

Twist of Fate

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Was her fate pre-determined or could she change it? Would it be determined by a card game?

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The closed heavy draperies helped blanket the room in darkness. Outside the wind howled with its wolf-like voice. Just that sound made the house seem colder than it really was. "Put your head down and rest," he whispered. "You know you want to. Things will be better in the morning, I promise. Everything always looks different in the light of day." He hated lying to her, but if it could give her at least a little peace in this blackest hour, it was worth it. Things would not be better in the morning. What had happened here could not be undone. As he looked at the blood covering her, he knew that her life was coming to an end. * * * Was her fate pre-determined or would she be able to change it? Would her fate be determined by the turn of a card...? * * * Four months earlier, Sophie Huffman and her father Floyd were traveling to Las Vegas for her 18th birthday. It should have been a time for celebration but it brought only misery to her father and her. For the past ten years they had been on the lamb from loan sharks, unpaid bills and exorbitant amounts of gambling debts. It was not an unusual occurrence for Sophie. Her mother died when she was eight years old, and since then her father started running up gambling debts and trying to outrun loan sharks from almost every state in the country. For the past ten years, Sophie had to learn as she went along in life, as she never got the chance to finish school. They lived out of the back of Floyd's old beat-up Chevy and Motel 6's. She was an absolute genius with numbers, but never had the chance to do anything with her genius. She worked out a year or so ago that if her father bet big enough in Las Vegas on a sure table he would be able to wipe his slate clean and let her finish school. Not that she would see a cent of the money. He had come to the same conclusion that the only way to clear his gambling debts was through more gambling, but if he won he would likely just pay off his creditors then "invest" the rest in more casinos until he was right back where he started. As they drove along the highway at extraordinary speeds they left behind all traces of their former lives and identities. They were now using the aliases of Wesley and Megan Smith. This was his one and only chance to finally clear all his debts that followed them everywhere they went. They drove all night as they kept one step ahead of everyone he owed money to. They took turns driving; as one slept the other drove. It had been this way since Sophie had turned fourteen and her father taught her to drive. The sun rose over the

desert, blinding Sophie's tired eyes through the rearview mirror; in the distance she could just make out the Vegas skyline amongst the dust and haze. The raven-haired girl with big brown eyes reached over to her father and tapped him on the shoulder to wake him up. "Dad...DAD! We're here! I can see Vegas," she shouted to wake him up. "Mmm...What?" He jumped up. "Okay... wake me when we get to the hotel..." he yawned as he lay back down. Sophie put her foot down on the gas pedal as they sped towards Las Vegas. She could not wait to get a long hot shower and a solid eight hours of sleep. They passed a police car on the way into Vegas that clocked the speed of their car at 104 mph, but let them pass without pursuit. She pulled up to the casino's entrance and put the car in park. The valet came over and handed her a ticket. The bellboy took the bags out the car as Sophie woke her father and dragged him out the car. "We're here, GET OUT!" she told him sternly. They walked together into the hotel towards the reception desk to check in under the alias, with their newly acquired identification and credit cards. "Please sign here, Mr. Smith..." the girl at reception said with a smile as she pointed at the slip of paper. "Why? I have never had to do this before," Floyd protested. "Procedure. It's for security sir," she said as she handed the key to the bellboy. "Tom, our bellboy, will escort you to your room, sir. And if you need anything just dial zero on the telephone. There will be someone here 24 hours a day. Enjoy your stay, sir," she said. Their suite was on the 27th floor, so the bellboy took the key from the receptionist and led them to the elevator. There was a long awkward silence in the elevator journey as no one looked at each other and no one said a word. The bellboy opened the door for them and placed the bags inside. As he stood waiting for a tip he watched Sophie, his eyes following every move she made. "Get a good enough look, pal?" Floyd asked him angrily. "Err... I'm sorry sir. I'll be going now," he announced as he turned on his heels, scurrying for the door. Floyd and Sophie spent that day and the next planning how he was going to find the 'hot table' on his own. Sophie would have to trust him not to give into his gambling urges. They decided he would case the casino floor the night before; he would watch all the tables but not bet a single cent. It was his test before the big night. * * * He was dressed in tourist clothing to blend in as he cased the floor, eying tables, security, and floor walkers. It went off without a hitch as he found two 'hot tables'; those tables were on fire that night, all night. He went back up to the suite to discuss strategy for big night with Sophie. "Well..." Sophie asked bluntly as he walked through the door. "There were two tables tonight, both equally matched. Both watched like a hawk, that's