

## Family First

Anna ushered her children into the bedroom closet and kneeled in front of them. “Huddle close together, and you take care of your sister.” She kissed her little Billy’s head, then pushed him closer to Bella. When she closed the double doors, she turned and pressed her back into the doorknobs.

A man wearing all black, holding a gun with a silencer and heavy boots, stepped onto the soft carpet. “Can we get this over with?”

“Will you at least tell me who sent you?”

His grin sent chills down her spine. “You really don’t know?”

“That tells me everything.” Anna pulled a kitchen knife tucked into the back of her pants and whipped it at his chest.

Blood dripped, and he stood there with his mouth wide open. Anna leaped forward and kicked the knife, digging it deeper before he collapsed on the floor. She hovered over him with a satisfied smile, then rushed to her kids.

“Who is that man, Mommy?” Billy asked.

“Don’t look at him.” She grabbed her children’s hands and hurried them outside to the car. She checked to make sure their go-bags were tucked into the space where the spare tire should have been.

“Are we going to Daddy’s?” Bella asked.

Anna buckled her kids into their car seats. “Soon.”

When she got behind the wheel, she sped down the road, her target already in mind. She pulled up to a gated mansion and pressed the pound key on the panel like she’d done many times before. The gate buzz and rattled as it opened. She drove up the cobblestone path and parked at the open doors leading to a marble entranceway. “Stay,” she said to the kids before slamming her door shut. She leaned on the passenger’s side.

Sergio stepped into the light that shined from his porch and walked down the steps. “I knew you would kill him. I don’t even need to officially hire you anymore. Did you come here for your next job?”

“No more jobs. I’m done.”

Sergio reached for her face. She grabbed his hand and twisted his wrist. He laughed. “You think you have a choice? You don’t make the demands.”

“You’ve already taken too much from me. Stay away.”

“Look around you,” he outstretched his arms to gesture at the property, “Everything you see here is a symbol of my power. What do you have? Two children, no husband, and a mini van.”

“I’ll blow it all to pieces.”

He snorted when he laughed. “You wouldn’t be the first who has tried.”

An explosion erupted on the West corridor of the house. Sergio flinched and watched the smoke and flames dance towards the sky. She laughed when he looked at her the same way as the home intruder.

“I’m a planner, Sergio,” Anna pulled a remote detonator out of her coat pocket, “And I know a lot more people than you do who are willing to do me a favour for free. Leave me and my family alone, and you can keep the rest of your house.”

Sergio swore at her in several different languages. “I’ll find you wherever you go.”

Another explosion attacked the East corridor. Anna winked and walked to the driver’s side of the van. Sergio called his guards and ran inside. Anna slipped into her seat and adjusted the mirrors. She smiled at her kids. “No one messes with a mother.”

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