

Chapter Thirteen

Cathy woke to the smell of coffee and bacon. She spent the night like almost every night after the shooting in a spare bedroom with Owen and Ana in their home. She offered to sleep on the couch, but Owen wouldn't take no for an answer saying, "*your pregnant and that's that.*" Owen worked in the gun shop in the day, and she stayed with Ana. Wendy called that night saying she had news about this raid she was planning in Mexico as well as some other news, but she would see her later. She got out of bed and saw the door to Ana's room was open. Ever since the shooting, Ana had locked herself in the room with her gun and enough ammunition to cause some concern. Ana was now in the kitchen frying bacon. Her gun was on the counter next to the fridge. Cathy said as calmly as possible, "*good morning.*" Ana looked to her gun then she turned to Cathy walking around and embracing her saying, "*I am so sorry.*" Cathy hugged her back saying, "*there's nothing to be sorry about.... oh god that bacon smells good.*"

Ana made Cathy a nine egg three cheese omelet with about a pound of bacon on the side. As she ate the bacon, Cathy thought about how just about four months ago, she was on the verge of going vegan and now eating something that would make a vegan cry and it just tasted so good. Ana picked at her food staring out the window at the store. Cathy swallowed a fork full of eggs and said, "*he's alright, and he is here every night.*" Ana said, "*I don't want to be one of those women who only talk about their man. I hate it when writers have women only talk about men when they talk.*" Ana turned to Cathy who was trying to inhale the omelet while holding some bacon strips in both hands. She quickly swallowed again and said, "*you're glaring out in his direction and look at your eggs.*" Spelled in runny yolk was the name, Owen. Cathy said, "*none of this was his fault or your fault, but just because it isn't your fault it doesn't mean you don't have some responsibility to make it right. I mean come on you shot him.*" Cathy twisted the bacon in her hands then nearly swallowed the bacon whole. She then asked, "*are you going to eat that?*"

Jorge turned off the main road heading to the warehouse wanting to get back and grab the equipment left behind especially the guns. Fully automatics with suppressors were worth a

fortune. He would sell the guns and equipment and use that cash to get his sister back from the Americans. His first act would be to kill that Jack guy and his family. He lost everything to save her, then these American stole her away. He would then turn around and come after Wendy and her people burning their house down. He pulled into the still open warehouse and found all the gear. Ten minutes later, he was on his way to a guy he knew in Mexico City. Jorge only knew him as Ghost. He handled problems for a price and was willing to buy guns and other tech for his clients around the world. The guns in the back were worth enough money to help him do what he must do to get his family back. Jorge also knew the guns would most likely end up with one of the cartels. The radio was talking about the raid on the village and how the American DEA along with Mexican officials moved in finding nothing but dead bodies. Whoever that other gang or cartel was last night that invaded the village hadn't stayed.

Jorge walked into a cantina on the outskirts of the city wearing a long coat despite it being very warm outside. A large man with a gun on his hip went to search him, but Jorge stared him down. A large man in a white suit with a shiny metallic gold shirt yelled, "*soldier boy you came back to me.*" The man smiled and with a malicious chuckle said, "*how did the guns work for you?*" Jorge said, "*Ghost you sent me black powder rifles with no black powder and guns older than you.*" Ghost gave a dismissive wave then waved Jorge over allowing him to come over past his protection. Ghost sat back down, and two women who were little more than overly done teenagers moved to either side of him. He put his right arm around one of them kissing her neck then he turned to the other kissing her on the lips while nearly exposing her left breast feeling it up. He turned back to Jorge saying, "*so little Jorge what brings you back?*" Luis undid the strap holding the gun under his arms and pulled it out on the table in front of Ghost. He picked up the gun asking, "*this thing is heavier than it appears in the movies but still, my god where did you get it?*" Luis said, "*that doesn't matter. I have seven more as well as two American Sniper rifles and a 50calliber Barrett and they could all be yours for the right price.*"

