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*Ruthe McDonald*

**SOUTHERN COMFORT**

**A NOVEL**

**JOHNRUE PUBLISHING**

**SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA**

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If you don't see your name; don't feel slighted. I'll catch you on the next one—I have plenty more!

***For John,***

***You never have to know...***

***That's a promise***

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## **PROLOGUE**

**July 4th, 1990**

**LORD, I JES DON'T KNOWS 'BOUT THIS** This is not what I expected. I never thought I'd be around this long. Don't get me wrong!—I'm grateful. Yes I am. I s'pose things could be worse. I jes miss my home, my things...my life. It jes ain't fair gettin' old!

Maybe I should jes stop complainin'.

Good Lord!—here comes another nurse. If she sticks me one more time...I ain't responsible for what I might do!

“Good afternoon, Ms. Emma. How are we today?”

How are 'we' today? Hell, she acts like she in this bed, being stuck like some damn pin

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cushion!

“We’re going to just check your pressure...”

*Again?* This must be the hundredth time today. Hell, I’m still breathin’. Ain’t any alarms goin’ off. I wish they jes leaves me alone...and let me go home! It’s the 4th...I should be preparin’ for my family.

“Well, your pressure's just fine.”

*I could have told her that.*

I realize that if I jes smile and nods my head they seem to get out quicker; except for that nurse in the mornin’. Humph! I swears she takes pleasure in Southern Comfort stickin’ me with them damn needles! Talkin’ ‘bout: “Ms. Watson, we got to make sure your sugar’s fine. We have to make sure all your levels are stable. You know, we ain’t young no more”.

*We?*—I don’t sees no one Southern Comfort stickin’ her! I’m sure as hell the Southern Comfort only one gettin’ poked and prodded! You’d think I was a turkey bein’ prepared for Thanksgiving supper! And Southern Comfort ‘we ain’t young no more’. She has a hell of a lot of nerve! I know ain’t nothin’ young ‘bout me anymore. Hasn’t been for a long time. Hell, my breasts where my knees used to be, my knees where my ankles use to be. Don’t even asks where my ankles went! And let’s not talk about my behind, either. Lord, makes me cry jes to thinks about it. It used to be so round and tight. You could bounce a quarter off it! Now? Well, I don’t know where it wents. Like it jes took off and ran away with the rest of my sexiness!

*Damn!*

If you can helps it, don’t ever gets old. (Not that I’m that old, mind you! I’m only 68, and still gots a lot of livin’ to do yet!) And whatever you do, stay away from hospitals! Especially

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doctors!—‘cause all they gonna do is take your money and try to sticks you in some nursin’ home, and gives you a bunch a pills. This pill for that; this one for that; this one to take cares of the Southern Comfort side effects of the first one...and so on, and so on.

Hell if I’m goin’ to one them places. As many Chilren as I have? I better not! I’d haunt every last one them Negroes for the rest of they lives! They thought Southern Comfort I was hell when I was alive? Put me in some damn nursing home and see what happens!

I jes don’t like havin’s to depend on someone else. Don’t gets me wrong; I’m glad Southern Comfort I’m still around. My doctor ain’t, too, bad. Normally I’d tell you that I have no need for no doctors, but I s’pose that I need to listen to what they sayin’—at least him anyway.

It jes ain’t no funs gettin’ Southern Comfort old, you know?

When did I gets so old anyways? Last time I look, me and Al B (that’s my husband), were sitting under them stars and he was askin’ me: ‘what would I do without you?’ And I say to him: ‘you never has to know’. You know, I raised five Chilren. And some Southern Comfort that wasn’t mine. I s’pose I’ve lived a full life. I know it’s been a good one. But hell!—I ain’ts nowhere ready to go...not yet.

Lord? Emma Jean here. We needs to have us Southern Comfort a talk!

“Ms. Watson?”

It’s that nurse again. I guess she ain’t so bad...not like that mornin’ nurse.

I turns my head and smile to let her know I’m still alive.

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“You have a visitor.” She smiles. “Come right in. She’s awake. She’s doing much better today.” She opens the door wide and steps to the side, as someone enters.

My word! Look who it is.

I jes smile as wide as my cheeks would go.

“Hey Mama!”

It’s Macon. My precious Macon.

Southern Comfort  
“How are you today?”

## **Southern Comfort**

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