

Red Zone

A Daniels Brothers Romance, Book 2

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Chapter 1

It was late by the time Gage Daniels arrived home Tuesday night. He was tired and more than ready for a few days off. Too bad he had to report to practice the next morning.

He tossed his keys in the bowl he had sitting just inside the door as he made his way into the kitchen to get something to drink. He noted that everything seemed to be in its place. His brother and his girlfriend had cleaned up after themselves well after using his home this weekend. That was good. The last thing he wanted was to come home to a trashed house. Not that he could imagine Chris ever partying like that. No. That was Gage's style. At least, it used to be.

Reaching into the fridge, he grabbed a beer and popped the top before taking a large swig. He had spent the last day and a half in Los Angeles with his manager, Mel, at an underwear photo shoot, of all things. Gage didn't dispute he was a good-looking man, but why someone wanted to put him, a quarterback, in a pair of tighty-whities in a magazine was beyond him. He didn't get it.

Mel had set everything up, so at least the previous day's shoot had gone smoothly. That morning had been another story. For whatever reason, his manager scheduled an interview with some magazine he'd never heard of. Apparently they were big in Europe or something. He said it would be good for Gage's image. Although after the interview, he wasn't exactly sure what *image* they were trying to promote. The woman conducting the interview had pawed at him the entire time.

"What do you like to do when you're not playing football?" She reached out to caress his thigh, her tone filled with innuendo. He knew he had a

reputation as sort of a player, but come on! He was supposed to be there on business, not to get in her pants. Business was business. He didn't like mixing the two. Even if he had, there was no way he would have gone for a reporter, no matter how attractive. That was just asking for trouble.

"Swim." He'd kept his answer short, hoping she'd take the hint and move on with another line of questioning. No such luck.

"Hm. Anyone in particular you like to swim with? A girlfriend perhaps?" Her fingers glided suggestively against his arm this time. He leaned back in his chair, away from her. It didn't work. She compensated by leaning in, her top dipping low.

"Surely you don't like to swim . . . *alone*."

By the time the interview had finished, the woman was practically in his lap. He'd politely excused himself and retreated to the car waiting out front to take him to the airport. The magazine was taking care of the lunch bill anyway, so it wasn't as if he had to stick around to pay.

To make matters worse, someone had recognized him on the plane, and he'd spent the entire flight signing autographs and answering questions. Normally, he didn't mind. Really, he didn't. He loved his fans, and it was part of the job. After his disastrous lunch, however, he'd just wanted to be left alone.

Turning around, Gage spotted an envelope on the counter. How he'd missed it before was a testament to how tired he was, since it was lying there in plain sight. He picked it up and carried it with him upstairs to his bedroom. As much as he was dreading it, he had tapes for this coming Sunday's game to look over.

He booted up his laptop and logged into the team's private account. In the old days—not that he'd been around for the old days, since he'd only been playing professionally for five years—the players would huddle around a single television in one of the conference rooms to watch footage of the other team. He'd done that in high school, and that had been bad enough. This way was much better. Everything he needed to prep for the following day's team meeting was accessible through a website and could be downloaded to his laptop and streamed to his big screen television. Once everything was set, he settled back against his pillows and pressed play.

The team they were playing wasn't doing all that well this year, but their defense was solid. In fact, from what he could see, their defense was scoring as much as their offense. He would need to work with his receivers on protecting the ball. Turnovers could kill a team faster than anything.

An hour into the footage, his gaze drifted back to the envelope he'd brought upstairs. It seemed to be mocking him from where it lay on his nightstand. Picking it up, he saw his name handwritten on the front. It was

just like all the others, and he knew what he'd find inside.

The first one had shown up two months ago at the stadium. It had been found by the front office manager and brought down to him. He'd taped it to the front of his locker. At first, he'd thought it was a fan letter, so he hadn't opened it right away. Instead, he'd taken it home. Some of his fan letters, especially ones from women, tended to be slightly more explicit, and he didn't like reading that stuff in front of the guys. In the privacy of his own home was . . . safer.

