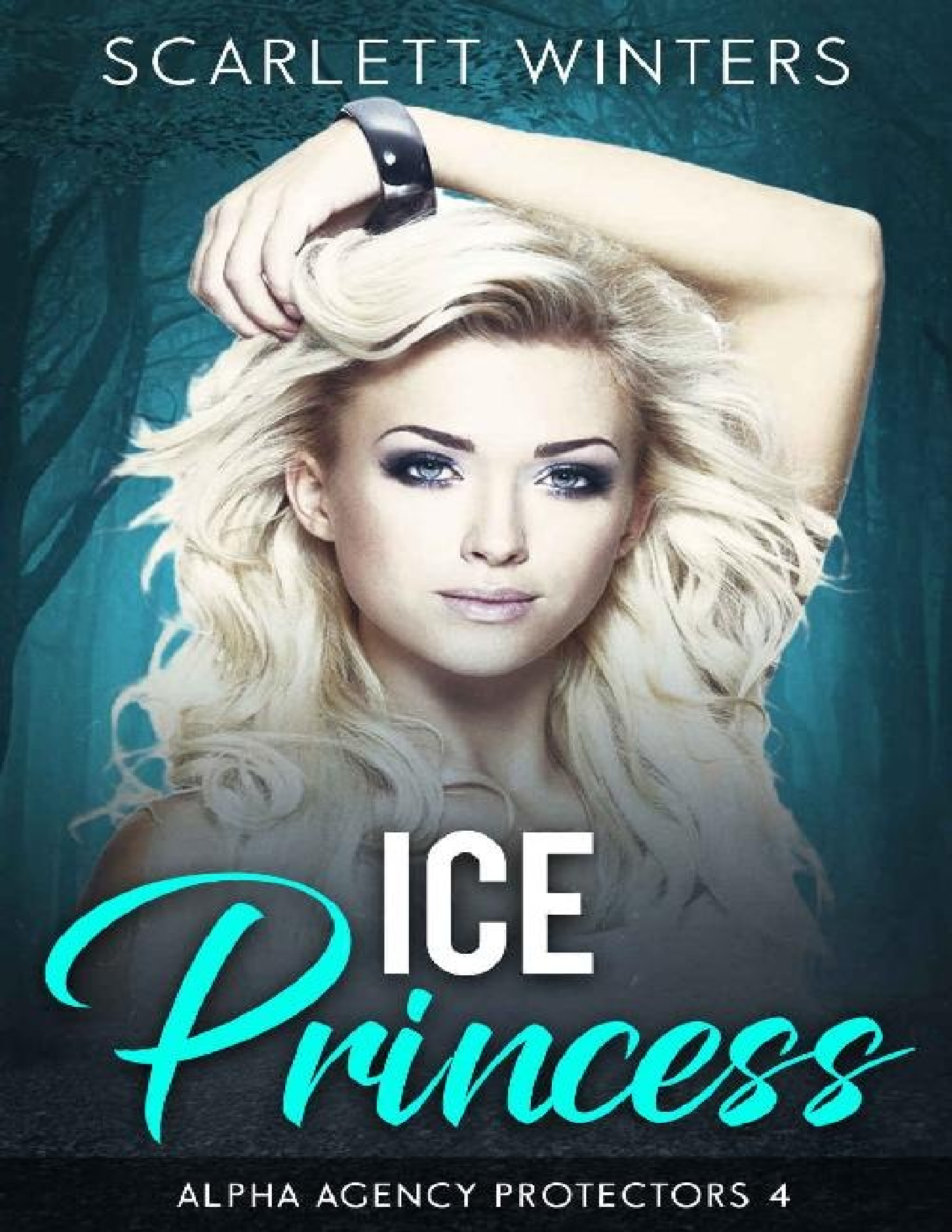
SCARLETT WINTERS



ICE Princess

ALPHA AGENCY PROTECTORS 4

Alpha Agency Protectors 4

Ice Princess

By:

Scarlett Winters

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Warning: This book is for adult audiences.

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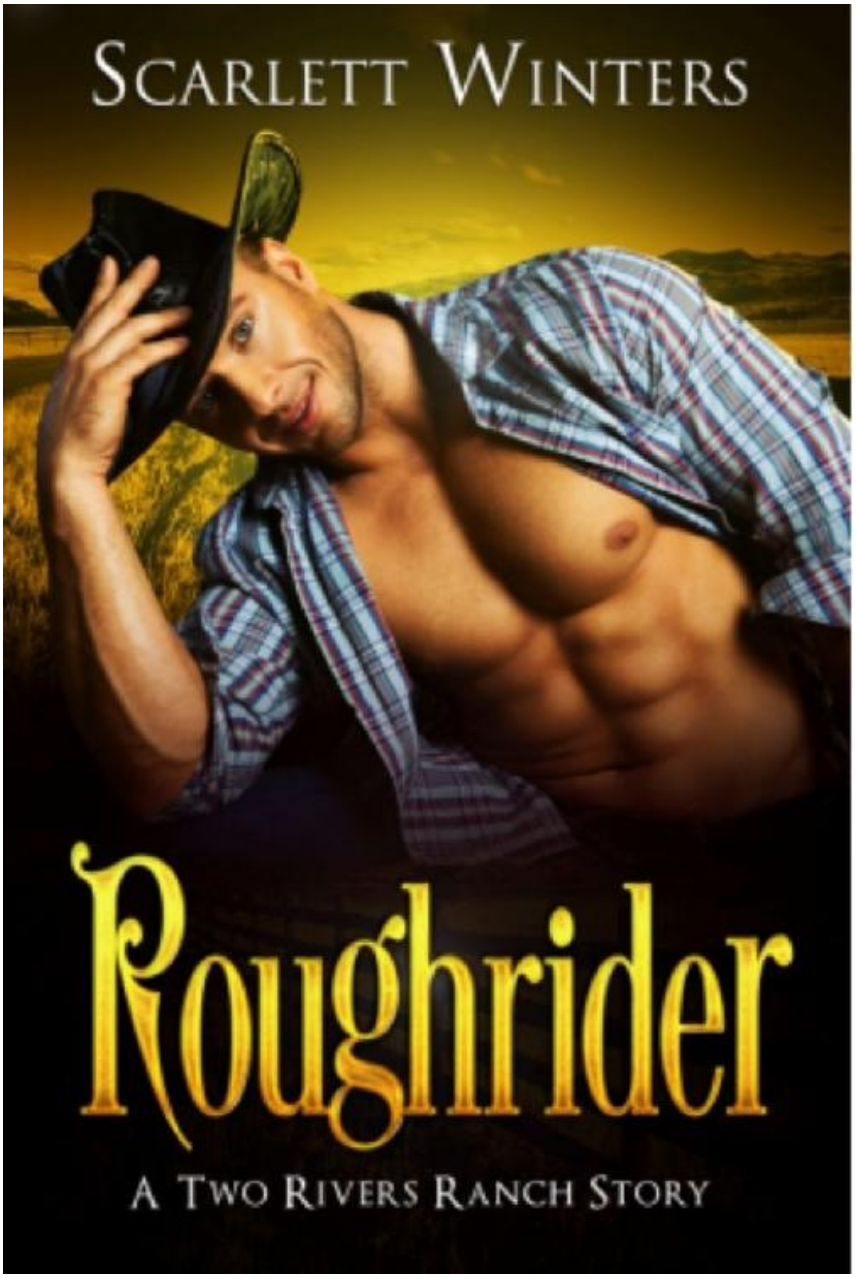
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Chapter One ~Raven

She steps back from the table and looks down at her handiwork. The cut is clean; the appendix removed before it burst the patient should make a full recovery.

“Daniel, would you like to close?” Raven asks looking at the young hungry resident on the other side of the table. She reminds her of what she was like as a resident. Dr. Daniels is dedicated, intelligent and her sutures are picture-perfect each time.

“Yes, Dr. Ballenger.” She tells her eyes lighting up and Raven can sense the smile under her surgical mask.

“Then have at it. I need to do rounds.” Raven walks out of the surgery center, snapping off her gloves and taking off her apron. She feels the eyes of the other staff on her as she leaves. She tries to pretend it doesn’t bother her.

It is hard to be one of the youngest surgeons on staff. At age 26 Raven is much younger than the others, having started college at 16, and medical school at 19. She has always fought her image. Petite with sunny blonde hair, blue eyes, and when she chooses to show them, dimples. Raven looks like she should be serving coffee at the local Starbucks, not cutting people open on an operating table.

She walks down the hall, stopping in the office to grab an iPad before seeing her first patient. The nurses don’t look her in the eye, averting their gaze as she walks past. Raven is known for expecting perfection from the staff. They call her the ice princess and believe she has a heart like a stone, but it couldn’t be farther from the truth.

Raven expects excellence from her employees as well as from herself. They are saving lives here and one screw up could kill someone. They can call her the Ice Princess if they like as long as they perform their jobs to her satisfaction, Raven couldn’t care less.

She swings into the first patient room and finds the first smile of the day.

“Mr. Ferguson, how are you feeling today?” Raven asks him as she quickly reviews the nurse’s notes that have been uploaded to his chart.

“With my fingers Doc.” He grins at her.

He is currently her favorite post-op patient in for the removal of part of his liver due to non-alcoholic cirrhosis he constantly has a joke on his lips and a sparkle in his eye.

