

Alias Smith and Jones

Two con women are conned themselves and set out on a mission to give back a lifetime of ill-gotten gains. In this off-the-wall comedy where the insane collides with the divine, Delilah and Dixie figure out that going 'straight' isn't as easy as it looks.

CHAPTER ONE

*If I'm Goin' to Hell,
But You Are Too, Would it Really Be
Such a Bad Place to Be?*

DELILAH FOSTER WAS one of a kind; well, actually, she was two of a kind. She and her partner, Dixie Wagner, had spent the majority of their lives, 'spreadin' the gospel,' 'speakin' the word of the Lord,' and just generally rooking idiots out of their cash. Delilah's attitude about her profession was simple: since a fool and his money were soon parted, it might as well be parted into *her* wallet. Dixie's contribution to their joint soul-searching career-wise was; if what they were doing was so bad, wouldn't the Good Lord Himself come down and tell them to stop? And since He hadn't bothered to show up in the past fifteen plus years that they had been at this, she wasn't going to worry about it. On this evening, the dynamic duo were conning the folks in Riverton, Nevada, a fictitious little town about 30 miles from Las Vegas, which is real, but seems fictitious because it sucks so bad. The women had found themselves a captive crowd, mainly because Delilah had locked the door on the VFW just before the show had started. The mostly sober audience and the men listened intently as the tall, dark minister explained how she could give them salvation if they only believed enough and, of course, if only they saw fit to make a small donation to the cause. No checks accepted. If God was willing to accept checks, He wouldn't have invented cash, properly executed stocks, or money orders. Delilah held her old Bible high in the air and made eye contact with everyone in the room. Well, almost everyone. That old guy in the back of the room with no teeth and the wandering eye gave her the creeps.

"You know, Brothers and Sisters, we all have things we're ashamed of, and we all have ills that can *only* be cured through the power of the LORD. Tonight, my faithful, this is exactly what's going to happen. Who in this crowd of pitiful sinners most needs the Lord's help?"

Two men in the back staggered to their feet and raised their hands. The motion caused one of them to tip backwards and crash to the floor, but the other valiantly remained on his feet screaming, "Pick me! Pick me! Oh, oh. I'm a sinner. Pick me!"

And we have lift off. Our first freak of the evening. Delilah promptly ignored him.

This is where Dixie came into the picture; she was, of course, a plant. Not an actual plant, although once Delilah had taken on a partner named Fern and things got really confusing there for a while. Dixie was an 'audience plant.' Part of the con. She traveled from town to town with Delilah and just happened to be at every single sermon needing desperately to be cured and saved. What her particular illness would be depended on Della's mood and what she thought would work with that crowd.

Now, in a little town this size, it would seem that a stranger would stick out like a sore thumb, but Dixie had put some of her considerable talents to use before Delilah's performance began. She had paid careful attention to the folks around her, had looked through the town Yellow Pages, which were all of fourteen pages thick, and had made a

stop at the tiny local library. With a smile so sweet and innocent it would charm the socks off.... well, anyone who wore socks, she had convinced everyone at the VFW that she was the great niece of the second husband of Mrs. Maple, who ran the little general store but couldn't be here tonight because her rheumatism was acting up 'somethin' awful.' And when she mentioned how horrible it was that the town's girl's basketball team, the Wildebeests, had been robbed of their victory last week, she was welcomed home as a prodigal daughter, earning the coveted seat next to the mayor as Delilah ranted, raved and generally enthralled.

Blue eyes lifted from the pages of a well-worn Bible and bore into Dixie's. The blonde squirmed in her chair. Even after all these years, when Delilah Foster looked at Dixie Wagner in that special way, Dixie was bound to leave a wet spot on her seat.

Delilah marched across the room and smiled benevolently as she placed a hand on Dixie's shoulder and gave a subtle squeeze, allowing her fingers to linger just a second before she drew them away. "You, young lady, have a problem."

Hell yes, I do. It's that you're not kissing me right now! Dixie ducked her head. "Yes'm... I..."

"NO!" Delilah waved her hands around wildly. "No, don't tell me. Let the power of our LORD tell me." She pressed the palm of her hand to her forehead as she concentrated with all her might as if a message was being beamed to her at that very moment.

Dixie fought hard not to roll her eyes as Delilah went into full preacher mode. She had plans for the dark beauty tonight that didn't include staying in this grungy VFW any longer than necessary. She knew that by the time Delilah was done with her 'sermon' these folks would be giving her the gold fillings right out of their teeth, which, by the way, Della kept in a baby food jar in the glove box of the truck. Dixie decided that was really yucky, but to Delilah's credit, once the people had actually pried the fillings out of their mouths, usually with swizzle sticks, it did seem rude to refuse them.

"Ohhhhh, Sister, you have been a bad, *bad* girl." Delilah projected a wicked gleam that could only mean one thing.

Dixie narrowed her eyes at her partner. *Don't you dare, Della, or you're not getting laid tonight.*

"I can help ya, Sister. I can. But you have to ask. Ask the LORD!"

Oh, shit. Dixie did her best to look especially contrite. "Please help me, Reverend Foster."

"What was that? I couldn't hear ya. And I *know* the good folks of Riverton couldn't hear ya. That means the Good Lord above couldn't hear ya!"

Dixie took a deep breath and wailed out loud enough to shake the rafters, "Puhhleeeez, help me!"

"Good for you, Sister." Delilah nodded approvingly. "Let the power of the Lord heal you from your condition. Amen-blessed-be. Amen-praise-the-Lord."

"What condition is that, Reverend?" the old toothless man with the bad eye croaked.

"Crabs!" Delilah announced gravely, her voice showing her revulsion.

The room gasped.

The old man chuckled.

And Dixie barely overrode the desire to jump up and drive a pen into Delilah's right eyeball, that same eyeball that was right now giving her a ghost of a wink.

"This sinner needs to be cured of her waaaaanton ways," Delilah continued. "A lifestyle that has caused her to develop an awful itch. Say it with me now."

"An awful itch," the audience dutifully chanted back.

Dixie glared at Delilah.

"An itch that can't be scratched by anyone but the Lord Almighty Himself!"

"An itch that... can't.... uh... scratch... umm...." The audience, confused by the long statement they were supposed to repeat, sort of trailed off at the end, mouthing the words like those assholes at baseball games who don't know the National Anthem but pretend as though they do.

Delilah gritted her teeth and turned away from Dixie to address the larger portion of the crowd. "Because He can scratch it without touching her. And He's the *only* one." She was careful not to flinch when she felt the heel of Dixie's shoe slam into her toes.

Dixie hid out in the bathroom until she heard Delilah give the all-clear whistle. Not that she really needed to hide; everyone pretty much avoided her after the sermon. "I can't imagine why," she mumbled drolly.

The VFM manager had left Delilah there alone in the place to clean up and 'finish up with God.' Had robbing the cash register at the bar outright been her style, Delilah could have cleaned the place out. As it was, she was having too much fun with Dixie to resort to something as tacky as that.

Dixie strolled out of the ladies room to find Delilah alone. She thought about the evening's events and couldn't believe people continued to be so stupid. Fortunately as long as they kept on breeding, she and Delilah would always have work.

Walking up to the bar, Dixie wordlessly took one of the two shoeboxes they'd used as collection plates and started sorting the money.

Delilah opened the beer cooler and took out two frosty bottles of Miller's Genuine Draft. She popped the tops, handed one to her smaller, fairer partner, and leaned on the bar to watch Dixie count the loot. Sweat had gathered around her collar and tendrils of her dark hair were damp from the exertions of the evening. "What's the take, darlin'?"

Dixie looked into the other box and made a face. It was mostly filled with singles. "Looks like a couple hundred bucks."

"Shit," Delilah whined as her head hit the bar. She spoke against the wooden surface that smelled like rancid beer and cigarettes. "Why do we do this again?"

"So we can live like we want and not answer to anyone?"

"Not good enough."

"So we can sleep in until noon everyday?"

"We *never* sleep that late."

"So we can screw the IRS?"

Delilah cocked her head to the side. "Better," she allowed, tipping back her bottle and draining it in one long slug. "But I'm still depressed."

A blonde eyebrow crawled up Dixie's forehead. "Gee, I never would have noticed." As she watched Delilah reach for her beer, she was tempted to snatch it away. But with one look at Delilah's face, she knew she'd be letting her have her way. Dixie even nudged it closer to her lover.

Delilah flashed her an affectionate smile. "It must be true love, huh?" she said softly.

Dixie grinned back. "Must be."

The women climbed out of their rusted pickup truck, their feet kicking up clouds of dust as they hit the dry ground. The twinkling lights of a nearby casino/church/hospital/DMV could barely be seen in the distance.

On the way home, Dixie had had a chance to stew. Plus, she had a little buzz going from raiding the VFW cooler. After she'd finished counting their money, she too had grown depressed. "For Christ's sake, Delilah, I can't believe you did that." She looked upward into a sky bright with stars and plaintively cried out, "Why me?"

Delilah snorted. "Save the drama for the morons."

Dixie narrowed her eyes and looked directly at her partner. "I did."

"What?" Delilah stopped walking. "What did I do now? It's been years... okay, months since I looked at that showgirl." The twinkle in her eyes let her partner know she knew exactly what they were talking about.

"Crabs ring a bell?" Dixie played along, more annoyed than truly angry.

"Not really." Blue eyes narrowed. "Hey! You said you weren't in the mood the other night. You'd better not have gone into Vegas and picked up...."

"Della, focus, hon. Tonight... work... heal me of my 'crabs' and 'wanton ways'?" Dixie's hands went to her hips. "Do you know how gross it is to act like you've got crabs?"

"Is that what all that gyrating and moaning was?"

"I was acting itchy and unhappy! Wouldn't *you* be unhappy if you had the crabs?"

Delilah slapped her hand over Dixie's mouth. "Shh..." Her eyes scanned the rough terrain and scrub brush around their mobile home. "Did you hear something?" she whispered.

Dixie shook her head no, then bit Delilah's hand.

"Ouch! What was that for?"

"For gagging me." Dixie winked. "Without my permission first." Her face went serious.

"And no I didn't hear anything. And no you can't take fingerprints, or look for fiber or fluid evidence, or check for foreign footprints in the sand." She poked Delilah in the chest with her index finger. "That's it. No more watching *CSI* for you!"

