

Bound

ASHLEY IRVIN

I KNEW IT WAS A MISTAKE THE MINUTE IT WAS OVER. Everyone knows my face. They will know who it was as soon as they realize what I did. He's dead. No, that can't be. There is no way it was me, but it was. I pulled the trigger. I saw the life leave his eyes and his body fall to the ground. No way. It wasn't I watching his blood begin to pool in a dark glassy circle, but it was.

When I saw him for the first time it was from across a dark room through flashing lights in a bar down on Fifth Street. Upon first glance I instantly knew his type: Rugged, good looking, a bad boy. Damon was dangerous, and he knew it. I knew it too but that made him irresistible all the same. Intrigued I made my way across the floor, caught his attention and let him place his hands on my hips. With each song I slowly felt life as I knew it slipping out of my fingertips, and I allowed it to go.

Our love was undeniable and passionate, unable to be tamed. He had the dark breath of a demon and I fell for him hard. Quickly consumed, he became my life. School, family, friends, nothing mattered, it was only Damon. Just a glance my way from his dark eyes could make me swoon, so when he told me to follow him to Minnesota my heart did not even think twice. To be completely alone just the two of us on an adventure sounded like all my dreams coming true. Now I know that is exactly what he wanted, separation from the rest of those who loved me, and it worked.

We moved away and I finished up my degree in education, not that I would ever use it. The move led to Damon getting the opportunity to start a business. All the sudden we

were rolling in the flourishes of the rich. I went from housewife to trophy wife in what seemed like second. Sometimes being beautiful and supporting a successful man seemed shallow, but it was enough for me, just not enough for him. It was never enough. Damon began to spend longer hours at the office and one night as I waited at home alone drowning in the silence, the office cameras caught his latest extra interest, a lanky brunette he had hired not even a month ago.

I confronted Damon about his office flings multiple times over the next five years, only to get another red handprint on my cheek for being ungrateful and nosey. I was not to meddle in his work life. I was just the wife, the pretty smile, everything he had made me to be, and everything he had crafted, built, molded, bought.

One October, I decided that being alone was not enough for me anymore, so I ran. Ran past houses of men and women who knew and did nothing. Ran past "friends" homes, friends who were only there when there was an open bar at a party where they didn't even know what they were celebrating. I ran until the state lines became a blur and my lungs couldn't handle the running anymore. He found

me. There was a broken rib behind a bruise on my chest to prove my escape had failed, he found me.

For another three years the cycle remained the same. I watched snapshots of my murky life pass like scenes in a movie. I was waiting for the credits, but they never came. I became more and more broken and beat down. I was unable to be pretty enough, supportive enough, mindful enough, fake enough, never enough.

Last September I greeted Damon on the front porch with suitcases in both hands and the car keys around my neck. I was finally speaking for myself and this time I was going to be successful in my exit. It took me three months to figure out the code to unlock the safe holding the pistol in my back pocket. The pistol was the leverage I needed to get into the car.

Quickly my wrists were constrained and I was yanked back into the house. A place I had never considered my home suddenly felt like walls of a cold prison cell. I was thrown to the ground and the pistol flew from my pocket across the hardwood floor. At the sight of it, Damon became enraged. I lurched forward toward it, reaching for hope, freedom. I grabbed it

with both hands. Shakily, I demanded he let me go. He laughed saying I could never kill him. For a few seconds we stood in silence. He lurched at me and I pulled the trigger of a gun I did not know how to use.

I knew it was a mistake the minute it was over. Everyone knows my face. They will know who it was as soon as they realize what I did. He's dead. No, that can't be. There is no way it was me, but it was. I pulled the trigger. I saw the life leave his eyes and his body fall to the ground. No way. It wasn't me watching his blood begin to pool in a dark glassy circle, but it was.

I was always bound by Damon, but now I am bound by one word, murderer.