



Hemingway defined the **Code Hero** as "a **man** who lives correctly, following the ideals of honor, courage and endurance in a world that is sometimes chaotic, often stressful, and always painful." He measures himself by how well he handles the difficult situations that life throws at him.

Hemingway.

My father loved Hemingway, and not just his books. He emulated his lifestyle. He grew a beard, drank his way out of every bar in Key West, smoked himself half to death and fought his way past crippling seasickness to fish for Marlin in the straights of Cuba—as a matter of fact, he violated the embargo repeatedly so he could live where Hemingway lived. My father claimed to be a righteous, old-fashioned, god-fearing Christian, but his real religion was masculinity.

Something he, let's say, impressed upon me as a boy.

I thought about all that—the code hero, my father, what it means to be a man—as I pulled my panties down to my knees and sat on the toilet, a Clear Blue pregnancy test in my hand. The toilet seat was cold, and I squirmed a little, staring at the Clear Blue, a strand of my long blonde hair falling across my face. I felt my hand tremble as I stared at the little digital window where soon would appear either the word 'Pregnant' or "Not Pregnant." I didn't want to get pee on my hands, and the Clearblue box promised this one came with *Floodguard Protection*, which actually kind of offended me because my thing isn't that big to call it a flood or whatever, but—

I almost stood up, pulled up my panties and threw the stick away. I couldn't be pregnant, and if I was I didn't want to know. But then I thought about my father, and closing my eyes I whispered "be a man" to myself and reached down between my legs, inserted the pregnancy test into my—well, you know—and then peed-- feeling the warm pee drip over my fingers. Damn! Stupid flood guard! Pulling the test out, I fought the urge to cry, not even sure why since I didn't even know what the results would be yet, and then I wiped my fingers on the toilet paper roll, staring at the flashing digital readout on the

stick, which promised a count down, but what the hell difference did it make as I sat there staring, watching it blink, wondering what it would say, what it would mean.

Please, please, please I found myself praying. Please don't let me be pregnant. I don't know what I'll do, how I'll handle it, I mean I am, was, the top assassin in the agency. I was, am, a man. Please. Please. Please. Haven't I suffered enough? Haven't I learned my lesson?

God, please!

The tears started to fall, I didn't even know what I was even crying about, but I'd found that happening a lot since I'd changed. As I sat there crying and praying, wondering if I had a baby inside me, I remembered how I had come to this, how I had found myself here, wiping away my tears, a man in the body of a young woman, scared and alone.



Chapter One

I buzzed along Ocean Avenue in my convertible Porsche, the briny Atlantic breeze blowing through my short, black hair, my dark shades hiding my eyes as they caressed the bodies of the bikini clad women walking outside the crumbling walls of Convention Hall. A couple sevens and a maybe eight. Way beneath me, but there was no harm in looking.

I passed The Stone Pony, a dirty little dive bar where Bruce Springsteen had gotten his start. A little further down the road, I pulled my car up to the Empress Motel, a classic 1960s motel once frequented by the likes of Judy Garland and Liza Minelli. As I parked my car I pictured the floor plan in my mind—every room, every stairway, every inch of the bars, the restaurants, the pool. I had memorized it all, and I could walk the length of the hotel with my eyes closed. It was part of my prep work, part of what made me the most dangerous man in the world.

Grabbing my rolling suitcase from the back of the car as well as a garment bag, I headed into the hotel, shaking off the eager bellhop who'd taken in my gold watch and 600 dollar Italian shoes and almost tripped over his own feet running over to earn what he'd hoped would be a big tip. At the front desk I found myself greeted by a pair of perfectly groomed clerks—I admired the precision of their grooming, and I matched their gleaming white smiles with one of my own. The woman—her name plate read Consuelo—had a truly gorgeous face and perfect skin as well as full, perfect breasts, but she was too short for me. Still, I winked at her as I picked up my key. The guy? I figured I could kill him in less than 5 seconds, so he didn't matter.

As I headed up to my room, I kept scanning for a girl worthy of me. Getting the kill was my job, but getting a kill and landing a ten was a victory, and I never settled for less.

In my room, I stashed my stuff, and then I went out in search of my target: Peter Ustinov, aka Rasputin, head of the Russian Mob in Little Odessa,

Brooklyn, who'd moved into Staten Island and now New Jersey. Dozens of capos from rival families had vanished without a trace, and the bosses had all gone into hiding. I didn't give a shit about Rasputin. Someone paid me a lot to kill him. It didn't matter to me who or why. Had he been a loving father of three who ran a gardening supply company I would have killed him just the same.

