

Rock Chick Bonus Tracks

TEASER CHAPTER

Rock Chick

His List

Lee

Lee was in the extra bedroom in his condo sorting through the stuff, most of which would be trashed, when he heard the front door open.

He stilled, listening.

That was he stilled all but his hand. Automatically, it crept to his weapon that was sitting on the beat-up metal desk beside him.

Then he heard strange scraping sounds coming from the door handle, like someone was attempting, poorly, to pick the lock.

“Jesus,” he muttered, stood, and leaving the gun where it was, he walked to the door.

He pulled it open and watched Indy’s body jolt so strongly, she lost balance in the crouch she was holding on the balls of her flip-flopped feet and fell to her ass in the hall.

She looked up at him.

“It was open,” he informed her.

“Oh,” she replied.

“So no need to pick the lock,” he shared unnecessarily as she started to push up to standing.

“Yeah, I got that,” she returned irritably, brushing off her ass with one hand, even though the hall was carpeted, and Judy kept it obsessively vacuumed.

He didn’t watch her brush her ass. He watched as a flush formed on her beautiful cheeks. Color, Lee knew, that didn’t come from embarrassment, because as far as he could tell, his woman didn’t get embarrassed. And fuck knew, he’d witnessed her giving herself plenty of opportunity to feel embarrassment.

No, she was annoyed.

She was also curious.

In many instances, he could read her mind—this was how long he'd known her, and how much attention he'd paid to her—but this time she made it easy.

She tried to peer beyond him.

She'd always been nosy, including being nosy about a room in his place that he kept locked.

Her place was now his place, which prompted him sorting that room. He should have done it before, but now he had renters moving in, so he had to see to it.

Considering his woman's most recent antics, he wasn't going to make it easy for her to get what she wanted.

He stood solid in the doorframe and kept the information flowing.

"You do remember three weeks ago? You know, that time when you were kidnapped...*again*...and nearly taken against your will to Costa Rica?"

Her amazing blue eyes darted to him, and Christ.

Give him a year, even five, to think on it, and he couldn't tell you precisely what did it for him with her.

This was because there was so much of her that did it for him.

Those eyes, for starters. That blue—rich and so fucking deep, not dark, not light, an azure so pure, he could swim in it.

Her ample ass and tits were two others.

The fact she was who she was, did what she did, let it all hang out and didn't get embarrassed about any of it was high on the list too.

"That's hard to forget," she retorted, a hint of snap in her tone.

"And you thought it was a good idea to creep around my condo?"

"I wasn't creeping. I have a key."

"You have absolutely no reason to be here. You were creeping."

She made the wise decision not to reply to that.

"And I have a gun," he went on.

She rolled her eyes.

Fair play, he'd never shoot anyone he didn't intend to shoot, and they both knew it.

"You're a trouble magnet," he muttered.

She rolled her eyes again.

Another fair play, Indy being that wasn't news.

He let his gaze drop to her hand, the one she didn't use to brush off her ass.

He returned it to her face. "Is that my lock picking kit?"

"Um..." She didn't exactly answer.

"You stole my lock picking kit?"

"I didn't steal it." Definitely a snap in that. "I found it."

"You found it," he repeated wryly.

"I found it."

She was such a shit liar.

"I hid it in one of my boots so you wouldn't do something like, oh, I don't know..." He gestured to the floor between them and finished, "*This*."

She scrunched up her nose and kept her mouth shut.

He knew why.

She was dying to see what was in the room behind him and getting into an argument with him might mean she wouldn't get what she wanted.

"You know, if you wanted to know what was in this room, there's ways to find out that don't involve breaking and entering," he pointed out.

"Naked gratitude?" she asked snottily.

He grinned. "Well, yeah. That's always an option."

Her stare turned to a glare.

He went on, "But also, you could just ask."

She put a hand on her hip, hitched said hip—always a warning coming from any female, a code red warning coming from Indy—and asked, fake-sweetly, "Can I see what's in there?"

"Sure," he replied easily.

She blinked in surprise, and Lee moved out of her way.

She walked in and gazed around.

Lee watched her.

Her gorgeous, expressive face was filled with wonder.

