

Author's Note: This story follows events in "[Some Fireman Like You](#)." You should read that one first before reading this one.

If At First You Don't Succeed

By [Tig](#)

*McGraw State Mental Facility
November 5, 1977*

"Okay, Denise, I am going to release you, but with a couple of conditions that will be documented in your record." The beady-eyed doctor fidgeted with a paper clip in his hand. "First of all, you may *never* practice as a nurse in any facility. You know your license has been revoked in the state of California. Secondly, you must stay out of Los Angeles."

Denise Sutton smiled. "Thank you, Doctor. I won't disappoint you. I'm ready to start a new life for myself. And I am truly repentant for my past misdeeds."

The doctor returned the smile, satisfied that his patient was completely rehabilitated.

Denise took one final look at the room where she had spent the last year. Her bag was packed, and she was ready to leave. *One year of my life spent here... He'll pay for this... He'll pay dearly for this.* She reached under the mattress and pulled out a yellowed newspaper clipping with a photo. She looked at it with contempt. *You think you've seen the last of me, but you're wrong. You and I have some unfinished business...* Then she slowly and methodically tore the paper to shreds.

*Station 51
Two days later*

"I'm tellin' ya Roy, it can't miss! There's a need for this kind of service. We could make a fortune!" John Gage enthusiastically waved his arms in the air.

Roy rolled his eyes. "Now where have I heard *that* before?" he said as he walked away from his partner.

Johnny ran around and got in front of his retreating friend. "Just hear me out, Roy. I have it all planned out! It can't miss!"

Roy stopped dead in his tracks. "Okay, I'll listen to your plan on one condition... count me OUT!"

Johnny shook his head. "You *won't* be saying that once you hear what I have to say. I'm tellin' ya, Roy, it's fool proof!"

Roy stared at his partner in disbelief. *This is going to be a long shift...* "Well, can we at least get some coffee first?"

Johnny followed his partner into the kitchen. "Sure, sure. You don't have to be a grouch!"

Roy sighed. *To argue would be pointless.* "Sorry, Johnny. Tell me this brilliant idea of yours."

Johnny grinned. "I thought you'd never ask! Okay, well, remember Paula? The girl with that little dog that I took care of?"

"How could I forget..."

"Well, I was thinking...." Johnny began.

"That's a first," Chet interrupted when he walked into the kitchen.

"Very funny, Chet," Johnny shook his head and then turned back to Roy. "Anyway, like I was saying, I started thinking about all the people who have to stay in the hospital, or go out of town, or for whatever reason, need a dog-sitter. Roy, we should go into the dog-sitting business!"

Roy raised his eyebrows at his partner.

"Now, I know what you're thinking, Roy, so give me a chance to explain."

"Oh, I'm all ears."

"This I gotta hear!" Chet exclaimed.

Johnny was just about to explain his theory when Vince Howard from the LA County Sheriff's office walked in. "Hey, fellas. How's it going?"

"It's going good, Vince. What brings you by?" Johnny asked.

"I need to speak to Captain Stanley. He around?"

"Uh, yeah. I think he's in the office. Want me to get him?"

"No, that's okay, I'll find him." Vince stopped and looked at the two paramedics before him. *I sure hope all this is for nothing.... this is sure gonna put a damper on their day.*

When Vince left the kitchen, Johnny and Roy exchanged looks. "Wonder what that's all about," Johnny pondered.

"I don't know," Roy said.

"Well, whatever it is, it can't be good. Otherwise, why didn't he just tell us?" Chet stated.

The three men looked at one another and chose not to speculate.

"Roy! John!" Mike called as he entered the kitchen. "Cap wants to see you in his office."

An unspoken word hung heavily in the air.... *trouble...*

Johnny and Roy walked into Hank's office, wondering what trouble was coming their way.

"Sit down, boys," Stanley stated.

Oh... this is really not a good sign... "Um, that's okay, Cap, we'll stand," Johnny said. He threw a nervous glance at Roy.

"What's going on?" Roy asked in a serious tone.

"John, Roy, I was just filling Captain Stanley in on some news I thought you'd be very interested in," Vince said regretfully.

"What's that?" Johnny asked.

"I don't know quite how to say this without just coming right out with it. Denise Sutton has been released from McGraw. They say she's been rehabilitated."