Owen did his best to wipe the gun oil off the glass counter after a customer popped open a bottle squeezing it too hard. He was mad that his paperwork was being held up and he couldn't pick up his gun until it was approved. He said, "*I know my rights, and no petty two-bit know-*

nothing is going to keep me from my rights.” The man grabbed a plastic bottle of gun oil and in the process squeezed it breaking the seal sending oil up in a stream and down spreading across the glass and in the face of the man. Owen tried to not laugh saying, *“sir I don’t make the laws I just follow them so I can stay open and provide good people with what they want.”* He handed the man a towel. The man looked at the spreading oil then down his shirt. He said, *“call me when it’s approved.”* He went to pull out his wallet, but Owen waved his hand in a “don’t worry about it” gesture. The man left holding the door for a woman as he walked out. She walked up to the counter saying, *“I need some 9mm ammo for my Glock. I seem to have fired most of mine at my bedroom door.”* Owen turned to see Ana standing by the counter. He smiled saying, *“I think we can do something about that, and I don’t know maybe body armor for that door?”*

Part Two

An hour later and Jorge had over twelve thousand euros for the guns and gear and another thousand for the truck. Ghost’s connections in Europe and the middle-east prefer doing business in either bitcoin or the European Union's euro. Ghost sold him an older truck for three-hundred euros. Jorge’s first goal was to change the European money over to either pesos or American currency. He kept one of the guns along with half of the ammo he harvested from the other guns. He planned to ship the gun to Hawaii in parts as disguised as possible. The gun would be sent to a house he rented for two weeks from a real-estate agent for six-thousand dollars. Leaving the agent, he saw a car following him, so he ducked down an alley then back out the other side going away from his hotel room. He double-backed around checking for another tail then made his way to the hotel finding it overrun with police and American FBI agents.

Ana asked, *“what is that banana smell?”* She was pinned up against the wall with her and Owen’s clothes on the floor with her legs around him. The smell overpowered the scent of sweat and sex as Owen seemed to try and thrust his way through her to the door. In a husky almost out of breath voice, Owen said, *“some asshole spilled oil all over a counter, himself and me.”* Ana heard something about oil and asshole, but she didn’t care. This day this hour this act would live in her memory long after it had past. Neither of them knew the storage room of the gun shop would be the place where their first child was conceived. Sam tried not to listen to them as they made love but at one point when Ana started to scream, *“fuck me banana boy, fuck me hard”* it

became difficult for him as well as the other customers in the shop to ignore. By the end of the week, the small unincorporated community they lived in all called Owen Banana Boy. Sam liked the scent of gun oil, he used a gun oil scented cologne as well as gun oil scented candles both in the shop and at home but what he didn't like was the banana scent of that company's oil. Ten minutes later the commotion in the back died down. Sam said to a customer, "*to be young and in love.*" The elderly woman buying ammo for her forty-four caliber Smith and Wesson replied, "*I don't know if that's love, but it does bring back fond memories.*"

Cathy watched the news as they covered the raid and the return of the students going back to school after the shooting in stunned silence. Wendy came home and told her what they found out about Luis and Jorge. She also told her about Maria, her children and everything she found out about the village and the events of that night when the cartel took over. The stomping to death of Maria's youngest, a nearly newborn baby hit the pregnant Cathy like a hammer to the gut. Taking care of Ana helped her push her pregnancy aside along with the thoughts of her miscarriage and the man that killed their baby, but now Ana was able to be alone leaving her with her thoughts. Wendy handed her a light tannish-milky substance in a glass with a slight banana, peanut, and smoky scent. Cathy asked, "*please tell me this isn't more of that powdered protein crap?*" Wendy said, "*it's an Elvis. A banana, peanut butter, and bacon smoothie.*" Cathy smiled saying, "*bacon, I guess I'm going to hell.*" Wendy replied, "*I don't want to go alone, so I'm taking you with me.*"

Jorge went back to the place where he hid his truck and picked up the rest of the gear including the gun. He knew the cash on hand wasn't going to be enough and to get more he would have to take it. There were several banks in the area, but bank robbery was more of a team sport, and he was on his own. Robbing stores wouldn't bring enough cash and were the domain of junkies. Thinking about Junkies made him think about the cartels including the one that destroyed his family and life. He said to himself, "*if they are still around then they would be in disarray making a hit doable.*" In the three years, he and Luis planned they found where the cartel was based, and it was not that far from where he was. Before the border was chosen, they had planned out an attack on the compound hoping to kill as many of them as possible. Those

plans were in his head along with the ability to change those plans as needed including a one-man attack. He would need some things, and those things would take the rest of his cash, but he knew he had no choice and the police were closing in.