“It says here that your incision is healing nicely. Mind if I take a look.”

“A pretty and smart young lady like you, I wouldn’t mind having your hands on me.” He winks as she comes to the side of the bed and lifts the bandages to look at his incision.”

“It’s healing nicely. You should be able to discharge tomorrow. Do you have any questions for me?”

“Nope, not unless you have considered my marriage proposal again.” He winks at her. Mr. Ferguson is in his eighties and has asked every pretty young nurse, or in Raven’s case doctor, to marry him.

“Sorry, Mr. Ferguson I am married to the job.”

“A pretty girl like you needs to get out, date some.”

“I am too busy being a doctor. I will be back to check on you in the morning and sign your discharge orders. You need anything just tell the nurse I will swing back by.”

“Thanks, Doc. You have been a real lifesaver. Pun intended.” He cackles, and she laughs a little with him before leaving the room to check on the next patient.

There is a little bounce in her step after leaving Mr. Ferguson’s room. The feeling of helping someone was one of the reasons Raven became a doctor. The human body was like a puzzle, and she loved spending her days figuring that puzzle out.

She stops at the nurse’s station to write up some notes in Mr. Ferguson’s chart, trying not to roll her eyes as one of the nurse’s hurries away.

“The Ice Princess strikes again.” Raven looks up to see her best friend striding towards her.

“Aren’t you supposed to be up on the psych floor? I didn’t know they let you out to roam the halls.”

Taylor grins at her, “They had a psych consult on this floor and when I saw the nurse scurrying away from the desk and your ponytail, I knew it couldn’t be anyone but you.”

“I don’t know why they think I am so frightening.”

Taylor taps one blood-red nail against her lips. We met in college, both young girls with big brains and blonde hair being constantly underestimated by everyone else. She was young to 17 when she entered college. They had become fast friends and now worked at the same hospital Taylor had become a psychiatrist while Raven had opted to become a surgeon.

“Do you have time for lunch? We can zip down to the cafeteria and grab a couple of salads. I can update you on all things, Jared.”

Raven consults her watch and sighs, “As much as I want to know about your latest conquest, I have another surgery in thirty minutes, and I need to finish rounds.”

“You work too hard, Raven; you need to slow down, or you are going to burn yourself out.”

It was an old refrain from Taylor she was constantly trying to get Raven to work less, to do self-care as she called it. What she didn’t understand was that this job was everything to her. Raven had worked hard to get where she was, and she wanted to rise up the ranks. Raven had even been contemplating doing a rotation in cardiothoracic surgery to get more of a challenge.

“So, you have said before, but you know me I love the job.”

“That is what worries me. You need some work-life balance, girl.”

Raven pats her face and grabs the iPad, “Maybe tomorrow right now I have rounds and gallbladder to remove. How about a drink after a shift?”

“Sounds good! Meet you at The Spot.”

“Sound great.” She waves and Raven turns her mind back to work. A margarita at The Spot with Taylor sounds like the perfect way to end the day. Raven stops and calls out to Taylor.

“See I agreed to a drink work-life balance.”

She rolls her eyes and keeps walking.

Raven shrugs and walks into the next patient room.

Chapter 2 ~Blade

Blade stands in front of a screen watching the jumpy body cam video as one of his teams enters a village in West Africa.

“Master Chief Benson we are entering the village now, it looks as if we have some infected dead.”

“Roger that, be careful. This disease can cause some aggression.”

“Copy.”

Then Blade feels his muscles tense as he looks at the scene of devastation. Someone has been testing bio-terror weapons in remote villages. It hurts his heart to look at the scene, but he has seen too much to show it outwardly. Growing up in a military family the Navy Seal program is all he ever wanted. Blade achieved his dream and found the infectious disease was his calling. Now after completing a Ph.D. in infectious disease, he is the senior officer on the bio-weapons task force protecting Americans and our allies from the threat of bioterrorism.

“It looks as if it wiped the entire village, Master Chief.” Owens one of the most senior officers’ radios back.

“Do the recon make sure that no one got out of the village and create a containment field for 25 miles around the village. Check for survivors and get back to me.”

“Roger that.”

“Owens?” Blade says, waiting for him to respond.

“Yes, Master Chief.”

“Be careful and come home safe.”

“Will do. Owens out.”

The feed disconnects and Blade walks out of the briefing room. The last month has been brutal. He lost two of his closest friends and officers to an Ebola outbreak and now this new virus was spreading terror and panic. From the

analysis, it was a man-made combination deadliness of Ebola with the longer shelf life of other viruses. It seemed to be able to live outside of the host for 24 hours. If it was to get out and into a major metropolitan area, it would be devastating. From their limited exposure to N562 or as it was being called The Kraken Virus due to the virus somewhat resembling the sea creature of old, it had a 75% mortality rate.

The only good news was that it was not airborne and had to be spread by direct contact.

“Master Chief there is a phone call for you.” His assistant said coming into his office.

“Send it through.” He says picking up the call as it rang through.

“Is this Master Chief Benson?”

“Charlie is that you?” Blade finds a smile and kicks back in my chair. Charlie went through Navy Seal training and the infectious disease program with him at Columbia.

“Blade, how the heck are you?”

“Busy, busy the terrorists just keep making more bio-weapons and we keep rooting them out.”

“I hear that. I wish this was a social call, but no such luck. I am afraid I have some news. I received word that there is chatter about a possible bio-weapon attack on the United States.”

“Is it Tuesday?” Blade laughs along with Charlie.

“Isn’t that the truth? This is credible and we think that the terrorist is armed with N562.”

“There is chatter that someone has brought Kraken into the United States.”
All humor leaves the conversation as Blade thinks back to the video of the village from Owen’s body cam.

The bodies littering the dirt, the screaming of the dying. Blade thinks about that village except imagine it as a major American city and shudder.

“Do we have any way of knowing where he may have come in at?”

“Not at this time. All we have so far is the chatter that he is in the United States. That was all we got from the source before he was found dead in his apartment.”

A chill works its way through his body.

“What was the cause of death?”

“He was shot in the back of head execution-style,” Charlie says and Blade feels numb.

“I will have a team readied in case the threat is identified to a specific location.”

“Appreciated. I will keep my ear to the ground and if we get any specifics, you will be my first call.”

“Thanks, Charlie, give Sandra my love.”

“Will do. You met anyone yet?”

“No, you know me this job and the military is my life.”

“Eventually you are going to have to get back out there in the real world and find yourself, someone man.”

“You know me, Charlie, I am a lone wolf.” Blade tells him, leaning back in his chair. This was an old conversation with Charlie and the few other people that Blade is close to. They don’t understand that he is ok with this job being his life and he doesn’t want to leave a widow behind when something happens to him on the job.

“Alright keep your phone on and near you, be ready to jump on a plane at a moment’s notice I don’t have to tell you the seriousness of Kraken loose on American soil.”

“We will be ready.” Blade tells him before hanging up.

Blade needs to get a team on standby and the equipment packed and ready to go. If this disease was to get out in the general population, it would be catastrophic and that would be before it might mutate.

He starts getting things into motion and his adrenaline spikes, this was the worst and the best part of the job. Blade crosses his fingers that the man is either found before he can infect someone or that the threat is bogus because the U.S. is not

ready to deal with a pandemic on this scale.

Chapter 3 ~Raven

“Dr. Ballenger, we need you to ER stat.” Raven sits up and rubs her eyes, swinging her legs off of the on-call bed. She is at the end of a long shift and hopefully this will be her last call of the night.

She walks swiftly down the hall to the elevator, pushing the button for the ER. When the doors open, she walks into chaos.

“Dr. Ballenger we have a gunshot wound to the abdomen, he is losing blood rapidly and is combative we will have him ready and waiting in OR 4.”

“I am on my way.”

“Doctor! Doctor!” Raven turns to see a man covered in blood standing in the lobby.

“I need to tell you something it is important.”

“No, time if you want your friend to live, I need to get him to surgery now.”

The man continues to scream at her, but she ignores him, walking into the triage room.

“His BP is falling.” The nurse calls out as Raven is gowned and gloved.

“Push one milligram of epi and get him hooked up to O negative Stat,” Raven calls out as the nurse puts on my face shield.

She walks up to the table and takes a deep breath. Gunshot wounds are hard, and she digs deep for that ice princess calm that she is famous for. During her ER rotation, she was assigned to one of the inner-city hospitals. While assessing a man with a gunshot wound a rival gang member came in and shot him as well as the other doctor working on the victim.

Raven was only grazed, but Dr. William Wolfe her mentor and friend didn’t survive his injuries. She tries to stay away from gunshot injuries, but as a surgeon, it wasn’t always possible.

Her hands try to shake, and she takes a deep breath to steady her nerves.

“Let’s get him stable and up to an operating theater.” She looks at the gaping wound in his side and sees where the bullet had ripped out a good part of the man’s intestine.

She focuses on the wound and not what caused it. The team works in concert with each other, each member performing their duties until the man’s blood pressure and vitals are stable.

“Alright he is stable let’s get him up to the surgical floor so I can remove this bullet and repair the damage.”

Raven walks beside the bed to the elevator, watching the beeping monitors closely. He might make it if she can close up the hole in his intestines. He might end up with a bag, but at least he will be alive.

****

“I think he is going to make it. Good work team.” Raven stretches her back to alleviate the cramp from bending over. She snips off the last stitch and stands back, making sure that they are going to hold the wound closed.

