

Getting Lucky - CHAPTER ONE

Lucky Coalson walked into the Mississippi Flame after landing in Las Vegas the night before, his deep blue eyes adjusting to the dim interior as his boots crunched across the filthy carpet. He figured that once upon a time it must have been a dark red dice pattern, but now it was a disgustingly stained mess. At twenty five, he figured he was probably younger than some of the stains. He ran his eyes over the dark paneled walls, the blackened ceiling from years of smokers, and the torn leather seats on the stools at the slot machines. Even the old felt fabric on the game tables was torn and held together by duct tape. Everything in the place was old, worn out and dirty looking.

Everything, that is, except the goddess behind the bar. His body reacted to the luscious ass that was filling out the little, cutoff blue jean shorts. She was currently bent over the bar, her long form reaching for a bottle of something from the customer side. He remembered her from his interview. She had been behind the bar then too, the first time he had talked to the big man, Otto or something, about his duties. She would definitely be the only perk for having to work in this shit hole. Maybe he could enjoy this part of the job at least.

Lucky wondered why someone that looked as good as she did was still here. She could definitely make better money elsewhere. As he walked toward her, platinum blonde hair fell in sleek waves as she righted herself. Large breasts bounced enticingly in a skintight blue camisole as she found her feet. She turned to him and anger instantly ignited as he saw the remainder of a black eye where the delicate skin was starting to heal above her cheek.

"Give me the bastard's name, darlin', and you won't have to worry about him anymore," Lucky growled as he strode forward to get a closer look at the shiner the woman was sporting. She was a definite beauty, with lightly tanned skin, light blue eyes and the most delectable ruby red lips he wanted, no, he *needed*, to devour.

She put out a hand. "Whoa, there, Cowboy Curtis, no one hit me. A corner of a heavy box fell in the storage room, smacking me square in the eye." She looked him over. "I take it you're the new bouncer?"

"Yes ma'am. The name's Lucky." He gave her his patented panty-melting smile that all the Coalson brothers had been gifted with.

She frowned at him. "Your name is Lucky, and you're in a casino. Yep, you'll fit in around here just fine. Nothing else in this dump is very original either." She placed the bottle in its spot behind the bar. Heading down to the small wine cellar where supplies were kept, she didn't even give him a spark of interest like most women would.

Lucky grinned. *Challenge accepted, darlin'.*

"Hey! Wait up!" Lucky called after her. He jogged around the bar, but she had disappeared. Heading down the small stairs, he saw her reaching on her tiptoes for another box perched precariously on top of several smaller boxes. "Let me get that," he sighed. Easily grabbing the box, he handed it to her, then began to rearrange the rest into a safer semblance of order. "You never

told me your name,” he said with another seductive glance at her. *God she was so pretty. She would be even prettier if he could just coax a smile out of her.*

She turned on the stairs, the frown never leaving her face and replied, “It’s Claudia. Welcome to the Mississippi Flame and all that. I’ll get your paperwork as soon as I finish stocking the bar. Oh, and your drug test came back clean, so you are good to go.”

“Where is everyone? I mean, like the guy that hired me. He’s the boss, right?” Lucky had to concentrate on his words to keep his mind off that fine ass swaying in front of him. Damn! The woman was stacked. He’d seen some beautiful women, but she was on a whole other level than the sweet things back home.

“Otis? He’s not the boss. You’re his replacement. Far as I know, the owner is at one of his other properties. He hired me to oversee this casino, so that’s what I do. He pays well, but he’s a cheap bastard otherwise.” She set the box down on the bar and waved a hand around. “I’ve been telling him we are losing customers in this rundown joint, but he doesn’t seem to care.”

Lucky took another look at the place. She was right. It sure wasn’t a place where winners came to win; it was more like where losers came to end it. Yeah, if a guy owned this joint, he might be tempted to try his luck elsewhere and spend his money on something more profitable. *So how does this rat trap fit into the vandalism back home?* Lucky’s brother, Sam, had his old friend, Noah, working on that problem right now. According to Sam, Noah was the best hacker money could buy.

“So why do you stay? I bet with your looks and smokin’ hot body, you could be a huge Vegas hit,” he said as he tried his charming smile again, but still no dice. Now Lucky was intrigued.

“I grew up in Vegas. I know what it takes for a woman to make it here. I can’t sing, I can’t dance, so that leaves me on my back or working the bars. I’ll work the bar, thank you very much.” She settled the last of the supplies under the bar. Dusting her hands on a rag, she shrugged an elegant shoulder. “Follow me. You start in half an hour, so we need to get the paperwork done now.”

