what you preach before sitting in judgment on the rest of us.”

Smirking, I click my fingers and relish the fact her mouth tightens and her eyes flash with fire as Donna rushes over. “What can I get you, honey?”

Fixing her with a wicked grin, I wink. “Just the check, darlin’. Add Lucy’s millions of coffees to it and I’ll see if the bank will honor it.”

Donna chuckles and Lucy looks as if she wants to kill me barehanded. As Donna walks away, she says angrily. “Ok, you’ve had your fun, but it ends here. If Sydney did send you then god only knows why? Thanks, but no thanks. I think I’d rather face my problems on my own if that’s ok with you? Now, if you’ll excuse me?”

She stands to leave and I reach out and grasp her arm, pulling her roughly down into her seat. She tries to pull away but I hold on to her fast as I say in a low voice, “Non-negotiable, darlin’. Whether you like it or not, you’re stuck with me. Let’s just say I’m your new best friend. Where you go, I go. Where you live, I now live. I work with you and I eat with you. It’s your choice whether I sleep with you.”

She pulls away and I note the flush in her cheeks and the brightness in her eyes. For all her front she’s battling with her own desires and I smirk to myself. What can I say, I have this effect on women and she appears to be no exception? However, she’s a strong woman and may be harder to crack than most. I’m guessing that she isn’t one to give into her desires when her head tells her otherwise. This should be fun.

She grits her teeth and snarls.

“Then let me tell you, *darlin’*, I’m not the pushover you think I am. Like I said before, thanks, but no thanks. Now run along and head back the way you came. I think I’d rather face my problems than you every day. I’m not your usual damsel in distress and you are certainly no knight in shining armor. So, like I said, run along now like a good little soldier and leave me to figure things out on my own.”

She throws \$10 on the table and grabs her purse. Then without a backward glance she walks quickly away.

Sighing, I throw \$50 on the table and wink at Donna as I follow her outside.

Lucy

What the fuck was that? I am so angry. In fact, I am beyond angry, I'm furious. How dare that creep strut in there and try to order me around? I can't believe that Sydney would send such a man to help me.

The legs that carry me outside are shaky yet determined. Yes, I need help and yes, I'm heading for shit creek. But that man... well, let's just say he has lit something in me that I'm resisting with everything I've got. He is rough, crude and hard and so damn sexy it hurts to look at him. That's why I stormed out. I have no time for men like him in my life... not anymore.

"Going somewhere, Lucy."

I'm brought back to my harsh reality as I hear the soft voice of an assassin. My heart clenches and my breath deserts me for the second time as I begin to shake inside. He's here.

Raising my eyes, I see him waiting. Emilio D'Angelo. Michael's Hench man and a cold-blooded killer.

He's leaning against the door of his usual black car watching me through a hooded expression. My legs start to shake as I see the determination in his eyes.

He moves aside and opens the back door.

"Step inside my office. You have a meeting to attend."

I swallow—hard.

My first instinct is to run.

My second instinct is to brave it out.

My third instinct is to crumble.

He raises his eyes as I take the second and face him snarling, "I'm going nowhere with you. If he wants to see me, he can meet me here after class."

I swallow as I see his hand move to his left-hand side under his coat and see the flash of steel reveal itself. He regards me coolly and says in a hard voice.

"Get in the car, Lucy."

The tears have frozen in fear as I wildly think of a way out of this. However, even I'm not that stupid. Nobody messes with Michael and his mob. Who do I think I am even trying to? Maybe it's best just to try to get this over with and brave it out some other way. Donna's right, it's time to face this fear head on and end it once and for all.

Sighing, I step toward the car just as a strong hand grabs my arm and growls, "Going somewhere, darlin'?"

I am pulled back roughly and stumble as I'm tucked behind the huge body of the biker. A little part of me feels angry that he followed me and yet the rest of me feels huge relief that he did. However, there's a part of me that's scared for him because he doesn't know what he's just done.

I hear a low, hard voice say, “And you are...?”

I shiver inside at the sound of the emotionless voice coming from Emilio.

The man I’ve just met answers in a voice devoid of anything. No fear, no warmth, no shit. “I’m your worst nightmare so run back to your keeper and tell him to stay away from Lucy. She’s protected and if you try to get to her, you’ll have to come through me first.”

I think I hold my breath. I am fully waiting for the bullet to hit my protector square in the head as the silence surrounds me like a choking fog.

Then another voice joins the party and I recognize it immediately. Clara Santobello.

