

The Woman  
By Emma Hammes

Across the room, she looks at the mysterious man with a sharp jawline and a well maintained dark and handsome beard. Her glass rises to her glossy lips as she takes a sip of her red wine. She has confidence in her like she hasn't had in a long time. Her tight red dress makes her waist look slim and her legs long. She pulled her thick brown hair in a nice, slicked-back ponytail which was freshly washed and dyed. Her fingers twirl her hair as she looks at the man who seems to have no interest in her. He has a tall slender figure; with muscles you could see through his black suit. The woman picked up her glass of wine, tilted it up and finished it all. She was going to need the extra courage if she had any chance of talking to him. She stands up, with her back straight, and her chest forward, one leg after the other. The model walks calmly and modestly to the mysterious man. Her hands rub across his shoulder down to his arm, as she turns to him.

“Hello there,” she says in a sexy, calm voice. His face turns to her with a smile that could light up a room. The white shine from his teeth blinded the woman along with his crystal blue eyes. The lady looked at him and then noticed something unusual about his perfect face. A red scar started below his right eye then went through the top of his nose. It startled the woman at first, but she managed to keep her smile tame and was still standing up straight. She hadn't noticed his scar from that far away, just his perfect jawline and slim figure. He looks deep into her green eyes, “How are you this evening?” he says in a deep voice.

Her stomach drops at how heavenly his voice sounds, “I'm doing a lot better now that I'm talking to you.” As the night went on, drinks were poured, and the flirting was strong. The woman was very tipsy at this point and the two were getting along quite nicely. She puts her

hand on his face, and smiles sharply, “Where’d you get that scar handsome?” He takes her hand from his face, places it on her lap, stands up and adjusts his tie.

“I made some mistakes in the past.” He walks out of the bar with his trail of cologne following him, takes his phone out of his suit pocket, and makes a phone call. The woman gets up stumbling in her tight dress and high heels. She goes to follow him and yells out, “Where are you going, our night is just getting started, I don’t even know your name.” but he’s already gone in a black car with tinted windows. Outside, she stands cold and hurt by her mystery man leaving her, but before she knew it, a tall slender man in a black suit came up behind her, placed a towel laced with something under her nose and dragged her into the black car.

The woman’s eyes opened and all she saw was darkness, she tried to move her hands, but they wouldn't budge. Her feet didn’t move either, she was tied to a chair with rope and a black mask over her face. Sweat was dripping down her face and she started breathing heavily, she could feel her face turn red and the tears streaming down. The more she tried to wiggle to get out the more tired and mentally drained she got. It felt like hours she was sitting there, her head hung down and her feet felt numb from the straps of her high heels. So many thoughts ran through her head as she was trying to process what was happening. Should she scream, fall on the ground, keep wiggling, stay quiet, or pretend to be sleeping? Her head pounded with what to do.

The woman had fallen back asleep but was awoken to loud footsteps coming down squeaky floorboards. Her body froze and then went numb, who could be coming down those stairs? A murderer, cop, another victim? The list continued until the mask was pulled off her face and was blinded by a bright light. Her eyes were trying to adjust but she wanted to see who had just uncovered her. About 30 seconds went by with her head down trying to get used to the light when she looked up and saw a woman with a black lace tank top on with one strap down her arm, a pair

of jeans with big holes in them, and no shoes on. She had a black eye and a bruised lip, and her wrists were red and torn. A terrified look was permanently planted across her face.

As the woman stared at her up and down, the other lady came over and started untying her ropes. There was a sense of relief as she untied every knot because everything was cramping and her back hurt very badly.

After she was done untying her, she bent down slowly and whispered in the woman's ear, "Don't try running," a wave of fear came across her. A man's voice started yelling "Don't talk to her, you're nothing!" as he came into the room, his hand swung across her face leaving a red handprint. Then she was being dragged out by her hair. The woman couldn't believe what she just saw and figured that this scenario was going to be her in a few seconds.

The woman's hands and feet were untied, and she considered trying to make a run for it but decided against it after what she had just witnessed and what the other woman had said. A gentleman had come into the room, it was the mysterious man she had seen at the bar. Her eyes widened as she saw him, he stood in front of her, arms crossed, staring into her eyes. He was wearing the same black suit. The woman didn't dare to say a word, the man bent down, placed his hands on her shoes, and started to take them off for her. The relief that she felt after they were off was like no other, she gave out a slight smile as the man stood back up. No words were said yet as they both just stared at each other. He walked over to a table and grabbed a green hoodie, a pair of black shorts, and some white socks. "Put these on in the bathroom to your left," he said in a low deep voice. He held the clothes out, she slowly got up and her arms reached out to take the clothes. She walked to the bathroom, her legs still weak and numb from sitting and being tied up so long. She reached the bathroom, closed the door and locked it. As soon as that door locked, she quickly and quietly looked around the bathroom for a window or any way to get out. There

was nothing, it was just a small room with a toilet and a sink. She unzipped her red dress and slid it down her body. She had a sudden chill around her, she took the green hoodie, shorts, and socks and hastily put them on. The hoodie was soft and comforting. It gave her a small sense of relief which is what she needed right now because she was terrified on the inside. The woman walked out of the bathroom and the man was gone, so she decided to take that time and look around. She hadn't properly seen where she was being held captive. It was a decent-sized room with nice, carpeted floors, a lovely couch in the middle of the room, and a large flatscreen TV in front of it. After that, she noticed the big fireplace, and the windows high above out of her reach. She must have been in a basement. She turned to see a shelf on one of the walls with numerous signed baseballs, bats, and hats. There were pictures of the mysterious man and what she figured was a professional baseball player.

