

Hera, Love & Revenge/Intro

Intro

"Agent Rivera! ...Hey, Rivera!"

He turned around, glaring at the figure in the doorway. The woman chuckled.

"Oh, someone had a bad night."

"Thirty hours awake in a bloody car with fucking Wright for nothing," he grunted.

"Oh, that explains it," the woman walked over to pat his shoulder. "What can I get you? Coffee?"

"I'm on my second already," he sighed. "That and the cold shower helped... But thanks, Dolores. I just need to finish filing that damn report before twelve or the Chief's going to give me hell."

"I wouldn't sweat it," she scoffed. "Chief's been talking to journalists all morning, he won't remember your report until next week, Love."

"What happened?" He asked with a sigh, stretching his neck. "Gunfight?"

"No, some poor chick committed suicide. Found dead in her hotel room. The case's pretty clear, but she was some b-rate celebrity so we've got all the media covering it."

He frowned, making the woman chuckle.

"You've really been out of the loop eh, hun? It's all over the radio and TV. Look."

She walked over to grab the abandoned remote on one of the desks, and switched channels from a soap opera to the news channel. The headline was large, and the journalists' faces were a bit more stern than usual. The images were showing the front of the Four Seasons Hotel, that fancy place between Park Avenue and Madison Avenue, with a crowd gathered and the dramatic lights of police cars. He frowned. There were dozens of people gathered, and in the middle was indeed their boss, in his uniform, visibly holding an impromptu press conference.

"Look at him," scoffed Dolores. "They dragged him out of bed at one in the morning to handle the journalists. Poor Rodney..."

He scoffed too, grabbing his half-empty cup to chug down the rest of that coffee. If he remembered well, their Chief of Department was supposed to be off today... Bad luck some famous chick had decided otherwise.

Suddenly, the image on the screen changed to a picture with a face on it. A face he had seen before. He didn't even hear his cup fall on the desk, bounce and crash down on the floor. He stared at that face, and the name that was scrolling across the bottom of the screen. He slowly stood, in shock.

"Hey! ...You alright, *Flaco*?"

He didn't answer. No, he hadn't even heard the question. He felt light-headed, his thoughts spinning. No, not her. He hadn't even made the connection. He took the remote off Dolores' hand, turned the sound up. The death had occurred right before midnight, the legists had said. Found in her bathtub by her fiancé half an hour later. No witnesses. They showed the images of some young people, crying out as the body-shaped bag was taken out of the Hotel. A fan in tears was interviewed, still in a complete state of shock. So was he.

"...You alright?" Dolores asked gently. "...Were you a fan of hers or something?"

"...Or something," he muttered.

He suddenly came back to his senses, wiped the tears from the corner of his eyes. He was breathing loudly, as if he had just run a race. His heart had, but it was a... dead end. He was feeling sick to his stomach. He had to be dreaming, right? He hadn't slept in hours, there was no way this nightmare was real.

"Poor girl," sighed Dolores. "What pushed her to do such a thing? Bless her soul, the poor darling. I'm never fond of these celebrities, but she was hella young. Who knows what happens to them when they get so famous so young. Makes more than one crazy..."

"That was... last night?" He muttered.

He had been parked just streets away all that night, waiting for some narco to show up. All this time wasted, while she... He took a deep breath, trying to keep himself from passing out.

"Who's on the case?" He asked.

"There won't be much of a case," Dolores sighed. "It's a suicide, Love. They'll scrape the carpet just to make her fans and the media happy, but there isn't anything to find."

"No."

Suddenly, he saw from across the window panes, the tired face of his boss walking in. He ran, almost bumping into two colleagues, to get to him first.

"Boss! I want the case!"

Their Chief of Department blinked a couple of times, confused.

"Rivera? What case? What are you doing here, shouldn't you be catching a break?"

"The Case of the Four Season Hotel. I want it," he insisted, out of breath.

His Boss hesitated, confused.

"The Starr Suicide? ...Rivera, I don't know what's gotten into you, but there's no case. The Forensics are on it and we already watched three hours' worth of tapes from the hotel. This is just a suicide."

