

# ~ Operation Drop Zone ~

by Larisa

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Disclaimer; Ya'll know this better than I do, sex between two hot women, ass kicking of men, filthy gutter language, mama's with super human boomerang powers, idiots on the loose and last but not least an ugly dog.

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LEFT...LEFT...STRAIGHT! OOHOO Hell, back the other way...hurry it's getting away!" A voice rang out in the partial silence along with the squeak of tennis shoes, the rubber wheels of the ladder stand and heavy panting. "SHIT I CAN'T REACH!" She swatted with her fish net and jumped up and down on the ladders top platform. "Too damn short even with a ladder," green eyes searched the ceiling, the cross beams in front and behind her before looking down to the floor. "You guys suck big time."

"Yeah well...so do you...shove that net...up your ass!" One of the two women that had been pushing the ladder around the Wal-Mart store panted out and then fell to the floor.

"Yeah well if you'd lay off the chicken tenders you wouldn't have that fat ass to drag around and been able to push me faster!"

"Look who's talking," the other one said and threw a tennis ball up at her. "You got an ass that looks like two of those giant cinnamon buns!" She pointed a shaky finger at the ceiling and yelled. "BIRD!" She then covered her head when it flew right over the top of them and used them as a drop zone. She snickered when a loud scream came from the small woman on the top of the ladders platform.

"Rotten god damn bird...got me AGAIN!" She screamed the last part out and ran for the bathroom. "God damn operation drop zone sucks donkey dicks!"

"GO BIRD!" The other two cheered the grey pigeon on and got up from the floor.

They cringed when they heard the twangy voice of their shift supervisor and tried to sneak away before she saw them. "Ya'll hold on up there now, why aren't ya'll in your departments putting stock up?" She pushed her cat eyeglasses up her long crooked nose and snapped her gum. "Shifts half over with and ya ain't done a damn thing!" She waved a long fingered hand at them and jabbed with a blood red fingernail. "Get movin or it'll be the last thing ya'll do!"

The two women looked to each other with crossed eyes and dropped their front teeth over their bottom lips so that they looked like her and nodded their heads. "Come on Smootcher I think we gots some new boxers in." She shook her long dark hair around her head until she got dizzy and stumbled off with her feet pointing out to the sides.

"Wait Stewie!" The other one yelled and took off frog hopping after her.

"Ya'll gotta be inbred or somethin, simple damn women. I'd fire ya'll but I can't get anyone else ta work." Looking around the immediate area, she spoke aloud to herself. "Now where's Murphy, there's all kinds of dog and cat food to put up?" She patted her fire engine red bouffant hairdo and waddled off with her head wagging back and forth from the weight of her hair. As she walked, she kicked out one leg, pulled the back of her nylon stretch pants up and scratched her ass.

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Judge Bloodstone waited for the automatic doors to slide open before pulling on her surgical gloves and walking over to a shopping cart. Pulling an aerosol can of Lysol from her cargo pocket; she sprayed the handle and then pushed it away. Her first stop for the night were the cleaning supplies; she was running low on everything and wouldn't have enough bleach for her daily cleaning the next morning. She pushed her cart down the aisle and stopped right before all the things she needed. After filling part of her cart with Lysol floor cleaner, Windex with vinegar, Murphy's oil soap, lemon scented bleach, a heavy-duty scrub brush, Clorox orange scented kitchen wipes and various other household cleaners to eradicate disease-carrying germs. Her next stop was the food aisles; she grabbed anything that could be prepared in a matter of minutes with no mess. Moving her below the shoulder length dark hair from her face, she looked up with clear blue eyes when she heard a sound on the shelf above her. What she saw there scared her senseless, all she could do was watch wide eyed as the whipped cream shot from the can and hit her square in the face.

"Gotcha weirdo cleaning lady!" Stewie yelled and jumped down from the shelf to run in the opposite direction. "Smotcher SHE'S HERE!" She screamed throughout the store and came to a screeching halt when Doris, her supervisor stepped in front of her. "But we have lots and lots of work to do." She hid the whipped cream behind her back and side stepped Doris until she was able to escape without her seeing the can.

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Judge pulled a container of hand wipes from her pocket and with shaky hands cleaned the whipped cream from her face and clothes. When she was done, she was close to hyperventilating and falling over onto the floor. "You're clean...no germs...germ free...breathe Judge breathe." She placed both her hands on the shopping carts handle and took deep breaths; she should be used to the ambushes. It happened every time she came into the store; she had thought of coming in during daylight hours but couldn't handle all the people. So she came in at two o'clock in the morning when the store was empty and only the shelf packers were there. The main problem were three tiny little women that made her visits pure Hell, they ambushed her every chance they got and there wasn't a damn thing she could do about it. She was well known for her problem and it kept her from grabbing one of them and beating the Hell outta them. She pulled her surgical gloves off, replaced them with clean ones and stuffed all her trash into a zip lock bag.

"OK you can do this Judge, they only attack you once and then they run off to hide somewhere dark and infested with diseases and insects." She shivered at the thought and pushed her cart to the checkout, the whole way there, she checked for her attackers.

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"Smootcher those are jerky dog treats," Murphy said over her shoulder and then saw that she had four bags of the Ol'Roy jerky treats. "Smootcher, we don't have a dog."

She turned and gave her a roll of brown eyes. "I know that but they're cheaper than the beef jerky things, besides, Stewie doesn't know the difference." She took the bag from the cashier and pocketed the change. "She really likes the turkey flavored ones." She tucked the bag under her arm and kicked Murphy's foot to get her attention. "It's the cleaning lady, the love of your life, the doom of every thing germmy and even wrapped in plastic ya ain't gotta chance!" Murphy ran her fingers through her short blonde hair, rubbed her front teeth with her index finger and adjusted her breasts. "Ohh yeah that really made a difference, why not just strip?"

"Shud-up and go hide somewhere, go give Stewie her jerky treats or something." She pushed her away and leaned against the bag holder with a cocky grin plastered on her face. "Aren't you the lucky one tonight, you're the only customer who gets a bag packer?" She winked a green eye and licked her top lip with the tip of her tongue.

"Ohh gee I feel so gifted," she placed her hands at her sides and wiggled her fingers. "Touch me and you're dead, that's d-e-a-d."

"Ohh goody now I can spell three whole words!" She licked her entire hand and grabbed the first item that came down towards her. "Lets see, I can spell d-e-a-d, r-e-t-a-r-d and e-u-t-h-a-n-a-s-i-a." She held up the carton of soymilk and licked the whole side of it before putting it in the bag. "Now if I was to combine those three words in a sentence it would say, 'You want my body!'" She jumped forward and humped Judge's leg.

Judge pulled a small can from her pocket and sprayed Murphy with it, she cringed from her scream and once she was free of the humping little retard, she sprayed her leg and the hand that had touched her with Lysol. "Disgusting damn woman, she needs to be locked up somewhere!" She cringed again when two more screams joined Murphy's.

"I'M BLIND!" She stumbled around and fell into Stewie's arms. "She blinded me with mace!"

"Ohh my God...oohh my God!" Smootcher chanted and did her impression of a grieving black woman complete with hysterical tantrum. "Ya hurt my baby...Lord Jesus she's suffering...help her Jesus! She jumped up and down, pulled at her afro, flung her arms around and fell to the floor. "Save her God...she's all I gots...my lil baby...she's an angel...doesn't deserve this!"

Stewie used the front of her shirt to wipe the tears from Murphy's face and kicked out at Judge.

"Mean woman, spraying a defenseless tiny little Murphy with Lysol and mace, you've sprayed her so many times there's no way she could have germs ya giant weirdo cleaning lady!" When Judge held up the can of Lysol, with Murphy still in her arms, she jumped backwards, tripped and fell on top of a still tantrum throwing Smootcher.

"You're all freaks, stay away from me or I'll mace all of you!" Judge stuttered and waved the can of mace at them while she pushed her cart away from their tangled squirming bodies. When she was out at her car, she looked around to make sure that she was safe from an ambush and placed all the bags in the trunk. She ran with the cart, shoved it into line with the others and ran back to her old Plymouth Skylark. Unlocking the door, she took one last look around before sliding behind the wheel. She waited for the day that one of the three women would hide in the back seat or jump in front of her car; she knew she would have a heart attack. Fifteen minutes later, she was pulling into her driveway and waiting for the garage door to go up all the way. Pale blue eyes scanned the neat and tidy shelves that lined the garage walls and came back to where a can of car wax sat.

"Ohh now I know damn well that you were clean when I put you there." She forgot all about her groceries and grabbed the can from the shelf, pulled a wet nap from her pocket; cleaned the can and placed it back inside the black circle drawn on the shelves surface. "That's better, must be condensation building up or something." A few minutes later, she had all of her groceries in her kitchen and was in the process of putting them away when she heard the click of toenails on the tiles. She looked down into the deep brown eyes of her Chinese crested dog. "OK Woobie I know you were on my bed, you have the tell tale signs of bed head." She leaned down and tried to fix the grey hair on the side of her little dogs head. "Guess you'll have to stay with the one side of your head flat." She pulled the bag of dog treats down from the counter and held them out. "I got you the bacon flavored ones, all the turkey flavored were gone." She opened the bag, held out two of the jerky treats, and watched her dog trot off into the living room with them. Most people would think that a person with her compulsions for cleaning and germs would not have a pet.

She wasn't like other compulsive people, her dog was cleaner than most humans and she was easier to talk to as well. In fact, the little dog was worse than she was at times; she refused to walk on the ground if it was muddy and wouldn't go outside until her coat was on. With nothing else to do but clean the kitchen counters with Lysol wipes, Judge went into the living room and growled at what she found. "Why are all of your toys and blankets at the laundry room door, I just washed everything two days ago?" She looked with a raised eyebrow at all the chocolate stains on the blankets and then to her dog. "Where did you find candy?" She sighed and slapped her forehead; she had left a bag of peanut M&M's sitting on her nightstand. She always had some kind of chocolate in her bedroom; it was a feel good food and she needed it often. Looking around her pure white sterile environment, she didn't see any little chocolate foot prints. "Ohh you are so lucky," she gave her dog the evil eye. "Because I'm not in the mood to shampoo the rugs, I just want to sit down and relax." She went into her bedroom, flipped the light on and went over to her dresser. Pulling out a pair of PJ's, she then headed to her bathroom.

Flipping on the light, she squinted at the brightness and used a hand to shield her eyes. She placed her PJ's on the glass shelf near the shower, turned on the water and then made sure that

the curtain was closed properly. Shedding her clothes, she placed each article in its proper hamper before grabbing a new shower sponge and personal bar of specially hand made sandalwood soap. Her showers always lasted exactly 22 minutes, after shampooing, rinsing, and conditioning and then washing her body twice, she felt clean. Taking the pure white towel from its sanitized paper, she dried off and placed it in the hamper that was strictly for bath towels. Grabbing a squeegee and a small white towel used to polish glass; she cleaned the shower and wiped off the curtain. Next came brushing her teeth and combing out her wet hair, when she turned the light off, her bathroom was cleaner than when she went into it.

"Where are you...you...little bald ass dog?" She wandered around her living room before going into her bedroom, flipping on the light not only did she shield her eyes but so did her dog. The only color in her entire bedroom was the brown leather Traders hat that sat on her dresser. "On my pillow," She pointed and rolled her eyes when her small dog rolled onto her back and kicked her legs. "You better be real glad that I like you." She pulled back the white goose down comforter and slipped between the cool sheets. "Now move your little bald ass before I throw you on the floor."

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A large older black woman with light maroon hair yelled and heard her voice echo throughout the house. "Ohh no they are not, I am gonna tan three asses!" She stomped up the stairs, down the hall and to the last door on her left. "That's enough, get your asses in bed or else!" She walked between each room and waved a pudgy hand in the air. "It's three o'clock in the damn morning and you three imps are making all sorts of damn noise!" She watched her three daughters jump and run around the rooms and hallway before they got into their beds; she wondered sometimes where she went wrong. Out of twelve kids, she had three that she couldn't get rid of. "That's it; tomorrow morning I'm putting the three of you on E-BAY!" She walked into one of the rooms, up to one of the beds and yanked a dog-eared magazine from where it peeked out from under the mattress. "I swear you are worse than all of your brothers," She smacked Murphy over her head with the magazine. "Nudy books hidden all over the damn place."

"Where do ya think we got that big old collection?" She asked and yanked the blankets over her head when mama glared at her.

"And just where do you think I got the money to get you three out of jail, dumb people pay all kinds of money for dirty magazines. Praise the Lord for E-Bay, gonna get me a brand new stove with the latest auction." She grinned and rubbed her fingers together in the international hand signal for money. "One Malibu Barbie, her pink Convertible Corvette gone to some fool in Tuscan Arizona, if she only knew she just paid for my new kitchen and the carpeting in my TV room." She flipped the light off and yelled when she heard snickers. "Shut up Stewie or I'll sell your Bernie Bernard and that goes for you to Smotcher, damn kids." She went down the hall to

her own bedroom and rolled her eyes when she heard laughter coming from the other bedrooms. "Retards, just little retarded imps." She draped her pink housecoat over the end of her bed, pulled a flowered shower cap over her hair and crawled into bed. A few minutes later, she was snoring up a storm and in perfect chorus with her kids down the hallway.

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Judge pulled on her charcoal suit jacket and checked her collar in the long mirror by her bedroom door; she checked her belt and then her shoes before leaving the room. "Woobie you behave and don't you dare get into anything, namely my closet." She grabbed her worn leather briefcase, her car keys, and sunglasses and went out the front door. It was close to six in the morning and most of her neighbors were already gone and halfway to work, she was one of the lucky ones and only had a fifteen-minute walk to her office. Her neighbors all worked in Washington DC and she wished that they lived there as well. What used to be nothing but open fields and thick wooded areas were vanishing with each rich asshole that came into West Virginia. They built their 30 room, quadruple garage mansions in the last little bit of Wild Wonderful West Virginia and then complained about the residents that had lived in the area for generations. They clogged the roads with their customized Humvee's and other huge SUV's made by Cadillac and assorted companies. These vehicles tearing around roads built some 70 years or more before hand and not designed for the size of the vehicles caused many accidents; the same went for the parking lots. The blind spots caused even more problems but combined with huge egos of the drivers and disregard for the laws, they became deadly. Or close to it and that was one of the problems that Judge had that day, she had to defend the actions of a small group of people who were chased by an SUV driver. Jogging up the courthouse steps, she went through the door and then turned immediately to her right to go up the stairs to the second level. She hated climbing the stairs, not because of the exercise but because the steps were so narrow, that she had to go up them sideways.

"No germs...no germs..." She chanted on her way to her tiny office and tried to wipe her hand off on her trouser leg and not trip up the stairs. She stopped and pulled her sunglasses down before opening her door and flipping the overhead lights on. Even through her sunglasses it was bright and harsh, she had replaced the small light fixtures with strip lighting and had replaced the bulbs with ones bright enough to give third degree burns. Along with those were smaller blue lights that killed airborne bacteria. "Three cases and you're done for the day..." She pushed her worn leather chair back, checked the seat and then sat down behind her desk. "Take deep breathes and relax nothing can go wrong today because it's Friday." She opened her eyes when her door swung open with a loud squeak.

"It's Friday the 13th every single week where you're concerned," Belinda her secretary said and handed her a stack of file folders wrapped in plastic. "Your first case has been held up and shoved to next Wednesday and I don't envy you one bit for this other one." The older woman snickered and waved a hand at the four-inch thick file. "If I were you, I'd run away...say to

maybe another State and give that case to some other lawyer. That family is bad news, always has been always will be."

Judge rubbed her face with her hands and looked up over the top of her fingertips. "What exactly do you mean by bad news, are they like born into the system or something?"

"Ohh worse Judge, far worse than that," she leaned forward and winked. "The system made them what they are." She clicked her tongue, waved a hand and walked from the bright office.

"Just wonderful I would have to go pro bono this week and end up with a one way ticket to hell." She looked up at her secretary with furrowed brows. "Tell me again why I do pro bono cases?"

"You're brain dead and you're too damn tall for me to reach up and slap every time you get the thought in your head."

"Next time just kick me in my ass," she flipped the file open and groaned at all the police reports that fell before her eyes. "How come I get the feeling that they should just be locked up and forgotten?"

"Ohh probably because the two brain cells that those damn lights haven't fried are working." She checked her watch before going to the doorway. "You've got about ten minutes before you have to be in court, if I was you, I'd take a handful of aspirins with a shot of whiskey." She grinned when Judge whimpered and dropped her forehead down onto her desk.

"Why me, I mean I've been good, I've never hurt anyone...OK so maybe a few people but they deserved it and more." She lifted her head and gathered up the items she would need for court, she never really took that much with her. It was more of a power play with the other lawyers to walk in with nothing but her briefcase and a cup of coffee. Most of the time, her briefcase was empty of case files and only held a pair of surgical gloves and little packages of handi wipes. She had a talent of being able to remember every thing she heard or read and was able to spit it back out verbatim. She had pissed off a lot of her professors and other students when she would bring up court cases that would knock their debates off track. She figured that's why they were all debating to begin with; to see who could come up with cases to either make or break the case they were studying.

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Mama D sat fanning herself with a small paper fan; it did nothing for the sweat running down her face or the sweltering heat that seemed to be getting worse. She looked around the room and saw everyone present taking off their coats, unbuttoning shirts and looking to the heat vent that was spewing more hot air. "What the hell is wrong with the bosses in this place are they trying to melt us?" She mumbled and turned her head to see a janitor pushing a huge pedestal fan through

the double doors and then making sure that the doors didn't close when he turned the fan on. "About damn time, now if they'd turn the heat off, we might just survive." She looked to her side when she heard the man next to her snicker. "I know I need to loose a few pounds but making me sit in a place hotter than Hell itself ain't gonna do it, if I thought it would, I'd have been sitting my fat ass in the nearest green house years ago." She wiped at her face and blew one of her curls off her forehead.

"Will all stand for the Honorable Judge...Ermine T. Hankins?" The courtroom bailiff yelled and wiped the sweat from his cheeks with the sleeve of his shirt; he stepped back when an old decrepit man shuffled in and dropped into his chair.

"Didn't know that he was still breathing, old bastard's been around since the War Between the States." Mama mumbled and fanned herself some more before sitting back down. The judge waved a trembling hand at the bailiff and leaned back in his chair.

"Calling the first case of Whistler Vs the people of Jefferson county West Virginia, will the defendants please stand for the court?" He looked around the courtroom and moaned when he spotted them, he was about to throw something when one of them jumped.

After jabbing her in the ass with a safety pin, Mama hissed in Murphy's ear. "Get your ass up and wake your sisters up!"

"Where's your lawyer?" The judge asked and was about to slam his gavel, when the fan screeched across the floor and their court appointed lawyer came running in.

"Sorry your honor I was given the wrong court room." Judge said and then came to a screeching halt when she saw three sets of familiar eyes looking at her. "Ohhh just throw my ass behind bars."

"What was that Ms. Bloodstone...do I hear contempt of court?" The old man asked and raised his gavel again. "Bailiff, throw Bloodstone in jail!" He slammed his gavel and then leaned forward when the bailiff spoke to him.

"Look Stewie it's the freaky cleaning lady!" Smotcher yelled and then grunted when mama smacked her in the back of her head with her umbrella.

"Shut up before I gotta bail your asses out again, now behave or I'll beat your ass's right here in front of every one." She hissed and smacked all three of them before they could do anything.

Judge looked to the judge, opened her mouth and before she could say one word, the bailiff waved her off. "State your case Bloodstone I ain't got all day!"

"Sir I haven't spoken to my clients, I would like a recess..." She looked to the three women with a terrified gleam in her eyes.

"Throw her in jail..." He yelled again and leaned over to the bailiff. "Proceed and make it



snappy, no recess are they guilty or not?"

"Not guilty sir..."

"Be back here in one week...month see someone about that!" He got up and shuffled from the courtroom leaving everyone to jump up and wonder what was going on.

"Ms. Bloodstone if you'll see the court clerk she'll give you the new court date." The bailiff said and then walked to the other side of the courtroom to disappear through another door. Murphy looked to her mama and then to Judge.

"You're a lawyer...worse, you're our lawyer?"

Judge raised one dark eyebrow and pointed a finger. "Not any more, I quit, there is no way in Hell that I'll represent the three of you!" She walked away and went past the fan only to hear her name called by the bailiff. "Life sucks and then they appear and make it worse." She said to herself and turned to see what the bailiff wanted.

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"What did you three do to that lady lawyer?" Mama D asked them once they were outside of the courthouse.

"She's the freaky cleaning lady that comes into the store at like two or three o'clock in the morning." Stewie answered and then looked to Smotcher.

"She's the one that Murphy humps her leg all the time and then she sprays us with mace."

"And Lysol, breath spray or what ever she happens to have in her hand at the time, I don't care though," She gave her mama a bright smile. "She's a hotty!" Murphy grinned like a lunatic.

Mama D smacked her in the side of her head and pointed a finger at the other two. "I think you three do more than hump her leg, that woman would rather go to jail then represent you!"

"We ahhh..." Stewie swallowed deeply and tried to look at her mama but couldn't. "It's all Murphy...she does everything!" She yelled and ran off towards their car and then went right past it to keep running down the sidewalk towards home.

"She's such a retard," Mama mumbled and swung her umbrella at her other two kids. "Who dropped her on her head more, me or one of you two?"

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Judge stood in the hallway that led to the judges chambers; she leaned against the wall and waited for the bailiff to join her. She wondered what she had done wrong this time to be called in the back hallway and sighed when the bailiff gave her a small smile. "Sorry about that Judge, the old man is off his damn rocker again this morning. I talked to the court clerk and you've got a few days before you appear before Judge Johnson."

"Thanks, what was he doing on the bench anyways; I thought they put him in a home?"

"They did but he keeps escaping...with the help of the other old people. Now I have to find out what happened to Judge Hawthorne, he was supposed to be on the bench this morning." He rubbed his face and looked up at her, he knew about her problems but it didn't take away from the type of person or lawyer she was. She was ruthless when needed and compassionate when it called for it; he just wished that she would take the Judgeship that was open. "I wish you would put the damn robe on, my life would be easier if you did."

"And my life would be pure Hell," she squeezed his shoulder and moved away from the wall. "Send someone over to the casino, they'll find Jonathon playing the nickel slots on the second floor."

"See that you made part of my morning easier already, just wish it was an all day thing." He said, gave her a small wave and headed to the clerks office.

"That was my good deed for the week," she rubbed her face and looked down the hall towards the side exit door. "Now why in the Hell did I get stuck with the Whistlers case, is this a way of telling me that I'm going to Hell in a hand basket?" She left the building and was on her way to the front where she hoped that she could catch up with the three women, what she wasn't expecting was to see mama D with Smootcher and Murphy in head locks and dragging them down the sidewalk. "Wait I need to talk to them!" She yelled and ran after mama. "Please ma'am I really need to talk to those two if I'm to defend them." Judge felt small when she finally caught up with mama and her two defendants, the woman was almost as tall as her own six foot height but she had to weigh close to 300 pounds. Her eyes blinked behind black rimmed glasses and maroon curls fell around her round sweaty face.

"I think you should just let that old geezer toss them in jail, I've tried everything I can think of and they're still bad!" She shook them where they hung under her massive arms and grinned when she heard whimpering murmurs. "I've got them up for bid on E-Bay, if we're all lucky, maybe some idiot will buy all three of 'em!" She gave Judge a wink. "Used sex slaves, ten bucks a piece or all three for \$25.00."

"I ain't no sex slave!" Murphy yelled and fell to her knees in front of Judge. "But I'll be one if you buy me," she gazed up into pale blue eyes, pulled a twenty dollar bill from her pocket and handed it to her mama. "Here mama she just bought me."

"See what I mean," mama smacked her on her head and then released Smootcher. "I shoulda paddled the three of 'em more when they were babies, now you apologize for being such an ass."

Judge looked down at the two bowed heads and then saw devilish grins on their faces. "If you would all like to come up to my office so I can get the details and your side of the incident with this Humvee." She looked around them and moaned. "Where's the other one, I'm one trouble maker short."

"Stewie ran home before I could kick her ass, if you want, you can come over to the house and talk to them." She pushed Murphy and Smootcher towards their car. "I can control them better at home; I don't get screams of disbelief when I pull out the duct tape there." She handed a shocked Judge a business card and waddled to her old Buick station wagon. "By the time you get there I'll have lunch made." After she climbed in, Judge seen two bodies crawl over the back seat to sit at the very back of the station wagon; she wondered why and then saw tennis balls fly from the front to bounce off the rear window.

"Go over to their house so they can tie me up and lock me in a basement for the rest of my life?" She shrugged her shoulders and headed down the sidewalk to where she parked her car. "I don't have anything better to do and who would miss me besides my dog?" She looked down at the address on the business card and grinned. "Mama D's house of junk, you need it, I got it. Well that's nice; I'm going to the city dump for lunch." She shivered with the thought and wondered if she could get mugged and knocked into a coma so she wouldn't have to go.

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Mama used a huge metal flipper to flip the hamburgers on the griddle, after she flipped them; she placed a thick slice of cheddar cheese on top to melt. She turned to the long scared wooden kitchen table to slice tomatoes and onions and heard the front doorbell. It had to be her kids lawyer because any one else would just come right into the house. Wiping her hands on an old threadbare hand towel, she waddled towards the front door and saw the tall dark woman fidgeting on the stoop. "You look like you're about to have a heart attack, ya know the black folks around here won't attack you." She opened the door and held it open for her. "Come on in here before my hamburgers burn." She walked back to the kitchen and heard the soft hesitant footfalls behind her. "The Ritalin kids are outback getting rid of some left over energy, they're usually in bed at this time." She looked to a frustrated and shaking Judge and waved a hand at a heavy wooden kitchen chair. "Have a seat and don't worry I spent 20 years as a cleaning lady at the High School, my house can't get any cleaner." She handed Judge a tall glass of iced tea and a napkin. "Now tell me how the DA of Jefferson county managed to get my kids case?" She placed all the hamburgers on a large platter, placed it in the center of the table and then dropped a fry basket filled with French fries down into hot oil. `

"I do a couple pro bono cases a month...you said kids, how can that be?"

"You mean the two pasty brats; I adopted them when they were babies. Now back to their case, ya know they're innocent and I ain't sayin that because they're my kids, I saw the whole damn thing from the front doors of Wal-Mart."

Judge looked around the bright airy kitchen and noticed all the hand made pictures that hung on the refrigerator and the wall next to it. "How many grandkids do you have, it'll help me to understand your family and help with their case."

"I've got twelve adopted kids, 31 grandkids and four great grandkids. The only three that haven't given me any is the three retards out back." She went to the backdoor and whistled so loud that Judge flinched. "You got any kids?"

"Me, no I don't have any kids and probably never will. Now about the accident, how exactly did it happen, the police report reads like a comedy sketch?"

Mama waved a pudgy hand at her to join her by the back door. "Now look out there and tell me why it wouldn't read like that and I know all about how they treat you at the store so put that into account as well." Judge stood up and joined her at the back door, she watched as the three women jumped on a trampoline and then smashed against each other in mid air. They fell into a heap and then off onto the ground to roll around moaning and groaning. "Now tell me why the cop wouldn't be all confused when he was making out the report, I tried to tell him but a hysterical black woman isn't much better."

Judge watched as they each got up and started slapping at each other; another whistle had both them and Judge jumping. They came running towards the door, stopped and pulled off their shoes before running past the two women. "They act like little kids here as well as at Wal-Mart," she lowered her voice to a whisper. "Are they mentally challenged; if they are the court case could..."

Mama busted up laughing and placed her hand on Judge's shoulder. "Nope not at all, they're quite normal and sorta sane, so that leaves just plain stupid for the way they act." She pointed to the chair Judge had been sitting in and then placed a paper plate in front of her. "Go ahead and get a burger and what ever else ya want before my kids get in here," she shook the fries of extra grease and dumped them into a huge basket lined with paper towels before putting it on the table.

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Murphy crawled on Smotcher's back and tried to look in the mirror; she slid off and landed on her ass in the middle of the bathroom floor. "Ohh come on I gotta make sure I look good for my woman!" She yelled and pushed between her sisters but still couldn't see her reflection.

"She's here ta see me!" Smootcher yelled and hip checked Murphy and Stewie all the way out into the hallway. "After all, I gots the booty ta last all night."

"And break bones, I think my hips broke." Stewie whined and whimpered until Murphy helped her up from the floor. "She might be here ta see me, remember I'm the romantic one, I use whipped cream." She wiped her hands on the front of Murphy's t-shirt and grinned. "I'll share if ya bring the cherries."

"I got ice cream," Smootcher said and dragged them both towards the kitchen. "We'll make her a big sundae!"

"You'll sit your asses down and act halfway human!" Mama said and raised a flyswatter over her head. "Now sit and behave your damn selves or else." They grabbed food from the plates like starving animals until they each got smacked on top of their heads with the flyswatter. Judge had seen such behavior in only the movies; it reminded her of Animal house or Revenge of the Nerds. With each bite of her hamburger, she wiped her mouth. With the three retards, they were lucky to get the food into their mouths. She sat in aghast when Murphy leaned sideways and took a bite of her hamburger and Smootcher stole pickles from Stewie's plate. "Charming ain't they, wouldn't ya like to take them to a fancy restaurant?"

"Only if I wanted to get kicked out and banned for the rest of my life." Judge answered and ignored the way Murphy was licking her fingers and eyeing her. She took a drink of her iced tea and choked when something touched her crotch; she covered her mouth with her napkin and felt tears come to her eyes. Choking made the burn in her sinuses worse and was thankful when mama pounded her on the back.

"Don't go dying at my table, the neighbors will talk and then I'll never get into that country club." Judge set her hamburger down and wiped at her eyes, she took a deep shuddering breath and was grateful that it didn't burn. "I'm making a pot of coffee, you want some?" She asked but never paid attention to what anyone said, it was just her way, she always asked but could care less the answers she received. Judge jumped in her chair and grabbed at her glass before it could fall over, she gave Murphy a glare and snarled at her. "Murphy leave her alone and eat your own food before I beat your ass!"

"Wasn't me mama it was that damn dog." Murphy said around a mouthful of Judge's hamburger. "You know how she gets around strangers?"

"I know that I'm not senile and that we don't have a dog with the exception of you, now keep your hands and feet to yourself." She threw her dishtowel at her and pointed a finger at the other two. "That goes for anything you two were thinking as well, now eat or go outside."

"I really need to know about the accident with the SUV." Judge stated once again and grimaced when Stewie looked to her with mustard and mayonnaise all over her face.

"That crazy bitch tried ta kill us!" Smootcher cried out and waved her ketchup-covered hands all

over the place. "Smash us to pieces in front of our mama!" Murphy slapped a hand over her mouth while Stewie grabbed her hands.

"I'll tell ya what happened," Stewie said and launched into her story. "It all started out when we was out in the parking lot, it was cold and dreary, our fingers and toes turning blue from the cold, not like we could actually see if they was blue but ya know what they say about them turning that color when it's cold outside. I asked Murph if she'd take her shoes off so I could see but she said she'd shove her foot up my ass so I forgot about it. And then Smoot said she'd kick my ass to if I didn't get the carts moving up towards the store, I said she could kiss my ass..." She mumbled behind Smootcher's hand and waved her arms.

"We'll be here until we need wheelchairs if ya let her tell our story," Murphy struggled with her sister and pushed her to the floor so Smoot could sit on her. "Now where were we?" She wiggled her brows and winked at Judge while licking her upper lip. "We were pushing around 50 shopping carts up towards the storage area and I was discussing my ways of seduction when Smoot said I was crazier than Hell. So I stopped and was showing her how I was gonna seduce you and hump your leg the next time ya came in the store." She stuck her tongue out and did things that brought a deep blush up Judge's cheeks and a yell from her mama. "Any who's it, this huge ass Humvee pulls up and starts honking the horn. Of course, we flip the driver off and keep on talking and then we notice that the lights are flashing at us and the horn keeps on honking. We thought the damn alarm was going off, so we ignored it just like we always do when car alarms go off." She yelped and looked to her mama and the French fry that she had thrown at her. "What..."

Mama threw a towel at her. "I'm getting older by the second, get to the damn point!"

OK, well the idiot drivin that big ass thing revved the engine and came tearing right at us! We jumped and ran around in circles screamin like little girls, cuz we thought it was gonna get us, ya know like the car in the movie Christine. So we jumped on the string of carts and that thing hit them!" She punctuated it by slapping her hands together and elbowing her sister and Judge at the same time. "Carts went everywhere with us on top screamin our heads off and mama watching from the door. We thought we were road kill until the carts stopped," She scooted closer to Judge and leaned into her side. "Ya know what a sexual high ya get when ya think you're gonna die a virgin?"

Stewie and Smootcher covered their mouths, coughed out the word "Bullshit!" and then snickered at the expression on Judge's face.

"Shud-up dipshits...where was I," she ran her hand up Judge's thigh and watched her neck turn a dark red. "Ohhhh yeah about me being a virgin, wanna deflower me..." Were the last words she said after mama hit her square between the eyes with a tennis ball and knocked her right over in her chair.

"Damn I'm good," Mama punched a meaty hand in the air and then pointed to her other two kids. "Haul her ass to bed; she's done for the day." She gave Judge a bright smile and handed her a cup of coffee. "I'll finish the story so you can go home and do your paperwork or what ever it is that

ya need ta do. Now after the Humvee hit the carts and they went all over the place, it kept hitting them until they got to the ones that my kids were hanging onto. It hit the one that Murphy was on so hard that she flew up onto the hood and smashed the windshield. After seeing that, Smotcher and Stewie jumped on the thing and started beating on the hood and roof, that's when the cops showed up."

"And the idiot in the Humvee is bringing charges against your kids for this when they in fact are guilty of attempted vehicular homicide among a half dozen other things?" Judge asked and shook her head. "So what was the original reason for this person hitting the carts?"

Mama leaned over the table and held her pale blue eyes. "The asshole wanted to park in the handicap spot and the carts and my kids were in the way."

Judge shook her head in total disgust, she would not only win this case, she was going to go after the other person. "Don't worry; I'll make sure that nothing happens to them." She got up from the table and reached a hand out to mama. "I'll be in touch before the court hearing and if I can swing it, I'll get the charges dropped all together." She went to the front door and let herself out, once on the sidewalk, she took a deep breath and looked around the quiet neighborhood and then upward towards the second floor windows. There was Stewie and Smotcher blowing her kisses and waving.

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Judge looked around her house and then pulled on her goggles and facemask, flipping the switch on for the giant shop-vac; she started vacuuming the ceiling of all imaginary dirt. The sound of the vacuum drowned out her stereo and TV that were both blasting the news. One of her other strange compulsions was to know what was going on around the world, not like she could help in any way but she figured that if anything horrible was heading her way, she could run and hide. She would be the first to admit that she was a huge lily livered, yellow stripe up the back dog. She had her times with facing danger years earlier but that time was done and over with. She wished that she could forget what happened then as well as erase everyone else's memory of the happening also.

In her nightmares, she still felt the darkness and heard her own screams from inside her car where she was trapped. She had been a defense attorney for a short while and had gotten stuck with a bad case where she had to defend a local mushroom farmer who had been caught growing peyote buttons among his puffer and shitake mushrooms. He wouldn't have been caught but the police chief's son had come home stoned off his gourd and carrying a bag of the buttons. Within an hour, police surrounded the farmers place and a DEA agent came in to collect the illegal mushrooms. What made it worse was the redneck farmer trying to convince the officers that by religious beliefs, he had a right to grow the buttons. The only problem was that he said that he was Chief Pocahontas of the Tahoe tribe. Needless to mention but the police dragged him by force from his farm and tossed him in jail until his hearing.

When Judge had lost the case and her client was fined an astronomical fine in his eyes, he retaliated by catching her in the courthouse parking lot, blocking her in and then dumping an entire dump truck load of cow dung mixed in straw on her small convertible Miata car. Once found, it took the fire department a good hour to dig her car out. They ended up sedating her, hauling her away in the ambulance and then to City hospital where she stayed in the nutward for three months. No matter what the doctors tried, she still came out with psychological problems. They all surrounded the need to be clean, who could blame her for that kind of thinking after being buried in cow shit. Even now, she had to live with the teasing and finding steer horns mounted to the hood of her car or little cows glued on as hood ornaments. She had even come home to find cattle crossing signs in her front yard along with a life size plastic Elsa the milk cow on her doorstep. Sighing and letting her arms drop to her sides and the vacuum hose fall to the floor, she dropped onto her couch and shivered with memories. When she heard her telephone ring, she flew off the couch and calmed until she heard the voice speaking on the other end.

*"GOT MILK?"*

"NO but I got a big gun to shoot you in the ass with!" She screamed back and jumped up and down in the middle of the floor. "Useless cow fucking assholes! May all your chicken eggs be fertile and your milk run sour in the jug!" She ran in a circle three times and then spit over her left shoulder to bring about the family curse. She didn't really believe in curses but it made her feel better that she yelled one out at the tops of her lungs.

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Murphy peeked from her hiding spot, keyed her Uniden 2-way radio and heard Smootcher snicker, give her an all clear and then give out a rebel yell and charge. Murphy jumped up and tried to duck but red paintballs that splattered all around her head before she could move. "Bitch you cheated!" Murphy said over the radio and then asked where their sister was.

*"No idea, I think she's going for the kill though, I heard her humming the Rocky song."*

"But we ain't boxing today why the Hell she humming that song?"

*"No, the theme song from Rocky and Bullwinkle, geez you're such a blonde!"* Smootcher looked around and then ran out from her hiding spot to then slide on her knees and stop beside Murphy. "So what we gonna do if she gets the flag, we gonna beat her up and take it?"

"Ohhh I see how ya are," Murphy said and wiped the paint from the protective shield she wore. "Ya put in some pot shots, see that we're close to losing to the twerp so now ya wanna join forces."



"Of course, ya think I'm a complete moron?" They snickered and grinned at each other before they ran from their hiding spot screaming at the tops of their lungs. They stopped and looked to the ceiling when a screech came over the PA system.

*"I gots the flag ya retards!"* Stewie said, waved a pair of huge ass grandma underwear over her head and then launched into her victory song that had everyone in the store cringing and the two losers looking out for trouble that always seemed to follow them.

*It's time for Animaniacs  
And we're zany to the max  
So just sit back and relax  
You'll laugh 'til you collapse  
We're animan-iacs*

*Come join the Warner brothers  
And the Warner sister, Dot  
Just for fun we run around the Warner movie lot  
They lock us in the tower  
Whenever we get caught  
But we break loose and then vamoose  
And now you know the plot*

*We're animaniacs  
Dot is cute and Yakko yaks  
Wakko packs away the snacks  
While Bill Clinton plays the sax  
We're Animaniacs*

*Meet Pinky and the Brain who want to rule the universe  
Good Feathers flock together; Slappy whacks 'em with her purse  
Buttons chases Mindy while Rita sings a verse  
The writers flipped we have no script why bother to rehearse*

*We're animaniacs  
We have pay or play contracts  
We're zany to the max  
There's baloney in our slacks  
We're animany  
Totally insaney  
Here's the shows name-y Stewie winnies*

*Animaniacs  
Those are the facts.*

Murphy and Smootcher dropped to the floor when they heard Stewie scream out over the PA and

then their supervisor's voice apologizing to all the Wal-Mart shoppers and assuring them that the culprit did not work there and would be medicated and hauled back to the hospital. The other two looked to each other and then took off running towards the Lay-Away-Department to save their sister.

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Judge looked at her watch, saw the time and rushed to her front door. She was going to be late for her weekly visit to Wal-Mart; she was always there at three AM no matter what. After she was finished cleaning her house and getting files ready for court, she took her daily nap and was ready for the rest of the early morning. This wasn't only a run for food and cleaning supplies, she needed to ask the three trouble makers questions about their case. What she hoped was still in the security office was the tape from the night of the SUV case, if she could get that, she would have it placed in as evidence to whom was at fault and get the charges dropped and then turn around and file charges against the other person. Jumping into her car, she pulled out into the road and punched the gas pedal to the floor. At the time of the morning that it was, she knew she was safe from the police because they were all parked in the 7-11 parking lots taking their naps.

A few minutes went by before she made her right turn into the parking lot, as she drove to the top of the spaces; she noticed all the handicap spots were filled. "And how many of you people are legal?" She asked herself and looked at the license plates as she drove by. "Better yet, why the fuck do you people from outta state hafta shop here; stay in your own fucking state and leave us alone!" She screamed and then parked her car a short ways from the front doors. "God damn people drive 25 miles or more to come and clog up our roads and park ILEGALLY!" She saw that none of the cars in the handicap spots had the special tags or the license plate that gave them legal rights to park in the spots. "Of course no one will say or do a damn thing about this because the cops are all sleeping and besides who cares, it's three am in the morning!" She ranted to herself all the way to the doors and continued to rant under her breath; she turned when she heard a deep voice and rolled her eyes.

"Ohhh how wrong you are, I'm gonna take care of those lying creeps right now and be glad you're not parked in the fire lane." The Auxiliary Sheriff said as he smoothed down his dark mustache and spun his nightstick between his fingers. "That's one of my pet peeves, no one is allowed in the fire lane!" He yelled and marched towards his cruiser where a bullhorn sat on the trunk, in a split second; he had the horn up to his mouth and was yelling at the tops of his lungs through it. What amazed Judge was the shattering of the windows of the car that was parked in the fire lane.

"So glad that I'm a law abiding citizen, I can't afford to replace windows in my car let alone pay the damn ticket." She shook her head and went through the door. "Laziness does not pay, you get fat and then ya have to pay tickets because your ass is too big to haul from a parking space a few feet away from the handicap one." She grabbed the end of a cart and saw mama D marching to

where the electric carts were stored against a wall.

"Now you listen here you lazy ass whore!" She yelled and grabbed the front of the small cart to keep the other woman from moving it. "I see you hauling your ass over to the casino every day and then to Golden Coral to give the cops in the parking lot blow jobs with no problem, now you come in here and you're gonna use the cripple cart...GET YOUR LAZY ASS OFF!"

"Where do you get off saying anything to me you lard ass bitch!?" The other woman yelled back at mama D and waved a fist at her for good measure before trying to make the cart move.

"For the simple fact that my four hundred pounds of ass and tits doesn't need this little cart and neither do you, now get off and leave it for someone who really needs it and if you won't move...I'LL RIP YOUR ARMS OFF!" She shook the cart so hard that the other woman fell off and crawled away from her while screaming for security. "I am security you lazy bitch, now get outta my area or I'll sit on ya!" She pushed the cart back against the wall and plugged it back into the charging unit. "God damn lazy ass people won't even walk on the legs they was born with, if I can haul all my weight around then so can they." She mumbled and then turned when she heard a deep voice chuckle. "Hey Judge come to get abused by my kids?"

"No I came for my weekly shopping excursion," she whispered low so that the other customers walking past couldn't hear. "They're not gonna attack me like all the other times are they...because I need to ask them some more questions and it'll be difficult if I have to run through the store?"

"I don't think you'll have any problems, Stewie got her ass in trouble earlier and that's why I'm here." She took Judge by her elbow and moved her out of the doorway. "It's the same as when they were still in school, they get in trouble and I get a phone call."

"Sounds like they should be put on Ritalin, they're all a little too old to still have their mom called to bail them out."

Mama D smiled and slapped at Judge's arm. "Hell those three keep me young, how many women you know that are in their 70's and still running around like me?"

Judge was shocked, she was usually pretty good at guessing ages but had no idea mama D was in her 70's, she shook her head and gave her a small grin. "Will it do the same thing for me, some nights I feel like I should be in an old ladies home?"

"You need ta get out more, have some fun, and stop cleaning your house every night. Those cleaning fumes will kill ya, you're neighbors wear oxygen masks because the fumes are getting ta them." She gave her a hip check and almost knocked her across the store. "That's right Judge Bloodstone; I know your neighbors and everything about you."

"Who doesn't know about me, I'm kinda infamous around here." She hated the thought that everyone knew about her run in with the farmer. "I hope that's forgotten in the next century or so, I feel like I should be spokesman for the Cattle association or something." She saw the confused

look on mama D's face. "Some kind hearted soul has paid for a lifetime of cow magazines, if it's got a cow on the cover or in the title, I get it. Did you know that calves know their mother by scent, I thought all cows smelled the same?"

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"Ohhhh look Murph," Smootcher waved a CD above her head and then tossed it to her sister. "Usher's new one," she looked around and then grinned when she saw that they were the only ones in the electronic department. "Put it in the huge ass system!" She jumped up and down and then grabbed her chest in pain. "Damn under wire shit, remind me ta toss this damn bra when we get home."

"Why do I gotta remind you about your bra...wait a minute...you're wearing my underwear aren't cha?"

"You know anyone else that has the damn things in our house; still don't know why ya get the wire ones?"

Murphy placed the CD in the sound system and then turned with a hand raised out in front of her. "I get great antennae reception when I wear 'em and keep your paws outta my under...wear!" She felt her face turn a deep red when she saw an unmistakable dark head above the shelves and just hoped that she didn't hear her, a gleaming smile came over her face when she heard the lawyer's deep rich voice and then shivered when she heard her mama's. "Damn mama got her that means I can't be...Oohhh yes I can be bad." She crawled up on top of the counter, winked at Smootcher and waited for Judge to look over at her. The timing couldn't have been more perfect, as soon as her favorite song started, Judge turned to look her right in the eye. She stepped slowly to the edge of the counter and pointed a finger at her.

"Hey!  
I feel like I just blow on up  
Anytime I could just lose control, caught up  
In your lovin' every time I feel your touch  
Second thoughts more doubts started buildin' up  
You're everything I wanted  
Before I knew just what I wanted  
And hey, hey  
You're killin' me on the inside  
And you're the only one I want  
I can't deny

Don't know what to do

What to say  
I'm not sure what to tell you  
Confused, which way do I  
Take your hand or let go (do I)  
Take your hand or let it go (I can't)  
Take this feelin' much more (do I)  
Take your hand or let go (go)  
Don't know what to do  
What to say  
I'm not sure what to tell you  
Confused, which way do I go

Hey  
I feel like I just blow on up  
Every time I feel your love  
I get so caught up  
It's your kissin', your touch  
It's just everything  
But I'm feelin' like I wanna just run away  
I'm here to tell you what I want  
But you're everything I want  
And hey, hey  
It's killin' me on the inside  
Cuz you're all I ever wanted  
So I can't deny..."

Then, her singing career came to a stop when Smootcher knocked her off the counter and then came to land at her mama's feet.

"Hi ya mama, wanna sing back-up for me?"

Mama reached down, yanked her to her feet and slapped her on top of her head. "Stop acting like an asshole and turn that damn thing down before you get in trouble...again."

"And just how am I supposed to capture Judge's heart if ya won't let me serenade her?"

"Pick a different song and learning how to sing would really help." Smootcher whispered in her ear and then sided up alongside Judge. "I'll sing for ya, everyone knows all black women can sing."

"Bullshit!" Murphy yelled and crawled on her sisters back. "She can't dance either, only black woman I know that ain't got no damn rhythm."

Judge rubbed her jaw and looked between the three women; it sure looked like she wasn't going to get the information she needed. "Uhhmm...I'll leave you three to what ever it is that you guys are doing and I'm going to do my shopping." She walked away and was down an isle adjacent to

where she was when she felt something touching her thighs and then her one leg grew heavy from Murphy wrapping herself around it.

"I'll do and be anything you want, just take me home and make me your sex slave."

"How about if I slap the shit outta you and then," she pulled a small can of Lysol from her coat pocket and waved it over Murphy's head. "Give you the royal spray down?" Her eyes turned silver with panic when Murphy smiled up at her and then scratched the inside of her thigh with her nails.

"Ohhh come on Judge, I know you want me in ways other than to spray me down with Lysol." She scratched along the inside seam of Judge's Levis and stood to her full five foot five height. "Go out with me just once, I promise no funny stuff and I'll even meet you at any restaurant ya want." She raised her hands to grip Judge's much larger hands in hers and gazed into light blue eyes. "I can be charming and intelligent when I wanna be and we can discuss my case without my sisters acting like animals."

"And why would I want to go out with you, I don't like going out to eat...there's germs and..."

"Stop being such a wimp and using your CID or whatever it is as an excuse, I know you're tougher than you want everyone to believe. Plus I know that you eat out on occasion, mama has spies everywhere and if ya want I can tell ya what color underwear ya got on."

"Murphy, I'm not gay so that means that the two of us going out wouldn't mean a damn thing in either one of our books and you can come to my office to discuss your case." She pulled her hands free and walked away, biting at her bottom lip; she fought back the feeling of being struck by lightning for lying.

Murphy was one to never give up; she jogged after the taller woman and jumped on the front of her cart. "Ya know what Bloodstone, ya can't lie for shit and I know for a fact that you're family. Your college 'room mate' has a huge ass mouth and blabbed for hours about your sexual hungers," she wiggled her brows and licked her upper lip. "I've been known to be quite adventuress in my sexual encounters, even ended up in the ICU a couple of times." She snickered at the pale shade that Judge turned and then pointed at her. "Can't run or hide from Murphy Whistler, I'm the best there ever will be at snooping, so meet me at *Ruby Tuesdays* at seven o'clock tomorrow night and if ya ain't there then I'll drag you outta your house." She launched off the front of the cart and went running towards the back of the store where Stewie was being kept against her will.

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"And to think that you're family, I knew ya was a mean old bitch but this really out does my nightmares!" Stewie yelled from where she was duct taped to one of the steel pillars near the

back of the store. "You're a wicked wicked aunt and I don't like ya!"

"Well I don't like ya none either," Doris said and snapped her gum. "Damn shame we can't pick our relatives, if we could, I'd toss your ass back and pick again." She walked away and wiggled to get the spandex resettled around her large ass. "Ain't a single relative besides myself that ain't a little off in the head, gotta be the home brew destroying the gene pool or maybe the incest."

"Eeewww...I don't wanna know anything about that stuff...might be true!" She yelled back and tried to wiggle free of her restraints.

"I can't believe that she's kept you taped to that pole or that she was able to do it in the first place," Murphy snickered and pulled a lock blade from her back pocket. "Hold still and I'll cut ya loose, ya know mama's here?"

"She got me from behind with a Wal-mart bag, pulled it right over my head and it was history for me." She took a deep breath and grinned widely with the news. "So mama's here ta escort us home huh?" She sighed when the tape around her chest fell away and allowed her to breath easier.

"Yep, the big gun is here." The last of the tape was cut away and Stewie was free to dance around in circles.

"Mama owes me ice cream; I lasted four hours here before I got in trouble!" She went skipping through the store in search of mama so she could collect her prize.

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Smootcher pulled the three heavy black canvas bags from inside the station wagon, tossed them into a cart and then pushed it towards the stores front doors. She should have known that mama just didn't happen to drop by for the Hell of it and that she was there on a mission of no good for three of her kids. "Just couldn't wait until tomorrow could ya Dodger, just had to interrupt our productive night at work?" She pushed the cart through the doors and was on her way to the employee locker room when she saw Judge searching through the underwear bin, she just couldn't help herself. "So are ya getting my favorite French cut silky panties or are ya turning into the freaky conservative plain old boring cotton type?" She looked under Judge's arm and snickered when she saw that she was holding two pairs of plain white conservative underwear.

"Isn't that mama calling you?" She pointed to where she could see mama D coming towards them and snickered when Smootcher whimpered and pushed her cart to where her sisters and mama were waiting. "Damn freaky women and their underwear fetishes, how can all three of them be that way?" She mumbled to herself and tossed the plain underwear back into the bin. "They even know what kind I have on today." She had almost fallen over earlier when Murphy announced

over the PA system that she had won a bet because a certain customer was wearing a royal blue Victoria Secret thong. "Wish I knew how she knows what thong I have on, it's not like I'm wearing white pants or anything." She looked down just to make sure that she wasn't and then checked to make sure that her G-string wasn't showing above her waistband.

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Murphy pulled on her black windbreaker and looked up when Stewie called her name. "How'd ya know she had the blue thong on?"

"Checked her diary before we came in, she's gotta get a firewall for her PC, I mean we've got all her checking and savings account transactions for the last month and she really needs to turn her PC off when she's not using it." Since Judge had come into their lives a few short days ago, they had been busy getting as much information as they could on the attorney. It wasn't that they didn't trust her abilities to represent them, it was a hobby of theirs not to mention they were just plain nosy. Murphy was hoping to talk to Judge about some of the information they were able to pull up on the internet, such as getting into her checking account by hacking into her personal computer files. "Ya know she spent fifty bucks at Victoria's Secret the other day, she got some of those fancy angel underwears!"

Two sets of eyes looked to her and then ear to ear grins blossomed on their faces. "Did she get the baby blue ones that match her eyes?" Stewie asked and then fell to her knees and put her hands up in prayer. "Please let it be the blue ones, I'll be good for the rest of the night if ya make 'em baby blue!"

"Why, you ain't ever gonna see 'em." Smootcher said and pushed her over. "Only one who has half a chance is an egotistical asshole." She pulled her matching black windbreaker on and lifted her black canvas bag up in one hand while pulling Stewie to her feet with the other. "Come on moron we got work ta do," she looked to Murphy with raised brows. "Did mama have our truck delivered or do we gotta go in her dork mobile?"

Murphy wiggled her keys and watched her sister's punch hands in the air and jump around like idiots. "But I think she did something to it...my keychain smells funny."

"Uhhmm...Murph your keychain is rubber, so that means it smells like rubber." She shook her head and mumbled. "Blondes will be the death of my last gay nerve...my keychain smells funny." She mimicked Murphy and then stuck her tongue out at her when she growled.

"Well it does smell funny...not like the usual rubber smell, it's more," she took a deep breath, held it for a while and then weaved before falling back down into the chair behind her. "Dude the rooms spinning!"



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Judge sat down at her PC and pulled up the program that she used for her daily diary, scanning down to her last entry, she started typing about her waking hours like a mad woman. Halfway through, she came to the area where Murphy won her stupid bet, she had maulled over every way possible as to how the small blonde could have known about her g-string. "Had to be a lucky guess," she glanced to her window and saw that the drapes were open and anyone could see inside to her office. "Peepers! They're peeping morons!" She jumped up, dropped the blinds and then pulled the drapes all the way closed before she felt safe enough to go back and finish typing. "Spying in on me and seeing what I'm writing..." she rubbed her tired eyes and sighed. "How can anyone see what I'm typing, unless they're using binoculars!" She closed down her PC and leaned back in her office chair until the screen went to black, pulling her plastic cover over the monitor and then the keyboard; she got up from her chair and made sure that the wheels went back into the indentations in the carpet. "I'll think about this later, I'm worn out and I have an early court case...I'm losing it, I'm talking to myself." She looked around for her dog and finally found her lying on her back right in the middle of her bed pillow. "That is my pillow you have you bald body all over." She sighed and crawled across the bed to fall face first into her spare pillow.

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Smootcher bobbed and bounced in the driver's seat with Stewie doing the exact same thing in the shotgun position. Murphy leaned up between the seats and looked to each one of them with narrowed eyes. "Why are you two humming?"

"Cuz we don't know all the words." Stewie replied and then sang what words they did know. "Feelings...nana nana, feelings...nana owwww!" She slapped at the hands that were trying to throttle her. "Stop or I'll sing one I do know...On the Love Boat...nana."

Smootcher started tapping on the steering wheel and then drew Murphy's attention away from her sister. "I like big butts...little hairy mutts, my sisters a slut and please don't smack me I'm tryin ta drive!"

"Ya know if I could have you both locked up I might just have a chance at having a halfway normal adult life...with a girlfriend that doesn't need blown up or bandaged with pool patches."

"At least she doesn't complain about you being a complete slob and wearing those nasty shorts with the ass all torn outta 'em."

"But they're comfortable and thank the all forgiving God of tongues Gene Simons you two could care less about my fantastic tight buns of steel." Murphy sat back in her seat and thought about the fact that they had a blow up doll in their part of the house and she was a close to a girlfriend that any of them had. "You guys realize that even our pointy headed black as coal brother Jay has a wife and a girlfriend and we ain't got anyone." She tilted her head back and hit the steel wall behind her; it was then that she noticed something about the windows in the truck. "We didn't have curtains in here before did we?"

"What in the Hell are you talking about," Stewie tried to look around the seat and fell across the console. "Ohh what in the Hell...mama put frilly curtains in our truck!"

"See I told you guys she did something," she slid the window back and tried to see if mama had done anything back in the cage as well. "Now why do ya think she did that?"

Smootcher busted out laughing and slapped the steering wheel. "Because she ain't all there in the head," she ran her fingers across the radio buttons and snickered. "I bet she went nuts with all the chocolate we had smeared on the radio buttons."

"Ohh now don't say 'we' when it was your nasty fingers all over those buttons, I only leave orange Cheeto's finger prints on the windows and dashboard." Murphy replied and then cussed when Smootcher hit the brakes.

"FuckinogoodVirginiaassholedrivers!" Stewie screamed and flipped the driver off in front of them who for no reason had slammed their brakes on. "Go the fuck back to your own God damn state and stay the fuck there...we don't wantcha here!" She screamed out her window as they flew past the slow moving vehicle. "No wonder there's so many damn accidents; fucking cops can't drive for shit..." She spun to look into the narrowed eyes of her sister. "Smootcher that was a cop you almost hit and passed doing 75mph!"

"So the fuck what, he's doing 30 in a 55 zone, ya really think he's gonna come after us?" She looked in her mirror and prayed that he wasn't in fact right behind them with his lights flashing. "The asshole's probably too busy filling his face with that bucket of chicken I saw wedged on the dashboard...we got time to stop for chicken?"

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Judge ran through the house to the living room, dove for her phone and landed on the couch with it clutched to her ear just as the answering machine clicked on. "Hello?"

*"Judge this is your mother, why are you not at work, your father's been at work for hours already?"*

She had hoped that it was Murphy calling or at least one of the Whistlers. "Mother it's five o'clock in the morning here, remember the time difference and fathers a workaholic."

*"Don't speak ill of your father, he works hard and look where it has gotten you or should I say where it would have gotten you if you had listened to us and taken the position at your father's law firm."*

"Why are you calling me?"

*"Because I know that I needed to remind you that this weekend is your fathers anniversary with the firm, you will be here and with a suitable date and don't you dare bring some woman with you, you will not disgrace your father's day or our family like you have done in the past."*

Judge rolled from the couch, grabbed a bottle of Windex and started cleaning her already spotless windows while she listened to her mother rant on the phone. She cleaned all the windows, her TV, monitor, mirrors and anything else that Windex could clean or shine. By the time she hung her phone up, half the bottle was gone and sweat ran down her face and neck to soak her t-shirt. Dropping into a kitchen chair, she let her forehead fall to the table and her hands went to squeeze the table's edge. She felt her fingers cramp from the pressure and the normal pounding start behind her eyes, it never failed, her mother would call and she fell apart. She moved back in her chair and pressed the edge of the table right over her eyebrows. It was the only thing that helped with the pounding and she didn't care that it left a red crease on her face. "Why did I have to answer the damn phone?" She sat up and rubbed the area between her brows with stiff fingers. "She just had to call and ruin what I had hoped would be a productive day for me, now I'm gonna worry about all the bullshit that she's going to pull at the firms shindig."

Her parents were notorious for making her look like a complete ass for not following in her fathers corporate footsteps, they came up with the excuse of paying penance for her past fiascos while in law school as the reason she worked for peanuts in the court systems. The real reason was that she wanted to beat lawyers like her father in court by way of becoming a Supreme court Judge. Her father was a crook and everyone knew it. He may not actually be the one breaking the law but his clients were and he was guilty in her eyes by keeping them from paying. "Filthy son of a bitch is worried about me soiling the family name when he represents the filth of the business world." She got up, grabbed the bucket she used for major cleaning and started to clean her small house for the third time that day.

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Smootcher parked the truck outside of the address that mama had given her, she looked to the flashing neon beer signs and then to her sisters. "Why is it always a damn bar, can't we get clients that hang out at like Pizza Hut or Fridays?" The other two groaned and filed out of the

truck to stop and check their weapons. "Ohh come on now," she got out to stand in front of them with her hands on her hips. "Wouldn't ya like ta order take-out, get our creep and food all in one shot?" When neither one of them said anything, she threw her hands in the air and walked away mumbling.

"Do ya think she has a problem with compulsive eating?" Stewie snickered at the wide grin that blossomed across Murphy's face.

"Ya mean like we do?" She pulled one of mama's cookies from her pocket and handed it to her. "Come on before she gets beat up or something." She reached for a flap on the back of Stewie's jacket and pulled it down to reveal 'Whistler Bounty Hunters' in bright yellow letters. They skipped into the bar and looked around for Smotcher; they finally found her at a table near the end of the bar, what didn't surprise them any was the plate of hot wings in front of her. "I bet she called ahead and ordered them things, she knows we gotta bring Charley in and don't have time for this." They dropped down around the table and stared at her.

"What?" She asked around the hot wing hanging from her mouth.

"Did you see Charley before you started filling your face?"

"Ohh sure...he'll be back in a minute." She pointed a sauce-covered finger between them and nodded her head. "Right there, happy?"

Stewie looked over her shoulder and snorted, she found it hilarious that a tattoo covered man weighing three hundred pounds or more with a shaved head and walrus mustache would be seen in a redneck bar carrying a pitcher of milk.

"I got more blue cheese dressing, they never give us enough." He put the pitcher down next to the dressing and then took the plate of wings from the cook who was behind him. "Thanks Junior I think we got everything now, come on guys dig in; who knows when the next time I'll be eating Junior's famous wings."

Stewie grabbed a wing and dipped it into the dressing before Murphy could stop her. "Ohh what the Hell it's not like we're in a hurry or anything, so Charley, what did you do this time?"

He poured each one of them a mug of milk before answering in his deep baritone voice. "Well, it's not all that exciting, I tossed a guy through the front window at 7-11. I was in there with my daughter and he hit on her so I hit on him and then tossed him," he narrowed his green eyes and wiggled his thick mustache. "Ya know those candy ass lawyers at Schmitt, Garrott and Folgers, well Folger's screams like woman." He looked to his watch and groaned. "Do we have time to stop by and see my ma before you take me into the courthouse, she's gonna be mad as Hell about me taking off before my hearing. I was not about to miss my baby leaving for college so the judge can kiss my big white hairy ass."

Murphy looked at her watch and nodded her head, they had about an hour before the bar closed and it would be Charley's ass when he woke his mama at the crack of dawn. They continued to

eat and talk until the food was gone and the lights flashed signaling that it was closing time. They grabbed the empty plates, glasses and bowls from the table, carried them to the kitchen area, and then left by way of the back door. Murphy wished that all the men they had to hunt down were like Charley, most of them they spent days hunting down and then fighting once they found them. Charley had called their brother and told him where he was and that he would wait for them to come and get him. They got out to the truck and heard the beep when Smootcher hit the alarm remote; Murphy pointed to the other rear passenger door and told Charley that he didn't have to ride in the cage that was reserved for the violent assholes that they brought in.

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Judge shook her head to try and wake up. As the door to the Judge's chambers opened on squeaky hinges, she looked to the defense table and wasn't surprised to see only the lawyer sitting there; she had been told that the defendant had run and was being looked for. She hoped that he didn't show up so that she could go back home and go back to bed, she hadn't slept any after her mother's phone call and had just made it out the door and to the courtroom in time for the bailiff to close the doors behind her. Now she was paying for it by drooping eyelids and nodding head. The sound of the bailiff telling all present to arise and his announcing of the judge had her jumping from her chair and knocking it over to the wooden floor with a clatter. A rush of heat ran across her skin and colored her face a deep red, she waited until the judge had taken his seat before righting her chair and stepping in front of her table to await his questions about the missing defendant.

"Where's your client Mr. Feinstein?" The Judge asked as he gazed over the tops of his half moon reading glasses. "Please tell me that he's in the john and will be with us in a second."

The attorney stood and first looked to Judge and then his honor. "To be truthful I'm not sure where he is, he missed his first appearance and of course you know about the bench warrant sworn out on him."

"And it looks like he will be spending the rest of his time with us until his hearing can be yet again set up." He was about to slam his gavel down when the door opened and the Whistlers escorted Charley inside and to his seat at the defendants table.

Smootcher sighed and wiped sweat from her upper lip. "Sorry we're late your honorablist, traffics a real bitch this morning. I had ta run a red light and then double park..." She flinched at the expression that came over his face with her joke. "Sorry." She dropped down into a seat and gave the Judge a grin. "Hey there Judge you look like shit." She whispered and then jumped when Murphy fell in her lap in able to get to the other side of her.

"Alright people let's get this over with," the Judge said and then took the papers from the pile in front of him. "You're the one that threw that whiny ass bastard Folger's through the window...I

should give you a damn medal and the key to the city for that. Ms. Bloodstone what are the people asking for?"

"The people want...him to run for mayor...Uhhmm; we'll drop all charges against Mr. Feinstein if he'll do the same with his countersuit against Mr. Folgers." She looked first to Charley and then to the Whistler's, her eyes lingered on the black clothed Murphy until brilliant green eyes connected with hers.

"And what is this countersuit?" He looked between the attorneys and then to Charley.

"Sexual harassment and behavior unbecoming a public official," his lawyer answered. "As you know Mr. Folgers is about to accept a seat on the city council, this could ruin his career...hopefully."

The judge held up one hand and waved it. "Hold on here, it says here that he hit on your daughter but there are no details. Tell me exactly what he did and don't be cleaning it up any."

Charley stood and clasped his hands in front of him; he grew nervous when he felt all eyes on him. "He came up behind my daughter, put his fat hands on her hips and thrust into her and then said that he wanted to fuck her up the ass like the dog she was, that's when I busted him up long side his head and then tossed him through the window."

The Judge looked up with a disgusted expression and shook his head. "He might as well put his application in for McDonalds his career is as of right now over." He waved the bailiff over and spoke loud enough for everyone present to hear him. "Call the head of the city council for me and inform him that his presence is needed in my chambers in 30 minutes." Slamming his gavel down, he dismissed the case and asked for the next one on the docket. Murphy got up from the bench and waited for Judge to move from where she was standing. When nothing happened, she walked up to her and saw that her eyes were closed.

"Ya know sleeping on the job is dangerous," she snapped her fingers and was amazed that Judge didn't move. "I could be really mean and nasty to you but since we're in the courtroom I'll be nice." She whispered and then took Judge by her elbow while signaling to her sisters for help. Charley seeing what was happening went over, lifted a still sleeping Judge up, and carried her from the courtroom under the bemused looks of both the Judge and Bailiff.

"What's wrong with her?" Charley asked in a low whisper. "Ya know this is kinda weird to be carrying out the attorney that was going to hang me out to dry."

"Well I can honestly say that this is the first time I've ever seen anyone fall asleep standing up." Stewie said with a snicker and was reaching out with a hand towards Judge when she got kicked in her ass. "I wasn't gonna do anything but see what color her bra is..."

Charley groaned and shook his baldhead. "You three are sick bitches; taking advantage of the lawyer lady like that...it's a baby blue color and looks silky, ya know I think she's wearing those angel underwear's."

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Mama looked up from her crossword puzzle, counted heads and then looked towards the back door. "Hold on there you...two, I'm missing one, where's Murphy?" She put her pen down and tapped her fingers on the old wooden table. "Well don't you two talk all at once, where is she and if you tell me she's in jail...you're going to join her!"

"Nope it's worse than that mama," Stewie said and then let Smootcher finish the sentence.

"She's with the weirdo cleaning lady...at her house!" She jumped up and down and smacked hands with her sister. "Can I have her room, it's bigger than mine?"

"Why is she with Judge and what happened with Charley?" As usual, her head swung back and forth between the two as they told her what had happened from the time they left Wal-Mart until they dropped Murphy and Judge off at her small house. This wasn't bad, it was when the three of them were together that she wanted to plug her ears and hum, they had started speaking like this when they were still toddlers and it still freaked people out. Most people were used to seeing twins or triplets finish each others sentences off not three people that were no where near related but simply raised together. "OK so she's with Judge and may end up dead," she watched Stewie look through the pantry and come up with Murphy's special blend of coffee. "Don't you dare drink your sister's coffee, she'll kill you and then I'll have two bedrooms to clean out."

Smootcher jumped up and down and waved her hands. "Can I have my pick of their rooms?"

"Be quiet, now what are ya doing with Murphy's coffee?"

"We gotta take this and some other stuff over to her," she winked at mama. "She's gonna cook for her, she says she's too skinny, doesn't eat right and that's why she fell asleep standing up."

"Mama she didn't wake up at all even when we pushed her in her house using the Hannibal stand." Smootcher shook her head and grabbed a cookie from the huge jar that sat on the counter. "Gonna take her some cookies, she ain't got no junk food in her house."

"And it's freaky clean," Stewie grabbed the half of cookie from Smootcher's hand, took a bite and handed it back. "All pure white and shit, she needs a splash of color,"

"Yeah Murphy's blood after Judge finds out she was playin in her underwear drawer." Smootcher went over to the refrigerator and stopped in her tracks when mama cleared her throat and spoke her name in the quiet whisper that meant she had better freeze or be able to out run mama's fast pitch.

"Why do you have a pair of thong underwears in your back pocket?"

"Ohh that's my new...slingshot, yep that's what it is, the new designer style...makes ya the bum of the neighborhood."

"That's 'the bomb' you dipshit," Stewie corrected her and gave mama a big smile. "Some even got sequins on 'em but we didn't get those ones."

"And you two are gonna put those ones back where ya found 'em or I'll call Judge and ask her if she's missing 'em, now what is Murphy planning on cooking for Judge?"

Smootcher looked up from where she was in a lower cabinet and snorted. "She called it mama's fat food, guaranteed ta put lard on yer ass."

"Now Judge don't know all of this is happening 'cuz she was still dead to the world and we don't wanna be around when she does wake up." She shivered and looked to her sister with worried eyes. "She has a complete arsenal of cleaning agents that if she used all of 'em on us, we'd end up in serious trouble."

"Or maybe for the first time the stains would come outta your clothes." Mama waved a hand at them. "Get your stuff and don't you two be a pain in Judges ass, she could make sure ya'll put in jail." She gave them a big toothy smile before going into the living room to watch TV.

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Murphy sat at the head of Judge's bed, a book across her lap and a can of Coke sitting on the night table, which if Judge had been awake and saw, she would have let her know that it was forbidden in that area. She snickered and flipped a page in the binder she had brought out of the truck and then looked over to a still sleeping Judge. "Drunk and disorderly and public nudity," she tapped her chest and pouted. "I went to the wrong college." She read down further and whistled low under her breath. "You drove your car up your private schools steps and through the front doors; I bet daddy's money saved your ass again." She reached out a hand, scratched Woobie's head and blew her a kiss. "What happened to your mother, she's such a wimp now?" She flipped back a few pages to a picture of Judge from about six years earlier; her hair was longer, wilder and looked darker. She was dressed in worn and faded Levis that had more holes than material and a blue flannel shirt with the sleeves ripped off. Her pose was somewhat masculine, with one booted foot on a wooden bench and her forearms resting on her knee, it would make one think twice about approaching her. "Damn you were hot back then...you're hot now but in a different way, maybe it's because you're unapproachable and because ya spray everyone down with Lysol." She looked over at her slack face and just watched for a few minutes before reading on. "And I'm glad to say that you've never seen the inside of a rehab center, just some fucking head shrinker in the nutward you were locked up in." She flipped a



couple more pages and blew a heated breathe threw her teeth, if at all possible, steam would blow from her ears. "I would love to have your parents locked up in a cell with one of my relatives, they had you locked up so that the shrinkers could fix your behavior. You were normal until then," she grinned when an idea blossomed in her spinning brain. "And you'll be normal again; I'll make sure of that."

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Smootcher and Stewie looked around the pure white kitchen, lifted their sunglasses and dropped them back down over their eyes. They felt like they were in some sterile laboratory, even her pots and pans were sealed in plastic to keep germs from getting on the surface. "I don't know Stewie, this is like freaky clean or something and Murph wants to dirty this stuff so she can cook?"

Stewie nodded her head and looked to the immaculate white stovetop with the plastic stretched over the top of it. "I'll go hafizes with ya when we go through her clothes."

"OK but I get her boots 'cuz your feets are huge and you can have all her Superman underwears 'cuz my ass is huge." They shook hands and then jumped when they heard a low growling behind them.

"I hope that ugly little dog bits your ass 'cuz it's huger than mine."

"Ohh so now I'm ugly, just fer that I'm making sure that I leave all my stuff to Good Will." Murphy looked at the bags that covered the kitchen table and then to the case of Coke on the floor. "So whatcha think mama's special beef stew with sour dough bread or mama's triple cheese lasagna and garlic bread?"

"I vote fer lasagna and so does Smootcher." Stewie started unpacking the bags and tossed a huge container of ricotta cheese to Murphy. "Because we had stew last week and who can resist mama's lasagna recipe?"

Murphy looked at all the cabinets and just picked the one most likely to hold a pan she could use for the lasagna, what she found brought a huge smile to her face. In perfect alignment were pans of every size and shape, she grabbed one that would be large enough to feed an army and placed it on the sterile white counter. "OK, I got the pan, someone find a pot and start the water for the noodles and I'll get the cheeses mixed." She found a mixing bowl and started her chore while her sisters did other preparations for their meal. "What'd mama say about all this?"

Smootcher looked up from what she was doing and gave her sister a wide grin. "Ohh nothing much except that we get your room and stuff when Judge kills ya."

Murphy snorted and shrugged her shoulders. "So nice ta know that my family has faith in my abilities to conquer the sterile heart of one Judge Bloodstone, I'll win her over with my cooking abilities."

"That'll have ta do it," Smootcher remarked.

"Cuz ya ain't got any other things going for ya." Stewie finished her sentence and jumped out of range of a small foot aiming for her ass.

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Judge rolled over took a deep breathe and drifted in between sleep and wakefulness, something just didn't register with the situation. The last thing she remembered were the Judge's words becoming mumbles and then nothing but the peacefulness that came with sleep. With the movement of the bed, she reached out with one hand and felt something that just didn't belong there no matter what. She opened one eye, took in her surroundings and then stared at the thing in front of her. Opening both eyes, she watched the tanned flesh of someone's stomach rise and fall with each breath and then flex when Woobie stepped on it. Panic set in, she knew that she was at least half-naked from the breeze that blew across her back and her thighs but what she didn't know was how she got that way or who was in bed with her. "About time you woke up, it's only been about ten hours or so." Murphy said in a deep whisper and then moved down in the bed so that she could connect eyes with Judge. "So how ya feeling there Judge, me and your dog have been having a Hell of a time," she looked down at her cleavage and winked. "We've come to the conclusion that you have at least one of everything that Victoria's Secrets makes..."

"How did I get here, why am I half naked and what are you doing in my bed?" She pushed herself up and grabbed a pillow to cover her chest.

Murphy rolled her eyes at Judge's attempt to cover what she had been looking at for the last ten hours. "Ohh like you were dressed like that at the courthouse, that I didn't get you that way and enjoyed it immensely and that I do know that your tits overflow my hands by exactly 8.7%." She wiggled her brows and lifted one corner of her lip. "By the way, how do ya get your bikini line so smooth and even, do ya wax or use one of those things they advertise on TV?" She laughed deeply when Judge turned a few shades of red, lurched off the bed and ran to the bathroom. "She's so easy!" She rolled all over her bed and stopped with her face buried deeply in the pillow that Judge had slept on. "Can't wait until she goes in her living room," she mumbled in to the pillow and then raised her head when she heard the door creak open. "Are ya hungry, I cooked...?" She fell off the bed and then ran after a furious Judge; she could only imagine what she was thinking. "Ohh would you slow down...how can you move so fast after just waking up?"

Judge stopped beside her couch and looked down at both Stewie and Smootcher, what raised the hackles on her back was the fact that her dog looked completely comfortable sitting between the

two weird women. "Why are you in my house sitting on my couch?"

"Why are you afraid of colors," Smotcher asked. "I feel like I'm in some laboratory, all white and shit...got any cheese?" She clapped her hands and whipped the long tail attached to her costume at her.

"Ya know little white mice love cheese and watching cable TV, did ya know the nasty stuff comes on really early in the morning?" Stewie jumped up and waved her white gloved hands at her. "Murph wouldn't watch it with us; she was too busy staring at your tits and making kissy faces at ya."

Judge crossed her arms over her chest and looked at the two women, she couldn't believe that they were sitting there in mouse costumes or that Woobie let them put white mouse ears on her as well. "You didn't answer my question..." she looked over to Murphy. "You said you cooked...not in my kitchen you didn't!" She ran towards her kitchen and came to a sliding stop with her hands on her table. "It's clean; my kitchen is clean so that means you didn't cook in here." She spun her head to see Murphy leaning up against the door jam with a crooked grin on her face. "Tell me what you three did."

"Ohh we did lots of stuff, we licked all your forks and spoons and then put 'em back in the drawer, fingered all your underwears," she placed her index finger across her lips and thought for a second before dropping the finger to point at Judge. "And I licked every inch of your gorgeous body." When Judge's face turned ashen and she started to sink, she jumped forward and caught her before she hit the floor. "Ohh don't do this, I'm still sore from carrying you in here yesterday." She dragged her backwards and set her down into one of the kitchen chairs. "Don't move I'll get ya something to drink." She went to the cabinet where the glasses were, grabbed one and then went to the refrigerator to get the green tea out that she had made earlier. When she turned back to where Judge was sitting, she couldn't help but grin at the open mouth and wide eyed expression. "That's right Bloodstone; I cooked, baked and made coffee and iced tea in your kitchen." She handed her the glass and waited for her to inspect the contents by smelling it. "For shame Judge, I would never poison someone in their own home; I'd do it in a restaurant so that the blame could go on them." She then went about getting a plate of food heated up and placed in front of her. "Now eat before it gets cold," she sat down across from her and held back a moan when Judge looked down at the plate from every angle before tasting the lasagna. "For someone who spends so much time in Wal-Mart, you don't have any damn food here."

Judge swallowed and took a sip of the green tea before answering. "I eat all that I cook at one time and I only buy enough for a few days."

Murphy slapped her forehead. "Ohh I get it and if you happen to get snowed in or sick, then you starve to death. Mama would kick your ass if she knew you didn't have anything here to cook, ya always gotta have food for an emergency."

"Do not, Wal-Mart's open 24 hours a day and I can drive in any weather."

"Stubborn just like Murph, we're going home, you coming?" Smotcher asked her sister and

blew Judge a kiss.

"Later, just leave my bike by the back door and I'll ride it home." She knew damn well that when mama found out that she would be riding her bike home after dark that she'd get her ass kicked, but that was only if she caught her. Chances of that ever happening were a trillion to one in Murphy's favor.

"OK," Stewie winked at her sister and blew Judge a kiss. "Love you Judge, you sexy beast."

"Tell mama I'll be home in a bit and don't you two speed on the way there." She gave them each a hug before they left Judge's house. "I swear they will be the death of me." She mumbled and sat back down across from a shocked Judge. "So how is my cooking, can you taste the puffer fish in it?" She grinned when Judge stopped mid chew, looked down at her almost empty plate and then back up at her with terrified eyes. "HAA! Just kidding, if anyone's been poisoned it's me and my sisters with all the stuff you've sprayed on us."

"Yeah well ya deserve it and so much more for all you've done to me," she finished her meal and leaned back in her chair after wiping her mouth. "So tell me what happened because I have no recollection other than running late for court...shit!" She dropped her face down into her hands and rubbed her temples. "Please tell me that I didn't fuck up the case."

"If you mean by having an innocent man put in jail then nope, Charley's at home with his family where he should be. So tell me, why'd you drop the charges against him?"

"I hate the son of a bitch that he tossed out the window; I just wish they'd been on like the tenth floor of some building when it happened. Folgers is a crooked lawyer," she held up a hand. "I know what everyone thinks about lawyers, but not all of us are that way, I'm not anyways. The bastard paid off a jury member on one of my cases and a drug dealer went free, so this was my way of getting rid of him for a while and hopefully ruining his career."

"Ohh you're not as nice as you look, I'm so glad you're on our side of the courtroom, speaking of which how's it lookin?"

Judge snorted and raised her head up from where it rested in her hands. "It would have been looking good except that I haven't had a chance to speak to any of you since that day at your house. I need more info on the night of the accident and if there are any security tapes from the parking lot cameras that night?"

Murphy rubbed her chin and looked to the ceiling. "Ask me anything and I'll try my best to answer and for the security tapes, I have no idea." She leaned across the table and held pale blue eyes. "I'll tell ya all of my deepest secrets including my sexual conquests if ya answer one question for me...how'd ya get the DOC disease?"

"COD, compulsive-obsessive disorder and I don't have that, I just like everything germ and dirt free...sterile..." She groaned. "The Hell with it, I like things the way I like them, clean and orderly."

"Well, get over it, I've rearranged your kitchen cabinets, refolded all your clothes and mixed up all the sizes of tampons in the little plastic dispensers you 'had' them in and now they're all together and happy."

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After running through her house making sure that Murphy hadn't done everything she had claimed, Judge stood in her bathroom wiping sweat from her face on a pure white towel; she looked around her and then inspected her medicine cabinet. What she found was a note telling her that she was anal for putting her deodorant in a zip lock bag. "I am not anal, I just like things the way I like them, that's all, and I don't have any psychological problems."

"Keep on looking in the mirror and telling your self that, just maybe someday you'll believe it that is after the voices only you can hear convince you of it." Murphy looked around Judge and pointed at all the items sealed in zip lock bags. "That is anal Judge and no matter who you ask, they'll tell ya the same damn thing."

"I'm not anal and this way everything stays clean and orderly." She lined up her aspirin bottles and then made sure that the toothpaste was where it was supposed to be. "Do you always barge into peoples bathrooms?"

"Yep, sure do, it's my favorite past time." She touched a blue toothbrush with her fingertip and snickered when Judge grabbed it and held it out of reach. "It's still in the damn box it came in...tell me you don't use a new tooth brush every time you brush your teeth."

"No but I use a new one every five days, that's so that the bristles don't get worn down and everyone knows that worn bristles can't fight gingivitis."

"And that's something that keeps me from sleeping at night, you're anal Judge, face it and I'll see ya later." She smacked Judge on her ass, walked from the bathroom and headed towards the front door.

"It's getting dark out," Judge ran from the bathroom and stopped outside on her front stoop. "You can't ride your bike in the dark...where the Hell are you?" She looked around and then across the road to see her neighbor watering his lawn and then down to her bare feet and up to where her shorts hardly covered anything. She quickly looked to where her trench coat hung on a hook inside the door but thought better of it when her neighbor turned with the hose in his hand and gawked at her. She grinned and pointed to where the water was flowing through the open window of his expensive Saturn SUV. "Serves ya right you freak, now where the Hell is Murphy?" When a whistle sounded behind her, she jumped, spun and tripped down the three steps of her stoop. "If you want me dead, just shoot me and get it over with!" She grabbed her

chest and dropped down onto the top step. "Give me a damn heart attack and I won't be able to get you and your retarded sisters out of the trouble you're in." She looked at the mountain bike that Murphy was leaning on and shook her head. "You are not riding all the way home on that thing, I'll drive you home."

"You're not the boss of me and I'll do what ever the Hell I want." She swung her leg over the seat and then sat down. "Besides my mama, the only one I'll ever take orders from is my spouse," she took in the long muscular legs stretched out before her and sighed. "Marry me and I won't ride my bike home."

Pale blue eyes shone silver in the dimming light, white teeth flashed from an evil grin before disappearing. "Let me get my car keys and be the first to try to run your ass over."

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As soon as Murphy peddled out on the sidewalk, Judge ran back into her house and grabbed her car keys from the hook by the front door. In a split second, she was in her car and trying to catch up, she found out real quick that Murphy's little legs could out peddle her car. "Son of a bitch!" She yelled as she peeled around a corner and hit the curb with the rear tire. "It's not her that'll get creamed by a car; it'll be me that gets hit by a truck or something." She pressed the gas pedal down further and watched the speedometer hit 40mph, she knew Murphy wasn't going that fast but that's how fast she had to go to catch up to the orange reflectors she saw off in the distance. Squinting in the darkness beyond her headlights, she didn't see them any longer. Slowing down, she looked up at the street signs and saw that she was one street away from where Murphy lived, feeling stupid for not being able to keep up with someone on a bicycle, she floored it and took a short cut to Murphy's house. When she pulled up, she slapped the steering wheel and cursed, Murphy and the rest of her small family were all sitting out on the porch waving at her. "Damn her, she did this just to make me look like an ass."

"Come on up here Judge," mama yelled and waved a bottle of Coke at her. "Have a Coke with us before ya go and don't say it's late and ya gotta go to Wal-Mart, it's your night off from cleaning."

She waved a hand at them and shook her head. "No thank you mama, I've got to get some files taken care of and some work done on their case, can I have a rain check?"

"You have a standing invitation, having a nice talk with an adult would be a change of pace." She gave Judge a wink and got up to go inside her house, she missed the wiggling tongues and thrusting hips of her kids. "Knock it off you freaks, now get in here and clean up your damn mess!" Or so they all thought. Judge got back into her car and with one last look and a wave and headed back home.

"I swear the reason I'm still stuck with the three of you is because you're a rude, crude and twisted bunch of freaks, now get your asses in here and clean up all those damn Popsicle sticks and wrappers and get out of those damn mouse costumes. It's not like the neighbors don't already have enough to talk about with your brother wearing an evening gown to the race track."

"Hey wait a minute I didn't get no Popsicle!" Murphy yelled and fell over Stewie's feet trying to get into the house. "Mama she tripped me!"

"Why in the world did I adopt so many whiny brats, I shoulda raised gold fish or something."

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Judge rifled through the files covering her kitchen table and then looked through the stack she had sitting on the floor. She could have sworn that she had it at home, she never left files at her office because she had a feeling that someone was sneaking in there and looking through her filling cabinets; sorry about their luck but now all they would find was cleaning gear. "Where the Hell did it go, I know I saw it..." she got up and went into her bedroom, there on her dresser was the file she had been searching for. "That rotten nosy little trouble maker," she leafed through the file and found parts highlighted in bright yellow with notes at the side of the page. "She...she messed up my file!" Her breathing became irregular, sweat broke out on her brow and then she calmed after reading what Murphy had wrote. "Subject has four counts of bodily threats and endangerment with the use of a vehicle in Virginia, two counts of leaving the scene of an accident in Maryland and the state of Pennsylvania is sending their records by courier Now breathe Judge you sexy beast, you can add this to your report and print up a brand spanking new one." A small grin came across her face, she shook her head and went back into the kitchen to reread the report and see what Murphy had added to it.

An hour later, she had a new report in her hands and was waiting for her laptop to shut down, with the new information from Murphy, she was seeing a way of turning the tables and getting the charges dropped completely and the person put away. What she couldn't figure out was how the person had evaded jail time with all the serious traffic violations. "Must be a rich bitch that can buy the judge, that won't happen this time." She placed the file in her briefcase and then stood up to stretch the muscles in her back. Even with all the sleep that she had, she was now exhausted to the point of fighting to keep her eyes open. It would be the first time in years that she was in bed before eleven pm and that was without cleaning before hand.

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The three sisters walked into Whistler's bail bondsman office and stood with crossed arms over their chests with identical glares for their brother Dodger. During a phone conversation earlier, he tried to stiff them on their payment for bringing Charley in for court. He thought that they really hadn't had to look for him and that they should only get a quarter of the bounty money, now he was seeing the error of his way, not because of his sisters but because mama stepped through the door. She raised her umbrella and pointed the shinny tip at him. "How would you like me to deflate those saggy ass tits of yours, you're gonna give your sisters their pay or you're going to the ICU for a few months!"

"But mama," he whined and tried to get his huge 400lb body up from behind his desk. "I told them where to find Charley, all they had to..."

"Ya I know what they did and from now on you can get your fat ass out there and find your own fugitives, knock them dense with your tits or what ever 'cuz they now work for mama Whistler's bounty hunting." She moved around the desk and smacked him with her umbrella until he was out of his chair and standing away from all of them. "You just became the fat ass gopher, now go get me a cup of coffee and not that nasty stuff you make either, walk your ass on down to Grandma's kitchen." She shooed him away and then picked up the files that were in the center of the desk. "OK let's see now," she put her bifocal glasses on and squinted through the lenses. "There's one here from Frederick County," a wide smile blossomed on her face. "This ones for five grand, he must be a bad one." She waved it in front of them and grinned when Smotcher grabbed it. "OK, now here's one for this area, Martinsburg bail wants a Ralph D. Trancer Jr. brought in to the Martinsburg jail, considered armed and dangerous, he's a triple hitter so this ones not getting out once he's brought in." She waved it in the air and snickered when Murphy groaned and then took it.

"Ohh Hell, this one's 25 grand if we can find him, that means he was put out on 50 grand bail. What the Hell did he do to have that amount slapped on him?" She went over to the PC set up on a side table and punched in the file number; she whistled low and waved a hand at her sisters. "He's a two time loser with...spousal assault and battery and a two time loser for carrying an illegal weapon...damn," she looked to mama and shivered. "We'll need our vests for this one; he was arraigned for killing a cop."

"Gimme that one back," mama said and reached out a hand. "I'll give that one to one of the boys."

"We can handle it mama, we've had worser ones than that." Stewie said and winced when mama held up her umbrella.

"Who taught you how to speak, worser is not a word, now gimme that file." She knew all was lost when the three of them ran from the office before she could get up from her desk. "Damn rotten kids, I need to kick their asses more." She waved a hand at Dodger when he came huffing and puffing through the door with her coffee and a bag that she knew was filled with fresh turnovers. "Like you really need those things, I'm fat because of my thyroid; you're fat because you're a lazy bastard that eats everything that falls in front of you. Now put those down and go across the street and get your brother Barry."



"But mama I got him on speed dial, just..." He threw his arms up over his face when she produced a tennis ball. "On my way, if I'm not back in a few minutes, it means I fell over from heat stroke!"

"You could use a little heat stroke; maybe it'd melt some of that lard off your ass!" She yelled back at him, bounced her tennis ball off his ass and then fixed her coffee the way she liked it, half cream and a lot of sugar. She started putting the files in order according to how dangerous the fugitive was she knew that her girls were tough and able to handle the worst of the skips, she just didn't like it that they did it all the time while the men got the easy runs. From now on or until Dodger wizened up, she would give each group of bounty hunters one of the bad apples. "I know they can kick all their brothers' asses but they're my baby girls."

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The next morning Judge locked the doggie door to her back yard and pointed a finger at her dog. "No funny stuff and stay out of the clothes hamper, you have your toys you don't need my underwear." Grabbing her briefcase, she looked around her kitchen before grabbing the paper bag with her lunch in it. This would be like the second time that she had taken a lunch into work, if not for Murphy cooking, she wouldn't be taken anything in but waiting until she got home. The problem there was that her blood sugar always dropped and left her weak and stumbling. Her secretary always had candy in her drawer for those times and a few harsh words to go along with it. She just didn't think about eating, she was always too busy cleaning to do that. If not for the alarm on her watch going off to remind her that she had ten minutes to get to work, she would have mopped her all ready spotless kitchen floor before leaving. "Now behave your self and stay out of the no dog zones," she leaned down and held the innocent brown eyes of Woobie. "You know what those are, we've discussed them daily."

The second the door was closed, Woobie took off at breakneck speed through the house, she jumped on the couch, launched off the arm to the chair and then to the floor. Her feet moved at warp speed but her body went nowhere until her toenails dug into the carpet. Her next place was her mistresses' bed; she jumped up and rolled all over the white down comforter until she left it rumpled. Bed pillows were next on her agenda, after jumping on each one, she took off to the bathroom and to her favorite hamper; the one that held all Judge's underwear. It was one of nature's mysteries, dogs and underwear; it's simply something that was never meant to be solved.

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Judge walked up the stairs of the silent courthouse and felt shivers run up her spine, it never failed to amuse her that being in the building on a weekend could creep her out. She often wondered if the chills weren't from ghosts that she knew wandered the place, after all the building was a couple hundred years old and back then a lot of people were hung in the tree that up until a few years ago was still in front yard of the courthouse. Stopping outside the door to her office, she pressed her ear to the wood and listen to the creaking from inside, she swore that things got moved around while she was away. "Get out of my office unless you plan on cleaning it!" She yelled and then looked around to make sure that she was in fact all alone and no one was watching her talk to her door. "Maybe I should make an appointment with my doctor, I talk to Woobie like she's human, and I talk to things I can't see and mostly to myself." She unlocked her door and walked in slowly, she always wanted to catch a ghost rifling through her desk drawers, if it ever did happen, she'd drop over dead and not be able to tell anyone. If she did want to catch someone, yelling before hand wouldn't help one bit, she always thought of that afterwards though.

As she dropped behind her desk, she had a nagging feeling that she was forgetting something, giving up on it; she pulled her files out and set to work.

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The Whistler sisters were dressed in their bounty hunter clothes complete with bulletproof vests and knee, shin and elbow guards. They basically looked like they belonged on a SWAT team. The only thing they didn't wear was the ballistic helmets and face shields. Before they got into their dark truck, they did their good luck ritual; they slapped hands and did a dance in a little circle before head butting each other. Wobbling from the head butting, they got into the truck with Murphy riding in the back. She wasn't allowed to sit up front because she was a backseat driver, she screamed louder than their mama if she was up front. "Come on Smotcher let's go get the creep!" She jumped up and down in her seat and slapped the back of the seats.

"How about if I smack the shit outta you," Stewie asked and smacked at her hands. "Ya always miss and hit me in my head."

"Like I can hurt you, Smotcher remember that time when we were little and you hit her in the head with that brick and it broke?"

"You hit her with the brick and if I remember correctly, mama broke your ass with her hand."

Murphy snickered, smacked Stewie in her head and then moved so that she couldn't reach her. "Either way she's got a hard head," she pulled a paper from inside her vest and read the addresses on it aloud. "Which one first, the nasty mean bastard or the wimpy fuckwad?"

"I think we should just get the wimp over with and then get the hard one," Smotcher looked into

the rearview mirror at her sister. "That way if we get the shit kicked outta us, we're done for the night and don't gotta go chase down the other one." All heads nodded, it wasn't like they needed to discuss what they were going to do, it was just a way of making sure that they were all on the same page and part of their ritual. Within an hour, they were pulling up outside of a small well-lit house, pulling up from the drive a bit; they parked and exited as quietly as possible. Using only hand signals, they moved out and took their normal positions when entering a home. With weapons drawn, they each counted to ten before entering through the two doors of the house. With Smootcher screaming at the tops of her lungs at the back of the house, it always distracted the person so that Stewie and Murphy could take them down in a surprise move. When Murphy and Stewie stormed the front room, the extremely overweight man was standing there with a slice of pizza hanging from his mouth, phone in one hand and a crushed can of foaming beer in the other. What was truly shocking for them was that he was completely naked except for the thick black hair covering a good percentage of his body. He whipped his head back and forth, dropped what was in his hands and then the pizza from his mouth.

"Hey I give up just don't shoot me...hey I get all women cops, I must have done something right for a change." He grinned to show lack of teeth on top and what resembled a picket fence the rest of the way around. "Come on tell me this is Scare Tactics."

"Ohh believe us it is," Murphy shivered and pointed to where his bathrobe lay on the couch. "Give us a break and put your robe on."

He looked to her with one raised bushy eyebrow and then scratched his hairy stomach with an equally hairy hand; they all prayed that his hand didn't wander anywhere else. "Guess this isn't scare tactics huh," he slowly grabbed his robe and then pulled it on. "Guess I should have made my court date huh, can I see your badges so I know this ain't a gag?"

Stewie pulled her ID from her pocket and showed it to him with a grin. "Bounty hunters buddy, we're tougher than cops." She turned him around, cuffed his hands with plastic bands and then waited for her sisters to check the rest of the house before taking their prisoner outside to the truck and then securing his house. Once he was inside the cage, they snickered when he let out a wail from sitting on the cold steel bench. He should have thought about something like that happening, his robe barely covered his ass when he was standing. "And men wonder why there are so many lesbians in the world." They got into the truck and headed in the opposite direction to the next place of attack, they would handle this one differently because this guy could really hurt them. That was the last thing any of them wanted because if they survived, mama would happily finish the job. "Uhhmm guys did anyone change the batteries in our zappy guns?"

Stewie leaned over the back seat with her tazer in her hand. "Don't know, stick your tongue on it and we'll find out?" She gave her a big grin and wiggled her brows. "Dare ya...triple dog dare ya."

Murphy rolled her eyes and chuckled. "Do I look that stupid, once is enough; I learned that the last time that's not how you check the batteries; jeez you sorta blondes sure are dumb."

"I'm not the one who stuck their tongue on the connectors and you're calling me dumb? And I

wish you would get it straight, I'm not a blonde you dumb blonde."

"Ohh will you two just shut the Hell up, I'm tryin ta concentrate on where were supposed ta go." Smootcher mumbled and weaved the truck back and forth to get her point across.

Their prisoner put his face up to the small window and yelled above their arguing. "Hey do you guys gotta blanket up there, my nuts are freezing to this bench?"

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Judge sat at the small table in her office and looked over all the files she had spread out, so far she had written up an inch thick file on the woman that tried to kill the Whistler's. What really surprised her was the fax she found in the paper tray from the PA courthouse, she would have to find out how Murphy had known her office fax number among other things. Moving some files to a leather satchel, she put the others into her briefcase and some loose papers in a wooden tray she had off to the side. Placing all her office supplies in a small plastic carrier, she cleaned up her work area and sat back to rub her eyes. She still had a nagging feeling that she had forgotten something, it was a normal thing for her though, and over the last few years, she had noticed that her memory was getting worse. She hadn't seen a doctor about it because she was afraid that he would tell her that she had the early signs of Alzheimer's. That was more frightening than having a fatal disease that would kill her in a matter of months. Taking a deep breath, she tried to ignore the pounding that was starting behind her eyes. Stress always brought on a major headache that would debilitate her for a day or so, this one felt like a huge jackhammer with a spike on the end. "Just my fucking luck," she looked around for her Mason jar sized bottle of aspirins and found it on her desk amongst other files.

"I need jumbo sized aspirins or a morphine drip." Dumping half a dozen into the palm of her hand, she dry swallowed them and grimaced until the bitterness left her mouth. Shaking her head and slapping a hand on the table, she threw her head back and howled. "Damn that sucks!" Stretching out all the tense muscles in her body, she bent over and let her hands touch the floor. Straightening up only when the pressure behind her eyes became too much. "Time to go home and do something constructive." Gathering up what she needed to take with her, she left her office to head home for the night.

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"Ohh this is not good," Murphy said from where she stood hiding at the side of their truck. "How in the Hell are we gonna get past the entire Pagan motorcycle gang to get this asshole and why

wasn't it in the damn file?"

"Ohh probably because our dear brother is a fat ass bastard that needs his nuts put in a vise didn't do any more research than necessary, that's why." Smotcher dialed their mama and waited for her to answer, when no one picked up on the other end she swore under her breath. "For fuck sakes we are so screwed, mama ain't home." She checked her gear and made sure that her bulletproof vest was secure. "Either we go in there with swinging fists or we go home with our tails tucked, what is it?"

"I ain't no yellow bellied dog; I'll go in alone and get the asshole." With a cocky strut, Stewie walked from their hiding place and headed towards where she thought a window would be.

Murphy and Smotcher cussed and went after their sister, they knew she would get in trouble and her ass kicked just to prove that she wasn't a coward like some of their siblings, but more of an idiot.

"Damn her but one of these days she's gonna get us all killed." Murphy swore again and checked to make sure that her Beretta 92 USA Desert Storm had a full clip and that the safety was off. She took off running at a crouch and stopped at the side of the building beside Stewie. "What in the fuck are you gonna do now...", her eyes grew wide; she covered her ears and dropped her chin down to her chest. "Oohhh shit Stewie."

Stewie pulled the pin on the flash bang grenades, tossed them through the open window and dropped down to huddle next to her sisters. When the grenades went off, they waited a few seconds before jumping through the window and kicking ass. Or not, they found that some of the men were not affected by the grenades because they were too drunk or stoned to notice. As they searched the room for their skip, they dropped close to a doorway and then flattened out on the floor when bullets flew around them. Each pulled their weapons and waited until the shots from the other room stopped. Murphy tossed another grenade, rolled into the room with her Beretta up and shot the man right in front of her.

Scurrying to a safe area beside a couch, she put her hand over the back of it and returned fire while her sisters rolled into the room. Smotcher let out a scream and tossed another flash bang into the adjoining room, she just couldn't figure out why they were having no effect on the people shooting at them. She caught movement out of the corner of her eye and wasn't able to move in time, she howled in pain as the buckshot from a shotgun hit her in her ass and the backs of her thighs. Stewie stood up and charged forward with her pistol blazing until the man fell backwards with half a dozen bullet holes in his chest, she rolled and came up in a kneeling position and took out another man who was reloading his pistol.

