

## ~Chapter 5~

Early the next morning they were back on the road. Flossie adjusted her glasses as she studied the route from Barstow to Laughlin. They were both startled by a mighty roar that swell-ed behind them, as hundreds of Harley motorcycles zipped past them on both sides. Sterling's hands gripped the wheel, trying to stay calm in the midst of the thundering bikes. "What the—?"

Flossie squinted at a logo on the back of one of the rider's leather jackets. It had the face of an old man with flaming gray hair and lettering she could barely read. "Flamin' Fogeys? Ever heard of that Sterling?"

Sterling took one hand off the wheel and slapped his forehead. "Flossie, I read about this in the *Times* on Sunday, but I never put two and two together. It's a good thing we made a reservation in Laughlin. Matter of fact, it's amazing that we got a room at all."

Flossie shouted over the noise of motorcycle engines, "What are you talking about?"

"Believe it or not, we are about to mingle with the most famous over-sixty motorcycle gang in the United States at their annual *Flamin' Fogeys Festival*. You wanted adventure, old girl? Well, with about fifty thousand bikers over sixty partying all through Laughlin, you're gonna get it in spades."

Flossie clapped her hands and gazed at the spectacle with shining eyes, "Oh, Sterling, this is so exciting. Maybe we can join their party."



The hotel parking lot was crammed with every size and vintage of motorcycle, from big Harleys to little pink putt-putts. In fact, the entire town of Laughlin was wall-to-wall bikes.

Thousands of frolicking seniors in leather chaps and jackets pushed and shoved each other under the fluorescent orange "Welcome Flamin' Fogeys" banners stretched in front of every hotel along South Casino Drive.

Sterling inched old Betsy into the valet parking lane. "I tell ya, Flossie," he shouted, "there's so much noise I can't hear myself think."

Flossie shouted back, "No big deal. I've been listening to you think out loud all the way from L.A., and I'm tired of hearing your old gears grinding."

When they got out of the car, the valet ran his hand down the seam of the tuck and roll upholstery and let out a low whistle. "Boy, she's some machine, isn't she? I've been working here quite a few years, and the only other old Caddy I've ever seen in cherry condition like

this belongs to Percy Presley. He's an Elvis impersonator."

Sterling gave the young man a steely gaze, "Don't you go hot rodding this baby up the ramp or I'll show you my imper-sonation of the Terminator."

The valet patted Betsy's bonnet and said, "Don't worry, I'll take good care of it for you."

As they walked into the lobby of the Silver State Hotel, Flossie pointed to a poster of a well endowed biker chick in a sexy black leather bustier. She tugged at Sterling's sleeve. "Ooh, look Sterling. They're having a leather and lace fashion show. Let's go see it."

"We can talk about that later. Right now I've got to take care of some urgent business," and he set off to look for a bathroom. By the time he got back to the reception desk, Flossie had struck up a conversation with an old duffer who was shoehorned into motorcycle leathers. His pot belly and bandy legs didn't do much for the outfit, but he was putting the moves on Flossie as if he was a young stud, and she was giggling like a school girl.

"Oh, here comes my brother-in-law now," she said. "Hey, Sterling, come over and meet my new friend Stoney. He's the president of the Kansas Kickass Crusaders."

Stoney had a booming voice and a handshake like a vise grip. "I'm really a retired dentist," he confessed, "but don't tell anyone."

Flossie took his arm and gave him a killer smile, "Stony likes to play the part of a bad boy, don't you *bubbeleh*?" He nodded as she continued, "And he wants us to do a gig for them tonight."

Stoney grinned and said, "Yup, our Kickassers are having a private party in the Desert Room. Flossie, here, told me you two are magicians and she volunteered to be part of the show tonight. You guys can kinda get the crowd warmed up. No pay of course, but it'll be fun."

Flossie and Sterling checked in and followed the bellman up to their room. "See," she said, "it's a good thing I packed this extra bag with our spangled outfits. I thought we might need them in Vegas, but we've already landed a gig even before we get there." She held up a modest pink costume covered with silver sequins and posed in front of the mirror.

"We didn't exactly land a gig, Miss Show Business. You threw yourself at that blowhard dentist—boxed him into a corner and you know it."

Flossie rolled her eyes. "You're such a stickler for details. Who cares how we got the chance to play a big stage? I'll be fun, won't it?"



By the time the old magicians began their act, the room was overflowing with folks from the Kansas Chapter of Flamin' Fogeys—and they were all very drunk. Right in front of the stage, a woman with teased hair and tight leather pants accused a gray-haired cutie of making moves on her hefty honey. A fight broke out and before long, chairs were flying through the air. Flossie used her shoe to bash one of the intoxicated bikers who had climbed

up on stage, and Sterling wrestled with a Yamaha Mama who had gotten hold of his leg.

Through it all they kept on performing, "Remember that awful night at the Temple Theater in Detroit?" Flossie whis-pered.

"It wasn't as bad as this," said Sterling as he pulled a string of scarves from his sequined sleeve."

Flossie produced a bouquet of silk flowers from her bosom and said, "But the show must go on."

"Not this time," Sterling huffed as the cops burst into the banquet room and photographers' flashbulbs went off. "You've managed to get us into a fine mess again, old girl. Looks like it's time for this duo to do a disappearing act."

Flossie shoved the flowers back into her spangled top and grabbed his hand.

As a burly cop hauled Stoney past her, the disheveled dentist called out to Flossie, "Call me, Honeypot."

"Oy vey, don't look back!"