"It's not," he said. "I'm sure it isn't, Boss. Please. Give me that case."

The Chief of Department frowned, and looked down on the coffee stain on his pants. He sighed, and walked past him, heading for his office.

"I don't know what's gotten into you, Rivera. Shouldn't you have your hands full with the Narcos' case?"

"The trail's gone freaking cold, Wright and I have gone nowhere for two weeks. I want this case."

His superior frowned, and sat behind his desk.

"Rick, what is it? I've never seen you like this? You're an excellent detective, you wouldn't take a lost cause like this... There's no one to save. So what is it?"

He couldn't tell him. He remained of stone, and silent.

"...I want this case."

The Chief sighed.

"...Her fiancé confirmed she was extremely depressed. Whatever your reason is... I can't give you a case that does not exist, Rivera. Her family doesn't even seem to care much either. The journalists are my main issue at the moment, and those bastards will bite at the smallest hint we give them that there's more to it. My answer is no."

"It wasn't a suicide," he muttered between his teeth.

"How the hell would you know that!"

Once again, he remained silent. The Chief massaged his heavy eyelids, then looked behind his stubborn subordinate. Luckily, at six in the morning nobody was listening. Only Dolores was standing a bit further, visibly concerned about her colleague. When their eyes met, she shrugged. He went back to the man standing in front of his desk.

"You're so fucking stubborn, Rivera... Let's wait for the Forensics. If there's a case... I'll consider it. Alright? Now get the hell out of my office before I really need to yell at someone."

He nodded. Not satisfied, but it didn't matter much what his Boss said. He wouldn't leave things at that no matter what the forensics said. He stepped out, giving Dolores a vague sign of the hand. He walked out to the coffee machine, just so he could have something else to do. The New York City Police Station was always busy, no matter what time of the day. An old lady in front of him was shouting at the coffee machine for only giving her milk.

He stood next to it, the anger building. Her yelling wasn't helping. She kept shouting, and shouting. He was the one who wanted to shout!

He suddenly punched the machine. Everyone in the station froze, turning their eyes to the frustrated cop. The Coffee Machine made a beep, and the coffee came down.

"Thank you, young man."

He didn't answer that, and moved his back against the wall. He slid down, until his butt hit the ground. He felt like crying, screaming and shouting. Nothing came. Instead, he took out his wallet. Searched between all the crumbled receipts, and found it. A small, old photo. His throat got tight.

She was smiling in it. She had always had that smile that went up to her eyes, and revealed only her front teeth. A new tear came to his eye. He took a deep breath, and took out his phone. He found a number he hadn't used in years. He rang it, and waited a few seconds. Her voice came on after the tone. He listened to it, over and over again, without leaving a message; Her voice was much younger. This number was not in use anymore, but somehow, she had never deleted it. After some long minutes of listening to it, over and over, he wiped his tears again, and looked up another number.

"Hi, Lisa speaking," answered an out-of-breath voice. "Who's this?"

"Liz, it's Rick."

A couple of seconds of silence followed.

"...Rick?"

"It's about June."

"Oh, you've got to be joking." she scoffed bitterly. "Then I don't want to hear it. Whatever she wants now, you can tell her to go f-"

"She's dead, Liz."

"...What?"

"June's dead."

He heard the woman gasp. Another silence followed, and he heard her chuckle nervously.

"...No fucking way. ...P-Please tell me you're joking."

"It happened last night. You'll see it in the news soon," he muttered. "I didn't want you to learn it from TV."

"Wha-... What happened!" She cried. "How-!"

"I don't know. ...But I will."

He took a deep breath.

"I promise," he muttered. "I'll find out what the fuck happened."

Hera, Love & Revenge by Jenny Fox

Chapter 1

Chapter 1

"...Isn't it taking too long, Sir?"

"She'll wake up. Soon. ...Isn't my daughter so pretty already?"

"Yes, yes..."

I hear someone chuckle, a deep voice. After a couple more seconds of struggle, I finally manage to open my eyes. Oh, crap, it's bright...

"Good morning, my Sleeping Beauty."