Even the sound of sirens coming their way didn't stop the gunfire, Murphy yelled out in pain, dropped to the floor and shot beneath it. She shook her head and saw blood spray out across her hand, raising her fingers to her face, they came away covered in blood. That was the last straw; she gave out a yell, flew over the back of the couch and stormed the room in front of her. Her body jerked from a shot to her chest but it didn't stop her from running forward and tackling the man shooting at her. She punched and used the butt of her Beretta on his head until he fell

motionless to the floor. Rolling off him, she lay there until Stewie came rushing in. "Is that all of 'em?"

"Yeah except for the ones sitting around staring into space, did the flash bangs do that?"

Murphy wiped at her cheek and shrugged her shoulders. "No idea where's Smootcher?"

"Laying on the floor, she got buckshot in her ass and legs. Is this our skip that you put a few more lumps on his head?"

"I hope so; I don't want anymore firefights tonight." She sighed and pointed a finger over her sister's shoulder. "Now they fucking show up, after we get shot and blow out all the windows with grenades, the brain dead in blue show up."

"Ya know mama's gonna kick your asses, this is all your fault!" Smootcher yelled and crawled towards them. "Lettin me get shot in my ass and for what?" She looked at Murphy and felt all the blood drain from her face. "We are so dead and your face looks horrible, does it hurt?"

"Does your ass hurt..." she raised her hands in the air and let the officer take her Beretta from the floor beside her. "About time ya got here, we're gonna need identifications on all these people in here."

The officer collected all their weapons and then stepped back for his sergeant to get closer. "And what in the Hell happened here, it looks like the OK corral?"

"Ohh we came to get our skip and the whole damn place went up," Stewie nodded her head and waved a shaky hand around. "Bastards didn't give us a chance or nothin, just started shooting at us. So we threw some flash bangs and got down to business...can I have my piece back now, my mama will kick my ass if I come home without it?"

The sergeant nodded to the officer and then took in the three women. "Who are you people anyway, no one in their right mind would come in here?"

Smootcher gave them a big grin. "Ohh we're the Whistler's, ya know Whistler's bounty hunting?" When the sergeant threw his hands in the air and walked away, she looked to her sisters. "Are we like lepers or something, they always do that?"

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Judge sat at her kitchen table looking off into space, it was six o'clock in the evening and she still couldn't figure out what it was that she was forgetting. She took a sip of the coffee she had made and sighed from the rich creamy taste, she had found the small plain can of coffee next to her

normal generic brand and knew that it had to have been put there by Murphy. Another thing was the Ziploc containers in her freezer with lasagna in them. The small blonde had thought of everything including slicing the garlic bread in to small pieces and freezing those as well. "I'll have real food for a while thanks to the Whistler's, what I can't figure out is why they did it." She reached down and picked Woobie up to put on her lap.

"What am I forgetting Woobie, I'm supposed to be doing or going somewhere tonight but I can't remember what." She kissed her dogs little head and then rested her chin there. "I'm loosing my mind, whose gonna take care of me when I become a rutabaga...that's a veggie right?" She reached across the table, grabbed a medicine bottle and dumped two of the pills out into her hand. She had been taking the same prescription since college and wondered if the pills did anything at all, she had asked her doctor a few times what exactly they were for and he said they were to regulate chemicals in her brain. She had looked the name of the pills up and wondered why she was on an antidepressant medication, she couldn't remember being depressed. Grabbing another bottle, she poured out one pill and popped it into her mouth, she had grown tired of trying to figure out all that she took and when she forgot to take her medication, she felt horrible. "Well Woobie, how about if we watch some TV and then find something to do later on?" She took her coffee into the living room and dropped down onto the couch, after flipping through the channels, she settled on the History channel.

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Smootcher yelled from where she was laying across the backseat of the truck. "I can't believe you guys wouldn't let the ambulance take me!" She slapped the seat and whimpered when they hit a hole in the road.

Murphy snorted and tossed an M&M back at her. "It wasn't our idea; you blew it when ya asked that lady paramedic if ya could bury your face in her tits on the ride over."

"And sucking on her thumb sure didn't help any...SONOFABITCH!" Stewie screamed as a car blew in front of them, she jerked the steering wheel to the left, slammed the brakes on and winced at the squeal of rubber as they slide sideways through the intersection.

"MotherfuckingcocksuckingassholeMAN!" She pulled the truck straight; hit the gas pedal at the same time as she hit the siren and the flashing lights. "Gonna kill the son of a bitch, he coulda killed us!"

Murphy yelled enough cuss words in one sentence to break Stewie's all time record and slapped her hands over her eyes. Smootcher screamed and slid off the seat to the floor and let out a scream that had everyone's hair standing on end and that included naked guy who was bouncing around in the cage. Stewie chased after the man and finally got him to pull over on the side of the road. She pushed the truck door open, jumped out and strode up to his car. Yanking his door

open, she grabbed the cell phone that he was speaking on, looked at it and then smashed it in the middle of the road.

"Hey what the Hell did you do that for," the man got out of his car and picked up what was left of his cell phone. "That phone cost me five hundred dollars!"

"Too fucking bad," she grabbed the remains from his hand and threw it out into the open field. "You know that talking on a cell phone while driving is against the law, now hand me your car keys and then stand at the back of your car."

"I'll do no such thing until I see a badge and some identification!" He threw a hand out towards where her badge hung on a holder on her jacket and found that it was a very bad thing to do, Stewie twisted his arm up behind his back and slammed him into the side of his car.

"Hey Murphy can I borrow your handcuffs, mine are on one of those stoners the cops got?"

The man tried to look over his shoulder at her. "Who are you people...you're not cops...ooohhh my, you're going to kidnap me and sell me on some kind of slave market!" He struggled against her and cried like a girl.

"Get real asshole, everyone knows that men are lazy assholes with no brains, that's why the slave market is full of women." She took the cuffs from Murphy, slapped them on one of his wrists and then fastened the other to the handle near the windshield that people used to get in or out of their cars.

"Will you hurry up," Murphy hissed. "We got naked guy in the back and Smootcher bleeding all over the seat." At that, the man started screaming for help and then cried when he saw his keys sail out into the field.

"Next time you even think about using a fucking cell phone when you're driving, running a red light anywhere in the world, cause a near fatal accident, think about this moment." She slapped him in the back of his head before flattening two of his tires. "Fucking asshole I hope no one comes by here for DAYS!" She jogged back to the truck and snickered when she heard Smootcher growling in the back seat.

"Can we go to the hospital now; I can't wait until mama tans your asses for letting me get shot in mine? And now that I've hit the floor face first I think I need a breast inspection, my tits hurt!"

"You just want some nurse feeling ya up so ya can get cheap thrills," Stewie said and then sighed in disappointment. "Would someone slap me or maybe zap me with the zappy gun when we get there, I could use a cheap thrill."

Murphy uncovered her eyes and punched her in her upper arm half a dozen times until she yelled out. "I'll do worse if you don't slow down and stop making turns on two wheels!"



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Monday rolled around with Judge working at her desk, she looked up from the papers she was reading when her secretary Belinda walked in. She was wearing wrap around sunglasses and nose paint and carried an umbrella in her one hand. "Your mother's on line two and I for one am glad that I am NOT you, that woman broke my eardrum and has me wishing that I stayed home."

Judge whimpered and then reluctantly picked up the phone. "Hello mother..." She flinched and jerked the phone away from her ear.

*"You ungrateful bitch, all I asked was for you to come to your fathers celebration and you couldn't even call to say that you wouldn't be coming!"*

Judge groaned, covered her face with her hands and wished that a giant hole would open up and swallow her, her parents could and would make her life a living Hell for this mistake. If she planed it right, the Whistler's could knock her off by way of heart attack, all she would have to do was let Murphy grope her or worse. "Mother I forgot all about it, I have important cases that I worked on all weekend, tell father that I'm sorry and that I'll make it up to him somehow."

*"To Hell with your piddly ass unimportant cases, family always comes first and you're damn right that you will make it up to him and me. You will be here tomorrow on the first available flight; a ticket will be waiting at the counter."*

Judge sighed and was about to explain that there was no way she could just fly off and leave everything hanging and jumped from the slam of the phone in her ear. "Like I can't afford to pay for my own ticket and what if I can't wanna fly there because of unfinished work?" She said to the dead line and knew that it would be the only way she would say such a thing. "I hate Maine, the damn nasty smelling ocean or what ever the Hell it's called, stupid ass accent, lighthouses, sailboats and I hate your fucking huge ass better than the rest of the relatives house!" She ended her tyrant with her hands pulling her hair out to the sides and then dropping down to tap nervously on her desk blotter. "How can I get outta this...?"

"Move to a foreign country like right now," her secretary said and handed her a note in a zip lock baggy. "It's from your nightmare clients." She walked from her office laughing hysterically.

Judge read the note and dropped her head to her desktop. "They're in the hospital...they wanna see me drop over from a stress induced coronary."

"That would make two of us; I wonder if we can get a discount for a double funeral?" Mama D asked and walked into the too bright office. "Damn woman but don't you think you have way too many lights in here?"

Judge's secretary snickered and pointed a finger at a whimpering Judge. "I told her but she don't

listen to me any, maybe you can slap some sense into her."

"I told you it's to kill germs and airborne bacteria...ooohhh just give me a fatal disease and end my horrible life!" She dropped her head back down and whimpered until Mama D poked her in the shoulder.

"Stop being so damn weak, where's the trouble making Judge Bloodstone that had an entire campus full of women falling at her feet...and I'm counting the ones you knocked out with that left cross?"

"She's been gone a very long time, there's no more need for the bully I was back then." She ran her long fingers through her hair and then rubbed her bloodshot eyes. "What happened that they're in the hospital and I know there's gotta be something else wrong if you came to my office this early in the morning?"

"Well, outta three brats I got two with gunshot wounds and one that's just being an ass because she's loose in a place with females other than relatives. Then the small part is the Maryland police department wants confirmation that they are in fact bounty hunters working for you."

Judge's face paled at the mention of gunshot wounds, she swallowed with difficulty and stuttered. "Are they alright...it's not life threatening is it?"

Mama D laughed and shook her head. "Hardly, it'd take more than buckshot to hurt them that bad."

Blue eyes widened and then narrowed with what Mama D said about them working for her, she shook her head and raised a finger only drop her hands back to her desk. "I don't have any bounty hunters looking for anyone...do I?" She looked to her secretary and sighed when she pointed at a forgotten folder on her desk. She looked over the papers in the file and whistled under her breath. "They got all of these skips in one night; did they hold a porno party or something to lure them in?"

"Worse than that, they raided one of the Pagan's hang outs, I tried keeping them from going after that asswipe but they took off outta the office before I could do anything. I was gonna give that case to one of their brothers and let him and his group go after him but those three stubborn girls of mine." She shook her head and held out a sheet of paper to Judge. "If ya would sign that I'll fax it back to the cop shop so they can then fax me back the paperwork I need to close out the bonds."

Judge signed the paper and looked to Mama D with curiosity. "You run the bail bondsmen office along with everything else you do?"

"I do now, that lazy ass son of mine was ripping the girls off so I kicked his ass out and now he's my bitch." She looked to her watch, gave Judge a short wave and waddled from her office, as she stopped at the door to the hallway she spoke. "Ya might wanna go check on my girls; they may be in need of a lawyer by now." She laughed deeply all the way out of the building.

"Ohh Judge you are in so deep with the Whistlers that it reminds me of a paid mafia lawyer," she laughed at her bosses pale features and left her to her paperwork. "Judge Bloodstone the Whistler's private defender."

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Stewie hid behind the door to the nurse's lounge and waited, she knew that before long one of them would come in and she'd get her chance. For once, she wasn't one of the injured Whistler's so she wasn't about to waste this quality time with a good looking nurse. She was about to give up when she heard the squeak of shoes on the tile and then saw the pale pink scrubs of one of the hotty nurses, she crept up behind her, grabbed her ass and then joined her in a blood curdling scream. "Why'd you scream?" She asked where she was plastered up against the wall.

"What would you do if someone snuck up behind you and grabbed your ass?"

"Uuhmm...thank them and ask 'em ta do it again...OK maybe not." She slid along the wall hoping to make it out the door before the nurse got to her. "Well...must be going now...my sisters in surgery her big ass got shot..." She spun around and was almost in the hallway when another nurse came in, all Stewie could do was groan. "Like threesomes, me and your two huge tits?" She reached out her hands and yelped from the finger thump to her forehead.

"How about some good virility drugs," the young nurse asked and shook the pill bottle in her hand. "They'll make you a stud for hours on end and then we can all play together...a threesome with Stewart Whistler." She took two of the pills out and popped them into Stewie's waiting mouth. They stood around for a few minutes and then watched Stewie fall to the floor and start snoring.

"What did you give her?"

"My sleeping pills," she grinned wickedly. "This is paybacks for all the years she chased me in High School and for the time she made a complete ass outta me in gym, she took pictures of me in the shower." She said the last bit through her teeth. "Rotten bitch put them up in her locker!"

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So where's mama, I figured she woulda been back by now," Smootcher moaned and rolled part way onto her side and looked to where Murphy was sitting in the chair next to her bed. "I hope

she's bringing real food, I'm starving," she wiggled her dark brows at her. "And maybe she's bringing your giiiiirlfriend?"

Green eyes rolled to the side. "And why would mama go and tell Judge that we were stupid and got shot up bringing in a skip?"

"Because I wanna show her how dumb you three really are that's why and how you ignore your mama," mama tossed Murphy a clean t-shirt and flipped Smootcher off when she whined. "I had to get her signature on that paper so that the dumbass cops in Maryland would send me the rest of my paperwork." She shook her head and mumbled under her breath. "Damn dumbass men, like any of us would lie about being bounty hunters."

"So is she coming here...?" Murphy struggled to get out of her blood soaked shirt, got her arms stuck and fell off her chair. "Do I look OK...should I go for the macho look or the pitiful baby me look?" She finally got untangled with mama's help to find that Judge had been watching her struggle.

"How about the 'I'm such an ignorant ass look'?" Judge said and then walked all the way into the room. "Nice tank top, does your underwear have little strawberries on them as well?" She gave Murphy a bright smile and dropped down onto the empty bed on the other side of the room.

"For your information...take me home with you and I'll show ya my under roos." She blew Judge a kiss before pulling her clean t-shirt on.

"No thanks, there's one of you missing, where's Stewie?"

"The Devil only knows, hopefully one of the nurses has tied her stupid ass up somewhere and we won't find her for a few months."

Judge gave mama a raised eyebrow and chuckled at the picture that formed in her head. "Ya know I haven't seen the three of you together since I was over at your house, she will be there for the court hearing won't she?"

"In handcuffs if needed," mama dangled a pair in front of Murphy. "Here's your cuffs from the skip, I'll have to order some more, remind me when we get home."

Judge heard Murphy snicker and looked over to see her pointing at her sister. "Smootcher wants a pair of bullet proof underwear."

"From the looks of the two of you, I'd say a new line of work would be better." She leaned forward to get a closer look at Murphy's face and winced. "That graze is awful close to your eye, is your vision OK?"

"A little blurry, it'll get better." She looked to her mama and raised an eyebrow. "You never did tell me if it adds character or not."

"Get real you little moron, your face is a royal mess, go look in the mirror." Mama pointed and shook her head when Murphy did the same.

"Nope, I'm afraid ta see just how bad it is."

"You're lucky; they coulda used that super glue on your mouth." Smotcher blew kisses at her. "I tried convincing them after you said ta use a giant magnet on my ass."

"Hey I just wanted ta see if it'd work, ya know instead of digging all that buckshot out." She gave her a wide grin and moaned from the pain in her face. "How come I didn't get any drugs and you did?"

Mama threw a cookie at her and reached into her purse for more. "Because they already thought you were on drugs when you came in, ya want a cookie Judge, I made 'em this morning?" She handed a cellophane wrapped jumbo-sized peanut butter cookie to her and watched as her eyes grew misty. "It's just a cookie Judge nothing ta get emotional over."

"It's the simple things mama, when I lived at home; my mother never cooked, baked or did anything that an employee was hired to do. She has never even had to wash her own clothes or change the sheets on her bed; there's always been an employee there to do that, so a home made cookie is special to me."

"Then that's solved, as soon as I get all my kids at home you're coming over for supper," she leaned forward and handed her another cookie. "And it ain't gonna be hamburgers and fries like the last time; I'm talking all home made food that'll put lard on your ass." She grinned and tossed her magenta colored hair over her shoulders. "I guess I better go find Stewie before she ends up staying here and costing me more money."

Judge sat on the bed and played with her fingers, when alone with the two sisters, she became self-conscious and a little afraid of what they could do. Even injured, they could do harm to her, after all they had all kinds of germs. She stood up and gestured to the open doorway before trying to get past Murphy. "I'll see you guys later...I have to go home and pack..." she sighed after realizing that she had said too much. "My lunch."

"Ohhh no Bloodstone, that's not what you're gonna pack." Murphy got up and stalked Judge until she was cornered. "Where ya going Judge, got a hot rendezvous with a good looking woman...ooohhh wait I'm right here." She leaned up against Judge and ran a hand down the side of her face. "So what's up Judge?"

"None of your business now get off me...I have MACE and I have a bad temper!"

"Ohh gimme a good shot of it, I've kinda missed it."

"What did I ever do wrong in my life to deserve you?"

"Ooohhh I don't know but I would love to see your bad side, whatcha say there Bloodstone,

wanna get down and dirty?"

Judge stood completely still and gazed down into clear green eyes; a thought came to her and brought with it an evil grin. "I need you." she grabbed her hand and pulled an ecstatic Murphy from the room.

"YES! I knew you'd finally figure it out, so are ya a top or a bottom, kinky or boring white bread...got any neat toys...edible underwears?" Judge jerked her around the corner and made her jog to keep up; Smootcher whimpered and pounded her small cheap pillow with a fist.

"Just fucking ain't fair, she always gets ta go places...ooohhh but she left her cookie!" She grabbed up her sisters cookie and forgot all about being alone in the room.

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It serves ya right you retarded brat," mama said loud enough for all the patients in the ER to hear. "Ya shoulda never pissed off that nurse," she maneuvered the wheel chair around the corner and stopped in front of the information desk. "Can I use your phone to call my other daughters room?" She took the phone from the blue haired old woman and waited for Smootcher to answer. "I found Stewie; make sure you thank the nurses for the new mittens and hat she's wearing. After she wakes up, I'm gonna take her over to your brothers house so he can cut the water pitchers off her hands and see if he can get the bed pan off her head; I think it's glued on." She snickered at the looks Stewie was getting from the other people around them and then busted out laughing at what Smootcher said. "OK, I tell her you said she's a Potty head." She gave everyone a bright smile and left the hospital singing the theme song from *Gilligan's Island*.

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Judge pulled a river dancing Murphy out to her car in the parking lot and shoved her through the driver's side door and across the seat, as she got into her car; she noticed that it was bouncing from Murphy's jumping. "Will you stop already, my shocks are shot and you aren't helping them any."

"Can't help it," she bounced, clapped her hands and sang. "I'm gonna get me some...I'm gonna get me some," she saw Judge's eyes change to an eerie silver color and slumped in her seat. "Maybe not...ya ain't gonna like throw me off the bridge to see if it is a fatal fall are ya, 'cuz I can tell ya right now that it would hurt like a big bitch."

"As much as I would love to put an end to your terrorist behavior towards me, no I'm not gonna toss you off the bridge. I need you to rescue me from a certain situation that I'm gonna be in tomorrow."

Green eyes took on an amused look; she licked her upper lip and leaned back against the door. "Please let it be something extremely dangerous...like you needing help outta your underwears."

Judge cast Murphy an irritated look and then made the last turn that led to her house. "What is it with you and my underwear or me out of my underwear, what ever happened to leaving things like that to the imagination?"

"My imagination is overworked where you're concerned, it needs a break." She winked and looked past the black blazer lapel and down to where Judge's breasts pushed against her white cotton button down. "Ya know you should feel special, I haven't shown this kind or this much interest in any woman in years."

"Ohh please," she rolled her eyes and got out of her car. "You're the type who can tell what cup size every one of the Victoria Secret models has and probably know their names and hobbies as well." She headed up to her door and turned to find Murphy staring with a tilt to her head at her ass.

"You've got guys briefs on with the kangaroo pouch in front."

Judge spun to put her back to her door and then put her briefcase in front of her. "Do not...I don't have any of those...you can't tell that just by looking at my ass."

Murphy cocked an eyebrow and gave her a lopsided grin. "Ya got the black ones on and you're wearing a sports bra with extra elastic at the sides and the Y in the back, wanna know what brand socks ya got on?"

Judge raised a finger at her and opened her mouth to only close it and put her key into the door handle. "Stop with the freaky psychic stuff, you're just guessing that's all, nothing for me to worry about." She mumbled to herself and jumped when Murphy grabbed her ass and squeezed past her into her house.

"Ya gonna make me get inside a plastic bag so I don't get germs all over your house?"

"Why would I do that now, you already left your germs in my bed...?" She sighed and went into her bedroom to start packing for her trip. "And stay outta my underwear drawer you pervert." She went into her bathroom to gather new hygiene items to place in her shaving kit bag and other items that were a must when traveling.

Murphy fell back on Judge's bed, grunted when Woobie jumped on her stomach and then buried her face in Judge's pillow. "So where we going that ya need ta pack so much and why do ya need me there to rescue you," she rolled to her side and gave Judge her best seductive look. "Do I get ta set the price for this little endeavor?"

Judge felt her pulse race as she took in the small blonde laying on her bed, no matter how much she denied it, and strange as it was; she was attracted to her. "I have a 'thing' with my parents tomorrow night and I don't want to be stuck there," she dropped down onto the side of her bed furthest away from Murphy and played with her thumbs. "We don't see eye to eye and in just a mere hour they have me suicidal, homicidal, you name it and I'm it. I want you to break up the happy little gathering and get me out of there."

Murphy was ready to be her usual perverted self but saw the sudden change in the tall dark woman, her hands shook uncontrollably, sweat ran down the sides of her now pale face and her breathing was erratic. Moving down the bed to sit beside her, she took her larger hands in hers and held them still. "You're not kidding about how they affect you, why are you going if it's that bad?"

"Because I missed my father's shindig and this is what I have to do to make it up to him and keep my mother off my back, if I don't do this, she'll show up here and make my life more of a living Hell than it all ready is." She took a breath and felt her chest tighten, moaning deeply, she pulled a hand free and clutched her chest. Falling to her side, she tried to breathe but felt her chest getting tighter by the second, fear showed in her pale eyes and tears ran from the corners.

"Ohh Hell Judge," Murphy placed her fingers at her pulse point, looked at her watch and counted, when she looked back into her pale blue eyes, she became really worried. "Does this happen all the time?" She watched her nod her head in answer to her question. Wiping at the tears on her face, she brushed her sweat soaked hair back from her face and then moved so that she could hold Judge against her body. Rocking her gently, she ran her fingers through the hair at her temples. "Close your eyes and picture Stewie, Smootcher and mama in string bikinis." She felt Judge shudder in her arms and smiled. "Can you imagine the screams of horror and how fast the beach would be cleared?" She knew that laughter was the best medicine for everything; she continued to rock Judge until she felt her relax and her breathing even out in exhausted slumber. In a soft voice, she spoke to her. "I wonder if they're the main reason behind your compulsive behavior." She rolled them to the center of the bed, wrapped around her taller friend and drifted off to sleep to the sound of her breathing.

A few hours later Judge woke up to feel the rise and fall of her head and a soft thump in her ear. Confused, she ran her hand upwards and felt a firm breast beneath it. Her eyes flew open and searched around her to see that she was in her own bedroom. Then her memory of what had happened colored her face and brought a soft groan from her throat. "Can my life get any more embarrassing?" She asked herself in a low voice and then froze all movement when Murphy moved beneath her and wrapped her tightly in her arms. The feel of a small hand brushing through her hair and then down to the nape of her neck sent electrical bolts southward. It had been a very long time since she had felt anything in that region of her body and thought it dead. "Not now," she whispered. "Why now and why her of all people?" Her questions went unanswered and then her comfortable pillow woke up.

"Ohh Hell," Murphy grumbled and then rubbed at her gritty eyes. "What time is it?"



"How did you know I was awake?"

"Easy you breathe different and there's little brown eyes staring at you." Woobie was standing with her feet on Murphy's forehead, stepped all over her until she was able to drop her head down so that she and her mistress were nose to nose.

"I forgot to unlatch your doggy door didn't I?" Woobie jumped all over them, barked and charged off towards the kitchen. "Guess that answers that," she rolled off Murphy and hurried from her bedroom. "Hold your bald little ass a minute!" She yelled and stumbled through the house. "I am in so much trouble here little dog, so much trouble." She opened the doggy door and then headed towards her bathroom off the living room, it was another one of her weird problems; she couldn't use the facilities if someone was near. Closing and locking the door, she placed her ear to it to make sure that she was still alone before taking care of her needs. When she walked back into her bedroom, she found Murphy leaning over the bathroom sink washing her face. "Sorry for acting like such an ass before, it's been a while since I had a panic attack that severe." She said from where she leaned against the door jam. "You don't really have to come with me if you would prefer to remain safe and sane."

Murphy stood up, wiped her face on the bottom of her t-shirt and shot Judge a concerned look. "I'm going with you; if just thinking about going to your parents gives you chest pains then I can only imagine what happens when you're in the same room." She stepped closer and placed a hand on Judge's chest. "I can be a real bitch when needed and that's the one you need in this case, so I'm in."

"We'll have to go to your mama's so you can get some clothes and what ever else you need," she took in the old t-shirt and faded Levis. "Do you have any professional looking stuff, you know...intimidating clothes?"

"Black leather or are ya thinking something like Armani, 'cuz I don't do girly."

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Stewie sat across the living room from Smotcher with a wide ridiculous grin on her face; she waved the tennis balls at her and pretended to throw one. "Do it and I'll get up and kick your ass...potty head!"

"I'm not a potty head...lead ass," she ran her fingers through the patchy haircut she now had and grinned wider. "Feels like a porcupine's ass."

"Looks like one to, where's mama?" She rolled to her side on the couch. "Is she cleaning out Murphy's room?"

"No I'm not touching that room," mama slapped Stewie in the back of her head and took the tennis balls from her hand. "I might get some damn strange ass disease from touching anything, you girls are disgusting!" She threw garbage bags at both of them and pointed to the stairs. "Get your asses up there and clean those pigsty rooms, your brothers were nowhere as nasty as you three."

Two sets of eyes connected and then swung back to mama, mouths dropped open to speak and then closed when she raised her hands with a tennis ball in each one. "Clean our rooms...we've never cleaned 'em before?" Stewie said and then ducked the flying yellow object that came at her at 60mph. "Sounds like an excellent plan!" She ran for the stairs and snickered at a stumbling, cussing crippled Smootcher.

"Damn brats are close ta 40 and they act like two-year-olds, where did I go wrong with them?" She dropped down onto the couch, grabbed the bag of potato chips and finished them off. "Maybe Judge will give 'em cleaning lessons that is if she survives two days alone with Murphy?" She grinned and then busted out laughing with the knowledge that Murphy was beyond being a pig.

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Murphy swung her backpack over her shoulder and jogged to keep up with Judge, even cussing and pleading for her to slow up didn't do a thing, she wondered what the hurry was. "Ohh come on I'm dying here!" She reached out, tried to grab her hand, and missed. While still jogging, she got her backpack all the way on and then sprinted after the long legged lawyer. "Damn you to Hell and back you bottom feeding..." she jumped and landed on Judge's back and was surprised when she didn't miss a step. "Now this is better," she draped her hands down over Judge's breasts and shivered at the deep growl coming from her. "Ohh do that again, gets me all hot." She whispered close to her ear.

"Let's see, a class A violent felony is life in prison in West Virginia because they don't have the death penalty," she bounced Murphy up against the wall and then started to choke from the tight grip around her neck. "Guess I'll...kill ya now...since we're in...Virginia...they have the...death penalty...couldn't handle being...someone's bitch."

"Ohhh but you're my bitch 'cuz I ain't lettin go until we're on the plane!" She wrapped her legs around a stumbling choking Judge and grinned all the way to the customer service desk. "Ya know Judge," she leaned down and blew into her ear. "You're so butch, who knew?"

"And you're gonna be buried in my parents back yard, who knew?" She blushed when the customer service agent gave her raised eyebrows. "Sorry, here are our tickets." She shivered and felt her face get hotter from what Murphy was doing to her. "Stop that." She growled and tried to shake Murphy off her back. "Will you get down already, my backs killing me?" Murphy licked

her ear once more before sliding down to the floor and grabbing her hand in a tight grip. "What are you doing, that's my hand?"

"I know it's your hand," she gripped her forearm with her other hand and stepped even closer to her. "I hate airports...ya know terrorists and stuff." She whispered the last part so that she wouldn't be hauled away by airport security or overheard by the other passengers. "And you're so big; I need all the protection I can get."

"Liar, you just want a free feel," she leaned down close to her ear. "Grab any of my body parts and I'll toss ya out a door at a couple thousand feet, got that?" She gave her an icy look accompanied by a deep growl.

"Ohh God what that growling does ta me!" She ran a fingertip against the side of Judge's breast and then yelped from Judge stomping on her foot. "I'm crippled...I'm crippled!" She limped beside Judge. "You crippled me...you...big mean lawyer!" She stopped suddenly at the end of the Jetway, looked at the planes door and yanked on Judge's hand hard enough to make her jerk backwards. "I can't do this..." she tried to turn and run and ran right into a huge mountain of a man. "I'm afraid of heights...airplane food...flight attendants!" She yelled at the man, gasped when strong arms wrapped around her waist and carried her backwards down the aisle. "You can't keep me on here; I'll cause a...commotion!"

"Do that and I'll strangle you right in your seat and then leave your little body for the cleaning people." Judge dropped her down between two seats and pointed to the one by the window. "Sit or I break both your legs and stuff you in the overhead compartment."

Green eyes looked to the seat and then up into silvery blue eyes; she gulped and with a hasty step, squeezed between the seats and down to the one next to the window. Judge gave the other passengers a small shaky smile and sat down next to a trembling Murphy. "Why didn't you tell me you don't like to fly?"

Murphy looked to her with panicky eyes and wiped her clammy hands on her thighs. "I never knew I was afraid until a few minutes ago, I've never flown before."

Judge sighed and wiped her own hands on her thighs; she looked to Murphy and shook her head. "Murphy, how can you be afraid of something you've never done before?" She pulled a handi-wipe from her pocket and handed it to her.

Murphy looked at the small square package and then raised her left eyebrow at Judge. "And what am I supposed ta do with this, now if ya had some Dramamine." She opened the handi-wipe and wiped her face and hands off before rolling it up and stuffing it in the pocket on the back of the seat in front of her, Judge took a deep shuddering breathe and shook a finger at it. "Ohh come on Judge, what am I supposed ta do with..." she looked out the small window, grabbed her seat belt, fastened it as tight as she could and grabbed Judge's hand. "We're moving and they didn't give us the engines turn or people swim speech!" She tried to stand up, jerked around and kicked her feet out in front of her. "We're gonna crash people! The pilots really old, uses a walker and has cataracts!"

Judge covered Murphy's mouth with her hand and tried to hold her arms down with her other one. "You are gonna get us kicked off and then I'm gonna tell my mother it was all your fault and give her your address!" She leaned in closer and gave her a look that should have planted her six foot under. "My mother doesn't go outside because there's a 99.9% chance that a house will fall from the sky and land on her, do you really want her at your house?" When the threat didn't do anything but make the other passengers give her pleading looks, she turned to see a flight attendant coming their way. "Ohh you are so gonna pay for this." She raised her one hand, cupped the back of Murphy's head and pulled her into a kiss that had the smaller woman moaning and sinking into her seat. When Murphy realized what was happening, she wrapped her arms around Judge's neck and kissed her back. The clearing of a throat and then the insistent tapping of a finger on Judge's shoulder broke them apart.

"The other passengers insist that you two not show public affection," the flight attendant said and looked to the passengers around them. "Just be glad that the homophobic Christian Fundamentalist asshole in the next row has not requested that the Captain turn us around and head back. Myself I could care less what you two do, it's the shallowness of the others that make us play stupid ass games." She walked away leaving Judge and Murphy to look around at all the staring passengers, Judge sunk deep into her seat while Murphy gave them the biggest grin she could and winked.

"She's all mine so turn your bug eyes back to the seat in front of ya!" Taking Judge's trembling hand, she brought it up to her lips and placed a soft kiss in her palm. "Knew ya liked me, wanna neck some more?"

Judge took a deep breathe, looked to a smirking Murphy and yanked her hand away. "No and it will never happen again...I don't know why I did it." She searched through her pockets, pulled out breath spray, an Oral B Brush-up and more handi-wipes. When she was finished with de-germing herself, she placed everything into a Ziploc baggy and placed it back into her coat pocket.

"You really are a freak," she licked her lips and stared at Judge's. "So I guess oral sex is out of the question."

"That and everything else that concerns the transference of body fluids between us," she shivered and rubbed her hands together. "Can't believe I did that and with of all people, Murphy Whistler. Why do you have two last names anyways?"

"Why is your first name Judge, she leaned sideways in her seat to wait for her answer?"

"I asked you first and why am I getting the impression that your little tantrum earlier was faked?"

Murphy's mouth dropped open, she thumbed her chest. "I wasn't faking anything and as soon as this thing takes off I'm gonna drop over from air pressure poisoning or something just as bad, we ain't supposed ta fly through the air unless we were born with wings."

"Uhhmm Murphy, we've been flying for the last ten minutes, they've already turned the seat belt sign off. Now what about your weird ass name?"

Murphy shook her head and growled. "We are not flying, I would have noticed..." she leaned over, looked out her window and then jumped back as far as the seat belt would allow. "Holy shit we took off and I didn't notice." She watched pale blue eyes narrow. "There's nothing wrong with my name and to make you happy, Mama D kept my last name so that I would know who I was and where I came from. It was either that or have a house full of kids with baby as their first names, ya know baby Murphy, baby Stewart, baby Smootcher..." She bobbed her head and held out her hands to get her point across.

"OK well that makes sense," she unfastened her seat belt and stretched her legs out as far as she could before turning her head to Murphy. "So Smootcher got shafted because her mother has a weird last name, and I got screwed because it's a family name. My father didn't care one bit that I wasn't a boy, he said I would be named Judge and that was it."

"So did he pick your profession as well, ya know hoping that you'd be a supreme court Judge; ya gotta admit that Judge Judge Bloodstone sounds stupid."

"And that's why I'll never put on the robes," she leaned back in her seat and breathed out a deep breathe. "I flinch ever time I think of the brass desk placard, people would think it was a typo."

"Or that you have a problem with stuttering."

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Mrs. Bloodstone hung up the phone and stomped into her husband's office, she slammed the door closed and then stopped to stand in front of his desk. "I just had the airline check to see if Judge made her plane, she cancelled the reservation and bought two tickets for an earlier flight."

Judge T. Bloodstone the IV looked up through his black framed glasses with brown eyes and shrugged his shoulders, he could care less if his only child walked all the way from West Virginia, it was no secret that their was no love lost between them. He had wanted her to join his law firm right out of college but she had to ruin it by getting into trouble, embarrassing the family and ending up in a psychiatric ward for a year. He went back to his paperwork and groaned when she yanked the papers from his hand. "What do I care if she changed her plans, I still don't know why you insisted that she come here?"

"After all that we've done for her, private schools, college, cars, the medical bills, she can at least show up and congratulate you." She dropped the papers back on his desk and stood with her hands planted on her surgically perfected hips. "When I spoke to her, I distinctly remember telling her to not bring anyone and what did she do, she has done just that. She had better not

come here and think that she is going to bring her sinful ways into this house."

Mr. Bloodstone looked at his wife with half lidded eyes and shrugged his shoulders. "So have all the doors and windows locked and make sure that the guard at the front gate knows to not let her in if she comes here with someone, that she's not granted entrance until tomorrow when she's expected. Just do what we do every time we know she's coming, now leave me in peace so I can get this contract finished for my meeting in the morning."

"Ohh she will not get through that gate until she's supposed to, I have everything on a time schedule and she will not disrupt it one iota!" She stomped from the room and slammed the door when she left.

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Judge took the offered glass of Jack Daniels and Coke on the rocks and sipped it slowly; she wasn't really a drinker but needed something to calm her nerves. At home she would have cleaned or ironed her clothes, here she was stuck with a snoring, drooling Murphy laying up against her and stuck-up passengers whom kept giving her the evil eye. The more she thought of going to her parent's house, the more nervous and agitated she became. Her pulse raced, heart pounded in her chest and sweat trickled down from her temples to soak into her shirt collar. Checking her watch, she saw that they had maybe 20 minutes of flying time left before they hit the airport; from there they would take a rental car. She had planed ahead and got them a room at a motel close to where her parent's house was; she knew her mother and knew that she would be unwelcome until the appointed arrival time. "It's like making an appointment with the fucking Queen of England." She mumbled and ran her fingers through mused blonde hair. "I wish I had a mother like yours," she placed a kiss upon the golden crown and ignored the small hand that made its way to her inner thigh. "Mama D would never have sent me away or put me through the shit that my parents did, I know she didn't put any of your brothers or sisters on a plane when they were five and sent them off to boarding school."

"Nope, she threatened to send us to our grandma Mildred's though, she smelled like mothballs." Murphy stretched against Judge, tilted her head upward and took in the lawyer's angled features. "Pops left us at the grocery store once," she ran her hand up and down Judge's thigh and snickered when she slapped her hand. "They called him at home and told him if he didn't come and get the three of us he'd be in debt for the rest of his unnatural life." She sat up in her seat, took Judge's drink and finished it off. "Every one gave Mama D and pops a hard time about all us kids, it was unknown for black parents to adopt or foster parent white kids. Mama said it didn't make no difference to them what shade we all were, we needed parents and they had enough love for all of us." She saw the tears glistening in blue eyes and squeezed her hand. "Some people are meant to be parents and others shouldn't even have gold fish, yours sound like the former."

"You don't know how right you are," she pointed to the seat belt sign that had come on and fastened her belt for their landing. "You'll see what kind of people they are soon enough and then you may wish you had stayed home."

"Ohh I can handle just about anyone, remember I have eleven siblings and a small army that we call a family."

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Smootcher and Stewie sat side by side on the couch with a photo album across their laps; Smootcher flipped the page and sniffled. "Look at her little face; she looked like a toothless little troll." She wiped tears from her eyes and sniffled along with her sister. "She was so tiny for a second grader, a whole two foot tall toothless lil troll."

"I'll miss her blowing toothpaste bubbles out her nose and belching the Lords prayer." She wiped tears from her eyes and fell into a blubbering Smootcher. "But I'll enjoy her Playboy collection like she would want me to."

"What in the Hell are you two doing," Mama D asked and then wiggled her fingers for the photo album. "Gimme that before you get chocolate all over the pages."

"We're mourning Murphy; she was the best older sister we ever had." Smootcher whined and covered her face with her chocolate covered hands.

Mama D smacked both of them on their heads with the album and pointed to the mess on the coffee table. "It ain't gonna work you idiots, she'll be back in two days so forget about the dibs on her stuff and clean up your mess!" Mama opened the album to the page they were looking at and gave them a raised eyebrow look. "All three of you looked like toothless trolls; your poor teacher had to be medicated after a week of putting up with your rotten asses, poor woman thought you were the true devils spawn."

"I saw her the other day," Stewie said and gave her sister a wicked grin. "She screamed and fell over the bushes tryin ta get away from me, all I did was wave."

"And ask if she wanted to see the triple 6's on the back of your head." Mama said and then snickered at her kids before going back into the kitchen to finish making her famous blackberry pies. She had made an extra one to give to Judge when she and Murphy got home, after reading the file Murphy had on the woman, she knew that she had to take her under her wing. "What's one more kid, besides it's never too late to be mothered."

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Murphy looked around the motel room and sighed at the two double beds, when she found out that they would be staying in a motel, she had prayed for one queen sized bed. Not that she expected to have sexual relations with Judge; she just wanted to be close to her. She knew she acted like a dog a good majority of the time but would never force or take advantage of anyone. She would never do that with Judge, she may cop a feel or act ignorant around her but it was more of a way to put her at ease than anything. If all of a sudden she treated her differently, Judge would know that something was up.

"Where's the mini bar I need a drink?" Judge asked and looked around the room for the small refrigerator that held the over priced every thing. "There had better be Jack Daniels in there or I'm storming the office." She found it beneath a counter near the sink that she just couldn't figure out why it was in the room and not the bathroom. Pulling it open, she pulled out three mini bottles of Jack and a can of Coke.

"Whoooa there Judge, put that stuff back, its way too expensive."

"But I want a drink and there's nothing else around here." She pouted and dropped down into one of the two chairs at the small round table. "I should have brought..." she watched as Murphy placed a bottle of Jack Daniels and a thermos on the table. "And how did you get that through airport security?"

"What," Murphy looked at the items and into bloodshot blue eyes. "It's nothing illegal and the thermos is plastic, how many drinks did you have while I was snoozing?"

"One mouthful and then you drank the rest, now gimme some before I lose it and scream bloody murder." She slid the sealed plastic cup across the table, watched as Murphy made her a Jack and Coke and then ran from the room to get ice; she came back a few minutes later to find the cup empty and Judge tipped back in her chair.

"Tell me that you're not a light weight and you're wasted already?"

"I have no idea; it's been a while since I've drank." She opened her eyes and blinked a few times to get the blurriness to leave. "I'm hoping that it'll knock me out so that I can get some sleep, I can't sleep in strange places or beds."

Murphy gave her a wicked grin and leaned back in her chair, placing her hands behind her neck, she flexed her biceps. "I can think of a couple things we could do to wear ya out," she flexed her arms again and then blew kisses at her. "Wanna arm wrestle, I win you drink, you win...you drink."

"Ohhh now isn't that a fair deal, go to Hell." She rolled up her sleeves and cracked her knuckles. "Prepare for extreme pain 'cuz I'm gonna kick your ass and break your arm off at the elbow." 30



minutes later, a passed out Murphy was on the floor and Judge was wobbling in her chair, she looked down and ended up falling on top of Murphy. Getting to her knees, she grabbed the front of Murphy's shirt and dragged her across the floor to the bed. After struggling with her spinning head and Murphy's dead weight, she got them into one of the beds and then passed out with Murphy lying across her chest.

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Stewie and Smootcher sat on the curb outside Wal-Mart; they looked to each other and sniffled, they had returned to work but felt lost without their sister there. They were hardly ever apart from one another and wondered if that had something to do with why none of them was successful on dates. If one of them managed to finagle a woman into a date, it usually ended up with the other two meeting them wherever they had taken her. "So what we gonna do when she moves in with Judge Dread?" Stewie asked and took a bite from the turkey jerky dog treat in her hand. "We ain't never been apart before, at least not like forever...did that make sense?"

"Does anything you say make sense and there ain't a damn thing we can do about it except hide in their closet and watch 'em." She snickered and slapped hands with a grinning Stewie. "Ya know it just ain't right that she's the only one who's had 'kinda sex', I got a big looty, how come no one wants it?"

Stewie fell back on the sidewalk and groaned she would have to get her sister a book on slang so she wouldn't get her ass kicked for saying the wrong thing. "You're the only black person I know that screws up slang, it's booty not looty and I think it has something ta do with having Murphy the chick magnet with us all the time, she gets the women's and we get nada," she wiggled her dark brows. "Maybe now we can gets some dates!" She jumped up, pulled Smootcher with her and they hobbled back into the store.

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Mrs. Bloodstone slammed the phone down and cussed at the maid who took that moment to try to sneak past, the poor young woman jumped and dropped the dust rag and can of polish she had been holding. "Why are you in here, could you not see that I was on the phone, there are other rooms to clean, find one so I do not have to look at you?" She waited until the maid ran from the area and disappeared. "Where are you Judge," she looked through the phone book that sat on the small telephone table near the library doors. "I know you would not lower yourself or the family's reputation by staying in some less than five star establishments." She flipped through the pages and gave up when she saw that she had called all the Hotels in the area, she knew that her daughter would not drive any great distance and would be in a five-mile circumference of the house. "I'll find out where you were as soon as you get here and then we will talk about your choices."

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Murphy groaned, grabbed the side of her pounding head and then noticed the warm moist flesh beneath her cheek, lifting her head; she cringed at the sound of their skin coming unstuck. "Ohhh why did I drink so much?" she whispered and moaned when she lifted her head up. Blinking her eyes, she took in the disheveled form of Judge, if her head wasn't screaming she would have jumped and did a little dance. She didn't know if she had done it or Judge had but the lawyer was naked from the waist up. "Ohh what a body you have," she trailed a finger across hard abs and felt her fingers tingle. "I'd worship you given half the chance." She watched as blue eyes blinked open and then looked to the ceiling in total confusion. "Hey sexy, do ya feel as bad as I do?" She rubbed at her temple and then sat up beside Judge. She wiggled her fingers against the bedspread and noticed that it was damp. "Are ya a bed wetter?"

"Nooo are you?" Judge asked, sat up and wished that she hadn't, she moaned and grabbed at her aching head with both hands.

"Well I know I'm not, so how'd the bed get wet?" She moaned from the rocking of the mattress when Judge launched out of bed. "Damn you're hot!" She gasped at the rippling muscles that danced across Judge's damp skin.

Judge looked down; saw that she was half-naked and that the fly on her Levi's was down as well. "Son of a bitch... I didn't wet the bed; I sweat excessively when I drink too much." She grabbed up her shirt from the floor and rushed into the bathroom, Murphy growled at the sound of the lock clicking.

"Ohh no ya don't, there are no locked doors where I come from, it's unsafe." She grimaced from the spinning room, stumbled to her backpack and pulled out a plastic card. "But that's easily solved." In a split second she had the door opened and was yanking the cheap shower curtain back. "No locked doors and save some hot water!"

Judge jumped, spun and fell back against the shower wall, she felt her feet sliding out from under her and flailed with her arms. "Get out...help!" She gripped the offered hand and let go to fall on her ass in the bathtub. She covered her chest with her folded arms and pressed her legs together tightly. "Why are you in here...get out!"

"You locked the door, I don't like locked doors, don't do it again." She pulled the curtain closed and then went over to the toilet to relieve her extremely full and painful bladder. When the shower curtain flew back, she looked up into questioning pale blue eyes peeking around the edge. She gave Judge a raised eyebrow with a small smirk. "If you ask me what I'm doing, I'm gonna flush the toilet like six times and enjoy every minute of it."

Judge wiggled a long finger at her and moved her mouth to say nothing; she yanked the curtain back and just stood under the spray of hot water hoping that it was just a bad nightmare. So much

had happened in just hours that she was feeling her life come apart in giant chunks and that, she no longer had control over anything. "I need to reclaim control, I'm a strong person, I can do anything, I'm a complete failure and I suck!" She pounded her forehead against the tiles and then jumped back when germs entered her hung over brain. "Germs...I'm gonna die from a horrible disease...cool... guess I'll miss out on going to my parents." After washing her hair, conditioning it and washing her body, she shut off the water, climbed from the bathtub and grabbed a towel. "What the Hell am I thinking, there's no way I could catch a bug, virus or other and drop over before I have to be in Hell...unless" she wrapped herself in towels from head to toe and then pulled on the complimentary robe before going out into the room. "Do you have any strange diseases, viruses or anything fatal that can kill me in a matter of hours?"

Murphy looked up from where she was looking through the bags cluttering the small table and almost choked on the donut in her mouth. "Jesus Christ Judge," she coughed and took a quick drink of coffee before she continued. "No I don't have any diseases are ya nuts...well yeah ya are but what's with wanting to die, we only got hangovers?"

"No, if I drop dead then I won't suffer at my parents place today," she moved over to the table and looked down at the many bags of food. "Where did you get all of this?" She took the cup of coffee Murphy handed her and then took the bag with sugar and creamers in it.

"While you were using all the hot water I ran down to the corner restaurant," she took in the ridiculous way that Judge had covered her body and just shook her head. "Ya know we could just turn around and go back home."

"And have my mother show up in West Virginia...Ohh nooo, I can't handle that." She went back into the bathroom and came back out to grab her small carry on bag.

"Crazy woman, she's just plain crazy." She put the rest of the food out on the table and made herself a plate of what they had, placing the rest on another plate, she covered it up for when Judge was done. "She's gonna drive me as nutty as she is, do I have any diseases?" She mumbled to herself even after Judge came out and sat down across from her at the table. "Could just take my gun and shoot yourself if that's whatcha want but I want your body before ya do that." She looked up from her food and choked. "Damn but you cleaned up good." She took in the silvery blue eyes and felt her insides turn to jelly; she let her eyes trail down to where the powder blue silk shirt fell open across full breasts and felt her mouth go dry.

"Or I can shoot you," Judge threw a wadded up napkin at her. "Stop looking at my chest," she glanced at her watch and counted in her head how long they had before she faced Hell on earth. "Four hours until I got to be there and then another fifteen minutes before you rescue me." Green eyes held her and didn't release her until she dropped her head.

"And what's my excuse for rescuing you, it's gotta look good or they're not gonna believe one bit of it."

Judge thought for a minute and then grinned wickedly. "Tell them that you need me at the court house to sign papers for one of your skips, my father knows that as a prosecuting attorney I have

to do that at times." She sighed tiredly and looked down at the full plate of food. "I hate this shit and I should move to a foreign country where they don't have electricity and satellites."

"Caller ID and moving without leaving a forwarding address is cheaper and a Hell of a lot easier." Murphy said and grabbed a piece of bacon from Judge's plate.

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Mrs. Bloodstone stood by the large bay window that faced the front lawn; she pushed the silk curtain to the side and saw a dark form walking up the long drive. Even half-blind, she would know her daughters walk anywhere, with all the ballet, etiquette classes and every other kind of training or schooling that should have turned her into a lady; none of it worked, she still walked like a truck driver. "She looks ridiculous in a dark suit cut like her father's, she needs a new wardrobe." She walked away from the window and headed to the sitting room where she would take her stand against her daughter's manly ways or not.

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The guard at the front gate looked at the dark car pulling up alongside the curb and then nodded when he saw Judge get out of the passenger side. He had never actually spoken to her and had just given her curious glances whenever she came to visit. When he asked the other employees about her, they told him not to ever ask again if he knew what was good for him. He questioned the rule and they told him that, if their employers found out that he was asking about their daughter, they would fire him in a split second and given a terrible recommendation. More or less, he would be finished in the state of Maine. So now, he ignored her except for to call up to the main house to let them know that she had arrived.

Judge looked up towards the house and watched as the curtains floated back across the window. She knew her mother had been watching just so that she could say that she was late and then call her undependable. She checked her watch and saw that she had three minutes before she would be late and then another hour before Murphy would reappear and save her, she had changed the time span so as to not cause anymore problems than necessary. Although she wished that, she could cause such a horrific scandal that they would rule her dead and leave her alone for the rest of their lives. Stepping up onto the sterile front porch, she rang the intimidating doorbell and waited for someone to answer the door. With the first few tones of the bell, she went back to when she was still just a child. Whenever there were holidays the schools closed down and the children returned to their families, they would put her on a plane or train and then a bus would drop her off blocks away from the house. She would drag her luggage all the way to the front

door, then stand where she was now, and wait for someone to answer it. She had asked once why she didn't have her own key and both her parents had looked at her as if she was just the hired help. They told her that it was their house and visitors didn't get keys, so to never ask again. Now some thirty years later she was back at the same door and still didn't have a key. When she heard the sound of the doorknob, she quickly wiped her hands on her trousers and took one-step back.

"Miss Bloodstone please go around back, Mrs. Bloodstone informed me that you are to wait for your requested presence in the kitchen." The butler closed the door on her face and locked it.

"Ohh how I just love coming to this Hell on earth and being treated like the hired help, go to the kitchen Judge, don't you dare use the front door Judge." She stomped off the porch and made her way down along side the house to where the servant's entrance was.

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Murphy stopped at what she called a fancy smancy store, looking around; she strolled up to the door and went in. She couldn't help but grin at the looks she was receiving from both the employees and customers. She dropped her head so that she was looking over the tops of her sunglasses. Seeing what she wanted, she headed in that direction. "Can I help you with something?" One of the sales clerks asked as she looked down her nose at Murphy.

"Sure can," she pulled the dark suit coat from the rack, placed it up against her chest and nodded her head. "Got any pants ta match in a 28X28?"

"That happens to be a man's suit that comes with double pleated trousers not pants, our ladies apparel is on the other side of the store." She tried to pull the suit jacket from Murphy's hand and jumped back from her growl.

"Take a good look at me lady; do I look like I'd wear anything that came from that area? I want 'trousers' to match and fit and if ya try and sneak some female crap in on me and ya lost your commission." She pulled her jacket aside to show the gold badge on her belt. "Now I'm in a hurry so what is it?"

The sales clerk huffed but went ahead and found trousers in the size that Murphy needed. Once she paid for her suit and some other items that she had found, she strolled from the store and walked across the street to a small café. Checking the bright place out, she found the restrooms and headed that way under the stares of all. "Damn people are all uppity freaks of nature." She mumbled under her breath and shook her head in amazement. A few minutes later, she came out dressed in her new clothes. "So, am I GQ material?" She did a small spin and snorted when everyone dropped their eyes back down to their plates. "Stuck up assholes." She left the café and went back to the rental car, looking at her watch, she saw that she had just enough time to head on back to the Bloodstones and rescue Judge.

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Judge looked down at her hands where they traced the fine lines on the wooden table in the large kitchen; she looked up into the kind brown eyes of the cook when she placed a cup of coffee in front of her and smiled her thanks. She had been sitting there for better than 45 minutes and not a word from either one of her parents, she was beginning to wonder if they would ever call for her. It would not be the first time that she was ordered to eat in the kitchen while they entertained people in the large opulent dinning room. Even into her late teens, they often banished her to the kitchen or sent her to stay in her room until the guests were gone. She looked at her watch and wondered where Murphy was, she hoped that she could persuade the gate guard to let her pass. She had made up a phony document for a bail skip and hoped that it got Murphy inside the grounds.

She also told her where the servant's entrance was and alerted the cook to what was to transpire. She knew the older woman would let Murphy in because she didn't like her employers any more than the rest of the state of Maine did. She just hoped that she hurried; she didn't know if she could hold out for the entire time. Glancing at her watch for the umpteenth time, she was about to call it all off when the butler stepped in and motioned for her to follow. "You are to sit at the far end on the right, your place setting is already there and waiting." She stepped into the dinning room, looked around and saw where she was to sit. She might as well eat in the backyard, she was closer to it then her parents and where she was placed, she couldn't see her mother unless she turned in her seat.

"Mother, father good to see you both." She said as she made her way down the table that could seat 40 people if needed. Any further to her chair and she would have to stop and rest before venturing forth, she wondered if this was their way of telling her that they were pissed at her for missing the shindig? Taking her seat, she looked down at the plate and silverware and frowned. What they had given her to eat off was a chinette disposable plate and plastic utensils that you would get from a fast food place. She looked down towards her parents and saw that they had the usual expensive china and crystal wine glasses; her glass was a plastic cup still in its plastic cover. "Glad to see that you find me disposable, family togetherness and a parent's unconditional love, something every child should feel." She sighed and turned to her father, opening her mouth, she shut it when he raised a hand to dismiss her. "Nothing ever fucking changes around here, why do I waste my time?" Pulling the small napkin from the plastic utensil bag, she opened it, placed it across one thigh, and stared down at the paper place mat under her plate. "Gee they went all out on this one, wonder what I get to eat?" Her wait was not long, the cook came in and placed the extra large silver covered serving tray at her fathers side and then left the room. Next came the butler with a small paper plate in his hand, he dropped his head and placed it in front of her along with a bottle of water. "Thanks William, tell them that they shouldn't have gone all out on my meal...on second thought forget it." He nodded his head and left the dinning room to go to the kitchen.

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The cook was sitting at the small counter near the double sinks eating a piece of the roast she had prepared for the elder Bloodstone's, when William came in, she pointed to the other stool and the plate of meat. "I hate those sons of bitches, why do they treat her like that?"

"Because they think they have the right, from the day she was born, they've done this; I don't know why she keeps coming back here?"

"If I was her I'd knock both of them out and be done with it," she saw movement in the window at the side door and grinned. "Here's her friend, this ought to get them." She got up and opened the door for Murphy. "You must be Murphy, I'm Delia and this is William." She closed the door and took in the slight blonde-haired woman; she picked up the inner strength and hoped she had enough for Judge as well. "You're just in time...actually kinda late since they started with their humiliation the second she stepped through the gate."

Murphy took in the plump gray haired Delia and the tall whip thin William, she saw by the disgusted expressions that they were none to pleased about what had been happening since Judge had gotten there. "What exactly has gone on?"

Delia took her hand and pulled her over to the counter. "They wouldn't even let her in the front door; they sent her around to come in the same one you used. Then she had to sit in here until they called for her, but that's not the worst part." She shook her head and pointed to the array of food covering the worktable and counter. "Ya see all this food," she watched as green eyes grew wide. "Well, William here can tell you that Judge ain't eating anything even close to this stuff."

"Judge has a plain cheese sandwich on stale bread." He flinched at the deep growl that came from the small woman and then grinned when he saw fire flash in her green eyes.

"While they're eating food like this, she's got what a starving homeless person would throw out?" She growled out and then felt her anger take hold and cause her hands to shake. "I gotta find her a set of balls...sorry for my uncouth language but it's true."

"You might consider getting her off all those damn drugs their doctor has her on." William said and handed her a business card with said doctor's name on it from his wallet. "I'm sure that with some of Judge's contacts you should be able to get her medical records from that quack."

"Ohh I don't need them," she winked and shoved the card in her breast pocket. "I have some very powerful friends myself, namely my family, they can spin a tale you wouldn't believe and charm the gold right outta peoples teeth." She pulled her badge off her belt, flipped the carrier so that it hung from her jacket pocket and cracked her knuckles. "We haven't eaten since early this

morning, could ya make us a care package up and how are her parents dressed, ya know colors?"

Delia grinned at William and went to getting food ready for them to take with them. "Mrs. Bloodstone is dressed in a peach colored silk dress and Mr. Bloodstone is dressed in his normal white linen shirt and silk tie." William answered and saw an evil grin blossom across pink lips.

"Got any red wine, I hear it goes good with snobby assholes in expensive clothes?"

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Judge sat looking down at the poor excuse for a meal and felt tears form in her eyes, she never cried except for when she was inside the walls of her parent's mansion. Tears trailed down her high cheeks to drip off her strong jaw and soak into the paper mat in front of her. She dropped her head, stared down at her trembling sweaty hands and closed her eyes. She never heard the door open or the click of heels on the marble floor. It wasn't until she felt finger's brushing through the hair at her temple, that she lifted her tear stained face and opened her eyes to see Murphy.

"Ya know what, the Hell with an excuse for those assholes." She wiped the tears from her friends face, placed a soft kiss to her forehead and then pulled her head into her chest. Kissing the crown of silky dark hair, she eased away from Judge and gave her a wink. "Ya know I was talking to Billy and Delia and they say that this here bottle of wine costs like six hundred bucks!" She looked down the long table at the two stricken elder Bloodstone's and waved the bottle at them. "Is that about right, six hundred?" She took a long drink, offered the bottle to Judge, swallowed with difficulty and coughed. "That stuff sucks; I've had three dollar wine that tasted better." She grinned at the grimace on Judge's face, took the bottle from her and walked towards her parents. "Ya know where I come from ya don't treat your kids like lepers, not even if they've been arrested or caused all kinds of hate and discontent." She took another drink of the wine from the bottle and was happy to see that her manners appalled both of them. "Now my girl Judge is a successful lawyer, a good friend and would do anything for any body, but you two assholes are something else!" She waved the bottle at them as she walked behind them and stopped on Mr. Bloodstone's right hand side. "She's down there in bum fuck Egypt with a fucking stale cheese sandwich while you two high and mighty asswipes are eaten real fancy and expensive gourmet food. That just ain't right in my mama's book,"

"Who in the Hell are you..." Mr. Bloodstone demanded, tried to stand up and found steel like fingers digging into his shoulder. "How did you get past our guard and in our house?" He squeaked out.

"Ohh lets just say that I'm the one who makes her scream and getting in was easy, ya see a gold shield gets me in anywhere I wanna go," she tapped her shield for good measure. "And being the police chiefs niece helps to, now about this shit of you two terrorizing Judge." She leaned down between the two and looked to each one before straightening up. "It stops as of right now, no



more phone calls, guilt trips or anything else or I'll come back with my entire family. And just so ya get a good picture in your heads, I come from a huge ass family and 90% of them are black."

Mrs. Bloodstone waved her dinner knife at her and screamed loud enough to make everyone's ears ring. "You're one of those lesbians that ruined our lives! Get out of my house right now before I have William throw you out!"

"Ohh well that's something that I forgot to mention," she wiggled the bottle of wine. "When I found out what you paid them, I gave them the rest of the week off, they'll be looking for other jobs that pay better." She winked at a pale faced Judge, raised the bottle above her head and then poured it all over the Bloodstones. "My job here is done, come on lover lets get outta this fucking place, gives me the extreme creeps." She walked calmly to Judge and took her hand. "I got us a packed lunch waiting along with an expensive bottle of Champaign; Billy says it's the best stuff here." She pulled an awestruck Judge from the dinning room and back to the kitchen where Delia and Billy were laughing their asses off. They had been eaves dropping by way of the intercom that ran throughout the mansion. "I think the assholes may be in comas, they're just sitting there in wine soaked clothes."

"Let them sit there and stew for a few days, I'm outta here." Delia said and then waited for William to grab his coat and small overnight bag from the table. "I can go anywhere and get a job that pays better than this that gives me weekends off on top of it, Hell I'm a damn chef."

William nodded his head and thought of the restaurant that his brother owned, he knew he could get them both good paying jobs there. "Come on Delia we're going to see my brother about jobs."

Murphy grabbed the cardboard box of food, handed it to a still silent Judge and then grabbed the bottles of wine and Champaign that lined the counter before ushering them out the side door. "Time to chow down and watch free porno in our room, you two have my card, any time you're in West Virginia give me a call." She waved a hand at the two former employees and then placed it on Judge's lower back. "Anyone home in there," she asked once they were at the rented car that she had parked next to William's car outside of the door. "Come on Judge say something so I know your brain's still working."

"Holy fucking shit!" She said and dropped into the passenger seat. "Holy mother fucking shit."

"Ya said that already but at least I know your brain has some current in it." She got behind the wheel and with in a minute she had them on the road and in the direction of their new motel room.

"We're going the wrong way, our motels the other direction."

"Nope, I didn't want your parents finding us after we left so I got us another room in a different motel under my uncle's name." She looked sideways at a still pale Judge and reached across to squeeze her cold hand. "It'll be alright, they wanna press charges I got a good lawyer who can kick their asses all the way to Hell and back."

Judge gave her a crooked grin. "I just can't believe what you did; I wish I had the balls to do something like that." She said in a low voice and squeezed the warm hand holding hers. "I was so shocked at how they were treating me that I just sat there."

She grinned and brought Judge's hand up to her lips. "Don't worry I got balls big enough fer both of us."

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Murphy was in the shower after winning the coin toss or three and cheating, Judge was looking around the room for the box from the food she had gotten from Delia, she just could not stand that there was a bit of trash on the table from their meal. One thing she had to admit, she was thankful that Murphy had asked for the food, it had been a long time since she had eaten one of Delia's gourmet meals and enjoyed the company of Murphy as well. What she never expected was for Murphy to cater to her and then to treat her with such gentlemanly manners; it was something she didn't know the woman knew. After cleaning up the little bit of mess, she placed the box outside the door. Coming back in, she looked around the room for anything else that needed done. Shaking her head, she picked up Murphy's suit jacket from the foot of the double bed and went to place it on one of the coat hangers hanging from the clothes rod. She stopped when she saw the label and then felt Murphy step up behind her. "Are ya impressed?"

"Kind of," she hung it up and ran her fingers down the front of the soft material. "I know you didn't have this in your backpack."

"Nope, I bought it right before I headed over to the Hell mansion. I've never had a designer anything unless ya count the Wal-mart tennis shoes I wear."

"So the first thing you buy is a Ralph Lauren cashmere suit," she turned to look down into her eyes and felt her insides quiver, Murphy looked at her openly. "What are you doing?"

"Standing here looking at you, drooling, dripping water on the floor and freezing my ass off." She grinned wickedly when Judge's mouth dropped open after seeing that she was completely naked. "No towels in the bathroom, either I go for them as is or..."

"I'll go...put something on for my sanity's sakes." She looked around and then decided to just go and get them some towels from housekeeping. When she came rushing back into the room, she heard the sound of a hair dryer and then saw Murphy using it to dry her body off. Looking at her compact thickly muscled body made her stomach quiver and her knees go weak, she had seen her share of naked women but none of them made her feel the way Murphy did. The only problem she saw right now was that no matter what her feelings were towards the smaller woman, she was off limits. Not because she was a client or anything but because Judge couldn't

trust herself with relationships. "Here I brought all the ones I could find..." she handed over one of the fresh towels and felt her heart thump against her ribs when Murphy turned and her breasts brushed against her hand. "What are you going to wear to sleep in?"

Murphy rubbed her head with the towel, lowered it and gave Judge a sexy grin. "What ya see is what ya get." She draped the towel around her neck and walked over to fall across the bed and roll to her side. Well come on Judge get naked so I don't feel so alone."

"I think I'll just go take a shower and then sit in the only chair in here to watch the news."

"Gods you're boring, we could roll around on this big old bed get comfortable, intimately close and ya could let me use ya as a pillow." She wiggled her brows and ran her hand up across her stomach to her right breast. "Or you could use me as a pillow, sex slave or just watch what I do to myself." She noticed the red creeping up Judge's neck and then her shaking hands right before she bolted to the bathroom, the sound of the lock had Murphy cussing under her breath and getting up from the bed. "I know I told her about that, no locked doors, it's unsafe." She pulled her plastic card out of her backpack and unlocked the bathroom door, when she pushed it open she couldn't help but snort at what she saw. "You defiantly are hot, uncoordinated and above all else anal!" She grabbed the white t-shirt that Judge had tangled around her arms and helped her get it off. "What is it with the little baggies for your dirty clothes, are you afraid that they might talk to each other about you or maybe contaminate each other?"

Judge pulled her shirt up in front of her chest and looked down at Murphy. "Why are you in here with me, I swear you have a thing for bathrooms."

Murphy rolled her eyes and pointed to the door. "You locked the door and it's not bathrooms alone, it's which ever room you happen to be in." She blew her a kiss and went back out into the other room to get dressed; she figured she had tortured the poor attorney long enough. Dressing in a new pair of blue silk boxers and cotton tank top, she crawled into bed and flipped the TV on, as she watched the boring local news, she drifted off to sleep.

Judge finished her nightly ritual, came out of the bathroom with the mindset that she would be sleeping in the chair and then saw Murphy sound asleep. She went over to the bed, sat down and then just took in the sleeping form of the only woman who could drive her to distraction. With gentle fingers, she touched the area around the stitches on her cheek and felt how soft the skin was. "You could have been killed, why do the bounty hunter thing?" She asked quietly and sighed when Murphy took a deep breath, snuggled further into the bed and laid a hand on her bent leg. Letting her fingers trail over warm skin, she found herself looking down at hardened nipples showing through the white tank top. Butterflies took flight in her stomach and her breathing sped up, she found a clothed woman sexier than a naked one, especially this woman. "And what you did for me today I will never be able to repay, no ones ever done anything even close to what you did and I wish I had the balls to say all of this when you're awake but I don't." She leaned down, placed a soft kiss to her forehead, and then moved so that she wrapped partially around Murphy and rested her head on her chest.

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Once seated on the plane, Murphy looked around them and to the other passengers; she was just as nervous this time around and hoped it didn't show too badly. She hated showing weakness around Judge; she wanted the tall attorney to see that she could depend on her for anything. Taking a deep breath, she gave Judge a quick grin and then fastened her seat belt. "OK let's get this show on the road; I know mama's got pie and ice cream waiting for us at home." She took the offered hand and squeezed it tightly when the plane started to move.

Judge saw the strain around Murphy's eyes and lips, she held out her hand and held back the whimper when she took it in a death grip. Seeing that just her hand was not going to calm her, she pulled her against her side as best she could with her other arm and whispered in her ear. "What kinda pie and will she have whipped cream to go with it, ice cream is fine but it makes the pie soggy?"

Murphy breathed easier and grinned at the mention of whipped cream. "Ohh I suppose she'll have a pie in each flavor, whipped cream in both regular and chocolate and ya wanna know what I'd like ta do with the chocolate kind?"

"If I let my brain fall a few stories into the gutter I can only imagine that it's a perverted thing you have in mind."

"Far from it," she nuzzled her face into Judge's neck and then lifted her face high enough to place her lips against her ear. "I wanna completely cover you in it and then lick it off slowly, that's not perverted, and it's sexual, big dif."

Judge closed her eyes and trembled from the sensations Murphy was causing, holding back the moan that threatened to come forth, she answered her in a deep whisper. "You are such a horn dog and it's perverted, kinky what ever no matter what and I could be lactose intolerant."

"Is not," she licked at her ear and ran a hand up the inside of her thigh. "It's intoxicating, stimulating and mind blowing sex and ya can't get lactose whatever by way of osmosis so there."

"People like you two should not be allowed to live!" A man yelled and threw the magazine he was reading at Judge and Murphy. "President Bush should pass a law that all of you...gays be put to death!"

Judge turned steely eyes towards the yelling passenger, bared her teeth and growled in a dangerous voice. "People like you should be gutted and hung on a fence post in the Bible belt, with a sign on your neck stating that you are a hypocrite. Isn't it your 'God' who says pass no judgment but that's exactly what all you religious fanatics do?" She leaned closer towards him looked him up and down and snorted at his overweight body. "Its men that look like you that cause women to jump the so called fence," she glanced down at his visible hard-on. "What would

your God think about you getting a hard-on because you were watching us?"

A body came in between them and blocked their view of each other. "If you are going to cause problems on this flight I will inform the Captain to have security waiting when we land." The flight attendant stated and looked between Judge and the irritating man.

"Tell the asshole there to turn around in his seat and leave us alone and there won't be any problems," Murphy remarked and then pointed a finger at him. "Wait a minute, that's the asshole Christian Bible thumper from the other day, he was causing problems then to, kick his ass Judge!"

The flight attendant pointed to the man and then whispered so that only he could hear. The next thing they knew, she led him to a seat towards the front and away from them. "Well that just sucks; he should have been sent back to the economy class, maybe the manual pit or something, maybe strapped to a wing or landing gear assembly." Murphy said and then looked around to see if any one else was going to cause the problems.

"He hasn't seen or heard the last of me, just wait until we land." Judge flexed her fists and felt an old long forgotten flame start in her stomach; it had been years since she was this mad. "He had better start praying now to his God, because he's gonna need all the help he can get."

Murphy grinned, she was loving the idea that Judge was showing a backbone and maybe a little of the forgotten kick ass Judge of the past. She may have never met her back then but she had read all the files, police reports, and just knew that the young Judge was a force to be reckoned with back then. "Ohh baby you make me wet."

"You make me nauseous now behave, we have about 30 minutes before we land." She gave her a wicked smile when her mouth dropped open.

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Judge kept an eye on the door when the other passengers were beginning to de-board at Dulles, she wanted to catch the loud mouth and teach him some manners. Taking their carry-on bags from the overhead bin, she handed Murphy's backpack to her, took her hand and rushed them to the door.

"What's the hurry lover got a hot date?" She asked and then tapped her forehead. "That's right it's with me and one of mama's pies."

"Ohh I've got a date alright, with that asshole, time for him to learn some manners." She got them past the passengers that clogged the Jetway area and into the waiting area and then handed her carry-on to Murphy. "Hold this and if anything happens to me, run like Hell."

Green eyes rolled, she would not leave Judge alone no matter what happened. "Get real, I'm not

going anywhere without you and that's final." She pressed into Judge's side and snickered. "So tell me, whatcha gonna do to him?"

"Plow his bigoted ass into the carpet." She saw the man coming towards them; she stepped right in front of him and growled. "Remember this moment," she pulled back her left fist and hit him in the jaw with all of her power. The sound of cracking bone, and then a thump, as he hit the floor was all that registered through the red fog of anger that covered her eyes.

Murphy jumped forward and grabbed her before she could do anymore damage to the Bush supporting Bible thumping Christian Fundamentalist. "Come on Judge we gotta get outta here before the cops come," Murphy looked around them and then saw security rushing towards them, pulling her cuffs from her pocket, she slapped them on Judge and pushed her towards the security officers. "I got this," she quickly held up her badge and dropped it back into her pocket. "Stand aside I'm a U.S. Marshal, she's in my custody." She rushed them towards the people movers and got through right before the driver closed the doors. "Good thing I'm a kinky bitch that carries cuffs around." She unlocked the cuffs from Judge's wrists and noticed that she was not really with her. "Hellooo, jeez ya take off and don't take me with you." She grabbed Judge's ass and smiled when she jumped, blinked a few times and looked down at her. "Are ya back 'cuz if ya ain't then I get ta have some more fun?" She raised her hands towards Judge's breasts and yelped from her stomping on her foot. Grabbing her foot, she hopped up and down. "You could've said yes I'm back instead of crippling me."

Judge looked around them and rubbed her face with both hands. "Guess I kinda blanked out there for a minute huh?"

"Ohh you could say for longer than a minute and just be thankful I carry a badge or you would be in police custody right now, a customer service agent narked on ya and I got to handcuff you." She winked. "Wanna try it again later and see where it leads us?"

"Right to the house of extreme pain and I'm talking about your pain." She rubbed her temple and sighed. "Forget what I just said, thank you for saving my stupid ass again, I have no idea why I hit that guy other than he pissed me off."

"No apology needed, I enjoyed every second up until ya smashed my toes." She took Judge's hand and gave it a soft squeeze. "Let's go home, I'm hungry and I'm sick of all these freaky ass people."

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Mama D looked around her kitchen and then held out a finger towards a chair where a little bald dog sat with her head tilted to the side. "Wait until your mother gets here, I'm gonna plant a foot up her ass." She tossed a piece of turkey to Woobie and then went back to making sandwiches

for Smootcher and Stewie. "I can't believe she left you all alone in her house, so what if you had 20lb of dog food and a five gallon drinking fountain." She watched Woobie grin and shake her head. "You have my permission to tear up all her underwear and pull the insoles out of her shoes." She tossed her another piece of turkey and then sat down next to her. "So is she as big a clean freak as I've heard, you're kinda weird so it must have rubbed off from her." She ran her fingers through the sparse hair on Woobie's head and snickered. "Just wait until she sees what I made for you."

"How we gonna explain that we got her dog?" Smootcher asked and grabbed one of the sandwiches.

Mama D rolled her eyes and tapped the gold house key that lay on the table. "Daaah, I'm gonna tell her that she drove over for supper and decided to stay. I'm gonna tell her that her secretary brought her over what did you think?"

Smootcher shrugged her shoulders and ate with her mouth open. "Guess we better come up with an excuse for her underwears being all over our bedrooms and then the few missing ones." Her eyes grew wide with what she had let slip. "Uhhmm...STEWIE!" She screamed and ran from the kitchen and what would be a very painful explanation.

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Judge turned her car off, stretched and then looked over to a sleeping Murphy; they had fled the airport and driven straight to Murphy's home without stopping. It was not as if it took them hours to get there, they were only 50 minutes at best when traffic was light. Judge had driven the distance numerous times and after sitting in bumper-to-bumper traffic, she now booked flights at odd hours to avoid it all. Now that they were home, she was having mixed feelings about parting from her friend. If not for the small blonde, she could very well be a new patient in the nutward or fighting for the top spot in the local jail. She continued to watch Murphy sleep until she heard blood-curdling screams coming from the backyard. "I really hate to do this but if I don't wake you up something very nasty might happen to me." She leaned towards her and whispered in her ear. "Murph, we're home and I can smell food cooking." Brushing her hair back from her ear, she tried again. "I smell roasted chicken and cornbread..." green eyes blinked open, Murphy turned her head and felt warm moist lips brush against hers.

Murphy groaned and moved in closer so that their lips were touching. "As much as I want to explore this closeness, food wins out." She gave her a soft kiss and slipped from the passenger side, Judge fell forward and threw a hand out to keep from falling out the door. She blinked and took a deep shuddering breath; just the soft kiss had her head spinning and her blood roaring in her ears. "Come on before all the food is gone or touched." She reached in and grabbed Judge by her hand. "You act like we've never done that before," she pulled her out of the car and then

closed the door. "We could neck later so ya don't get all weirded out when I kiss you."

"I don't even think so...I don't like kissing or anything that ends in the transference of bodily secretions or fluids...it's unsafe..." from the force of Murphy's body, she fell backwards on the hood of the car and moaned when her mouth was taken in a deep kiss that made her forget everything around them. When the kiss broke, they lay wrapped in each other's arms and gasping for breath.

"Ya know for someone who doesn't like kissing you do it awful well." Murphy slid off Judge and then pulled her off the hood. "Let's go eat before I fall over from starvation." She pulled a still shocked Judge after her and then flinched from the screams getting closer to them, before she could do anything; her sisters knocked them down and smothered them.

"YOU'RE HOME!" They both screamed and dog piled Judge and Murphy.

"Will you two get off them, what're ya tryin to do kill 'em?" Mama D asked and grabbed a foot that was sticking up. "Moronic idiots, I swear I shoulda raised goldfish, fishing worms or sea monkeys." She pulled Smootcher from the pile and then used her foot to push Stewie off and into the grass. "Now get in the house suppers getting cold." She jumped at Stewie and Smootcher and watched as they ran up the front steps and into the dark house. Murphy laid spread eagle in the grass with Judge lying on top of her; she groaned and tried to move her arms. Judge groaned and lifted her head from where it was nestled against Murphy's breasts; she snorted and rolled off to lie in the grass beside her. "Well come on and get your asses up, now I got four retards to look after." She mumbled and went in to make sure that the other two were not getting into trouble.

"What did she mean by four retards?" Judge asked and looked over to see emerald green eyes watching her.

"Mama just adopted you that's what it means..." a crooked grin graced her face and one brow rose rakishly. "When we have sex will it be incest?"

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Judge stopped in her tracks in the kitchen and pointed a shaky finger at her dog, she looked around to Murphy and then to mama who was pointing at a chair next to Woobie. "That's my dog..."

"Boy are you observant," mama said and shook her finger at the chair. "Now sit your ass down before I get the fly swatter." Judge moved around the table and then dropped into it while holding eyes with her dog. "I'll tell you how I got her as soon as we eat."



Judge nodded her head and grabbed the bowl that was shoved right in front of her; she looked at the thick mashed potatoes and heard her stomach rumble from hunger. Spooning some on to her plate, she passed it on to Murphy and took the bowl of peas that came in front of her. She had never eaten like this before, plates, bowls circled the table, and then cornbread muffins flew through the air to each person. With never having been in a real family type situation, she wondered if this was how all families ate supper. When she felt a hand rub her thigh, she looked over at Murphy and watched as a small smirk came over her face.

"Not used to this huh," she waved her fork at all the food tossed back and forth. "You should see when we have a family get together, now that's some heavy duty eating and food tossing."

"You're right I've never experienced anything like this but this is a good experience..."

Mama tossed her a can of Coke. "Might make ya a little more human now eat so we can have pie and ice cream." After they had eaten, mama pulled out her pies, whipped cream and ice cream. Judge watched as Murphy stuck her finger into each one and got smacked with a dishtowel for her horrible manners. For some strange reason the fact that Murphy had put her finger into the pies didn't bother her nor that she herself hadn't used sterile utensils or other items that were normal for her to eat with. With her bowl of raspberry pie covered with French vanilla ice cream in hand, she followed Murphy out onto the back porch.

"Your choice," Murphy whispered to her. "You sit on my lap or I sit on yours?"

"Why are you asking me a strange question like that and nothing like that will ever happen," Judge got shoved and spun around in a circle and saw that two of the three seats were taken, next came mama who took the swing which left one chair for both her and Murphy. "You set this up didn't you?"

"Now sit your ass down my ice cream is melting and making my pie soggy." Murphy pushed her down into the chair and then climbed onto her lap; she leaned back into Judge's left side and looked at her with amused eyes. "Are ya comfy, I am, can I have some of your pie?" She wiggled her brows and knew that Judge had gotten the 'real' question because her face was bright red. "You are so easy to rile," she leaned into her and whispered into her ear. "I'll wait as long as I have to but some day I'll be more than your tormentor."

Mama snorted. "She'll be more of a pain in your ass and hope ya don't mind spectators 'cuz you'll get those to." She said and nodded her head at the two gawking retards. "For the retards there, watching you two is better than watching Showtime at 2am." Judge groaned when Murphy wiggled around on her lap and then it got worse when Woobie jumped up there to stare at her along with everyone else.

"Y'all trying to push me off the deep end aren't ya?" She shook her head, after such a short time she had started to sound just like the Whistlers; she hoped their other habits did not rub off as well.

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After Judge had left for home mama pulled Murphy into the living room, sat her down and looked at her as if she was a strange creature. Not that she didn't think that about her kids anyway, but Murphy was different to her, she couldn't put her finger on it but she would figure it out. "What happened when ya'll were gone, ya'll seem a little weird?"

Murphy became somber and dropped her brows over her nose in concentration, leaning back in the chair; she crossed one ankle over her knee. "Mama ya would not believe the house that Judge's parents live in," she threw her arms out to the side. "It's a mansion mama, with maids, a butler, a cook and who knows how many other people work there. But ya know I didn't like it, it's impersonal and too big. And ya know that Judge never had a bedroom in the main living areas, the butler said her room was in the servants area, not like she was ever there anyways." She sighed and shook her head. "She told me about being shipped off when she was five and coming home for the holidays to find out that her parents were off to a foreign country. Mama, she has never even had a key to her parent's house and she has to go in through the servant's door whenever she shows up." She went on to tell mama about how Judge was treated in the short time she was there and then what she had done to the Bloodstones right before they left. Mama sat quietly taking it all in and then her fuse went, she clenched her fists and pounded them on the arm of her chair.

"I woulda done worse, they woulda had to call in contractors ta fix their damn mansion! Treating a child like that...Hell an adult like that!" She stood up and began to pace the floor in front of her daughter. "What kinda people send their baby away to boarding school?" She stopped and looked into amused green eyes. "Stop looking at me like that you little troll."

"Ya yelled about all us kids always under foot when we were younger, you're ranting and raving about Judge's past and we all know ya got your wing around her, mama you're a big softy." She got up from her chair and gave her a big hug. "Thanks mama."

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Judge opened the front door and watched as Woobie ran past her and jumped onto the couch, she shook her head and sighed. Her dog wore a blue windbreaker with Mama D's Bounty Hunters in white lettering across the back. "I leave you alone for a day and a half and you cause enough noise that the neighbors call the police, who called Belinda and some how mama ends up with your rotten little ass." She looked around her living room and swore that something was out of place but she just didn't know what. "The Hell with it, I'm stuffed from mama's cooking and I'm exhausted from the last two days." She stood looking down at Woobie and pointed a finger

towards the bedroom. "Well get going and don't think you're wearing that bulletin board to bed." She followed after her but still couldn't get rid of the feeling that something was off about her house, she pushed it to the back of her mind and went into her bathroom to take a shower. After tossing her clothes into the proper hampers, she noticed a spot of color in the white hamper and slowly stepped forward. After sorting through the dirty clothes, she found her blue silk g-string among the whites and knew that someone had been in there.

Looking over her bathroom with a critical eye, she found another discrepancy, there was a blue towel hanging with her pure white ones. As she stalked from room to room, she found other splashes of color around the place and knew for certain that two women were behind the act. "There's...color where there shouldn't be and I'm running through my house bare ass naked with the curtains open!" She high tailed it back to the bathroom, slammed the door and locked it; a second later, she unlocked the door and opened it to make sure Murphy wasn't around. "She's got me going nuts in my own house!"

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Murphy sighed and shook her head for the umpteenth time; Smootcher and Stewie were jumping all around her as she sat on her bed. "Forget it I'm not telling you two a damn thing...I don't kiss and tell!" She gave them a smug look and crossed her arms over her chest.

"Since when," Stewie asked and dropped down beside her. "Ya always tell us and give explicit details!"

"So tell us before we make something up, call Judge and repeat it back ta her!" Smootcher grinned, she knew that got her, lying always got them what they wanted.

"Bitches, we didn't do anything, I kissed her and that's it now get outta my room ya retards." Moving down into her bed, she fluffed up her pillow and then turned onto her side to look more closely at it. Dropping her face close to the pillow, she took a deep breath and moaned. "This isn't mine, its Judge's pillow," a wide grin came over her face, she knew how it had gotten in her room, she would thank them later. "Ohh is she gonna be mad when she goes to bed." Burying her face into the soft pillow, she drifted off to sleep.

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Judge blinked and rubbed at her blurry eyes, she hadn't slept the night before because of the strange pillow with the familiar scent that lingered on the worn cotton pillow case. Leaning back in her chair, she yawned and tried not to fall asleep. "Are those all your real teeth or did ya have 'em capped like all the other rich bottom feeding lawyers?"

Judge opened one eye, took in the serious expression on Belinda's face and couldn't help but give her a crooked grin. "They're all mine and not one single filling," she waved a hand at her overflowing in box. "Where did all these folders come from, before I left, my desk was a barren surface?"

"Ohh I thought I'd clean out my own desk and hide it all in here," she stepped forward and riffled through the folders until she came to the one she was looking for. "This is a beauty, it came in while you were...where ever, I think ya should slap the shit outta this bitch and get as much as you can for the Whistlers."

Judge raised her left brow and took the folder from her, flipping it open, she read the cover sheet and grinned as if she had swallowed a canary. "I got the bitch now, call her attorney for me and tell him I wanna deal or I'm taking this to the judge."

She rifled through the remaining folders and found two that were full of coupons from the newspaper and Food lion, she was about to scream for Belinda when an evil idea came to her. She pulled her scissors from the drawer and started to cut out each coupon and then she put them into order according to product and then alphabetized them before placing them into a small plastic note card box. The sound of her stomach growling and Belinda stepping into her doorway told her that it was time for the older woman to head on home for the day. She held up the box to her and gave her another one of her evil grins before getting up from her chair. "I think you put those folders in there just so that I'd cut up all your coupons for you." She knew the minute Belinda's husband had to sort through the small box, he'd scream, he was a disorderly person and hated any kind of order in his life; he was like Judge's polar opposite and she couldn't help but terrorize him every chance she got.

"Damn right I did, I hate cutting them things out but you know my old man would have a shit fit if we went shopping without them, he's like the coupon grand Pooh-Bah or something. Before I forget, I left a message for that rich bitche's lawyer. I couldn't understand what his secretary was saying; damn woman speaks some damn foreign language so I don't know if he's out of town or his mind, not much of a difference if he hired that damn 'no speaka English person." With that, she was out the door and clumping down the narrow steps to the ground floor. It wasn't surprising that the lawyer's secretary didn't speak good English; a large majority of the people in the Loudon county area was from different countries. She found it hard even going through the drive thru window at Burger King, how can you place an order if the person on the other end doesn't speak English. And pay phones, ATM's and the credit card readers at stores were another pet peeve of hers. Why should anyone in America have to hit a button to pick English, Judge felt that her rights were taken away with the placement of that little button?

"Sons of bitches should either learn English or go the Hell back to their own shithole country!" She slammed her hand on her desk and then sighed. "I sound like a Whistler, but I'm right and I

don't care what anyone says about it." Grabbing the things that she needed to take home, she left her office and made sure that she locked the door. There was nothing of value in her or Belinda's offices but there were court papers that could get destroyed and cause a lot of hassle in the system. "What should I stop and get for supper or should I attempt to cook and not turn it into char broiled goo?" She gazed down at her watch and shrugged her shoulders, it was early for her to be leaving the office and it felt weird to be doing so. "I guess I could stop and get a pizza, cheese bread sticks and a gallon of milk to go with...beer, I want beer." She jogged out the door and across to where she had parked her car, after tossing everything into the back seat, she climbed in and took off to the center of town and to Pizza Hut. She never paid attention to the large black truck behind her or the fact that it was right on her bumper.

Stewie looked in the back seat to Murphy. "So do ya think she blew a gasket when she got home?"

Murphy rolled her eyes and fell back into the seat with a moan. "What do ya think, you two played with all her underwears, ran through her house doing who knows what and ya don't think she didn't? Please, this is Judge the COD nutcase who can tell if ya walked on her yard 'cuz the grass will be bent the wrong way."

Smootcher tapped the box that sat between herself and Stewie and whined. "But we only played with the ones we found in this box, she shouldn't have the UPS guy just leave her packages on her step, strange weirdo peoples could steal 'em!"

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Judge pulled into the Pizza Hut parking lot, parked close to the front door and then made sure that she had everything she needed before getting out of her car. She had to make sure that she had her survival kit of sanitary and protective items, restaurants were a biohazard zone and every ounce of help against germs was necessary. As she cleared the door, she heard a cat call whistle and spun around to give the person a piece of her mind or at the least the finger. When smiling green eyes came into view, she gave up the idea of flipping her off, used both middle fingers, and then pumped her arm in the lady like manner of the same gesture. "God damn freaks," she lowered her voice and checked to make sure that no one was paying too close attention to them. "Are you three freaks following me?"

"And what if we are," Murphy asked and moved into her personal space. "Are ya man enough ta do something about it?" She bumped her chest with Judge's stomach and jumped from the hard jab she felt. "What ya got in your shirt that's hard..." she winked. "If ya say something nasty I'll take ya home and we can have some fun for all of three minutes until I pass out."

"She ain't lying none either," Smootcher snickered.

"Three minutes my ass, two and that's pushing it; little twit only has time ta yell God before it's over." Stewie informed a red-faced Judge. "And that's with foreplay included," she slapped hands with Smootcher. "We have thin walls." She grinned evilly and then jumped behind Smootcher to avoid Murphy's foot that shoot back at her.

Judge moved away from the door and walked closer to where she would be ordering her pizza, she turned back and took in how the three sisters were dressed and raised an inky eyebrow at them. "What are you guys, bad knock offs from the Matrix movie?" She touched the collar of Murphy's long black leather trench coat and felt tingles go up her arm from warm soft leather.

Stewie waved a hand and jumped up and down. "Yep that's us, Murph's Zero, Smootch is Dorkiest and I'm..."

A retard that needs her ass kicked," mama said and pushed past her kids to stand between them and Judge. "You got my permission to smack the shit outta them if they need it." Taking Judge by her larger hand, she pulled her over to a table and then pushed her down onto the bench. "Ya ain't in no hurry so you're eating with us."

"I can't mama, I've got Woobie waiting at home and I have tons of work to do and..." she gave up and just dropped her head in defeat when dark brown bi-speckled eyes zeroed in on her. "I can take her some breadsticks and the work can wait for a while."

Murphy slid onto the bench next to her, dropped her hand on her upper thigh and gave her a wink. "Mama's a convincing woman ain't she, besides ya need ta sit down and be with abnormal people for a change."

"Speak for yourself, I'm more normal than I'm supposed to be, after all I raised a bunch of freaks and retards and I've kept almost all of my sanity." Mama took the menu and then smacked all at the table when they reached for the other three that the server was holding. "Paws back on the table I'm ordering and there ain't a damn thing any of ya can do about it." Mama ordered a pizza with every topping she could get without it ending up weighing a ton, to go with it; she ordered a pitcher of milk. Murphy gawked at the thing when the server placed it in the center of the table; she had hoped that mama would have at least ordered a pitcher of Coke. "Ya'll thought I was gonna order beer didn't ya, NOT! We all drove here and driving after drinking is against the law, so get over it." She went about pouring everyone a glass of milk and stuck her tongue out at a bunch of laughing teenagers. "Laugh it up ya rotten little bastards, I can get all your pictures on the side of the carton!" She waved a meaty fist at them and grinned when they got up and left the restaurant.

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Two well-dressed men sat across the restaurant watching Judge with the Whistlers, the older of

the two pulled a cell phone from his coat pocket and hit speed dial. "Boss, she's here with the same woman that she brought back to the mansion." He flinched and looked to his friend. "Yes Ma'am the same one, in fact she's eating with a whole table of women."

*"I told you to call me if she beds any women, I don't give a damn if she's eating with a whole table of them, unless she's got one on the table top!"*

He flinched at the loud click in his ear and then tossed the phone in the center of the table. "Next time you call that crazy bitch," he pointed to the phone and then crossed his arms over his chest. "Now didn't she say to call her if Judge was with any woman at any time especially the little blonde haired one?"

"That's exactly what she said and that's exactly what we've done every time we've seen Judge with a woman. Now exactly what is wrong with her being near a woman is beyond me, she's a dyke for Gods sakes, she's supposed ta be with women. And we've been watching her for," he looked down at his watch and back to his friends irritated face. "Exactly 19 years, three months, 15 days..." He jumped and fumbled with his glass of Coke. "I wasn't finished and why'd you kick me?"

"Why do you have to put the word 'exactly' in between every damn word in a sentence?"

"Because my mama smacked the shit outta me the last time we were home for saying 'fuck' too many times so I'm trying to clean up my language, so there."

"If you don't knock it off they'll be putting 'exactly' what killed you on your fucking tombstone, me." He took the plates that the server handed him and then kept an eye on the table where Judge was sitting, he didn't know why her mother wanted her watched like this but they had been doing it for more years than he cared to admit. As far as he was concerned, poor Judge hadn't been quite right since she was released from the so called treatment center, she was half a person and his opinion was that the best part was left behind. He liked her when she showed some fire and bucked against the system. He often wondered if she knew that they were watching her, they never got close enough for her to see them and sometimes they went weeks without even bothering. She kept the same routine so all they had to do was drive past at certain hours and she would be where she always was at that particular time. "After supper what would ya say to a few hours of playing in the casino, maybe our girls will be in there?"

"Sounds good but this time you're paying the drink tab, I've gotten stuck with it three weeks in a row."

"And you're full of shit, drinks are free if you're playing the slots, those waiters are ripping your simple ass off."

"Damn I wondered why they always grinned and ran away after I gave them money."

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Murphy pointed to where the two men sat talking and nudged Stewie. "Hey ain't those the guys who almost jumped our bumper hitch?" Everyone turned to look at the two men who at that moment were looking at them. For a few seconds they all just sat staring at each other before mama's huge pizza was placed in the center of the table. Nothing in the world could distract the Whistlers from food; a full-fledged family war couldn't do it so two men staring was nothing. "Ooohh mama you out did yourself this time!" She said and pulled a thick slice from the pan to put on her plate. "Well come on Judge Dread dig in before we leave ya with crusts." Seeing that Judge was just going to sit and watch everyone take what they wanted, she grabbed a slice, placed it on her plate and then stole a piece of pepperoni from the top. "Now don't get all COD on us, just eat and enjoy our fine company." She grabbed the sterile utensils from Judge's pocket and placed them under her thigh. "And don't you dare spray us down with Lysol; it'll ruin the flavor of the greasy cheese."

After wiping her fork until there was almost no shininess to the metal, she placed it over her pizza. "I wouldn't dream of it," she cut a piece of her pizza with a fork and looked up when everyone gasped. "What, this is how I eat pizza; otherwise your hands get all messy..." She placed her fork down and picked up her pizza and ate it like everyone else in the world did, when her hands shook from having grease all over them, she felt a calming hand on her forearm and looked into green eyes that gave her strength. "I can do this...it's only grease."

"I would love to see how you eat BBQ ribs," Mama said and used her napkin to wipe sauce from her chin. "Bet ya wear a garbage bag to keep clean."

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Mrs. Bloodstone slammed her hand down on the tabletop and growled deep in her chest, she spun around, jabbed a finger in the direction of the shivering maid and howled like a banshee. "YOU'RE FIRED!" Storming from the sitting room, she headed down the hall to where her husband was hiding in his den. She flung the door open hard enough that it crashed into the opposite wall and sent a framed picture of her father that hung on the other wall to the floor. "Your hired thugs are assholes, they can't follow simple orders, I want new ones and I want them NOW!"

Without looking up from his papers, he replied in a monotone voice. "Why don't you go and hire your own spies and leave me alone, better yet, go take your daily 26 pills times six and wash them down with that rotgut you call Cognac?" His patience was wearing thin where his wife and daughter were concerned, after what Murphy had done to both of them that night; he had washed his hands of his daughter. He just wished that his wife would do the same and then find



something else to waste his money on. "If it'll make you happy, I called our attorney today and told him to closeout her trust fund and take her grandmothers inheritance as well, plus all she gets when we die is a dollar."

"I want everything back that we ever spent on her and that includes the nanny service, diapers, food...EVERYTHING!" She screamed and stomped her feet before storming from his den to terrorize the only maid they had left. She had fired almost all of the staff that week and they were having problems getting anyone else to come in and replace the ones they had lost, it seemed that the temporary services refused to answer their phones when he called. "Everyone has damn caller ID nowadays, I should see about having a law passed that you can't have it!" He went back to his paperwork and forgot all about what his wife had said.

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Woobie sat on the floor on a piece of newspaper at Judge's feet eating her cheese bread sticks and giving her mistress evil looks, when Judge had tried to sneak into her own house, she found a pissed off little dog waiting for her. What struck Judge as odd was the fact that all her shoes were right in front of the door, she was waiting to find all her clothes not far behind and a note from her dog saying she was kicking her ass out for being late. Glancing down from where she was working on her paperwork, she stuck her tongue out at Woobie and took a bite of a breadstick. "OOhhh come on now, you would think that I left for a week and forgot to feed you all together. And what is the deal with my shoes; you've never bothered them before?" She glanced to Woobie and back up to where her laptop had finally loaded the page for her bank account. "Let's see how much I can piss them off, I can see mother having a coronary and falling off her expensive love seat." She opened a new account under JT Webster, Woobie's registered name. Moved all her money around and closed out two of the five accounts. "I have this feeling that the assholes are gonna try and take my inheritance and my trust fund, money that I've never even touched. Now see if they can touch what's not there, not even mother's investigators will be able to find it." She was about to log off when the AOL Instant message window popped up.

Freakme1: You should really get a Firewall and you're buying supper from now on!

Judge blinked and shook her head, she had no idea who Freakme1 was or how they knew what she had just done. She raised her hands to her keyboard and hesitated before typing a response. TheLawOne: Who are you?"

Freakme1: I'm your love slave and I got's your blue G-string with the 'lil angel wings on the front!"

TheLawOne: OK, which freak are you? She typed back with relief.

Freakme1: Ohh I'm the sexy one, the bomb shelter of the neighborhood!"

Judge choked on her coffee and wiped at her nose, there was only one freak that she knew that sucked at slang.

TheLawOne: Smootcher, you're an ass! OK, how do you know what I was doing on my PC and what's a firewall?

Freakme1: I hacked your PC and snuck right on in, Murph's on her way over to fix your PC and no more bank transactions before she fixes it, c-ya Hotty!

TheLawOne: C-ya. She replied and sat staring at her screen. "A firewall and someone's gonna explain all of this to me or else." She was about to sign off when she heard a loud pounding on her door and heard the chime for Instant Messenger come back on.

Freakme2: Let me in so I can play with your PC and files!

"Sick bitch, no one plays with those!" She jumped from her chair and jogged to the front door; she peeked through the curtains and grinned when Murphy saw the movement, jumped and almost dropped her cell phone. "Gotcha little dweeb," she pulled the door open and waited for Murphy to step inside. "Now explain to me what you're going to do to my PC and it better not break it."

"What no Hi how are you would you like to be sexually assaulted, be chained to my bed and covered with chocolate," she watched as Judge's eyes turned dark and knew she had better explain the firewall before she found out how unpleasant the Charlestown jail was. "OK, this is what it does; it keeps hijackers and other PC's from getting into your PC while you're on-line."

"You mean like Smootcher did a few minutes ago...damn it to Hell!" she threw her hands in the air and pointed to her PC. "Could this have been going on the entire time I've had my PC, I mean I do my banking and all kinds of stuff and that includes buying stuff on-line but of course you guys know all about that?"

Murphy snickered and nodded her head. "That and so much more, you really shouldn't have a diary on your PC, unless it's gonna be steamy... which yours isn't." As she walked through Judge's house, she looked around for any changes, her sisters had sworn that they hadn't been inside Judge's house and she believed them. It was the dripped motor oil in the street and in Judge's driveway, which said that someone other than them had been there.

"That reminds me," she jabbed a finger into Murphy's chest. "Tell your freaky sisters to stay outta my dirty laundry, besides trespassing on private property, breaking and entering and a few other things that I could put on the list, it's just plain gross."

Murphy shook her head and dropped down into the chair in front of Judge's computer. "Wasn't them and they wouldn't lie about it," she spun the chair and looked into pale blue eyes. "All they did was play with the new underwear they found on your porch, you really shouldn't just have them drop packages there, it's just plan unsafe."