I walked onto the Boardwalk. People milled around me. I found Ustinov right where I expected to find him-- he'd had his people set up a bright red tent in the middle of the beach across from the old Howard Johnson's building. He lounged in a chair, a woman on either side, and men wearing suits and dark glasses lingering around the perimeter, constantly scanning. He probably felt that being so open and public made him safer, and it probably did from most people—but not from me. And not from my employer, either. They wanted him to die in public.

I paused, leaning on the steel railings, glancing around myself, just another casual tourist enjoying the breeze, the crashing ocean waves, and the—

“It's beautiful, isn't it?”

I turned and looked to see a tall blonde leaning on the rails next to me, the wind tossing her golden hair. She had a perfect face, perfect skin and as she smiled I saw perfect, white teeth, gleaming.

“It's not the most beautiful beach I've seen,” I said, feigning disinterest.

“Oh, are you about to try and impress me with your worldly knowledge of all the most exotic beaches?”

“What makes you think I have any need to impress you?” I said, turning and regarding her fully now.

She kept that amused, skeptical smile on her face. “You're a man and I'm...” she gestured down at her body, inviting me to take it in.

I looked her up and down. Perfect body, like a Roman statue. Her full, firm breasts strained against the tiny little ties of her lime-colored bikini top,

and her skin was a fine, golden tan, glowing, healthy, flawless. When I met her big, brown eyes again, she raised an eyebrow.



“You’re beautiful,” I said, taking my sunglasses off and staring into her eyes. “Beautiful enough that I would consider sleeping with you.”

“Oh? And are you the kind of man who is more interested in my personality?”

“Not really.”

“Then, what?”

“Well, if I decide to pursue you, I will spend a little time getting to know you to figure out if you’re any good in bed or not.”

“Oh? And do I have any say in that?”

“No.”

“No?”

“If I want you, I’ll get you.”

“And why is that?”

“Because...” I glanced down at my body.

I was very curious to see how she would respond. This was one of the first little tests I used to decide if a woman was worthy of me.

She laughed, and I knew I was in. “Does this actually work for you?”

I held out my arm. Waited. She slipped her slender little arm into mine. “I guess you just answered your own question.”

“I like a man who makes me laugh.”

“What’s your name?” I asked.

“Circe,” she answered.

“Unusual name,” I said. “Do you turn men into swine?”

“Never,” she said. “I turn them into angels.”

We walked back along the Boardwalk without talking. It felt good to have a beautiful girl on my arm. I always liked being the king stud, and having this gorgeous little lady at my side broadcast to everyone that I was the man. She clung to my arm, keeping her thoughts to herself. We went into the Paradise Lounge, one of the bars located inside the Empress Hotel—cool, dark and hip this time of day, before the parties started. I bought her a drink. We laughed and talked some more. She ran her finger over my gold watch at one point and said, “So, what do you do, Charlie?”

“Crisis Management,” I said. “Consultant.”

“That seems like a lie,” she said, big green eyes sparkling with mischief.

I laughed. “It is a lie.”

“Why can’t you tell me?”

“I could tell you, but---“



“You’d have to kill me? Please. That’s the first bad line you’ve used tonight. One demerit.”

“What do you do?” I asked.

“Trap men,” she said.

That did not seem like a lie. Since the moment she walked up to me, my instincts had been buzzing a warning, a little voice saying—watch out!

This woman is some kind of hustler. Now, that quiet voice had grown very loud. But there was another part of me that was still stronger, and that was the part that loved danger, and now that I fully perceived this woman as some kind of threat, I really wanted to get inside her very, very badly. “You don’t think you’ve trapped me?” I said.

“Oh, honey,” she said, grabbing my arm and squeezing. “I had you at hello.”

“Now who’s throwing out bad lines?”

“Raise your game and I’ll raise mine.”

“I don’t play games.” I leaned in and kissed her. She had soft lips—so soft. They tasted of cherry and vodka. Her perfume filled my head, and she put one hand to my cheek while reaching down with the other and grabbing my Johnson through my pants, giving it a squeeze.

I broke off the kiss, slammed down the rest of my drink, and then kissed her again, my body burning with desire, a desire I saw matched in her wet eyes, and then we were pawing at each other, kissing, and we fell off our stools and crashed to the floor in each other’s arms.

“Okay, okay,” the bartender said, leaning over the bar and looking down at us. “Take it to your room, folks.”

We laughed and got to our feet. I tossed some money on the bar and slipped my arm around her waist. She leaned against me, giggling, her hand on my chest, and I led her back to my room. As soon as the door closed, she loosened her wrap and let it drop to the floor. I unbuttoned my shirt and tossed it on the floor, taking her in my arms and kissing her again, letting myself get hard as I put my hands on her firm, plump ass and squeezed. She pressed her breasts against my chest, and then broke off the kiss, giggling, “More drinks!”

