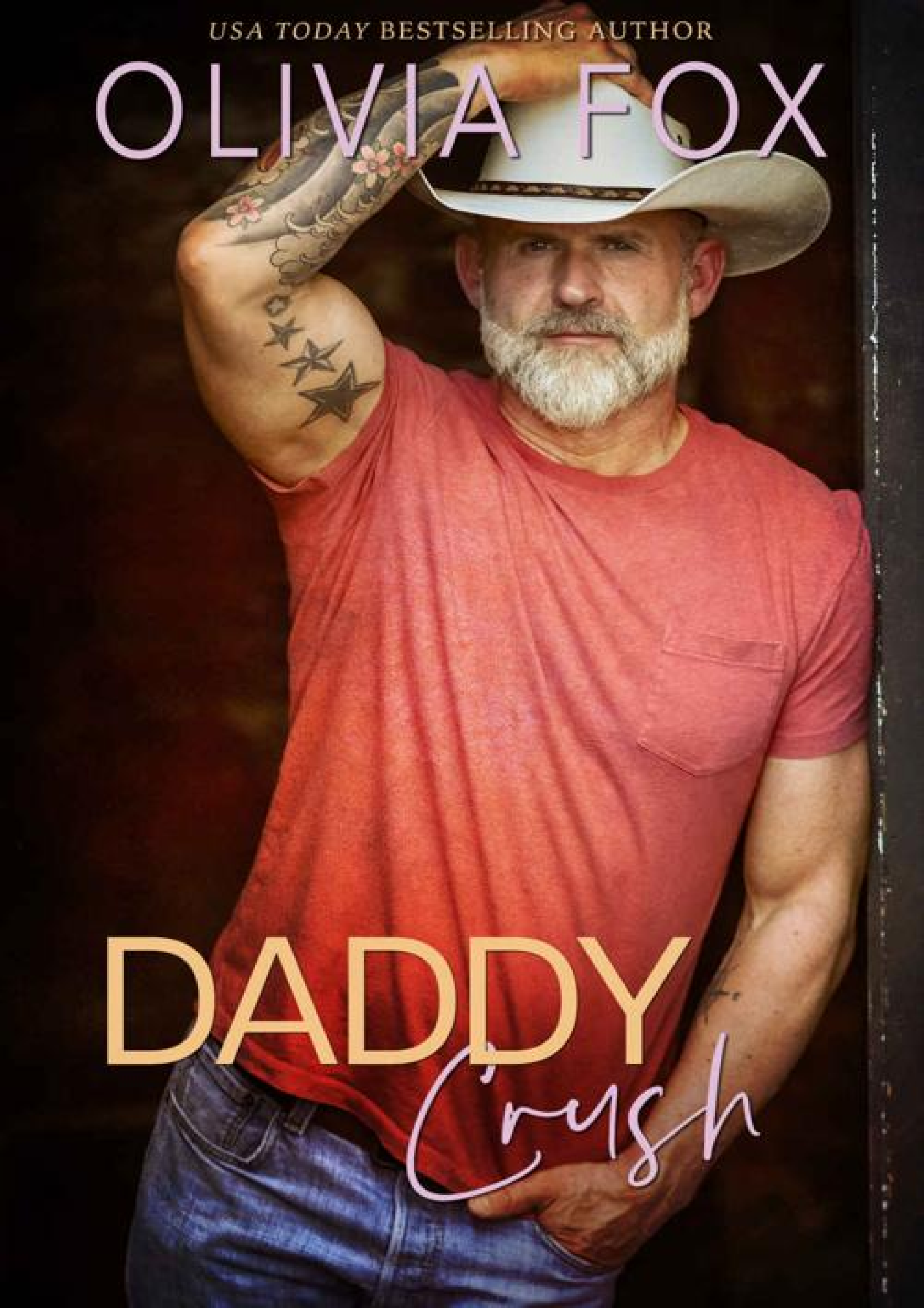


USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR

OLIVIA FOX

DADDY

Crush



DADDY CRUSH

DAD'S BEST FRIEND, OLDER MAN YOUNGER
WOMAN, AGE GAP ROMANCE

SILVER FOX DADDY

BOOK FIVE

OLIVIA FOX



Copyright © 2023 by Olivia Fox Romance

All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without written permission from the author, except for the use of brief quotations in a book review.

