

Blaze of Fury-Chapter 1 by Elizabeth Parker

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Chapter 1-Fallen Angel

“Roll down your window. I’m here to help you. It’s Okay! I’m a police officer.”

Eliana didn’t say a word. She had been stranded on the side of the road all night. The engine was dead. She was glad she wasn’t, too.

“Ma’am, roll down your window, I’m a cop.”

Eliana looked at the man, dressed in black sweat pants and a hooded green sweatshirt. His hair was matted to his head. She couldn’t tell the color; was it brown or blond, drenched with sweat?

Her eyes shifted to his car—a beat-up Chevy caprice. There were lights on the roof.

He caught her gaze.

“An off-duty cop, ma’am. They don’t pay us nearly enough to afford a Lamborghini.”

The man smiled. But his eyes. There was something dark about them and not the color. They were beautiful, piercing blue. But they pierced right through her soul. She felt an arctic chill travel up her spine.

It was five-thirty in the morning. Her car had broken down on a road that had nothing but trees and abandoned buildings. There hadn’t been anyone on this lonely road all night. There were no phone signals way out here. No cell phone towers within miles of this vicinity. *What the hell was I thinking about going for a drive this late?*

She cursed herself for her stupidity. And now she cursed this man. “It’s okay, officer,” She mustered. “My husband is on his way.”

The man knew these roads well. He was well aware she hadn't called anyone. "He have ESP?"

The window was rolled-up, but she heard him fine. "Excuse me?"

"How does your husband know where you are? Ain't no signal in this neck of the woods."

He was smiling broadly now. She was on the verge of tears.

"He, uh, he knew where I was going. He'll be here. I should have been home an hour ago." She lied. She didn't have a husband, and no one knew where she was going, not even herself.

"If that's *not* your police car, why are there lights on top of it, and why are they on?"

The man appeared annoyed by her question. His hands clenched at his sides. He was tired of trying to lure her out of the car.

"Well, that's because I'm going to knock yours out."

A lump caught in her throat. She would die out here, and he was going to be the one to kill her. Those eyes. They were black. Onyx, full of anger.

She had to think fast but was like a deer in the headlights. The only protection she had was the car windows, and he looked ready to bash them in. He turned toward his car and looked back at her.

Could he be...leaving?

No, he opened his trunk. She wasn't sure what he was doing, but she was certain it wasn't good. Her only chance. She jumped into the passenger seat, grabbed her phone, and fumbled quickly in the glovebox for anything to use as a weapon—nothing but a screwdriver, but it would have to do.

She opened her door and darted out through the woods. She glanced behind her. He had a bat in his hand. The man spotted her running immediately. *Nooooo!* She was fast. She had trained for a marathon last year, so her leg muscles pounced into action. She thought the man must have been training, too, because he was on her tail in seconds.

She didn't know these woods. She presumed he did. *Shit!*

The terrain blurred underneath her. Twigs snapped and crunched as she bolted through trees and bushes. Her ankles struggled to keep balance on the slippery rocks and protruding tree roots.

I can't die this way! Please God, no!

Her rapid heartbeat pounded in her ears and her arms pumped by her sides as she charged through the unknown. She looked for any way to throw him off the trail.

The screwdriver handle was drenched with sweat, sliding down her fingers, so she clutched it tighter. It was the only weapon she had, and it was barely a weapon at that.

She expected the man to scream after her. Yell something, anything. But it was clear he was preserving his energy, too. For what? *Oh God, for what?* She knew the answer to that question. *He has a bat, Eliana; he's not asking you to play an urgent game of baseball right now.*

Run, Run, Run. Faster! She willed her legs to pick up the pace. She was thirsty before this man even pulled up, and now her tongue felt like she drank a pint of sand-paper chased by a shot of gravel.

She breathed in the crisp, bitter air like sharp icicles piercing her lungs. It was cold and damp, but sweat still poured down her face. Her eyes teared from the wind. Branches scraped her arms as she ran, but she couldn't feel the pain.

This is nothing compared to what he'll do to you. RUN!

She tried to see how close he was. Five, maybe ten feet behind her? *Oh God, is that his breath on my neck?* She could sense his arms reaching out to grab her. The swing of the bat whooshed in her ear. He was closer than she thought.

In front of her, a fallen tree stump. She saw it last minute and jumped over it. Then, as if angels were singing, she heard the man slam to the ground. He tripped and fell hard at the momentum he was running. She heard nothing but a loud grunt and wind escaping his lungs, no scream, no cursing.

It wouldn't deter him, but gave her a few seconds to sprint further.

She wished for sound. No birds were stirring. No rabbits or deer scurrying. Nothing. No noise to mask the sounds of her feet crunching debris as she ran. *Where the hell is all the wildlife?!*

The full moon still shone brightly, but it was approaching morning. The sun was fighting its way through the darkness.

She ran faster. Faster still. Her chest heaved as she sucked in the air. *It's so hard to breathe. He doesn't have to kill me. I'm going to have a heart attack and beat him to it.*

She saw a road. Then cars. Many cars. It was a highway. She looked behind her. The man was gaining on her again. She couldn't run any longer. She had one choice. Let him catch her or dash into the middle of the highway.

She chose.

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