

SCENERY JONES

CHAPTER I: SHINY SHOES MAN

Scenery Jones was driving at eighty-five miles an hour along the 10 with three million dollars in diamonds on her lap, a gun in the glove box, a dead body in her trunk and a juicer on the shotgun seat.

But to tell you about how she got all of these things we have to start at the beginning and that means talking about the man with the shiny shoes.

But before Shiny Shoes Man, we have to start at her club. Scandal. Because that's where this all *really* began.

Scandal was a strip joint out near LAX where she danced under the name Voodoo. She had always liked the Stones' 'Voodoo Lounge' album, in fact 'Love is Strong' was one of the three songs she danced to every night. 'Sexual Healing' and 'Love T.K.O' the other two. She was old school like that. She knew the words to all of them off by heart. Lip-synced to them with a smile on her face. The johns liked that. They liked to think she was singing to them.

Her Mom, high on mushrooms, had made the name Scenery up. There was no deep reason for it. No illumination of character applied to it. Her Mom had just chosen it because she had never heard it before. Her Mom was impulsive like that.

Scenery had almond eyes, real full breasts, and a honey colored skin. She knew she had an ass to die for but she had been brought up to believe her hair wasn't good hair. Been fed the propaganda and tried everything. Relaxing it. Weaving it. Dying it. But she had had enough of being defined by someone else's notions of beauty and now wore it short and natural. And it worked. Showed off her face and made her more attractive in a predatory way. She was thirty-four and knew she passed younger. Black don't crack baby. But she could feel her body beginning to protest at the strain it was being put under. It was the high heels that really, really hurt. The hot yoga helped sure. But she knew what her body was telling her. That this job was going to a thing of the past real soon. But Christ what would she do next? No way was she gonna end up like Marlo behind the bar. Skimming off the tips, with a face stuck together with the glue of a wasted life and trapped opportunity. God. She could not end up like that. She **WOULD** not end up like that.

She hadn't figured she'd be doing this for as long as she had. But the money was good. Real good. But it wasn't about the money. It was about the power. All men, *if* they

did think, thought from below the waist. She knew this. And once you knew this you could control a man. They were like sheep.

But soon, 2 years had become 5 and now here she was in her 7th year on the stage. It had just settled on her in the same way as you get older, you don't know what's current in music. She thought this funny. That ignorance crept on you with age. Is that what wisdom was? Defiant ignorance?

She liked to arrive at the club early. Way before they opened. She didn't mingle with any of the other girls. The white girls soon moved on so it hurt too much striking up a friendship with them only for them to leave a vacancy in your heart. And truth be told the other black girls didn't like her, because she was light skinned and made more money than them. Her skin. That was on account of her father Moses Jones. A high yellow quarter cast man with bright eyes and straight hair who often passed for white.

She had a routine. She'd get to her spot. By the emergency door. She'd take out her outfits. Her heels. Rub herself down with coco butter than go outside to have a joint with Clarence the bouncer. She'd then enjoy the buzz with some white wine and a Snickers bar. Then she'd read. Scenery loved to read. Anything. And now with a Kindle it meant she didn't have to carry a heavy bag around.

She wasn't sure if Clarence was a simpleton or just touched by God. A mountain of a man he reminded Scenery of Lenny from Mice and Men. Only Clarence wasn't THAT stupid. He was just slow. Like maybe he heard things half a beat too late. But he never hit on any of girls and always treated them fair.

Scandal didn't serve liquor but you always got the occasional drunk and Clarence would know. He'd either not let them in or watch them. Some of the other girls they found him creepy. But Scenery had worked clubs with creepy doormen and Clarence wasn't that.

He didn't want a cut of their wages or a blow job to sweeten the deal. She felt safe around him, she often wondered if he was gay but she had never seen him with no man. Just his Rhodesian Ridgeback Birdie Num-Num. She had lent Clarence Peter Sellers' "The Party." He had liked the film. Liked the name. Up until that point the dog had been called Bertie. She often wondered if this change of name confused it.

He came to work with Clarence. Vicious muthafucka who only seemed to bark at blacks. Now since Clarence was black it was hard to accuse him of owning a racist dog but it was true. The dog didn't like black people. The girls figured it was because black

dudes didn't tip so good, although he never ever barked at Scenery. Clarence had once explained this: that dogs knew their own. She wasn't sure if it was compliment or insult.