"Oh my God," Roy said softly. *"I'll be back, and then, it will be your turn . . ."* the demented woman's voice echoed in his head. "She threatened me," he stated flatly.

John sat down, his face pale. "Vince... how? Why? The woman almost *killed me!*" *I don't want to go down that road again.*

"I'm sorry, that's all I know. I wanted to inform you, so you can keep your guard up for a while, in case she plans to carry though with that threat. In the meantime, I'm afraid there's nothing we can do. If it's any comfort to you, she has been ordered to stay out of LA, and she can no longer practice nursing."

The two shocked firemen looked at Vince. Stanley looked at his paramedics and then turned to Vince. "Thanks for coming by, Vince. How about a cup of coffee?"

"Sure. That'd be nice," Vince said as he followed Stanley out of the small office, leaving the two bewildered men behind.

Denise Sutton walked around her newly rented apartment and was pleased. *It's small... but it's also out of the way... perfect!* She smiled as she counted the money in her wallet. *This trust fund will last me for quite some time... I have plenty of funds to accomplish my goal.*

Hearing the doorbell ring, she concealed her wallet within her purse and answered the door.

"Delivery for you, ma'am," the young postal worker smiled at the pretty woman.

"Thank you," Denise said, grabbing the package anxiously and closing the door without a second glance.

She ripped open the package. The contents made her smile cynically. *My new identity.* She held up the social security card: "Dora Barrett," she said aloud. Sorting through the package, she found a driver's license and a nursing license. *Welcome to LA, Dora Barrett...*

She walked to the bathroom and looked in the mirror: "Well, Dora, it's time to do something about this hair... Let's go shopping."

"I don't know about you, Roy, but the thought of that woman out on the streets again gives me a bad feeling."

Roy nodded in agreement. "I know what you mean... but Vince did say she's not allowed in LA."

"Roy, LA is a big place... she could be anywhere!"

"That's true, Junior, but then again, they wouldn't have released her if she wasn't rehabilitated."

"I sure hope you're right."

The two men fell silent.

Denise entered the beauty salon, and took a deep breath. *I don't like having to do this... all the more reason to make them pay for what they've done to me and my family.*

"Can I help you?" a lady at the salon asked.

"Yes, I'm going for a new look. I'd like a cut and color," Denise answered.

"Do you have an appointment?" the lady asked.

"No," Denise answered.

The lady started flipping through an appointment book. "How about next Tuesday, 10:00?"

Denise opened up her wallet and pulled out a large bill, handing it to the woman. "How about now?"

Not one to turn away that kind of cash, the beautician pocketed the bill. "Right this way, miss."

An hour later, Denise gazed into the mirror. Her once waist long red hair was now bobbed to her shoulders, and the color was now dark brown. *Hello, Dora. No... I still see Denise... you need something more.*

Denise left the salon and did a little more shopping before returning home. The final part of her disguise held within the contents of the shopping bag. *No one will recognize me now.* She laughed out loud as she tried on the rose colored glasses. *Now... to get back into circulation, let's find a job.*

She picked up the newspaper and looked through the classified ads... "School nurse wanted... Pinewood Elementary." *Sounds perfect!*

"It's time for lunch. Who's turn is it?" Chet asked.

"I hope it's not mine," Johnny said. "We haven't stopped all morning! It's only 12:00 and I'm bushed already."

"It's my turn," Marco said. "I'll have it ready in a few minutes."

The rest of the men smiled and sat around the table. Mike picked up the newspaper and was looking at an article with interest. "Hey, Roy, there's an article in here about Pinewood Elementary. Isn't that where your kids go?"

"Yeah. Well, just Chris. He's in first grade there. What's it about?"

"Says they're trying to raise funds for a new gym."

"Oh great. Fundraisers," Roy sighed.

"Hey, guys, just got this memo from headquarters," Captain Stanley said as he walked in. "It says they're sending a rep over with some new tanks and masks for us to take a look at. If we like them, we can use them on a trial basis and either recommend them to the department or scrap 'em."

"When's the rep coming?" Marco asked.

"A week from today," Stanley answered.

Six days later

At the DeSoto Home

"I'll get it!" Roy called to his wife as he ran to the phone. "Hello?"