He knew from the handwriting on the front, however, that what he currently held in his hand wasn't a fan letter. Flipping it over, he took a deep breath, opened the envelope, and pulled out the contents. As with all the others, there were pictures of him and a single sheet of paper that said *I'm watching you*. These pictures were from last weekend when he'd gone out with some of the guys after the game. A busty blonde was sitting on his lap, making sure he could see all her assets. She hadn't really been his type—he preferred women who could at least hold their own in a conversation—but he was in the mood to party, and she was available. As he'd told the reporter, he didn't have a girlfriend. Although he didn't sleep around nearly as much as he had early on in his career, he wasn't celibate either.

He looked at the pictures again, frustrated. Whoever was stalking him was doing a bang-up job of it. He had been photographed in nearly every public place he'd gone over the last two and a half months, and he'd not been able to spot anything out of place, and it wasn't for lack of trying. Even the night the picture in his hand was taken, he'd thought he'd been diligent. The club was crowded but not any more than usual. People were moving comfortably throughout—socializing and dancing. He'd not seen any indication someone was paying him, or his teammates, any more attention than they normally provoked when they were out in public.

Throwing the letter down on his nightstand, he leaned back against the headboard of his bed and ran a hand through his hair. Tim Donovan, the team's owner, would want to know about this. He'd nearly flipped a lid when he'd found out about the last one through the grapevine and that it hadn't been the first. Tim had made Gage promise to come to him immediately the next time it happened. He'd even threatened to bench Gage if he didn't, and there was no way he would let that happen.

Shutting everything off, Gage lay back on his bed and stared up at the ceiling. Who was doing this and why? It didn't make sense. He was just a football player.

Rolling over, he punched his pillow until he found a semicomfortable position. He'd need to take a detour to Tim's office first thing in the morning. There was no way he was giving Tim an excuse to keep him on

the sidelines.



The sun was setting over the smoky mountains on Thursday when Special Agent Rebecca Carson's phone rang, disturbing the peaceful setting. Her job with the FBI often had her traveling across the country. It was rare she was able to sit back, relax on the deck of her condo, and enjoy something as simple as the sun going down behind the mountains. There had been days she'd longed for that moment of peace. Now, it was driving her crazy.

Nearly a month had passed since the agency had put her on administrative leave at the advice of one of their therapists. Sure, it had been a difficult case, and it had ended badly, but her sitting around at home wasn't helping. She wanted—no, she needed—to get back out there. Sitting around doing nothing was going to be the end of her sanity.

She pushed herself up off the lounge chair and walked into her living room to answer the call, hoping it was her boss saying she was cleared to come back to work. Knowing her luck, though, it would be her baby sister needing her help to get out of another jam. Either way, it would be a welcome distraction. "Hello?"

"Carson?"

"Yes," she said, immediately recognizing, Travis Hansen's voice on the other end of the line.

"Good. I'm glad I caught you. Something's come up, and I thought you could use something to do. I know you're probably going stir-crazy sitting at home, and I could use the help."

"Is everything all right? I can meet you tonight if you need me to."

"No, no," he said. "Tomorrow will be fine. You may want to pack a bag, though."

She knew what that meant. Whatever assignment was waiting in the wings, she'd most likely be on a plane before noon the next day. "All right. Where should I meet you?"

"Just be ready at eight. I'll pick you up."

"All right," she said, unsure but trusting her ex-partner and former mentor. Hansen had retired from the FBI, and now ran his own P.I. firm, but they'd stayed in touch. He was one of the few people in this world she would trust with her life.

"See you tomorrow, Carson. Get some rest."

After hanging up, Rebecca walked to her bedroom and began packing. Suits with matching blouses lined her closet. Her sister always gave her a hard time, saying she needed to spice things up a bit with her wardrobe, but

she was an FBI agent—she didn't do flashy. Besides, she had been living in sweats and T-shirts for far too long. She pulled out a week's worth of clothing and placed them in her garment bag before zipping it up. The same routine had been gone through so many times, it didn't take her long to pack all but the toiletries she'd need that night and in the morning.

At seven fifty-eight the next morning, she was standing out in front of her building waiting on Hansen. He was punctual and pulled up in his silver sedan as her watch beeped, alerting her of the new hour. He was right on time, as always.

She walked over to the car and slipped inside. He smiled and handed her a cup of coffee before pulling back out onto the road.

"Morning, Carson."

"Hansen." She nodded in greeting. They'd been partners for a little over a year before he'd retired. Although he was perhaps the one person she was closest to in her adult life besides her sister, they still had that professional distance. It was exactly the way she liked it.

