

## 10. SCORPIO RISING

“Jack, I found her. I should say that Nick found her for me. But it is her. She has the money. At least most of it.”

“What are you going to do?”

“Do you want me to kill her?”

“I want you to get the money. Then we’ll figure out what to do with her. I need you to take care of it for me.”

“Nick is going to help me.”

I hang up the phone. She will suspect nothing. She has been too trusting.

Jimmy has been waiting too find her. He is glad that our work paid off. We know that she would go as far north as she could until it became just too cold. DC seemed like a likely place. She also didn’t think that we’d try too hard to find her. Otherwise, she might have hid out West.

She asks me to her place for dinner. I tell Nick nothing about what is going on. Her apartment feels lived in. There are photos and paintings on the wall.

“Did you do these photos?”

“The ones that I’m not in. Do you like them?”

“They’re great.”

She is yelling at me from the kitchen. I continue to pace around looking at things.

“Did you say that you took a photo class?”

“No, I had a friend who had a darkroom. It all started from that.”

“These shots of you look great. You look like a model.”

“Don’t say that. That’s stupid.”

“You do.”

“That is not going to get you a better seat at dinner.”

“I didn’t know that there were special seats.”

“There aren’t. But if there were, you wouldn’t get one.”

“You have a lot of art here. You moved it all with you.”

“Yeah. Do you ever feel that life is just passing by so quickly?”

“Why do you say that?”

“Each day, I feel like I am losing part of myself. I don’t know how to get it back.”

“Hold your breath.”

“That doesn’t work, silly.”

“I tried to do some photos. I took some good pictures. But I really don’t have the time or the patience to learn anything else about it. I like words. I can mold them to say what I want.”

“I’m sure that you can.”

“Really. I not trying to be a smart ass.”

She screams louder, “Come in here. I cut myself. Do you want to see my blood?”

I walk in the kitchen, “Of course not.”

She is running her hand under the water. “I love to bleed. It gives me relief.”

“You don’t cut yourself for fun, do you?”

“No, nothing like that. I’m actually afraid of sharp objects. But I’m just fascinated by my

own blood. The deep color.”

“That could be a disease.”

“Are you serious?”

“No, I’m kidding you. But I am sure that you’re a vampire.”

“You have a weird sense of humor.”

“At least I try to laugh.”

She sticks out her finger, “Do you want to suck on it?”

“No, why?”

“I’m just testing you. If you had said yes, I might have asked to leave.”

“Just asking could be grounds to leave.”

“Do you really want to go?”

“Not until after I eat. What are we having?”

“It’s a surprise. It will be until after you swallow it.”

“I’m hungry.”

“It’s almost ready.”

I end up stuffing myself like a glutton on her special shrimp and pasta dish.

“What’s coming next?”

“I think we’ll mount you on the wall.”

“That was fantastic. I can hardly move.”

“Just wait for dessert.”

I finish it up with mounds of strawberry shortcake, dripping with whipped cream.

“Wallace, what could be better than that?”

“You stuffed in whipped cream.”

As I sat there full to the gills, I wonder if she suspects anything of my purpose here.

“The most wonderful thing in life is when you can just close the door on your past. Act like it doesn’t exist at all.”

She is seeming very philosophical. What is her actual motivation?

“Wallace, I have all this money. I should quit living in squalor.”

Does this mean that I should make my move immediately. Jimmy has nothing more to say to me. I have my orders. If I hit her now, it would be perfect. She would have fed me and pow, it would all be over. Why am I delaying?

She looks ready to kiss me. I am already blitzed from too much wine. To drunk to kill. To trashed to kiss. I feel like I am going to pass out. I have failed for the time being. But she isn’t going anywhere.”

“I really should get going.”

“We have only begun to fight!”

“Don’t tell me that there is another course.”

“Are you going to leave me to clean up.”

“The clean up is the best part.”

I am falling over as I carry the dishes to the kitchen. Only her humor can get me through this.

“You wash and I dry, Wallace.”

“I don’t feel very dry.”

“That’s why you wash.”

I make it through all the way to the last pan. I am so tired that I can barely stand.”

“Stay here. You can sleep on the couch.”

“I have to lecture tomorrow early. We’ll get together tomorrow.”

“I’ll pick you up in the evening. After rush hour.”

She shows up in a Jaguar. She drives me to her new place in Northern Virginia.

“I’m not going to save the money. I need to live. I’ve taken all this shit.”

We walk inside.

“This is fantastic.”

“Someone told me that it was haunted. The only thing that it’s haunted with is the smell of money. I deserve this.”

