

## Chapter 771

"Are you implying we are lying to you?" Violet glared.

"I'm implying you six are treating me like an idiot and none of you are graduates of the NSA, CIA or the New York Academy of Fine Arts. Violet," I glared right back.

"You are not being a team player," Theresa gave me a smug look.

"Now we are back to me being treated like an idiot," I sighed. "Let me see, each of you knew where your assigned person was, Buffy didn't see the need to greet Fabiola, Fabiola knew where the car keys were kept, she knew right where the Exeter Building was without accessing our onboard navigation system. She found a parking spot in downtown New York City at ten in the morning in under fifteen minutes...shall I go on?"

The hush was so pronounced that not only could I hear our elevators quiet whirl, I could hear the noise from the ones on either side of us. The women exchanged nervous looks.

"You could still come out and join us for some drinks," Daphne jumpstarted things.

"I'm seeing somebody," I countered.

"You don't have a girlfriend," Paula stated confidently. Yep – dating survey.

"I met a nice female mime (might as well confirm my heterosexuality) and after an in depth conversation I think we have a lot in common so we are giving serious thought about going out tonight," I lied. Oh, it was an obvious lie alright. I wanted it to be.

"She could join us," Tigger suggested. They were freaking relentless. Fortunately, the elevator doors opened and we exited onto the ground floor.

"And that would make sense because on the first date I'd want to surround her with a bunch of women she doesn't know and probably has little in common with...I don't think so," I mused.

They watched me prep my bike, affix my helmet and pedal off to freedom while hovering around and trying to create a new game plan.

"Let us know how the date goes," Fabiola called out.

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"Like that is going to happen," I muttered as I sped away.

I had studied the route between the corporation headquarters and my domicile for three days and gone onto multiple chats with my fellow cyclists to get a feel for traffic flows, road construction and back alleys. This allowed me to get home in just under fifteen minutes. I lugged my bike up the three flights of stairs – my neighborhood was far from the safe confines of the skyscraper – and settled into my shared flat.

The apartment was rather close quarters, but my roommate, Timothy (never Tim), was a descent sort. Timothy was an exercise-conscious, gay tattoo artist with a good professional reputation and he found my choice in employment amusing. Timothy said I was swimming against the current. I told him salmon did it every year. He countered with salmon don't jump Angel Falls.

I was starting to feel he was prophetic after only one day. I didn't dwell on it too much. I did our laundry, picked up our common area then started in on dinner. That consisted of microwaving frozen vegetables and sausage and bacon biscuits. I left that to warm while I worked out. When Timothy walked in he laughed and shook his head.

"You are the best boyfriend I never had," he chuckled. "Did you do my laundry too?"

"Yep," I said. I put my tablet down and headed to the kitchenette.

"Even the underwear?" he teased.

"If that's what you like to call it," I teased right back.

Timothy tended to dress like a Chippendale dancer on his date nights. Thankfully, he had the body for it. Double thankfully, we were both okay with our sexuality. At the start, he had told me he was coming off a long term relationship that imploded. I told him I was heterosexual who had a chronic problem with fidelity.

(Tuesday)

My mobile phone rang at three o'clock – in the a.m. It was Katrina telling me that I was to get my ass over to corporate, find Desiree and do what she said. Katrina hung up before I could ask for an explanation. Twenty-two minutes later I was back at work. I pulled my 'Clark Kent.' then phoned Desiree Fredrickson who was already in the garage – level one.

She was waiting for me, trying to look impatient, but I knew the 'threw on whatever was handy' look from too many 'confused girls in the morning' experiences. I looked at her grim countenance and decided to be professionally polite.*www.NoVelWorm.co*

"You have this spot at the right corner of your mouth," I quietly informed her.

While driving, she peeked into the rearview mirror and used her tongue to correct the dried drool problem. There was no 'thank you' aimed my way.

"What are we doing?" I yawned.

"At least pretend to maintain the proper decorum," she chided me. She did her best to stifle her yawn.

That was the end of my instructional period until we pulled into a parking spot close to a police station.

"Watch your mouth and remember they don't like us," Desiree warned.

"Woman, is it going to kill you to tell me what's going on, or am I going to have to figure this out with a Tarot deck?" I snapped back.

Her eyes narrowed with anger as she turned on me.*www.NoVelWorm.co*

"Can't you follow a simple order?" she growled.

"Sure," I sighed. "It isn't like you want me to succeed anyway," I groused. She huffed in exasperation then led me to the front of the precinct building.

Due to the hour, the place was crowded with drunks, drug addicts and dealers, with a sprinkling of prostitutes and violent felons. The 'they' who didn't like us became obvious. The cops didn't like Desiree and, by default, me.

"We are here for Marilyn St. John," Desiree stated.

"Of course you are, Ms. Frederickson," the female desk sergeant sneered. "It is Lady's Night at some whore-hole so, of course, your princess ended up here."

"Just get her," Desiree demanded. The sergeant kept sneering in a way that told us we were going to be a while. Desiree walked over to a corner and put her back to it.

I decided to hover close by until the sergeant had a moment.

"What do you want?" she regarded me. "Aren't you with the trash collector?" I guess that meant Desiree.

"She's one of my bosses," I shrugged. "This is my first – I guess now it is my second day on the job and I have no idea why I am here."

I put my politest, most girl-friendly demeanor forward. It worked.

"Keep in mind you are picking up your boss's trash, Kid," she turned all matronly on me. "You need to stop hanging around all those poisonous bitches and get a better job." That led to a discussion of my age, background and economic status of my family.

She liked the fact that I was proud of my blue-collar background, single and polite. As an unexpected bonus the Sergeant had a single daughter; a freshly minted from the Police Academy policewoman. I gave her my mobile number and she sent someone to retrieve our charges. While we waited, she showed me a picture of her girl. The daughter was rather sexy.

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