Mistaken Hero

Retribution Games Book 1

Ella Miles

Free sample: Prologue and Chapter 1

Adult dark mafia romance (18+).

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Prologue

Beckett

I did something terrible, the worst. I can't say it, can't even think it. But it's there in my soul and I'll carry it with me forever.

I stare at the dot on my phone's map as I contemplate my next move. I've been watching her location, thinking of all the twisted, fucked up things I want to do to her. I want to murder her, but I also want to fu—*no, I won't even think that.*

The dot starts moving on my phone. At first, I think she's just moving around at the cabin, but then it starts moving faster and quickly ventures beyond the property.

She's running.

No, she wouldn't run. She cares too much.

That only leaves one possibility—she's been kidnapped.

I run to my car with my phone in hand as my anxiety racks through me. There's more at stake than just her, but for a second, all I think of is her safety. My pulse flies thinking about her getting hurt.

I step on the gas as I chase her, but I'm a good hour behind. I call Caius. He answers on the second ring.

"Someone took Ri!" I yell into the phone.

"What? She's—fuck! We're on it."

I hang up the phone, knowing they can track her as well. They are closer, but as I'm already in my car and Caius has to wake the rest of the guys, I'm not sure who will get to her first.

I watch the dot speed toward the city, and I follow, driving like a fucking maniac. I'm sweating, my hand trembling at the wheel. I can't even play music I'm so focused on getting to her.

"I'm going to make it. I'm going to make it. I'm going to make it," I repeat over and over.

When that doesn't work, I repeat, "She's strong. She's strong. She's strong."

The dot suddenly stops.

I look up the address while I speed down the interstate. They took her to a club. And not just any club—the Phantom Brotherhood's club.

They took her.

They rescinded our deal—*those fuckers.*

I step harder on the gas, going as fast as my car will take me. My mind is racing too, and I end up having to take large gulps of air every few seconds because I forget to breathe.

What seems like hours but is actually only a few minutes later, I make it to the club. I don't know what I'm about to walk into, but I'll do whatever it takes to get her back.

I walk through the club as stealthily as possible, so I can scope the place first before drawing attention. Although that isn't easy to do when you only have one arm, people tend to stare.

I should call the crew and see if they've made it, but when I pull my phone out, I have no reception. I'm not going to waste time going outside to call them, and I'm riled up enough to take down anyone by myself.

I make my way through the main areas and don't find her or any of the Phantom Brotherhood. They must be in a back room.

I head down the hallway when I hear a scream.

It's her.

I can hear it over the booming music—her howl pierces my heart, deflating it like a balloon.

I'm too late. She's been hurt.

I run toward her voice and am led to a locked door. I kick the door down, too impatient to pick the lock. *Their security is shit.*

The sight in front of me rips my heart from my chest.

She's on a pool table naked with four men surrounding her. They are all shirtless, wearing horned masks that make them look like devils or monsters. Most have their dicks out; some have their dicks inside her. *Inside what's mine.*

Except she's not mine. She never will be.

But she's mine to protect.

I see red.

A switch flicks in my brain. I don't think; I just move automatically. The guy that's between her legs—I throw him by the neck and punch him hard in the jaw repeatedly until he's rolling on the floor.

I grab the next one and kick him in the balls. Then a swift kick to the head drops him to his knees.

The third puts up more of a fight, having seen what I've done to his buddies. He gets a punch into my gut, but it barely slows me down before I knock him out.

And then there's just one. He gets all my remaining rage in the form of punches and kicks. If my outrage was patient, I'd pull a gun out, but luckily for him, I'd rather murder him with my fists.

He doubles over, and her screams are the only thing that keeps me from actually killing him.

She's scared to death, lying naked on the table with a blindfold over her eyes. I can't imagine what is going through her head. The monsters didn't even let her see. They took full advantage of her.

As much as I want to stay around and murder these fuckers, I need to get her out of here.

