

The Superhero's Husband

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Part 1

Rhett's heart pounded as he leaned against the cool, metal wall of the self storage units. He wiped the sweat from his brow while squinting at the mid-day sun, imagining the worst.

Would today be the day his wife was finally defeated?

What surprise was ahead of them?

Rhett took his wife's hand and pulled her closer to him.

She pushed away. "I'm going to get them." Rayne's green eyes shimmered from beneath her red mask. "Stay here."

Stay here. Stay out of my way. I'll be home soon.

Those were words Rhett was used to hearing, but after eight years of marriage, Rayne should know he ignored them most of the time.

THUD!

Rhett and Rayne jerked away from the thin metal wall at their backs.

"They're right behind us." Rayne flew up, pulled her golden hair off her face, and planted a peck on Rhett's cheek. "Love you." She snapped her yellow cape around her curvy body as she disappeared down the deserted aisle that ran along the back side of the storage unit complex.

“I love you, too.” Rhett whispered, even though his wife could no longer hear him. His shoulder skimmed against the wall as he crept along the building in the direction his wife had headed.

At the end of the long row of storage units, Rhett pulled his gun from the holster at his waist. Rayne didn’t believe in weapons, and she didn’t need to use them. Being able to control mother nature was enough. Rhett didn’t have that luxury. He would take all the protection he could get—not for him, but for his wife.

Rhett leaned around the corner of the building and scanned the next aisle. Nothing but a wide, dusty gravel path between two rows of closed, overhead garage doors.

THUMP!

Rhett tightened his grip on his 9mm and edged his way down the path, checking each storage unit door as he passed. The wind picked up, blowing dust from the gravel path into his eyes.

Where had Rayne disappeared to?

His phone buzzed on his belt. Rhett tried to ignore it, but when the call ended, it vibrated again, indicating a text.

Stay here. His wife’s words echoed in his head.

Fine.

He pulled out his phone to read a message from his boss.

Gregory: The project meeting has been rescheduled to 3PM today. See you there.

Rhett glanced at the time. One-fifteen. Would it be possible to assist his wife in taking down the bad guys, recover the stolen merchandise, and get to work in time to get to the meeting?

Of course. He had done so much more in so much less time.

The breeze turned cool as clouds blocked the sun. Rhett took a deep breath. When the weather rapidly changed, he knew Rayne was still in control—still alive and well. If the weather ever grew eerily silent during a take-down, that’d be his time to worry.

Rhett traveled down the path between the storage compound, then turned down the next row lined with large, overhead doors. He flexed his trigger finger.

BAM!

Then a woman’s scream.

Where was Rayne?

Enough being careful!

Rhett’s legs were not fast enough as he raced down the aisle to the last unit. It had its overhead door lifted half-way. The wind picked up, nearly blinding him with a dust storm. Rhett pulled a pair of sunglasses from his breast pocket and slipped them on.

He followed the swirling dirt into the large storage unit at the end of the aisle, pressing his back to the wall as he tried to see through the heavy dust. The dirt was so thick, he struggled to see anything, but when he looked up, he saw the bright green glow of Rayne's eyes cutting through the cloud.

"It's Elemental Fox."

"I told you she'd find us!"

"Let them. We need to go."

Rhett listened to the three distinct voices, barely audible over the howling wind. He kept his back to the wall as he journeyed deeper into the unit. The dust and wind picked up, swirling in a circle like a tornado. He'd seen Rayne do this trick before. After the wind and dust, she'd bring in rain to clear the debris from the air while she zip-tied her targets with the police-issued cuffs she carried.

Even though Rayne was a superhero, she lacked one of the common traits it seemed most superheroes shared—she was strong, but not super-strong. She relied on controlling the weather to save the day.

As Rhett neared the back wall of the unit, he stopped, making out the silhouette of a person leaning against a large container resembling a giant steel barrel. Any closer and the man was sure to notice him as well as he noticed the man. Rhett backed away a few steps.

Just like on cue, the rain started, settling the dust. Rhett crouched behind another steel container. There had to be ten of them, and that was what he could see.

The rain pelted the ground, and the wind picked up, making it impossible to see.

KA-POW! WHAP!

Rhett readied his gun and peered around the barrel.

Please make sure Rayne's okay.

Elemental Fox swooped down, the glow intensifying in her eyes, as she pulled one handcuffed woman towards two men who were already handcuffed to the wall on the other side of the giant storage unit.

PING!

Rhett swung around to a man with dark hair similar to his own, and a muscular face smeared with dirt standing right behind him. The man's lips parted, revealing too-white teeth.