"It's good to see you. I apologize for curtailing any plans you may have had scheduled for your time off, but something's come up, and I could really use your help in Nashville."

"No problem. Anything at this point would be better than being stuck at home crawling the walls."

He chuckled. "Good, 'cause we're helping out an old friend of mine."

She looked over at him, questioning.

"His name is Timothy Donovan. He owns the professional football team in Nashville. Something has come up with one of his players, and he needs some help."

She waited for him to elaborate, but he didn't. Although she was curious, it didn't matter. As she'd told him, anything was better than sitting at home doing nothing.

Two hours and a brief argument later, they pulled into the parking lot of a nicer-than-average hotel in Nashville that would act as their base of operations. Halfway to Nashville, she'd finally decided to ask for the exact details of the assignment. Needless to say, she wasn't thrilled with his response. The problem was, either she took this assignment or she went back home again to do . . . nothing.

They checked in, under the guise of a married couple, and quickly set up shop in their assigned room. "I don't like this," she said, staring around the room at the fancy décor. She'd stayed in any number of motels since she'd become an agent four years ago, but none of them had come close to this. This was way above government budget. Of course, the government wasn't footing the bill for this one. It was compliments of Donovan, according to

Hansen.

Her nose scrunched up in distaste at the frilly coverlet on the bed. “Not liking the new assignment, Carson?” her old mentor asked, smiling.

He was enjoying her discomfort way too much. “Like you’d be over there grinning if the shoe were on the other foot, Hansen.”

“True.” He laughed. “Thankfully, I don’t look pretty on the arm of a hotshot quarterback.”

Rebecca clenched her fists to keep from hurling something at him. Instead, she slipped the hotel key in her pants pocket and walked to the door. “Let’s just get this over with.”

Hansen kept his mouth shut on the way to the stadium, although she could see he was dying to comment. She liked Hansen. He was a good partner and had always treated her as an equal, even if she had been a rookie at the time they’d worked together. It was probably part of the reason he was getting such a kick out of this.

They followed the instructions they were given and parked in the players’ lot. A security guard greeted them, and they were escorted upstairs to a long hallway of offices before he stopped at the last one on their right and motioned they should go inside ahead of him.

An older gentleman, who looked to be in his early sixties, sat behind a large wooden desk. He stood, and rounded the desk to greet them. Giving Hansen a pat on the back, and offering her a firm handshake, he introduced himself as the owner, Timothy Donovan. “I’m glad you were able to come on such short notice,” he said directly to her. Then he turned to the man who’d walked them in. “Get Gage Daniels, will you? Tell him I need to see him.” The man nodded, closing the door behind him.

Donovan walked back to his chair behind the desk, while she and Hansen took the seats offered to them. Putting her game face on, Rebecca answered in her usual professional tone. “I wasn’t told much, Mr. Donovan. Perhaps you can fill me in.”

“Of course,” he said. Reaching into his desk drawer, he pulled out a large manila folder filled with envelopes. “About two months ago, Daniels, our star quarterback, began receiving these. They’re all there with the exception of the first few. He just threw them away. Thought they were a joke.”

She flipped through the pictures and letters. They were all of a young man, in his mid-twenties, whom she assumed was Daniels. He was doing various things, from something as simple as shopping to sitting in a bar. What she did notice, however, was that all the pictures included females. “He seems to be quite the ladies’ man. Could it be a woman scorned?”

“That’s always a possibility, I suppose. Gage is well, he’s young, not bad to look at, and he’s an athlete. The ladies like him.” He

shrugged.

“So, what would you like us to do exactly, Mr. Donovan?” she said, trying to keep the contempt out of her voice.

Donovan stood and walked over to the large bank of windows behind him. He motioned them over and then pointed down to the field. “This is my team. I watch out for them.” It wasn’t hard to pick out Daniels from the field below. He was in full uniform with his name across his shoulder blades. It helped that the security guard was walking across the field straight toward him, too. “He doesn’t know this, and I’d like to keep it that way. I don’t want him rattled any more than he already is.” Donovan turned to face them, his expression serious. “A security guard noticed something sticking out of Gage’s car two days ago. Given the letters he’s been receiving, I called a friend in the local PD.”

“Explosives?” Hansen asked.