A got on the bed and watched her as she went to the little frig and grabbed some little bottles of booze, pouring them into the little plastic cups. She looked back at me over her shoulder and gave her hips a shake. I shook my head. She had a great ass—high and firm and heart shaped, and long,

lithe legs that went all the way from her ass to the ground. She stirred the drinks with her finger, then put her finger in her mouth and sucked, then pulled it out licking her lips. “Give you any ideas?”

“A few,” I said, gruffly.

She brought me my drink and climbed onto the bed, tucking her legs under her, and then she raised her glass and said, “To danger.”

The alarms went off again. I hadn’t said anything about danger, how much I loved it. The fact that she said that now? It suggested to me I’d been profiled, that she’d been playing me. I knew with certainty at that moment I’d been played, that she was some kind of threat, and as I held that drink in my hand, I knew I would be a fool to drink it.

I replayed the scene in my mind, now from her perspective, and I saw it all. The shake of the hips to distract me as she reached into her cleavage and pulled out the mickey. The sucking of her finger after she stirred the drinks-- not just sexual, but to show me the drink was safe.

It was all so perfect, so polished. I knew I should throw the drink right in her face, spank her and kick her ass out of my room, send her back in tears to whatever dumbass had hired her.

I met her eyes, the drink in my hand. She took a sip of her drink and eyed me hungrily, whispering “drink up.”

I hesitated.

“You’re not afraid, are you?”

My eyes narrowed. I brought the drink to my lips thinking no.... don’t..... but then I smiled and said, “I’m not afraid of anything.” And I drank the whole thing down in one gulp.

The room immediately started to swirl. The cup dropped from my hand, and my head lolled down onto my chest.

“Oh my goodness,” I heard her say. “Now, you were just about to go sunbathing, right? A pretty girl like you loves to tan.”

No, what? I thought, then, yes. Oh, yeah. I loved to sunbathe, and I had been just about to layout. How did she know so many of my secrets?

I sank into blackness.

Part II

The sun baking my skin. Beads of perspiration on my body, one bead rolling down the inside of my thigh. I had been in my room, with-- hadn't someone been there with me? And then I remembered. I'd decided to go sunbathing, because I loved covering my soft skin in coconut oil and—

No. I didn't. Something wasn't right.

I opened my eyes, and found myself looking at a pair of tone, sexy legs—smooth and hairless and—were they mine? They looked like a woman's legs-- I was sitting with my knees together, my long, lean thighs riding up, a gap between them as if—



My mission. I had a mission. I had to kill Rasputin—these couldn't be my legs. I closed my eyes, opened them again, but those legs were still there, my legs, but no man had ever had legs like these legs, nor the shadowy valley between the soft hills of ...

My heart began to race, my mind reeling against what my senses were telling me.

What time is it? I wondered. How long had I been lounging in the sun? I raised my wrist to look at my watch, and I heard myself make an embarrassing squeak because the watch on my wrist was mine, but I had long, red fingernails. Like a woman.

And it wasn't just the nails, but the hand, my hand. I had slender, graceful fingers, a dainty wrist. My watch was too big now, loose on my little wrist like a bracelet. No, I thought, feeling sick to my stomach, sick with shame. It can't be--- It isn't possible.



I sat up, and I felt the weight of breasts sway on my chest, felt the strings of a bikini pull tight against my shoulders as my breasts settled into the cups, and I felt like the whole world glitched, shook and rushed in on me as an impossible truth screamed through my brain, the impossible truth that I had become a woman.

A woman.

How?

All around me, I saw people tossing footballs, playing frisbee. I saw kids building sandcastles and girls lounging in the sun, girls like—just like—

I looked at my hand again, at that graceful, feminine hand, those long nails—my long nails, flashing in the sun. I put my hand to my lips, tears pooling in my eyes as I shook my head, feeling my long hair brushing against my slender neck, my breasts swaying slightly with every move...

What the hell? How? It wasn't possible. Couldn't be possible.

A cloud passed over the sun, and I shivered. Standing, I started to walk back toward my hotel, but the sand burned my soft feet, and I realized I had no room key, or anything, wearing a tiny little string bikini that left me feeling naked, and feeling naked in this soft, bouncy body was—scary. The panic and fear gripped me, grew stronger, the tears pouring down my cheeks. No money. No room key. No—name. No identity at all, I was just a silly girl, lost and alone and...