A silhouette appears above me, blocking the light. I blink a couple of times, trying to distinguish those facial features. A smile like a shark amongst a greyish, perfectly combed beard, and two piercing, ice-cold blue eyes. ...Who's that? I can't help but keep blinking repeatedly, my eyes dry as hell. Where the heck am I? What's going on? I want to move. My body's so damn heavy... What's that weird smell, too? I try to move my head, look around. This place is so... white. All monochrome, white and metal. Sanitized and cold like a hospital. No, wait. It looks like it must be cold, but I don't feel cold at all. Nor hot. Just... neutral. So weird...

I do feel something hard and sturdy underneath me. I'm not on a bed. A table?

"Can you hear us?"

I turn my head, finding another man on my right, seated and staring from behind his glasses. I do hear them. I want to answer, but... my throat hurts! It hurts so much, like it's completely dry, and raspy. I want to talk, but I don't even know how to breathe! I can't feel any air moving through my lungs, my throat... I try to inhale, but it feels empty, like my organs are moving for strictly nothing.

"Answer us," the man insists. "Can you hear us?"

He's wearing a white coat and scrubs? I just nod by reflex.

"I... I-I do."

The air I finally feel seems so strange in my lungs, my throat. My own voice sounds different. Deeper, raspier.

"Good."

"Give me your hand, Dear," gently says the bearded one next to me. "Let's have you sit up first."

I feel his cold hand grabbing mine, and very gently, he helps me sit up. My body feels so heavy, I thought I'd get a bit dizzy or something, but there is none of that. Just some strange... nausea. I try to ignore it and sit up, to finally realize where exactly I am...

"Is this a... mortuary?" I mutter, a bit confused.

I've never been into one, but there's no mistaking it. I've seen enough crime shows for that. Those rows of chrome cupboard doors with numbers on them, and this aseptic, cold hospital atmosphere, without any patients... I look down, and notice I'm sitting on a silver table, like one they put the bodies on. Except that I'm very much awake and alive, and not naked nor covered by just a sheet like I'd imagine a corpse to be. Instead, I'm actually wearing a long-sleeved black dress I've never seen before...

"What the..."

"Seems like you're a quick one," says the guy in the doctor outfit. "Yes, this is a morgue. Your death was pronounced at thirty-four minutes past one this morning, and it's now... ten in the evening."

"My... death? But I'm not..."

"Oh, no, you're dead. According to the humans standard, you were dead the minute your heart stopped beating, although you were formally pronounced dead a few minutes later. But you did die at around one o'clock this morning."

"This makes no sense," I mutter.

The man with the beard next to me has been smiling all this time, staring at me like a proud father looking at his child, which seems incredibly strange given the situation. I don't understand anything that's going on. Not only do I feel... extremely weird, but those two are making it even more uncomfortable. There's a man in a white coat giving me a lecture about my supposed death right now, and another staring at me with... a creepy expression. What the heck is going on?

"How do you feel?" Asks the creepy smiling man..

I realize this guy's got a British accent... Or is it Scottish? His blue eyes look as if he's scanning me. I slowly shake my head.

"Strange," I mutter. "My t-throat hurts like hell, and... I'm feeling somewhat sick. Nauseous. But... who the heck are you people?"

"My name is Richard," says the British man. "Richard Heartgraves."

"Ethan," the guy behind him waves with a bored expression.

Ethan adjusts his round glasses and turns around to grab a paper on his desk, visibly unbothered. He has short curly hair and a two-day beard. I turn my eyes to Richard. I feel such a strange... sensation towards him. As if I know him, like a long-lost parent. Have I met him before? Even if my mind wasn't so fuzzy, I don't think I could remember. No, I wouldn't have forgotten someone with such a strong... aura. I'm attracted to his eyes every time I try to look elsewhere. He dominates the room with that strange... heavy, dark aura around him. It's invisible, but it's impossible to ignore, it's suffocating. I feel like a defenseless child. If he wasn't gently holding my hand, I'd be terrified...