“You must have taken a lot of money to get this.”

“I have my ways.”

The place is a ways out near the Potomac River.

“I bet that there’s a hunting lodge nearby.”

“Quit teasing me. Although we could send you out there and then hunt you down.”

“Why would you do that?”

“Sport. If you start to piss me off too much.” She gives me a cackle of a laugh.

“Do you actually have food here?”

“Of course.”

“Are we going to hang out here.”

“We’ll live by candlelight.”

The sun is going down and she has loads of candles going throughout the place. I am forgetting my purpose for being here. I can’t let this go on forever.

“This place is really far out here.”

She agrees, “No one could find it unless they knew what they were looking for.”

I move to touch her cheek., “You look great in this light.”

“I don’t think that would be a good idea.”

“What do you mean?”

“Wallace, you must think that I’m an idiot.”

“We’ve been getting on so well.”

I am now sitting across from her in the luxuriously furnished living room.

“You can stay here tonight. But I know what you’re doing.”

“If it’s about what’s going on between us, I thought that you were being romantic.”

“Maybe I am, but that’s not the point.”

“What is?”

“Jimmy sent you after me.”

“Jimmy what?”

“You’re working for him. I’m not stupid. You’re supposed to kill me. I just don’t understand what you’re doing dawdling around. Are you developing a crush on me?”

I feel like I am being invited to join the other side. I have had a purpose all along. Now I am forgetting it. What is my reward in all of this?

“I’m not working for Jimmy.”

“I didn’t bring you out this far to have you lie to me. I could kill you here and no one would know the difference. You’d be picked up in the trash tomorrow. You’re nobody. Nobody to me. Nothing to him. Garbage.”

“I don’t know.”

“Don’ know what. Are you going to kill me?”

I am hesitant to say anything. She seems easily subdued. What is she thinking?

“I want you to kill me, Wallace. I want them to find my body out here. Then Jimmy will stop looking for me. I can live in peace.”

“What about this place.”

“It’s all temporary. All for show. My neighbors know that I’ve moved in. They’ve seen the car. When they find my body, they’ll all testify that it was me who died here.”

“Why are you going to let me kill you?”

“I need to die if I want to live.”

“What do you mean by that?”

“You’re a killer. It should be obvious. You’ll tell Jimmy that you did the job. The police will find my body, and that will be the end of it all. I know that Jimmy knows no one out here so he can’t fuck it up.”

She seems entirely seductive in the candlelight. I can kill her or really kill her. What is my choice. She moves close to me. I can taste her. As I move to touch her, she stands up.

“What do you want, Wallace? You have to be a man here.”

“I can be a man like the next guy.”

“Is that why Jimmy sent you to get the job done. You should have already taken care of me. Are you getting soft?”

“I’m just observing your habits. I’m trying to pick the best time.”

“Now seems like a good time. Do you have your piece. Is it loaded.”

“I’m not really here for innuendo.”

“I could do a little strip for you here. You want my body naked for your work.”

She begins to prance around the room. She takes off her blouse. She is now barefoot and dressed in her skirt and a bra.

“Do you want to take my panties off with you teeth. Get down like the dog that you are.”

“This is moving a little to fast for me. Do you have a drink?”

“Isn’t this what you want?”

She turns on some music. It is low enough to hear her talk. But I am straining.”

She takes off her skirt and starts to shake her ass.

“Are you ready to make the deal?”

“What deal?”

“Is there ink in that little pen of yours, or are you going to sign in blood.”

She is sitting propped on my knees. I am turned on, and she knows it. She has turned the tables on me. I want to grab her and roll around on the carpet and make passionate love. She has different intentions.

“I guess I can’t hide a pistol in my panties. You feel pretty confident big boy. I’d like to see what you’ve got.”

I am useless. My mission for Jimmy is going by the wayside.

“You’re not a very good mechanic.”

“What do you want from me, Alea?”

“I want what you’re willing to give. Do you think that you can get rid of me?”

She now has her hands running through my hair. Her knees are on the couch as her body straddles mine. She is close enough to kiss.

She pushes me down and pretends to pin my body to the couch.

“You like this. You like not being in control. I move to kiss her. She pushes me down and jumps up.

“What do you think that I am? Your little whore. You come here to kill me, and you think that you can make love to me on the carpet.”

I am so aroused. I want her. I can’t think about anything else.

She taunts me, “I want you to kill me” Her back is to me as she continues, “Can you do that? This is a man’s job. I don’t want you wilting under the pressure.”

“I won’t wilt.”