“Yes. Although I’m told it wouldn’t have done much damage had it gone off, but that’s beside the point. Someone’s decided to put a bull’s-eye on Gage’s back, and I need to stop it.” He paused before looking Rebecca in the eye. “Which is where *you* come in.”

“Security footage?”

“Checked. There’s nothing there except his vehicle. We went back a week.”

As much as she didn’t like the situation, putting up a fight on this one when Donovan was footing the bill would be difficult. The person behind this had clearly crossed state lines—the pictures were taken in various cities—then delivered them to Daniels, either at his home or to the stadium. A couple even looked as though they’d come through the mail. That was enough to put it on the federal radar. Add in the explosives and even she could admit she was intrigued. They were his last hope before getting the FBI officially involved, and likely the press. Something like this wouldn’t stay under wraps for long.

A minute later, there was a knock at the door. “Come in.” Donovan yelled.

The door opened, and there stood the man she’d be spending the majority of her time with in the near future—Gage Daniels.

Chapter 2

When Gage saw Jack, one of the stadium's security guards, lope across the field toward him, he knew something was up. The first thing that crossed his mind was that he'd received another letter, so being told Tim wanted to see him wasn't a surprise. What he wasn't expecting was to see two strangers dressed in suits sitting in Tim's office. They both stood when he entered.

The man was tall, looked to be in his late fifties, about six two, with sandy blond hair, greying temples, and eyes that told you he was tougher than he appeared. Looking him over, the first thing Gage thought was *bodyguard*. He wasn't overly muscular, but Gage knew enough from growing up with three brothers that looks could be deceiving.

His gaze fell on the woman. She looked to be around his age, twenty-six or twenty-seven. She was tall for a woman, five ten, maybe, with light brown hair that was pulled back into a high ponytail. He had to admit she had a nice figure, even though it was hidden under all that unattractive clothing she wore. Her eyes raked over him in appraisal, although from the look on her face, she didn't like what she saw. That was too bad. He was rather enjoying the view. Of course, he'd enjoy it more if she'd lose the jacket and pop a few buttons open on that blouse of hers.

Gage tried to redirect his thoughts and focus on the task at hand. "You wanted to see me, Mr. Donovan?" he asked, keeping it formal since he didn't know who these people were.

"Yes, I did. Come on in, and shut the door."

Gage did as instructed and took a step farther inside his boss's office, trying not to feel out of place. He'd left his helmet downstairs, but he was

still in full gear. If he'd known it was going to be more than just a casual meeting with Tim, he'd have swung by the locker room and cleaned up a little. As it was, he was hot, sweaty, and his practice uniform was covered in grass stains from the hours he'd already spent on the field running drills.

"I want you to meet Rebecca Carson and Travis Hansen. I've known Hansen since college. He's former FBI, and he knows his stuff. I've asked for their help with your situation," Tim said.

What?

"Um. Sir. I don't think that's necessary. I mean, they're just pictures and letters. They're a little creepy, but I don't see how this is a matter for the FBI, former or otherwise. I'm sure they have better things to do." Gage's gaze drifted back over to the woman. Was she a former FBI agent, too? She looked too young to be retired, but he'd heard his brother, Paul, talking about cops who were burnt out on the job. He had to assume the same thing could happen to FBI agents.

Agent Rebecca Carson. He could definitely see it. She was just buttoned up enough to be a stuffy government agent.

If her expression was anything to go by, she agreed with his assessment. He cocked his head to the side and imagined what she'd look like with her hair down. It looked long enough to brush her shoulders, maybe even a little longer.

"That's not your decision, Daniels," Tim said, bringing him out of his thoughts. "At the very least, you have a stalker, and in my experience, stalkers don't tend to go away unless they're stopped. So this is how it's going to work. Ms. Carson is going to act as your girlfriend for the foreseeable future."

Excuse me?

"Agent," she corrected, although he was only half-paying attention.

"What?" Gage said, stepping forward. "You can't be serious."

"I'm very serious. Anytime you go out to a social event or to a club, she is to be with you. This includes any events for the team, charity or otherwise. She's trained to spot people who are acting suspicious or out of place. Plus, if this stalker decides to up the ante for any reason, she'll be there to protect you, as well."

That ruffled his feathers. "I don't need protection. I'm perfectly capable of taking care of myself."

