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# HUNTER'S TREASURE

The Celtic Demons - Book Two

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JILL SHANNON



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Jill Shannon  
Hunter's Treasure

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This book contains fantasy themes appropriate for mature readers only.  
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*I haven't done a dedication in my last few books, but this one requires a couple of names mentioned.*

*First, I'd like to thank my family. They have always supported my efforts in becoming an author and have always stood by my side.*

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## Prologue

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Someone removed the dark hood from her head as she was shoved onto the cold damp ground. The first thing she saw after her eyes adjusted was a pair of worn work boots. Her gaze traveled up the dirt-stained jeans to a flannel shirt snugly fit around his bulging waist, and before her, stood a very large man. Gathering what courage she had left, she allowed her eyes to move further up. She found his face covered, leaving only his cold, dead eyes exposed. Knowing she would get no answers from him, she surveyed her surroundings; there were no windows, no bed, no toilet, nothing but her and her abductor.

"Get comfortable. You'll be here a few days, and then they'll come get ya." He pulled a knife from his belt and reached for the bindings on her wrists and ankles.

"Where is here?" she asked as she looked around the cave-like cell. "And...who are they?" Her voice was filled with the fear creeping into her bones.

"Your new home. Until they come." Removing his phone from his pocket, he snapped a picture of her. Putting it back into his pocket, he turned to leave. When he was at the only exit to the cell, he looked back at her. "Don't make any trouble. I would

hate to have to hurt you." Those were the last words he spoke as he locked her inside.

Rubbing the sensation back into her legs, she got to her feet and stumbled to the door. She wrapped her hands around the cool steel bars at the small opening of the door as the light in her cell went out. "You can't keep me here. Someone will be looking for me, you know!" she shouted. A dim light illuminated the empty hallway, showing other doors like her own.

From behind one of the doors, came a faint voice of warning, "It's no use, if you continue to yell, he will shove a needle in your arm to shut you up."

"What is this place?" she asked quietly.

"From what I have gathered, we are in some kind of smugglers' cave," came a voice from her right.

"Do you know who 'they' are?" She emphasized the word.

"The people who come and take us out of here," another voice chimed in from the left.

"To go where?"

"None of us know; we just know that one day a woman is here, and the next she's gone," whispered the original voice.

She counted the number of cells in the dim light. Seeing ten other doors similar to hers, she asked, "Are all the cells filled?"

The voice to her left answered her, "They were, but they came and took four women before you arrived."

"Who are they, and what do they want?" Her voice rose.

"Keep your voice down. You don't want him coming back." The voice to her right spoke, "We have no answers for you, only assumptions. We think they are human traffickers. Only women have been in these cells, all either prostitutes, homeless, or drug addicts. Women who no one will miss. We think the photos taken are put online to be bid on. Once they leave here, they don't come back." She was quiet a moment then asked, "Which one are you?"

"None of the above," came her quick response. "But I did have my issues with drugs and being homeless. My parents

couldn't handle it anymore. So, they threw me out. Since then, I've gotten my shit together. I found a program that is helping me with my drug problem, my parents took me back in, and I even found a decent job. In fact, I was walking to work when a van pulled up and stopped. A masked man jumped out, shoved a black hood over my head and shoved me in the van. I don't belong here." The tears started to fall from her eyes.

"None of us do, sweetie, but we're all here anyway."

She wasn't sure which voice had answered her. "How long have you all been here?" she asked, sniffing and wiping the tears from her face.

Voices rang out randomly, "Three weeks, ten days, five days, eight days," and so on. The final voice came from the faint voice she had heard initially, "One month."

"You've been stuck in there for a month? How do you stand it? I feel like the walls are closing in on me already."

"For the first two weeks, I was recovering from the beating I received for trying to escape." Her voice came closer to the door. "Now I do as I'm told and pray that when I'm released from this cell, I never see it again."

"When do you think that will happen?"

The voice from the right perked up, "I overheard him talking on the radio, when he took the other four women. He said that, sometime this week, a boat would be coming for the rest of us."

"It can't come fast enough for me," the faint voice whispered.

"What's your name?" the woman asked.

"I've been called many names, but you can call me Cindy."

The woman to the left spoke next. "Lori."

Then to the right of her came, "Renee."

Renee asked her, "What's your name, sweetie?"

"My name is Hailey."