“Is there a problem here, Emilio?”

I peer around the body of my protector and see her standing there in all her glory. Clara Santobello, Michael’s wife and the hardest woman I’ve ever met. She’s one of the most beautiful women I know yet the emptiest. When she looks at you her eyes are devoid of any emotion and there’s a weariness and resignation to her that tells of a hard life spent with an even harder man.

She is holding the hands of her two children. Two gorgeous little girls who must be around 3 and 5. Sophia and Maria are in Sydney’s dance class which is exactly where I should be now. Sydney has built up this business from scratch and asked me to cover for her while she took off to find her real parents. The trouble is, she was lined up to dance in Michael’s club and he’s angry she didn’t show up. Nobody runs out on him and now he’s after me.

The girls see me and look at me with the eyes of the innocent. Sophia cries, “Mommy, look it’s Lucy.”

Clara nods and turns to Emilio and says coldly, “I said, is there a problem here?”

Emilio answers with resignation. “No, Mrs. Santobello.”

She turns to me and says briskly, “We will walk with you to class, Lucy. I need to discuss the girl’s progress with you.”

The relief hits me as I venture out from behind the mountain of leather hiding me from view. Taking a deep breath, I fix them with my brightest smile that I can only hope blinds them from seeing the fear in my heart.

“Of course. What do you want to know?”

I daren’t look at the two men who watch us leave and hope they can’t hear my thumping heart as we walk toward the dance studio across the street. I hope my protector knows his shit because when you upset the local mob there’s only ever one outcome.

Maybe it’s because I feel I owe him, or maybe it’s for another reason known only to my traitorous libido, but I turn and say sharply, “Well... are you gonna stand there all day. We have a class to attend.”

The smirk on his face and the promise in his eyes makes me immediately regret my words. He knows he affects me and is loving every minute of it.

He nods to Emilio coolly and follows us to the studio.

Well, that was interesting. That little scene told me everything I needed to know and more. It appears that Ryder was right to send me here. With guys like that running the show nobody stands a hope in hell of leading a normal life.

As I follow the two women, I take a moment to admire the sight of Lucy's ass wiggling before me clad in Lycra and looking so damn sexy I want to push her against the nearest wall and make her mine. Then there's the woman, Mrs. Santobello. Strong, beautiful and broken. The kind I'm used to and the sort of woman that stirs up the beast in me as I try to give them their life back. Two strong women who are yet weak in the most important of ways. I saw it all in that brief exchange and it makes me madder than hell.

They are talking in low voices as the girls skip in front of them. My heart stirs as I see the angelic faces of the two pretty girls who don't have a care in the world. They don't know about the harsh reality of their privileged life. They don't know their father's a monster and their mother dead inside. They are happy and cherished and only time and knowledge will rip that glow from their hearts and replace it with ice.

This is an interesting assignment and if I'm to succeed, I know what I have to do.

We head toward the dance studio and I look around with interest as we move inside. While Mrs. Santobello ushers her kids inside the studio, Lucy turns and says harshly, "You may as well wait here until Emilio leaves. I wouldn't want your death on my conscience."

She points to a couch in the corner and makes to follow the others. Reaching out, I grab her arm and spin her around to face me.

She gasps and I relish the look in her eyes before she replaces it with anger and snarls, "Let go of me."

Smirking, I pull her toward me and when she's only centimeters from my face whisper, "I ain't going nowhere, honey and the sooner you accept that the better. I'm your bodyguard whether you like it or not and if anyone wants you, they have to get through me first."

Her breath hitches and I see the pain in her eyes as she realizes she doesn't have a choice. I've seen that look countless times before. A cornered animal with no place to run facing the predator head on. This time I'm her only way out and she knows it. Then she rallies and I see the fight enter her soul as she snarls, "Ok, fine. Have it your way but this will be by my rules. As soon as we finish up here, I'll lay them down. Until then, keep yourself out of trouble and wait here and try not to scare the children."

She pulls sharply away and storms into what must be the studio leaving me grinning inside like a Cheshire cat. Yes, this mission is interesting me in so many ways. I love a good fight and she promises to be worth the effort.

As instructed, I wait patiently as the studio fills up with dozens of pampered little girls. Their mothers watch me with interest but I say nothing. I plaster indifference on my face and pointedly ignore every last one of them. I don't miss the curiosity in their eyes and the interest in their

bodies. Women who have it all and yet always want more. Rich, spoiled housewives with nothing better to do than shop and fuck the hired help. There are no strings attached and they do it purely to scratch an itch.