the sign. The tables that are being watched constantly are the tables to go for," he chanted off as he went into the kitchen for a beer. "And...?" she piped up. "And what?" He popped his head around the corner. "Did you bet? Did you get the urge!" Sophie asked angrily. "...yes, but I didn't act on it! God you'd think I was the child and you were the parent," he informed her sharply as he chugged down a beer. "You shouldn't be drinking for tomorrow, you need a clear head to get it right," she sighed, as she knew she was talking to a brick wall. She headed to her room, as she was not going to get into an argument with him over it. She turned on the television as she lay down on the bed. Her head hit the pillow and she was out like a light. This was the moment she had longed for all week, a comfortable undisturbed night's sleep. * * * Sophie was awakened suddenly at 5am by her father's loud singing. He was wasted; he had spent all night drinking and was now going to fuck up her chance of a normal

life. She covered her head with her pillow as she tried to get back to sleep, but it didn't help, so she pulled the mattress into the bathroom and went back to sleep on the bathroom floor. She woke up around midday to absolute silence. Sophie knew that silence was never good and never hassle free. "Dad...DAD..." she called out from the bedroom. Nothing, complete and utter silence. She crept out of the bedroom on her tip toes; she looked to the left then the right, nothing. She checked the whole suite; he was nowhere to be found. The balcony doors were splayed open with the curtains billowing into the wind. Sophie's nipples became instantly hard with the cold wind blowing through the door, she walked toward the doors, shivering in her tiny pink shorts and gray tank top. Her hand pulled the curtains open to reveal her father passed out on the balcony. She closed the doors and curtains as she ordered lunch from room service. "Happy Birthday, Sophie. Eighteen years old and it's turned out like all the rest, unnoticed," she said to herself as she sat waiting on the food. There was a knock at the door 20 minutes later. Tom the bellboy delivered a cart that was overflowing with more than enough food for four people. Sophie opened the door in her shorts and tank top, showcasing her voluptuous toned body that no teenager should have. Her nipples, still hard, strained against the material of her tank top. "Hey, bring it on in." She shot a smile at him. "Emm...Okay." He put his head down as he tried not to look at her. "Are you okay?" she asked as she tried to get his attention. "I'm fine, Ma'am." He looked her up and down, licking his lips unconsciously as he noticed her nipples. "Ma'am? I'm 18, not 80! Come with me," she giggled as she walked toward the master bedroom. He followed her like a lost puppy. Sophie stood in front of the king-size bed with her hands on the hem of the tank top. She pulled it up toward her full perky teen tits as she revealed her tanned, toned stomach to him. She smiled and beckoned him with her index finger. "I really shouldn't be here," he stammered as he walked toward the bed. "Then why are you standing in front of me, Tom?" she smiled. "Because I've wanted to do this since the moment I saw you," he whispered as he grabbed her head and kissed her with a raw fiery passion. His hands roamed down her shoulder to the hem of her tank top. Slowly he slid it up her torso over her perfect C cup breasts, pushing up the top to expose them to his eyes. Breaking their kiss, he pushed her arms above her head and removed her top completely, then threw it across the room. Sophie started to undress the bellboy as he kissed down her neck and onto her chest, his tongue tracing the path from where his lips had previously been. As she slid his shirt off his shoulders and onto the floor, he reached her hard and sensitive nipples. He kissed them both gently, followed by sucking on them, then he gently grazed his teeth over each one. Sophie gasped and shuddered as he did so. She gripped onto the back of his head and pushed him into her bosom. Her hands slid down his back to his trousers. She furiously unbuckled them letting them fall to the floor with a thud. He continued down her abdomen to her navel, and his hands grasped her firm bubble butt before hooking his fingers under the waistband of her shorts, removing them in one swift movement. He kissed down her left thigh and back up the right before he threw her onto the bed. Tom knelt between her knees and looking up at her with a smirk, he pulled her toward the edge of the bed, placing both legs on his shoulders as he kissed the inside of her thighs toward her dewy slit. He slid his hands around her thighs, pulling her lips back as his tongue licked from the base of her slit to her rosebud clit. He continued like this for a few more

