

SEIZED, A Romantic Suspense Novella

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The guys were just settling up the betting and reorganizing the room when Dave's phone vibrated on the table.

"Oh, man, the woman is psychic. Probably wants to remind us to wrap the leftovers and not to spill any beer on her brand new carpeting," Luke said.

"Too late. You already did that," Matt said, shoving their youngest brother sideways.

Dave gave his brothers a warning glare. "Hey, babe," he said as he held the phone to his ear. "What's up—?"

"Listen carefully, Lydia" she said, as if talking to someone else.

"Lydia? Did you dial the wrong numb—?"

"Dr. Hodges is dead. That's the gunshot you heard."

"Gunshot?"

All the men in the room froze. Dave hit the speaker button on his phone and set it on the counter of the bar so they could all hear. Gripping the counter with both hands, he willed the sudden rush of fear to ease its stranglehold around his heart.

"The rest of our team, all four of us are okay and the patient is stable. Mr. Wilkes is in charge and he's wired a bomb to the doors. If anyone...and he means *anyone*...tries to come in, all three entrances will blow."

His knees wobbled when he heard the word bomb. "You're telling me there's someone holding you hostage? In the OR?"

A deep voice spoke off in the background, too muffled to make out his words.

"Paul says you have ninety minutes to clear the patients out of the hospital."

Matt dropped the poker chips and pulled out his phone. Dave could hear Jake also talking on his phone, probably to his sister Sami. They lived on the next block over. Luke pulled his ever-present laptop out, while Castello, pad and paper in hand, leaned in to hear what Judy was saying and take notes old-school style.

"What else does he want?" Dave asked, trying to control the panic surging through him. He needed to remain calm or his woman was dead.

"Mr. Wilkes wants to be sure the SWAT team knows if he sees them or any cop, he'll trigger the bomb early."

Good girl. She'd mentioned his last name twice. He glanced at Luke, who was already typing the assailant's name into his computer.

"Keep him talking, babe. Can you tell us what he's planned?"

More deep rumbling sounded in the background.

"Lydia, he knows the media are already all over the place in the ER. He wants someone to find Senator Klein and make sure he gets here. You have twenty minutes. Then meet us back at this door. Remember, no one is to try and get in here."

"The guys are still here and we're leaving now. We'll figure out how to get you out of there, I promise." He looked at the seriously concerned features of the men surrounding him. They all knew he'd just made a promise he might not be able to keep.

"Judy, I'm going to disconnect now to save your battery life. Don't panic. Stay calm. Keep him calm. I'll call you once we're there. I love you, babe." He nodded at Jake to hit the off button, his body shaking too much to do it.

"Fuck!" He whirled and slammed his fist through the drywall he'd spent hours putting up that summer. Dull pain registered in his hand. He pulled it out and bent over, willing himself to slow his breathing.

Inhale.

Exhale.

Think.

Judy was depending on him.