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## Chapter 1

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"**A**lpha team, your mission is a go, and may God be with you all," Hunter 'Saint' Murphy heard through his earpiece. Looking at the six men sitting in the Blackhawk helicopter with him, he gave them all a thumb up. "We've done worse missions than this one, and we've survived. I don't need to remind you not to take anything for granted. Watch each other's backs, get in, retrieve the woman reporter, and get out. Anybody unsure of their job?" Hunter addressed the men. When he had received confirmation from them all, he added, "Then let's get to it, boys."

Hunter watched as the men began dropping out of the aircraft to the water below. Being their team leader, he was the last to go. The Blackhawk would rendezvous with the team about a mile down the beach. Until then, they would disappear. Hunter watched as each of the men began to surface on the beach. They relieved themselves of their equipment and prepared to enter the building. The structure was small, and intel indicated that only six men were securing the area. The team split into two groups; a three-man team would move in from the rear of the structure while the rest of the team would enter through the front.



Hunter stayed with the team to the front of the building, and receiving confirmation his team was prepared to enter, he gave the order, "On my mark, three, two, one." At the same time, the two teams converged on the building. Gunfire erupted around the room. Hunter watched as two of his men took out the two men standing guard in front of a door. Then he watched as his team took out the other two men sitting at a table. He moved with his team toward the door that had been guarded, under cover from the other team. Busting the door down, they found the woman reporter they were there to rescue, standing in the middle of the room with a knife at her throat. "We told you she would die if you tried anything like this. Now you will live with the memory of her dying before your eyes for the rest of your life." Hunter watched in slow motion as the knife sliced across her neck.

Soaking wet with sweat, Hunter woke from the nightmare that had haunted his dreams since his last mission. He reached for the bottle of sertraline. This usually helped decrease the anxiety and depression that surrounded him whenever the dream assailed his unconscious state of mind. He swallowed the pill, then dropped his head back on the pillow and stared up at the ceiling. The Serbian man had been right; watching that female reporter get her throat slashed right in front of him had affected him more than he could ever admit. The only person who knew how deep his scars ran was the psychotherapist he spoke with once a month to stay on track.

After that mission, Hunter had decided that it was time for a change. He had reached out to one of his best friends from the military, Killian 'Yankee' Ramsey, when he retired. Knowing Killian dealt with his own military demons, Hunter wanted to know how he was doing with them. Killian explained that when his father had gotten into a bad accident, he left the military, although that hadn't been his plan. Yet, Killian knew when he left the military, he had another brotherhood that already

accepted him—the Celtic Demons Motorcycle Club. When Killian heard that Hunter was looking for a similar brotherhood to the military, he introduced him to his Celtic Demons brothers. Hunter knew he had found his place outside of a Naval base. He prospected for six months before Judge found out about his skills with a computer, promoting him to secretary of the club and earning him his patch. Something that generally took a year to do.

Once he felt the anxiety ease, he swung his long legs over the side of the bed and sat up, looking at the clock, which revealed that it was six-thirty. Scratching his healing tattoo gently, he looked over how the Japanese design had turned out. He had his Navy anchor covered over on his left shoulder and extended the new tattoo to his chest. He no longer needed a reminder of that time in his life. Finally, finding a talented tattoo artist to bring his vision to life, Hunter had sat for the hours required to finish. A samurai and oni mask ran along his left arm, a symbol of strength and courage, while over his left pec rested the face of a geisha girl representing beauty and grace. He was thankful the right arm sleeve and chest area had already healed; the bright red dragon ran the full length of his arm. The detail the artist had added only enhanced the dragon's face on his right pec. As a child, he had been fascinated with dragons. Learning that they stood for strength, ferocity and wealth only made them more appealing. Seen as destructive yet also as a guardian angel, a dragon symbol was the perfect two-sided sword.

Hunter ran his hands over his face, wiping the sleep from his grey eyes. He was still getting used to his shortened auburn colored beard. Sliding his fingers over his mustache and around his mouth, he got off the bed. Standing to his full height of six-foot-two, he headed to the bathroom. He needed to get in the shower and start his day. Judge had scheduled church for this morning to talk about the upcoming fundraiser. Plus, he wanted to get a much-needed ride in before working out. Turning the

water on and adjusting the temperature, he got in, letting the hot water soothe away any residual anxiety from his nightmare.