Rhett lifted his gun, but the man swung a pipe, knocking the gun from Rhett's hands.

Rhett grunted as he flung his body forward, tackling his opponent. He grabbed the man's wrist, trying to twist him over, but Muscle Face turned too quickly, throwing Rhett off him.

Rhett crouched down low, eyeing his gun a few feet away. The man's eyes followed Rhett's, and they both went in for a dive.

POW!

His body pounded into the muscle man's. Rhett wedged his hand between the man's arm and torso, grabbing his wrist and twisting him over. He leaned forward, grabbing the man's other

arm and twisting it behind him. Gathering both the man's wrists at the small of his back, Rhett knelt on the man's thighs while he held him to the ground. Rhett's phone buzzed again.

Not now.

The rain stopped, and Rhett could get a clear view of his wife. She had four people—three men and one woman—handcuffed to some metal piping that covered the electrical wiring.

She pulled her wet hair off her face.

The man beneath Rhett kicked, and Rayne snapped her head in Rhett's direction. The look of accomplishment on her face turned to anger when she saw her husband.

Rhett's chest tightened, but he searched for his most charming, innocent smile. "I thought you could use some help."

Rayne's jaw tightened as she flew over to Rhett, pulling a pair of handcuffs off her belt and taking Muscle Face's hand from his. "I told you to stay put."

"You should know me better."

Rayne pressed her lips together. She pulled Muscle Face over to the others and attached him to another metal pipe. She then pulled the phone off her belt and dialed.

"It's Elemental Fox. I have a present for you down at the Highway 15 Storage Unit Complex." Rayne hung up, and flew over to examine the silver barrels.

The containers were nearly as tall as Rhett—probably about six feet. Rayne touched each one as she walked through the unit. "One, two..." she weaved between them, counting, "...eleven...twelve." She spun towards the five they had apprehended. "The report was four dozen were stolen. Where are the rest?"

The handcuffed woman spit in her direction. The others set their jaws.

In the years Rhett had been helping Rayne catch the bad guys, Rhett knew they didn't spill their guts like in the movies.

"No worries. The police will tell me who you are and we'll find a connection. We always do."

Rhett's phone buzzed again, and the screen displayed more messages from his boss.

Gregory: The meeting has been moved to the downtown office.

Gregory: Rhett? Where are you?

Rhett looked up to his wife. "I gotta run." He swooped down and picked up his gun, tucking into the concealed holster at his waist. He tried to brush the dirt from his clothing, but only smeared it in. Luckily, he carried a change in his vehicle.

"Not so fast!" Rayne walked into the light streaming in from the storage unit's door. She turned around, displaying her pissed-off-lip-twitch. "Come here!"

Rhett followed her outside the building and outside anyone's earshot.

Rayne spun on her heel. “What were you doing? You came in too early! I hadn’t given you the all clear!” She reached up and wiped a handful of blood from Rhett’s temple. “You could have gotten hurt...or died!”

“I heard a woman’s voice. I thought it was you!”

“You thought that was me? Come on, Rhett, we have a secret code word. Did you hear me saying ‘puppy’?” She put a hand on her hip.

Rhett’s hands fisted, and he forced them to open. “If I have an inkling you’re in trouble, I will not hold back.”

“You could have died!”

“So, could you!” Rhett took a step back. “I helped.” He waved his hand towards the storage unit. “I got one of them. He was sneaking toward the door. He would have gotten away.”

“So, let him. It’s not worth risking your life.”

“Why can’t you ever accept that I’m helpful?! I help you all the time.” In fact, Rayne couldn’t do it without him, he was certain.

“You’re a distraction. Next time, I’ll take my brother instead. He’s at least invincible.” Rayne looked at Rhett’s blood on her fingers and wiped it on her black leggings.

“Why don’t you then?!”

Rayne always retreated to her family when she was frustrated, but the threats never amounted to anything. Rayne huffed, and Rhett’s phone vibrated again.

“I gotta go. Work’s waiting.” He took off towards his SUV. He didn’t need to look over his shoulder to confirm Rayne would wait at the storage unit for the police—she always tied things up with them. Rhett also knew he could never be around when the police showed up. If he was seen connected with Elemental Fox, they may figure out Rayne’s secret identity. It was bad enough he risked it sometimes in front of the villains, but Rayne always covered for him.

Everyone believed a superhero.

Besides, Rhett had to change and clean up before heading off to that work meeting he was sure to be late for. He’d need a good excuse, since he didn’t want to jeopardize that promotion he was up for.

Rayne would realize he was important...if not to her and her fight for justice, then to the company Rhett worked for.