

The thumping bass of Luke's phone ringtone startled him awake. Groping around on his nightstand, he finally grabbed it and answered.

"Yeah, hello?" he mumbled.

"Mr. Morel?"

"Yeah, that's me," he replied groggily.

"This is Bethany from Edward Porticello's office."

"Who?"

"Mr. Porticello. He's handling your case against Doug Byerley."

Luke heaved himself up to a sitting position. "Doug Byerley? Oh, my accident. Sorry. You, ah, caught me off guard."

"That's quite all right, Mr. Morel," Bethany told him. "Mr. Porticello wanted me to let you know that they set a date for the trial. It will be April twenty-fifth, at 10:30 at the Yellowstone Country Courthouse in Billings." She paused. "They want you to testify."

That woke Luke up completely. "Wait, what? Mr. Porticello said there wouldn't be much I could contribute, being nearly dead and all," he replied bitterly.

"I'm sorry. Mr. Byerley's attorney has requested it. He said if you cannot make it, they will be forced to subpoena you. Mr. Porticello assured him you would be there."

He sighed. "Terrific. I guess I have no choice."

"Again, I'm sorry for the short notice. They are hoping you won't come from Los Angeles and the case will be dropped," Bethany said.

Luke shook his head. "That's not going to happen, I'll be there."

"Very good. I'll send you some briefs to read through before you get here. Mr. Porticello will want to see you before the trial to go over a few things. I'll be in touch as the date gets closer."

"Great, thanks. I guess I'll see you in a couple weeks," Luke told her.

"You're welcome, Mr. Morel," she replied. "Have a nice day."

Luke scowled as he hung up the phone. "Too late for that," he said, flopping back down on the bed. "Great news before I've even had a damn cup of coffee."

"Hi, Wuke!"

Luke was startled a second time and bolted upright. Spying Joshua at the end of the bed he sighed, then grinned. "Hey there, champ."

"Wom is hungwy. I is too," the little boy told him. Rommel's head also appeared and he added a "Woof!" to the conversation.

Luke laughed. "Well, I can't let you two starve now can I. Let's find some breakfast, then how about we go build sandcastles on the beach?"

"Yay!! Sandcastles!!" Josh jumped up and down making Luke laugh again.

"Want pancakes?"

"Yes! Pwease!" The little boy rushed from the room.

Rommel looked up at his master. Luke nodded. "Go on." The dog sped out of the room after Josh. Luke shook his head and got up, pulling a pair of shorts and a shirt on. "Time to turn this day around."