Cathy got a call from her obstetrician asking her to come in for another ultrasound. She said, *“Cathy there’s nothing wrong. I just found out the ultrasound machine we were using had some issues, so we are asking all mommies to be to come back in.”* She told her doctor she would be in right away. Wendy was already changing her clothes getting ready for the drive. Cathy tried to not think about all the possibilities while trying to stay calm, and most of all stop thinking about bacon. Just thinking about not thinking about bacon brought up images of thick-cut bacon covered in maple syrup or dark chocolate. There was a restaurant near the border selling what they called bacon candy, thick-cut bacon baked with brown sugar, cinnamon and pecan pieces creating a candy coating and a crunch that never left her thoughts. Cathy got ready while Wendy sat in the truck with the engine running. About the fifth horn hunk Cathy while half-dressed leaned out the door and said, *“honk that horn again, and I’ll make you eat it.”*

Cathy leaned over and said to Wendy as calmly as possible, *“slow down.”* They were about twenty minutes away from the doctor’s office with Wendy going about ninety miles-an-hour on a fifty-five mile-an-hour road. Cathy said, *“this sort of crap happens all the time, and you need to chill, or the next six months will be a horror.”* Wendy sped up. Just outside the office, Wendy came to a screeching stop leaving rubber on the parking lot. The office had twelve other pregnant women waiting for a new ultrasound. The women watched Wendy and Cathy step out of the smoking engine truck. They stepped inside and signed in. One of the women saw the gun Wendy was concealing on her and slid away and to the receptionist saying, *“I’ll come back tomorrow.”* The technician came out and asked, *“who’s next.”* All the other mother’s pointed to Cathy. A few minutes later and Cathy was in a reclined chair with the tech running a scanner over her saying, *“the last machine wasn’t correctly recording heartbeats, but this one is the best.... Yes, there they both are your twins are both looking good.”* The tech pointed to the screen pointing at the images. Cathy asked, *“twins?”*

Part Three

Cathy's obstetrician came into the room in her usual rush holding a file and a smile. She said, *"well now I guess you didn't expect this when you got my call."* Cathy was sitting on an examination table wearing a simple cloth gown staring at the stirrups that while attached were swung away when not needed. Cathy asked, *"Doctor Kay what does this mean for the pregnancy?"* Doctor Kay said, *"please call me Linda, and while some things will change, you and your children are healthy, and everything is good. This is good news."* Linda nodded to Wendy and asked, *"is she OK?"* Wendy was sitting in a chair staring out into the distance silent. Cathy dismissively said, *"she just needs some time to let that set in, but she'll be just fine."* Linda said, *"yeah until the babies come and you're on the one-hundredth diaper change. Twins are more than just double the kids, but that's not just yet, let's focus on the here and now including setting up more visits."* Cathy nodded. Linda asked, *"how's your appetite?"* Cathy said, *"I've had this need for bacon for about two days now that just won't go away."* Linda replied, *"that's fine just as long as you cook it thoroughly and eat it in moderation. Just how much have you eaten?"* Cathy looked down at the floor and said, *"I don't know maybe five or six pounds in the last two days."* Wendy stood up and asked, *"did someone just say twins?"*

The latest prosthetic leg was well balanced, and a metallic pink with a well-hidden knife placed somewhere no one would find. Ana stood up testing her balance on the new leg while staring at it in the mirror. She turned to Owen and asked, *"does this leg make me look fat?"* Owen asked, *"what?"* Ana turned back to the mirror and said, *"good answer. I'll let that slide since I shot you."* Owen replied, *"are you ready to drive?"* Ana turned back to him and said, *"I don't plan on being a passenger in my own Jeep again."* Ana turned around then back around looking in the mirror while staring at the leg. She stepped back and started to stumble. Owen stood to go to her, but she stopped him saying, *"you aren't going to be around me all day, I need to do this for myself."* She straightened back out then fell. She looked over at Owen and said, *"don't just sit there help me up."* Owen's phone rang, *"hello?"* Wendy said, *"hey Owen we're having over a few people tonight to talk about something important, and it would be nice if you Ana and maybe Sam could come."* Owen said, *"I don't know if she's up for something tonight."* Wendy said, *"I'll see the three of you tonight."* She disconnected the line.

