

## Chapter 2

### **Forty-Fifth Floor.**

Quiet as a mouse. Plush wall to wall carpeting in the halls. Paintings that looked like they were worth millions. Mahogany trim and counters. Glass displays with gold, porcelain and jade statuettes. A personal museum—likely stolen—now in the possession of Lingo Stein.

Classic Lingo arrogance. No security on this floor; so convinced no one would get this far. Plus, it was never wise to post CCTV cameras in view of a 20-foot by 20-foot swastika hanging on the wall.

Could anything be so dreaded and beautiful at the same time? That bright, blood-red with the deepest black was mesmerizing. Then she thought of the blood trail that symbol represented—then she thought of her father.

She never, *ever* got that creaking wood sound out of her head. *Thank you, Mister Stein.*

Thoughts of her father were kept to a minimum; trapped behind a multi-layered web of denial and emotional lock-downs. She would give any psychiatrist a lifetime achievement award for the mess she had repressed in there. She didn't want to remember why she had a problem with wood and rope creaking.

“Heil Hitler,” she smirked, saluting the flag in common Nazi fashion, retracting a nasty Bowie 13-inch blade from the same sleeve. She slashed the political flag down the center until they made neat, dual draperies—revealing a camera embedded into the wall.

*That's not good*, she thought, sucking her teeth. *Looks like it's gonna be a night of stupidity.* And as if to prove her prediction correct—

“Good evening, Ms. Thief.” A voice echoed through the hall. “That was a \$200,000 authentic piece of history you just destroyed.”

Butta' looked up and around to find the speakers discretely lining the ceiling. "Now you've got expensive toilet tissue."

The voice was not amused. "Please follow the floor track lights to the office ... and please, don't detour from the path."

Like a neat runway strip, the paneling by the rug lit up to guide Butta' to double-doors halfway in the opposite direction she planned to go. *Well, I'm not climbing forty-five stories back down. Might as well see what's what.*

"Come in, dear. Come in. You must be exhausted from your climb."

Lingo Stein looked pretty much the same, aged fifteen years with graying hair on his sides and apparently having eaten well. He had that 'rich portly child molester' air about him. The kind of guy who has money and enjoys watching little Japanese girls in school uniforms as well as other dirty secrets.

More secrets than that and Butta' knew it.

She couldn't make two steps into the plush office before the nozzle of a gun was lowered to the side of her head, pressing against her temple. Daniel, also aged by time (but in better shape than Lingo), gestured for her to put something in his hand.

"Just a formality, of course." Lingo assured her. "Nothing Personal."

Butta' pulled out her Magnum, handing it over nozzle facing Daniel. The customary way to hand over a weapon is with the handle first—but these weren't customary times. Butta', with finger on the trigger, stared at ole' Daniel. Daniel, with his Ruger P345 .45 automatic already cocked and with a *can't miss* lock on her skull, stared back. Both silent. Both prepared to do something any moment.

"Not on my carpeting, you won't!" Lingo admonished. "Hand him the weapon, dear. It's been a long evening for us all. Let's not make it messy."

Butta' had to agree, releasing the weapon. She was just too tired to duck and dodge right now.

*Creaaaaakkk*. The aura of rope on old wood was back. It was fifteen years ago all over again.

Daniel frisked her a with patrol man's detail, running his hands up and down her chiseled, taut frame. Except for confiscating the blade, she was clean. Her body was worth the second time around, frisking again slowly.

Daniel was not a gay man and unlike his employer, had a taste for *adult* women. This woman was *fine*—and if she should survive the night, he might find a reason to frisk her one more time.

Butta' knew what he was doing, shaking him off her. Lingo laughed at the two of them. “You've got to forgive my man. He has an affinity for *your kind*. So—who are you?”

*My kind*, she snorted. The hate she had for this man was so entrenched; it took time for her to realize she was finally less than ten feet from having her hands around his neck. After years of pictures and news articles—to think she was finally here. It actually stupefied her to silence. She was a fan to Lingo's rock star status in a sick and revenge kind of way.

“Answer me when I speak to you,” he barked, although restrained. Was this the same Lingo Stein she remembered? Where was that vile, hating, lynching racist she built her adulthood on finding? Why did she suddenly feel like SHE was the bad person; a common thief breaking and entering some fat sicko's home?

“Very well then. Call the police and send her off. Let them deal with her. I won't raise any complaints. They'll likely keep you for a night and release you. I'll even forgive you for destruction of property.” He approached her with an open box of the finest milk and dark chocolate assortments money could buy. Oh, did Butta' love her some chocolate. “I'm in a charitable mood this evening and you've helped me identify weaknesses in security. We'll call it even—no harm, no foul. Here, have some chocolate for your troubles.”