"You're going to feel sick for at least the next forty-eight hours," says Ethan, his eyes still on the paper. "It's just the beginning, but it should subside, though. Eventually. Are you thirsty?"

"...My throat hurts," I groan.

I don't know if it's due to the thirst, but it feels as dry as sandpaper. Ethan moves, and hands me a cup. It looks like... wine? It smells good, and... appealing. Without thinking, I drink, and it's... strangely filling. It tastes vaguely familiar, a bit sweet and salty at the same time. I frown. The smell is... a bit off. Or perhaps because it's new. I drink, I keep drinking. No, I just can't stop myself. I push all my thoughts aside and drink more and more, unable to stop. The liquid's cold, but it's filling and warming me up nicely. It's almost calming, but it's never enough. I want that feeling in my throat. It's the most delicious thing I've ever had... I feel like ten more of those won't be enough... Soon enough though, I reach the end of the cup, the last drop. I feel a bit better, but... unsatisfied. I glare at the empty cup.

"...Good girl."

Richard takes the cup away from me before I can protest. Now that I've drunk a bit, I feel a bit better, but also... even more confused. He's visibly the man in charge, so I turn to him for answers. The nausea's getting worse, but I try to ignore it.

"What's... going on?" I mutter. "What happened?"

"Do you remember?"

He slowly pulls down my sleeve, revealing the blood-stained bandages around my wrists... I shiver. I remember. Vaguely, but I have a feeling. The pain, the loneliness. The rain against the windows, the neon lights from the billboards, and the darkness of my room... The bathtub overflowing. The lukewarm water, and that pain... The one in my chest, deeper and worse than the one dripping down my wrists. ...It's like a nightmare that sticks to my mind. I start breathing heavily, erratically.

"I... I..."

It was no dream. I tried to kill myself. No... I fucking did. I grab my other sleeve, to find the same bandage, the same blood stains on the other side. Ice runs down my spine, making me shiver even more.

"Hera."

Richard suddenly caresses my cheek, forcing me to look into his blue eyes again. He smiles, with a hint of warmth, but more importantly, two visible fangs...

"Calm down, child," he mutters. "You will be alright. This is all over. You're mine now."

"W-what... What did you call me?"

He smiles even more, and I start to feel... sleepy. Why am I sleepy now? So suddenly. My head feels heavy...

"Sleep, my child," he whispers. "You'll feel better when you wake up again."

I have no choice but to obey. My whole self dives into sleep before I can resist it.

I wake up slowly, with no idea where I am, or how long I've slept... I'm not in a proper bed either, but leaning in a comfy leather armchair, a blanket covering me. There's a strange, heavy buzzing in the background. I grimace. I'm still feeling crappy, but it's a bit better... The ache in my throat is gone. I glance at the window next to me. It's night again... But this isn't a window. It's a plane window... and we're above the clouds, too.

"Good evening, darling."

I turn my head. In the seat facing me, Richard Heartgraves, again. He's looking at me with that smile, slowly swirling a glass of wine between his index and thumb.

"...Richard," I mutter. "Where... are we?"

"Somewhere above the Atlantic ocean," he says, glancing outside. "We will land in London in a couple more hours."

"London?" I frown. "Why the hell..."

"Is there a problem?"

I can tell by his smile he knows there's one. I swallow down my protest. I guess I have a few bigger issues than going back to that City for now... I try to remember what happened. It still feels like I'm half in a dream, or in a weird daze. I look down, to notice I'm still wearing the same black dress as before. It looks simple, but I can tell when a piece of fabric is expensive. That kind of lace and embroidered top isn't one you'll buy at any store. I glance around. This is definitely a private jet, too... And while he's not wearing any jewelry but a couple of old rings, Richard's suit looks brand new, and tailored. Perhaps British. There's a cane with a golden pommel by his side, too. The head is a roaring lion...

"...Who are you?" I finally ask. "Why... Why did you..."

I just have so many questions, and about as many wild guesses floating in my head...

"Why did you save me?" I mutter.

"I didn't," he smiles. "I only took you."

I guess that's one way of saying it, but he's obviously avoiding my real meaning... My eyes fall on his glass.

