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WARNING: May contain coarse language, violence, gore or sexual content. Reader discretion is advised.

Chapter 1 “The Easiest Way To Meet A Strong Woman”

Divorce was the best thing that ever happened to him. He has dealt with a lot of issues in his 25 years, but Troy Light found matters of the heart were the toughest to negotiate. It took a year of his life to get through the anger. Now, he was finally learning acceptance for himself, his life choices, and his future. That didn't stop him from returning to thoughts of those days when he thought his life was great. It was great to be love birds moving out on their own and into their own place - starting a life together.

“All good things must come to an end” as they say. So do bad things. And, in his case, pent up and potentially explosive things.

He became so mad at himself for not seeing the signs. It felt like something was wrong, but he couldn't put a finger on it. As far as he knew, everything was just stressful. They had moved 500 miles from home so they could attend the same university. He was understanding of her desire to return home to ease her homesickness. All that traveling was costly. He had to get a part time job in order to cover the extra expense. Now, he was hardly home to be with her. The more time went on, the more trips home she took. That meant things at home stopped being done. He thought, maybe, she was so homesick that she was depressed. She even dropped out of school when her grades became so bad from not attending classes or doing assignments. He saw glimmers of happiness from her, but they were few and far between.

Then, something changed. She seemed to be happier. It came at his expense, though. He had to drop out of school and work full time. A co-worker mentioned his friend - who was the owner at a construction company - needed help. It was Jon Beaucamp. It was a locally known and reputable company.

The first few months were a struggle to transition. Going from a full time student in medical engineering to a full time construction worker was a lot of hard work and dedication. It was tough leaving behind the last year of school before graduating with honors. But, his first paycheck afforded him the luxury of finally returning home himself. He was glad he did, yet wished he didn't. A month later, he was divorced.

It was one of those times he wished he could scream. To let loose a string of foul language that would make even the most hardened criminal blush. But, he kept a cool head as he watched his soon-to-be-ex-wife holding hands, laughing, smiling, and kissing another man. He found it to be Dustin Glazier, owner of a budding doughnut franchise called, appropriately, 'Dust 'n' Glaze Doughnuts'.

When the judge asked why they were divorcing, all he had to do was produce a newsprint photo of them smooching at a grand opening of a new store and a few paparazzi photos. They trumped her claims and non-proof of physically and mentally abusing her. For her adultery, the new couple had to pay restitution of the lawyer, court, and documentation fees, as well as pay his family for compensation of the wedding. He also received compensation for all her trips the past 4 years. He was glad he saved the receipts from her plane tickets.

Troy was a single man working through grief and a plethora of other emotions, but he found himself enjoying the nights at the scenic overlook to the city of Cliffside on the hood of that rusty Rambler Rebel. Watching the stars and the moon at night with few distractions became his place to escape the thoughts of her.

He enjoyed the construction job and found that he liked taking apart his car as well. It almost fit his degree and dream job of developing new medical equipment. He was learning to read blueprints and to cut and assemble parts. The car took that knowledge from wood and concrete to metal and plastic parts. It almost concerned him how much he loved doing these things. He just brushed that notion aside as just keeping the passion for medical engineering alive.

A shooting star arched to the west - a cool breeze breeze gliding across his face. He made a silly wish, even though they never came true. He wished for three things: Peace of mind, an end to his suffering and, if he had time before it disappeared, someone who genuinely cares for him. Usually he could only get the first two. So maybe, just maybe, *that* was a sign things would start looking up for him.

It was about time he headed home. It was definitely enough reminiscing for one night. He took one final breath of the clean air and set his abs into motion. The hood caved and crumpled around him as he sat up and scooted to the fender. He pivoted off to the side of the fender and pushed off with his hands. His feet crunched stones beneath. The driver's side door squeaked and popped open as he opened it and the seat groaned as he sat in it. It groaned again as he leaned over to pull his card case out of his pocket.

Inside, he had his identification, a bank card, an employee card, his student identification, a life record card - that held birth, vaccination, blood type and unique DNA information - house access card for his house as well as his parents' and the card he needed: Vehicle access.

He pulled the card out and inserted it into the Rambler Accessory Display. The screen glowed a dark green color as a light green 'Rambler' logo popped up and the iconic Rambler sound came from the speakers. The main menu popped up and the door locks engaged. He pressed the button to activate the electrical system and the dash lights, headlights, taillights, and other accessory lights came on. It reminded him that he should get the dome light fixed. He was well acquainted with the machine, but it would be nice to have on darker nights than this.