Suddenly, I had a vision of my father. We warmed ourselves next to a crackling campfire. Blazing motes rising into the dark night sky, a small pack of raccoons creeping around our campsite, their eyes glittering in the firelight. "A man measures himself by how well he handles the difficult situations that life throws at him," my father had said.

On the ground lay a wounded raccoon, mewling. It had been caught in a trap, a trap I had set in my youth foolishness, never really thinking to catch anything, but it had caught one, broke its leg. My father handed me bowie knife, the cold steel blade flashing red in the firelight. "You can let it suffer," he said. "Or put it out of its misery. It will die either way. What kind of man will you be?"

I took the knife. I killed the raccoon. I was a man, that kind of man who did what needed to be done.

I wiped my tears. Adjusted the straps of my bikini top. I closed my eyes and took a deep breath, then looked around the area. I spotted a beach bag—silvery blue and reading Chanel on the side. Looking inside the bag, I smiled. Room key. Water. Wallet. Cell phone. Other stuff. It had been left here for me to find. I checked the time, finally able to focus on my watch and not my hand. 3:11.

I grabbed the bag and slung it over my shoulder, then, feeling the hot sand burning my feet, I slipped on a pair of wedge-heeled sandals that had been resting in the sand next to my chair and began my walk of shame back to the hotel, clutching the room key in my slender little hand-- was it for my room?

As I walked, I felt my breasts jiggle and bounce. My butt, too. My breasts, my tits—they were big. I'd seen them, of course, but it was a whole different matter wearing them. They stuck out from my chest and swayed in counter point to my swiveling hips. Men gazed frankly at me, letting their hungry eyes roam up and down this soft body. I felt—angry. Violated. What made them think they could just gawk at me like this? My sense of shame returned, shame at what I'd become, what I had allowed them to make of me, of this jiggling shape that wasn't mine.

I hurried my pace, though I found it a little hard to walk in the sandals, my heels were lifted, and my weight was on my toes and the balls of my feet, and I had to adjust my stride anyway—my legs felt too long, my hips too high.

"Look at that sweet ass," I heard a man say.

"Her legs go all the way from her ass to the ground."

My temples pounded. My skin crawled. I looked ahead and saw the sign rising high above the boardwalk shops: The Empress. I just needed to get to my room. Get away from all these eyes. These--- men. Think. Plan my next move.

I made it back to my room and inserted the plastic scan card into the lock. The light flickered green, and I sighed with relief, walking into my room, closing the door and immediately plucking at the thong, wiggling, trying to get it out from between my butt cheeks. How did women put up with this crap?

That's when I noticed it—a little black dress laid out on my bed next to a pair of stiletto heels, a single rose and an invitation.

They'd been in my room. I cursed myself for being so careless, for not listening to my instincts, and before I even looked at the tableau on my bed. I went to my suitcase, which I'd put in the closet. It was still there, but when I opened it up, I cursed, surprised by the tiny sound of my feminine voice. It was packed full of women's clothes, and digging through I confirmed my worst fear—my weapons were gone. I'd packed the pieces of a Precision Sniper Rifle into the case, and they were all missing, as was my sidearm.

I checked my garment bag. Dresses. And no weapons.

The plan had been for me to find a spot on the roof and take Rasputin out during the fireworks, but with no gun that would be impossible.

I kicked off my sandals, sat down, knees together, and calmed my mind, making a check list of what I knew, what needed to be done. I idly toyed with the ties of my string bikini as a thought, keenly aware of the weight of my breasts, rising and falling with each breath.

Protocol required me to report to my bosses that the mission had been compromised, that I had been compromised. But I couldn't, wouldn't. I couldn't call them and tell them I'd been turned into a woman. They would laugh, and not only that, but they would pull me out of the mission. I would return to The Office like this—a woman, and I would probably stay like this for the rest of my life.

I looked over and saw the dress, the invitation.

I walked over to the bed and read the invitation:

Dear Bambi—

If you want to ever be a man again, meet me at the Wonder Bar at midnight.

Wear the dress and heels. Do your face. Make yourself pretty for me.
I'll consider giving you your balls back.

Rasputin

"If you ever want to be a man again." My hands trembled. Blackmail. He'd emasculated me. Somehow. And now he was offering to restore me, to give me a man's body once more, and all I had to do was betray the very code that gave being a man value, that made me a real man not just a bitch with balls.

I ran my fingers along my bikini bottoms again, pulling the thong out from the deep places between my butt cheeks, squirming furiously. I really needed to change clothes. Get into something more comfortable, more practical. What do I look like? I wondered, considering Rasputin's offer, wondering if it came down to it what it would mean for me to be this woman—this girl—for the rest of my life?