“Doctor Ballenger. I need to speak to you it is urgent.” She looks over to see one of the ER Doctors up in the balcony. Raven frowns up at him. It is a well-known fact that she does not like being uninterrupted during a procedure.

‘Dr. Mason, I am in the middle of a procedure as you can see, can this wait?” Her voice is icy, her showing displeasure at his interruption plain.

“I apologize but this is an urgent and developing situation that needs your immediate attention.”

Raven sighs, “Dr. Daniels, please come take my place and watch for any signs that these sutures are not going to hold.”

“Yes, Dr. Ballenger. Raven waits for her to come around the table before going to the door of the surgery suite to meet Dr. Mason and find out what could be so urgent.

“No Dr. Ballenger, please do not leave the surgery room.” He says through the door, pointing at the phone hanging on the wall. She feels the first cold fingers of dread down her back.

“How can I help you, Dr. Mason?” She says voice cool, not betraying any of the

anxiety she feels looking into his worried eyes through the door.

“We need a sample of your patient’s blood. The man that brought him in? He is the shooter. He is claiming that your patient was injected with a biological weapon. He called it Kraken. We need a vial of blood to test. You will need to remain in the operating room with the patient until the blood is tested.”

“Copy that.” Raven walks back to the patient and looks down into his pale face.

“Nurse Claus may I please have a syringe and vial please.”

“Is there a problem, Doctor?” She asks, handing Raven the supplies requested.

She falls back on her Ice Princess persona. There is no reason to worry about the team until the presence of a bio-weapon is confirmed.

Raven looks at her, making her eyes as cold as possible. She draws the blood and is careful when inserting the needle into the vial. Shaking it and then walking to the door of the surgery center, inserting it into the little slot for taking samples in and out.

Dr. Mason nods and then flashes me the ten minutes sign. It appears that they will be testing this blood ASAP.

Now they will sit and wait for the results of the tests and hope that the team hasn’t all been exposed to a deadly virus.

****

Raven looks up from watching Dr. Daniels suture the wound closed and sees Dr. Mason standing outside of the room. He is dressed in full protective gear and her heart jumps into my throat. It could just be a precaution, but she walks over to the door, and he slips a piece of paper through the receiving spot. He points to the phone on the wall and she picks it up.

“He is infected with a virus known as N562 referred to as the Kraken Virus due to its shape.”

“What are the specifics?” Raven asks, turning back to look at my team. They know something is going on, it is highly irregular for a surgeon to supervise the simple stitching up of a patient with a resident, especially one as skilled as Dr. Daniels.

“Mortality rate 70%, spread by contact with infectious body fluids, no evidence of it being spread by air. A navy seal team specializing in infectious diseases will be here shortly. The hospital is now on lockdown. They are moving the patients that they can onto this floor and the ER will be sealed. Tell your team. Finish up the surgery, we have an isolation room ready.”

She nods and hangs up the phone before turning to the team. They are some of the most competent nurses and residents that she knows. She hopes they are able to handle this news.

“Team we have a problem,” Raven says walking back to the table.

Chapter 4 ~Blade

“Charlie, you have news for me?” Blade says rubbing his hands over his face as he swings his legs over the bed. The clock by the bed says 2 am.

“We found the terrorist.” Charlie’s voice is serious.
“I take it from your tone there is no sign of the virus?”

“No, we found that too. Our officer got the drop on the terrorist. They started shooting our agent was wounded but not before he was able to shoot one of the terrorists dead. The other was seriously wounded but able to inject himself with the virus before he passed out. They are at a hospital in Phoenix. We have it locked down.”

“How many were exposed?”

“The FBI agent checked the man’s pulse and had a blood transfer. Fifteen hospital staff are exposed. We have the ER and surgical floor on lockdown.”
“How long since the patient was admitted?”

“It’s been about 12 hours. It took a while for the surgeon to be warned and tests to be administered.”

“If there are any infected, they should start showing symptoms soon.”

“Word is the originally infected man is starting to show symptoms. They have him sedated for now.”

“I will gather the team and be on the next flight out. Our supplies are ready, and I will make the order to have them loaded. We should be wheels up within the hour.”

“I will let the President as well as the other powers that be know. Good luck and be careful.”

Blade hangs up and reaches for his jeans and go bag. This needed to be contained if Kraken was to get out and infect the general population there would be mass panic. Someone bleeding from all of their orifices after they fall down dead in the street would be a hell of a visual.

Blade picks up the phone and starts barking orders as he walks out of the house

and gets into the car. His team is ready for this, he just hopes that he doesn't lose any of them.

*****

Welcome to Phoenix General, Master Chief Benson." A man in a suit greets me at the door to the hospital.

"I am Shawn Finch, the director of the hospital."

"It is good to meet you. Have all the possible infected been quarantined?"

"Yes, they are all up on the surgical floor."

"Is anyone showing symptoms?" Blade asks as they walk down the hall to a staff lounge where the team will dress in Personal protective equipment.

"Just patient zero at this point. What precautions do we need to take in regard to staff?"

"They will need full suits from the neck down, N95 masks, goggles, and hoods. It isn't an airborne infection as it happens when there is contact with bodily fluids so full respirator suits will not be needed. We have brought extra PPE for the staff to use."

"Thank you. We appreciate your assistance in this matter." Blade nods and heads into the lounge with his crew to suit up. The hospital director follows them in. This part of the job is hardest for Blade as people have trouble relinquishing their authority. Blade turns and gives him a professional smile.

"Mr. Finch, we appreciate your help, but this hospital is now under my direction. Every order will be followed to the letter. Do I make myself clear?"

Blade watches the myriad of emotions cross his face, anger, fear, and others that he can't name. Blade has learned it is best to be blunt and tell them upfront how it will be.

"Yes, that is fine for the duration of the emergency."

"As soon as we know the virus is no longer affecting your hospital, it will be returned to you. Now if you will excuse me, I would like to get up to the surgical floor and talk with the surgeon in charge."

“As to that, Dr. Raven Ballenger is her name. She can be a bit difficult to work with, but she is an excellent surgeon.”

“She will not be difficult for me or she will be contained to an isolation room for the duration of the outbreak situation.” His voice is hard and brooks no argument. This is not a situation where a pissing match is appropriate. If this would be to get out, it would kill millions of Americans if allowed to spread and weaken our country opening the U.S. up to an attack.

“This is a terrorist attack, make no mistake about it. It will be contained without worry of stepping on toes or hurt feelings.”

“I am confident that you and your team will be able to halt the spread of the outbreak. Just a little heads up in regard to Dr. Ballenger. I will get out of your hair. Please contact me if you need anything from the hospital.”

“Noted,” Blade says, brushing past him and into the elevator with the rest of the crew. He hoped that Mr. Finch was exaggerating the attitude of the surgeon. It would be nice to have another doctor familiar with the hospital and staff to help with logistics. If that was not possible the team would work around her it wouldn’t be the first time that was necessary.

Blade gets off the elevator and standing in front of him is the most beautiful woman he has ever seen.

Her blonde hair is swept back into a high ponytail, clear blue eyes assess him with cold efficiency, and from what Blade can see around her scrubs she has curves that would make any man weep.

“You must be Master Chief Benson. I am Dr. Ballenger.” She doesn’t try to shake his hand which he appreciates given the circumstances she seems calm cool and collected and if I can get her on my team, it would be beneficial. It is obvious from the staff that he can see going about their business that she has been able to help everyone keep their cool.

“Have there been any staff infected?” Blade asks her and sees a flash of worry in those cool blue eyes.

“We can discuss particulars in a moment. I want to stay on the case and help. I am not an infectious disease specialist, but I was top of my class in med school. I have been reading over the information you sent over and would like to continue

to work on the case if possible."

"You will follow my orders to the letter." He says staring her down.

He sees her straighten her spine. Good, he likes his women with a backbone and if he has anything to say about it when this is all over, she will be his.

"If I believe that they are the correct orders to keep my staff safe." She rebuts and he can see what Mr. Finch was talking about.

"You either agree to follow my orders or you are off the case it is that simple."

"I agree for now."

Blade nods, "If that changes please know that I won't hesitate to take you off the case. Now here is the PPE for your staff and can we please discuss possible infections of your staff."

She stands looking at him for a long moment before taking the packages of gowns and other equipment.

He has to try hard not to smile. They will butt heads, he can see that but if they can get past it, she will be an excellent addition to his team.

Chapter 5 ~Raven

Raven walks briskly down the hall, calling out to her staff as she goes. They need to get this PPE on so that no one else is infected. They have masks and gloves, but this extra protection will go a long way to making her feel that the staff is safe.

Raven looks back and sees Master Chief Benson talking on his cell phone. He is a demanding man, but from her research she knows that he knows what he is doing. He downplayed his education by not butting in and calling himself Dr. Benson. His multiple PHD's and training in infectious disease makes him the logical point person here, but she will not be shunted aside. Two of her staff have been exposed and are in isolation. They have mild fevers suggesting that the infection has taken hold.

Handing out the PPE She pulls hers on wanting to get back on the floor as soon as possible. Raven knew that Blade Benson would be hot. She googled him before he arrived expressive green eyes, muscular body, a neatly trimmed goatee at least in his last photo and obviously intelligent.