Lucky admired her work ethic. She was no slouch. He also admired her determination to make something of this dump. But what he most admired, was the way those tiny shorts hugged her perfect body. God, how was he going to keep his hands off her long enough to find something on the arsonist? If she was the manager, then he’d have to keep a close eye on her. *Hmm, that could be interesting.*

“If you keep looking at my butt, you’re going to run into the wall,” she said. “Then we’ll both have black eyes.”

Lucky glanced up quickly, and sure enough, he was one step away from slamming into the damn wall. “A man can’t help but look, darlin’. Not the way you’re put together.”

She rolled her eyes at his attempt at flirting. “Keep your eyes on the customers, your cowboy charm to yourself, your cock inside your pants, and we’ll get along just fine.”

Lucky stared at her retreating form and felt his cock twitch. Dammit, this was going to be one helluva long month, *but interesting...very interesting.*

Claudia settled herself in the broken chair behind the desk. It creaked and tilted sideways, but held her weight. She rifled through a stack of papers in a bin until she located the folder she wanted. She turned to Lucky, and found him taking in the office décor. Yeah, dark paneling, beige file cabinets, beige metal desk, and the same worn carpet from the casino, didn't exactly lead anyone to think this was a profitable establishment. Even the plant on the sill of the lone small window was dead. Claudia sighed. Who knew a cactus would die if you forgot to water it occasionally? *Only a little longer, Claudia, and you will be free to get the hell out of this dive.*

Lucky turned back to her. She felt the full impact of his gaze down to her core. Dammit, she hadn't been this attracted to a man in years. She was thirty two years old; she had urges and when she felt inclined, she scratched that particular itch with one of her go-to friends with benefits, but this guy really got her juices flowing. She didn't do the hearts and flowers thing, but damn, he made her think about keeping him around for a while. *Keep your mind on the business. You've got a job to do and when it's over, you should be able to walk away free. Don't let a hot ass cowboy fuck it up.*

"So here's your tax info and salary, such as it is," Claudia practically shoved the folder across the desk at him. "Do you have any questions about your duties?"

"Are you one of my duties?" Lucky asked in a sexy drawl. Claudia shivered in response.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, do I keep you safe and do whatever you want of me?" He cocked up his lips for a slight grin, showing her that would be his pleasure.

She felt the blush staining her cheeks. *Dammit! She hadn't blushed in years.* She scowled at him. "I can take care of myself, cowboy. And if I want to play 'hide the pickle' with you, I'll let you know."

"Well, you do that, darlin'. And for future reference, I don't have a 'pickle' or even the largest prize winning cucumber; I have huge cock that's gonna more than fill you up, darlin', so show some respect for my equipment."

Claudia laughed. She couldn't help it. He looked like a kid defending his favorite ball team. *Well, perhaps it was.* "All right, cowboy. I stand corrected. Now let's get down to business." She rocked back in her chair. "You work a twelve hour shift, mostly evenings, and have one day off a week, which will alternate as the scumbags don't need to know when you're here or not. Pam is an ex-wrestler and two of the dealers are ex-Marines. They will spell you when you need a break and on your days off. Two of them will always be on day shift. Not much trouble comes this way as we don't get many high rollers."

"Sounds simple enough; I help wherever needed, keep the place calm, but I don't get to fuck the staff unless I get an invitation."

Claudia grinned. He really was incorrigible, *and sexy as hell.* "What you do with Pam and Simon is your own business, *darlin'*," she stressed his nickname for her, "but I'll let you know if I have an itch that I want you to scratch. Don't hold your breath."

“Yes, ma’am. I fully understand the rules.” He leaned in. “But that doesn’t mean I’ll stop trying to get into those sweet little panties, *darlin’*. I am a red blooded male and you are just about the sexiest thing I have ever seen.”

Claudia stood up and held out her hand, ignoring his remark for the moment although she would admit that his deep rich baritone did things to her insides. Lucky grasped her hand in his own as she said, “Welcome to the Mississippi Flame, Lucky. You start right now.”

He grinned and tipped his hat, then turned to the door.

“Oh, and Lucky,” Claudia waited until he turned around. “I think you’re hot as hell, too, and I rarely wear panties.”

Satisfied that she had given him a dose of his own medicine, she sat back down and forced herself not to give him a second look.

After all, she had to stay in control; her very life depended on it.