Wendy turned her phone off. Cathy asked, “*did he say they would come?*” Wendy replied, “*I didn’t give him a choice.*” Cathy shrugged her shoulders letting that go past her hoping to keep her and Wendy’s calm going. Cathy’s phone rang, but Wendy got to it first, “*you rang?*” Ana asked, “*yes, I was just wondering if we should bring anything with us like... I don’t know something?*” Wendy put the phone on speaker and asked Cathy, “*should they bring anything?*” Cathy asked, “*would it be rude to ask them to go and get some of that bacon candy?*” Ana answered saying, “*consider it on the way.*” Wendy said, “*well I guess it’s not rude.*” Owen asked, “*what’s this about?*” Wendy disconnected the call. Cathy looked over the menu Wendy was fixing, “*two kinds of corn, two kinds of potatoes, two kinds of chicken, and two kinds of on the nose?*” Wendy said, “*it’s not like any other day and well yes this is so on the nose but so what? I want this to be perfect.*”

Two men stood on a street corner talking to each other while scanning the street making their presence both known and covert. Both men were well built with plenty of tattoos visible on their hands going up their wrists and a few on their faces and shaved heads, but they kept their guns hidden. One of the men had a curled wire coming from his ear in what was most likely a radio connection. On both corners were cameras with night vision. A car with a man behind the wheel and another in the back with a machine gun underneath a blanket sat about a block away. Both men were asleep. Jorge knew this was his way in. Walking along the roof of a nearby building he could see all the other security from the bars on the windows, the steel doors to the fenced in area with the dogs. There were no snipers or spotters on any of the roofs. The building was connected to a series of buildings going down the block, but the gang connected to the cartel owned the block and the alley running behind was fenced in with attack dogs. There was an open hole in the roof of one of the buildings on the other side of the block showing they didn’t use all the buildings. This was one of the cartel’s banks as well as a stronghold in case they needed to regroup.

Jorge watched as not much happened during the day. The guards out front changed every four hours and the men in the car every eight hours. They fed the dogs raw meat and two smaller dogs that the guard dogs ripped apart. Around midnight, a van pulled up, and three men with what looked like Uzis took up positions around the van and door while two men carried mail satchels into the door in a building in the middle of the block. About ten minutes later the same men came back out carrying duffle bags. Jorge figured the bags going in was cash while the bags going out was either arms or something else but not drugs because having the cash and the drugs in the same place sounded wrong. The van pulled away with another two cars following. None of the men carrying the bags or in the following cars had any visible tattoos. He wanted their money but doing something to this transfer could start a war between the gang and the cartel. Jorge asked, "*Luis how do I do this without starting a war that burns the city down?*"

Part Four

Using parts from several air conditioners, Jorge built a hiding place on the roof where he could sleep hidden in plain sight. He woke to the sounds of a door opening and people walking around. He counted seven armed men. Jorge slowly picked up his rifle trying not to make any noise. The seven men walked around searching for something then three of them left, and three men with boxes came up and started to set up cameras. None of the men noticed the extra air conditioner. An hour later the cameras were installed facing out, and the men were gone. From what he could tell the cameras had motion detectors. He would have to get off the roof without setting off the detectors or getting away before someone could show up. He thought, "*setting off the alarms might not be a bad thing.*" The gang would call for reinforcements allowing him to blend in and get into the building through the front door. For his plan to work he would need one of the key cards the gang uses as identification. He needed to find someone who wouldn't be missed.