"Normally I would have been here to get the box; but they shipped it sooner than I thought they would. Why am I telling you that, you probably already know when it was supposed to be here?" Glancing down at the worn leather slippers on Murphy's feet, she grinned. "What no PJ's to go with?"

"Count yourself as lucky; I was going to come as was, naked." She placed the program disk into the CDRW and waited for it to come up on the screen, hitting the proper keys; she sat back and let it load. "Now in a few minutes you'll be safe from hackers and other creeps that want your goodies, me excluded of course."

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After Murphy left, Judge wandered around her house with a dust rag and furniture wax to remove any microscopic traces of dust or dirt. She tried to just sit down, read a book or watch TV but she just couldn't do it knowing that there was dust all over her house. Now with all the dust gone and her hands slippery from the polish, she dropped down onto the couch to look at Woobie. "I should put little dust rags on your feet and you can dust while you run around the house." When her dog gave her a disgusted look and jumped off the couch to head off to her bedroom, she leaned back and sighed from exhaustion. "I should go to bed before I end up sleeping at the foot of my bed because of a tiny little dog hogging my pillow, or run the firewall and Spyware programs to clean any traces of Internet mumbo jumbo that I still don't understand." She went over to where she had left her now protected laptop next to her other PC and just looked at it with drooping eyes. "I can do it later, it's not like anyone can get in if they're not turned on." She stumbled off to bed and never noticed her PC flickering back to life or the programs starting up all on their own.

"OK Stewie we can still get in and watch what she does," Smootcher snickered and sent a picture to Judge's PC, they had set it up that it was almost like they were working on their own computer instead of one a few miles away. "OK that should do it, nothing like having a good background picture to stare at all day long." She slapped hands with her sister and shut down Judge's PC. "I'll get her laptop tomorrow when she turns it on."

"Ya know Murphy's gonna blow a gasket, she doesn't know that we put a back door in the firewall program."

"She'll get over it when we show her the hotty's shopping list from Victoria's secret; ya know she has a thing fer those lil silk boxers."

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Belinda waved a hand at Judge to draw her closer to her cluttered desk; she had been waiting for the tall lawyer to get back ever since she left to get her lunch. She had to warn her about the man whom had been insistent about waiting for her inside her office and wouldn't take the small woman bodily blocking the door or threatening to call the deputy from downstairs seriously. She had no idea who he was but she didn't like him at all, he had the air of superiority and given half the chance she would push him down the stairs. "Come here and make it snappy," she hissed and then pulled Judge down by the lapels of her jacket. "There's some asshole in your office, I tried to." She had no choice but to let Judge go when she jumped up and ran into her office. "One of these days I'm gonna push her down the steps." She went after her boss and took her stand in the doorway to watch.

With one look at the intruder, Judge's dormant temper flared. "What the Hell are you doing behind my desk?!" Judge bellowed and walked forward to rip the folder from the man's hand. "Get up before I knock your teeth down your throat!"

He smiled to show pure white capped teeth, stood slowly and moved stuff around on her desk just to irritate her more. "Good to see you to Judge but I must say you are far to thin nowadays," he walked around to stand in front of her desk and then splayed his arms out to the side. "I see you still have your germ problem, isn't the medication working, maybe I should contact your doctor to have it changed?"

"Go to Hell and get the fuck out of my office!" Her face was changing to crimson and the veins in her neck started to bulge a purplish color, Belinda jumped and ran back to her desk to make a phone call. "I don't want any of you lackey's anywhere near me or even in the same State that I reside in!"

He shrugged off her verbal assault, brushed off his cashmere sleeve of imagined lint and gave her a million dollar smile. "Come now Judge, your parents are worried sick about you so they sent me to check up on you. He placed a sealed envelope on her desk and dropped casually into one of the chairs in front of it. "Now let's speak about the bank transactions that you did last night, your father is livid about you closing out those accounts without his permission."

Judge slammed her palms down on to her desk, leaned forward and growled deep in her throat. "Go fuck yourself..." she felt the Judge from years ago resurfacing and felt her heart start to pound erratically in her chest from both fear and surprise. "That is my money and I can do what ever I want with it, so tell my parents to go fuck themselves as well, now get the fuck out!" Her eyes swung to her doorway and she felt more strength flow through her now shaking body. "Get this filth out of here and make sure he remembers what happens to trespassers." A feral smile came across her face when the Whistler sisters grabbed the stunned man by his arms and yanked him from the office. "They must have sent him on the damn family jet the second they found out about my accounts." She said to herself and then dropped into her chair to stare at the pure white envelope sitting before her. With a trembling hand, she reached for the envelope and then watched as it was taken by a smaller hand.

"Who the Hell was that and should I stop my sisters from hanging him?" Murphy asked and examined the envelope.

"My parents accountant slash pitbull, Mr. Bandenson does all their dirty work including keeping me from what is mine. Or so they think, I have my own accountant that looks after things and the best thing about her is she hates my parents as much as the rest of the world does, so whatever they do to him for failing, he deserves and much more." She gulped for air and felt her eyes start to water from the exertion of not breathing between words. "The bank must have contacted them as soon as they saw that I closed out some of my accounts, I should have done it years ago. Moved them to someplace like the Bahamas or Switzerland, but this is good to, they can't get to my money." She reached for the envelope and wasn't surprised when Murphy hid it behind her back. "Ohh come on Murph, give me the damn thing."

Murphy shook her head and took a few steps back away from Judge and her desk; she raised the envelope up to the bright lights and whistled under her breath. "I can't let ya open this...its baaaaad." She could see a seal of sorts through the envelope, knew that anything with a seal was bad, and she should burn it just because. "I'll open it and break the news ta ya gently," she wiggled a brow and licked her lips. "I can be really gentle when I wanna be and with you I can be like silk." She tore open the envelope, pulled the stiff paper from within and shook it open. After reading the letter, she handed it over to Judge with a low mumbling curse. "Burn them sons of bitches, low living scum sucking people like them shoulda been drowned at birth!" She saw a silvery gleam come into pale blue eyes and gulped. "I take that back, you wouldn't have been born if that happened and I would be without some very hot sexual fantasies."

"And we'd be without material to laugh hysterically about," Smootcher said from where they lurked in the doorway. "That guy is gone but he left without some pieces and parts..."

"To his fancy smancy car that is," Stewie said and waved some chrome parts in the air. "I can have mama sell this stuff on E-Bay, got the cat off his hood to." She tossed it to Judge and grinned when she placed it on a shelf behind her. "Nice little knick-knack, want his watch to?" She dangled his diamond encrusted gold Rolex from a finger.

"No you guys can sell that, with the money you could by a house or a couple of cars, just about anything you all would want or need." She read the letter and dropped it in the trash with a flourish. "They can kiss my ass, that is my money and I can do what ever I want with it."

Stewie winked at Judge. "Like buy an island in the South Pacific...Jefferson County...us lunch and Murphy some more batteries for her vibrator!" She ran down the steps and away from what would be a very painful kick in her ass, or so she thought.

"Or maybe you could buy me an electric one, damn batteries don't last long at all."

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Bandenson waited until the phone on the other end picked up and was thankful in a way that it was Mr. Bloodstone; he hated having to talk with the old battle-axe as all referred to Mrs. Bloodstone. "Sir I tried but your daughter has three...henchman who dragged me down some thirty steps, down a hallway and then threw me in the middle of the street before they destroyed my new Jaguar!" He was still pissed over losing parts off the car, it would be a royal bitch explaining to his wife how he let three women beat him senseless and then take parts off her beloved car. "I didn't even get three words in before they showed up; I did leave her the letter stating that unless the money was returned to you, she would be subpoenaed to court."

*"Are you ignorant," Mr. Bloodstone asked. "She's a damn good lawyer and will know that there's not a damn thing that I can do about her moving her money. Where the Hell did you get that stupid ass idea...oohh wait, the old bitch I'm married to, gave you the idea didn't she?"*

Bandenson cleared his throat and then answered in a soft voice. "She said that Judge was a horrible lawyer and would fall for it because your money bought her that degree."

*"That's bullshit and if you haven't noticed, she's the District attorney for Jefferson County. She didn't get that by way of money, she got that job by being voted in, so don't underestimate my daughters capabilities in her profession, just leave her alone, she'll more than destroy herself because of her neurosis."*

"Yes sir and that is another thing, her doctor has changed her prescription to stronger doses and that is to be delivered today along with some instructional CD's that he thinks she will find helpful."

*"Do me a huge favor and don't ever call me again about what ever the Hell it is that you're doing where my daughter is concerned, you and my wife are the main reasons she's so damn insane and I'm getting closer to joining Judge in her rubber room!"* He slammed the phone down and hoped that Bandenson was now deaf in one ear.

"I swear the whole fucking family is insane, if it wasn't for all the money I've gotten from them legally and otherwise, I'd find other employment!" He tossed his cellphone on the passenger seat and sped off towards the nearest Interstate and home.

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An hour later, the Whistlers watched as Judge charged into the courtroom just as the bailiff was closing the doors, they found it hilarious that as anal as she was about things, promptness wasn't one of them and that she was always running late for the courtroom. This time they were at fault, she wanted to know how they were able to come to her rescue in a matter of seconds, as was the usual, they went into a long version complete with shoving each other for the lead role of story

teller. By the time, that Murphy had gotten out that they were already in the building; Belinda was reminding Judge that she was due in court five minutes before. Now with the Whistlers watching her try to get into her chair without falling, she made her apologies to the Judge and other lawyer.

"Sorry your honor I had an appointment that ran late," she looked around her and realized that she had left her briefcase in her office, although she didn't need it, she felt naked without it. The expression on his Honor's face told her that no matter if she was dying, there was no way in Hell that she was going to leave the courtroom until they were done. Accepting her fate, she sat down and tried not to panic at not having her props. "I bet she'll kiss ya if ya take her briefcase up to her." Stewie handed it to Murphy with a wide grin and a wiggle of her dark brows. "Maybe she'll hire us as body guards and Murph as her pack horse?" They took seats in the galley right behind Judge's table and made snide remarks about the goody two shoes lawyer representing the defendant and their fawning sister who was sitting next to Judge.

"I'm gonna kill them both when court is adjourned," Judge said to Murphy, turned partway and bared her teeth at Smotcher. "Stop it!" She hissed and swung back at her with a tight fist. The slamming of the gavel made Judge jump and before she knew what happened, she was escorted to the lower section of the courthouse with the Whistlers. "I'm gonna kill all three of you!" She screamed and struggled against the bailiff.

"But then you'll have to fight off all the women's in the jail all by yourself." Smotcher said and then rubbed her hands together. "Maybe we can get dates!" Her and Stewie took off running down the hallway and looked into each cell for women of any age or condition. "I wanna be locked in here!" They yelled and howled like wolves when the two young women ran to hide in a corner. "FRESH MEAT! Got any Tabasco sauce on ya Stewie?"

"Aren't you the lucky one," Murphy took Judge's hand and squeezed it. "You and me in a jail cell all alone, the romantic lighting of a bare 20watt light bulb, melodious screams of my sisters victims and all kinds of perverts watching us."

Judge stepped into the open cell and waited for the door to close before she grabbed Murphy by the front of her leather trench coat. "Just wait until mama gets here, I'm going to tell her that it's all the three of you guys' fault that we're locked up and to leave you in here!" She let Murphy go so she could walk in circles in the center of the floor. "I've never been cited with contempt of court before and I didn't do anything to be locked up...I HATE YOU GUYS!"

"Like we've never heard that before, in fact that's what mama said right before she tossed us all out the door this morning." She pulled off her trench coat, placed it on the hard bench and waved Judge over. "Come on have a seat it'll be a while before anyone comes to get us out, mama D's at the office so he'll get a hold of her there."

"Who's he and it better be soon because I hate being locked up...period?"

"Ohh the bailiff, he's related to us somehow but then who isn't related ta us?" She grabbed Judge by her hand and pulled her over to the bench. "Come on I promise not to drool too much or cop

any free feels."

"Ohh that makes me feel so much better, I was so worried that I'd become your jailhouse bitch and have to dress and act cheaply."

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Mama D sat looking at the four women, two of which sported assorted bruises and scratches. Smootcher looked out from under her makeshift ice bag at Murphy and then stuck her tongue out. "How many times have I told you that straight women are mean, especially the high maintenance ones who wear designer clothes and Italian made stiletto heels?" She looked to her left at a frazzled Judge and flinched from the look she received. "But not all high maintenance women are as nasty as the ones you were with, now Judge here made Martha Stewart's jailhouse designs look shoddy. I bet the cell has never been that clean before, I just can't believe that they brought her the cleaning cart."

Stewie and Smootcher snorted and rolled their eyes, with all the screaming coming from the cell that Judge and Murphy shared, they were all thankful that the guards gave the lawyer anything she wanted. She did push it though, when she asked them for a floor buffer to finish their cell and requested they let her out so she could do the other cells. "We're surprised that we're not all deaf and that they didn't put her in a straight jacket and toss her into solitary confinement." Stewie jumped from her chair and ran out the kitchen door after seeing Judge start to rise from where she sat.

"Well that just gave me an idea," Mama said as she pointed a finger at Smootcher. "Get your idiot sister, the vacuum and all the cleaning supplies, you two are cleaning the basement apartment." When Smootcher's mouth dropped open, she shook her finger. "Don't even try, I know more ways of torture than you'll ever know, cleaning is just one of 'em." Getting up from her chair, she waved a hand at Murphy and Judge. "Murphy take Judge home so she can get cleaned up and make her a strong drink, better yet, she looks like she needs a few of 'em." She left the kitchen and started yelling for her other two kids to hurry their asses up before she beat them down to the basement. Murphy looked Judge over and noticed for the first time the shaking hands that constantly wiped at the dirty smudges on the grey dress pants and pale blue shirt.

"Come on let's get out of here before you pass out from stress." She pulled Judge from her chair and slapped at her fidgeting hands. "Will you stop already; you're making your clothes worse than they already are."

"I need to take a shower...burn my clothes..." her face paled, she started to sway back and forth until Murphy pushed her back into her chair.

"Now listen here Judge Dread, you're acting like a big pussy, where's the Judge I saw in your



office today?" She leaned in close and held watering pale blue eyes with her own. "How do we get that Judge to stick around, piss you off every couple minutes?"

"I have no idea and no one wants her around very long, she's dangerous."

"I'm dangerous, mama's dangerous, Hell, air is dangerous. You need to get some backbone and stop the OCD stuff; dirt never killed anyone so get over it." She stood up straight, ran a hand through her hair and then waved a hand towards the door. "Ya got two seconds ta toughen up or I call my sisters and we do a striptease and make ya nauseous."

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The next morning, Belinda looked into Judge's office and grinned, she would never have believed it if she hadn't seen the paperwork herself. "So how was lock-up, get any dates with the other jailbirds?"

"Haa not funny Belinda," she rifled through some papers and then got up to look through a filing cabinet. "Any idea what I did with the paperwork on that property I have up on the mountain?"

"You mean that plot that you need a chopper to get to?" She went over to the bookshelf and pulled down a worn book on the Civil War. "Where else would you keep it but in this old moldy book, still don't know what this book and that land have to do with each other?"

Judge took the book from her hand and sighed; she had tried to explain it to her before but always failed to make her see the connection. "It's where the CS artillery was set up that fired upon Harpers Ferry, there's still cannon balls up there and all kinds of other stuff from the civil war. One day I'm going to go up there and bring it down for the museum."

"But first you have to get over your aversion to getting your hands dirty."

Judge gave her a small grin and a nod of her head. "Yeah that would kind of help huh, maybe I can hire the Whistlers to go up there and dig stuff up."

Belinda threw a hand out at her and waved it around. "All you would have to do is wink at those three and they'd do anything you asked, ya have the whole damn family smitten with you." She raised a brow at Judge. "Do they know how bad you really are?"

"Murphy does, at least I think she does...I'm not that bad, I've only washed my hands twice in the last 30 minutes, instead of the usual every five minutes." She looked at the papers in her hand and shrugged her shoulders. "I don't think I'm that bad and besides they have excellent taste in women and little things like compulsive disorders don't bother them."

"Well you suck at lying and that's a grand total of...one person that it doesn't bother but that's because Murphy's as nuts as you are. Before I forget, you have a meeting with that SUV bitch's lawyer at noon." She jabbed a finger at her. "And I will remind you, drag you from the office and all the way to the diner so that you're not late. This could be the break you need to get the Whistlers their money, no lawyer wants to meet a week before a court date unless they wanna wheel and deal; but of course you know that."

"I don't wheel and deal, I get what I ask for and he had better be able to write the check for his client or she's going to be Martha Stewart's bitch."

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Stanly and Arnold the Bloodstone henchmen, walked up Judge's drive and then around to the back of her house, they had done this so many times that they never worried about her neighbors, plus the fact that they were dressed like the local meter readers helped stop suspicion. Pausing at the back door, they looked around and then picked the lock in a matter of seconds. Stepping inside, they waited for Woobie to come running and give them her usual greeting of wiggling around and whining. "There's our baby girl, have you been rotten to your mistress lately?" Stanly handed her a dog bone and watched as she ran in circles before lying down to eat it. Arnold, the older of the two slapped his forehead.

"Damn I forgot to bring the surgical gloves." He searched through his pockets and came up with some empty gum wrappers and a half melted breath mint. "What ever you do don't touch anything without gloves; ya know Judge can tell if a fly landed on her counter." He looked around and grabbed the pristine oven mitts from a hook above the stove, shoving his large hands into them; he grinned and walked in the direction of Judge's bedroom. Let's see what we can do with her underwear drawer, she goes nuts when it's messed with." Once in Judge's bedroom, the men went in opposite directions and started rearranging the meticulous drawers and closet. They knew this would send the lawyer off the deep end, or they hoped it would. "Ya know I hate doing this, she's not a bad sort but when it came to the money and my family." Arnold said in a low voice as he destroyed the neatness and order in the underwear drawer.

"I know what ya mean," Stanly answered in the same tone. "After this maybe we should just walk away, we both have enough saved that we don't have to worry about working?"

Arnold nodded his head as he moved over to the other side of Stanly, placed one of Judge's black suits in between a pale dove grey shirt and a dark blue one. "It's a deal, after we lock up we head on home and wipe our hands of this whole Bloodstone mess. I've had it with being a low life henchman for that bitch," he looked around as if the woman could hear him from hundreds of miles away. "Ya know maybe we won't have to spend so much on antacid and aspirins after this?" With the thought of being free, he smiled for the first time in years and felt the heavy weight of Mrs. Bloodstone lift from his shoulders. "Hurry up there, if we leave within the next

few hours we can make it home to our families for supper!" With more drastic measures than they had planned on doing, the men left Judge's house three hours later. They were glad that they would be nowhere in the area when she came home that night and upset about what they had done at the same time; they genuinely liked the woman but did what they did over the years to protect their families from Mrs. Bloodstone's threats.

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"Captain, the atmospheric pressure is dropping; the life support levels are at 20 percent and dropping as well!" Dust swirled around the air making the three women cough and wipe at caked eyes. "The core is red lining and if it goes...we all...go!" She screamed over the whine.

"Plug that hole in the bulkhead, lock down this corridor, I'll override the system and bleed off the warp core and then we pray it works!" A choking voice rang out right before an eerie screech and blinding white light hit the clouded room.

"We're all gonna die!" Another voice rang out and then went silent with a loud thump.

"Ensign Dumbass get that hole plugged now and get the barriers up before you blow us all back to the alpha quadrant!" In minutes, the room began to clear and the women breathed easier, Murphy rubbed at her dust-covered face and blinked tears from her eyes. "That was the stupidest thing you've ever done!" She screamed at Stewie and then cringed when Mama D came down the steps. "It was Stewie's fault..." she pointed a finger at her sister and then looked to where Smootcher was laid out on the floor. "She even tried killing Smootcher; hit her in the head with the vacuum wand." She knew that Mama D didn't believe a word she said but she wouldn't be herself if she didn't try to put all the blame on her sisters or vice versa.

Mama D stood at the bottom of the steps with her hands planted on her hips, looking around at the mess before her, she was ready to kill the kids. "What in the Hell happened down here?"

"Murphy shot the vacuum!" Stewie yelled and ran for cover behind Mama. "I told her the spear gun wasn't a toy...she almost got me!"

Mama looked to where a small spear stuck from the front of her old vacuum and then to where Murphy was trying to hide the spear gun under the couch. "I don't give a damn who did what, get this mess cleaned up before I start kicking ass!" She stopped halfway up the steps and turned to Murphy. "And you three will replace my vacuum," she pointed a chubby finger at her. "Or else, ya got me?"

After mama was upstairs and the basement door closed behind her, Murphy chased Stewie down and knocked her to the floor. Grabbing both her ears, she pulled her up so they were nose to

nose. "You suck and you're a big ass chicken shit, you shot the vacuum!"

"But it was your idea so stuff that in your hat and smoke it." Both Stewie and Murphy looked to their sister and rolled their eyes, they wondered if she wasn't really a blonde bimbo in disguise. "Now who in the Hell hit me and with what?" She rubbed her forehead and winced when she touched the huge goose egg. "Next time I get to play Captain Janeway, you suck at it Murph." She rubbed her head and glanced down at them. "What I don't get is where in the series they used a spear gun?"

Murphy let Stewie up from the floor and shrugged her shoulders. "I don't know but it sure did a job on the old Hoover."

"Don't know either but it sure did an excellent job on the vacuum and we better get mama a new one or she's gonna kick our asses daily." Stewie looked around at the dust-covered basement and grinned evilly. "I got an idea; get the leaf blower and the big fans." Within a few minutes, the basement was humming with noise and dust was shooting out of the basement windows into the back yard. Stewie used the leaf blower to move the dust towards the fans that Murphy and Smootcher held up to the windows, it wasn't clean but it would be less work later. "All that time and we ain't even close to being done, why we cleaning down here anyways?" That question scared them more than Mama with a wooden spoon or tennis ball.

"It means one or two things, we're moving down here or one of the kids is coming back home."

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Judge rushed into the dinner with Belinda right on her heels, her assistant made good on her threat and had in fact chased her from the office with a chocolate covered hand and a threat of wiping it on her ass. She looked around the small place, back at Belinda and growled. "Are you happy now, we're here but that scum sucking asshole isn't..." She saw a gleam come to the older woman's eyes and knew she was in deep shit. "He's right in front of me isn't he and I should just throw myself in front of a semi truck because I'm an ass?"

"I'll forgive you," the attorney said and motioned to the table next to Judge. "My wife calls me a scum sucking bastard at least three times a week," he sat down and waited for Judge and Belinda to do the same. "Now let's get this over with, I can't wait to get rid of that asshole client, she's ruining my reputation. How about we settle with 20 grand and all the charges are dropped?"

Judge laughed, leaned forward on her elbows and dropped her voice a few octaves to what was her dealing voice. "I want \$350,000.00 for my clients, all fees paid and your clients driving privileges suspended for the maximum amount of time," she saw his face pale. "Or we go before a jury and I get double the price and she faces jail time after her sentence is served where ever she is now." She gave him a crooked grin. "Didn't know that I knew she was behind bars for the

exact same thing she tried to pull here huh?"

He acted as if he hadn't heard the last sentence. "Are you insane, no one gets that kind of money out of a simple attempted... vehicular manslaughter case...ahh fuck it." He knew his client was getting off easy and had expected this, so he pulled a check from his pocket, filled it out and handed it over. "I'll settle with the court on my way home," he stood and then turned to her. "I would have gone higher on the settlement."

"I would have gone lower," Judge said with a small smirk. "But this amount will make my clients very happy, more so that this is all over with." She handed the check to Belinda and stood up from the table so that she would tower over the other attorney. "I'd suggest picking your future clients better, that would do a lot of good towards your reputation."

"My wife says the same thing, good day Bloodstone, may yours be better than mine." He left the two women in the dinner with a nod of his head.

"Maybe if he'd stop chasing ambulances his reputation wouldn't be so bad, his firm advertises in the want ads for Christ sakes." Belinda put the check into her purse and then sat back down. "Come on Judge I'm hungry and your paying," she looked at the menu and then to Judge. "Ya did good Judge; in all my years in the court system I have never seen anyone hand over that much money."

Judge sat down across from her and nodded her head. "Yeah well I've gotten more than that working a case, that money would have been just a drop in the bucket." She looked at the menu and then up to see Belinda's mouth hanging open. "I wasn't always prosecuting attorney; I worked for a huge ass law firm and made seven figures or more a case." She put the menu down and gave her assistant a big smile. "Close your mouth Belinda, you look like one of the Whistlers."

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Murphy peeked from behind a pallet of dog food bags and saw that the way was clear, taking off at a sprint; she came to a sliding halt next to where the hunting clothes were. "Stewie, is the coast clear?" She whispered and waited until her sister waved her forward. "Are they here yet?"

Stewie bent over and went eye to eye with her before asking. "Are what here yet and why were you hiding down there with the 'I'm a tree' clothes?"

Murphy rolled her eyes. "The Spidey 2 DVD's and who else would I be hiding from but your wicked aunt, she's been spying on me all night." She looked around and swore she could hear the clumping sound of her clogs coming after her. "Any one tell her yet that the Dutch boy wants his shoes back?"

"No but I've been searching for some termites or hoping for a giant wood pecker to swoop down and start pounding holes in those damn things." She shivered at the sight that came before her eyes, her aunt in black spandex pants, matching sports bra, leg warmers and clogs. "She's like a middle aged jazzercising...Peg Bundy!"

"Ewww her doing Pilates with a bunch of other bee hived old women with their false teeth clicking to Englebert Humperdink music!" The clumping noise came from behind them and sent them scurrying in the opposite direction and into the camouflage hunting clothes. Then clicking noises came from within inches of Stewie's ear and then the snapping of bubble gum.

"Who's Humperdink?" Smootcher asked and moved in between her sisters. "Is it like rap music and can we dance to it?"

Murphy looked down at Smootcher's feet, saw just her tennis shoes and became worried that their boss was hiding somewhere close by. "Where's the boss from Hell and stop that damn gum snapping shit, you know it drives me nuts?"

"She's in the underwear department, we gots some new spandex in." She winked and got up from their hiding spot. "I told her about the leopard print that's supposed ta be in the shipment," she grinned, pulled a sheet of paper from her pocket and waved it in the air. "So she's putting my stock up while looking at the same time, she don't know that I cancelled it; we don't need no damn ugly ass hillbillies in leopard print spandex...spandex period!"

"And men in sweat pants, gross damn dicks swinging free and shit." Murphy watched as her sisters became nauseous and grinned at her accomplishment. "Anyone who doesn't look like Judge and wears spandex should be put in jail," She growled and then looked between her sisters. "What, am I right or not," she took on a far away look and smiled. "She's perfect in every way, warm and silky flawless skin, even the Celtic tattoo across her lower back is perfect." She sighed and wrapped her arms around herself in a tight hug.

"Whoa there Murph what tattoo and do ya got pictures?" Smootcher asked and shook Murphy from her daydream. "What's it look like ya troll and how do ya know about this?"

"Easy I saw her half nekkid and NUNYA!" She walked over to where the new Spiderman 2 DVD's were and grabbed a copy. "Put this up and remind me before we leave to pay for it, now I think it's time to play Whistlers dodge ball." The three women took off towards the aisle that ran from the front doors to the back of the store, right in the middle of the aisle was a huge metal cage filled with balls. Climbing up the sides, they dropped down inside and then each grabbed a ball. Even though not many customers came in at midnight or later, there were still other employees wandering around the place. As they sat a good twelve feet above the floor, they could see out over the tops of shelves and be able to keep an eye out for their boss. Smootcher grinned evilly and pointed to their extreme left, one of the chauvinistic pricks that worked the garden center was trying his damndest to pick up one of the younger girls that worked the cosmetic department.

"That little ass hasn't a snowballs chance in Hell, as soon as he clears the perfume aisle, we nail his sorry ass!"

Stewie squeezed the basketball sized rubber ball between her hands and growled. "I still owe that freak for that time he locked me in the layaway trailer, fucker ran after I got out through the damn vent at the front." She moved closer to where the guy stood with one hand on his dick and the other giving the young girl rap gestures. "He's such an ass, has anyone told him he's a white boy?"

"He doesn't speak English," Murphy replied in a deep growl. "He speaks that rap shit, one more reason to plow his ass." They raised the balls to throwing height and as soon as he walked away, they let loose and watched him hit the floor when all three balls bounced off the back of his head. "And the Whistlers score!" They did a little victory dance and grabbed up more balls for the next victim.

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Judge rubbed her tired eyes, crawled from her car and stretched the kinks from her back. She stood looking throughout the parking lot for the Whistler truck but figured they would park along side the building where the other employees parked. She hadn't any idea why she was at the store; she didn't need anything and was wiped out mentally from all the files she had read earlier. The only thing that kept popping into her head was a pair of green eyes and a throaty laugh that she missed more than anything in her life. Yawning wide, she then moved off at a slower pace than normal towards the front doors. As she got closer, she realized that it wasn't only exhaustion that was causing her slow movements. Sweat poured down from her temples and every muscle in her body ached. "With all the precautions I take I still get sick." She whimpered and shivered from the fever coursing through her body. "Maybe I should just go home, drug myself up, crawl in bed and cuddle up with Woobie?" She knew that it wasn't Woobie she wanted to cuddle with, it was Murphy. As irritating as she could be, Judge knew that she could count on her or her sisters for anything. "I'll get some more drugs, say hello to the Whistlers and then go right home to suffer alone in my bed." She wiped the sweat from her face and shivered again when the heat of the store washed across her face, looking around; she winced when a loud scream echoed through out the store. "Can only be the freaks, they must be torturing someone."

As she neared the ball cage, she felt the hair on the back of her neck stand on end. Thinking it was from whatever virus that was ravaging her body; she kept on walking and found her mistake instantly. Three balls flew down at her and bounced all around at her feet; she turned her head and felt the floor move beneath her feet. Blinking her eyes did nothing for the darkness closing in on her or the floor rising up to meet her.

Murphy gasped as she watched Judge collapse to the floor, she climbed part way down the cage and then jumped the last couple of feet to the floor. Kneeling beside Judge, she placed her hands

to her face and felt the raging heat beating off her clammy skin. "Will one of you call mama?" She looked to her sisters with worried eyes.

"How about 911 instead," Smotcher said as she pulled her cellphone free of its belt fastener. At the shaking of Murphy's blonde head and Stewie running for God only knows where, she called home and waited for mama D to pick up the phone. "Mama come quick Judge passed out or something at Wally world..." she looked to Murphy and nodded her head to what mama was saying and then handed the phone over to her sister. "You listen to mama, she's talking medical stuff." She had no idea about anything except band-aides and iodine. "I'm gonna go find Stewie...boil water...find a midwife..."

"Get me some ice and a towel," Murphy yelled to her and then waved a hand to the young girl from the cosmetics area. "Would you get me a blanket or something and find Doris for me." After the girl had taken off at a run, she moved so that she was cradling the unconscious Judge against her chest. "Mama she just passed out and she's laying here on the floor, what should I do?" She listened to mama and then hung up the cell phone. "Why did you leave home if you felt this bad, geez you could have passed out behind the wheel of your car and killed yourself or some...OK so no one else is out at this time of the night?" She brushed her lips against her temple and brushed her hair away from her sweaty face. "It'll be OK I'll take care of you, I'm a natural at this stuff." She sat on the floor with Judge in her lap until Smotcher and Stewie came pushing an office chair with Doris following. "Mama says to get Judge home and to bed," she looked to Doris and saw that she was in agreement with her. She searched Judge's pockets and came up with her car keys. "Stewie take her car home and Smotcher will bring us in the truck," she tossed her sister the keys and then helped them get the still unconscious Judge into the office chair. Doris took the blanket from the other employee, pulled the tag from it and then covered Judge with it. She knew the other woman by sight but had no idea of her name or that her niece was anything to her but a tormentor.

"Is mama gonna be there?" Smotcher asked. "She might need to protect us when Judge wakes up?"

"She's calling our doctor; they'll meet us at Judge's." She struggled along with her sisters to get Judge's dead weight into the office chair and then keeping her there as they pushed her and the chair out the doors to wait for Smotcher to bring the truck up to the doors. After they had Judge laid across the back seat, Murphy crawled in and held on as Smotcher flipped the flashing lights on and took off towards Judge's house.

Doris stomped her foot and planted her hands on her hips. "I just lost three idiots to play nurse maid, who in the Hell's gonna finish putting up their stuff?" She looked around and saw that she was speaking to herself. "Damn but I hate those three brats."

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Murphy ran her fingers through sweat soaked hair and watched as feverish blue eyes opened. "Feel like shit and wish ya were dead?"

"Something like that..." she looked around and recognized her bedroom. "How'd I get home," she tried to sit up in bed and groaned from the pounding in her head. "Could you maybe shoot me in the head and end my pain and humiliation?" She pushed the bed covers down to see that she was dressed in a t-shirt and sweat pants. "So is a picture of me bare ass naked up on the internet somewhere?"

Murphy gave her a lopsided grin and winked. "Nope and the picture I do have is safe and sound in my head," Mama D standing with her arms crossed over her chest and glaring at her was a scary picture. It would come to mind every time she thought about the lost chance of undressing and touching Judge's body. She placed her hand on Judge's cheek and felt just a slight warmness to her skin. "Don't move I'll be right back, it's time for some of mama's special tea."

Judge pushed herself up into bed, looked around to see that the clothes she had been wearing earlier were hanging from the chair in her room and that there was a vaporizer running across on the other side of room. "God they really pulled out the stops on this one," on her nightstand was a glass of water, when she tried to reach over to grab it, she whimpered from the soreness in her body. "MURPHY!" She yelled and grabbed at her aching head.

"What is all the yelling," Mama D asked and stopped to hover over her. "And what in the Hell were you doing out of bed as sick as you are, now what if my brats hadn't been at work, then what?" She handed Judge the glass of water and a few pills from the bottle in her hand. "Good thing that one of my kids is a doctor as well, she came right over and checked you out."

Judge inspected the pills before putting them into her mouth, normally she would have wanted to see the bottle and all pertinent information before taking them but she trusted Mama D. "I didn't feel that bad until I got to the store, what's wrong with me?" She wiped sweat from her forehead and felt her mouth drop open when the doctor stepped into her bedroom.

"You have the flu and you're not to get out of bed for a few days or do anything stressful for the next week." The small Asian woman who didn't look past her late 20's said as she flipped her long jet-black hair cascading over her shoulders back. She walked over to the bed and waved a thermometer in front of her. "Now open up or I'll have the retard come in here and do something gross and disgusting." She saw the questioning look in feverish blue eyes and smiled. "And I know what's going through your head right now and the answer is yes, I'm one of mama D's kids."

Murphy came back into the bedroom a tray in her hands with a coffee cup, toast and a box of Kleenex on it. "That's ping pong Whistler, MD extraordinaire and here's your tea."

"And Murphy's full of shit, my names Vanessa." She pulled the thermometer from Judge's mouth and grinned. "Almost normal, to bad Murphy makes your blood pressure soar; you'd have almost normal vitals if not for that."

"Hell, she drives everyone's blood pressure up." Mama gave Judge one last look, and pointed at Murphy. "I'm going home, behave yourself and keep your paws off Judge." She yawned wide and blinked her eyes to try and clear away how exhausted she was. "Come on Ling Ling drive me home and then you can stay in your old room, I don't want you out driving around at this time of the morning."

Vanessa rolled her eyes and followed Mama D, from as early as she could remember, her family members always came up with weird names for her, it was just one of their ways of showing affection. "OK but you have to make me pancakes in the morning with real whipped cream and blueberry's." She stuck her tongue out at Murphy and waved at Judge. "Are ya jealous Murph, ya know the baby always gets what she wants." She smiled to show even white teeth and then flipped her sister off with a flourish for good measure.

"I am so proud of her," Murphy sniffled and then grinned wide before dropping down beside Judge. "She caught on so fast to the proper way of flipping people off." Stretching out on the bed, she leaned up on one elbow and took in a feverish Judge. "Drink your tea and then I'll tell ya a bedtime story."

She was a little afraid of what Murphy would consider a bedtime story. "First what's in the special tea and then where are your sisters?"

Murphy ran a finger across Judge's upper lip to brush away her sweat and noticed the hitch in her breathing from the simple contact. "Whiskey, peppermint and a tea bag, the freaks had a skip to pick up for court in the morning."

Judge took a sip of the tea and felt the slight burn down her throat; she placed the cup back on the tray and turned her head to gaze at an exhausted Murphy. "Is it safe for them to be without you, I mean the last time you guys got hurt?" She noticed for the first time that the stitches were missing from the smaller woman's cheek and changed the subject. "Vanessa took your stitches out," she wiped at the sweat rolling down her face and groaned. "I feel like shit and where's my dog?" Her thoughts once again ran amuck.

"They'll be OK without me and she's chewing on her huge ass rawhide bone, close your eyes and get some sleep, I'll be on your couch playing with a pair of your silk boxers." She stood up, pulled a pair of silk boxers from her back pocket and pulled them over her head. "Night sexy, I'll be dreaming about ya." She bent over and placed a soft kiss to Judge's forehead before leaving her bedroom.

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The room was dark, smoky and echoed with the hum of huge overhead fans. Smotcher and

Stewie blinked and squinted beneath the brims of their baseball hats and grunted when a whiskey voice reminded them that they didn't have all night long.

"Come on will ya put up or shut up?" The old woman said as she flipped the ashes from her cheap cigar.

"I'm out," Stewie dropped her cards on the dirty table and leaned back in her chair to watch the rest of the poker game. "Come on Smootcher if I didn't have anything then I know damn well that you didn't either."

"That's whatcha think moron," she winked and gave everyone at the table a wicked smirk. "I'm a real card fish and I beat my entire family at Strip the old maid." Everyone looked at her and cringed at the thought of her family playing strip anything. She laid her cards down with a flourish and waited, when nothing happened she elbowed her sister. "I won right?" She counted the four aces with a tap and then slid the king of aces out to lay along side the other cards.

"Now that's just impossible," An old man said with a raspy voice, he pointed to the king of aces in front of the old woman and then looked at her with rheumy eyes. "She cheated and you invited her so that means we kick all your asses."

"Pipe down old man or I'll make sure that when I get done with court I forget to pick up your rheumatism medicine." She pushed all the M&M's towards Smootcher and stood up with Stewie's help. "Come on kids lets get this over with." She blinked through her pop bottle lenses when the lights came on and waved a hand at the bar tender. "Make sure your dad gets home, I got court this morning."

The beefy bartender came out to the table, kissed his mom on her cheek and then helped his dad up from his chair. "You know if you'd pay your parking tickets or actually park where you're supposed to, then you wouldn't end up in court all the time." The other three old men that had been at the table snickered and started to clear the table top of glasses and other trash that had accumulated from their card game.

"And where would the fun be in parking the right way, besides this way I get to spend time with the Whistler kids." She took her cane from Smootcher and waved at her son and husband. "Later, I'll call if they give me an orange jumpsuit and a number." She hobbled out the door of the Finish line bar and grill with the help of the Whistlers. "Now tell me more about this woman Murphy is chasing, is she mentally unstable?"

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Murphy moved around Judge's kitchen with a familiarity that came from having to search for what she needed, wiping her hands on her apron, she sighed. "OK Judge Dread where's your

cake pan, you have to have one, you have everything else?" She walked bare footed to Judge's bedroom and stopped when she saw the tanned skin of an upper thigh peeking out from under the bed covers. The last time she had been in the room, Judge was fully clothed. Her brows wiggled at the thought of what she would reveal when she pulled back the blankets. The raspy breathing and then the coughing that came with it washed the sexy image right from her mind. "Gods you're a mood killer, I was getting this fantasy all together in my head and it's all gone now." She walked over to the bed and pulled the blankets back to find sweatpants hanging off Judge's one foot. She pulled them the rest of the way off and then found a sweat drenched t-shirt tangled around the top sheet. "What am I gonna do with you?" She rolled the dirty clothes up and tossed them through the bathroom door before covering a snoring Judge back up. "You are so going to get it when you wake up; I can't believe what a mess this place was." When everything had calmed down the night before and she was able to relax a bit, she found all kinds of strange things in Judge's place. Namely, the fungus covered food in the refrigerator and a pair of dirty jock socks in the freezer.

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Judge rolled over on to her left side, felt her sinuses clear on that side and groaned from the nasty taste in her mouth. Reaching out with one limp hand, she tried to brush away her greasy hair and whimpered when her fingers got tangled. "This sucks..." she opened one eye and saw Woobie sitting at the bedroom door with her head tilted to the side watching her. "Stop staring at me, I already know how bad I look." A distinct sound of pots and pans clattering had her falling from bed. She crawled to where her robe lay across the foot of the bed and saw her dirty clothes lying on the bathroom floor. "Ohh my Gods what did I do last night?" She ran her hands down her robed body and felt her skin aching from touch alone. Her ears caught a velvety voice singing a Dixie Chicks song and became frightened as to who could be in her house; she looked to her dog and whispered. "Some watch dog you are, letting a strange woman in my house." She wandered on weak legs out towards her kitchen and stopped to watch a vision before her, the compact muscular body dancing in front of the stove was familiar but the singing voice was not.

That Earl had to die  
Goodbye Earl  
Those black-eyed peas  
They tasted all right to me Earl  
You're feeling weak  
Why don't you lay down  
And sleep Earl  
Ain't it dark  
Wrapped up in that tarp Earl

The cops came to bring Earl in  
They searched the house

high and low  
Then they tipped their hats  
and said "Thank You ladies  
if you hear from him let us know"

Murphy sang and danced as she scrambled the eggs and flipped the bacon in the frying pan on the other burner, she didn't sing that often but when she did, she put her whole heart in to it.

Well the weeks went by and  
Spring turned to summer  
And summer faded into fall  
And it turns out he was a missing person  
who nobody missed at all

So the girls bought some land  
And a roadside stand  
Out on Highway 109  
They sell Tennessee ham  
And strawberry jam  
And they don't  
Lose any sleep at night 'cause

Earl had to die  
Goodbye Earl  
We need a break  
Let's go out to the lake Earl  
We'll pack a lunch

And stuff you in the trunk Earl  
Well is that all right  
Good let's go for a ride  
Earl hey

She finished the song, spun around and flung the flipper in the air when she saw that she had an audience. "Christ almighty you could have coughed up a lung or something so I knew you was standing back there watching me."

Judge snickered as best she could with her sore throat and stuffed up head. "And miss the finale not on your life," she sat down and sighed with relief. "You have no idea how glad I am that it's you in my kitchen," she became worried when she noticed that Murphy was wearing a pair of her silk boxers. "What exactly happened last night and why are you in my kitchen...cooking?"

"You mean after the hot, sweaty and satisfying sex that rocked my world and just about killed yours?" She put breakfast on the table and sat down across from her. "Ya know that little grunting noise you make when you grind your hips; it's so hot, just thinking about it makes me

horny!" She looked up from her plate, saw the deer in the headlights expression on Judge's face, and put that little tidbit to the back of her mind for later use. "Just kidding," she pointed to the medicine bottle on the table. "Take your pills and eat your breakfast and I'll tell ya about all the hickeys on your neck and ass."

Judge looked at the doctor's name on the medicine bottle and started to remember some parts from the night before. "I must have really been out of it," she looked down at the glass of fresh juice and into twinkling green eyes. "You squeezed oranges...I didn't have oranges?"

"No but that place just down the road does, ya know the grocery store?" She waved at the bacon and wheat toast on Judge's plate. "Funny how they had all of this stuff there, ya know that even Wal-Mart sells food." She snapped her fingers and pointed a finger at Judge. "Ohh that's right you couldn't do anything last night because you were out cold on the floor." She got up from her chair, stepped in front of a shocked Judge and tapped her on her chest with each word. "Don't you ever go out running around when you're this sick again; I was beyond worried until Vanessa got here." She sniffed the air and then gave Judge a raised eyebrow. "After breakfast you're taking a shower."

"Are you insinuating that I stink?" She couldn't smell anything so she had no idea.

"No insinuating about it, you are rank, even Woobie won't get near you." She took her seat and went back to eating her breakfast but with one eye on an investigating Judge. "Stop picking at your food and eat, the only thing with germs is you."

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After breakfast and a handful of pills that Murphy guaranteed would kill the flu, Judge looked around her bedroom and became uneasy, there was just something not right about her home and it wasn't because of Murphy. "MURPHY!" She yelled and then jumped when her ass was grabbed.

"I was right behind you, you didn't have to yell." She pushed her further into her bedroom. "What is your problem?"

"There's something not right in here," she turned and looked down at how Murphy was dressed. "And it's not only that you're wearing my clothes, it feels different."

"That reminds me; I found dirty jock socks in your freezer." She watched as blue eyes narrowed and Judge started to shake. "I take it that you knew nothing about this, there's some other stuff like moldy food in the refrigerator."

"Moldy food and socks, you know how I live, didn't you find it strange?" She moved around her room and ended up at her dresser, pulling out clean clothes; she stopped and turned around to find Murphy watching her every move. "Someone besides you was in my dresser." She shivered from both the flu and the fact that her home had been invaded.

"You want me to call someone," she followed her and stopped outside of the bathroom door. "Or wash your back?" She winked and then felt her mouth drop open with realization. "Damn it to Hell, I knew there was something odd!" She ran out of the room and out the front door to stop dead in her tracks. "You have got to be kidding me," she watched as the man across the street dropped the binoculars he had been looking through. "Get the Hell back in your house before I knock the shit outta ya!" She stepped down to the driveway and followed the stain in the driveway right down to where it disappeared from her vision on the road. Looking in both directions, she decided that it would be best to get dressed before questioning neighbors.

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Judge finished with her shower, dressed in sweats and then picked up her dirty clothes from the floor. After dropping them into their proper hampers, she grabbed her suit and placed it in the bag for clothes that needed dry cleaned. Feeling exhaustion steal over her, she dropped the bag on the bathroom floor and headed back to her bed. "Damn, I need to call Belinda." She sat down heavily in a chair and reached for the phone when Murphy came into the room cussing under her breath. "Where'd you go and what's with the cussing?"

"Outside to check on something," she saw that her friend was starting to fall asleep as she sat there. "Get in bed and when you wake up I'll tell ya if anything's panned out." She eased Judge back into bed and was about to cover her up, when she noticed that the sheets were damp from sweat. "Hold on a minute there Judge I can't let you sleep on wet sheets." She went around the bed, folded the sheets up to the center and then went back over to whisper into Judge's ear. "Where's your clean sheets?"

"In the hall closet, I'll get them."

"The Hell you will, I'll get 'em and you'll stay right here in bed." She left the room and then felt Judge right behind her; she opened the closet door and snorted at what was before her. Every set of sheets was in plastic and stacked according to where the colors letter fell in the alphabet. "Gods but you're anal," she grabbed what ever was on top and held up a hand when Judge was clearly going to object. "I don't care if they're fluorescent orange with white stripes, they're clean and you need to get your ass back in bed."

"But the color will clash with my bath towels and..." she dropped her head and shuffled back to her bedroom. "Now I'll have nightmares and you're worse than a mother hen."

"I'd have nightmares to if I had to deal with all the plastic wrap and cleaning agents you have around here. Ya know maybe that's why you got sick; your immune system is shot 'cuz it's not used to all the germs out there." She stepped around Judge, handed her the clean sheets and then started stripping her bed.

"How am I ever going to repay you for everything you've done for me?" She wobbled and placed a hand on Murphy's back to steady herself.

"Ohh I'll think of something you can count on that," she looked over her shoulder and saw that Judge had no idea that her hand had dropped down to plant firmly on her ass. "For now you can squeeze a little harder and move maybe to the left a bit." She felt something other than the bed sheets beneath her hand and turned her attention back to what she had been doing. "Ohh my fucking Gods," she whispered and then turned to Judge. "Who's been in your bed?" She dangled a pair of men's BVD's from her two fingers and cringed from what she saw. "I know for a fact that these ain't yours, only filthy ass men leave skid marks in the ass end and piss stains in the front." Judge took one look at the filthy things and fell back on the floor with her eyes rolled up in her head. "Just great, on top of every thing else you pass out again." She threw the dirty BVD's in the trashcan across the room and finished making up Judge's bed. "She really needs to toughen up," she looked to Woobie who took a seat on her mistress's chest. "Go ahead and jump on her a few times maybe it'll do something."

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Belinda looked inside Judge's office, saw the neat pile of folders in her outbox and knew that her boss had spent most of the night huddled behind her desk. Checking her watch, she saw how late it was and became worried because Judge had never been this late before. "Where the Hell is she," she went over to Judge's chair, dropped into it and grabbed the phone. Dialing Judge's number, she leaned back in the chair and waited for Judge to pick up. "Come on Judge, answer the phone."

"She might be sleeping," An exhausted Stewie said as she stumbled into the immaculate office. "We took her home last night..."

"Mama says she's got the flu so can ya cancel her stuff for the..." Smootcher yawned wide and blinked her eyes while her sister finished her sentence.

"Next week or so, Murphy's over there right now taking care of her."

Belinda swung her eyes back and forth and found it really strange how the two women finished each other's sentences. She hung up the phone and looked between them, what she saw was two women who were dead on their feet. "You two need to be at home sleeping, what are you doing here anyways?"



"We brought a skip in," Stewie said and yawned.

"She had a nine o'clock hearing and now we're going home." Smootcher said, waved and stumbled from Judge's office.

"Try calling again or maybe going over to kick Judge's ass and ask her how the floor felt." She gave Belinda a big grin and left the woman wondering what Judge and the floor had to do with each other.

"I'll do that," she searched through the files on her boss's desk and then went back to her own to make the necessary phone calls. She hoped that she was able to cancel some of the court hearings or get someone else to cover for Judge. "Now of all the times to get sick." After she made all the phone calls, she grabbed up all the files that needed signed and the new docket and left the office for the rest of the day.

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Murphy lay on the couch with a pillow tucked under her head and a blanket just covering her lower legs, she had ventured out after putting Judge to bed and questioned the few neighbors that were home. The only thing that she found out was that Judge was a reclusive neighbor and that none of them had ever spoken with her. The man across the street had conveniently gone missing before she could question him; he was her prime target since she had caught him with binoculars. Plus, she wanted to ream his ass for spying on Judge; the woman had enough problems without having some freak peeking in her windows. "I'm a pervert but everyone knows and besides I'm harmless," she picked up a picture from the coffee table, rolled onto her back and took in the young version of Judge. "You are the perfect fantasy for anyone who's breathing and here I am on the couch when I could be cuddled up in bed with you." She brought the picture to her lips and placed a soft kiss to it before clutching it to her chest. "I can always have you in my dreams and usually do a few times before I wake up." She sighed and then moaned when she heard the doorbell ring, rolling off the couch; she staggered to the front door. What she saw brought a wide grin to her face and a low belly laugh; she pulled the door open and waited for Belinda to notice.

"You need to get a life you fucking freak!" She turned when she heard Murphy laughing and growled. "Who is that man and why in the love of God haven't you done something about him?" She pointed to where the neighbor was hiding in a tree in his front yard with his binoculars.

"I didn't know he was home yet," she walked past Belinda to stop right below the treed man. "Now since you can't run and hide, I want some information and if I don't get it, I'll call 911 and have you hauled away."

The man looked around and knew his predicament was his own fault; he sighed and nodded his

head. "I should have known that the damn camouflage didn't work when all the birds kept flying away." He saw that she was becoming impatient. "I'll tell ya what I can, just don't tell my wife."

"Well, since you seem to be the neighborhood watch commander, have you seen anything out of the ordinary around Ms. Bloodstone's house?"

"Like what, I mean can you be more specific?"

Murphy thought for a second and raised an eyebrow. "How about, any strange vehicles in her driveway, delivery men besides UPS, people hanging around when she's not here, stuff like that?"

"The only people I've seen over there in months, you excluded, were the meter readers yesterday when I was going to the store. It was two big guys in tan coveralls and white hardhats. Other than that, nothing except for the UPS man, does that help?"

"It might, I'll let you know and don't ever let me find you peeping on my girlfriend again." She jogged back across the road to Judge's house and went inside to find Belinda watching TV. "Has Judge ever mentioned about meter readers coming around here?"

"She has one of those new meters that don't need read; ya know one that sends the information all by itself or something, why?"

"Someone was in here yesterday playing around, I found a pair of dirty men's underwear in her bed and nasty jock socks in her freezer." She sat down on the couch and rubbed her face. "I've got this bad feeling that her parents are involved in this somehow." She told Belinda what happened when she returned home with Judge and what she had done to the Bloodstones in retaliation; Belinda agreed with her and would make a phone call to the electric company to find information about meter readers.

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Mrs. Bloodstone stomped back and forth in her sitting room, her normally hurricane proof hairdo was beyond repair and her silk hose had numerous runs in them. She had tried calling Stanley and Arnold and received an automated message from both their cell phones, stating that they were no longer in service. Her next venture was to go to their family's homes and see if they had heard from them, their response was to slam the door in her face and refused to let her threats rile them. Upon returning home, she fired the last of the hired help and she was looking for a way to get rid of her husband as well.

"Useless men, I paid them more money than they were worth and they up and quit in the middle of an important job!" She kicked over an ottoman and then limped over to an original Queen Anne chair to collapse in pain. "Now I have to replace them and brief new henchman on the proper way to send that wreck and disappointing daughter over the edge and into full blown insanity. It's the only way I can save face with my peers, they will accept a crazy person in the family but not someone who is...a small town city official." She kicked off her \$500.00 shoe and watched it sail across the room and knock a picture of her husband off a small table. "To bad it wasn't really you, you deserve a swift kick in the head!" She got up, hobbled across the room and picked up her phone. She went through her mental phone book and dialed a number she seldom used, with in seconds a nasally voice answered.

*"Antonio's Pizza."*

"Tony this is Bloodstone; I need two guys for a job ASAP."

*"What kinda job and how many clams ya payin?"* He asked in a thick Bronx accent.

"I want my daughter Judge, driven insane so that she is put into an asylum and \$250 grand when the jobs complete."

*"Make your kid nuts,"* he was thinking that spending a day with her mother would be a quicker way to accomplish the job. *"Does it matter what nuthouse she ends up in?"*

"No, as long as she is locked up in any mental ward I'll be happy. When you have the men, call and give me their names and I'll have the funds waiting for them when the jobs done."

*"Already got the guys for ya, me and Sid will pay her a visit and get back with ya."*

She felt a huge weight lift from her shoulders at being able to replace the incompetent henchmen that had quit after so many years of loyal service. "She is in Eastern West Virginia, she's the District Attorney for Jefferson County, and you'll find her at their tiny little courthouse. Follow her to her residence and watch out for a small blonde headed woman, I think they are having abnormal relations."

He hung up the phone and ran a hand across his baldhead. "Damn woman needs locked up herself, ain't a damn thing wrong with her kid." He walked to the kitchen area of his pizza parlor and found his younger brother pulling a large pizza from one of the ovens. "We gotta job Sid, we gotta go to West Virginia and pay Judge a visit."

Sid gave his brother a wide grin and then chuckled. "So we go see Judge and then what?"

"The bitch of the family wants us to drive her nuts." He held out a take-out box to his brother and after the pizza was inside, he closed it up and handed it over to the delivery guy.

"So are we gonna tell Judge what's going on and then clean up on some clams?"

"Now ya know ya don't even hafta ask that, she's a good kid and shoulda been born in another family, damn people are all crazy in that mansion." He wiped his greasy hands on his apron and walked away two steps before turning. "As soon as we close tonight we'll get a flight outta here, but first I gotta call Stanley and find out why they quit."

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Belinda stood beside Judge's bed and snickered at how human her boss really was, sprawled across the bed, her mouth hanging open and drool running down from the corner of her mouth. "She's such a lovely creature; maybe we can get her picture on the cover of 'Sleep deprivation and you?'"

"She doesn't have sleep deprivation." Murphy said in confusion.

"No, but whoever would try and sleep in the same bed with her would, she's like a Saint Bernard." She saw the dreamy expression on Murphy's face and knew no matter what she said or how gross Judge was, it wouldn't matter one bit. "I sure hope I didn't look like you when I first met my husband, damn sappy ass look." She shoved Murphy in her shoulder and laughed when she almost fell on top of a now snoring Judge. "Let me show you what stuff I brought so you can tell the drooling wonder there what needs to be done, you would think after all these years she wouldn't have to be told." They went back into the living room to where Belinda had dropped her battered canvas bag. "These are all the cases that I had the court dates changed and the paperwork that she has to sign before I send it to the other lawyers, don't know why they can't accept the damn change over the phone?"

Murphy looked at the thick stack of folders with the papers attached to the front with paper clips; she had no idea that Judge saw that many cases in a week's time. "This is just one weeks worth of cases; I had no idea her work load was this heavy?"

"Ohh this is nothing compared to some weeks, there's times when she just stays in the court room and they usher the defendants in one door and out the other." She saw the look of admiration on Murphy's face and then saw her brows dip low over her turbulent green eyes.

"What in the Hell are the ADA's doing while Judge is in court seeing to all these cases?"

Belinda grinned at her and then laughed when Murphy crossed her arms over her chest and gave her a look similar to Judge's. "The one and only ADA is spending his time keeping his buzz on in the nearest bar, he's a lush and there's not a damn thing anyone can do about it. They say they would fire him if they had someone to replace him, he's useless so they should just can his ass anyway."

"Son of a bitch, so the mayor and the city council would rather see there district attorney fall over from work exhaustion than to search for an ADA to replace the drunk?" She chewed on a fingernail and then gave Belinda a smirk. "Mama D knows a lot of people; I know that she'll know of a replacement for the next Betty Ford patient."

Belinda didn't doubt that Mama D would be able to find a replacement for the drunk; she hoped that she did so that she could get a break and a few days off. Not to mention that Judge needed some time off as well, the woman was a total wreck. "If your mama can do that I'll dance at your wedding." She turned when she heard a sniffing and then a deep rattling cough. "Ohh my but you are a scary ass sight, what are you doing out of bed?"

"I'm hungry," Judge asked and leaned against the door jam for support. "Tell me there's not a problem at work?"

"Nope everything is good to go as soon as you sign off on some paperwork." She looked at the haggard features, tangled and sweaty hair and grinned. "Better yet, ta Hell with paperwork, come on in to the courthouse and scare the shit out of the criminals, we can tell 'em you're a prime example of a jail sentence!"

"That's it pick on me when I'm sick," she whimpered. "We got anything to eat?" She asked and went into the kitchen to search for food.

"She's pitiful, how can you stand all that pouting?"

Murphy grinned. "This is the first time I've ever seen her pout, you want some coffee or tea?" She headed into the kitchen and pushed Judge out of the refrigerator. "Get the coffee and I'll get you something to eat, you want breakfast or lunch?" She rolled her eyes when Judge just shrugged her shoulders at her. "You're so helpful when it comes to picking what you want to eat." She pulled out containers; plastic bags and other things that Judge had no idea were even in her refrigerator. "So Belinda, when's the last time you saw Judge here eat real home made food?"

"My memory doesn't go back that far," she took the offered cup of coffee and gave Judge a raised eyebrow after the first sip. She eats that fast food garbage and you know how I like my coffee?"

"Of course I do, after all these years of working together why wouldn't I?" She sat down, watched Murphy cut up fresh vegetables, grade cheese, and then beat eggs in a bowl. "You know I still have lasagna in the freezer so you really didn't need to do all that."

"Yeah and why is that, I made it so you could just heat it up instead of eating nuker meals?" She placed bacon in a frying pan and then took a seat at the table. "I made Judge Dread there lasagna and garlic bread one night, and then I froze what was left over for meals and guess who hasn't eaten hardly any of it?"

Judge felt her face getting warm. "I was saving it, I didn't know if you'd ever cook for me again."

She reached over to the stove and grabbed a dishtowel to clean an imaginary spot from the table. "I'll have some today for lunch along with some of mama's pie."

"You are so whipped Judge, you go up against the meanest criminals in the county without a blink but fold with one glance from Murphy."

Murphy grinned and looked to a blushing Judge. "That's because she knows that I know all her secrets." She winked at her. And no, you're not getting your pillow back." Judge remembered writing in her PC journal about when her pillow was switched with Murphy's, she had wondered to herself in her journal if she would ever get her own pillow back. "I told you that you're PC wasn't safe, does that bring you to light concerning how my sisters know what underwear you have on?"

Belinda raised a finger in the air. "That reminds me, how was the floor?" She watched as her bosses face turned a deep shade of red and Murphy chuckled. "Now I know I missed something, so what was it?"

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After eating an omelet, bacon and English muffins, Judge went back to bed for what she refused to admit was a nap. No sooner, had her head hit the pillow she and Woobie were sound asleep. Murphy stood in the doorway watching as she slept and felt a warmth envelope her heart, even when Judge rolled to her back, scratched her crotch and began snoring didn't bother her in the least. "She is so human it's scary," she felt butterflies take flight in her stomach at the thought of seeing the stoic attorney at her weakest. "I guess this is the only peek into the old Judge that I'm likely to ever see, unless she's pissed off and pummeling someone." Going back into the living room, she grabbed a Wal-Mart bag from near the front door and jumped a few times when she saw what was inside. "I love my mama," she placed a zip-lock baggie filled with home made peanut butter cookies between her teeth and pulled out four new DVD's. "Ohh I'm gonna give them big hugs when I see 'em!" She went over to the couch, pulled her knife from her front pocket and lost all patience trying to get the security tape off the DVD cases. "Why the fucking morons gotta put so many damn tape seals on these damn things, can get in ta Fort Knox easier." After a mighty struggle, she had one of the cases open and then few minutes later with beer in hand; she was watching *'White Chicks'*.

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"Gimme some more tape, I got this one spot that won't stay stuck." Stewie pounded on the floor with the heel of her hand and then took the long strip of scotch tape from Smootcher. "God damn shit sucks; did ya get the stuff that was left over from last year or what?"

Smootcher gave her a look that should have singed the skin from her bones. "Like scotch tape has an expiration date," she pulled a long piece off and got an evil gleam in her eyes. "We'll see if it's the tape or the dumbass using it!" She tackled her sister and wrapped the tape around her head until something bounced off the back of her own head.

"I can't leave you two alone for two seconds," Mama hit Smootcher again with another tennis ball and wound up to hit Stewie as well. "Now get this mess cleaned up and get your asses upstairs, you have an hour before your skip gets off work." She looked down at the mess before her and then to a struggling Stewie. "What is this mess anyway?"

Smootcher shoved her sister out of her way, pulled the life size piece of cardboard up from the floor and stood it in front of her. "It's our dear MIA sister Murph," she put her head over the cutout's right shoulder and gave mama a wink. "We gots her in her most loved expression, flipping us all off and we even gots sound effects." She hit a little red button on the front and grinned when the life-size Murphy said. "Bite my ass ya loser!"

"Just lovely, I wish I had thought of that before I adopted all your stupid asses, now take the phony Murphy upstairs and I'll get the mummy." She grabbed a stumbling, cussing and extremely taped Stewie by the front of her flannel shirt and dragged her upstairs. "I should have had my damn head examined when your dad said to, always knew procrastinating was bad for my health."

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With the TV blasting and Murphy jumping in the middle of the living room floor, she never noticed Judge wandering through to the closet and getting the shop vacuum out. A few minutes later, she spun around and shot a glare at the bedroom door. "What in the Hell is she doing?" Stomping towards the bedroom she stopped outside of the door and cussed, Judge was vacuuming the area between the ceiling and the wall with a brush attachment. "She's fucking nuts, she's like...ADRIAN MONK!" Moving into the room, she reached down and yanked the plug from the wall. When Judge froze and slowly turned her head to look at a furious Murphy, she knew she was in deep shit. "What in the Hell are you doing cleaning, you look like death warmed over?"

"I woke up and saw dust webs," she planted her hands on her hips and shot Murphy a glare of her own. "I can't sleep if there are cobwebs or dust webs floating above me, it disturbs my sleep."

Murphy walked into the room, took the shop vacuum wand from at Judge's feet and waved it in front of her. "You want disturbing, how about this shoved in any orifice of your choice?" She scratched her head and tilted her head to the side. "I sound like my mama." She dropped the attachment, grabbed Judge by her hand and dragged her from the bedroom. "If you must clean something, you can...shine my boots." Proud of her quick thinking, she grinned all the way out into the living room. "You can shine my boots while we watch the rest of 'Resident Evil.'"

Judge yanked her hand free and stopped to cross her arms across her chest defiantly. "I hate those slash 'em movies, they're violent and make people do all kinds of crazy stuff."

"You sure are some kind of freak ya know that," she arched a brow and shook her head. "Just think where you're career would be without crazy people to do crimes?" Fifteen minutes later with a boot stuck on her hand, Judge jumped on the couch cheering Alice on. "So you hate these types of movies huh?"

"Kick his ASS!" She punched her arm in the air and ignored the boot flying off to land across the room. "Fucking cannibalistic freak, RIP HIS HEAD OFF!" Murphy sat back on the couch and watched as Judge became more engrossed in the fight scene between the main character Alice and one of the hundreds of zombies that had been chasing them through out the movie. "Damn but she's sexy as Hell when she's kicking ass!"

"She sure doesn't look so sick now," Mama said from where she stood behind the couch watching. "You must have broken her Murphy; she's acting the same way you guys do at home." She tapped a jumping swinging Judge on her shoulder and smiled at her shocked expression. "This is your lucky day, I'm staying with you while the brats get a skip, I'd just send the other two retards but this is a real bad guy."

Murphy shook her head and groaned she had hoped that they wouldn't have any skips for a week or so, to be honest, she just wanted to take care of Judge. That in its self was odd. She gasped and looked to her mama to see a knowing look. "I'm getting to really hate this job, please tell me that the three of us won't end up broken and bleeding in the hospital?"

"Can't guarantee that, only if ya use the wire tasers and knock his ass out before cuffing him. I put the shackles in the truck and if ya hurry up and get your ass out there maybe ya won't have to unlock one of your sisters." She moved around and caught Woobie when she flew up into her arms. "There's the baby, have they been neglecting you?" She handed her a dog bone and gave both Murphy and Judge narrowed looks. "Ya know I'm gonna teach her how to get back at you two, neglecting this poor baby." She wandered into Judge's kitchen so that she could spoil the little bald dog.

Sighing and then getting up from the couch, she cast a quick look at Judge. "Damn but I really need to retire," She mumbled and went after her boot that was across the room. "It's not like I need the money or anything, we're richer than Bill Gates and shit," she sighed. "I guess it's just that I like beating up men and shooting at 'em." She looked to see Judge giving her a raised brow expression. "Ohh come on ya can't tell me that you haven't thought about shooting some ignorant son of a bitch for one reason or another, some men are just useless and should be put down to



spare the rest of us aggravation." She finished tying her boots, checked the knife that slide into a special sheath on the side and took a deep breath. "If I don't see you later, your pills are on the kitchen table and there's some left overs and special tea in the refrigerator." She leaned forward and placed a soft lingering kiss to Judge's lips. "And get some rest, you look tired." She left with Judge sitting on the couch with her fingers over her lips. Once outside, she felt a loss come over her that had her stumbling. "Come on Murph, it's not like you're leaving for good or anything, you're just going for a skip and then you can come back and tuck her in." She ran both hands through her hair and sighed, she knew what her problem was, she was completely lost to the compulsive attorney and wanted to spend every available second with her.

"Ohh my Gods...she's ALIVE!" Stewie yelled and then fell out of the passenger side door to hang by one foot, from the ground she looked up at her sister. "You're not like contagious with the flu bug or anything are ya?"

"Of course I'm not, remember I don't get sick. Tell me you two aren't shackled together."

"Nope, I'm shackled to the gear shift, can ya help me up, my foots going numb."

"Ahh leave her there," Smootcher growled. "After a few miles she'll come loose, stupid dipshit tried to shackle us together while we were waiting for your slow ass." She pointed to the back seat and then flipped the switch to open the lock. "We brought your gear bag and one of the new tasers we ordered, this skip we gotta bring in is a freaking gorilla!"

After getting Stewie in, Murphy got into the backseat and started changing out of her street clothes and into her black SWAT gear. Pulling her Kevlar vest on over her tank top, she then pulled the black jacket on, then her tactical vest and belted on her tactical thigh holsters. A few minutes and miles later, she was completely dressed and examining the new taser. "So will this thing take down a rhino?"

"I sure as hell hope so," Stewie handed her a print out complete with the mug shot of the skip. "We may need an elephant sized tranquilizer gun to go with."

Murphy's eyes shot wide as she read. "Ohh my fucking Gods, this guy is almost seven feet tall and goes over 500lbs, how are we supposed to bring him in if he doesn't want to cooperate?"

"No idea besides running his ass over with the truck, what I wanna know is how come the boys didn't get this one?" Smootcher asked and then figured out why; her brothers didn't answer their pagers or phones when mama called. "When we're done, we're going over and kicking the shit outta the boys, damn losers." Their brothers were infamous for not answering their phones or pagers when they caught wind of a retrieval of a hard ass skip, it didn't matter to them that when mama got a hold of them they'd be sporting tennis ball sized bruises from her fast pitch.

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Mama sat next to Judge on the couch and took in her disheveled appearance and pale skin; she did look better but not 100%. "What are you doing out of bed, don't ya know that you'll get better faster with more rest?"

"I can't stay in bed all day and night; I get sore all over and a monstrous headache. Plus I'm going nuts with not being able to keep the place clean," she blushed and looked away from mama. "I was trying to vacuum and Murphy stopped that real fast."

"Did she use the 'I'll shove it up your ass' threat, that's one of my favorites? I still use it a couple times a week with those three."

Judge chuckled and nodded her head. "She put it more as an invasion of any orifice of my choosing, she has no idea how this is killing me, you know not being able to do my normal routine." She played with the hem of her t-shirt and looked up when mama placed a hand over one of hers.

"Ohh she's got an idea of how you feel, she's feeling something similar I can guarantee that, she's used to chasing after women and you're not running away from her. Her routine is, she chases, they get tired of running and then they go out for one date. On the night of the date, Murphy comes home with numerous bruises and swears off women forever, that lasts until another one piques her interest." She grinned and gave Judge a wink. "At first, you were a challenge to her, now you're something more, I saw her kiss you before she left and I can tell she respects you more than anyone in the past."

"I have to admit that she's grown on me, I don't think of spraying her with Lysol at first glance anymore." She twisted her shirt hem. "I owe all of you more than I can ever pay, since I met your family; I've experienced what its like to have a real family, that's something that no price can be given. And that's something I've never had with the exception of the cook when I was little."

"Anytime you wanna get fed up with family members all over the damn place you come on over, a real good time is when I have a couple of grandkids running around screaming at the tops of their lungs."

Judge had never given thought to kids but a few running around and screaming wouldn't bother her, at least she didn't think they would. "My parent's house is a place where you can hear a pin drop; they didn't allow yelling, temper tantrums or anything else unless you happened to be my mother." She rubbed her stomach when it growled and saw mama grin. "I'm starving are you hungry, Murphy said there's food in the refrigerator?"

"Speaking of money, Belinda gave me an envelope the other day and if I hadn't been sitting down I woulda caused a small earthquake when I fell over." She followed Judge into the large kitchen and stopped her by placing a hand on her shoulder. "Why didn't you take your cut from all that money?"

"Because I took the case as pro bono and that's how I treat it until the very end even if there is a monetary reward." She shrugged her shoulders and went over to see what kind of food was in the refrigerator.

"Well I'm giving you the money you deserve, pro bono or not and to tell the truth the only reason we went with a public defender so to speak was because no lawyer in the county will touch us." She gave Judge a huge grin. "We have a bad reputation if ya didn't already know that."

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The Whistlers waited in the truck until they saw the first of the employees coming from the warehouse building, they knew this was going to be bad with the first man that came out dragging his knuckles. "Damn cavemen and shit," Stewie whispered. "What is this place anyways?"

"They fill orders for R.L. Bean, Dickies work clothes and some other on-line companies, maybe the natural history museum as well." Smootcher shivered and looked to her sisters. "Its show time, Montel Jackson has made his debut." They watched as the huge black man ducked his head as he came out of the building. Grabbing what they hoped they really didn't need to do their job, they got out of the truck and started towards where he was walking towards a beat up Cadillac. "Thou shall I walk through the shadow of a huge fat man I shall fear no...we're gonna die horribly." She whined.

"You are such a brave soul; I wanna grow up to be just like you, now move your fat ass before he gets in his car!" Murphy pushed past a praying Smootcher and ran towards the passenger side of the Cadillac, she wanted to get to the other side and block him from entering and getting away in his car. She jumped and slid across the hood to land a few feet from him. "Montel Jackson I'm here to take you in, come peacefully and we'll have no problems." His laugh was huge; it reminded her of a giant Santa Claus. "You're gonna make us work for this aren't ya?"

"Lady, you ain't taken me nowhere, now get outta my way before I smash you with my man breasts."

She took in his huge quadruple Z sized tits and shivered. "How can ya stand up with those huge things, do ya get a serious back ache after standing around, chaffing or raw spots from your bra strap?" She thought they were good questions until she saw how red his face had gotten and then heard his knuckles cracking. "Hey I'm just curious, I got no tits and I'm jealous as Hell!" She tried to run but found a huge hand grabbing the front of her tactical vest, the next thing she was dangling a good nine or ten foot above the ground. "Damn so this is what its like to be tall," She tapped his hands and looked down into his dark brown eyes. "Could you put me down now...please?" Just then, she heard two yells and then the unmistakable sound of discharging tasers. Her body jumped in his hands from the electricity and then she felt her free fall start to the

ground.

Stewie and Smootcher let the darts from the tasers fly into Montel's meaty back, they hadn't even thought of their sister suffering from the shock that traveled through then mans body until after the fact. That was until her blood-curdling scream pierced their ears and then they saw her fall onto the roof of the car next to Montel. What scared them more than Murphy's revenge was the fact that the tasers shock did nothing to the huge fat man. Murphy sure enough suffered, she laid panting and trembling. Montel turned, looked down at them and then roared. They backed up and then started running in opposite directions, when he went after Stewie, Smootcher ran after him, jumped up on to a car and then to his back. He ran around as if she wasn't even there hanging from his neck.

Murphy sat up from where she lay and looked around at all the employees laughing and pointing fingers, sliding off the car and onto shaky legs, she stumbled around to the back and watched Montel run in circles with both her sisters on his back. She flinched when he dropped his shoulder and shook Smootcher off and then tried to toss Stewie after her. Shaking off the final tremors, she staggered towards them and then climbed up into the back of a pick-up truck. "COME ON FAT ASS COME AND GET ME!" When he turned and came towards her, she moved to the back of the truck and felt her mouth drop open when he rocked the truck from side to side. "Come on you can do better than that!" She crawled up on to the cab, slid down the windshield to the hood and to the ground. Taking off around the other vehicles, she yelled fat remarks back at him and grinned when she saw Smootcher pounce on his back after Stewie fell off.

"Ever watch that program the 'Biggest Loser' fat ass; no, well you should be on the program?" She would let him get within a few feet of her and then dodge out of his way at the last second. With her sisters taking turns falling off and jumping back onto his back, she knew he had to be getting tired; she was, from running all over the parking lot. She grinned when the other employees cheered her on and then yelled louder when both her sisters were on his back and trying to put the 'sleeper hold' on his thick neck. Actually, he had no neck and they had their arms wrapped around his head and throat. "Damn but you should be dropping over by now." She jumped to the side and took them out into the open. "Come on you cock sucking asshole!" When he roared and came after her, she jumped to the side, kicked out a leg and caught him in the side of his knee. He stumbled but didn't go down, she dropped down on one knee and kicked him in the back of the same knee and watched him drop down on to his knees with a roar. Jumping back up, she launched onto his back and took them down the rest of the way. Exhausted and with three women on his back, he still was able to push himself up onto his hands.

"God damn but he's gotta be on drugs or something." Stewie mumbled and squeezed her arms tighter around his neck.

"Hold tight retards, its payback time!" Murphy jumped off him, pulled her taser from her vest pocket and fired it into his ass. She grinned when both Smootcher and Stewie let out screams and shook from the electricity. "How'd it feel ya smucks?" Her world flipped on her and left her lying on the hard pavement with a sharp pain radiating through her head. With fumbling fingers, she waved a pair of legs closer and held out her cell phone. "Call 911; tell them we need assistance

and a big stretcher." After taking a few deep breathes, she rolled to her side and felt everything spin out of control, she knew she had a concussion but had no idea how she had ended up on her back. "Anyone see how I ended up down here?"

Smootcher crawled over to her, looked into her sisters pain filled face. "Lard ass there kicked you when he was having spasms from his ass being shocked, that's how ya got down here and just wait until later; I'm tellin mama what ya did ta us."

A few minutes later, the Sheriffs department showed up along with the fire department and rescue squad. It took ten men to pick Montel up on the oversized stretcher and get him into the back of the ambulance, the grunting and groaning from the men had everyone around still snickering. The Whistler sisters sat on the curb with ice bags to various body parts; Murphy was the worst of the three. Her head was splitting and she was having a slight problem with double vision. "Come on lets go home," Smootcher helped Murphy up and wrapped an arm around her shoulders. "We can stop and get you some pain pills or ice cream."

"I wanna grape Slurpee," Stewie said and limped ahead of her sisters. "And a vacation from getting my ass kicked, we better get a bundle for that fat bastard and how come no one helped us?"

"Do you think that everyone's as crazy as we are?" Smootcher rubbed her lower back and just knew that she would be a rainbow of colors in the morning. "Come ta think of it our family's taken 'that' trophy every year for centuries."

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Mama sat in the recliner across from where Judge was sitting on the couch giving her dog, dirty looks. Woobie had done the unmentionable; she had dragged one of Judge's expensive boots outside and buried it in the yard. The boot part wasn't the shock but the digging a hole and getting her feet dirty was. "So tell me why the compulsive behavior, it can't all be from when ya got buried in cow shit?"

"That's one thing I like about you mama D, you're blunt and no it didn't just start with the cow case." She sat pondering until she found the right words to describe all that had happened to make her less of the woman she had once been. "I'm sure you know about my time in the nutward or should I say nutward's since I've seen the inside of a couple of them. The first one was the worst; it was one of those places, where they thought that they could 'fix' the homosexual problem I have. I kept telling them that I didn't have a problem with being gay, that they were the ones who needed 'fixed'."

A wicked gleam came to her pale eyes that sent a chill down mama's spine. "They got the real meaning when I grabbed the doctor by his nuts and squeezed until he passed out." She took a

deep breath and sighed. "Then came the straight jacket, drugs and intense psycho babble one on one counseling that lulled me to sleep a couple times a week. After a while they had me in group counseling where they tried to brainwash a group of us into the 'straight life'." She pulled her legs up onto the cushion and wrapped her arms around her knees. "They used to give us shock treatment and or this drug that made us nauseous while they showed us naked pictures of men or women, you know depending on our orientation. I got sick no matter what they showed me, it could have been a picture of a kitten and I would have thrown up." She sighed again and made eye contact with mama. "Those were the days, I dropped a lot of weight and was in danger of losing my teeth from throwing up a couple times a day, and anorexics would love the damn place. Anyways, after puking and sitting in a room with a bunch of other people puking all over the place, it soon manifested into a compulsion to be clean and be in a sterile environment. The dumb shits there thought they had cured me of my homosexuality because I showed no interest in women and seemed overly domesticated."

"Is this place still open?"

"As far as I know it is, its run and funded by some holy rolling Christian assholes that should be put behind bars. I looked into having them shut down as soon as I was set free, but I was threatened with being disbarred before I even became a lawyer and worse if I didn't leave the whole thing alone."

"What about now, with being a prosecuting attorney, you've got to know other lawyers who can help, places like that are a rotten scam and should be shut down?"

"Doesn't matter, the damn president of the US is one of them so what ever he says goes down as fucking gospel. That asshole passes judgment on others and goes against his bible..." Her temper was starting to rise and that wasn't always a good thing, one thing that could make her erupt, was politics. She would never agree that a bunch of old fat bastards sitting in Congress or in the cabinet had the right to tell her whom she was allowed to sleep with or spend the rest of her life with. She didn't agree with anything the politicians said or did for that matter and that included the local Government. "Sorry, politics and religion are two subjects that piss me off, religion more so because they preach someone's interpretations of the past. I mean if ya think about it, how Adam and Eve could populate the entire world, the world would be full of retards from all the incest."

Mama patted her hand and gave her a wink. "I'm right there with ya, even if I didn't have four gay kids, I'd still feel the same way." She saw the questioning look in pale blue eyes. "That's right, you don't know about my son Keith, he lives in Baltimore with his partner of twenty-one years. They're complete opposites, Keith's a macho truck driver and his partner Sam is a chef at one of the big Hotels there. The boy sure can cook his ass off, almost as good as me. And I don't believe a damn thing that's in that book either, bunch of bullshit if ya ask me, people living for hundreds of years and having a couple hundred kids. How in the Hell did they feed and clothe 'em all, oohh wait, dinars grew on trees way back when?" She gave Judge a grin and a wink; she knew she liked the tall woman for other reasons besides that she threw her kids off kilter. "I wonder if my kids are alright, the skip they were going after is huge and I mean that in the rotund sense."

"If that's the case then why didn't some of the guys go after him?"

"Ohh that's easy, I fired all their lazy asses and I'm changing my will, can ya make one of those amendments to it for me?"

Judge wondered what the boys could have done that had mama firing them and taking them out of her will. "If that's what you really want then yes I can make changes to it..."

"I know ya wanna know and the reason is that, two of 'em called my three baby girls freaks of nature and abominations to their God. After they said that, I disowned their stupid asses. I didn't raise them that way; this is all coming from their wives and the asshole in-laws. If their dad were alive, he'd kick their asses for acting this way. The other two would rather sit on their fat asses and watch the damn car races, so I fired them as well." She clapped her hands together and then tilted her head to the side. "I just heard car doors slam, maybe that's my baby girls now, rotten damn retards that they are, had me all worried." She got up and missed the smirk that came across angled features. Judge sat thinking about mama firing her own sons for calling their sisters names and found it hilarious, what other employer would do something as drastic in the eyes of the world as to stand up and protect gay rights. Any other boss would have looked the other way if it were a family member causing friction.

"Mama I hurt all over and I never wanna go after something like that again, he was beyond HUGE!" Stewie said as she hobbled towards one of the easy chairs across from Judge. "We hit him twice with the new tasers and it took Murph hitting him a third time ta knock his ass down." She shot her sister a glare and wagged a finger at her. "Smack her mama; she tried ta fry us along with Montel!"

"Yeah well who did it first," Murphy growled and then slid over the back of the couch to land beside Judge and then lay down to place her head in her lap. "My head hurts along with every single inch of my wee lil body."

"We did and it was funny as Hell seeing ya twitching and shit," Smootcher sat down at the far end of the couch and slapped Murphy on her ass. "She ain't allowed ta sleep, she's got a concussion and guess who gets ta watch her?"

Mama stopped in front of the couch and ran her fingers through Murphy's hair; she stopped when she felt the huge lump on the back of her head. "You need to get some ice on that lump and take some aspirins, what'd he hit you with?"

"The parking lot," Smootcher snickered and straightened up when mama shot her a death glare. "He swept her legs during his imitation of a big piece of bacon on a hot griddle."

Murphy whimpered from mama's touch and pressed her face tighter into Judge's stomach; she didn't know what hurt worse, the back of her head or the pressure across her eyebrows. She knew that a concussion was the same as shaking a raw egg; your brain just bounces around like the yolk. "My brains on drugs." She raised her head up when she heard Judge start to laugh. "Did I

just sound like totally blonde bimbo?"

"Don't worry about it, I know all too well what a concussion feels like, let's get you some aspirin and the ice pack." She waited for Murphy to get up and then went into the bathroom for what she needed, while in there she heard mama cussing her kids out and thought it was hilarious.

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"Those tasers are not toys and the next time either one of you zaps anyone but a skip, I'M KICKING ALL YOUR ASSES!" She raised her hand and grinned when Stewie flinched and ducked her head. "Now you two idiots get your asses home, Murphy you behave yourself and you call if you need to go to the ER." She moved over to Murphy, leaned forward on the couch and placed a kiss to the crown of her head. "I'll see you tomorrow and no more skips for the rest of the week, your lazy ass brothers are gonna work their fat asses off instead." After her family left, Murphy sat back on the couch and closed her eyes; her head was pounding and her stomach growling. She knew that if she ate with the way her head was pounding, she would most likely be sick to her stomach.

"My job sucks...both my jobs suck who am I kidding?"

"Could be worse, you could work for someone like me that makes you stay late and sanitize every surface with bleach water."

"I know damn well that Belinda would knock the shit outta you if you made her do that, Hell if you even mentioned it." she took the aspirins from Judge and picked up her glass of juice from the coffee table. "What time is it?"

Judge looked at the DVD player and double-checked by looking at the clock on the wall. "Going on eleven o'clock," she rubbed her eyes and tried to remember how long a concussion victim had to wait before sleeping. "You don't really have to stay up all night do you?"

"No, the best thing for me is sleep," she yawned and rubbed her eyes. "All curled up against your extremely sexy and warm body." She got up from the couch with difficulty. "Come on Judge, time for me to make you all uncomfortable."

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Sid and Tony had waited until all of Judge's guests had left and then an hour longer to make sure



no one else would show up. After exchanging looks, they got out of the rental car and headed for her back door. They knew better than to be seen standing at someone's front door in the middle of the night and in a strange neighborhood. At least that's how it was where they were from. "Let me do the talking, you'll get all off topic with shit from your screwed up college days." They stopped a short distance from the door and then Tony knocked hard enough to make the door shake in its frame.

"Damn Tony, take it easy before we gotta replace her door." Sid hissed and shoved his brother out of the way. "Let me do it, besides seeing your mug may cause her to scream and pull a baseball bat out or something."

"Like your ugly mug is any better...here she comes, so there." He straightened up and smoothed down his crumpled jacket. When the door opened, they both stood staring down into tired green eyes and the business end of a .9mm. "Uhhmm...is Judge home; we're old friends of hers from New York?"

Murphy tilted her head to the side, took in each man and then yelled loud enough that they jumped three foot in the air. "YA KNOW TWO BONEHEADS FROM NEW YORK?"

Judge stepped behind her, looked to the men in the doorway and stepped forward to push the pistol down towards the floor. "Yeah I know them now put your toy away before you put holes in something." She wrapped an arm around Murphy's stomach and pulled her back from the door. "Come on in and you can tell me what you're doing here."

"Geez Judge no kiss or anything?" Sid said and gave her a cockeyed grin. "Ya look different, good but different." He said and dropped down into one of the kitchen chairs.

"Sorry if we're interrupting something," Tony said after seeing that Murphy was dressed in a t-shirt and boxers and Judge had her robe on. "This situation is kinda urgent so."

"What does my mother want you two to do, knock me off, frame me for something or her favorite thing, have me committed?"

Both men looked from each other to a snarling Murphy and back to Judge. "The last one but ya know we'd never do anything ta hurt you," Sid said and looked to Murphy. "Can ya call off your girlfriend now?" He pointed to where Murphy was spinning her pistol; dropping the magazine and slapping it back in. Judge looked down and grinned at how protective the smaller woman was acting and grinned.

"She's not my...never mind." She wasn't quite sure what they were to each other and wasn't about to get herself caught between a rock and Murphy's revenge. "You two want some coffee or Coke; I think we have beer as well, you bought beer the other day didn't you?" She asked Murphy, realized what she had just said and felt a blush work its way up her neck; she couldn't deny that they hadn't been living together for the last week.

"Coffee would be good, we need the caffeine boost." Tony remarked and yawned to show

missing molars and gold caps. "It took us forever to find this place, what made you move to bum fuck Egypt anyways, well besides your crazy ass mother?"

She struggled with Murphy and just decided to let her make the coffee since she had snagged the can of coffee from her hands. "I like it here; it's quiet, inexpensive not to mention a few hundred miles away from that crazy bitch that gave birth to me." She tried to get the coffee cups down and yelped when Murphy stomped on her foot.

"Sit down and let me do this, everyone knows your coffee sucks." Murphy slapped at her hands again and pointed to an empty chair. "Ya want me to call mama?"

Judge rolled her eyes and saw that Tony and Sid had been watching with interest. "Never thought I'd see the day that the mighty Judge would be domesticated, how long you two been together?" Sid asked and took the offered cup from Murphy's hand.

"From the first moment we met," Murphy purred. "She had my heart."

"More like I had a heart attack, we're just...owww, happy as any couple could be." She growled out after being pinched, then let out a grunt when Murphy dropped down onto her lap and wrapped an arm around her neck.

"That's just great you two, I'm glad you're finally happy Judge." Sid said and then looked to his brother. "Tell her all the nasty little details about this bullshit deal her mother offered us." An hour later and sitting alone in the dark living room, Judge wiped at her eyes, she knew that she couldn't hide forever, that some day her parents would try and rein her back in. Even if it was, only to put her away in a mental institution, steal her money and deface her.

"I have to do something; I can't keep running and hiding from all my fears."

"You're right and that starts right now," Murphy said in a whisper before dropping down beside her on the couch. "I got my little sister to write up some admission papers for the boys to take back to your crazy ass mother and now you can relax and enjoy life again." She wrapped her arms around Judge and pulled her close. "Can we go ta bed now, I'm exhausted?"

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Sid took the paperwork from Vanessa Whistler and gave her a curious look. "So you're really Murphy's sister and those other women we saw leaving Judge's are your sisters and your mother?"

"Hard to believe huh, but yep they're just a very small part of the Whistler family; there are a lot of individuals out there that would not have known any kind of family if not for my adopted

parents. With them, there is no such thing as race, just a child in need of love and a strong family structure, to bad the rest of the world didn't work the same way." She stuffed her hands in her pockets and gave each man a smile. "And just to let you know, my mama has taken Judge under her wing as one of her kids. So if her parents want a problem, they've got one with a huge ass group of people."

"That's good to know because the Bloodstones have a lot of big wigs that think they can get away with anything and that includes murder...you didn't hear that from us and we didn't have a thing ta do with it." Sid rushed the last part out, flinched with saying too much and looked to his brother.

"He's right and the person responsible for all mysterious deaths is now on death row himself, keep Judge safe and we'll keep an ear out where we're at as well." He handed her a card with all his phone numbers on it. "You need anything you let us know and vice versa?" He took her card and placed it inside his worn leather wallet. "See ya Doc and take care." After they had left, Vanessa stood at the door to the ER and just watched the activity in the parking lot. It was just like any other night with the hospital visitors fighting for parking spaces and employees dodging their cars as they crossed the area reserved for helicopters to land. She thought of what she knew about Judge and her parents and was thankful that she had mama D.

"You people need to slow down and look around you, with all your medical problems you still have it better than some." She closed her eyes and covered her ears when she saw a driver sideswipe a parked car after speeding into the crowded parking lot. "See, no one pays any attention to what I say."

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The next day after spending a few hours at her office and then driving around town, Judge made a decision about her life. It was only ten in the morning but it was already too late for her, she now knew that she should have done more things with her life. Now she stood atop the hill and looked out over the Shenandoah River; it had been years since she had been up here at her property and realized how she missed the freedom of noise. All she could hear was the breeze ruffling leaves and the birds chirping in the trees, which alone made up her mind. She needed to gain her freedom back, from herself as well as everyone else that had a piece of her. Dropping down, she ran her fingers through the tall grass and took in the scent of the earth around her. It was pure and fresh and so unlike her yard at home, that reminded her of an aerosol spray with the phony scent of flowers. The air was always tinged with other scents that came from cars, people and just plain old pollution. "It has to end here and now." She stood and walked to where the ground dropped off over the river, she stood staring out over the scenery for a few moments before stepping off.

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Belinda looked around Judge's office and noticed that a few of her more personal items were missing and then noticed the envelope with her name on it propped up in the center of her desk. She opened it and dropped down into her boss's chair to read, after the first sentence, she clutched at her chest and swore. "What in the Hell is she thinking?" She flipped through the other pages and came across the deed to her house, on the bottom line was her signature and a post it note sending her to a folder in her out box. Belinda opened it and found all the necessary paperwork that turned the house over to Murphy and that included everything in the house as well. "She has finally gone off her rocker." Picking up the phone, she called Judge's house and was relieved when Murphy answered. "This is Belinda, is Judge there?"

*"No, she was gone when I woke up this morning; I thought she was at work."*

"Nope, can you come over to her office; we may have a big problem?"

*"I'll be right over, give me fifteen minutes or so."* Murphy felt fear reach up and grab her heart, she had noticed some strange things when she walked through the house that morning but thought it was just her imagination. Now she was sure that it wasn't and became worried about her friend. "Fuck, I wonder if her friends showing up caused this?" She ran through the house to the bedroom and got dressed in the clothes she had worn the day before. On her way out the door, she called home on her cell phone and asked her sisters to meet her at Judge's office, if there was something seriously wrong, she would need their help.

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The mayor of Charles town sat rubbing his temples, it was only 9am and it had already been a bad day. Before he could get into his office, there stood his only good Attorney waiting for him with a grim expression plastered on her angled features. At first, he thought it was some kind of emergency concerning one of her many cases, which was until she handed him an envelope. He had opened his door, ushered her in and then closed it behind them before saying a word. Now he wished that he had just stayed in bed that morning and not come into work at all. She had left quietly without a single word and never looked back over her shoulder even once after he had read her letter. "What in the Hell am I going to do now," he sighed and spun his chair around to look at the picture of Harpers Ferry that had been taken during the 1800's. He wished at that point, that he could fall into the picture and escape the problem of replacing Judge Bloodstone. "Why couldn't she have just taken some time off rather than resigning?" He dropped his head back against his chair, closed his eyes and hoped when he opened them that he was still in his bed and had dreamt every minute of what had happened.

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At three pm, the Whistlers stood around Judge's office with grim expressions on their faces; so far, none of them could locate Judge. They had called in favors from both friends and family and nothing had paid off. It was as if Judge had disappeared into thin air, Murphy had gone so far as to have one of her police friends put out an APB on Judge's car. That came up empty as well. "Are you sure she didn't have a meeting somewhere?" Murphy asked and looked out the window that faced the street. "You know with a client or another lawyer, because I can't see her just taking off...fuck me," she clutched her fists and ground her teeth. "She took Woobie with her." She dropped down into the chair and covered her eyes with the heels of her hands. "Maybe she went to the veterinarians or something?" She hoped that it was just something simple such as an overlooked note or message. All hope dashed when the mayor stepped into the office and gave everyone a curious look.

"My God, I've never seen this many people in here before." He looked at Belinda and offered her a sad smile. "I guess you all know that she resigned today..." at the shocked expressions, he then knew that he was the barer of the news. "I take it she pulled the same thing on everyone here," he handed Belinda a copy of Judge's resignation letter and stood silently until she swore under her breath. "I came over hoping to talk her out of it." He shrugged his shoulders. "I'm not accepting it; I'll keep it in the bottom of my desk drawer in case she changes her mind."

"Son of a bitch!" Murphy swore and stomped from the office with her sisters watching. She didn't know where to start looking for her friend but she wouldn't stop until she found her. She ran over everything that Judge had said the night before and remembered that she said she would stop running and hiding. "So what does that mean?" She asked herself on her way to where she had parked mama's car. She would return to Judge's house and see if she could find an address book or something that would put her on the woman's path. "Why am I panicking, she could be at a doctors appointment, quitting her job doesn't mean that she left the area for good." She sure hoped not, Judge had wormed into her heart and she didn't want to loose her. "Damn you, why didn't you say something to me?" She asked the thin air around her and felt tears slid down her cheeks. "I could have helped you!"

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"OOhhh come on I'm not playing that game with you." Judge said to Woobie and crossed her arms over her chest. "You walked all the way down here all by yourself and now you want me to carry you the rest of the way?" She looked to the ledge just eight feet above from where she was standing and sighed, she knew she was beat and just had to accept the fact that her dog had her whipped. "This is the first and last time that I let you manipulate me, from now on, you walk all on your own." She scooped her dog up and made her way down the dirt and rock path to the small cleared area where she had parked her car. When and if she ever built a house on the property, she would build a better footpath or a road that came up to the back of her property.

The path was fine if you were a mountain goat but trying to come up it at night or during bad weather was an instant suicide warning.

"Where shall we go, North, South, an island, different country?" She thought a few minutes and stopped right beside her old beat up car. "It's been years since we went anywhere besides to Wal-Mart, how's South Carolina sound Woobie?" She got in and put Woobie on the passenger seat where she turned in circles before jumping into the back seat. "Suit yourself and just remember if we end up somewhere you don't like, it's because you're in the back."

Reaching over to a black leather carrier, she opened it and randomly pulled a CD out. She had noticed the CD carrier after she had already left her house, not wanting to take a chance and find Murphy awake, she would play chicken shit and send it by way of USPS back to Murphy. What came over the small speakers of her cars ancient stereo system shocked her? "You sure don't look the type to listen to country music," turning it up, she listened to the group and wondered who they were. "I'm one to talk; I only listen to the news stations." Pulling a quarter from the ashtray, she flipped it three times and then backed from her parking area to head back down the mountain. "Looks like we're heading North Woobie, I hope you packed your fur lined coat and boots!"

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Murphy wandered through Judge's house looking for anything that would give her a hint as to where the tall lawyer had gone. She headed to her desk and started pulling out drawers and rifling through papers and folders. With the last drawer, she found a leather-bound address book and sighed. Opening it, she looked from page to page until she came upon some names and addresses that looked to be personal ones. "Here's those two guys that were here the other day, I wonder if they know where she is?" She picked up the phone and called the first number when no one picked up she called the next one. "Hello is this Tony?"

*"Yeah, whatcha want?"* His voice was gruff and threatening.

"This is Murphy Whistler, I'm trying to find Judge, have you heard from her since you left the other day?"

*"Nope, me and my brother left right after talking to your sister the doc, are ya sure Judge isn't just out cleaning something?"*

Murphy admitted to herself that it may be jumping to conclusions about her friend but her gut was nagging her that it was something else. "Maybe but I just got this feeling if ya hear from her will you call me at her place or tell her to call home?"

*"Sure thing and I'll let my brother know to, they're old friends and she may call him first. Let me*

*know if she shows up and thank your sister for us, we're taking the letter over to the bitch's house later on this morning. Later Murphy and take care."*

She hung up the phone and went back to looking through the address book; she would call all the numbers in the thing if it led her to finding her friend. "There has got to be someone in here that would know where Judge would go if she's pissed." She thumbed through the pages and stopped at an address for New Iberia Louisiana. "What the Hell is in Iberia Louisiana," She flipped through a few more pages and found another name belonging to a person in Iberia. "Interesting, Judge Dread knows people in bumfuck Egypt." Giving up and heading off to Judge's bedroom, she stopped in the living room and looked around her. "Come on give me a hint here?" An idea hit her, she jogged off towards the bedroom and then to the closet. Opening the door, she checked each item of clothing and then went to the dresser. She knew by heart all the things in Judge's underwear drawer and started there first.

Curiosity hit her between the eyes, she checked again and then went into the bathroom to check the clothes hamper. Everything was accounted for except for what Judge was wearing that day. "This is a good sign, if she went anywhere other than local, she would have packed!" She fell back on the bed and stared off up at the ceiling, she just wished she had some idea of when Judge would be home. "What should I make for supper and why in the Hell did she sign over her house to me...FUCK ME!" Realization was a hard thing to swallow; she clamped her hands over her face and screamed until she needed to breath. "She's not coming back, face it Murphy."

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Judge was halfway to Rt. 81 when she saw a police blockade up ahead of her; she slowed down, pulled over and flipped on her police radio. She had it installed for the times she was at a crime scene; it always helped to know the circumstances before she got to the scene. Other times, she listened out of pure boredom. What came over the radio had her pulling a U-turn and heading off in the opposite direction. "What the Sam Hell is up, there's an APB on ME?" She groaned, everything started to come together, she had hoped to be out of the immediate area if not the state when everything started in motion. "Guess I'm heading south, we can always go visit some friends down there and then head maybe west." She said to Woobie who could care less where they ended up as long as there wasn't any snow. No more than a half hour later than she was hearing another call over the radio, it gave out the full description of her car and the license plate number. "Son of a bitch, they don't spend this much time or effort on serial killers!" She thought quickly, turned off down a back road, and kept taking them until she was into Virginia. With the statewide search for her, there was only one thing to do and that was get as far away as possible and trade in her car.

"Just great, maybe I should have sent all that damn paperwork in the mail, it would have given me a day or so to make my get away." She cast a glance at Woobie and shook her head. "That's it, you're gonna share the driving, you know you could stay awake long enough to hear me rant." She turned up her portable CD player and listened to a random CD from Murphy's case, as she listened closely to the words, she had a flashback to when she was in High School. "Oh for

crying out loud, she listens to *Journey*?"