He was military and alpha male, so they were going to butt heads it was a fact. He was the first man in a long time to give her these kinds of tingles. She needed to keep her head in the game and get more information on this virus, and how to treat it before she lost two members of her staff.

She was the ice princess it shouldn't be hard for her to keep her head in the game. But then there were those tingles.

****

"How much have you been able to glean about the virus?" He asks standing outside of the isolation chamber containing patient zero.

"I read everything you sent over. That it appears to be a base of the Ebola virus crossed with an unknown virus protein to make it survive longer outside of the body. Spread by body fluids non-aerosol as of now and you are still learning. Not sure how it quite attaches to the body cells, and it is impervious to known anti-virals." She takes a deep breath, trying not to think about her friends.

“Seventy percent kill rate, and high likelihood of mutation to aerosol if an anti-viral and vaccine are not developed.”

He nods, “Good work you are up to speed now, tell me about the infected employees.”

“One is a nurse she was stuck through the glove with a needle when trying to insert his IV line in the OR. The other is another Nurse he vomited on when he was admitted right into her face from the sounds of it.”

“Are they showing any symptoms?”

She stands there for a moment as the reality of what is happening sinks into it. There is a very high likelihood that the two women laying in isolation as friends of hers will not survive this.

“They are both showing low-grade fevers.”

He nods again. She can see the sympathy in his eyes behind his goggles. She tries to not to let it affect her, but it does make her feel better about this man. He came in with an attitude of authority, but that look in his eyes tells Raven that underneath all of that he understands the human toll of something like this.

“That is the first stage of infection. We haven’t known about this long, what we do know is classified but you and your team are being read in as a need to know. I need you to understand that none of what you learn in the next few hours or days can be shared. It is a matter of national security as well as we don’t need the mass panic that this information will cause if it gets out into the public.”

“You have my assurances that we can be trusted, and that no information will leak out from this team.”

He nods, “Then let’s start researching the confidential files, see what we can come up with.”

She follows him out of the patient rooms, and down the hall to the doctor’s office. Between the two of them they should be able to find a way to beat this virus.

Chapter 6 ~Blade

“It is hard sitting this close to her as we research breathing in the smell of her skin. Every time our arms brush it sends a sizzle up my arm. I don’t know how much longer I will be able to resist the pull of her.” Blade is not a man that usually resists. He goes for what he wants. The more he is with her, the more he knows that this is it for him. They are going to be together now all he has to do is convince her.

“It looks like from the information coming in from Africa that it infects the host cells much like Ebola but then there is the twist that comes from this other virus DNA that they have spliced into the original Ebola virus. I hate to say anything positive about the monsters that made this, but the virus is truly a beautiful piece of work. Deadly and horrible, but a master piece of engineering and science.”

“Do you have any idea how we might develop a serum to combat this?” He asks looking over at her. He can’t take his eyes off of her. Even in all the PPE gear, she is beautiful.

“No, but there might be something we can do involving the protein envelope. We will need antibodies from one of the infected and then maybe we can work out something. Is there any way that I can have contact with this Dr. Owens, the man on the ground in Africa?”

“I think I can arrange that. The reception is a bit spotty out there, but I am sure that we can work something out.”

“That would be great maybe he has some insight that we can’t glean from this research or that he hasn’t had time to upload yet.”

She scoots her chair back and rolls her neck. They have been sitting at this desk for hours going over the research and bouncing theories off of each other.

“It’s time for a break I am starving may I buy you dinner?”

Her eyes are wary, but she nods and shows him to the staff break room. They have delivered supplies via elevator to the people quarantined. They may be stuck up here for a while, there is no telling how fast the team will be able to come up with a serum to fight the virus. They will be quarantined at least two

weeks to make sure no one is an asymptomatic carrier.

Ravens tests as well as most of the other staffs have come back negative for the virus. When we received the news an hour ago Blade found her breathing out a sigh of relief. In the very small amount of time that he has known her, Blade has fallen for Dr. Raven Ballenger and it was a huge relief to know that she wasn't infected. Now he just had to convince her to give in to the heat between them.

He looks over at her as she takes a bite of her sandwich and grins. He knows she feels the same heat that he does, he saw how her skin pebbled at the brush of his arm.

They finish up lunch and he waits for her to stand.

"Raven, I know you can feel the attraction between us, and if this is something that you don't want, I need you to tell me now."

"I can't focus on my personal life right now Blade, my friends are dying."

"We can't work on this problem 24/7 we need to rest let out brains run through the probabilities. I just need to hear you say that you are feeling the same way that I am." He is close to her now, his breath whispering across her lips.

Blade watches as her lips part and her pink tongue darts out to moisten those lips.

"Blade I…."

The door to the break room swings open, and he steps back. Her reaction was all he needed to know she wants him as much as he wants her. She is right finding a cure is more important than the way that they feel right now, but they are both going to have to blow off some steam in the next two weeks. He knows exactly how he would like to accomplish that.

They walk out of the break room and find the hallway deserted he grabs her arm, "We will finish this conversation later Raven. I mean to have you."

She looks me in the eye, "You will only have me as you put it if I allow it."

Blade nods, "I would never force you, but you need to know I always get what I want."

There is fire in her blue eyes as she narrows them at him, "You should know I

always get what I want, and I am not sure that means you.”

She puts her mask and goggles back on before marching down the hall to patient zero’s room.

A slow smile crosses his lips. She can fight all she wants, but he knows she is feeling this attraction between them and with these close quarters she will eventually cave.

He finds a little spring in his step as he follows her down the hallway. He may not be a patient man, but for this he can wait. He had a feeling that she isn’t going to be able to hold out long.

Chapter 7 ~Raven

“Dr. Ballenger, are you there?” She rubs her tired eyes and tries to smile at the jumpy image of Dr. Owens.

“I am here, can you hear me? See me?”

“I can. How are things faring there?”

“We lost patient Zero, but I was able to extract some blood. I am trying to make a serum and vaccine from his antibodies but it’s slow going. I have tried one mix, and it didn’t have any effect on my other two infected.”

She closes her eyes for a moment. Thinking of her friends as the infected is easier than remembering them as the bright and funny women they are. She can’t think of the last time that they had a girl’s night out she needs to focus on finding a cure so that she can save them. There will be time for emotions later but now is not the time. She needs to focus on saving them and then she can think of them as her friends again.

“I am doing the same, but nothing seems to be working. The antibodies from infected don’t seem to have any effect on slowing the virus or allowing the immune system to defeat it.”

“We will just have to keep at it. I will send you over some of my findings. You send me yours, and then we will work together. Two brains are better than one. Well, two and a half if you add in Benson.”

She laughs, “That sounds great, thanks Dr. Owens.”

“You get some rest Dr. Ballenger you look exhausted.”

“Thanks something you should always tell a woman.”

Dr. Owens laughs, “I am a charmer that’s for sure. Let’s schedule another call in a few days, unless one of us has a breakthrough.”

“Sounds good,” Raven says and ends the Skype call. Trudging back to the on-call room, she lays down on one of the beds there and tries to close her eyes. Thoughts swirl through her mind one after the other. *Are there more infected out there? Was he able to infect others before he was caught? Will her friends*

survive?

Raven sighs and gets up she isn't going to sleep there is no reason to lay in this bed and stare at the ceiling. A cup of tea and more research is in her future.

"Hey, I thought you were going to go get some rest?" She looks up from her phone to see Blade sitting at the table with his laptop and a cup of coffee.

"Tried, couldn't sleep." She takes a cup down and fills it with water before popping it into the microwave.

"I think I might know why our last serum failed." She says taking the hot water out of the microwave and dropping a tea bag into it.

"Does your brain ever turn off?" He asks, turning around to face her.

She leans against the counter, taking a sip of her tea. "Nope. I think it has to do with the way that the virus infects its host."

"What are you thinking?"

"I think that the antibodies don't have time to multiply enough to fight the virus. I think it was designed to multiply rapidly even though it kills the host quicker that way. They solved the problem of being able to infect a lot of people by giving it a long incubation period as well as having it be able to survive outside of the body for a longer period of time."

"So, if we can overcome that, we might be able to have a way to fight it. Any good ways to do that?"

She sighs and sips her tea, "None that I can think of."

"You really need to rest. Your brain is an amazing thing, but it won't work properly without rest."

She grins at him, "Not true, I once worked three days straight as a resident, my brain still worked fine."

"No, your brain worked at the average intelligence of the rest of the human population. We need you at your most brilliant."

She raises her eyebrows, "Was that a compliment Master Chief?"

He stands up, caging her in between his arms and the counter.

“It was a fact, Dr. Ballenger. I can think of a few ways that we can work out some adrenaline and anxiety.”

She really likes him and what would it hurt to give in? He was a handsome, intelligent, successful man. She could do a lot worse.

“Oh, really and what would that be?” She grins up at him.

He starts to lower his head when the door to the break room swings open.

“Seriously we have the worst timing,” Blade says, resting his forehead on hers.

“I am sorry to interrupt but something is wrong with Maggie.”

Blade moves back, and she shifts back to professional mode.

“On our way, thanks, Carrie.” Raven walks out and swiftly down the hall to the on-call room. She puts on her PPE, and runs to where the isolation rooms have been set up.

“Get me out of here.” She hears a scream, and then a crash as something is being thrown against a wall. She skids to a stop in front of the isolation room and what she sees has her mouth drop open.

Maggie, her friend who is normally so sweet and kind is standing in the middle of the room her face red with anger. Sores stand out on her arms weeping blood.