This book is all fiction. All sexual acts are between consenting adults and if there is no talk of condoms, birth control, etc. it's only because it's **fiction and fantasy**. If you are having sex, here are some essential resources:

[PREP reduced the chance of contracting HIV by 99%](#)

[Get tested - find out why you should](#)

This book is dedicated to all people whose families and lives have been negatively impacted by substance abuse, which is essentially all of us.

The cover model for this book, Kevin R. Davis, is open about his recovery and was kind enough to share a personal message:

"If you need help with addiction, or substance use, please reach out to someone.

The idea of change is scary, even when your life is at its lowest, but just know that becoming free from whatever has a hold on you, will be the best thing that you can do.

I made so many excuses, for so long, why I couldn't seek help.

I sure wish I had known then, what I now know.

My life is way better than I could have ever imagined, and I'm so happy I got the help I needed.

I'm so happy that I got a second chance at life. Don't put it off any longer, because you never know how many more chances you will get."

- Kevin

SAMHSA's (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) National Helpline, 1-800-662-HELP (4357) (also known as the Treatment Referral Routing Service), or TTY: 1-800-487-4889 is a confidential, free, 24-hour-a-day, 365-day-a-year, information service, in English and Spanish, for individuals and family members facing mental and/or substance use disorders. This service provides referrals to local treatment facilities, support groups, and community-based organizations.

Also visit the [online treatment locator](#), or send your zip code via text message: 435748 (HELP4U) to find help near you. Read more about the [HELP4U text messaging service](#).

If you are a fan of Kevin, follow him here:

*Instagram: [kevinrdavis.official](#)
[linktr.ee/Silvermodelkevin](#)*

Exclusive Daddy Crush Merch. Featuring Kevin can be found here: [Daddy Crush](#)

CONTENTS

FREE BOOKS

1. [Clover](#)
2. [Duke](#)
3. [Clover](#)
4. [Duke](#)
5. [Duke](#)
6. [Clover](#)
7. [Clover](#)
8. [Duke](#)
9. [Duke](#)
10. [Clover](#)
11. [Duke](#)
12. [Clover](#)
13. [Duke](#)
14. [Clover](#)
15. [Duke & Clover](#)
16. [Duke & Clover](#)
17. [Clover](#)
18. [Clover](#)
19. [Clover](#)
20. [Clover](#)

[Also By Olivia Fox](#)

[About the Author](#)

FREE BOOKS

When you grab my FREE, best seller box set you get: two full books, including the free prequel to this one, and two more sexy snippets.

[Your perfect daddy is waiting for you.](#)

My newsletter subscribers get to read all these lovely books for free and get deals and updates on my next stories! I hope you'll join me for a naughty ever after. Get more free books and the best prices and special discounts at my bookstore www.naughtyeverafter.com.



Visit the Naughty Ever After shop for exclusive discounts on daddy merch. and spicy stories, plus free books!

<https://www.naughtyeverafter.com/>

CLOVER



P orterville, CA, Tulare County

My story began the usual farmer's daughter way, my overalls covered with the print marks of shit-stamped baby goat hooves. The sound of a baby begging for the bottle always pulled at my heart a little. I could fill the mixing container and pour just the right amount of formula powder on top of the warm water in my sleep, I'd done it so many times. I shook the final feeding bottle, covering the tip of the huge nipple with my pointer finger. The water inside warmed my hand, and I grinned as I watched the white-coated kid with a wet muzzle and adorable little goat beard guzzle it down with relish, twitching its triangular tail back and forth with contentment.

The scent of sweet formula in the air blended with the familiar smells of manure and hay, and I let the baby lick the remnant milk off of my hand. Her tongue tickled.

