

Excerpt

"I hired a couple of guys to handle the bar and the kitchen," Pearl commented as she picked up a tray of clean glasses from under the counter.

Dismay flashed across Tina's face. "Did you interview them first?" she asked with a frown, setting Ruby down on the floor when she started to wiggle. "Did you get a background check on them? Drug test? Anything, before you gave them the job?"

Pearl flashed a grin over her shoulder as she pushed the door to the back kitchen opened. "Of course not, that is what I have my accountant for," she chuckled before the swinging door closed behind her.

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"Accountants are supposed to handle finances, not human resource," Tina grumbled before she dropped her head and laid her forehead on her folded arms that were lying on the bar. A low groan escaped her. Pearl was dynamite at running the bar, but she had about a fifty-fifty rate of picking the right employees.

"Make that ten percent okay and ninety percent totally awful," Tina groaned under her breath.

The sound of the door opening behind her forced her to raise her head. Turning on the stool, her eyes widened when she saw the silhouette of two large men in the doorway. The sun pouring in behind them cast a dark shadow over their features. They were both too muscular to be Craig, who weighed in at over three hundred and fifty pounds, and was more of a round, cuddly teddy bear than a lithe tiger.

Dismay coursed through her when the men stepped into the bar and the door closed behind them. With the blinding light cut off, she could finally see them clearer. Her eyes locked with the man standing in the front. His dark brown eyes had hints of gold in them. Tina resisted the urge to roll her eyes when she saw the slightly elongated pupils. All he needed was to have a tail coming out of his ass to complete his costume.

Her eyes swept down his tall frame covered in as much black leather as her grandmother. Her gaze finally returned to his face and she released an inelegant snort as she slid off the bar stool. The frustration of the last week snapped at this final straw.

"Great!" Tina growled under her breath. "Pearl has hired a couple of male strippers this time. So much for all my efforts to pull *The White Pearl* up into a classier joint."

"Pearl!" Tina snapped as she glared in distaste at the man staring at her with wide, almost shocked, deer-in-the-headlight eyes. "The guys you hired are here. I've got work to do. You handle them. Come on, Ruby, we've got work to do."

She didn't bother to turn when she heard the swinging door opened as Pearl walked back into the main part of the bar. Instead, she focused on retreating to the office located down the hall. Pausing long enough to make sure she didn't slam the door on Ruby, she snapped the door to her office close with a resounding thump before she

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turned and clutched her fists into a ball. Leaning back against the door, she emitted a small scream before counting to ten.