He pressed the 'engage' button to get the motor whirring into motion. He wasn't completely sure how the hydroelectric engine worked, but he was becoming more familiar each time he took it apart. He didn't even want to wrap his head around the nuclear prototype. How they could keep it from leaking, melting down, or causing a disaster if it ever was involved in a wreck...

The drive home from the overlook always made him think thoughts like these. It really helped him focus and open up new avenues for his mind to explore after finding acceptance with another part of his past. It reminded him of how open-minded he thought before they had moved down here. He had noticed that his thoughts were more creative and otherwise clear as the stress left his life.

Speaking of stress relief, the Hammerjack's cat was curled up and sleeping outside of his front door on the 'W.E.L.C.O.M.E.' mat. The motion light had kicked on as he pulled up by the house. He shut down the vehicle and closed the door quietly. He slowly stepped on the porch and closed in on her. She had a white underside, a dark chocolate fur, and a mix of gold, yellow, and caramel patches - like many other calicos.

He was not a fan of cats...or any pets for that matter. There was just something kind of sweet about how she curled up outside of the door of someone that didn't like her. Maybe because she didn't demand or shove her way in that there was a little bit in his heart for her. She was a sweet cat. It made sense the Hammerjacks called her "Angel."

He really couldn't help himself. Maybe it was because they shared amber eyes. Or maybe it was just the fact of how happy she seemed whenever he touched her. He would always reach down and rub her belly. She would softly "mew" as she stirred and looked up at him with her sleepy amber and blue eyes. She'd move her head in the way and he'd scratch that. Then, she'd ask for the belly again and purr with satisfaction. When he was done, she'd look up and her eyes would follow him in.

It was almost like she knew his schedule. She was there in the morning and at night, but never in-between. Unless he left for a bit, she'd be there when he got back. Mrs. Hammerjack said that either she liked him despite what he thought, or that she knew he hated cats and did it just to spite him. Either way, she'd say she was there to make his sadness go away or to protect him from something. Then she'd shrug and throw in, sarcastically, that maybe she was just biding her time and would kill him in his sleep or he'd trip over her and break his neck. It was good to see her laugh and smile even if it was due to a morbid remark.

Mrs. Hammerjack loved to talk about cats. She had many stories of her own and others that trended from sad to miraculous to evil. "An enigma," she'd call them.

The Hammerjacks lived in a large farm house up the driveway from his manufactured house that he rented from them. They used it as an intermediate for their children moving out to living in their own homes. They rented it other times to small families needing a place to stay for a few years or for a group of students. They let Troy stay out of school because he was friendly and always paid on time.

He even remodeled the deck off the back of the house. It wasn't the best work he'd ever seen, but he took his time and used what knowledge and experience he had to make sure it was better than average and definitely safe. It was really a good first effort, if he said so himself. His boss would have a fit with some of the lines he cut, but the Hammerjacks love it. They agreed to and paid him back with a few months free rent and dinner whenever he wanted. Sometimes, Mrs. Hammerjack called him "son." They made him feel like one whenever he stopped by.

“Our furry friends have an uncanny knack for knowing if someone is good or evil,” Mrs. Hammerjack stated one day while he was working on the deck. She handed him an ice cold lemonade and continued. “An abused one will bide their time until an opening presents itself to strike in retaliation. A loved one may just wake you up if the house is on fire or warn you of an intruder and they will fight fiercely to protect you.”

She took a drink herself and looked at him, her expression turning from warm to serious.

“I think they know what’s in our hearts and not what we feel or prefer. I think little Angel knows that you really don’t hate her. I think we both know that you really don’t hate animals. She formed a bond with you the first time you scratched her head.”

Mrs. Hammerjack talked his ear off that day about animals and Angel in particular. He wouldn’t openly admit it, but he was glad Angel was there. Jackie despised her. Maybe that’s why he started paying attention to Angel. It’s not like Jackie was always glad he was home. She wasn’t always there. Angel was. He gave Angel a bit more attention tonight. She deserved it. He was growing attached to her, but he didn’t want the responsibility. Their relationship was just fine the way it was.

He woke up in the morning and ate breakfast while watching the television. It was on the local news channel. He’d switch between this and the one from back home just to, hopefully, see a story on the ex-wife’s death. Maybe murder-suicide. That’d be okay. No such luck today.