"But Dixie," Delilah moaned, "you know how I love that Marg whatsername." Her depression had lasted for weeks after 'China Beach' had been cancelled. Even reruns of 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang' had not been enough to snap her out of it. Frankly, it was a dark period better left undiscussed. *Dixie must really be pissed.* She made a mental note. *Scratch off plans for next week's sermon: "The Evils of the Drip and the Ho's Who Spread It."* But damn, Dixie was going to look great in that slutty red dress she picked out for the occasion. "Please, Dix."

Dixie thought about it. She loved Marg too. "Okay, yes to watching *CSI*, but only if we're naked..." A beat. "And the sound is off."

"Deal."

As they opened their door, Bruce Simpson, who was hiding beneath their trailer, breathed a ragged sigh of relief. He tested his audio feed, tapping his earpiece and jumped a little when Delilah's strong voice was piped directly into his brain.

"I can't believe I'm this old."

Dixie flopped onto the bed next to Della, kicking off her shoes. They hadn't bothered to turn on the lights. She kissed her partner lightly on the lips before rolling over onto her back. "Happy birthday, sweetie. And you're not *that* old."

Della tossed her Bible onto the chair that sat alongside the bed. "Our investments all went belly-up. My career peaked at thirty, and I've been reduced to touring VFW halls, the American Legion, tractor shows, and second-rate churches. AND I am thirty-damn-eight years old."

"Mmmm... Actually that does sound pretty old," Dixie murmured, not bothering to smother her smile. She'd heard the other complaints a million times.

"What?" Delilah quickly rolled over to face her, searching her face intently. "What did you say?"

"Nothing," Dixie lied. "I coughed." She hacked a couple of times for effect.

"Humph." Delilah flopped on her back. "Liar. Just remember, if I'm this old then you're thirty-five, and that's no spring chicken, baby. That dancer wasn't a day over... well, she

was forty-five if she was anything, but her tits weren't a day over 20!" Delilah could spot saline over silicon at thirty paces.

Dixie rolled her eyes and began to strip Delilah of her clothes. "I am *not* thirty-five."

"Are too."

"Am not."

"Are too."

"Wrong," Dixie said in a singsong voice. "I lied to you when we met. I am currently thirty-three. That's right. Read it and weep. Or, well, hear it and weep, old one." *Teach you to give me the crabs.*

"What?" Delilah roared, lifting her hips so Dixie could remove her slacks. "That means you were only seventeen! You told me you were twenty. You lied?" She blinked. "I can't believe you lied. To ME."

Dixie set to work on Delilah's blouse, thinking that the number of buttons seemed to grow larger whenever she drank beer. *Tequila and I'd just rip it off. Heh.*

"You were a child. A *lying* child!"

"Duh. Did I *look* twenty years old, Delilah? I still had braces on my teeth and you met me in the parking lot of my high school!"

"You *looked* fifteen, but I believed you and I just thought you failed a bunch of grades or something. Your brain was the second thing I was attracted to." She felt a slap to her belly. "Ouch." Then lips kissed where she'd just been slapped. "Your father, that no good dirt-farming bastard, was right. I am going straight to hell."

"It's not nice to speak ill of the dead."

"He's not dead."

"Whatever."

Delilah laughed despite herself when fingers tickled her belly button. "Why are we getting naked?"

Bruce got so excited he began to shake. Then he sat up without thinking and banged his head on the underside of the mobile home. "Damn!" He pressed his lips tightly together, not even breathing as he lay stock-still, his eyes wide and frightened.

"What was that?" Delilah's head snapped towards the loud sound.

This time Dixie heard it too. "Probably just some vermin under the 'Spam Can'," their not-so affectionate name for their trailer. "We are in the middle of nowhere, you know." *Had she said vermin? Bruce gasped. How did they know Charity's pet name for me? Is my plan foiled?*

"Oh, right." Delilah shrugged. That explanation was as good as any. "Now, back to us getting naked..." She had figured her chances of getting laid had crawled right out the VFW window along with Dixie's crabs, but now... Wait. "Ooo..." She glanced towards their disgustingly large television set. "Is it CSI night?"

"Noooo... I just love you." Dixie stripped off her shirt and bra in one deft motion and Delilah moaned throatily at the sight. She thrust her chest out a little, causing full breasts to sway gently. "Isn't that enough?"

For a moment Delilah lost all motor skills. "Of course, it is," she finally said, licking her lips. "More than enough." She pulled Dixie's body on top of hers and moaned again. "Ohh... you are so soft."

Dixie moaned her approval at the feeling of skin on skin.

Bruce moaned too.

"What's it been, Dixie?" Delilah ran her hands down the soft skin of her lover's back. "I can't remember the last time we..."

Dixie laughed. "Two days ago. It's been two days, Della."

"That long?" Delilah's voice dropped to a growl. "That's two days *too* long."

Dixie eyes rolled back as Delilah's lips attached themselves to her throat. "Mmm... True. God, Della," she panted. "Ughh.. Yeah, like that, baby. But no hickeys. I don't want to have the plague again."

Delilah chuckled. "Considering the congregation all ran out of the church screaming, I think I'll pass on that particular disease."

"No more talk," Dixie muttered, sitting up a little and bringing her hands up to Delilah's breasts.

Bruce's face twisted in agony. "Yes, talk. Lots and lots of talk. Dirty talk, if you please," he mumbled, nearly in tears because he hadn't popped for the video camera. God, that endless popup ad from hell had said a mini-camera guaranteed to get shots of naked beautiful women was only \$80! How could he have been tempted by the World's Largest Casino ad instead? What had he been thinking?

The trailer began to rock, sending the muffler crashing into Bruce's forehead. He lurched sideways out of the way of the muffler, so dazed that he easily slid into oblivion.

Just as the sun came up, Bruce crawled out from under the trailer. He hadn't gotten much sleep, except for that temporary bout with unconsciousness, because Delilah and Dixie hadn't gotten much sleep. He had almost dozed off around 3 a.m. but then Dixie cruelly suggested whipped cream and sprinkles to her mate. After that, he couldn't even bring himself to blink. He was sure his retinas were permanently damaged. But who could be expected to miss the adventures of Dixie and her human sundae? Eating had never sounded so good. Damn, he was hungry!

He dashed, well, he dashed as fast as a man with a perpetual woody who had spent the night lying on the ground under a cramped trailer could dash, to his car hidden behind an outcropping of rocks. Once he was well on the road to town, he dialed his cell phone.

"Hello, brainless." Her voice was like a driving spike into his exhausted brain.

"Hiya, pumpkin'."

"Don't call me that," she spat. "I am not your pumpkin'. Is the trailer ready?"

She laughed a wildly insane laugh that half scared him, half turned him on. He looked between his legs and scowled at Bruce Jr. *You disobedient traitor.* "Yes, Charity. The speakers and projector are in, the wires are laid and the holes are drilled in the floor. When they leave tonight we can finish it up."

"What's this 'we' shit, Bruceee Boy? You get the dirty work; I'm going to be following them like I did last night. God, you should have seen it. It was pathetic. Of course, the handful of bills I managed to snatch was pretty good. I got most of the twenties from their shoebox while Delilah was spying on Dixie in the bathroom, no doubt hoping she'd catch her changing out of the blue gingham dress from the Wizard of Hell. Perverts." She cackled again and one of Bruce's eyebrows jumped. Along with another organ. "Did..." He swallowed hard. "Did you wear the wig?"

Charity tapped her claw-like fingernails together. "Of course I wore the wig, simpleton. I didn't want them to recognize me."

He shifted in the seat as his jeans grew a little too tight. "The shaggy, short blonde wig?" he asked innocently. Then he said a little prayer and with the back of his hand mopped up the drool that had pooled at the corner of his mouth. "Or the long black one?"

Pleasepleasepleaseplease.

Charity smiled coldly into the phone. "The red one that looks just like your *mother's*."

"Arghhh." Bruce nearly drove into the ditch.

"Just get your butt back here, pervert."

"Yes, Charity." He snapped the phone shut and tossed it on the passenger seat of his beat-up little 1976 Ford Pinto, praying someone would rear-end him and end his misery. He quickly amended his prayer; thoughts like that were dangerous in a city like Vegas, full of pretty-boy dancers.

His thoughts turned to Charity. "You bitch." He glanced between his legs sympathetically. "Sorry about that."

Bruce and Charity were an odd couple, if you could call them a couple at all. Bruce lusted for Charity but she treated Bruce like the slime you find on your shoe after walking around a rodeo. But he had talents that she required in her profession. She was, after all, Delilah and Dixie's chief competitor; however unlike Delilah and Dixie, Charity had bigger dreams. Some day she was going to be on television and tap into old farts' pensions with her ministry. *That* was where the real money lay.

Bruce had other talents he wished Charity would utilize too, but to his chagrin, the most she had ever done is kneed him in the nuts when he was dumb enough to call her his 'widdle snuggle bunny.' Confused, he had phoned his sister, who had assured him that he had committed a universal female infraction by uttering the black, vile words, and that any self-respecting woman would crack his walnuts for such an offense, unless, of course, the man was rich, then he could say whatever he wanted. Being poor, he tried not to hold a grudge. Okay, that was a lie. He hated the bitch. But he still wanted her.

God was one cold-hearted mutha.

Bruce turned down a lonely road, deep in thought. He had finally stopped believing that Charity was saving herself for their wedding night. "Ha! Did she think she could fool me forever?" he mumbled as he pulled to a stop and exited his car. "We've been married for three years."

"I've had it." Bruce was going to leave that no-good bitch once and for all. "I'm reclaiming my independence and pride." Why did he have to do all the dirty work? Why did he have to withdraw \$350 dollars from the bank, give it to Charity, and stay at the Motel-6 every time Charity's long-lost twin sorority sisters, Bill and Jill, came to visit? Why did he have to go to the convenience store in the middle of the night when Charity ran out of feminine hygiene products only to be sniggered at by the pubescent clerk? Enough was enough! Being Mr. Charity of 'Charity for Charity Ministries' just plain sucked.

Bruce opened the front door of their mobile home intent on leaving her once and for all. His escape fantasy went up in a great poof of smoke as Charity, wearing a black teddy, waved a double-stuffed Oreo under his nose. She placed the cookie between her breasts and pressed them together, inviting Bruce with her evil smile to take a bite.

He broke down in tears, a man-slut to his passions.

Bruce could go without many things, Oreos, however, was not one of them. She who controlled the Oreos, controlled Bruce.

"Are you sure this is going to work?"

"Of course I'm sure," Charity snarled as they watched Delilah and Dixie go back into the trailer after returning from having dinner in Vegas.