The thought terrified me, but I had to face the possibility, and to do that, I had to face myself as I was now, in this body. I walked tentatively to the bathroom, and looked at-- Circe? I blinked. Shook my head, and she shook her head, a look of shock on that perfect face, in those big, pretty eyes. I was my own perfect woman—tall and lean, with big, firm breasts, a tiny waist, wide, round hips and those long, tone legs. As I look at me as her, I remembered how horny I'd felt when I'd seen her, how much I wanted to make love to her body, this body—my body.

"Shit," I said, wincing at the sound of my voice.

Did this mean she was in my body? My mind raced. Could there be a bigger picture? Was Circe going to infiltrate the agency as me?

I needed to take action, and I reached up to untie my top, jabbing myself with one of my long finger nails. Groaning, I struggling to get a grip on the string, and for a moment a felt myself starting to get frustrated, hyperventilating, my breasts heaving. I reminded myself that women all over

the world managed this trick daily, and calming myself I managed to untie my top, tossing the little scrap aside, feeling my breasts sway freely for the first time. Looking in the mirror, I saw my big, brown nipples perched on firm, perky melon-sized breasts, and the sight of my tits turned me on, but instead of a boner my nipples started to harden and throb with pleasure, and I felt myself getting wet. It was not a sensation I'd ever experienced as a man, but I knew what my body wanted all the same. It craved to be penetrated.



The feminine needs terrified me, so I quickly wiggled out of my bottoms and turned, not wanting to look at myself anymore, disgusted at myself for wanting to be fucked. God damn. I'm a man, I reminded myself, trying to push the feeling away, to ignore the signals my body was sending me.

Not ready to wear a skirt, I went to the suitcase and looked through the clothes, picking out a pair of cut-off jean shorts. I pulled them on, wiggling my hips to get them up over my ass. They were low riders, hanging around my now soft, curvy hips. The jeans were super tight against my big, plump butt, and did very little to cover my long legs. Shit. Guys would definitely be gawking.

I had to figure out what to do with my boobs. I didn't want them bouncing all over the place, so I ruefully fished a bra out of the suitcase. It had lace cups and I cringed to think of myself wearing it, but I pulled it on and managed to get it hooked in the back. Then I adjusted my breasts in the cups, then the straps before sighing with relief for the support and stability they offered my jiggling body. I didn't want to walk around in a bra, so I looked for a shirt to wear.

Of course, the only tops were short little tank tops. It was clear whoever did this wanted me to dress sexy. Some kind of psychological warfare I supposed. Fighting with my hair, I pulled the tank top over my head then had to stretch it out to get it over my tits. It hugged them like a second skin and the spaghetti straps left my bra straps for the world to see. There was nothing better, so I just put it out of my mind. Lined up on the closet floor were high heels—shoes and boots. No, thanks. I slipped the beach sandals on my feet, finding myself once again propped up, walking on the balls of my feet, my calves tight. At least the base was wider and more stable, though I was still hobbled.

I looked at myself in the mirror. Wow, I thought. My time in the sun had really paid off-- my skin had a healthy, bronze glow, and my eyes really popped now just from the tan, which really made me look so sexy— I put a hand on my hip and turned, looking at myself from different angles, smiling, and then—

Shit. This was not me, this behavior. I looked at that gorgeous woman in the mirror, her bra straps were visible, bright against her tan, glowing skin. What had they done to my mind? Could I even trust myself to complete this mission?

Call it in, I said to myself. *Scrub it. Your first responsibility is to the mission.*

I turned and looked back over my shoulder, seeing my perfect, heart shaped ass in the mirror, spreading out invitingly below my tiny little waist. A vision flashed through my mind: I saw myself walking through the office in a tight little skirt, a white blouse, sensible black pumps. The guys were all checking me out as I passed, looking longingly at my ass, imagining taking me from behind...

I saw myself kneeling on a bed, looking back over my shoulder, Gary leering at me as he grabbed my hips...

Honor. A man conducts himself with honor.

There was no honor for a man who was a sex object for other men.

I would not be that man, the one who failed in his mission and came back to the office as a piece of ass.

I would handle the situation, and I would do it like a man.

These shorts were so tight and the pockets so small I had no choice. I needed a purse. Given what I was wearing, that was the least effeminate thing I would be doing. There were actually three purses arrayed on top of the dresser.

I grabbed the largest purse and slung it over my shoulder, and then I marched out the door, a man on a mission. The secret panel in the floor of the driver's seat was undisturbed, and my heart soared as I opened it and found the stack of cash there, just where I had left it.

Oh, Rasputin, I thought, smiling as I pulled out. You are in for such a rude awakening. Mess with the best; Die like the rest.



Bonus