After walking from the bathroom with a towel wrapped around his waist, he pulled his new black Killer Couture shirt and a pair of black jeans from the dresser. After putting his jeans on, he grabbed his shirt. The gold skull and crown emblem rested over his left shoulder, with the words Killer Couture written on the back. The short sleeves pulled tight around his biceps and stretched tight across his muscular chest. He knew he would catch shit from his brothers, but he didn't care. Every now and then, he needed to wear something other than a Harley Davidson shirt. Heading back into the bathroom, he brushed his teeth and ran a brush through his wet hair. Getting his gym bag, he threw his gym clothes in, leaving it on his bed to grab later. Then he put his cut on and picked up the material he would need for church, and left his room. Stopping off at the conference room, he dropped the papers on the table then headed downstairs for a cup of coffee.

Scar, one of the prospects for the club, was working behind the bar in the clubhouse. Although it was early for most of the Celtic Demons, there was always someone operating the bar. People came and went at all hours in the clubhouse, so Judge made sure that someone maintained the bar all the time. "Morning, Scar. I need coffee."

Scar grabbed a mug and the pot of coffee from the brewer. "Rough night, Saint?" He placed the cup in front of him.

"No, more like a rough morning." Pouring some milk into his coffee, he sat back on the stool, looking around the clubhouse area. The television area had a black leather sectional resting in front of the wall of televisions. Hunter could see two prospects sleeping with two of the house mice. He knew Judge was not going to be happy to see that. This area was a communal area, not for sleeping, but Hunter would let Judge hand out their punishment. Toward the back of the clubhouse, the video and pinball machines were quiet. No one was shooting pool or

playing darts. The area for the band was littered with garbage that hadn't been cleared away yet from last night.

Hunter's attention was drawn to the stairway leading to the second floor, which held Judge's office, the conference room, and individual bedrooms for board members of the Demons. Coming down the stairs was Reed 'Judge' Brody, President of the Celtic Demons. Judge was six-foot-four with sandy blond hair. His beard was trimmed tight to his jawline with his mustache meeting it. Judge had become president of the Demons when his father became too ill. He was voted unanimously into the position by every member. Not because he was Sam Brody's son, but because he deserved the position. Judge was the most level-headed man Hunter had ever met. He handled club business with fairness, and if someone fucked up, he handed out punishments that fit the crime.

Judge had pushed to get the government contract that allowed the Celtic Demons to grow medical marijuana. The arrangement worked well for both parties. He had also added the solar panels on the compound that helped with the cost of producing a quality product. It helped the Demons stay under the radar growing their own business supply of marijuana. Hunter had been involved with filing the paperwork for the permits, plus, securing the contracts as secretary of the club. It was a lucrative venture for the Demons, as well as their other businesses scattered around Hog Inlet. The Demons had earned the respect of the people living in the area and made it a point of always being involved in whatever function the club organized. This year, they were planning a fundraiser to help support the pediatric scarring unit at the local hospital.

Hunter watched as Judge bypassed the bar area and headed straight for the sectional couch. Slapping both hands down on the back of the sofa, he made the couples sleeping jump awake. "You two, get the fuck out of here," Judge told the house mice. "You two," he directed his comments to the prospects, "for the next week, you are on garbage detail, both inside and outside the

clubhouse. If I see a speck of crap anywhere on the grounds, another month will be added to your prospect position. Am I making myself clear?" When Judge had received confirmation from the two of them, he told them, "Now get your asses in gear and clean the back rooms, and don't let me catch you sleeping on the couches again." The two prospects jumped to do Judge's bidding.

Judge joined Saint at the bar as Scar placed a mug of hot coffee before him. "Morning, Saint, you're up early today."

Turning to Scar, he said, "Thank you, Scar. When do you get off?"

"I'm here till twelve, Judge," Scar replied.

"Good, keep an eye on those two assholes. Then let whoever relieves you know I want an update on what they were up to all day."

"You got it, Judge," Scar said as he disappeared into the kitchen area.

Judge turned his attention to Saint. "Is everything all arranged for the fundraiser tomorrow?"

"Yes, along with Yankee and Angel's race, I convinced the artist John Lawson of Yew Tree Galleries LTD in Reading, Berkshire England, to set up a booth. He'll be here on holiday but is willing to help raise awareness for children living with scars. He's agreed to auction off an original painting of a Harley he did. Dude! You have to see this guy's work. He does a little of everything, but the way he portrays a Ferrari in his paintings is what makes him so unique. He also does technical art, showing you the inner workings of things and infographics. These give detailed information like the entire layout of the Titanic, planes like Air Force One, even the storming of Bin Laden's lair. I think if we set his booth up near the car show, it will benefit both his sales and the cars being auctioned off. What do you think?" Saint asked Judge.