Charity had nearly wrecked her car three times trying to get back to warn Bruce their prey was coming home early but for some reason the fool had turned off his cell phone. She had expected the women to be out most of the night, giving him enough time to finish the modifications to the trailer, so it really put her panties in a wad when Delilah and Dixie drove into Vegas, ate dinner at an all-you-can-eat steak buffet for \$12.95, rented a movie and then headed home. Damn, but they were boring; she had been expecting so much more.

"Is all this worth it?" Bruce asked his ball and chain.

"Of course! Of course, it's worth it," Charity shrieked, tossing down a blanket to sit on and sending a cloud of dirt into Bruce's face. It stuck to the jagged, barely-healing cut on his forehead that the muffler had made the night before. The mark was a perfectly shaped 'C' as though she had branded her initial right there for the world to see. Charity laughed.

"What's so funny?"

"Your face," Charity told him in a bored tone.

Z Bruce wiped the dirt from his eyes, leaving white circles around them. Now he looked like a deranged raccoon. "Better?"

"Much."

"Can't we just go home? I..."

"How many times do I have to explain this? If we can drive them out of the business, then there'll be that much more for me!"

Bruce gave her a look.

"I mean for *us*." Charity didn't try give him an innocent look. She had found out years ago that her face actually hurt when she did.

"Bullshit. You meant what you said the first time. Hell, I can barely get enough out of you for a Whopper and fries."

"If you aren't satisfied with this arrangement—"

"As a matter of fact—"

Before he finished the speakers came to life. Charity's eyes lit up. She could hear movement in the trailer and she turned up the volume on the receiver so she could sit back and listen.

Bruce groaned. There was no turning back now.

Dixie rubbed her hands all over Delilah's ass, before sliding them up to broad shoulders. She wrapped her legs around Dixie's waist and nudged her lover towards the bed. "Come on, baby. I'm horny."

"You're always horny."

"No, that's you."

"Whatever." Delilah chuckled as she playfully slapped her partner's hands away as she dropped her on the bed.

"C'mon, it's not a bad thing. It had to happen sometime. There was bound to eventually be a lull in your fifteen-year relentless attack on my body where I could jump in."

"Maybe," Delilah allowed skeptically. "Are you saying I've been slacking?"

Dixie gave her a wry look. *Slacking?* "I could sell your sweat as pure Viagra, honey. You have not been slacking." She didn't think that Delilah needed to know she actually *had* sold a vile of her blood to a research lab in Los Alamos after a particularly spectacular vacation, where they'd spent nearly 48 mind-blowing hours in continuous copulation. But there as no need to make her lover so paranoid she'd be afraid to close her eyes at night. Besides, she knew that Delilah had, though she'd never admit it, enjoyed the ABBA greatest hits collection she'd bought with the proceeds. So was it really so wrong?

Delilah let go of Dixie's hands and started walking them over to the bed. "Didn't I read somewhere that you shouldn't have sex for two hours after eating?"

"That's swimming."

Tucked behind the bushes behind the Spam Can, Charity rolled her eyes. "Christ, turn on the gas before they gag me."

"Couldn't we just listen for—"

"NO! Turn on the goddamn gas, vermin."

Delilah looked at God's face for a good long moment. If God was Anthony Quinn then how come he'd been in so many horrible movies? "Dixie, this is serious," she finally said. "This is *God*." Delilah rubbed her eyes, hoping God would come further into focus.

One he regained muscle control, Bruce stroked his mustache. "How does my face look, ladies? I got the projector on EBay. Ouch! Where did you get steel-toed boots? Shit!" There was a long pause. "I mean I *made* the projector. Ouch! What?" Another pause. "I mean my human minion slaves made the projector and I just stole it." A choking noise interrupted God's words.

Delilah looked at God's face. It looked like shit, but now wasn't the time to offend. "It looks fine, your *Godliness*."

"Eh," Dixie piped up. "You're a little fuzzy around the edges, but you keep trying, you'll get there."

"Dixie," Delilah ground out, keeping one eye on God. "Ixney on de attitud ney!" Then she exploded into song.

'*Cheeseburger in Paradise?*' Dixie scrunched up her face. Delilah was high? She only sang Jimmy Buffet when she was high. But how could that be? They'd both given up pot years and years ago after Dixie, during a fit of the munchies, sold their car for a jumbo-sized bag of Doritos and they ended up getting stuck in Mexico for two years. "Huh?"

Delilah rolled her eyes. Why was Dixie being so dense? "You can't talk to God like that!" "That's right, bitch!" a loud voice hissed, shaking the trailer again.

Bruce grabbed the microphone back from Charity. "God, wants you nasty, *nasty*," this second 'nasty' said with a hefty dose of appreciation, "women to listen up good. You have been living a life of sin. I know these things."

Charity rolled her eyes impatiently; not liking the power trip Bruce was on. "You are God, yeah, yeah," she mumbled.

"It is time to mend your wicked ways and repent!"

Finally starting to feel a little concerned about their visitor, Dixie looked to Delilah.

"Yeah? What do you want us to do?"

"I command that you stop conning the innocent!"

Charity slapped Bruce in the back of the head.

Bruce rubbed the back of his head petulantly. "I mean stop conning the stupid. Give up this wicked path you have started before it is too late and you spend an eternity roasting in the fiery pits of hellllllllllllllllllllll!" He laughed wickedly and even Charity had to nod in approval.

"We can do that!" Delilah nodded furiously. "Maybe retire somewhere. Somewhere far, far away." Her eyes glazed over. "Somewhere full of scantily clad island women and drinks with umbrellas. That would be good, wouldn't it, Dixie?" *And we could just start a little business on the side. For spending money. Nothing too serious. Just to rip off the really obnoxious tourists.*

When no answer was forthcoming, Delilah elbowed her partner in the ribs.

"Oh, yeah, sure," Dixie finally slurred, blinking with exaggerated slowness. "Umbrellas, naked women." She looked at Delilah. "Are you gonna be there too?"

"Uh huh." Delilah nodded.

Dixie shrugged. "I'm there."

Bruce continued, "I wish to speak to the one you mortals call Delilah."

Delilah's ears perked up and Dixie pointed both hands at her lover. "Thanks, honey," Delilah mumbled sarcastically.

Bruce's brow furrowed. "Delilah, you raven-haired beauty. Umph. Not the face!" A cough and a pause. "I sense you are being too cooperative. You wouldn't be blowing sunshine up God's ass now wouldja?"

Delilah's eyes widened. God had read her mind! Was there no end to His powers?

"Sunshine? Nooo, not me, Sir. Not me. I'm happy to do whatever you want. I'm innocent!"

Dixie snorted.

"I swear, I'll do what you ask," Delilah amended quickly. "I swear to G— well, I swear to You."

"You'll do anything I command?" God bellowed. Charity whispered something in Bruce's ear. His brown eyes widened but he nodded reluctantly.

"Absolutely," Delilah vowed.

Bruce took a deep breath. "If I commanded it, would you sacrifice the blonde to me, the Lord Almighty?"

Delilah looked to Dixie who raised a challenging eyebrow at her partner. "Umm... well...umm..." Delilah stuttered, just knowing she was about to be struck by lightning or maybe by one of those plates that God smashes against the walls when He dances around with all His Greek buddies.

"Hell no, she won't," Dixie yelled, hoping to distract the death strike that was sure to be delivered to her partner.

Bruce snarled into the microphone, "I knew you were full of shit. You can't fool me, Della. Ouch!!" God sounded out a breath for a moment as Charity chased him around the desert. When he finally out ran her, he panted, "Would you at least strip her naked and take her LOUDLY in supplication to me?"

Delilah shrugged. "Now that I could do."

"You shit!" Dixie slapped her. "I can't believe you. You jerk!"

"What?" Delilah tried to escape Dixie's hands. "It sounds kinda kinky and fun, doesn't it?"

Dixie froze, as she thought it over.

Charity came up behind Bruce and knocked him unconscious with a large rock. As he thudded to the ground she picked up the microphone. "Listen up!" she shrieked, her entire body quaking in an uncontrollable rage. "This is God's WIFE, the deity who is REALLY in charge of the fucking universe." Charity didn't bother to try to disguise her voice. "And I make the rules! Understand?"

Now there was a voice that scared the shit out of Dixie. It sounded like her grandmother, the most vicious old hag ever to walk the face of the earth. "Got it!" she managed to squeak as she hid behind Delilah.

Charity exhaled slowly, tore the tubing from the bong, and sucked in a deep, calming breath. "Good. Now that we have that straight, things will go much smoother. I command that you never preach another sermon. Never fake another illness. Never con another sucker out of his money as long as you both shall live. You are to go straight."

Dixie and Delilah both gasped.

Dixie silently mouthed the word 'straight' as though it was a curse.

"Couldn't we just stop conning?" Delilah asked pitifully. "I really kinda like the way she bites and squeaks when she comes." She jerked her thumb over her shoulder at Dixie. "I could never go straight. Couldn't you just send us to hell instead?"

"Yeah," Dixie agreed.

Delilah wondering briefly why God's face was still on their wall when Mrs. God was the one talking.

Charity's knuckles stood out vividly as she clenched the microphone. "Not *that* kind of straight. I don't care who you screw! God's wife is not a tight ass!" She took another

calming breath. "Stop the conning and repent. Give back your ill-gotten gains. All of it. Or face the wraith of the divine with PMS. Have I made myself clear?"

"Yes, ma'am." they answered in unison, sounding very much like two kids who just got caught big time with their hands in the cookie jar.

"Who should we take the money back to?" Delilah asked absently, taking a step towards God's head. She wanted to see if she could touch it.

"God's wife doesn't give a rat's ass what you do with your pitiful buck and change, so long as *you* don't have it."

Bruce began to moan as he started to wake up and Charity clamped her hand over his mouth and nose to keep him quiet. She figured he could probably breathe through the bleeding gashes on his head. "When you wake up in the morning, this may seem a little fuzzy," she boomed. "But make no mistake. This *was* real. Your salvation depends on what you do with this information." Charity turned up the gas and took another hit for good measure. "Sleeeeeeep..." She cackled wildly, "Sleeeeeeep, my pathetic human pawns. God's wife has spoken. HEHEHEEEHHEHHEHHEHHHEHHHEEEEEEEEEEE."

Delilah and Dixie just looked at each other as God's head faded away.

"Whaddya wanna do?" Delilah asked woozily. The inside of the trailer was starting to spin.

"I... I think we oughta..." Dixie tried to concentrate but couldn't. She made a face. "Hey, Del..." she began, before promptly passing out against Delilah's chest.