There was a convention on at the Staples Centre. Scenery had danced for some of the men. Seen the badges they wore. A convention for Industrial stoves. Most of stove men were fat and over weight and had forgotten they had a penis that did something else than piss.

Man they were so easy to play. An exhalation of breath in the ear. A lick of the face. A lip bite. Any of those got them hard and sometimes squirting, which wasn't what you wanted. *A man who cum, soon runs* was the rule. It applied in the bedroom as much as on the dance floor. Once a man was done, well he was done. The key was to keep him back from being done.

She had regulars. Lots of them. And really that's where our story begins. With a regular john she just called Shiny Shoes Man, on account of his shiny shoes.

He paid well. And whenever he came he'd book out a private room for a good two hours. Only thing with Shiny was he liked coke. Liked to sniff it off her butt. Off her tits. He didn't like to buy it. So she'd get it. It was all part of the service.

She didn't know much about Shiny. He didn't speak when he watched her dance. He just stared at her with those charged eyes, rubbing himself through his trousers. She'd move his hand away...after all a man who cum, soon runs...and keep him focused on her.

It was one of those dark cold nights that LA rarely has and he had come in wearing a kaftan over a suit. As per usual his shoes were very shiny. Almost like they were coated in plastic. But they weren't. They were just fucking shiny is all. She complimented him on his scarf.

'It's a kaftan,' he had replied.

She shook her head. 'No it isn't.' She was sitting on his lap. Her back to him. Ass grinding into his groin. Her spine strong, curving like an elongated 'S'.

'A kaftan is a front-buttoned coat usually reaching to the ankles, with long sleeves. It can be made of wool, cashmere, silk, or cotton. What you're wearing is a scarf.'

Shiny looked at her and smiled.

'Why do you work here? You're smart. Bright. Couldn't you do something else?

It was Scenery's turn to smile. 'See you make the mistake that I don't like this job.'

'Do you?'

'Like all things. Sometimes I do. Sometimes I don't. I like the money.'

'That why you do this? For the money?'

'Why do people do anything?'

Shiny's eyes dropped then. Like suddenly he was remembering something. Something bad.

'I did something today. And I don't know why I did it.'

'What?' She stood up and faced him. Taking off her top.

He looked at her breasts. They weren't full of plastic. They were real. A slim girl with big tits. Always a fine sight.

'Do you have it?'

She reached for her bag. Taking out a wrap of coke. She glanced up at the camera on the wall. Then unplugged it.

She lifted a breast and spread some cocaine on it. A mound. Shiny leant in and sniffed it up. It stung. His eyes watered a little. He rubbed his nose. Then licked the rest off. He started to talk again, the gear giving him courage.

'I did something today.'

'What?'

She sat on his lap. Facing him.

'I stole over 3 million dollars from my work.'

She didn't know if he was kidding. Sitting there with rheumy eyes. Dribbling nose. Cold hands. Sweating. He repeated it.

'3 million dollars.'

She humoured him.

'Why?'

'Why did I steal it?'

'Yes.'

'I...' He started to say something but stopped. Then he thought for a moment. 'I don't know. Jesus. What have I done?' He started to panic then. Pushed her off his lap. 'If I put them back now. They'll never know. Jesus Christ what have I done?' He was standing now. Reaching for his coat which was when he had the heart attack.

Scenery had never seen a man die before and was mildly amused how similar a man dying looked to man orgasming. Shiny clutched his chest then fell to the ground.

She was out of her comfort zone now and for a second she just stared at him, not sure what to do. She looked around then knelt by his body, leaning in to see if he was breathing. He wasn't. Fuck. She rolled him round. Squatted on top of him and started pumping his chest. She didn't really know what she was doing. Had read about it.

'HELP!' She screamed. She pumped again. 'HELP!' Clarence rushed to the door. 'I think he's dying! Call an ambulance!' Clarence nodded. Scenery went on pumping which was when the pouch dropped out of his inside pocket. As she pumped his chest she saw it there. On the floor. She pumped again. Listened to his chest. Still nothing. With her ear on his body, the pouch was in her direct eye line. She reached over and snatched it up then started to give him mouth to mouth.