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The next day a bloodshot-eyed Murphy rubbed at her tired eyes and leaned back in the leather office chair in front of Judge's PC. She had been doing searches all night and had a list of accounts in Judge's name along with some other traceable information. She installed a program that would alert her when Judge accessed any of her bank accounts and in what state the banks were. She hadn't heard anything yet from the APB that was out on her friend and figured that she had gotten through the net before the police and other local agencies were able to do anything. "I'll find you if it's the last thing I do."

"You'll stop acting like an ass and leave that poor woman alone," mama D said and slapped Murphy in the back of her head. "I wish I could just take off and disappear like she did, everyone knows I certainly deserve a break and so does Judge. That woman has lived in Hell for more years than not and maybe she just needs to get away and clear her head."

Murphy dropped her head down and clasped her hands together, she could see where her mama was coming from and had seen some of what Judge's previous home life was like, what bothered her was that she hadn't come to her or her family for help. "But mama, she just up and left and didn't even say one word about leaving or quitting her job. Why didn't she say something to me, I could have helped?"

"She's a proud woman, she's always done things on her own and this is another thing that she will do on her own. If she comes back then fine, if not, that's fine to." She pulled Murphy to her chest and gave her a tight hug. "You pulling a stunt by getting an APB out on her sure isn't showing her that you care, it's almost as bad if not worse than the stuff her parents are trying to pull. We all know you care about her but not letting her go is the worst thing you could do." She held onto Murphy as she broke down and cried, she hoped that she would see her errors and allow Judge the space she needed. "Now lets get out of here, you're buying me lunch."

Murphy wiped her eyes and nodded her head she knew mama was right. "Where are the idiots at?"

"Out in the car, I threatened to take their Playboys away if they didn't stay out there." When they got out to the car, she noticed that Stewie and Smotcher were tied together with a length of rope. "I thought you said you threatened them?"

"Ohhh mama did," Smotcher said.

"We pissed off some woman by whistling at her," Stewie tossed in.

"She tied us up and threatened to cut our tongues out." Smotcher finished.



Mama laughed and shook her head. "What kind of society are we living in when women carry rope around with them?"

"Ohhh this is our rope, we always have some with us." Stewie volunteered.

"It was this or she cut our tongues out." Smootcher said with a shudder. "I think we picked the right choice."

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Judge pulled over to the right hand lane and took the next exit; she needed gas and a bathroom break. The bathroom part terrified her; she knew that no matter where she stopped the bathroom would be a haven for germs and diseases. A small bit of relief was that she had some cleaning agents with her; she never left home without having at least the bare essentials of supplies on hand. What she had in her car alone would make most janitors envious. "OK Woobie get your ass up, its break time." She turned her car off and waited for it to stop coughing before she got out. Opening the trunk, she pulled out a canvas bag and found Woobie's leash lying on the floor. She had no idea if Virginia had a leash law or not but didn't need a ticket or some idiot screaming at her.

After letting her dog relieve herself in the appointed dog area, she put her back in the car and locked it. She didn't trust anyone and made sure that her Mace was in her back pocket before heading to the small building where the bathrooms were located. The second she stepped into the place, she felt like turning around and running back to her car. Water ran from the men's bathroom, across the floor and out the other door. A brick held open the door and she could see men standing at urinals. "Disgusting sons of bitches," she mumbled as she hurried past the door. "They just whip it out and don't give a damn that a woman sees the disgusting little thing."

She shuddered at the sight of the women's facilities, some of the stall doors were missing, faucets ran because the handles were missing and the big window was open because someone had smashed the glass from the frame. The stench of urine burned her sinuses and the filth made her shake with fear. "Ohhh there's no way in HELL!" As she turned to leave a woman came in and went to the first stall with a door on it, she didn't care how bad she had to go, this would be the last place on earth she would drop her pants. "I'll wait, there's no way I'm getting some disease from this filthy place!" She wiped at her clothes and then thought of something that made her skin crawl. "Place is probably infested with crabs!" That sent her running from the building and all the way to her car. She pulled a map out, found where she was and estimated how many miles she had to go before the next exit. "You have no idea how lucky you are little dog, some grass and you're good to go."

The next 20 miles was excruciating, the closer she got to the exit the harder her foot pressed the

gas pedal. Taking the exit at breakneck speed, she peeled around the corner and came to a sliding stop in front of the McDonalds Restaurant. Leaving her bag and everything she needed in her car, she sprinted to the door and almost ran over an old couple. When she came from the bathroom, sweat was pouring down her face and she was having trouble breathing. The place had been thousands of percentages better than the rest stop but it was still nowhere near her standards as far as sanitation went.

Thinking that while she was there, she would suffer more and get something to eat before her blood sugar dropped. With her order in hand, she went back out to her car to find Woobie standing with her feet on the steering wheel and honking the horn. "I didn't leave you for Gods sakes, move your bald ass or you're not getting you chicken McNuggets." Sliding into the car, she sorted out the food before pulling her laptop from the floor. An idea had come to her while eavesdropping on a couple of guys in McDonalds. They had been talking about what supplies they would need to pick up before going camping. "That's what I need to do, get some camping supplies but first, to find a place around here." Booting up her PC, she was waiting when she seen the guys from inside come out.

"Excuse me!" She yelled and then got out of her car to approach them. "I overheard you talking inside; I'm looking for a place to buy camping supplies, could you help me out?" A few minutes later, she was pulling up outside a large building that housed sporting and camping supplies. She knew that they couldn't very well stay in a motel every night or keep stopping at McDonalds or what not for food. She had seen a dramatic price hike in the last 24 hours when she crossed state lines. Virginia was the worst so far and N. Carolina wasn't looking too bad but she had only been in the state for about an hour.

"OK Woobie, you guard the car while I go in here and see what we can get to make our lives a little more comfortable." She was about to add that staying at home with Murphy would have been the best idea but it was too late for that now. She really didn't know what they needed since she had no idea where they were headed, some no fuss camping food would be a good place to start though. After grabbing a cart, she started up the first isle and just looked at all the different items used for just cooking outdoors on a camping trip. Dutch ovens seemed to be a big necessity, she figure this because there were so many different sizes and brands of them. Next came the other cooking supplies complete with Coleman stoves. Her head was starting to spin with all the stuff in front of her when an older man came up and asked if she needed some help. "I'm not real sure what I need, I'm traveling cross country and I just need some stuff to help me survive without spending a small fortune."

He nodded his head and gave her a small smile. "Never tangled with Mother Nature before huh?" He saw a slight blush and chuckled. "That's OK we all start there at some point, I've been camping since I was a toddler." He waved a hand for her to follow and pointed at an assortment of cooking packages. "I put this stuff together so that beginners don't end up buying what they'll never use; fancy stuff has no place out in the woods. All you'll need is a regular sized Coleman stove and that's your kitchen."

"One of my other concerns is hygiene, the rest areas so far are disgusting and sleeping, stopping every night at motels will cost a small fortune. Can you set me up with a small tent, a sleeping

bag and what ever else I need?"

"Sure thing," after he put the cooking items in her cart, he went over to the tents first and looked at some of the boxes he had sitting on the floor. "I just got this new tent in; it connects to the back end of an SUV or truck. I've tried it on a car and it works just as good, gives ya some more room for storage and what not. Then we have just regular old tents and pup tents, depends on how many people are going to be using it."

"It's just me and my dog, so a two or three person tent is good." After looking at all the kinds available, she pointed to one and waited for him to put it in her cart. When all was said and done, she could drop camp anywhere and be prepared for just about any kind of weather. She had a sleeping bag that would keep her warm and dry as a bone if it rained and a cot that kept her off the ground. Now, it was as if the older man was reading her mind, he nodded his head to an area across the store and saw relief cross her face.

"I have three woman in my life and believe me they educated me on our first camping trip." He pointed to a port-a-potty complete with carrying case and extra bags. "My wife had me drive 50 miles to the nearest camping supply store to get one of these that day and I tell ya, it saved my skin." He grinned at her blush and dropped it in her cart. "There's more expensive ones on the market but that one will last for years and there's no hassle with having to get it to fit in your trunk." He moved a little down the aisle and pulled a discreet package from the wall. "Now my wife and daughters swear by this little thing, I order them from London of all places." He handed her the package that read *The Whiz*. Takes care of the nasty bathrooms or lack there of, even my granddaughters use them in school." He chuckled and waved a hand at her. "It wasn't easy but my granddaughters are regular ruffians and the first time one of the other girls made fun of them, she got a black eye for her trouble. I think all women should use something like this, you know with all the diseases in this world you can never be too careful."

"Ohhh I agree with you there, what I saw coming down this way as far as rest areas is just unbelievable, what I don't understand is why no one fixes them. I know that the state is responsible for the highways and such, it's no wonder the truckers are getting semis with living quarters built on to them." She looked to see other hygiene products on the wall and watched as the older man walked away so she could have some privacy.

"Let me know if you need any help, I'll be over in the clothing area."

"Thanks for all the help you've given me so far." She nodded at his wave and went back to looking at the other items. She was getting a different kind of education. She never realized that there were hygiene items that could be stowed away in the glove compartment or inside a purse. Not like, she had ever carried a purse or anything but, she could see some of the things that would be good if she did. Extendable toothbrushes, drinking cups that did the same thing, small unbreakable metal mirrors and small safety shaving razors, she was scanning the area where *The Whiz* had come from when she saw other types of the female urination device or F.U.D. for short. "I wish there had been stuff like this years ago when I was in college, all those times of standing in line at a bathroom while the guys just went outside." She grabbed another brand called a Freshette; it came with a long tube that fit into a gel-filled bag. It stated on the package

that it was used for wheelchair bound persons and numerous other occasions. It made her wonder how many different kinds of things were available for woman to make hiking, climbing, camping and any other male oriented sport easier. When she had filled her cart with everything that she needed and then some, she headed for the cash register. After ringing up her sales, she pulled a brand new Visa card from her wallet and handed it to him.

"Did you get everything you needed?"

"I sure hope so, I've been camping before but it was more like a bunch of us spending the night in a park and getting wasted. That was many years ago and probably the dumbest thing I've ever done, anything could have happened."

He grinned and nodded his head. "I think we can all say that about something but to make it easier on you," he handed her a small book and a map. "The book will keep you from getting into anything poisonous and the map is of all the camp grounds in North Carolina. Some of them have facilities; you know showers and bathrooms, running water and electricity for campers. The map tells you which ones have all that stuff," he handed her back her Visa and then helped her get everything out to her car. "Now be careful out there and if you have a gun keep it handy, if not, then get one."

She gave him terrified look. "For wild animals?"

"Of the two legged variety, don't trust anyone out there and that includes young couples." She thanked him and then drove off to the nearest interstate exit. She thought about the times she and friends had spent weekends in the parks and how filthy she had been when they staggered back to campus. Now years later, she couldn't handle dust blowing on her. She knew that the camping idea was going to be a major lifestyle change for her and may cause her to hyperventilate and fall over unconscious but it was a start in the right direction towards her personal freedom.

"We can do this Woobie, the fresh air," she took a deep breath and held her arms out to her sides. "Mingling with Mother Nature, simple meals cooked over a small stove or campfire, sleeping under the stars...me dying from a contagious tree fungus...bit by a rattle snake...you beaten up by a squirrel...eaten by a wolf...maybe we should just stay in motels?" She looked to her sleeping dog and shook her head. "You could care less as long as I was the first to go, remember that when it comes time to eat."

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After they had taken mama to lunch and returned home for the truck, they went on their way. Murphy found herself looking at every car that was similar to Judge's or female with long dark hair; she was hoping that one of them would turn out to be her missing friend. She blinked and rubbed at her tired eyes and then saw that Stewie had been watching her, she shrugged her

shoulders and went back to watching out the window.

She had wandered around the house earlier, pretty much in the same condition she had been for the last few days, she stopped to look at things but never really saw them. She just couldn't believe that the house was hers or that Judge had actually just up and left without a word to her. She had yet to sleep there; she always went back home and crawled into her bed still clothed and grimy from the day. It had been a few days since she had a shower and didn't really care; she could care less about anything at this point and wished that everyone would just leave her alone. "Where we going?" She asked in a bored tone.

"We got a small problem that we gotta take care of," Stewie said and looked right at her with a burning gaze. "Then we're going out and getting shit faced and pick up some good looking women's."

Smootcher slapped the steering wheel and bounced in her seat. "I'm gonna get me drizzled chiseled!"

Both of her sisters looked at her in exasperation, Stewie sighed and shook her head. "I swear one of these days someone's gonna do what you say and we ain't helping."

"Don't tell me I got it wrong again, I know I said it right." She shot them both a glare before returning her attention to the road. "Might get one of those 'Street talk for dummies books so ya'll can't make fun of me no more."

"We just can't help it," Stewie said and tried not to bust out laughing. "We don't know anyone who can come up with the stuff that you do and not get the shit kicked outta them." She looked over at Murphy and sighed, she just didn't know what to do about her sister, and none of them had ever seen her like this or anyone for that matter. "Ain't that right Murph?"

"Yeah, she's lucky to be alive." She let her head fall against the window and squeezed her eyes tight to keep the tears from falling. "Can we just go home...I don't feel like going anywhere?"

"Not a chance there Murph, we're going out as soon as we take care of your hygiene problem."

"I don't have a hygiene problem; ya'll got a problem with not letting me be." Her sisters shared a look and went about dreaming of their plan for Murphy. A few minutes later, Murphy groaned and got out when they pulled into the 'Do it yourself carwash' on Liberty St.

"This is your small problem that you just had to drag me along to help with?"

"Yep," Stewie said and started dropping quarters into the machine. "Gotta make our ride all nice and sparkly, ya know for the women's and all." She winked at Smootcher and grabbed the scrub brush from where it hung on the wall. "All clean, sanitized and sparkly." She nodded her head and watched as Smootcher tackled Murphy and handcuffed her to the trucks door handle.

"What the Hell..." her eyes grew wide when her sisters came at her with the high-powered

sprayer and scrub brush. "Ohhhh this just ain't right...you'll both pay dearly for this!" When Smootcher sprayed her head with the warm water, she yelled and tried to hide her head under her arm. "MAMA!"

"Mama can't hear ya; we made sure that we're far enough from home for that." Smootcher snickered and kept on spraying her down.

Stewie started scrubbing her down with the soapy brush and busted out laughing. "Take it like the man ya are Murph!" After they were satisfied that she was clean, they watched as she stood under the air dryer at the end of the automatic car wash, what had them laughing hysterically was her hair and her dodging cars coming out of the carwash. From the force of the air dryer, her hair stood out at all angles around her head and made her look like a demented poodle.

"Now ya have that lemony fresh smell of car polish and sealant."

"Ohhhh thank you very much Stewie," she growled and flipped her off. "Just wait until you two go to sleep tonight." She got into the backseat and had to hold on to the door or slide off the seat. "Bitches, how am I supposed ta sit anywhere without sliding off?" She mumbled and let out a yell when Smootcher took a corner too sharp and she slide across the seat and onto the floor.

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Judge looked down at her map and then swung her car across to the far right hand lane before she missed the exit that would take her to a campground just outside of North Carolina. She had wanted to get into the next state by nightfall but was exhausted and was having trouble staying alert. She still had to read the directions on how to set the tent up and some of the other things that needed put together before it got too dark to see what she was doing, if all else failed, she would sleep in her car for the night. Not like it wouldn't be the first night of a lumpy car seat as a mattress.

This far south and she still had no idea of where she was heading, she admitted to herself that she had not planned anything for this adventure into the unknown. She was a little scared of what she was doing and where she would go once they ran out of road, she had never been to the west coast and wondered if she shouldn't veer in that direction in the morning or keep heading south.

"You know Woobie, this is the first irrational and spontaneous thing that I've done in years." She sighed and slowed the car down for a sharp turn into the campgrounds. "I feel like I'm in my twenties again and acting on the spur of the moment." Watching for an open camping area, she spoke to her sleeping dog and herself to cover up her nervousness. "How's this one Woobie, it's clean and we can look out over...the collection of dumpsters and port-a-potties...NOT!" She drove on until she was at the very end of the campgrounds. With only two spots left unoccupied, she pulled into the one that was farthest away from families. "There's either a lot of people who

enjoy camping or a lot of cheap people." Her answer came when a handful of kids came charging out of the huge tent. "Geez, that's a bankroll to put all of them up at a motel." After turning her car off, she stretched and yawned wide. "Ok Woobie time to get to work, we have a lot of stuff that needs put together." An hour later, she was sitting amongst her tent that was in a jumble and the poles that were supposed to be holding her tent up.

"Looks like you need some help." An elderly gentleman said from across the ways. "Damn directions never work for me," he pointed to the handful of directions in her hand and spread out on the ground. "They give ya a damn novel of foreign languages and it takes half a page of explaining in English. Just toss the damn things away and go by instinct," he crossed the road and started picking up poles from the ground.

"Thank you, I was about to give up and sleep in my car." She said and was amazed that in a few seconds he had one set of poles together.

"No problem, been here myself a few hundred times." He looked up at her and smiled. "You're a tall one that's for sure, want some helpful advice?"

"Sure, I'm not one to turn down help or advice in this situation."

"Get some clothes that don't scream citified or attorney, ya stick out too much and that's one thing ya don't wanna do in an area like this."

She looked down at her gray slacks and white button down. "Yeah that would help; I wasn't thinking this morning and dressed like I was going to work instead of camping." In a few minutes, they had her small tent up; she thanked her savior again and went about getting her belongings inside. She was amazed that she was able to stand up inside without hunching over. "They were right when they on the outside of the box that said looks can be deceiving." She looked down at Woobie and rolled her eyes. "Ohh come on this won't be that bad, we have an air mattress, sleeping bag and all the comforts of home...ok, so not all the comforts." Going back out to her car, she got the Coleman stove and its stand, after a few minutes; she was heating up stew that she had bought earlier. "Now just look at that Woobie, just like at home...without the microwave, sterile cooking conditions of my kitchen and the comfort of bugs not falling inside it." She wrung her hands together, took deep breathes and tried to keep the darkness creeping at the corners of her eyes at bay. "It'll be alright, I can do this...there's no bugs in the stew...protein...extra protein if there is." She grabbed the pot from the burner and examined it until it grew cold. "If I die from eating this, let Murphy know how sorry I am about everything."

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Stewie stood beside her sister and tilted her head in the direction of the dark corner of the bar, they had been in the place for over three hours and the only time Murphy had moved was to go to the bathroom. Normally, she would have been chasing her umpteenth woman or sitting on the

ground in the parking lot after the bouncer tossed her out. This was not their sister and they wondered how long it would be before she was back to her normally woman chasing self. "What are we gonna do Stew, I've never seen her like this at all over a woman, let alone one she was never intimate with?"

"It's only been what a day or two; we'll give her some time and see what happens. If she don't come around, we'll drop her off at the nearest convent."

"And what's that gonna do for her? Smootcher asked.

"Not a damn thing but it'll give us more women to chase and we'll get our own rooms." She gave her sister a huge grin and wiggled her eyebrows. "How's one more day sound and we drop her ass off with the penguins?"

"You're on, but I get her room, you got too much shit to move." They moved towards their gloomy sister and sighed, she was a pitiful sight. She gave 'crying into your beer' a completely new meaning, all she needed to do was wail and everyone would think she had just become a widow. "Ohh we have got to get you out of this place, you'll give us a bad reputation."

"We already got one," Murphy sniffled and wiped at her glistening cheeks. "Can't get much worse."

"Ohh yeah it can, remember when Smootcher flashed her tits and they banned us for six months?"

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Mama D stood in the doorway shaking her heads as her kids stumbled up the driveway, she hated when they came home drunk. "In the basement with you three, I told ya no drunks in my house."

"We ain't drunk mama," Stewie said and fell to her knees. "We're fighting Murph!" She covered her head with her hands and waited for the smack of a tennis ball that she knew was coming. Murphy jumped on Smootcher's back, bit her ear and pulled on her hair with her free hand.

"Ohh for the love of God knock it off before I knock you off!" Mama said as she came down the steps towards her kids. "I should change the locks when you guys are out doing something completely asinine and useless." She pulled Murphy from her sisters back and dragged her by the back of her Levis into the house. "You three reek of smoke, do ya'll have to go to a place that lets people smoke?"

"Whose gonna tell a few hundred dykes and queens they can't?" Stewie mumbled and wiped at her smoke irritated eyes. "Do something with Murph; she's so depressing and weepy." She went



towards the stairs and took off running so that she would be the first to take a shower and have hot water.

Mama took one look at Murphy and pulled her towards the kitchen, she had no idea what she was going to do with her but she had quite a few ideas, one was hanging her upside down until she gave up on her childish behavior. "I should have raised goldfish, one gets a little screwy and ya just flush the sucker down the toilet." She sighed when Murphy started crying all over again. "Maybe move to Florida with no forwarding address or phone number," she grinned at the idea and wondered if she could sneak off to the land of hurricanes and tropical storms. "The strongest wind couldn't move my huge ass."

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Judge sat on her sleeping bag twisting her hands to the point that her fingers were getting sore from the friction, she was at a complete loss as to what to do now that it was dark outside. She had arranged everything in the tent a few dozen times and couldn't do anything else with her small lot of possessions. Even cleaning the inside of her car had ended with fear of a dead car battery and no one to jump it. "You know what Woobie, the more I think about it the more that what I have done is a huge ass mistake," she twisted her fingers and then ran them through her hair for the hundredth time. "I should have just stayed home and tried to work things out there," she sighed when she saw that her dog was paying as much attention as she normally did while sleeping. "It's not like if we headed back now that I would be welcomed with open arms when I stepped up on the porch, a big barreled gun is Murphy's way of a greeting friend or foe."

She laid back, stared up at the material of her tent and wondered what would happen when it rained. She had noticed in the last few hours that her train of thought had jumped from one subject to the next like a fluttering butterfly. She had also started to remember long forgotten things, stuff she wondered if she had really done or just imagined doing. It was a feeling of brushing fog and mist aside to see a clearer surrounding, if it was because of her present circumstances or lack of stress, she had no idea.

"Woobie did I bring all my medications with us or did I forget them along with other things?" Crawling on her knees she stopped where she had her overnight bag and small shaving kit bag, dumping the contents of the former, she cursed under her breath. "Damn it all to Hell and back," she rubbed her temples and tried to envision where she had set them. "I left them sitting on the table by the side door, now what am I gonna do?" She didn't know if it was wise to go without the medication that she had been on for years but had no choice now. For one, she couldn't call up her doctor and ask for more. "I can't do that, he would call my mother and that would ruin the lie of me being locked in the nuthouse. I'll go without them and see what happens; the worse thing that could happen is I really get locked up in a nuthouse." What was really bothering her was the fact that she couldn't take a shower or wash her hands a couple hundred times like she would have done if at home or in a motel, she felt like a fish out of water and felt tremors coming closer to claim her body. Taking deep breathes and closing her eyes tight, she rocked from side to side with her arms wrapped tightly around her chest. A few minutes later, she was sound

asleep and snoring loudly.

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Mama rubbed her tired eyes with the heels of her hands, she was beyond exhausted but wanted to make sure Murphy didn't do something stupid after she went to bed. "Now you listen to me you troll, no stupid damn stuff out of you, I'm tired and in no mood to kick your ass until noon." She leaned down and looked into bloodshot green eyes. "Judge is doing what she needs to do and I ain't gonna tell ya again, now get your ass to bed or else." She got to the door and turned back with a pointed finger. "Stop being such a pussy, my Murphy would let this roll off her back and chalk it up as experience. I have no idea who the weepy little troll is or where she came from, just wish she'd go away." She left without another word and went to her bedroom.

Murphy stared after her mama with wide eyes; Mama had never called anyone a pussy before and she was shocked. "She called me a weepy pussy...Eeewww that's just disgusting." She shivered and then slammed her hand down on the table. "I ain't no pussy...I'm just," she sighed and wiped at her tearstained face and took a shuttering breath. "So pissed and upset about being left that I don't know what else to do but cry." Fresh tears trailed down her face to drip onto the tabletop. "OK, I gotta go somewhere...do something before I jump off the nearest bridge." She got up from the table, headed upstairs to her bedroom and then into the steamy overheated bathroom. A few minutes later, a much cleaner Murphy jogged down the steps and out the front door. She bypassed the truck and kept on jogging all the way to her families bail bondsman office, using her keys; she opened the door and flipped all the lights on. Moving over to the desk that her mama had taken over, she dropped into the old chair and waited for the PC to boot up.

Tired of staring at the monitor, she got up, started a pot of coffee and cleaned the coffee mess area up to Judge's standards or at least close to it. A few minutes later, she was scanning through all the recent bail orders and skip reports, some of the missing people were real scumbags. "How in the hell do you keep getting out of jail on your own recognizance?" She read down the report and counted all the times the man had been before the judge and for what reason. "You have seven DWI's and all of them were thrown out of court?" She hit print and waited for the full report to come from the printer, there was just something very wrong with this individual or more likely the justice system. Flipping through the pages, she came to the man's biography and cussed under her breath. "God damn useless family...inbred assholes...Social Security scheming sons of bitches...you're all going down if I have to run for public office to do it!" She placed the papers on one corner of the desk and went back to looking for more troublemakers in the skip files.

The sun had been up for hours and Murphy was still at the desk looking over files, she rubbed her eyes and leaned back into the chair. Closing her eyes, she swiveled the chair back and forth for a few minutes before getting up. "What to do first...get some breakfast or go get some creeps off the streets?" Grabbing the files, she got up and headed from the office and down the street to Billy's restaurant. She did better work on a full stomach and just didn't feel like going all the way home to eat. In the hours that she had been at the computer, she had come across a dozen and a

half of skips that needed picked up ASAP. She would start as soon as she ate and got the truck from home, thankfully her sisters were the type who slept until noon so she could take the truck without questions or company. She went over to her favorite table and sat down, she didn't need to order, and everyone who worked there knew what she wanted.

"You're all alone this morning?" Mildred one of the very first waitresses from the day the place opened more than 50 years before said as she placed a cup of coffee in front of her.

"Yep, got an early start this morning," she took a sip of her coffee and added sugar and cream. "So many nasty damn people in this city, I could work twenty-four hours a day and not get all of them."

"I know what you mean," she squeezed Murphy's shoulder. "I see most of them walk right past here and go into the sheriff's office right across the street; now he's one that needs to be put behind bars." She moved a few steps away. "I'll be right back with your breakfast; we just got this morning's paper on the counter if you're interested." As she waited for her food, she watched out the windows at the traffic and people. What she wanted to do was run out, herd them right across the street in through the front doors of the jailhouse; it would be quicker to toss the few innocents out the door than pull the criminals inside.

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Judge woke to Woobie jumping on her chest and barking in a tone that could make your ears bleed; she covered her ears and mumbled before rolling over and onto the hard ground. "Shit, why didn't you warn me?" She asked and rolled to her knees. "Forgot where I was and I can't believe I slept through the night in a tent." Rubbing her face, she looked down at her hands and panicked, she always washed her hands before touching her face in the morning. Moving over to where she had arranged her sanitation gear, she grabbed a handful of handiwipes and did the best she could with those. "What am I going to do Woobie; I never planed anything past this?" Woobie spun in circles and barked at the tops of her lungs. Ohh all right already, just give me two seconds to get the flap opened."

Before she could get it opened a quarter of the way, Woobie was out and running towards the open grassy area across from the tent. "That's weird, she ran out without worrying that her feet might get dirty." After getting dressed, she went over to where the porta-potties were and checked each one before going to the cleanest. What had the other campers near by curious, was the large plastic bucket over flowing with bottles and brushes. Fifteen minutes later, she dropped the dirty rags and sponges into a plastic bag, shed her rubber gloves and disappeared inside the porta-potty. When she came out, she saw that she had an audience. "The place needed cleaned, you know how many germs and diseases are on the surfaces of a place like that?" She walked past everyone and headed back to her tent. "Guess I'll pack up and get us back on the road to...somewhere." She noticed that she was talking to herself and lowered her voice.

An hour later with the car packed to perfection and the area cleaned up of all evidence that she

had ever been there, she got behind the wheel and started the car. "Ok, now where are we going, further south or in the east or west direction," She looked over to see that her companion was sound asleep on the passenger seat. "You are of no help to me what's so ever, you know that right?"

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Murphy rubbed at her gritty bloodshot eyes, she had lost count of how long it had been since she had slept or changed her clothes. She knew it had to be days since she had not done anything close to cleaning up and people were starting to shy away when she walked past. "Funny how the company I've been keeping hasn't complained not once about me reeking." She shot a Barbie wanna-be a glare and pushed the cuffed bail jumper she had in custody in through the open door of the police station. "I hope you like your new residence cuz you ain't getting out after this."

"Lady, after being stuck in a truck with the driver from hell, this place is the safest place I could be." He wiped his nose on his sleeve and blinked his watery eyes. "And it smells a whole hell of a lot better, you allergic to soap and water?"

"No but the pig farmer I brought in before you is, now shut the hell up and get in there." She sighed with fatigue and dropped into a chair when an officer took the man towards the holding cells. "That's it for me, I need some sleep." She yawned and felt her jaw pop.

"I am sure glad to hear that, I have carpal tunnel from doing all the damn paperwork you caused." A tall black officer said as he dropped a stack of papers in front of her. "What's gotten into you sis and where's Smotcher and Stewie?"

"They're mama's slaves for the week." She picked up the papers and stuffed them into the leather case she had by her foot.

"What did they do this time?" He brother asked.

"While mama was out running around, they took all the doors off the kitchen cabinets."

He cocked a bushy eyebrow over his left eye and shot her a crooked grin. "What did they do just leave it like that and why did they do it to begin with?"

"We got the new doors so we could refinish the cabinets but they were supposed to wait for me and then we were gonna do one cabinet at a time, not demolish the kitchen."

"Ohh but that's the Whistler way, tear things up and then sit in the middle of the mess and ponder where we went wrong." He leaned back in his chair and really looked at his younger sister. "You look like shit, go home and get some sleep and I don't wanna see you in here for at least a week. Believe it or not sis, we're running out of cells for all the creeps you keep bringing in. Not to

mention the new assistant district attorney is gonna be putting the business end of a gun barrel in his mouth when he gets all these reports." He tapped the pile to his left. "I sure wish your friend was still around, she may have been...eccentric but she got the job done in mere minutes compared to days sometimes weeks with these other clowns we deal with."

"I wish she was still around to, any word on her car," she held up a hand when he opened his mouth. "I know it's wrong and there's the whole crossing jurisdictions and everything, I just wanna know that she's safe."

"Nothing yet, look sis, it's only been a few days. You never know, she may be back by the end of the week."

"Come on Jeff, she signed her house over to me and gave the mayor her resignation, she may never come back and I'm finding it hard to cope with."

"What you need is a vacation, sit at home, read some books, watch some TV and just veg out for a while. Hell, I wish I had the house all to myself to do what I wanted, it's been years since I got to watch what I wanted on the TV."

She chuckled at the picture of her brother having to watch some girly programs with his wife and three daughters. "You could always come over to Judge's and watch the hockey game with me and the idiots."

His face light up and then dimmed. "I'll let you know, with soccer games, band practice and kendo classes, we're lucky to have two minutes to spare. I do have girls right?"

"You are one lucky man Jeff, you have a beautiful wife and three talented girls, what more can a man want?"

"True, at least I'll never have to worry about them not being able to protect themselves, let some guy try something when Julia gets to college." He let out a long sigh. "We're getting old Murph; my baby is two months away from going to college and then it's either the FBI or law school, my luck it'll be both."

"Look at it this way, the Whistler clan will be in charge of all the law enforcement agencies, we can rule the world!" She got up from her chair, tapped his desk and then pointed at the pile of reports on his desk. "I'll take a few days off so you can recuperate, c-ya Jeff, say hi to the girls and your boss at home." She left the police station, went out to the truck and drove to Judge's house. Her name may be on the deed but it would always be Judge's house. Leaving everything in the truck, she walked slowing to the side door and let herself in. Taking a deep breath, she took in the scent of cinnamon that filled the house. "Hope you're having fun where ever you are Judge." Going into the bathroom, she stripped off her clothes, placed them into the proper hampers and then got into the shower. She had yet to sleep in the house since Judge had left; she just came here maybe to clean up and to bring the mail in.

Standing beneath the hot spray of the shower, she closed her eyes and dropped her chin down to

her chest. Slowly her tight neck and shoulder muscles began to relax and her body started to ache from long hours of activity and lack of sleep. When she was finished with her shower, she dressed in some of Judge's sweats and fell across her neatly made bed. It wasn't long before she was sound asleep and dreaming of chasing a fat man through a field full of huge muddy sows.

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"Where the HELL are we?" Judge asked and flipped the map in her hands around a few times before it sort of made sense, she had zoned out and missed a few exits on the highway and now had no idea where she was and that included the state. She cussed under her breath and threw the map out the window. "Just great," she rubbed her face and leaned back in her seat. "What to do keep going or turn around and take the last exit?" She looked at Woobie and groaned. "You are no help, guess we'll just keep going until we hit an exit with a sign for a motel." She was sore and stiff from sleeping on her small air mattress and wanted a nice hot shower to ease all her aches and pains away. Not to mention to save what little bit of sanity she had left, she had gone through a few 1000 sheet tubs of sani-wipes and needed to find a dry cleaner and laundry-mat to do the rest of her dirty clothes.

She had still yet to pick an actual place to stay with some kind of permanency; everyone she knew would alert her parents that they had seen her. Having that happen would not be a good thing and would end her freedom in a mere second. "That bitch has way too much power, too many years of getting dirt on people and using it for blackmail." She floored the gas pedal and headed off back down the road, she just hoped there was something close by because she hadn't noticed any camp grounds in the area.

"This just really sucks, I should have bought one of those big atlas map books," she squinted at the green highway sign that had to be a good mile down the road. "Next place we stop I'm getting one, this just sucks ass. Now I'm sounding like one of the Whistlers, next I'll be acting like one of them." Thoughts of Murphy flowed through her mind, she wondered what she was doing and how pissed she was at her for just up and leaving with out a word. As she was daydreaming, she caught sight of the international symbol for hotels and motels from the corner of her eye. Slamming on the breaks, she slid sideways into the exit lane and then continued. It was afterwards that she thought about other drivers on the road, fortunately it was close to 2am in the morning and traffic was very thin where she was. "Well Woobie looks like we're in Roanoke Rapids N. Carolina." She slowed as she came to the end of the off ramp, looked both ways and saw a sign for a Holiday Inn Express. "Now that's what I'm talking about, a hot shower and a real honest to god bed to sleep in!" After she had gotten a room, she went to her car for Woobie and her small gym bag that had her clothes and essentials in it. The other stuff could wait until she checked the room out; hopefully the room wouldn't need much cleaning.

When she opened the door and flipped on the light, she sighed with relief. The room was bright, smelled clean and the air was warm and cozy. "This is a hell of a lot better than sleeping in a tiny

tent with bugs slamming into the side of the thing and creepy crawlies doing their thing." Woobie ran right over to the bed, jumped onto it and took her spot in the middle. She'd had enough of her mistresses rants and what not for the day, she stretched out and covered her face with her paws. Getting what she needed for her shower, she headed to the bathroom and stopped in the doorway. A smile brightened her face at the sight of a paper band on the toilet seat lid. "It's been years since I've seen one of those, hope the rest of the place is just as clean." She checked the shower and just gave in; she was beyond exhausted and just wanted to take a shower and go to sleep. In the past, after her shower was when she would take some of her medication, it then dawned on her once again that she didn't have them. "Come to think of it, I feel better and not as edgy. That's just got to be a plus for me, for once that is, probably never needed all those damn pills." With in minutes, she was in bed and asleep beside her dog.

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Murphy rolled over and bumped into something strange, she reached out, poked the object, and growled. "How the hell did you get in here Smootcher?"

"Wait a minute," Smootcher growled back. "How did ya know it was me, coulda been Stewie?"

"If I poked Stewie, she would've busted out laughing and fell on the floor." She looked up at her sister and had the weirdest feeling that her head was lopsided.

"Nice do Murph, bet it took hours to get it that way."

"Shut up, what are ya doing here?"

"We came for the truck; ya had it for how many days now, besides we got a skip to pick up."

"We don't have any left to get unless this came in over night." She rolled from bed and groaned from stiffness in her joints.

"What do ya mean; we pulled up all kinds of them yesterday." She followed her sister to the bathroom and stood outside the closed door. "We had a total of five guys ta pick up today." She yelled and jumped when the door swung open.

"Already got 'em," she went up on her toes and jabbed Smootcher in her chest. "I was out working while you lazy bitches were in bed sleeping," she went over to one of the dressers and searched for something to wear. "So guess what we're doing today?"

"Playing PS2?"

"Try fixing the kitchen cabinets you two geniuses took all apart, surprised you're still alive after mama got a hold of ya."

"Just wait until ya see Stewie, she didn't fair to good this time." She grinned to herself when she noticed how Murphy was moving from one dresser to the next getting what she needed. "You're looking a little DCO...DOC, what ever the Hell Judge is, maybe it's contagious and we'll all get it from being in this house!"

Murphy looked up from what she was doing and snorted. "The Gods know you two sure need it, damn pigs...did I say that?" She knew that the three of them were huge pigs when it came to their bedrooms and the bathroom that they shared, they had always been that way no matter what mama did to correct it. "Damn, maybe she's right?" She looked down at the clothes she had in her hands and rolled her eyes. "I'm gonna look like a street urchin, damn tall people."

When she went out into the kitchen, she just stood and stared at Stewie. "What in the hell happened to you?" She looked at her two black eyes and the strange bruise mark on her forehead.

"Ohh nothing, just mama's backhand, she's dangerous as hell when she's wound up!" She touched her forehead and winced. "I shoulda ducked instead of dodged, broke the tennis ball on my head though, that was kinda cool."

What was cooler was you falling face first into the net and then doing a flip over it." Smootcher said as she examined the coffee maker. "Where's the water go in this thing?"

"You are hopeless," Murphy flipped the top up on the sunbeam coffee maker and then pulled the coffee strainer and water container loose. "We got these at work, remember?"

"I don't play with the household stuff, it's boring. Ohh before I forget, I think they fired ya."

"Ohh who cares, that place isn't fun anymore, besides who needs it?" she pointed to the leather folder on the table. "There's all the skip paperwork, just needs taken back to the office. Just to warn ya, Jeff says he doesn't wanna see us in the station for a few days, I just about killed him with all the paperwork."

Stewie sat down at the table across from her and held her with her eyes, she knew that they couldn't help her with what she was going through but she could try. "Since we don't have anything to do, wanna take a break and just chill for a while?"

"You sound just like Jeff; he said to veg out or something." She got a look in her eyes that scared both her sisters. "Wanna go with me to look at a new work vehicle?"

Smootcher gave her an intense look and leaned in closer. "What did you do to my truck?"

"Nothing, we need a bigger one with lots of seats...a school bus. We need a great big school bus; we can weld ankle cuffs to the floor and the same with other restraints." She pulled a plate over and held it out to Smootcher who filled it with food. "I got us a contract with the Homeland Security Agency and to do the job, we need a great big yellow bus." She grinned at their shocked



expressions and started eating like a starved dog. "So I was thinking that we go over to the state line auction and see if they have one, if not, we check with the river rafters and see if we can buy one of their old ones."

"I think you went off the deep end, no way Homeland Security wants help from us." Stewie replied and looked to Smootcher. "A couple of bounty hunters who chase down bail skippers, I don't even think so."

"Ohh come on guys, this will be easy, all we gotta do is pick up all the illegal aliens in the area and bus them to INS at Dulles airport, they take 'em off our hands and give us receipts that we then give to the acting agent for Homeland."

Smootcher groaned and dropped down at the table, she knew they were in trouble. "And just how do we know who's an illegal and who's not?"

"Easy," Murphy grinned. "We show up at the horse barns at the race track, flash a badge and tackle who ever runs."

"Ohh easy as pie," Stewie remarked. "We might as well set up a cattle chute into the bus, they're all illegal. What's next, the apple orchard in Bardane and Kearneysville or maybe the titty bar?" She grinned widely with the last one.

"Yep, ya got it and I'm sure we can get a bus load of them out at the mall."

"We are sooo screwed," Smootcher groaned. "We can't do this with just the three of us, we need some help."

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Judge looked around the Roanoke Rapids and sighed, she was lucky that she had found a laundry mat and was able to wash her dirty clothes. The place was like Leesburg Virginia, there were mini malls, strip malls you name it and they had it. The Super Wal-Mart had her head spinning; it was at the least three times larger than the one in Charlestown. She looked down into her cart and wondered where she was going to put everything in her car. Looking at all the cleaning supplies she had, she started putting some of them back and just left the Lysol cleaner and some bathroom wipes in the cart. "What were you thinking Judge, you have limited space and you're shopping like you did at home." Checking the rest of the items, she headed into the men's department for socks and some sweats and sweatshirts. She needed clothes that would stand up to the dropping temperatures and wear with the abuse that she was putting on them. A grin came to her face when memories of her rebellious college days came forth.

"Maybe some t-shirts, heavy socks and a pair of work boots, maybe some boxers like Murph

wears?" She found herself thinking more of her smaller friend and wished that she were there at times. "She would have kicked me in my ass for just thinking of camping out without so much as a knife for protection." Wheeling her cart around, she headed to the sports department and stopped in front of the glass case that held the rifles and shotguns. In less than five minutes, she had a .12 gauge Remington shotgun and three boxes of shells. She asked the sales person where she could buy a handgun and now had an address for a shop close by, when she was done; she would be able to protect herself and half the town.

"I really need a big truck with a camper or maybe a Winnebago type thing, tour all the states and never need to get a motel room. My own shower and bed, park anywhere and sleep." She grabbed a newspaper from the machine on her way back to her car; she would look but didn't have her hopes up. "Might just get lucky, if not there's always the next town or city, could go to Atlanta and see what they have there." She packed the car, tossed Woobie a rawhide chew and then crawled behind the wheel. "One more stop and we head back to the motel, in the morning we'll head to Atlanta and check out a Winnebago if we don't find one here, how's that sound?" Woobie ignored her and just kept chewing on her rawhide.

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Judge looked in the glass cases at each handgun displayed; she didn't need something that would take down a tank just a man or two. She had liked the guns that the whistlers carried but wanted something a little fancier. She spotted a Berretta 92FS Brigadier Inox .9mil handgun, waving her hand; she waited for the salesperson to come over. "Tell me about this handgun, you know the stats."

"That's one of the newer versions we've gotten in, it's semi to full automatic, double to single action. It has rubber handgrips, stainless steel barrel, magazine holds 17 bullets and it weighs almost 34 oz unloaded. It's easy on the wrist and hardly has any kick to it. We have a shooting range in the back if you want to try it out?"

"That sounds like a good idea, let me try the Px4 Storm as well." She handed him her driver's license and followed him to a side door that led to the shooting range. "It's been a while since I shot a handgun, I have an old .45 at home in my closet."

"I prefer a .45 to a .9 mil," he loaded the magazines and handed the Px4 to her to fire. "I'm old school; I used a .45 in Vietnam and never found anything that I liked better."

She braced her gun hand with the palm of her left hand and wrapped her fingers around the outside of her right hand. Aiming at the target, she squeezed the trigger and felt the slight kick in her hand. She fired off the rest of the clip and placed it on the shelf in front of her. "That's a sweet gun; I can see why the cops are switching over."

"Yeah, it's a little smaller but built better in my opinion." He handed her the Brigadier and

watched how she handled it. "You handle a gun like a cop."

"I was taught by one many years ago, he told me that I had a natural way with guns." She fired off the first shot and checked the new target before finishing off the other rounds. "I'll have to practice some, anyone not four foot wide or better is safe from me." She pulled the target up and looked at the loose grouping in the chest area.

"You're better than some of the people that come in here every week, the perp would still drop with what you've done here."

"You sound like a cop," she grinned and handed him back the Brigadier. "As long as I knock them down, I'm happy."

"So what did you think?" He asked as they went back up to the front of the store.

"Do you have two of the Brigadiers?"

He stopped and felt his jaw drop; it had been a long time since he had sold two handguns that went for over \$800.00 each. "Sure do, I'll throw in two cleaning kits and carrying cases for free."

"I'll need a leather double shoulder holster and six boxes of rounds," she thought for a second and added something else. "Do you have the side saddle shotgun shell holders, it holds six shells?"

"Just got some of those in, we have the slings as well, they hold 55 shells."

"I'll take one of those as well and laser sights for both handguns."

"Do you mind if I ask why all the ammo and weaponry?"

"I'm traveling across country with just my dog and it's just not safe on the road anymore." She pulled her permit to carry a concealed weapon from her wallet along with her District attorneys badge and ID. She grinned when his eyes widened at the gold badge.

"Guess we don't have to worry about the waiting period, not like honest people who buy guns from a place like this are going to go out and commit a crime. Those people buy a gun on a street corner or back alley somewhere, not like I need to tell you this."

"I know all about that all too well, one of the reasons why I'm arming myself so well." She took her purchases out to her car, opened the door and sighed at the sight of Woobie stretched out across the front seat. "Some damn watch dog you are, I could be here to steal this piece of shit car and you would let me." She placed her bags in the backseat and then crawled behind the wheel; she sat for a few minutes to reflect on what she had done in the last few weeks and shook her head. "What else do we need to get before we head back to the motel room?" She thought for a few minutes before pulling out onto the main road, she would check out the mall and see if they had an LL Bean store or something similar. "Ok Woobie, one more stop and we're done for

the day, I should have really thought all this out first before we took off."

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Smootcher rolled onto her back and groaned from the stiffness in her shoulders and knees, they had been working on their bus since early that morning and were still fighting with the ankle restraints and floor mounts. If she could walk, she would go into the house and kick Murphy in her ass. "That's it I'm done, I can't kneel no more, so that means I ain't welding either." She flipped her welders shield up and turned the welding torch all the way off. "How many more do we have to do before we're done?"

Stewie arched her back and whimpered. "I think maybe a dozen or so, I have all the rigs for the handcuffs done, they just need welded to the seat frame." She moved over to her sister and sat down in one of the seats. "Why ain't Murphy helping us, this was all her idea?"

"Uuhhmm...she's in doing the kitchen cabinets, I sorta made a deal with her. She would do the cabinet doors and I'd save us from her and the welding torch. She shouldn't even be allowed to use matches or be anywhere near an open flame."

Stewie snickered as she remembered when Murphy had to explain to one of their brothers that his car was now crispy because she heated up the gas tank while welding new muffle brackets on. "Good thing, a bus would be a big boom compared to a little Geo Metro." She shed her leather gloves and sat thinking for a few seconds. "Do ya think she's burying herself in work so she doesn't think about Judge, I mean look at all the skips she brought in by herself and then getting us this contract with Homeland security?"

"Better her working than sitting around crying all the time, I mean Murphy being a weepy lil troll is just...gross and so un-Whistler like." Smootcher shivered and rubbed her hands together.

"Maybe but she looks terrible, I think we better keep an eye on her, you know to make sure she's not working 24/7."

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"Will you sit your ass down already, you're making me sick watching you run around like an idiot!" Mama said and pointed a finger at Murphy.

"I wanna get all the doors on so this place doesn't look like Katrina came through and camped for a week." She grabbed another door and held it up to the cabinet, she had found that some of them needed the hinges moved or they wouldn't close right. "I think the house is sinking on one end,

the cabinets are way off, may have to jack it up from the basement."

"Let the damn thing sink, now sit down and eat while I get your sisters in here." She went out the back door and shook her head at the blue and white school bus sitting in the driveway; never would she have thought that one of her kids would buy a damn school bus. She had to admit that Murphy had done good with getting them a Government contract and it would boost their already excellent reputation in the bounty hunter business. "All right get your asses in here and eat before Murphy covers the food in sawdust!" She stepped up onto the bus and wrinkled her nose. "What's burning in here?"

"Nothin mama, I was welding." Smootcher hobbled to the front of the bus and whimpered for effect. "My knees are killing me, I need some of those kneepads before I go cripple."

"Stop your whining and get in the house and before I forget, call Jeff."

"Why, when we have to call him it's always bad news." Stewie mumbled. "Probably something about one of the skips Murph took in."

"Nope, something about the new District attorney wanting you guys locked up for something." Mama replied.

"Ooohh so then it is all Murph's fault," Stewie said. "She can call Jeff and see what she did wrong." She grinned and jumped past mama to run into the house and terrorize Murphy.

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"Never again, I refuse to do anything with cabinets ever ever again!" She dropped down into a chair and looked at the last door sitting on the floor. "God damn things must be made by blind men, damn hinges all crooked and shit." She took a drink of her Coke and rubbed her eyes with the heel of her hand. "I need to sleep for about two days and then some."

"I hear that you can sleep all ya want in jail." Stewie said and danced past her sister. "The new DA wants you in orange with a white number across your back."

"Who says?"

"That's what Jeff told mama, you gotta call him ASAP." She dropped down into a chair, gave Stewie her best smile, and pointed at the phone on the table. "Go ahead I wanna hear you scream about being someone's jailhouse bitch."

"In your dreams Stewie," She growled and grabbed the phone. "If anyone's gonna be a jailhouse bitch it's you and Smootcher." She dialed their brother's office number and waited. "Hey Jeff it's me, what did the DA want?"

*"Ohhhh did you piss off the wrong people Murph, you brought in the Sheriff's brother for skipping on a DWI court appearance, he was none to pleased about it and wants you...dead. The DA threw the case out after the sheriff pressured him by jacking him up against the wall and threatening to throw the door on his closet open."*

"For Christ sakes," she slammed her palm down on the table and made Stewie jump. "What the fuck is wrong with the DA, hell, our so called Justice system, that asshole has seven DWI's and he's still running loose!"

*"I know Murph, we pick him up and they turn him loose before we can even get the paperwork started."*

"We need to get that asshole out of the sheriff's office and a DA with some damn balls!" She felt her blood pressure skyrocket along with her temper; she hated nothing more than crooked politicians and cops.

"I agree with you Murph but that will never happen until someone comes along that has more pull than he does, his damn family are the ones who keep him in office."

Murphy started to grin evilly, Stewie, Smootcher and mama knew that her brain was going on overdrive and that just wasn't safe. They looked to each other and backed up into the living room for safety. "I might just know someone who can knock his ass out of office, when's the elections for Jefferson County?"

"In two or three months I think, no ones ever beat him before Murph; I hope this person has deep pockets and a Hell of a reputation."

She gave him an evil laugh. "Ohhhh believe me, this person is richer than Bill Gates and has a Hell of a rep." She hung up and sat with a cocked eyebrow and smirk covering her face. "The asshole is history."

"Who is she talking about?" Mama whispered.

"Don't know but I ain't digging no grave to hide the body." Smootcher said.

"Don't look at me," Stewie whispered back. "Last time I dug a hole the power and cable company wanted to sue me."

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Judge stood beside the bed and looked down at all the stuff she had bought that day, if she kept it

up, she would need a u-haul trailer to haul it. One of the things that she had gotten would be of big help at night; it was an all in one deal with small TV, radio, strobe light, flashlight/lantern combo and tire pump. She had found it at one of the outdoor stores she had wandered in at the mall, no more nights of trying to find something with a small flashlight or being bored with no TV or without the latest local weather information. Taking it from its box, she set it on the floor, broke the box down, and set it aside. Next, were her new Beretta's, she filled all the magazines, slipped the extras into the extra magazine pouches and the last two into her guns. With her guns in the double harness, she placed the cleaning kits into the leather cases and placed the boxes to the side. When she was finished with all her new purchases, she had a pile of boxes to take out to the dumpster. "I'll be right back, stay off my new clothes." She pointed a finger at Woobie and knew it would do no good.

As she went out the door with her hands full, she noticed two men walking in the parking lot. Ignoring them, she went about her way to the dumpster. When she headed back, she saw only one man, what made her uneasy was that he standing near the cars and was looking about. Moving closer to where her room was, she pulled her Koga SD1 from her back pocket and held it in her left hand. She had never actually used the self-defense weapon on a real human but had watched the DVD that came with it. She had to remind herself that it had been years since she had even hit anyone and maybe she should just run to her room and lock the door. As she got closer, she saw that the other man was trying to get her car door open with a slim Jim. "Get away from my car," she strode forward, punched the lookout man in the jaw and shoved him over the hood of the car he was standing by. "Get the fuck out of here before I call the police."

"How about you get the fuck outta here or I'll put you in the trunk?" He said as he moved into her personal space and shoved her backwards. "Now run along or else bitch."

"Bitch..." she raised her left eyebrow. "I hate being called a bitch." She growled right before she struck downward on the man's collarbone and heard a loud crunch. "No one calls me a bitch and doesn't end up in the ICU!" She used a backhanded movement and jabbed him in his solar plexus. "Lights out asshole." As he fell, she came downward with a right cross and heard his jaw break.

"Holy shit lady..."

His partner yelled and tried to run past her, she threw out her leg and tripped him. "You should have run when I said so the first time." She opened her car, grabbed her shotgun and pointed it at his chest. "Move and they'll need a shovel for your remains." Pulling her cell phone from her belt, she dialed 911 and asked for an ambulance and a police officer. She was leaning against her car when police cars and an ambulance showed up. She slowly raised her arms over her head and turned so that the police officers spotlight hit her chest.

"Put the shotgun on the roof of the car, lace your fingers behind your head and drop to your knees!" He yelled while another police officer moved slowly around behind Judge and grabbed the shotgun from the roof of the car. Judge didn't flinch, she didn't want bullet holes in her new shirt. She let the officer cuff one hand and let him move her arms down and behind her back to cuff them together.

"OK, now I'm going to help you up and you're going to stay at the front of the cruiser." He pulled her to her feet and watched as she moved to stand in the headlights.

"I'm so glad to see you guys," The car thief cried. "She's nuts, I thought she was gonna kill us!"

"And just why would she do that," The officer asked and held out another pair of cuffs. "Seems to me that I've hauled you in numerous times before, and I believe it was for stealing cars or stealing items from cars, same goes for your friend there."

"We weren't doing anything, she just came out of nowhere and beat my buddy up and then threatened to shot me."

The officer pushed him down into a sitting position near the front of the car and then checked on his friend. "Need the paramedics over here, this guy is out cold." He turned, saw the slim Jim sticking out of Judge's window and pulled it out by the very tip. "Ohh she just attacked us for no reason, wanna make a bet this has both your fingerprints on it?"

The officer from the cruiser stepped up to Judge and turned her around, seeing the gold badge clipped to her belt he stepped towards her car for the license plate number. "What's your name?"

"District Attorney Judge T. Bloodstone the V. are these handcuffs really necessary?" She was slowly going nuts she hated being restrained. "My ID is in my wallet, just look at it."

"Let me call in your plates and then we'll see about the cuffs."

She would have thought that being a public official they would have treated her differently. "This is just fucking ridiculous, I catch two car thieves breaking into my car and I'm in handcuffs."

"Keep it up and you'll be in the back of the cruiser," The officer spit back. "You had a shotgun pointed at one guy and the other looks like a truck hit him, we could book you on assault."

"And I can bring up charges against them as well as the Police Department, why don't you just call your Sergeant and let him decide if I need to be cuffed like a common criminal." She knew she had gotten nowhere when he got into his cruiser and used the computer to find out if she was lying about whom she was. She leaned back against the hood of the cruiser and watched as the paramedics placed her victim on a stretcher, she grinned when he let out a loud moan and slapped at the one of the paramedics hands. "Hope your mouth gets wired shut ya rotten bastard." She felt the old Judge resurfacing and felt a bit of freedom with it.

"Your license plate checks out," the officer reported and then came around to unlock her cuffs. "What are you doing in North Carolina?"

"Does it matter," she rubbed her wrists and held him with silvery eyes. "A little over 14 hours here and I catch two scumbags breaking into my car; I'm cuffed and treated like a criminal after



calling 911. I can guarantee that I won't spend a minute longer here than necessary."

"Will you be pressing charges?"

"What the Hell for, it's obvious that those two have never and will never see the inside of a jail for longer than it takes the judge to release them to their own recognizance. I can only hope that the next person, who catches them, shoots them instead of retaining them for the police." She took her shotgun from the other officer, locked her car and went back to her room.

He watched her go and shook his head at his partner. "You know your cousins Jim and Larry are gonna get killed one of these days and it'll be their own fault."

The officer who had given Judge the hard time shrugged, he knew it would happen eventually, he just hoped it wasn't on his watch. "That dumb ass better not wanna press charges, I think she'd bury him under the jail."

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"Now I know why the Whistlers scream bloody murder, asshole justice system sucks ass, I hope she knows that it sucks ass in every state." No sooner had she got in her room than someone was pounding on the door. "Jesus fucking Christ what the Hell is wrong now!" She yanked the door open to see the manager with his hand raised.

"I had some complaints from other patrons that you had caused a disturbance..."

"I caused the disturbance, let me tell you something," she raised her voice and her finger to jab him in his chest. "I go outside and find two men breaking into my car, if those patrons were so damn nosey and had enough time to call you then why the Hell didn't you or they come outside to help me or call the police?"

"I don't know what to say..." He flinched when she stepped closer to him and bared her teeth.

"You can say have a good night and the room is free."

"But I can't do that..."

"I'm a District Attorney, one phone call from me and I'll cause all kinds of hate and discontent, got me?"

"Yes ma'am." He stumbled backwards, turned and kept his eye on her all the way back to the office.

"Sniveling little worm," she went back into her room and leaned back against the closed door.

"Sure hope no one calls to see if I'm a DA," she unclipped her badge and tossed it on the bed. "Unbelievable how the justice system fails and so many assholes get to walk the streets, maybe I should have taken the Judgeship and tossed a few hundred in prison." She headed for the bathroom for a shower and thought of what her future could have held if she had stayed in West Virginia. "I could have been the Honorable Judge Bloodstone of Jefferson county circuit court," she sighed and shook her head. "Too late now."

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Murphy came into the kitchen and sat down at the table across from mama; she rubbed her face and placed her elbows on the table. "Mama I need some help."

"And don't I know it, been saying that for years."

"Not that kind mama, I need help with campaigning for an election." She watched as mama stopped pouring coffee and turned to look at her with wide eyes. "I wanna run for Sheriff of Jefferson County."

"Murphy, he's never been beaten before." She handed Murphy her coffee and stood next to her. "Because a Whistler has never run against him, the man is history." She squeezed Murphy's shoulder and gave out a holler that had the drapes moving. "My baby's gonna be Sheriff!"

"I think the elections in a few months; can we pull something together in that short of time?"

"I can pull together just about anything in that amount of time, after all I have an abundance of volunteers." She grinned wickedly and reached for the phone.

Murphy knew all too well what that meant, mama would rope in every available relative, which meant that the house would be Grand Central Station until the very end. "Thanks mama, if I become Sheriff I'm gonna tip this county on its ass and clean house."

"When you become Sheriff, it'll be the best thing that's happened in this county in years, damn corrupt asshole we have now." She took the phone and a pad of paper with her into the living room; she had a mission to get underway. "And the basement is your campaign office, it had better be clean."

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Early the next morning, Judge was in a rare mood. "We are getting the Hell out of this place Woobie, car thieves, helpful employees and spectators. I could have been killed out there and they would have just gone on about looking out their damn doors and windows, rotten sons of bitches." She piled the last of her belongings near the door and went about looking around for anything she may have missed. "Did I get everything?" She looked around and headed back into the bathroom to look it over again. "Ok, now where the Hell am I going to put all this stuff?" She ran her fingers through her hair and stood there looking at the huge pile. Looking down at the clothes she had on, she decided to change into something else and toss what she had on out, including her dress shoes. "I'm doing all of this to change so I'll start with my clothes, kind of stupid to travel in dress clothes to begin with." A few minutes later, she wore new Levi's, work boots and a flannel shirt with the sleeves rolled to mid forearm. She looked in the mirror on the back of the bathroom door and saw a resemblance to the old Judge. Taking all her dress clothes, she placed them inside her old gym bag and set it to the side. "Stop looking at me you bald ass dog, I didn't always dress in suits and such."

After she had packed her car as best she could, she went back into her room, pulled her holsters on and then put on her old hooded sweatshirt. Checking her wallet and pockets, she clipped her badge to the front of her belt and grabbed Woobie. "Time to check out, that asshole better not have charged me or I'll shoot his spineless ass." She put Woobie in the car and then crawled behind the wheel. "Anyone comes near my car, you bit the shit outta them." She stopped right outside the office door and saw the man from the night before trying to hide behind the counter. She went into the office and slammed the room key down onto the counter. "I'm checking out, so get your spineless ass over here."

"Just go, there's no charge." He hid back behind swinging door that led to the small lobby area. "Please lady; just go so I can have some peace."

She gave him a wicked grin and slapped the counter top once more before leaving the office. She jogged back out to her car and jumped in. "OK Woobie, we're going to Atlanta after I drop my old clothes off at a thrift store." It took her a while to find a thrift store and then she had trouble finding her way back to the interstate. Once she found an exit for I-95, it was almost noon. "Wasted almost half the morning getting lost, what would ya say we stop at the next exit and get something to eat?" Woobie gave her a look and dropped down on the seat next to her. "What aren't you hungry? She then realized that Woobie wasn't laying on her favorite blanket and didn't have a treat between her paws. "Ohh Hell, why didn't you say something...almost two weeks ago?" She sighed. "OK, tell ya what, next place we stop I'll buy you a new blanket. New blanket for a new start on life, I'll even get you one of those big ass bones to chew on and you know I've never let you have one of those before because they're so messy."

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Smootcher, Stewie and Murphy stood outside one of the bars frequented by illegal aliens, two of their brothers Steve and Alan stood at the back door with the bus door wide open. They hoped that they would be able to usher them onto the bus without any problem, they had two more of their brothers Billy and Gary inside the bus to help if there was any problem. "Are ya sure we can do this Murph?" Smootcher asked in a low whisper.

"Should, after all, they always run out the back door." She placed her hand on the door handle and waited for Stewie to press the door buzzer that would alert the bartender to open the door. "Now remember, we flash our badges and whoever runs towards the front door we get, the back door the boys get."

"Once on the bus, we check for green cards or work visas." Smootcher added and rushed the door when Murphy pushed it open. "Ohh for shit sakes Murphy," The place had over 100 people packed inside the small bar. "Can you say stampede or maybe run of the bulls."

"Ohh Hell this is gonna be very bad." Murphy said and was about to turn around and leave when Stewie pushed past her and flashed her badge.

"This is a raid, all you people who are here illegally step to the front of the room!" Her eyes grew wide when they all started chattering in their language and then ran for both entrance and exit. "OHH SHIT!" She yelled and fought to stay on her feet. "GET 'EM MURPH!"

"We're gonna die!" Murphy yelled back and tried to block the door so no one could get out.

"Dumb ass, I swear Stewie you're brain dead!" Smootcher pulled her gun, fired a shot in the air and watched as people froze in place. "All you people freeze or I shoot holes in ya and I don't wanna hear no hablo English, ya'll sure as hell understand INS!" That had people fleeing for the back door at double the speed. "That's it run for the back door ya cowards!"

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The Whistler brothers were having a hard time getting everyone who came out the door onto the bus, some of the people got past them but they didn't much care. The other two brothers on the bus gave up on seating people and just started knocking them out as they got on the bus; they had one hell of a pile of bodies near the door. They all knew that if they survived, they would kill their sisters.

Now a riot was breaking out on the bus and they had to resort to using tasers, they were just about to give up when Stewie and Smootcher came running towards the bus. "Ohh my Gods we got to get outta here!" Stewie screamed and pushed her way onto the bus. "Forget them and let's go!"

"Hold on there Stewie," Billy said and tried keeping one of their victims from getting off.  
"Where's Murph?"

"Don't care, she tried ta get us killed!"

"Liar!" Smootcher yelled. "You're the one who tried being a badass and yelled INS at the tops of her lungs."

"You shot a hole in the ceiling and told 'em to run for the back door." All the brothers were now on the bus trying to piece together what had happened inside the bar and where Murphy was. When people tried to get off the bus, one of them slammed the reinforced steel door that separated the front two seats and driver's area from the rest of the bus closed and locked it.

"It don't matter who did what, where's Murph?" Billy asked and started to get off the bus. "Her ass is mine, she almost got us all killed with her asinine idea." He walked towards the back door and used every bit of his 250lbs to force the door open and then shove people out of his way. He stopped, squinted and started shoving people out of his way to get to his sister. "What in the Sam Hell are you doing up there?" He looked up into the rafters and shook his head. "I should just leave you up there; you have no idea what kind of problems we had out back."

Murphy looked down and sighed, she had a good idea what happened out back. "I'm really sorry Billy; can you help me get down...please?" She looked to all the people pointing and screaming something at her in Spanish or Mexican, she didn't know which. "If ya don't help me, I'll fall on your big black bald head!" She was relieved when he climbed up onto the pool table and then helped her down from her perch.

"You're lucky that I like you and it's just not because I'm afraid of mama." He tossed her over his shoulder and ran for the back door, the whole way laughing his ass off because she was screaming. He got onto the bus with Murphy still over his shoulder. "Who wants her?"

"Throw her out the door, she's bad news!" Everyone yelled including some of their captives.

"Gee thanks now would ya put me down, my heads ready to explode." He dropped her into one of the seats and then dropped down beside her.

"OK genius, now what do we do with all these screaming people?"

"We go into Dulles airport and let INS take care of them, all we have to do is bring them in and they'll fax their report to the office. After that they'll direct deposit the check into the company account." She covered her ears from all the yelling and looked to Alan. "Can we get going, I'm going deaf, next thing we're doing is putting up sound proofing!"

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Cruising down Interstate 95 at 75 miles an hour was letting Judge make up for the time she spent lost, she really just wanted to get to a big city and disappear. She reached over, grabbed the tub of handi-wipes and found it empty. She reached into the back seat and searched around for another tub. "I know I have some so where the hell are they?" She turned around for what she thought was a split second; it took only that for her to go off the road and into a deep rut. The wheel yanked from her hand, the car bounced up onto the opposite side of the burn and came to a slamming halt. With this, she slammed forward, smacked her forehead on the steering wheel and snapped back into the seat. Groaning, she ran her fingers over her forehead and came away sticky with blood.

"Fuck that hurt," she immediately looked for Woobie and found her sitting in the back seat. "Please tell me that you didn't get thrown back there." She reached back, picked her up and brought her to her chest. "You didn't get hurt did you?" She ran her hands all down Woobie's bald little body and found nothing wrong. "That has got to be the stupidest thing I've done this week." She kissed Woobie's head and held her tight to her chest. "I'm so tired," she had lost track of how many hours she had been driving but she was tired and starving. "Ok, this is what we're gonna do, find someplace to eat and then either a camp site or a motel."

She pulled the car back onto the road and immediately knew something was wrong, the passenger side wobbled and thumped. "Ohhhh shit, I think we have a flat or I hope that's all it is." She got out and went from tire to tire until she found the culprit. "Fuck me sideways," she wiped at the blood running down her temple. "I can't remember how to do this, where's Murphy or one of the idiots when I need them?" It took her fifteen minutes to unpack the trunk so that she could get to the spare and the bumper jack. Once she had what she needed, she stood and stared at them as if it was the first time she had ever seen them. "How could I have forgotten what to do, it's not like it's changed in all these years; Christ I've had the same car since before I got out of college." She looked at the wreck that she drove and wondered why she had never bought a new one after the one the farmer ruined for her. "Ok Judge, you can do this, just think." She played around with the bumper jack until she got the latch in the right direction and then found the hole in the bumper. "I can do this," she wiped at her forehead with the back of her hand. "If I don't bleed to death first, I really need to clean myself up..." She looked at her dirty blood covered hands and felt her heart beat speed up. "Calm down and breath," she closed her eyes and took a deep breathe. "Wait a minute, you've not been washing your hands every five minutes or done any of your other compulsive things." She wiped at her forehead again and let out a deep breath. "Ok, just change the tire and get on your way you can wonder about what you've not been doing later."

20 minutes later, she had the tire changed and was repacking the trunk, a few minutes later she just tossed stuff in and put the rest of the stuff in the backseat. She was beyond exhausted and had a splitting headache; at that point, all she wanted was to go to sleep. "Ok Woobie lets get out of here," she crawled slowly behind the wheel and slouched in the seat. "I sure hope I put the tire on the right way, it's been years since I changed a tire." She was on the road for maybe 30 minutes when she came upon a rest area sign, pulling off the exit ramp, she continued until she came to the parking lot. Sighing at the sight of the McDonald's golden arches, she heard her

stomach growl. "Here we go Woobie; I'll be right back with lots of unhealthy greasy food." When she tried to get out of her car, she felt every single muscle in her body scream out. She stumbled into the restaurant area and noticed that people were giving her horrified stares. She ignored them and went towards the bathroom, once inside, she looked in the mirror and saw why she got stares.

"Ohh my Gods," she turned the water on, grabbed a handful of paper towels and soaked them under warm water. "Surprised I still have a head left." She looked up into the mirror and gently touched the egg sized knot on her forehead and dabbed at the oozing gash in the center of it. "I need stitches or a butterfly thing," she felt sweat break out on her forehead and felt woozy. She took deep breathes and waited until she felt better before washing her face and hands. It was afterwards that she noticed the blood all down the front of her shirt and spatters on her pants.

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The salesperson at the counter for the small store in the rest area flinched when Judge came towards her; she looked around hoping someone would help her if there were trouble. "Do you have any butterfly bandages or something I can use as one?"

"I'm not real sure; why not just go to the hospital?" The young girl asked.

"I'm not real sure where I am or how to even find a hospital," she dabbed at her forehead again and flinched. "My car blew a tire and I ended up hitting my head when my car slid off the road." She wondered why she was telling this stranger her story. "Does it look that bad that I need to see a doctor?"

"To be honest, yeah it does."

Judge closed her eyes for a few seconds and nodded her head; she had to admit that she would feel better if she saw a doctor. "Can you give me directions to the nearest hospital or doctor?" After getting directions, she went over to where McDonalds was and got food for both herself and Woobie. She ignored the looks she was receiving and went ahead and took her time getting napkins and condiments. "Assholes act like they've never seen an injured person before," she gritted her teeth and felt her jaw bulge. "I'd like to kick all your asses." She mumbled on her way out the door, by the time she got to her car, she was livid. "Ok Woobie, I'm tired of the pricks around here, we're gonna eat and then take off for the nearest place to get some sleep. To Hell with a doctor or hospital, it'll take forever to be seen and I can't leave you in the car." In between bites of food, she kept looking in the rearview mirror. "You are sooo good looking, such a prize, women will fall all over to get away from you." She finished her meal, wiped her hands, face off, and then got out to get rid of the trash. "I need my head examined and for more than the gash and huge ass knot on my head, I should just turn around, go back home and beg for forgiveness." Her shoulders slumped and she dragged her feet back to her car, she was feeling stiffer every minute.

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Murphy sat behind the desk in the bail bondsman office rubbing her eyes; she had been going over the weeks reports and was clearing out the skips that she had brought in. The sound of the Fax machine interrupted her train of thought and had her getting stiffly to her feet. "About damn time, guess we buried you guys with illegals." She read over the report and let out a yell, they had turned only two people loose from the whole bunch. "That is one Hell of a paycheck, mama's gonna fall over!"

"It has got to be quite a few figures to do that," mama said and pushed Murphy in the chair out of the way. "Holy shit, what's all that money from?"

"We cleaned out one of the bars in town for Homeland." She pulled herself to the other side of the desk and propped her feet up on it. "So how's the campaign going?"

"I put in an order at the copy place for some signs, bumper stickers, flyers ya know that sort of thing. All your nieces and nephews are gonna hand out the flyers and put them on telephone poles for you and I got your sister in laws to help with putting the signs up along the roads." She took in Murphy's ragged look and the dark circles beneath her eyes. "Get your ass home, take a shower and get some sleep, you look like shit."

"But mama I have a lot of work that needs done, I have..."

"You got nothing here to do, I'm kicking your ass out of my office, now get out or else." She pointed to the door and had to pull out a tennis ball from her purse as an extra measure of persuasion. "Before I forget, you three at the tennis courts tomorrow at noon."

"But mama, I suck at tennis." She whined all the way out the door. "She just wants ta put bruises on all of us at one time," she thought of Stewie's forehead and winced. "I'll look real good with a tennis ball impression in the middle of my forehead." She shoved her hands deep into her pockets and walked with her head down. When she looked up at her surroundings, she realized that she was at Judges. "Guess I'm home." She pulled her keys from her pocket and walked up the driveway to the front door, before opening it, she looked across the street to her peeping neighbor. Giving him a quick wave, she then went into the house. She flipped the radio on as she went through the house and stopped dead in her tracks with what she heard.

*"We need a change in local Government, so vote Murphy Whistler for Jefferson County Sheriff, paid for by the Whistler campaign organization."*

"Sure aren't wasting any time mama, what's next, TV commercials?" She was afraid to turn the TV on and see her picture flash across the screen with a vote for me thing across her chest. "My



luck it'll be the goofiest picture mama could find." She went into the kitchen, grabbed a beer and dropped down into one of the kitchen chairs. She had been putting all of Judge's mail in a plastic container and after all this time it was getting full, she wondered if she should go through it and make sure that nothing important was there. She had paid the utilities and the garbage pickup but had left all the other stuff alone. "There's got to be a lot of junk mail in there that I can toss." She really just wanted to see if there was anything of a personal nature amongst the envelopes, she wanted to feel close to Judge in a way. "She's not here so what does it matter?" She started going through the mail and tossed the junk mail into the trash, the other stuff she set aside. She came across one envelope from the Governor. "Ohh shit, this has got to be important," she held it up to the light but couldn't see anything. "Open it or leave it alone?" She pulled a quarter from her pocket, flipped it three times and gave up. "Open it; I may have to make a reply to it." She started to read the letter and almost fell from her chair, she dropped it and grabbed the telephone from the wall.

*"House of ill repute and old fat people."* Belinda answered.

"Belinda?"

*"Yep, I'm the ill one, is that you Murphy?"*

"Yeah, I was calling because I have a letter here for Judge from the Governor of West Virginia. He offered her the position of circuit court judge of Jefferson County?"

*"Yeah that was a while ago though, she turned it down...I think."*

"She was offered the circuit court Judge spot and turned it down...is she nuts...that was dumb we all know she is but. This is dated this week, he's offered her the spot again, what am I supposed to do?"

*"I have no idea, I wouldn't even know where to look for her or what to tell the Governor, she's put us all between a rock and a hard place. I wanna kick her skinny ass all over the state."*

"You, me and the rest of the Whistler clan," She thought for a few seconds and grinned. "I have an idea, I'm gonna contact every newspaper I can and place an ad for Judge to contact the Governor, she'll know what it's about if she sees the ad."

*"Geez Murphy, that's gonna take a lot of work to do that, you need any help?"*

"If I draw up the letter will you help me send it out via internet to some newspapers?"

*"Sure count me in; I would do anything to get her back here so I can hang a foot up her ass."*

A fire started to burn in Murphy's gut, she had a feeling about this and got up to go to the computer to start her project. She hoped that Judge would take the Judgeship and come back home; she would sell her soul to the devil to have it come true. "Face it Murph, she has your heart and soul and you would do anything to get her back."

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Murphy woke from clicking under her ear; she lifted her head and flinched from the sound of the keyboard falling back onto the desktop. She looked around, saw that it was early the next morning and groaned. Blinking her eyes, she then rubbed them and hit the mouse so the monitor would come back on, she saw the last newspaper that she had placed the ad in and sighed. "That was how many before I passed out and got letters imprinted on my face?" She looked at her notes and saw that she had sent the ad to 32 newspapers. "I have to get with Belinda and let her know what I've done, I sure hope this works." She rubbed her eyes and got up from her chair to jump from a loud pounding at the front door. "Go away no ones home!" She yelled and then heard her mama yelling that she was going to kick her ass. She ran to the front door and pulled it open before her mama screamed again or broke the door down.

"What took you so...Lord almighty what happened to your face?"

"Keyboard bit me in my sleep, why are you here so early?"

"I brought some flyers over, you can hand them out when ya go places, stuck a sign in your yard to." She handed Murphy the flyers and headed for the kitchen. "You cleaned in here?"

"Yeah, I keep it clean cuz that's how Judge likes it."

"Maybe you should try that in your bedroom in my house; Lord knows it's been years since it was really cleaned." She started a pot of coffee and looked in the refrigerator for food. "Geez Murphy, from the looks of the refrigerator you would think that Judge still lived here." She pulled the freezer open and gave Murphy a glare to make her hair stand on end. "There's no damn food in this house!"

"I know, I went shopping and...it's contagious," she whimpered and dropped her head into her hands. "I bought cleaning supplies; I'm turning into a miniature Judge."

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Judge looked around her and then at the map she had in her hand, she had made it to the next campgrounds in record time, the problem was finding the place to pitch tents. All around her were full-sized campers and huge drivable RV's. "That's what I should have instead of my piece of shit car and my little tent; I wouldn't have to worry about finding a place to camp all the damn time." She got back into her car and looked to Woobie with a shrug of her shoulders. "Let's take one more drive around and if we can't find a spot, we'll drive to a motel or something." She

shook her head when Woobie opened one eye, glanced at her and went back to sleep. "You know I would get more responses from one of those car buddy dummies, I can replace you ya know." She drove around again and found that she would be driving to the next exit, which was almost 30 miles away. This campsite being packed to the gills showed that she wasn't the only cheapskate in the area. "This just really sucks, remind me to fill the tank up and check the oil." She shivered at the thought of getting oil and gasoline on her hands and then thought of being able to take a nice hot shower in the motel gave her a small bit of calm in her own personal storm. In the past days, she had barely survived with only being able to clean up with her moist wipes. She hated the thought of even touching her hair, she knew that it would feel dirty and just thinking about it made her head itch.

"No problem, just take deep breaths and calm down, it's only another half hour at the most." She wiped at the sweat forming on her upper lip and then her heart started to race. "Come on Judge, stop being a wimp ass, this wouldn't bother Murphy in the least." She continued on her way with thoughts of Murphy floating through her head and of mama's cooking. She had never thought too much about food until she had to eat while traveling on the road. She was getting tired of fast food and her own cooking over the small Coleman stove was really close to not being fit for human consumption. "What I wouldn't give for a piece of mama's pie with ice cream on top, Hell, even with Murphy sticking her fingers in it would be good." She continued to daydream and on autopilot, she made it to the next exit and to the parking lot of a Motel 8.

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"What do you mean ya lost the bitch," the Larry hissed at his cousin Jim through the car window. "We've been following her ever since we got out of that mess back home and now you manage to lose her!"

"Hey, this is a big place not to mention its dark as hell and packed with campers and shit, maybe she headed outta here?"

"Get in stupid shit, we'll check the next exit and if not, we're coming back here and you're gonna look again." They looked at each other and growled; they had been on the road for days following Judge and were getting close to tearing each other apart for fun.

"Yeah, well whose stupid idea was it the other day to try and steal cars from the motel on the main strip?"

"Well, who sucks as a look out guy?" He growled back between his teeth and would have slugged his cousin in the side of his head if his arm wasn't in a sling. "If you wouldn't have had your thumb up your ass, I'd have two arms and more teeth!" They drove out of the campgrounds and towards the next exit where they hoped that they could find their prey.

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Stewie and Smootcher stared at their sister and shook their heads; she was nowhere near attractive in her present state. With her bare feet kicked up on the coffee table, head thrown back over the back of the couch and her mouth hanging open. They both shivered at the sight of drool running down from the corners of her mouth and down her chin. "She's such a prize, men and women fight to the death to be with someone like her." Smootcher said with a shiver.

"More like commit suicide so they don't have ta get near her," she looked around the living room for the video camera and then thought better of it when mama stepped into the room. "Wonder how many days she's worn those clothes...that ain't hers?"

"She maybe filthy as Hell but her house is like walking into a sterilization chamber; I think she beat Judge on killing germs." Mama D said and was just amazed at her kid. "Now if she would only take on some of Judge's other traits like taking a shower and changing her clothes more than once a week. Not to mention buy some damn food for that place, she had zilch as far as food goes in that place." She huffed and went into the kitchen to make a pot of coffee; wiped out was too mild a word for the way she felt. She had spent an hour with Murphy at the grocery store and would never do that again. It was like having a two year old in the cart, except a normal kid wouldn't try to sneak Lysol, Pine-sol and any other kind of disinfectant into the cart. More than once she had slapped her hands, made her put the stuff back on the shelf, and then slapped her in the head because of the looks they were getting. She told the gawking strangers that having a mentally challenged child was exactly that, challenging. What she found funny was when the people looked between her and Murphy and mumbled something unintelligible under their breath.

"I just hope she comes around before the election, no one's gonna elect a pig for a sheriff. It would be a hell of a lot better than the crooked asshole we got now but there ain't no way she's gonna embarrass the family by being a filthy pig!" She jumped when Stewie and Smootcher snickered at her.

"Mama, ya know Ling Ling here has some medicine for your problem, ya know talking to yourself." Stewie said and grinned when Vanessa waved a fist at her.

"And the ICU has plenty of beds," Vanessa threatened. "For my three dear sisters that is." She dropped into a chair at the kitchen table and smiled when mama placed a cup of coffee in front of her. "Ok, now what is Murphy's problem that ya called me over here for?"

"Ohhhh I don't think you're the right kinda doctor to help her." Smootcher said with a wicked laugh. "She needs her head shrunk big time."

Mama gave them a raised eyebrow look and reached for the tennis ball sitting on the table, before she could extend her arm all the way out, they were gone. "I called 'cuz I need you to check my blood sugar and pressure, you know my monthly check-up."

Vanessa had forgotten all about her mama's check-up, with the way the hospital was going lately, she was lucky she remembered where she lived. "Ooohh sorry mama I forgot all about that," she took a sip of her coffee and pointed over her shoulder to the living room. "Now what's the problem with Murphy?"

Mama sat down across from her and rolled her brown eyes. "Besides being a filthy little pig, she's just pinning away for Judge. I wish that woman had at least said something or left a note before she left for parts unknown, it's killing Murphy."

"You mean to tell me that our lil Murphy hasn't been able to track her down, you know with all her know how and connections?"

"No I haven't and it's for not trying either, I think she was abducted by aliens." Murphy said close to her sister's ear. "But," she raised a finger in the air and grinned. "I posted in 30 some newspapers that she's supposed to call the Governor about being a real Judge and then," she wiggled her brows. "I'm gonna contact him and see if she called." She knew what mama was going to say and raised her hand to ward her off. "I just wanna know if she's ok," she ran her hands across her face and sighed. "I know that if she wants to come back she will and there's nothing I can do about what her decision is either way. I'm just really worried; she left with just the clothes on her back and Woobie." She got a cup of coffee and leaned back against the counter to blow across the top of the cup. "Not to mention that she's driving a piece of shit car, I swear that thing is older than mama." She winked at her sister and snickered at their mama's grumbling.

"I'm sure that if anything happens to her car, she'll either get it fixed or buy a new one." Mama said. "I can see her driving one of those new Ford Mustangs, maybe a nice metallic red." She nodded her head and sipped at her coffee. "I know one person that wouldn't be getting in that car and that's Murphy," she eyed her. "Judge would really spray you down now, with even stronger germ killers, you reek."

Murphy raised an arm, sniffed and blinked her eyes a few times afterwards. "I can take a hint," she sniffed and pouted. "My own mama saying I reek." She dragged her feet as she left the kitchen and grinned when she heard chuckles coming from the Vanessa and mama. "She knew that she had let her personal cleanliness go to the wayside but with the election preparations, the bail bondsman business and the contract with Homeland security, she was lucky she knew where she was half of the time. There was only one more month before the elections for County Sheriff started and she had a lot to do before then. She would worship at her mama's feet when it was all said and done with, the woman had more done in one week than she herself could have done in a month. No matter where she went, she saw either election signs in yards or her face staring back at her from a store window. She had caught site of two of her nephews slapping bumper stickers under windshield wiper blades and wondered how many were on her brother's car. She moved into her bedroom, grabbed clean clothes and then headed for the bathroom. On her way there, she peeked into Smootcher's room and then into Stewie's. She jumped back from the door and felt her heart slam in her chest when she caught a figure out of the corner of her eye.

"God damn but you scared me..." she peeked back around the corner and let out a loud burst of laughter. "Now this is really talking to myself." She looked closer at the life-sized cutout of her

self and shook her head. "Only those two would do something like this." She headed to the bathroom and had to laugh and when an idea came to her, her eyebrow raised over her left eye as she thought. "I'll have to snoop around and see what I can find and then beg them to do it for me."

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Judge felt a thousand times better than when she came out of the bathroom, she knew she had used a couple hundred gallons of hot water and almost half a bottle of shampoo and conditioner. With her hair towel dried and a towel around her neck, she sat on the bed and flipped through the stations on the TV. When she found a news station, she stopped and then grabbed the phone. Earlier she had found some take out menus in the nightstand and had picked an Italian restaurant; she ordered shrimp scampi, garlic bread and a salad. When her food showed up, she would run down the hallway to the Coke machine. She slipped her feet into the shoes, grabbed her wallet and slipped it back into her pocket. "Are you hungry Woobie, I got you some dog food?" She pulled a small bag of Pedigree chicken and gravy from the grocery bag and waved it at her dog. "It's your favorite; I got some jerky treats for ya to." She poured the food into Woobie's dish and watched as she stretched before she jumped down from the bed to investigate her dish. Judge watched as she sat there, stared at her dish, and then looked up at her. "Either you eat your food or starve because you're not getting any shrimp; I'm not having you breath on me with garlic breath all night long." She jumped when someone knocked on the door and then moved over to the peephole, what she saw made her snort out disbelief. She pulled the door open and looked down at the small white haired man and grinned.

"Don't say it lady," he wagged an arthritic finger at her and narrowed a rheumy eye. "I know I'm older than dirt and I'm a delivery boy, damn pension don't pay for shit and I gotta do this to pay for my medication." He shook his head and sighed. "Don't pay no attention to me, I'm old and I've had a Hell of a day and night." He held out the bags to her and the bill. "That's \$7.50 for the food."

She pulled a twenty from her pocket and handed it to him. "Thanks and keep the change." After seeing a wide toothless grin blossom on his wrinkled face, she placed the bags on the small table near the door, checked to make sure she had the card key for the door and then followed the old man down the hallway to the Coke machine. She noticed that he moved slowly and limped a bit on the left side, she thought it was just horrible how the Government screwed over the elderly. "Sons of bitches should have to go on Social Security and put up with all the bullshit that the rest of the people put up with, damn health care costs have raped the elderly." She had read about the problems the elderly were going through with getting their prescriptions after the president's health care reform. Moreover, how the prescription companies were raking in the money, while people went without the drugs they needed to survive. After she got her Coke, she headed back to her room and her first real meal of the day. Her eating habits were worse now than when she was in college, she wondered how she was able to function at all on the greasy fast food.

When she had set the small table near the curtained window, she saw that Woobie had covered up her food dish with the end of the bedspread and was now sitting at her feet with a pitiful expression on her face.

"Christ all mighty," she rolled her eyes and then handed Woobie a shrimp. "Good thing I don't have kids." She ate slowly savoring the creamy sauce and buttery garlic bread. What came to mind was mama D's cooking and the laughter that rang out from the people around her table. She was regretting many things at this moment but the most was the time she could be spending with the Whistlers, one Whistler in particular. "I should just check myself in to the nearest nut ward; I have just got to be completely outta my mind to be doing all this stupid shit."

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Stewie and Smootcher ran down one isle and up the other to get away from Stewie's aunt, they had been loafing as par usual and she knew it. "How come we just don't quit," Smootcher asked. "It's not like we need the money and with all the skips we've been getting lately I'm lucky I get four hours of sleep." She blinked her eyes and then rubbed at them. "I've used more Visine in the last month then in my entire life!"

"I was thinking the same damn thing," she ran around the end of the shelf and right into her aunt. "We quit...as of right now we quit!" She threw her arms over her head and took a deep breath. "Damn I feel sooo much better, like tons have just melted from my shoulders." She grinned and then ran screaming from the store with her sister right behind her.

"Now what we gonna do Stewie?"

"I wanna go home and sleep until I wake up," she stopped and looked at Smootcher. "I've lost my mind haven't I?"

"I think it's a family trait, don't think we were born with one." She scratched her head and shrugged her shoulders. "See what I mean?" She got into their truck and started the engine. "Think mama's gonna be mad at us?"

"Doubt it, this way we'll have more time to spend with her and get the house the way she wants it." She groaned with realization. "We just went from the frying pan to the fire, slaves...we're gonna be mama's slaves."

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Murphy sighed with relief when she closed the final page of her resume` or what she hoped looked like one. She had spent hours scouring through old folders and such looking for the information she needed to prove to the people of Jefferson County that she was qualified for the job as Sheriff. Most people thought and knew her and her sisters as screw-ups, not many knew that they had gone to college and graduated with degrees and then went to the police academy. Degrees that they hadn't fully used in their chosen professions, not as if they needed to with it being involved in a family business. Now was the time when she hoped that it all paid off for her, she wasn't a young kid anymore by any measure and it was time to start acting like an adult. That thought scared her more than facing some of the badass skips they had brought in over the years, she knew that at her age it was long overdue. "Do I know how to act my age?" She asked herself and fell back on her bed to ponder the question. "Will people like me if I act my age...who the fuck cares, never cared what they thought before why start now?" She laced her hands behind her head and closed her eyes. "One person does come to mind...hell, she comes to mind constantly." She pictured Judge in her minds eye and felt her lips pull into a small smile, even with all that the tall woman had done to her with leaving; she could still make her smile. "I wonder what she'll think of me being the sheriff."

"Probably run screaming off into the night," Smotcher said and dropped down on the foot of her bed. "You as sheriff means packed jails and over worked lawyers and a lot of pissed off criminals and their families." She grinned and clapped her hands. "I am so gonna love it when you kick that bastard outta office and I want you to give his ugly ass daughter a few hundred parking tickets!"

Murphy laughed and rolled to her side so she could see her sister better. "Did she turn you down again?"

Smotcher rolled her eyes and shook her head; she had given up years ago with asking white women out, actually with asking any women out. "Come on Murph, you know that I would have to be absolutely insane to even think of even looking at her..." She snickered and gave her a grin. "I flipped her off and her daddy arranged to have a cop gimme about two dozen tickets yesterday."

"You gonna pay them?"

"Fuck no...the truck was in our driveway. Does the cop really think that it's gonna fly in court, I mean how stupid to ticket a vehicle for being parked in its own driveway." She got up and left but Murphy could hear her ranting still as she went down the steps to the other part of the large house.

"Only two dozen tickets, good thing she didn't moon her as well...I'd give her four dozen for that alone." She curled into a fetal position and went on daydreaming of her future and Judge, until she drifted off to sleep. When she awoke, she felt worse than when she had fallen asleep. It wasn't until she stumbled downstairs and looked at the time on TV that she saw that she had slept for almost two full days. "Ohh for Christ sakes, how come no one woke me up?" She threw her



hands in the air and went into the kitchen to find someone to listen to her rant. "I sleep for two days and no one even cares...Hell, they left me here all by myself." She stomped her foot and planted her hands on her hips. "Fine, just be that way." She wandered around the kitchen until her stomach made a horrible noise. One thing in Mama's house was that there was always food, she could have a feast just from the left overs alone. She had her arms full when the back door opened and in rushed a dozen kids ranging from two-years-old to eight, that meant one thing, the basement was where all the activity was. She wondered if it was too late to run back to her bedroom and feign sleep but that went out the window when Mama tapped her on her shoulder.

"About damn time you woke up," she took in all the food containers in Murphy's arms and shook her magenta curls around her head. "That's not gonna be enough food for you, two days of no food equals a side of beef in your book." She grabbed some of the containers and shook them. "I don't even know what some of this stuff is, could be hazardous...eat this one first." She grinned and dropped the container on the table. "Seen any of the little ones around here?"

"I saw them heading towards the living room, who all's downstairs?"

"The 'I hate soccer moms' team, we have more posters and such for the election, which means you can help after you eat." She took a bunch of Cokes and Pepsis with her as she headed back into the basement. "Don't take all day either and no teasing of the little ones."

"Me teasing them, that's the other two retards...geez I just called myself a retard." She dropped into a chair and started searching through the containers; she pushed some of them way to the side and mentally labeled them as hazardous materials. "Stewie can have those ones; she can eat just about anything and not get sick."

She had just tossed some containers into the microwave when she felt small hands grabbing her knee. She snuck a peek and saw sea blue eyes looking back up at her.

"Want some juice Aunch Murph," the toddler mumbled, jumped up and down and tugged on her aunt's pant leg. "Kissy wips stuff." She grinned up to show her baby teeth and purple stained lips, chin, nose and wherever else she had gotten the juice on.

"Kissy wips stuff huh...guess that means this purple stuff here," she looked around for a cup and snorted when the toddler pointed to the sippy cup hanging from a string around her neck. "I need to do that...with everything I own."

"Mama says I looses my head that why I got a rope on my cup." She jumped up and down and reached for it after Murphy had filled it part way. "Kissy wips stuff...gimme some sugar!" She said in a deep voice that sounded like Mama and pursed her purple lips. Murphy rolled her eyes and leaned down so that she could reach.

"You're gonna leave purple stuff on me aren't cha Abbey?" Abbey gave her the sloppiest kiss next to one from a St. Bernard; she just knew that the side of her face was slobbery and purple. "Thanks Troll, now go be mean to your cousins." She ruffled the curly blonde hair and was still amazed after all these years at all the little curls that adorned the little girls head. Not including

the darker halves (as Mama called them) of the family, Abbey was the only one to have naturally curly hair. As she headed back towards the living room, Murphy saw the glint of a chain hanging way past her knee; she thought it cute at first. "Abbey lemme see your wallet," the wide sea blue eyes and high-pitched squeal had her chasing after the toddler. "You pick pocket, Aunt Smootcher is a bad influence on you!"

"S'not...Grammy is!" She yelled and ran around the couch squealing with Murphy after her. "Aunch Smoo learned me to...rap and Aunch Stew learned me to spit..." She stopped, took a mouthful of juice and faced a terrified Murphy.

"Ooohh nonononono...you do that outside," Murphy looked to all her grinning nieces and nephews and saw that they all sported purple stains on their clothes. "Ya'll came in here to be safe from the spitting troll?" Heads nodded and pointed to where Abbey was shooting a stream of purple juice right at Murphy. "Damn it Stewie, I'm gonna kick your ass." She jumped forward, grabbed Abbey up and rushed her out the front door.

"It's on a roll...the spittin troll..." She jumped around the front porch and tried to rap. "Gonna spits all day...cuz that's my way...bum of the hood...chill."

Murphy covered her face and tried not to laugh at her niece, her jerky little movements as she danced, combined with the stained face and spitting was just too much. "Your mom is gonna be sooo mad when she sees you."

"Hoochy mama...huba huba..." She winked at Murphy and ran back into the house.

"We're all going to hell," she wiped at her sticky cheek and followed Abbey back into the house. "Does anyone say hoochy or huba huba anymore?"

When Abbey looked up at her and opened her mouth, she raised a hand to stop her. "Lemme guess, Uncle Steve taught you that?"

"Uncle Weve says 'Who the Hell took my beer!'" She ran off when she heard her mother calling her name.

"Just lovely, another juvenile delinquent Whistler, now all she needs to know is how to drive a car."

"Ohhhh don't you say that," Carla, Abbey's mother and one of the adopted Whistlers said. She ran her fingers through her daughter's curls, covered her small ears and rolled her brown eyes. "You would not believe what I go through after she's been with her uncles, the other day she came in the house covered in grease. She had a screwdriver in her back pocket and nuts and bolts in her front pockets, I found those after I washed clothes. What a lovely sound in the dryer that was, I thought the thing was falling apart. Anyway, the rest of the night all she kept saying was 'God damn cata verter sucks ass; rip it off, useless piece a shit!'"

Murphy couldn't help it, she busted out laughing and laughed harder when Abbey took a big mouthful of juice and dribbled it on her mother's feet. "Just think what mama went through with all of us, double it and that's your payback." She laughed and slapped her hands together. "I'm never having kids; it'll be a worse punishment for me!"

"I said that to, I just wish that her dad could have seen her." She pulled Murphy's wallet from Abbey's pocket and handed it to her. "She carries Danny's wallet around with her at home; it has his old driver's license, military ID and some old pictures in it." She wiped at her misty eyes and gave Murphy a small strained smile. "I miss him...I just wish I had known I was pregnant before..." She stopped and shook her head. "Let's change the subject of 'I should have done' is old and needs to be kept in its little room." Abbey's father had been Carla's high school sweetheart, after high school, they had gotten a small apartment in town. He worked as a mechanic for the Ford dealer while Carla worked part time as a bank clerk; they had no plans for marriage and just wanted to take life day by day.

One day Danny came home and dropped down at the kitchen table with a worried look on his face, he handed Carla a piece of paper with the Ford logo on the top. In not so many words, they had laid him off. He tried to find another job, and looked for three months. He did the only thing he could; he enlisted in the Marines to serve his country and family. Months later, they were all at the airport watching him get on a plane to S. Carolina for boot camp. When he graduated, the Whistlers were all there. They took up one whole section of the parade ground and outnumbered the Marines graduating that day. None of them was prouder then when they saw him in his dress blues for the first time, gone was the boy and now stood a man. After his leave time, he received orders to San Diego for training and from there he would then go on to Kuwait.

There wasn't a day that the family didn't worry about him being over there, the news was terrifying to begin with and Danny being in the middle of the crisis over there didn't help. Two months after Danny had arrived in Kuwait, Carla answered the front door to find a Navy Chaplain and a Marine MSgt in full dress blues on her doorstep. That day will forever be in everyone's memory; his name now graces a spot on the granite memorial wall in the small Charlestown Park. It was a week later that Carla discovered that she was pregnant, the Whistler's all pulled together and made sure that the new addition would want for nothing. Danny was an orphan and had no family except for the foster parents he had while growing up. To keep a part of him with his daughter, Carla named her Abigail Daniela Whistler. Everyone called her either Abbey or the troll, depending on her temperament of the day. She was a hellion coming into the world and has just gotten worse. One thing, Carla was not looking forward to the day she started school.

"Time for me to get the troll home and try and get the grape juice stained face and everything else she has touched clean." She looked down and just groaned. "I swear they just had to switch kids on me when I was in the hospital," she pulled Abbey's shirt down from where it was over her face and head. "We couldn't have been this bad...could we?"

"Ohhhh you were bad but none of you kids was as bad as the troll there," Mama said and handed her a handful of wet ones as she went past into the kitchen. "I think she's Murphy's evil twin incarnate."

"Hubadah...hubadah...hubadah!" Abbey chanted and stuck her tongue out at Murphy. "Women with big tits are best!" She danced at her mother's feet and spurted more sayings. "Why buy cow...gets milk free."

"Ooohhh I'm gonna kill some men," Carla growled under her breath. "I get this after about ten minutes of her being with one of our dear brothers."

"Ohh ya should let her be around Stewie and Smootcher so you can compare which influence is worse."

"No thank you, just thinking of that makes my head hurt."

"Motion of ocean baby!" Abbey yelled and wiggled her hips.

Murphy laughed hysterically as Carla tried to cover Abbey's mouth on the way to her car. "Just say she has Tourette's syndrome or she's possessed by a demonic old man." While Carla was strapping her into her car seat, she was blowing kisses and waving her hands at anyone who happened by, her rude comments were stifled behind her mother's hand.

"Do me a favor and beat Steve up when you see him; he's to blame for most of this behavior. He's been coming over to help with getting the new wiring done in the basement and of course guess who his tool hound is?" She pointed a finger at Abbey and blew out a breath. "She imitates Stevie Wonder now, just great." She watched as Abbey closed her eyes, smiled and leaned from side to side like Stevie Wonder. "What's next corn rows?"

"Blonde Dreadlocks." Murphy snorted and waved as Carla got behind the wheel and pulled away from the curb, she couldn't remember her brothers teaching any of the other kids the stuff they were teaching Abbey. She wondered if it was because she didn't have a father and they were trying to make up for it in some way. "They sure ain't the right father figures that's for damn sure, turning a little girl into a pervert like me." She strutted into the house with a crooked grin on her face.

"You think that was bad," Mama questioned. "I smacked her behind earlier and she yelled 'harder! When she starts school, she's gonna have her own chair out in the hallway that's for sure."

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Judge rubbed her eyes and groaned from the stiffness in her shoulders and neck; she had been driving for what seemed days when in fact it was about nine hours. She had woke at almost ten o'clock that morning and panicked at first. Then it hit her that she had no place to be except on

the road to where ever. She had just lay in bed and stared at a still snoring Woobie until her stomach growled. After a shower, she dressed and gathered up her personal items that she had brought into the room with her. She was getting quicker with packing the car, not really packing but tossing stuff in the back seat and or trunk was more like it. She was reverting to the old judge at warp speed and she hadn't even noticed it. Grabbing the CD folder from where it sat between her and Woobie, she slid a CD out and placed it into her portable CD player. "Next car I get, I want a real CD player that's built into the damn car. I'm tired of this shit; damn thing falls off the seat and..." She looked to her dog and rolled her eyes. "I'm gonna get me one of those car dummies cuz you sure as hell don't pay no attention to me." She scratched her jaw and tried to remember what she had been ranting about. "Right...god damn cd player...I want a real dashboard clock to!" She looked at the old watch she had buckled around part of the steering wheel and smirked. "Maybe a nice sports car so I can pick up a certain blonde and not feel like a total nerd."