"Whoa." Delilah quickly wrapped her arms around her rag doll lover. Feeling like she was going to hurl, she staggered over to the bed, dragging Dixie along with her. At the bed's edge her knees buckled and they both tumbled forward, deeply asleep.

CHAPTER TWO

Time Flies When You're

Having Fun. That's Why It's Standing

Still for Us

DIXIE WOKE FIRST, feeling like her mouth was full of glass and her head was full of cotton. No, wait. That wasn't right. A mouth full of cotton and a head full of glass. Actually, it didn't matter. What mattered was that her head hurt like hell and she needed aspirin, a *lot* of aspirin. She managed to crawl out from under Della who was snoring and drooling at the same time.

Dixie didn't even try to get up on two feet; crawling was so much easier. Damn, but she needed to vacuum. She made her way into the tiny bathroom, looking for a moment at the porcelain Goddess and wondering if she felt so damn bad, why she hadn't spent the night praying there, begging God to let her die and for Delilah to hold her hair while she puked. She knocked the aspirin from the counter and raised up from the floor just long enough to fill Delilah's sacred blue Cookie Monster cup with water. She slumped back on the floor and tried to get the cap off. She tried it the way it was *supposed* to work, then she tried biting it off, but her teeth hurt too bad for that. Then she tried banging it on the counter, but that only made her head worse. Finally, with only one option left, she slammed the toilet lid on it, nearly crying, not for smashing her fingers, mind you, but half the pills had gone into the water. She stared into the bowl. Damn, but she needed to clean the bathroom. For one brief minute she thought about going in after them. She'd done worse.

Delilah's long groan told Dixie that her partner wasn't in any better shape than she was, so holding the rim of Cookie Monster between her teeth, she picked up the remaining aspirin from the floor, and took them to the remains of her partner.

She started to curse when some of the water sloshed out on the ugly avocado green carpet as she crawled through it, but she held her tongue to keep from dumping it all. When she reached the bed, she set the cup on the milk crate that served as nightstand and holder for sex toys, then she looked in her hand at the remaining aspirin. *Seven, okay five for me, two for you.*

With a great deal of work on her part, Dixie pulled herself up, grabbed Delilah's nose and threw two aspirin into her mouth. Delilah started to spit them out. Being mostly asleep made it hard to swallow. Dixie grabbed her partner's jaw and slammed her mouth shut.

"Oh, no. You take those, because you're not getting mine."

"Water..." Delilah choked, trying to get the pills down her completely dry throat.

"I spilled yours, make spit," Dixie groaned as she slumped to the floor. She popped the remaining pills in her mouth then gulped down the remaining water. She had a funny, unsettled feeling about the night before. Something had happened. She just couldn't put her finger on it.

Yet.

Sometime later, Delilah actually managed to stand up, nearly tripping over Dixie who was still lying on the floor, waiting for her pathetic life to end.

"Why won't He just kill me?" she groaned as Delilah made her way to the fridge, pulled out a carton of milk, and drank straight from it.

"It's not like you killed me when I asked you to earlier?"

"Jeez, Della! If I had killed you, then you'd be dead now and couldn't kill me." The logic seemed so clear to Dixie. "God," she sighed. She might just have to do it herself this time. She felt *that* bad.

"Who?" the tall woman asked as she wiped her mouth with the back of her hand.

"Who what?"

"Who did you just say?"

"I said kill me. God damn, Della. At least pay attention."

Suddenly Delilah's mind became crystal clear and the milk slipped from her hand, splashing onto the floor and making a little river that flowed towards the bedroom where Dixie lay on the floor. It only did this because Delilah was too fucking lazy to properly level the trailer when they parked it. She figured if it didn't tip over, it was safe.

"God!"

"Huh?" Dixie opened one eye and watched the milk roll toward her. She licked her lips and for one brief minute considered it.

"He's going to kill us!"

"Good. The sooner the better."

"You don't understand!" Delilah was as near to a full panic as a one-eyed Dixie had ever seen her.

"Apparently not." Dixie sat up, trying not to jar her body, which really didn't matter since Delilah was jumping around like she had ants in her pants, shaking the entire trailer.

Fortunately for Dixie, there were no ants and Delilah wasn't wearing pants. In fact, she was totally naked, and Dixie herself was somewhat mesmerized by the bouncing of Delilah's breasts.

Suddenly, those breasts were up close and personal as Dixie was yanked to her feet.

"Don't you remember? God and the bitch he's married to, they were here last night. Told us to ditch all our money and go strai...errr... I mean stop conning."

"Oh, that," she dismissed. "That was just a dream." A sick and very wrong dream.

"Then how come we dreamt the same thing?"

Dixie's eyes widened. "You mean that was real?" *Oh no. No. No. No!*

"Dix, think hard, darlin'. When was the last time you and I were naked in the same room for more than five minutes without our thighs wrapped around each others heads?"

Dixie's pale eyebrows drew together. Concentration was nearly impossible, but the sick feeling in the pit of her stomach, and everywhere else, forced her to try. "Only once, I think. When something was terribly wrong. When our first trailer started sinking in that Florida swamp!"

"Point. Only when something goes wrong. So something bad happened last night. And remember what it was? This is big, I mean *big!* God is after us, Dixie. We've got to change our ways. I know it's gonna suck. Really suck. But this is *God* we're talking about."

Tears filled Dixie's eyes.

Delilah cupped her cheeks. "Don't worry, honey. We're not going 'straight', straight, if you know what I mean." She winked. "There are some things I won't do even for the Almighty." She smiled at her lover and Dixie grinned back.

Dixie sank bonelessly to the bed. The events of the night before came crashing back and she felt even sicker, if that were possible. "We gotta get rid of all our money, huh?"

"Every last damn dime." Delilah sighed and dug in the pockets of her jeans, dumping all the money she had onto the bed. "I've got...forty-five, no fifty-two dollars. How much you got?"

Dixie groaned. This was not going to be pretty. "Are you sure we have to get rid of it all?" *Going to hell is one thing. But when Della finds out...*

"Yes! Now how much do you have? We couldn't have more than a couple hundred bucks between us."

Dixie had tears forming in her eyes again when she moved toward the small kitchen and grabbed her jacket. She tossed it to Delilah. "Check that, darlin'. I'll get the rest."

"Kay." Delilah shook Dixie's jacket furiously, nearly ripping the lining out in her search for cash. "Okay, this is good. One fifty, one sixty-five. One hundred sixty-five bucks. We can give that to a bum on the street and get God off our ass."

Dixie raised an eyebrow at Delilah.

"I mean... and start our new and righteous life." The words tasted worse than Dixie's mother's tuna, noodle, peanut, pineapple casserole. And *that* had won a prize on the Internet.

Delilah shook her head when a canister of Comet landed on the bed in front of her.

"Honey, we don't have to launder the money, just get rid of it."

Then a can of Spam, a real can of Spam, not a replica of their house, landed on the bed, along with a can of Pepsi and a can of Aquanet hairspray, and a can of those curly fried onions that Midwesterners pour all over vegetables and call a hot-dish.

Dixie sat on the bed, real tears seeping down her cheeks as she removed the bottoms of all the cans, and dumped the rolls of money on the bed.

"Fuck!" Delilah gasped and tried to stagger backward, but the close space of the trailer made it difficult and the best she could do was sway. As it had done so many times for Fred Sanford, the 'big one' was coming. She laid her hand over her heart. She couldn't feel a blessed thing. "Fuck," she repeated... with feeling.

"Not now, honey. Going broke really takes it out of me."

"Jesus Christ, Dix!"

"Shhh, we don't want Him down here because we're picking on the kid. Goddamn— Oops." She clamped her hand over her mouth. She could not be trusted.

Delilah could only stare. "How much money is there?"

"Forty nine thousand, six hundred eighty-seven dollars and seventy-five cents."

"Seventy-five cents?"

"I had to take a five spot out for toilet paper the other night, but I put the change back."

"You hid money from me? Your... your... wife?"

"We're not married."

"A technicality!"

"Don't be mad, please? I just took a little of our money out each week and tucked it away. It was for our retirement."

Delilah sighed. She knew Dixie was a pack rat, but this... She scrubbed her face, deciding that it wouldn't do any good to be mad. "Now what?"

Dixie's head swayed in dismay. "I say let's chance it. What's the worst that could happen?"

"How about we end up apart? Never to see each other again. Does fire and brimstone mean anything to you?"

"I thought you were over that slut!" Dixie jumped to her feet and poked twin nipples with her index fingers.

Delilah grasped her breasts, half hoping Dixie would do that again. But now wasn't the time. "Who?"

"That skanky bitch that was the lead singer for Fire and Brimstone. You know, I still have a hard time believing your zipper just got stuck and that her spit was a magic lubricant."

"Dix, sweetheart." Delilah gently grasped her partner's arms. "Now is not the time for your irrational jealousy. We've got to ditch the cash. How are we gonna get rid of it?"

Dixie sighed. "We can give it to charity."

"Not a chance in hell!" Delilah roared. "I'd rather be tortured with needles and Michael Bolton albums for a million years than give a single Canadian penny to Charity Ministries!"

"Not *that* charity. An *actual* charity."

"Oh. Right then. It's a plan." *God, this rots! It sucks! It stinks!* "Let's go." Delilah turned to leave.

"Della, darlin'?"

"Yeah?"

"If you go out like that people will be throwing money at you. Put some clothes on first."

Dixie wanted to cry. Again. All the money she had carefully stashed away over the last ten years was about to be given away to people who didn't need it. Okay, they probably needed it, but she wanted it, *damn* it! She wanted the fruits of her hoarding. Was that so wrong?

They pulled up in front of the orphanage. Dixie sighed and cradled the bag of cash as though it was a baby. Her baby. She and Delilah's baby. "Delilah—"

"Don't, Dixie. Don't make this harder than it already is. I'm already about to puke.

Gimme."

"Honey..."

"Hand it over."

"Sweetheart..."

"Fork it."

"Thunder tongue..."

With that, Delilah ripped the bag from her arms and said, "If God strikes me down you'll never feel my thunder tongue again. Let's just do this and get it over with."

Dixie opened her door and followed Delilah into the building where a handsome man waxing the banister met them. This struck both women as a little odd since the banister

was a metal rail running up a set of badly rusted metal steps. They instantly gave in to the urge to say in fake Asian accents, "Wax on. Wax off." Each, in her own way, had thought it would help. It didn't.

The man turned a smile on them that would make the brightest light in Vegas jealous, his one gold tooth standing out like a beacon. "Can I help you, ladies?"

"We'd like to make a donation." Delilah thrust the bag at him.

"And we'd like to take your donation."