It was Faith's fault I had twice the number of babies to feed today, meaning it took me all morning, even though I had hustled. Not that I didn't agree with her philosophy, but I could see the issue from both sides. She couldn't resist goading my dad, coming down to breakfast wearing a tight white tank top with large black print that read, *SEX. Now that I have your attention, please stop eating animals.*

Before I could say, "Please pass the pancakes," the beginning of World War III commenced with Dad demanding, "Young lady, go take that off right now and put on something respectable! You know damn well we're going to Pickerson's

Feed Store to buy hay, and I won't have you wearing a shirt like that."

What did my sister expect, donning such attire in a home where charming farmhouse sayings covered the walls? They had brought us up on quotes like, *Faith, family, farm* since before we could read the words ourselves. Did she really think she was going to convert traditional farmers into vegetarians by wearing a stupid T-shirt?

Come on. Pick your battles, Faith.

Suddenly, I heard the loud crash of the barn doors swinging shut, and my darted eyes over to an annoying sight strolling arrogantly onto our private property. He strutted through the barn, chin held high, despite how his green rubber boots left a trail of mud behind him. His shirt was unbuttoned one too many, and he had a smirk on his face, like he was about to reveal some secret knowledge.

Hoss surveyed the babies with a look of disdain, giving away his prejudice towards cattle raising as the only true profession. His blue eyes flicked from one bleating kid to the next without a hint of tenderheartedness, searching for me. When his eyes finally landed on my chest, he rewarded me with a smile he'd no doubt been told a thousand times was handsome, but it didn't disarm me in the least.

In fact, his coming here when everyone else was gone made a wave of apprehension sweep through me.

The weird thing about it was, plenty of girls in this town wanted to get with him. As the heir to one of the largest ranches in Tulare County, he was raised to believe if something didn't belong to him, he'd find a way to get it. His features betrayed that sense of entitlement as he strutted down the straw-covered aisle between green metal feeding pens. My heart capsized in my chest, and I had the urge to urp up my pancakes as saliva pooled in my mouth.

Every inch of me said to run, but I stayed put, shielding the baby below me from his douchey aura, rooted in place and trembling as I watched his large frame move towards me. It was his birthright to take whatever he wanted, and

unfortunately, that was me. He didn't much care if I didn't feel the same.

No matter that I'd blocked his number.

As he advanced closer with a sinister sneer, the little calf butted my hand with its fragile head. It seemed to appeal for help, but my dread intensified as I only thought of saving myself.

After an arduous morning of barn chores by myself, this dude picked the wrong day to fuck with me.

"Get off of my farm, Hoss," I said, my voice shaking with anger as I stood my ground. No matter what, I would not give him the satisfaction of seeing me cower away from him.

He stopped in his tracks, surprised by my sudden daring. He was taken aback, although he quickly covered his surprise with a haughty smirk and stepped closer despite my warnings. "Now, Clover. Calm your teats. I only came by to ask you out to the Cattlemen's Ball on Saturday."

"That's weird. According to everybody, you and Mary Jo are a couple." I didn't back down. "You don't belong here, and I didn't invite you. Turn around and adios yourself right out."

He looked me up and down, his eyes narrowing as he considered his options. Finally, he let out a harsh, brittle laugh. His gaze remained fixed on me, as if challenging me to make the next move.

"All right, all right. I get the message," he said, and I noted how out of place his form-fitting, cream-colored shirt with a black vest, complete with a bolo tie, were in our barn. His jeans fit well, hugging his waist as though they were tailor-made for his body.

I didn't let my guard down, having had it severely tested by him too many times in the past. He'd take a few steps back, say something agreeable, then make his sneak attack when I least expected it, grabbing my ass or pulling me against his body so I couldn't escape his embrace.