Woobie sat up, stretched and began to bark with ear piercing tones; that were Judge's signal to find the nearest rest area or go deaf. Not more than five minutes later, she saw a sign for a rest stop and moved over to the far right hand lane. It was already quite late and she knew that she should have been looking for a place to camp for the night. What she was hoping was that she would be able to get to her destination instead of spending one more day on the road, New Iberia Louisiana was about 100 miles away and that's where she wanted to be. With a jaw-breaking yawn, her mind was made up; they would camp for one more night and start first thing in the morning. Luck was on their side for once, she had seen a sign for a campground not three miles down the road. She hoped that she could find a spot to pitch her tent, sleeping on the seat was not something she wanted to do. She had napped a few times on it and suffered for hours from where the springs had left deep indentations in her hip. After putting Woobie's leash on, she took her to the designated dog area. Lord have mercy if her dog happen to pee on a spot of grass not designated for that purpose, that had happened once so far and was told the good lord would make her pay for it.

"I hope the rotten son of a bitch steps in dog shit every morning before getting into his car." She mumbled to herself and grinned evilly with the picture of the man gagging from the smell of dog shit. "With my luck it'll be me that it happens to," she looked down to make sure that it didn't happen, that was all she would need to round out her day. "Hurry up Woob's; I want to get out of here."

Picking up Woobie, she headed back to her car and climbed behind the wheel, she was not looking forward to putting up the tent. She was glad that it might be the last night of camping and having to cook on her small Coleman stove. She had no idea what she would do with all the extra propane tanks she had for the thing, maybe give them to any campers she came across at the campgrounds. The rest of the stuff she would hold onto, you never know when you might need something like a good lantern or a sleeping bag. She could remember nights when the electricity went out and she had no way of seeing around her house besides a flashlight and no way to heat water with her electric stove. She would use her laptop once she had set up camp to scan the Iberia area for a house or apartment to rent and then figure out exactly what she would do afterward. She hadn't really thought of what she would do once she got down there, she hadn't even thought of why she picked New Iberia as her destination.

She pulled up the off ramp to the camping area and noticed right off that it was completely vacant; she thought it strange at first but then realized that most people would just keep driving the extra fifteen miles to the next exit and motels. Finding a spot that wasn't too far from the entrance but not in direct headlight range of it either, was easy with it being empty. She had on countless times woken from headlights scanning her tent or the sound of a vehicle idling right in front of it.

She pulled what she needed from the back seat and the trunk and with in minutes she had her tent up. She then transferred bags and boxes to the tent and then searched for the small box that held her small satellite dish she used for highjacking a wireless internet connection. Next, were her weapons, she never left them in the car after that time at the motel; she didn't need anyone getting a hold of one of her guns and using it to rob a store or anything. She pulled her double shoulder holster on and checked to make sure the safety's were on, it sure wouldn't look good if she shot herself in the leg or anything. Placing her shotgun so it leaned against her rolled sleeping bag, she went back to her car to see if there was anything else, she needed at that moment or was forgetting all together. She saw her small combo radio unit and grabbed it from where it sat inside the trunk, she had gotten used to falling asleep listening to the radio. With a deep sigh, she went into the tent and went about getting things set up, she did this out of habit; most times, she spent a few days just at a campsite.

"This is dumb," she looked to the pile of stuff she had near the tents door. "I'm leaving in the morning but I've dragged all this shit in here." Shaking her head, she set up her tent as she did any other time, it really didn't matter anyway, she wasn't on a timeline or anything. Twenty minutes later, she was trying to clean herself up with moist wipes. Gone were the tremors she usually got when she was dirty, she had gotten to the point where she just didn't care anymore. Mostly because there wasn't a damn thing she could do about it and stopping at every available area to wash up, became aggravating. Once done, she dressed in old sweats, a clean tank top and slipped her tennis shoes back on. Slipping her holsters back on and clipping her badge to her waistband completed her strange outfit, she found out that if people thought of her as a vacationing cop, they kept their distance. Not to mention that she felt better armed with her pistols after what had happened in the past and she had no interest in repeating it.

"Well Woobie, let me see what I can find as far as a place to live or maybe a bed and breakfast type place until I can find a permanent thing." She booted up her laptop and moved the small dish until she got a good strong signal for her wireless setup. It was the best thing she had done when ordering her laptop, she had gotten tired of the modem and phone cord deal after she tripped over it and yanked her laptop onto the floor. She had gotten the small dish from a less than lawful website but didn't much care, she paid for her ISP so it wasn't like she was stealing anything. She went to one of her bookmarks for a newspaper in the New Iberia area and then went to the classified ads for apartments. After writing down the phone numbers and addresses, she shut down her laptop and put it back into its carrying case. She would make the calls first thing in the morning before they left and hopefully, she would have a place to look at by the time they hit town. She looked at her watch and saw that it was past eleven o'clock; she removed her holsters but kept them close to her side. Lying back on her sleeping bag, she waited for Woobie to join her before she flipped the small light off on her radio combo unit. "Ok Woob's, no snoring

tonight or kicking me." She wrapped one arm around her small dog and fell into a light sleep.

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"This is our lucky night," Larry's gruff voice forced through his clenched teeth. "Now we can pay that bitch back for all the trouble she's caused." He had to eat all his meals in liquid form because of having his jaws wired closed after she broke his jaw; he had tossed his sling out the window out of frustration and knew it was a mistake, the pain in his shoulder was worse without it. "Look there Jim, there's her car." He pulled the car to an area where it would be hard to see it and waited for Larry to get out. "Now remember the bitch has a shotgun, just get in and haul ass, I'll wait down at the end of the ramp."

"And what happens if I can't get into the damn thing, she may have an alarm on it now?"

"Fat chance in that, an alarm costs more than the damn piece of shit car." He jabbed a finger at the car and narrowed his eyes. "Get your ass moving already dumb fuck." He didn't even wait before he backed up and went back the way they had come.

"Mother fucking asshole," Jim growled under his breath. "I should just shoot him and get it over with." He walked slowly to Judge's car and looked around to make sure that she wasn't standing anywhere in the area, he had no wish to end up dead from her hands. He moved over to the drivers side of the car and tried the door, he snorted when he found it unlocked. "Dumb bitch," He said in a low whisper. "Serves her right to have her car stolen." He leaned down under the dashboard and searched for a way to get to the wires so he could hot-wire it, it was easier to fix wires than to replace the ignition in a stolen car. He cursed under his breathe, he couldn't maneuver under the dashboard because stuff was in his way, he started tossing stuff from the seat and floor out of the car.

Woobie started a low rumbling growl, moving to where she was sitting on Judge's chest, she bared her teeth and growled some more. The small amount of peach fuzz down the center of her back stood on end and her growl became loud enough to wake Judge. "Now what...I swear you growl at every single noise you hear." She said in a thick voice and tried to go back to sleep. That was not about to happen with her dog now bouncing on her chest and snapping her teeth at the air. "Ohh for crying out loud Woobie have you finally gone insane?" She watched her and decided that maybe there was actually something outside this time. "Alright already I'll look, but I'm telling you that this had better not be another false alarm. Three in one night is quite enough, I'm gonna stuff cotton in your ears from now on." She grabbed one of her pistols and headed towards the tent flap, as quietly as she could, she unzipped it part way and looked out. She couldn't be certain in the darkness but it looked like her car door was open, she unzipped the flap all the way and crawled out to stay in a crouch.

Moving slowly, she stopped a few feet from her car and then panicked. There was someone in her car and she had no idea what to do, she felt her pistol in her hand but knew she just couldn't

shoot someone. "Don't move asshole!" She yelled and raised her pistol in front of her. "Put your hands where I can see them or I'll blow you away!"

"Fuck off bitch!" Larry yelled back and flinched from the shock he got from the wires he just twisted together; he touched them to another wire and grinned when the car started. He stayed leaned over in the seat and pushed the gearshift to drive while moving his foot to the gas pedal. He jumped with the sound of her pistol firing and hit the gas pedal. He knew he was in trouble when the car crept forward at a slow speed and came close to stalling. "Fuck me I'm a dead man!"

"Fuck me sideways!" She said and took off towards her car, she had just grabbed the top of the door when the car jumped forward and picked up speed. She hung on and tried to get her pistol trained on the man stealing her car. She let out a loud yell when the door closed on her left hand and she was literally running beside it. Before she could do anything, she fell against the side of the door and felt the rough surface of the ground biting at her, she then began praying for a quick death. The car picked up speed as it made its way towards the exit and then it screeched to a halt, the door opened and she felt her body drop to the hard pavement. Blinking back tears and the blackness that threatened her, she realized that she still held her pistol still in her other hand. Raising it and pointing it in what she hoped was the right direction, she emptied the clip and then fell still.

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With the first shot still ringing in his ears, Larry shook his head and then grabbed at the side of his left thigh. He knew that she had hit him but didn't know how bad it was, he just knew it burned like Hell and he was close to crying. It was the other shots that pelted the car and the bullets that bounced around inside the car that really had him worried, he sighed with relief when he felt no other burning in his body. "Missed me that time bitch!" He yelled and then felt his body start to shake with the loss of adrenalin and just plain fear. He saw his cousin up ahead and veered off the road to pass him on the driver's side; he jammed the gas pedal down and felt the car shift into over drive.

"Son of a bitch!" Jim yelled. With the way that Larry had torn past him and the way he was driving like a maniac, he knew that they were in deep shit. "That stupid fucker must have gotten caught," He pulled out and started after him, he then noticed the sparks flying out from under the car and swore he could smell gasoline. He got up beside him, blew the horn and pointed for him to pull over. To his amazement, he shook his head and increased his speed. Pulling back behind him, he stayed close and kept flashing his high beams at him; he hoped that he pissed him off enough to make him pull over. "God damn it you fucking moron pull the fuck over!" He screamed at the tops of his lungs and kept flashing his high beams and blowing the horn. His heart slammed in his chest when he saw an orange glow erupt from the back of the car and then a burst of flames shot back and covered his hood and the windshield. He screamed, covered his face and felt his car lifted in the air and a hot torrent of air cascade over him. His world was crashing all around him with the tearing sound of metal, explosions and the white-hot heat that



stole his life in seconds.

Flames shot straight up into the night and scorched the air; the sounds of separate explosions rocked the ground and spit parts of flaming debris into the air. If it went unnoticed, it would be an amazing occurrence.

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Murphy walked into the makeshift office in the basement, the noise had her head spinning, she had no idea that a dozen people could make so much noise on the phones. "Mama what is going on?" She looked around and saw all the relatives waving at her.

"They're calling the rest of the Whistler clan and making sure that they get their asses to the voting booths," she grinned so evilly that it sent shivers up Murphy's spine. "If they don't show up and vote, they get stuck with Smootcher and Stewie for a solid week."

"Do Smootcher and Stewie know of this?" She knew that it didn't matter to those two as long as there was free food and cable TV.

"Yep, it was their idea." She wrapped an arm around Murphy and gave her a hug. "You're gonna win this hands down, people are tired of the ways things are handled around here, new blood is just the thing this town needs, not to mention a hard ass like you to enforce the law." She gave her daughter a kiss on her temple and went back to organizing her election. There was only a week left before the public went to the ballot booths and determined Murphy's future, she sure hoped she could handle being in office and being able to make good on all the promises she had made. She sure as hell didn't want to be like the asshole she was running against, he made the same promises every year and never made good on any of them, he was just like every other politician that ran for office. Climbing back up the stairs, she went through the living room and out the front door. What she didn't find was the truck or her mom's car, she wondered where her sisters were and what kind of trouble they were getting into without her. That was one of the things she missed lately, this was the first time in their lives that they hadn't spent almost every waking hour together or at least in the same place.

"I'm bored...don't know what to do and I'm talking to myself again," She looked up from where she was standing on the front porch to see Carla pull up, she smiled and gave her a wave. "Won't you be glad when this is all over with?"

"Not really," she said as she got out and moved to the passenger side to get Abbey. "The tax office is slow right now so my boss said to take the rest of the day off," she shrugged her shoulders and placed Abbey on the ground. "He still pays me so I don't care."

"Wish I had that kind of boss," she snapped her fingers and grinned. "I am that kind of boss, well mostly I am except when it comes to certain brothers of ours." She ran her fingers through

Abbey's curly hair and looked down into her devilish face. "Have you been bad today?"

"Yep." She showed her baby teeth in a full grin and went into the house.

"I swear I'll be in a nuthouse before she hits kindergarten, while I was making lunch, she took my vacuum cleaner apart." She sat down on the porch swing, leaned back and closed her eyes. "Damn Steve left his toolbox in the kitchen and she decided to use his tools for no good."

Murphy shook her head and groaned. "She's only two and a half, what happens when she hits three?"

"Hopefully by then she'll be able to put the stuff back together, did I tell you about all the nails she pounded into the wall?" She rolled her eyes and groaned. "She pounded about a dozen ten penny nails into her bedroom wall before I caught her, she can now patch walls with the best of them."

Murphy busted out laughing; she could just see Abbey with a putty knife, wall mud and an evil glint in her eyes as she cussed like a sailor. She had told Carla when Abbey was born that she had an old soul; the little girl was proving it everyday. "I'm gonna head down to the bail office, I can take her with me, maybe wear her little ass out so she passes out from exhaustion."

"Ok, but take some aspirin with you, she'll give you one hell of a headache." She winked. "Steve has been teaching her to sing, I hope you like Kenny Chesney." She laughed all the way into the house.

"Fine with me, hope Carla likes Melissa Etheridge." She grinned and couldn't wait to start teaching her niece the finer things about music.

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Stewie had been checking the company mail when one of them caught her eye; she opened it and covered her mouth to keep her gasp from alerting Smootcher. It didn't work, Smootcher had been looking directly at her and was now alarmed, her sister's expression added to her worry. "Ok, what is it?" She got up from her chair, went around to the monitor and started to read the e-mail. She sunk to her knees and had to hold onto the desktop to keep from falling over. "Ohhhh my Gods...are we gonna tell her?"

"Not me," Stewie shook her head. "We can't, not this close to the election...we'll tell her afterwards." She hit print and after it printed out, she deleted the e-mail and then deleted it from the trash file. She wanted to make sure that Murphy didn't find it because she had a habit of looking at deleted mail in the trash folder. "I'll give this to mama and see what she says; she folded the paper up and shoved it into her shirt pocket.

"You know this may very well kill her, I mean Judge taking off almost did it, what's she gonna do when we tell her that she's...dead?" She shivered and collapsed onto the floor with a thud. "I can't believe that she got killed in a car accident...I mean she drove like an old woman."

Stewie got up from the chair on shaky legs and stood over her sister with tears in her eyes. "Let's go see Jeff; he can get a copy of the police report easier than we can." She helped her sister to her feet, with tears streaming down their cheeks; they left the bail bondsman office. They cried for the loss of a friend and for their sister, they knew that Murphy would fall apart once she found out; they hoped that she wouldn't go off the deep end. "This is bad...I just don't know what to say or think."

"Me neither, we've never had a friend die before." Smootcher said and wiped tears from her face. They got into the truck and sat staring out of the windshield with tears streaming down their faces. "We gotta tell Belinda," she sniffled and wiped at her face. "She'll have to get a hold of the Governor and let him know..."

"Ohhhh damn, the judgeship and everything." Stewie closed her eyes and shook her head. "This just fucking sucks ass."

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Two days later, State police cars were still at the scene of the accident not three miles down the interstate from the campgrounds, none of the officers had ever seen anything like it before. The badly incinerated cars that they had hauled away were of no use for their investigation and if not for a few pieces of paper and a partially burnt license plate from one of them, they would have no idea who the owner was. It came as a shock when the officer typed in the license plate number and saw that there had been an APB on it a while back. He had blown out a breath when he saw that the owner was a district attorney, he immediately called the information in to his chief. He would let the higher ups take care of informing the relatives, he always hated that part of his job. He looked up when the fire chief came over, leaned on the hood of his cruiser and wiped at his soot-covered face.

"What we think happened is the car in front caught fire, exploded and blew the one behind it to hell." He pulled a piece of metal from his pocket and held it out to the cop. "That's from one of those small propane bottles, you know like you use on a Coleman stove. We found some other stuff that was lying all along the road; the muffler casing has a hole in it."

"Nothing out of the ordinary, bet there's a bunch of holes in the one on this cruiser." He cop said and shrugged his shoulders.

"Not unless someone was shooting at you," He cocked a silvery eyebrow at him. "We found

other holes on what's left of some of the parts, I think the person in the other car was having target practice and he hit one of these propane bottles and that's what caused the explosion. Either way, the person in the first car died instantly."

"She was a district attorney from West Virginia, chief is gonna contact her family if she has one and who ever put out the APB on her." He rubbed his tired eyes and hoped that they could all go home soon. "Are you guys all done then, I'm exhausted and my wife is gonna give me the third degree on this one?"

"Not much we can do out here, that fire burned so damn hot that the road crew is gonna have to come out and fix the melted asphalt. Only other time I saw anything like it or close to it was when a gas tanker blew, there must have been a hell of a lot of propane and other accelerants in one or both cars." He tapped the roof of the cruiser and headed back to where he had his truck. The cop rubbed his tired eyes and yawned, he hoped he never seen another accident like that one again, even though there were no bodies, he could only imagine the terror of dying by fire.

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A low pain filled moan came from dry cracked lips, eyes tried to open but didn't. A soft puff of warm air and a whimper came from Woobie as she lay across Judge's chest; she had been guarding her ever since she fell unconscious. "Woob's?" A low raspy voice came from between Judge's lips; if a dog could look relieved then that's how Woobie looked at that moment. "Are we dead...cuz I feel like it?" She tried to lift her head and let out a hiss, with each small muscle flex, she felt like someone was filleting her to the bone. She had no idea how long she had lain there or why no one had come along and helped her. She finally was able to lift her right hand and run it across her sore face; she could feel dirt and grime on her skin but couldn't figure out why she couldn't open her left eye. "I need help Woobie," she groaned and tried to roll onto her side. "I'm hurt real bad." She was finally able to roll onto her side but it felt like it had taken hours and she was exhausted and sweating heavily. When she tried to get up, she felt extreme pain course through her entire body. She saw stars and her ears rang when she put weight on her left hand. Raising it close to her face, she saw mangled fingers and dried blood through slits, it was then that she remembered what had happened to her.

"I'm amazed that I'm still alive." She mumbled and tried once again to get up, she settled on a sort of dragging crawl on her right side. She had figured out that her left side had taken the brunt of the damage and wondered just how bad she actually was. "How come no ones come by here..." she stopped from exhaustion and rolled to her back to rest. She blinked her one eye and sniffed the still air. "Smells like someone was cooking something on a grill...with gasoline." A long time later, she made it back to her tent and fell across her sleeping bag in more pain than she had ever felt before. She fell into a deep exhausted sleep with Woobie lying across her chest.

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Mama wiped tears from her cheeks and looked to her two daughters with their tear stained faces, she had called Jeff to confirm the e-mail and the State police report. She had no idea how they were going to tell Murphy but she knew that it would have to wait until after the election. As mean, as it seemed to do such a thing, she knew that if Murphy found out the dreadful news, she would call off the election. "Not a word of this to anyone," she folded the paper up and tucked it into the envelope that contained the official police report. "Once the election is over, I'll tell her." She dropped her hands into her lap and ran her fingers across the envelope. "This is gonna kill my little Murphy," she looked up and saw that they were wiping fresh tears from their faces. "I want you two to go down where the accident happened and get any personal stuff that was Judge's and bring it back."

"You just wanna get rid of us so we don't fall apart in front of Murph." Stewie said and wiped at her face again.

"You're not as dumb as you act," she got up and went over to the bookshelf, after a few minutes of searching, she came back with maps. "Take these with you, that way you'll only have an 80% chance of getting lost."

"Hey we ain't that bad...anymore." Smotcher said as she took the offered maps. "We stopped listening to Murphy's directions and all is well on the road again." She grabbed Stewie by the front of her shirt and pulled her towards the steps. "We'll take off as soon as we get packed," she stopped and turned back to mama. "The boys are gonna have to take over the INS run for us."

"Don't worry about that, I'll take care of it." She hoped that she would be able to keep it together in front of Murphy, if not, all Hell would break loose."

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Judge moaned and forced her eyes to open, she had the strangest idea that she had been sleeping for a very long time. Moving her head to the side, she winced from pain and pressed her right hand to her forehead. She remembered something about her car and firing one of her pistols; hazy visions danced before her and brought a groan. "I am so fucked," She said with a raspy voice. "She trailed her hand down her body and came upon her pistol tucked into her waistband. She tugged it free and gasped from where the metal had stuck to her skin and again from sitting up. Her body felt raw and pretty much like a dump truck ran her over a few hundred times. She looked down at her legs with blurry eyes and became alarmed with the sight a bloodstained left pant legged, she hissed when she tried to bend that leg. With out thinking, she placed her left hand down to try and push herself up and let out a yell. Clutching her hand to her chest, she felt tears flow from her eyes to wash down her dirty cheeks. Long minutes later, she looked at her mangled hand and knew she had to get medical attention or die right there in her tent. She turned her head when a slight sound came from outside the tent, she breathed a sigh when Woobie came

hopping in backwards. She wondered why until she saw that she had a food lion bag in her mouth.

"What did you find Woob's? She asked and pulled the bag over to sit beside her. "Ohh I so need this, you have no idea." She pulled one of the bottles of water from the bag and struggled with the cap, she ended up using her teeth to get it free. After drinking half the bottle, she felt a little better but her body was screaming from pain. "First aid kit Woob's, where is it?" She scooted along the floor to where she had placed her bags and searched until she found the small first aid kit. "What I really need is a huge bottle of peroxide and a morphine drip." Dumping the bag onto the tent floor, she saw that she really didn't have much. She lay back and struggled out of her sweats and then her shirt, with the first real look at her left leg, her eyes rolled back in her head right before she fell over.

She came to a short while later and knew that no matter what, she would have to deal with her injuries and then try to make it down to the interstate for help. She washed the worst of her injuries as best she could without using all of her water and then dressed them with the entire tube of antibiotic and small 4x4 gauze pads held in place with band-aids. "Fuck if it isn't like putting duct-tape on the hole in the Poseidon." Gazing into her small travel mirror, she cleaned the gash in her left eyebrow and washed away the blood on her face and neck. What she really needed was a hot shower and a few thousand sutures and maybe a skin graft or three. When she was done, she swallowed six aspirins and lay back on her sleeping bag. She was starving but in too much pain to try to fix anything to eat, not to mention, that she felt nauseous at the same time. She would not have thought that it was possible but now knew it was. Sleep claimed her minutes later and she never saw Woobie lay down next to her bag of dog food and chew a hole in the side of it.

The next morning she blinked her eyes open to see the sun shining in through the open tent door, she groaned and rolled to her side. "Ok Woob's, we gotta try and get out of here before I can't move at all." She rolled to her side and grabbed one of her bags that contained some of her clothes, finding a clean shirt and a pair of loose sweatpants; she struggled and was able to dress. What made her feel extremely uncomfortable was that she wore no underwear or a bra. Taking a deep breath, she moved over to the tent flap and got to her good knee. She found it impossible to get to her feet and looked for something to help her up. The only thing that she saw was a stick about ten feet away, it seemed more like miles to her slow progress and aching body.

An hour later, she stood down near the entrance to the campgrounds leaning against a steel bar that closed the area off. She knew that the thing had been open when she got there and that meant that the assholes who stole her car had to have moved it across the entrance. It explained why no one had come into the place since she had gotten hurt, she shook her head and winced. "Ok, now let's see if I can flag someone down." She looked to her feet to see Woobie looking up at her with strange expression on her small furry face. "Don't look at me like that, I know I'm pretty ugly but what else am I supposed to do?" She hobbled closer to the road and waited for the next car to come by, when one did, she waved and watched as it just kept on going. She stood there for hours with out even one car slowing down; she did have a few of the assholes throw beer bottles at her and other various objects.

"That's it, I'm gonna shoot someone!" She yelled and hobbled back up to her campsite. On the way back, she would have kicked herself if possible. "I have my cell phone...fuck me sideways!" She yelled and growled from the pain shooting through her head. "It was in my god damn car and it's who the hell knows where," she gritted her teeth and felt her anger growing by the second. "I lost a lot of shit when he took my car, he's probably making all kinds of long distance calls on my phone and getting my laptop full of spy ware and," she stopped and then remembered that her laptop was in her tent. "I can e-mail someone...Murphy; I can e-mail Murphy for help!" She tried to move faster and gave up when bright colors flashed before her eyes. Once she made it back, she opened her laptop, turned it on and watched as it booted part way before dying. "Nonononono...NO!" She tried again and watched as the lights flashed once before going out for good. "This isn't happening, this is all an awful nightmare and I'll wake up in my bed." She started to sob and pulled Woobie to her chest with her good hand. "I deserve all of this don't I, I'm paying for all the awful shit I did as a lawyer." She sat there and wept until she had no more strength to do anything but lay back and fall into an exhausted sleep.

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Stewie and Smootcher were sitting at a rest area somewhere in Virginia, they had been driving all day and were about to shoot someone. They had never seen so many bad drivers on one road before, some idiot ran them off the road; forced to lock the brakes up and just about crawl beneath a semi truck. "Let's find a hotel and we'll start out first thing in the morning," Smootcher said with a tired voice and yawned. "Maybe all these stupid assholes will be gone by then."

"Ya know, now I can see how Judge got killed in an accident." She took a deep breath and shook her head; she still couldn't believe the horrible news. "It's so damn hard to believe she's gone...and poor Woobie."

"Ohh I forgot all about Woobie," Smootcher slammed her hand on the steering wheel. "I hope the asshole that caused the accident died painfully." She pulled out of the rest area and every time another car got too close, she let out a scream and flipped on the hidden siren in the grill of the truck. "We're gonna put lights on this when Murphy becomes Sheriff, I wanna flip the shit on and tear through town!" Neither one of them knew what if anything they would find once they got to where the remains of Judge's car sat, the report said that there was a burned out vehicle. In their minds, it was a total loss. They knew that if they saw it with their own eyes, then Murphy would accept what the report said.

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Once again Judge stumbled down to the side of the interstate and tried to get a car to stop and help her, she had even gone to the point of scribbling on a piece of cardboard to call 911. She

knew that she looked worse than a homeless person did; there wasn't much she could do about it. She had rationed what little bit of water and food she had and was trying not to use what wet wipes she had left. With her car stolen, she had lost almost everything. She had used the last of her aspirins that morning and didn't know what she would do now for the pain she was in. With not a single vehicle slowing to help her, she stumbled back up the hill to her campsite. First, she went over to the dumpster and looked for anything that would be of use to her. She did find an old beaten to hell shopping cart with its basket bent into almost a U shape. It rolled and that was all she cared about, she would make her way down the highway the next morning and head to the nearest exit and a town.

She looked over herself and then down to the dirty bandages covering her mangled fingers, she would kick herself if able to, she had a full range first aide kit in the trunk of her car. A lot of good it did her since her car was long gone along with her chance of getting to the next town quickly. She knew that the next day would be long and painful but had no other choices, good Samaritans were an extinct animal and no one had told her. She eased down onto her small camping stool and looked at Woobie who was stalking a chipmunk; her poor dog was filthy and didn't seem to care in the least. She tried to smile but the pain in her face screamed at her, she had tried to clean all the cuts and scrapes on her face but knew that some of them were now infected. "Well Woobs, if we can make it to a phone, I can get us the Hell outta here." She remembered seeing phone boxes every so often and hoped that one was close by, if not, she would continue until she reached a town or someone picked her up.

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The next morning and hours later on the interstate, she looked to the scorched ground and the debris that was scattered along both sides of the road. She used her stick to stab a piece of paper, brought up close to her one eye and gasped. Her signature was at the very bottom of the receipt. She looked around more and began examining every piece of debris and concluded that her car had met its maker on this spot. From nowhere came a deep laugh that had her folding over onto the carts handle, she laughed until her stomach hurt and then wiped her face of tears. "My car blew up...with him in it!" She pushed her cart slowly down the edge of the road and laughed hysterically. She kept at her slow pace, waved at cars, cussed a blue streak and finally gave up when it became to dark to do anything. She looked for an area off the road to camp and ended up just pushing her cart into some scrub brush and trees. She knew that she would not be able to pitch her tent in her condition so she settled on getting into her sleeping bag and falling into a pain filled sleep. Woobie lay on Judge's chest, she had taken up that spot ever since her mistress had been hurt, she would guard her as best she could.

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Murphy was sound asleep on the couch in mama's living room; she had worked into the early



morning hours and had just dropped there from exhaustion. Now someone was doing their best to drag her from her slumber and she was fighting it for all she was worth, until a finger went up her nose. Her eyes shot wide and connected with ones of a sea blue color, she opened her mouth and stopped when Abbey pointed a small finger at her. "Grammy says...GETS UP!" She rolled off the back of the couch onto Murphy's chest and then scurried to the floor to run off into the kitchen. Murphy groaned and rubbed at her stomach, who knew that little feet hurt so much. She stumbled into the kitchen, took one look at her mama and broke down into hysterical laughter. There across her mama's chest was a picture of her with the goofiest look imaginable.

"Ok, tell me that you have the one and only t-shirt." She went over to the coffee maker and poured a cup.

"Haaa! Like I would do something like that, I had 200 of them made," she counted in her head and gave Murphy a wide grin. "Each relative got two of them, so that leaves like 50 or so not being worn at this very minute or in the immediate future." She nodded to Abbey and gave her a bigger grin. "I ordered 50 little t-shirts for the little ones, that's a lot of walking billboards around town and what not."

Murphy looked down at Abbey and rolled her eyes; she bounced around the kitchen to the music only she could hear and slapped 'Murphy for Sheriff' bumper stickers on every metal surface.

Mama shook her head. "I had to hide the other ones; it took me an hour to get the sticky stuff off the stove." She handed Abbey a cookie and pointed at the back door. "Out troll before I duct tape you to the wall."

"Grammy's...bomber of...hood...chill man." She said as she bounced out the door to join her cousins in the back yard.

"Ya think maybe Smotcher could be her father in a weird abstract kind of way," Murphy winced at the awful singing voice coming from the toddler. "I swear she acts just like her and she sucks with the slang stuff."

"I think Abbey fell into the Whistler gene pool, that child acts like every single one of you and it scares me more every day."

Murphy dropped down into a kitchen chair and eyed the spot where all the car keys hung; she noticed that the ones for the truck were gone. "Where's the idiots at?"

"Road trip, had a skip take off towards Richmond, they went to bring him in."

"Without me...what were they thinking?"

"That you should be concentrating on the election that is in two days, that's what they're thinking and it's what you should be doing instead of sleeping into the late morning."

"I was up late doing research, statistical stuff for the county board. I'm gonna knock those shitty

statistics right off the paper when I take over, you would not believe how low the traffic citations are!" She took a drink of her coffee and waved a hand in the air. "We have the lowest numbers in all of the counties, what in the Hell are the cops doing?"

"Sampling the menu at Ruby Tuesday's?" Mama offered and took a seat at the table. "How often do ya see a cop anywhere in town except at one of the restaurants?"

Murphy slapped a hand down on the table and bared her teeth. "That's gonna stop real quick, damn people tearing through town at 50mp is gonna get someone killed and then they'll be screaming bloody murder for justice."

"Now that would be something I would love to see, justice from our legal system. The ADA is lucky if he knows where his ass is half the time and the judge has a gambling habit that takes up 22 hours a day and his whole paycheck."

Murphy leaned back in her chair, she wished that she could do something about the judge but she couldn't. What she really wanted was her Judge back but she couldn't do anything about that either. Their local judicial system sucked and unless they got a new judge, better a prosecuting attorney and ADA's, they would suffer with criminals getting off Scott free with no jail time involved.

"Hey mama, has Jeff coughed up that report on all the sheriff deputies and the part time auxiliaries?"

"It's on your bed but then if you had slept in it last night you would have seen it." She refilled their coffee cups and took her seat. "So tell me, why did you want that report?" She had a sneaky suspicion and hoped that she was right.

"I get in, I'm gonna clean house and I mean clean, there has just gotta be a reason for all the bullshit that goes on around here and I think it's in the sheriffs office. I mean shit mama, the one deputy weighs over 500lbs, and how can he do anything but devour all the food in Kentucky fried chicken. Better, how in the hell did he get into the department anyway, there is no way he could pass the physical exam." She took a deep breath and looked down at her coffee, she felt like her brain was overloading and ready to explode. "Am I ready for all of this?" She looked up with tired eyes and saw mama grinning at her. "What?"

"You not ready to kick ass, come on Murphy that's what you live for and to cause all kinds of hate and discontent." She rolled her eyes and snorted. "You're gonna kick ass and do it big time," she leaned in and held Murphy with her eyes. "You are ready for this and remember you have the Whistler clan behind you, we're bigger than the National Guard in Martinsburg."

Murphy smiled and nodded her head; she knew that her family would back her all the way. "Ok mama, I'm gonna go read that report and see what I can do to stir up the county when I get Sheriff."

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Judge rolled over and gasped from the pain that radiated through her body; she blinked her eyes and squinted. The sun was shining right into her face and there was not a single place to hide from it. She looked around through slits and had no clue as to where she was, that was until she saw a bird land in the bush beside her. "Christ almighty I slept in a ditch." She rolled to her side and had to wait for the dizziness to subside before moving again. As each day passed, she felt worse and knew that she had to get help soon or die alongside the road. Long minutes later, she was pushing her rickety cart down the side of the road and trying to get someone to stop and help her. She would have thought that with the condition she was in, someone would have at least stopped and asked her if she needed help or anything. With each car that went past, she got madder and her thoughts on people in general changed. The layers of what was DA Judge Bloodstone peeled away to reveal the old JT Bloodstone, with it came a low growl that turned into a roar of pain and frustration. She had even started throwing stuff at passing cars and found that it didn't do anything but make her whole body hurt.

Ahead of her was a sign for the next exit, she let out a string of cuss words that left her out of breathe; she had five miles to go and knew it wouldn't be happening anytime soon. She would be lucky to make it within the next week at her rate. She continued at her slow creeping pace with Woobie sitting inside the cart on top of what few belongings they had left. "This sucks and I HATE THE HUMAN RACE!" She screamed and threw a rock at a passing car, she let out a yell when it bounced off the trunk; hit the road and then the car behind. "Mother fuckers could stop!" Hours passed with her dragging her left leg and placing more and more weight on the carts handle. When she stumbled for the hundredth time, she gave up for the day, pushed her cart off the road and dropped onto the ground beside it. She didn't even bother with her sleeping bag but just fell back in the tall grass and closed her eyes. She was starving but was shit out of luck; she had eaten the last few cookies that morning and had just two more bottles of water left. Once her water was gone, she had no idea what she was going to do.

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Stewie and Smootcher stared out the windshield and back to each other, they couldn't believe how bad the highway was damaged from the car accident. They had seen some really awful ones and could only imagine what Judge's was like. "So what are we gonna do now?" Smootcher asked and went back to looking out at the charred highway.

"Let's take a quick look around and then try and find the salvage yard," she shook her head and opened the door. "Not like we're gonna find anything there besides a burned out car."

"At least we can tell mama what we saw down here and Murphy after she gets out of the nut ward. Cuz ya damn well know that when she finds out, she's gonna go off the deep end and then some."

"I'm heading to another country before mama tells her, I can't stand seeing her cry," Stewie shivered and rubbed at her arms. "My heart hurts and then I wanna hurt someone." She started walking along the side of the burn and stopped to pick up a piece of melted plastic; she flipped it over in her hands and realized what it was. "I found the remains of her phone or maybe the other persons." She shrugged her shoulders and kept on looking as she walked. They spent an hour walking around the crash site picking up pieces of the wreckage but nothing that amounted to much in ways of value. They gave up, walked back to the truck, and headed down the highway. "Christ will ya look at that," Stewie pointed at the ragged person standing along side the highway. "They have homeless people way out here."

"And just how do you know that person is homeless?"

"Do ya see a car anywhere and they're pushing a shopping cart?" She rolled her eyes and snorted. "You are so blonde Smootcher and I can't believe you got the license plate with 'Drizznit' on it, it's Shiznit ya blonde."

"Shiznit...driznit, what's the difference?" She shrugged and sped up when she saw the homeless person go to throw something at their truck. "Damn idiot was gonna throw a rock or something, I should turn around and go plant my foot somewhere...ewwww on second thought, they might have bugs!"

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Judge rubbed at her face and tried to pull the dry leaves from her ratty tangled and filthy hair, if she had a pair of scissors, she would hack it all off. If she had anything besides a bag of dog food, dirty clothes and a bottle of water she would be extremely happy. She had gotten to the point where she was beginning to believe that she had truly lost her mind, she was eating dry dog food and liking it. "Ya know Woob's this stuff ain't half bad," she ate some more and hummed happily. "Wish I had some milk or maybe some of those beef jerky treats for later, when we get to the next exit, we're gonna get some jerky treats."

She handed Woobie some of the dog food and kept on slowly making her way down the edge of the highway, which was when she saw the truck coming up behind her and reached for one of the many rocks she had stored in the cart. When it sped up and moved to the far left hand lane, she screamed and flipped them off instead. "Next car that goes by I'm shooting out their tires!" She mumbled under her breath for the next few hours or so and then looked up at the sign for the next exit; she hadn't even noticed how far she had traveled and was relieved that she was close to getting help. "We're almost there Woobs; I wanna hot shower and some real food." She grunted and tried to force the shopping cart up the incline of the exit, she got mad and shoved it hard and let out a yell from the pain in her left hand and leg. "Fuck me sideways and back!" She rested her head on the carts handle and took in deep breathes to ease the fog away; she knew then that she wouldn't be able to push the cart any further. She made a decision and took a few belongings from the cart before easing it off the road.

"Ok, let's get going before it gets too dark to see anything out here." She picked Woobie up and used the stick she had picked up days before as a cane. It was late by the time she made it into the town; she looked around and sighed with exhaustion. Off in the distance, she saw the light of a small Motel 8, the problem was that she didn't know if she could make it. Her clothes were soaked through with sweat; she was shivering at the same time and could swear she heard Murphy whispering to her in one ear and Woobie the other. "Would you two stop already, I have a headache from all the chatter and I feel like I'm dying here." She wiped at the sweat running down her face and stumbled on with Woobie trotting beside her. "We can do this guys...we can make it to the motel."

She stopped outside of the motels office and tried to catch her breath; she was ready to keel over and leaned up against the side of the building. Hefting the shotgun on her shoulder, she pushed open the door and stumbled in. "Can I have a room please?" She asked the young man behind the counter.

He looked at her appearance and the guns she had on her and hit the panic button under the counter. "We're full, just gave out the last room."

She turned and looked out at the sign and cocked a dark eyebrow over a crazed silvery eye. "Your sign says vacancy and there's only three cars in the parking lot," she turned back towards him and bared her teeth. "Gimme a damn room before my friends get pissed."

He looked around her but only saw Woobie sitting at her feet, he shook his head and pointed at the filthy dog. "We don't allow pets; try down the road at the other motel." He pointed in the direction that she had come from and hit the button a few more times.

"Listen you little prick, my car was ripped off, I was dragged down the fucking road, I haven't eaten in days and I'm losing what little bit of control I have!" She slammed her left hand down on the counter, let out an ungodly yell right before she fell backwards, and hit the floor. No more than two seconds later, flashing lights from a police car lit up the office.

He blew out a breath and shook his head; he was relieved at seeing a police car and two cops coming towards the door. He pointed to the prone figure, came around the counter, and jumped back when Woobie growled at him. "She wanted a room but with all her weapons and looking like a homeless person." He shrugged his shoulders and grinned when the biggest cop shied away from Woobie. "Plus she has that ugly little dog and we don't allow dogs."

"Damn but she reeks," the officer said, covered his mouth and nose and looked closer at her. "Got a blanket we can throw over the mutt?" He used his toe to hook the shotguns sling and pull it towards him. "She's got better weapons than we do, that's just not right."

"What's not right is a woman being out here wandering around period." The other cop said before he called into the dispatcher. "What we gonna do with her dog?"

"We'll figure that out when we get to the jail, too late for any vets or kennels." An hour later they

had Woobie muzzled and on a short piece of rope and Judge in the backseat of the cruiser. Both men were exhausted and happy as hell that their shift was almost over, they would do all their paperwork in the hour before their shift ended and let someone else worry about the dog. With a wave, they got into the cruiser, rolled all the windows down and sped off towards the local jail. They knew that the car would need detailed before anyone else would use it, if they hadn't known any better, they would swear they had a dead animal in the backseat. "Christ," the cop said after wiping his tearing eyes. "I'm gonna burn my uniform when I get home, how in the hell could she stand the stench?"

"I really don't wanna know but I do feel sorry for the guys at the jailhouse." He snickered with the thought. "I say we drop her off and haul ass outta there, I don't wanna get stuck doing their job because she reeks."

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Judge Claudia Beaujue rolled her eyes and yelled loud enough to make the windows in her small office rattle, she had been trying for the last hour to go over the cases on her docket but no one seemed to care. In the last hour, she had half a dozen interruptions and she was getting real close to arming herself and taking pot shots at the people wandering past her office door. "Now what the fuck is wrong," she threw the folder down that she had been reading with a thump. "There has just gotta be some other judge in this building that can do something?"

"Yes ma'am but I know for a fact that Judge Sands shoots dogs." The state cop said as he slowly entered her domain. "We got someone in lock-up and she has a dog," he held out his bandaged hand. "Who would think a little dog could just about take a mans hand off...anyway, we were wondering if you would be willing to like."

"Feed it my hands?" She threw her booted feet up on her desk and ran her fingers through her short dark hair. "How about you turn it loose in Judge Simms office, he needs his ass bit."

"Actually ma'am, I came to you because it looks a lot like your dog and thought maybe." He shrugged his shoulders and prayed she would help them out.

"Ohhhh for Christ almighty sakes," she got up from behind her desk and waved a hand at him. "Well come on I ain't got all day ya know." She went out into the hallway and stopped. "So what's the woman in for and how come she can't handle her dog?"

"She was causing problems at the Motel 8 late last night, the night manager hit the panic button and now we have her in lock-up."

"That doesn't answer my question son."

"No ma'am it doesn't, truth be told, she's still unconscious and the dog won't let us in her cell. We think she's one of those homeless people and she...reeks really bad, we had to move one of the

other prisoners because of it."

She stopped and stared up a good two feet into the officers dark eyes, she barely made the four foot five mark but made up for it with her commanding way in the court room. "A homeless person around here?"

"Yes ma'am it would appear so, some other officers found an old shopping cart near the motel; it had some stuff in it that might be hers. Not much, a sleeping bag and some stuff used for camping. She had a laptop in there that they gave to the chief to put in his safe and ahhh...guns. She was loaded down with some nice guns last night; they're in the chief's safe to."

"Get me that laptop, homeless people don't have laptops. It might tell us who she is or who she stole it from. Run the serial numbers on the guns to, if they're stolen they'll pop up as well...why the hell am I telling you this, I'm not a cop?" The officer had to jog to keep up with the smaller woman; everyone called her the hummingbird, for obvious reasons. "So what are we gonna do with this woman, is she being charged with anything?"

"No ma'am, they brought her in because she was a threat at the time, now I'm not too sure."

She stopped and looked up at him with quizzical eyes. "Do I see the sympathetic Jason peeping through that rough exterior?" She wished that he had followed his heart and gone into the social services branch of the local government; he was a good cop but could do so much more in social services.

A deep blush colored his ruddy cheeks and moved down his neck, he gave her a small grin and dropped his eyes to the floor. "She just doesn't look like a violent person and the way her dog is guarding her." He shrugged his shoulders and took off at a jog to catch up to the quick moving judge.

When they entered the holding cells in the basement of the courthouse, Claudia knew right away that this would be the talk of the small town. Normally they would have a drunk or two in lock-up, not a woman with a small vicious guard dog protecting her. The sharp barks made her flinch and cover her ears, she knew the bark all too well, her dog did the same thing when threatened. Moving closer to the cell, she waved a hand at the officers and jail workers to move away from the bars. "You people are just making it worse, she wouldn't bark if ya'll would back off and leave her be." She turned her attention to the filthy little dog, tilted her head to the side and leaned in closer to the bars; a small grin came over her features. "Ohh you are so like your mother," she squatted down in front of the bars and held out a hand. "Come here Woobie, I just happen to have of all things, dog treats in my pocket." She pulled one out and waved it on her side of the bars. "I know for damn sure that you're a bigger pig than your mother, so get over here before I change my mind." Woobie barked and came charging right for the bars, the officers jumped back and then groaned when they saw the small dog walk between the bars. Holding Woobie to her chest, she rubbed her head and looked into the cell. "Call an ambulance right now," she stood up and looked to the jail supervisor. "That stench you all smell is gangrene, didn't you notice her hand all bandaged up?"

"Well yeah but..."

She cut him off with a point of her finger. "I'll let you answer to her when she comes around and believe me, you'll be sorry. Now get that damn door open and move your asses' outta here before I let Woobie have some fun." She pulled her cell phone off her belt and made a quick call to her assistant. "Cancel my docket and call Dr. Randy over at the hospital, tell him I'll need a private room and his best staff." After hanging up, she stepped into the cell and ran her fingers across a deeply angled cheek. "Damn but you're burning up JT." She then made her way down to the small supervisor office and looked for the copy of the booking papers on her friend. She was about to yell when she found them pinned to the corkboard near the door, taking them down, she looked over them and then tossed them in the trash. "We won't be needing those anymore." She looked up into the supervisors eyes. "Did any of you even pay attention to her condition or did you just assume that she was a bad person and forget all about her?" She held up a hand when she saw his mouth start to move. "Never mind I know the answer and I'm warning you now, her and the Governor of West Virginia are gonna have you for a lite snack."

"Wait," he stopped her in the hallway. "Who is she?"

"That is JT Bloodstone the fifth and Judge elect for the state of West Virginia, you dipshits locked up a Judge." She grinned at the paleness that washed over his face and went back to rubbing Woobie's ears. "Bet no one even looked for an ID because she reeks?"

"Nope, no one wanted to get that close and with her guard dog and all...we are so screwed." He hung his head and walked back into his office, he wondered how long it would take before he was packing up his office and looking for a new job.

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Claudia climbed into her old Honda civic and followed the ambulance to the hospital; she had called her husband Joe and let him in on what was going on so he wouldn't worry. She knew that as soon as she reached the hospital, the rumor mill would go into full action and he would not have the real story when it reached his ears. That was one of the problems with a small town, the busy bodies had nothing better to do but gossip and make stuff up. This would certainly shake things up in town, she wondered how long it would be before it became national news and made it to the next little town 20 miles away. She pulled into the parking lot and grinned; Joe was waiting for her and had their baby and Woobie's mother Sydney with him. He met her as she got out of her car and held his arms open for Woobie. "I've never seen a bald dog so dirty in all my years," he said and looked down into Woobie's eyes. "You hate dirt as much as your mother." He placed her on his lap next to her mother and wheeled himself beside his wife. "So Judge ended up in lock-up down here, so what's the chance on that happening?"

She moved behind him and pushed his wheelchair up the small incline, in through the ER doors



and down the hallway where the examine rooms were. "Ya know there's just gotta be a dramatic reason behind all of this, I mean wait until you see her." She saw her husband's doctor up ahead and headed in that direction. "There's Doc Randy, let's go see what he has to say." They stopped outside of the examine room where Judge was and waited for the doctor to come back out, Claudia sighed when he looked to her and waved her in. "I'll be right back, this just can't be good." She stopped beside the bed and had to stifle the gag response, she wasn't prepared for what she saw. "Ohhhh my God," she looked up to the doctor and back down to her friends damaged body. "Can you help her, you know with all the damage?"

"I'm gonna do my best but I need a signature on the paperwork, does she have any next of kin?"

Claudia took a deep breath and shook her head. "We don't go there anymore; I'll take responsibility and take care of the paperwork." She looked down at Judge's mangled left hand and shivered, she knew that the pain from her hand alone must have been unbearable. "Can you save her fingers?"

"It doesn't look good, the infection is really bad but what has me really worried is this." He pulled back the sheet to bare her left leg, Claudia thought for sure she was going to faint and reached out a hand to steady herself. "I know that I'm going to have to cut away muscle tissue, I won't know how much until I get into the OR." He covered her back up and picked up the clipboard on the small table. "I'll do my best you know that."

"Ohh I know you will, that's why I had my assistant call you, if not for you, I'd be a widow."

"Joe's will power to live is what made it easy, this," he waved a hand over Judge and shrugged his shoulders. "Is a different animal all together, I'm looking at maybe 12 hours of surgery."

"Believe me Randy, Judge is a force to reckon with, you do your job and I'll get her so pissed that she'll be up and out of here in no time."

Claudia and Joe had stayed at the hospital long enough for them to take Judge into the OR; they had then driven home and taken care of Woobie before heading back to wait for news on their friend. Claudia really hated hospitals; it got worse when Joe's diabetes had been the reason for a long illness that eventually led to him losing both his legs below the knees. She had spent most of her nights by his side and then behind him as she pushed him through the agony of physical therapy. She remembered how he had hated PT and just wanted left alone to stew in his depression and pity. She just started pushing his buttons until he would get so mad that he would drag himself across the room to scream and yell at her. When he finally noticed what he was doing, he gave in and started working harder towards his recovery. In a few short months, he was up and walking as he had before losing his legs.

With the swishing of the double doors, they turned to see Doc Randy coming towards them; the exhaustion on his face couldn't hide the small grin. "Hey Randy, how'd it go?"

"Pretty good, there wasn't as much damage as I had feared."

"But?" Claudia said and leaned into Joe.

"I couldn't save all her fingers, the knuckles were crushed and the infection was in the bone." He shook his head and rubbed at his tired eyes. "Now for her leg, I had to replace her kneecap with a new one. I had to fix the tendons and ligaments and the ACL is from a donor, some of the muscle tissue had to be excised but she'll be able to walk. Now granted she'll have a bad limp but with a cane she'll be able to get around quite good. The scarring won't be pretty but at least she'll have an almost full functioning knee." He dropped his six-foot frame down into a chair, pulled his surgical cap from his blonde head and sighed. "It's a good thing she got arrested, she wouldn't have lasted much longer without medical attention."

Claudia sighed with relief; she was glad that the worst part was over. "When can we see her?"

"She's in recovery now, I'd say wait until morning. I gave her some heavy-duty drugs to keep her knocked out for the night, the less she moves around the better." He got up, shook Joe's hand and gave Claudia a quick hug. "I'll check on her before I go home, go get some rest you two, you're gonna need it." With that, he went back through the doors and disappeared from their sight.

Claudia sighed and wrapped her arms around Joe's waist; she was beyond exhausted and knew he was to. "Let's go home; the kids are probably ready to have the locks changed on the door."

"And Woobie needs a bath, that little dog is a mess." Joe said and walked slowly beside his wife. "You didn't happen to get anyone to check into why Judge was walking did you?"

"Yeah I did, I was hoping for some news from the chief but ya know how that goes, I'll end up using one of the investigators just to check into the simplest things."

"Ya know I could do that for you, I'm caught up on work and I'm bored as Hell." He looked at his watch and grinned wider. "It's only going on eight o'clock; I can check some things when we get home."

"Like me saying not to, will mean anything; besides you know I'm not gonna sleep until I know."

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Joe grinned from ear to ear and then rubbed at his tired eyes; he had been scanning over some old newspapers and came across a very interesting advertisement in the personals. He tore the page out and took it into the kitchen with him where his wife was making the dogs eggs. "I found something that's kind of interesting, seems that JT has someone looking for her."

Claudia read the news clipping and snorted. "I'll ask Judge about it in the morning, might be the reason she's down here; she might have a stalker chasing her."

Joe's brows raised, he tilted his head and then nodded, he hadn't thought of that but could see it now. "Maybe that's why she's in the condition she's in," he got up from the table and went into the room they used for an office. "I'm gonna run a check, be back in a few." While Joe was doing his amateur PI work, Claudia got things together for Woobie's bath. She knew that the small dog would feel 100 percent better once she was clean and had a full belly; she knew she herself would feel better once all that was done.

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Stewie and Smootcher couldn't do anything more, they had gone to look at the remains of Judge's car, spoken with one of the officers who had been on the scene and gotten a final report on the accident for their files and then headed home. If the ride down was bad, the ride back home was worst; they now had proof that their friend was really gone. They were glad that mama would tell Murphy the bad news; she was the rock of the family and was the only one that could handle the emotional stuff. They hoped that they could put all of this off until after the election, Murphy needed to be at her best for the big day. If they planed it right, they would be getting home in time to vote for Murphy's election and then see about coming up with a plan with mama. "Are we ready to actually grow up and be adults?" Stewie asked with raised brows.

"We knew we were gonna have to do it someday, I was hoping we could have put it off until we hit 60 or so but I guess now's as good as time as ever." Smootcher replied with a shrug of her shoulders and a grin.

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Murphy twitched and tugged at her suit jacket and scratched at her neck, she cast a glance at mama and rolled her eyes. "Ohh come on mama don't look at me like that."

"Like what, I looked at you the same way I have for the last umpteenth years?"

"Ohh you know, like when we were all little and couldn't sit still and...hell, why did I get my hair cut so damn short again?" She scratched at her neck and swore that she had hairs down inside her shirt.

"Because you wanted to look professional for the election instead of a shaggy bum and try taking off your sweatshirt, dumb kid tries to wear an Armani suit jacket with a sweat shirt on."

"I need to get a new shirt to go with my suit, maybe a nice silk one." She ran her fingers down the front of the suit jacket and remembered the last time she wore it. "Maybe a pale blue

one...what do ya think mama?"

"I think you need to get up off your ass and go take a shower," she looked at her watch and tapped the face. "We have exactly one hour before you have to be at the High school gym for the voting booth, now move your ass!"

"Ya know I thought there would be a debate or something, this is just me registering to be on the ballot and people voting for me." She mumbled all the way to her bedroom and then into the bathroom. Mama just shook her head, she knew that Murphy had not a single clue as to what the family had done as far as campaigning went and debates only happened in the big cities for big political jobs. No one really cared about the sheriff's job, not many people knew all of what a county sheriff did. If Murphy read the newspaper, she would have seen the articles they had in there about her, which were more or less just resumes. If she only knew how many people stopped her mama on the street and asked if Murphy had actually graduated from college, she would be surprised.

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Murphy felt like the world was closing in on her; the high school gym was packed to the gills with people. No matter which way she turned, she ran into someone. She was ready to turn tail and run to the nearest emergency exit when she ran into the back of a huge black man; she growled and shoved past him and then jumped when he growled back at her. "I'll bite you lil sis." He grinned, picked her up and carried her from the crowded gym. "This is like a family reunion," he said and set her down in the hallway. "And just like those things, I can't wait for it to be over." He gave her a huge toothy smile. "Good thing about this thing finally being over is you ruling the county and my wife being home to cook, I suck a cooking and I swear I've lost weight!" He patted his rotund belly and grinned some more.

"Ohhhh so you didn't know that along with my campaign, mama planed it all out as a wife's mini vacation and husband's weight loss program?" She laughed and waved a hand at him to follow her. "I'm hungry and I know damn sure that no one will ever notice me missing, let's go pig out somewhere." She stopped and looked at him for a minute. "Which brother are you?"

"Haaa funny Murphy and I want my bail bondsman business back; can you find mama a job in your office? She has me running up and down the damn sidewalk for all kinds of stuff, half the town thinks I'm training for the Marine Corps Marathon."

Believe me Dodger; after all of this I think mama's gonna take a vacation and you can relax for a while. You might wanna look into hiring some more people, you know with the contracts we got with INS and with Border patrol having their new office right down the road it'll make things a hell of a lot easier but busier at the same time. Not to mention that I'll be gone and you know damn well that Stewie and Smotcher will be shadowing me somewhere in the general area; I wouldn't put it past them to want sworn in as deputies."

He shivered and opened the door for her before jogging around to the other side. "That's just too damn scary, those two with real badges and guns."

She dropped into the worn out passenger seat and leaned back, she missed her screwy sisters and wondered when they would get back from chasing down the skip. "At least they would be close to lock-up and we could use their own cuffs on them."

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Stewie and Smootcher stood at the top of the bleachers and tried to spot their mama in the sea of faces below. They had spotted Murphy once or twice and ducked down to avoid her, they wanted to talk with mama before any confrontation with their sister. "So do ya think we can get to mama and live?" Smootcher asked and then tripped down two bleachers and fell on her ass. "Maybe not." She rubbed sore spots from both her fall and the long ride home. They just hoped that mama didn't move from where they had last seen her, with all their relatives around them, they wanted to make this as quick as possible. A relative snagging them would be pure Hell on earth in their books. The biggest problem was that they could never remember the names of all of them, Hell, most of them they never knew to begin with and that included mama. Some of the relatives by marriage, divorced like you change socks and afterwards, they just hung around like leftovers.

"This sucks, why don't they just vote and then go the Hell home?" Stewie said and tried to get past a throng of jaw jackers and groaned with irritation. "This is worse than anything I've ever seen...except our family reunions." She spotted mama, grabbed Smootcher's hand and dragged her the last ten feet to their mama. "Help us mama...can't let Murphy see us before we come up with a plan."

"She's gone," Mama said. "Someone saw her and Dodger take off a little while ago." She moved over towards an exit. "What all did you find out down south?"

"Not much more than what was in the original report," Stewie replied and then handed mama the reports they had with them. "It was just plan awful down there, wasn't much left of anything. No remains to...you know." She shrugged and wiped at tear-filled eyes.

"Where the officials down there going to contact her family?"

"As far as we know yeah, I know that I don't wanna call those stuck up assholes." Smootcher growled out and punched her palm. "None of this would have ever happened if they had just left her the hell alone, but that's just my opinion." Both mama and Stewie looked at her with raised brows. "What?"

"For once you made some damn sense," mama said and pointed for the main exit. "Seems kinda funny that she high tails it after some goons show up," she stomped a foot and cussed. "I see one

big ass problem coming Murphy's way. Her asshole parents will want everything she owned and then some, that's gonna be a bitch of a fight unless Judge made her will iron clad." She was trying to think of a kick ass attorney that would represent Murphy if it came down to a fight with the Bloodstones, she didn't know a single one in the entire county and that was bad. "OK, the only thing we can do is handle it if it comes this way; now lets go home and see what kind of plan we can come up with that won't send Murph off the deep end."

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Claudia had just finished with her last court case for the day and was on her way out to her car. She had cleared most of her docket by giving them to other judges or sliding them to other days, it wasn't often that she needed to do things like this and was thankful that the other judges would accommodate her requests. Giving them a short explanation of the problem at hand and that it revolved around a Judge elect made it easy for them to jump on board and offer any help she needed. What she needed were some answers from a certain stoic DA, she hoped that she was awake, if not; she would just wait it out. "And then I'm gonna hang a foot up her ass!" She pulled out of the parking lot and headed off to the hospital.

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Soft hums, squeaks and dim voices drifted through Judge's dreams, she tried to roll over and found it impossible. She tried to lift her arms and found that they were useless as well; she fought to open her eyes and groaned with effort. Her one good eye blinked open and shut immediately when bright light blinded it, she tried to turn her head and groaned in pain.

"Well hello there," a soft baritone voice hovered on Judge's blind side. "We didn't know if you would be awake today or not, let me give you a quick going over and then I'll call in Doc Randy to have a look see."

Judge felt a warm soft hand move her left arm and hand to the side and then cool air caress her left hip and side, she had figured out that she was in a hospital but had no recollection after being in the motel office.

"My...dog...where..."

"Ohhhh now you don't want to be talking just yet let me get you some ice chips; I know your throat must be dry as the Arizona desert and then some." She tried to turn her head to see the person speaking and stopped when pain radiated through her head and neck. "Now I know you can't really move around much with all the tubes and such, so I'm gonna remove some of the ones you don't need anymore." Judge finally got sight of her nurse and tried to smile, he was the largest black man she had ever seen and that included the Whistler men. He had to be close to

seven feet tall, 350lb and very muscular. His baldhead shown bright under the lights and little flickers of light danced off the diamonds that adorned his cat-eyed glasses and the diamonds in his ears. After he removed some of the tubes and such, he covered her back up and left the room. She had to admit that even with the splitting headache and other aches and pains, she did feel a hell of a lot better than she had in the past week or so. She wasn't sure of how long she had been on foot or anything, days ran together as well as the nights; one thing for sure was that she had been in a lot of pain out there.

"Hi there, I'm Doc Randy." She watched as a tall blonde haired doctor came into her line of vision, leaned in to examine her face, and closed eye. "I checked your other eye yesterday, we flushed it out, put some antibiotic salve in it and within a few days it should be opening all the way. We'll know more once that happens but at the time your pupil was reactive and didn't show any damage. I couldn't close the gash in your eyebrow because it had already started to heal, a good plastic surgeon can make the scar disappear."

"Don't matter...", she whispered. "Dog."

"The person you want to talk to about your dog will be here in a bit and I know for sure she'll be glad you're awake. Now I'm going to tell you what I had to do when they brought you in here, it's gonna sound a whole lot worse than it is but I guarantee that you're gonna be just fine in a few days." After telling her what surgeries he had performed, he examined all her wounds, adjusted her medications and told her nurse that she could have some soup for lunch and what ever she wanted to drink. Giving her a bright smile and a wave, he left the room and ran into Claudia in the hallway. "Good news, she's awake and asking about her dog." He chuckled when he thought about it. "That was the first thing she asked both her nurse and me, not a thing about herself at all." He gave Claudia a boyish grin and shuffled his feet a bit. "Is she single...you know, anyone to contact..."

"Hold your horses there son; she's on the other side of the fence." She gave him a lopsided smile and jabbed him in his stomach. "That one in there is a heartbreaker on two fronts; I remember a young Judge running from a bar with a handful of young girls hot on her heels, seems she had made too many dates for the same night and used one establishment as a meeting place."

"Damn just my luck," he rubbed the back of his neck. "She have any sisters?"

"Nope, she's an only child." She squeezed his shoulder and chuckled. "Randy, I just happen to know of a certain court reporter who asks about you way too often for it to be just friendly conversation. Give Diana a call; go out for coffee or something." He grinned and took off running down the hallway towards the doctor's lounge at a quick jog. "I swear men are all completely lost in the head."

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"Now sugar I'm gonna move you over in the bed a little so I can change the sheets...on second thought, my favorite woman in the entire world is here and I know she'll help me."

"Omar, I'm so glad you're here taking care of JT." Claudia gave the giant of a man a hug and moved around the bed to get a good look at her long time friend. "And you, we are gonna have one hell of a long talk." She ran her fingers down Judge's cheek and gave her a soft smile. "I'm really glad to see you; all in one piece would have been a hell of a lot better." She waved a hand at the sheets sitting on the table and watched as Omar lifted Judge up like she was a toddler, in a few minutes, the bed was remade and Judge was sitting up at a slight angle sipping some water.

"How long have I been here?" Judge asked in a gruff voice and winced from the pain in her throat.

"Not quite 24 hours," Claudia replied. "And believe me; the cops in this area will never forget you or Woobie the total terror of the jailhouse. They almost pissed themselves when she walked through the bars and came up to me; by the way, she's at home with Joe and her mother." Judge sighed with relief and closed her eye.

"I was worried about her, I don't remember much past going into some motel. Guess it was a good thing that I did, at least from what Doc told me."

"From the report I got, you scared the poor night manager half to death and he hit the panic button. If it wasn't for Woobie and a soft hearted cop, I wouldn't have known you were in lock-up that is unless you came across my docket." She gave her a complete play-by-play of the events that landed her in the hospital. "So what brings you down here to my part of the world?"

"I had to get away, I ran into some family problems and some other stuff..."

"You're running JT and that's not good," she sat down on the edge of the bed and held one blue eye until Judge looked away. "Who is she; it's just got to be a woman you're running from?"

Judge chuckled and groaned from pain. "It's four women to be exact, the one that scares me the most is mama D, she'll kill me if she ever sees me again and then there's Murphy. If there's anything left after her mama gets done, then she gets the rest and then on down the line to the youngest of the Whistler clan."

"What exactly did you do to these women?" She was curious as hell; the Judge she knew was always the one to leave a party or establishment with the best-looking woman on her arm and always in one scrap or another. That was until the nutward stay and then everything changed for the worst as far as she was concerned.

"I kind of took off without saying anything," she felt her face color and tried to look everywhere but at her friend. "I left the deed to my house on my desk with a note for my secretary telling her to give it to Murphy, gave the mayor my resignation and just left." She raised her left hand and winced from pain. "And look what happens to me, I would have suffered less at Murphy's hands and she's just a little shit." She grinned and Claudia knew right there that this Murphy meant



something more to Judge than just a friend.

"We are going to start at the very beginning because I have this God awful feeling that all Hell is gonna break loose, shit is gonna hit the fan, Hell's gonna freeze over and what ever else I can think of. I'm gonna need a way to help you out of it all without a jail sentence for either of us for mass murder."

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Claudia was still laughing as she pulled into her driveway; she laughed all the way into the house and kept on laughing even after Joe gave her a strange look. She waved at him and busted out laughing some more before she fell onto the couch to try to catch her breath. She groaned and rolled onto her side holding her stomach. "Good Gods but JT's gonna be the death of me!" She started to giggle and busted out laughing again when both dogs jumped on her head and started licking her.

"Geez I thought you'd lost your mind there for a second," Joe said as he sat down on the other end of the couch. "So how's JT doing?"

"Ohh she's in a shit load of trouble as usual and that ad you found is not a stalker but her friend who is gonna kick her ass for sure." She told her husband all about the Whistler's and the problems with the elder Bloodstones. "You have her laptop right?"

"Yep, it's on the desk; I have it on the charger and I have a spare one she can have."

"Go into her files and find her accountant's phone number, I need to call and make sure that she knows that she isn't dead. I called the cop shop and told them not to call next of kin because there was no need but you know those dipshits, they probably called from the damn crash scene." She sat up and held both dogs on her lap. "Seems JT has been living quite an interesting life in West Virginia...Ohhhh no, what if her friends think she's dead?" She fell back into the cushions and groaned she could only imagine the emotional pain they would be going through with that kind of news. "Shit, should I call them and tell them she's not dead, you know in case they found out some how?"

"Now what are the chances that they would hear about an accident way down here, I say we wait and see what happens, if anything it can be straightened out later."

"Yeah I guess you're right, I'm wiped, I'm gonna take a shower and see about getting us something to eat."

"Already got stew in the crock pot, just have to put the muffins in the oven."

She stopped at the doorway and leaned back to wink at him. "I'm so glad I bought you that crock

pot for our anniversary." She grinned and busted up laughing at his swinging head. It had become a family joke that he was the woman of the house so she regularly bought him household appliances for their special occasions.

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Murphy ran dirty hands through her hair, looked around the cluttered office, and sighed when mama and her sisters dropped some more boxes in the doorway. "Throw them in a dumpster...no more room..." she sunk down the wall and whimpered. "Where the hell did all this stuff come from anyway and what's it all for?"

"As far as we know its tax and registration files that the old sheriff ignored and just tossed in a storage room." Mama explained and sneezed a few times from all the dust that covered all of them. "He told the mayor on his way out what you and he could do with all the case files," she cast a glance at her other two daughters and snickered. "Wait till he gets to his house and finds out what kind of present the mayor had delivered for his leaving the public office."

Stewie winked at her and mooed like a cow. "A friendly farmer kind of lost control of his tractor and manure spreader and completely covered his yard with fresh cow and pig shit."

"And just in time for his family get together this afternoon!" Smootcher said and fell over laughing.

"Good, I hope that black and green flies the size of choppers invade his yard and carry everyone off." She looked at the dozen boxes and growled. "Isn't there supposed to be a file room or something over at the tax office for this stuff and why the hell hasn't anyone ever complained...ooohhh wait, that's right we did complain about his stupid lazy ass for YEARS!"

"And that's why you're the new sheriff and things are gonna change," Stewie said as she watched a couple former deputies walk from the building with personal items in cardboard boxes. "We better watch for disgruntled former employees, they can't be too happy with the outcome."

"Not my problem," Murphy replied. "They should have thought of that before they decided to break the law they swore to uphold. Ya know I have more than enough badges for you two and I could sure use the help here." She just couldn't believe that she had folded and offered her sisters jobs so easily, she had no idea if they would accept or not, they weren't exactly used to conformity.

"We'll have to think about it Murph, it's not that we don't wanna help you..." Stewie said.

"It's that we're...not really the best ones for the job." She looked to her sister and saw her nod her head. "If ya can't find anyone better than us, then we'll take up arms and cap some bad guys." She gave her a toothy grin and a wink.

"Ya got a deal," she got up from the floor. "Now let's pile this shit in a corner and I'll go through it all when I get time." She took in the shabby furniture she had and just knew that something wasn't right. "All this shitty stuff came from some second hand store didn't it; he took all the good stuff with him." She gave the desk a good kick and jumped back when it crashed to the floor with a loud bang. "Fucking no good bastard, I hope he trips and falls in cow shit!"

"That would be nice but I have something that will make you grin like a fucking maniac every single day." Smootcher waved a hand at mama and took the brown paper covered parcel she had pulled from her huge purse. "This is for when you get a space on your wall, ya know after we paint and everything." They waited as she tore the paper from it and saw tears fill her eyes. "Damn, it's supposed to make you happy, ya know what you did has never been done before."

Murphy looked at the framed front page of the Journal newspaper, her face was dead center with the headline of a 'Murphy Whistler wins as sheriff of Jefferson County by a landslide!' She placed it on a box, moved around and gave her sisters and mama hugs. "Thanks guys, its gonna go behind my desk so who ever comes in sees it and knows that I rule." She chuckled and led them from her nasty office. "Let's go get something to eat, I'm starving." She signaled to her dispatcher and grabbed a hand held radio off the counter. "I'll be over at Billie's if ya need me, I have a radio so just give a yell."

"Ok, Sheriff." The older woman replied and gave her a small wave of her hand. "If you remember, tell my sister I want extra chicken in my salad today, she gypped me yesterday."

"Will do Emma, can I bring you anything else back with me?"

"Not necessary, I have a delivery service." She grinned to show ill-fitting dentures. "She owes me for life." She wiggled her brows and knew that she had the new sheriff's curiosity going. "Ask your mama, she knows all about my sister Rose and Albert." She kept on grinning until they were out of sight.

Mama snickered and rolled her eyes, she knew all about the man and never let the old buzzard live down his evil ways when she saw him. "Back when I was 200lb lighter and 50 years younger, Albert Johnson was the Don Juan of Charlestown. He was a handsome devil and always had a woman on his arm, when he was in town. Always flashing a wad of bills and driving through town in his fancy car, he had every single woman chasing after him. Little did any of us know that the no good bastard did it in every damn state in the Union!"

"How many girlfriends do ya suppose mama?" Murphy asked.

"Too many to count, it was the five wives that finally caught up with him that clipped his sails. He sat behind bars for a while and when he came out he was marked more or less as a permanent bachelor, the old bastard still can't get a date after all these years and that includes from his old jilted girlfriend Rose here at Billie's."

"Sounds like Murphy in a way," Smootcher said and then jumped back when green eyes swung her way. "Except you're doing the chasing and the women are all running."

"Ha funny, only one literally ran from me, the others got in their cars and drove away at high speeds." She felt sadness well up in her chest at the thought of the one woman who constantly ran from her, she wondered where Judge was at that moment and if she knew that, she had become the new sheriff.

Smootcher was ready to throw herself in front of the next car that came by, she hadn't even thought of what she was saying until after she had blurted it out, they still hadn't come up with a good way of telling her the bad news about Judge. She blew out a breath of relief when the subject dropped and thanked her good luck. "Sorry Murph." She dropped her eyes to the ground at their feet and squeezed her shoulder. "Ok, let's go eat and Stewie's paying!"

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Omar took in the sight before him and just shook his head; his patient was cock-eyed in the bed and in great danger of falling on her head. "And just what are you trying to do besides tear out all your sutures and destroy all the work Doc Randy did?"

Judge moaned and knew that she was stuck where she was; she dropped her head in defeat. "I was trying to look in the mirror, I have no idea how bad I look and that damn buzzer thing is broke." She strained to turn her head in his direction and was thankful when he came over, picked her up and placed her back in bed the right way. "Can I take a shower or something, I feel nasty and my hair is ready to fall out?"

"Lemme check your chart and see what it says about bathing and what not but I can tell you that you've had better days as far as the looks department goes."

"I know this but I have a slight problem and right now I'm about to go off the deep end and I mean that in the most literal way. I have OCD and being dirty like this is..." she lay there and realized that her problem really didn't figure into it anymore but that it was more of a discomfort and just feeling dirty is what was really bothering her. "Will you help me, please?"

"Sure thing, just lemme go get the plastic cover for your hand and leg and what not and I'll be right back."

Judge sighed with relief; she had no idea the last time that she had an actual shower. She had been trying to run her fingers through her hair and got nauseous when her fingers got caught in knots and she found pieces of leaves and grass tangled in her hair. She saw Omar carrying some items in his hands and took a chance on some more help. "Would you do me another favor?"

"That all depends on what you need sweetie."

"Dog clippers, I want my head shaved; you know a GI Jane type hair cut?"

His large brown eyes grew behind his glasses at her favor; he had never had a woman ask him to shave her head before. "Sweetie, I can wash your hair."

"I know that but I'm tired of it and I need a change, plus as long as I'm mangled like this; I can't take care of long hair like I used to." She struggled to push herself up in bed. "Please, if you don't help me; I'll find a way to get out of this bed and get it done."

"I swear you women will be the death of me." He threw his hands in the air and mumbled until he was out of her earshot. When he came back, he had a pair of clippers and a pair of scissors. Putting them in the bathroom, he started the shower and then came for her. "Once I shave your head, there's no turning back."

"I know but you have no idea what I'm going through right now, being bald will be a blessing."

"All right, I'll do it but if Claudia kicks my ass, I'm coming for you afterwards." He couldn't help but return her grin, the thought of tiny Claudia trying to kick him that high was plain hilarious, she would need to stand on a table to even get close. "Now either I can help you in the sit down shower or I can go get a female nurse if you'll be more comfortable, I won't take offense."

"I don't think that I'm the first woman that you have seen naked, not like it would faze you in the least anyways." She gave him a wink and chuckled when he flipped a hand at her.

"Got that right sweetie, have any brothers?"

"Nope sorry, I'm an only child...sorta."

"How can you sorta be an only child?" He asked as he put all her IV's in her good hand, carried her into the bathroom and set her down on the toilet seat. He then went back for the IV stand and one of the chairs from near the door before he closed the bathroom door. While he covered her leg and left hand in the plastic coverings and got her ready for the shower, she told him all about the Whistler's and how mama D had taken her under her wing and treated her as one of her own kids. "She sounds like an amazing woman; we have an elderly lady near by that has been feeding the less fortunate for more than 40 years. She gets donations from all kinds of companies and stores and her and her daughter and the churchwomen make up care packages and cook up a storm on the holidays to take care of the people. I hear that they've been in New Orleans helping with clean up and such, wouldn't be surprised if they weren't down there building houses. They are some fearsome women," he showed her the scissors and looked into her clear blue eyes. "Are you sure about this?"

"Yep, go to it Omar; I just hope I'm as good looking when I'm bald as Demi Moore was in that movie."

"Ohhhh I don't think you have anything to worry about there sweetie." He grabbed a long strand of her hair and cut it off with a flinch. He took a quick look into her face, saw a crooked grin, and knew that she was having the time of her life. "You're demented."

"I've been told that before." She closed her eyes when she saw locks of her hair drop to the floor. "Now I'll really hear it." She chuckled and wondered what the Whistler's would think of her haircut. She opened her eyes when she heard a click and then the soft hum of the clippers, with the first swipe she shivered. "Damn I don't think my scalp has ever had air hit it like this before...well since birth anyways."

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Cleaner and more comfortable because of it, she lay in the hospital bed in a light sleep until she heard the squeak of shoes and the sound of papers flipping. Cracking one eye, she saw wild blonde hair that reminded her of Murphy. Doc Randy looked up and gave her a quick grin. "Go back to sleep I was just checking your chart."

"I'm tired of sleeping, that's why I was napping...does that make sense?"

"I don't think so but Hell; none of this makes sense to me after a sixteen hour shift." He closed her chart and took the chair next to her bed. "I noticed that you have a new hairstyle, would that be compliments of Omar the barber?"

"Sure is, I'm gonna save a hell of a lot of money on shampoo and conditioner." She ran her good hand through the ¼-inch high hair on top of her head and chuckled. "Do I look like a Jarhead, you know with a high and tight hair cut?"

"You kind of look like my brother now and that's just too weird to think about." He smiled when she busted up laughing and then grabbed her still aching head. "Still hurting huh?"

"A little but I feel better after having a shower, how long before I can get rid of the tubes and shit, they're a pain in the ass and I absolutely hate the idea of a bedpan!" Silvery eyes pinned him where he sat in the chair. "You have no idea how hard it is to use one of those god damn things, they are not female friendly that's for sure."

He felt fear at first and then her frustration, she was right, he had no idea what she was going through but thought he might be able to help her out a little. "Hold on a minute and let me check into something with one of the nurses on one of the other floors. He made a hasty exit and ran all the way to the stairs; he hadn't the slightest idea why but kept on running.

"Now that was just weird." She said to herself and snuggled back into her pillows for another nap, it wasn't like she had anything else to do or could do anything else. Her left leg was in a weird ass contraption, her hand wasn't much better and she hurt all over no matter what they gave her. She knew that the aches and pains had to be from not moving around, she often felt that way when she slept too long or when Woobie kept her from moving in bed. Tears filled her eyes and trailed down her pale cheeks at the thought of her dog; she missed the little thing and

wondered when she would get to see her. She knew that Claudia and Joe were taking good care of her and she was with her mother but she missed her.

"Ohhhh now what's wrong sweetie?" Omar asked as he came into the room with her food tray and a big brown bag in one hand.

"What's not wrong, I'm stuck in bed, I hurt all over and my dog is eating better than me." She pointed at the tray and groaned at the sight of the mystery meat sitting in gravy. "They hide everything in gravy and the jell-o has no flavor what's so ever, what I wouldn't give for one of mama's hamburgers." Tears flowed faster down her cheeks and soaked into her hospital gown; Omar had seen it all before, hundreds of times in fact and grabbed a handful of Kleenex from the box.

"I'm sure that everything will work out just fine."

"I don't think so...I don't know what I'm supposed to do now." She wiped at her face with her hand and then took the offered Kleenex.

"For one thing you can eat this greasy ass hamburger and fries I brought you before someone comes in and catches us." He handed her the bag and used his size to block the door. "I got strict orders from the boss lady Claudia to feed the shit outta you cuz you're too damn skinny so that's what I'm gonna do and after that the therapist is gonna be here to help get your muscles loosened up."

She looked into the bag and groaned from the smells inside, it felt like years since she had eaten anything substantial, her stomach let her know that with a loud growl. "Thank you so much," she stuffed her mouth with fries and moaned with pleasure. "This is so good." She mumbled around a full mouth and reached into the bag for more.

"Slow down there boss, there's no way I wanna explain how you choked on a French fry." He handed her a napkin and placed her food on the table in front of her. "Let them yell at me, I don't give a damn; after all I've got two Judges on my side." He gave her a huge grin and a wink. "All the cops are still shaking in their boots over you; none of them have ever locked up a public official let alone a judge elect. On top of it all, you being the hummingbirds best friend didn't help any."

"Yeah well Claudia can be a fierce little thing." She took a huge bite of the hamburger and closed her eyes in rapture as the flavors burst in her mouth. "This is better than sex."

"Hah, like you know anything about that." Claudia said and came all the way into the room with a huge mischievous smirk on her face. "JT there thinks that the Missionary position is a job." She hefted her huge purse up on to the bed and let Woobie jump out. "Not a word about this guys or my ass is grass and I have to write out a huge ass check to the hospital administrator...again."

Judge grabbed her dog and clutched her to her chest, tears flowed down her face to soak into what little bit of hair Woobie had. "I missed you Woobie." She looked to Claudia and nodded her

head. "Thank you and thank Joe for me, I don't know what I would do with out the two of you."

"Most likely be in less trouble than you are right now." Doc Randy said as he took in the food and Woobie. "But then what kind of fun would I have around this place with out them." He placed a female version of a male urinal on the bedside table and blushed. "I hope that helps until you're able to get out of bed and use the bathroom."

"Yeah, bedpans suck Doc; now move your bony ass." Joe said from behind him and gave out a laugh when the tall doctor jumped. "How ya doing Doc, JT giving you hell all ready?"

"You could say that but she just wouldn't be a friend of yours if she didn't now would she?"

"That's true," he squeezed Omar's shoulder and moved over to his wife's side before giving Judge a smile. "I see you're doing better and Omar has had his clippers out."

"Wasn't my idea." the nurse said, waved a hand and slid from the room before anyone could say another word.

"I just couldn't take it anymore," Judge said and ran her good hand through what was left of her hair. "Kind of breezy on my neck at times." She sighed when she saw that Doc disconnected all of the IV's from the pole and then motioned for her to hold out her left arm. "Thank you, I'm so tired of those IV's."

"Well, starting tomorrow you're going to go to physical therapy and IV's just won't work." He rushed from the room because he knew what was coming with the news.

Blue eyes turned to a silvery color and a deep growl rumbled forth from deep in her chest. "Just how in the hell am I supposed to do anything, my leg is in a contraption and..." she lifted her left hand up to eye level. "Fuck me sideways, I'm missing fingers!"

"Uhhmm JT its kind of late to be noticing the missing fingers," Joe said and snickered at her narrowed look. "Like that's supposed to scare me, you want scary, spend some time with the hummingbird at PT time." He gave his wife a kiss on her cheek and a tight hug. "Don't worry about it right now, they won't have you up and running around, it's just stretching and stuff. By day three, they'll have you outside on the track running!" He snickered at her rolling eyes and grunted from the elbow to his ribs. "Almost forgot, I brought you an extra thick chocolate shake from Dairy Queen." He pulled it from the bag and put it next to the rest of her meal. "And a cell phone so you can call us or take out, God knows it saved me from starving to death." He placed the cell phone on the table and gave Woobie a scratch behind her ears.

"Thanks guys, I have no idea what I would do without you two." She finished eating her food and sighed. "You guys have no idea how good that was, Omar saved my life."

"We have to keep you alive long enough for the Whistler's to get a hold of you." Claudia said and grinned. "I got a hold of your accountant and she knows that you're still alive, I called the Governor and let him know that you will be calling him soon," she held up a hand when she saw



Judge open her mouth. "Don't even say a word; just listen for a second ok." She took the chair that Joe held out for her and then took Judge's hand. "Talk to the man, see what he has to offer; it's got to be better than what you were doing before."

"My job sucked, I did all the work while everyone else was drunk or at the race track playing slot machines." She closed her eyes and took a deep breath. "There is no real justice there, criminals walk all over the system and I've spent more time behind bars then they have but that's another story."

Claudia's brows rose at the mention of her behind bars again and she filed it away for another time. "See that, now if you take the oath and go back as a Judge, you can kick ass and change everything that needs fixing."

"Rule like the humming bird does here," Joe said with pride in his voice. "Criminals are known to weep when they hear that they lost the draw and got on her docket, one guy tried to strangle himself with toilet paper. He's now in a different lock-up and not happy at all."

Claudia snickered. "I go by once a month and offer him a roll of Charmin, ya know just for shits and giggles. Anyway, you can't run forever and what better way to get even with some of the assholes back there then to throw some of them behind bars for good?"

"Ok, I'll think about it but I may end up at the bottom of the Shenandoah River before I ever make it to the bench. You have no idea how many Whistler's there are in Jefferson County. Hell, I have no idea! Their family reunion looks like the United Nations is meeting or a block party in Washington DC. If Murphy gets me...I'm in great big trouble."

"Ohh she can't be that bad, after all you gave her your house."

"Wanna make a bet," Judge's brows rose high on her forehead. "Her and her sisters are bounty hunters!"

Joe grinned, he now had a mission; he would do some investigating once they got home. He was curious as to what this Murphy looked like; he knew Judge's tastes in women and muscle bound bounty hunter seemed far-fetched. Claudia got up from the chair, kissed Judge's cheek and gave her a small smile. "We have to get going before they toss us out on our asses; I'll come by tomorrow afternoon with some clothes for you." She waited for her friend to say a tearful goodbye to her dog before she placed her back inside her purse. "Anything else you need, you give us a call and one of us will bring it by."

"There is one thing, I left a lot of my stuff at a camping area near where my car blew up; I have no idea if my stuff is still there." She shrugged her shoulders.

"I'll have the state boys check it out; if there's anything there I'll have them drop it off at my office." She leaned over, kissed her cheek again, and ran her fingers across her head. "You need a haircut like this Joe, it's sexy."

"Really..." He gave Judge a raised brow. "Now see what you've gone and done, now I'm gonna be bald like you." He gave her a kiss and a soft hug before following his wife from the room. "I'm gonna look like that Gunny on 'Mail Call'." He said to Claudia as he walked behind her down the hallway.

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Judge flipped the TV on, adjusted the bed back to reclining and picked up her shake. She tried to keep her tears at bay but lost the battle and just let them fall. "I want my Woobie." She mumbled. "Or Murphy, even her bitching at me would be good right now." She fell asleep watching TV and never noticed when her nursing staff changed and her new nurse switched off her TV and cleaned up her food wrappers. Hours later she woke in pain, she tried to ease the pain by moving around in the bed but failed. Jabbing the button until her thumb grew sore, she sighed when a nurse appeared in the doorway.

"What's wrong there honey, can I get you something?"

"I want my morphine back, I think the left side of my body is gonna fall off."

"How about if I get you some Demerol and an ice pack for your knee and hand?" She looked around the room and scratched her head. "Do you need your bedpan?"

"Doc got me something other than a bedpan," she showed her the urinal on the table and leaned back into her pillows to await her shot. "Bedpans suck."

"Ok, I'll be back with your shot."

Judge draped her arm over her face and gritted her teeth to keep from groaning with pain, it wasn't as bad as when she was out wandering around but it was close. She wondered if most of it wasn't from being stuck in bed and not being able to move around. "Shit what's next bed sores?"

"Not on my watch," her nurse said. "Roll on your side and I'll give you your shot, it'll take a few minutes to hit but then you should get some relief."

"What I need is to be able to get out of this god damn bed, I'm not used to being stuck 24/7 in bed." She groaned when she rolled back and pulled the thin blanket up to her chest. "My hips hurt, my lower back is killing me and there's not a damn thing on the TV worth staying awake for."

Her nurse looked at her chart and nodded her head. "Good news for you, tomorrow they have you going to PT, which means you get a wheelchair."

"And that means what?" Judge gave her a raised eyebrow.

"That means that you can escape this room," she gave her a grin. "We have way too many patients on this floor to keep track of who's supposed to be wheeling themselves around and who's not and since you're one of the hummingbird's personal friends and a Judge...well." She held her hands out to the sides and smiled.

"Ohhhh I gotcha, seems Claudia has a lot of pull around here."

"She's done a lot for this hospital, well both her and Joe have. The new wing for the Pediatrics center got built because she went to the Governor, the hospital board and who ever else could help get it built; not to mention the labor was dirt cheap when she got done." She grinned and leaned in close to Judge. "She emptied the local jail and got inmates from the prison to build the pediatrics wing, she sat out there with a shot gun on her hip and told them if they so much as twitched, she'd shoot their asses full of buckshot."

Judge grinned at the picture that formed in her head; Claudia would have used the shotgun and enjoyed every single second. "She's a force to be reckoned with that's for damn sure." She sighed when her pains started to fade. "This is nice...I like Demerol." She felt her eyes closing and then nothing as she fell into a deep sleep.

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Murphy looked over the edge of her desk and down into mischievous blue eyes, for some reason, her family deemed her the permanent cage master of the spitting troll. "Where have you been?"

"On patrol," she came around the desk and held up her handcuffed wrists to her aunt. "They gots me...they cheats...help."

"I see," she pulled her handcuff key from her pocket and unlocked the cuffs. "Who got you this time?" She pushed back her Sheriff's hat that Abbey seemed to wear more than she did and looked into wandering blue eyes. "What did you do this time?"

"Nothin...gotta go...crooks in here." She took off running from the office and Murphy just knew that somewhere in the building there was something taken apart. Abbey didn't need real tools to be able to dismantle stuff, she had found a few utensils twisted to strange proportions next to what used to be office equipment. The latest thing to suffer at the toddlers tiny hands was the floor buffer. The janitor about had a heart attack when he plugged it in, pulled the trigger and the motor flew off and rolled across the floor. They later found a fork and a broken leathermen tool that one of the deputies said was missing from his desk drawer.

"This is paybacks for making the tax office people work late, I just know it is." She rubbed tired

eyes, looked at all the file folders on her desk and wished that they would disappear on their own. Since taking office, she had hired additional people for the tax office to help clear up the boxes of tax papers left by the former sheriff. What she had found out after a few days both enraged her and brought a demonic grin to her face. She knew the amount of funds the city had on hand and once the tax office got finished, there would be a hell of a lot more funds flowing in. With her sister Carla's help at the tax office, they had lists of people that were living in Jefferson county that were not paying West Virginia taxes and hadn't for years. Stewie and Smotcher as well as other auxiliary officers hung out at all the schools at dismissal time and recorded out of state license plates. Any out of state vehicle picking up a child, they wrote down; then they turned the list in at the end of shift, and the plate numbers were investigated with in the next few days.

Once in a great while it was a grandparent picking up a kid. Most times, a resident with a kid in the school system flat out refused to change their vehicles over to the state in which they resided. They didn't like the idea of having to pay personal property taxes. Murphy as well as the rest of the people who lived in the state didn't like freeloaders. Next came the people who owned numerous properties but didn't claim them on their taxes, either they pay or they go to jail, their choice. In just a short time, she had shaken up the county but the changes were for the best.

With the firing of a handful of bad deputies, she had hired replacements and a few more that brought her numbers up. She now had more deputies to cover the roadways and slow down the traffic violators. The biggest areas that she had seen herself on many occasions were the High School and the hill right after leaving Harpers Ferry. People seemed to think that it was the Indianapolis Raceway in both areas and ignored the speed limits, stop signs and red lights.

They also had another parking law enforcer, she took no prisoners, her aunt waited for the meters to kick over, and then she slapped a parking ticket on the cars. At five dollars a car, they could pave the roads in gold in a month's time. She just couldn't understand why people would park and rather pay a hefty parking ticket than drop a nickel in the meter. She always put money in the meters and it wasn't just because she was a cheap bitch.

"Murphy can you come here and help?!" One of the deputies yelled and then yelped like a schoolgirl. "I'm never having kids!" He whined and tried to get the huge paper-binding clip off his ass.

"Too late there Jerry, you have two sons." She said and tried not to laugh as Abbey tried to put another paper-binder on his ass.

"I'm sooo glad I don't have any girls, in fact I'm gonna have a vasectomy today to prevent it!"

"And here I was gonna ask you if you would take Abbey to lunch." She chuckled at his saucer-sized eyes and waved a hand at him. "Just kidding, I don't wish that on anyone." With the exception of one person that is, she would love a chance to handcuff the spitting troll to Judge. That thought brought a wicked ass grin to her face. "Come on troll; let's go get you your unhappy meal."

"Unhappy meal?" Jerry questioned her.

"Have you seen some of the toys they put in those things," she rolled her eyes. "Believe me when I say that they are nothing but torture toys for parents." She looked around and groaned. "Now where did she go?"

"You need a leash or one of those alarms that you push the button and it beeps." A loud yell came from one of the other rooms. "Or that works to." He grinned and watched as his boss went after her niece.

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Stewie and Smootcher stood looking at each other; they were in their auxiliary uniforms and still couldn't believe it. Some how Murphy had gotten them to agree to help her out with all the bullshit going on in town and they didn't even know it until she handed them bags with their uniforms in them. "Explain to me again when we said yes?" Smootcher asked and adjusted her badge.

"Hell I was gonna ask you cuz I sure as hell don't remember it." Stewie replied and sighed as she dropped down onto her bed. "Ya think she was born to be a politician?"

"Why cuz she's a manipulative little twit and has gotten more done in a few short weeks than the other sheriff did in years?" Mama said from the doorway and grinned when her kids shook their heads. "You know, you could put on real badges and get paid for putting your lives on the line."

"We thought about it mama, we just haven't decided if it's the right thing to do." Smootcher said.

"Put all that college and time at the police academy to good use, your sister needs all the help she can get and with so many people getting nasty tax bills in the mail this week, the sheriffs office and the tax office is gonna be under attack." She gave them both a bright smile. "Your brother can put a new paint job on your truck and put the light bar on the roof if you go to be real deputies." She saw the light bulbs pop on over her kids heads and knew that they would be down to get sworn in as real honest to god sheriff deputies.

"Shit," Stewie said as she moved towards the door and her mama. "Murphy takes after you." She gave her a hug. "We'll go get sworn in and go protect Carla and the others over at the tax office or where ever Murph needs us."

Mama D watched them leave with a smile on her face, she wished her husband was still alive so he could see what a good job they did raising their kids. She was proud of them and she knew he would be as well. "We did damn good Whistler; all our kids have turned out good." She went back down stairs and into the room that she used as a sewing/office/hide from Abbey room and booted up the computer that Murphy had put in there for her. She checked her e-bay account and

then her e-mail; she seldom got e-mails with the exception of spam. She closed out her e-mail program and went to her search engine. Typing in the name of the area newspaper where Judge had been, she checked for any news of their friend. She already knew that she was gone but she would never give up hope that a miracle could happen. Unless they had something to bury, she wasn't accepting anything.

Going back to her e-mail program, she pulled up her address book and found Judges E-mail address. After a few minutes of typing like a mad woman, she hit send and watched as a message popped up saying that the e-mail had been successfully sent. She didn't much care that Murphy may intercept the e-mail because everything she said, was mild compared to what her kid would say to the tall lawyer if she were still on the earth. "If you were here, I'd box your damn ears and hamstringing your ass." She leaned back in her chair and watched as her screen saver came on. "You have no idea what you've done Bloodstone and I have no clue on how I'm going to break this to Murphy."

"Break what to me mama?" Murphy said from where she stood in the hallway with Abbey in her arms.

Mama felt all the blood in her body flow to her feet, she prayed for a stroke or heart attack to get her out of the place she was in at that very moment. She hadn't even thought of a bad way of telling her kid about her friend's untimely death let alone a good one. Now was as good a time as any and god willing they would all make it through.

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Mama sat at the kitchen table with bloodshot and swollen eyes, she looked up with a weak smile when Stewie and Smootcher came in. With one look at their mother, they knew what had happened. They slowly took seats and sat quietly for a few moments until mama D spoke. "She took it Ok; at least I think it was ok. No hysterics, tantrums or anything; I'm scared shitless right now."

"Where is she?" Stewie asked in a low voice.

"Out back with Abbey, they've been out there quite a while."

Smootcher got up from her chair, moved to the kitchen window and scanned the backyard. She leaned to the side and stopped her search when she found her sister and niece sitting on the picnic table under the maple tree. Murphy was on the bench and Abbey was on the tabletop, the toddler was sitting so that she was hugging her Aunts neck and patting her head in comfort. Smootcher smiled at the picture and waved a hand at her mama and sister. "Take a look at this."

"That little girl is something else." Mama said and went towards the door. "It's almost time for

Carla to come get her; I better get her cleaned up before she gets here." She went out the back door and couldn't help the fresh tears that pooled in her eyes. "Come on Abbey, your mom's gonna be here in a few minutes."

"K," she leaned forward and gave her aunt a sloppy kiss on her head. "It be ok Aunch Murph, we wuvs you." She gave her another hug before getting up and jumping into her grandma's arms.

"Are you Ok Murphy, need anything?" Mama asked.

Murphy looked up with tear-filled eyes and offered her a small smile. "No, I'm ok mama; I'll be in after a little bit, thank you for telling me."

"I wish I never had to give you news like that." She hugged Abbey to her and went towards the house. The second she put her granddaughter down on the floor, she was off and running to parts unknown in the house. Mama rolled her eyes and cussed under her breath for the hundredth time that day. Before she could go after her, she came running back with a worn out stuffed dog in her arms and forced her way out the back door and out to her aunt. They all watched as she gave Murphy her stuffed dog and then came running back to the door and ordered them to 'let her in or else.' "You know Troll, you have a big heart." Mama said and gave her a kiss on her forehead.

"Mommy says I gots big feets."

Stewie and Smootcher went out the door and walked over to the picnic table, before they could get part way there; they broke down and had tears falling down their cheeks. They approached Murphy and engulfed her in a group hug that lifted her up from the table, they stood for a long time weeping until exhaustion and hunger drove them into the house. Murphy went up to her room and lay down on her bed; sleep claimed her within minutes while her sisters ate sandwiches that sat like cement in their stomachs.

"Do ya think she's just gonna explode with grief or what?" Stewie asked as she pushed her sandwich away and leaned back in her chair.

"That would be better, geez look how she was when Judge left," Smootcher said. "Maybe we can get her some counseling..." She thought of what Murphy would do to them both if they even mentioned seeing a counselor period. "Or not."

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The next few weeks were pure Hell for anyone who crossed Murphy. She was fine with her deputies and family members but when it came to people who thought they had a right to disobey the law; they found out how vicious she was. The local TV station from Washington DC came to town to do an interview and mama D warned her that she had better be on her best

behavior or get her ass kicked right there live on the 6 o'clock news. She had run her fingers through her hair so often that day that she swore her hair was ready to fall out from all the stress. She hated interviews even though she had never given one before, this would be worse since it would be live and on the 6pm news. She glanced at her watch and saw that she had less than 20 minutes before the interview and the end of her short career as sheriff, she hoped her brother Jeff was up for the job; she had made him chief shortly after taking office and he may very well end up as the big boss after this. Checking to make sure that she was presentable, she collected a new sheriff's cover from on top of a high Abbey proof cabinet and left her office.

A few of the Whistlers stood outside on the lawn to the city hall, Mama D, Stewie, Smootcher, Carla and a leashed Abbey waited nervously. They had watched as the reporter's cameraman made adjustments and finally gave her the thumbs up sign. All they needed was the Sheriff and they could get rolling, no sooner had they thought it, than she came jogging across the street from her office.

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Employees and patrons at The Grinder Café sat watching the interview as it played out; one woman in particular was more than a little interested in the small sheriff. Tamara Thompson would do anything to get the sheriff out of her uniform and had started her campaign a week ago by taking coffee and pastries over to the sheriff's office. She had a few short conversations with Murphy and would increase them until she wrangled a date out of the older woman. If nothing else, she was persistent when she wanted something and Murphy was one of those things. She moved from behind the coffee bar, swept her dark hair back over her shoulders and watched with deep blue eyes as Murphy paid close attention to the questions asked of her. Tamara could care less, she just wanted to be known as the Sheriff's girlfriend and if she played her cards right, the small sheriff's life partner. She moved closer to the TV and turned up the volume to hear it better.

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"It's a well known fact that you have cracked down on the residents whom were avoiding paying personal property taxes by not switching over their vehicles to the state of West Virginia, how is that going?" The blonde haired reporter asked.

"It's going great, we've received about 22% of the past taxes in the last few weeks and we won't stop until we have all of it."

"Charlestown is fast becoming known as a no speeding zone and in the short time myself and my cameraman have been here I've heard about road blocks for drunk drivers, is that true?"

"Yes ma'am, I'm sure everyone has heard the statistics of how many accidents and deaths are



caused by speeding and drunk driving per year; I want to put a dent in those numbers in my county." She looked right into the camera with her next words. "We don't put up with law breakers in Jefferson County anymore; our bursting jails prove it."

The reporter saw fire erupt in green eyes and felt a chill run down her spine, something in the small sheriff scared her senseless and made her words ring true. "Thank you Sheriff Whistler. This is Jasmine Costa from NBC News Washington DC, back to you Barry." She handed her microphone to her cameraman and held out a hand to Murphy. "Thank you so much, you did great."

"Thanks, I've never done anything like this before; I wasn't to sure what to do." She grunted when something slammed into the backs of her legs and then she groaned when a small voice started making embarrassing phrases.

"Hubadah...hubadah...lemme see some tit!" Abbey said and reached up towards the blushing reporter.

"Yours" She asked.