“Good man. Are you willing and able. Will you last when they shine the bright lights on you. Will you stay standing in the hot sun.”

“Of course.”

She comes close to me again and is ready for a kiss. “You can kill me and not flinch.” She licks her finger and runs it down my face. She pushes me down and stand up again.

She again shakes her body to the music.

“Are you going to just sit there or come and get it, big boy?”

The seduction is overtaking me.

“I’m ready. I’m ready.

She could kill me now for all that I care. She takes off her bra and waves it in the air. Then she covers her breasts.

“Do you like what you see? Is your mouth watering. What are you going to tell Jimmy. That you screwed me before you plugged me. Ha! He’s going to think that you’re a real man. But he’s also going to wonder if you went weak at that moment. The moment that I could overpower you and take care of my little problem. Who is Jimmy going to send after I’m gone?”

“Put your clothes on. Take me home.”

She rubs her body against me. I am overwhelmed by her nakedness. Her perfume has me paralyzed.

“Wallace, does it feel so natural. Don’t you want to slip your finger inside my panties. I’m all wet for you. I’m ready. I’m ready. If you were a real man, you’d already be down on the floor with me. What are you waiting for? You’re going to lose it. Your pistol is going to be all out of ammo before you get a good shot in. Can you take your best shot? Are you an action hero?”

Her taunts make me want her more. I pull her close to me and give her a deep mouthed kiss. I feel even more aroused with her on top of me. She pins me down and thrust on my clothed body. She is completely aggressive. She is challenging me. I am being overcome. I try to catch my breath. I try, I try.

“Wallace, are you going to do what you came here to do?”

She reaches inside my pants and moves her hand vaguely around. She is still teasing me.

She pushes me down and stands up again.

“Are you going to take what you came here for?”

“Yes, yes.”

She is on the floor in with her legs spread in the splits. She rolls over and is just lying on the ground with her head looking up at me on the couch.

“Come on, Wallace.”

“I don’t.”

“Cat’s got your little thingy. You’re going to have to do a little more to please Mama. I thought that they sent a killer. You seem a little puffy to me. All smoke and no fire.”

“I am ready.”

“Sure you are.”

She lies back with her knees up. I slide over, so that I am on top of her. My clothes spin off as we twist on the carpet.

The next day, I have surrendered to Alea.

“I was not kidding about the fact that you need to kill me. We need to find a body. Someone who looks like me. They’ll find me dead here. And Jimmy will find out that you’ve done your job. I’ll be free.”

“He’ll still want his money. He won’t rest until he finds it.”

“We don’t need the money. We have each other.”

“I’m not stupid. I’m not a stupid romantic.”

“So how do we keep it?”

“You’d have to kill me as well.”

“That could be arranged.”

“How will we find a body double for you? Do I have to kill someone?”

“I know someone who works with cadavers. I can get one that looks close enough.”

“I don’t know if anyone could really look as good as you.”

“That’s as good as me dead.”

“An exquisite corpse.”

I kiss her.

“Are you afraid to kiss a dead woman?”

“Aren’t you afraid to kiss a dead man?”

“I have to go on some errands. I want you to wait here.”

“Are you going to take me back to DC?”

“Later. We can hideout here for a while.”

When I am alone I think about the holes in her plan. Jimmy isn’t stupid either. He’s going to send someone else out to investigate. I take my time staying in her new place. It so comfortable here. It’s great being away from the cares of the city.

Nothing is going to come this easily. She can’t get away with her plan. I make myself some lunch. I feel like a sitting duck here.

She comes back late that afternoon.

“I’ve missed you. It just took to long ”

“Have you thought more about your plan?”

“Wallace, I have everything worked out.”

“Jimmy is no fool.”

“Neither am I.”

“I’d advise a fire. A fire so it appears that the money got burned.”

“This is not money to burn.”

“Take my advice. I know Jimmy.”

“Trust me. You need to trust me. I’ve got everything under control.

She kisses me, and we make love on the couch as the sun sets.

“I’ve been thinking about you all day.”

“I wanted you to save the best for now. Do you want your treat?”

We move together so smoothly. I am lost in her arms. I let my cares go. I feel like a kid. I am being led around by my lust.

I wonder what Jimmy is thinking. He probably expects her dead by now. She is lying on top of me as we relax together.

“I need a shower.”

She stands up and walks over to the bathroom. Her walk is full of pride. She knows what she is doing.

After dinner, I question her, “Are you going to take me back?”

“Not tonight.”

“Jimmy has some guys in DC. They’ll come looking for me if I don’t get back there soon.”

