

# Chapter One

Shawn pulled up to the impound lot before the rain, while the air still felt tight in his throat.

Behind the chain-link fence, cars waited in perfect rows, windshields facing the parking lot like soldiers at attention. He glanced to his left, where the small brick office sat, dark, locked, and shuttered, before leaning over to fish a set of spare keys from the glove box. Panic slipped into his stomach when he straightened again and measured up the fence. All around him, floodlights were throwing distorted shadows over the ground, and a thought lurked in the back of his mind: a yell, and a night patrolman's heavy footsteps quickening to a run. Breaking and entering, they would say. He closed the door as quietly as he could.

*Seriously, Becca. Every single time.*

Shawn hadn't expected better from her, but that didn't make things any easier. Still, when the buzz of his phone startled him, he gritted his teeth and answered. "What?"

"Hurry up, jerk." Rebecca's voice came through a haze of bad reception.

Shawn snapped the phone shut and headed to the pad-locked gate.

Predictable. After all was said and done, he always ended up being the jerk.

The cuff of Shawn's jeans snagged on his way over the fence, but that was the least of his worries. He shook himself

free and dropped onto the dirt lot. Crouching down to be less conspicuous, he hurried off to the left, where they kept newly towed cars. He planned to tell Rebecca how pathetic it was for him to know that.

When his phone started humming again, he almost ignored it — he'd already caught the gleam of Rebecca's Mustang anyway — but even on vibrate, it made too much noise and he knew that she'd just call again, over and over until he picked up.

"What?"

"Oh my God, Shawn, hurry."

He straightened up and punched the unlock button, and the car's lights flashed yellow through the dark. The Mustang's trunk popped open and his sister climbed out, all legs and too much skin, smoothing down her navy skirt. Shawn just shook his head.

Rebecca doubled over to fluff out her long hair, the blond almost silver in the dark. "Took you long enough," she said.

"Yeah, I guess."

"Jesus, it's cold."

Shawn knew, even without looking, that Rebecca's eyes were on his jacket.

"Yeah," he repeated. "I guess."

"Shawn."

"Fine." He shrugged off the coat and handed it over. "Happy?"

"Yessir. Now how are we getting out of here?"

"I'm parked out front."

"No, I mean *we*." Rebecca settled her palm on the Mustang's scarlet tail fin, fingertips caressing cold metal. She maintained an unhealthy relationship with that '97, but at least she could admit it.