"Again, that's not your call. Now, practice is pretty much over for the day. Why don't you go get cleaned up, and they can follow you to your house. I'm sure they'd like to take a look around, and of course, *Agent* Carson will need to get set up in one of your guest rooms."

"Wait. She's *living* with me, too?" he said, his voice getting louder.

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“How else is she supposed to protect you? Besides, as your girlfriend, it makes sense.” Instead of saying anything more, Gage stood there seething until he was dismissed.

His new bodyguards remained outside the locker room as he ducked inside to shower and change. At least none of the other guys had come in from practice yet, or they would have been grilling him on what was up. Not only had he been called to the owner’s office, but there were two individuals in suits standing outside waiting for him. What he wouldn’t have given to be back out on the field right about then.

Showered and dressed in clean street clothes, he walked out into the hallway where they were waiting. He still couldn’t believe this. “Let’s go.” He didn’t wait to see if they were following, but by the sound of feet hitting the concrete floor behind him, he knew they were.

His SUV was right where he’d left it. Throwing his duffle bag into the backseat, he slid behind the wheel and started the vehicle. As he pulled out of the players’ parking lot and onto the street, he noticed a silver car following him. He sighed and concentrated on the road in front of him. How was he supposed to go out and have fun with someone like her on his arm? No one in their right mind would believe *she* was his girlfriend. He’d be lucky if anyone believed he had a girlfriend period.

A plan began forming in his head. If she was going to be his *girlfriend* for the foreseeable future, then some things were going to have to change. The first was her wardrobe. Fishing his cell from his pants pocket, he dialed his stylist. “What are you doing this evening, Charlie?”



Hansen drove, keeping pace with Daniels and trying to keep the smirk off his face.

“There is absolutely nothing amusing about this situation, Hansen.”

With that, he let the laugh he’d been holding in burst out. “Oh, I beg to differ. You pretending to be Mister Star Quarterback’s girlfriend is pretty funny. Do you even know who he is?”

“He’s a football player. What more is there to know?”

“Oh, man,” he said, continuing to laugh. “This is going to be interesting.”

Daniels pulled up in front of a gate and stopped, causing their conversation to come to an end. She could see a large house beyond and assumed this was his home. The gate was smart given someone was after him. Hopefully, he had security cameras installed as well. The cameras at the stadium were helpful, but they wouldn’t negate her always having to check under his vehicle before he got into it. The challenge was going to be

doing so without his knowledge, since Donovan wanted to keep Daniels from knowing about the explosives. She didn't agree with keeping something like that from the football player, but for the moment, she'd let Donovan call the shots.

They followed Daniels through the gate and up the curved driveway to his garage, where he parked the Explorer beside a vintage Mustang. He got out, not acknowledging them at all, before disappearing into the house. The only concession he made to their presence was to leave the garage door open.

Hansen's chest was still rumbling with laughter when they both stepped out of their vehicle and followed him inside. "Keep it up, Hansen, and I'll make sure your wife knows you've been cheating on your diet, because we both know you have."

"You wouldn't."

She turned and gave him a big smile. "Try me." He sobered immediately, and she enjoyed her little victory before she walked through the slightly open door into the residence.

The place was even nicer on the inside. They were currently in the mudroom, and even that had granite countertops and marble floors. It was fancier than her kitchen, so she could only imagine what his kitchen was going to look like.

They followed the sound of movement down the hall to where it opened up into a large room that included the kitchen, an eating area, and what looked to be a living room. One could never tell in these big houses, though. They tended to have multiple rooms for very specific things. She didn't see a television anywhere in sight, so she imagined there had to be at least one other room for that.

Daniels ignored them, exaggerating every move as he pulled things out of the refrigerator and dumped them in a blender. His back was to them, but he had to know they were there by how immature he was acting. She decided it was time to be a professional, suck it up, and do her job, even if this was one of the least desirable things she'd done since joining the FBI. "If you'll tell me what room you'd like me in, I can bring my things inside and get settled before we talk."

"There's a guest room down the hall," he said, pointing to a hallway that ran behind the kitchen. "That's as good a place as any."

"And where do you sleep?"

"Upstairs," he said with a short, clipped tone.

"And are there any other rooms upstairs?"

He stopped and turned to face them. "Why?"