“Get me out of here! I can see you. I am going to tear this place apart.” She screams again, and there is another crash as she throws her dinner tray at the window.

“What is going on?”

“It’s the next stage of the virus. We think it has to do with the DNA from the virus that they used to try to weaponize the Ebola strain. It causes extreme violence. Dr. Owens said there had been reports of this in Africa.”

“He talked about aggression in the patients, but this is extraordinary.” She whispers as she watches Maggie’s chest heave with the exertion. They had to stop her before she was going to harm herself. Her body didn’t need any other wounds to deal with.

“We are going to have to sedate her,” Blade says, his mouth set in a grim line.

“I am not sending my people in there she will attack them the chance of someone getting infected is almost certain.”

“I know and you are not going to like this part, but it is the only way.”

“What is the only way?” Raven says watching her once sweet friend scream and throw her body against the door.

“We are going to have to use a tranquilizer gun.”

“Like with animals?”

“It is the only way to get her sedated without someone else getting infected. If we send someone in there, she will fight scratch possibly bite and they might not be able to get the sedative into her fast enough. We have one that will take effect in 10 seconds.”

“How is that possible? I have never heard of such a thing.”

“It is something Dr. Owens developed for another virus that caused aggression. It is the only choice we have.”

Raven just closes her eyes and nods. She knows that he is not asking her permission, he is in charge after all just preparing her for what is to come. She appreciates the gesture, he is a good man underneath all that commanding authority.

“Ok, do you think there is still a chance that we can save her?” She whispers.

“If we find a cure quickly, there is still a chance, he whispers.

“I will stay here you go and grab what you need.” She watches as her friend beats herself against the door again and again. She lets one tear trickle down her face. The woman with the bright smile and jokes is gone. All that is left is an aggression shell. She hoped that they find a cure and she could have her friend back.

Chapter 8 ~Blade

Blade walks back to the isolation room holding the tranquilizer gun over his shoulder. He hates that he has to do this to a friend of Raven's, but she will harm herself if they don't stop her. It is impossible to treat someone in this state.

He walks up to the room and he can see the terror and sadness in her eyes.

"I am sorry Raven if there was any other way."
"I know just do it." She says standing at the window, folding her arms in front of her.

"Ok, you know the drill guys when she goes back for another strike pop the door, I will shoot the tranq, and then we wait."

He holds his breath as Maggie staggers back for another run at the door. There is a large hiss as the airlock is unsealed. He takes aim and fires the dart. He hits her in the neck, and she screams, reaching to pull the dart out.

The life goes out of her eyes as she slumps to the floor. He takes a deep breath and then enters the room picking her up and laying her back in the bed.

"We need a nurse in here to hook her back up to the IV's and then run a drip of whatever heavy sedative you think is most appropriate."

"Push 2mg Haldol once an hour," Raven says and then walks back down the hallway.

She turns and looks at Blade.

"Give it to me straight I need to know the timeline of how the disease progresses."

He sighs this is the one thing he didn't want to tell her.

"Phase one is the low-grade fever, Phase two is the sores that we saw, Phase three confusion and agitation." He pauses, and she glares at him.

"Then what Blade I am not a baby I can handle it what comes after phase three."

He looks her straight in the eye his voice emotionless, "Phase four bleeding from

orifices, and follicles basically any spot the body can bleed from, organs liquefy, and death."

"How long do we have?"

"At most 3 days if we can't find something to slow the virus."

"Then we need to get back into the lab and find a serum."

She turns on her heel and walks swiftly down the hall to the lab. What he didn't tell her is based on the legions and the severe aggression Maggie was too far gone to save.

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"It has to do something with the proteins I just wish I could figure it out." She paces in front of him as he turns from his own microscope.

"That is what Dr. Owens, and I speculated but there doesn't seem to be a way to get past that part. Whoever created this knew what they were doing."

"I feel like it is right there staring me in the face, if I try hard enough, I can reach out and grasp it but each time I try it floats away."

"That's because you are exhausted you need rest; we both need rest. Take a couple of hours down and then we will go at this again."

"No, I can't Maggie is dying, Elizabeth is dying I need to figure this out so I can save them."

He takes her by the shoulders and gives her a little shake, "It is not going to matter if you are so tired you can't think straight. Taking a little rest is the best thing you can do for them, Raven. Trying to fight through the tired isn't helping anyone."

She glares up at him, and he matches her stare. He is not going to let her work herself into the ground. It isn't just that he cares about her, but they need her sharp to help figure this out. He has the sneaky feeling that the terrorist they caught wasn't the only one. It doesn't make sense. They would have used more than one person planted them in other large cities to make sure they had success.

"You are going to rest. I am going to rest. It is not only about these people here, Raven, but we also have no idea if this has spread or if there were other

terrorists. We need to find a cure and soon."

She sticks her chin out and gives him a mulish look. At any other time, he would think it was adorable. He is used to people obeying his orders without question, and she is not complying.

"That is all the more reason to keep working."

"If you don't take a few hours down I will remove you from the team."

Hurt flashes across her eyes and he regrets it, but he needs to do what is right for the greater good and he needs her sharp.
"Fine." She says through gritted teeth and storms out of the lab.

He follows her, he needs to find his own flat surface and turn his mind off for a while.

Chapter 9 ~Raven

Raven comes out of the on call room and goes to the lab. She owes Blade an apology he was right she needed sleep. The few hours that she allowed herself to rest has sharpened her mind, and she feels refreshed and ready to get back to trying to find a way to help her friends.

She walks in and sees Blade hunched over a microscope.

"Hey, didn't you take your own advice?" She asks softly, standing behind him.

He turns around and smiles at her, "I did, I have only been here a few minutes. Do you feel better?"

"Yes, thank you I appreciate you making me take a rest, I needed it I just didn't want to admit it."

His smirk conveys the told you so that he isn't saying.

The door to the lab pushes open and one of the nurses come in.

"You need to come now it's Maggie."

Raven looks into the other woman's eyes and sees her worry.

“Raven, you might not want to see. This last stage can be a bit ugly.”

Raven shakes her head, “She would be there for me. Is she still going to be violent?”

He shakes his head “No, she should be at least somewhat back to herself, it is the worst part of the disease.”

Raven turns to the nurse, “Back off the Haldol and push as much morphine as is deemed safe, I don’t want her to feel any pain if that is possible.”

“I will get right on its Dr. Ballenger.” The nurse leaves.

“She is going to make it Blade, she is strong.” Raven hates that her voice quivers.

“Just let it out, it’s ok to feel.” He opens his arms and she walks into them. Her sobs wracking her body as his big strong arms come around her. She feels safe and protected, wishing she could hide in his embrace and not have to face this stage of the virus to see her friend in pain and afraid. She straightens and backs up. That is not who she is. Dr. Raven Ballenger doesn’t hide from the hard things she faces them head on. She would reassure Maggie and then she would find a cure. She wasn’t going to let Maggie’s daughter grow up without a mother.

“Let’s go get on our PPE and see her.”

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“Raven is that you?” Maggie opens her swollen eyelids and looks up at Raven.

Her eyes are bloodshot, bloody tears running down her face.

“Yes, it’s me.” She says softly, gripping her friends’ hand. She had put on three sets of gloves and taped off the wrists of her suit. She would hold Maggie’s hand and she would reassure her friend. She wasn’t going to lose her. They were so close she knew it. There was just that final piece of the puzzle that they needed to crack.

“Thanks for the extra morphine.” She smiles, her lips bleeding and cracking. It is all that Raven can do to shove the feeling down to present that Ice Princess exterior of cool and calm. Maggie doesn’t need her grief along with everything else.

“I talked to Tom, and I saw Lilyann. She was dressed as a princess and so beautiful. Can you please look in on her every once in a while?”

“That won’t be necessary Maggie because you are going to get better, I am going to figure this out and you are going to live.”

The ice princess facade broke and a single tear slides down her face. Maggie had a husband a three-year-old daughter. She wished that they could trade places. Raven didn’t really have anyone to miss her, not a husband or a child.

“Of course, I will come by. The three of us can watch frozen and eat junior mints.”

Maggie laughs, the sound more of a gargle than a laugh. She coughs and blood runs down her face.

“Do you think there is a heaven? Somewhere I can go to look down on Tom and Lilyann?”

“Of course, but you are not going there you just need to hold on Maggie. The new serum isn’t a cure, but it should help you fight this better. I am sorry Maggie, you didn’t deserve this.”

“You do me one favor, Raven.”
“What is that?”

“You find happiness. Quit living for the job and find someone to love. Also find a cure for this. You are one of the smartest people I have ever met and if anyone can do it, you can.”

“I will, I promise, but you will be there to see it.”

“Tell Tom and Lillyan that I love them.” She closes her eye and takes one last rattling breath.

Raven listens and watches as the heart monitor continues to beep. She has slipped into a comatose state she is still hanging on but for how long?

Raven walks quickly out of the room stripping off her soiled PPE and putting it in the incinerator basket she stands in front of another nurse turning to make sure that wasn’t anybody fluids to be seen.

“You are good, Dr. Ballenger.” The woman whispers. Raven nods and walks to

the showers. She needs to wash and make sure that nothing got through her suit.