Another of those things that did it for him. The fact she was gorgeous, but more, how free she was with her expressions. She gave her trust like the precious gift it was, and she gave it openly. Then it was up to you what you did with it.

She'd accept some battering and bruising because that was the kind of heart she had.

But if you broke it, you were history.

That was a nightmare he'd faced when he inadvertently did that ten years ago. He didn't know he'd delivered that blow. He'd considered it since he found out, whether or not he should have said what he said to slow down her pursuit of him so they could both get the wild out before they connected.

The answer he'd come up with was...no. He shouldn't have said it.

It tore him up to know how deeply he'd hurt her.

He didn't know what he should have done in that situation, because, fuck knew, they both needed to get the wild out, and since he wanted her as badly as she wanted him, it was hard as fuck to put her off.

He just wished like hell whatever he said hadn't hurt her.

She spoke, taking him out of these thoughts and reminding him what was most important in the now.

She'd let him back in.

She'd made him work for it, but that was something he had no regrets about at all. He'd do it for longer. He'd relive it. Even if it wasn't much fun the first time, he wouldn't hesitate if it meant she'd be where she was right now.

"So it *is* a secondary command central," she breathed as she looked at the monitors, computers, tech equipment, gun safes and piles of tactical gear. She turned to him. "Do you command legions of mercenaries in bloody coups from here?"

He chuckled. "No."

She appeared disappointed.

He'd given it enough time.

That time was up.

He got in her space and circled her with his arms.

Her sweet tits rested against his chest as she relaxed into him.

Yup. Totally, her tits were high up on his list.

“What you see is the beta version of Nightingale Investigations,” he explained. “I didn’t have an office when I started, it all ran from here.”

“Whoa,” she breathed, also circling him with her arms, natural, easy, like they’d done it for more than the few weeks they’d been together.

It felt good.

The wait was over.

That was even better.

And he liked the look on her face. Like she’d just received a precious gift from him, knowing this part of his history, his life.

So yeah.

Oh yeah.

He loved her expressive face.

“Most of this is going to be recycled,” he shared. “It’s out of date, and it wasn’t top of the line when I bought it, because I couldn’t afford it then. The setup in the offices is the best you can buy. This has been wired into the surveillance room since I got the office, so I could work from home if I wanted to, but I rarely do that. Since it’s rare, there’s no need to have a space like this at our place. So it’s time for it to go.”

“If it’s essentially just a home office, why did you keep it locked down?”

“First, because there are weapons in here. They’re in safes, but I’m responsible for them, so I’ll use every measure of security at hand to keep them as safe as they can be.”

She nodded. “Makes sense.”

“Second, because even if this equipment is old, it’s still worth a whack. It’s not like the door is made of steel, but any lock slows down anyone. I have a security system. If someone breached this condo, it might give me thirty more seconds, or three more minutes for them to get through this door. But time is time, and the more you have, the more it’s on your side.”

“That makes sense too.”

He smiled at her.

“Is that why you’re here? You’re cleaning it out?” she asked.

“Yeah.”

“Is there some reason you didn’t tell me you were coming here to clean this out?” she asked, which was a turnabout, something she was good at, far better than lying.

The way she asked that, it was on him why he was there and hadn’t told her, when they were not one of those couples who shared every move they made during their time apart (unless there was a possibility of snipers setting up for a shot, which, thankfully, was a zone Indy had cleared a few weeks ago). Instead of it being on her, when she had no reason to be there at all, except to break and enter into his defunct home office.

“Got word the place rented this morning,” Lee said. “Decided to hit it rather than procrastinate, because tomorrow, you might get kidnapped again. Or you and Ally might get arrested for trying to sneak backstage at the Red Hot Chili Peppers concert, and I’ll have to drop everything to wade into that.”

Her eyes got big. “The Peppers are in town?”

Noting she seemed unconcerned about future mayhem, considering creating mayhem was her way, even before the recent intensifying of it, but it was concerning to Lee, he looked to the ceiling in search of deliverance.

As usual, he found none.

He dropped his eyes to hers again and tightened his arms. “No trying to sneak backstage.”