There wasn’t anything significant - to him - to report. A cyclone hit the desert region of the continent and did some minor damage before it faded. An earthquake woke up the central region as it set off some vehicle alarms. The North and South continents were in talks to renew a peace treaty. A vehicle homicide caught his attention on the news from back home. It wasn’t anyone he knew. A lab in Oakdale was close to discovering a way to reuse nuclear waste.

He turned off the t.v. and put away his dishes. He scratched Angel’s head on his way out and drove towards the job site. Jon called and wanted to have a meeting in his office. He could only imagine what he wanted. Maybe it was to talk about Troy getting back to school. Maybe a raise. Termination?

A news bulletin came across the radio. Apparently the lead actors for the upcoming ‘Victory Squad’ movie hadn’t shown up on set. He was looking forward to the

movie's release next year. The Government Investigation Bureau was being brought in to take over and treating it as a possible abduction. G.I.B. director Harold Bob Herbert was heard next.

"A number of individuals have gone missing over the past year. Most, if not all, of these cases resolved in the individuals being found at a later date in various, gruesome ways. We took notice and have collected data. Now, we are collaborating with local departments to put our collective efforts into a full-scale investigation. We will provide an update after we have gathered enough information. We advise all citizens to contact local authorities with any information that they see or hear - no matter how minute it may seem. That is all for now."

Troy changed the channel to one that was playing more music. He hoped they would find those people and catch whoever was behind it all.

Everyone else was at the job site. He was the only one that didn't smoke and typically arrived ten to fifteen minutes early. They all arrived about thirty minutes early to get in those few extra smokes or lip of dip. Boss wouldn't let them do it on the job and definitely not in his trailer.

"Our foundation is built with concrete and wood. NOT with butts and chaw spit," he would tell them during the hiring process.

That was the one and only warning they would ever receive. Troy saw a few get sent home for disregarding the boss' first rule.

He parked in his usual spot and hit the button to open the trunk. He pulled out his tools and slammed the lid.

"Troy!" Ezekial, "Zeke," yelled. Troy stopped and looked over. "Boss sa' ta git on in when ya got 'ere."

This made him wonder if he literally or just mentally dropped his heart into his stomach. It seemed like a full minute before it started beating again. His mind was either racing or completely broken - or both - since he could barely use his basic motor skills. He couldn't afford to lose this job. He liked the job even. He didn't mind being treated like crap by the crew. He's learned a lot from their "tough love." It was time to get over the butterflies and the jitters. He wasn't getting let go.

He set down his tools and entered to find Jon pouring over a set of “prints” on a long table against the wall in front of him. He looked about as friendly as always. It made Troy think back to when he first met Jon with how his face went from happy for a potential client to evil bulldog wanting to know what the hell he wanted. It was the latter face with the former attitude with him.

“Troy. Come ‘ere. Look at this shit. What d’ya see?” Jon asked.

Troy stepped beside him and looked over the table. He could only laugh and shake his head.

“Fuckin’ a, right? Some dumb bastard wants a staircase to a cellar with a seventy degree incline, three inch steps, and a fuckin’ door at the bottom. Not to mention the fucker’s six-five and it’s a single story so there’s not even enough clearance for head space. It’s a damn fire and safety hazard.” The iconic vein was jutting from Jon’s forehead. “If he was four-two...”

Jon grabbed the blueprint and threw it on the floor. He sighed heartily as he ran his hand across his face several times, then looked at Troy.

“Take the next couple days off until I can get in touch with our “drafting major,” he said using his fingers to make air quotes, “That wants that house.”

Jon moved behind his desk as Troy moved towards the door.

“Troy,” Jon called as he sat.

Troy stopped with his hand on the door and looked over.

“I don’t want to tell you what to do with your life, but I would like if you could stay with the crew. You’re damn smart an’ you ain’t half bad with a hammer.”

Mind you, this was coming from a guy that should be a professional wrestler or a linebacker for the Detroia Lions. Praise was something shown, not spoken.

“If business stays like is has, I’ll be lookin’ at adding a second crew and I’m hopin’ to get you to a point where it’ll be your crew.”

He gave Troy a very matter-of-fact look. Troy didn't know what to say. He could only give a slight smile and nodded his head once.

"We can discuss it more later," Jon said as he shuffled a few folders on his desk. "When you come back, I want you to put full effort into tightening up your lines and start learning the prints more. Now go. Have a good weekend. And for fuck's sake," he said and looked at him sternly. "Go meet someone. Do something crazy." Jon set down the folders and pointed at him with one of his massive fingers. "Get laid."