This time, I had a secret weapon. Reaching back, my hand closed around the grip of a tool designed for shoving huge-ass

bulls around. Most people around here called it a hot shot, otherwise known as a cattle prod; it delivered 13,000 electrical pulses per second. Like I said, they designed it for making 2,000-pound creatures get the hell out of the way. I had a feeling it would do just fine for what I had in mind. My father only kept it around to threaten one particularly precocious billy goat, who made a sport out of escaping his pen.

I was sick and tired of Hoss trying to toss me, and the rubber handle in my hand reassured me I'd be all right, and no one could hurt me. It was a good feeling. He'd groped and grabbed me one too many times, and now, with the rubber handle of my makeshift weapon clenched in my fist, I felt brave enough to stand up to him. With the hot shot in my hand, I was ready to take control. The adrenaline coursing through my veins was invigorating, reassuring me he'd learn his lesson and leave me alone.

Despite his pretense at retreating, my antagonist stepped over the small metal gate at the front of the calf pen I stood in. I tightly clenched my right hand around the hot shot, my heart racing in anticipation. I stood tall, knowing I was ready to break the single most unspoken rule of Porterville.

Do.

Not.

Cross.

Hoss.

"I'm warning you," I said, my voice deceptively steady, and swung the cattle prod from behind, holding it in front of me with both hands, pointing it upward at the barn roof like the blade of a sword. "You've badgered me for the last time."

The tension crackled around us.

Without warning, he lunged at me.

This time, I was ready.

I knew what was in store for me if I didn't come to my own defense, with my parents and sister way back in the house, sorting out their differences in a "family meeting".

Today he'd gone too far, trespassing on our land, not taking no for an answer for the one millionth time. My fear evaporated as if by an onrushing wind, and I saw who he was with abrupt clarity.

A bully.

An entitled toddler in an adult's uniform.

My would-be accoster, or worse.

I jumped to the side, out of his reach, squared up to my potential attacker, and roared with a voice like thunder, "I've had it with you!"

Dad didn't raise me to back down to tyrants. I raised my prod, making sure Hoss could see the two special spurs at the tip, which would shock the shit out of him. He shot his hand forward, trying to grab my ponytail and missing when I stepped aside. I pulled the trigger, landing a lucky blow, which dazed my attacker.

With a quick thrust of my arm, and a single press of the trigger, I pricked the prod right between his legs.

Up to now, I thought there wasn't a sound that could drown out the plaintive sound of baby goats bleating for their breakfast.

I was wrong.

Hoss let out a bellow of pain and stumbled backwards, falling to the ground.

I brandished the hot shot to convey my meaning. He better stay down, but I needn't have bothered. He was writhing on the ground, groaning in pain.

I'd completely fried his wiener.

"I hope this serves as a valuable life lesson for you, Hoss," I said, growing stronger with each word. "Mess with me again, and I'll zap your pecker right off."

And with that, I turned and walked away, feeling a wave of relief and pride as I made my way back to the house, leaving

him there to ponder the error of his ways while lying in a pile of goat droppings I'd raked up.

Little did I know, at that instant, my life had become pretty much screwed.

DUKE



COUNTY SEAT, HUMBOLDT

When my friend, Troy, called in his favor, saying no didn't even cross my mind. It was only afterwards I fully understood that playing babysitter to his daughter would severely cramp my style.

I parked at the curb, which served as the Greyhound station, since even the largest city in Humboldt County didn't merit a building for its infrequent busses.

His daughter was supposed to be here fifteen minutes ago, but I guess public transportation wasn't what it used to be. Not like Germany, where the trains always ran on time. The tight knot within me begged for release, and I reminded myself that having a beer before the drive back home was definitely not the answer.

Staying sober wasn't easy.

I thought being back in civilian land after deployment would be a cakewalk, but it hadn't turned out that way. Cracks on the sidewalk looked too much like trip wires they trained us to spot, and at first, the bottle was a good place to forget what I'd done in the name of being a true warrior.

The first time I showed myself at his tattoo parlor in Briarville, I thought my brother, Doc, would shit a brick.