“That’s my collection of signed baseball gear,” the voice came out of nowhere. Startled, she jumped and turned around, “Are you going to hurt me?” she blurted out with a scratchy voice. He smiled and took a sip of a glass that appeared to have whiskey in it, “I don’t hurt anybody.” The woman stared at him confused because of what she had just witnessed a little bit ago. She walked to the couch, sat down, and waited for what was about to happen to her. The man walks slowly to the couch, eyeing her with apprehension. A glass of wine in his hand just like the one she had been drinking just a few hours earlier at the bar. He sat down next to her and handed her the glass persistently. He placed his hand on her cheek ever so gently and slid his hand down to her shoulder. She got goosebumps as she was uncomfortable. “What do you want with me,” she said in a snarky way. “I want you,” those words almost made her faint.

“How do you even know me?” the woman asked in a quiet, small voice. “I’ve been following you,” he responded bluntly. She had a terrified look on her face and just stared at him.

“I’m not going to go into too much detail, but I hired people to track you down and find out everything and anything about you. For instance, I know you never got married, you have no kids, parents are both deceased from a car accident when you were just a child. You don’t have anything tying you down.” The woman felt sick inside because it was all true.

“You’re beautiful and I know you don’t have much money, you find yourself at the bars to find rich men, sleep with them, and steal their money.” She looked shocked as he was saying all of these things because again, it was true.

“So maybe it is all true but why didn’t you just ask me on a date like a normal person does instead of drugging me?” He looked at her lips then at her eyes then at her lips again.

“I had to make an elaborate first impression, didn’t I?” He places his hand on her thigh gently and stares at her lips again. The mysterious man leans closer to her face and puts his hand on her chin. The woman’s breath is taken away as she stares into his eyes and feels a loving, almost calm and trusting sensation with his hands on her. “I don’t even know your name,” she whispers calmly. He leans in, kisses her soft lips, and whispers in her ear “James.” James carefully takes her sweatshirt off, kisses her, and the rest is history.

The woman wakes up on the couch with a blanket covering her, she looks beneath the blanket and realizes she’s not wearing anything. She looked around the room, but James was nowhere to be seen, all she saw was a gift box with a note on it that said: “Come to the garden.” She opened the gift and inside was a beautiful yellow Sunday dress, and a pair of white wedges. She hesitantly puts them on even though she just had sex with a man who kidnapped her. She feels strangely calm. The woman makes her way up the stairs, she reaches the first floor and is in awe at the beauty of the house. It must be worth millions of dollars. The house was extremely spacious with so many rooms, each room more impressive than the previous one. She makes her

way to the garden. Outside was James, sitting at a dainty little white table with breakfast waiting for her. She walks over, tucks her dress under her, and sits down. "Good morning beautiful," he says cheerfully.

"Good morning," she says as she takes a sip of the coffee on the table. "I have a gift for you," James says.

"You already got me this dress and the shoes."

"I mean a real gift." James takes a little box with a bowtie on it and hands it to her. "Open it," he says. The woman takes the box unties the bow and inside is a gorgeous diamond necklace. "It's beautiful", she says, "but why are you giving me all these gifts?" James stands up, takes the necklace from her, and places it around her neck, he bends down and kisses her on the cheek.

"You can have gifts like that every day if you agree to stay here with me and be my wife." The woman was shocked and almost choked on her coffee after what she heard. "You barely even know me, why would you want me to be your wife?" "Like I said before," James said, "You have nothing tying you down, be with me without anybody noticing." She pauses and looks at the necklace again, "I know you had me followed, but you don't know the real me and my personality, just the facts in my life."

"I learned a lot from you last night," he says with a smirk on his face. "That's all I need to know; I'll get to know the rest of you as time goes on." "What happens if my answer is no?" James picks up his coffee and sips it as well, "I'll have to have you killed." The woman starts laughing because she doesn't think he is serious.

"Yeah right, I thought I was the perfect one for you."

"You are, and that means only I can have you, and you already know too much for me to

let you go.” She stares at him with a concerned look realizing he wasn’t kidding. “So, it’s either I marry you or you kill me?” “It wouldn’t be me killing you, I would hire someone.” She was terrified at this point. It was such a strange situation; all she did was go to the bar and try to hit on someone and now she might be getting killed.

“Can I at least know what you do for a living or know some information about you before I agree?” “Sure, I am in charge of one of the biggest money laundering and drug trafficking businesses in our area,” he says very calmly. The woman asks, “How are you so casual while talking about this, you just shared a big piece of information with me like it was nothing?” “It’s our life,” he says, “You’re in it now or I sure hope you are.”

“How did you get that scar on your face?” the woman said in a quiet tone. “To get where I am it takes a lot of sacrifice and struggle, let’s just say this was one of the struggles to get here.” The woman took a long time to think about it but oddly she was still attracted to him, and it was worth the risk to marry him, and it seemed better than the alternative. She could get used to the expensive gifts and other things he had to offer. She stood up, patted down her dress, slowly walked over to James, sat on his lap, and looked into his eyes.

“I’ll marry you, but I want kids,” she says passionately. “I wouldn’t have it any other way.” He kisses her for a long time and then smiles at her. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a bracelet, takes her arm, and clips it onto her wrists, on it is written “J+W.”