"I think that's a good plan. There will be a lot going on all day. I just want to be able to enjoy the day; it's been a long time

coming for the Demons. Gaining control of our streets back from the Santoro organization took longer than we thought." Judge's face contorted with a look of pain. "Is Diesel going to be able to join the festivities?" Diesel Diaz had gone undercover and infiltrated the Santoro organization. Everything had been going perfect until the night Judge had received the text message from Vito, Don Santoro's right-hand man. He had found out who Diesel was and tortured him, breaking his arm, a few ribs, and then scarring his chest by carving SNITCH into it. By the time Diesel was returned to them, he was dehydrated and hadn't eaten in three days. They weren't sure he was going to make it to the hospital that day.

Diesel had joined the Celtic Demons as a prospect three months before going undercover. Volunteering for the position, he had known the risk he was taking. Judge had flown in the best plastic surgeon to repair the damage done to his body. Over the past five months, he had healed remarkably well, considering the severity of his injuries. His mental wellbeing was recovering at a slower rate, but he had made significant strides just the same.

"Yeah, as far as I know. Ace said he was going to come later after the baptism," Saint commented. "From what I hear, he's doing really well; he just needs to take crowds in smaller doses now."

"That's good to hear." Judge sipped his coffee. "I'm putting his patch to vote this morning. This way, his cut can be done tonight, and we can present his patch to him tomorrow. I want as many members as possible to be there to recognize the role he played in securing our territory."

"I'll let Ace know to get him there after the wedding and baptism. You could present it to him at the reception. I don't think Dancer and Rita would mind, plus, most of the club will be there."

"Hopefully, it will give him the incentive to stay and enjoy the day." Judge finished his coffee. "You ready for church?"

"Yes, I have everyone's assigned jobs for the fundraiser. Ace

has the final numbers as far as cost, but with all the booths being sold, we should be able to double our donation." A part of each booth's profit was going to the total donation to the pediatric scarring unit.

As they were sitting at the bar, the door opened to the clubhouse. Yankee walked through, followed by Eric 'Viking' Reynolds and Allen 'Ace' Bentley. Viking was the club's Sargent of Arms. At six-foot-six, he towered over most people. It was easy to see how he got his road name. When you added his blue eyes and blond hair, he was the perfect image of a Viking, while Ace couldn't have been more opposite looking, with his dark brown eyes and hair and, on top of that, being six inches shorter.

Ace knew how to trade on the stock market like a magician, thus earning him the position of treasurer. "When will you ever learn, Viking, don't bet with Ace," Yankee said with humor in his voice. When he got to the bar, Scar had five to-go cups of coffee waiting. "Morning everyone, thank you, Scar," he said, taking one of the cups from the bar.

"How much is this one going to cost you, Viking?" Judge questioned as he got up off the stool he had been sitting on. Retrieving two cups of coffee, he handed one to Viking.

"For the next five rides the Demons have, he has to clean my bike," Ace chimed in. Then, shaking his head and laughing, he grabbed his cup of coffee. "Thanks, Scar." Scar gave him a head nod of acknowledgment and a grin.

The door to the clubhouse continually kept opening as members of the Celtic Demons filed in for church. As the members greeted each other, the room began to get loud. Among the last to arrive was Dominic 'Grave Digger' Santiago, Jason 'Shadow' Bentley, and Adam 'Dancer' Miller. Dancer had recently earned his patch as a member. He and his old lady Rita also had a baby. Everyone had agreed that the perfect time to have their wedding and baptism for their son Robert would be before the fundraiser began. Grave Digger, as Road Captain, and

Shadow, as Ride Lieutenant, were in charge of Dancer's final ride as a single man later tonight.

Judge looked around the clubhouse filling with members and told Saint, "I think it's time we moved this to the conference room." Moving past Saint, he made his way to the stairs leading to the conference room above the clubhouse.