"Hello. Is this Roy DeSoto?"

"Yes it is."

"Hi. I'm Dora Barrett, the school nurse at Pinewood Elementary. I'm calling about your son, Chris."

Roy's heart skipped a beat. "Is Chris okay?"

"Well, he took a little spill at recess. He's fine, but he bumped his head. It's our policy to call parents anytime there's a head injury, even if it's minor. We'd like for you to come get him if you can."

"Of course, I'll be right there," Roy said. He hung up the phone. "Jo!"

"What's the matter?" Joanne asked. "Did they call you into work?"

"No. Chris got hurt at school. They said it's not serious, but I'm going to pick him up."

"Oh no! Is he okay? Did they say what happened?"

"Relax... he just took a fall and hit his head. I'm sure he's fine."

Joanne sighed with relief. "Do you want me to get him?"

"No, it's okay. I'll go."

Joanne smiled. "He'll be thrilled to show off his fireman daddy."

Roy smiled. "I won't be long."

"Hold the ice on it," the nurse snapped at the whimpering child before her. *God, he's being such a baby!*

"It's cold," Chris complained.

"I know it's cold. Ice usually is. It will keep the swelling down." *Better keep him happy till daddy dearest gets here...*

"So, Chris, you said your daddy is a fireman?"

Chris sniffed and nodded. "And a paramedic."

"He's not working today?"

"No. He said he has to work tomorrow."

"Where does he work?"

"Station 51."

Good. Some things never change.

The next day

Denise Sutton sat in her car. It was parked a block away from Station 51. *Roy DeSoto had no idea who I was yesterday... and he looked right at me. There's no reason for me to hide...* She got out of the car and put a rolled up newspaper under her arm. She wore a pair of tight jeans, accenting her curvaceous figure. She walked with an air of elegance unbecoming her surroundings.

As she got closer to the station, she stopped on the corner across the street. *I can see everything from here.* She looked around and noticed a bench at the bus stop. Making herself comfortable, she rummaged through her purse, pulling out a pack of cigarettes. She patted the pack into her palm and pulled out a cigarette.

"Damn, I don't have a lighter," she swore under her breath.

"Maybe I can help you with that."

Denise looked up, startled. A handsome young man dressed in a suit and tie held a pack of matches toward her.

"Thank you," Denise accepted the light.

"If you're waiting for the bus, it just left. There won't be another one for an hour," he smiled charmingly and sat beside her.

"I've got time," Denise said seductively.

"I'm Tim Hyden. I work in the plant here," he informed, throwing his glance to the massive chemical plant in the background.

"Hi Tim Hyden. I'm Dora." She extended her hand, which he took with a sly smile.

"I've never seen you around here before, Dora. New to the area?"

"I've been away for a while," Denise answered truthfully. "Just getting reacquainted with the area."

"Is that a fact," Tim asked with a gleam in his eyes.

"Yes it is," Denise said. "So tell me about this plant you work in. It looks huge."

"It is huge. I tell ya what, instead of me telling you about it, how about a tour?"

Denise threw a look at the fire station across the street. The doors were closed and there really wasn't anything she could see. "Okay," she agreed. "When?"

"How about right now?"

"Right now? Don't you have to go to work?"

Tim smiled. "Well, it pays to be the plant manager. I don't usually work on Saturday, but we got a new lab on the south side of the plant. No one is there today, so I am just going in to make sure everything looks okay."

"Well, right now would be great then," Denise said as she stood.

"I'm afraid we'll have to walk a good distance. I live just two blocks away. It was such a nice day I decided to walk. Once we get inside we can get a cart to ride in."

"Just lead the way," Denise smiled.

The couple walked into the plant, where Tim showed his ID to the guard at the front gate. He got Dora a guest pass. The two then got into one of the company carts, which looked to Dora like a golf cart, and they proceeded to drive to the south side of the plant.

"This place is huge," Denise commented, taking mental notes of everything they passed.

"I told you it was," Tim said. He stopped the cart in front of a new looking building. "This is the new lab I was telling you about. We just got a shipment in yesterday, so I need to go make sure everything is in place. Come on." He waved to her to follow him inside the building.

They went upstairs and entered a huge room. *Typical lab*. Denise noticed with interest the many boxes lined up along one wall. "What's in there?" she asked.