She removes the mask, and we come face to face. I'm still pissed at her. And it's clear from the way her eyes dilate at my sight that she's pissed at me. But we can be pissed later. I need to get her out of here.

I scoop her up in my arm—not an easy task, but I make it work. I'm not going to throw her over my shoulder when she's in this state. I wish I could cover her better as I head out into the hall, but I'm more worried about those rapists waking up and trying to take her.

Unexpectedly she starts fighting me, beating against my chest and flailing around trying to get out of my arm. I don't know if she thinks I was one of the guys hurting her or if she's mentally still back in that room fighting them off.

I duck into the closest room that will provide some safety until she calms down. I run into a private bathroom, kick the door shut, and turn the lock—only then can I breathe a bit.

"It's okay, Princess. You're safe. I've got you. I won't let them hurt you. You're just in shock." I grip her tighter, but she pushes free.

"What are you doing?"

"Saving you," I say.

"Of course you are, Hero. Of course you are." She runs her hands through her hair with a frustrated grin. "I don't know why you decided to save me this time, but you got one little thing wrong."

I frown, my brows pinching together. “What’s that?”

“For once, I didn’t need a hero.”

“What did you need?”

“I needed you to let me save my damn self.”

I cock my head in complete confusion. Somehow I fucked everything up again, but I don’t regret it. From where I was standing, she needed a damn hero. I may hate the nickname she gave me as much as she hates me calling her Princess, but I’m not about to stop saving her now, even if it is a mistake.

Chapter 1

Beckett

“I do,” Odette says, brightly smiling at me with tears in her eyes.

Those two words take my breath away and have me on the verge of tears. I already succumbed to tears earlier when I watched her walk down the aisle toward me in her sheath white lace dress on her father’s arm. I’m the luckiest man in the universe—marrying the woman of my dreams on this perfect spring day in this outdoor Eden.

I’ve been waiting for this day for the last three months, ever since Odette said yes when I proposed on the rooftop of our favorite building looking out over the Chicago skyline. Three months was as long as I was willing to wait when I’ve been waiting my entire life for this moment.

I’ve watched everyone I love get married and have kids. It’s finally my turn.

Now there is nothing left standing between us and our happily ever after except the officiant declaring us husband and wife.

I grip Odette’s hand tighter like if I loosen my grip, she’ll realize her mistake and not marry me after all. Or my real fear—someone will take her from me. A monster will kidnap her, torture her, kill her. When you grew up as I did, it’s a very real fear.

She shakes her head knowingly, thinking I’m ridiculous for ever thinking she doesn’t want to marry me. I don’t know how she could love me—she’s an angel and I’m a sinner. She’s pure and I’m pure darkness. But somehow, she found a way to love me despite my faults.

“I now declare—” the officiant starts to speak, but suddenly a woman shoulders past him and smacks right into our linked hands, pushing us apart.

“What the hell?” I say, furious at the intruder. We were assured by our wedding planner that the courtyard would be private and secure during the ceremony.

The woman doesn’t apologize as she bursts down the aisle, knocking one of the bouquets off the end of a chair. She keeps running frantically as if she’s being chased by a dangerous animal, and if she stops for even a second, the animal will catch her and devour her.

I look behind the officiant trying to figure out where she came from and if we can expect more trespassers. But all the doors to the building are closed. Despite how the woman is acting, no one is chasing after her.

I drag my eyes back to the aisle the woman is continuing down. Her raven-colored hair encompasses most of her petite body, but it doesn't hide the small tear on the back of her white buttoned-down blouse, nor the one on the side of her black leggings.

Something happened to her, something cruel. I thought I had left my past behind me. I thought I was free, but it can't be a coincidence that this woman crashed my wedding, *can it?* Not with my history.

It doesn't take a detective to see this woman must work as a waitress. It explains the outfit and the apron tied around her waist, but not why she's running.

At the last second, she turns around. Her eyes meet mine instantly, ignoring the other hundred people gathered in the courtyard for my wedding.