Stripping off her scrubs she steps under the water grabbing the antibacterial soap and scrubbing every inch of her skin until it is red and raw. That task accomplished, she sits down on the shower floor and sobs. She cries for Maggie, Tom and Lilyann for all the people that love her that are out there hoping that she pulls through.

“Raven, you have been in here for a half-hour I am just checking to make sure that you are alive.”

She looks up at him through the film of water. She likes that he didn’t say if she was ok. He stands there in his scrubs.

“Are you clean?” She croaks out.

His eyes flash at her. “Yes, I just showered and put on fresh scrubs.

She pulls him under the water with her, pressing her naked body to his and fusing her mouth to his. She hungrily devours his mouth. His hands slide up her wet naked body and fist in her hair changing the angle of the kiss making her moan.

He tears his mouth from hers, looking at her through the curtain of water.

“Are you sure you want this?” He asks.

She knows what he is asking if this is her grief, a way to block everything. In a way yes, but she is tired of fighting her feelings for him she wants to feel alive.

“I am sure I want you Blade, I have wanted you since the first moment I saw you.”

He crushes his mouth back down on hers, his hands going to her breasts rubbing her nipples.

The sensation lights a spark in the core, and she is instantly wet. She moans against his mouth as he pushes her against the shower wall, discarding his wet clothes. Then he is standing there in front of her and she can hardly wait for him to be inside her.

She runs her hands down his powerful shoulders, muscular chest and down his six-pack abs and fists his cock making him moan.

“I want you inside of me now.” She growls at him.

“Soon enough, but I want to play with you a bit first.” She growls out her frustration as he runs his hand down her stomach and into her folds. He flicks her clit, and she feels herself gush into his hands.

“You are ready for me.” He murmurs against her ear as he inserts one finger inside of her, stretching her. She moans and hooks a leg around his hip, letting all of her grief and sadness fall away. It is just her and Blade in this moment.

A second finger joins the first, and he begins to glide them in and out of her.

“You are so tight and wet Raven I love the feel of you.” He whispers in her ear.

She grinds herself against his fingers, her orgasm just out of reach.

He moves his fingers and she whimpers, making him chuckle.

He braces her against the wall, bringing her legs up to wrap around his hips.

She feels him at her entrance, and he watches her as he slowly slides into her. The pleasure is intense and immediate as he pushes himself into her and then slowly out gliding back into her.

She pushes her hips against him and grinds her hips against his. She doesn’t want this slow glide, she wants fast and hot.

As if he can read her mind, he pushes back into her pressing her against the wall.

“Yes, like that.” She calls out.

He begins a punishing rhythm pounding into her harder and harder, she orgasms squeezing him tight, fisting her hands in his hair and screaming his name.

She feels him follow her off the cliff with one more hard thrust.

Her head falls to his shoulder as the waterfalls around him. She feels safe and protected as if the world and what is happening beyond this shower stall can’t get to her as long as she is in his arms. She was going to take these few moments and enjoy the good and not focus on the bad. She was going to take refuge in his arms and let herself believe that she would find a cure, that Maggie and Elizabeth will walk out of here and go home to their families. She held on to him and let go of all the negative thoughts that were swelling in her brain.

Chapter 10 ~Blade

Blade looks over at Raven bent over the microscope. It has been a frustrating few days all wrapped into one. Elizabeth their other patient dropped int a coma. He held Raven as she cried, promising her that they wouldn't stop until they found a cure. None of the other staff had shown signs of the disease and they were all breathing a sigh of relief. They had not found a cure, but with help from Owens it felt as if they were getting closer. He felt like they were right on the edge of finding a cure, that at any moment the breakthrough they needed would happen.

They spend all of their time now in the lab or in bed together. She slept next to him her head on his shoulder for the snatches of time he was able to get her out of the lab eat something and catch a few hours of sleep. Of course, there was the sex, which was mind-blowing. Any time they took a break, she was on him. It was as if she was trying to stuff a lifetime of feelings, of being with him into those moments. He knew she was scared they wouldn't find a cure, that it would spread, and she would be helpless. The one thing he had learned about her was how much she hated to feel helpless.

"I have new notes from Owens I sent them to your email you should be getting them anytime."

She responds with a grunt.

He smiles, "I will take that as a thank you. He sits down at his own workstation and pulls up Owens notes. They were having some breakthroughs, and it was taking longer for people to succumb to the virus, but they hadn't had any luck in having someone recover fully after receiving treatments. It was a grueling process. They were working with Owens sending information over to him in Africa hoping that they could stop the spread. It had migrated to another village, and Owens was desperate for a cure.

"I think, what if I…. just yes?…."

“I need a Skype call with Owens now, like right now.”

Blade looks at his watch, “Babe it’s like 2 am there.”

“It doesn’t matter I have it I actually have it. Call him now!”

Blade pulls up the Skype app on his laptop and presses in the numbers.

The call rings and a bed-headed Owens pops on screen. “This better is good, I just dropped off.” He growls.

Raven pushes him out of the way, “Owens try this combination. It is too much to explain I am sending it through right now.”

She uploads a file and they hear the beep on the other end.

“You did it! Raven, you are a genius!! I am going to go synthesize this now. Stay close, I will call you in a few hours with results.” The Skype call ended, and she throws herself into his arms.

“I did it. This is it, I can feel it.” She kisses him hard on the mouth and he fists his hands in her hair.

“Let’s get the serum made and administer it to Maggie and Elizabeth. I know they are in a coma but maybe we will be able to save them.”

He kisses her again and follows her to the lab. His fingers are crossed he hopes that this works. Maggie and Elizabeth were hanging on by a thread if this treatment didn’t work. He was afraid that they may not make it. They needed this win.

Chapter 11 ~Raven

Raven blinks, she is so tired, but this is the last step. She can hang the bag for Elizabeth and Maggie and then rest. It will take a few hours to know if it works if their symptoms are clearing and she can use that time to rest. If it works as she hopes it will, she is going to need to be fresh so that she can make the instructions more concise and get them out to other labs to start producing the cure. She had a good feeling that this serum was the one, it was going to work.

“Hey, I have got some bad news.” Blade steps into the lab.

“Did Elizabeth or Maggie?”

“No, I am sorry their condition hasn’t changed. I just got word from the CDC five more cases have popped up. Our worst fear is confirmed they hit other places.”

“Where? Do they have them in isolation?”

“Two in New York City, One in L.A., One in Austin, and one in Washington D.C. All in isolation and backtracking to figure out where they were infected. The one in New York they found the source he was hit while riding the subway.”

Raven felt a cold chill go through her body.

“He had a bag of syringes Raven; they can see it on the camera. Our worst fear has come true.”

“Ok, it’s not airborne it will be harder to spread that way. Fingers crossed we have a cure.”

A machine beeped, and she turned.

“This is ready, let’s get it bagged and into the patients.” He nods and takes one of the bags from her.

They each go into one of the isolation rooms and hang the bag. It would take a few hours to see improvements.

“Ok now we wait.”

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“Dr. Ballenger, Dr. Benson come quick.” The nurse crashes into the on-call room and flips on the light.

“Betty what the hell?” Raven says covering her eyes from the bright light.

“Come now, you have to come now.” She rushes out of the room and back down the hall. They get into their PPE and rush down the hall.

There in the isolation room Maggie is sitting up drinking out of a straw.

“It worked, Blade it worked!” Raven pushes open the door and rushes into Maggie gathering her up in her arms.

“How are you feeling?” She grins at her friend even though she can’t see her face she knows it is showing through her eyes.

“Like I have been hit by a train.” Maggie smiles up at her and lays back on the pillows.

Raven pulls back and gives her a once over. “How long, how many bags?”

“Three bags about five hours. We wanted to make sure before we woke you, but it is working.”

The sores had receded, and her eyes were no longer bloodshot. The treatment seemed to be working.

“Let’s give it 24 hours before we sound the horn. I think you are going to be ok.”

“Elizabeth?” Raven looks over at Blade, giving her a thumbs-up through the window.

“It looks like she is going to be ok.”

“I will be back to check on you in a bit.”

Raven runs to her desk and sees she has missed 5 calls from Owens. She pushes the button for the Skype call and his face immediately fills the screen.

“It’s working, Raven! We have had at least six patients show huge strides towards wellness. I think you found it.”

“No, we found it. Let’s not get too excited call back in twenty-four hours then we will sound the alarm that the serum works.”

“Got it, see you in twenty-four hours.”

“You are amazing, we have a cure because of you.” Blade picks her up and swings her around the room.

“No not because of me. Because of us. Without you and Owens I would have never been able to accomplish this.”

“I can think of a great way to celebrate.” He says making her laugh.

She boosts herself up and wraps her legs around his waist, kissing him with all the joy she feels at having found a cure.

“We do have some time to waste.”

He walks her back to the on-call room. As soon as the door shuts, they are ripping off their clothes. He latches on to her breast, making her moan. Each time is better as they learn more about each other’s bodies.

He licks his way down her body, taking her scrub pants with him as he lays her back on the bed. Giving her a wicked grin, he licks down her body until he gets to her soaking wet pussy.

“I am going to make you scream.” He promises and buries his head between her legs.He licks and sucks at her throbbing clit until she is screaming his name. She feels her body come apart as the orgasm rips through her.

“I told you I’d make you scream my name.” He says as he crawls up her body. He kisses her, and she tastes herself on him. She feels him at her entrance and reaches, pushing him into her.