strokes before concentrating on her clit. Sophie was gasping and gripping onto the bed as his tongue revolved over her clit at speed, making her blood boil, her pulse race, and her desire for his cock to go off the Richter scale. As he used his finger to massage her asshole and flicked his tongue over and around her clit, her breath grew faster and more ragged. She was about to come when suddenly he stopped. He let go of her altogether, and her legs fell onto the bed. Sophie opened her eyes as she looked up from the bed in horror. Her father held the bellboy in a headlock. He dragged him to the door, and threw him out into the hallway naked. "What the fuck, Sophie! You fuckin' little slut!" he spat at her as she covered herself with the sheet from the bed. "Why be so modest now?" he demanded. "You weren't five minutes ago with that complete stranger!" He drew his hand back and struck her across the face. She let out a squeal as Floyd grabbed a fist full of her long dark brown hair at the nape of her neck. Dragging her to her bedroom, he threw her against the back wall before slapping her again. She lay on the floor curled in a ball sobbing into the floor as she clasped her face in her hands. He stormed out of the room, closing the door and blocking it with a chair from the dining room. Sophie would not be going anywhere anytime soon and he knew it. * * * Floyd decided it was time to play cards. He changed into his tuxedo and headed down to the casino floor with the duffel bag full of money. He went over to the cashiers' desk and handed the bag over in exchange for 50k in casino chips. "Please sign here sir... protocol," the young girl behind the glass said. "Fine!" he said, exasperated. "Have a good night sir, and good luck," she smiled falsely to him. Floyd smiled falsely back at her and walked away with the chips towards tonight's "hot table." It wasn't so hot tonight. He had expected to lose a little at first before hitting a winning streak, but less than an hour later he counted his chips and realized that he was down to his last 1,000.00. Common sense told him to cut his losses, but Floyd had never let common sense get in the way of his gambling. He was about to bet the rest when he saw someone important-looking approaching. "Good evening Mr. Smith, or is Huffman?" the man asked. "My name is Michael and I manage this casino. I'm confused as to why you are registered as Wesley Smith but signed F. Huffman. I think we need to talk. NOW!" The manager sat down next to him at the table and continued. "You see, Floyd, we know all about you and your pretty little daughter Sophie. And all the debt you have. Did you really think you could just run up all the debt and no one in Nevada would know about it? Come on, you're not that stupid, now are you Floyd?" he said sarcastically. "I have a proposition for you. If you win, I'll keep your secret, pay off your debts, and give you money for Sophie's future. IF you can beat me at MY game. If you lose, I get Sophie and you get your 50 grand back. Deal?" Floyd couldn't really see a down side to the proposition. Even if he lost, he would come out 49,000 ahead. And all he would lose would be that bitch of a daughter of his. "What's the game?" Floyd asked, a little suspicious. It sounded almost too good to be true. "One game. Highest card wins. That's it, simple," Michael smirked. "Deal," he answered bluntly. "Dealer, cut a new deck. Deal the top two cards out," the manager ordered. The dealer opened a new pack, shuffled them, and slid two cards onto the table, one to Michael, one to Floyd. "Turn them over, gentlemen," the dealer said impatiently. Floyd turned over a ten of spades and waited with bated breath to see Michael's card. Michael turned over a king of hearts. "Well my friend, it's a pleasure doing business with you. Where is Sophie?" he asked abruptly. "Where's my

money?! Money first then you can get her," Floyd demanded. Michael snapped his fingers and a security man appeared beside him with the duffel bag. "Please escort Mr. Huffman off the premises. And make sure he never returns!" he ordered. "Now where is Sophie!" "She's in the suite, locked in the room," he said with a shrug, opening the duffel bag to make sure it really was full of his money. "Do not return to Las Vegas Mr. Huffman or it will be the last thing you do," Michael informed him, then turned to another security guard. "Go get my prize and bring her to my office," he ordered, handing him the master keycard. * * * As Michael sat patiently waiting for his henchman to bring his spoils to him, he thought of different ways he could use her. He decided to wait and see what her attitude toward him would be as to what he would sentence her to. He could hear Sophie yelling and objecting to being brought down to the mangers office, not surprising as she had no clue what had happened. They burst through the door, and the henchman, known only as Ice, threw her in to the chair as he wiped the blood from his face. "She's a fighter," he spat as he walked outside, closing the door behind him. "Where is my father?! Why am I here? I haven't done anything wrong!" she shouted at Michael. "Well my darling Sophie... Your father is on his way out of Nevada, and you are here because he bet you in a card game and now you belong to me," he cackled. The color drained from Sophie's face as she sunk into the chair across the desk from him in utter shock. She sat blinking but not moving or breathing. She was completely dumbstruck. "He bet me?" she whispered as she frowned. "Yes, and now you are my property to do with as I see fit. And I know exactly what to do with you, missy!" he laughed. * * * The Diamond Cavern was a popular bordello and escort agency that the casino owned at the end of the strip. Michael was no stranger to the place, as he had a stake in what went on there, so he visited it often. The frequency of his visits increased over the next three months; he had new girl in training there, a young and innocent beauty with dark hair and brown eyes, sure to be a big hit with the clients as soon as her training was finished. He claimed he just wanted to protect his investment, but he had another motive for visiting the Diamond Cavern as well. He had made a mistake in not taking her right there in his office the day her father gambled her away, and he planned to rectify it. With her training period soon coming to an end, he was getting impatient. One day, he walked in the front door of