I expect to see extreme fear in her eyes—terror, maybe. Or at least some anger or rage at what happened to her.

Instead, I see a determination in her large, cat-like eyes that seem to glow with a fierceness I've never seen. She's young, maybe early twenties, but she doesn't carry her youth in her eyes. For a split second, she lets me through her eyes to glimpse what lies beneath—she's an old soul. A tortured one. A dangerous one.

A second later, she turns the corner around the side of the event center and disappears.

I blink rapidly, trying to figure out if I just imagined the interruption entirely when the murmurs of our guests die down almost immediately. Odette once again takes my hand, gripping it with both of hers.

"Well, that will make for a fun memory to tell the kids someday," she jokes.

My eyes race over hers, looking for any sign of distress or annoyance at what just happened, but I find none. Just one of the many reasons why I love her. She doesn't take life too seriously. She's kind and warm and innocent. When she looked at the intruder, she just saw a girl who was a little rude, so she resisted turning into a bridezilla. When I saw the girl, I saw pain, evil, and danger.

I wanted today to be perfect for Odette. She deserves the very best—the wedding day of her dreams.

She notices my concern and strokes my cheek. "Something always goes wrong at weddings. I couldn't have asked for a more perfect day, even with the small interruption. I love you. All I want is to be married to you."

"Shall I continue?" the officiant asks, clearly baffled.

I nod, forcing a smile on my face. There was something odd about that girl, something I'm going to have to explore later, but not now. Now, I need to focus on my wife, on our future. Tomorrow I'll worry about that girl's identity.

"Um…where was I?" the officiant fumbles his note cards.

Odette looks at me with such love in her eyes that it forces me to forget all about the interruption. "You were at the best part, declaring us husband and wife," she says.

I don't wait for him to say it. I dip Odette in my arm and kiss her.

I hear the officiant mumble something about us being husband and wife and kissing the bride, but I don't really hear it. All I hear, feel, and see is her—my wife.

My wife.

My wife.

The kiss warms my entire body, and my mind immediately fills with dirty thoughts of how I'm going to fuck my wife tonight. Odette's face flushes when I break the kiss off, but only after exploring every inch of her mouth with my tongue and making her moan twice.

Our friends and family are hooping and hollering, and I know I let the kiss go on far too long for what's appropriate based on Odette's deep blush. Or maybe she's blushing because she knows what I have planned for her tonight once we get to the penthouse suite I booked.

"No," Odette says as I link our fingers and we start walking down the aisle.

"No, what?" I feign ignorance.

"No, we aren't ditching our wedding reception to go straight to the hotel. My father spent too much money on our wedding to do that."

"I'll write him a check," I wiggle my eyebrows which I know will make her laugh.

She chuckles. "No."

I lean in and kiss her again. I would never deny her the opportunity to celebrate our union with our friends and family, no matter how badly I need her now. My cock is going to be aching all fucking night.

She grabs my tie and yanks my ear to her lips. "But I might be able to be persuaded to a quickie in the bathroom."

I groan and bite the back of my knuckles. "You're trying to kill me."

She knows I won't let our first time as husband and wife be in a dirty bathroom. I want to give her the best of everything, including a magical wedding night with flowers, chocolate-covered strawberries, champagne, the works. A night where I declare my love to her over and over again while I whisper poetic words in her ear. A filthy bathroom won't do.

She knows it, and yet she says it to torture me as if I wouldn't already be thinking about it all night. How could I not when she wears a dress that exposes her entire back and hugs her ass like a vice grip.

A few minutes later, we walk into the ballroom reception. I admit I didn't participate in much of the planning. I don't know what the flowers are called other than 'white.' I don't know about the centerpieces other than they have pops of gold. I don't know about the food, the cake, any of it other than I offered to help pay and plan, but neither she nor her father would hear any of that.

"Ready for our first dance, wifey?" I ask.

"I'm ready for you to hold me against your chest as you whisper dirty words in my ear to make me squirm."