"Ethylene Chlorohydrin," Tim answered. "Nasty stuff."

"Oh?"

"It's a good product, it's used in certain pesticides, as a solvent for removal of resins and waxes, and various other uses... but it's highly flammable and highly toxic. I checked on it yesterday before I left, but I wanted to make sure none of the cartons were leaking since we didn't have a chance to store it properly."

"Tell me, Tim, what happens if you have a fire here? I guess it's a good thing you have a fire station across the street, huh?"

"If we had a fire in here, even having a fire truck that close wouldn't be good enough."

"But if you ever did have a fire, would the station across the street respond?" *This is perfect... I better act now... I may never get this opportunity again...*

"Yes, it would be them, and probably half of the county," Tim laughed. "Everything looks good in here, can I show you the rest of the plant?"

"Sure," Denise said. She looked around the room and noticed a heavy pipe in a pile of debris. She picked it up when Tim turned away. Walking quietly behind him, she hit him on the head with all her might, knocking the man unconscious. Searching the lab, she found a mask, rubber gloves, and a razor knife. She then went to the boxes of Ethylene Chlorohydrin and began opening them, spilling the contents onto the floor. She bent down and dug through Tim's pocket, retrieving the pack of matches. She struck one, threw it on the floor, and ran.

"Marco, that was a great meal," Johnny stated as he stood and picked his plate up.

"Thanks, Johnny. My aunt used to make it all the time. I got the recipe from her when I visited her last month in Tacoma," Marco replied.

"Man," Chet began, "I can't believe we made it through supper without getting a run! We haven't had one since before lunch!"

"Shhh," Marco scolded, "Now we'll get one for sure."

"What makes you say that, Marco?" Roy asked.

"Anytime anyone mentions that we're having a slow shift, we suddenly get busy. It always happens," Marco stated seriously.

Just as Roy was about to reply, the tones sounded. The crew of station 51 quickly moved toward the apparatus bay as the dispatcher relayed the call.

When they heard the address, Johnny and Roy looked at each other. "That's right across the street!"

Captain Stanley picked up the mic at the station. "Station 51, KMG365."

Johnny looked at his partner as Roy drove the squad to the scene. "Guess we finally get to try the new air tanks."

"Yeah. Won't be long now. The bad thing is... when we get back we have to write a report on them."

"Are we the only unit using them?" Johnny asked.

"As far as I know. Not even the engine company is using them yet. I really liked them when the rep brought them over, so I think eventually this is what we'll be getting," Roy replied.

They pulled to the scene and quickly put on their turnout coats and the new air tanks and masks. Johnny noticed that it had that "new" smell to it. *It **won't** smell like this after today...*

"Gage, DeSoto," Stanley called. "There's a man trapped on the second floor of the storage building. Take an inch and a half, and make it fast. The whole place looks really unstable."

"Right, Cap," Roy acknowledged.

A greenish thick hazy smoke filled the hallway of the second floor. The flashlight Roy carried did nothing to penetrate the haze. He heard Johnny cough as he tugged on the hose. "This is as far as it will reach," Johnny said.

"Stay against the left wall, and let's stick together. We'll never find our way out if we're not careful."

Johnny nodded and coughed again, falling in step behind his partner. They reached a room where the green smoke seemed to be coming from, and entered it. The dense smoke forced them to crawl on their hands and knees in search of the victim.

"I've got him!" Johnny called as he lifted the man across his shoulders. Roy noticed that Johnny was coughing again as they made their way outside to safety. They quickly stripped their tanks off and began assessing the victim.

"No pulse," Johnny said. He put the paddles on the man's chest and looked at the display monitor.

"Flat line," Roy said as he began CPR. Chet placed the oxygen down next to the busy paramedics and got the biophone set up to call Rampart.

"Rampart, we have a male, approximately 26 years old, victim of a chemical fire. He's cyanotic. He is asystolic, and we are currently performing CPR." Johnny prepared to write down instructions.

"Start an I.V. with Ringers, wide open, and give 1 milligram Atropine and get him patched in," came the orders from Rampart.

"10-4," Johnny answered as he assisted his partner.

"Okay, we have a rhythm," Roy said.