“You are so hot, wet and tight Raven I love the feeling of being inside of you.” Blade begins to thrust into her, and she feels her body coiling again with each long hard thrust of him into her wet pussy. Just when she thinks that she can’t take anymore she explodes again feeling him spill his seed inside of her. She knows that he is the one and she is never going to let him go.

Chapter 12 ~Blade

“You ready to go and check on our patients?” Blade asks her as she puts on fresh scrubs.
“Yes, I am ready as well as going back to the lab and using the serum to make a vaccine so we can leave this hospital. I am tired of being here and I am ready to sleep in my own bed, be in my own space.”

He wondered how she would feel about moving to Florida where his base of operations was. He could use a good doctor on his team and even though she wasn’t an infectious disease doc, she was one of the smartest people he had ever met. She could learn. And if that wasn’t her cup of tea, he would quit the service and move here. He wasn’t letting her go no matter what.

“I understand that if I never see another hospital bed, it will be too soon.”

She gives him a wry grin. “In our profession I think that it is all too likely.”

They walk down the hall and look into the first isolation room. Maggie is sleeping peacefully all the sores have healed.

“I think it really worked. Let’s go check, Elizabeth.” They walk to the other observation room and open the door.

“Hey, guys when do we blow this joint?” She grins at them. All of her sores are gone, and it is obvious she is feeling much better.

“How are you feeling?” Raven asks.

“Better, much better. A little weak, but that’s it. Your miracle cure worked Raven, you are going to be famous.”

Raven blushes a little and Blade smiles she deserves every accolade that comes her way.

“I don’t want to be famous I just wanted you to get better. Now I need to go work on the vaccine so we can as you said, blow this joint.”

“Sounds good to me. And Raven?”

Elizabeth gets teary-eyed, “Thanks for saving my life.”

Raven nods and quickly walks out of the room. I know that she is trying to hide her feelings.

“It’s ok to be moved when someone thanks you for saving their life.”
She smiles at me, “I know but this is the first time that it really has sunk in. People tell me that after surgery all the time and sometimes it’s true sometimes I just got lucky, but this time we really did save their lives and the lives of as many people as possible with this serum. We are going to make a vaccine so terrorists can no longer use this as a weapon. It’s just it is all sinking in.”

Blade gathers her in his arms and lets her cry all the good feelings, and worries out. She wipes her eyes and looks up at him.

“Let’s make a vaccine.”

“Sounds good to me.” Blade follows her into the lab to start work on the vaccine. He couldn’t wait to be out of this hospital so that he could tell Raven how he felt. He wasn’t about to tell her loved her in a lab, although it would be appropriate given how their relationship started.

Chapter 13 ~Raven

“It feels so good to be free.” Raven walks out and puts her face up to the sun.

“The real air does feel good, and the sunshine,” Blade says standing beside her on the sidewalk.

“Do you have to go back to Florida tonight?” She asks, shading her eyes from the sun.

“Not until tomorrow.” He says.

“Then come home with me, Blade. We can order in and watch a movie and pretend like we are a normal couple.”

“I thought you would never ask.” He said, leaning down to kiss her.

“What would you have done if I hadn’t?”

A twinkle lights up his eyes, “I would have kept coming around until I wore you down.”

“That is what I was hoping you would say. I love you Blade.” She kisses him softly as he looks down into her face.

“I love you too, Raven. I have something I want to talk to you about, I hope that this is a good time.”

She feels her heart stutter, “What is it?”

“I want you to come to Florida and join my team. I want you to come to Florida so I can marry you too, but I think you might need some time for that part.” He winks at her and she feels her heart start to beat harder.

“I am not an infectious disease doctor I am a surgeon.”

“Is that a no?”
She stands there looking at him. Finding a cure for this virus has given her a sense of purpose that she felt was missing in her work. Having to remove another appendix or gallbladder would pale in comparison to finding the cures for diseases that have the potential to kill millions. Being able to do it at Blade’s side makes it an even better deal.

“It’s a yes. As frightening as this has been it made me feel alive. More alive than I have been in a long time. If you will have me on your team, I would be honored to join.”

He grins and kisses her hard.

“That other thing, if you were serious about that. I would say yes.” She feels her

heartbeat harder. Did she go too far? Was it too soon?

“Are you serious?” He asks looking down at her, searching her eyes.

“Yes, I am serious.”

“Then I say to point me to the nearest jewelry store because I can’t wait to ask you to be my wife.”

“Are you serious?”

“I have never been more serious about anything in my life. I love you Raven Ballenger and I am going to spend the rest of my life proving it to you.”

Chapter 14 ~Raven

Epilogue 5 years later

“Hey honey, have you seen the binky?” Raven asks looking under the couch cushion while trying to bounce their one-year-old on what is left of her hip. Her life in the last five years has changed so much she doesn’t even recognize it.

She moved to Florida and joined Blade’s team until they got married and spent the next few years flying around the world solving disease crises and helping

people. When she found out she was pregnant, they decided it was time for a different life. Blade retired from the Navy with full honors and they moved to Oregon to start a lab to look for serums and vaccines for some world's most deadly diseases. It was still dangerous work, but they had moved back and do most of the administrative work now. She was content with that and with another baby on the way she was going to have her hands more than full.

"This is what you are looking for?" Blade walks in a binky in his hand. Their daughter Clarissa squeals, bouncing on her hip and reaching for her Daddy. She is a daddy's girl through and through.

Raven rubbed her belly as she hoped this little girl turned out to like Mommy.

Clarissa rubs her eyes and puts her head down on Blade's wide shoulders.

"Someone is ready for a nap." He says rubbing her back.

Raven watches as Clarissa's eyes become heavier and heavier and then finally close.

"I am going to go put her down and then it is time for some Mommy, and Daddy time." He wiggles his eyebrows at her.

She laughs and sits down on the couch to wait for him to return. She was a very lucky woman she had met her soul mate who loved her more each day. She had a beautiful and bright daughter and another one on the way. She couldn't possibly ask for more.

"You ready for a back rub?" Blade asks, coming over to stand next to her by the couch.

"I have a better idea." She says pushing him down on the couch and kneeling down in front of him.

"Babe, that isn't," She reaches forward and puts a finger to his lips.

"Shhh, she unzips his pants and pulls out his long hard cock.

She squeezes him and he muffles a moan. One thing they have learned in the last year is how to be quiet.

She leans over and takes him into her mouth. She licks and sucks him, listening to him groan.

“Your mouth feels amazing on my cock.” He says in a low voice. She licks his head then sucks him, listening as his breathing starts to come hard and fast. His hips bucking against her mouth as she pleasures him with her mouth.

He pulls back, pushing her gently away and then picking her up and walking to their kitchen table. He puts her down leaning her over the table lifting the skirt of her dress.

“I don’t want to come in your mouth, I want to come in your sweet pussy.”

He lines himself up and plunges himself into her body. She groans and the amazing full feeling of having him inside of her. Due to her pregnancy, her orgasms come quickly and rock her entire body.

He is moving inside of her, his cock sliding in and out of her as she pants. Then the orgasm is exploding, and she is biting her lip to keep from crying out. The waves of pleasure go on and on and she hears his low groan as he follows her.

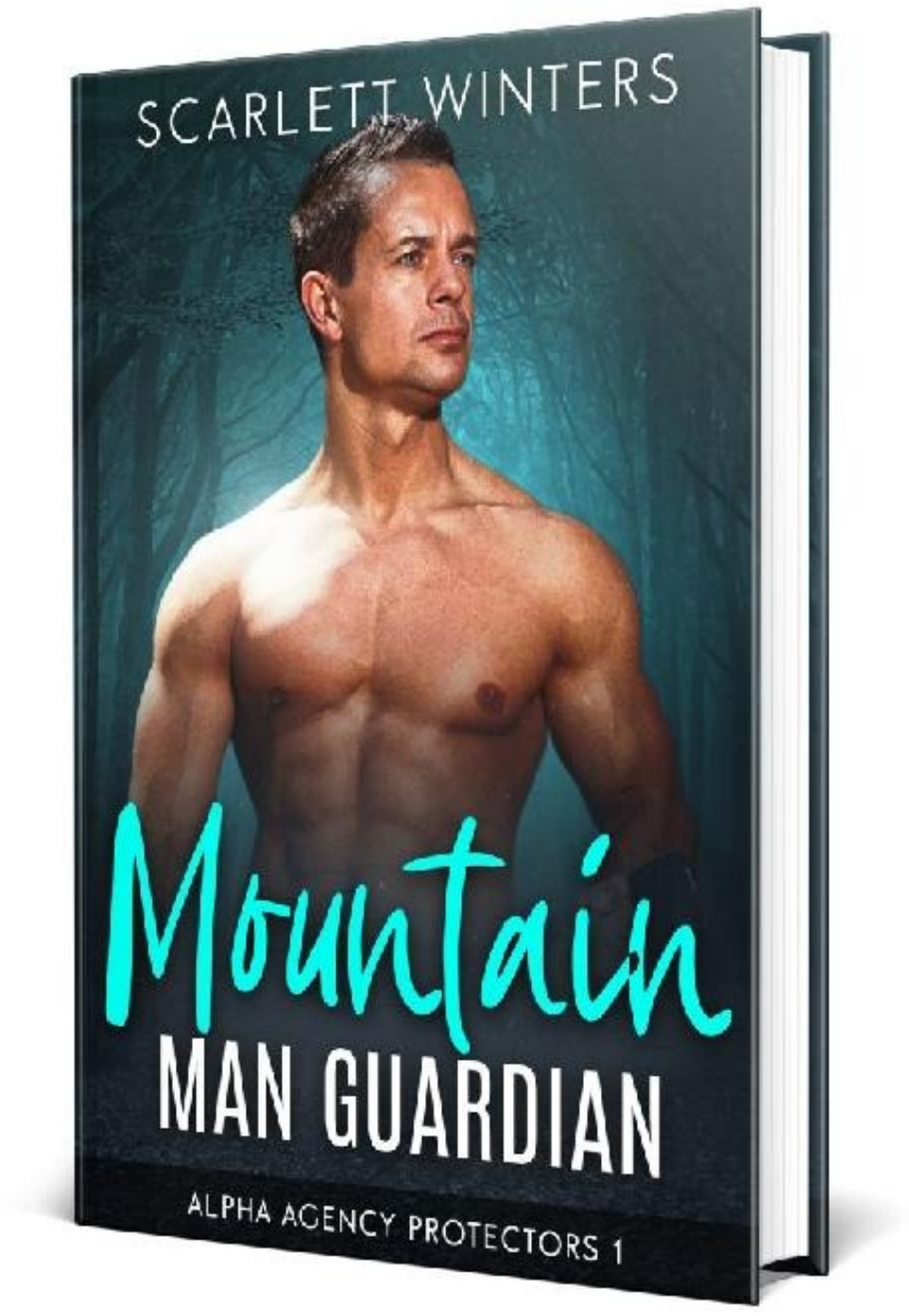
He hugs her from behind, massaging her swollen belly.