Before she could answer, her partner jumped in. "If Agent Carson is

going to effectively protect you, she needs to be close. You being upstairs while she's downstairs isn't the ideal situation. If you have a bedroom upstairs, that would be preferable." Maybe he sensed she was about to lose her professional cool. This was a crap job, and Mister Football Player wasn't making things any easier. Couldn't he just work with them?

"Fine," he said, turning back to whatever he was doing. "Take any room but the last one on the left." With that, he turned on the blender effectively ending the conversation. *This is going to be fun*, she thought.

Hansen helped her carry her bags upstairs. Thankfully, they hadn't dropped them off at the hotel earlier. The last room on the left was clearly the master suite and his, so she chose the one directly across from it. The walls were a soft baby blue that matched the bedspread. It wasn't as frilly as the hotel room, but it still had that air of money about it, including an en suite bathroom that had a large shower and a soaker tub. As much as she hated to admit it, she liked it.

Since she'd only brought a week's worth of clothing with her, it didn't take her long to unpack. They were on their way downstairs within twenty minutes. As they reached the bottom of the staircase, they heard voices. Each glanced at the other before reaching for their guns and edging down the last remaining steps.

Rounding the corner, they saw a man talking with Daniels. He appeared to be about her height, wearing a dress shirt with the sleeves rolled up fashionably and neatly pressed pants. He didn't look threatening, so they both holstered their guns and stepped into the room.

Before they made it more than a few feet, the new arrival noticed their entrance and was quickly racing toward them. Correction. He was racing toward her.

"Oh! This must be her," he gushed. "I see what you mean. I can definitely help." Before she knew what was going on, he was reaching for her suit jacket, trying to remove it.

She reacted instinctively before thinking it through. Within seconds, the man was bent over the kitchen island with his arm pulled tight and high along his back.

"What in the world are you doing?" Daniels demanded.

"What was *he* doing?"

"Jeez, lady. Relax. This is Charlie, my stylist."

Glancing down at what she then realized were his designer clothes, Rebecca conceded she might have overreacted a bit. She wasn't used to people grabbing at her and trying to remove her clothes like that. She stepped back, releasing him. "Sorry," she said. "Just please don't try to remove my clothing without asking first."

“Got it. No problem,” he said, glancing between her and Daniels.

Hansen recovered faster than the rest of them. “What’s he doing here?” he asked, nodding at Charlie.

“My *girlfriend* is going to need some new clothing if she’s going to be out in public with me. Outfits like that,” he pointed at the suit she was wearing, “won’t do.”

“And what exactly is wrong with my clothing?”

“Honey,” he said, walking up, getting way too close for her comfort. “The places I go? You’ll stick out like a sore thumb in an outfit like that.” Then he leaned in and whispered in her ear. “Or do you want everyone to know you’re my bodyguard?”



Travis Hansen hadn’t had this much fun in a while. He and his former partner were used to investigating kidnappings of minors, before he retired. It was serious business and wasn’t a place where he found himself trying to control his laughter, which was what was happening. There were definite perks to his new line of employment. He was sure, however, that Carson wouldn’t see it that way.

His ex-partner was as straitlaced as they came. She was hard working and one of the best agents he’d ever worked with. Being sidelined had to be killing her. She was the type when something knocked her down, she found a way to get up again. It was why he’d thought she’d be perfect for this job. That was the main reason why he was trying not to laugh while she stood there like a statue as Charlie circled around her over and over again, taking measurements and holding up clothing. He knew her well enough to know she hated every minute of it. He also thought this would do her a lot of good, in more ways than one.

Daniels stood leaning against the wall on the other side of the room. His arms were crossed in a relaxed pose, and if not for the smirk on his face, Travis would have thought Daniels couldn’t care less about the goings on before him. There was little doubt Daniels was enjoying every minute of Carson’s discomfort. The more Travis watched him, the more he had difficulty controlling his own amusement. The man was cocky and confident. He and Carson should mix like oil and water. *Should be interesting*, Travis thought.

“Here,” Charlie said, handing her several outfits.

She looked down at them with distaste. “What exactly do you want me to do with them?” she asked.

“Try them on, of course,” Charlie said, as if it should have been obvious.

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Carson glanced up at him, then Daniels, as if seeking help. When she received none, she took the clothes from Charlie and marched into the bathroom. She had to pass Daniels on the way and looked as if she were ready to do bodily harm to the man she'd been hired to protect. Oh yes, this was going to be quite entertaining.