the bordello and called up the stairs to "Mama," the name that everyone called Phoenix, the Madam of the bordello. "I'll be one minute Michael; wait in my office," she hollered. Phoenix was in Sophie's room, currently occupied pinning the girl's hair. "You look beautiful, baby girl," Phoenix said, stroking Sophie's cheek as she looked at her in the mirror. She could clearly see why Michael had given her the working name of Bambi; the girl had big brown doe eyes, a reminder of her innocence. "Stand up and give me a twirl..." said Phoenix, holding back tears. Phoenix knew Sophie was too smart to be working as an escort, she should be back in school learning how to become the boss not a bottom rung whore. She had tried everything to get Michael to change his mind about her, but nothing would stir him from that path for her. He had ulterior motives, and Phoenix knew it. "You look like a million dollars, Sophie." A tear dropped from Phoenix's eye. "You know you're like a mother to me, don't you?" Sophie asked. "Uh huh, Sugar." Phoenix hugged her. Phoenix knew all about Sophie's turbulent upbringing, and she felt nothing but pity for the girl. Some of the other escorts under Phoenix's care had similar hard-luck stories, but Sophie's was

particularly sad. Over the past three months, Phoenix had taken special care of her as "Bambi" was trained and prepared for her new life. "Stay here, Sugar, and stay out of his sight, okay?" Phoenix instructed Sophie as she rubbed her shoulder. Phoenix walked out to her office where Michael was sitting, drumming his fingers on the desk waiting on her. "What can I do for you today, Michael?" she smiled. "You know what I want! I want Bambi, I want to break her in. I want to be her first client. Make it happen," he demanded. "You should know better than anyone, Michael, I do not take demands, not even from you. We made a deal. When you turned her over to me, we agreed that what you get out of her is a percentage of the cash she brings in. You want more, you have to go through the same process as everyone else. If you want to be her first client, then place your bid and wait," Phoenix smiled. Michael slammed his fists on the desk. "You can't protect her forever, and I WILL HAVE HER!" He stormed out of the office, knocking over another girl in his haste. Phoenix had her own plan for Sophie, and she was just waiting on a certain person coming into The Cavern. She hoped it wouldn't be too long until he arrived, for everyone's sake. * * * The auction was rigged, of course; just an excuse to allow Phoenix to tell Michael to go to hell when he came around demanding to be Sophie's first client. But Phoenix had no intention of selling Sophie's first time to the highest bidder. She had a john in mind for the girl, so she was in frequent secret communication with a particular mystery bidder, revealing to him the competitors' bids to give him a chance to out-bid them. He had money, and was willing to spend it on something special. When the bidding ended, he was, of course, the winner. He turned up late one night dressed all in black from his Stetson down to his leather boots. He walked in the door with an eerie presence about him. "I'm lookin' for Mamma Phoenix," he said to the girl at the door. "Follow me, sir," she chirped. He followed her along a dark hallway, then up a tight metal spiral staircase. "Please wait in here. Who will I say is here to see her?" she smiled. "Tell her it's the dark cowboy. She'll know who it is." He walked into the waiting room. Phoenix hurried along the hallway and tried to compose herself outside the door to the waiting room before entering. She opened the door to see the dark stranger standing in the shadows of the room. "Buck, you bastard! How you doin'? Not seen you in an age! How's life treatin' you?" she smiled as she walked in and hugged him. "Ah, well, you know me, never one to complain, but since you asked... You know what I'm here for. You promised me something fresh. Nothing that's been around the block with half of Nevada. Something new, a fresh piece of meat," he smiled. "You won't be disappointed, my old friend," Phoenix sighed. "Let me go get my baby girl. Just..." "Just what?" The expression on Phoenix's face grew serious. "We go way back, Buck," she said. "I wanted you to be her first client because, well, you've always been good to the girls. Just promise me you'll be gentle with this one. I want her to have a good experience the first time, and I know you can give it to her." Buck smiled. "Well now, how can I refuse when you ask me so nicely? Of course I'll be gentle." Bambi was brought to the waiting room for approval. "Well what do you think of her?" Phoenix asked. Buck was stunned as he looked over the young beauty who stood before him. He had expected a young and innocent girl; Phoenix always delivered what she promised. But this girl was beautiful far beyond his expectations. He couldn't even speak, but simply nodded in approval. Phoenix had her led away to be dressed and prepared for work. A few minutes later, Buck entered the luxury suite and nearly melted