"Great. Thanks. See ya." Delilah nearly dropped the bag when he wouldn't take it.

"But we can't."

Two sets of eyes widened.

"What kind of loser charity can't take donations?" Dixie asked as she took possession of the bag.

"One that has already taken as much money as it can without losing its federal funding."

"Excuse me?"

"Most charities rely on a combination of donations, and government grants and funding. We're only allowed to take so much in donations before the government takes away our federal funding for the year. And unless you intend to make this next year to make up for the short fall...?"

"No."

"Then, I appreciate the offer, but..."

"It's nearly fifty grand!" Delilah wanted him to take it. She wanted him to take it so badly she nearly fell to her knees begging, but the look in Dixie's eyes told her that her partner wouldn't be happy to see her on her knees for anyone else but her.

"Wow! That would put us so far over the top, we'd lose our grants for two years. I'm sorry."

"Yes, you are! C'mon, Dix, let's go give it to the Baptists; they aren't too good for our money."

Unfortunately for Delilah and Dixie, the Baptists didn't want their money. Neither did the Mormons, the Buddhists, nor the home for Aged Rattlesnake Handlers. Of course, at the moment there weren't any live aged rattlesnake handlers, but who could tell what the future would bring? By the time they had been turned down for the fourth time, Delilah was in a panic; she couldn't face another charity with their bad coffee and pictures of... well, sad things. Would some cheerful colors really be such a crime?

Dixie was feeling secure that this was a sign. "Della, honey?"

They were walking down the Strip, passing casino after casino. Delilah figured that the only thing that could make her feel better was to see people far worse off than she was. Pathetic, hideous, losers.

Dixie had immediately suggested they go watch tourists who were about to see all their hard-earned money go up in smoke and Delilah had been willing to give it a try. So here they were.

They passed a trashcan next to a stand that sold newspapers that contained nothing more than nudie pictures and hookers' phone numbers. As casual as a summer's breeze, Delilah set the bag of money on the top of the trashcan and kept on walking, never missing a step. She walked for a few more feet, waiting. Nothing happened and Dixie, who was oblivious, and not just at this particular moment either, kept chattering away.

Delilah looked skyward, a brilliant smile on her face. It was done!

"Hey, lady! Lady!!"

No!!! Delilah's mind screamed.

"Hey, Della, I think that guy means you." Both women turned around.

A young man with a fanny pack around his waist, sunglasses with the price tag still hanging off them, and a jumbo volcano drink in a cheap commemorative glass, the free kind they gave away at the Stardust when you presented one of the million coupons that littered the streets, in his hand. His other hand held a brown paper sack. "You dropped this." He thrust the sack in Dixie's face.

"Oh." Dixie shot Delilah a look. They'd decided to at least do something worthwhile with the money. "Thanks."

"No problem." He smiled brilliantly. "Back home... in Ashwagubeon, Wisconsin—"

"Ugh." Delilah couldn't take it anymore. "Whatever." She turned and marched away from the helpful young vacationer.

"Della," Dixie admonished, running to catch up. "That was rude."

"I know," Delilah gritted out. But this was so hard. Giving away money? God, this had to be some sort of sick cosmic joke. She grabbed the bag from Dixie as she thought about their current situation.

Dixie glanced up at her. "Maybe we're supposed to keep this money. I mean nobody wants it."

"They're idiots. We're getting rid of this money, Dix. We're not quitters. Well, we are, but God doesn't need to know that!" Something clicked behind blue eyes. "I know just the place to do it too."

Dixie saw where Delilah was suddenly heading and her eyes widened. "Della, wait!"

"No," Delilah barked, her stride long and purposeful.

"Della!"

Delilah whirled around to face Dixie. "I will not wait. I want to get this over with."

Dixie's hand moved to her hips. "How could I have ever married somebody as frustrating as you?"

"We're not married remember?"

"Details," Dixie dismissed her with a wave of her hand.

Blue eyes narrowed. "Well, my attention to detail is going to keep God out of our lives once and for all."

"Am I alone in seeing the irony in that statement?"

Delilah rolled her eyes and turned on her heels, shouldering past a group of Hari Krishnas. Her gaze drifted to the paper sack in her hands and she paused in her trek, glancing over her shoulder at the men. *Nah.* Long fingers tightened their grip on her bag. *There is only one way in Vegas to get rid of a ton of cash in less than two seconds flat. No hassles, no worries.*

"Welcome to Caesar's Palace, a toothy, burly man in a set of leather armor and a shield greeted Delilah as she plowed through the doors. Dixie was hot on her heels but had gotten caught behind the toga parade that started moving her in the opposite direction.

"Move it, Kojak. Captain Stubbing, outta my way! Oooo... how do you get it so shiny? Watch it, Yule!" she yelped, then pointed an accusing finger. "That's disgusting! You're supposed to be a man of the cloth." She thought she saw a dark head bobbing in the distance and she jumped to see over the crowd. "Della!"

Delilah covered her ears. "LALALALALALALA. I can't hear you," she shouted back in a singsong voice.

Determined eyes scanned the casino interior. She'd only have a second to do this before Dixie started bitching about how the money could be better spent. This, from a woman who once 'accidentally' sold Delilah into white slavery to pay off her Monkey Ward's charge card, but only a few days before wouldn't let her order extra cheese on her

burger because it cost \$.50 and was a 'waste.' *No way am I going to listen to her about money!*

Ahhhhh... Delilah's eyes lit on her best chance to go down in flames fast. Roulette.

The wheel was already in motion when she bolted past a set of red velvet ropes for the table. Okay, *first* she paused to order her complimentary drink from a cute cocktail waitress. She smiled charmingly, *then* she bolted for the table, tossing her bag of money onto the green felt squares and yelling, "ZERO! I bet it all on zero!"

The people around the table, and most especially the croupier, glared at Delilah. The little white ball spun a final time before plunking dangerous close to zero, then it jumped to its final spot, landing safely on the double zero. "Yes! Delilah shouted with glee. "I lost! I lost it all!"

"I'm sorry, ma'am." The croupier glared at Delilah then turned apologetic eyes to the other patrons. "That spin was invalid, ladies and gentlemen. I'm afraid I'll have to re-spin." He gave Delilah another dirty look.

"What?" she said innocently.

"You can't bet once the wheel is in motion and I announce no more bets."

Her expression went blank. "You mean I didn't lose?"

"No."

"What the hell kind of crooked establishment is this? I'll bet it's owned by the mob!"

The croupier's eyes widened.

"You heard me. THE MOB! And I don't mean wannabe rap singers. The *real* mob. I should be punished for ruining the spin. You should take my bet as punishment!"

"That's not how it works, ma'am."

"Arghhhhhh!"

"There you are." Dixie marched over to Delilah, intentionally stomping on her foot as she moved alongside her.

"Ouch!"

"Didja lose it all yet?" She had promised herself she was not going to say a word about what Delilah was doing. This was Delilah's money as much as it was hers. And if they were separated in hell for all of eternity, well, it really *would* be hell. She was willing to do whatever it took to ditch the money. "Oh, look," she said happily, snatching away the drink the waitress was about to hand to Delilah, "you ordered me *your* favorite drink. How thoughtful."

Delilah smiled sarcastically. "You take it. You deserve it, *dear*." *Choke on it, midget.*

"Ma'am," the croupier spoke again, "you need to move your bag so we can continue play."

He glanced at a security guard who had surely only been released from prison a few days ago, wondering if this crazy woman was going to be a problem. The 'M' word was bad. Very bad. "This is a high rollers table, ma'am," he informed her mostly to get rid of her. "The minimum bet is \$250.00."

"Nooooooooo problem."

The croupier looked surprised. "All right then, you'll need some chips and—"

"No time. This is \$49,687.75 and I bet it all on zero."

"WAIT!" Dixie roared. She grabbed the bag from Delilah and pulled out a buck and the change. "God would want us to tip for the booze."

"Good point." Delilah nodded. "Now," she turned back to the table. "Let's play!"

The croupier made a face. Usually folks bothered to take the drug money out of the paper bag before playing. Usually, not always.

"Is there a problem here, Brian?" A distinguished-looking gentleman in a perfectly pressed suit strode over to the croupier.

"Well..."

"Hell yes there is a problem," Delilah ground out. "I'm trying to dump off a ton of cash in this," she glanced around, "dump."

Dixie quickly finished her drink before they were tossed out. Delilah was completely unreasonable when she was mad.

"Maybe you can't handle this action. Maybe I should go play with the *big* boys at Circus Circus," Delilah taunted with devastating effectiveness.

Dixie gasped. God, Delilah was sexy when she was being an uppity bitch. Not that she'd ever admit it, but that didn't make it less true.

The man in the suit's eyes turned to slits. "Brian, take that bet please."

Brian gulped. "Yes, sir."

Delilah smirked triumphantly.

Dixie turned to the waitress, plunked down her buck and change as a tip, asked for a light beer, and gave her a charming smile.

The croupier called out, "Place your bets!"

Not a single other bet was placed. Delilah glanced around the table. "Pusses." It was easy to play the big shot when you were God's puppet.

"Good luck, ma'am," he said professionally before spinning the wheel, then the little white ball that would determine their destiny. "Bets are closed."

"So this is the High Roller's Suite," Dixie said in awe as they were let into their room and the porter disappeared back down the private elevator.

Delilah could only whimper. This was impossible. For her entire life she'd tried to get money. And now that she had it she couldn't give it away. Who knew? "God is punishing us."

"Well, he can punish me some more then. Look at the huge bed! It's bigger than the entire Spam Can."

Delilah's mouth went dry when she saw the bed. A tiny growl escaped her throat. "God wouldn't have put us in this room if He didn't want us to have sex, Dixie. I'm sure of it."

Dixie gave Delilah a sexy grin. Not the charming grin she gave any pretty woman. This was the sexy I'm-in-love-with-you-and-I-want-to-lick-every-square-inch-of-your body grin that was reserved just for *her*. She took a step closer to her lover, delighting as Delilah's eyes darkened from the sound of her voice alone. "Tch. And you thought religion would be all bad."

Delilah's hands went limp and she dropped their three paper sacks loaded with money.

Charity and Bruce sat in front of the nickel slots in shock.

Bruce scratched his prominent jaw. "God is *not* happy."

"For fuck's sake, retard. Stop calling yourself that or I'm going to have you committed." He'd been insufferable ever since they realized that Delilah and Dixie were indeed trying to get rid of their ill-gotten gains.

"Bet I'd at least get laid there."

Charity smiled wickedly. She was planning on an all-male institution. "I'll bet you do too."