By the time the last one leaves I'm glad of it. Alone at last with time to contemplate the situation I'm in. The guy, Emilio was packing heat and wouldn't hesitate to use it. It was only his boss's wife and kids who saved us this time. I'm not stupid and recognize a cold-blooded killer when I see one. Hell, I am one and as they say, 'It takes one to know one.' It will be interesting to see which one of us is the better at his job.

The door opens once again and as I look up, I see Mrs. Santobello looking at me with interest. Not the usual interest of a woman who desires a man. The interest of a woman with a lot on her mind.

She nods coolly and says in a hard voice, "You're not from these parts."

I nod. "Stating the obvious, darlin', you're better than that."

She nods and leans against the wall with the ease of a woman who does whatever she wants.

She says bluntly, "Word of advice, biker, leave town now while you still can. If my husband doesn't get you first the local MC will."

Leaning back, I smirk and raise my eyes. "What if I don't?"

She smiles slightly. "We both know what you'll be facing; I don't need to spell it out for you. Do yourself a favor and get out while you can. My husband's not known for his patience and his temper is something I can do without this week."

Shrugging, I cross my arms behind my head and laugh softly, "Brings his temper home, does he?"

She says nothing but I see a spark of interest that wasn't there before. Then she says with a little more warmth, "You have no idea, do you?"

I sigh heavily. "Listen, darlin', I've seen all of this a hundred times before. Small town hard man throwing his weight around and making himself king. He doesn't scare me and neither does the local MC. You think I'm scared of them, well, I'm not. What I deal with on a daily basis would scare those idiots shitless. So, maybe you should run along and warn them against me because I'm going nowhere until I know Lucy's safe from the soulless idiot you call a husband."

To her credit his wife just looks curious. She moves across and sits beside me on the couch and looks deep into my eyes before saying in a low voice. "I take it all back, biker. Now I'm interested. Maybe you should stick around and see this out. Maybe you will be more useful than I first thought and I can put some business your way."

She leans in and whispers, "Strictly between the two of us, of course."

I feel her breath on my face and almost taste the desperation in the air as she whispers, "I need a man like you. A man who knows his stuff and has no fear. A man who takes what he wants and screw the consequences. A man who isn't afraid to bend the rules to get what he wants and a man who may, just may, enjoy a little female company to sweeten the deal."

She bats her eyes and says huskily, "So, what do you say, biker. How do fancy going into an um... private arrangement with me?"

Just for a moment I say nothing and the question hangs in the air desperate to connect with the right answer. It all makes sense as I see the confident woman suddenly looking a little unsure as

she waits for her words to take effect. A thousand reasons why I should decline surround the spoken words and I don't miss the attractive proposition she has thrown my way.

Clara Santobello is an impressive woman and extremely easy on the eye. It may be fun to indulge in a private arrangement with this woman but I know what the motive is. Freedom. She wants out from her loveless marriage and is looking for a fall guy. Someone to do her dirty work while she remains squeaky clean. She wants a hit man to rid her of the vermin in her life and isn't afraid to pay whatever the price to get it. Yes, I've seen this all before. She is no different to any other unfortunate wife trapped in a gold lined prison with a monster. She has hit me in my weakest spot because I thrive on ridding the innocent from their problems.

I lean forward until our mouths almost touch and she shifts closer. Moving past her willing lips I whisper in her ear, "I'm not for hire, darlin'. Maybe you should look elsewhere."

The door opens as I pull back and I hear a harsh voice say, "Jet, a word if it's not too much trouble."

As I look up, I see the fury blazing from Lucy's eyes as she watches us pull apart. Hiding the broad smile threatening to break, I nod and move across the room.

She looks at Mrs. Santobello and says roughly, "You may wait if you prefer, Mrs. Santobello but you may be more comfortable across the road. There isn't much here to entertain you while you wait and they serve a mean cocktail."

Mrs. Santobello stands and nods blankly.

"No, It's fine. I have errands to run and will be back on the hour. Look after yourself, Lucy. I would hate the girls to lose yet another dance teacher in the space of two weeks. Most unsettling for them, wouldn't you agree?"

Without waiting for an answer, she leaves a whole load of unspoken promises behind her.

Lucy

I'm not even sure why I came out of the studio but when I saw the two of them bent so close together, something happened to me inside. It was like a bolt of lightning, a sharp pain to my heart and the realization that this man affects me in the most destructive of ways.