"That wasn't... wine that I drank earlier, was it?"

"No, darling. It was not."

Richard slowly stands up, and goes to the mini bar, grabbing another glass. I didn't realize how tall he was before... It's not only his height. He's imposing. Square, broad shoulders, and a lean physique in his dark grey suit. Despite his greyish hair and beard, it's hard to pinpoint his age. I would guess in his fifties from his looks. In his nineties from the way he spoke. In his twenties, from his sharp eyes... He pours a glass and turns around to hand it to me, but I hesitate. Before, I wasn't in my right mind, but...

"This time, it is wine, Dear," he chuckles. "I promise."

I take it. I could use a sip of that right now, I guess... He sits back facing me.

"...Why are you taking me to London?" I ask the easiest question I can think of.

"Because you're officially dead, and having you appear in New York City would be quite troublesome, at the moment. Your face is all over the media already, Dear."

He suddenly takes out a tablet from the table next to him, handing it to me. I grimace. It's already open onto the front page of a popular news journal, my face and name splattered all over it. Ugh, they had to take one of those horrible pictures from my previous movie promotions... I only need to read the two first lines, but the rest of the article is no news to me. My suicide is the main focus, with big words to make the death of a b-rate celebrity more sensational than it has to be, and a tear-jerker paragraph about my short, pathetic life to grab the readers' attention. Of course, they probably mention my family, too... They wouldn't miss an occasion. I check the date. How quickly did they manage to write this piece of crap that it came out the next day? I nervously comb my hair back, a habit I wish I'd given up.

"So you know who I am..."

"Of course. I didn't pick you randomly. And it's who you were," he says. "You're not June Starr anymore now."

"Then who... What am I?"

"You're a Heartgrave. Hera Heartgrave."

Hera... He called me that earlier. I've got a lot to say, but I'm somewhat... scared. Despite his gentle voice and expression, this man intimidates me to no end. Being alone with him in just one room is... suffocating. The Morgue guy was avoiding even looking in his direction all along earlier too. I force myself to take a breath, and drink a sip of wine while I think about what to say next. It's definitely wine this time. The taste is... lighter and sweeter than I expected. Almost like I'm merely drinking some juice... No, grape-flavored water. I can't taste the alcohol either.

"...A lot of things will taste, smell, look and feel different from now on," says Richard, as if he'd read my mind. "Don't worry. We will guide you through it."

"We?"

"It's not just me," he smiles. "That's why I'm taking you to London. Home. To your new home... And you do need to meet the rest of the family."

I want to ask, but a new wave of nausea suddenly makes me want to throw up that much too sweet wine. I grimace and turn around. Please don't throw up in a plane... And I certainly don't want to throw up in front of him. I spot a kraft bag right on the side of my seat, and I can't hold it anymore. I throw up, all my dignity gone in loud and ugly sounds. Shit... It's like my stomach's trying to tap out. I feel even sicker, but at least, once it's gone, my stomach feels better... I take a couple of seconds to catch my breath, and Richard hands me a handkerchief, as if it was

normal for him to hand me some expensive piece of silk to wipe my dirty mouth with. I take it reluctantly, trying to gather my composure.

“Your current state is normal,” he said. “You’ll be sick for a few more hours. Your body is adjusting to the transformation.”

“Transformation into... what?”

He smiles.

“You already know,” he whispers.

I think I know, but it’s... terrifying to think about. Hell, just a while ago, I was ready to die. I actually did. I died. But now, I’m on a plane, far above the Atlantic and stuck in-between two continents in an expensive private jet with a terrifying, imposing man facing me, and even scarier changes happening to my body... I try to calm down, at least so I won’t throw up again. I glance outside, as if the darkness of a night sky could help me. After a few seconds, I turn back to Richard.

“Did you... make me a vampire?”

He doesn’t answer; but his sinister smile tells me all I need to know.

So it’s true...

***Author Note: Thank you for reading! Hope you’re enticed by the story so far? Please do leave me your reviews in the comments!! <3 And remember to add this to your library so you don’t miss upcoming updates!**