Saint grabbed the last cup of coffee Scar had placed on the bar and followed Judge to the stairs. The rest of the members followed suit and made their way to the conference room. The board took their seats at the table in the front of the room, while the other members filled the empty seats spaced out in rows. Once everyone had settled down, Judge started the meeting. "I'm glad you could all make this early morning church; we have a few things to discuss before the event tomorrow. First on the agenda is the fundraiser itself. As you are all aware, we are donating all the money we make to the pediatric scarring unit. After seeing firsthand how affected Diesel was by his scars, I want to help the children who might not be able to afford the surgeries they need to feel whole again. Oh, and while we are on that subject, I'd like to put Diesel's patch up for a vote." Judge paused, watching every man in the room place their closed right-handed fist across their hearts, confirming Diesel as a member of the Celtic Demons. "Ace, you are in charge of getting him there tomorrow for the reception. We will present him with his cut before the festivities begin. Now, Saint has a schedule for around the clock coverage at the fundraiser. After the shit we just went through with the Santoro organization trying to take over Demon territory, I'm not taking any chances." Judge wanted to make sure everyone who attended was safe and had a good time.

Saint spoke up to the room as he said, "We don't expect anything to go wrong, but as Judge says, we'd rather be prepared. I've made a diagram of the entire area to make it easy for you to find your posts. For the most part, you will be overseeing the prospects at work." Hunter held up a sheet of paper. "And this list is for those of you who will be operating the Demons' booth



as well as the information area. See me after church for a copy. I'll also post the list downstairs. After the reception, Ace will spend most of the day at the entrance with three prospects collecting any entrance donations people want to make." Entrance to the fundraiser and parking were free; however, if someone wanted to donate before entering, this would be the perfect place to collect the money. "I will be around all day if you forget where you're supposed to be. Oh, and one more thing, because this is a family fundraiser, the mud wrestling booth will be inside of a tent this year." There was some grumbling around the room, but they all understood why it needed to be done this way.

For the rest of the meeting, Judge, cleaned up some arguments and spoke about how things were going with the government and the medical marijuana supply. By the time things had wrapped up, it was close to twelve in the afternoon. "Anything else need to be addressed?" Judge asked the room of men. When the room stayed silent, he announced, "Then we're done," ending church.

As Saint handed out sheets of paper to the men who requested them, he asked Yankee, "You up for a ride this afternoon? I need to get on the road for a bit."

Yankee was one of Hunter's best friends, standing six-foot-four with shoulder-length dark hair and ice-blue eyes. He knew better than anyone the nightmares Hunter suffered. "Sounds good to me; let me just let Angel know I'll be back later than expected." Rachel 'Angel' Santoro was Yankee's old lady. They had met while the club was trying to bargain with Don Santoro. Their attraction for each other had been instant, even though Rachel was the daughter of the man trying to take over their territory. She had also played a significant role in securing the Don's word that Demon territory would be off-limits to the Santoro organization. Yankee pulled his phone from his pocket and walked to a quieter part of the room.

Judge had overheard Hunter's request and commented to

him, "Hey, can anyone join this ride?" Judge had similar features to Yankee. They stood at the same height, and Judge's sandy blond hair matched his trimmed beard and mustache. Yet, his piercing green eyes saw things in his brothers that other people missed. Ever since Yankee had met Rachel, he had been spending all of his time with her. Judge couldn't blame him, but in the interim, Saint and Judge had been working together on the fundraiser. Although Saint hadn't said anything to Judge, he knew something was bothering him. Judge could only hope that a ride would do him some good.

"Hell yeah! I need to get out of here for a while." Hunter had packed up the rest of the paperwork he had brought.

Yankee walked back over to where they were standing. "I'm in. Angel and my mother are redoing my house for a big reveal tomorrow night, so I have the whole afternoon."

Viking joined them as well. "Yeah, I'm coming too. I can't afford to lose any more bets."

"I'll meet you guys outside. I need to post the list before we leave," Hunter said as they all left the conference room.

"Meet you outside," the others said as they walked past him out the door.

Hunter stood before the corkboard and posted the list. Then he followed his brothers outside to his two-thousand-seventeen granite crystal metallic street glide. When he had bought it, he had taken it directly to Yankee's shop for them to customize the paint, add some chrome, and upgrade the engine. The paint alone had cost him five grand, but it had been worth every penny he had paid. Airbrushed on the tank of Hunter's bike was a dragon. A wingless, four-legged, serpentine creature, the scales of his back were a flaming red. The sleek, smooth underside of its belly was a blend of orange and yellow.