I feel angry at myself more than him which is why I totally overreacted and laid my heart bare for him to gloat over. I saw the smirk on his face as he realized the anger I directed at them was born from jealousy. Damn him and damn her. I want my heart back before it gets damaged beyond repair—again.

So, I drag him into the little office around the back and point to the chair behind the desk, hissing, "Sit there and stay away from the customers. Do you have a death wish or something?"

He smirks in that sexy way he has that makes my legs shake and my heart beat faster. He towers above me and fills the small office with his ego sucking all the air and reasoning out as he breathes. Then he sits on the edge of the desk and says in a low sexy voice, "Careful, darlin'. Anyone would think you're beginning to care a little."

Rolling my eyes, I step back a little, a fact that doesn't go unnoticed by the ego maniac before me as he smirks again, making my blood boil.

"For your information, the only way you affect me is in the way I want you out of my life. I didn't ask you to come here, and I didn't ask you to stick around. Despite what you've heard I have people I can turn to and am more than capable of looking after myself. That little stunt you pulled could get you killed. Clara Santobello is like a forest fire around here. You light the spark and the flames will burn out of control destroying everything in its path. If you like to live dangerously be my guest. However, I have a job to do here and just want to keep this business going for the only friend I care about and keep myself out of trouble at the same time. So, do me a favor and hide out here until she's gone and when these kids have gone home, we can discuss your future."

He laughs softly and raises his eyes. "My future...?"

Clearing my throat, I look at him with a hard expression. "Yes, your future. Like I said before if you insist on sticking around there will be ground rules. I don't let just anyone into my life and if that's going to be you, for however long that may be, there will be rules that must never be broken."

I speak fast to distract myself from the fact that close up this man is even more impressive than I first thought. I can't tear my eyes away from the sparkling eyes that are looking at me with amusement. The sexy mouth that's set in an amused line is calling to my own and the hard body clad in leather straining against the fabric I want to rip off with my bare hands.

This man is something else and I curse Sydney for sending him here. He is the last thing I need in my life right now and it's that fact that drives my anger. So, without another word, I spin on my heels and head back to class. I need this time to think about what the heck I'm going to do with him.

By the time the class finishes, my mind is fucked. Everything rushes around it and makes no sense. On the one hand, I need to honor my promise and keep this studio ticking over before Sydney returns. Then, on the other I need to protect myself. Michael wants a dancer, and he wants Sydney. In her absence I'm the alternative and I'd rather pull my own fingernails out than dance in his seedy joint. The Starlight club is the place a mother would warn her daughter about. The men that pass through its doors have only one thing on their mind - the women inside. These women dance and flaunt their bodies for the green stuff and depending on their level of desperation they do more than just dance. Am I really that woman? Could I lower myself to protect a friend by destroying my own standards? Of course not. I know it's not me but this isn't my call. Regardless of the reason I'm in this situation, it's no longer about Sydney. Michael won't want to lose face and wants to prove a point. Nobody runs out on him when he calls and this is his way of proving a point. He won't make this easy on me—quite the contrary. The longer I resist, the harder it will be.

Then there's the biker. Hot, dangerous, sexy and so damn infuriating in every way possible. Cocky and arrogant and so sure of himself it brings out the beast in me. I am determined to resist his charms because then I would be just like every other stupid woman that falls for his hero act. He is so sure of himself and I want to cut him down and show him that not every woman is the sure thing he's used to.

Even Clara Santobello apparently can't resist him. I saw the way she looked at him and the way her eyes flashed when I interrupted them. I didn't miss the veiled threat in her words as she left. Great, now I have two Santobellos gunning for me and I've made a bad situation a whole lot worse. She wants Jet for her own sick reasons and I've just thrown a spanner in her plans. Great. Way to go, Lucy, step up and grab the prize as the town fool.

As the door closes on the last child, I take a deep breath. Time to lay down some rules I already want to break a hundred times over. When will I ever learn?

Jet

As I wait, I think long and hard about this crazy situation. These women are something else. I'm used to women and their crazy ways. Hell, I live with enough of them. Mainly whores who like the protection we offer them. They get to lay with a hard biker in exchange for a protected life and the comforts only we can offer them. Some of the guys have old ladies and they appear happy with that. A familiar body to come home to every night after a hard day in the field. I say that lightly because what we do would make a General weep.