"Nope, my niece and about to be dropped down the nearest sewer grate; my brothers are the worst damn influence." She placed her hand over Abbey's mouth and tried to find Carla. "Sorry, if you'll excuse me I have to do something with her before I have to lock myself up." She picked Abbey up and carried her away before she could yell any other embarrassing things at the reporter.

"Badonkadonk butt!" Abbey yelled at the tops of her little lungs over Murphy's shoulder.

Murphy felt her face heat up and knew that she had to be tomato red. "Ohhhh you are gonna get it Troll."

"Fo shiggedy ma nizzle."

Murphy stopped, turned Abbey in her arms and looked into sea blue eyes. "You need to teach your Aunt Smotcher that slang."

Abbey raised her hands in the air and shrugged her shoulders. "Tried...she's a blonde."

Murphy busted out laughing and felt tears trailing down her cheeks, it got worse every time Abbey said something.

She yelled at an old woman and Murphy almost tripped and fell when she saw that it was the mayor's wife. "It's good...at math...U+I=69!"

"I'm gonna kick your mother's ass, that's all there is to it." She looked around and finally saw Carla and the rest of her family standing up on the courthouse steps with Belinda.

"Gots MILK!?" Abbey yelled at a young well-endowed woman before Murphy could cover her mouth.

"Ohhhh you are so gonna get it Carla," She handed the Troll off to her and then saw the wicked gleam in her eyes. "She made a pass at the reporter," She said in a low voice. "And the mayors wife and numerous other women on the way over here."

"You can thank our dear brothers once again, seems she's only safe with the biggest pervert in the family, you." She cocked an eyebrow at her and tilted her head to the side. "She ran through the house last night yelling 'WVC 11A-1-3 or I kick ass!' Now I know what that is and it's a hell of a lot better than her spouting off about badonkadonk butt, so thank you."

"Speaking of that, we gotta take off." Smootcher said and waved a hand at her truck. "Like our ride, we just got it back this morning?" She was proud of her truck with the new paint job with the sheriff's insignia on the doors and the light bar across the roof.

"Yeah and it'll be easier to catch creeps going through fields with our truck, the cruisers suck." Stewie said and then pulled her ticket book from her side pocket. "We have about a dozen more tickets and this book is finished, that's three books this week Murph."

"Where have you two been hiding?"

"Over on the other side of Flowing springs road, ya know the field near the grocery store." Smootcher said.

"People don't pay attention to ya over there and we catch all the speeders from the high school and the ones who ignore the stop signs." Stewie finished.

"One of us stands there with the radar gun and the other stays in the truck incase we gotta do a chase...race ya Stewie." She gave her sister an evil grin. They looked at each other and then ran for the truck.

"I swear they're both idiots," Murphy said and looked back at her mama and then at a smiling Belinda. "But they bust more offenders than any of my deputies; I may have to promote them before too long." She looked at Belinda and gave her a sad smile. "How's the new ADA doing?"

Belinda rolled her eyes and shook her head. "He's a complete idiot; he couldn't win a case to save his sorry ass life. He doesn't even know the WV penal codes or the statutes, hell anyone who watches Law and Order knows more than this guy."

"Where'd he come from?" She asked a bit curious as to how they got such an idiot and why the mayor hired him.

"Morgantown and from what I hear, he was schooled at some Ivy League school; I swear his diploma has poison Ivy on it somewhere instead. I think the mayor hired him because no one else applied for the job." She stepped forward and engulfed her in a strong hug. "I'm so sorry about

Judge, we'll all miss her."

"Thank you Belinda, there's a huge hole in the world where she used to be, I miss her so much." She hugged her back and then pulled back to take a deep breath and rein in her feelings. "Anyone wanna get a cup of coffee, I could use the caffeine?"

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Omar wheeled Judge into the rehab center and looked around for the therapist, spotting her on the far side; he whistled and snickered when the older woman flipped him off. "I swear she's related to you and Claudia, mean old battle ax."

"I think you're right," she whispered. "Miriam's worse than Claudia, she's meaner."

"That's cuz you keep whining and I hate whiners, now get your ass out of that chair." She pushed the wheelchair over to the even bars and waited for Judge to grab hold and pull herself up before pulling the chair back. "Thanks Omar, I'll bring her back up after PT." The short woman crossed her arms over her chest and walked beside the bars as Judge moved slowly along. "Ohhhh come on you big wimp."

Judge dropped her head and swung it back in her therapist's direction, baring her teeth, she growled. "I'm going as fast as I can, it hurts." She mumbled under her breath. "Mean little troll, hang my good foot up your ass."

"Like I haven't heard that before lady, now move your ass before I hang a foot."

Judge got to the end of the bars and dropped down into her chair, she cupped her left hand to her chest and took deep breathes trying to will away the pain. She hated PT and wished that she could just go somewhere and be left alone; she had all the time in the world to get back up and walking. These people wanted her to be able to run a marathon in a week's time and there was no way in Hell that she could do that. Looking at where she used to have five fingers, she now saw a full thumb, index finger,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of her middle finger and half of the last two. Her palm was calloused from her wheelchair and the PT but plastic caps covered the tips of her missing fingers. Her left leg throbbed with the beat of her heart and the pain went all the way to her hip and lower back. Each time she put weight on her leg, she could scream. "Why can't I just go home and be done with all of this bullshit?"

"Because you have to be able to walk before we let you through the doors and sitting on your ass is not gonna do it, so get off your ass and try again."

"Do you talk to all your patients like this?" Judge asked

"Nope, just you because you're a stubborn ass."

"Plus I told her to not give you one single inch to squirm in," Claudia said from behind Judge. "What's it gonna take to get your ass in gear?"

Judge closed one eye in concentration and then grinned. "Them telling me I can get out of here tomorrow and that I never have to come back."

"Like that will happen without you walking," she pulled a color picture from inside her purse and held it out of Judge's reach. "How about seeing something that you want but can't have?" She waved the picture around and grinned. "Come on JT, come see what I have." She moved to the opposite end of the bars from where Judge was.

"What a picture of Woobie?"

"Nope, human JT not canine, if she knew you were being such a wimp ass, she would terrorize the shit out of you."

"Murphy?" She moved towards Claudia and growled as she kept moving away from her. "Come on that's no prize for me, I ran from her remember?"

"Yep and all I have to do is make a phone call and I know she'll be here in a matter of hours to kick your ass." She snickered and jumped back a few steps when Judge reached out a hand for the picture. "I'll get mama D here to and maybe the sisters, Hell I'll get all of them down here and they can start a cheering section for ya!"

"You don't have their phone number." She knew how stupid that sounded but didn't know what else to say.

"Ohh yes I do, I have it on speed dial," she pulled her cell phone out, looked at the screen and read off the phone number. She grinned evilly when Judge's face paled and sweat ran down her temples. "I have their e-mail addys as well; I can send the picture I just took of you."

"I wouldn't have to worry about walking; they would kill me on sight!" She waved a hand at the small cell phone. "Quick, call Murph, that way I suffer less pain!"

Claudia shook her head and sighed, she thought for sure that she would be able to push the Murphy button and get Judge to do her PT. "Come on JT, do your PT so you can get the Hell out of here." She placed the picture on the table near Miriam and leaned against the edge. "Ya know she's a cute little thing, bright green eyes and evil smirk; I can just imagine the Hell she put you through."

"Evil incarnate, Satan's spawn, hairy footed little troll, cost me a fortune on disinfectant." She looked down at the picture on the table and then realized that she had walked to the table without the assistance of anything. She picked up the picture and took in the smiling face of the one woman that could drive her to distraction and back. "I couldn't even go in Wal-mart without her doing some kind of forced recon attack on me." Her eyes glazed over with memories as she

talked in a low gruff voice. "She was hiding up on the top shelf once and just as I passed by, she jumped on my back and took me right to the floor. Then her sisters came running, sprayed us down with shaving cream and ran off before I could do anything but sit there and go into a seizure." She looked to the other women with a smirk. "That was one of the mild things they did to me."

"Now that we have something to work with, get your ass on the treadmill and I want ten minutes of just walking." Miriam said as she pointed a finger at the piece of machinery. "No heroics here JT cuz I can get the phone number and besides, you get hurt and that just adds onto your sentence," she snapped her fingers. "That sounded good, I always wanted to be in law enforcement."

For weeks, Judge worked her ass off in physical therapy, she even tried to over do it one day and found that Miriam was good on her word and planted her foot up her ass. Every time she thought about the small woman kicking her in the ass, she laughed until tears rolled down her cheeks. This was the long awaited day of her release from prison, she was dressed in the clothes that Claudia had brought for her and was looking at the cross trainers on her feet. Her eyes traveled up to the ugly contraption on her leg with all its bells and whistles and wondered how long she would have to wear the damn thing.

"Another month or so and you can get rid of that one for a more simpler model, streamlined, goes better with your wardrobe...maybe." Doc Randy said as he pushed a wheelchair into the room. "Ya gotta admit it's a whole hell of a lot better than years ago when we would put a couple hundred pounds of plaster on ya and watch ya itch like crazy."

"That would have lasted for as long as it took me to get to something either heavy enough to break it open or sharp enough to cut it off." She got up from the bed and dropped down into the chair. "I've never understood the damn wheelchair thing, what difference does it make whether I walk out or you push me out, I'm leaving just the same?"

"Hospital policy, insurance bullshit, who the hell knows, some idiot with a stick up their ass makes up all the rules around here." He whispered close to her ear. "Lets get out of here; I hear that Claudia has cooked up a storm."

"No way I wanna miss that, I'm tired of this nasty hospital food and even with all the food that got snuck in, I've still lost weight." She knew she looked beyond anorexic and that no one back home would recognize her if seen. "Plus I want my dog; she's probably traded my sorry ass for Claudia and Joe."

Randy pushed her out to his truck and helped her get into the passenger side, she had no idea of what all her friends had planned for her getting out of the hospital but it didn't take much for them to throw a party. She remembered them throwing a party when Woobie's mother killed a mouse that kept getting into the kitchen cabinet and eating Claudia's cereal. She watched out the window as they went down the road and she wasn't surprised at the changes in the area, it had been years since she had visited and she saw new houses and subdivisions where open fields used to be.

"They'll drop a house anywhere won't they?" She said and pointed to a house that almost sat with its back door on the sidewalk.

"It gets worse believe me, I wish they would all go back where they came from," He glanced over at her and gave her a shake of his head. "You would not believe how many men I've treated this year for over doses of Viagra and old people for STD's. I mean an old age home where 75% of them have gonorrhea is just wrong. And the women around here are throwing Botox instead of Tupperware parties." He pulled up a gravel road and took a few turns that led them to a long driveway that ended at Joe's barn. She looked to the side of the barn and saw a red 2004 Peterbuilt semi truck. She knew it had to be Joe's, because before losing his legs, he was a truck driver, she just wondered why he still had his truck. "Joe's baby, he still putters around inside, I hear that it's like a honeymoon suite in there." He winked and snickered when she rolled her eyes. "His words not mine."

"That means he's got a few nudy pics hanging up in the cab and a bottle of whiskey in the glove compartment." A wide grin spread across her face when the side door opened and the dogs came charging out followed by Claudia and Omar. "There's my baby, I owe her big time for saving my ass." She got out of the truck, caught Woobie as she jumped into her arms and buried her face against her neck. Randy shook his head at her and headed towards where he knew all the food was waiting, that was one thing he missed the most about being away from his parents, a good home cooked meal.

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Three Whistler's checked their weapons for ammunition and then used hand signals to communicate enemy positions, they crept forward through shrubbery and stopped at the edge of a wide clearing. "See anyone?" Stewie whispered.

"Nothing." Smotcher replied.

"You guys sure they ran this way," Murphy asked and pulled her binoculars around to peer through them. "They could have doubled back and are now coming up our six." She felt the hairs on the back of her neck stand up; she rolled over and swung her rifle up in time to see dark shapes charging at them. She fired off a couple dozen shots and felt stings in her upper body and legs before the enemy ran off. "Son of a bitch!" She laid panting and hurting like hell from all the shots her body had taken. "See I told ya, right up our six!"

"Hey, I just said I saw them go this way, I'm not psycho and can't see into the future or anything." Stewie looked at her sisters and shrugged her shoulders. "What?" She jumped when a loud air horn pierced the air; she rolled to her stomach and pointed her rifle to the open clearing. "What was that?"

"Better question, what is that?" Smootcher asked and pointed to something weaving across the open area with a white flag sticking up from the top and a hand made sign on the front.

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Abbey looked out the eyeholes mama D had cut for her and stumbled across the back yard. Mama had put her inside a plastic garbage pail that was over her entire body, with the exception of her feet. "Grammy says...comes and eat!" She spun in a circle and almost fell over. "Comes and eats!" She yelled again and then clapped her hands over her ears when thuds started hitting her makeshift tank. "They got me...I'm sinkin...HELPS!" She stumbled, swayed, and finally fell over a few minutes later. "Troll...depwuty...Wucky Charms."

Murphy pulled her out from inside the garbage pail by her feet and looked down to see that she had her hands over her face. "Name, rank and cereal?"

"Grammy said when captured ta gives that." She pulled her hands down from her face and gave her aunts a toothy grin. "Wosers." She pointed to all the paintball stains of their clothes and grinned some more. "Ya sucks." They flipped the pail over, placed her inside and carried her back towards the house. Occasionally a paintball would whiz past their heads or strike the garbage pail that Abbey stood in. "Assholes!" She would yell and flip off her cousins as they ran past them. "Get em back when they sleep." Once in the house, they couldn't find one single spot to put Abbey down in, the place was wall-to-wall Whistler.

Every size and shape of container you could think of and filled to brimming with food covered every flat surface in the kitchen. The aromas had their stomachs growling and patience growing thin.

With so many of them, the birthday parties got out of hand at times so they devised a plan to hold one party every six months to celebrate those in that period of time all at once. On a kid proof surface, better known as on top of the refrigerator, was an extra large white sheet cake with every ones name that had a B-Day within the last six months on it. No one in this household had a name there but Abbey's mothers name was on it, one present to her was that Abbey would have jail keepers for the weekend so that she could have time to pamper herself.

"About damn time," Mama D said and pointed to their stained clothes. "Lost again I see, I keep telling ya that they set ya all up for an ambush every single time." She pointed at some of the younger Whistlers that rushed past with only a few paintball stains on their clothes. "They send in the little ones to get you to follow, then flank your dumb asses and come up on you from behind." She reached down for Abbey and placed her over one hip. "You should use the Troll here as bait."

"She'd sell us up the river for a cookie." Smootcher said and moved off to the side to grab them all paper plates.

"Gimme two, I tell ya where they hide." Abbey said and took a carrot stick from her grandma.

Mamma D grinned at them and moved off to the other room where the kids were all eating at the kids table. She placed Abbey into one of the highchairs that lined the wall and handed her a sippy cup from the tabletop. The parents worked the kids table like in a banquet hall; they came by with platters and filled the kid's plates to keep them from being under foot. The rest of the Whistlers and other family members were between the other rooms and the outdoors.

One person who didn't belong wandered amongst the family looking for the small sheriff, Tamara nodded and smiled when people noticed her and sighed with relief when she spotted her target. She had overheard one of the deputies talking in the coffee shop about needing to pass along some papers to Murphy and she had convinced him to allow her to do it. What she would have to give him in return was nothing compared to what she would get from the small sheriff in time. She tapped the envelope in her fingers against her thigh and made her move when the path was clear.

"Excuse me Sheriff Whistler; I have this letter for you." She held it out and couldn't help but to grin at the paint stained goggles on top of Murphy's head or the stains all over her clothes.

"Uuhh thanks," she took the offered letter and then looked curiously at the younger woman and the fingers still resting on hers. "How did you come about getting this?"

"I was coming this way so I volunteered to drop it off, have a nice day." She gave her one of her sexiest smiles and put extra sway in her walk as she left. Murphy glanced up once and went back to the letter in her hand.

"What was the coffee girl doing here?" Stewie asked, took the letter from her hand and read it. "Ohhhh gee has the new ADA run off to join a convent," she handed the letter to Murphy and gave Tamara's retreating form the once over and shivered. "Jailbait and she ain't all that even with the extra swing."

"Yeah," Smotcher said over their shoulders. "Should hear what the Troll calls her." she gave her sister a bright smile and walked off leaving her with her raging curiosity.

"I wanna know what the Troll said?" She gave her sister a raised eyebrow and wondered why she was slapping on the coffee girl. "Ya don't suppose she has a crush on that girl do ya?"

"Who knows with her, she's been acting weird all week." Stewie watched to see where her sister went and then followed a few seconds later.

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Murphy was sitting at her desk going over some reports when she heard a soft knock at her door, she raised her eyes and saw familiar eyes watching her. "Come on in, what can I do for ya?" She



said to Tamara and then saw that she carried a tray with coffee and a bag from the shop.

"I've got the orders here," she looked at the cups and pulled one from the back to hand to Murphy. "I know you'll enjoy this one, it's one of our best sellers." She pulled a still warm blueberry muffin from the bag and placed it on her desk before giving her a sexy smile and leaving. "Have a nice day Sheriff." Murphy watched her make her way around the office; she gave each officer a cup of coffee and a muffin or croissant before she left the building. "Wonder how long she's been bringing us coffee?"

"Ohhhh about a week or two," Smootcher said from the doorway and gave her sister a narrowed gaze. "She wants in your pants ohh mighty sheriff of Rottingham, we all get regular old coffee but you get café mocha double espresso something or nother with whipped cream and a fresh muffin."

Murphy held up her hands and shook her head. "Not interested, you want her go for it."

Smootcher laughed and clapped her hands. "I don't want her either; I don't trust her is all. Just be careful Murph, you become sheriff and all these women start falling all over themselves to get near you?" She gave her a raised eyebrow and tilted her head to the side. "Seems kinda odd dontcha think?"

"They'd all run away if they knew how much money this job actually pays, must be the title or something cuz it sure as Hell ain't the money." She rubbed her face with both hands and then leaned back in her chair with her hands still over her face. "I hate paperwork, think anyone would notice if I shredded it all?"

"From past performance of the county sheriff...not a chance." She said and looked at all the file folders on her sister's desk. "What is all this shit anyways?"

"Uhhmm...I have no idea, my brain is fried today and all I wanna do is go home and watch TV."

Smootcher rolled her eyes and grabbed her sister by the front of her uniform. "You are the county sheriff; hire a damn assistant to take care of this shit." She picked up the phone, called information and made another phone call afterwards. "Sometimes I'm not so blonde." She blinked a few times and shrugged her shoulders. "Any who's it, I just called Kelly Services and they're gonna look for someone to help you but you have last say if ya want it."

"Smootcher, doesn't one of our Aunt's work at Kelly Services?"

"Yeah and that's who I called, I just couldn't remember her work number; she'll find ya someone good or have someone in the family give birth to it." She pulled her from her chair and led her from her cluttered office, I'm hungry, let's go find Stewie and get something to eat."

"Are you guys off today?" She just barely grabbed her cover before Smootcher dragged her through her door.

"Yep, hope these new guys can hold down the fort without us for a day or two."

"Have faith, our numbers have more than doubled in the last few weeks." She looked in the general direction they were walking in and wondered why they were going towards the Methodist Church. "Don't tell me Stewie's on pedophile surveillance again."

Smootcher busted up laughing even though she knew it to be on a half-truth. "Nope, the Trolls being punished; she made a pass at the minister's wife yesterday." She gave her sister a shit-eating grin. "She's such a lil genius and a baby dyke in the making, she grabbed Mrs. Finnie's ass and said 'Do you know how to use a whip?' So to make a long story short, her and Stewie are sanding the pews until Hell freezes over or the Mrs. cools off, which ever comes first."

"And just how did Stewie get caught up in this, she was on duty yesterday with you?"

"She had Troll duty during lunch and it happened when they were coming back from getting our lunch order. She said that all she did was laugh her ass off and cheered the Troll on and that got her sentenced right along with her tiny ward."

"Christ, we really need to turn one of the jail cells into a play room for the Troll; not one single relative besides us will watch her while Carla works, she's been banned from every single preschool and daycare center within three counties and just mentioning her name sends babysitters into witness protection and safe houses." They walked up the sidewalk to the side doors of the church and each took a deep breath before entering the building, neither one of them attended church and often wondered if just entering would cause lightening to strike them on the spot. They waited for their eyes to adjust to the dimness and then sighed when they heard first Stewie's and then Abbey's voice singing something better left in a bar.

I like big butts and I can not lie  
You other brothers can't deny  
That when a girl walks in with an itty bitty waist  
And a round thing in your face  
You get sprung  
Wanna pull up tough  
Cuz you notice that butt was stuffed  
Deep in the jeans she's wearing  
I'm hooked and I can't stop staring  
Oh, baby I wanna get with ya  
And take your picture

Stewie looked up and grinned at her sisters; she placed her hand over her niece's mouth and shrugged her shoulders. "Hey guys come to help us?" She wiped her face on her upper shirtsleeve and yanked her hand away from Abbey's mouth. "Sick lil creep," she wiped her palm on her pant leg and cast Abbey a narrowed look. "That's gross; you're not supposed to lick my hand, that's like...incest or something."

Abbey gave her a toothy grin and was about to go back to singing when a set of green eyes held

her. "You little girl are in so much trouble, what are we gonna do with you?" Murphy held out her arms and caught her when she jumped into them.

"Buy me a happy meal?"

"And maybe a belt sander," Stewie said after looking at her sore hands. "We got two pews done in like hours," she showed them the sponge like sanding blocks laying on the floor, putty knives and other miscellaneous items. "The worst part is they want these things varnished to, there's no way in Hell that the Troll is gonna be part of that. That stuff is hazardous to breathe in and I'm not gonna have her anywhere near it." She pointed at her niece. "No more hitting on older women for you, stick to the young ones and get me their phone numbers."

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A photographer from the Washington Post snapped off pictures of the women as they left the church, he snickered at the smallest Whistler whom was on a leash. He busted out laughing when she ran in circles around her Aunts legs getting them all tangled in red retractable strap. He was working on a human-interest piece for the paper and this family had piqued his interest a few months ago, the more he learned, the more he knew he had chosen the right family for his story. He had already caught other members of the family on film and done some background history on them, the last ones on his list were the immediate family of Mama D and the last remaining kids that still lived at home. The small curly blonde-haired toddler added to the all around picture, he had a soft spot for kids but this one was special. He chuckled as she stood off to the side and danced around while her aunts tried to untangle themselves. He put his camera away and walked up the opposite side of the sidewalk, he glanced over and smiled at Abbey and gave her the thumbs up sign.

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Judge sat in a lawn chair in Claudia's backyard, for the first time in a long time, her stomach felt stuffed. She looked to the bottom of the chase and watched as Woobie snored and ran in her sleep. Closing her eyes, she felt the sun warm her skin and ease all the stiffness from her body. It seemed an eternity since she had been outside and felt a clean breeze caress her baldhead; she snickered and ran her fingers across where her hair was less than ¼ inch high.

"I do the same thing everyday but my thoughts are far different than yours I'm sure." An older man with a sparse white hair sat down in a chair next to her and smiled. "Seems like only yesterday that I woke up and found myself old, bald and depressed; the depression hit when I walked into the kitchen and seen that I wasn't married to Christie Brinkley like in my dream." He held out his hand to Judge and gave her a wink. "I'm Jason by the way."

"Judge and you look very familiar to me for some reason." She sat up a little further in the chair and looked over her shoulder when she heard Claudia's voice.

"Take off ten years and think of all the political bullshit newspapers that float into your office with some guys' picture in the corner." She pointed a finger at Jason. "He's the culprit; blame him for all the fodder that fills your garbage cans in your office."

Judge felt her face pale; she turned to see him grinning at her. "Governor Chilton sir...I'm sorry I didn't," She stopped stammering when he held up a hand. "Thanks for the warning Claudia."

"Ohh this was all my doing, I just drop in on her and Joe from time to time, I planed it right this time; I think I gained ten pounds just walking through the kitchen!" He waved the chicken leg at Judge and grinned. "No one can cook like her, not even my dear old mama and don't you dare call her either Claud."

"Men, they will never catch on to the secrets of mothers." She dropped down into a chair beside Judge and whispered to her. "His mama gave me the recipe for chicken and can still cook up a storm; she just knows that if she cooks, she'll never get rid of him." She winked at the Governor and gave him a wicked smile.

"I know all about my scheming mama, it's paybacks for marrying a woman who refuses to cook. My wife doesn't even know where the kitchen is or if we have one but she sure as Hell knows where the check book is and all the credit cards." He shook his head and grinned. "Just kidding, my wife is the best and we're just regular people." He wiped his greasy hands on his pant legs and saw Judge grin. "I'm gonna catch Hell for that when I get home, anyway, I came here to talk to you about a job."

Judge figured as much, she knew that she couldn't run forever without giving him an answer. She took a deep breath and nodded her head; she had been thinking about the job quite a bit lately and was seriously considering taking it. This job would give her something that she always wanted, control. She knew that Jefferson County was also in dire need of a good Judge as well and that she could change some lives with her rulings. "Is it still for Jefferson County?"

"Yep," he took a plate from Joe and grinned wide. "All Hell broke loose up there with the new sheriff taking over and firing a bunch of people, then the Mayor hired some new ADA that isn't working out."

"When do you need me up there and what about that old geezer Hankins, he keeps sneaking into the court rooms and citing everyone with contempt?"

He looked up from his plate, stopped mid chew and gave her a quizzical expression. "Ain't he retired?"

"Yes sir, he retired almost five years ago; he keeps escaping the old ladies home in Ranson. He even had a locksmith come in and change the locks on his old chambers and then dead bolted

himself inside."

"Christ, I didn't know he was that bad."

Judge busted up laughing and waved a hand at them. "He got me on contempt of court for using hand signals to my client; we all sat in cells that day and let me tell you that was not a fun time for me." She looked to Claudia and gave her a raised eyebrow. "I was locked in a jail cell with Murphy until someone got a hold of mama D to come bail us out."

"Any other problems up there that I should know about?"

"I haven't been there for a while sir and I'm not one for scuttlebutt, the one who knows everything is my old assistant Belinda. She'll tell you everything you want to know and then some, without a conscience."

He nodded and gave them all a grin, he knew Belinda and had been speaking with her for a while now since Judge had disappeared. He wished that he could tell the woman that her boss and friend was alive and well but he had promised Claudia and Joe that he wouldn't. He was glad that he would be long gone when they informed her that everyone back in Charles Town thought her dead and that her going back would be quite a shock. He was also glad that he had come prepared for anything. "So are you gonna bail an old buzzard out of the fire and take the job?"

"Come on JT," Omar said as he handed her a cold beer and then one to everyone else. "I think you'd look hot in black robes, slamming a gavel and yelling 'Life in prison no chance of parole!'"

She leaned back in her chair, closed her eyes and thought for a few minutes before coming to a decision. "Ok but under two conditions,"

"What would those be?" The Governor asked.

"I want Belinda as my CSO and my own holding cell like Claudia has here, seems that her paint scheme does wonders for repeat offenders." She had heard stories from Omar and Joe about the horrible orange color with bright yellow stripes her holding cell was painted and the bright lights she had in there to reflect the light off all four walls. Then there were the orange coveralls that the prisoners wore that made it even more horrifying. She could only imagine the headache one would have after spending a few hours in there; the thought alone would keep her off Claudia's docket.

The governor looked to each person and then let out a long drawn out breathe, he had no problem at all giving Judge what she wanted, he just didn't want them to know he was such an easy push over. "Ok, deal." He pulled a packet of papers from his pocket, opened them up and handed them to her. "Sign those and then repeat after me."

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Murphy was cruising down Rt. 340 towards Harpers Ferry in her squad car, she had been ecstatic when her Aunt had sent over a middle aged woman to be her assistant. She had given her the office next to hers and in no time the folders had disappeared from her desk and what came back were just things that needed her signature. To make sure that she wasn't dreaming, she walked into the office and found her hard at work. "Excuse me Mrs. Hardly, where did you work before here?"

"Ohh I worked at the Berkeley county assessor's office, I was...replaced by a twenty something bimbo with huge tits." She gave Murphy a raised brow and tilted her head to the side. "I hope my former asshole boss finds out too late that she doesn't know a filing cabinet from a paper shredder." She pointed to a stack of folders on the corner of her desk. "You shouldn't even have those; they should be at the tax office."

"I have all kinds of stuff in my office and in a make-shift storage area, all compliments of the former sheriff. So I'm sure there's all kinds of stuff that I'm not supposed to have, I've been going through it slowly and trying to get it to the right places." She pointed to the pile of folders sitting on the corner of the desk. "I'll take that stuff over to my sister at the tax office, she'll be thrilled." She gave the older woman a smile. "I'm so glad you're here and believe me that I'll never replace you until the day you retire." She had left her office later that day with a huge weight gone from her shoulders, she hadn't felt this good in weeks; perhaps months. Now with someone to sort through all the paperwork, she had time to check on her deputies and the trouble spots in the immediate area.

What she found amusing was that she could pull up behind someone who was speeding and they kept on speeding. She always panicked when a cop pulled in behind her, sometimes she would pull in somewhere just to get them off her tail. "When the car in front of her sped up to 70, she ground her teeth together, hit her lights and siren and yelled when they still ignored her. "What the fuck you dumbass, pull it the fuck over!" Hitting the siren button again, she was reaching for the microphone when the car slowed and edged over to the side of the road. She called into the dispatcher, grabbed up her cover and exited her cruiser. Slowly she moved alongside the car and peered through the side windows at the passenger and driver. "Can I have your driver's license, proof of insurance and registration?" She eased up so that her right side was even with the edge of the cars door, reaching with one hand she took the offered papers. "I'll be right back, please stay in your car." She backed up a few steps before she turned and headed back to her car.

"Stella this is Murphy, I've got a car pulled over on 340 right before the cemetery."

*"Ok Sheriff, need any help?"* The dispatcher asked.

"I sure hope not, that would look bad now wouldn't it?" She chuckled, hung the microphone up and punched in all the information she had into the cruisers computer. As she was writing up the speeding ticket, she glanced at the small computer screen and felt her mouth drop open. Picking up the microphone, she called dispatch. "Stella, the car I have stopped...we may need the Virginia police here for a pick-up, so far he's got two warrants for Virginia and...shit, Maryland

wants this guy as well, ohh hell this is a bad one I got here. Call me some back up, have them come from the other side of Harpers Ferry."

"I have your sisters free, they just came on and are headed that direction?" She said and looked at the sheet in front of her that had all the officers' names on it that were on duty.

"Ok, I'll give them a call, thanks Stella." She pulled her cell phone out and called Stewie's cell phone, she relayed all the info she had on the driver and two minutes later she was watching as their truck came towards her, cut across and blocked the other car in before the driver knew what was going on. Knowing that they were doing something completely against the book, she climbed from her cruiser and stood behind her door. "Driver throw your keys out the window and put both arms out the window where I can see them!" She watched as her sisters used their doors as cover and braced their weapons on the windows edge.

"They better not shoot holes in our truck; it's got enough bondo to qualify to be made of 90% plastic as it is!" Smootcher growled and watched as the passenger moved lower in the seat. "Shit Murphy!" She yelled over her radio. "Passenger is reaching!" She yelled as she and Stewie ran towards the car, they all knew it was stupid and against every thing, they trained for but they were well known to act on instinct alone. Murphy had run for the driver's door, grabbed the driver by his arms and yanked him out through the window. She had him on his stomach, cuffed, and was opening the door when she saw her sisters cuffing the passenger on the other side.

"Passenger here had a .9mil on the floor; we gotta thank the other boys for putting that might be armed in the report." Stewie said as searched the passenger and then helped Smootcher yank the spitting and cussing creep up from the ground and half dragged and carried him to the back of the car. They looked down 340 and saw a bunch of flashing lights headed their way and grinned. "Here comes the Calvary."

"And late as usual," Murphy said as she searched her prisoner and then sat him down against the bumper of her car. "I'm gonna call Stella and get the Maryland and Virginia chiefs on the line and see who has the what on these two creeps." She went back to her car and was talking on her radio when the other cars pulled up and started loading the two guys into the backs, the other deputies waited until the sisters were finished with reading of the prisoners rights before they transported. Murphy had just stepped from her car when she noticed a photographer standing on the other side of the road; he waved, got back into his car and drove off before she could do anything. "Take them to our lock up, Maryland has them for armed robbery and Virginia has them for assault on a police officer, we're gonna let them fight it out." She saw the deflated look on her sister's faces and knew how they felt. "Sorry guys."

"Hey it's ok; at least we got them off the street, that's enough for us." Smootcher said and gave her sisters a big smile.

Murphy looked at her watch and then counted back in her head the time that it took to apprehend the creeps and everything that had happened and then gave her sisters a narrowed look. "You guys aren't even supposed to be on shift yet so how in the Hell did you guys get here so damn quick?"

"Ohh that's easy," Stewie answered. "We were right behind you when you flipped your lights on..."

"So Stewie called Stella and then pulled the info on the car," Smootcher added. "And then I cut up through town to come out down by the motel 8, ya know so that we could come out down from where you were."

"What are you doing down here?" They both asked her in unison.

"I was coming down here to check out the speed trap points; little did I know that I would be yanking someone through a car window." She watched as the area cleared of cruisers and that they were the only ones left. "Come on I owe Smootcher here lunch for getting me an assistant, Mrs. Hardly has cleared my desk off in one morning."

"Hold on Murph, lemme get you some cuffs, ya know in case we have to arrest some other people before we hit the cop shop." Stewie said as she jogged back to their truck and went to the back door. "We need to start carrying those nylon cuff things." She pulled a pair of cuffs from a lock box under the seat and tossed them to her sister along with a leather case filled with nylon restraints. "We just got them in today," she shrugged. "We haven't even put them on our belts yet."

"But I like the click of cuffs slapping on a perps wrists." Murphy mumbled as she slipped the cuffs into the worn carrier on her belt. "These things remind me of those things ya close garbage bags with...kinda fits though if ya really think about it." She climbed into her cruiser and waved to the waiting wrecker service as she pulled away, the perps car would be taken to the impound lot and processed and hopefully sold on the auction block. As she followed her sisters, she looked at her watch and wondered what the last four hours of her shift would be like.

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Judge stood standing with a hammer in one hand and a piece of 2x4 in the other; she cocked her head at an angle and shook her head. "I still say it's cock-eyed, look from this angle." She stepped back and waited for Joe to step beside her.

"You need to see a doctor about your eyesight," he handed her the level and went back to the wall framing he was doing. "Gaydar is not part of building houses JT; we need the stuff straight around here."

"Haaa, funny guy you are there Joe." She limped back to where she had been hammering nails into ceiling joists and stopped to look at their work. They spent a few days a week working with other people building houses for habitat for humanities in New Iberia; they had just finished one the week before and were helping with the framing of this one. Before this, she hadn't a clue



about framing or anything besides hanging a picture, Joe promised her that by the end of the month, she would be a journeyman framer if he had anything to do with it. She knew that back home in Martinsburg they had a habitat for humanities that built houses for people but she had never given it much thought before now. "How many houses have you built Joe?"

"Over the years?" He asked and dropped his hammer into the strap on his belt.

"Yeah." She let her arm drop and rubbed at her tired shoulder and upper arm, she swore that her right arm was twice the size of the left one from all the hammering she had done.

"A couple dozen or so, I started helping out before I lost my legs and more afterwards, ya know as a therapy type thing." He grinned at her. "My boss hung a foot up my ass and told me there were people far more worse off than I was and to get my damn hammer and go pound some nails." He dropped down onto a stack of wood and wiped at the sweat running down his face. "I really didn't have much of a choice after Claudia dropped my sorry ass off and left me at the work site and no one would go against her orders and give me a ride until the end of the work day."

Judge loosened the straps on her leg brace and eased down beside Joe; she looked to her dirty, calloused hands and grinned. "She sure is something, I watched her the other day in the courtroom and I swear the prisoners trembled when she came through the door."

"I call that the Oz Syndrome," he chuckled at her expression and went on to explain. "It's from the scene in the Wizard of Oz movie where they all first meet the wizard and jump at his booming voice." He saw the light click on over her head. "Claudia has that little part of the movie on CD and it blasts into her holding cell every so often, it's enough to make anyone jump if ya set it up right."

"I heard from the sheriff deputies in the courthouse that she has the worst taste in music, I had no idea that she piped in music to her holding cell; that is until I went down there and heard it." She shivered. "I'm so glad I missed the Wizards voice that would have killed me on the spot."

He laughed and clapped her on her leg. "You missed the best part, nothing like hearing 'I am Oz the great and powerful Oz' screamed into your ears for hours but the secret is conditioning. From the second they step into her holding cell and the music starts, they're being conditioned. Hours of listening to 'We're off to see the wizard' and the sporadic 'I am Oz!' part yelled with Claudia's voice yelling 'sit' afterwards has them jumping when she yells it in the courtroom when she enters."

"Ohh my Gods, she's playing head games with them before she actually has them in her courtroom, I never thought of that." She looked to see his wicked grin. "Has anyone complained about it?"

"Nope, she got some ideas from talking with that sheriff in Arizona, ya know the one who has tent town and makes all his prisoners wear pink underwear?"

"I've heard of him, we need that around where I live or lived I should say, ya know since I gave my house away. Wonder if I can do all that once I get back there, ya know the music and all?" She grinned at the thought of dressing all the prisoners in pink jumpsuits and making them into road gangs, the highways definitely needed some help with all the empty beer bottles, tires, couches, stray household appliances and other miscellaneous items that litter the roads. An even wider but far more evil grin blossomed across her face, the thought of having all the trouble making Whistlers in pink jumpsuits, chained at the ankle and picking up said items in the chain gang.

"You're starting to scare me there JT," Joe said and moved further away from her. "Maybe you need some more time off, you know before heading back to work."

"Nope, just thinking of road gangs dressed in god awful pink jumpsuits. Can you imagine seeing that as you go down the road, can't say that you couldn't see them."

"That's true, maybe you could make them all wear pigtails and really drive them all nuts?" He saw her eyes light up and knew that he wasn't helping matters any and just decided to keep his thoughts to himself.

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Judge dropped down onto the queen size bed and looked down at her scared and mangled looking knee. She remembered a time before all of this when she would have fainted at the very thought of the imperfection, now it was just another chapter in her growth. She fell back on the bed and looked up at the ceiling and thought of everything that she had gone through and how far she had come since leaving Charles Town. At times, she had thought that it was the wrong thing to do, usually when she ran out of hand wipes and was seconds from a break down. Now, she could care less about any of that as she looked down at her dirty fingernails and dirt stained fingers. "If Murphy could see me now, she'd probably fall over." She rolled from her bed and limped towards the bathroom for a hot shower. "Wonder if I've blown it with her, when I go back do I go see her or hide when they find out that I'm back in town?" She asked her reflection.

"How about suck it up and be a man for a change," Claudia said from the doorway. "I know for a fact that you can take an ass whipping and still live." She placed a clothesbasket on the bed and gave Judge a once over look and chuckled. "Hell, she may not even recognize you now; from a spit shined lawyer to a muscle bound, hammer swinging house builder."

"Who is probably public enemy number one in the Whistler book, they can have me taken out and no one will ever find my body." She sighed and ran her fingers across her face.

"Ohh grow some damn gonads for Christ sakes," she stepped right up to Judge and smacked her in her stomach with the back of her hand. "All you have to do is flash that trademark grin that you used in college and she'll forgive you for being an idiot."

"You know about that huh?" She grinned and wiggled her brows. "Had all those straight girls having second thoughts about the dickless wonders they were with."

"I may have been a professor but I wasn't deaf, dumb and blind to the seedier side of your college life; hard not to be when your name was mentioned everywhere after a big party."

Judge felt her face heating up, she knew that she was a big dog in college but didn't know that it was so widely broadcasted. "Damn, guess I have no secrets from you huh?"

"Nope, so stop the damn negative thinking and go get your woman." She left the room and headed towards Joe's workroom, she knew that she could steal a few minutes of time and be alone to use his phone to make some important phone calls.

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Claudia leaned back in Joe's office chair and grinned as she punched in the phone number, she just had to do this. She knew that what she was doing was somewhat bad but with everything that JT had done to her over the years, this was paybacks and would help her on her first day as a Judge. She knew that when her former mentor had done it to her, it had helped on her first day of work on the bench. She still grinned when she thought of the expressions she saw on of every single persons face in the full courtroom when her small frame walked through from the Judge's chambers. From what she learned later, they all thought she was a six-foot-seven Amazon that made the floor creak with each step and the ceiling shake with a booming voice. JT already looked that part; she just needed some help in the ego department. "Hello, is this the Charles Town Mayors office?" She held back her laugh with the thought of how fast this information would travel after one brief phone call to a bored secretary.

*"Yes it is how can I help you?"*

"This is Claudia, I'm one of the Governor's assistants and I'm calling to confirm receipt of the letter announcing that Judge J. Tenneyson Bloodstone the Fifth will be taking the bench within the next few weeks?" She heard the clicking of keys and then papers ruffling before she heard a weak voice come over the phone.

*"I'm sorry but we haven't received it yet, can you tell me when it was sent?"*

"Within the last few days or so, it may still be on its way but this is good to, you know by word of mouth."

*"You're right, I always back up a letter with a phone call, you know just in case something happens in route. So you said that Judge Tenneyson..."*

"Judge J. Tenneyson Bloodstone the Fifth," she crossed her fingers that the woman didn't make

the connection of whom she was talking about; no one that she knew of called Judge by J. Tenneyson, it was how people in the other political world held her and her fathers careers apart, not like they had anything in common. "Anyway, this is a hell of a Judge you all got coming up there, a real hang-em type."

*"Really, that's something we need around here; with all the changes in the political arenas we need a good Judge to put the creeps behind bars instead of slapping them on the wrists."*

"Ohh nothing to worry about with Judge Tenneyson, criminals tremble with fear at just the mention of the name." She smirked with the lie she was about to tell. "One guy threw himself in front of a car right in front of the courthouse just so he wouldn't have to go before Tenneyson's ruling!" It wasn't quite a lie, she just changed the names, the poor guy tried to kill himself again when he found out that she would still be hearing his case. By the time she hung up the phone, she knew that she had started a wild fire; she wouldn't be surprised if JT wasn't a 12 foot two-headed monster that ate small children for snacks and used tree branches for toothpicks in the next hour or so. "One more call to make and I'm done for a while."

*"Jefferson County Insane Asylum, head nutcase can I help you?"*

"Ohh good, I hate talking to the wannabe bosses." She chuckled when she heard Belinda sigh. "So Belinda do you like your job?"

*"Who is this?"*

"Let's just say that I know of a certain Judge taking the bench in Charles Town that will be in need of a good CSO, you up for the job?"

*"I'm retired and the person coming here has just got to be nuts, no good Judge's come to this area cuz the pay sucks."*

"Well yeah insane is one way of describing her but I think you know her better as OCD impaired." She heard the phone drop and called out a few times before she heard Belinda.

*"What did you just say?"*

"OCD impaired...well I think that's cured now but anyways, Judge needs someone she trusts as an CSO and I know for a fact that she already told the Governor that she would only take the job if she could have you back. So will ya help out the poor kid and take the job?"

*"She's dead...she died in a car accident..."*

"That was a huge mistake on the cop shops part and should not have been released before confirmation could be made, I found out too late to stop the information from reaching everyone that counted. Believe me she's alive and ready to kick some ass from behind the bench. By the way, I'm Judge Claudia Beaujue, one of her oldest friends. If ya Google me you'll see that I'm on the bench in New Iberia Louisiana and the page lists everything I've done; including teach Law.

Judge was one of my students and then she clerked for me until she graduated, I'm sure Murphy can confirm that."

*"This is all so hard to take after thinking her dead, does Murphy know?"* She sat down and tried to calm her shaking hands and knees.

"Nope, I think we should let JT take care of that family. To be honest, I wish I could be a fly on the wall when the Whistlers see her." She laughed when she heard Belinda snort. "Will they kill her on sight or is JT exaggerating?"

*"Uuhhmmm...no she's not exaggerating, she may get her ass kicked all over Jefferson County. Not like she doesn't deserve it, now why in the Hell hasn't she called me; of all the people I should have been the first one that she called to let me know that she's not dead!"*

"That's kind of my fault, you see, she doesn't know that she's dead. With all that's happened...it kind of slipped my mind on purpose to tell her what the cops down here did. Plus, I've kept her busy as hell to keep her and my husband out of my hair; it's like having two toddlers under foot. She's needed this time to find herself again and heal from all the bullshit her asshole parents have put her through over the years, so I kind of put off the 'Ohh by the way you're dead talk.'" She heard Belinda bust out laughing with what she had just said. "And so that you're not shocked when you see her, she's not the same person who left West Virginia. She suffered some injuries and spent some time in the hospital but she is back up to speed and ready to kick some ass."

*"You mean from the car accident?"* Belinda feared the worst, from what she had heard of Judge's car, there was nothing left of it. All she could think of was that she was badly burned from the accident.

"She wasn't in the car, she got injured trying to stop the guy from stealing her car, and the car thief is the one who died in the crash. I just hope Murphy is ready for the change, because who you got coming up there is someone Murphy has never met."

*"Well the Murphy we have here now is not the same one we had when Judge left...she's the new Sheriff of Jefferson County and she's kicking ass. Maybe now they'll be more fitted to be together as a couple?"*

Claudia ran her fingers across her lips and felt a wicked grin break out across her face, she had a strange feeling that something was working in the background but never dreamed of anything like this. "Ya know you might be right, from what Judge told me of the Whistler sisters and their pranks..."

*"Yeah, they all needed to grow up a lot. We never thought that pinning badges on those three would do it, but I tell ya."*

Claudia talked with Belinda for another hour before they said their goodbyes and she promised to call again and let her know how Judge was doing. She also had more insight into how Judge had been living the last few years and was so glad that she had found her way back to her old

self. She was exhausted from just hearing about how she had been living, she knew if she had actually been the one doing it, she would have committed herself long ago or found the nearest bridge. "God that kid is sooo much trouble." She leaned back in the chair and yawned wide enough that her jaws cracked. "She's in for a huge surprise when she gets back; hope she can handle it all."

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Murphy leaned back in her chair, closed her eyes for her lunchtime nap and then felt fingers digging deep into her tired and aching shoulders. At first, she thought it was either her mama or one of her sisters until a strange voice whispered in her ear. She sat up so quickly that she knocked her out box off the corner of her desk and sent papers scattering across her office floor. "JESUS CHRIST...WHO THE FUCK?" She jumped from her chair and spun to face the person who had invaded her personal space. She stood staring into the frightened blue eyes of the coffee girl and felt horrible.

"I'm sorry Sheriff...I just thought that...I'm just so sorry." She turned to leave and heard Murphy swear under her breath and then call out her name with a bit of hesitation. She quickly hid the grin that broke across her face with Murphy's cussing and turned with her former hurt expression plastered all over her face.

"Tamara right?" She moved closer with a hand held out in front of her. "Hey look I'm sorry you just scared the Hell outta me, can I help you with something?"

"No, actually I was just passing through and you looked so tense that I thought...never mind." She left the office and heard a loud sigh come from behind her; she was good at this game and knew that she was driving Murphy nuts with her actions.

"Hey listen I could use something to eat, how about joining me, ya know my way of an apology?" She moved in front of her and motioned to the front door of the sheriff's office. "I usually just go down the street here and grab a quick bite to eat and then come back to the office to eat it."

Tamara was in heaven, her plan had worked and she was closer to her goal than before. She walked beside the sheriff all the way to the small restaurant and thanked her quietly when she held the door open for her. If she played her cards right, she would be living the big life in no time.

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Judge looked at her laptop screen and scanned the different properties for sale in the Jefferson County area, she had planned to build a house on the property she owned but had changed her mind. She wanted something wide open and easier to get to than her mountain top property; she didn't want to think about the difficulty she would have getting up there during the winter time. What she wanted was a good-sized piece of property to build a house on or maybe find a farm for sale. She had been looking for a few days and had contacted a realtor to help her find what she was looking for, so far, she hadn't seen anything she liked and wondered if she would end up living in a motel until she found something. "Whatcha looking for Mail order brides from Russia?" Claudia asked as she looked over her shoulder at the laptop screen.

"Ha funny, if anything I should be looking for a group of body guards." She pointed to an ad for a large amount of land zoned for both residential and business. "Ya know I'm gonna get my ass kicked as soon as I step into Charles Town. So I'm trying to find some land where I can hide behind a twelve foot fence of razor wire and roaming guard dogs."

"Isn't 635 acres a bit much, it'll take you a month just to cut the grass and who knows how long to get to the end of the driveway?" She looked at the price and felt her knees grow weak. "You have that kind of money to spend?"

Judge glanced over her shoulder and gave her friend a big grin. "And then some, what can I say I'm a cheap bitch and I've never really used any of the money from my parents. Besides, land is an excellent investment especially in Jefferson County; so many damn builders dropping condos and shit every few feet." She printed up a few ads and then went to her e-mail program to see if her realtor had written to her.

"With that much acreage you could start your own town and have the Whistlers as your own personal guards; ya know what they say, keep your friends close and your enemies closer." She hugged Judge tightly. "Custom made handcuffs for you and Murphy can't get any closer than that."

"And I'm sure she'll have a pair with my name engraved on them as soon as she hears that I'm back."

"Yeah about that, I'll warn you now that it maybe more of a shock than you think; you see uhhmm...they think you're dead." She rushed the last part out and waited for her friend to explode, all she did was bust out laughing.

"I'm dead, as in planted six foot under dead?" She laughed until tears ran down her face.

"Yeah and why are you laughing?"

"Because Murphy's gonna kill me as soon as she becomes conscious after seeing me. Christ, who was the idiot that killed me off so to speak?"

"One of the cops, he jumped the gun before any investigating could be done; he sent the report off the same damn day they found your car. I tried to stop it but it was a done deal, one good part is that your parents think your dead."

"Ohhhh fuck me, they think I was locked up in a mental institution all this time," she thought for a few seconds and then shrugged her shoulders. "They'll just think I escaped again or checked myself out." She was starting to panic; she knew that if they went after Murphy, she would end up in jail for two murders. "Ohh shit, they'll try and get the house I gave to Murphy and all my money."

"Take it easy there Judge, you wrote out the paperwork on the house which means that not even God could wrangle it from her and I called your accountant and all your money is safe."

"Why didn't you tell me about this sooner, ya know like when I was still in the hospital?" Her temper was starting to get the better of her; she was real close to throwing a temper tantrum.

"It wouldn't have made any difference," she thumped her on her forehead. "You were all ready dead by that time and had been for a while."

Judge counted in her head how many days it had taken to get to the motel and then how long she was in a jail cell after her car was stolen and knew that Claudia was right. "I'm so screwed." She dropped her head onto the table and groaned while Claudia laughed and slapped her on her back.

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Mama opened the back door to Murphy's house, walked through the kitchen and into the living room where she found her kid sitting on the couch staring at her laptop screen. "What in the Hell were you doing with that gold digging tramp from the coffee shop?"

Murphy looked up with wide eyes and mouth hanging open, it just amazed her sometimes how her mama knew when she had done something before she could say a word. "When did she become a gold digger and how do you know I was with her?"

"She comes from a family of gold diggers," she dropped down into the chair across from Murphy and gave her a narrowed look. "All of a sudden you have a 20 something chasing after you; you never had that when you were 20 something. Now you get a powerful job and all the creeps come out of the woodwork and start chasing you. All of Jefferson County knows by now, you were seen walking with her down the street and then having lunch with her." She tossed her the newspaper and waited for her reaction. "There are spies all over the damn place and you are the



main target."

She read the headline and snorted. "A little Bounty Hunter in the Sheriffs Department?" She stared at the picture of her and her sisters from when they had apprehended the pair of criminals on route 340. "Geez we have our own paparazzi and was he referring to my shortness with the 'little' bounty hunter statement?" She chuckled at the picture of them all tangled in Abbey's leash and another one of Abbey flipping someone off over her shoulder as she carried her. "Does the spitting troll know she's a star?"

"Yep and she's getting real close to having her picture put on a Milk Carton, she stole my sunglasses so that she could go incognito and hide from the papas as she calls them." She leveled a stare at her daughter and then pointed a finger at her. "Be careful of that girl, I have this bad feeling that she's nothing but trouble; run a check on her or something before you get your ass in a sling."

"Geez mama ya act like I'm gonna marry her, we went to lunch and that's it. I have no intention of forming that kind of relationship with her, I was just being nice."

"Ya wanna be nice, help old ladies across the street or arrest some drunks but leave that one alone." She got up from the chair, looked around the living room and snorted. "And clean this pigsty up, the place is disgusting." She laughed at Murphy's shocked expression and left her sitting there with her mouth hanging open.

Murphy looked around her and knew that she couldn't get it any cleaner unless she tore the place down and built a new house. She had bypassed Judge with the cleanliness of her surroundings by buying a robot vacuum cleaner; the little bugger came out and cleaned the floors all day long while she was away. What she really wanted was one that followed the troll, that kid could make a mess in a room void of everything. She flipped through the paper and came to an article about a woman in Washington DC whom gives out blankets and coats to the homeless people during the winter. Along with an award for her generosity and kindness, the neighborhood in which she lived in threw a huge party in her honor. An idea started to form; she flipped back to the article about her and her sisters and looked for the reporter's name. Grabbing her phone, she called the paper and asked for the sneaky picture snapping man.

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Judge sat on the back porch with a cup of coffee in her hands, she gazed out towards the large barn and watched a doe and fawn graze on Claudia's rose bushes. She thought it hilarious since she had blamed Joe the day before for attacking them with the weed whacker. She had been thinking about what she would do about getting back to Charles Town, she thought about flying into Dulles Airport and then renting a car to drive home but then she thought of just driving back. Thing was she would either have to buy a new vehicle or rent one, it would be easier to just buy a new one but she was dragging her feet about it.

"You look awful pensive there Judge," Joe said as he sat down next to her and then swore under his breath when he saw what she was watching. "I need a camera cuz Claudia sure as Hell won't believe me about them deer out there." He took a sip of his coffee and glanced sideways at his friend, he was about to say something when she spoke.

"Any car dealers around here that won't rip me off," She glanced sideways and held his look. "I'm gonna drive back home, ya know take my time do some more thinking."

He smiled and gave her a nod of his head; he knew that she would pick to drive back. "Ohhhh I know of a good place to get a nice vehicle, owner is a decent and honest guy; he won't take ya for a ride." He got up and walked slowly down the steps and out into the yard. "If ya got time, I can take ya now."

"Are ya sure, I can wait until Claudia gets home?"

"Ohhhh I have so much time that I don't know what to do with myself, come on and help me scare off the Bambi crew before they eat all the trees and the garden. After chasing off the deer, they went towards the side of the barn where Joe stopped and gave Judge a wink. "Welcome to Joe's used cars and trucks." He pointed to his Peterbuilt semi truck. "I have this here truck, fully loaded, low mileage, customized interior, full sized sleeping cab and then some. Has everything you need for the long haul with the exception of a wide screen TV, tried that and almost went blind. He pointed to the side door and tossed her the keys. "This truck is called a Cowboy Cadillac and you'll see why the second you look inside."

"Joe, I can't drive a truck like this, besides this is your baby."

"I'll teach you and it's about time I got rid of her, she's just gonna fall apart back here and I just can't sell her to some trucker." He ran a hand across the glistening paintjob and smiled. "This baby hums like ya wouldn't believe and the best thing is you don't have to stop at nasty motels or anything." He followed her inside and took a deep breath, it smelled of leather and furniture polish.

"Ohh my Gods," she looked around and couldn't believe that she was standing inside a semi truck. The part of the cab behind the front seats looked like a small living room/kitchenette and as she moved towards the back, she found a small bathroom and the bunk area. She turned to Joe and saw his proud smile. "She's beautiful; I had no idea that they made trucks like this." She ran a finger across the mattress and then looked to the small bathroom, what surprised her was the shower stall. "You were right, no nasty motels." She leaned back against the bed and gave him a serious look. "How much?"

"He thought for a minute and grinned. "Ten grand and it's yours."

"Joe, I know this truck cost way more than that, I can't even buy a new car for ten grand!"

"I built this truck and that's all I put into it, my brother has a custom truck shop so I get good

deals on stuff. In fact, this truck was a total job that we got from the insurance company and I paid a couple hundred bucks for it from the salvage yard."

"Christ, no wonder car insurance costs so much." She looked around her and the back at him. "You said it was totaled, it's not gonna fall apart going down the road is it?"

"Nope, it was totaled because all the airbags deployed when the driver went off the road and hit some saplings. A new bumper, grill, hood and windshield and it was good as new. I tore out all the old stuff the other owner had and redid the entire interior, ya know as a hobby type thing. When I was done, I drove it for about six months before I had to give up driving because my legs fell off." He chuckled at her rolling eyes. "So what do ya say, will ya make the boss happy by getting my truck out of her yard?" He scratched his neck and looked up at her from below his hats bill. "I've been putting it off, ya know selling it and now I know why."

She looked around her, tossed the keys in her hand a few times and nodded her head. "Ok, ya got a deal;" she grinned at the thought of her pulling into town in the huge ass truck. "How long will it take me to learn how to drive this beast?"

"Not long, the hard part is backing the damn things up with a trailer on em, learning the gears is easy and what not. I'd say a week or so and then we'll get you a driver license; I just happen to be one of the few truck driver trainers in the area so I can rush it through."

"Ya know this is something that just doesn't fit in my head, me driving a huge semi truck and I know that no one else can picture it either." She grinned widely. "It's perfect, I can live in it and no one will be the wiser. I can park it out where ever I happen to get some land and not have to worry about some place to live while my house is being built."

"Maybe get yourself a vehicle to go into town with and save on diesel fuel," He took in her appearance and then gave her a huge wicked grin. "Like motorcycles, I can see you on a big bike and dressed in black leather?" He got this goofy expression on his face and just stood there looking at her.

Claudia came up behind her husband and smacked him in the shoulder. "I heard that and I can see that you're having that fantasy about Judge dressed in black biker's leathers straddling a gigantic motorcycle with a look that makes every living soul swoon at her feet." She shoved him again and gave her friend a rolling of her eyes. "He saw a picture of you from years ago; ya know when you decided to give us all heart attacks by getting a damn donor cycle?"

Judge chuckled, she remembered when she decided to see if she could pick up more women if she had a motorcycle, she did get a few but they were nurses; beer and a motorcycle didn't mix. "I don't know about getting a bike, with my luck I'll spend more time in the ER than in court. Now a car or truck might be a better thing once I get back, ya know leave the truck sitting on the home site and take the other vehicle to work." She walked around the truck one more time and started grinning like a lunatic. "This is gonna be an experience."

"I'll say," Claudia snorted. "It's been years since I saw this side of the barn without a truck parked

in front of it, and that means you can get my green house put up; damn things been sitting in the box for two years!" She shoved her husband again and then grabbed Judge by her hand. "Come on, I just had a phone call from your realtor, she said she e-mailed you some info and she need's an answer ASAP."

"Maybe it's about that land I was looking at earlier," she hoped that's what it was and not one of the smaller plots her realtor had found. "Pray it's the 635 acres."

"I can see it now JT Bloodstone Land Baron of Jefferson County."

"That would be something," she thought about it a few moments and wondered if she could buy all the available land in the Charles town/Harpers Ferry area, that would be one way to stop the building of houses and what-not in the area. "I think I like that title."

The expression on her friends face was down right scary and she was thankful that it was back where it belonged; too many years had gone by with Judge being a wimp. "I'm not gonna have to call you Queen of the Universe or something like it am I?"

Judge burst out laughing and laid a hand on Claudia's shoulder. "Na, I'll save that for the scumbags I see in my court room." Judge was still trying to get used to the idea that she would be going back home and that she would be wearing robes next time she appeared in court. She went over to her laptop that was sitting on the kitchen table and checked her e-mail, after reading it; she grabbed the phone and made a call to her realtor. "This is Bloodstone is Janet there?" She waited a few minutes and then heard her realtor's voice on the line. "This is Judge, tell them yes that I'll take it and can you check into the adjoining property that's up for sale?"

*"But that has a dozen or more structures under construction on it; I didn't know you would be interested in that kind of land."*

"Why's it up for sale if they're building on it?" She was curious because she had never heard of a bank selling property if they were still building houses on it.

*"The bank foreclosed on it, the construction company that owned the land went out of business and lost everything. The plots are still marked so if you wanted to continue building you could, all the building permits are filed with the building commission."*

"That won't be necessary, I'm not thinking of building anything; I just want a lot of land." She thought for a second and figured out the cost of the property and her realtor's commission, taxes and every other stupid little cost that came with purchasing land or a house and knew that she could swing both properties. "I want both properties, see what you can do." She listened for a few moments and nodded her head. "Ok, let me know." She hung up the phone and wiggled her left eyebrow at Claudia. "She got me the 635 acres and she'll call back about the other piece of land."

"How much all together if you get that other land?"

"Almost 1000 acres, I have river access with those 635 acres and the other 310 acres backs up to historical property that's owned by the US Historical Society. I think it's where Jackson had his troops; I'll have to look it up to be sure." She thought of her other property that was considered of historical importance and wondered what the protocol would be for donating it to the West Virginia Historical Society. "I am gonna be soo busy once I get back," she ran a hand across her face and felt just how tired she was that day. "And I can fell the seasons changing; my knee is killing me, is it like this for Joe?"

"Worse, there are days where he just sits and wants to cry but don't tell him that I told you. His condition may be different than yours but he has arthritis in his hips and it really bothers him when the weather changes, ya know like you knee."

Judge nodded her head and rubbed her knee unconsciously, she didn't want to even think about what she would feel like once it got cold and she faced snowy and icy weather. The thought of sitting in front of a blazing fire with a cup of strong Creole blend coffee made her feel better but she knew what would really make her fell better was if Murphy was at her side. She thought of the small woman and smiled, she had fallen for her hard; even though she and her sisters had driven her nuts and terrorized her.

Claudia noticed the softness that came into her eyes and wondered what she was thinking. "What's on your mind there JT?"

"A nice blazing fire and a fiery blonde," she felt heat race up her cheeks and chuckled. "Guess I may just have to settle for the blazing fire."

"Ya never know but remember this, there's always make up sex." She busted out laughing when Judge's face turned an even deeper red.

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Murphy rolled her eyes and tried not to run from her office when her sisters teased her without mercy about the coffee girl or sleazoid as they had named her. "Ohhhh Sheriff Murphy try this donut," Stewie dropped a frosted donut down the front of her shirt and then bent over to show it inside her sports bra. "I made it just for you!" She batted her eyes and gave her a sickly smile.

Smootcher waved a cup of coffee in front of her and unbuttoned her shirt to show off her leopard print sports bra. "Ohhhh Sheriff Murphy try this coffee, I ground the beans all by myself and I used breast milk to get extra foam!"

"You guys really need some mental help and button your shirts up for God sakes," she looked out into the main office and waved at one of the deputies that was looking their way. "Our reputation is bad enough without everyone thinking we're kinky on top of it."

"But we are kinky," Stewie said. "We like to watch you with women's but that..."

"Ain't anymore," Smootcher finished, there was no way they would ever let their sister get involved with the sleazoid. It was a different story when Judge was still alive, they would have moved heaven and earth to have that happen. "Sleazoid just wants in your pants because you're the sheriff." She pulled her sister into a tight hug and kissed her forehead. "You're worth far more than that."

"I know that and that's why I'm not getting involved with her," she hugged her sister and pulled back to hold her with her eyes. "For one thing, she's way too young, I could be her mother!" She shivered at the thought. "That's just ewwww." She pulled back, checked her watch, and then heard her stomach grumble. "Come on let's go to lunch, I'm starving and if we don't escape now; something will happen." They ran from the building and never looked back.

They had picked one of the smaller restaurants in town just for the reason of it being unknown and off the beaten path. Anymore they couldn't find a place to eat because of the idiots from out of state; they really wished the racetrack would close down so that the out of state people would stay in their own state and leave them all alone. It had never taken them 25 minutes to drive the three miles from home to the grocery store, now traffic was so bad that they couldn't get out of their driveway. Then with the disappearance of more farmland and more houses, springing up over night made it even worse on the back roads. Murphy was thinking of the sold sign she had seen earlier that day on Rt. 9. "Did ya guys see that 635 acres on Rt. 9 sold, just what we need are more god damn houses around here?"

"I saw a sign over by the old abandoned Millville quarry houses that it sold to, ya know they have already built new houses on that land and it's zoned for over 500." Smootcher said and shook her head in disgust. "Sons of bitches need to stay the Hell out of West Virginia, think we can have '*Deliverance*' reenactments on the weekends for their entertainment and maybe they'll get the fucking hint?"

Stewie gave them an evil grin and snickered. "Did I tell ya guys I stole the new 'Welcome to West Virginia sign from the Maryland/WV border?" When she saw that, they were giving her their full attention. "We ain't open for business no more!" She slapped hands with them and then lowered her voice when she saw that they were getting unwanted attention. "Who ever the asshole politician was that changed the sign from Wild and Wonderful West Virginia to West Virginia, Open for Business should be shot and hung from the Welcome to West Virginia sign."

"We should start buying up property around here; add to what I've already gotten." Murphy said and took her plate from their server. "We can buy it and then let it turn back into hay fields and wooded land."

Stewie nodded her head and took her plate. "If there's houses on it can we burn 'em down?"

"We buy 'em we can do anything we want to 'em." Smootcher said around a mouthful of food.

"Ok, then that's a plan." Murphy said and took a drink of her Coke. "After lunch we'll go see a realtor and have her look into the properties around here and I think we should include open lots, ya know those assholes will drop an apartment or condo on a postage stamp sized piece of land." While eating, she thought of what they were about to do and couldn't help but wonder what Judge would think of it, would she be for buying the land to stop the growth or would she be for the growth of the area. She often thought of her friend and wondered what her life would be like if she was still alive, would they be together as a couple or still just friends. She knew for certain, that the coffee girl would never fill the hole Judge left in her heart; no one could ever do that but the person who had put it there. Besides, the coffee girl was just a kid and not her type at all. She had faced her demons and wasn't afraid to face the future alone, she knew that she would always have family when she needed moral support or a shoulder to cry on.

"Hey Murph what did ya think of the newspaper article on us?" Smootcher asked with a twinkle in her eye and pointed to the newspaper on the table. "Have we hit the big time or what?"

"Ya know I saw a photographer around but I thought he was taking pictures of historical landmarks," Murphy waved a hand in the air. "Each time I saw him, we were near one, so ya know?" She raised her hands and shrugged her shoulders. "So I got this idea, now it's Mama's turn to hit the big time, I called the reporter and asked him to do a story about her."

Both her sisters looked at her and then gave her huge grins, they knew their mama was gonna kill her when she found out. "I get first dibs on her room!" Smootcher yelled out.

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Murphy dropped the real-estate listings onto her desk, rubbed her tired eyes and leaned back in her chair. She had been reading over the listings and trying to decide exactly which ones to look at and which ones were a waste of time and energy. She knew that getting open land would be better and less of a hassle, she was thinking of reclaiming farmland. She knew that there were farmers in the area that would jump at being able to harvest grains and by products if the land was there for them. Sharecropping kept running through her head, she would check with the local agriculture committee and see if they knew of any farmers that would be interested in such a thing.

"Did ya find anything yet?" Stewie asked as she dropped into a chair across from her sister's desk.

"A few," she handed the ones that had promise over to her. "What do ya think of sharecropping?"

Stewie looked up from the papers and cast Murphy a raised eyebrow. "Thinking of sharecropping the land?"

"It's a thought, ya know instead of letting the land go unused."

"I think it's a good idea, we get 1/3 of the crop to sell or do with whatever and the rest goes to the farmer. There's not a whole lot of farmland left around here so maybe this will help the local farmers with grain for their animals so they won't have to get as much help from the Government." She pulled a pen from her shirt pocket and made some notes in the margins of the papers. "I wrote down which ones are prime land for farming and the others for just letting mama nature take 'em back."

Murphy looked over her sisters notes and gave her a nod of her head. "Mama will be happy that your tree hugging ways aren't wasted, where's Smootcher?"

"She's got troll duty; I think she was taking her to Taco Bell for cinnamon crisps and chicken burritos."

"Carla still working those long hours?" She hadn't seen her sister in a week or so but knew that she was looking worn out the last time she had seen her.

"Yep, she didn't get home last night until seven or so; she said she was burned out and wished they would hire some more people to help with all the taxes." She grinned. "It's kind of a whiplash effect, we bust assholes for not paying their taxes and then we get troll duty cuz Carla has to work overtime to straighten out the tax fines we've collected."

"It should be slowing down, ya know with us getting all the scumbags in the new developments to cough up their past taxes." She looked at her watch and sighed. "I'm gonna head on home for some sleep; I have to be back out on the road at ten to help out with the road blocks."

"Are you going to mamas or to your other bedroom?"

"My other bedroom, I have clothes to throw in the washer; I'm down to my last pair of socks." She yawned wide enough to have her jaws crack and tears form in her tired eyes. "If anything comes up between now and then, handle it."

Stewie grinned evilly and nodded her head. "I've been waiting for this day, I'll rule with an iron fist."

Murphy wondered if she had just made a huge mistake by leaving Stewie in charge and then thought that she really didn't trust anyone else to do the job. Her sisters may act like total idiots but that's all it was, an act. "Ok well I'm outta here; can you call our realtor and give her the go ahead on those properties?"

"Sure I'll call her in a few minutes and tell her to put the paperwork in our company name."

"Sounds good, I'll see ya later." She grabbed her hat and sunglasses from her filling cabinet and left her office. She felt like her feet were sunk into cement and couldn't wait to shed her boots and fall into her soft bed, she wondered if she was coming down with something because she just



felt off. And spending half the night at sobriety check points was not going to help her any but they had to keep on the public, there were too many accidents involving alcohol in the last month. She got into her cruiser, pulled out onto the road and headed home.

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Judge looked at what she had inside the living area of her truck and tried to think of anything else she would need. She had bought linens, bath towels and paper supplies. However, she still had a feeling nagging at her that she was forgetting something important. The clicking of nails on tile and then a soft bark had the feeling bursting like a giant bubble. "Holy shit I forgot dog food!" She picked Woobie up and hugged her to her chest. "I'm going to Hell for this huh?" She hadn't started learning how to drive the rig yet but she wanted to get the staples she needed for the day that she would take to the open road on her own. She also knew that she was needed back home, the place would go to Hell in a matter of time if the law wasn't upheld.

She could only imagine how many criminals had been turned loose on the public, she knew that she could check all this out but didn't want to show up with a jaded aspect of the lawyers and judges. "Ya know Woobs once we get back home, we're gonna have hundreds of acres to wander over. Maybe we can get you a buddy to hang around with while I'm at work, a puppy or something, how's that sound?" Woobie yawned and gave her a tired expression. "You are so much help; maybe I'll drop your little ass off with Mama D and let her spoil you all day long." She sat down into one of the chairs and sighed, she was tired from all the work she had done that day. "I know one thing, I am not looking forward to that long ass drive back to West Virginia but I can't wait to get behind the wheel of this baby." She dropped down into the soft cushions of the couch and sighed. She fell asleep thinking of all the stuff she had to finish before she headed back home.

Joe gazed out towards his barn and felt Claudia step behind him. "Sure am gonna miss Judge when she leaves."

"Bullshit, you're gonna miss that damn truck." She yanked on one of his belt loops and grinned up at him. "But I'm sure gonna enjoy my greenhouse."

"You're just mean," he pulled her into his side and placed a kiss on her head. "We'll get started on it tomorrow and then I'm gonna get Judge out on the road, I'm thinking that she's really needed back home and no time like the present to give driving lessons."

"And just what do you know that you haven't told me about yet?"

"I've just been reading the online local newspaper from Jefferson County and the cops there are filling up the jails and court rooms, figure they need a hang 'em Judge up there before all their work gets released."

"Ohhhh how I would love to be a fly on that courtroom wall, she's gonna be in so much trouble once one of the Whistler's sees her."

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Judge slammed the gavel down with enough force to send the head flying straight up into the air, a wide grin crossed her face as everyone ducked and covered their heads with their arms. Tossing the handle into the 55gal garbage can, she grabbed another gavel from the box sitting beside her on the large wooden desk. She half rose from her chair pointed a deformed hand at the guilty man and bellowed.

"LIFE WITHOUT PAROL!"

"But your honor," the man's attorney started to quiver under her glare. "That's a harsh sentence for a parking ticket."

"Do you want to be his cellmate?" She quirked an eyebrow at him and laughed hysterically inside as he paled and dropped back into his seat. "Get 'em outta here!" She yelled and watched as Stewie and Smotcher dragged the guilty man from the courtroom. She had just settled down into her leather chair when she heard her name yelled out over the courtroom, flinching, she tried to sink below the edge of her desk.

"Get your ass up," Mama D yelled as she strode purposely forward. "It's your turn to play tennis with me, now move it and don't even think about trying to escape, I have the exits guarded."

Judge jumped from the smack of a tennis ball off her forehead, she grabbed at her head and groaned. "Jesus Christ I'm losing my mind," she shoved the fallen book onto the floor and glared at Woobie. "How many times have I told you that if you kill me in my sleep you're not gonna get fed?" She pulled her down from where she stood on the wooden ledge above her head. "That was one nasty dream...Mama D is gonna kill me." She hugged her dog to her chest and wondered if she could just move to a far away place like New Zealand and hide for eternity. "I should make out my will just incase my nightmare comes true," she looked into chocolate brown eyes and grinned. "I should make Murphy my beneficiary, that way if I die a mysterious death again, the Whistlers will be the prime suspects; ya know with her being the one to gain my fortune and all! Paybacks of a sort for all the nasty stuff they all did to me, whatcha think Woobs?" She watched as her dog yawned and closed her eyes. "You are so helpful; I just love our long and involved conversations."

The next two weeks went by faster than a kids summer vacation, Claudia's greenhouse was up, the semi moved to the driveway and Judge was mapping out routes back home. Joe took her out every night to "Cruise the Cadillac" as Claudia referred to their nightly jaunts to the open highway. She had passed her truck-driving test the week before and knew that she had more to learn before she would head north to West Virginia. Joe had given her a crash course on changing a tire, basic diesel engine maintenance and the proper walk around inspection. He

wanted her prepared for just about anything and she was thankful for it. If anything happened, she had a number for a semi truck emergency road service. Joe knew the owner so she knew she could trust them with her truck. All she could think of was how she was going to approach the Whistlers, show up in person or be a chicken shit and call. She pondered her choices and knew when it came right down to it, she would most likely run into one of them by accident; there were just too many of them not to have that happen. She just hoped it wasn't one of the sisters, she knew she didn't stand a chance against the three of them.

"Still thinking about them huh?" Claudia asked as she sat down next to her. "I say just pull into their driveway and blow the horn, worse case scenario; you get your ass handed to you." She grinned when Judge rolled her eyes.

"That's what I'm afraid of, that would look good in the newspaper. New circuit court Judge gets ass kicked by Whistler tag team."

"Sounds like something you could sell tickets to for a charity, in this case it would be to pay for your medical bills. Speaking of bills and money, I heard you talking to your realtor earlier, how much more property have you managed to buy up there?"

"I was in a bidding war over another 1200 acres with a company; they caved so I got it." She counted on her fingers and grinned. "So far I have over 4000 acres of both farm land and commercial/residential properties. I can't wait to see it all and decide what to do with it. You know farm land or let Mother Nature choose."

"What I would do is, find the land with the best house on it and tear down all the others, that way you have a place to live and you don't have to fight with builders."

"I thought of that, I'll have to see what they look like. Before I left, they were building these fucking mansions up there; ya know 450 grand for a substandard house that is a rip off of a southern plantation house?"

"Wannabe assholes, don't tell me the ones who want that are all from out of state and call ya'll ignorant hillbillies?"

"Ya go it, ignorant and offspring of brothers and sisters." She shivered at the thought of her parents being brother and sister; it wasn't the first time that she thought that it might just be a possibility. "I may just tear everything down and use the materials to build my house and then give the rest to the habitat for humanity." She shook her head and sighed. "Funny how I'm buying up all this land so they don't build houses after I built a few down here and then I'm gonna turn around and give them building supplies."

"But you see there's a difference, the houses you helped with here were built on lots where a house was torn down. All you did was replace a house, not build on a new lot. Those asshole people who want to move out to the country are the ones who keep destroying the country with their god damn citified ways. They need to stay the hell where they are and leave us all be." She took a deep calming breath and shook her head. "One of the reasons I'm so involved in

community projects around here, we don't want this area to become the next big city."

"I'm gonna do what I can to take back Jefferson County from the builders and citified assholes and then do something about all the illegals in the area." She could only think what kinds of names she they would give her after the community found out about her buying up all the land, she could careless and knew she it would get worse after hearing a few court cases.

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Mama D leaned back in the chair at the head of the huge table and grinned, she just couldn't believe what her kids had pulled off without her knowing. Looking around the room, she saw the mayor and other officials that had shown up for the celebration. "Who would have thought that I would be given the key to the city and named Mother of the year?"

"You deserve it mama and so much more." Vanessa said close to her ear and took the seat next to her. "About time these people realized how much you've done for the county." She squeezed mama's hand and leaned over to kiss her cheek. "Congratulations mama and don't forget I'm picking you up in the morning for breakfast." She looked at her watch and sighed. "I have to get going; I have the late shift tonight."

"You be careful going to work, all the drunks are out at this hour."

"Mama, the drunks are out 24/7." She squeezed her hand one last time before heading towards the door.

Mama knew she was right but she still warned all her kids, Murphy and the others were doing the best they could but some assholes always snuck through the net. Crime was down in the area as well as the driving violations but the amount of traffic was still high. "Penny for your thoughts mama?" Carla asked and gazed at the large gold key lying on the table.

"Just random thoughts, like I bet your dads laughing hysterically at this." She tapped the key and grinned. "How the brats pulled this off and where's the house this thing belongs to?"

"That would be one big house; I sure wouldn't want to carry those keys around." She leaned back in her chair and watched Murphy avoid the coffee girl for the umpteenth time. "Why doesn't Murphy just tell that kid to go away, find someone her own age or go play in traffic on 340?"

"She has, the gold digger just won't listen, and the idiots have caught her hanging around Murphy's house at night and warned her."

"Figures Murph would attract a stalker." She got up and waved a hand at her sisters. "I'm ready to go, how about you?"

"Ohh I've been ready for a while now, my ass is numb and all I want is my easy chair and a cup of tea."

Carla told Stewie and Smootcher that she was taking mama home and for them to sneak Murphy out and away from her stalker. She chuckled when she saw Murphy duck under a table and crawl out the other side to disappear around a corner. She wondered how long Murphy would put up with the coffee girl following her before she went ballistic and told her off, she hoped it was soon.

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Murphy snuck out the door and sighed with relief, she had been ducking and weaving all night to keep Tamara away from her, she told her more times than she could count to leave her alone. The damn kid just wouldn't listen and swore that if given the chance she could change Murphy's mind about their age difference. "Christ...I sure wish you were here Judge, you could help me out of this mess." She heard footsteps behind her and jumped up against the wall.

"Not fast enough Murph," Smootcher said. "You would have been caught if I was the coffee weirdo. Carla and mama are gone and it looks like the party is breaking up."

Murphy closed her eyes and nodded her head, she was beyond exhausted and couldn't wait to get home and get some sleep. "Ok, I'm ready when you guys are; it's been a long day." She yawned, rubbed at her eyes and groaned when she saw Tamara step from the church. "Damn it all to hell and back." She said right before she ran towards where they had parked the truck. No sooner had she jumped in the back of the truck then she heard the doors slam closed and the engine start.

"That idiot just doesn't get the fucking hint!" Stewie growled. "She's chasing after the damn truck!" She pulled through the back of the parking lot, jumped the curb and headed a round about way to Murphy's.

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"Damn meddling bitches!" Tamara panted out and bent over to try to catch her breath. "She had tried all night to get the small sheriff alone but ran into wall after wall of Whistler's. She would convince Murphy that they were meant to be together; she had to make this work at all cost. "No way in hell is she gonna get away from me, I refuse to live the life of peon when I can live it as a politicians wife." She went to her car with all the intention of sitting outside of Murphy's house until she came to her senses that she couldn't live without her. As she was leaving the parking lot, she saw the former sheriff, his brother and one of the ADA's standing by their vehicles. If she could get away with it, she would have run the three of them over with her car. She had numerous run ins with all three of them but the one who burned her ass the most was the sheriffs

brother. "Drunken asshole!" She yelled out the window as she drove past.

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"I hate that bitch!" The sheriff slurred and flipped Tamara off as she drove within a foot of them. "She's nothing but trouble for...what was I sayin?" He swayed and lifted the beer bottle to his lips, missed and poured half of it down the front of his shirt.

"Hate her to," his brother slurred, grabbed his crotch and yelled. "Suck me!"

The ADA swung his head around to look at the retreating car and almost landed on his ass, he'd been drinking twice as long as his buddies and had no clue even to where he was. He blinked blurry eyes at them, opened his mouth a few times and then just shrugged his shoulders. "We got anymore beer?"

"Nope, last one." The sheriff said after draining the one in his hand. "Lousy party didn't even serve beer...cheap assholes." He threw his beer bottle at the side of the church and grinned when it shattered on the wall. "Lets go get some more...better yet...hit the bar." He checked his pockets for keys, scanned the ground and then saw them hanging from his ignition. He tried the driver's side door and found it locked. "Wife is gonna kill me...locked the keys in again." He looked to his brother and saw him pointing to the passenger seat.

"Those are mine." He snickered. "Locked my keys in your car...your wife's gonna kill me to."

The ADA jingled his keys in the air and grinned. "Got mine...let's go." The three men piled into the car and sat there for a few minutes until the ADA figured out which key worked in the ignition. Once the car was running, he made a lurching attempt at driving through the parking lot. By the time he hit the road, he was doing 30mph and on the wrong side of the road. Mailboxes fell, trashcans scattered and anything close to the edge of the road crumpled beneath the tires. He hit Rt. 340, blew the red light that caused cars to skid out of his way and kept on going as if nothing was wrong. He punched the gas pedal to the floor, blew another stop light and peeled around the corner to go down the up ramp to Rt. 9. None of them paid any attention to what they were doing or what was going on around them. He weaved in and out of the oncoming traffic and blew threw another red light. He never saw the dark truck on the correct side of the road flip flashing lights and siren on.

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"Holy shit do you guys see that car?" Smotcher said as she hit the pedal to try to catch the offender. "We need to stop him before he wrecks or hits someone, call for backup, maybe we can get a car up ahead to help?"

Murphy leaned over the seat, took the radio and called into dispatch. She asked for all available cars to head in the direction of the speeding out of control car and to stop traffic if possible. "How come no one else saw that idiot?" She asked and then felt her cell phone vibrate on her hip and the radio burst into activity concerning the car ahead of them. "Ok so I spoke too soon." She sat back in the seat, put her seat belt on and prayed that they stopped him before anything bad could happen.

"Come on you son of a bitch!" Stewie swore under her breath and clenched her hands into tight fists. "Look at that asshole...he's driving in the grass!" She watched as the car swerved off the road and dropped down into the grass before swerving back up onto the wrong side of the road.

"Ohh my god...ohh my god!" Smootcher chanted when she saw a car approaching the intersection ahead of the speeding car. "Please stop...please stop...ohh my gods that was close." She sighed when the other driver slid to a stop and avoided an accident. The next car wasn't so lucky; there was nothing the driver could have done to avoid the collision. The speeding car crossed back into the proper lane, over the curb and broadsided the car coming up a side street. Stewie grabbed the radio and called for an ambulance and the fire trucks to respond to the accident. By the time, they reached the cars, other police cars were on the scene and officers were running towards the wrecked cars. All three of the Whistlers starred at the scene and just couldn't believe that the people from the speeding car were out and walking around.

"Ohh my fucking God," Murphy whispered. "How in the hell are they moving around?" They all jumped from their truck and started running towards the other car, they all faltered at the same time and then some officers running their way stopped them. Jeff came running right behind the officers and held up his hands.

"Don't go over there...we have EMT's there and the ambulance is seconds away."

"That's Carla's car..." Murphy stuttered out and tried to force her way around the cops. "Where's mama...where's mama!"

"The EMT's are treating them," Jeff had to wrestle Murphy back away from the car and then found himself on his ass and his sisters running towards the three men that came from the other car. "We're all gonna go to jail." He grumbled before getting back up to help save the other driver and his friends, it wasn't until he was a few feet away that he saw whom his sisters wanted to kill. If he could have gotten away with it and there were no witnesses to the crime, he would have helped them kill the three men.

Spitting and clawing, Murphy tried to get to the ADA. With all his bitching, he gave it away that he was the one whom was driving the car when the accident occurred.

"Stupid bitch...you wrecked my car!" He slurred and stumbled around the accident scene. "I wanna report her for..." He looked to his friends and wondered why the cops were cuffing them and raised his hands out to the sides. "What's the deal?"

"Easy you're under arrest," The deputy told him and continued to read him his rights on their way to his car.

Paramedics, firefighters and EMT's crowded around Carla's car, the firefighters had the Jaws of Life and a reciprocating saw going at the same time. The sisters fought with the deputies until the fire chief signaled for them to let them go. They ran to the side of the car to see both Carla and Mama trapped within mangled steel.

"Murphy, tell these boneheads to hurry the hell up." Mama said and moaned when the dashboard lifted away from her legs.

"They're almost done mama," she said loud enough for her to hear over the noise of the tools. "Don't worry mama you're gonna be ok." She raised her eyes from mama's pain stricken face to see Smotcher and Stewie motioning for her to come over to the other side of the car. "I'll be right back." She nodded her head and watched as her sisters came around to her side and helped the firefighters lift the dashboard from the car. She took Carla's hand and gave it a gentle squeeze before looking into her eyes. "You're gonna be ok sis," she tried to smile. "A little bit more and they can get you and mama out."

"Listen Murphy..." she pulled her closer to her. "Take care of Abbey."

"Carla...hey come on there," she felt her hand go limp within hers and panicked. "God damn it do something!" She grabbed a hold of the paramedic and shook him by the front of his shirt. "Help my sister!"

"Sheriff I can't do anymore until she's free," he backed up when a firefighter brought a crowbar over to the door and pried it open. "Get me a gurney and a backboard!" He yelled and then moved so that he could check on Carla's vitals. Within five minutes, they had both mama and Carla from the wreckage and on their way to the hospital. The sisters ran for their truck and followed with Jeff not far behind in his cruiser. Lights and sirens going full blast cleared the roads all the way to the emergency room doors.

In 30 minutes, the waiting room filled up with Whistler's, in-laws and deputies. There was no news from beyond the ER doors and it was taking its toll on the family. With each wisp of the door, all heads turned and a collective groan erupted from disappointment. Everyone had settled down when the doors flung open and Vanessa stepped into the room. Her expression was troubled and she stood wringing her hands.

"Their both in critical condition and still in surgery, they've called in the best orthopedic surgeon for mama and a neurosurgeon for Carla. I don't know anymore than that, as soon as I hear more I'll come back." She waved Murphy over and took her hand. "Where's Abbey?"

"She's at the nurse's desk, why?" Her heart thudded in her chest. "What's going on Vanessa?"

"Carla slipped into a comma on the way here, she's in bad shape and the surgeons don't know if she'll pull through surgery." She wiped at the tears running down her cheeks and then to her



sister. "I think Abbey should see her...you know...she's a smart kid and."

"I understand sis," she rubbed her face and looked towards the door that led to where the nurse's desk was. "Can you clear it as soon as she's ready to go up for surgery, you know for Abbey to see her?"

"Even if it costs me my job." She squeezed her sister's hand and looked to the floor. "They had to take mama's left leg off at the knee; it was too badly crushed to save. So far I don't know about the other leg but she's holding her own."

Murphy nodded her head and looked to where her sisters and Jeff were watching them. "Ok, I'll tell them." She gave her a tight hug and then went over to where Smotcher, Stewie and Jeff were waiting. She relayed the information and then went to get Abbey.

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Hours later the packed waiting room was quieter than before; every chair had a body in it, people sat on the floor or leaned against walls. If someone were to look out in the parking lot, he or she would see more people out there as well.

The three sisters sat on the floor with their backs against the wall, Abbey used their laps as her own personal couch and Murphy's thumb as a pacifier. Besides the news that Vanessa brought them hours before, they had not heard anything since. Murphy kept staring at the door and praying that someone would come through and tell them something. It was already going on ten o'clock at night and she needed to get Abbey home and in a real bed. But she didn't want to leave incase there was news. "Listen guys, I have to get Abbey home, call me if you find out anything." She moved the troll onto Smotcher's lap, struggled to her feet and whimpered from the tingling in her legs. Just as she bent over to pick up the troll, the door opened and an exhausted Vanessa stepped into the room. All eyes swung in her direction and waited.

"Mama is in the ICU, she's doing good and her status is changed to stable. Carla is still critical and they have her in the coma ward, if her condition changes they'll page me. Mama can see visitor's tomorrow afternoon at the earliest, I still don't know when Carla will be able to have visitors." She looked to Murphy, nodded her head, and stepped back through the door.

"I'm gonna take the troll up to see her mom," she felt her eyes tearing up and hugged Abbey closer to her chest. "You guys going home?"

"For a while," Smotcher said and looked to Stewie. "We're gonna get a few hours of sleep before shift, you coming home or going to the other house?"

"I'm going to Judge's," She thought it funny that she still thought of it as Judge's house. "I need a clean uniform and the troll can sleep for a few hours in my bed." Just then, she noticed blue eyes

blinking open and looking up at her. "Hey troll, we have to go upstairs for a few minutes and then we can go home."

"See my mama?"

It took every ounce of Murphy's strength not to cry; instead, she nodded her head and walked silently towards the elevator.

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Judge hugged both Belinda and Joe one more time before crawling up into the trucks cab, she hated goodbyes to begin with but this was hard. She owed her friends a lot and knew there was no way to repay them for everything they had done for her in the past months.

"Now you call us once a day to let us know where you are, you hear me JT?" Claudia shook a finger at her. "And I wanna know when the wedding is so I can come up there and dance until my feet fall off."

Judge rolled her eyes and snorted, she knew her chances with Murphy were slim to none; with what she had done to the blonde, she would be lucky to get a 'kiss my ass' out of her. "How about I call to let you know that the Whistler's haven't killed my stupid ass off?"

"That'll work to," Joe said with a grin. "And then you can tell us the wedding date."

"Geez you two are hopeless, Murphy's gonna kill me if she doesn't have a heart attack when she sees me. Besides, I'm not exactly a prize."

"Bull shit, you're irresistible and you know it." Claudia gave her a narrowed look. "Get some leather and you'll have all the women in Jefferson County chasing after you, nothing like a lil competition to stir things up."

She shook her head and smiled down at them. "You really want me to get killed huh...I'll send pictures." She gave them a rakish grin, closed the cab door and fired up the massive engine. With one last wave and a blow of the air horn, she pulled from the driveway. "Ok Woobs we're heading on home."

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Judge just couldn't believe the difference in the drive back up North compared to the disastrous

drive south. The semi truck rode like a dream compared to her old rickety car, that thing was like riding a lawn mower down the highway. She never felt a bump in the road in the semi plus she had all the comforts of home on wheels. She no longer had to stop at the nasty restrooms or eat at the greasy diners. She just pulled into the rest areas and used her stove to cook simple meals and then sleep in her nice soft bed. While on the road, she thought of what she would do once she was back in Charles town. She could live in the truck but driving it around would be a real pain in the ass. She thought about getting a used car but just couldn't ignore the racing of her heart when she thought of a motorcycle. She would claim a little bit more of the original Judge with a bike and that was very important to her. She wanted to be complete, to feel again with other than fear of her own shadow; not to mention it was a chick magnet. She had to chuckle at the last part, it had been a very long time since she even thought of having a real relationship with a woman. But there was only one woman that entered her thoughts, she just wondered if she would live long enough in Murphy's presence to tell her how she truly felt about her.

"Maybe if I stand across a car packed street and yell it to her," she looked over to Woobie and grinned. "Think that would cause a stir in town, ya know me yelling something like; 'I wanna lick whipped cream off your body for the next 50 years!'" She had to shake her head at her thought pattern, she wondered if being around Murphy and her sisters had warped her some. "Nothing I can do but wait until I get there and see what happens, I sure know it's not gonna be a parade and welcoming party. Lucky if they don't get me arrested and tossed into a jail cell." She let random thoughts flow through her mind but most of them led back to her time with Murphy and the other Whistler's.

She was so lost in her thoughts that she didn't realize just how far she had driven; she had no clue as to what state she was even in. Seeing a sign for the next rest area, she moved over into that lane and soon left the highway. She would spend a few hours getting some sleep before she would start out again. She wanted to get back home, settled in someplace and then find the perfect place on her land to build her house. She had lots of plans for her property and wanted to start as soon as she got there. She knew that she would be making lots of enemies no matter what she did but she just didn't give a damn. Moving back to her bathroom, she washed her face, brushed her teeth and then fell into her bed with Woobie right beside her. "Can't make everybody happy." She mumbled just before she fell into a deep sleep.

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The people of Charles town were somber; cars jammed the small streets in Ranson around the Strider funeral home. Police, sheriff and State Trooper cars led a procession from the funeral home to the cemetery a short distance away. The dark SUV directly behind the funeral car carried part of the Whistler family. Abbey sat between Murphy and Mama D, she had been told where they were going and why but no one knew for sure if she totally understood. Her mother had never recovered from her comatose state, going by the wishes in her living will; she was taken off life support. She passed shortly afterwards.

Mama fought tooth and nail, threatened doctors and down right ordered them to let her out of the hospital so that she could attend her daughter's service and funeral. What made it easier to let her leave was that Vanessa would be with her and then escort her back to the hospital where she would remain until her leg and other injuries were completely healed.

There was never any doubt as to who would raise Abbey, even if it had not been put into writing, Murphy would have fought the devil himself for her. She glanced down at her and felt heaviness in her chest, Abbey was unusually quiet and she wondered if she would ever be the rambunctious little girl ever again. She took one of her small hands in hers and held it until they reached the road beside the cemetery gates.

Two of the Whistler boys came to help mama into her wheel chair and then up the sidewalk to the plot. Some of the other brothers were poll barriers along with one of the Sheriff's deputies. Stewie, Smootcher and Murphy walked up the sidewalk with Abbey in the middle of them. The others followed as they arrived and crowded around the plot. It was a relatively short service; mama didn't see any reason to prolong the grief by dragging it out. She would much rather have her memories of Carla when she was alive then by how long she cried at her grave site.

Murphy felt someone step beside her and saw the bloodshot eyes of the Bill Matthews the reporter whom had taken so many pictures of the family and written the newspaper articles. He bowed his head, took her hand and whispered his condolences to her. She couldn't hold back her tears any longer and felt them trail down her cheeks. She was angry and confused as to why Abbey had to lose both of her parents and wished that someone would explain it to her. She also wanted to know why she had to lose so many people that she loved and tried to remember what the last words she had said to both her sister and Judge.

She came back to the present and watched as her mama placed a white rose on Carla's coffin. She ran her fingers through Abbey's hair and urged her forward so that she could place her own rose there as well. After the funeral, everyone headed to mama's, Murphy wanted nothing more than to go home and sit in the dark but she knew it would help the troll if she were able to be with her cousins and family members.

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Murphy looked around the house and sighed, it was wall to wall people with not even an atoms worth of space to spare. Moving with purpose, she made her way out the back door and into the yard. Taking a deep breath, she was about to cuss the person out who dared lay a hand on her shoulder. She turned and felt her world deflate under the compassionate eyes of Belinda.

"How are you doing kid?" She asked and handed her a Coke. "You need anything you call me day or night and I'll be there."

"Thanks Belinda," she dropped down onto the picnic table and wiped at her face. "This has just got to be the worst damn year; will it ever end or just keep getting worse?"

Belinda sat down beside her, wrapped an arm around her shoulders and hugged her tight. "It'll get better believe me, I have this feeling that everything will work out just fine." She had no idea when Judge would get into town but she sure hoped it was soon. She knew that if everything that she had heard about Judge from Claudia was true, then she would tip this city on its ass and come to Murphy's side. She knew that Judge would take care of Murphy's trouble making stalker as well, and since the accident, things had just gotten worse where the coffee girl was concerned. "Are there going to be any legal difficulties, you know probate or anything?"

"No, Carla had everything in order," she wiped at her eyes and looked to her friend. "After we lost my brother in-law, she had all their paperwork updated. She named me as Abbey's legal guardian and everything else was put into my name." She shook her head. "Why does everyone do that to me, first Judge and now Carla?"

"Easy, they trusted you and knew that you would be strong enough to carry on. You are a lot stronger than you realize and you have plenty of people that will come to help you if you need it."

"That's right," mama said from the doorway. "There's plenty of us to help." She moved her wheel chair so that she could look out into the backyard. "Damn chair, I can't wait to get my new leg, then I can get around better. Are the little ones all out there, it's time to eat?"

"I'll get them in mama, why don't you go get a spot at the table before the rampaging feet come in?" Murphy got up from the bench and walked further out into the back yard to find all the kids.

"I just don't know how much more she can take; she's still not over losing Judge." Mama said in a low voice so that only Belinda could hear.

Belinda wished that she could tell mama D about Judge being alive and on her way back to town but she knew that Claudia would kill her. She hoped that Judge would hurry up and get her ass back before she screwed up and let the secret slip out. It was hard enough not telling her husband and she told him everything. "Everything will work out; I have this feeling that it will be soon to. But we need to do something with that coffee girl stalker; she's spreading rumors around town that she's dating Murphy."

Mama rolled her eyes and growled. "I told her that girl was trouble, she's a gold digger I tell ya! Wanna bet that she found out about all the land that my kids are buying up in this area, that's bound to show they have a lot of money."

"Someone else is doing the same thing," Belinda said. "I saw 'sold' signs up on some properties that have been for sale for years and then that housing development sold to. Who would buy that with the loan problems, foreclosures and what not?"

"Stewie said that she was in a bidding war with someone and just gave up and let them have it,"

she shrugged her shoulders and waved a hand. "Come on inside, I made some coffee and I'm dying to have an adult to talk to."

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Judge woke, looked at her watch and then lay looking up at the ceiling, she couldn't believe how far she had driven nonstop and that she was almost home, it was no wonder that she was exhausted and had slept for ten hours. She figured that she would be home in two days if she took her time or a day if she just drove straight through to Charles Town. It all depended on how she felt, she had to admit that her leg was killing her and her hand wasn't feeling too great either. What helped was not shifting gears so often; it was nice to hit the highway and just cruise along without having to slow down for anyone. For her to be able to do that, she would have to drive at night when the roads only held other semis and the occasional car. She looked outside and saw that it was still early but decided then to just stay put, get some more sleep and leave later that night. She rolled over and lay there for what seemed hours and sleep never came. "Shit this ain't working." She got up and headed back towards the bathroom. On the way, she grabbed a clean towel and clothes.

Ten minutes later she was sitting at the small table in the small kitchen area drinking iced tea and reading the news by way of her laptop. She pulled up the Journal after finding nothing in the Jefferson Spirit. What had her choking on her tea was the picture on the front page. It showed the Whistler sisters, mama D and Belinda outside of the cemetery gates. She read the first part of the article and had to wipe her eyes before continuing onto the next page. "Ohhhh my Gods, I have to get back now." She jumped up from the table and ended falling over and onto her ass. "Fucking useless ass leg!" She fell back on the floor and lay there breathing through the pain that was radiating through her knee and thigh. "I need to call Belinda...she's gonna kill me." She rolled over, got to her good knee and then pushed herself up from the floor. She grabbed her new cell phone, dialed Belinda's number and prayed that it was not possible to kill someone over the phone. She went back to her laptop and checked the date of the article, she couldn't believe that the funeral had been the day before, if she had known what happened, she would have left Claudia's earlier so that she could have been there for the family.

*"We don't want any."*

"How do ya know what I'm offering?" Judge replied.

*"Ooh my Gods...I'm gonna kick your ass Judge!"* Belinda yelled over the phone loud enough that Judge jumped and almost dropped her phone. *"Where the Hell are you?"*

"I'll gladly bend over when I see you so that you can kick my ass and I'm around Chattanooga Tennessee...I think." She took a deep breath and closed her eyes before she asked her next question. "How's Murphy and the others, I just saw the newspaper article about Carla."

*"Falling apart, I don't know how much more she or the others can take and you're partly to blame for that."*

"I know and I'm sorry, I had no idea that I was marked as dead until a little while ago."

*"I know, I've talked to Claudia and let me tell you I almost fell over when she told me you were alive. We talk about once a week ya know so I have all kinds of blackmail material to use against you."*

Judge chuckled; she could only imagine what Claudia had told Belinda. "Wait until I talk to her, anyway I'll be home soon and I just wanted to know if there's anything I could do for mama D and the others?"

*"Yeah, try not to give any of them heart attacks when you get back."* She had no idea what would happen when Judge just showed up after being dead, she hadn't really thought much about it. *"How much did that article tell about the accident, you know the details?"*

"Not much, it just says that Carla lapsed into a coma after sustaining injuries in a two car accident and passed after being taken off life support, why?"