Troy could only smile wider as he shook his head. Jon shooed him out with his hand. Jon was right. He should do something. Meet somebody. Maybe not get laid, but he could use some company around the house. Angel was great and all, but not much for conversation and he wasn't about to let her in the house to cuddle.

He made it home and spent a few hours cleaning up the house. It wasn't a mess, but did need a bit of sprucing up. All of Jackie's leftovers like pictures, food spices, random clothing items, on up to some things she cherished were thrown out in the curbside dumpster. It was time he moved on and time her spirit did as well.

He left the house and scratched Angel's head, then drove to the grocery store and picked up a few things. Nothing there except old women and women with kids. He wasn't against dating a mother, but they usually came with a ring and he wasn't completely sure about it. He thought it too awkward to dive into that situation. Too many variables.

He made and ate a late, light lunch before scratching Angel's chin and heading to a sports bar. The place was nearly packed with men. He stayed around long enough to open and close the door. He had no idea where to go to meet women.

Maybe the library would know. It knew everything. You could find anything in the library. Cooking recipes. Vehicle manuals. Advice on personal logs - or plogs. There had to be somewhere the chances were high.

On the way to the library, he passed by a hole-in-the-wall. He parked the car and made his way inside. It was quiet with a single television on a sports game. He looked around and saw mostly middle-aged men that just got off work or were using the time to get away from the house. He walked over and sat in the middle of the bar. He looked both ways and nodded acknowledgment to the guys.

He'd never drank anything alcoholic, so he had the barkeep mix something together. The guy gave him an indifferent look with a raised eyebrow, but shook his head and went to work. The barkeep lined up several shot glasses and put a touch of several bottles into each, then filled a glass with cola and passed it all over.

"Try each one and chase it with the cola...if you want. Or, carefully pour the cola in and try it mixed. That's where I'd start. Straight up isn't for everyone - especially not virgins. Anyway, there's about a shot there so we'll say four."

Troy set his card card up on the counter so the 'keep could process the transaction. Troy upended the first glass in his mouth and tasted it. It had a blandness to it, but it burned his throat going down. His face twisted, then he snorted and coughed almost at the same time - sending a rubbing alcohol and potato scent through his nasal cavity. He'd forgotten all about the cola. He took a huge gulp and passed the shot glass back to the laughing 'keep. Troy winced while the others laughed at him, then shook his head.

After wiping his eyes and recovering, he tried the other shots while holding the cola near his chin. He decided the rum and cola was the least offensive of all the ones he tried.

During his first full drink, he thought back to high school and how easy it was to meet people. He didn't know the first thing about meeting people outside of that environment. He was already at a disadvantage without even attempting. This definitely wasn't going to happen tonight, but at least he'd have an idea of the types of girls...ladies - he would have to remember *that* as well. He'd have an idea as to the types, personalities and when they frequented the place.

Second drink in, he couldn't help but feel like this was a terrible idea - among other things he was feeling. The feelings the alcohol were giving him were new and even wonderful. His whole body seemed to be radiating heat and happy. His face felt especially warm. The weirdest thing was how his teeth felt numb. They tingled when he pressed his tongue to them. Actually, it was how his whole body felt.

He stayed for two more hours before he decided to leave. The room was getting too loud for his taste. He wasn't getting the feeling that any women were looking his way. It seemed that they all came in with male friends or with a plus one - sometimes with a third wheel. Either way, it seemed like they were more interested in chatting with their friends or boyfriends or husbands. Maybe he was in the wrong place to meet

women. Perhaps women didn't go to bars and pubs to meet men, but to relax and let off steam. Unwind like everyone else.

He got up to leave and swore the room spun a few times. He regained his composure and made his way out to the car. He...*felt* okay. He figured he'd be okay to drive, so he got in and started heading down the road. Everything was going as normal. Speed was fine. Staying in the lane was fine. Smoooooooooth sailing.

Something caught his eye. It seemed his shooting star was back. Again, he wished he could forget the past and move on to something better. Another star flashed across his eyes. It was a lot brighter and redder than the last one. It flashed three times. It seemed like each blink was getting brighter.

"Is this what alcohol does to you?" He thought.

The flashing red light surrounded him. It was followed by a siren.

He followed the light to the source. His chest clenched and it felt like his heart stopped. He looked around to see why he would be pulled over. His speed was half what it was, but...he was straddling the centerline. Several curse words ran through his head as he applied the brakes and pulled over to the shoulder of the road.

