

## Visions Of The Past

\*Bella\*

Just another ordinary day, and I was heading back from work. The heavy trac roared across the road. I still couldn't shake off my fear. Even after three long years of treatment following my accident, the terrifying ashes and sudden blackouts continued to haunt me. They just wouldn't let go.

Summoning my courage, I took a deep breath and prepared to cross the road. I looked around warily, the sense of being watched only adding to my unease.

"Come on, Bella! You can do it," my inner voice urged me.

As the trac signal shifted to red, signaling pedestrians to go, I hastened my steps and focused intently on the path ahead. Then, unexpectedly, someone darted in front of me. I froze in panic, the blaring of horns assaulting my ears. Beads of sweat formed near my temples, and I felt trapped. My breathing became erratic as those dreaded ashes returned, scenes of a car tumbling and crashing, followed by a deafening explosion.

Tears blurred my vision as I found myself amidst the bustling streets outside. Horns honked loudly, cars zipped past beside me, yet I remained rooted in place. My feet felt as though they were glued to the ground, my body unwilling to budge.

Closing my eyes, I surrendered to the deluge of memories ooding my mind. Once again, his image materialized—the man, whose face was not clear in my memories, had been seated beside me before the explosion had cast a haze over my recollections. Struggling to grasp his identity, I felt my head throb with an intense ache. It was as if the pain was so immense it might rupture my brain. A suffocating sensation gripped me as though my soul had become ensnared in the clutches of the past.

However, the illusion shattered abruptly as I was forcefully shoved to the ground, the impact jarring me out of my reverie.

Blinking in surprise, I opened my eyes to nd Vincenzo holding me protectively. His muscular frame shielded me from hitting the unforgiving concrete road. His intense gaze locked with mine for a eeting moment before he quickly shifted his focus to the road.

Without hesitation, Vincenzo swiftly pulled his gun from its holster. In one uid motion, he held me tightly against his chest, rolling us both to the side. A burst of gunre echoed through the air as he unleashed a series of shots, aimed at a massive truck hurtling toward us.

The screeching of tires and the sound of metal crunching against metal lled my ears as the truck veered and toppled to the ground, narrowly missing us. I was left stunned, my heart pounding in my chest, unable to comprehend the sudden turn of events.

The chaos of the street seemed to freeze at that moment as my gaze shifted between the fallen truck and Vincenzo, searching for answers.

Before I could utter a word, Vincenzo sprinted toward the truck that had attacked us. In a matter of seconds, before he could even take a couple of steps, a thunderous blast erupted from the vehicle. The explosion sent ames soaring into the air, shrouding the surroundings in billowing smoke.

Thankfully, the onlookers had already scattered, having sensed the impending danger upon hearing the gunre.

The cacophony of the blast echoed through my ears, leaving me momentarily paralyzed with shock.

"Vin!" I cried out, my voice trembling with fear as I watched him being propelled into the air, his body crashing violently onto the unforgiving pavement. A surge of anguish and helplessness washed over me, threatening to overwhelm my senses.

"Bella! Stay there and get away!" he yelled despite being in pain, his voice straining with a raw sense of urgency and concern as I began running toward him.

In the midst of my fear, a gure materialized from the chaos. With an iron grip, he forcefully pulled me away from the unfolding catastrophe. Panic coursed through my veins as I fought against his hold.

"Let go of me!" I screamed, my anger fueling my struggle to break free from his unyielding grasp.

The man who had pulled me away, his face remained cold and blank.

"Ma'am, we are Mr. Vincenzo's associates. Please come with us," he pleaded earnestly.

"But how can you just abandon him there?" I protested ercely, refusing to comply and go with him.

The thought of leaving Vincenzo vulnerable and alone in the midst of chaos was unfathomable to me.

"Ma'am, the boss is alright. We need to get you to a safe place, as per his orders," the man argued, trying to convince me.

"No, I won't go anywhere without him," I insisted rmly.

"I'm alright. Don't worry about me, Bella," I stopped struggling after hearing Vincenzo's voice and turned toward him. Traces of smoke covered his body, indicating that he had been affected by the heat. His clothes were torn in places, evidence of the explosion's impact.

"Oh, my God, you need to go to the hospital for a check-up immediately," I gasped, my wide eyes observing his exposed burned skin and bleeding wounds.

"No need, I'm ne. This is nothing compared to what I face on a daily basis. I'm used to more dangerous situations than what you just witnessed today," he shrugged nonchalantly.

"Micah, take care of the matter. Make sure to handle the police, but more importantly, nd out about the driver and the truck," he barked orders. He then grabbed my hand and started walking away, not waiting for anyone's reply.

"Vin, where are you taking me?" I asked, protesting against his actions.

"To my place," he said rmly, without stopping.

"Wait. No! I want to go home," I objected, trying to assert my independence.

"You're coming with me," he ordered in his bossy and authoritative tone.

"But Vin..." I tried to protest, but he turned and glared at me.

"You're coming with me, Petal, and that's nal," he declared, grabbing my hand and forcefully leading me toward his car.