The red head of the dragon faced the front of the bike. Two horns were jetting upward, mouth open with teeth showing, and a full Manchu flying in the breeze. And when you looked close enough, you could see the leprechaun skeleton head of the Celtic

Demons' patch being held in its claw. A Samurai warrior from early modern Japan was airbrushed onto the left rear bag. The artist had set the warrior walking alone, holding his sword in full armor through a fiery looking desert, following a red dragon flying away toward a mountain range. On the right bag, the front view of the Samurai sword, in his raised hand, as he battled with the fire breathing dragon. On the fairing was a blood-red and black oni mask. The horns on its head spread out across the fairing, curling at the ends. The black beard drew eyes to the mouth of teeth and fangs. But what got most people's attention was the piercing black and green eyes. Sitting on the bike, Hunter cranked the ignition, and the bike roared to life. The peace he felt on his bike could never compare to any medication he could take.

"Any idea where you want to go?" Judge yelled over the sound of the rest of the motorcycles starting.

"I need to visit a friend," Hunter shouted back.

"Lead the way; we'll follow you."

Hunter received head nods from Yankee and Viking, and they were off. He led them to SC-31, and for the next forty-five minutes, the world stopped, and it was just the road and wind. They got off at US-501, heading south. Hunter led them from Harrelson Blvd. to Kings Highway, then he turned into the Ocean Woods Memorial Cemetery, heading straight toward the flagpole in the center. Then, veering to the right, they followed the path to a large oak tree where Hunter pulled over. Everyone pulled to a stop and shut their bikes off. Hunter got off his bike and pulled an envelope from his bag. "Give me a few minutes; I'll be back." Taking the envelope, he walked past the tombstones till he arrived at the one he knew very well. The headstone read, 'In loving memory of our son, Chief Petty Officer First Class, Rodney 'Redbull' Turner. They fought together as brothers-in-arms. They died together, and now they sleep side by side. Just whisper my name in your heart, and I will be there. Born March

fifteenth, nineteen hundred eighty-eight, died May eighth, two thousand thirteen'.

"Hey, Redbull, it's been a while." Hunter used his call name as he sat down on the ground by the grave. "I know I'm not supposed to feel guilty over your death, but human nature makes that impossible for me. I had the dream again this morning but woke before I found you shot. I figured it was a sign that I needed to come and see you." Pulling a chain with a cross attached from the envelope, Hunter added, "I found this the other day." It was the necklace his men had given him the Christmas before the mission. "I think it's what triggered my dream again." He paused. Sifting the chain through his fingers till the cross was in his palm, he continued. "It doesn't hold the same memory for me that it once did. So, I'm going to leave it with you to care for." He got up and placed the cross on the tombstone. Sitting back down, he put his head in his hands. "You weren't supposed to die," he yelled. Rodney had been shot in the leg before he could kill the last kidnapper. The bullet had ripped through his artery. They had done everything they could do to patch him up and get him to the waiting Blackhawk, but it hadn't been enough. He had died three hours later at the hospital. The tears were falling down Hunter's face. "You were supposed to be here, getting married, having children, and in the blink of an eye, that was all taken from you. I'm so sorry. You were my responsibility, and I failed." He wiped the tears from his face, taking a deep breath. He raised his head and looked at the tombstone. "I know I promised you I would move on with my life, but so far, I haven't been able to do that. I've tried, but I just haven't found the woman who will stop the dream. If you have any pull up there with God, you can send her my way any time you want." Hunter smiled, thinking of all the women he had been with, "And it's not for lack of trying." Hunter looked to his brothers waiting for him, "I have a new brotherhood. I would have never found them if it wasn't for you. They are an awesome group of men; I think you'd like them. Each is damaged in his own way. So, together, they make

the perfect family for me." Hunter stood. "They are waiting for me now, so I need to get going. I just wanted you to know I haven't forgotten about you. I will be back soon to visit again. Until then, could you put a good word in with the big man?" He paused as if waiting for an answer. "I'll be back, Redbull. Hopefully, I'll have better news when I return." He kissed two fingers and laid them on the tombstone. Then he made his way back over to his waiting friends, his soul feeling a bit little lighter.

When he got back to his bike, Yankee asked, "You okay, brother?" If anyone knew how Hunter was feeling, it was Killian. They had met while stationed on the same base in Okinawa, Japan. Unbeknownst to both of them, they had been training at the same dojo. It wasn't until they saw each other in the Hotel Adonis that they started talking to each other. Hotel Adonis was a BDSM dungeon they had both been going to on the recommendation of their sensei. Since that night, they had been friends. They not only trained together at the dojo, but they also trained to become dominants. They had both tried traditional relationships, and neither had been satisfied. Once they had learned how to recognize the body language of their sub, control their own emotions, appreciate a sub as the gift they were, and watch and protect all submissives, was when the Dungeon Master allowed them to join the other dominants on the floor of the club.