Ana and Owen opened the door to the common room to find the place lit with strings of lights hanging from the ceiling and flowers everywhere. The large dining table was set up with a white table cloth, flowers, and candles. All the furniture was pushed aside with folding chairs in

their place facing the large flat screen television. Wendy popped her head out of the kitchen saying, *“you can either find a seat or join in and help.”* Ana turned to Owen saying, *“I’m going to go find Cathy. Why don’t you help Wendy and I don’t know, try and find out what the fuck this all is?”* Owen walked into the kitchen to find Wendy in nothing but a pair of panties, apron and a floppy chef’s hat. The apron barely covered her front and was open in the back. She turned to Owen taking the box of bacon. She said, *“I’m glad you’re the one to arrive first. I could use some help in here.”* Owen just stood still staring at her. Wendy turned and asked, *“Owen you’ve seen me in far less than this, are you going to help or not?”* Owen shook off his hesitation and asked, *“what do you need me to do?”* Wendy took off the apron and tossed it at him saying, *“take over.”* Owen slipped on the apron and walked over to the stove. Wendy leaned over kissing him on the cheek. She said, *“thank you……. I need to get dressed before the others get here.”*

Ana sat on the bed listening to the shower in the bathroom as well as one of the worst karaoke renditions of Come and get Your Love being screeched out by Cathy. On a hook near the bathroom door were two dresses. Ana realized what the Dresses were, but she didn’t think that Wendy would ever wear a dress. A topless Wendy came into the bedroom and past Ana. She turned around then sat next to Ana with a sigh. Ana tried not to stare down at her chest. She asked, *“wow so you two are going to do this tonight?”* Wendy didn’t say a word.

Ana turned to look at Wendy seeing her tear up. Wendy said, *“I think I was just selfish. I wanted both her and the others, but really, I just wanted to be alone. I just wanted sex without consequences, but there are always consequences.”* Ana asked, *“what changed?”* Wendy looked down at her bare chest feeling naked for the first time in a while. She said, *“George. When he died, I tried to fight the loss like it didn’t matter to me, but it did. I wanted something more.”* Part of Ana wanted to ask, *“why are you telling me this,”* but another part could see she was opening to her and just maybe they were friends. Ana said, *“I didn’t know what I wanted. I’m still not sure but what I know I don’t want is to not be with Owen. I know that we will survive no matter what…… after all, we’re still together after I shot him.”*

The water sounds along with the singing stopped, and the bathroom door opened. Cathy found Wendy half naked sitting on the bed hugging Ana. The look on Ana's face was part friendly part awkward not wanting to be there. Cathy walked over to the bed and joined in the hug. She whispered, *"about three months ago this might have been something more."* Ana squirmed out of the hug sliding off the bed onto her butt. She said, *"I'm going to make sure Owen isn't burning the kitchen down."* She got up and went out the door in a rush without trying to look like she was rushing. Wendy laughed as she said, *"that wasn't very nice."* Cathy replied, *"I didn't like seeing another woman in my bed with my wife, so nice wasn't on the menu."* She said it with a smile but an undertone that made Wendy think about their past and all the men they shared in bed. Cathy dropped her towel and sat next to Wendy. The two started to kiss until Cathy said, *"everyone will be here soon, and well this isn't our wedding without us."*

The sun went down with one flash of light crossing the rooftops then darkness. Jorge pushed the false air conditioner unit off him and went for the door. He stopped halfway and shot one of the cameras. Halfway down he went out a window onto a fire escape and across to another fire escape and into a window where he went the rest of the way down onto a street facing away from the gang-controlled block. He could hear the dogs barking, and a lot of commotion as the block woke up to the sound of the gunshot and the loss of the camera. Now all he had to do was wait for a random gang member to walk by and offer his keycard. He thought, *"what's another death on my hands."* About an hour later and six men walked by then another four. A minute later and another man came by stopping and staring down the alley. A thump, then another thump and the man went down with two holes in his head. Jorge pulled him in and searched for the keycard. He found the card and a map to the block. Jorge asked, *"so are you new?"*

