

THE HUMANIST

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PROLOGUE

She's been with me ever since the beginning, as if she imprinted herself into my brain.

I still remember two things she told me—her words continue to ring in my ear like an ever-present whisper.

One: People like myself don't go to jail.

That is true. Oh, so true.

And two: The law isn't about common sense.

She's right. She's right about a lot of things. She's right about just about everything.

The law is about what you can prove, about what you can make people believe.

And when you have deep pockets and influence, you can make people believe anything.

It's not about what makes sense. Sometimes fantasy is way more believable than reality. If enough pieces fall together, people will fill in gaps and make sense of the picture. Sure, some of those pieces might be the wrong way around, upside down, or even from a different puzzle. But most of the time, people believe what they're told.

I think about these words often, especially when we're together—as we are now.

Trying to brush my thoughts aside, I hug her tightly, our heads on each other's shoulders.

"Do you think this is what the people want to hear?" I ask.

"Yes," she replies, her voice like sunshine. "They'll buy it. Hook, line, and sinker."

We release each other. She holds my face while my hands move down her body, coming to rest on her hips. Her eyes are mesmerizing, deep, and soothing.

"Just don't tell them the thing," she says.

The thing.

"Of course not," I assure her. "You know what'd happen if I did?"

“It would hurt a lot of people.”

“I know.”

We kiss—long, deep.

I know.

I never want to let her go.

But sometimes, what we want and what we get are two different things.