Bruce grinned, satisfied. Then his brows knit together. "What are we going to do?" He motioned for a cocktail waitress but the woman, seeing that he was at the nickel slots, blew him off.

"I think the devil needs to visit his two favorite girls this time."

"Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen?"

Charity couldn't disagree. "I was thinking more along the lines of a midnight visit to Delilah and Dixie," she clarified, fighting her natural inclination to run her fingernails down his face.

"Who will be the devil? Or at least Satan's head."

"Hmmm..." Charity tapped her chin with a single finger.

"Tony Danza? Erik Estrada? Sally Jessy Raphael. No. No. Sam Donaldson!"

Charity shuddered. All worthy selections. Then her eyes lit up with evil glee. "What would scare you so bad you'd wish for oblivion?"

Bruce's eyes went wide. "No. You can't mean—"

"Oh, yes. That little girl from the Pepsi commercials. Hallie Eisenberg."

Bruce screamed in terror.

Charity was evil incarnate.

It was well past dinner and Delilah and Dixie still hadn't ordered room service.

Bruce and Charity stood in the doorway of the kitchen in stolen wait staff uniforms.

Bruce, Charity decided, looked really bad in a polyester skirt and cummerbund.

"Don't they have to eat?" Charity hissed. "They've been up there for hours."

"Ooooo.... I'll bet they're eating." Bruce's eyes glazed over and Charity made a gagging noise.

"How did you get us these uniforms and access to the High Roller's Suite?" She was actually a little impressed. Now they'd be able to slip drugs into their victims' food and enter and exit unseen through the private elevator. It was perfect.

"I promised that guy over there you'd sleep with him once his shift was over," Bruce said absently, rolling the enormous Pepsi poster containing Hallie Eisenberg's picture that he'd stolen from the lobby of Circus Circus. "He's got a key to the elevator and uniform closet."

Charity turned to her husband and raised an eyebrow. "You told him I'd have sex with him?"

Bruce nodded. *Boy, that waiter was a sucker.*

Charity eyed the muscular young man as he set a bottle of champagne into an ice bucket. His biceps bunched and released, teasing her with their tautness. "Oooo..." She clapped her hands together gleefully. "Two Oreos for you tonight, honey."

"How'd you get the Rohypnol?" he asked his wife, not especially impressed. He was convinced that she could find plutonium and the Holy Grail if she had two hours and was pissed off enough.

She shrugged. "Easy." She pointed to a group of students who had gathered around the bar. "Those college kids had enough to drug the entire casino."

"Expensive?"

Charity snorted. "Hardly. I told him," she pointed to slender young man dressed in pink chaps made out of ostrich feathers and a lavender felt cowboy hat, "you'd be by later to perform debasing, perverted acts for his pleasure."

Bruce gasped. What had Charity done? "I will not sing Karaoke!"

The waiter to whom Charity was promised finally approached them, pushing a small cart.

"Your sister finally ordered room service, sir." He winked at Charity.

"What'd they pick?" Bruce asked. There wasn't any food on the cart.

The waiter picked up an order form and read it. "A big-ass bucket of booze and expensive sex food. And hurry!"

"What?" Charity shrieked. "How are we going to come up with that?"

"Actually," the waiter showed Charity a copy of their room service menu, "it's number sixteen."

"Oh."

Another waiter approached the trio. He placed a large ice bucket containing bottles of champagne, tequila, and scotch on the cart. Next came a round tray of crackers with blackish-green stuff spread on them that looked mysteriously like duck shit. There were also a few fresh strawberries and a bowl of melted chocolate in the center of the tray for those who didn't have much imagination.

Charity's stud-in-waiting pressed two key cards into her hands and whispered, "I get off at 11:00."

Charity made a purring sound as the man disappeared.

"Did you say something, Charity?" Bruce asked, tugging at his uniform. Nylons were hell. "Nothing you'll ever hear." She looked at the food and drink, snorted, and unscrewed the tequila bottle, where she dumped all the drugs. "Ooo, goody. Time to party. Ready when you are."

They made their way to the elevator and once inside Charity pulled an enormous pair of scissors from her handbag. "Bruceeee..." She pouted coyly. "We need to alter your appearance just a tad so slut number one and her whore won't recognize you." She snapped the scissors near his head. She didn't intend on making good on one of her many eunuch threats. At least for the moment.

Bruce cringed and ran his fingers through his luxurious dark hair. "Just a trim?"

Charity batted her eyes then grabbed Bruce by the ear and yanked his head down to her eye level. She snapped the scissors open and closed several more times in rapid succession, a maniacal, homicidal look overtaking her. "Of course."

Delilah signed their room service bill, though all the food and booze was courtesy of the casino, and pushed the cart the remaining few feet to the bed. She poked at the lump beneath the blankets that was letting out tiny continual moans of sated bliss. "Hey, Dix?"
A groan.

"Do we know any cross-dresser with a big cut on their foreheads and a Mohawk? He... err... she... err... 'it' looked familiar."

Dixie didn't bother to answer. Her tongue was still numb. How Delilah could talk or walk, for that matter, was a miracle unto itself.

"Want some tequila?"

The covers flew off the bed as Dixie bolted upright. "Limes?"

Delilah eyed the tray. She picked up a chunk of dark hair from it and examined it curiously before dropping it. "Let's see... We have duck shit on Triscuits. But, hey, they're both green," she supplied cheerfully.

Dixie shrugged. She wasn't particular. "Works for me."

Bruce and Charity stood at the foot of the enormous bed staring at Delilah and Dixie, who were unconscious.

"You are so excessive. You didn't have to give them *all* the drugs, Charity."

"Shut up! How was I to know they'd drink *all* the Tequila? Lushes." They'd rummaged through the room, looking for the sacks of money, but couldn't find them anywhere.

Delilah, that finicky bitch, must have put them in the safe. Like God's wife couldn't worm a lousy safe combination out of her? Ha! All she needed was a nice leather razor strap and a few dental tools and—

"Charity?"

"What?" she snapped, unhappily ripped from her glorious trip down memory lane. Visiting Grandpa in the old folks home was always such a blast.

"What are we going to do?" He jerked a thumb towards Dixie and Delilah, more than a little upset that they'd passed out with a sheet covering everything but their heads. Life was not fair. "They're dead to the world."

Charity thought for a moment. She could, she knew, smother the women with the pillows and frame Bruce for the crime in less than five minutes flat. She sighed. But, she wanted the oil in her Toyota changed this week and that was the best part about being married. Free oil changes for life. "Lets just hang the poster and get out of here."

Bruce blinked. "Bu—"

"I know. I know. It's not fair. We work so hard for our money; they didn't work for theirs! They're crooks. We'll continue to follow them. I know they'll break soon." *But what if they don't. What if they ended up keeping the now million plus dollars?* Charity placed both her palms to the side of her head to ward off its impending explosion. "They didn't *earn it!*" she crowed, unable to contain herself. "They didn't *earn it!*"

Dixie grumbled in her sleep as the words filtered into her foggy brain. She was in a Peanuts cartoon. Piano music was blaring in the background and Snoopy, who was wearing her old high school softball team uniform—bottoms only—was dancing a jig on the great pumpkin. She was Peppermint Patty, only cuter. And Delilah was Lucy...with spectacular cleavage. God, she'd always had a thing for Lucy, who kept insisting that she needed to peek under her skirt. For medical purposes, of course. And then, when Dixie would happily let her (she never could resist Delilah, no matter what her incarnation) Lucy would demand payment of five cents and yank Linus' piano (their makeshift examination table) out from underneath her.

But where the hell was Woodstock? How odd.

In the distance, Dixie/Peppermint Patty heard an adult cackling. Someone whose voice she didn't want to hear. WAH WAH WAH WAHHHH *BURN IT*. WAH WAH WAH WAHHHH *BURN IT*.

And suddenly Dixie knew exactly what she had to do.

CHAPTER THREE

*If at First You Don't Succeed,
Why Not Quit and Hope That No One is
Paying Attention?*

DELILAH AND DIXIE woke up the next morning feeling horrible, but neither woman knew what torture really was until they opened their eyes. On the wall across from their bed was the Pepsi poster. Halle Barry's head had been cut off and pasted onto Barry Bostwick's body and vice versa. Hallie Eisenberg's remained *exactly the same*.

There could be only one explanation. The blood in both women's veins ran cold.

Beelzebub...

It had been two days since their stay at Caesar's Palace and they hadn't spent any of their million dollars and even worse, neither woman could bring herself to drink Pepsi again. Would their torture never end?

Dixie had been slowly going insane. She knew what she had to do, but actually doing something, or more to the point, undoing something that had taken her ten years, was killing her. That evening, after CSI was over and the women were nearly asleep, Dixie had to talk about it. Like a taco eaten from one of the street vendors in Tijuana, it was killing her and *had* to come out. Somehow. So Dixie bared her soul.

"Lucy?"

Dixie nodded mutely. She didn't think she'd mentioned the cartoon's character's enhanced bosom. Some things were just meant to be kept private.

"Are you sure?"

"Very."

"Where was Woodstock?"

"For the love of Mike, I don't know!" Dixie buried her face in her hands, tears of anguish in her eyes. "I've been trying to figure that part out. But I just can't!"

"Hmmm..."

Dixie grabbed Delilah's hand and gave it an affectionate squeeze.

"Dixie, honey, I think we'd better do what your dream said." Her face took on a grave expression. "I want this to be over."

They'd both been so consumed with getting rid of the money, and now with the fact that they were both rich but couldn't spend it, that they hadn't even figured out how they were going to go through life without conning. It was all they knew.

Dixie sniffed. She didn't like it but Delilah was right. She took a deep breath and let it out slowly, already feeling better over having made the decision once and for all.

"Tomorrow morning, we'll burn it all. One million dollars and change will go up in flames."

Bruce, who had been eavesdropping with his listening device, started to choke on his own tongue. "Holy shit! I've got to tell Charity." He stumbled out of his hiding place in the bushes, falling several times because his left leg was asleep from being in the same crouched position for so long. But it had been worth it. *CSI* night *rocked*! Who knew Dixie and Delilah could both pretend to be Marg Helgwhatever and still make it work? Why didn't those two acknowledge their true talents and do porn. He knew his VISA-- okay Charity's VISA that she sometimes let him use--would be ready.

Delilah and Dixie stared down into their wicker wastepaper basket with haunted eyes. They were standing outside in front of their trailer. The sky was a clear, pristine blue and a gentle, cool breeze was blowing in from the north. The newly risen sun painted the desert in spectacular colors.