He suddenly felt completely sober when a massively bright light filled his car and reflected off the rear view. When the officer stepped out of his vehicle, he could feel his skin get extremely hot and he felt he was sweating like he'd started working out. He felt his heart beat again - slamming in his chest, then beating rapidly as if to make up for lost time. He rolled down the window as the officer came near.

Those moments leading up to "the talk" were excruciating. The slight scuff of the officer's boot sliding on the asphalt before clacking down. The groaning and creaking of the leather as it moved with the foot. The click of the flashlight as it was aimed in the back seat and finally on him when those footfalls slid and pivoted to a stop. A moment he never thought he'd be in his entire life was finally upon him. His hands began to ache. He didn't realize he was strangling the wheel.

"Good evening, sir," came the authoritative, deeper woman's voice that commanded respect. "Do you know why I stopped you?"

He felt like crying. He was so defeated and felt as vulnerable as a newborn baby. He nodded his head and let it fall on the final nod. He was staring at the floorboard in front of the pedals as if a portal would open up and whisk him away from this moment.

“Could I please have your identification card?” She asked, though it felt more like she told. He couldn’t tell which.

He started to reach for his pocket to grab his card case.

“Just one hand, if you would. Keep the other on the wheel, please,” she commanded.

His mind was racing with questions of repercussions, but blank with answers and outcomes. He pulled out the case and popped open the card-safe magnetic enclosure. He set the open case on his left thigh, grabbed his Id. card and handed it over to the officer. There was no portal and there was no way out of this. He was going to jail.

“Sit tight, Mr. Light,” she said and went back to her vehicle.

It felt like an hour before she returned. It only increased his anxiety and he was at the point of a complete meltdown. His throat felt tight and twice the size it should be. His temples felt like they were coming together and smashing his brain. The rest of his body felt as if it was weighed down by some invisible force.

“Looks like I’m the only one that needs you tonight, Mr. Light,” she stated with an almost happy tone.

It didn’t make him feel any better. She handed back his Id. He set it back in the case, closed it and set it on the passenger seat.

“Step out of the car, please, Mr. Light. Put your hands in front of you and open the door with your left hand. Unbuckle the seat belt with your right. In one fluid and slow motion, if you could,” she instructed.

The door popped open and fell down it’s usual off-set inches. The harness belt sprang free from between his legs, then the lap belt popped free and they all began retracting into the seat.

“Now, keep your hands where I can see them and slowly step out of the vehicle. I’ll get the door for you.”

He held his hands in a surrender pose - his arms tucked in to his torso and his hands palm out from in front of his shoulders. He started to step his left foot out as the door opened wider. He violently shook as the seat groaned when he leaned back and turned to place his other foot onto the ground. He stepped out and stood up on the side of the road. A car passed by them and momentarily blinded him. He thought he was okay, but maybe not. He was too stressed out to know for sure.

“Why don’t you come over here and stand on this line for me,” she said, motioning toward the back of his car with her flashlight.

He looked over at her. She glanced to her right and back at him. She was quite attractive. He was around six feet tall, but she was looking directly across into his eyes. She looked solid under the black, short-sleeved uniform. She brought the light back and shined it into his face. He cringed and looked away as he squeezed his eyes shut.

“Today, please, Mr. Light,” she politely growled.

He slowly opened his eyes, but kept them squeezed nearly shut. The bright police strobe flashed, the headlights brightly illuminated the stripe by the side of the road, and the spotlight blinded him. He made his way to the back of the car and waited for further instructions.

“Now, step on the line. One foot in front of the other. I want you to walk this line. Keep your hands out to your sides. Keep your chin level and look at my car. Every step you take, I want you to bring the opposite hand in and touch your nose. Like this.”

His neck creaked as the tense muscles shifted his neck to the side to look over his shoulder. He saw her right foot come out at about a forty-five degree angle. She swung it in as she turned her left arm in. Her right heel clicked against her left toe and the side of her left index finger gently pressed against the tip of her nose. She looked silly. But, now it was his turn.

He took a deep breath and exhaled sharply. He held his arms out to his sides - straight out from his shoulders. He moved his left foot onto the line, then slid his right foot behind it. He looked ahead at her car. He sighed and collected his concentration. He took a right step and swung his left arm in. His heel slammed into his toe and his

finger pressed into his nose. He took a left step and swung his right arm in and his left arm out. His left heel slammed into his right toe as his right finger pressed into his nose. He did this several more times. He didn't *feel* shaky throughout the ordeal. But, he wasn't the one in control.

