

## Fly Like An Eagle

Black leather-gloved hands grip the sleek steering wheel. Crystal stares down the long dark road for several minutes and then in the rear view mirror. The August heat blows through the open roof and the murky smell of the river creeps suffocatingly in. Her fingers stroke the wheel; her heart beats faster. She looks up and down the street again. The half-moon casts an eerie blue glow all around, and it's quiet except for the lap of the water against the bank.

She guns the engine. Looking at the clock on the dash, she shifts into first gear, eases her foot off the clutch, and gives the car some gas.

3:23 AM. Crystal had come purposely at this time because she knew there wouldn't be anyone here. She couldn't wait any longer; she knew she had to do it. She couldn't even sleep. She knew the road—River Rd.—well. Of course, it curved along the river, twisting its way past abandoned factories and winding through dense patches of invasive trees and overgrown brush.

The road was exactly 4.6 miles. She had gauged it precisely. One more glance in the mirror and at the clock. With her heart beating rapidly and her palms sweating inside the gloves, Crystal's black combat-booted foot releases the accelerator and the other foot depresses the clutch. She shifts effortlessly into second gear and then third, her hands grasp the wheel tightly and in 3.7 seconds she is moving at 60 mph. Again, she lets off the gas, steps on the clutch and slips into fourth. Crystal pushes the speedometer to 70. . . 80. . . 90. Fifth gear. Dauntless, she feels exhilarated as she handles the steel machine expertly. The faster she goes, the more freedom she feels. "Fly like an eagle. . ." she sings. Approaching 104, she shifts into sixth when she sees the lights.

In the rear view mirror, Crystal spots the fluorescent red and blue lights in the distance. Her heart quickens and she smiles. Pushing the clutch, she downshifts smoothly as she searches

in the mirror. She listens, but doesn't hear anything. Going slower but no longer seeing the emergency lights, she wonders if it was she they had been after. Putting the clutch in again, she shifts up and picks up speed. The LED lights on her vehicle illuminate the road. Just as the speedometer creeps past 93, she sees the red and blue lights in her rear view mirror again and hears sirens in the distance. Her heart skips a beat.

Adrenaline running amok, her combat boot commandeers the clutch. Upshifting, Crystal urges the accelerator and the car quickly speeds up to 95, 100, and 105. When the speedometer hits 110, she gently hits the clutch and begins to slow the vehicle down. She comes to a complete stop off to the side of the road. The silver sports car gleams like diamonds under the lone street light and the black trim reflects like a mirror. Shortly, a motorcycle careens down the road, lights and sirens blaring, and the cop pulls in behind her. A patrol car follows moments later and stops next to the cycle.

“Turn your car off and throw the keys out the window! Then lock your hands behind your head where I can see them,” comes from a loudspeaker on the motorcycle.

Crystal takes a deep breath and follows orders. The patrol officer gets out of his vehicle with his Glock drawn and treads guardedly along the passenger side of the sports car. The motorcycle cop comes close from the rear on the driver's side. Crystal's eyes grow big as they slowly approach. She watches the officer with the gun. This is not part of the plan. She looks questioningly at the motorcycle cop through her side mirror. Gazing at his tight-fitting uniform pants with shiny black knee-high boots, Crystal sucks in her breath. She raises her eyes to biceps bursting through his shirt. His face, the color of buttered caramel, is smooth except for the thin moustache above his lips which softens the masculine jaw. Impulsively, she wants to kiss him.

“I'm sorry—” She has her story prepared, but she only expected one cop.

“Shut up! Keep your hands where I can see them!” The officer with the gun yells.

“But really, I’m sorry. . .”

“Are you alone?” The motorcycle cop shines a flashlight into the car while the other cop stands poised and ready.

“Yes sir. I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to cause a problem. I thought no one would be out here. I just bought my car last week. I just wanted to try it out.” Crystal smiles innocently.

“What?” says the other officer.

“Come on, you can’t have an Audi R8 without breaking it in.”

“Whaat!?” H looks at her in disbelief.

“Really.” She turns towards the bike cop.

“I said keep your hands on the wheel!” the other cop shouts again as he raises the gun at Crystal.

“For real, officer.” Her eyes get big again. “I’m not dangerous, I was just checking out my new car.” Her forehead wrinkles and she looks back at the bike cop.

The patrol officer shakes his head. “You should have gone to a fucking racetrack!” He reholsters his Glock after getting the OK from his partner.

“Step out of the car, Ma’am.” This from the motorcycle cop. “No back-up needed,” he speaks into the radio that is attached to his shirt. He opens the door and the boots come out, one at a time, followed by Crystal’s long legs. “Ok man, I can handle this,” the motorcycle officer says to his partner.

He doesn’t respond as they both watch Crystal stand up. She’s wearing cut-off denim short-shorts and a tight black T-shirt. Her shoulder-length hair is pulled back into a ponytail.

“You need some help, Wes?” the other officer asks as if he didn’t hear him.

“Naw man, I got this,” he says waving him off. “Your driver’s license and registration, Miss.”

The patrol cop saunters back to his car, still watching them. Again, Wes waves at him. The officer slowly gets in his car and eases into the darkness.

“I told you not to do it, Crys.”

“Come on, Wes! I had to break it in.”

“You keep driving like that out here, you’ll kill yourself!”

“I know how to handle this baby. It’s your back-up I’m worried about.” She frowns again. “What’s up with him?”

Wes guffaws. “He’s new.” He gives her a long look. “This is your lucky night. I’m going to let you go. I could take you to jail for driving like that, you know.”

“Thank you, officer.” Again, that smile.

He steps closer, seizes her shoulders roughly, and kisses her salaciously. Her lips open and accept his encroaching tongue with fervor.

When the kiss is over, Wes puts on his helmet, jumps on his bike and the engine roars to life. “See you at home, babe,” he yells over the noise and speeds away.

Crystal jumps in her car thinking about the racetrack, but right now she races home.