

Fool Me Once

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Approx. 708

An overfamiliar scent of sandalwood fills my nasal cavities upon entering the cheap motel. Chanel No. 5, a fragrance that once lured me, was now repulsive, but I'd been waiting on this day, my last chance.

"What the f-ck, Patty," I shout as I slam the dingy white door.

Patty Baker, AKA Patty Cake, wife of Miami's most notorious drug smuggler, Frankie "Sweet Tooth" Baker, declared she had an emergency.

"I'm-I'm sorry, Detective Halburn. You know I wouldn't ask if-if it wasn't urgent," she sniffles, stepping on the grey concrete patio.

Patty's customary tidy blonde locks appeared disheveled, her body weak, intoxicated from binge drinking.

Examining the odd-shaped dark plum bruise covering her right cheek, I ask, "What has he done this time?"

Mascara stained her hazel eyes down her boney cheeks. Frank had hit her again, *bastard*.

"I-I didn't mean to...you gotta help me. They're going to kill me." She sobs.

Her tiny hands tremble, causing the clear liquid in her glass to ripple. Patty had never been this frightened over Sweet Tooth before.

"Did you do as I said?" I ask, resting a hand on her frail shoulder.

She winces in pain.

"I tried. George, please believe me. I didn't mean..." she trails off.

"Tell me!"

Her eyes wide at my demand.

"H-he come home early while I was packing... Frank went crazy, George." She buries her face in her hands, drawing in a sharp breath, blindsiding me by the words that come out, "I-I think I killed him."

"Jesus, Patty, what did you do?"

"He was choking me, so I grabbed a vase smashing him over the head. Frank's body crumpled to the ground," she pauses, placing her glass on the table. I study her movements as she fidgets her hands.

"You need to leave. Frank's people will come."

She calmly stands, closing the space between us, crouching down on her knees to face me.

"I can't," she whispers as she runs her blood-splattered hand up my leg.

I shift evasively in my seat.

"W-Why not? Why stay here?" I compel.

She pauses before whispering, "You."

I push her assertively onto her derrière.

"I've told you," I point between her and me, "this... can't happen."

Vastly I stride towards the door, rejecting her as she remains on the floor.

"You need to know the truth," she mumbles.

"The truth," grabbing the knob to exit.

"About your wife."

I spin, squaring her up. "We arrested and convicted her killer."

"You see, George," she begins, changing the decibels of her tone, "When you ended our affair, I was devastated... you chose her over me."

"What is so special about ordinary," she implores.

I let on I didn't hear her desperate attempt to anger me.

"She cheated too, ya know," she shouts, slapping both hands on the concrete patio, startling me.

"No, she wouldn't have!" I protest.

"She did, and so did you. Do you recall, George, rolling in the green sheets with me? Red suspender belt clipped to black fishnet stockin-"

"Enough," cutting her off. Patty was p*ssing me off, and she knew it. "Made me a better lover," she claimed.

Sleeping with the most desired women in Miami was a thrill, but I always knew I would pay, one way or another.

"I-I couldn't believe you chose her over me after you promised to get me out of this situation and away from Frank," she wails.

"You don't deserve sh*t," I spit harshly. "It was you who killed my wife."

She draws in a huge breath, eyes wide in horror, "You knew?" she shrieks.

"I found something that night no one else did, a lone blue diamond laying near her lifeless body. A rare diamond I've seen many times before, on you," I raise my voice.

Her bloodshot eyes widen, "W-why didn't you arrest me?"

"I think we both know the answer to that, Patty Cake," I taunt.

"You wouldn't," she squints her eyes, daring me.

"I already did," flashing a wicked smile.

"Wh-wha-what...have you done?"

Grabbing her throat, stumbling to her feet, then towards me while gasping to take a breath. Patty stares into my empty soul as she struggles to take her last breath.

"I am getting you away from him... just as promised."