“*Gisela*,” is all Butta' had to say.

*Slam!* went the lid to the box of chocolate, and the mood turned dark like a storm over head. Creeeeaaakkkk—They were all back in the barn. A lynching was about to occur.

“You.” Lingo added two and two together, producing unforgettable memories of his heyday and early rise to power. Funny how the mind works. He was suddenly able to smell that old barn, chicken feed and nigger's neck all over again. “You,” was all he could say, walking back to his desk.

Clearing his throat, he sat down tapping his fingers on the table looking intently at Butta'; retracing the years as she does on a daily basis. Thoughts, emotions, control—everything moved through Lingo while he stared at the one fish that got away. This was a greeting card moment from hell. “I spent a considerable amount of money looking for you. For some strange reason I had a feeling, if I didn't get you then, *you'll* get me later. No heat on Earth burns hotter than hate.”

“You should know,” she responded.

“Times have changed. I've evolved. It's not profitable to be, shall we say, *openly honest* about certain passions. Can you say the same? Did you spend your time plotting your vengeance or did you do something constructive with your pitiful race? Maybe more of your insignificant marches over some alleged injustice?”

Butta' stared at him tight lipped; wanting to speak, but how does one respond to such subversive racism?

“Nothing to say?” It angered him when ‘they’ played arrogant to his higher position. No one was higher than he; especially some nigger bitch on some vendetta mission. Not by a long shot. “Then we'll have to take it up a notch. By the way, you can get it out of your filthy bastard head of yours about *Gisela*, designed and owned by Stein Diamond Industries, patent pending.”

“Son of a bitch!” Butta's teeth grinded to the bone with anger.

“Your daddy sat on the innovation of mankind’s lifetime, and simply didn’t listen to reason. For some reason the universe saw fit to give him the idea for artificial rapid heat and compression. Now you want to talk about a son of a bitch. As stupid as you nigger’s are, it’s damn ironic that he came up with the concept to make diamonds in the comfort of his own damn home. The laziest, dumbest race on the planet—”

He paused, completely frustrated and appalled at the notion. “Like a goddamn monkey getting the keys to the jackpot. So I had to set time straight—and kill me a monkey.”

Butta’ made an advancing step forward—more instinctive than planned—blocked by Daniel’s hand on her shoulder. Lingo eyed her carefully, pulling out one of his cigars, gesturing about his office.

“As you can see, the process works. There were some necessary retooling and the usual research and design, but almost off the original plans, your daddy was on the money.”

“Thank you. Now, hand over control, evidence and all rights to Gisela to me ... and we’ll almost call it even.”

Lingo laughed. However Butta’ nor Daniel did any laughing. The seriousness in Butta’ was evident to anyone. Lingo just didn’t care.

“Well, you had to ask, I suppose,” he lit his cigar, puffing casually. “Just for the record, the answer is *no*. Too much time has come and gone since your family kindly *gave* me the invention—”

“With their lives, you bastard!”

“Whatever it took, sweetheart. But like I said, these days are different. It isn’t profitable, not even politically correct, to do that kind of damage at my level. I have a reputation to keep you know.”

“I’ll kill you,” she swore.

“I bet you want to. But that won’t happen. Not by the likes of you. Thanks to Gisela, I’ve got the midas touch, which means I have friends in high places, power beyond your imagination and the ability to move mountains if I requested. Money, now

there's the real son of a bitch. In two years, my Diamond Tower will be complete, right next door to the United Nations and I will continue *suggesting* my desires to world leaders—all of whom have a hard time resisting 240-carat diamonds." Lingo sat forward, shaking his head at Butta', whom for a moment, felt a little defeated. "So talk to me again about why I should care if I stamped out seven worthless niggers? Oh! I'm sorry—six. What to do with you?"

Lingo did his best thinking when he had the upper hand, knowing full well that the other person was usually caught between a rock and a hard place; or in the case of Butta', death or missing, which meant about the same thing. She saw what this character could do—she *felt* what he was capable of. If she got out of this situation, this would be the second and last time this scum will ever have the advantage. Next time—if there is a next time—she'll be smarter.

"Daniel, call the police."

"Sir?" He inquired, quite surprised. Butta' was just as taken aback.