at the sight of Sophie sitting on the bed dressed in a black and red corset with suspender and stockings, waiting for him. She smiled at him as he entered the room. "I'm Buck and I'm here to fuck," he told her. It was his favorite catchphrase, as more than one girl in the Diamond Cavern knew. Her smile fell away, and for just a moment he saw on her face all the pain she felt inside. He knew immediately that she was not here in the brothel by choice, and wanted desperately to get out. His heart went out to her, and now he felt a little guilty about what he was about to do. But if not him, someone else would take his place. Her first client might even be... He fought down a wave of disgust at that thought. Not him. Buck would be her first client, and he would make tonight special for her. He sat down next to her and placed a hand on her knee. Instead of moving directly to the action, however, he wrapped his other arm around her shoulder in a comforting gesture. He said nothing, just holding her, giving her the kind of affection she clearly needed. Sophie's reaction was just what he had hoped. He could feel the tenseness leave her body as she relaxed. She looked into his deep blue eyes for a moment, then she took the initiative by kissing him deeply. He stopped her and broke the kiss. "What is your name, sweetness?" he enquired. "Bambi..." She looked down. "No, your name, not your house name," he smiled, lifting her chin up with his fingers as he gazed into her chocolate eyes. "Erm... Sophie, my name is Sophie," she smiled. He leaned down and started to kiss her slowly and gently, working down her neck as he started to untie her tightly bound corset. She giggled, as he kissed her neck so softly that it tickled her. He pulled away from her, looking at her soft features as her giggles fell away to a smile, then embarrassment. She covered her face with her hands as he stared at her with a look in his piercing blue eyes. "Don't hide... not from me," he smiled as he pulled her hands from her face. "I'm sorry... I... I didn't mean to laugh. I'm sorry..." she stuttered as she looked at the floor, her raven colored hair falling over her face. He pulled her hair away from her face and lifted her chin with his index finger to kiss her. "You are too innocent for this work. I should know; I come here often enough," he told her as he pecked her on the cheek. Sophie smiled. The dark cowboy had been a little intimidating when she first met him, but his gentle demeanor was giving her more confidence. Something about him told her that he wasn't just another client hoping for a quick screw; he actually cared about her feelings. As she stared at him, her eyes became alive, shining like molten chocolate. Then she did something that surprised her as much as it surprised him. She pounced onto Buck, pushing him back onto the silk covered bed. His Stetson flew onto the floor as she straddled him and kissed him hard. He slid his hands up her smooth supple thighs to her round juicy ass; grabbing firmly then slapping her left cheek, making her squeal and jump, breaking their kiss. He chuckled as he threw her onto the bed; she squealed again as he lay on top of her and unhooked the rest of the corset to reveal her luscious perky breasts with rose colored nipples, that he devoured immediately. As he swirled his tongue around her nipples and teased her with a flick of his tongue, she sighed heavily, knowing he was only just beginning. He looked up into her brown eyes, watching her squirm under him. He stood up and unbuckled his jeans pushing them to the floor as he kicked off his boots. Sophie sat up and licked her lips as she looked at his semi-hard 7-inch cock dangling in front of her. She moved to the edge of the bed, reached over to his hips, and pulled him forward until he stood between her spread legs. Taking his cock in her right hand she pushed back

the skin before licking from the base of his thick cock to the tip, teasing him as she swirled her tongue around his bulbous head. She looked up at him before opening her mouth wide, sliding halfway down the shaft and back up as she continued to swirl her tongue all over it. He grabbed a handful of her hair at the back of her head as she continued to suck his cock, and pushed her more and more onto it until he hit her throat. She shoved him away, gasping for air with a sparkling string of saliva mixed with pre-cum stretched from his cock to her lips before breaking. He bent down and kissed her hard. Pushing her back onto the bed, his hands traced up her arms and pinned them above her head with one of his hands as the other ripped the panties from her crotch and lined up his cock between her puffy dewy lips. "You work fast, Cowboy," Sophie proclaimed. Buck smiled as he kissed and nibbled on her neck and dove into her velvety warmness. Sophie gasped as he entered her. He started slow but soon picked up speed as their bodies collided in their passionate embrace. Buck rolled over, pulling Sophie on top of him to ride him. His hands slid up her legs to her ass helping her to fuck him hard. She bounced up and down on his rock hard member, her breasts slapping rhythmically against her until he pulled her down onto his chest, kissing her as he took over and pounded the hell out of her tight teen pussy. It was not long until they both approached climax; Sophie moaned and squealed as Buck started to buck. Thrusting into her fully he came, spurting rope after rope into her very fertile womb. A few seconds later Sophie's body completely tensed up as she rode out her orgasm until her body went completely limp on top of him. They lay together like that for half an hour, until Phoenix knocked the door to find out how everything was going with 'Bambi's' first time. Sophie got off of Buck and went over to the door to speak with Phoenix. "Get yourself cleaned up, Sophie," said Phoenix, gesturing to the mess between Sophie's legs. Sophie's face turned bright red as she realized what Phoenix meant. She closed the door and ran to the bathroom, completely ignoring Buck on her way past. He sat up in bed, looking toward the bathroom door and trying to understand what had just happened. He got up and wandered gently over to the