“I love you Raven so much.” He whispers.

She turns to him, wrapping her arms around his neck.
“I love you Blade; you are my husband, the father of my children, and my soul mate.”
She kisses him and tastes forever on his lips.

~The End~

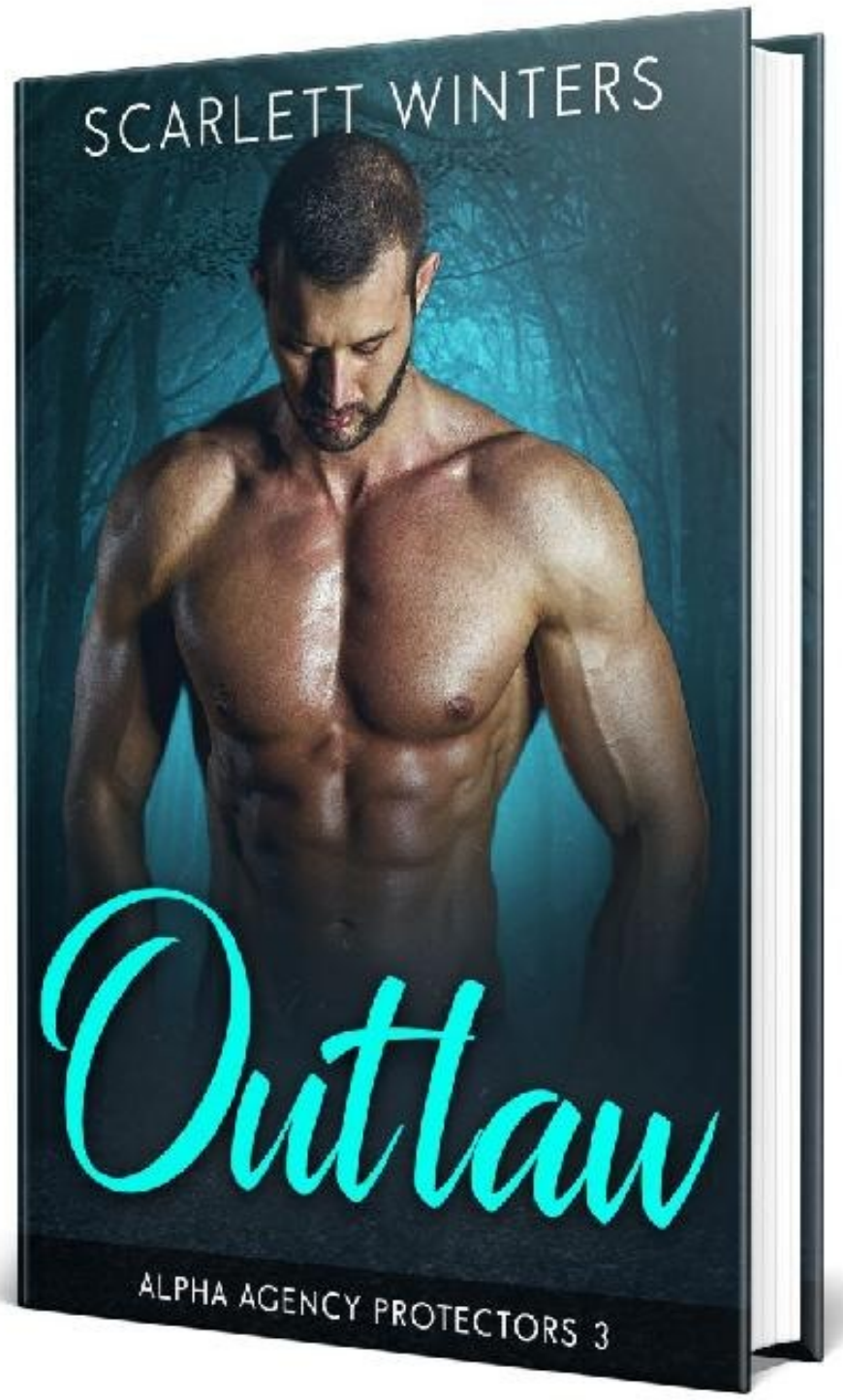
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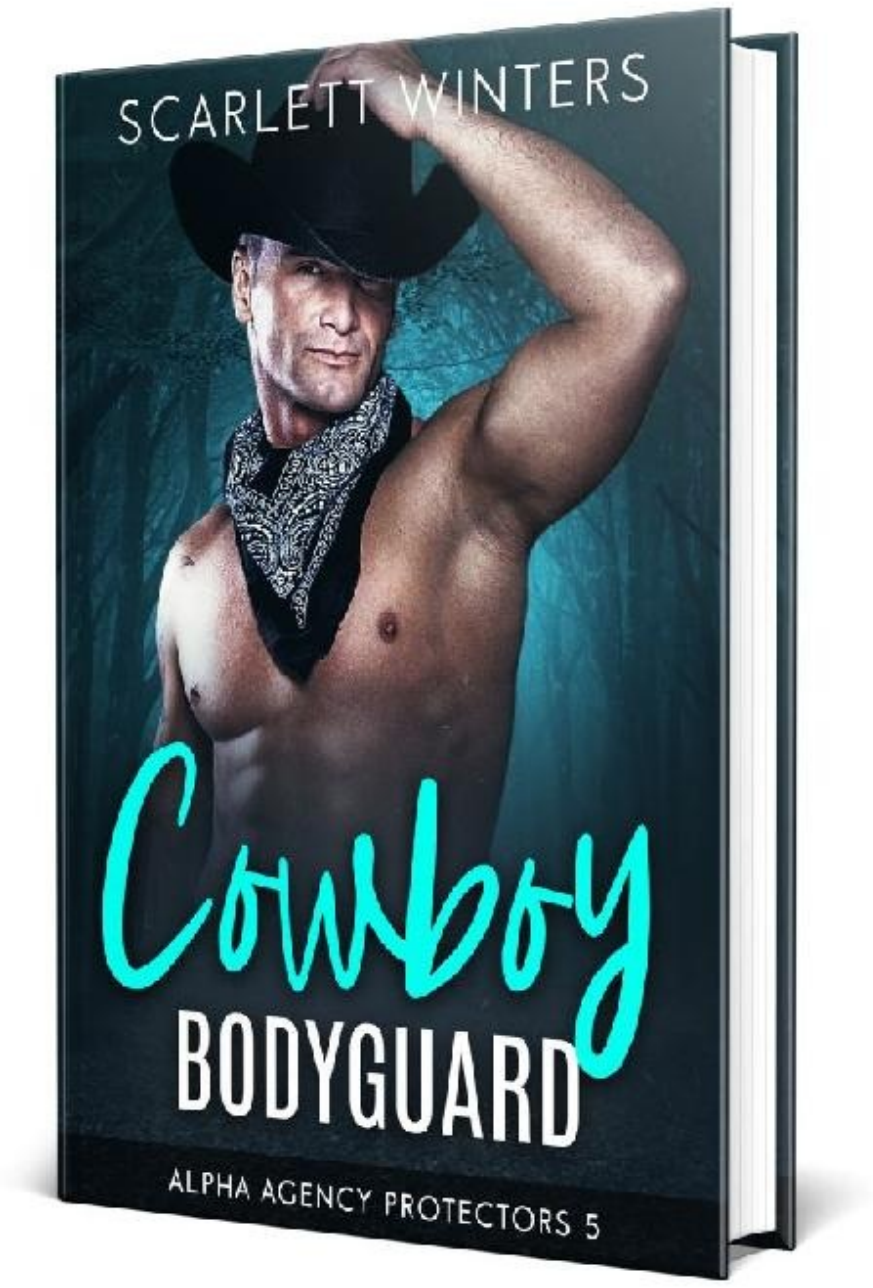

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