"Good," she said as he came close to the patrol car. "Now, turn this way," she instructed.

He did as he was told and faced her and his car.

"Now, I want you to keep your arms down at your sides and hop on one foot towards me. Your foot, your choice this time."

He shook his head to himself, but did as he was told. *This...was* more difficult. But, he did it just fine. He put his foot down and awaited further instruction.

"Graceful as a deer fresh outta the womb. Alright. Now, turn this way," she said.

She righted her posture and stood straight up like a soldier. She used her left hand to motion between them as if saying, "Like this."

He slid his feet together and dropped his hands to his sides and looked directly at her.

"Now, Mr. Light, I want you to look straight up and say the alphabet forward, then backward. Keep your hands at your sides. Keep your feet together. Can you do that for me?"

He closed his eyes and sighed, slumping his shoulders. This was *not* going to go over well. He opened his eyes and bit his lip as he looked over at her.

"What's the matter, Mr. Light? Cat got your tongue?"

Her light shined directly into his eyes. He rolled his eyes and slumped a bit further. He motioned toward his pocket and started to walk towards her.

Bad idea.

Her left hand reached over to her right hip and grasped the handle of her gun. He heard the “pop” of the buckle snap free.

“I didn’t say to move! I said to speak! Now, speak!” She commanded.

He had no choice. He reached behind him to his right side. It was like his hands were attached by an invisible thread. As he reached back, her hand extended forward - led by her standard issue Gault 3270 10mm autoloading pistol. She was yelling something, but his brain shut down. He wasn’t processing what she was yelling as she took a step back. The flashlight spun in her right and she brought it over under her left wrist.

“ARE YOU FUCKING DEAF!? GET THE *FUCK* ON THE GROUND! NOW!!!”

He read that loud and clear. He slowly brought his open hands in front of him and slowly made his way to his knees - his whole body violently shivering. He must not have been moving fast enough. She took a step and launched a boot into his chest. He lost his breath as he fell onto his back. His body lurched up and to the side while he tried to breathe or cough as he lay there. There was no air to be had either way. She holstered her flashlight and knelt down. She wrenched his arm to turn him onto his chest. A car slowed as it drove past. He felt cold steel press into his back, then more cold steel slap around his right wrist. She pulled his arm by the cuff and pressed her knee into it behind his back. He felt her shift and his left arm was forced to his back. He could feel his face get hot as the pressure raised within his head. He still hadn’t taken a breath, but his arms were now secure behind his back.

Her weight lifted from his back. He was finally able to draw a sliver of breath in his aching chest. He began to cough as her hand forcefully slithered across his shoulders, his sides, his legs, his inner thighs, then his back pockets. He felt her pull something from his right pocket.

“Shit! Shit! Shit-shit-shit!” She yelled under her breath. He heard her gun holster and snap back in place. “Get up!” She yelled and yanked up under his armpits.

He got to his knees. She kept pulling until he got to his feet. Her right hand wrapped around his right wrist and her left hand clamped down on his left shoulder like bench vices.

“Mr. Light, you’re under arrest for operating a motorized vehicle under the influence of alcohol, reckless driving,” she said as she shoved him forward, “And for provoking an armed government official into using lethal force.” They continued towards her vehicle. “It is strongly suggested that you stay quiet. Anything you say,” she began and stopped short. “Who am I kidding,” she muttered through a sigh.

She forced him to the back of the vehicle and shoved him into the back fender. She reached over and opened the door. She pulled him back by the shoulder and forced him in front of the opening.

“Now, get in the car,” she growled as she pushed him forward.

His forehead struck the door frame on the top of the car. A strong ache followed by pins and needles flowed from the point of impact. He instantly felt a massive headache and his vision blurred. Something hot began to trickle down his forehead and across the right side of his nose bridge. He felt faint as he was pulled back to be shoved forward again.

His vision cleared enough to where he could see the inside of the bulletproof glass divided back seat. He blinked and felt the cooling trickle pass over the curve of his lip and over to the side. He flinched, then blinked and squeezed his eyes shut out of fear of again hitting the door frame. His body was forcefully slumped and he flew forward towards the cushion. His eyes opened to a blurry version of the seat. His feet felt a mile away as they lifted and he fell into the cushion. His feet were forced down at an angle and slammed into the floorboard.

The door slammed shut and he heard her cursing, “God...fucking...dammit!”

The world seemed to cross over itself - what he could make out of it - as his eyes rolled up and closed.