Part Five

Jorge walked around the gang-controlled block to the car with the two men. Both men were gone. He placed a grenade under a tire then pulled the pin with the pressure from the tire holding the handle in place. From there he made his way to the front door and using the keycard

went inside. He passed men as they went outside and toward the building with the cameras. Down a hallway, he found a small staircase that seemed to be shabbily retrofitted going down. At the bottom, he found another security door left open. Inside was a sea of cash in Mexican Pesos, Euros and American Dollars. In another room was an arsenal of weapons including explosives and rocket launchers. Jorge took off his jacket then the tactical vest replacing it with one with pockets. He knew leaving with a bag would get him stopped then shot. Back in the cash room, he found what had to be the banker. He was maybe five foot three in his fifties with a deep-set hairline, a bald spot, thick glasses, and a pencil-thin mustache. He also had a small automatic pistol in his hand. The Banker asked, “*what are you doing here?*” Jorge shot him in the head saying, “*making a withdraw.*” Jorge packed his vest with cash both Euros and American Dollars replacing the body armor plates with cash leaving the room with around four-hundred thousand dollars.

Just outside a man got behind the wheel of the stationed car and starting it causing it to roll forward an inch releasing the grenade. Unlike the movies when it went off, there was no large orange and yellow explosion just a puff of smoke and shrapnel shredding the gas tank. The gas spread across the street and with a spark the vapor caught fire torching all the cars on the block. As the fire spread, Jorge made his way out and down the block. The fire department rolled up on the fire along with men looking for a firefight but instead they helped the firefighters put the fire out just as the police arrived finding well-armed gang members. The gunfight lasted three minutes with what became a standoff until three days later when the police moved into a building filled with guns and money.

Everyone they could get there on such short notice came to the event and party. Even Alice and her husband Max were there with Ying. The ceremony was brief with an exchange of rings as well as vows. Cathy carried the bouquet to hold one tradition but only one. She turned and tossed it striking Jill in the face. Later that night Cathy would find Jeff and Jill in Wendy’s office naked and having sex or what Cathy would later see as them making love. She didn’t stop them she just quietly closed the door and backed away thinking, “*not my problem.*” Just outside the door, she found Scott. He was following her since the ceremony and for what had to be the

fifth time Cathy said, *“no there is no way they are yours.”* Scott asked, *“they?”* Cathy turned to Scott and said, *“not a word. We are telling everyone tonight, and if you say something before we can tell everyone, I’ll rip off something you’ll miss.”* Scott looked at the door asking, *“she’s in there with him, isn’t she?”* He and Jill had a momentary thing back a few months ago, but they never were more than friends with benefits or that was how Jill saw it. Scott went back to the open bar and poured a glass of whiskey neat. Sitting at the bar was Ying. She saw the look on his face and said, *“you’re not my type. I like them a little more female, but you know you won’t find what you want in the bottom of that glass right.”* Scott downed the whiskey in one shot then said, *“right now I’m just looking for a way to end tonight. I’ll find something new tomorrow.”* Scott sat down on the couch next to Sally. He asked her, *“is there something wrong with me?”* Sally put her arm around him and said, *“I don’t know, all I see is my friend.”* An hour later, Scott was passed out on the couch next to Sally who stayed with him through the night.

Cathy turned out the lights in the common room leaving Sally and Scott asleep on the couch and Jill and Jeff in the office. Everyone else was either gone or sleeping on whatever bed they could find. She went to bed next to Wendy thinking about how Jeff while looking at the food on the table asked in sign, *“twins?”* Ruth knowing sign finally saw what he saw and asked out loud, *“twins?”* She nodded, and the dying party picked back up then died again. That night Wendy dreamed about Peter for the first time in years, but unlike those days in prison, she remembered the good times from long before they had to grow up. Those days as children they played-outside not thinking about anything else but fun and sun. Her dreamed changed to Cathy and twin girls with blonde hair and the deep green eyes of their father. In that dream, George was there as a proud papa watching over his girls alongside her and Cathy. Time seemed to pass, and the girls were going to school for the first time. Jeff was there with a pregnant Jill. Jeff turned to Wendy and asked in Cathy’s voice, *“Wendy why are you crying?”* Wendy said, *“because nothing lasts forever.”*