bathroom, opened the door quietly and crept in. His warm hand slinked around her waist and across her stomach like a snake constricting, as he pulled her back close against his front. Sophie tilted her head back against his shoulder, kissing his neck and smelling the mix of sweat, aftershave and sex on him. Eventually they ended up in the shower together with the water cascading over their naked bodies as they were entwined in a passionate kiss. Buck turned her around, running his hands down her arms until he reached her wrists. Lifting them up above her head, he placed them on the wall, then he slid his hands back down her arms till he reached her breasts. He gently massaged them as he pushed her legs apart with his feet, then he slid his stiff cock between her legs, rubbing it against her lips and just barely touching her clit, teasing her again. He removed one hand from her breasts to reposition the shower head to rain over both their bodies, as he planned to take her for the second time in an hour, this time from behind. He left one hand on her breasts while the other trailed down her stomach to her clit, where he started to rub her with tenderness. He knew just how to get her wet quickly, as they were on a tight time scale. His cock still between her legs, he felt she was wet enough and placed one hand on her stomach and the other on his cock, guiding it into her dripping wet slit. Sophie's hands pushed hard against the wall as he slid all the way in. She felt every thrust with more and more intensity as he built

up speed, and his grip against her stomach got tighter with every second that passed. She started to climax as he continued to thrust. As she started to cum he came at the exact same time, before collapsing against her and pushing her against the cold slate tiles on the bathroom wall. They cleaned themselves up before getting dressed and heading to Phoenix's office. He asked to speak with Phoenix alone first. "Phoenix, I want to see her regularly. I'll pay whatever you ask as long as you promise me that He will never have her. Ever," Buck told her. "I normally don't make such deals, Buck, but for Sophie's sake I will make that deal with you," she nodded. * * * He paid Phoenix for Sophie's services that day and for another three visits in advance. The girl intrigued him. He just couldn't get enough of her. It wasn't all about her pretty face or beautiful body; sometimes they spent half their time together just talking. At first reluctant to open up about her past, she gradually warmed up to him and eventually told him her life story of how she got to be in the brothel. Like Phoenix, he felt pity for her, but he started having other feelings for her as well. At first he hesitated to call those feelings by their proper name. He had been in love before, but usually he was more interested in just having a good time than committing to a serious relationship. But now, each time he visited her his feelings for her grew. He couldn't stand the thought of her with another man, which surprised him. Buck had never been the jealous type with any of the other girls in the bordello, but with Sophie it was different. One day, only a month after he had first met her, he decided that he could not go on like that. Their arrangement was only temporary, and could end at any time. That thought frightened him, and he knew he had to do something about it. That very day, he went to the casino to speak with Michael. He was met by one of Michael's henchmen, who told him to take a seat. Buck sat down and waited. Thirty minutes passed before anyone came out of the office, but that didn't surprise him. No doubt Michael already suspected what Buck wanted, and preferred not to have that conversation. Buck was more patient than Michael, however, and eventually another henchman ushered Buck into the office, where Michael sat behind his desk. "Well... Buck, what can I do for you? I can't say it's a pleasure to see you," Michael smiled. "Feeling's mutual, buddy. I want you to release Sophie." Buck stared at him. "Not going to happen! She is my property," he spat at Buck. "Name your price, Michael," Buck said with a straight face. "Not for sale." "I said name your price, Michael! Anything you want!" Buck shouted, losing his composure. "Anything?" Michael questioned with a raised eyebrow. "Anything... brother," he said. "Well... my dear brother, I want your half of this casino. I want the whole casino." He smiled. "Deal, but you have to clear her debts fully and release her, no strings," Buck told him. "Deal, no strings. Sign this. I've had it for a while now, in case I ever came across the proper leverage on you." Michael threw a contract at him. "Looks like I just did." "Hmm... Okay. Now you sign this." Buck looked over the contract as he gave Michael another contract releasing Sophie completely. The two brothers exchanged signatures, then handed the contracts to the two witnesses who had watched them and now signed to say they witnessed the transaction. Michael was now the full owner of the casino and Buck had gotten Sophie's release, a small price to pay for her happiness, he thought. Buck drove over to the brothel in his pick-up truck as fast as it would go to tell Phoenix the news; he parked up outside and ran up to her office, banging on the door until she answered. "Where's the fucking fire?" she screamed as she opened the door. "What the fuck, Buck?!" she asked