"You know me so well."

Our song starts playing, and I take her hand and spin her so her back is tight against my body.

"Beckett? Did you—?"

"Learn how to dance? You wouldn't let me plan anything else. I thought I could at least learn how to dance in time for the wedding," I whisper in her ear.

Her eyes twinkle with happiness. I know I didn't have to, but seeing how happy she is, I'd learn every waltz, tango, and cha-cha. Hell, I'd learn to do ballet if I thought it would bring a smile to her face.

"Hold on tight, wifey," I say as I twirl us around the dance floor. I have to make a few adjustments to account for only having a left arm, but after the accident, I've learned how to do almost everything with one fully functioning arm and one residual limb. Odette was the first woman I dated who didn't look at me like I wasn't human, like I was broken. She only saw me—the man. A man she could fall in love with, not a man who needed fixing.

I squeeze her tight to my body and lift her off the ground. She squeals with happiness which almost bursts my heart open before I set her feet back down on the ground and continue the dance I learned. Even though Odette didn't learn the dance, she

keeps up flawlessly. She used to dance as a child, and she knows how to read my mind, so it doesn't surprise me at all.

With every spin, my mind flashes with happy memories of us.

* * *

Our adorable meet-cute.

* * *

I step forward in line while staring at my phone. A huge mistake, I realize as burning hot coffee spills all over my hand and phone. I'm already in a foul mood, and this just made it a hundred times worse. I open my mouth to accuse the person who just spilled coffee all over me of not paying attention. An asshole move, I know.

Instead, my jaw drops to the floor when a woman, no, an angel stands in front of me. She has beaming eyes, a gorgeous smile, and waves of blonde curls. Her white sundress still looks flawless on her, even though it's now covered in stains.

I wince when I look up at her, realizing I'm the one who ruined her dress, but all I see is pure joy on her face, and I'm pretty sure a halo around her head—definitely an angel.

"I'm so sorry. I'm an asshole. I was looking at my phone instead of looking where I was going. Can I pay for your dry cleaning?"

She gives me a smug smile. "No."

"No?"

"You can buy me another cup of coffee and talk with me before you persuade me to give you my number."

A shit-eating grin spreads across my face. I think I'm in love.

* * *

We spent hours in that coffee shop ignoring everyone else. She canceled a dinner with her brother, while I failed in killing my target.

The first time I told her I loved her flashes next.

* * *

"Do you want to come up to my apartment?" Odette asks, as I lean back from our kiss.

Hell yes, I want to come up to her apartment. I've wanted nothing else since I picked her up at her classroom. She teaches kindergarten and stayed late turning the room into a winter wonderland for the kids the next day. I haven't been able to keep my eyes off her ass even though her clothes weren't all that tight—a knee-length gray skirt and maroon sweater. She looked gorgeous for our first date without even trying. And if I come up to her apartment, I'm not going to have any control around her.

She laughs, reading my mind. How does she do that?

"Come on." She doesn't take no for an answer.

I follow her up, putting my hand in my pocket to keep from touching her. Stay in control.

She opens the door of her small loft, revealing a living room crammed full of plants, books, and crafts.

"You can come in; I don't bite."

I laugh. It's not you that I'm worried about.

I step into her apartment. She stands on her tiptoes and kisses me. A kiss I feel fucking everywhere. And when she pulls away, I do something worse than fuck her on the first date.

"I love you."

I wait for her reaction. For her to freak out. To kick me out. To say I'm crazy. Instead, she kisses me back. "I can't wait to fall in love with you, too."

* * *

Four months later when she finally said it back.

* * *

I'm balls deep in her. Her body is clenched around me. Her hands are on my shoulders as she bounces up and down on my dick.

"Are you close?"

"So fucking close."

I grab her ponytail, knowing my girl likes it a bit rough just before she comes.

"I love you," she screams.

I stop, not believing she just said that.

“Don’t fucking stop!”

I chuckle and kiss her before I let her come on my cock.