"I have too much at stake for scandal. I'm on the cusp of global networking with the elite," then he laughed. "Who are probably even dirtier than me, but I have to look golden. Killing you will come back to haunt me—case in point, your arrival here tonight. The past just can't seem to die."

"So she lives?" Daniel asked, tapping the side of her head with his gun, sour-grapes.

"So she lives. Call the police and get the Mayor on the phone. When I'm through with you, Ms. Thief, you'll wish you were dead."

"You realize as long as I breathe, I'm coming for you."

"I realize that. Which is why I'm going to bury you so deep into the prison system, it'll take the greatest detectives combined to sort out your story. Rest assured, you'll be quite dead and rotting behind bars with the rest of your people, all shouting the same injustice of some sort. No one will miss one less porch-monkey abusing and taking advantage of this once

great nation, under God—indivisible, with liberty and justice for all—except you. *Oh!* And I’m suing you for destruction of property. Here—”

He threw her a small bottle of aspirin, which she caught bemused. “What’s this for?”

“To the end, I’m still charitable. They’re for the headache you’ll have when you wake up. Hopefully the police won’t strip them from you. Good day, Ms. Thief.”

And Daniel clocks her on the back of the head.

*Yep—a night of stupidity.*

Okay—this is going to move by kind of fast.

Lingo Stein lined the pockets of every major politician in the state of New York, New Jersey, South and North Carolina, Los Angeles, Chicago and Miami. He also has his hands in the goings-on in South Africa, Germany and most other European countries. Back in New York, Lingo has used his political clout to get his building erected with unbelievable tax breaks and being a close personal friend to the Governor of the Empire State, he golf’s with the big-wigs and occasionally shares stories with the friend of the President of the United States. Lingo Stein is connected—all because of diamonds; all because of Gisela.

So when Butta’ woke up in a jail cell the next day (sans aspirin, by the way), her head was killing her and it only got worse. First, she was left in her cell and denied the right to make any phone calls for three days. Not that she had anyone to call—no, that’s not true. She had three people she wanted to reach out to; good, trusted friends that, by now, knew she’s either dead or in a situation.

That *situation* spiraled on day four.

The court appointed lawyer never showed, and Butta’ was left to defend herself in what seemed like a kangaroo court scenario. The judge, Lingo’s beer-drinking buddy whenever his yacht ports in the city, ensured Butta’s stay in the system would be most uncomfortable. He threw the book at her with enough

personal rage, Butta' felt the heat on every count read against her: burglary 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> degree, aggravated assault, criminal mischief - purposely or knowingly, criminal trespass, attempted murder, conspiracy, resisting arrest (that's a good one considering she was out cold), mistake of law as to unlawfulness of force (*what?*), reckless or negligent injury or risk of injury to innocent persons, intoxication pathological (*the reason she was out cold*), duress, perjury, false swearing (*without saying a word*), robbery in the first and second degree, aggravated sexual assault (*on who? Lingo?*), aggravated criminal sexual assault during course of a felony (*she raped Lingo during her robbery*), stalking, terroristic threats, theft of immovable and moveable properties, theft by deception, theft by extortion, possession of firearms, possession of certain weapons, possession of firearm with a purpose to use it against the person or property of another, possession of a weapon for unlawful purposes, destruction of property, unlawful possession of a weapon and finally, breaking and entering.

*Guilty, guilty, guilty.* No defense or jury to protect her, Butta' was handed down a sentence after her rap sheet grew from unknown to a file befitting the Guinness Book of Records: the most fabricated criminal charges handed to one person—that stuck—*ever*. Additionally, she was being sued for over 65-million dollars by Stein Diamond Industries for the damage of an expensive and rare Nazi Party flag. How that is being permitted in such a Jewish-majority run city as New York, she will never know—or find out. She is sentenced to one year in Rikers.

One year for every count of each charge.

So let's see—doing the math—thirty-three charges, each with one count except for stalking where the judge somehow managed to squeak out nine-counts out of nowhere, comes to 42-years, with no parole. Might as well be a life sentence. As she was being led from the court room, she felt Lingo's presence in this whole debacle and realized this was the new

style lynching; the politically correct version of hanging someone without too much blood on anyone's hands.

What was *really* on Butta's mind as she was given a lengthy stay behind bars? Why didn't she put up a fight or complain about her over-killed criminal record? Because she needed two-years to wait for Lingo's tower to be built; to think things through about him and this whole Gisela business and what better place than prison to think deeply and plan. She's been in jail before—even on death row some place in India once. What Lingo didn't realize was her jail time was not in his control at all, and in two-years, *not* forty-two, they will meet again.

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