It was beautiful.

"Dix?"

"Yeah?"

"Too bad this is the worst fucking day of our entire lives. And I'm including the day your Great Uncle Herbert asked me to file his bunions and you made me do it."

"Yeah," Dixie sighed. She glanced back down into the wicker wastepaper basket.

"Shouldn't we say something? Like, to mark the occasion?"

Delilah considered that. She had been known to move people with sermons so eloquent that they left her service with empty pockets, wet cheeks, and happy hearts. *Morons*.

"Nope."

Dixie nodded. "You or me?" Who would actually light the flames had been a bone of contention between them all morning. Though Delilah truly wanted this to be over, she thought that since Dixie had had the dream, she should be the one to do the honors.

Dixie, on the other hand, had offered Delilah three weeks of sex where the taller woman got to go first every single time; three automatic 'I-forgive-you's' so that Delilah could piss her off with impunity and not be forced to sleep in the pickup truck; no buying light beer (only REAL beer) for an entire month; and a partridge in a pear tree.

How could Delilah refuse that? Blue eyes narrowed. Oh, Dixie was a shrewd one and she knew it. *What a woman!* Delilah held out her hand and Dixie sighed in relief as she passed over their lighter.

Delilah crouched down and flicked the lighter. Nothing happened. She flicked it again. Still nothing. Then was a barrage of furious curse words and flicks, but not a single spark. "For Pete's sake, Della." Dixie grabbed the lighter. "You can forget about that real beer." A scowl met her words.

Dixie crouched down next to Delilah, who leaned over and gave her a kiss on the cheek. "Thank you for caring about our future enough to see that we had a nest egg, Dix. I love you."

Dixie's chest felt tight and she leaned forward and pressed a tender kiss on Delilah's lips, humming lightly into the sweet contact. "I love you too, Della. With all my heart. Thanks for being strong enough to make sure that we end up someplace... well, just that we'll be together."

Bruce, who was hiding in the bushes, swooned. God, how he wanted to be a lesbian! Charity, who was sitting next to Bruce, flipped over on her back with her feet in the air as though she was roadkill. This was just too gross for her to take. What did those two sickos think this was? An icky romance? *Ack. Phft. Ack.* She shivered.

Deep down Charity hadn't believed either one of the women would burn up the money, not after they'd tasted the good life in the High Roller's Suite at Caesar's Palace. Then she saw Delilah flick the lighter. Demented brown eyes went round. Were they really going to do it? *Oh. My. God.* They were going to burn the money. That was just wrong, especially when there had to be a way for Charity to get her hands on it. A few bucks was one thing, this would make her *rich*. She had to stop them!

Charity sat up to see Dixie frantically flicking the lighter. Finally the blonde woman could take no more and she threw the lighter into the bushes with startling strength. The small missile hit Bruce squarely between the eyes and Charity had to clamp her hand over his mouth to keep him from screaming out.

"Della," Dixie sobbed. "Why won't anything work? I... don't understand."

Delilah's jaw tensed. "We're being tested."

"Oh, no! I cheated on all my high school exams."

Delilah's face fell. "Me too."

"Now what?"

"I for one am sick of this bullshit. I'm going to find the first incendiary device I can and burn the cash from hell. Are you with me?"

Dixie nodded furiously and wiped her eyes. She headed for their pickup truck while Delilah stuck the wastepaper basket inside the trailer. If they couldn't have the money, there was no way in hell she was going to let the vultures have it. Okay, there were no vultures in Nevada, but Delilah didn't like leaving any loose ends. She was just that way. Anal. But loveable.

When the pickup drove away, Charity and Bruce came out of hiding. "The money is mine...er, ours," Charity thrilled. She did a little happy dance in front of the trailer, already thinking of what she'd buy. Then she tried to open the door to the Spam Can but found it locked. *Damn that Delilah!*

Bruce stood by watching and rubbing his sore forehead. He reached up to scratch his head and once again was reminded of his horrific hairdo. It was the last straw. Bruce, who was more mouse than man, finally snapped. "Out of my way, Charity."

"What—"

Bruce grabbed her by her shirt and jerked her towards him. "I *said* OUT OF MY WAY."

Charity's eyes went impossibly wide, and something much farther south on her anatomy gave a little twitch. She'd never seen Bruce as... well, forceful.

"We can't get in the trailer. I didn't bring along the spare set of keys I used when I broke in and set up the projection equipment. And we only have a few minutes before Delilah and Dixie are back. They'll most likely go to the convenience store down the road."

"Sooooo?" Charity asked, intrigued at what Bruce had in mind despite herself.

"So," a determined glint showed in his eyes, "I'm getting my balls back."

"I thought I left those in my other purse."

Bruce nodded slowly. "So did I. But I was wrong."

Charity purred like a cat lapping up milk. She couldn't help it. This was getting good.

Without another word, Bruce marched over to his Pinto and took out the enormous gas can that he always kept in the trunk, just in case the Pinto wouldn't totally combust on its own if it was rear-ended—and not the kind of 'rear-ended' he'd get in the mental ward if Charity had him committed. He'd figured that out the day before and decided life with Charity, at least on her terms, wasn't really worth living. *Time to change that.*

He began dousing the Spam Can with gasoline.

"OH MY GOD! You've lost your mind." Charity tried to stop him but couldn't.

This time it was Bruce who laughed insanely. "I'm ending this little chapter of our lives, Charity. One way or another this is all going to be over!" He continued to slosh gas everywhere he could.

"No. No! You can't. The money is inside."

"And we can't get to it!" he barked, stopping long enough to glare into his wife's eyes.

For one brief and shining second, Charity saw in Bruce a kindred spirit she didn't even know she had. She sucked in a shocked breath.

"Now, we're not going to let *them* have the money are we?"

"Not in this lifetime," Charity vowed sincerely.

Bruce threaded his fingers through Charity's wild blonde locks and crushed his mouth to hers. When he pulled away, Charity said the words he'd always longed to hear.

"You. Me. Tonight. A sack of Oreos. And a whole lot of naked."

"YES!" Bruce threw his head back and howled.

"I'll get the lighter."

Charity sprinted for her car, not hearing two other cars make their way to the trailer and stop.

A police car had followed Delilah and Dixie home. The cop had gotten the call that a cute blonde had lifted a pack of chewing gum from the gas station. It *could* have simply been a mistake and she'd forgotten to pay for it along with her other purchases, so instead of starting a high-speed chase, he'd followed them home at a leisurely pace.

When they turned down the dirt road, he watched as a crazy, dark-haired man doused a trailer in what appeared to be gasoline, while the crazy blond tried to stop him. He hit the gas and sped past the truck carrying the gum-snitching, low-life criminals, who were, of course, presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law. "Yeaaaaaaaaaaaaah, right," he snorted.

Skidding to a halt, his cruiser kicked up a huge cloud of dust. He jumped out of the car, drew his pistol, and yelled, "*Freeze, dirtbags!*" at the top of his lungs. He'd wanted to do that every since he saw Dennis Franz do it on 'NYPD Blue.'

At exactly the same second the cop emerged from his car unseen by Charity who was currently in the midst of a maniacal haze, she called to Bruce, "Let's torch this baby!"

She flicked on her lighter then heard the police officer cock his gun. "Uh oh," she squeaked.

Bruce froze. *Is prison co-ed?*

Delilah and Dixie's truck slowly came to a stop behind the cruiser. They climbed out hesitantly, clueless as to what was going on. Then Dixie got a good look at the participants, put two and two together, and saw red. "What the *fuck* are you two doing here?" It had been ages since she'd laid eyes on these two.

Delilah crossed her arms over her chest in a pose of pure defiance. If they came near her CSI tapes or Bionic Woman lunch box, those two were dead meat.

Charity sneered at Dixie. "Wouldn't you like to know."

"Drop the lighter!" The cop stepped out from behind the door, still pointing his gun at Charity. He called for backup. Here was a woman with a lighter and a scared shitless, unarmed man. This required no less than 23 cops. Lucky for the man he didn't have a handkerchief, spoon, flower or other obviously deadly weapon, then he'd have to call at *least* another 10 cops on top of the 23. *This could turn explosive*, he thought, then smiled at his own pun. He'd have to remember to tell the guys about that one.

The situation was so tense that the cop saw the dark-haired man's face turn three shades of green. His smile grew. Now *this* is what being a cop was all about. Not writing parking tickets and helping old ladies across the street. Leave that shit to the Boy Scouts. "I said drop the lighter you Medusa-haired, *freak!*"

Charity looked over to Bruce, whose Mohawk was blowing gently in the breeze. "He must be talking to you, dear."

Bruce growled at his wife and set the gas can down.

Dixie charged forward. "You were trying to burn down our trailer! You assholes!"

"Two-bit assholes," Delilah added darkly.

Charity threw her head back and screamed. She'd seen 'Bonnie and Clyde,' 'Thelma and Louise,' and 'Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.' Pusses, the lot of them. She was going down in a *real* blaze of glory and so was everyone else. She dove for the trailer, arm outstretched, lit lighter in hand.

Delilah charged past Dixie. I mean, how fast can short people *really* move? She tackled Charity and the two women began to scratch and claw like two gay dwarf brothers from Kentucky on the 'Jerry Springer Show,' each pissed that the other was sleeping with his boyfriend/other brother. It was nasty.

The cop watched slack-jawed as the tall brunette yanked the clearly crazy woman back from the trailer and slammed her still-laughing face against the aluminum wall, knocking her unconscious.

"That's it, baby! Kick her ass! Man, you are *so* getting laid tonight!" Dixie squealed and clapped her hands. Nothing got her horny like Delilah going all Xena on some idiot. *Do the war cry and I'll orgasm right this second, baby. I know it!*

Bruce and the cop both just stared.

Panting, Delilah stood up straight. She dusted off her hands, then really got a good look at Bruce. He looked so different than the last time she'd seen him. The light bulb went off in her head. "You were our waitress at Caesar's Palace." It wasn't a question. "You brought us the sex food and booze." She smirked. "You make a really ugly woman, you know."

"Yeah, well...I Umm...." He looked down at Charity and pointed. "It was *her* fault. She controlled me with my addiction." Would the State of Nevada treat Oreos the same way it did crack cocaine? He could only pray so.

The cop carefully approached Bruce and cuffed him. Then Bruce started raving about being God and saying that the woman on the ground was God's bitch. The cop just shook his head. He'd seen this happen more than once in Las Vegas. People just snapped for no

apparent reason. Well, other than the incessant, debilitating heat, rude tourists, constant water shortages, corrupt casinos, and cutthroat government. But hey, it was still better than California.