We do the government's dirty work and operate outside of the law and rid the country of those it can't deal with legally. We remove the threat from our way of life for the good of the people, but when you deal with the lowest of the low, you bear the scars. These people are scum and we are no better. We fight fire with fire and the only escape from the torment it delivers is to fuck everything that moves when we return and drown the memories in the whiskey bottle.

We are well paid for our sins but pay a heavy price. Ex-Navy Seals for the most part and other military personnel. Ex-cops and criminals wanting to do better make up our fucked-up family.

All hiding behind the steel doors of The Twisted Reapers MC. Bikers to the outside world that nobody wants to know. We live with our own kind inside our steel-clad prison with a hard-bastard presiding over us.

Ryder King—the President, is a man with no feeling and no morals. The only people he appears to care about are his daughter and wife, Ashton. When he took her for his old lady, it was like a grenade thrown into the room. A frightened, vulnerable, hot as hell package, delivered to us by her brother one fine day. As soon as he laid eyes on her, she was his. She didn't have a choice, and we were warned off her. Look but don't touch and only look if you have a death wish. Nobody messes with Ryder which is why I find myself in this strange situation. Ashton's brother came for Sydney and made the call. I was just the unlucky one on hand at the time to help out. As I think about Lucy, I smile inside. As it happens—lucky me!

The door opens, and she comes into the room. Her sexy mouth is set into a hard line and her eyes flash with fire. My cock jumps to attention as it sees what's coming. Man, this woman's impressive and I'm more interested in her the more time ticks by.

She folds her arms and says roughly, "Ok, this is how it is. You can come back with me and stay in Sydney's room until this blows over. Keep yourself to yourself and check the cocky attitude. If Michael comes calling, I'll deal with it in my own way. There will be no macho foolishness which will only add gasoline to an already lit fire. You will remember your manners and clean up after yourself. I'm not here to wait on you and I'd appreciate you respecting my home and picking up after yourself. You can accompany me to and from work but aside from that you can amuse yourself. Do I make myself clear?"

I just stare at her and try to stop myself from laughing out loud. Man, this woman is something else. I've never seen the like of her before. The trouble is, I love a challenge, and she has just thrown out an extremely desirable one. For all her talk we both know what's gonna happen here. I can see it in the rise and fall of her chest as she breathes a little faster. I see the flash of desire in her eyes as she fights it with all she's got and I see the lick of her lips as she pictures mine on them. Yes, this will be interesting and I love a challenge. She is about to discover that I never back down until I have the win under my belt.

So, I just nod coolly and pull on my jacket. "Have it your way, darlin'. I'm just here to do a job, nothing else."

As I follow her outside, I enjoy the view. Man, that ass is mine and I will thoroughly enjoy the fight to claim it.

We head outside and she makes to walk toward a small car parked nearby. Grabbing hold of her arm, I pull her back and nod toward my bike parked opposite. "Not today, darlin', you ride with me."

Her eyes widen as she sees the monster waiting for us. As bikes go this one's impressive. It gives me a hard on just looking at it. This bike is my one true love and there isn't a more splendid sight. The thought of Lucy sitting astride it with her arms wrapped around me drives every fantasy I've ever had and riding in the little green car doesn't quite cut the same fantasy.

She gasps and says breathlessly, "You have got to be kidding."

Shaking my head, I pull her over to it and throw her a helmet. "Non-negotiable. If they're after you this bike will outrun any car they drive. They won't be looking for you on the back of it and so is the best method of transport we have."

However, Lucy's a tough nut to crack and throws the helmet back. "Well, I'll take my chances. I'm not leaving my car here overnight. Who knows what damage I'll find in the morning. I don't do bikes and I don't do bikers, ok? You can follow me if you insist but you're on your own on that beast."

She stands facing me with her hands on her hips, her eyes daring me to object. As I look past her, I take in the neighborhood. Clean, respectable and not the sort that would attract the rougher type. However, she does have a point about the car. It may be best if she drives it home and leaves it where it's safe. This particular battle could wait for another day so I just nod and give her the victory she craves. "Ok, have it your way. I'll follow you home."

She nods and spins on her heels and heads to her car and I don't take my eyes off her for a minute. This girl is different to those I've met before. Vulnerable, broken and yet with steel running through her veins all wrapped up in a hot little package. She is no pushover which attracts me more than it should. We both know those rules of hers are going to be broken so damned quickly the ink won't even dry on them.

It's that thought that keeps me company on the ride to her apartment. As roomies go, I've got me a good one.

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