“You could call him from your cell phone. Tell him that everything is under control.”

“I’m not sure that it is. Do we know what we’re doing?”

“I explained the plan to you. I just need you to hang out here for a while.”

“I want to get home.”

“OK. Do you know how to get back here. “

”Yeah.”

“Take my car. I’ll be all right for the night.”

I want to stay with her. It is already so comfortable here. But I am too deep in the mess. I need to get back. The sooner that I straighten things out, the better.”

When I get back to my apartment, I call Nick.

“Where have you been? Jimmy is looking for you.”

“He’s not here.”

“He’s not here at all. But he is getting suspicious.”

I’ve almost taken care of his problem.”

“I hope so.”

Nick wants me to meet him. I tell him that I can’t. I tell him to delay Jimmy’s boys. I’ll get back to them tomorrow night. We’ll all meet. I even set up an appointment.

I roll back in the Jaguar to Alea’s place around mid morning. It all seems quiet. I get out. I am met by an army of police cars appearing from nowhere.

“Are you Wallace Simpson?” one of the officer asks.

“Yes, I am.”

“You’re under arrest for the murder of Alea Jones, the owner of the house. Her body was found on the carpet.”

“I need my lawyer. This is a set up.”

They take me in for interrogation. The lead detective is trying for a confession.

“We have you on camera having sex with the woman. Your fingerprints are all around the place. You like it kinky. You’re even choking her in one scene.”

“I never did anything like that.”

“Did you ever point a gun at her? One neighbor said that you had a fight. Alea had to smooth it over so the neighbor wouldn’t call the police. She said that you had a gun. Alea told the neighbor that you thought that you heard a prowler. And she got in a argument with you over that.”

“That never happened.”

“I’ve got the testimony from the neighbor. She even remembers the night.”

“I did go out to check on something in the back. I saw the neighbor and said hello.”

“We’ve got evidence that you were violent with Alea. If you tell us what happened, if you can just clear up some things, then maybe it won’t look so bad for you. You were playing a game. She taunted you. She got you angry. You didn’t mean to do it. This is Virginia. If you don’t cooperate, this could be the death penalty. People have morals around here. They figure out that it’s some kinky sex thing, then you will be put to death.”

“None of this happened like that.”

“We have tapes.”

“I made love to her in the apartment. I never did those things that you talked about.”

“It looks a lot like you.”

“You can’t use those tapes in court.”

“It makes you look pretty guilty. Where there’s smoke, there’s fire.”

“Not this time.”

“Did you have sex with her?”

“Is this how you get your jollies?”

“I get a real kick out of breaking down killers. I suppose that you love confessing to your misdeeds. Was she good?”

I feel like slapping him.

“Do I have you going? Did she have you going all night. At least you tried. And you couldn’t keep it going. So she made fun of her. You slapped her around a bit. That’s how you types play. And that wasn’t enough. You choked her. You hope that it would get you aroused again. That’s how you get off. And you thought that she might like it like that too. But you couldn’t stop.”

“You’re a real sick bunch.”

I am hoping that he doesn’t connect me with any of my other jobs. This is sloppy. I need to get out of here. He thinks that his case is iron clad

“She really did a number on you. Played you for a sucker. You found out that she was leaving with another guy. We found the airline tickets. Then you killed her.”

The other guy. It has to be Nick. That’s why he seemed so confident when I called last night. What can I tell this detective so he’ll let me go.

“It’s not really me. It’s someone else that I know. The body isn’t even hers. Not the girl that I know.”



“We have her license. We have positive ID. You’re up shit’s creek.”

“You don’t have ID on me. Otherwise, you’d charge me.”

“We had enough for an arrest warrant.”

“So when is my arraignment?”

“We’ll put you back in lock up. Within twenty four hours.”

“I think that you guys messed up. You had a warrant to search the place. You were supposed to bring me in for questioning. Not arrest me.”

“I told you that we have tapes.”

“Look closely at the tapes. I’m not in all of them.”

I’m sure that Jimmy has nothing to do with this. But he’d hit the roof if he knew what was happening. What can I throw to the detective to let me go?

“Did you get her money?”

“There was no money in the place.”

“She’s out there somewhere with her accomplice. It’s just a body that she found to put there. I was planning the same thing with her.”

“Why would you do that?”

“She’s being followed by a man. She just wants to get away.”

“You agreed to kill for her.”

“I was going to make it look like she was dead.”

“But it got out of hand, and you had to kill her.”