* * *

After we recovered, she said she loved me with tears in her eyes. Every happy moment with her flashes like lightning through my brain. There is too much happiness to process it all.

I fell instantly in love—with her laugh, her brightness, her kindness, her independence. She doesn’t rely on her family for income or a job. She doesn’t need expensive things. She doesn’t live in fear of the danger lurking around every corner. And most of all—she isn’t a princess in need of saving.

Odette Monroe is normal. She lived a perfectly happy life without all the death and loss that existed in my world. And I instantly wanted to be a part of her life.

So that day, I made a choice to give up my life of crime. I stopped working for my half-brother and his wife. I gave up my friends. I gave up my nieces and nephews. I gave up everything to start over again. I found a new job in marketing that pays well enough, I moved into Odette’s tiny loft with her, and I’ve never looked back.

I keep my past and present separate to keep my wife and future family safe. I know how much my brother and his friends struggled and still struggle to keep their families safe. Every day is a fight to keep their enemies away. I don’t want that for my family. Sure, it’s tough rarely seeing them and only under careful secrecy. It was tough not inviting them to the wedding and only seeing my nieces and nephews once or twice a year, but it’s necessary. I’ll do everything I can to keep Odette and my future children, that I plan on having with Odette very soon, safe.

When I started dating Odette, I didn’t think a woman like her, such an angel, could ever love a man like me. A man with blood on his hands. A man who is surely going to hell for all the sins I’ve committed. But on one drunken night after a month of dating, I finally told her the truth. I told her exactly who I am—a criminal, a weapons dealer, a drug dealer, a thief, a torturer, a murderer.

She said it didn’t matter about my past, only about my future. That was the night I knew for sure I was in love with her and that I would do anything for her, including giving everything up. A year later, here I am, married to the most incredibly perfect woman. An angel I can only hope to be as sweet and kind as. A woman I get to love for the rest of my life. I can’t think of a better way to spend it.

My two worlds can't cross. I won't put her or our future family in danger. It means seeing my brother and friends less. It means giving up everything before her, but Odette is worth it. I won't lose her.

Something won't let me forget that girl who interrupted the ceremony, though. An unnerving feeling makes me think danger is closer than I realize.

I shake the feelings off. Old habits die hard. That's all this is. I can't stop seeing danger when there isn't any. So I let the uneasy feelings go, despite my gut saying otherwise.

We step off the elevator on the top floor of our hotel hand in hand. Odette laughs at a stupid joke I made. Her laugh is infectious. It's the most beautiful thing I've ever heard, and her smile the most gorgeous thing I've ever seen. Same goes for her blue eyes, blonde hair, and curves. I love everything about her.

We reach the door of our suite before I stop. There are limitations to only having one arm, but this won't be one of them.

"What are you doing?" she squeals as I wrap my arm under her ass, lifting her into the air. Her legs wrap around my waist while her arms cling to my neck.

"Carrying you into our honeymoon suite." It may not be honeymoon style, but it doesn't matter.

She giggles, slightly tipsy from the champagne we were drinking at the reception.

"You don't have to—"

I kiss her lips. "I want everything to be perfect for you, today and every day."

"Okay," she says, her eyes growing darker as I carry her over the threshold. Her eyes are still on me as we enter the room.

I nod for her to take a look at her surroundings.

Slowly, she peels her eyes off of me and looks around the room. "Oh my god, Beckett, this is too much! You shouldn't have—"

I capture her lips with mine, so she stops saying things about how expensive the room is or that we can't afford it. I want to give her the world. Tonight is nothing compared to what I have planned on our honeymoon. I want to spend every penny I earned through less than moral means on her—my way of making amends to the world for my sins.

She moans against my lips, completely forgetting about the expensive suite.

I've been in control all day. I didn't fuck her in the bathroom even though I knew she would have if I'd asked her. But now that we are alone together, I lose all control. I grind against her as I hold her up. I don't want to fuck her up against the wall. At least, not the first time I fuck her as husband and wife; that will come later.