"Rampart, we have a rhythm. BP is 90/50, pulse 110, victim's breathing is assisted. Pupils are equal and sluggish. He's diaphoretic."

"51, start a second I.V. with D5W TKO, slow down the Ringer's to TKO, keep monitoring vitals, keep him well ventilated and transport immediately."

"10-4, Rampart; I.V. D5W TKO, slow down the Ringer's to TKO and transport." Johnny stood to join Roy in treating the victim. A sudden wave of dizziness caused him to nearly fall forward. He quickly regained his balance before his partner noticed anything was amiss.

"Why don't you ride in with him," said Roy once they had the patient ready to transport. Johnny nodded, and with the help of the ambulance attendant, he loaded the patient on board.

"See you at Rampart," Roy said just before closing the ambulance doors. He quickly got in the squad and followed right behind the ambulance on the 10 mile trek to the hospital.

"Malcolm, keep this oxygen on him," Johnny told the ambulance attendant. Malcolm had ridden with both Johnny and Roy many times, and was familiar with how they worked.

"Johnny, he's having a seizure!" Malcolm alerted suddenly. Johnny quickly notified Rampart and was given orders to administer 5 milligrams diazepam. The patient was once again stable, but Malcolm wondered why Johnny had suddenly turned his back away from him. "Johnny?" he called out over the blare of the siren. *Why is he facing that way?*

Johnny didn't answer. He turned and looked at Malcolm with a frightened look on his face. His hair was damp with sweat and his hands trembled.

"Oh, God," Johnny said as he started to retch violently into the corner.

Malcom reached over the patient and grabbed Johnny's shoulders. The paramedic had stopped vomiting, and dry heaved. Alarmed, Malcom watched as John tremored.

"Squad 51, this is Rampart, what's your ETA?"

Malcolm picked up the biophone. "Rampart, this is the attendant with Squad 51, we have a problem."

"Go ahead, 51," came the concerned voice of Dr. Brackett.

Before Malcolm could answer, Johnny's eyes rolled back as the paramedic passed out. *Shit!*

"A.J., stop the ambulance, we have a problem back here!" he called to the driver. *What the hell is wrong with him? Shit, Johnny!* The smell in the ambulance was about to cause Malcolm to lose his own supper, but he managed to grab the biophone.

"Rampart, the paramedic in the ambulance has gotten sick. He passed out and is breathing real shallow. We've stopped transport. The squad is right behind us to assist."

Roy noticed the ambulance pull off to the side of the road, so he did the same. He quickly got out and jogged towards the ambulance. Before he even got to the doors they were opened from the inside. Roy felt his stomach flip as he saw the limp body of his partner slumped on the jump seat.

"Oh my God, what happened?" he asked as he grabbed the unconscious paramedic beneath the armpits and pulled him out of the ambulance. Roy and Malcolm gently lowered Johnny to the ground.

Malcolm shook his head, "I don't know... it all happened so fast. The patient had a seizure, and right after Johnny treated him he just turned away and started throwing up. He got all shaky and then just passed out."

Roy nodded, never taking his eyes off his partner. "Malcolm, hand me the biophone, and then go stay with the victim. Let me know if you need me in there."

"Okay," Malcolm answered as he rushed to assist.

At the base station, Kelly Brackett turned to his colleague, Dr. Joe Early. "Joe, we've got another patient coming in... it's Johnny Gage."

"What's going on, Kel?" Dr. Early asked, putting his hands in the pockets of his white lab coat.

"He got sick in the ambulance. It sounds like he may have been exposed to the same chemical that his patient was exposed to."

"Two is ready for the victim, I'll go get three set up for Johnny," Dixie said, keeping her professional mask on.

"Do you know what the chemical was?" Early queried.

Brackett frowned and shook his head.

"Rampart, This is Squad 51," came the sound of Roy DeSoto's worried voice.

"Go ahead, 51," Brackett answered. He picked up a small notepad to record Johnny's vitals.

Roy grabbed the equipment and quickly assessed his partner's condition. He picked up the biophone to report his findings.

"Rampart, we have a second victim, a firefighter, age 30, who had a syncopal episode. Witness reports he vomited and became shaky prior to passing out. He's diaphoretic, pulse is 110, B.P. 100 over 70, respiration..." Roy stopped transmitting when he heard Malcolm call out.