“Quit being so fucking stupid. I didn’t kill Alea. She is not dead. She found a stiff and put it in the house. Now she’s set me up.”

I admit that I have nothing to go on. I can feel myself rotting in here.

She has been so methodical at trying to lead me on. I am a professional and I fell completely for her trap. Now she is using the law to her advantage. They have no reason to believe my story. It sounds as if I am trying to absolve myself of the guilt.

“All I did was sleep with her.”

My past offenses have caught up with me. I am suppose to know what to do under pressure. I have been saying too much. I want to end this quickly.

The detective goes out for a while and then returns.

“There has been some mistakes here. But I am sure that you did it. We’re going to let you go for now.”

“Is it OK to go back to my place in DC?”

“You really should wait around here. We need to know where you are. We have some hotels near here.”

She’s worked it out to this point. But she didn’t think that they would release me. What are they looking for? From the sounds of things, a gun wasn’t used in the crime. Alea seems to sloppy. She must have made a mistake. I’ve tracked people before.

I am glad that I left my gun in DC. That would have really messed things up. And they haven’t got a warrant to search there yet. That doesn’t make sense. Maybe they are just trying to scare me. Or they believe me, and they think that I will lead them to her. Where did she get the body. I should have never believed her.

I meet Nick at an Italian restaurant..

“Wallace, Jimmy always said that you weren’t too bright.

“Where are you hiding her?”

“I don’t know what you mean. You’ve been spending time with her.”

“Jimmy was happy when I told him that you were going to skip town with her. He didn’t like the fact that you used me as a patsy.”

“You’re bluffing. I talked to Jimmy. He know that you were conspiring with that whore.”

“Cut the shit, Nick. You couldn’t have called Jimmy. He’d be on to your plan. That wasn’t her body in the house.”

“That’s where you’re wrong. It is her. I knew that I could set you up. And still get the money. You’re even stupider than I thought. You threw Jimmy off the trail. All I had to do was to step in. Now it’s my money. You’re going to take the fall for it.”

“The police let me go.”

“For now, they don’t have an air tight case. Yet. I’ve got the gun. Your gun.”

“They said that she was strangled.”

“They are messing with you. I shot her with your gun.”

“Where is she?”

“I killed her. I did it for you. She was using you. Playing you like a yoyo. And you went along. The little man just led you astray again. Jimmy told me that I should have taken care of you a long time ago. I should have listened. But I guess that you came in handy.”

“So how are they going to find my gun.”

“They will.”

“Is it back at my place?”

“I think that they are getting the warrant right now. You were clever to use an alias at that place. But they’ve figured it out.”

Why does he want me to head back to my place? This is another set up. The last piece in the puzzle. Maybe he know where I hide my gun. Or he doesn’t know and he wants me to find it.

I should kill the son of a bitch in here. He knows the owner. I am probably being watched. Nick wants the satisfaction of humiliating me. I’ve already tried to humiliate him with Alea.

“Wallace, don’t you hate the fact that you can’t get a corpse to speak.”

“Oh, you can Nick.”

Alea walks in at that moment.

“What is going on?” His jaw drops.

“You are going on. She used your gun, you slack ass. That’s why the cops let me go.”

“But she’s still alive.”

“A technicality.”

Nick has indeed told Jimmy that I am working with her. He has also told him that I ran off with the money. But the cops caught me. The police have the money now. The perfect story.

“Just one thing, Nick. Do you want us to send you a postcard when we get to our destination. It’s good getting mail when you’re in prison. I don’t think it was a good idea doing those tapes with her. It’s your face on the video. And you thought that you were setting me up.

What a fool.”

We head off to Hawaii. Nick is picked up the next day after they find the gun.

“Alea, where did you get that body?”

“My little secret.”

“When the cops picked me up, I thought I was done for. I thought for sure that she was strangled. I’m glad that they never had a chance to search my place. They would have found my gun. But then it wouldn’t have matched the ballistics tests.”

“Yes, it would have. I switched your gun with Nick’s.”

“Why did you do that?”

“Insurance. I needed to make sure that you wouldn’t rat me out to Jimmy.”

“Don’t we have to stick around for the trial?”

“I think that they have enough on Nick.”

“Won’t Nick say something to Jimmy about the money?”

“He already told him that the police have it. If he tells Jimmy anything more, then Jimmy will kill him in prison.”

“Isn’t Nick going to be put to death anyway?”

“He’ll get off on a manslaughter charge. He can say that it didn’t mean to happen that way. That it was a game that went awry.”

“But that’s motive enough in Virginia.”

“You said it yourself. You wanted to die.”