**Billy the Beast**

by

L.O.R.D.

**CHAPTER 3**

“Very sad day here at Alexandria Elementary School,” expressed a female Latina news reporter as she reported live in front of the school, with red-and-blue lights projecting from the cop cars that sat in the backdrop. A mass of police officers, plain-clothed, uniformed, and some guiding scent-sniffing K9s, frequented in and out of the school as she continued. “A seven-year-old child, Ebony Anderson, has yet to be found and is still missing from earlier today. Police aren’t releasing too many details at this time, but what has been confirmed is they scoured the entire school and the little girl is not inside.”

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The principal’s office was crowded with school em­ployees, Charelle and Daryl, police officers, and relentless detectives who felt no remorse while conducting mandatory up-front questioning techniques.

Charelle sat in a chair right next to Daryl’s, slumped over with her face buried into his chest, crying profusely as he held her in his arms. While consoling her, his face was grief-stricken and covered with silent tears, watching closely as the lead detective questioned an old woman who appeared to be senile or suffering from Alzheimer’s. She was the school’s crossing guard.

“OK,” Detective Tarrasi said, gesturing for the woman to work with him while placing a hand in front of himself. “Ma’am, you said you know she got on the bus today, right?”

“Yes.”

“So you saw her get on the bus, right?”

“No.”

“Well, ma’am, how do you know she got on the bus today if you didn’t see her get on?”

“Because,” the old woman spat, becoming just as irritated as the detective questioning her, “her classroom is the closest class to the school exit. And she’s always the first child on the bus. Every day.”

“I understand that. But I’m talking about today! Did she get on the bus *today*?”

“Yes.”

“So then you did see her get on the bus?”

“No.”

“Well, then how do you—never mind. You’re all set, ma’am. You can leave.”

Detective Michael Tarrasi was well respected amongst his peers. He’d been with the force for eighteen years. He once worked Robbery Homicide, but was now a veteran in working kidnapping, sex crimes, child molestation, and missing persons cases.

“Alright,” Detective Tarrasi announced. “I’d like to speak with the parents privately, if you will.” At that time, Tarrasi’s officers cleared the room of all civilians, leaving only two detectives and Tarrasi himself.

“Look, Daryl—I mean Mr. Anderson,” Tarrasi quickly corrected himself. “I don’t know how your daughter could just disappear like this—”

“Go figure,” Daryl said with anger, cutting Tarrasi off before he could finish.

“Hey! What’s that supposed to mean?”

“It means get off your ass and do something about it! Put out an APB, set checkpoints up throughout the city, start the search process now instead of waiting for it to be too late. That’s what it’s supposed to mean!”

“I see,” Tarrasi responded sarcastically. “Now that something of yours has vanished into thin air without anyone knowing anything about it, you want us to remove the stars from the sky to help you. Doesn’t feel so good when the shoe is on the other foot, does it?”

“You comparing my daughter to some damn money?” Daryl shot back, knowing Tarrasi was referring to the cash that was never recovered in Daryl’s case.

Charelle was still sobbing with her face buried into Daryl’s chest, too hurt to be paying them any attention. That was until she suddenly felt Daryl jerk away. “*Motherfuckah!*” he growled as he lunged for Tarrasi. The detective fell out of his chair backwards as Daryl pushed him over with both hands tightly clenched around his neck.

“Let go . . . Get the fuck off of ’im, you son of a bitch!” the two detectives ordered while struggling to free Tarrasi. But during the detachment, Daryl was able to get off one good punch.

“Bastard!” Tarrasi barked as he grabbed his pained face. The bridge of his nose was split and oozing blood.

“Get ’im cuffed and sit him in a car out front until the meat-wagon comes,” one of Tarrasi’s fellow detectives yelped as Daryl was on his stomach being detained by four cops. “You earned your ass a trip straight back to the can!”

“*No*, please don’t take him. Please don’t take him. God help me!” Charelle beseeched, crying extra heavy while begging and pleading as they held her back from inter­fering. Her chest was rising up and down, her face was soaked with tears, and her hair was messier than a bird’s nest. But right now, nothing in this world mattered except for her daughter, and now Daryl.

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With his head hung low and his hands cuffed behind his back, Daryl sat in the rear of the police car, totally stressed out and discombobulated. He was on his way to jail for yet another stretch, but even more worrisome, his little girl was missing and he had no idea of her fate. There was nothing he could do to help her or keep her safe from harm. And that’s what broke his heart the most.

“I’m sorry, Ebony,” Daryl said aloud, rocking back and forth as he broke down in tears. “I love you, baby,” he carried on, crying with no shame and speaking as if she could hear his every word. “Daddy loves you, baby. And I’m so, so sorry . . .”

Back inside the school, Detective Tarrasi was seated in his chair with his head laid back as two paramedics patched him up. Charelle was still present but difficult to deal with as her thoughts were scattered everywhere with detectives trying to gather information from her in order to find out what happened to Ebony. Things had gone from bad to worse in no time at all. But fortunately, Tarrasi seemed to be thinking with reason.

“Alright, alright, that’s enough already!” Tarrasi exclaimed, warding the paramedics off in a grumpy manner. “Angelo,” he yelled out. “I want you to go outside and bring Mr. Anderson back in here, uncuffed.”

“But why? He just broke your freakin’ nose!”

“Listen,” Tarrasi responded. “I made an unprofessional remark, which I shouldn’t have done. And for that I owe him an apology. But furthermore, I’m not going to send a man in this predicament to prison. So forget it.”

“But—”

“There’s no buts about it! Now go out there, uncuff Mr. Anderson, and bring him back in here . . . And under no circumstances at all do I want him arrested. Are we clear?”

“If you say so.”

“*Are we clear?*” Tarrasi specified.

“Yes.”