*"Because mama D was with her in the car."* She filled her in on what had happened with the exception of who caused the accident and the other passengers in the car. She knew if she told Judge everything, she would go off the deep end.

"Christ..." she rubbed her forehead and sat with her head braced against her palm. "I'm gonna leave here in about an hour, I don't know how long it's gonna take me to get back, I'm thinking maybe ten hours or so."

*"So to be on the safe side, sometime tomorrow morning?"* She counted in her head and added pit stops along the way. *"You come here before you go anywhere and I don't give a damn if it's still dark out, your ass will be here, ya got me?"*

"Yes ma'am, I will be there no matter if it's the crack of dawn." They spoke for a few more minutes and then hung up; Judge stretched and looked to her sleeping dog. "Ok Woobs, your ass is going out the door so that I don't have to find a doggy rest area two miles down the road." She filled up the diesel tanks and almost fell over with the total cost, that cemented the idea of getting a motorcycle once she got home, there was no way she was going to keep filling up the tanks with the price of diesel. "Christ I'd need to get another job just to be able to get to work!" She stuffed her wallet back into her back pocket, climbed up into the cab and pulled out a few moments later. She didn't know if it was possible to be excited and dread something at the same time but that's how she felt about going back home. She couldn't wait to see Murphy and the others again but was dreading the initial confrontation at the same time. She figured she had about nine to ten hours to come up with what to say before and after the sisters got a hold of her. She was never really good with words with the exception of the law so trying to find the words or condolences was going to hurt.

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Murphy sat at her desk with numerous papers and file folders cluttering the surface, she was trying to get all the land deeds in order, copies made and all the paperwork concerning Carla's property ready for their lawyer. If she had known that it was going to give her a migraine, she would have given it to one of her sisters to do. Then again, she didn't want a call from their lawyer complaining about orange fingerprints all over the papers from a Cheeto's eating Smootcher. She was half tempted to change the uniform pants from brown to orange; it would save on her and mama yelling at her to stop wiping her hands on her pants. She leaned back in her chair, rolled her shoulders and closed her eyes. No matter what time of the day or night, the image of Carla in the wrecked car came to her. She wondered if it would always haunt her or if it would fade with time. At the sound of a soft knock on her door jamb, she opened her eyes and groaned inwardly. She wished that Tamara would get the fucking hint and leave her alone. She had told her numerous times that she was not interested in a relationship with anyone. Not to mention how many times she had told her that the age gap was too much and to find someone her own age. It was like talking to a wall, she was running out of patience and ready to lock her up for stalking.

"Hi Murphy," she came in even though the look she was getting from green eyes singed her skin. "I stopped by to see if you needed anything and if you are free tonight."

"I'm fine thanks and no I'm not free, I have a family gathering to attend."

"What about afterwards, maybe we could get some takeout and rent a movie."

Murphy was ready to blow a gasket. "I can't, I have my niece with me now and her bedroom is my living room. You really need to look else where, I'm not available."

"Put her in your room until later," she was going to win this if it took all day. "Come on you're stressed out and you need to relax and you're single so that's available."

A savior stepped into the door and Murphy felt like running up and kissing her. "Murph you're needed at the courthouse," Stewie said and tossed the keys to the truck to her. "Better hurry mama's there and she's ready to kill." She knew damn well that mama was still in the hospital but the coffee girl didn't know that.

"Thanks, I better get over there before she ends up in an orange jumpsuit." She mouthed the words 'Thank you' as she rushed past her sister and tried not to see her mama as the great pumpkin.

"Don't you have coffee beans to grind?" Stewie asked in a deep menacing voice. "Maybe some donuts to fill or something?"



"Actually no, and no matter what you try, you can't get rid of me." She gave Stewie the once over and rolled her eyes. "I definitely picked the right Whistler, you're way too butch, I detest muscles."

Stewie stood there for a minute and snorted to herself, the coffee girl had no clue as to what she was talking about. "Not, ya bimbo dipshit; Murph has way more muscles than me; she eats her spinach!" She flexed her biceps and grinned when one of the other deputies gawked at her. "Horse steroids do ya good."

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Murphy pulled into McDonalds, pulled up to the drive-thru and placed an order large enough to feed a small army. She knew that she owed Stewie and food was a sure way of paying her back. She called Stewie's cell phone and gave her the code word of 'The Church Lady', Stewie would then call Smootcher and then they would all meet at the prearranged place. It was one way for them to get together without anyone knowing what they were doing, especially the coffee girl. She took off in the opposite direction from the office, cut down West Liberty Street and came up on the backside of the Lutheran church. Looking out all of the windows, she checked for sneaky people before opening the door. Grabbing all the bags of food, she sprinted to the gap between the eight foot hedges and shot through. Inside the gap was a large patio complete with picnic tables under a striped overhang. When Stewie and the troll were doing their community church service, they often escaped to the area for fresh air and lunch time. Now it was like their unofficial secret meeting place. No sooner had she sorted through the bags then she heard huffing and puffing coming towards her.

"Slow down...I can't keep up...damn...short legged troll." Smootcher stumbled through the gap right behind the troll, sweat poured down her face and soaked into her uniform shirt. "Gonna kill me." She dropped down onto the grass and laid breathing like a freight train.

"Outta shape Aunch Smootch," Abbey danced around her and then fell across her heaving chest. "Bigs booty...junks in trunk."

"I'll have you know that I have buns of steel."

"Handcuffs in your back pocket does not count as buns of steel Smootch," Stewie said as she stepped over the top of her. "Now our dear sister there has buns of steel and huge ass pythons." She wiggled her brows at Murphy and gave her a wicked grin. "The coffee girl said she picked you cuz I'm too butch and she detests muscles. I think a certain sheriff needs to pump up and flex those pythons."

"I'd wear a pink tutu and run down Main Street if it meant she'd leave me alone." She picked up the troll, put her on the bench and placed her unhappy meal in front of her. "I told her again

today, I swear no matter what I say; it goes in one ear and out the other." She rolled her eyes at her sisters and the troll when she saw the French fries sticking out of their noses. "Ya know maybe she'd run the other way if we invited her to eat supper with us?"

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Murphy sat in her living room with the only light coming from the TV, the troll was curled up against her with her head on her thigh. For the last week or so, the troll had been having nightmares and ended up crawling into bed with her. Mama said that in time they would go away but what Murphy wondered were if her own nightmares would go away. She still dreamed of Judge and swore at times she could feel her presence. "What am I going to do?" She asked the darkness and almost had a heart attack when it answered.

"You can help me with the take-out." Tamara flipped the living room light on and walked over to the coffee table.

"How did you get in to my house?" Murphy growled and gave her a glare that should have melted her on the spot.

"It was unlocked, I knocked but I guess you didn't hear me." She stood looking at the troll with a disgusted expression on her face. "Why did you get stuck with the kid, won't anyone else take her?"

Murphy's temper flared to incinerary proportions, she was up and in Tamara's personal space in mere seconds. "You just crossed the line of no return, get the fuck out of my house and stay the hell away from me and my family." She pointed to the front door and kept walking forward until Tamara bounced off the closed door.

"Come on Murphy, you really want to be saddled with someone else's kid?" Before she knew what happened, she was face first in the front yard and the slam of the door was reverberating behind her. "Fuck me, why would anyone be so bent outta shape over a snot nosed kid?" She sat up, brushed herself off and swore that she would find a way into Murphy's life. "Send that brat to an orphanage."

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Murphy got on the phone and called the office, she asked for one of the deputies to drive by and make sure that Tamara was nowhere in the area and if she was to haul her ass in for trespassing. She double checked the lock on the front door and then every other door in the house before she felt safe enough to turn in for the night. She thought back to when she had last been at the door and swore that she had locked it. "Maybe I'm losing my mind." She picked up the troll and

carried her back to her bedroom; she figured she might as well put her in her bed because she would end up there anyway. Before she covered her up, she unpinned her sheriff badge from her PJ's and put it on the nightstand. "Surprised you don't have my pistol belt on, but that's probably next week." She tucked her in and then headed for the bathroom. She had been thinking of looking for a bigger house for her and Abbey but hadn't gotten around to it. Everything was just too raw and she wanted Abbey to get used to being with her all the time before she made a drastic change like a new home. Plus, she really didn't want to leave her home, she would lose what little bit of Judge still remand.

She crept back into the room after her shower and saw that Abbey had squirmed over to her side of the bed and was lying across her pillow. "Christ she's like a little dog." She was getting used to waking up with either little feet or butt in her face. "It's like sleeping with Woobie." Tears came to her eyes at the thought of the small bald dog. "I even miss her dog."

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Judge pulled into the next rest stop, shifted it into neutral and pulled the brakes on. She was in Winchester Virginia and only an hour at the most away from home. She checked her watch and saw that it was almost five in the morning. "At the crack of dawn it is Belinda." She took Woobie out for her pit stop, grabbed a cup of coffee and hit the road to Charles town. She looked around her and couldn't believe the changes that occurred in the short time she had been gone. New housing developments where hay fields used to be, a new high school where corn was grown and other buildings not needed. She got closer to the Charles town exit off of the old Rt. 340 and felt her pulse speed up. "No turning back now Judge." She pulled up the exit and turned left to head to Belinda's house. She noticed that they were almost finished building the new hotel for the racetrack/casino and that traffic had gotten worse even with the high price of gas. For curiosity sake, she turned down her own street and drove slowly past her old house. She saw a Sheriff's cruiser in the drive and wondered if Murphy was renting the place out to a cop. Continuing on, she made a few turns and then pulled up the driveway that led to Belinda's house. She knew that her old friend would be shocked to see her climb down from the cab of the massive Semi. No sooner had she shut down the engine, then the front door opened and a curious Belinda looked out. She couldn't help but grin when the outside lights popped on and she came out onto the front porch. She pushed the door open, swung down to the ground and waited for her friend to recognize her.

"What the hell are you doing with such a big truck?"

"I wasn't gonna take any chances on getting run over." She limped towards her and almost fell over when the smaller woman wrapped her arms around her in a fierce hug.

"I'm so glad your back and I'm still gonna kick your ass." She let her go and waved a hand towards the front door. "Come on it, I just made a pot of coffee." She led the way to the kitchen

and pointed at table. "Have a seat while I get the coffee cups, want anything to eat; I was just about to make some eggs and bacon." She glanced over her shoulder and raised a finger. "I'm cooking and you're eating, don't argue with me."

"I wasn't gonna, I was gonna say I'm starving." She dropped into the padded chair and groaned. "Too many hours driving today...yesterday, anyway I'm hungry and exhausted."

"We can talk while we eat then you go take a nap; I know you're probably dying to sleep in a real bed."

"Not really, I'll show ya my truck and then you'll understand. I love that truck; it's the best money I ever spent." They spoke over breakfast about the changes in town in the short time that she had been gone and then Judge brought up the accident that Mama D and Carla were involved in. Belinda didn't tell her everything because she was sure that she would be the presiding Judge in the court case. One thing that she wouldn't tell her was about the new sheriff in town, she figured that she would find out sooner or later, she just hoped that she was there when it happened. It was sure to be a Kodak moment, or maybe a 911 moment. They cleaned up the kitchen and then headed out to the semi truck; Belinda whistled low as she walked past it.

"This is incredible, where did ya get it?"

"I bought it off Joe, Claudia was happier than you would ever believe." She opened the door and helped Belinda inside. "Where the truck sat, is now the home of a new greenhouse." She watched as Belinda wandered around her truck and then grinned when she picked Woobie up and gave her a hug.

"You don't know how happy I was when Claudia told me that you both were alive." She took in how Judge was leaning against the bulkhead. "Come on sit down, you're making my body ache. So are you ok physically? Cuz you're different...rougher and dangerous looking. Murphy is gonna pass out when she sees you," she leaned forward on the table and studied her friends scared face. "You two are the perfect pair now, all dinged up and imperfect."

"Perfect but imperfect?" Judge asked with a grin.

"Yeah but ya know what there JT, you're more attractive now than before even with the butch haircut."

"Should have seen me before it grew out, I looked like GI Jane." She ran her fingers through her hair and down to where it was curling over her t-shirt collar. "I might just keep it short; it's so much easier to take care of. Now I know why Murphy keeps her hair short." She thumbed her remaining fingers on the table and noticed that Belinda was looking at her mangled hand. "Do you think Murphy and the others are gonna go ballistic and kill me? Or do ya think that I might be too damaged?"

Belinda busted up laughing; she wiped at the tears trailing down her cheeks and tried to calm herself. "Are you kidding me, you were more damaged before with your OCD than you are now

with some missing fingers and what-not." She pointed to Judge's hands and smirked. "Your hands are filthy and you're still conscious, you are cured!"

"Amazing what being filthy, half dead and living out of a bent up shopping cart will do for ya."

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She took a nap for a few hours and then decided to scope out her property, as she was driving through town; she got stuck at the light on Washington Street. She just happened to glance to her right and saw something that had her pulse speed up. There on the sidewalk were the Whistler sisters. As the light turned green, she slowly pulled abreast them and watched as Murphy looked towards her rig. She knew that there was no way that she could see into her cab but she swore she could feel green eyes looking right at her. She watched in her side view mirror until they became too far away. What she wouldn't give to be able to pull over, jump out and walk up to her. She slowed down and was ready to pull over then changed her mind; she would have to think on how to approach her. "Stop being a chicken shit, pull up to mama D's and face the music. All they can do is kill you, beat you up maybe tie you up and make you Murphy's sex slave?" That thought brought a smirk to her face; she would like nothing more than just that. A half hour later she was pulling through the gates to one of her properties. It was the one that had some houses completed and others that were under construction. She drove past some of them and stopped at one that was much older than the others.

She walked around the old structure and knew that this was worth more than all the new homes on her property. The foundation was fieldstone and with further examination, she found thick oak timber supports in the cellar. What was left of the walls was a cross between lathe board and old logs. "My Gods this place is old," she ran her hands across the smooth log and knew she had found her new home. "A little time and love and you'll look like you did years ago." She stood outside on the remains of the front porch and looked around at all the asphalt, concrete and modern monstrosity's people considered tasteful homes. "In time, this will all go back to Mother Nature, I just need a great big bull dozer." She went back to her truck, got Woobie and walked around to take in all that was around her. "So what do ya think there Woobs, I tear all these ugly ass houses down and plant trees?" She walked back to her truck and watched as her dog ran here and there inspecting every little thing in her path. "Come on Woobs lets go get something to eat and then some sleep, we have lots of work to do in the morning. And I have to make my appearance before the Mayor, which should be loads of fun."

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Murphy stopped and looked up to the cab of the huge red semi truck; she jumped but still couldn't see the driver. "Did you guys see that trucks driver?" Both of her sisters gave her a look

that told her she was asking a stupid question. "I swear I know the driver of that big ass red semi."

"You just asked us if we seen the driver, so that means that you didn't short shit..." Smootcher said with Stewie finishing.

"So how the hell would you know if you knew the driver if ya didn't see him?"

"I just got this feeling; ya know the hair on the back of my neck stood up and ya know what that means."

"Yeah ya got fleas again." Stewie replied and then jumped to avoid the foot coming at her ass. "We don't know any truck drivers but I'm sure we can find ya one at a truck stop."

"Ha funny, I don't think so." She looked up ahead and tried to see the license plate on the truck but it was too far away. "I swear I know that driver." She mumbled to herself. "What time are we going to pick up the troll and go see mama, ya know she's gonna kick our asses if we don't bring the troll with us?"

"Dodger said to meet them at the hospital at three o'clock," Smootcher said and then checked her watch. "We have fifteen minutes to get there so move your ass." They picked up the pace until they reached the truck and then they fought over who was driving. They had to be at the hospital on time because mama was getting released from prison as she put it. "He told me that they have her cell finished at the office and to make sure we don't put the keys where she can get them." They had found out the hard way what the troll does with keys, she releases prisoners. They had to chase two prisoners through Ranson after the troll found the keys and opened the cell doors. So to help with escapes, they fixed one of the storage rooms into the spitting trolls own cell, complete with metal cell door. Mama D wanted them to put her in leg irons but knew that some idiot would report her for cruelty to children. Little did they know that she wanted to have the little imp fitted for a straight jacket, shackles and just maybe a tracking device?

"That should be fun, trying to hide the keys from someone who can sniff out what she's not supposed to have." Murphy mumbled to herself. When they pulled past the ER doors, she saw her brother with his hands over his face; she just knew that the troll was behind it. "Are ya'll ready for hell, Dodger looks like he's ready to run screaming?" When they got to the door, they soon found out the reason for him hiding his face. The troll was running up and down the short hallway yelling out pick-up lines. Some of them were quite clever and others raunchy as hell; Murphy knew who those came from and she would be sure to hang a foot up their ass for it.

"Abigail Daniela," Murphy growled and pointed a finger at her niece. "You little girl are gonna get it."

Abbey turned and looked to her aunt with a smirk and a raised eyebrow. "Wants two of 'em."

Murphy groaned, rolled her eyes and shook her head, she just realized that she was in deep shit and was about to start paying for all the evil deeds she had committed when she was a kid. Never

in her life would she think that all of mama's warnings about child rearing would come true for her. "Only sixteen more years to go." She mumbled as she took off running down the hallway after the troll.

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Judge sat in the Mayors driveway trying to find her nerve to go up to his front door and ring the bell. She knew that she had left him in a bad spot and hoped that he would forgive her ignorance. She took a deep breathe before opening the door and climbing from the cab. She looked around her and noticed that a few of his neighbors were looking her way with curiosity; she knew it was because of her and her truck. She waved and continued her way up to the front door, before she could ring the bell, the door opened. "Hello Sir," she said in a low unsure voice. "Can I have a few minutes of your time?"

She was inside the mayor's house for almost two hours before she came back out to her truck, she shook her head and had to grin. He was more than happy to see her and was ecstatic that she was to be the new Judge; he told her that by the next afternoon, he would have her chambers cleaned and new furniture brought in. He was shocked when she said that what furniture was there would be fine and that all she really needed was a small refrigerator.

She would have a few days before she would have to start work and wanted to see about getting a jail cell set up like Claudia's. She would start her plans by talking to her favorite bailiff; the basement cell area was his territory no matter what the sheriffs department thought.

Pulling back out on the road, she headed into town to find a place to eat; she was tired of fast food and wanted to have a real sit down meal. The only place that came to mind was Mountain View restaurant. She pulled in slowly and looked around to see if the Whistlers truck was parked anywhere. That was something that she didn't want to have to deal with yet, she still hadn't come up with the words. What struck her as strange was when she mentioned the Whistler's to the Mayor, all he could do was snicker. She wondered if they had caused all kinds of hate and discontent since she had been gone, it wouldn't surprise her if they had; after all that was their main goal in life.

Walking into the restaurant, she waited to be seated at a booth for two and noticed all the older people in the place. It still amazed her that gambling was so popular with the older people, she could think of many things to do with hard earned money than to give it to the gambling association and another lump in taxes if you were lucky enough to win any. After placing her order, she gazed out the window at the continuous traffic and day dreamed. A few minutes after her food came; she was taking a drink of her tea and almost choked to death. At the front door were two of the Whistlers, she prayed that Stewie and Smootcher didn't look her way. Dropping her head, she brought her left hand up and placed it in front of her face.

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Mama D sat with a huge smirk on her face, she never thought she would ever see the day when Murphy would be struck dumb. She just wished that she had a camera to catch the moment on film, and then she remembered her cell phone and all its extras.

Abbey sat on Murphy's lap with a raised left eyebrow, arms crossed over her chest and blue eyes staring into perplexed green. "Gonna do it." She bounced on Murphy's lap and chanted "Aunchmama...aunchmama...aunchmama."

"I gotta say that is some combination of titles and if it don't scream incest nothing will." Mama busted up laughing and laughed harder when Murphy's mouth dropped open.

"What about Aunt Jemima?" Stewie asked when she got into the truck.

"Who wants nasty pancakes when we have Gyros from Mountain View?" Smootcher asked and got strange looks from everyone. "What?"

"Blonde." Abbey pointed to Smootcher and went on chanting Murphy's new name.

"I can just see me at parent's teacher's conferences," Murphy took a deep breath and looked to her sisters. "Hi I'm Abigail Whistler's Auntmama', won't that cause a few weird looks." She put the troll back into her car seat and swore that the idiot who designed it really hated parents. No matter how many times she had to buckle the troll into the thing, she always ended up with at least one strap dangling unattached to anything. "Duct tape would work just as well." She mumbled and gave up trying to figure out where the other end was, it wasn't as if one strap mattered when there were five others holding her in. "Could be a dozen straps and she'd still escape like Houdini."

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Judge watched as they took take-out bags from the server and left the restaurant, sighing with relief she went back to eating her food. She needed more time before she faced them and knew that stopping for something to eat was risky. "Grow some balls Judge and just go over there, sooner or later you're gonna have to face them." She continued to talk to herself and grinned when the couple in front of her turned in their booth to give her strange glances. "My voices wanna adopt a child; know a good place where I can get a kid for them?" She snickered when they got up and moved to a table across the room. "Murphy would be so proud of me." She



finished her food, waved for her check and dropped some bills on the table for a tip. She had some errands to run before she headed back to her property, she hoped that she could get it all done and be ready to start her project in the late morning or early afternoon the next day. Her biggest problem at the present was finding a place to park her truck where she had electricity to hook into. She didn't want to go to the KOA campsites and really didn't want to impose on Belinda, she grinned at the thought of an orange extension cord running from her friends house to the hookup on her truck.

Sitting in her truck, she closed her eyes and tried to think of everything that was up on her properties. She had some houses that were complete and then some that were just frames, she wondered if the power had been turned on in the finished ones or not. At the very least, she could let her truck run like the truckers do. She had learned from Joe that it cost more diesel fuel to start the thing up than if she let it run. Releasing the air brakes and then putting it in gear, she pulled from the parking lot and headed back to her property. She thought of seeing the Whistlers at the restaurant and wished that Murphy had been there, she really wanted to see her but didn't at the same time. Then her mind wandered to starting work the next morning, it wasn't really a working day but a day to get her office squared away and talk more with the court officers, bailiffs and other people involved in the system. She snorted when she thought of wearing the black judge's robe and wondered what her asshole father would think of her job.

"Hell, sooner or later he'll find out that I'm not dead."

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Murphy sat at her kitchen table with stacks of unread mail and assorted real estate papers in front of her, she had so much to do that she didn't know where to start. What she really needed was a secretary for her personal stuff, or let Stewie handle all the real estate stuff. She sorted through the papers and placed a good sized stack into a manila envelope. In the morning she would drop it off with mama, she knew that if Stewie got it by way of mama, she wouldn't argue or run away. She was just about to open her mail when she heard sliding noises coming her way. Looking to the doorway, she grinned when a half asleep troll came into the kitchen. Dressed in lightweight footy pajama's, sucking her left thumb and dragging a ragged Pooh Bear by his arm had Murphy choking up. This was something that Carla would be seeing if not for an asshole drunk. "What's the matter troll?"

"Boogie man unner bed, stole Pooh again." She crawled up onto her aunt's lap and rested her head against her chest. "Awest him aunchmama."

"I can do that," she stood up and carried her back to her bedroom. "You get back in bed while I crawl under it and get the boogie man." She waited until Abbey was in bed before she lay down on the floor and pretended to arrest the boogie man. This was a nightly thing for them; she would have to ask mama if Carla had said anything about it to her. She was worried that this was

because she missed her mother and her own bed. She came back up from the floor and saw that the troll was sound asleep and Winnie the Pooh was suffering from the death grip she had on his neck. Tucking her in, she placed a kiss on her forehead and flipped the nightlight on before going back into the kitchen. She would have to get a move on about finding a bigger house for them; everyone knew that she had the pick of over a dozen houses from one of the properties that they had bought. She chuckled at the thought of all the land they had bought over the last couple months, especially the last one they got; it was a foreclosed housing development. The more land they got, the less people in their area. The only problem they saw was the other company that was doing the same thing. They had lost a few of the properties in bidding wars and just hoped that this company failed just like the previous ones did.

"I need to move my ass here," she rubbed her eyes and yawned. "The troll needs her own bedroom, a big yard and a puppy." She grabbed the manila envelope and searched through it until she came to pictures of the houses in the development. Picking out a couple, she stuffed the rest back into the envelope and dropped it on the table. "Tomorrow after I drop off the troll with mama, I'll pick the best one and that's where we'll live." She got up, turned the light off and headed to the bedroom.

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Judge wiped the sweat from her face and looked up at the court house; she had been running around town like an idiot trying to get things done before her appointment. She climbed down from the truck and peeled her wet t-shirt away from her back. "Fresh as a daisy I am." She mumbled on her way to the front doors. "I Knew I should have come here first." She moved around people standing on the sidewalk and wondered if there were that many court cases going on. If that was the case then things had sure changed in the short time she had been away. After taking a deep breath, she pulled the huge door open and stepped into the dim foyer. The first thing she saw was a young guard and a metal detector, which was a big change in itself. She eyed him and if arrogance was a fragrance, then he reeked of it. He kept a close eye on her every movement and puffed out his chest when she walked past him. What she found funny was that they had never even thought about the safety of the people in the court rooms in the past and now they had this and deputy dog. She stepped up to the small shelf, emptied her pockets into a plastic basket and walked through only to hear the buzzer go off. "Son of a bitch," she mumbled. "Listen, I have all kinds of screws and shit in my leg."

"Ma'am please move to the side and raise your hands over your head." The guard motioned with the wand where he wanted her. "Spread your feet further apart and don't move."

"This is ridiculous," she growled. "If I have to go through this every damn day I'm gonna hang someone. Do you think I have some kind of secret weapon on me?" She looked down at her worn out filthy Levi's with the knees all torn out and her paint splattered t-shirt. "Tell me where I could hide anything."

The guard stopped where he was and keyed the microphone attached to his collar. "I need some assistance here at the front door."

"How long have you worked here?" Judge asked and looked to the other people standing around waiting to get through. "Because I can assure you, that you won't be here long." She moved back to where her wallet was lying in the basket and grunted from the blow to her stomach. She wheezed, dropped to her knees and let out a string of cuss words to rival any sailors. "You are so gonna regret touching me." She let out a growl when he smashed her to the ground and cuffed her. "You had better know a good lawyer because you're gonna need it asshole!"

"I hope you know one because you're gonna need it lady." The guard said from where he had his knee in the between her shoulder blades.

"What in the hell did you do this time?" Belinda asked Judge and crossed her arms over her chest. "I swear you're in the court house one damn day and you're already in cuffs."

"Tell me about it," she growled. "Now tell dumb fuck here to un-cuff me and run for his very life, because I'm gonna kill him!"

"Buddy, if I were you, I'd drop the handcuff keys and run; you just cuffed a Judge." She grinned when his face went pale and he started to shake in his very shoes. "I hope you know that you're fired as of two minutes ago." He nodded his head and handed Belinda the keys. She grinned even wider when she heard all the whispers coming from the people standing around the foyer area. "That's right people, she is a real honest to god 'hang 'em' judge better hope she's not your Judge." Belinda knew that her friend was beyond pissed off by the way her body was trembling on the floor, she un-cuffed her and tried not to flinch when Judge rose from the floor with a deep growl and pinned the guard with a deadly glare. Taking her very life in her hands, she grabbed Judge's upper arm and pulled her away from the trembling guard and over to the basket to retrieve her belongings.

"What's going on up here?" The bailiff asked and almost fell over when he saw Judge standing before him. "Ohh my god, I can't believe it." He held out his hand to her and ushered her through the court house and down to his office.

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"John, I want that guard fired," she growled and dropped down into one of the chairs in front of his small wooden desk. "That son of a bitch treated me like I was a terrorist!" She rubbed her bad knee and held back a groan of pain. "I should sue the fucker for hitting me and then just about breaking my back when he kneeled on my back to cuff me." Her friends sat with their mouths hanging open, neither one of them could believe the change in her. "What?"

"You're scary," Belinda said and saw the bailiff nod his head. "I wanna be a fly on the wall when Murphy sees you." She waved a hand in the air at the bailiff. "Like you, the Whistlers think she's dead and I for one can't wait until they find out differently."

"I sure as Hell ain't gonna tell them," he saw Belinda wiggle her brow and tilt her head towards Judge. "They scare me as much as you do." He shrugged his shoulders at her and saw her mouth the words 'Later'.

After they showed Judge the cell that they were working on, she went up to her chambers to see what kind of cases she would have later that week. Belinda sighed with relief when she and the bailiff were alone; she now knew what Claudia had meant by Judge being different from before. "Ok, now here's the thing; Judge has no idea that the Whistlers are the new law."

"Ohh for Christ sakes Belinda how can she not know that?"

"Uhhmm...easy me and Claudia didn't tell her and she doesn't read the newspaper often." She shrugged her shoulders and sighed. "Sometimes she's completely clueless but ya gotta admit this is gonna be good."

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Judge sat behind her desk and looked at all the files covering it; she thought that at the least they would cut her a break coming out of the gates. She rubbed her eyes and swore that they were about to fall out of her head from so much reading. She had just two days to get all this information crammed into her head and knew there was no way in Hell that she could do it. "I should jump off the damn bridge, what in the hell was I thinking when I agreed to become a Judge?" She kept on talking to herself and never heard the shuffling noise or saw the eyes watching her. She did however feel the hand grab onto her leg, she let out a yell and was ready to jump when a little body came from under her desk and crawled onto her lap. She sat looking into eyes much like her own and then noticed that the face was covered in chocolate.

"My Grammy talks to herself to." She held out a half eaten candy bar to Judge. "Stealed it." She wiggled her feet and grinned at the tinkle of chains. "Gots caught to, see?" She pointed to the shackles on her ankles.

"I see and how is it that you escaped?"

"Picked lock," she pulled a bent up fork from her pocket and handed it to Judge. "Aunchmama gonna say I gonna get it, so I hide'n."

"Uuhh huh, I'd say so." She looked at the toddler on her lap and couldn't help but grin and then wonder why no one was tearing the place apart looking for her. "So where is your...Aunchmama?"

"Somewheres." She stuffed the rest of the candy bar into her mouth and wiped her hands on her pant legs. She looked into Judge's eyes and grinned wide enough to show her tiny chocolate covered teeth. "Gots eyes like me."

"Yes she does and you little girl are gonna get it." Belinda said as she came into Judge's chambers and closed the door.

"See tolds ya." She mumbled and shrugged her shoulders. "I always gets it."

Belinda came closer to the desk and held out her arms to Abbey. "Your Grammy is looking for you and your uncle is none to happy either." She rolled her eyes when Abbey grinned at her. "Seems that when he fell asleep, she tied his shoelaces to the bar under the court room bench; needless to say, that he made one hell of a racket in the court room when he got up and fell on the floor."

"I take it that she's well known around here?" She looked at the tiny shackles and chuckled. "I've never seen shackles that small."

"Aunchmama made 'em." She said and pulled on a leather harness that was fastened around her chest. "This to."

Judge looked to Belinda with a raised eyebrow. "Who is this Aunchmama?"

"Her mother, I'm sure you'll meet her sooner or later, speaking of which I had better get her back before I end up in shackles." She left the office and thanked God that Judge didn't ask any more questions, that was one thing she didn't need right now. "So Troll, how did you get this far into the belly of the beast without getting caught?" The Troll pointed to a pissed off Deputy coming their way.

"He knows." She grinned when he held up her leash in one hand and pointed a finger at her with the other.

"She tried to kill me!" He wiggled the leash at her. "She clipped this thing to my duty belt and tied the other end to the desk in the bailiff's office."

"When will ya'll learn that you're not safe with the Troll around?"

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Belinda had just rounded the corner when she saw Murphy coming down the hallway; she could tell that she was none to happy. "I found something that belongs to the Sheriff's department; you want her in lock-up?"

"Like that would keep her out of trouble," she said and wagged a finger at her niece. "YOU are in so much trouble little girl, I've been looking all over the place for you."

"Been hide'n in beast."

Belinda grinned and explained what she meant. "She was in some Judge's chambers having a long conversation about her aunchmama."

"Ohhhh I see," she took the troll from Belinda's arms. "Get in good with a Judge and get a reduced sentence."

"Yep, she my booty girl."

Belinda gave Murphy a raised eyebrow. "What can I say, she's around her uncles and three dykes and now she's got a one track mind..."

"BOOTY!" The troll yelled and jumped in her aunts arms. "WANTS SOME BOOTY!"

"Glad I don't have to go out in public with her." Belinda laughed all the way back to her office and then some more when she thought of the troll being in Judge's chambers. "If Murphy only knew."

\*\*\*\*\*

Judge was just about to lock up her chambers when John came trotting down the hallway, he held up a hand and panted out a 'Hold on' to her. He bent over at the waist and raised a finger while he tried to catch his breath. "A Judge called in...car accident...can you cover a case?"

"I'm not officially on the job for another few days."

"The Mayor asked," he stood up and wiped the sweat from his face. "He's with the Judge, some asshole read-ended them at a stop light. Can ya do it so we don't have to reschedule, it's a big case?"

"I need the information on the case and some time to prepare."

"I can give you twenty minutes, I'll bring the stuff you need right away." He grasped her hand and smiled. "Thank you so much, you're saving our asses here and have I told you how happy I am that you're wearing the robes?"

"Don't say that too soon, I've never done this before." She went back into her chambers and dropped into her chair. "If I had been just faster." She mumbled and looked up when she saw movement by her door.

"Just what I wanted to do today, work." Belinda sorted through the paperwork and handed some papers to Judge. "I can give you the cliff notes version?"

"Go right ahead, I don't have enough time to read all of this."

"He's guilty and should rot in jail forever." She grinned at Judge rolling her eyes and handed her the arrest report. "He's charged with car jacking, one count of murder, two counts of vehicular homicide, assault on a police officer, and destruction of government property and possession of an illegal weapon. He had an assault rifle with four fully loaded banana clips when they finally got him."

"Who got him?"

"Uhhmm... the sheriff actually got him," she wasn't about to spill the beans yet. "Lost a cruiser on that deal."

"Like we have so many of them to lose," she quickly read through the reports, checked her watch and then rose with a moan. "Ok let's go get this over with, hope they don't mind that I don't have any robes."

"Good try there Judge," she pulled a suit bag from off the back of the door and handed it to her. "I got them back from the cleaners this morning."

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Judge was sitting at the bench listening to the drivel the defendant's scumbag lawyer was spewing out and was tempted to throw her gavel at him. She had never heard so much bull shit in all her life and wished she could lock both of them up. About to put an end to it, she stopped when she felt something brush against her legs. Peeking up at her from under the bench was a pair of mischievous blue eyes. She pulled Abbey up, placed her on her lap and went back to listening to the case.

"So your honor my client is not guilty..."

"Ohhhh shut up already," Judge said and pointed a finger at the prosecuting attorney. "What's your recommendation as far as sentencing?"

"The maximum sentence your Honor, with no chance of parole." He glanced over at the defendant and narrowed his eyes, the asshole sat with a smug expression on his face. He looked back up at Judge and saw her eyes drilling into the sad excuse for a human.

"Ok, give me a few minutes to make my decision." She had to grin when the bailiff yelled out for everyone to rise when she stood up, that cemented it for her, she was a real Judge. She sat the troll on the bench and went back to her chambers. She just stood in the center of her chambers

for a few minutes before she returned to the court room. She knew what she was going to do before she even left but had to make it look good. When she walked in and the bailiff yelled again, she snorted when it never fazed the Troll who kept dancing across the top of the bench. Dropping down into her chair, she pulled the paperwork to her and looked to the defendant and his attorney. "My decision in these matters is to go with the recommendations of the state; offenders of heinous crimes will not walk amongst us if I have anything to say. She signed the papers and handed them to the Belinda. "You are to be remanded to Martinsburg correctional facility to serve out your sentence of life with no chance of parole. You are lucky we are not in Virginia or I'd have you on death row!" She handed the gavel to the Troll and watched as she slammed it down on the sound block.

She had to grin to herself when the scumbag screamed all sorts of obscenities to both her and the prosecutor, she could care less because he was one less asshole walking the streets. She leaned back in her chair and watched the troll dance back and forth down the bench and then glanced over at Belinda. "She escaped again?"

"Looks like it and funny how she ended up here with you."

"What can I say, I'm a chick magnet." Tapping the troll on her foot, she waited for her to look at her. "What's your name?"

""I's on a roll...the spittin troll..." She jumped around the bench and tried to dance. "Gonna spits all day...cuz that's my way...bum of the hood...chill."

Judge and Belinda busted up laughing at her and laughed harder when she started to wiggle all over the place.

"Get's jiggly...get's jiggly... She stopped wiggling around and stood staring into a pair of furious green eyes. "Ohhhh shit...hides me!" Before anything could be said to her, she yelled out. "WANTS TWO!"

Belinda tried to disappear by sliding down into her chair, she was not ready for what was about to happen. "Ohh shit." She said softly and turned her eyes to Judge.

Murphy strode towards her niece. "You are so gonna get it this time, I've been looking..." She stopped and felt her heart slam to a stop in her chest. "You're dead..."

"Helps me...aunchmama gonna kill me!" The troll jumped into Judge's lap and wrapped her small arms around her neck. "She mad."

Judge let her eyes wander from Murphy's boot clad feet all the way up to where her hair was meticulously combed. She let her eyes travel back down to the badge pinned to her chest and then realized that she was wearing a County Sheriff's uniform. "Hi Murphy...I was gonna call..." The expression on Murphy's face scared her. "She's gonna kill me." She looked to an amused Belinda. "Help?"



"Ha, fat chance on that." She waved at Murphy and realized that she was in the same boat with Abbey and Judge. "Uhhmm...hi Murphy, I was gonna call you...we're all gonna die!" She mumbled the last part.

"Can we talk?" Judge asked as she stood up. "I need to explain a lot of things."

Anger filled her in seconds; all she wanted to do was smack the living shit out of Judge. "I'd say, but ya know what," Murphy stalked right up to stand in front of her, she looked into clear blue eyes and felt all the anger that had rushed through her leave in one glance. Letting her eyes travel across her friends face, she noticed all the scars and the silver starting at her temples. She reached out and ran a finger over the scar above her left eye, what she saw was not the same person who left months before; she was rougher in a way. "Do you have any idea how you hurt me by just taking off and not saying a word?" She saw Judge's lips start to move and pointed a finger at her. "And to add to that, I find out that you're dead; I'm still missing you!" She closed her eyes and tried to fight back all the emotions that were coursing through her. "Now I find you alive and with my kid?"

Judge looked between her and the troll and raised her eyebrow. "The spittin troll is yours...you're Aunchmama." Murphy nodded her head. "What exactly is an Aunchmama?"

"Aunt Mama, I'm her guardian." She held her arms out and sighed when Abbey clung tighter to Judge. "Troll, we have to go home and get ready to go to Grammy's for supper."

Belinda cleared her throat and tilted her head at Judge. "Murph sooner is better than later if ya know what I mean."

She thumbed her chest. "And have mama kill me?" And then she grinned evilly. "Come to think of it, everyone will be there and you deserve a lot of pain Bloodstone so you're coming to supper tonight." She turned and walked away, she was halfway to the door when Judge yelled.

"But they'll kill me!"

"If you're lucky."

She looked down at the Troll. "What about the troll?"

"You know where she lives, bring her back for supper at seven and don't be late."

"Have any Kevlar?" Belinda asked and chuckled at the terrified expression on her friends face. "Come on it won't be that bad, the worst is over with and she didn't shoot you."

Judge mumbled. "That's gotta count for something right?"

"Not really," Belinda gave her a brilliant smile. "She would have to do a Hell of a lot of paperwork and it wouldn't look good for the Sheriff to shoot the new Honorable Judge JT

Bloodstone the fifth."

"Sheriff...that badge and uniform was real?" She groaned at Belinda's shit eating grin.

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Judge sat in the grass behind her old falling down cabin; she had about a half hour before she had to face the death squad. But until then, she enjoyed the warm sun and the laughter of the troll as she chased after Woobie and vice versa. If anyone would have told her that she would be doing exactly this, she would have had them locked up in an institution. With the short time that she had spent with the toddler, she learned all kinds of slang and pick-up lines. That was one of the reasons for them being out in the middle of nowhere, it was safer for both of them. If she had no idea whom the Troll was related to before, the bad pick-up lines would have clued her in quickly. She looked at her watch and then gave out a loud whistle, she didn't want to be late to mama's and actually she didn't want to go period.

"Come on Troll time to head out." She picked up both the toddler and Woobie and headed back to her truck. "What's mama cooking tonight?"

"Fat ass food."

"I should have known," she climbed up into the truck and put Woobie on the couch. "Ya know if I get caught driving around with you not in a car seat, I'm in big trouble?"

"Escapes don't matter." She bounced in Judge's arms and pointed to the bottle of Mountain Dew on the table. "Wants some."

"Why not, it's not like it's gonna hurt you any and it's sorta colorless."

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Mama looked over at Murphy and waved a fist full of tennis ball at her. "And who is this baby setter that has the Troll?"

"Someone that deserves torture, lots of torture" she put the bowl of mashed potatoes on the table and tried to grin at the thought of what Judge had gone through for the last few hours. "And the Troll was all hyped up on chocolate and Mountain Dew before the baby setter got her."

"I wouldn't wish that on my worst enemy, that one on just chocolate just about kills me." She saw an evil glint in her kid's eyes and wondered what exactly she was up to. "You had better not

tell me that you left the Troll with that gold digging stalker."

"Ohhhh Hell no, that freak of nature better stay clear of me and the Troll." She told mama what Tammy said about Abbey and thought that mama was gonna go through the roof.

"I told you about her, you better change the locks and get a restraining order on her."

"I have better plans for her and believe me she's gonna wish she had stayed clear of me." She heard a god awful noise come from the front of the house and looked at mama. "Sounds like a semi truck out there, I sure hope the idiots didn't buy a semi." Two minutes later they heard the Troll come into the house.

"FEEDS ME!" She yelled as she came running through the house and stopped to crawl on mama's lap. "Hungry Grammy feeds me."

"Where's your baby setter?" Mama asked. Before she could say another word, Woobie came charging into the kitchen and barked at her. "Your baby setter is a dog?"

"Uhhmm...no that would be me." Judge said from the doorway and ducked as a tennis ball came her way; she wasn't quick enough for the next one and yelped when it smacked her in her forehead. She was ducking and dodging badly until mama ran out of tennis balls. She knew that later she would have bruises but knew that she deserved each one. "Hi mama," She stepped closer and dropped to her knees. "I'm really sorry about Carla; I would have been here sooner if I had known." She squeezed mama's hand before struggling back up to her feet.

She nodded her head and accepted the condolences. "Now, if I could get up from this damn wheelchair, I'd knock the living shit outta you!" She waved a fist at Judge. "It almost killed me telling my baby that you were dead, almost killed her." She leaned forward and held blue eyes with hers. "Don't you ever do that again; I'm too damn old to go through that again." She hugged her granddaughter to her chest and placed a kiss on her messy curls. "I can't believe that Murphy let you live and then saddled you with the Troll?"

"You know me, I'm not about to pass up a chance to get a free baby setter, besides no one else will watch her." She placed the roaster on the stove top and turned to take in Judge. "You realize that your shirt is covered in Troll spit right?" She was waiting for her to flip out and go into convulsions.

"Not to mention chocolate and Mountain Dew, I now know why she's called the spittin Troll." She jumped when two loud bangs erupted behind her; she turned and saw two sets of boots sticking into the kitchen doorway. "I think Smotcher and Stewie are home."

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Judge felt uneasy under the stares she was receiving from Stewie and Smootcher, she had undergone the third degree from the time the idiots had woken. It was during this time that she found out that they had driven down to her accident scene and confirmed that she had been killed. She figured in her head where she was at the time that they had been down there and realized that she had been at the most a few hundred feet from them. If she had been conscious at the time and near the scene, then all would have been good. Then she thought of all she had gone through and how much better off she was because of it and knew that she wouldn't change a thing. With the exception of maybe calling Murphy to let her know she was indeed alive and not so well.

"So no matter what we throw or spray on you, you ain't gonna flip out?" Stewie asked as she bounced a raw egg from hand to hand.

"Nope, sorry about your luck but I'm cured." Judge grinned and pointed to her once clean white t-shirt. "I had to change the other one because it was soaking wet, this one suffered minutes later. And I heard that you two are to thank for her spitting." She shot them both narrowed looks. "And some of the nasty pick-up lines, songs and horrible dancing, Smootcher."

"Hey don't blame me for everything, her uncle's help ya know." She pointed to Stewie. "She does most of it!"

She was about to say her goodbyes when she heard the thunder of little feet coming down the stairs and then Murphy yelling.

"Abigail Daniela Whistler you are gonna get it!"

"WANTS TWO!" She yelled back right before she crawled over the back of the couch and into Judge's lap.

"Where's your clothes?" Judge asked and snorted when the Troll raised her hands and shrugged her shoulders.

"I swear you're gonna be the death of me little girl." Murphy waved a pair of footed PJ's and Pull-up at her and then wiggled a finger. "Come here so I can get you dressed."

"Nopes...bare ass nekkid."

"That's just lovely," Murphy shook her head and looked to her sisters. "Which one of you said that?" She sighed when they looked at each other and then back to her before shaking their heads. "Mama!" She yelled and dropped into a chair defeated.

"Here gimme her stuff," Judge said and held out a hand. "Time to get dressed little girl, can't have you running around nekkid." She gave her a narrowed look and waved the PJ's at her.

"Kay but don't like it."

Mama watched from the kitchen doorway and knew that everything would work out alright. Judge surprised her though; she would have never thought that the woman would take to her granddaughter like she had. From the expressions on her kid's faces, they thought the same thing. She was even more surprised when the Troll kissed her cheek, crawled off her lap, gave everyone else kisses and then went over to Murphy and took her hand.

"Aunchmama time for bed." She tugged on her hand until she got up. "Bed bugs bites me!" She yelled on her way upstairs.

Judge waited until they were gone before she said anything. "Has she had any problems since her mom passed?"

"Nightmares," mama said as she came into the living room. "They're becoming less often but it still worries me." She moved right up to trap Judge on the couch and gave her an intimidating glare. "What are your intentions with my kid and granddaughter?"

"Excuse me?" Judge asked and raised her eyebrow.

"Ya know what I mean, ya gonna date her and watch after the Troll or what?"

"I guess that's up to Murphy," she ran a hand down her face and looked at everyone. "What?"

"Answers that question." Stewie said and then got up from the couch. "Come on Smootch, we got butter pecan ice cream hidden somewhere."

"So you are interested in her other than as a friend?"

"Always have been but I had so many problems that I couldn't do anything until I was happy with myself. Now I'm basically problem free unless you count my missing brain."

"Well ya got a new problem," Murphy said as she crawled over the back of the couch and sat in the corner to face Judge. "My kid, it seems that you have become her hero."

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Judge stood on the sidewalk with Murphy; she was at a loss of words and didn't know what to say. She wanted more than a friendship with the small sheriff but didn't know how to ask or if she still stood a chance. Before she could say a word, Murphy stepped towards her Semi and cussed a blue streak.

"I wasn't wrong the other day," she waved a hand at the huge truck and turned to see a confused Judge. "You were in town the other day and I told the idiots that I knew the driver of this truck,

they said I was more or less nuts and too damn short to see into the cab...yadayadayada. I was and am right; question is why do you have such a big ass truck?"

"I got it really cheap?"

"Right, liar." She went around to the driver's side and crawled up into the cab, when she saw what it looked like, she let out a yell that brought a grin to Judge's face.

"Guess she approves?" She crawled up into her truck and went back to find Murphy lying on her bed. "So how do you like my house?"

"It's sweet!" She rolled over onto her side and took in the room. "So do you live in this or are you staying somewhere, ya know since you're kinda homeless?"

"I live in it for the time being, it's cheap and I can park it just about anywhere."

"You can stay at your house if you want, I'm only there a few times a week, ya know to escape and have some peace and quiet?"

Judge thought for a second and shook her head. "Nah I'm ok, it's comfortable and I have everything I need here."

Murphy tossed her a key and grinned. "In case you change your mind and I never got rid of your clothes, they're still in the closet. Actually your house is just as you left it, with the exception of the refrigerator and freezer having food in them."

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Murphy sat on the porch after Judge left; she swung back and forth on the swing and smiled when she heard mama cuss. "Damn door never wants me to let me get out." She kicked the door with her remaining leg and sped through before it would close. "So whatcha gonna do about Judge, gonna date her?"

"Me date that fruitcake?" She leaned back in the swing and snorted. "Hell ya I would, even though she hurt me." she looked to mama and looked carefully into her dark eyes. "She's different isn't she, I mean more than the OCD thing being gone; she's...I don't know." She shrugged her shoulders.

"Older, rougher, dangerous as Hell, a real Judge and Abbey likes her, what more could ya ask for Murphy?"

"Not a thing, she's perfect...but will she go out with a lowly county sheriff?"

"You don't have to worry about that, you ask and she'll be there." Mama grinned and fought with the door to get back into the house. Murphy went back to swinging and thinking of Judge, she grinned when she thought of her with a stained t-shirt, dirty Levis and how in the past she would have been unconscious from just the thought of dirt touching her.

"You have no idea how to ask her out Murph, you're a total moron when it comes to dating, look what happened after you took Tamara to lunch." She shivered at the thought of Tamara sneaking around and spying on her.

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Judge parked her rig in the county employee parking lot and made sure that she wasn't blocking anyone in, that was the last thing she needed, a parking ticket. Walking through the alleyway, she came up alongside the Tax office and turned right to head down towards the courthouse. She looked around her and saw all the different stores and restaurants and noticed that where one of the old time restaurants had been was a Latino store. She stopped about twenty feet away and looked at all the people standing on the sidewalk in front of the place. Anyone coming in either direction had to walk in the street to get around them and put up with catcalls, begging for money and insults when ignored. Seeing what was happening, she walked towards them and refused to walk in the street. She tried to walk between the men and found herself pushed against the wall of the store and hands grabbing at her breasts and ass. A low rumbling growl came to her throat, she grabbed one of the hands, slapped her other hand against the outside of the elbow and dropped the Latino to his knees. She kept applying pressure until he was on his stomach and screaming out from pain.

"How's it feel asshole and don't give me that no hablo English shit," she pressed further and knew she was close to breaking his elbow. "You made a grave mistake and you're going to pay for it." She looked to the other men and saw genuine fear in their eyes. "You are coming with me or I break your arm in about six places." She grabbed the back of his shirt and yanked him to his feet, before he could even think about running; she yanked his arm up behind his back until he cried out in pain. "Anyone think of doing anything stupid and I'll make sure your buddy here pays dearly!" She marched him right across the street and down the sidewalk to the Sheriffs department. She used his forehead on the door, forced it to open and grinned from his cussing her out in Spanish. "I need some help here!" She yelled and saw a deputy coming up to the window. "I want this asshole booked for sexual assault, loitering, and unlawful obstruction of a sidewalk, pan handling and assault on a public official."

"Ma'am it's very dangerous to take the law into your own hands, you could have become a victim. All you had to do was call us and we would have come to assist you."

"This isn't a citizen's arrest," she slammed the guys face into the counter, reached for her badge and held it up to the deputy. "I'm Judge J.T. Bloodstone and if you don't do it I'll get Murphy to, take your pick." After the deputy took the guy into the back, she shook out her hand and then

flexed her bad knee. She would talk to Murphy about the problem across the street, there was no way in Hell Charles Town was going to turn into another Leesburg, Manassas or Winchester Virginia. Those cities had serious problems with the Latinos scaring people from entering businesses by standing in front of the store fronts, loitering in the Malls and harassing people and running shop lifting rings in the same areas. The Malls hired off duty police officers as extra security and installed more surveillance cameras to help with the thefts. There was no way she was going to let them move into her city and take over even if it meant her patrolling the streets.

At the sound of Stewie's voice, she looked around the glass partition and caught her attention. "Hey Stewie I need to see Murph."

"Ten dollar cheap!" She held out her hand and jumped when Judge tried to smack her hand. "Ok I'll let ya see her for free." She opened the door next to the glass partition and grinned evilly when Tamara coming through the front door with a tray full of coffee. A vengeful idea came to her; she would pay anything for it to take fruit. Even if it meant begging on her hands and knees, she would see if Judge would do it. "Would ya do me a huge favor, go make her day, go in there and give her a big hello kiss." She whispered so that big ears couldn't hear her. "Please, it would really make her really bad day better not to mention my life."

"You want her to kill me don't you?" She looked down at her with narrowed eyes.

"No, I'm serious here, she's had a really bad day and I'm afraid she may explode and kill us all." She watched as Tamara carried the coffee through the door, she quickly grabbed Judge by her hand. "Come on Judge; please do this, besides I know ya want to." She hurried them around the stalker and towards Murphy's office; she knew that she just had seconds to ruin someone's day. "Go get her Judge Dread, knock her on her ass." She shoved her forward and prayed that she did as she asked.

Judge took in the exhausted profile of the small Sheriff and knew that Stewie wasn't lying; Murphy looked like she was ready to run screaming from her office. What she wanted to do was take her for a ride in her truck, park out in the middle of one of her fields and just sit in the tall grass and do nothing but relax. Even though she wanted to do something very intimate, she was still picturing her lying across her bed smiling up at her. She wanted more, she wanted her but she didn't want to rush anything. She moved slowly into the office, stopped behind her, leaned down and gently wrapped her arms around her. "Bad day Murph?" She whispered in her ear.

"Ohh yeah," she said in a low voice and looked over her shoulder into clear blue eyes. "Today really sucks," She caught site of her stalker coming towards her office. "And it just got worse." She grumbled.

Judge followed her eyes and caught site of the very young woman out in the main office area. The look the woman cast her was anything but friendly, down right hostile and she had no idea why. "Then I'll do my best to make it better." She leaned forward and kissed the side of Murphy's neck, at her moan; she moved up to her ear and whispered. "Kiss it and make it better?" Murphy turned her head, looked into deep pools of blue and moaned again. She then wrapped an arm around Judge's neck and brought their lips together softly. When she heard



Tamara clearing her throat, she deepened the kiss and heard nothing else except for bells and whistles in her ears. What she had started, Judge had defiantly taken control of.

Judge moaned when a small hand ran through her hair at the nape of her neck, down across her chest and stopped to cup her breast. Everything else going on around them fell to the wayside.

Tamara was ready to throw the tray of coffee on both the tall stranger and Murphy; it should be her kissing the sheriff not this woman. She growled and started to move forward when she got bounced into the doorjamb and felt the tray of coffee smacked from her hands. There was nothing she could do except scream and try to get out of the way of all the hot liquid. She screamed louder when she saw what had caused her to be covered in coffee.

"You fucking little freaky brat...I'll kill you!" She jumped forward and was ready to grab the troll when furious ice blue eyes froze her where she stood. At the sound of a deep growl and showing of white teeth, she stepped back and held up a hand. "Murphy will you look at what that brat did to me!"

"If you are smart, you will get out of my sight." Judge growled and stepped closer to her while swinging the troll up into her arms as she did.

"Don't likes her." Abbey whispered in Judge's ear. "Hates me."

"I see that," she pressed a kiss to Abbey's temple and moved closer to Tamara. "Why are you still here?"

"We will talk later Murphy; you can't do this to me!" She yelled on her way out of Murphy's office.

Judge raised an eyebrow at a smirking Stewie and turned to see the same expression on Murphy. "I've been used and abused haven't I?"

"I wouldn't say that," Murphy moved into her personal space, wrapped her arm around her neck and pulled her head down. "Thank you." She softly pressed their lips together and pulled back to look into her eyes. "Have time for lunch badass?"

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Tamara cussed, threw things, stomped around the break room of the coffee house and then slammed into the women's bathroom. She had stomped all the way back to the coffee house screaming out obscenities about Murphy and the tall dark woman who had been kissing her. There was no way in Hell she was going to let this woman take Murphy from her; it would torpedo all her plans for the future. "She isn't going to get rid of me...I'll kill that tall bitch if I have to!" She screamed at the tops of her lungs and kicked the hand dryer right off the wall. Sparks shot out from the electrical wires and then black smoke filled the small bathroom. She

stumbled out still cussing and ignored all the strange looks from employees and patrons. "She's MINE!" She screamed and ran from the building. "I'll get her back no matter what I have to do!" She ran all the way down the sidewalk and stopped briefly to look into each window, she had seen the three of them leave and wanted to see what they were up to.

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Judge sat across from Murphy and watched her from behind half lidded eyes; this was something that she never dreamed of seeing. Murphy was fixing Abbey's food so that she could eat it easier; Abbey was not helping her in the least.

"Aunchmama starves me!" She tried to grab some of her food and found her small hand held by even white teeth. "Bites me!" She looked with pleading eyes to Judge. "Helps?"

"Not a chance little girl, Aunchmama will get me to." She grinned when green eyes looked up from the plate to hold her stare.

"Ok Troll now you can eat and don't you dare stuff your mouth like your aunt's do, it's gross." She pointed a finger at her the second she saw a small hand reach for the mashed potatoes. "Spoon Troll or else."

"So tell me, who was that teenager in the office, a girlfriend?"

"Hell no, she's my stalker, I made the mistake of being nice to her and she's been chasing after me ever since."

"And you've told her to get lost and she thinks you're playing hard to get?"

"I even threatened her with a restraining order," she thanked the server for her plate of food. "She even broke into my...your house and swore that the door was unlocked, I know damn well that I had locked up the house. I threw her out and told her to stay the Hell away from us, which lasted until today."

Judge leaned over her plate and held Murphy's eyes with her own. "I'm surprised that she's still alive, I'd expect Stewie and Smotcher to toss her carcass into the Kearneysville quarry."

"Ya well, they've changed and I begged them to not cause me anymore paper work than I already have." She shrugged her shoulders and looked down at her plate. "We've all changed in some ways."

"That's true, but something's will never change." She took her hand and gave it a small squeeze. "What we did in your office...I ahhh...hope I...I feel like I forced you and I didn't want it to be that way."

"You didn't and I wanted to," she took her hands in hers and ignored a snickering Troll. "I want a real relationship, no games or anything...I want that with you. I've always wanted that with you but I was." She shrugged her shoulders and sighed. "You know how ignorant I acted, so can we try again?" She held her breath and waited.

Judge sat there watching Murphy turn a few colors before she said anything. "Ok, whatcha doing for supper?" She smiled at the rush of breath that came from Murphy. "I couldn't resist making you wait and I'll tell you before Stewie blabs and throws me into boiling oil, she asked me to kiss you." She waved a hand at her to stop her from thinking anything. "As soon as I saw you, I wanted to...do more than what we did do." She dropped her voice to a low rumble. "Actually I've wanted to do a lot of things with you since the other day when we were in my truck," She raised her eyebrow and gave Murphy a look that had the small Sheriff breathing heavy. "My beds a virgin." She whispered so that the troll couldn't hear her and thought Murphy was gonna fall out of her chair.

"Really and what do you plan on doing about that problem?" She smacked her forehead and groaned. "You know that I'm going to be thinking about that the rest of the day, don't you?"

"Ohh I hope so."

They finished their lunch and left the restaurant with the Troll dangling between their hands, as they came upon the area where all the Latino's were crowding the sidewalk, Judge pointed at them. "Can you do something about that, I hauled one of them in for grabbing my tit but they need to go."

"Ohh I can get rid of every single one of them in less than an hour." She grinned evilly, grabbed her cell phone from her hip and made a call. "The boys will be here in about five minutes and in a few hours the Whistler bank account will grow. I got us a contract with Homeland security; you would not believe how profitable it is."

"So what exactly aren't the Whistler's into these days?"

"Titty bars, we thought that might look bad; ya know ruin our pristine reputations."

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Murphy couldn't concentrate to save her life; all she could think about was the kiss she had shared with Judge and the statement she had made about the bed in her truck. Pictures flashed through her mind that caused her to get more than a bit excited. She looked at her watch and grumbled about how time was her enemy that day. Giving up, she tossed all her paperwork into her in box and pushed away from her desk. She knew that she had another hour before her shift was done but she could go patrol town and then drive home afterward. Maybe she could find a

distraction that would cool her jets for a while, at least until she could get home. Her thoughts wandered but always ended at a half naked Judge, she grinned and then groaned when the Troll came charging into the picture.

"Now I know what my siblings are talking about, there's no 'alone time' when you're a parent." She smacked her forehead. "I don't know if I have any 'alone time' with Judge, geez we haven't even done anything but kiss. I can always beg and plead the idiots to take the Troll for a night." She slapped the roof of her cruiser and gave out a loud laugh. "I'll end up with the three of them sitting at the end of the bed taking notes, eating popcorn and critiquing us on our inability to bend into pretzels. I really need some mental help, wonder if Ping Pong knows anyone?"

She got into her cruiser, buckled the seat belt and then pulled out of the parking lot. She hated this car and wished that they had something else for her to drive; she knew that as soon as it snowed, she was screwed. Mentally flipping a coin, she turned right onto Rt. 9 and headed towards the mountain. She had seen in the paper where there was more river front property for sale, she wondered if anyone had put a bid on it yet. "Let's take a look and see if its river front property or swamp land." She had looked at some other supposed river front property and found herself shin deep in muck, she was nowhere near the river when this happened and cursed her realtor. She had finally found the river and someone else's land. After checking the land plots at the courthouse, she found that the property ended two miles from any body of water except for the swamp she had found. "Never trust some asshole from Washington D.C, hope he liked his property tax bill and all the delinquent fees added on."

She slowed the cruiser and made a right hand turn down the gravel road where the land was advertised, the first thing she noticed was that someone had started to landscape the land. Bobtails, bulldozers, dump trucks and other equipment sat near the road with for sale signs on them. She knew right away that the person was bailing because of the house and land foreclosures. "Good, another asshole out of the area." She stopped down near where the river ran across the property and saw a brand new wooden dock and some 400 feet back a small barn. "Sweet, a perfect fishing spot." She pulled out her cell phone called her realtor and told her to put a bid on the property for her. On her way back out, she looked to the other side of the river and saw an old run down house with newer ones off in the distance. This was one of the properties that they had lost in their bidding war with the mysterious company. They had yet to find out anything about the company or who owned it, she just hoped that they failed like all the others.

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Judge pulled out of the Wal-Mart parking lot and stopped at the red light, off to the side standing in the grass, she saw a man in his 30's holding a sign that said 'Please help I'm homeless will work for food.' She wondered if he really was that bad off or another rich asshole panhandler getting richer off the kindness of others. Grabbing her cell phone, she dialed Murphy's number and waited for her to answer.

"*Sheriff Whistler.*"

"Hey it's me, know anything about a homeless guy by 7-11?"

"*Ya mean besides the fact that he's homeless and works for food?*" She chuckled at the growl coming from Judge. "*He's for real if that's what ya wanna know; he's a victim of downsizing. Worked for some brick laying company in Winchester and got laid off when they lost contracts to some other company.*" She thought of the illegal alien grabbing Judge and felt anger raising its head. "*Has he done something, grabbed your ass or anything else that I would shoot him for?*"

"Nope," She laughed. "I wanted to know if he was really homeless, I may have some work for him and I didn't wanna be paying some poser."

"*Ahhh I see, anything I can help ya with?*" Her mind was dropping quickly into the gutter.

"Nope, I think he can handle the job I have, but I can think of some other things you can help me with, are ya free tomorrow night?"

Murphy prayed that they were thinking the same thing. "*For you I'm free every night, what ya got in mind?*"

"I was thinking of some steaks on the grill, baked potatoes, corn and some beers down by the river? Maybe teach the Troll how to fish or let her play with Woobie; ya know to wear both of them out?"

Murphy felt her libido drop off; she was hoping that they were going to have a romantic night alone. Then she felt bad because she was thinking of only herself and not Abbey. "*Sure that sounds good, you don't mind having the Troll around?*"

"Of course not, you know my family history; plus I have to pass the kid test to date the mom right?"

Murphy busted out laughing and wiped tears from her eyes. "*This is one conversation that I never dreamed of us having, what time and where?*"

"There's some property on Rt. 9 towards the mountain, it's called Falcon Ridge, there's a road that goes off to the left that runs along the river, that's where I'll be all day. I got lucky at work; my docket is empty for some strange reason."

"*I think your cases took deals to stay out of your courtroom, seems they're scared shitless of you.*" She had seen the cell that Judge had set up and would plead guilty to anything to not go in there or to get out as quickly as possible. She could only take a few minutes of Alvin and the Chipmunks singing Funky town before she covered her ears and cringed, being stuck in there for hours would kill her. What made that worse, were the lilac colored walls with yellow vertical striping and the strobe lights covering the ceiling. "*Your cell is...beyond words, it's terrifying!*"

"Then I've accomplished my goal, so how about supper tonight? I can cook or we can go out somewhere, it's your choice?"

*"Two nights in a row, are we making up for lost time here Judge Dread?"*

"Yep, a lot of lost time and not just the time I was gone."

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Murphy snuck into the house, tripped over boots at the door and ended up falling into a wall and knocking the phone off the small phone table. She cursed under her breath as she put the phone back on the table.

"Can you make anymore noise?" Mama asked and flipped on the lights in the living room. "You're how old and you're trying to sneak into the house at," she glanced at the wall clock. "For Christ sakes Murphy, it's only eleven o'clock."

"I know this; I was trying not to wake up the Troll." She straightened from her crouch and knew her face was a brilliant red.

"Try again," mama crossed her arms over her chest and sat staring up at her kid from her wheel chair. "You suck at lying, so how's Judge?"

"She's ok," she planted her hands on her hips and tilted her head to the side. "How do you know I was with her, I could have been at the office or with someone completely different?"

"Please, you haven't gone anywhere in a long time and now that Judge is back from the dead, you're sneaking in before midnight. Besides, I got a phone call from one of the family spies who said you and Judge Dread were at Mountain View. Sharing food and desert," she shook her head. "Sure proves she's not an OCD victim anymore, so did ya do anything else that's more interesting?"

"What...mama I can't believe you asked me that, I gotta get you away from the idiots, their perversions are contagious!" She pushed mama back into the kitchen and then got herself a can of Mountain Dew from the refrigerator. "And no, we didn't do anything more interesting; we had supper and talked, period. We're both too old to be screwing around in the backseat of a car, besides if we got caught that would really look bad."

Mama grinned and busted up laughing, it was good to see a little bit of the old Murphy coming through. "So you were thinking about it?"

The wiggling of eyebrows and smirk was all that was needed. "Of course I was, I can't think of a time that I haven't thought about Judge in that way; I'd have to be completely insane not to think

of her in a sexual way." She shook her head and groaned. "I've turned into one of my brothers or worse the idiots!"

"Nah, you've just turned back into Murphy, enjoy life Murph it's shorter than you think." She wheeled herself from the kitchen knowing that she left her kid to think some heavy thoughts. She knew that she had taken on a lot of responsibility with becoming sheriff and then all that was thrown onto her with the death of her sister but she was becoming stronger because of it all. Judge coming back from the grave was just what she needed and mama would do whatever she could to get them together. She went into her room, checked to make sure that there were no huge ears listening and picked up her cell phone. There was a certain Judge down south that she knew was chomping at the bit, Claudia had called earlier but mama had no news for her. Now she did and she couldn't wait to tell her and of her future matchmaking plans.

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Judge stood on the sidewalk outside of the sheriff's department and decided to go get a cup of coffee first. Limping down the sidewalk, she stopped outside of the coffee house and looked through the window. Once before she had stopped and found the place packed with the holier than though assholes from out of state. Nothing pissed her off quicker than people calling her an ignorant hillbilly when she was in her own state or giving her a disgusted look because she wasn't dressed to the nines. She liked her new Dickey work pants and blue pocket t-shirt, she had even broke down and bought a new pair of work boots. Even Woobie got a new t-shirt to wear while they were working around her housing development. She pushed the door open and walked to the long counter devoid of anyone; she looked around and was ready to tap on the counter with her cane when Murphy's stalker came from the back. She paid little attention to her and went about scanning the board behind the counter for regular coffee.

She just didn't get it, why did anyone need so many types and flavors of coffee and who in their right mind would pay six bucks for a 12oz cup of frap crap? "I just want two large regular coffees."

Tamara stood looking up at the tall woman before her, she had to admit that she was attractive but there was just something about her that she didn't like. Then it came to her, she growled, called Judge a fucking bitch and then stormed into the back leaving Judge to stand with her mouth hanging open.

"Geez maybe I should have ordered two of those mocha frap what ever the hell the rest is." She was ready to walk out when a young man came out to the counter. "If I ask for two large coffees you wont' call me any names and run away will you?"

"I'm really sorry, I have no idea what's gotten into her all of a sudden." He handed her two large cups and pointed to the decanters on a side board. "It's on the house and I'm really sorry about Tamara."

"Tamara is it; well she needs to learn that customers are her paycheck." She filled her pockets with creamers and sugar and left the coffee shop to go back over to the sheriff's department, she would let Murphy know about her stalker. "Murph really needs to get a restraining order against her, that kid is a fruitcake." She went into the sheriff's department main lobby area, nodded her head at Murphy's brother and pointed to her office. "Is she back there?"

"Yep are ya sure ya wanna go back there, she's having one of those days?"

"Aren't we all," she went through the door and stopped beside him. "If you hear moaning and screaming don't come running."

He blinked and looked up at her. "Huh?"

"Nothing just fucking with your head, I can see it worked." She went towards Murphy's office and stopped to watch from the doorway.

"I can't believe you did this while I was on the phone," Murphy grunted and let out a string of mumbled cuss words from where she was on her hands and knees beneath her desk. "Ok, where's the wire for the printer?"

"EBay." Abbey said from where she was chained to a steel ring attached to the wall.

"I'm gonna have a long talk with a certain granny," she dropped her head in defeat. "How am I supposed to print stuff with no wire to my printer?"

"How about the one that's hanging out of the Trolls back pocket?" Judge said and then held back her laugh when Murphy jumped and banged her head on the underside of her desk.

"Ohhhh someone is gonna get it!" She scrambled out from under her desk and crawled over to the Troll. "You've had it all this time and you let me search the whole office for it?"

"No EBay?" She asked and tried to hide the wire from her.

"Nope, no EBay, now gimme that wire." She held out her hand and then looked to Judge with pleading eyes. "Want her, two dollars and she's yours?"

"Two bucks...DEAL!" Judge handed her a coffee and then looked to a wide eyed Troll. "And look at that you're already trained to walk on a chain, makes my job easier." She hid her grin when blue eyes looked to Murphy. "I came to see if we're still on for today, you know steaks and such?"

"Yep, as soon as I can get out of this place I'll be there." She got up from the floor and dropped into her chair, before she could do anything, she was on her back looking up at the ceiling.

"Abigail Daniela Whistler what am I gonna do with you?"



"Gimme two?"

Judge covered her mouth to keep from laughing and looked to Murphy. "Tell ya what; I'll take her with me so you can get your work done."

"Are you sure, she may take your truck apart while your not looking or looking, doesn't seem to matter with her." She got up from the floor and groaned painfully. "Not real sure if I'll survive to see her turn eighteen."

"Ohhhh you'll be around to see that and more, us evil people are hard to kill off, I'm living proof." She unhooked the Trolls chain and chuckled. "I don't even put Woobie on a leash."

"Believe me when I say my life would be worse without her chained." She gave the Troll a hug and kissed her forehead. "Don't you cause any problems for Judge or..."

"Gonna gets it." The Troll mumbled and held her arms up to Judge. "Up."

"You want me to bring anything; I can stop at the store on my way there?"

"Nope we should be good unless the Troll won't eat what we're having."

"No chance in that, she eats anything." She pulled a blue backpack out from the filing cabinet drawer and handed it to her. "Everything she needs is in that bag, change of clothes, shoes, pull-ups and a giant size bottle of Tylenol for you. If you can't open it, hand it to her, she can open Fort Knox if given the right tools." She snapped her fingers and waved a hand at them. "I almost forgot there's a spare car seat out front, with new modifications." She cast the Troll a narrowed look.

"Yeah I hear that she escapes from them." Judge said and then smirked at the thought of what Murphy or her sisters had done in modifications. She leaned forward and placed a soft kiss to Murphy's lips. "C-ya in a little while."

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Judge raised the bucket on the front loader and dumped the debris into the old dump truck. This was the last of one of the concrete foundations, she had over three dozen more to break up and get rid of, some of it would go into the basements that were dug, and the rest would go to a concrete company and be recycled. She rolled her head on her shoulders and then rested her chin on Abbey's head. "Ready to call it a day?"

"Play with Woobie?" She asked and tilted her head back to look at Judge.

"Yeah you can play with Woobie while I get the grill going, your Aunt...mama should be here

soon." She had no idea what to call Murphy, she felt weird referring to her as mama for the simple fact that she never dreamed of her being a mother. "So Troll, lemme ask you this, which house do you like better, the falling down one or the one over there?"

The Troll turned on her lap and gave her an intense look; she raised an eyebrow and shook her head. "Not nasty one." She pointed to the finished two story house a good ways from the old one. "That one!"

"Ok, that one will do for now, until the other one is fixed. Maybe I'll get some furniture and other stuff, like a table to eat at."

"TV needs TV for toons." She got down from her lap by way of sliding on her belly down Judge's leg. Before Judge could get down from the seat, the Troll was trying to crawl onto the running board of her truck. She had been keeping Woobie in the truck to save the sanity of the local wild life, mainly the poor chipmunks. Woobie chased the little critters until she dropped from exhaustion with the Troll dropping right behind her. It was a guaranteed way of wearing both of them out and nap time was something that Judge looked forward to. She just couldn't figure out how such little bodies had so much energy, they exhausted her by watching alone. The bad thing was that after a 30 minute nap, they were ready for more.

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Murphy slowed as she pulled into the housing development, she wondered why Judge had picked this place to have a BBQ and then she saw it as she made the left hand turn. "What in the Hell is she doing?" She pulled beside the semi and shook her head at the orange extension cord running from one of the houses to her truck. "I wonder who she's smooching electricity from," She looked around the area, saw all the big equipment sitting around and recognized the bobcat from the property next door. Two and two came together and became Judge's demise, in a split second Murphy's temper flared to life. "Ohhhh Hell no!" She got out of her cruiser and headed for the truck, before she could climb onto the running board, Judge called her name.

"Looking for us?"

"Who owns this land?" She asked while stomping towards her and the Troll.

"What no hello, I missed you or when do we eat?" She threw her hands up to protect her head and grunted from the slap to her stomach.

"You didn't answer me, who owns this land?"

"Woobie does and lemme tell ya she's a slum lord." She ducked her head and tried to protect herself. "Hey I'm a delicate person...help Troll!"

"She ain't gonna help you," she said as she slapped at Judge's shoulder and stopped when the dust flying off of her clothes started to choke her. "I've been in a damn bidding war with you!"

Judge straightened up, saw the look in Murphy's eyes and grinned. "Have to admit that it's kinda funny, ya know that we were bidding against each other." She stopped talking, turned and listened for Woobie and the Troll. "Where did the kids go?" She looked around and caught sight of Woobie chasing a squirrel up a tree and the Troll running behind her. "I swear those two can move faster than greased lightning; the poor critters around here have been running from them most of the day." She whistled and watched as Woobie and the Troll came running back towards them.

Murphy took one look at her niece and wondered if there was any dirt left on the ground. She swore that a dirt cloud floated out behind her as she ran forward. "Did you two roll around on the ground or what?"

"Destruction is dirty work; we moved and broke up a lot of concrete today." She cocked a dark eyebrow and grinned. "Bet you never thought you would ever see me like this huh?" She staggered when a small body slammed into the back of her good leg and groaned when the Troll crawled up to hang from the back of her belt. "I feel like a jungle gym." She swung the Troll around into her arms and then motioned to where the BBQ grill was set up under an old oak tree. "All we have to do is throw the steaks on, the potatoes are done and just need warmed up."

"You are still in deep shit here Bloodstone, I wanna know what you're gonna do with all the land you bought?"

"Easy, tear down everything and have a hell of a time doing it." She nodded towards her truck. "The steaks are in the fridge, we're gonna get some of this dirt of us, aren't we Troll?"

"I think you two need a power washer to get all the dirt you two are covered in, not to mention Woobie." She followed them into the truck and snorted at all the coloring books and crayons covering the small kitchen table. "She's had you busy and you've only had her one day."

"Uhhmm...actually I was the one coloring while her and Woobie took their naps, legal briefs give me a headache not to mention they put me to sleep faster than Ambien. So I wiled away the time by coloring, I even stay inside the lines some." She hauled a wiggling Troll back to the bathroom and started to wash some of the dirt from the wiggling toddler. What the bathroom looked like afterwards was horrifying, in the past; Judge would have fallen into a coma from it. When they went back outside, they found Murphy flipping the steaks on the grill. "Well we're a little cleaner but my bathroom is a disaster area, looks like a mudslide hit it."

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After they had eaten and Abbey had managed to get more food on her than in her, they gave up

and let her run free. Both women then cleaned up the grilling area and tossed all the trash into black garbage bags and put them into one of the *Apple Valley Waste Management* dumpsters. Murphy looked around her and noticed that there were dumpsters all over the place and most of them were full. "Did you fill all these up?"

"Yep, its roofing materials, insulation, and all the crap they left laying around the place and broken glass. Seems that some kids came up here and shot out all the windows in the houses that were done, but they missed some in that house." She pointed to the one that the Troll liked. "I have plastic to staple up on it until I can get some new windows put in."

"What are you gonna do with all the building materials, ya know the wood and stuff after you start tearing the houses down?"

"I'm gonna save some of it, I want a great big barn or garage to put my truck in and enough room to keep other stuff, ya know like a tractor and another vehicle. That truck is too big to drive around all the time not to mention expensive as hell."

"Who are ya gonna get to build it and help you tear down stuff?"

"I was gonna ask that homeless guy if he wanted a job and a place to live while he worked, whatcha think?"

"I think it sounds good but one guy isn't enough, there's carpenters in the area that lost their jobs, they'd jump at the chance to earn some money."

"Do ya know any of them?" She raised a dark eyebrow.

"A couple of them yeah, I can give ya their numbers once I get home," she took a deep breath and let it out. "They're my brothers and they won't take charity from us, so this would really help them."

"Ok, tell them I'll pay them top dollar and they can start on Monday if they're interested."

"Thank you Judge, you have no idea what this will mean to them and their families, not to mention mama, she's been trying all kinds of tricks to get money into their pockets. The idiots sneak food into the house when they're out looking for work and they've been paying for the kid's school lunches."

"But they can get those free, all they have to do is go over to the board of education and do paperwork...and then everyone would know." She saw what they all were dealing with; it was Whistler pride in all its glory. "Anything else I can do?"

"Yeah, get the Troll down from that tree." She pointed to where the Troll was sitting in the V of a small tree with Woobie jumping around at the trunk.

"How in the Hell did she get up there?" She limped towards her and saw that she had a 5gal

bucket near the trunk. "If there's a will, there's a way." She mumbled and then pointed a finger at her.

"WANTS TWO!" The Troll yelled and held out her arms. "Stuck!"

"I can see that and I think it's time for a little girl to get a bath." She pulled her from the tree and carried her back to where Murphy was standing.

"Yeah its time for a dirtball to get a bath and then bedtime," She saw how wide her eyes got and grinned. "Ohhhh yeah bedtime is a wonderful thing, peace and quiet for me." She took the Troll and watched as she gave in and wrapped her arms around her neck. "So are you going to sleep in the truck or that house tonight?"

"The truck, there's no furniture and the floor is really bad for my knee and just plan bad for my whole body." She was standing so that most of her weight was on her good leg and Murphy had noticed that the longer the day went, the more she limped.

"Come home with us," she looked into her light blue eyes and saw how much pain she was in. "You can have a long hot shower and then soak in the new Jacuzzi I had put in."

"Jacuzzi?" She felt a huge grin come over her face and wiggled her eyebrows. "All kinds of soothing jets and what not?"

"All the works, I bought it off my brother and he put it in the backyard for me." She leaned in close to her and whispered. "I have a gallon of home made butter pecan ice cream for afterwards."

"I'd come over for just the ice cream." She held up a finger. "Gimme one minute to get Woobie in the truck and then I'll follow you there."

"Why not just ride with me?"

"I can't leave the truck out here, at least not until I get an alarm on it or some security lighting out here. The kids still come out here at night; I've had to chase them off a few times."

"And you still stay out here all by yourself, are ya...yeah you're nuts." She sighed and nodded her head. "Ok, you park the monster truck in the drive and I'll park on the street."

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Judge limped into her old house and held back a deep laugh; she couldn't believe that Murphy hadn't changed a single thing. She went into the kitchen and saw that there were more pots and pans but that was it. "You didn't change anything?"

"Nope," she carried the Troll towards the bathroom and nodded her head for Judge to follow. "I may need help with the mud slide she causes when water hits her."

After bathing the Troll, Judge carried her into the living room and to a small bed in the corner. "You need a bigger house."

"I know I've been looking at the ones on the property that we own and I've narrowed it down but I still haven't picked one." She pulled back the blankets for Judge and watched as she lowered the Troll down and covered her up. She placed a kiss to soft blonde curls and then moved over to the couch to sit down. "To be honest, I felt like if I left here, I'd lose a part of you, kinda stupid huh?"

Judge looked down at her hands and felt a weight drop onto her shoulders, she felt responsible for a lot of things and Murphy's pain was at the top of the list. "I'm sorry Murph, for everything, there's no way that I can say it enough to make up for all the pain I caused." She dropped down onto the couch and looked at her worn out boots.

"Will you stop already, you did what you had to, now you're back and that's all there is to it." She turned to her and watched as emotions ran across her face and was ready to smack her when she turned pale blue eyes on her. "What are you thinking?"

"About us, ya know, you, the Troll and me; what are we doing and where are we going?"

"What do you want?" She asked as she moved closer to her and took a calloused hand in hers.

"I want what everyone else wants; I want someone to share my life with, to come home to after a long day, I want the whole works." She looked into green eyes and prayed that Murphy wanted the same thing and with her. "I have a huge house and no one there to share it with..."

"Is the great Bloodstone at a loss for words?"

"I'm always at a loss for words around you..."

Murphy smiled and leaned into her side. "Is this your attempt at asking me and the Troll to move in with you?"

"Will you?" Warm moist lips connecting with her own was all the answer she needed. Before it went too far, Murphy pulled back and whispered.

"You really need a shower and we don't want a little snoop watching us do we?"

"Uhhmm...no, she might just tell us if we're doing something wrong." She gave Murphy one last kiss before she got up and headed back out to her truck for clean clothes, she got as far as the door when Murphy grabbed her by the back of her Levis.

"Where ya going?"

"I need clean clothes and they're out in my truck."

"You have clothes in the bedroom; I didn't get rid of anything." She pulled her back towards the bedroom and then left her to find what she needed. She headed out to the backyard and watched as Woobie ran around inspecting every little thing. She flipped the switch on for the Jacuzzi's heater, pulled the cover off and turned the jets on. "I knew I bought this for a better reason than to help my brother out." She thought of seeing Judge relaxing in the hot water in nothing but her boxers and a wet t-shirt. "I love wet t-shirts," she mumbled and leaned against the edge of the tub. "Especially one that clings to every single God's blessed inch of a tall sexy Judge Bloodstone." She grinned and closed her eyes trying to picture Judge that way. She almost fell over when a warm body brushed past her and sunk into the Jacuzzi. "You're naked!" She gasped and then tripped over the robe that was at her feet. "I've died and gone to heaven."

"If ya take a closer look, it's more like Hell?" Judge said and closed her eyes as she sunk deeper into the churning water. Her aching body relaxed and brought a deep groan from deep in her chest. "I've forgotten how good these things feel."

"Huh?" Murphy asked as she gazed into the water below Judge's chest.

"Glad to see you're back Murph." She stood up and waited for green eyes to trail up her body and linger on her breasts. "Seen enough, can I sit back down?" She sat back down and chuckled when Murph just stood there with her mouth agape. "You're such a dog Murph."

"Huh...dog..." She said with her eyes still searching the bubbling churning water.

"Did I fry your brain or what?" She splashed her with water and waited for her to come out of her dumb struck state. "Do me a favor, either get in here with me or go get me a beer." She snorted when Murphy ran stumbling for the back door and tripped on her way in. "The old Murphy is back." She snorted when she heard her cussing from the kitchen.

"Ok, here's the beer and I'll be right back!"

"Where ya going?"

"To get changed, I can't go in like this." She held her arms out and looked down at her uniform.

"Just get undressed here, who's gonna see you."

"Are ya nuts," she looked around at the six foot wooden fence that surrounded the yard. "You'll see me!"

"Why Murphy Whistler, I never took you as being modest." She opened one eye to look at her. "Get your damn clothes off and get in here."

"What if someone comes over..."

"The great Murphy Whistler is a chicken shit, I'm here in all my glory and I don't give a good god damn if your sisters see me."

"I care," she started to strip out of her clothes as fast as she could. "I don't want those perverts seeing you." She dropped the last of her clothes and slipped into the hot water. "Christ I need cold water not hot water."

Judge opened both eyes and trailed over the soft white flesh of Murphy's upper chest and then to where the sun darkened skin of her neck began. "You're absolutely breath taking."

"I think the hot water has fried your brain," Murphy said right before she sunk under the water to soak her head, when she came up, she saw that Judge was still looking at her. "Stop it."

Judge moved in the water so that she was right in front of her, she reached out a hand and brushed the hair from Murphy's face. "I've missed you so much." She pulled her closer and captured her lips in a soft kiss. "Have you ever made love in a Jacuzzi?" She mumbled against her lips and grinned when she sunk lower in the water. She pulled her into her body and continued to assault her senses with the touch of her fingertips and lips. When Murphy was putty in her hands, she lifted her up and sat her on the edge of the tub. "I want you." She said softly before brushing her lips across the silky skin of her inner thigh.

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A set of vengeful eyes watched the women from a hole in the fence, the anger and madness grew by the second. "You'll pay for this, you'll both pay!" She growled out and then grinned evilly when the sirens approached and all hell broke loose around the small house.

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Judge jumped at the sound of sirens and then a window breaking, she spun in the Jacuzzi at the sound of a chain saw and then heard Murphy yell as she fell backwards into the yard. Hurriedly, she climbed from the Jacuzzi and cursed from the pain shooting through her knee. She was helping Murphy up as firemen, police, EMT's and who ever else was in the general area came rushing into the backyard. "What the fuck!" She yelled and pushed Murphy behind her.

"Where's the drowning victim?" A fireman asked and looked around for the victim. "Better yet, where's the swimming pool?" He scratched his head in confusion.

"We're here for a domestic violence report." A Ranson cop said and then went slack jawed at the



sight of the two naked women.

"We got a call for a heart attack victim." The EMT's said and then saw that they were indeed needed when the Ranson cop fell over clutching his chest.

"Look at that, Judge Dread can kill just with a look." Stewie said as she climbed through the hole in the fence. "Why did you idiots cut a hole in the fence for?" She looked around for the lunatic with the chain saw and pointed a finger at him. "She's gonna kill you next!" She watched as Smootcher came from the house and just about fell over the downed cop.

"Jesus Christ almighty, what the fuck?" She looked around the yard at all the people and then saw that they were all staring at Judge and her sister. "My Gods they're bigger pervs than us!" She picked up Murphy's clothes and the robe lying by the Jacuzzi and went over to them. "Throwin a party and ya didn't invite us?"

"Well ya know how it goes; it's not a party until the town's entire emergency service departments show up and crashes it." Judge said as she pulled the robe on and turned to help Murphy get dressed.

"Who the hell called this in?" Murphy growled out as she pulled her shirt on.

"Someone called in a 911 of a drowning, fire and domestic abuse to this address." Stewie said as she came towards them holding a groggy Troll. "We were about two minutes away when it came over the radio," she pointed to her sister. "Call mama, she's got the scanner on so ya know that she knows."

"For fuck sakes," Judge grumbled so that the Troll wouldn't hear her. "Now all we need is a damn reporter to show up." She flinched at the flashing of cameras and looked around for something to throw. "Stewie get them the Hell outta here before I start killing people."

Murphy grabbed up her weapon, fired one shot in the air and yelled. "Unless you're doing CPR on that cop...get the fuck outta our yard before I start shooting to kill!" People started scattering in all directions and with in a few minutes the only ones left were the idiots and the EMT's performing life saving techniques on the cop.

"That's a first for me," Stewie wiggled an eyebrow. "I gots to see a nekkid Judge Dread and lived to take my next breath!"

Murphy smacked her in the back of the head on her way into the house. "I want the asshole that did this and I want them before the next shift starts!" She grabbed the phone and called into the office, after a few minutes of spouting out instructions; she hung up and looked at everyone in the room. "It came from a cell phone number that is now disconnected." She dropped down onto the couch next to Judge and sighed. "This just sucks."

Judge pulled her into her side and kissed her temple. "I have this bad feeling that we were set up, so who would do that?"

"Ohh nooo..." Smotcher looked to her sisters and then to Judge. "Now think, who would do this Murph?"

Murphy smacked her forehead with the palm of her hand. "Go pick that dumbass Tamara up and put her in Judge's cell."

Stewie and Smotcher turned and headed towards the back door, they both stopped and stared out into the yard. "Uhhmm...Judge you're gonna be really mad at Woobie." They stepped back and pointed to where Woobie was hooked up with the ugliest dog any of them had ever seen. He was her size, grey and looked like he had either gone through chemo therapy or had mange; one ear was missing, his teeth stuck out on the bottom and his tail curled up on his back.

"What in the Hell is that?" Murphy asked and busted out laughing when Judge slapped her hands over her eyes and fell over on the couch.

"Looks like something out of Lassie's nightmares." Smotcher snickered and pointed when they finally came unhooked and Woobie turned and chased the ugly little dog back through the hole in the fence. "Woobie's first booty call and she runs him off!"

"Can I sue the idiot that cut that hole in the fence?" Judge asked and couldn't figure out why everyone including the Troll was looking at her with arched brows. "What?"

"You tell us, you're the lawyer here?" Stewie said and grinned. "Pretty bad, Woobie got some but you two didn't!" With that she ran out the door to avoid getting her ass kicked.

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Judge rubbed Woobie with the bath towel and kept baring her teeth at her. "Rotten good for nothing little dog, you better not get pregnant by that...alien dog."

"Judge I'm really sorry about all of this," Murphy ran her hands down her face and left them over her lips; she was close to busting up with laughter at all the insanity that had happened on their quiet night.

"Do ya think they have the morning after pill for dogs?" Judge asked and let Woobie down on the floor.

"I have no idea," Murphy lost it and fell into Judge in hysterical laughter. "I'm sorry, I'm tired and all this seems so surreal." She wiped at her watering eyes and sobered. "Can we go to bed now; its one o'clock and I have to be up in a few hours?"

"Just lemme check on the Troll and the doors and I'll meet you in the bedroom." She pointed at Woobie. "Get your ass in bed now and no more ugly men."

Murphy slid between the sheets and rolled to her side so that she faced the center. She just couldn't believe all the bad luck they had that day and now she had to worry if their picture would end up on the front page of the newspaper. "Just what I need, our picture plastered on every newspapers front page." Before Judge got to the bedroom, she was sound asleep.

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The next morning, they both woke to find the Troll sitting at the foot of the bed eating cereal from the box. With every handful she ate, she threw some at them. Woobie sat beside her chewing on a rawhide bone and eating the loose fruit loop when it fell.

"Can ya handle waking up to this every morning?" Murphy asked and pulled her pillow over her head.

"I can handle anything as long as you're here with me." She rolled over and buried her face against Murphy's pillow. "Are we late for work?"

"I have no clue...I think I'm gonna be sick today."

"Toons on!" Abbey yelled and started jumping on the bed. "Turn toons on!"

"Is it Saturday?" Judge asked and prayed that it was, she had been losing days and hoped it wasn't early dementia.

"Satday toon day!" Abbey yelled and then fell on top of them. "Wakes up!" Woobie joined into the mix and did her part of jumping on heads and other sensitive body parts.

"This sucks..." Murphy mumbled and then rolled from bed. "Come on Troll; let's go get you a bowl for your fruit loops." She stumbled through the house and into the kitchen. As she reached for a bowl, she stopped, turned and ran back to the bedroom. She stopped beside where Judge was still lying and flipped back the covers. "I wasn't dreaming!" She gazed down at the expanse of bare flesh before her and felt her insides jump. "You sleep in the buff!" She reached out and ran her fingertips down the center of her back and watched the muscles flex and relax.

"If you don't stop the Troll is gonna get a lesson on the birds and the bees." She rolled over to show silvery eyes beneath arched brows. "Or maybe she can give us some lessons?"

"Ohhhh I don't wanna stop, you're all mine but I need more help than the Troll can give." She crawled on top of Judge and curled around her warm body. "I'm pathetic in bed." She buried her face against Judge's breasts and sighed happily.

"Aunchmama feeds me!" The Troll yelled beside her ear and just about deafened her. "Or else!" She smacked her with the small spoon she had in her hand. "Spittin Troll!"

Murphy jumped up and spun the Troll around before she was covered in orange juice. "You little girl has to learn to not spit in the house." She groaned at what she was leaving in the bedroom. "I'm gonna put a lock on the door, one that's like six foot off the floor and is troll proof!"

"Aunchmama wants some booty...wants some booty!"

"And I'm never gonna get any if a little girl keeps interrupting, not to mention all of Jefferson county." She finished getting the Troll her breakfast and set a bowl down for Woobie as well. "I may have to call 911 for help." She started the coffee and then dropped down into a chair across from her niece. "How would you feel about moving in with Judge?"

"Gets booty!" The Troll yelled and went back to eating her cereal.

"You may very well get it before I do, that's for damn sure." She moaned when soft warm lips caressed her neck and a smoky voice rumbled in her ear.

"What are you doing for lunch?"

"What are you offering?" She let her head fall back against Judge's chest and inhaled her spicy cologne.

"Whatever you want and it's yours."

"What I want will take longer than lunch." She whispered back.

"How about if we get a baby setter and spend the whole day doing whatever?" She nipped at her ear lobe and grinned at her intake of breath.

"Lemme call mama...you're killing me here." She moaned from the twitching between her legs and hoped that she could think clear enough to call mama. "If you don't stop, Troll is gonna see the birds and the bees live."

"Birds an bees!" The Troll yelled and then threw fruit loops to Woobie. "Gimme some booty!" She yelled and danced in her highchair. "Aunchmama wants booty!"

"No chance on keeping this a secret huh?" Judge said as she reached for the phone. "You want me to ask or do you want to?"

"I'll do it if you watch the Troll," she grabbed the phone from her hand, leaned into her body and pulled her head down for a deep toe curling kiss. "I'll be right back." She smirked when Judge just stood there and blinked at her. "I really need a cold shower; I can't believe I'm doing this." She shook her head and went into the bathroom with the phone. "I'm gonna beg my mama to watch the Troll so I can have a booty call, I've got to be insane, how did my parents do it with all of us kids around...I don't wanna think about that...ewwww!" She started the shower and sat on the edge of the bath tub; she dialed her mama's number and waited.

*"Brainless idiot here, how can I not help you?"*

"Good you're in the perfect frame of mind for what I need." Murphy said.

*"Ohh I know that tone, you want me to watch the Troll," she snorted at Murphy's groan. "So what's so important that you're calling so early and you need Moi to watch the Troll?"*

"Shopping with Judge...we need furniture for our house." She slapped a hand over her mouth when she realized what she had said.

*"So you're moving in with tall dark and sexy?"*

"Uuhhmmm...me and my big ass mouth, ok so she asked me and I said yes."

*"About damn time you did something right, bring the Troll over whenever, I'll be here all day."*

"Thanks mama, we'll be over as soon as I get out of the shower." She hung up and rubbed at the area between her eyebrows, she just knew that mama was on the phone right now spreading the news and as soon as she was done there, she'd be sending out an e-mail as well. "Judge is gonna kick my ass."

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Murphy let the Troll down inside the back door of mama's house and watched as she ran through the kitchen and into the living room, the crash and bang that came after was normal for her; it meant that she was in the toy box. Murphy waited for mama to give them the third degree and had already told Judge what she had told mama on the phone. "Hi mama," she gave her a kiss on her cheek and dropped down in a chair across from her. "So where's a good place we can get some furniture and not pay a kings ransom?"

Mama looked from Murphy to Judge and noticed the redness of her cheeks. "Alright Judge I wanna know what your plans are, and what house are you to moving into?"

"Permanent plans mama," she massaged Murphy's shoulders and smiled down at her. "And a house big enough for the three of us and then some..."

"You know the Falcon Ridge sub-division?" Murphy asked and then hitched a thumb over her shoulder. "Judge is the one that we've been in bidding wars with all this time."

"Well the Troll picked out the house up there, so that's where we're gonna live." Judge finished.

"Problem is that there's no furniture or anything and that's our mission for the day."

Mama looked between them and held back her chuckle; she was too old and wise to fall for their bullshit. "Sounds more like ya want time alone for a booty call." She grinned when they both turned bright red and started stuttering. "I was young once, back then I just slipped a little whiskey in your juice and we had all the time we needed, a whole five minutes of peace." She smiled at their expressions and waved a hand. "I was exaggerating; it was like three minutes tops before one of you kids came looking for more juice." She got up from the chair and used her walker to move about. "I'll keep the Troll for the weekend; I'm teaching her how to play tennis. And be careful, you two ain't young kids anymore, don't go throwing your backs out moving furniture." She gave them a wink and went into the living room to check on the Troll. "Abigail Daniela Whistler Bloodstone gimme back my leg!"

Judge placed a kiss on Murphy's crown and whispered in her ear. "That's an awful lot of name for a little one to remember."

"We'll have to think on that one," she pulled her down for a lingering kiss. "Let's go find some furniture, preferably a nice big bed."

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Judge and Murphy hit a few stores and arranged for most of the furniture they bought to be delivered to the house the next day; of course they had to pay extra but didn't care one way or another. What they did bring back to the house was a king sized mattress, box springs and frame in the back of Smotcher's truck. One thing that Murphy made sure of was that neither one of her sisters knew that she took the truck and refused to say where she was going. She knew that if they knew where the house was, they would be over there bothering them. Murphy just wanted one weekend or even a single evening with Judge without any interruptions. After struggling with the mattress, they decided to slide the box springs up the steps and into the master bedroom. They dropped the box springs onto the frame and left the mattress sitting on the floor.

Judge dropped to the floor and rubbed her knee, she wasn't used to doing so much walking and then climbing the stairs half a dozen times, and it was taking its toll on her knee. "Does it hurt?" Murphy asked as she sat down beside her and placed her hand over hers. "Is there anything I can do to make it feel better?"

"Nothing for my knee but how about my sore back, mama was right." She fell back on the mattress and moved so that she was in the middle of it. "It's been a long time since I've laid on a new mattress," she held out her hand and pulled Murphy up to cover her body. "So whatcha wanna do now Murph?" She rolled them over so that she was hovering over her.

"I can think of a few things but first, we do have electric and water right?"

"Yep, had that all fixed a while ago; I needed to run an extension cord out to my truck for auxiliary power." She thought for a second and pushed her self to her feet. "I'll be right back, I forgot something downstairs." She limped her way down the steps and Murphy could hear her moving around downstairs. While Judge was gone, she moved the mattress up onto the box springs, made the bed and was just taking off her shoes when she came back up to the room. "I have a radio and this little lamp for the...you made the bed..."

Her expression was one of deflation; Murphy walked over to her and ran her hands up her body to stop at her upper chest. "We're not sleeping on the floor JT," she lifted an eyebrow and grinned at Judge's surprised look. "I got an interesting e-mail from someone claiming to know a JT Bloodstone."

"That was a long time ago Murph."

"Ohhhh but I've seen some of what that person knew from so many years ago and that's what I want tonight, I want the wild child."

"The wild child may need a morphine drip in the morning." She pulled Murphy's shirt over her head and dropped it to the floor.

"Good thing my sisters a doctor then, I have her on speed dial ya know?" She unbuckled Judge's belt buckle and then undid the button and zipper on her Levis. She backed her towards the bathroom, hit the light on and stopped in the center of the room. "I have this fantasy that starts in a hot and steamy shower and I'll leave the rest to your imagination."

"Maybe you should call Ping Pong now, she may need to get a traction bed over here." Judge mumbled against her lips.

"I'll be gentle with you, I promise."

"Ohhhh the traction bed isn't for me, it's for you."

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Fifteen minutes later, a flooded bathroom floor and a slippery arrival at the new bed, had both women laughing hysterically. Neither one of them had thought of not having any towels in the house for after their shower or watery make out session as it turned out to be. That soon came to a halt when the water ran cold and then the light bulb blew in the ceiling light. Judge got up to turn the radio on and hit the button to play the CD that was in it, before she could move; she felt warm fingers trailing across her back.

"So many scars, what are they from?" She traced some of them that were still pink and then noticed more as she trailed her fingers down across her warm skin.