After leading Bruce to the car, the cop managed to lift Charity up and set her next to her husband in the cruiser. Then he turned to Dixie and Delilah. "You ladies okay?"

Just then Charity came to. "It almost worked," she screamed, the last shreds of her sanity flying out the window. "Almost!" Her wild laughter was cut off by Bruce who head-butted her, knocking them both unconscious.

The cop sighed happily, marking this down as a good day. They hadn't urinated in the back of his car—at least that he could tell.

Dixie and Delilah looked at each other. Delilah closed her eyes. "Holy fucking, CHRIST! Tell me you don't recognize that voice, Dixie. Tell me that wasn't God's wife." Here in this setting, the voice seemed unmistakable. How could she not have recognized it before?

Uh oh. "That's not God's wife." Oh, shit. Yes, it is. Arghhhhhh!!! She stalked over to the back of the cruiser and peered through the glass. "That's just one crazy bitch on her way to the pokey. You should be very popular in prison, Charity. Inmates just love women with big mouths."

It is God's wife. It is God's wife, Delilah chanted mentally as Dixie sheepishly handed over the pack of gum to the police officer, and swore to watch 'Cops' and 'America's Most Wanted' every week for a year as part of her rehabilitative therapy.

The cruiser pulled away.

Delilah made a face. "They tricked us. People barely smart enough to pull their pants down before they go to the bathroom tricked *us*. We were *conned*," she hissed. "I can't believe it." Disgusted, she sat down on a large rock and stared at the Spam Can.

"Hey, Della, think about it this way." Dixie moved behind her lover and rubbed her shoulders. "We get to keep the money. A million bucks. That's bound to buy a bunch of drinks on a white, sandy beach somewhere."

Delilah sprang to her feet. "You're right! We're rich, we're rich." She and Dixie jumped up and down like high school cheerleaders. Though neither one had actually *been* a cheerleader, they'd both watched all those jigging breasts so intently they felt they could relate to their respective squads on a deeper level than most people.

The taller woman pulled Dixie into a bear hug, lifting her right off the ground.

Then there was blinding flash of light and an explosion so loud it blew both women off their feet. A mushroom cloud ascended over Nevada.

Dixie coughed and rolled over, tumbling out of a bush. She'd done that hundreds of times, but this was the first time it had happened with Delilah ten feet away. Her t-shirt was smoking and her face was covered with ash. She could hear Delilah hacking up a lung and knew, without looking, that she was okay.

The blonde woman watched in abject horror as the trailer proceeded to burn to the ground. "No, no, no, no, no!" she cried, falling face first into the dirt, kicking and screaming like a small child, not caring one bit that she was getting dirt in her mouth.

Delilah, too, stared at the Spam Can. Well, the melted puddle that *used* to be the Spam Can. "My CSI tapes," she whispered in disbelief. "Mother of God!" She gazed towards where the heavens were supposed to be. Then she looked straight down, her eyes boring into the earth. "What have I done to deserve this?"

She wasn't surprised when there was no answer. "Chicken," Delilah grumbled. She glanced at Dixie, who was still making out with the sand. Not that she could blame her.

The wind suddenly shifted and the smoke cleared and Delilah could see something sitting in the middle of their ruined home. "No," she whispered. "It can't be." As if in a trance she started walking towards the trailer, heedless of the small flames and the smoke billowing from the debris all around her.

"Damn! Damn! Damn!" Dixie beat her fist against the ground and then looked up to see Delilah moving dangerously close to the ruins. "No!" She jumped to her feet then promptly tripped over what used to be their toilet. But she managed to grab her partner by the belt loops and hang on with her all her might. "No, honey it's not that bad. We'll make it!" Delilah continued to walk, dragging Dixie.

"Don't go in there! I love you, Della; it's only money!" She started to bawl.

Dixie's hysterical sobs snapped Delilah out of her daze, but that didn't mean she was going to keep her from checking out what she'd seen. "Let me go, Dixie!" When Dixie wouldn't, Delilah reached down and scooped her up, grunting from the effort. "Uff... Holy shitoli, Dix. How the hell much to you weigh, anyway?"

"Della, please!" Dixie was about to start begging again when Delilah let go with one arm just long enough to point to an object in what was the center of their trailer. "You don't think? Oh, Della, honey, it just couldn't have." *Could it?*

Delilah finally toppled from Dixie's weight, barely managing to keep from landing on Dixie's blow dryer and their jar of gold teeth. She made a mental note to pick that last item up later. "Ufff... Dammit." Her butt hit the ground with a resounding thud, and then a split second later, Dixie's butt landed with another resounding thud. Delilah lay on the ground, arms spread out, staring into the clear blue sky. "That was lightning, Dix. Out of nowhere it came down and hit the Spam Can." She threw her arms over her face and started to laugh. Then the laughter grew to the point where she couldn't stop it and tears began streaming down her cheeks.

Dixie's mouth dropped open. She'd seen Delilah happy, sad, angry, quiet, hungry, and a million other things, but she'd never seen her completely hysterical. Wet and wearing an electric-blue thong bikini, by the way, was her favorite, if she was forced to choose.

Dixie rolled over next to her partner. "Now if that wasn't a sign from God, I don't know what was. It's time to stop conning, Della. It's time to retire." She glanced back at the wicker basket, still *totally intact* with unburned bills waving from the top, begging her to come get them. It was the only thing larger than a playing card for several yards around the basket.

The smaller woman got up and carefully, stepped into the rubble, grabbed the basket and dashed out. When she got back to Delilah, she looked down and, with a huge smile on her face, sprinkled a few hundred-dollar bills over her partner. "Della.... Dixie to Dellaaaaaaaaa." Her nose wrinkled in delight. "How does a Piña Colada in...Tahiti sound to you?"

Delilah's eyes popped open. "It wasn't a dream?" Dixie wouldn't tease about something like this, would she? She sniffed. "You mean we're still rich? And..." Another sniff. "What about my CSI tapes?"

Dixie dropped to her knees next to Delilah. "It wasn't a dream, baby. We're still rich, but..." this was the hard part, "the CSI tapes didn't make it." She leaned over and kissed her. "But if you're really good, we can hire Marg What'shername to come sing 'Happy Birthday.'"

"It's not my birthday."

"Whatever."

Delilah sat up. She plucked a bill from her chest and kissed Ben Franklin right on the mouth. "I can't believe it." Shocked eyes shifted to Dixie's face. "We've lived rotten,

despicable lives. We've cheated and lied our way across the country and now we're filthy, stinking rich! It's the American Dream come true!" She kissed Dixie hard, their lips smacking loudly when she separated. "And we're not paying any stinking taxes on this either."

"We're becoming Republicans?"

"No. We're escaping."

"Let's find someplace warm with women in skimpy bikinis to stare at while we consume fruity drinks with silly paper umbrellas, and make love until we can't walk."

"Deal." Delilah lay back down, taking Dixie with her.

Twin sighs of happiness rang out in the Nevada desert.

Delilah took another sip of her fruity tropical drink. She and Dixie were in comfortable lounge chairs, wearing bikinis—hers electric blue as per Dixie's request—and enormous smiles.

The pool boy came around with their bill. "Could you sign this, ma'am?"

Delilah nodded.

"Thank you, Ms. Smith." The young, tanned native glanced at Dixie. "And thank you to you, Ms. Jones." He wished they'd stay at the resort forever. "You ladies give very good tips." He smiled unrepentantly.

"Thanks," Dixie said, "we aim to please. C'mon, honey," she told Delilah, "let's go back to our suite." She leered openly at her lover. "I'm in the mood to do some more pleasing."

Delilah, never one to give up a chance at getting good and pleased, bowlegged pleased if possible, hesitated. "Dix, I want to talk to you about something first." This had been on her mind for weeks.

"Yeah?" Dixie felt a little nervous. Normally Delilah would have her naked by now; something was up.

"A while back you mentioned that chick from 'Fire and Brimstone.'" Delilah braced herself for Dixie's explosion.

It never came.

"I was under a lot of stress, Della. I guess what you did then really doesn't matter now. I got you. *She can rot in hell.*"

Delilah suddenly found a tiny spot of dirt on the lounge chair extremely interesting. "I don't expect you to believe me or anything, I mean, this was before we were really serious about each other and well..." She stopped, a little tongue-tied. And that only ever happened around the pretty blonde who'd stolen her heart from the very first day, no matter what she said otherwise. "But... um... nothing happened between us."

Dixie blinked. "Nothing? You mean you didn't bang her like a drum like she said you did?" *Broke my heart into a million bits.*

"Nah." Uncharacteristically, Delilah ducked her head. This was harder than she'd expected. "She just said that to make you mad, and I didn't correct her because I was pissed you had jumped to the conclusion I was cheating on you. Sort of." Of course, had Delilah walked in on Dixie with some strange woman's head between her legs, she'd have gone apeshit, killed the home-wrecking bitch who came between her and Dixie, screamed at Dixie till her throat bled, and then jumped off the nearest bridge. And she knew it. Dixie always was stronger than she was.

"Dix, the woman literally threw herself at me. Before I could blink, she was on her knees and you walked in the door. I never touched her and she never even touched me." Delilah winced. "That magic lubricant stuff was just the best I could come up with in a pinch. Now you know why I always write down my sermons *first.*"

Dixie looked down at her drink then back at her partner. *Wow*. "You know what, Della?" Delilah mentally kissed herself good-bye. "You're going to yank my head off and bark down my throat?"

"Nope. I believe you." She smiled a smile so full of heartfelt affection that she instantly saw it mirrored on Delilah's face. "And I love you, too."

"That is *way* better than you barking down my throat." Her attention was suddenly drawn to the pool where a man with what appeared to be an entire brown shag carpet sewn to his back, exited the water. Delilah went pale. "I *still* refuse to go 'straight' though."

Dixie shivered when her line of sight followed Delilah's. "Ewww. Never. But our conning days are over. We'll be good, but never straight."

Delilah waggled her eyebrows at her lover. "This is *us* you're talking about, Dix. How good can we *really* be?"

"True." Dixie glanced up at the balcony of their suite. "How bad do you want to be today?"

"Silly question." Delilah lifted her glass. "But first a toast. To happy endings for those who don't deserve them."

"To us," Dixie added.

"Okay," Delilah grinned broadly, "To happy endings *and* Della and Dix."

They clinked glasses.

"Alias Smith and Jones." Dixie winked and took Delilah's extended hand. Being good and being bad, just a different kind of bad, was going to be very, very fun.