as he pushed past her. "Read this!" He opened the contract and handed it to her. "How the fuck did you get him to agree to letting her go?!" she asked, astonished. "I gave up my half of the casino, Phoenix. She's worth it to me," he told her like a love-sick teenager. "Let me go get Sophie! You'll want to tell her, yes?" she smiled. He nodded as she phoned downstairs for Sophie to come up to her office. Buck paced back and forth as they waited; it seemed to be the longest five minutes of his life. There was a knock at the door before Phoenix yelled "come in." Sophie entered, wearing a white baby-doll, her raven hair in curls cascading over her shoulders down her back. She smiled as soon as she saw Buck, then walked over to him and hugged him tightly before continuing over to Phoenix. "It's not me who wants to talk to you, baby," Phoenix smiled and nodded in Buck's direction. Sophie turned and looked at Buck, who had a huge grin from cheek to cheek, which wasn't irregular. "You want to talk to me?" Sophie asked him, worried. "Sit down, Soph. I've got something important to tell you." He bit his lip as she sat in front of him on the leather chesterfield sofa. "This is for you..." He handed her the contract. "I secured your release from here, from the casino, from Michael. You are completely free. No debt, nothing," he smiled. "I..." She could not speak, with the shock as she read the contract. "H...how?" she stammered. "I had to give him something that he wanted. That's all you need to know Sophie; I don't want you feeling you owe me for it. I did it to give you back your life. I want you to be happy." Buck smiled with a tear in his eye. "Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!" Sophie jumped up wrapping herself around him; kissing him hard. "I have something to ask you, though," Buck said nervously. "What's that?" she looked at him, letting go of him and standing toe to toe with him. "Will you marry me, Sophie?" he asked, getting down onto one knee. "W... what? Really? Yes!!" she squealed. * * * They got married in The Little White Chapel that afternoon with all the other escorts and Phoenix there to wish them well, and to see one of their own getting something good out of life. Buck couldn't wait to take her away from Vegas and all its reminders of her unhappy life, so the two of them hopped into his pickup and drove out of town. Buck and Sophie were giddy with happiness as they drove down the highway. Not even the storm clouds that were gathering on the horizon could spoil their happiness. Buck pulled off the highway onto a dirt road that led to a little house tucked away at the base of a hill. Technically it belonged to the casino and therefore to Michael; it was one of half a dozen properties in the middle of the desert that Michael had managed to wrangle out of unfortunate customers of the casino who couldn't pay their debts. Both Michael and Buck had keys to all of them, but they rarely visited. Mostly the houses stood empty, accruing equity until Michael decided to sell them for profit. Since Buck's five-bedroom farmhouse was a two-day drive from Vegas, the newlyweds would need a place to spend the night. Michael probably wouldn't approve of their use of his property, but then, Michael didn't have to know. The rain was beginning to fall as they left the truck and dashed for the front door. Buck opened it, and they stepped into their "honeymoon cottage." That night as they lay in bed together as man and wife Sophie whispered in his ear the three little words no one had ever said to him before. "I love you. You and no other," she whispered. "And I you, until there is no breath left in me." He kissed her forehead. They both slept a sound sleep that night that neither had ever had. The sound of rain falling on the rooftop did not bother them; cuddled up in each other's arms, they felt warm and peaceful. Not even the foulest

weather could interrupt their bliss. * * * They rose late the next morning, too late to finish the trip to Buck's farmhouse, so they decided to stay one more night here. Besides, the rain clouds had developed into a thunderstorm, and Buck didn't like the idea of any extended driving through the wind and the rain. They drove into a nearby small town to pick up some groceries, and ate breakfast in a little cafe. After the fast-moving city life of Las Vegas, it felt nice to just relax in a tiny little town that almost didn't warrant a spot on the map. They made love again back in the house, slowly and unhurriedly. They had all day with no demands on their time. That evening, Buck left her to relax as he drove back into town to gas up the pickup in preparation for their drive to his farmhouse the next day. The house had a working washer and dryer, so Sophie put their dirty clothes into the wash. They were just coming out of the dryer when the power suddenly went out. Sophie jumped, then laughed at herself. The storm might have knocked out the power, but she wouldn't let it get her down. Just then, she heard a knock on the front door. Wondering who would be calling on them here, she opened the door. The smile fell from her face as she saw that it was her father. "Hey, there's my baby girl," Floyd proclaimed as he tried to hug her. "What do you want?" she shouted at him. "Run out of money? Need to trade me off again?!" "Don't be like that Sophie! He had me cornered; what was I to do? They were gonna kill me!" He tried to make excuses. "Well one thing you shouldn't have done was sell your FUCKING daughter! Do you know what he made me do?! Do you?" she screamed at him. "I'm sorry Sophie, I really am... but I need money. Can you help your old man out?" he pleaded with her. "And what happened to the money you got for me? Blow it all already? No dad, I'm not giving you one red cent! Fuck off!" She shut the door in his face. She walked away from the door back into the utility room