RESURRECTION

A Mount Saga Novella

by Meghan March

Chapter 1

"Memorial tattoos. Seriously? How did you talk me into this? You know I hate needles," Imogen said to Jury as they walked up Canal Street toward the sign that read Voodoo Ink.

"Yeah, well, I'm getting one. Puss out if you want. It's fine."

"You know I'm too old for peer pressure, right?"

"Is anyone ever too old for peer pressure?"

"Yes. Which you would know if you grew up and stopped partying."

Jury reached for the metal door handle separating them from a terrible idea. "Yeah, like our sister dying young is going to convince me to start becoming all serious with my life."

The door chimed, and Imogen sent Jury a look of death. "How about we not be so cavalier about it, okay?"

"What? It happened. It's done. She's gone. The distillery is gone. Life will never be the same. Might as well get some more ink and commemorate her in my own way."

"Can we help you, ladies?"

A pretty young woman with beaded dreadlocks watched them with curiosity from behind the counter while buzzing noises permeated the tattoo shop.

Clearly, she heard that, Imogen thought. Great.

"Hey," Jury said to the girl as she walked forward. "Are you doing walk-ins? Or should I make an appointment?"

Imogen was glad she hadn't said we in regard to the appointment.

Please say no. Please say no.

There was no part of Imogen that wanted anything to do with anything in this place. The only reason she'd semi-agreed was because Jury had said after the funeral that she wanted to do some sisterly bonding.

Like I could've said no, Imogen thought.

They'd just laid Keira to rest. It was simple common sense that she'd be clinging to the only sister she had left.

Imogen noticed a heavily tattooed man with a beard and a baseball cap staring at her over a woman's body lying on a flat table. He held some kind of black gadget in one nitrile-gloved hand and a paper towel in the other.

She looked away to avoid eye contact, but couldn't help but sneak another glance at him.

He was still staring at her. Imogen turned back to the dreadlocked girl who was talking to Jury.

"We do have a guy doing walk-ins today. He's grabbing food, but he'll be back. Everyone else is by appointment only. What are you thinking? Flash?"

"Memorial tattoos for our sister. We just sealed her up yesterday."

"I'm so sorry," the girl said, and her facial expression fell.

It was that look of sympathy that Imogen had gotten used to over the last week or so. It seemed almost the same on everyone.

"Maybe you are, but I'm pissed," Jury said. "Her husband got her and her little girl killed. This is why I'm never falling in love. People do stupid shit, like marry mobsters."

Imogen noticed the buzzing in the shop had completely stopped. She glanced back toward the man in the baseball cap. It wasn't just him staring, but everyone.

"You're the Kilgore sisters," Baseball Cap Guy said.

Oh great, now we are infamous, Imogen thought.

The dreadlocked girl gasped, “No way.”

Imogen felt like she’d just stepped into an oven as her cheeks flamed. “This was a terrible idea, Jur. I’m leaving.” She turned for the door.

“Wait.”

It was him—Imogen knew. Somehow, she’d guessed his voice would be deep and smoky.

Why she stopped, Imogen would never know. She looked back over her shoulder, past Jury’s pissed-off features, to the bearded man who had been staring at her.

“Why?”

“Because I know someone who’s got something for you.”

Chills skittered over Imogen’s arms, and the hairs stood on end.

“Excuse me?” Jury said as she turned to face him and crossed her arms. “Who? What?”

“I’ll be right back,” he said to the lady he was working on. He set his black thingy down, peeled off his gloves, and tossed them in the trash.

As he came toward them, Imogen’s feet were rooted to the floor. Even though she wanted to leave, she couldn’t move. It was like her shoes were encased in concrete.

The man was bigger than she’d realized. And broader too. He was tattooed beyond belief, all bright and colorful images, all the way up his chest and throat and even the sides of his head, where the ink disappeared under his hat.

Whoa.

She’d never seen anyone like him before. Hadn’t known a human could look like that before.

His eyes were greenish-brown, and his arms stretched the sleeves of his T-shirt as he reached for a notepad and pen on the counter by the receptionist.

He scribbled down a phone number with elegant strokes of ink.

He truly must be an artist.

“Call this number. Tell him someone at Voodoo told you to call. Give him your name. He’ll take it from there.”

“Wait, what?” Jury said. “Who are you? Who do you want us to call? Why?”

Imogen couldn’t stop staring at his large, tattooed hands. He even had a mustache inked on the inside of one of his fingers.

He ignored Jury as he ripped the paper off the pad and held it out to Imogen. “Please, just call.”

She blinked, tearing her gaze away from his fascinating hand that held the piece of paper, and lifted her eyes to stare into his.

“Why?” she asked quietly.

He is beautiful. When have I ever thought a man was beautiful?

“I promise you want to make this call. He knew you’d come here.”

“Who?” Jury asked. “This was spur of the moment. No one else knew we were coming but our parents.”

Imogen’s hand seemed to move of its own accord as she took the sheet from him.

“Is this her reaching out from beyond the grave?” The words came out before she knew she would say them, and shivers rippled across her skin once more.

“What are you talking about, Im?”

Imogen ignored her sister and felt herself drowning in his hazel eyes. What is it about him? He is magnetic.

“Kinda like that.”

Another cascade of hair-raising chills had Imogen shuddering.

“I’m totally fucking lost,” Jury said before pausing. “Wait. Wait a minute. Is this about —”

“You should go,” the man said, interrupting Jury. “Call the number. Tell him a guy from Voodoo gave it to you and then give him your name. Got it?”

Imogen’s hands itched to pull out her phone.

“Wait just one damn minute—”

Imogen grabbed Jury by the arm and squeezed. It was the universal sister signal to shut up. “Let’s go.”

“But—”

She tugged on Jury’s arm, still staring at him. “Thank you.”

He shook his head. “Don’t worry about it.”

“But—”

She dragged Jury toward the door. Years of lugging around scuba gear made her stronger than her party-girl sister.

“Fine,” Jury said. “But I’m getting my damn tattoo after.”

Imogen glanced back one more time as Jury shoved the glass door open.

He watched her with a small smile from beneath that baseball cap as he leaned on the counter.

Goodness, he is handsome.

“Later,” he said with a lift of his chin as Imogen clutched the paper in her hand and forced herself to tear her gaze away.

As soon as her feet hit the sidewalk, she could only wonder, What in the world just happened?

With a glance at the phone number, she knew there was only one way to find out.

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