“I wouldn’t do that,” she lied. She totally would because she totally already had. “With all the drama recently, I didn’t know they were coming to town. I don’t have tickets.”

Yet was left unsaid.

She shifted her hands so they curled on his shoulders.

“Good news the condo rented,” she said quietly.

“Yeah,” he replied in the same tone.

“You want me to help you clear this out?”

“Bobby and Matt will clear it out. I’m just sortin’ through it, and you can’t help with that.”

She tipped her head to the side, and he felt her hair slide along his forearms.

Her thick, wild, auburn hair, also high up on his list.

“Want me to hang with you while you sort it?” she offered.

He wanted something from her, and he started backing her to the desk to get it.

The blue in her eyes shimmered in that way he liked so fucking much, and he felt it in his dick.

Also on his list.

“That isn’t going to get your stuff sorted, honey,” she whispered.

He lifted her so her ass was on the desk, then forced his way in, her knees opening to allow it.

“You’re with me, so you can’t get kidnapped. Seems I got some free time.”

She smiled at him.

Definitely at the top of the list.

Indy Savage’s smile.

As much as he liked it, Lee angled his head and kissed it off her face.

* * * * *

They were in his Crossfire on the way to a late lunch.

He didn’t get much sorting done, but they say even the busiest people needed to carve out time to find ways to de-stress, and he’d definitely checked that off his to-do list.

Indy flipped her phone closed and told him what he knew, since he listened to her side of the conversation. “We have Chowleena duty tomorrow. Both Tod and Stevie are on flights.”

“Gotcha.”

“We should get a dog.”

“If you want a dog, we’ll get a dog.”

Surprise filtered through the Crossfire.

She processed that quickly and kept going in order to further feel her way through it.

“You should come with me to the Chili Peppers concert. If I can get us tickets.”

“That’d be good.”

“Ally, obviously, has to come with us.”

“Obviously.”

More surprise.

This was because, she knew he knew Indy plus Ally plus live rock and roll was not an experience any man, including one who’d been fired on during a variety of iffy occasions, would

willingly walk into. He'd learned that the hard way at a Nine Inch Nails concert several years before.

But at his condo he'd come hard, as he always did with Indy.

She'd learn, and she was learning.

Naked gratitude went both ways.

Indy, being Indy, though, pushed it.

"Will you teach me how to pick locks?"

"No."

"Ugh. You're no fun."

He was fun enough half an hour ago.

On that memory, Lee smiled at the windshield as he searched for a parking spot outside Las Delicias.

Not much searching had to be done. There was one right outside the door.

"You and parking spots," Indy remarked as he backed in. "It's unnatural."

"What?" he asked.

"Nothing," she mumbled.

He parked. They got out, went into the restaurant, slid in their booth and ordered without looking at their menus.

Indy was sipping her Diet Coke, Lee his iced tea, and he was reflecting on how much he enjoyed three full weeks of no high-speed chases, car bombs exploding, or dead bodies propped in the doorway of his woman's place of business, when it happened.

"Oh. My. *God*," Indy bit off.

Lee felt her vibe and aimed his gaze from the bowl of chips to over her shoulder, something she was doing too, toward the front door.

"Shit," he muttered.

"She's coming over here!" Indy hissed.

And she was.

Cherry Blackwell, his ex.

She was not a woman he liked. She'd tried to trap him with a baby, something which wasn't conducive to a copacetic breakup.

She was talented in certain areas, but mostly a bitch.

More recently, he didn't like her because she'd confronted Indy and her posse at Twin Dragons. No reason for her to do it. Lee and Cherry had been over for years.

That was just total bitch.

Lee didn't like failure. He took great pains to avoid it.

He considered his attraction to Cherry Blackwell a failure.

It was true, she hid the fact she was a complete bitch from him, because she liked him.

That didn't negate the fact he'd missed it, and that wasn't his style.

"Cherry, don't," he warned low when she stopped at their table.

Though, he had to wince. There were still-healing shrapnel scores on her face.

Cherry didn't listen to him, which presented evidence as to why he'd been with her.

She had attitude. She didn't simper or give into everything he wanted because she wanted him. Both he found boring, and both were surefire that he wouldn't stick around.

