



## Excerpt: Shade's Lady

By Joanna Wylde

The first hour of my shift passed in a blur, busy enough that I didn't notice the time but not so busy people got pissy waiting for their drinks. I'd just leaned across the bar to give Bone a fresh order when the door opened and the room quieted.

The Reapers Motorcycle Club had arrived.

There were probably ten of them total, dressed in leather and patches and so much pure badassery it radiated through the room like a shock wave. I halfway expected heavy metal theme music to start playing spontaneously. I'd met a few of them before—they had a chapter over in Cranston, which was only thirty miles from Violetta. Rebel's riding club had hosted a barbecue last month, and the Reapers had come with all their assorted old ladies and hangers-on.

At the time, I'd been startled at how everyone treated them—almost like visiting royalty. Now I knew a lot more about biker culture, including the fact that in the world of casual riding clubs, true outlaws like the Reapers really *were* royalty.

Then their king walked in, and everyone got real quiet.

Shade.

He surveyed the bar, radiating a kind of cold, icy authority that gave me the shivers every time I saw him. When I first met Rebel, I'd teased him about having a crush on Shade because my new boyfriend couldn't stop talking about the man. Then I'd met Shade in person. Now I got it. Rebel worked hard to make sure everyone knew he was a big, bad biker.

Shade didn't have to work at it.

He just *was* big and bad.

According to Bone, Shade was the youngest national president in Reapers Motorcycle Club history. One of the girls at the barbecue told me he was a killer. Apparently he'd been arrested for murder, then gotten off on a technicality. Not that this seemed to bother her. She'd been all breathless and sighing, and later I'd spotted Shade pushing her up against a tree, skirt around her waist. He'd been devouring her mouth while she frantically clawed at his pants.

Apparently the whole murderer thing wasn't a deal breaker.

Shade's eyes caught mine, and I froze, feeling like he could see all the way down to my soul. In that instant, I completely understood why that girl had let him fuck her against a tree. The man radiated power, strength and raw sex. He was the biggest, nastiest bastard in the room—not to mention easy on the eyes—and deep down inside I just knew we'd make beautiful babies together. Too bad I already sort of had a boyfriend... Shade was so potent we'd probably have quintuplets or something crazy on the first try.

*You don't even want a baby*, I reminded my quivering ovaries.

*Jump him! Jump him and ride him like a cowgirl!* they snapped back. *Just think how sexy and strong he is. His sperm could kick Rebel's ass and you know it!*

"Go tell them the back room's ready," Bone said, breaking my trance. "Make sure they're settled. By the time you're out, I'll have their drinks ready to go."

“Me?” I asked, stomach clenching. Shade might be pretty to look at, but he scared the shit out of me—I’d decided about five minutes after meeting him and his club brothers that I’d best keep my distance.

Shade caught my fear from across the room, and his lip quirked. Not quite a smile. More like the amused, tolerant smirk a cat gives a doomed mouse. Made me want to run and hide in a corner.

But I had the feeling that no one ever successfully hid from Shade.

“Yeah,” Bone said. “You’ve got the experience and Sara hasn’t had a break all night. Suz just punched in but I don’t trust her in there with them—she’s looking for an old man, and her lips flap too much. Just serve the drinks, do what you’re told and if you happen to overhear anything, you keep your fucking mouth shut. Got me?”

I broke away from Shade’s gaze and turned to my boss. His face was serious. Dead serious. I swallowed.

“Are they—”

“Stop,” he said, cutting me off. “Whatever you’re thinking, just stop. Thinking isn’t part of your job here. Neither is flirting. Not tonight. You carry drinks, you take away empties, you hear nothing and you say nothing. Easy money, babe. Go earn it.”

He handed me a set of keys and gave me a small shove. I started across the room toward the bikers, ready to escort them despite the fact that they obviously knew exactly where they were going.

“Hi,” I said, smiling uncertainly. “I’m—”

“Mandy,” Shade said, eyes sweeping down my figure. I got the sense that he saw everything in that glance, from the red bra just peeking out of the top of my tank top to the fact that my ex-husband had gotten me arrested last year. “I know who you are. We met at the barbecue, remember?”

Oh, I remembered all right. He'd caught me by a belt loop on my jeans, pulling me just close enough for our bodies to brush against each other. Then he'd whispered I'd be welcome on the back of his bike any time.

Somehow, I'd managed to squeak out that I had a boyfriend.

Shade had laughed, running one finger under my chin, tilting my head up toward his. "That's your problem, baby. You don't need a boy—you need a man. Call me when you're ready."

Just the memory was enough to turn my face neon red. Thankfully, Bone was the kind of boss who believed a dimly-lit bar is a good bar, so hopefully it wasn't too obvious to the badass standing in front of me.

"Great to see you again," I told him, and I'm proud to say my voice didn't squeak this time. "I'll be your waitress tonight. Bone is pouring drinks right now."

"Thanks, babe," Shade said. "Lead the way."

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## About Shade's Lady

*Shade's Lady is a stand-alone story. There is no need to have read any prior Reapers MC stories to enjoy Shade's Lady.*

*The book will be released in paperback and through Kindle on March 14. The wider release, including all major retailers, will take place three months later.*

Order Shade's Lady: <http://amzn.to/2IFnmP7>