I carry her to the bedroom, and we fall together onto the bed. We devour each other. Our tongues tangle, our moans sync, our hearts beat as one. We were so made for each other. My hand roams over her body, feeling the mix of fabrics beneath my fingertips. I want to rip the dress from her body, but I'm not sure if she wants to save the dress as a keepsake.

I'm about to ask her when she sits up suddenly.

"Shit, I forgot to take my insulin at dinner."

Odette has type one diabetes, and I know how important it is that she takes her meds on time.

I inwardly curse that I'm going to have to peel myself off her for even a second to go retrieve her bag, but it's for the best. We have all night together. Our flight tomorrow isn't until the afternoon, and I plan on enjoying every second we have together until then.

"It's been less than two hours since we had dinner. You should be good. I'll get them from your bag," I say, climbing off the bed in search of our bags. We ended up having dinner much later than everyone else since Odette couldn't get enough of my new dance skills.

I search the bedroom, closet, and living space, but I don't find our bags. I pick up the phone and dial the front desk, assuming our bags are still with the bellhop, but there's no answer.

I sigh, running my hand through my hair.

I loosen my tie and toss it aside, as well as my tux jacket, knowing what I need to do next.

"I have to go downstairs to get the bags. The front desk isn't picking up. Do you need anything else while I'm down there?"

She leans up on her elbows, staring at me with such heat in her eyes that I almost say fuck it, I'll get her insulin after. But I know that will be a mistake when her blood sugar spikes or drops and we spend the rest of the evening with her sick. I love her too much to hurt her.

So I talk my cock down. *Soon, buddy, real fucking soon.*

“Just for you to hurry back.” Her hand trails down her cleavage.

I gulp as my cock hardens in my pants. There is no way I’m going to be able to walk with this hard-on.

Jesus, she’s making my job difficult.

“Don’t move. Don’t undress. I’ll be right back.”

She laughs at my strained words as I run out of the bedroom. I press the button on the elevator a thousand times like that is somehow going to make it arrive faster. I adjust my cock discreetly, getting my bulge to decrease enough to not make a scene when I arrive in the lobby.

I step on and press the ground floor button repeatedly on the way down, begging the elevator to move faster. The doors open on the second floor, and I immediately hit the closed door button as an elderly man tries to step on. *Sorry, old man, you can take the next one. I have a hot as sin wife lying in my bed waiting for me. You understand.*

After chewing the front desk worker’s ear off for not sending the bags up and not answering the phone when I called, I am promised that the bellhop will be bringing the bags up immediately along with a free bottle of wine.

I jog back to the elevator banks and once again press the button repeatedly.

Come on, come on, come on.

The bell chimes as the elevator doors open.

I move to step on but stop in my tracks.

A woman rushes off, colliding into me.

I grab her shoulder, steadying her.

It’s the same woman from before with the raven hair that interrupted our ceremony.

Our eyes meet.

This time the fear from earlier that I was expecting is there.

But just as I notice her anxiety, she blinks it away like I fucking imagined it. She shudders out of my grasp.

“Excuse me,” she says as she flees.

So strange.

I move to step onto the elevator when I look down at my hand.

It's covered in blood.

What the hell?

I glance at the woman just as she exits through the revolving door. I get one last look at her and realize she's covered in blood.

I squeeze my eyes shut, silently cursing myself for what I'm about to do. I want nothing more than to step onto the elevator and go back to my wife, but something about the woman unnerves me. Whoever is chasing her could be a danger to my new family.

It can't be a coincidence that I saw the woman twice now.

I have to find out who she is and get her to talk to me so I can protect Odette.

It will take twenty minutes at most for me to get her to talk, get her in an ambulance, and call up reinforcements if I need help keeping Odette safe.

Twenty minutes until I'm back with my wife.

I run out the door of the hotel and hope like hell that I don't regret it.

Keep reading

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