"Hey, Roy! The patient's not breathing!"

Shit! "Stand by Rampart."

Early and Brackett exchanged worried glances. Dr. Early nervously tapped his fingers as they waited for Roy to continue transmission.

"Rampart, victim one is in respiratory distress. Request permission to insert an esophageal airway."

"Permission granted," Kel answered. "51, what's your ETA?"

Malcolm picked up the biophone while Roy worked on the patient. "ETA 5 minutes."

"10-4, 51. On second victim, start an IV, D5W TKO, apply oxygen, 15 liters, position him on his side so he doesn't

aspirate and transport with the first victim immediately."

"IV D5W TKO, 15 liters O2, 10-4, Rampart," Roy answered.

Roy had both victims stabilized and positioned in the now crowded ambulance. He looked into the small window and spoke to the driver.

"A.J., notify dispatch to have someone pick up the squad."

A.J. nodded and did as he was told. He chanced a look behind him and noticed Johnny was still unconscious. *Man, he looks bad! And we've got a hell of a mess to clean up back there... Don't worry about the mess, let's just get to Rampart...*

Dixie, Dr. Brackett, and Dr. Early watched anxiously as the doors to the ambulance opened. Roy jumped out first. Malcolm guided the gurney with the first victim out.

"Take him into two," Dixie told Roy.

He guided the gurney with Dr. Early on the other side. As they rounded the corner, he glanced behind him. *Looks like Johnny's still out...*

Thirty minutes later

"Come on, Roy, let's go see how Johnny's doing," Dr. Early said.

"Doc..." Roy started.

"Don't jump to conclusions, Roy. This man was exposed to the chemicals much longer than Johnny was, and he received a blow to the head as well." He shook his head. "He never really had a chance."

Roy sighed. *What if Johnny doesn't have a chance...* Gathering up his courage, he looked at the door. "Okay," he nodded and began to exit the room.

The scene in the treatment room with Johnny was a far cry from the one he'd just left. He let out a sigh of relief at seeing his partner conscious. *He looks really out of it... but at least he's awake...*

"How's he doing?" Roy finally asked when he found his voice.

"He's hanging in there," Brackett answered. "How's the other victim?"

Joe Early shook his head. "Didn't make it."

"Roy?" Johnny said weakly.

"I'm here," Roy answered, moving closer.

"I don't think... I'll be recommending... those new air tanks," Johnny said. His face was pale and beaded with a fine sheen of sweat. "Oh..."

"Get him turned!" Brackett barked. Roy and Dixie quickly turned Johnny on his side as he once again began to vomit. Brackett shook his head. *I can't believe he's got anything left in him...*

"Stacy, get a fresh set of vitals. Dix, call the lab and see what the hold up is. I need those reports, stat."

"Hang in there, Johnny," Roy said as his partner moaned.

Johnny shook his head. "I can't remember ever feeling this bad. Doc, my head feels like it's going to split open." He closed his eyes.

Denise sat inside her car in the parking lot of Rampart General Hospital. *I wonder what happened... I didn't think any of them had gotten hurt... but then the ambulance pulled over. Something happened to Gage. She laughed. Things just got a whole lot easier.* She popped open the glove compartment and pulled out a vial with clear liquid. *Don't worry, fireman... if the fire didn't kill you... this will.* She smiled wickedly as she held the vial.

Two days later

"Okay, Joanne. I'll tell him to call you as soon as he gets here... Okay.... Bye." Johnny hung up the phone.

"Roy coming by later?" Dixie asked.

"Yeah. That was Joanne. She said Roy should be here any time. He's gonna bring me some clothes since I'm going home today."

"Tomorrow."

Johnny rolled his eyes. "Well, I'll have some clothes just in case I get sprung early," Johnny countered.

Dixie laughed. "Either way, Johnny, you need to take it easy. You've been a very sick man."

"Don't I know it," Johnny sighed.

Dixie picked up Johnny's chart. "I see Kel ordered more blood work. Has that been drawn yet?"

"No, he just left about 5 minutes ago."

"Okay. I'm sure someone will be in here soon to take care of that."

"Oh yeah, they're real good at that around here," Johnny frowned.

"I better head back to the ER before they send a posse out after me. Take care."

"Thanks. Bye, Dix."