to finish folding the laundry when she heard a loud bang and then footsteps inside the house. She turned around and headed out of the utility room only to be met by her father and his .44 Magnum. She froze in her tracks, looking at her father. "You will give me money, or so help me god, I'll blow your brains out. And don't tempt me Sophie!" he threatened. "I don't have any money! Buck deals with the money!" she blurted out. "Oh, Buck deals with it? Well we'll just have to wait on Buck then, won't we? Move!" he ordered, pointing the gun into her back as he pushed her into the living room. As they passed the busted front door, she peeked out and saw the pickup truck pulling up. Floyd, however, was obviously too busy shouting to notice anything that was not about him. "You know you're an ungrateful little bitch. You know that, right? I've always done the best I could for you but you always wanted more. You are such a little brat. Must get that from your mother; she was the exact same. I was never good enough, I didn't work hard enough, I drank too much. That bitch was never happy, just like you. She thought she could just up and walk away from me with you, but I soon stopped her," he sniggered as he pushed her onto the sofa, waving the gun around. "What do you mean 'but you soon stopped her'? I thought mom committed suicide?" Sophie asked. "A fourteen-story swan dive will do that to anyone. She might have jumped, or someone may have pushed her," he grinned. Buck was slowly creeping into the house as Floyd told Sophie how her mother really died. "You killed her? You bastard!" she screamed, jumping up to attack him. "Don't be so stupid, you little whore. I have the gun, remember," he told her as he pressed it against her chest at her heart. "And tell lover boy to back away, or I'll shoot you. I saw him get out of the truck. You thought I didn't, but I

did." he told Sophie. "Please babe, just back up," she told Buck as a tear rolled down her cheek. Floyd grabbed her and held her in front of him with the gun to her back aimed at her heart, and like that, he walked them back to the door. "If you want to see her again, you'll get me money and get it NOW!" he demanded. "Okay, just calm down Floyd. I'll get you the money. Just let Sophie go," Buck pleaded. "I'm not that stupid, buddy, I know you've got money and lots of it. You're brothers with the casino owner, I mean, damn, you own half of it. You done well for yourself there, Kiddo." He chuckled and slapped Sophie's ass. That gesture pushed her over the edge. She hated him. She always had. But until now she had also feared him, feared what he would do to her if she stood up to him. But that had always been a vague threat. Now she knew just how far he was willing to go. He might even be willing to kill her, his own daughter. But now that the threat took on a more solid form, he realized that she was no longer afraid. Floyd was just a man. He had never been much of a father to her anyway; why should she fear or even respect him? He no longer had any authority over her, and the only power he had here in this room came from the gun in his hand. Take that away, and he would go back to what he had always been: a miserable excuse for a man who could not control even himself, much less someone else. Rage overtook her, and without thinking, she turned to face him and grabbed the gun. She heard Buck yelling, but her focus was entirely on her father. She would take his power. He would never threaten her again. Sophie and Buck would be happy together, and Floyd would not come between them! The air was ripped by the sound of an explosion. Sophie fell to the floor, staring at the blood that covered the front of her white dress. She looked up at her father, who wore a stunned expression. As she watched in shock, he let go of the smoking gun; letting it drop with a metallic thud off the wooden floor. His knees hit the ground, then he pitched forward and fell lifeless to the floor. Sophie heard herself screaming. Buck rushed over to her and pulled her onto his lap, cradling her and rocking her back and forth until she calmed down. He held her there in the darkness for a long time. The closed heavy draperies helped blanket the room in darkness. Outside the wind howled with its wolf-like voice. Just that sound made the house seem colder than it really was. "Put your head down and rest," he whispered. "You know you want to. Things will be better in the morning, I promise. Everything always looks different in the light of day." He hated lying to her, but if it could give her at least a little peace in this blackest hour, it was worth it. Things would not be better in the morning. What had happened here could not be undone. As he looked at the blood covering her, he knew that her life was coming to an end. But that was for the best, after all. Buck had paid off the debt, and Floyd's blood on her dress was witness to the fact that she had just sent him where he could never harm her again. With nothing left to tie her to her old life, Buck intended to give her a new one, far away from the abuses inflicted upon her, far away from the horror she must feel at having just killed her father. That horror would not go away in the morning; it would take her a long time to forgive herself. But one day perhaps, when she finally realized how much Buck truly loved her, when she learned to believe her heart, she might trust him when he told her that none of this was her fault. He would not stop trying to convince her until she believed it. He lifted the weeping girl into his arms and carried her outside to his truck to drive her away from this life and into a new one.