Mostly, though, he never got deep with anyone because he was timing his move on Indy.

But Cherry did play games, he just caught it too late.

"*You got me exploded!*" she shrieked at Indy.

Immediately, Lee slid out of the booth. "Cherry, calm down."

She whirled on him. "Fuck calm, Lee. Your *bitch* got me *exploded!* My car is a total write-off, and *look at me!*" she screeched, pointing both hands, fingers straight, nails perfectly manicured, to her face.

In that moment, he gave zero shits about the cuts on her face, the fact he knew she was in the hospital for burn treatment for three days, the fact she probably was still healing in a variety of places on her body now covered with clothes, or the pain all that caused. Even after she'd pulled the shit on him that she'd pulled, he cared when her car exploded, after it exploded, and when she walked toward them moments ago.

Now, he didn't think about it.

He also gave zero shits that, with Cherry being loud, people were turning to watch.

Something clicked, and when that something clicked, there was no way to turn it off.

That something being about Indy, it'd take an act of God to turn it off.

Therefore, Lee got close to Cherry, bent his head to look down at her, and growled, “What did you call my woman?”

“Lee,” Indy said soothingly, and he sensed her movement to get out of the booth.

He turned only his head to her. “Stop moving.”

For once, she didn’t talk back, just stared at him with big eyes and ceased all movement.

He shifted his attention again to Cherry. “Do you know me?”

In the face of his mood, something that could make grown men quake, she was trying to keep her shit together and put on a brave face, but he could see the apprehension in her eyes.

It came out in her voice too. “Y-yes.”

“So you know, you do not walk up to my woman and talk shit, you do not call her names, not in front of me, not ever, Cherry. Are you hearing me?”

Cherry took a slight step back.

Lee didn’t move, but he did demand, “Answer.”

She tried that little-girl pleading he hated so fucking much when he was with her.

Christ, she was a total fail.

“Lee, she got my car exploded.”

“Indy might not be your biggest fan, but she had nothin’ to do with what happened to you. She might not have the scabs to prove it, but she went through worse than you, Cherry. Far worse. And she isn’t traipsing around town gettin’ up in people’s shit. For fuck’s sake, grow up. Or at least learn the world doesn’t revolve around you and you can’t behave however you like wherever you are. Not when doin’ it is selfish, ugly, spiteful and mean. Trust me, babe, it is *not* a good look.”

She assumed an expression like he’d slapped her.

Their server, completely ignoring the situation (they were regulars, but even so, nothing got in the way of food being delivered at Las Delicias), landed their order on the table and took off.

As for Lee, he ignored the look on Cherry’s face. She’d earned his words, and if she didn’t know it with the shit she pulled the last time they were together, she wasn’t going to walk away not knowing she’d earned them now.

“Go. Get out of our space,” he ordered. “But mark me, Cherry, if I hear Indy or Ally or any of their posse has any problems with you in the future, I won’t be happy.”

She looked like she was going to say something, wisely decided against it, turned stiltedly, and tried to go for casual as she walked away, but she didn't manage it.

She also didn't look at Indy as she did this, so Lee figured she got his message.

Then again, when that switch was flipped, not many people missed his message.

He slid into the booth and turned to his woman to see if she was okay.

The second he did, he had her hand in his face, and as she forked burrito into her mouth with her other hand, she spoke into her phone, which was tucked to her ear with her head tipped to the side to hold it to her shoulder.

"Ally," she said with a full mouth, then swallowed. "*You will not believe what just happened!*" She was okay.

Lee unwrapped his own silverware and listened to her tell the story. He sighed through part of it, ate through the rest of it.

When she was done, Indy gave Ally the chance to respond, then cried, "I know! It was totally righteous!"

That was when Lee smiled.

* * * * *

After he finished, but was rolling through the residue of his orgasm, Indy, who'd already had hers (two of them), slid down so he was fully encased and dropped her forehead to his shoulder so her hair slid all over his neck and chest.

They were in lotus position, and he tightened his hold on her, which was already tight.

She turned her head and pressed it against the side of his neck.

"Love you," she whispered, so soft, it was good he had excellent hearing.