Dixie had only been gone a few seconds when a nurse entered the room.

Johnny rolled his eyes. *That was soon! Oh great, someone new... hope she's better at finding a vein than that last gal...*

After the nurse entered, she surprised Johnny by turning back to the door. *What the hell is she doing?*

She turned back around and walked to the side of Johnny's bed. "Well, well, well, we meet again, *fireman*."

Johnny studied the woman and shook his head slightly. "I don't think we've met."

"Oh, but we have!" she laughed. "It's been a while... and I've done a little something different with my hair." She touched her hair and shook her head. "It used to be much longer... I had to cut it."

"Oh?"

"I didn't want to cut it, but a job I had to do required it."

"A job?" *Who is this nut? That voice... I know that voice...*

"Yes. Still don't remember me? We met a little over a year ago... right here at this hospital."

Oh my God... Johnny shook his head. *It's her!*

Denise saw the recognition in his eyes and laughed. "That's right, *fireman*! I didn't get it right the first time. You know what they say, 'If at first you don't succeed, try, try again,' well... I intend on getting it *right* this time. My sister is still waiting for a fireman to pay for killing her..."

She pulled a vial and a syringe out of her pocket. "Don't worry, it works instantly. And once your partner arrives, he'll join you. Won't that be great?"

Johnny watched as she filled the syringe and slowly began to approach him. He then leapt out of the bed, taking the woman by surprise. Knocking her hand, the syringe sailed from her hand, sliding under the bed.

Furious at losing the deadly syringe, Denise flew into a rage. She threw herself onto the weakened fireman with all her might.

Johnny stood near the window, disbelief evident on his face. He saw Denise flying towards him, but two large chairs blocked his escape route. The force of her body slamming into his took his breath away. The momentum pushed the pair against the window, causing it to shatter.

Roy held a bag containing Johnny's clothes as he made his way to the hospital entrance. A crashing noise caught his attention and caused him to look upwards.

The sight before him took him totally by surprise. *Oh shit... that's Johnny!* He stood frozen, unable to even breathe as he watched his partner grapple on the outside ledge of the fourth floor of the hospital. *Who the hell is that with him...* He felt himself grow cold as he realized the only person who could possibly try to

harm his partner. *Oh my God...*

Johnny was pinned underneath the maniacal woman. Roy couldn't tell if he was actually trying to fight her off or not. Finally, what seemed an eternity later, he saw one of the nurses looking out the window.

"What's happening?" she called.

Denise looked up, and Johnny took advantage of it by heaving with all his might. Denise landed on the side of the ledge. She clutched frantically to the smooth surface as gravity pulled her body downward.

"Help me!" she screamed, unable to stop her fall.

Johnny heard the force of her body as it hit the ground below. He sat stunned. The screams were now silent. He trembled as he dragged himself back to the window, where he felt hands reach out to pull him to safety.

Roy ran to the spot where the woman landed, forcing himself to approach her. *She's all in one piece...* As he felt for a carotid, he made a stark realization. *This is Denise Sutton... she was working at my son's school just a few days ago...* Amazingly, he felt a weak pulse.

Denise opened her eyes. She started to speak, her voice barely a whisper. Roy leaned in close to hear her words.

"I'm not finished with you. I'll be back," she said.

Suddenly, her muscles relaxed. Her face frozen in a death trance. Her garish red lipstick stood out in stark contrast to her dusky skin. Her eyes remained open in a cloudy stare.

Roy brought his hand down to her eyes, but then pulled back involuntarily, reluctant to touch her. Gathering his resolve, he willed himself to finish it. The icy stare in death worse than the task at hand. "Like Hell you will."

Medical personnel crowded around the body. Roy stood slowly and sighed. He turned his back to Denise Sutton, and never looked back. He couldn't shake the feeling that he was being watched as he walked away.

On the sidewalk... Denise Sutton opened her eyes...

THE END

Note: Thanks to all my beta readers... you know who you are :-) and a special thanks to Pat for all her help. I'd also like to thank the crew of #station51 and #rampart for helping me through my moment of crisis with the delete key! This story is silly, but what can I say... it was a fun one!! Hope you enjoyed it :-)

I almost forgot! Thank you Carla K for creating the wonderful Denise Sutton and allowing me to continue her story!!