"What the hell are you doing here?" He glowered at me and turned away, studying his appointment book like my showing up after three years was no surprise.

My throat tightened as I tried to bridge the gulf that had grown between us. "I'm a business owner now, little brother. I bought a coffee shop in town. Maybe you've seen it? It's called The Daily Grind." I spoke with a forced nonchalance, hoping to achieve the impossible and impress him after all the disappointments he'd suffered because of me.

"You shitting me?" he asked, finally looking up.

I knew what he was thinking. Where the hell did you get the money to buy it? Not surprising, since the last he'd seen of me was at our pop's funeral, and I was so drunk I could barely stay upright while serving as his pall bearer.

Doc had every right to punch me in the face first, then ask questions later. Instead, the anger in his eyes had dulled with surprise, and I could swear the hint of a grin crossed his face, a mere flicker before it vanished. Almost like old times.

He paused and looked down at the toes of his boots before drawing a deep breath.

"All right, Duke," he said, his voice just above a whisper. He clenched his hands into fists at his sides and shifted his weight back on the balls of his feet. "So, what do you need?"

Easy does it, I reminded myself.

I swallowed hard, trying to keep my composure.

"Not a thing," I said. "I know you don't have any reason to trust me—hell, I wouldn't if the shoes were on the other foot. I don't expect it to change your opinion of me, but I've been sober three years now, and I know I have a lot of making up to do."

And I was here for it.

Strong enough after rehab, and more meetings than I could count, to handle the disappointment, which still lingered when he looked at me. I was supposed to be the big brother, not the other way around. The one who looked out for him. And I'd failed miserably.

I focused on the bus stop again. A homeless woman gathered her sleeping bag around her shoulders for warmth. This was no place for a single female. What was Troy thinking, sending her on a bus alone?

Clover was young enough to be my daughter.

Last time I'd seen her, she was a sweet little thing, quieter than her sister. Always curled up somewhere with a book in her free time. And she was a good girl, too. From what I heard, she helped her parents on the farm even long after most kids

moved to the city and found employment where the scent of goat manure wasn't an on-the-job requirement.

The work I had for her might not be any more glamorous than what she'd left behind, but at least she wouldn't have to wear rubber boots to perform it.

When her father video called me and said she needed to get out of town, I had to ask, "Is she pregnant?"

There was a long silence on the other end of the phone. "No, Duke. Not that kind of trouble. She just needs a fresh start."

But trouble, nonetheless.

My friend went on to explain how a powerful rancher in the area set his sights on his daughter, then turned his local following against her after she'd gone public with his attempted assault. The rancher didn't welcome the creativity behind her *Wanted* posters. They featured his face and his alleged crimes of harassment, along with a description that included the distinguishing marks on his "electrocuted ding-dong". Her family's farm began to suffer from payback. Strangers left piles of garbage in their front yard, mysterious holes appeared in the wire fencing so the goats got out, and Clover was bullied every time she went to town by people who didn't appreciate her artistic attempt at justice.

I nodded listening to Troy's story, feeling a stab of guilt for asking what kind of trouble his daughter was in. My manners left a lot to be desired, even though I had no excuse. Mama raised me right, and the military drilled them into me even further. I just ignored decorum most of the time.

"What do you have in mind?" I asked.

"Somewhere safe," he told me, his face drawn tight in worried lines.

I clenched my teeth. He didn't need to spell it out for me.

"How can I help?" I asked.

He sighed, resigned. "I need you to give her a place to stay for a while."

I nodded. “I can do that.”

He gave me a tired smile. I didn’t know what it was like to be a father, but he appeared grateful beyond words.

Clover would be here soon, and I’d be ready. Ready to make sure she stayed protected from danger, and to help her through whatever it was she ran from.

Demons came in many shapes and sizes, as common as cockroaches, and all required one thing. Running away and getting lost.

Finally, the Greyhound bus pulled up. I watched for Clover but didn’t see her. No shy, young girl in glasses who could only look a grownup in the eye with effort got off the bus.