"Love you too," he whispered back, not nearly as soft, and slanted his head to tell her what he wanted.

She gave it to him, her mouth.

He kissed her as he shifted her to her back, him on top.

When he stopped kissing her, he lifted his head and looked down at her through the shadows of her darkened bedroom.

When they got married, started a family, they'd have to move. It'd suck. He'd been coming to this duplex for as long as he could remember. It reminded him of Grandma Ellen, a woman always full of vibrancy and energy and love. And now it was all about Indy, who was all of the same.

But it was too small for a family.

However, even when they moved, he was giving Indy a free hand to decorate their bedroom.

This room was her. The real her. All woman. The power of the feminine. Having it and flaunting it. But there was a delicacy to it. Her hidden core. The softness. The sweetness. The vulnerability she refused to show, except to the man who she let sleep at her side.

And that was powerful too.

He felt like an invader in this room. He'd worked hard for the honor of being in her bed.

It was part of the spoils of winning India Savage.

He'd wanted her since he knew what girls could be to boys.

Now she was his.

And he didn't ever want to lose that feeling.

"Is there a second wave of people you need to call to tell what happened with Cherry?" he teased.

She'd been on the phone all afternoon. He might be wrong, but he thought she'd even made a call to a friend in England.

"Not exactly," she returned. "But there will be follow up that's necessary to bask in the afterglow."

He grinned at her through the dark.

With the sudden change in her vibe, Lee knew what was coming when she rested her hand on his cheek and swept her thumb over his lips.

"Those marks on her face—" she began, her voice now quiet, concern threading through it.

And there was the softness.

The sweetness.

The real Indy.

Absolutely at the top of his list.

Even so.

“You’re not responsible,” he replied firmly.

“Her car exploded, Lee.”

“You’re still not responsible.”

“I know, but—”

“I get it. Wilcox isn’t available for her to be mad at, but that doesn’t mean she gets to take her shit out on you. You didn’t plant that bomb. You also didn’t walk up to her while she was enjoying a night out with her girls and say nasty shit to her or in front of her mother. Honest to God, if that car bomb hadn’t happened, and she walked into LD and saw us, what do you think she’d do?”

“Come over to visit and spread her brand of bitchy cheer all over our burritos.”

“Exactly.”

“No one should mess with an LD burrito,” she mumbled.

“Gorgeous,” he called tersely to get her complete attention.

“What?”

“It sucks that happened to her. But if you don’t learn your lesson not to be a total asshole after rollin’ around in hot and sour soup, when your car explodes, you learn. If you don’t, it’s fair game how those lessons are taught. I don’t suspect today’s gonna turn her into Mother Theresa, but maybe it’ll have penetrated, even a little bit.”

“I’m not sure. Cherry has pretty fortified bitch defenses.”

Lee started chuckling, even if that was true.

“I mean, what she did to you,” she continued. “It was pretty ballsy she went on the offensive at all, considering your history.”

“Agreed.”

“Are you...over that?”

“I didn’t knock her up, fortunately, so I was over it after I finished things with her. But I don’t want to have to buy an industrial washing machine to clean your clothes should there be a next go ’round with you and her. Denver is a big city. But it isn’t big enough for the two of you if she doesn’t back off.”

“It wasn’t me who threw the soup,” she informed him.

“Whatever,” he muttered.

“It wasn’t.” That was more heated.

Lee sighed. “Honey, can this be the last time Cherry is in our bed?”

She gave that a second to mull over, then agreed. “Absolutely.”

He kissed her quick then pulled them both out of bed so they could do the sex clean up and hit it to actually sleep.

He had her pinned mostly under him in bed, the soft drone of traffic on Broadway one block away acting as their white noise, and he was close to drifting off. He already thought she had, when she mumbled sleepily, “I forgot to tell you. Ally texted while I was talking to Marianne. She scored some tickets to RHCP.”

Well...

Shit.

At least whatever he was in for wouldn’t be boring.

And fuck him, he’d never admit it, not out loud, but whatever it was, he was looking forward to it.

Because it would be pure Indy.

Lee settled deeper into his woman.

And he fell asleep.

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