"Yeah. I needed to say a few things," Hunter explained.

"No explanation needed. Did it help?" Yankee needed to know Hunter's frame of mind.

Getting on his bike, Hunter looked at Yankee, a grin on his face. "I think it did. Let's get going. The ride home should exorcise the rest of my demons." He started his bike, and the rest of his brothers followed suit.

Before they pulled away from the side of the road, Yankee yelled to him, "You need a new sub, Saint." Then he smiled at him.

"You might be right," he shouted back to Yankee. Then he

put his bike in gear and led the way out of the cemetery to the highway and home.

The men felt the forty-five-minute ride seemed to go a lot faster on the way back. They arrived back at the clubhouse and went their separate ways, each knowing they would meet up later that night for Dancer's ride. Hunter parked his bike and went to his room to collect his gym bag. The ride back to the clubhouse had cleared any residual effects of his dream. Talking with Rodney had helped, but now it was time to hit the gym. Heading back to his bike, he was slowed down by one of the house mice, Crystal. Ever since she had started hanging around, she had made it clear the only man she wanted was Saint.

Standing in his path, she raised her head to look at him. Her makeup was flawlessly applied over her narrowed green eyes as her blonde hair cascaded down over her fake full chest. The clothes she wore didn't come from K-mart and were fit to accent her curves. Her pink gloss covered lips formed into a sarcastic smile as she said, "You're going to the gym again? I think you look fine just the way you are. If you would just give us a chance, I promise you won't be disappointed." She reached her hand out and smoothed it down his chest.

Hunter moved away from her hand. There was nothing physically wrong with Crystal; she was a beautiful woman. Yet, there was something about her that Hunter didn't trust. "It doesn't matter what you think, mouse, I live my own life," Hunter told her as he side-stepped around her out the door.

Crystal watched him walk out the door and whispered under her breath, "You'll see. One day, you'll come looking for me, and I will make you feel so good that no other woman will ever be able to satisfy you." Then she turned and looked around the clubhouse. It was late afternoon, and not many members had finished their days yet. Grabbing her purse, she made her way out the door. When she got there, she saw the dust from Saint's bike leaving the compound. She'd come back later when he was there. It made no sense for her to stay here with these

losers until he was there. Saint was the only one who mattered to her.

By the time Hunter made it to the gym that he owned, it was nearing six in the evening, not the ideal time to try and find a machine that wasn't in use. While Hunter waited, he did some stretching and used the free weights. When the first treadmill became available, he made his way over to it. Just as he was going to get on it, a little chestnut brown-haired woman jumped on it, saying, "I've been waiting for a half-hour to use one of these machines; you can have the next one." And with that, she dismissed him, put on her headphones, and started the treadmill.

Hunter stood for a few minutes, stunned at what had just happened, checking her out as she walked on the machine. He had bought the gym over a year ago and was always there. But this was the first time he had seen her here. Her chestnut hair was piled high on her head, her beautiful blue eyes not hidden behind a ton of makeup, and she wore an oversized sweat suit. Thinking she couldn't have been taller than five-foot-one, and yet she had no problem standing up to a six-foot-two man impressed Hunter.

He made his way over to the elliptical, never taking his eyes off of her, taking in the way her body moved to the strenuous workout, the way she walked then ran on an incline. As he watched, he imagined what it would feel like to have that tight little ass in the palms of his hands. The picture he created in his mind had his dick getting hard as he began to work out on the machine. Getting both his breathing and body under control, he continued his workout. He could tell from observing her that she was in fit condition and that this was something she did daily. Hunter was intrigued by this woman and needed to meet her. As her run was winding down, he prepared himself to make an introduction. That was until Hunter saw a man approaching from the other side of the gym. She had just stepped off the treadmill as he arrived. She smiled up at him, and Hunter thought he had never seen a more beautiful smile. He watched as

they conversed a few minutes. He could tell they were close, and then the man tucked her under his arm, and they headed to the locker rooms. "Well, there goes another one. Why are the good ones always taken?" Hunter said out loud to himself. Making his way over to the treadmill, he got on and tried to erase that brilliant smile from his mind.