

preview

A Cry for Justice

Chapter 1

I picked up on the third ring, walked out the back door to the veranda, set my scotch on the table and leaned back in my lounge chair.

“This is Justice.”

“Ahh, the Head Vigilante. How are you, Frank?”

My skin began to crawl at the sound of her voice, but I tried to be nonchalant as I answered.

“Well, well! I had hoped you ended up mangled on the I-70, or floating down the Mississippi, belly up, Luchia.”

“Oh, Frank! You are so kind! You left out being disemboweled and skinned alive!”

“All in good time,” I replied calmly, holding my scotch to my lips. “You called because?” I drained the glass with one swallow as I listened to this viper of a human trafficker begin her spiel.

“Being the equitable adversary that I am, Frank, I want to advise you that my field trip is over. I’m on my way back to Arizona to continue my

business. Last year I merchandised in excess of three thousand, shall we say, *items*. My South American sources tell me they can provide all I can deliver, so I expect to double my revenue this year. I'm willing to share with you, Frank, so I repeat last year's offer to you and your little family. Join me, Frank, otherwise I'll destroy you. Simple as that."

"Listen, Luchia," I began, but she interrupted with,

"Don't answer now, Frank. Think about it." and hung up before I could get the words out.

I sat staring at the empty glass in my left hand, phone in the right, wondering which one to smash, then decided I needed both, so I walked

back inside, called Ramona at the museum, while I poured myself another two fingers of scotch.

"Just closing up, my love. Be home in half. You need me to pick up anything?"

"No. Just wanted to hear your voice," I said, taking a sip of scotch. "Frank! What's up? Are you okay?"

"I'm fine, Sweetheart. I called to make sure you're okay. Just got a call from our favorite human trafficker. She tells me her vacation is over. We'll talk when you get home. Drive safe!"

"I will! And don't drink all the scotch, Cowboy!"

Chapter 2

Let me bring you up to speed: my name is Frank Justice. I'm a veteran cop living on a 160 acre ranch in Elgin--a rural, wine growing community east of Nogales in southern Arizona. I have a ranch hand, Jack, who moved in with me close to ten years ago.

Next came Skyler, or Skye for short, my faithful German shepherd; right behind him came Julie, Jack's lady. They were married in the back garden, with Skye and twenty Harco chickens as witnesses. (Of course, Pastor Jones brought his wife). Julie named the acreage *Thistledew* when she first laid eyes on it more than four years ago.

Then, of course, the latest to arrive: Ramona, my wife of recent months...well, four months and three days. Before she became my wife, Ramona was--and still is--my partner in a covert team set up by Arizona Governor Randolph.

Randolf, along with some other "Border Governors" was frustrated with the efforts of the Feds and determined to battle the cartels privately. As such, these governors, using lieutenants such as Ramona, sleuthed out and enlisted like-minded citizens to become team members. I am an enlistee--one of Ramona's. She wasted no time in branding me *Cowboy*, I wasted no time in falling in love.

Starting in July we battled and took down a major branch of a Mexican cartel--except for the leader, one Luchia Medina. A few weeks later Luchia sent us threatening letters post- marked from St. Louis. Then for four months--aside from an occasional one or two migrants trying to sneak across the border on my property--nothing...until today.

I won't go into details here as I pretty much documented all of it in an earlier writing, but suffice it to say, we are determined, as a fighting force, to keep the cartels--with their drugs, their human traffickers, their rapists, murderers, and other scum--all of them, below the border. We have picked up a few folks among the Feds sympathetic to our cause who have aided us...discreetly, of course.

Enough mulling over and replaying recent history. I reached for the bottle to top off my glass, then decided, "What the hell!" and with the bottle in one hand, two glasses in the other, I bumped the screen door open with my rump and backed out to the veranda. I set the bottle and glasses on the table, sat back in my lounge and waited for Ramona.

Skye stuck his muzzle under my left elbow and lifted my arm enough to put his whole head between my arm and ribs, then looked up at me with a, "What's going on in that head of yours, Dad?"

I rubbed his head with my knuckles. "Looks like we go back to work, Old Man."