"That's from when I was dragged beside my car, which was not fun." She moved over to the bed and pushed Murphy back into the soft quilt. She traced the scar on Murphy's cheek and noticed smaller ones at her chin and jaw. "I'm not the only one with new scars, think we can take it easy and try not to get anymore?" She kissed her chin and then trailed her lips across her jaw to linger at her pulse point before going back for a long and deep kiss.

"I'll try if you do..." she gasped as Judge returned to her neck and her skin was bitten and then sucked into a warm mouth. "We'll start later." She arched her back when Judge trailed her lips down to linger at her breasts and swore that the room started to spin as she moved lower. "Ohhhh this is new..." She grasped the quilt tightly in her hands and closed her eyes when she felt Judge's tongue explore her center. She thought for a second and realized that she was technically a virgin in many ways.

Judge stopped what she was doing and looked up at Murphy's flushed face, she ran a hand up her body and caressed her breast. "Murph if you don't like what I'm doing I can stop."

"Don't you dare stop," she raised her head up and shot her a narrowed look. "I have a gun..." Her hips thrust up when Judge's lips closed on her clitoris, her head fell back onto the bed and all she could do was let her body do what it wanted. In minutes, her body tensed and then she heard a ringing in her ears as her world fell around her. She lay trembling in Judge's arms and swore that she had never in her life felt anything like it.

"Are you ok, I didn't hurt you did I?" Judge asked this was the first time that she had seen Murphy so quiet.

"No one has ever done that to me before," she ran her finger's across her moist lips. "Actually no one has done much of anything to me before."

Judge rose up on one arm and looked down into her warm green eyes. "What are you saying..." she saw a light blush run across her cheeks and raised a dark eyebrow over her left eye. "You mean you've never done this before and I'm your first?"

Murphy ran her fingers through her dark hair and trailed her fingers down her high cheek bones to stop at her lips. "Not exactly but yes..." she grinned at her confusion. "What I did do never included taking off my clothes, mostly foreplay...so you are kinda my first." She pulled her down for a deep kiss and only released her when she felt more of her weight on her own body. "Are you shocked?"

"A little, I mean you always acted like such a dog...key word is acted huh?" She raised an eyebrow and gave her a crooked smirk. "I remember you saying you wanted me to deflower you, I thought you were kidding but you weren't."

"Nope I was being honest and I may not know much but I'm a quick study and I've seen plenty of



porno," she ran a hand down between them and moaned when she felt the wetness between Judge's thighs. "You're so wet," she kept running her fingers between her lips and looked into silvery eyes. "And swollen."

"Keep doing that and it'll be over in seconds." She dropped her head into the mattress and arched her back upward, she moved so that she was straddling Murphy's hips and groaned when she felt two fingers sink into her center. She rolled her hips forward and thrust into Murphy's hand, seconds later, she was crying out her orgasm into the mattress and riding out the last of her tremors. She sunk onto the bed next to her and shuddered from one final wave, it had been a long time since she had been with anyone and knew that her control was lacking. It usually took more than a few strokes to get her off; she raised her head up and looked into bright green eyes. "It's been a long time for me, good thing we have a few days to practice, cuz I need a lot of it." She straddled Murphy's thigh and brought her own thigh up close to her wet nether lips. Whispering against her lips, she said. "I love you Murphy Whistler and I'm going to show how much until we both pass out." She ground against her thigh and had them in frenzy in a matter of minutes.

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The next morning had the two women moaning and groaning as they tried to walk down the stairs to the kitchen. Judge limped more than usual and Murphy was holding her lower back. They looked to each other and grinned, even though they hurt like Hell, neither of them would change anything from the day and night before. Judge rubbed her jaw as she looked around the bare kitchen and then turned to look at her lover. "Guess we eat lunch out, we forgot about getting food."

Murphy moved in front of her and wrapped her in a tight hug; she pressed her face to her breasts and sighed happily. "We could always order pizza from down the road?" She looked up when she heard Judge chuckle. "It's a thought; we wouldn't have to leave the house at all for the weekend." She reached up and pulled her down for a kiss that had her staggering backwards into the kitchen counter. For long moments they explored each other's bodies through clothes and kissed until bells rang and whistles blew. They came apart gasping for air and far from being just a little excited. "I love you with all my heart JT but I need food before we play anymore." She moved to the sink and splashed her face with cold water.

Judge moved up behind her and wrapped her arms around her waist. "See I knew we should have brought my truck, I have lots of food in it." She moaned when Murphy turned in her arms and moved a thigh between hers and pressed into her. She nipped at her nipple through her t-shirt and moaned when she found that as the only barrier. In two seconds, she had Judge's Levis undone and her hand inside them. She pressed her face into her breasts when she found the wetness coating her lover, she ran her finger's through it and grinned at Judge's hitched breath. Tangling her fingers in the thick hair at the back of her neck, she pulled her down and captured her mouth for a hungry kiss. Slipping two fingers deep inside her, she hooked them forward and pressed. She pulled back and watched as her lover's head fell back, her mouth gasped for air and she shuddered with her release. Seeing that she was close to collapsing to the floor, she backed her

into the wall and pressed into her body. "We need clothes baby." She dropped her head down onto Murphy's shoulder. "We can't go anywhere in these...mine are, well you know."

"Wet, just like mine." She whispered in her ear and then stood stock still when she heard a sound outside. "Hear that?"

"Sounds like my truck...do ya think?"

"That the idiots found us...shit I forgot about the low-jack system on the truck." She tried to straighten her clothes and laughed when Judge just gave up on hers and took off at a limping gate for the bathroom. "What's the matter JT?"

"I really need to clean up..." she yelled through the door.

Murphy licked at her still wet fingers and felt her center twitch. "And I need to do something else...screwed myself this time." She ran for the front door, locked it and then ran for the bathroom where her lover was. She opened the door stepped in and undid her Levis before Judge could say a word. "I can't think when I'm like this," she moved up to her lover, grabbed her hand and thrust it into her pants. They stumbled around the bathroom until they ended up with Murphy pressed against the wall. They fumbled with buttons and zippers until Murphy was able to get to Judge's throbbing clit. When she felt fingers bury deep inside of her, she moaned and thrust against her lover's hand. They clung to each other and thrust their hips, deep moans and then muffled cries of release came simultaneously. Judge started to laugh at the horrible timing they always seemed to have. "We are such geniuses, now we're in deeper trouble than before."

"We might as well face the torture squad and get it over with." She looked down at her Levis and saw the noticeable wet stain on the front below the zipper. Murphy yanked her shirt from inside of her Levis and pulled it down so that it covered the spot.

"Just don't raise your arms and we're gonna have to run home and get clothes." Murphy said against her kiss bruised lips.

"And Woobie, I don't trust her; she's probably trying to get every male dog into the yard for an orgy." They snuck from the bathroom and quietly made their way to the front door, they looked out and saw Judge's semi in the drive and then they heard toenails on the hardwood floor. "Where are they?"

"No idea, I can't see if Smootcher's truck is there or not." She looked down at Woobie and pointed a finger at her. "No orgies for you." She took her lover's hand and they went into the kitchen and found bags of food, a case of beer and Mountain Dew and a note.

*Dear sex fiends;*

*Mama had us bring some food over because she knew ya'll were busy getting the house ready to move into...yeah right!*

*So were ya remodeling the bathroom or what?*

*Stewie*

*There better be a full tank of gas in my truck you perv!*

*Smootcher*

"Guess we can be thankful that they didn't catch us in the kitchen." Judge said and then started looking through the bags.

"Those two would watch us and wait until we were...finished." She looked back to where the bathroom was and shook her head. "Please let there be curtains on the window." She mumbled and went to look. "Baby...the first thing we do is get heavy duty curtains for this place!" She yelled from the bathroom and then came face to chest with her lover. "Wanna bet supper that they watched us?"

Judge looked to where the window was and shook her head. "Nope, I know I'll lose, let's hope that's all they did."

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Stewie looked at the pictures they had taken and started to laugh and bounce in her seat. "Ohhhh have we got the blackmail material this time!" She handed the camera over and watched as Smootcher quickly glanced at it and handed the camera back. "I think we should get into the porno business, I'm an excellent photographer, I got their climax shot!"

"And everyone will have the shot of us being tortured if Judge and Murphy find out what we were doing."

"Ohhhh come on, you know damn well that they'll figure it out, Murph knows that we just can't be trusted and with all the funny noises coming from the bathroom there's no way we wouldn't investigate it."

Smootcher grinned and nodded her head. "Who knew that our little Murphy was such an animal?"

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Judge went out to her truck, climbed up into the cab and went around to the living area. She stepped towards the bathroom, let out a yell and jumped back into Murphy. "What the Hell?" She grabbed onto her lover and pointed to the bathroom. "What is that?"

Murphy looked at the life-sized cut out of herself and grinned. "That's my twin, the idiots made it to keep them company." She flipped the light on and looked to her lover. "Quite striking huh, they caught my best side to?"

"Yeah the evil side, and such a lovely gesture."

"Yeah my favorite pose," she rubbed up against Judge and ran said gesture between her legs. "I know what to do with it now."

"You can show me later, right now I want some clean clothes and food."

"Sounds good, you get the clothes and I'll go in the house and see what they brought us as far as food goes."

They had just finished with another shower when they heard a horn blowing out in front of the house; Judge went to the front door while Murphy checked on the food in the oven. She knew that their chances of a quick shower were slim to none, so she decided to put in a roast that would take a while to cook. She basted it with the juices and checked on to see if it was still red in the center.

"Murph the furniture's here," Judge looked around the door frame into the kitchen and grinned, Murphy was wearing a pair of her Levis and they were two sizes too big. "They have the bedroom stuff on the back, so that means hundreds of trips upstairs before we get the couch and stuff off. Where are your sisters when we need them?"

"I never thought of that, they're cheap labor, feed them and they work." She wiped her hands on a dish towel and went with her outside to the truck.

"We may need to call them after we're done here; you know to come haul our bodies off to the hospital for recuperation."

Two hours later, with the help from the guys on the truck, they had everything into the house. Not everything was where it should have been but they would take care of that later. "Murph I have to eat before I fall over," She rubbed her temples and dropped down on to the couch. "I've got a headache and my stomach hurts."

Murphy straddled her thighs and ran her fingers through her hair; she massaged the back of her neck until her head dropped to rest against her breasts. "Tell ya what, I'll go heat up our food and you get the TV hooked up." She kissed her gently and then got up from her lap to head into the kitchen. She had to agree that she wasn't feeling to good herself; she knew it had to be from all

the activity and no food. She knew what she was going to do after they ate, she was taking a nap.

Their empty dishes sat on the box that contained an end table and empty Mountain Dew cans sat next to them. Woobie lay across the back of the couch snoring with her tail wagging. Judge lay on her back on the couch with Murphy stretched across her, they had passed out as soon as they lay down and nothing in the world could wake them, not even the thunderous clap that rattled the windows. What woke them was when the drone of the TV went silent. Lightning flashed across the sky and then came a torrential downpour.

"Ohh shit, the windows are all open." Judge mumbled and waited for Murphy to roll off her. I'll get the ones down here if you get the ones upstairs."

"Ok," she pulled her from the couch and noticed her wince when she put weight onto her left leg. "When we're done, you're icing that knee."

"Too much walking around today without my brace on, it's my own stupidity that I'm paying for."

"Well it doesn't matter because we're done for the night, my muscles are screaming at me." She gave her a quick kiss before she went to the stairs and started up them, halfway up, a loud clap of thunder and then a loud boom sent them into pitch blackness.

"Just great, a transformer bit the dust." Judge yelled over the noise and then tried to remember if she had a flashlight or anything they could use for light. She kept thinking as she moved through the house and shut all the windows, she came to the kitchen and searched through the drawers until she came to a single candle. "This won't do much." Rubbing her face, she looked out the backdoor at the rain and sighed. "Guess I'll have to look in the truck," she went back the way she had come and saw Murphy coming her way. "We've got one candle in here; I might have something out in the truck." She pulled her shirt off and handed it to a wide eyed Murphy. "Come on, it's not like you've never seen them before."

"True but you can do that a hundred times a day and I'll still act the same." She gave her a lecherous smirk and wiggled her brows. "Remember I'm a dog, take care of the girls." She ran her hands down across her breasts, pressed a kiss between them and laughed when Judge rolled her eyes.

"I'll be right back," she shivered as she neared the door. "This is gonna be nippy." She opened the door and took off at a limping run; she yanked the side door open on her truck and quickly got inside. She flipped the lights on and grabbed a clothe wall-mart bag. She began her search in the supply cabinet and found some candles, a flashlight and extra batteries, she would send off a thank you e-mail to her friends for thinking of the emergency items. Next, she grabbed some clean clothes, muscle rub, tooth brushes and paste, her knee brace, and the emergency weather radio and then she saw the leather CD carrier sitting on the shelf above her bed. She took one more look around and headed for the door and the cold rain.

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Murphy watched as Judge came towards the door, she opened it and as soon as Judge came through, she wrapped a bath towel around her shoulders. She put another towel over her head and started to dry her soaking hair. "Your lips are blue."

"That's the coldest damn rain I've ever felt, it feels like hail coming down out there." She shivered and took the offered shirt from Murphy. "I got all kinds of stuff in this bag; I've got some more candles that we can light." She could barely see by the one sitting on the small shelf near the door.

"Let's go in the kitchen, I fed Woobie and I was gonna call the electric company and report the power outage." She took the bag from Judge and pulled out the leather cd case. "I wondered what happened to this, you've had it all this time."

"Yep, I had it in my tent when that idiot stole my car, I've added some cd's to it since then." She finished drying her hair and took a seat at the table, I think we should switch the stove over to propane and put in a wood burning stove for heat, whatcha think?"

"You mean for situations like this?" She pulled all the stuff from the bag and placed it on the table.

"Yeah, if we had propane at least we'd be able to make some coffee or cook and during the winter we wouldn't freeze to death."

Murphy wound up the emergency radio and turned it to the weather station. "Ok, I'll check with my brothers, they might be able to do it or know someone who can." She listened to the news and looked worriedly up at her lover. "They spotted a tornado near Inwood," she grabbed her cell phone and called mama. She tapped her fingers on the table until she heard her sister on the other end. "Where are you guys?"

*"In the luxurious basement apartment," Smootcher said and then sneezed three times. "We never got all the dust outta here and it's killing me."*

"We just heard on the radio that they spotted a tornado in Inwood, stay down there and don't let mama go upstairs no matter what she says."

*"We have her busy, plus the troll stole and hid her leg somewhere. Don't you guys go anywhere; ya know the shitty stuff always follows the river."*

"We'll be fine and thanks for bringing Judge's truck up and all the food," she watched as Judge put some batteries in her beat up radio and then searched for a cd to play. "I'm just glad we got all the furniture in the house before this shit started." Another crash of thunder and then a bolt of lightening lit the house up. "Listen, I'm getting off here, the lightening is getting worse."

"Ok, you two take cover and stay away from the windows."

"We will, later Smootch." She hung up the phone and jumped from another crack of thunder. "I hate this shit!"

Judge held out her hand and pulled her through the house and to a room that was on the inside of the house. It had no windows and once the door was closed, the storm was almost shut out. She put the radio down on the floor and then took candles from her back pocket. "Got any matches?"

"You're lucky, I just happen to have a *Bic* lighter, where's Woobie?"

"Hiding in the bed most likely, that's the first place she always runs to during a storm." She lit the candles and placed them on a scrap piece of wood she found in the corner. "They could have cleaned this place up a little better before hightailing it out of here." She hit the CD player on, skipped it to the song she wanted and then turned to Murphy. "This is one of my favorite songs," she held out her hands to her. "Dance with me." She pulled Murphy into her arms and moved them slowly around the room to *Leona Lewis'* song *I will be*. When the song ended, Judge pulled back and saw tears trailing down her lover's face. "What's wrong?"

"Nothing, it's just a beautiful song."

"I listened to that CD a lot and it made me think of a lot of stuff." She pulled Murphy back into her arms and hugged her. As they danced, she hummed to the next song. She felt her shirt getting wet from Murphy's tears. "Baby, I didn't put this on so you would cry." She placed a kiss to her temple and began to sing in a soft voice in her ear.

I feel it you feel it that this was meant to be  
I know it you know it that you were made for me  
We can't deny this any longer  
Day by day it's getting stronger  
I want it and you want it  
It's what the people wanna see  
We're like Romeo and Juliet  
Families can't divide us  
Like the tallest mountain or the widest sea  
Nothing's big enough to hide us  
When we make love it's overwhelming  
I just touched the heavens  
You're an angel  
You're an angel

When the CD ended, Judge just stood hugging her lover and keeping her safe from the storm outside and the one she had awakened with the music. "Let's go to bed, my knee is killing me."

"I forgot, we were gonna ice your knee." She looked up at her and felt her insides quiver, the

candlelit made her eyes shimmer. "You're beyond beautiful; I'm the luckiest woman in the world and how come I never knew that you could sing?"

"You need glasses and probably because I never told you." She grabbed the radio, handed Murphy a candle and took the other one. "Wanna bet that Woobie is sleeping on my pillow?"

They went into the bedroom and sure enough, there was Woobie curled up in a small ball on Judge's pillow. "She likes her mama's pillow," she put the candle on the window sill and watched Judge put the radio near the bed and then blow out her candle. "I'll be right back, I'm gonna get the flashlight and we need to get one of those lanterns that works off those big batteries."

"What we need to get is a generator."

"I think we should just go green and have solar panels, turbines, ya know the whole green works. That way we wouldn't have to rely on the suckass electric company." She left the room and was gone no more than two or three minutes, she tossed the muscle rub on the bed and put the flashlight on the floor by the radio. "Ok, we're all set, I'm gonna go brush my teeth and then I'm gonna take care of your knee."

Judge shook her head at how bossy her lover could be, she would normally just take some aspirins and then go to sleep. She limped into the bathroom, and grabbed her toothbrush from where Murphy had put it in a paper cup. "I should have grabbed some aspirins when I was out at my truck."

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Judge lost the battle and was lying in bed with her knee bent and Murphy rubbing muscle rub into it, she winced when she hit a tender spot and tried to push her hands away. When she was done massaging her knee and thigh muscle, she pulled a hand towel off the bed and wrapped it around her knee. "Don't move, I gotta find something to keep that on there." She came back a minute later with a rubber band that she had used to keep the CD folder closed. "Ok, you're all set." She moved over to the other side of the bed, blew out the candle on the window and then started to get undressed.

"This sucks, I can't see anything." Judge whined, pulled her shirt off and then tossed her boxers onto the floor with the rest of her clothes.

"What do ya need to see?"

"You, I wanted to watch you strip." She leaned over and hit the radio on; she adjusted the volume so that it was low and then got comfortable. "And you Woobie keep your rotten little body off my pillow tonight." She felt a warm body move up against her and then lips caressing



her neck.

"I haven't been this exhausted in a long time," Murphy said and snuggled up against her lover.  
"We're sleeping in tomorrow."

"Until noon." Was the last thing Judge said as she drifted off to sleep.

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Judge had woke to find Woobie laying next to her head and Murphy laying halfway on top of her, she wouldn't have minded but her arm was dead and Woobie had the worst breath of any dog she knew. She pulled her arm free, tapped Woobie on her head and then got up to head to the bathroom. When she came out, Woobie was on her back with her feet curled up on her body. "Get your ass up." Judge whispered and pulled on her tail. "Time for your ass to go outside and me to make coffee before Murph wakes up."

She opened the back door and took in the fresh air and the warm sunlight as it washed into the kitchen. She started coffee in the new coffee maker and then went around opening all the windows before letting Woobie back in. She opened the refrigerator and took out what she needed and then grabbed coffee cups from the strainer on the counter. Filling the cups, she took them upstairs and looked around for Murphy and heard water running in the bathroom. She put the coffee down on the floor and fell into the bed to wait. A wide smile came to her face when she heard a song come on the radio; the timing couldn't have been any more perfect for her. As soon as Murphy stepped into the room, she started singing to her in a deep rich voice.

*You don't have to go now, honey  
Call and tell 'em you won't be in today  
Baby, there ain't nothin' at the office  
So important it can't wait*

*I'm thankful for the weekend  
But two days in Heaven just ain't gonna do  
Yes, it's gonna take forever, darlin'  
Girl, I just got started lovin' you*

*What's the point in fightin' what we're feelin'  
We both know we'll never win  
Ain't this what we're missin'  
Let's just stop all this resistin' and give in*

Her singing ended when Murphy captured her lips in a sensuous kiss that had her head reeling. She lay beneath her lover and knew that if she didn't stop her, they would never eat breakfast.

"Baby..." she rolled her to the bottom and hovered over her. "I love you and want nothing more than to make love to you for the rest of the day but I'm starving and without food, I'm an impotent wimp."

Murphy busted out laughing. "That's something that I don't think you're capable of, how many hours was it in a row without eating?"

"I do have some stamina but I can go longer if I eat," she gave her a quick kiss and then rolled from the bed. "I wanna cook breakfast for us; it's been a while since I had a real kitchen."

"You're gonna cook, I don't think I've ever seen you cook before?"

"I can cook, I just chose not to, now come on before something else happens, ya know like a meteorite landing in the back yard or your sisters showing up." She pulled Murphy to her feet, grabbed their coffee from the floor and held her hand all the way to the kitchen. She pointed to the chair and then went out in her truck for the cooking utensils she needed.

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Murphy sat rubbing her stomach and groaning; she had eaten way too much and felt like a beached whale. She would have her lover make breakfast from now on; she cooked a hell of a lot better than she did. She had never had an omelet the way Judge made it, she had watched as she used four cheeses, mushrooms, peppers, onion, bacon, ham and she couldn't remember what else was in it. Then she made hash browns and toast, plus orange juice and coffee.

"Well, how was it?" Judge asked as she placed the dishes in the dishwasher.

"I just gained like ten pounds, have you been eating like this since you left?"

"Blame Claudia and Joe, after I got out of the hospital, she decided that I needed fattened up. Then with all the carpentry work I was doing, I was burning a lot of calories, who knew hammering did that." She looked under the cabinet and then to Murphy. "That's it, we're going into town and we're gonna do some shopping." She grabbed her keys from the counter and then went over to a wooden bowl near the back door. She had emptied her pockets into it the other day and was now putting it all back. "We really should make a list on the way there, whatcha think."

Since it's your idea, you can make it and I'll drive."

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This was a new experience for Murphy; she pushed the cart while Judge read the list and tossed stuff into the cart. She had to grin at all the junk food that was ending up in it and for once she wasn't the one throwing it in. When they got down the aisle with all the cleaning products, Judge bypassed the Lysol and other cleaners and went for laundry soap and softener. "This is a fucking surprise," Murphy said and grabbed some cleaners for the house. "Baby you forgot something."

"What?" Judge turned and held out two boxes of dryer sheets. "Which kind, Lavender/vanilla or mountain scent?"

"The lavender stuff," she held up the Lysol and gave her a smirk. "You forgot this stuff, we can't clean without it, well there's bleach but it'll ruin the wood floors."

"That's kinda funny huh?"

"Sure is freaky cleaning lady." she moved into her personal space and placed a soft kiss to her lips.

"HEY none of that homo stuff in the store!" An old woman yelled and then flinched when Murphy turned around and glared at her.

"How would you like me to report you and your doctor to DMV for that handicap tag you have?" She stepped closer to her and got into her personal space. "I have video tapes of you playing singles and doubles tennis, that'll look real convincing to them won't it?"

"Ohhhh I didn't know that was you Sheriff Whistler, now if you'll excuse me." She quickly spun her cart around and went in the opposite direction.

"Damn people should mind their own business and leave us be." She said and took Judge's hand. "Let's get the rest of the stuff and get home; we still have all the furniture to get moved."

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Tamara carried a box out to her car and put it on the front passenger seat. She slammed the door hard enough to make the car rock and then let out a loud blood curdling scream. She was beyond pissed after the police hauled her in and kept her for 24 hours. They had interrogated her about the 911 calls but she never broke. After making the calls, she had tossed the cheap tracfone cell phone in a dumpster behind Weis Market and then went home. She knew that there was no way they could connect her to the calls because she made sure that no one seen her at Murphy's. She had been waiting for her to get home so she could try and seduce her again, and that's when she saw them both go into the house. She had lost it at that moment and making the phony calls came

out of nowhere. "She is gonna pay for having me pulled into the sheriff's department, everyone knew about it two seconds after they dragged me into that room!" She went around to the driver's side and got in; she peeled out of the parking lot and headed for revenge. "Murphy's MINE!" She screamed out of her window and kept on screaming into the night.

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Mama picked up the camera that was sitting on the kitchen table, after a few minutes of pushing buttons; she came up with a picture menu. She pressed the arrow button and looked at each picture with little interest until she came to one. "Ohhhh my..." she tipped the camera sideways for a better look and then went to the next one. "Those damn pervs." She went through all the pictures of Murphy and Judge and was fit to be tied. "I told them once I told them a thousand times, no peeping on their own family...with the exception of a few that is." She found a door on the bottom; she opened it and pulled the small memory card out. "Murphy is gonna scream bloody murder, I may have to give her my own peeping stuff on her sisters." She went over to the kitchen cabinet and pulled down a small wooden box about four inches square, sliding a secret panel back, she searched through the memory chips inside, then pulled one out and slipped it into the pocket on her apron. She put the box back and sighed when the phone rung for what seemed the hundredth time that day.

"Whistler discount funeral home, you pick the dumpster and we'll do the heavy work?"

*"Hi mama D, this is Deputy Jones, we've got a call from one of Murphy's neighbors, and she says that there's a crazy woman throwing stuff at her house, do you have any idea where Murphy is?"*

"I know where she is but there's no phone, did you try her cell phone?"

*"Yes ma'am and it's turned off, we don't wanna send out the Calvary again if this is a prank like the one the other night."*

"Lemme try her sisters and see if Jeff will go over to her place and check it out. Thanks for calling me; we don't need the damn people around here saying we're wasting money on emergency services."

*"No ma'am, we get enough complaints from the morons around here, have a good night and sorry for disturbing you."* She hung up before mama could reply.

"Damn kid, she's gonna hear about this." She dialed Stewie's cell number and when she picked up, she told her about the call from the office. She knew that they would head on over there and then track down Murphy and Judge if they weren't at their new house. "I swear it's always something." She jumped when she heard a loud crash and then a little voice yelling *"It not me!"*

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Stewie and Smootcher pulled up the street next to Murphy's house, they got out and crept in the dark along side and stopped when they heard insane screaming. Stewie keyed her microphone and whispered. "Officers need back-up at the Sheriffs house and no sirens." They then moved so that they could see the front of the house and cussed under their breaths. "What the hell is she doing?" She sniffed the air and cussed. "She's throwing bottles of gas on Murphy's house; we gotta stop her before she throws a damn match or something."

"Christ what in the Hell is wrong with that nut job, so how we gonna do this, run and tackle or shoot and run away?" Smootcher asked in a low whisper and moved back away from the edge of the house.

"I'd like ta just shoot the dumb bitch but then we'd have to arrest each other, cuz there's no way I'd turn myself in." She narrowed her eyes and then shook her head. "Whatever."

"Tell ya what, I'll distract her and you go around to the other side and take her down." They muffled their microphones when the approaching officers called in. "Hang back, we're gonna try and take her down; you see Stewie running, don't shoot her, that's my job."

*"Copy, we'll hang back and come in if you need help...what is that woman doing?"* The deputy asked as he strained his eyes through the windshield of his cruiser.

"Throwing bottles of gas on Murphy's house." Smootcher replied.

"She needs locked-up for sure." He responded.

Smootcher stepped out from the side of the house, made an arc to put her as far as possible from Tamara and waited until she saw Stewie across the yard from her. "Hey nut job, what in the Sam Hell are you doing?"

With crazed hysterical laughter, she lobbed another bottle at the house and then turned to face Smootcher. "What's it look like, I'm trying to burn down that cheating bitch's house!"

"Really and why is that?"

"Because she cheated on me that's why...I saw her...them...and it's supposed to be me!" She screamed again, started pulling at her hair and frothing at the mouth. "After all I did for her...all we've been through together and she CHEATS ON ME!" She lobbed a bottle at Smootcher and grabbed another from the box.

"So you've been having a relationship with my sister?" Smootcher asked hoping to distract her and get more information on her reasoning behind the 911 calls and what she was now doing.

"So how long has this been going on and what kind of relationship?"

"Are you stupid or something, we've been sleeping together for months and then that woman showed up and she tossed me to the side!" She threw another bottle and then she hit the ground face first with Stewie lying across her back.

"Crazy ass bitch is delusional," Stewie waited for the other deputy to cuff a spitting, cussing and all around possessed Tamara. "Does Murph know that she's been having a 'relationship' with this thing?"

"Guess not or she wouldn't be with the ohhhh sooo sexy Goddess Judge." They watched as the deputy dragged Tamara off to his cruiser and put her into the backseat, which in its self was no easy feat.

"We need to get a fire truck out here and hose her house down, that's all we need is for some idiot to go by and flip a smoke out the window." Smootcher said and looked around her to see all the neighbors watching from their windows. "Great an audience, good thing Murph is moving, these people are annoying."

"I'll call mama, you call the fire company." Stewie said as she pulled her cell phone out.

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Murphy, her sisters and Judge stood in the street watching the firemen put away the hoses, they knew that with the storm the night before that a lot of the gas would have been diluted without the firemen washing the house and all but none of them wanted to take any chances. What really pissed Murphy off was that now all the grass, shrubbery, flowers and anything else that had been alive, would probably die. "This just sucks but I'm glad she never found us at the new house."

"I would have killed her," Judge growled. "Let's go over to the office and have a little talk with her, I wanna know what the Hell she thought she was doing."

"This should be fun," Stewie said and ran towards her and Smootcher's truck. "She's in your cell Judge, we thought that would be the best one, ya know maybe drive her to sanity since she's already nuts."

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The four women watched Tamara dance around the cell and sing with the chipmunks; three of them looked to Judge and then back to the nut job. "That's just too damn freaky, maybe I should

pick another song or change the color scheme?"

"Or sign her up for American Idol?" Murphy said and grinned. "She's a Hell of a lot better than most of them, especially the She Bang guy, what's his name William something?"

"Anybody is better than him!" Judge said and went over to a control panel on the wall; she hit the music off and stepped in front of the bared door. "I see you're enjoying your stay this time around."

"YOU...you're the reason I'm in here!" She lounged at the door and tried to grab Judge. "Murphy's MINE!" She growled and spit at Judge like a pissed off cat. "You stay away from her or I'll kill you!"

"Would you say that louder?" Judge asked and leaned forward.

"I said I'll KILL YOU, what part didn't you hear bitch?"

Judge made fists and made one step forward before Murphy grabbed the back of her belt. "Hold on there JT, we don't need you sharing a jail cell with her." She stepped in front of her and looked at Tamara. "What's the deal with throwing bottles full of gas on my house, what were you trying to do?"

Tamara rolled her eyes at her and flicked her fingers her way. "You are so blonde, I was trying to burn your house down but the damn things were defective, they didn't explode in to flames like they do in the movies."

"Ok, I've heard enough." Smootcher said and then busted out laughing on her way from the cell holding area. "She didn't light them before throwing them and ya'll call me blonde!" She continued to laugh until she was out of earshot.

"Christ almighty," Stewie mumbled and shook her head. "Later guys and Judge, your truck is SWEET!"

Judge walked towards the door and looked back at Tamara and then to Murphy. "Come on baby I wanna try out that new body oil and vibrator we picked up," She gave her a seductive look. "I wanna see if I can make you scream until you lose your voice again." She laughed when Tamara went wild in the cell and tried to rip the door from its hinges.

Murphy slapped her in the shoulder on her way past her. "You are so bad and it was you that lost her voice, not me."

"She doesn't know that or maybe I should tell her?" She turned to go back and tell Tamara but changed her mind after Murphy grabbed her ass. "Or we could go home and play."

\*\*\*\*\*

Mama walked through Judge and Murphy's new house and stopped out on the back deck, she looked far off into the grassy fields and then to the trees lining the river and was thankful that Judge had bought all the land. Too much of the country side was disappearing to builders whom thought that every square inch of land was supposed to be covered in a house or building. "So whatcha gonna do with all the land?"

"After I bulldoze the rest of the foundations and fill in the holes, I'm gonna let Mother Nature take it back." Judge said as she stepped next to her. "I like trees, so I think I'll plant some chestnut and maybe some hickory out there where there used to be huge walnut trees."

"I like redbuds and pink dogwoods." Mama said and gave Judge a wink.

"I think I'll plant some redbuds and pink dogwoods in the front yard, maybe a magnolia tree to."

"And I'm gonna plant a foot up Judge's ass," Murphy smacked her in the shoulder and then pointed to the tree at the side of her truck. "The Troll is in that tree again and I can't reach her."

"Did ya try bribery?" Mama asked. "She takes out the trash and I give her a cookie, it worked good." She chuckled. "Until I caught her filling the trash bags with whatever she could put in them."

"Note taken do not put the trash bags where Troll can find them, she will drain us dry." Judge mumbled to herself on her way to get her from the tree. "Hey Troll whatcha doing up there?"

"Catch'n tree rats" She swung her feet and grinned through a dirty face. "Woobs helps see."

Judge turned to see Woobie chasing a squirrel towards the tree, she figured that the poor thing would run on past them, she figured wrong. Before she could react, the squirrel ran up her leg, jumped to her shoulder and then launched itself way up into the tree.

"Stoles my tree rat!" She pointed at Judge and yelled again. "THIEF!"

"Ok Troll, it's time to eat," she lifted her from the tree and put her on the ground, we're having Kentucky fried chicken and the sides."

"WANTS BREASTS!" She yelled and ran towards the house.

"I sure hope that's not an early indication of her sexuality." She shook her head. "She's not even three yet...but you knew when you were five...we are in so much trouble." She followed her into the house and thought of something else they forgot. "Shit, we need a highchair."

Mama waved a hand at her. "Stewie's bringing one from the house, we have so many of those things floating around that we could all sit in 'em."



"We really need to sit down and make up a list for each room," Murphy said. "That way we can work at one room at a time and make fewer trips to the store."

"Is it time to eat?" Smootcher yelled as she came through the front door.

"Thanks for the help Smootch," Stewie struggled with the door and the highchair. "You could have held the door at least."

"Why, this is so much more fun, ya know watching you struggle."

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Judge lay spooned against Murphy's back with her arm wrapped around her waist; she had woken only minutes before the alarm would go off. She was not looking forward to going into work; she would rather stay home and play with the bulldozer. "Can I stay home?" she whispered into Murphy's ear.

"Nope, if I gotta put up with assholes, so do you." She rolled over and pressed her face against her lover's chest. "I'll flip ya for who has to take the Troll to mamas."

"I'll take her; I don't have to be in court until 0900. I need to get a car or truck to drive instead of my rig; it's a bitch trying to find a parking space."

"Maybe we can do that tomorrow afternoon, maybe at lunch time?" She let out a grunt when something landed on her. "After we handcuff the Troll to the bumper."

"Feeds me!" The Troll rocked Murphy until she was pulled over her side and smashed between them. "Squishes!"

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Judge looked up from the briefs she was reading and grumbled beneath her breath. The one person in the world that she wished she could legally shoot stepped into her office with whom she presumed to be his high dollar mouth piece. "What can I do for you Charles?" She asked the ADA responsible for Taking Abbey's mother away far too early and crippling Mama D.

"I've come to congratulate you on your new position; I had no idea that you were working towards a Judgeship."

"Thank you and things change, now what's the real reason you're here?"

He laughed and took a seat in front of her desk. "I could never pull anything on you." He pointed to his lawyer. "This is my attorney Jerkin Terrebonne and we've recently heard that you will be hearing my court case." Judge leaned forward in her chair and hit a small button beneath the desktop. "I know that I don't have to worry with you as the Judge, you will do the right thing and see that I don't have to spend any more time in Jail than I already have."

"What exactly do you mean by that statement?" She asked and leaned back in her chair.

"Come on Bloodstone, who doesn't have a few drinks now and again?" He waved a hand in the air, leaned back and crossed his legs. "So I had one too many and had an accident, this is my first offense and you don't want the politicians in the area to think that you won't help them in a time of need." He gave her a wink and a grin. "If you do this for me, I'll make sure that your time in the Judge's robes is a fruitful one."

"You mean the good ole' boys that you work for, let me tell you something, I don't give a good god damn about the good ole boys." She stood up behind her desk, planted her hands in the middle and leaned forward. "My job is to uphold the law, to deal out the punishment by the book and that is exactly what I will do. Now get out of my office and never come here again unless I've called for a meeting."

"If I may," Terrebonne rose from his chair. "I would like to petition the court for a change of Venue, I don't feel that my client will get a fair hearing here in Jefferson County."

"How long have you been a lawyer?"

"Almost twelve years and I have an outstanding performance record."

"Really, you need to go do some research or ask a competent lawyer at what time and how you go about filing for a change of venue and the time frame at which it must be done. Now get out of my office or I'll call for security and have them take you out." After they were gone, she pushed the button again, pulled open her drawer and removed the tape from the recorder. "I'm sure the U.S. Attorney's office will be interested in this." She dropped the tape into an envelope and then called Belinda. "Hey boss, I have a tape that needs to be copied and the number to the U.S. Attorney's office, got time to do it?"

*"Tell me someone was stupid enough to try and bribe you?"*

"OK I won't but no one has ever said that Charles Burke was smart."

*"I'll be right there for the rest of the story."* Not two seconds later, she was coming through the door that adjoined their offices. "OK, I wanna hear every single word that was said."

Judge put the tape back into the recorder and hit play, not two minutes into it, Belinda busted out laughing. "He is some kind of stupid and his lawyer must have gotten his law degree from some

online college." She took the tape and used the pen she pulled from behind her ear to put the needed info on the label. "I'll have one of the bailiff's witness me making a copy, that way Charles or his asshole lawyer can't say that it was a fake."

"OK, and make a copy of the video to, I had the button tied into the security camera on the shelf." She hiked her thumb over her shoulder at the small teddy bear sitting in front of some law books. "I'm going for lunch, want anything?"

"A nanny cam?" She busted out laughing. "Only you would have a nanny cam in your office." She shook her head. "Hey bring me back whatever you're having and no low fat shit either, that stuff tastes like shit. I don't care if I have high cholesterol or not, that's not what kills us, it's the sucky ass low fat food."

"How do ya figure that?" Judge asked.

"Ya starve to death on that stuff, turn all anorexic and shit, no thank you, gimme a Krispy crème donut any day."

Judge laughed on her way out of her office, Belinda was right, the low fat food sucked. She couldn't bring herself to drink 1% milk; it was like dumping out regular milk and then filling that dirty jug with water.

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Judge walked into Mountain View restaurant and looked around, she knew that the Whistler's had to be somewhere. She turned at the sound of her name being called and saw Mama waving from across the room. She made her way over to them and swept a running Troll up into her arms. "What's all over your face?"

"Marker." Abbey grinned and then pointed to her forearm. "Gots a tat, see?"

"I see who drew that?"

"Aunt Stew, its Woobs."

Judge studied the tattoo and nodded, it did look like Woobie. "What about the stripes on your face, who did those?"

"Me...tiger stripe."

Judge looked to Mama and grinned. "Guess that's something else that we'll have to h-i-d-e." She spelled out the last word.

"Tell me what you don't have to h-i-d-e, I have high cabinets brimming with stuff that's h-i-d-d-e-n, I'm running out of room."

She put the Troll in the highchair and took a seat next to her. "Where's everyone else, I figured they'd be here already?"

"They should be here any minute, Murphy had a problem with a traffic stop and the idiots were escorting a prisoner to Eastern Regional."

"Why is Murphy going out on traffic patrol?"

"She gets bored sitting in the office all day, plus she says it's good that the public sees her out there."

"I can see where that would cause some people to pause when thinking about doing a crime, ya know with knowing that they may get their ass kicked by the Sheriff herself." She pointed a finger at the Troll when she saw that she was getting ready to escape.

"Need my cuffs?" Murphy asked and held them out to Judge. "Sorry I'm late, I had to haul in a drunk, the freak was skipping right down the center of Rt. 340 on his way to Harpers Ferry. It wouldn't have been bad but he was bare ass naked, you have no idea how long it took us to catch him." She bent over and gave Judge a soft kiss before taking a seat next to her. "So what did I miss, anything good?"

"Nope, didn't miss anything, I just got here." Judge held out a hand to mama. "Did she miss anything?"

"She missed the boat years ago," she placed her menu in the center of the table and looked to Judge. "So tell us what we missed today, you know with that asshole drunk that killed my baby?"

"How did you...Christ, I wonder how many people saw that asshole going into or leaving my chambers?"

Murphy turned in her chair and looked at her lover. "Spill it Judge."

Judge ran her hands down her face and took a deep breath. "Burke found out that I would be the preceding Judge on his case, the idiot thought that he could bribe me and he did this with his lawyer right there in the chair beside him."

Murphy rolled her eyes and shook her head. "Why doesn't that shock me, so what happens now?"

"He's going to get a visit from the Attorney Generals office; I got the whole conversation on tape and video."

"You mean the nanny cam worked?" She grinned and looked to mama. "We hooked a nanny cam up in her office; it's in a teddy bear sitting on a shelf behind her desk. We then set up her

computer and Belinda's to capture the feed." She grinned at her lover and winked, she hoped that Judge got the meaning. "You better check that video file before you hand it over to the attorney generals office." She grinned at the wide eyed look on Judge's face.

"Ohh shit!" She pulled out her cell phone and called Belinda, as soon as it connected, she knew that Belinda had found something other than Burke on the video file.

*"So busted!"* Belinda sang and then started to chuckle. *"You two are so busted and it's gonna cost you two big time!"*

"I forgot all about the damn camera," she whispered so that mama couldn't hear her. "Please erase that part and I'll give ya anything ya want."

*"You just love to play with fire don't you?"*

"This is gonna be bad ain't it?" She listened to Belinda's request and closed her eyes when she told her what she wanted. "You don't play nice." She sighed after hanging up. "I'm not playing with her no more."

Both mama and Murphy gave her raised brow looks. "So what did she find on that video besides Burke?" Mama grinned and waited.

"Uhhmm...nothing mama." Judge mumbled.

"You can't lie any better than my kids," She snapped her fingers and started searching in her huge samsonite sized purse, a minute later and she had what she had been searching for. "I took this out of the camera, I found on the kitchen table, you might wanna beat the shit outta your sisters." She handed the memory chip to Murphy. "It can't be any worse than what Belinda found on that video but I bet it comes close."

Murphy looked to Judge and felt her face getting warm; she knew what was on the chip and knew exactly when it had been happened. "I'm gonna kill them, I knew they couldn't just come in to our house and not do something completely in character." She pocketed the chip and placed her menu in the center of the table. "And you little girl are gonna get it as well." She pointed a finger at the Troll. "I found cookies in my boots this morning."

Abbey looked at her with puppy dog eyes, held her hands out to the sides and shrugged her small shoulders. "Woobie?"

"No not Woobie," she cast a narrowed look her way. "That was all spittin Troll, no Woobie in the picture."

"Aunt Smootcher?"

Murphy shook her head; she knew she couldn't win this accusation, so she gave up before she got a headache.

"It wasn't me." Smootcher said as she took a seat next to the Troll. "You blaming me for something Troll?"

"Yep, Stew did it!" She yelled and pointed a finger at her Aunt.

Lunch turned out to be a normal Whistler moment; servers peeked from the back room. They argued until they ended up flipping a coin to pick the loser who would have to come out to the table. Armed with a tray, the poor kid held it in front of his chest and quickly took their orders. Judge looked between two grinning sisters and just knew that they were the reason behind the terrified kid's behavior. She wasn't surprised at all, it was just their way and she knew that they would never grow out of some things. She hoped that she made up for some of their bad behavior by giving a good sized tip; she also knew that Murphy hadn't missed her slipping the twenty into the kid's hand.

"You stop giving such big tips you need to save lots of money, the Troll is gonna cost us millions. When she hit's five and goes to school, we're gonna pay and pay and pay."

"We are gonna pay for all the bad stuff we did as kids huh?"

Murphy took her hand in hers and squeezed it. "I'm gonna pay a hell of a lot more than you, I'll be paying from the damn grave." She mumbled the last bit as an elderly couple passed in front of them. "And I know I'm gonna pay for what I've been thinking about all day." She pulled Judge's head down and whispered in her ear, a wide grin came to her face when she saw red start up her lover's neck and color her cheeks.

"You are gonna pay dearly, good thing your not Catholic, you'd never get done saying Hail Mary's and Our fathers."

"And how do you know about those?"

Judge wiggled her left brow and grinned. "Easy, I corrupted a good catholic girl."

When they got out to the vehicles, Mama was leaning on Murphy's fender and watching as both the idiots tried to use slim Jim's to open her car. Judge and Murphy stopped and looked to mama who just shrugged her shoulders. "I told them to watch her but do they ever listen to me?" They all jumped when the siren came on and then the wipers, head lights, flashing lights and everything else that had a button to it. The Troll was having the time of her life until Murphy pulled her keys from her pocket and hit the button on the small device she had in her hand.

"What's that?" Stewie asked.

"Cool huh, it's kinda like a super kill switch." She tossed it to her and went over to open the now unlocked door. "One of the deputies installed it after she pulled this in the parking lot. It works kinda like the low jack system that shuts down a stolen car; he tinkered with it and set it up as a Troll device."

"Damn, he should patent the thing." Smootcher said as she took it from her sister. "He could call it The Troll Trap."

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Murphy came into the living room and looked around for her lover; she turned and looked to the kitchen but still couldn't find her. They were still getting used to having a somewhat normal home life, well, nothing would ever really be normal for them. After all they had the Troll to raise and she was teaching them that they would never win. Reverse psychology was a waste of their time and bribery was too costly. Judge found out that the only way to get her in the bathtub and then bed was to send her outside to chase chipmunks and squirrels. After an hour or so of her and Woobie running wild around the property, they were exhausted and putty in their hands. After the Troll was in bed and Woobie was comatose on the foot of her bed, Judge stumbled out into the living room and fell across the couch. She lay there until she felt eyes watching her, she held out one hand and when she felt her lover's hand in hers, she pulled her down onto the couch with her.

"I'm exhausted," She hugged Murphy to her and kissed the side of her neck. "I had to change my shirt after the Troll's bath and almost busted my ass on the wet floor."

"I think we should just hose her off in the backyard and be done with it." She moved so that she was lying on top of Judge and was able to look into her eyes. She traced each scar on her lover's face with a fingertip and then ran her fingers through the gray hair at her temples. "Did you ever think that your life would end up like this, ya know the house, a little beast running around...the whole family thing?"

"Not in a million years," she kissed Murphy's fingers and held onto her hand. "Who knew that we'd end up together?"

"Hey I tried for how long to get us together but you just wouldn't see it my way," she winked. "But finally, my charm won you over."

"So that's what did it huh, I can think of something other than your charm that got to me." She got up from the couch, grabbed Murphy's hand and pulled her towards their bedroom. "Let me refresh your memory."

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Judge sat behind the bench rubbing her eyes and holding back the yawn that was trying to fight it's way forth. She had lost count of how many cases had come before her but this one was by far

the most boring. The defendant was caught stealing of all things, chickens from his neighbor's chicken coop. His reasoning behind the theft was that the price of eggs went up." She waved a hand at the lawyer and the prosecuting attorney. "Come on guys, he stole what two chickens worth maybe ten bucks. There's no felony...hell not even a misdemeanor." She slammed the gavel and pointed to the old man. "Buy your eggs from your neighbor, keep your paws off his chickens and pay the court costs." She stood up and waved at the bailiff. "That had better be it; I've had enough for one morning." She looked to Belinda and raised an eyebrow. "How many after lunch?"

"Two and that's it for the day." She flipped through her book and nodded her head. "Two easy ones and that's it Boss." She slammed the book closed and stood up. Judge was gone before the bailiff could call for the court room to rise; he shrugged his shoulders and went through the door to the back hallway. Belinda trotted down the hall to catch up with Judge, she was curious as to what the rush was.

"Hey where's the damn fire?" She yelled down the hallway and came to a sliding stop outside of Judge's door. She looked in and saw where the fire was; it was a little over five feet tall and dressed in a sheriff's uniform. "You could close the door, no one wants to see you two making out...well maybe some but not me!" She marched into the office and tapped Judge on the shoulder. "Come on, break it up." She rolled her eyes when Judge yanked the tails of Murphy's shirt from her pants and then started to unbutton it.

"I can't believe that you just stood there and watched?" Murphy buttoned her shirt and cast a narrowed glance at Belinda. "Sure you're not related to me?"

"Christ who knows around this county, anyway, I forgot to tell you earlier. That crazy ass bitch Tamara was released today; they sent her to the mental ward at City Hospital."

Judge made fists with her hands, gritted her teeth and growled. "Who the fuck let her out?"

"I have no idea but I'll find out, no way that crazy ass bitch should have been released from jail." Belinda said and patted a furious Judge on her shoulder. "We need to get her ass back in jail before anything else happens."

Judge dropped onto the edge of her desk and pinched the bridge of her nose between her fingers. "I'll kill the son of a bitch who turned her loose," she sighed when Murphy pulled her into a tight hug. "After all the shit she did, some dumbass releases her."

"Wanna bet that they got her out on a psych plea?"

"Ohhhh I know they did which wouldn't bother me but City Hospital's nut ward is a sign yourself in deal..."

"And she can sign her self out...fuck." Murphy pulled her cell phone from her belt and dialed her sister's cell phone. "We need some help," she said to Stewie. "The crazy bitch is at City Hospital in the nutward, make sure she stays there."



*"How in the Hell did she get out of jail?"*

"That's what we're trying to find out, I'm gonna stay here with Judge and I'll call mama to make sure that she's on the lookout."

*"Ok, we'll make some calls and then head on over to City, you take care of Judge and be careful, if she gets out, she's gonna go after Judge."*

"I know that's what I'm worried about." She hung up and looked with worried eyes to her lover. "I think we should see about getting your cases continued until we can get Tamara back in jail or on a lock down in a real nutward."

"Baby," Judge pulled her into her body and looked down into her eyes. "I ran for years, hiding everywhere I could, I'm not running anymore. If she wants me that bad, she's gonna get me no matter what I do, I'd rather she find me here than at home." She kissed Murphy tenderly and then gave her a tight hug before she released her. "I have news for her; I'm not going down without a fight." She went over to a picture on the wall and pulled it back to reveal a wall safe. She spun the dial a few times and pulled the door open with a pop. She pulled out a medium sized wooden box made of Cherry, a few other smaller boxes and file folders were pushed around in her search. In the very back was a bundle of leather that she pulled out. She held everything in one hand, closed the safe back up and swung the picture back in place. "I never thought that I'd be wearing this again," she placed everything on her desk, shed her robes and looked down at her leather double shoulder harness. "They call me the hanging Judge now, what do ya think they would call me if they knew I wore guns in court?"

"A Whistler," Murphy said as she watched her lover pull the shoulder harness on and then opened the Cherry box, she felt her mouth drop open at the sight of the pistols in her lover's hands. "JT, those are Brigadiers."

"And lemme tell ya, they play havoc on a car." She checked the magazines, spun the pistols and dropped them into their holsters. "I killed my car and if you really think about it, the two assholes that stole it."

"Baby, we've both killed people but it was either them or us." She placed her hands on Judge's upper chest and looked into her silvery eyes. "Right or wrong we did what we had to, to survive."

"I'm sure that the people of this county wouldn't agree with that but I don't give a damn." She took Murphy's hand and pulled her towards the door. "Come on I'm starving and no one is gonna keep me from eating lunch." She saw the looks on the faces of the people in the courthouse as she walked through, she knew it wasn't that she was holding the Sheriff's hand but the silvery pistols she wore. "Good thing that I have a license for my pistols and that I just happen to live with the Sheriff of Rottingham."

"Sheriff of Rottingham huh, I can only imagine where you heard that."

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A week went by with no sign of Tamara anywhere; a deputy had been placed near her apartment and was pulled when she never showed up. Everyone was hoping that she had left the state and would never come back; they relaxed their guard and went back to their everyday behavior. Judge put her harness back in the safe along with one pistol, the other she kept in a special holster attached to the side of her desk next to her right thigh. They had made sure that the Troll couldn't get it out no matter how hard she tried. They used the same style holster that the cops used, you had to know how to draw the pistol for it to release. Judge sat everyday and practiced drawing it out; she wanted to be sure that if needed, she could use it.

She had called and talked to Claudia and told her all that had happened since the Tamara incident, she found out that her long time friend kept a pistol in her desk drawer as well. She thought of her small friend firing a pistol and flipping over backwards in her chair from the kick. She was leaning back in her chair grinning over the picture in her head when Belinda came in and gave her a roll of her eyes.

"I don't wanna know what that grin is about," she dropped a bunch of folders onto her desk and stood with her arms crossed over her chest. "Ok so tell me why are you grinning?"

"I just talked to Claudia, now picture a tiny little woman that weighs maybe 80lbs shooting a pistol like mine."

"I need a gun, maybe a nice shotgun." She walked from Judge's chambers mumbling about AK-47's, M-50 machine guns and missile launchers."

"Knowing her she'll have them mounted on her car." She picked up the folders and started reading through the next cases that she had after lunch. No sooner had she opened the first folder, than Belinda was coming back into her chambers with an older woman in tow. She took in the no nonsense dark suit, perfectly coifed short grey hair and the piercing gaze and knew where she was from. "You must be Mrs. Roberts from the Attorney Generals office." She stood and held out a hand to her. "I wondered when I would be seeing you."

"I would have been here yesterday but the damn airline cancelled my flight," she took a seat and placed her briefcase on her lap. "I can tell you one thing, my boss is ecstatic over the fact that we're finally getting rid of that piece of shit Burke. We've been trying to get charges to stick against him for years." She held out a copy of Judge's report to her. "Here's a signed copy of our report and the one you filed with us and I'll tell you now that with this charge, we can now investigate the judges that let him slide on all his DWI and DUI charges."

"What about his law firm, all those assholes over there are crooks and need to be sent up the river with him and don't forget about his lawyer?"

She smiled and started to chuckle. "You are one of a kind Judge; you might just single handedly clean up the judicial system of Jefferson County. And you don't have to worry about him, his law firm or his drinking buddies, we're gonna take care of all of that." She stood up and held out her hand. "I'll let my sister in-law know that you are living up to her expectations and that Murphy is as tough as she thought and gorgeous to boot."

"Ohh Hell, you're Joe's sister." She shook her head and came around her desk. "Do you have time for lunch?"

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Judge ran her fingers through her hair and sighed, she just couldn't believe how stupid some people were and how they thought that they could get away with their asinine actions. She was listening to the public defender try to convince her that his client had no idea that the car he took from the High School parking lot was stolen.

"Your honor, my client told me that he had known that the car was 'hot' he would have left it where he found it."

"You really think that I was born yesterday?" She asked as she turned in her chair and pinned him with her gaze. "He admitted that he 'took' the car from the parking lot, he also admitted that it was not his car and had no idea who it belonged to. He's guilty of car theft and will do the time for his crime; I'm sentencing him to ten years in the state prison, no time served and no parole until his sentence is served." She slammed her gavel down and growled when the public defender started yelling.

"Your honor he's 20 years old and this is his..."

"Fourth time in our courts for car theft, if you don't like it, appeal it but I can tell you right now you'll lose." She had turned from the bench and was headed for the door to her chambers when movement at the back of the court room caught her eye. She stopped and saw crazed eyes looking right at her. She raised a hand to point and before she could do anything, Tamara raised her hand and pointed the barrel of a pistol her way. Shots rang out in the court room, people started screaming and running for cover and the door. The young bailiff drew his weapon and fell before he could fire. Judge dropped behind the bench and reached for her pistols, she cursed and banged her head against the wood when she realized that they were in her chambers. Looking towards the door that would lead to the hallway and her chambers, she guessed the distance to be a good six to eight feet away. With the robes tangled around her legs, her bad knee and all around shitty luck, she decided making a run for it was not a good idea.

"Tamara put the damn gun down and we'll talk!" She yelled and knew that had to be the dumbest thing she had said that week. "All right Murphy where the Hell are you and the Calvary?" She mumbled. "Come on Tamara give up already you don't stand a chance when the Sheriff gets

here!" She dropped flat to the floor when bullets tore through the bench and lodged into the wall. She looked up from the floor and saw Belinda standing in the hallway; she mouthed Murphy's name and held her hand out like a gun.

"I hope she gets here so she can watch me shoot you!" Tamara screamed back and started shooting at every thing in the court room. People screamed and ran around like mice trapped in a bucket. "Will you stupid people sit your asses down before I put holes in ya!" She screamed and shot holes into the ceiling. "Come out come out where ever you are you home breaking bitch!"

"Let them go Tamara and you and I will talk." She crawled across the floor and plastered her self against the floor when more shots rang out. She was about to crawl all the way to the door when she saw Belinda in the hallway waving at her, she bent down and slid the Cherry box all the way down the hall and right into Judge's hands.

"Shoot that dumb bitch!" Belinda yelled and held her hands out like guns. "Shoot her or I will!"

Judge stripped out of her robes, pulled her pistols from the box and got to one knee. She checked the magazines and was about to move to the edge of the bench when more shots rang out. She flinched and gasped from the burning sensation in her upper right arm and back. "You son of a bitch!" She pressed a hand to her arm and pulled it away to see her hand covered in blood. "I'm gonna kill you!" She yelled before coming out from behind the bench with both guns aimed at Tamara. "Drop it before I blow you away!"

"You drop it before I..." she waved the gun around and shrugged her shoulders. "I'm gonna kill you no matter what you do." She aimed the gun at Judge and before she could pull the trigger, two shots rang out. She looked down at blood spreading out across her shirt and back up into silvery eyes. "You shot me..." Were her last words as she crumpled to the floor.

"You shot me first bitch." She felt the room start to tip sideways and then she saw Murphy running her way. "Sorry baby but she really pissed me off." She fell into her arms and let the blackness take her away.

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The surgical waiting room was jam packed with people, not only the Whistler's but police officers, deputies, firemen, EMT's and every other person who knew Judge and Murphy was there. Murphy paced the floor in front of the door and kept looking through the window with each pass. It had been over two hours since they had taken Judge in for surgery and the one person who could get her the news on the progress was the one doing the surgery. Vanessa had been the first surgeon to the ER when Judge had been brought in. Murphy knew that someone had called ahead of time to alert the hospital that they were on their way in and to get ready. She rubbed at the back of her neck and looked to where the crowd was parting to let mama and Abbey through. She scooped up the Troll and kissed her cheek.

"Anything yet?" Mama asked.

"Nothing, Ling Ling is doing the surgery...mama it looked bad." She wiped at the tears running down her cheeks and burst into tears. "I can't lose her again mama."

Mama wrapped both of them in her arms and rocked them back and forth. "Don't you worry about Judge; she's stronger than she looks. She's survived a lot of nasty shit that's far worse than getting shot, she survived dating you didn't she?" She heard Murphy chuckle and placed a kiss to her temple. "Besides Ping Pong is with her, who better to slap a band aide on her than your sister?"

"Murphy we brought you a clean shirt." Smootcher held it out to her and took Abbey from her arms.

"Anything yet?" Stewie asked and looked through the windows for movement in the hallway.

"Nope and I'm worried." Murphy said as she took off her blood stained uniform shirt, dropped it to the floor and pulled her clean one on. It was afterwards that she looked around her and saw that everyone had been watching. "What, geez it's not like I was naked, like ya'll haven't already seen that." She picked up her shirt and when she stood, she saw her sister coming towards the doors. Her heart skipped a beat at the dark circles beneath her brown eyes and the slouched set of her shoulders. "Ohhhh God mama..."

"Hey sis," Vanessa squeezed her shoulder and gave mama a kiss on her cheek. "I can sneak you up to see your woman but you better not tell on me." She gave her a tired smile. "She's doing good, I repaired all the damage to the muscle tissue of her upper arm and cleaned up where the bullet scuffed up the bone but I gotta tell you if she wasn't so damn muscular she wouldn't be here with us. The bullet went through her triceps, the lateral muscles and then traveled along a rib and went out beside her shoulder blade."

"Ping Pong that sounds bad," Murphy said in a low voice. "She's not gonna..."

"Hey I'm an excellent surgeon I'll have you know." She took her hand and pulled her back towards the doors, we gotta go up the back steps or I'll be working as a bounty hunter." She got her down the hallway and into the ICU room where Judge was still sleeping. "Go ahead, I'm gonna turn my self into the head nurse." She went down the hall to the nurse's station and confessed her sins to the head nurse; she knew it was better to let someone know than to have her sister have to arrest her self. She went back down the hallway and stood in the doorway; she watched Murphy lean over the bed and gently kiss her lovers lips before sitting on the edge of the bed. She wiped tears from her eyes and headed back towards the stairs. She never thought that she would see day when her sister would grow up and make a commitment to someone. "About damn time but it still ain't fair." She mumbled.

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Judge opened her eyes and looked around her; the first thought that came to her was that she wasn't dead. The next thing was that she hurt like hell and wished that she were dead. "I really hate hospitals." She mumbled and then felt something move at her side. "I sure hope that's you Murph cuz if this is how they set up roommates in this hospital then I'm outta here." She lifted her left hand and saw the handcuff. "That answers my next question."

"Didn't want them to steal you," Murphy mumbled and snuggled closer to her side. "Or throw me out." She stiffened and raised her head to look down at her lover. "I'm gonna kill you, what in the Sam hell were you thinking?"

"Let's see," she blinked a few times and waited for her head to clear some more. "I was thinking that you were late with the Calvary and that I was in pain because that crazy ass bitch shot me." She jabbed Murphy in her chest and growled. "Where were you?"

"I had to run all the way from the damn station, that crazy ass bitch flattened all the tires on the cruisers in the parking lot. And the deputies that drank the coffee from the coffee shop were in the john with diarrhea and don't get me started on all the other stuff she managed to do." She took a deep breath, looked into clear blue eyes and started crying. "I thought I lost you again." She dropped her face to Judge's chest and wept.

"I'm not going anywhere Murph; I've proved that a couple times now." She hugged her as best she could through the pain and the handcuffed wrist. "Baby, am I under arrest or can ya take the cuffs off me?"

"No keys, I left them at the office."

Judge started to laugh and then groaned from the pains shooting through her body. "So I guess I'm in a shit load of trouble huh?"

"I think you may get the key to the city actually, you saved Jefferson a shit load of money on attorneys, court costs and I sound truly evil...I am evil what am I saying." She searched for her cell phone and moaned. "I forgot my phone on my desk."

"Ebay'd it." A small voice came from under the bed.

"Abigail how did you find us?" Murphy asked and tried to get down from the bed. "Wanna do Judge a big favor, come up here and pick the handcuff lock."

"Kay!" She yelled and crawled out from under the bed; she crawled up the side of the bed, across Murphy and sat down on Judge's thighs. "Gots booboo?" She pointed to the shoulder immobilizer and bandages peeking out from under Judge's gown.

"Yep, a big one." Judge said and raised her wrist up to show the handcuff. "Got keys?"

"Nope, ork." She pulled out a bent up fork from her pocket and went to work on the cuffs, in a few minutes she had it off Judge's wrist and was working on Murphy's. When it fell free of her wrist, the Troll waved her fork at her. "Owes me."

"Yeah I owe you, I'll take you for an unhappy meal, how's that sound?"

"Kay." She moved so that she was lying on her back between them. "Go home now?"

"That all depends on if a certain Judge can keep her ass immobile?" Vanessa said. "Ya know, now days unless you've had a heart transplant, we throw you out the same day of treatment. But you two got a break and that's only because Murph there has a gun and handcuffs." She looked to see them lying on the bed. "Which I see are finally off and I see how they got that way. Granny's looking for you Troll and I heard that she's got a tiny little straight jacket just for you."

"Wants two!"

"You may very well need two of them," Vanessa mumbled. "She got loose from her harness and how did she find you guys?"

The Troll pointed to both Judge and Murphy and shrugged her shoulders. "Gwissly bear snores."

Judge pointed a finger at Murphy. "See that, I told you that you sound like a grizzly bear."

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Two weeks later, Judge stood outside of the small store on Main street, she looked through the window and then around her. "Not one word that we were in here, ya got me Troll?" She looked down into a grinning face and knew that she was going to pay for her silence. "Dairy Queen and you keep it quiet?"

"Kay." She grabbed Judge's finger and pulled her towards the door.

Judge looked into all the cases until she found what she was looking for; she waved a hand at the clerk to get her attention. "May I see these rings here?" She came over, unlocked the door and pulled the tray out.

"Which ones are you interested in?" She looked at the ones that Judge was pointing to and smiled. "Those are my favorites; they're beautiful and I love how the diamonds sparkle."

Judge looked at one of the rings and held it up to the light, the clerk was right, they were beautiful. "Do you have a size 10 and a," she searched in her pocket and then looked down to a grinning Troll. "Abigail Daniela Whistler gimme that ring."

"Wait, you have the spittin troll with you?" The girl asked and looked over the counter to see her sitting at Judge's feet.

"Yes I do, why?" Judge was curious.

"Just tell me who you need a ring for and I'll pull the size up in the computer, the Whistlers have been coming here for years."

"Well that makes it easier," she held her hand out to the Troll and raised an eyebrow when she didn't produce Murphy's ring. "I'll tell Aunchmama you stole it." She took the ring from little fingers and cussed under her breath. "It's for Murphy."

"Ok lemme see what size you need." She came back a minute later and pulled a ring from the tray. "Here it is, so ya gonna make an honest woman of her?" She leaned on the counter and wiggled a brow at her. "We've been waiting for years for someone to do that," she held out a hand. "I'm her cousin Sherry."

"I'm gonna try," she shook hands with her. "I just need to find the perfect moment but then I guess you hear that a lot in here."

"All the time and I'll tell ya, there's never a perfect moment until you ask. As soon as you hold out the ring, there's nothing can be any more perfect than that."

"What about the romantic moment, you know with the candle light dinner and all that?"

"In my experience, it's either a dead give-away what you're going to do or it's a break up dinner." She pointed to the ring. "Do it the Whistler way, take her hand and slip the ring on her finger."

"That seems so unromantic to me...I'll think of something." She pointed to both rings. "I'll take those and a bull ring for the Troll." She handed her a credit card and shook her head when she saw what the Troll had been doing while she talked. "Now how are we gonna walk after you tied our boot laces together?"

With the ring boxes safely tucked in a pocket that the Troll couldn't get to, Judge carried her back to the Sheriff department where Mama was to meet her. She would tell her of her intentions and see if she had any ideas of how to go about asking Murphy for her hand.

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With the death of the young bailiff at Tamara's hands, her death from Judge's, Murphy was up to her eyeballs in paperwork. She had investigators from all walks of life through her office, witness statements, insurance reports and she could swear that she lost her secretary in the mess some where. "Mrs. Hardly...I've fallen and I can't get UP!" She tried to step over, around or



through the mess in her office and all she ended up doing was falling over it and landing in a pile of folders and boxes.

"Can we just toss a match and run?" The older woman asked as she helped Murphy to her feet.

"Ohhhh how I wish we could do that, I'd run right out and get a lighter and take care of it." She stumbled to her feet and threw a hand out to grab the door frame. "I'm going home, I've had enough for one day and it's getting that I haven't seen Judge or the Troll except on my way out the door. If the Attorney Generals office or investigators need anything, send them to Jeff; let them bother him for a while."

"You got it and tell Judge to take it easy with that arm, I saw her in town the other day carrying all sorts of stuff."

"It's like talking to...me," she grinned. "I tried to get her to slow down but she's determined to get the house finished and all the other stuff around the property completed. My brothers have most of our barn put up and the other guys are almost finished with the stone on the wall where the wood burning stove is. On top of all that, she managed to get them to put in a Jacuzzi off the new addition on our bedroom."

"Isn't your bedroom upstairs?"

"Yeah, she had them put in a new addition; the room below is the Troll cage as she calls it. That's where Woobie and the Troll play during the night or when it's too nasty outside."

"She sure is keeping those relatives of yours busy isn't she?"

"Them and some other men she's found along the way, she gave that homeless guy that used to sit by 7-11 a permanent job as security guard/grounds man for the property and a small house to live in, I swear I'm gonna get her nominated for Saint or something." She looked at her watch and groaned. "I'm outta here, if I drive at warp speed I might get to have supper with Judge and the Troll." She jogged from the office and then ran all the way to her cruiser.

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Judge looked into the full length mirror and rolled her eyes, she just couldn't believe that she was going to go through with Belinda's request. She had gone back over to her and Murphy's old house and searched through the stuff she had packed away in boxes in the attic. After she had found what she needed, she paid her workers to pack all the stuff into a u-haul truck and bring it to their new house. It took her days but she was able to go through all the boxes and donate some of it to goodwill and then gave good portion of it to the guys for their families. So now she stood in their bedroom looking like a throw back to her younger days, she sure hoped that Stewie and Smotcher showed up to get her picture so that she could change before Murphy got home.

She didn't know why it really mattered whether she saw her or not, she was sure that her sisters would blow-up a picture and have it made into a bill board in town somewhere. She took one final look and then went in search of a little dog and the Troll. She had it all planed out that she would take Murphy out to supper and then they would go down to the dock on their property across the road for a walk along the river and then she would pop the question. She patted her pocket and felt the ring box, she had checked earlier to make sure that the rings were still in it, she found out that no matter where she hid the damn thing, the Troll always found it. With one last glance at her watch, she headed for the stairs. As she came to the last step, she heard the gravel crunch in the driveway and hoped that it was the idiots coming in.

"Woobie...Troll where the hell are you guys hiding?" She went through the house and ended up in the backyard, she looked to the Troll tree as they now called it and seen Woobie running around it and the Troll sitting in the V. She knew that there was no way to keep her from escaping the house; she had started using the dog door in the kitchen with Woobie. She couldn't get near the road because the land was now fenced in, which was good, and the lock on the gate was so far Troll proof. "Time for you two to come in and eat supper," She walked towards the tree and noticed the wide eyed look from the Troll. "What's wrong," she looked down at her self and then around her. "My fly open or something?"

"Huba huba!" She yelled from her perch and then pointed behind Judge. "Gets her!" She jumped from the tree and went running towards the house.

"That's new, she jumps and who am I supposed to get?" She scratched her head and turned to find a pair of light green eyes taking her in.

"I think that was meant for me," Murphy said in a deep husky voice as she stepped closer to her lover. "Where have you been hiding all this leather?" She ran her hands across the worn black leather motorcycle jacket and then down across Judge's chest. She looked down at the scuffed and worn black leather pants, licked her lips and wiggled an eyebrow. "That's it; this is all you're allowed to wear from now on." She pulled her head down for a kiss that had Judge sinking to her knees.

"Uhhmm...", she blinked a few times and took a deep breathe. "What was I saying?"

"Yes, this is all I'm gonna wear from now on?" Murphy said in a deep seductive purr.

"That will really cause a stir in the court room." She got to her feet and took her lover's hand.

"You dress like this all the time and you'll never be able to leave the bedroom." She ran her hand down from Judge's back to her ass, she moaned at the feel of the flexing muscle beneath her hand and if not for her sisters standing in the yard, she would have jumped Judge right there.

"Ohhhh my Gods," Stewie looked from Judge to Smotcher and then fell over in the yard. "She's HOT!" All Smotcher could do was stand with her mouth hanging open and watch as they walked past her.

"You better get in here with that camera!" Judge yelled as they crossed into the kitchen.

"Pictures...great big life-sized leather clad Judge!" Smootcher got out and then yanked Stewie to her feet. "We got scotch tape?"

"We'll get lots of it if not!" They ran for the door and got stuck when they both tried to get through at the same time.

Judge and Murphy were finally able to get out of the house, Judge felt like she had been posing for Leather Dyke magazine and was ready to take Stewie's camera and shove it up her ass. She looked down at her lover with a raised eyebrow and then just shook her head; there was nothing she could do about the goofy grin plastered on her face.

"Is this how you corrupted a good catholic girl?"

"It sure didn't hurt any," Judge whispered close to her ear. "It's what I put between her legs that really corrupted her." She grabbed Murphy to keep her from falling to the ground.

"You mean you can do more than what you've already done to me?" She sputtered out and wiped at the sweat that had formed on her upper lip. "Hot damn but I'm a lucky woman!" She was headed towards her cruiser when Judge pulled her in the opposite direction; she looked up at her and saw her grin. "Tell me were gonna go make out in the barn loft, it's always been a fantasy of mine."

"Nope, but I'll remember that for when the guys get it all done." She walked her to the sliding door, pushed it open and stopped in front of a tarp covered mound. She gave Murphy a sexy grin and yanked the tarp off her secret. "This does wonders on an uptight catholic girl."

Murphy looked at the motorcycle, she trailed her fingertips across the shiny purple paint on the gas tank and then to the leather seat. She could picture in her minds eye, her sexy ass lover straddling the machine and felt her heart skip a beat. "What kind of Harley is it?"

"It's a 1989 Harley custom FXDXT; I bought it last week from that pawn shop down the road." She searched her pockets for the keys and rolled her eyes. "I forgot the keys in the house, I'll be right back." She took off at a jog back towards the house and passed a running Troll on the way, she gave a quick glance back and then kept on going.

"Aunchmama...aunchmama!" The Troll yelled and jumped into Murphy's arms.

"What are you doing out here and in your PJ's at that?"

She put her lips next to Murphy's ear and whispered; "Escapes." Then she gave her a toothy grin before she shoved her hand into her shirt pocket. "Wants two!"

"Ok, I've got the keys." Judge jingled them in her hand. "Your aunts are looking for you little

girl, you better give Smootcher back her keys because she says if you don't then no cookies."

"Wants two!" She wiggled from Murphy's arms and went running back to the house, the whole way she yelled wants two.

"Ready?"

"I've been ready since I first saw you in all this leather." She grabbed the lapels of her jacket and pulled her down for a deep kiss. "Where we going stud?"

"We have reservations at The Anvil in Harpers Ferry and from there, I was thinking of a ride along the river."

"So what's the occasion?" She took the offered helmet and pulled it on.

"Ohh just that I love you." She pulled her own helmet on and then straddled the bike. She put the key in the ignition and started the bike; a huge grin came to her face with the rumbling of the engine. "It feels so good to have another bike." She moaned when Murphy got on behind her and ran her hands across her breasts.

"I'm gonna really enjoy this." She yelled and then hugged her tightly.

Murphy was shocked at what Judge had been able to pull off; they had sat in a private room at the Anvil, they had the most expensive dinners complete with a rare wine and then fresh apple dumplings with home made vanilla ice cream on top. She leaned back in her chair and swore if she breathed too deeply, she would explode. She eyed her lover across the table and took in how the blue cotton pirate shirt she wore hung open down her chest. "I'm warning you now; you're not getting any sleep tonight." She gave her a seductive look and ran her foot up the inside of her leg.

"So is it the leather or the food?"

"Most definitely the leather, I love the smell of leather." She stood up and stretched her arms over her head. "Let's go for a ride stud."

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Judge sat on the dock with the sun setting behind her; she watched as Murphy dipped a strawberry into chocolate and with a seductive look, licked her fingers clean. What she would really like to do now to Murphy would get them arrested and on the front page of the newspaper. So she put her thoughts else where and onto something that would guarantee to cool her heels. And that was her helpers, she was glad that after they left, Smootcher and Stewie had remembered to bring her cooler over to the dock. She was surprised to find some extra stuff that she hadn't thought of sitting on the dock as well. What she really wondered about, was where

they had found the swing that she was sitting on, and if someone was right now reporting it missing from their front porch.

"You know you are just full of surprises and who knew you were so romantic?" Murphy said and held out a strawberry for her, she took a shuddering breath when Judge nipped and then licked her fingers clean of chocolate.

"I had help, lots of help." She held out her hand to her and pulled her down beside her. "Who knew mama was such a romantic?"

"My mama helped you...that's just too...weird." She leaned into Judge and ran her hand across the warm leather on her thigh. "And this swing, it looks familiar for some reason." Judge felt panic coming on, she was ready to run all the way home and kill two women. "I think this belonged to my grandma, it's been in the garage for years." Judge sighed with relief and let her head drop back to rest on the back of the swing. She looked at the darkening sky and knew that she had better make her move before she lost her nerve or it got too dark to see anything. Reaching into the inner pocket of her jacket, she pulled out the small blue ring box and then turned sideways on the swing.

"Murphy I know that we haven't been together that long but I know that I can't and don't ever want to be without you." She looked from her hands into glistening green eyes and gave her a small smile. "I don't have an eloquent way with words so I'm just gonna do this the Whistler way." She opened the ring box and felt panic flow through her body. "I'm gonna kill her and let Woobie bury her in the yard!" She searched through her pockets and ground her teeth together. "She's going in a straight jacket, that rotten tiny little thief!"

Murphy wiped at her eyes and watched as Judge went nuts searching for something, and then she saw the ring box and felt her mouth fall open. As soon as she said the word thief, Murphy knew who she was talking about. She remembered the Troll shoving her hand in her shirt pocket earlier that day and never bothered looking to see what she had put in there. Most of the time it was something gross and disgusting like a half eaten cookie or candy bar. She paid no attention to Judge jumping up and jogging towards the road until she saw what was in her pocket. "BLOODSTONE!" She yelled at the tops of her lungs and waved a hand in her direction. "I think I have what you're looking for!" She brought the rings in closer, looked at all the diamonds circling the bands and gasped. "Ohhhh my...these are...Judge?"

"Yeah they are and I'm still gonna kill her." She took the rings from Murphy's hand, picked the smaller of the two out and held it out to her. "Marry me?"

"Are ya nuts?" Murphy took the ring, slipped it on her finger and then tackled Judge. "You didn't even have to ask, just put the ring on my finger." She kissed her like she never had before and stopped when she was close to passing out from lack of air.

"So that's a yes?" Judge said when she was able to speak without gasping for air.

"Ohh yeah!" She took the other ring from Judge's hand and slipped it on her left ring finger.

"Damn good thing that you didn't lose any more of this finger.

"Tell me about it, I'm just glad it's not my right hand, I'd be impotent."

"No chance of that," she got off her, pulled her to her feet and hugged her tight. "I love you JT, now let's go home and celebrate in our bedroom."

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Murphy lay in bed beside Judge; she raised her hand up and watched as the morning sun glistened off the diamonds. She still couldn't believe that Judge had asked her to marry her; she chuckled with the memory of Judge finding the ring box empty. She still hadn't figured out how the Troll had found the box or when she had taken the rings. She would probably never know either; the Troll wasn't talking, because she had taken the 5th. Murphy wondered if they had a lawyer in the making, the Troll was spouting all kinds of stuff that she had heard while sitting at the bench in the court room. It was better than hearing her singing the dirty ditties she had learned while running around the holding cells.

"So I did ok," Judge asked and rolled to her side. "Except for the part where I went nuts because the rings were gone?"

"More than ok, you completely surprised me." She ran her fingers across Judge's matching ring and then placed a kiss on it. "So how did you keep the Troll's silence?"

"Dairy Queen, McDonalds, Taco Bell and Burger King, she's a tough one to keep quiet, your sisters were easy. All I had to promise them were pictures of me in my leathers."

"You are in so much trouble; those pictures may end up on the internet or plastered all over their bedroom walls."

"If I end up on a calendar, I want royalties." She moved closer to Murphy and buried her face against her neck. "That's an idea; we can have them make Law enforcement calendars, sell them and put the money in the bank for the Trolls education."

"Or in the bank for bail money, she's gonna give us lots of grey hair." Just then she came running in the room with wide eyes and sputtering something neither one of them could understand, all they caught was Woobie and help.

"Did you lock the dog door with Woobie outside?" Murphy asked.

"No, she was in bed with the Troll when I locked it." She got out of bed and pulled her robe on before leaving the bedroom. She went from room to room looking for Woobie and then found her because the Troll came running back into the hallway from the bathroom waving her hands.

"Helps!"

Judge panicked, the last time Woobie was in the bathroom, she was in the toilet and couldn't get out. She rounded the door to the bathroom and saw the door to the vanity open. "Is she hiding under the sink?"

"Helps!" The Troll yelled and ran over to look under the sink, when Judge looked inside, she groaned deeply.

"Woobie you're not supposed to have your pups in here, that's why we got you that kennel thing." She picked up the Troll and carried her back to the bedroom. "Woobie's having her pups under the bathroom sink."

"I didn't think she was due yet," Murphy said as she slipped her feet into her slippers. "Gimme badness and you go see about Woobie, I'll get breakfast ready and make sure her kennel has clean blankets in it." She gave her a soft kiss before she left the bedroom. "What a weekend this has turned out to be." She looked into wide blue eyes and grinned. "So Abigail, how did you get the rings from Judge?"

"Stoles 'em...wants two!"

"We know that but how did you steal them?"

"Sneaks in and steals 'em from pocket," She leaned in close to her aunts ear and whispered. "Calls her mama J now?"

"If you want," she kissed her forehead and hugged her tight. "I think she'll like that."

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Judge carried Woobie and her one pup out to the kitchen and rolled her eyes when Murphy looked her way. "I pray that she only has this one pup," she placed Woobie in the kennel and then the pup against her belly. "It looks nothing like Woobie when she was born."

"What's another misfit in the family," Murphy said as she placed a bowl of cereal before Abbey. "Look we kept the Troll and she spits." She hurriedly pointed a finger at her. "But not in the house."

Judge chuckled at the look on the Trolls face, she knew she had a mouthful of juice and given the chance, she would spit it across the table. "Ya know she could fit in the kennel with Woobie and her pup, we could lock the door and always know where she was and what she was doing." She leaned down to look into blue eyes. "No more stealing stuff little girl, you almost gave me a heart attack last night."

"Kay mama J." She said and went back to eating her cereal.

Judge looked up at Murphy with wide eyes, her mouth moved but nothing came out. "It was her idea," Murphy said and shrugged her shoulders. "I think it fits you."

"Aunchmama...mama J...in Trolls tree," She sang out and danced in her high chair. "Doin the nasty in the V."

"Uhhmm..." Judge rubbed her chin and looked to Murphy.

"Uhhmm what JT," she stepped closer to her and ran her hands up her body to rest on her chest. "Wanna go play in the Troll tree or is it that you've already done that before?"

"I plead the fifth."

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A few weeks later had Judge looking to a fuming Belinda and mumbling under her breath, she had no idea why she had to get her picture taken; she hated having it taken, especially after seeing what Stewie did with the ones she had taken of her in leathers. They made a JT Bloodstone calendar for their cubicle, wallpapers for their pc's and T-shirts. The Troll was running around the courthouse now with one of them on, there was no way that anyone could not know who she belonged to, she kept pointing to her shirt and saying mama J. What really shocked her was the poster of her on Belinda's wall, she wondered if it had all been a set up between her, mama and Claudia. The only other person who knew about her and her leathers was Claudia, so when Belinda told her as a payback, she had to wear them for Murphy, it should have clued her in.

Then the news of her and Murphy's commitment to each other spread like wild fire once mama got the news that Judge had indeed asked her. Now mama was planning their trip to Massachusetts to get it on paper. They knew that it wouldn't mean anything in the state of West Virginia but it was still legal in other states and it would mean a lot to them. With the whirlwind of activity lately and now pictures, she was ready to take Murphy, the Troll and the dogs and run for the hills.

"Tell me again why I have to do this?"

"For when you run for Governor, it'll look good." She stepped forward and took the suit jacket from her hands and waved a finger at her. "Nope that'll make you look to...stuffy." She looked at her watch, rolled her eyes in exasperation and then pulled Judge from her chambers. "You better hope that he hasn't given up on you and gone home."

"I can wish can't I?" They stepped from the court house to see the Whistlers and the reporter



from the Journal standing at the bottom of the steps. Judge thought that he looked familiar but didn't know if she had ever formally met him. "Is there anyone you missed sending an invite to?" She mumbled.

"I didn't set this up, he did." She pointed to the photographer and waved. "I almost had to threaten her to get her ass out here Bill."

Judge held out a hand and introduced herself. "I don't think there's anyone who doesn't know you." He gave her hand a strong shake. "I'm Bill Matthews; I've been sneaking around Murphy and the rest of the gang since she decided to run for Sheriff."

"He did all the articles on me and slapped my mug shot on the front page after I won." She stepped forward and took Judge's hand. "And now it's your turn and you're gonna look hot." She whispered the last part so that only she could hear it. What neither of them realized was that Bill had been snapping pictures of their interaction with each other, he saw the love they had for each other and wanted to capture that on film.

"Ok guys, Murph you and Judge stand up there on the steps next to each other," he tilted his head to the side and shook it. "Take one step down Murph and step in front of Judge." He looked through his camera and said "Wants two!" The looks on their faces was priceless, he lowered the camera and grinned at them. "Ok, now that you're relaxed, this will go easier." After a good hour, he had enough shots of everyone to feel safe. He winked at mama after he had packed up his gear and handed her a note. "I'll load the shots as soon as I get home and you can go to that webpage and pick the ones ya want."

"Thanks Bill and I want you to know that we've made you an honorary Whistler, which means you get to come to all our family gatherings and the upcoming reception."

"Ohh I'll be sure and be at the reception, everyone needs pictures of that." He waved to everyone and made his way back to his car parked down the street.

"Reception?" Judge asked and looked to mama and then to Murphy.

"You can't win against mama so just say 'Ok mama what ever you want.'" She wrapped her arms around her and hugged her. "The Whistlers always get what we want and if you're done for the day, I wanna go home and BBQ some chicken and then sit on the back deck and relax."

Judge looked to Belinda and saw her shrug her shoulders. "We're done right boss?"

"Nothing that can't wait until tomorrow...errr Monday, so when is your trip to Massachusetts?"

Mama looked to Judge and Murphy and shook her head. "Those two couldn't plan a trip to the bathroom, it's the week after next on Monday, so make sure her docket is switched or delayed whatever it is you all do."

"I'll start doing that on Monday," she slapped Judge in her upper arm. "Dipshit."

"Hey I have no idea what's going on 99% of the time, that's why I have you."

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Mama looked to her watch and tapped her fingers on the picnic table; she knew what time the kid's flight arrived and how long it took for them to get home. She would kill them if they were playing around somewhere, she never knew two people that had sex almost every single night. Murphy's brothers were suffering because of it, a few of them asked her how she managed it and she just pointed to Judge and said. "*Can you imagine not wanting to make love to her?*" That stopped their questions and made them all the more jealous of her. She had just pulled her cell phone out when she heard the rumble of a motorcycle and then seen them pulling through the parking lot of the park. She was still going to read them the riot act for being late.

She looked around and saw Bill with a couple of her sons and went over to tell him of Judge and Murphy's arrival, he looked to where she was pointing and nodded his head. Before she could say another word, he had his camera up and was snapping away.

"I have my laptop and printer in my car; I can print out a contact page for you and get you the ones you want right away."

"Ohh that's perfect, then I can get their scrap book done; I have copies of all their newspaper articles and some other stuff already in it. But these pictures will be a perfect ending for this book and then it's on to a new one." She grinned and rubbed her hands together and pointed a finger at Stewie. "You know what I want, go get it."

Stewie jogged up to Murphy and held her hand out, when Murphy raised a fist at her, she pointed back to mama who was shaking her fist in the air. Giving in, Murphy reached inside Judge's leather jacket and pulled the folded paper out and handed it over. Stewie blew her a kiss and took off running in the opposite direction.

"Where is she going with our marriage certificate?" Judge asked as she watched her run all the way down the sidewalk and turn down another street.

"She's under orders from mama so who knows." She snorted. "I wonder why she didn't take the truck to where ever, she's gonna drop in about a minute and then someone's gonna have to go pick her dumb ass up." She watched as Smotcher pulled out of the parking lot and shook her head as she drove past them. "Look at that, not even a minute."

Judge looked around at all the people in the park and wondered if another family was having a party as well. "So where exactly are your family members?"

Murphy looked at her like she was crazy. "JT, all the people here are Whistlers, it's kinda like a United Nations party huh?"

"I'd say, I've never seen one family be this big, there must be over 200 people here."

"Yeah maybe, we've all lost count over the years but now there's one more." She pulled her down for a lingering kiss. "Make that three more." She said when she heard Woobie and her ugly pup barking at their feet.

"Do ya think mama would make the pup a coat, ya know to cover up her bald spots?"

"Or we could shave her so she looks like Woobie?"

"Murph, she would need plastic surgery to look like her mother." She looked down at the gray pup with her under bite, patchy hair, curly tail and big round eyes. The vet said she looked like she had pug and hairless Chihuahua in her; all they knew was that she was so ugly that she was cute and Troll named her booboo because of her bald spots. "Ok, now that we're here, what do we do?"

"Uhhmm I know what I would like to do but mama would kill us."

"You mean run like hell all the way back home?" Judge asked and knew she was half right. "And not leave the bedroom for the rest of the week?" She saw the wicked grin come over her wife's face and knew she had hit the nail on the head. "Only one problem with that, there's this little Troll that sits and pounds on the bedroom door."

"Speaking of which, I wonder who got stuck with her." They headed towards mama and Bill but still hadn't seen the Troll. "Where's the Troll?" Murphy asked as she looked around for her other nieces and nephews.

"On the tennis courts," mama said and pointed. "Stewie put a chain on the gate once all the kids ran in, now it's the official Whistler state pen."

Judge looked towards the court and searched until she caught sight of the Troll; she looked again and felt her heart race. "She's halfway up the fence!" There was the Troll climbing up the chain link fence that enclosed the tennis courts and yelling '*wants two!*' the entire way. Judge forgot all about her bad knee and took off at a sprint; she reached the fence before Murphy could even get halfway. "What are you doing up there, you could fall and get hurt?" She yelled and pointed a finger at her.

"Mama J back!" She yelled. "Aunchmama...wants two!"

Judge watched as Murphy opened the lock on the chained door and ran inside the tennis courts; she stood below the Troll and watched her with nervous eyes. "Now what JT?"

"I'll go up this side; you keep watch on that side."

"She's gonna be the death of us." She mumbled and moved closer to the fence to catch her if she fell. She watched as Judge crawled up the other side but not before the Troll was over the top and on her way back down. "She's gonna beat you to the ground," she ran around to the other side and looked up in time to see the Troll crawl down over her head and to sit on her shoulders with her arms wrapped around Judge's head. "Just don't fall, I can't catch both of you...and live." With Judge safely on the ground, she took her first deep breath since seeing the Troll crawling up the fence. She pulled her down from her wife's shoulders and glared at her. "Don't you ever do that again, we're too young to have grey hair."

"I'm too damn old to be running and crawling up a chain link fence." Judge said as she dropped to the grass and rubbed at her knee.

"You, I'm too damn old to be trying to run with a damn cheap bionic leg!" Mama said huffing and puffing, she pointed a finger at the Troll and growled. "I'm gonna paddle your ass little girl."

Later that day, the Troll was in her harness and tethered to mama, if she so much as wiggled, she got the 'look'. Judge and Murphy had calmed down and were now on the make-shift dance floor, mama never knew that Murphy could slow dance until now. Then again it looked more like a make-out session than dancing and her brothers were once again paying the price. She grinned at the yelps from her sons as their wives and girlfriends smacked them and pointed to the newly weds. "Watch and learn boys, watch and learn." She said and laughed some more when a few of the boys called out Murphy's name and flipped her off.

"Ok mama, I think we got everything that you wanted in here." Smotcher said and handed her the scrap book. "We also got the marriage certificate framed and troll proofed for them."

She flipped to the last few pages and nodded her head, she had picked some of Bill's pictures earlier, he printed them for her and the idiots put them into the scrap book along with a copy of the marriage certificate. The second to last picture was of Judge holding the Troll with her arm wrapped around Murphy as they talked to Stewie and Smotcher. The last picture in the scrap book was of them kissing on the dance floor and mama could swear that you could feel the emotions from the picture. She wiped a tear from her eye and nodded her head. "Ok, get them over here because I'm not getting up, the Troll just about dragged me across the park earlier, she's worse than having a grey hound on a leash."

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Judge sat on the couch with Murphy at her side, they had been looking at the scrap book mama had made for them and lived and relived some parts of their lives. Judge snickered at the picture of the troll with 'the vote for Murphy' t-shirt on. She flipped the page and felt overwhelming pride when she looked at the picture of Murphy being sworn in as Sheriff. "I never dreamed of you being sheriff, how in the hell did you pull that off with your record anyway?"

"I don't have a record," she grinned and ran her hand up her thigh. "Sure I've been pulled over, threatened and even hauled in but I was never convicted of anything and neither has Stewie or Smootcher."

"But I saw your file; it was full of all kinds of stuff."

"All fake, we wanted to be bad girls." She shrugged her shoulders and grinned. "We even went to college and the police academy afterwards."

Judge gave her a narrowed look before pointing a finger at her. "You guys are college and police academy graduates but you worked at Wal-Mart and as bounty hunters because why?"

"For the hell of it, but ya gotta agree we made a shit load of money hauling in jumpers and with all the side businesses we have. We're filthy rich and own a good portion of Jefferson County, just like you JT." She wiggled her brows at her and licked her lips. "But we could never compete with your bad girl image; I'm still shocked over the pictures of you in college." She covered her mouth and shook her head.

"I'm gonna kill Claudia, she's the only one who has pictures of me...how bad are they?"

"Far from that kind of bad they're more like incinerary!" She fanned herself and fell sideways on the couch. "I had to take a cold shower after I saw them," she got up from the couch and pulled Judge with her. "I have them on our PC in the study." She pulled her towards the study, turned the corner into the room and let out a yell as she jumped backwards into Judge. They both stood stock still and waited for their eyes to adjust to the darkness. "What in the Hell is that?" Murphy asked right before she flipped the light on.

"It's my mini me." Judge said as she looked at a cutout of herself standing next to Murphy's cutout. "Ain't that sweet, now your cutout will never be lonely."

"I swear they need to get hobbies...errr different hobbies." She moved over to the desk with the PC on it and waited for the screen saver to stop. As she waited, she noticed a thick manila envelope with Judge's name on it. "This is yours and that's mama's handwriting on it." She handed it to her and watched as she dumped out another scrap book with a letter attached to the front. "What's mama got to say?"

Judge scanned over the letter and decided to just read it out loud.

*JT;*

*You've over come many obstacles in your life, you've shone extreme bravery by accepting to help raise the spittin Troll, and you should get a medal for that alone! But there is still something that you must face before you move completely on and that is the scariest monster of all. I made two scrap books, one for you and Murphy and this one to send to the monster of your past, you know who she is and tell her to KISS YOUR ASS!"*

*Love*  
*Mama D*

"She wants me to send this to my mother?" Judge looked into twinkling green eyes and felt a smirk forming on her face. "If I've learned anything about your mama, it's that she can be mean as a snake."

"So whatcha gonna do?" She asked as she opened the folder with the pictures from Claudia in it.

"I'll have to think about it, it's been kind of nice not having to worry about those people." She looked over her wife's shoulder and groaned. "She would send you the ones that scream..."

"Lock your daughters up?"

"Yeah that was about the truth of it, I hate to say this but I was worse than any guy on campus." She looked to Murphy and blew out a deep breath. "It didn't matter if the girl was straight, gay, attached or a nun, I went after her for the pure pleasure of it."

"And look at you now, married with 1.5 dogs and a Troll."

"And happier than I ever dreamed of being," She kissed her deeply and only stopped when they almost fell over in the desk chair. "Wanna go relive my college days?" She pulled her from the chair and raced her all the way to their bedroom.

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"So tell me Murphy, how is she handling being a mother?" Claudia asked her as she watched Judge try to bribe the Troll out of the tree.

"She's a natural at it that is until her wallet goes dry." She pointed to where she was waving a bill at the Troll. "After that it's a lost cause and she yells for me," she grinned at her when Judge let out a yell of her name. "Like now." She clicked the radio and threatened to call mama and have her come chop the Troll tree down if a certain little girl didn't get her ass out of the tree. She watched as the Troll looked her way, clicked her own radio and yelled 'wants two.'

"She says that a lot, what exactly does it mean?"

Murphy chuckled and shook her head. "Did your mom ever say 'you're gonna get it when you got in trouble?'"

"All the time...I see now."

"She narks on herself all the time; she sees one of us and automatically yells wants two, makes

us really nervous at times, especially Judge." She held up her hand and spun her wedding band. "She told you about the wedding ring incident didn't she?"

"I almost died that day, I was choking on my coffee after she told me, and if not for Joe being in the kitchen I would have been haunting her ass."

"Where is Joe, I haven't seen him in a while?"

"Last I saw, he was with your brothers, something about a cabana or dock or who the hell knows with men."

"Ohhhh they're building a cabana down by the lake they dug out back, like the river isn't enough." She rolled her eyes. "Here comes trouble," she pointed to Judge and the Troll. "You haven't seen the scrap book mama made have you, believe me it captures Judge in a much different light." She came back outside with the scrap book in her hand; she dropped back into her chair and handed it over to Claudia. "Mama made that and gave it to us at our reception." She held a hand out to Judge and pulled her down to sit with her in the chair. "Baby did you send the other scrap book to your parents?"

"Nope, I had it all addressed and sitting on the desk ready to go and I went chicken."

"It's not on the desk, I was just in there." She saw a curly blonde head swivel, blue eyes go wide and the next thing she was off running through the yard yelling 'wants two!' "She wouldn't would she?"

"How could she, she can't get down to the mailbox unless she's been climbing the fence..." She groaned and dropped her head into her hands. "The Troll can do just about anything if she puts her evil little mind to it." Claudia just sat snickering at her old friend, she had to admit that they made a great couple and she was glad for the small part she played in getting them back together.

"It'll be ok, you'll see." Claudia said and opened the scrap book to catch up on her old friend's new life.

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Mrs. Bloodstone took the manila envelope from the mailman and grimaced in disgust, it was covered in chocolate and Cheeto orange fingerprints. "How disgusting, the post office needs to do something with their employees, this is just repulsive!" She tore the top of it open and dumped out the contents onto the kitchen table. "Who would send me something like this; it's so...lower class." She opened the first page and saw her daughters face staring back at her; it was a picture she had never seen before and wondered where it was taken. As she flipped through pages, she saw who she knew to be Murphy Whistler. Her anger flared to life with each picture

of the smaller woman and her deceased daughter. "One day I'll get you back for what you did to us, come into my house and embarrass me in front of the hired help and..." She looked down at a picture of Judge in a newspaper clipping and felt her world tip.

"Tell me you've not started a new hobby," her husband said as he stopped across from her. "Scrap booking, that surly is not something that would interest you." He looked to where she was pointing and noticed for the first time in their marriage that nothing was coming from her mouth. "So what, it's a picture of Judge."

"She's dead...right" she pointed at the date of the newspaper and saw his eyes widen in shock.

"That's got to be wrong, maybe a misprint in the newspaper." He took the scrapbook from her hands and flipped through it until he came to the last two pages. He looked at the picture of Murphy and Judge kissing and of them with Abbey and felt his heart skip a beat. He looked up to his wife and waved a hand at it. "This could have been taken any time, it doesn't mean anything and you and I both know that she left every thing she owned to that Whistler woman and there was nothing I could do about it." He flipped to the last page and felt his heart stop from what was before his eyes. "This could be a fake, anyone one with computer skills could make one."

"That looks real and so do all the newspaper clips," she grabbed the kitchen phone and called information. "I want the number for the Boston court house," she ground her teeth when the operator asked her which court house. "I don't give a damn give me any courthouse in Boston!" She wrote down a number on a pad of paper and then dialed it, as soon as she heard a voice on the other end, she started yelling out orders. Her husband shook his head and knew that no matter who she came in contact with, she treated them like the hired help. He watched as she asked her numerous questions in her holier than thou way and then she did something that took him completely by surprise, she fell straight back on the floor is a dead faint. He took the phone from the floor, spoke into the receiver and asked for the person to repeat what he had just said. His mouth dropped open; he looked to the phone and then hung up. He stepped over his wife and went towards his den, once inside, he went to the liquor cabinet and pulled out the most expensive bottle of bourbon he had and poured four fingers of it into a crystal glass. He held the glass up for a salute and grinned. "To you Judge, you're the first person to ever silence your mother." He downed the drink in one shot and took the bottle with him over to his desk, his plans were to finish the bottle off and enjoy the peace and quiet until his wife woke.

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Smootcher dipped her Cheeto into the melted chocolate and then popped it into her mouth before wiping her dirty hands on a pant legs. "Do ya think they got it yet?" She asked her sister and waved an orange and chocolate covered hand at her.

"They should have, we sent it next day mail. Stop eating all the Cheeto's and stop wiping your dirty hands on my leg, use your own." She slapped at her hands. "I wonder if Murph and Judge



have noticed it missing yet or if the Troll has narked yet?" At that moment, her cell phone rang; she looked at the phone number and turned it off. "So have ya ever thought about traveling to a foreign county," she waved an orange colored hand around. "You now like Iraq or maybe Pakistan?"

The End.  
Operation Drop Zone  
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