Skinny.

I remember she was a rail-thin little girl, even though she downed a bigger stack of pancakes than me every breakfast and was raised on goat’s milk and cheese with every meal.

Nope, the only female who got off at this stop was a tall, curvy woman, with auburn hair and a determined stance. She stepped off that bus, and it hit me like a lightning bolt to my nuts. The lady held her suitcase in one hand and wore a bright pink tank top, stylishly slashed jeans, and sneakers. No rain coat. We’d have to take care of that right away, since the rainy season on The Lost Coast could occur all year round.

As soon as she saw me, she waved her hand in the air like a flower blossom dancing in the wind. I hardly recognized her as the same girl I’d last seen twelve years ago. She approached me with a confident swagger that caught me off-guard. To say nothing of the round swell of her breasts, which tempted my eyes in a way that was impossible to resist.

Shit. This was really terrible. I shook my head and raised a single brow. Was it some new, sick joke God played on me, or what? Placing me in yet another predicament where my go-to line from the past, “*Let me drink about it and get back to you,*” was the perfect response? Was I being tested? Just because I didn’t imbibe—okay, let’s be honest, guzzle—any more, didn’t mean I didn’t want to.

Her smile was made for the camera, and she directed it at me. A man strengthened by the darkness of his days, who knew full well that suffering was the Lord's medicine for salvation.

Her father said I'd suffered enough, but my brother was still deciding whether to offer me a second chance. I didn't blame him. I'd take all the time I needed to prove I'd become a grown-ass man with my shit together.

"Duke," she bubbled, arms already outstretched for a hug.

I inclined my head and scratched my jaw, muttering, "My God, you look so grown up. What happened to the little girl I used to know?"

Fuck, if Troy knew the thoughts running through my head right now, he'd gut me right here on the sidewalk.

This was wrong.

I couldn't do this.

Offer her a job?

A place to stay?

What was I thinking?

She was no little girl, and my feelings for her were strictly adult. Maybe *purely adolescent* would be more accurate since I could bust cement right now using my cock as a jackhammer.

I watched Clover's every move as I unlocked the door for her, stood aside while she climbed in, and buckled her seatbelt for her as if she were still that shy schoolgirl who needed help to tie her shoes and loved to read books as much as she loved to run wild on her parents' farm.

Once behind the wheel, I glanced over her body and met her eyes, which lingered on mine for just a moment, before I stuck the key in the ignition and turned it, igniting the engine. Suddenly, my erection whipped against my zipper, as if offering its salute.

WTF?

The years and the abuse I'd put my body through had corroded and wracked its frame, but I was still the same person her father had met at UC Davis before I went off to Afghanistan. Time had not been kind, yet when my eyes met Clover's, it felt as if it had stopped. Did she feel it, too?

My stomach dropped as I realized the gravity of the situation. I felt a wave of emotion—doubt, anger, despair—all crashing over me.

The most disturbing thing of all wasn't the rando lust that hit me like a ton of bricks all at once. It was the nearly irresistible urge to ask her, "*Are you going to be a good girl while you're staying with me?*"

Which, of course, I resisted.

But I wasn't immune from fantasizing the entire way home about how I'd punish her if she disobeyed her daddy.

And I wasn't talking about Troy.

I wasn't exactly known for my willpower, but for real. Was she a temptation any mere mortal could actually refuse?

CLOVER



BRIARVILLE, CALIFORNIA

My feet ached from standing all day, but the chance to be alone with Duke was worth it. After going years without seeing him, it surprised me to learn when I got off the bus a month ago that he was hot as hell. I never thought of him that way when I was little, but something about the hint of silver in his hair now drove me wild.

I never imagined myself falling for someone my dad's age, but holy shit, Duke was smoking. I'd been enjoying that fact while staying in my private room in the huge house he lived in all by his lonesome, getting up at the crack of dawn every morning to toss alfalfa flakes to the horses in his boarding stable before going to work in his café.

It wasn't exactly feeding kids, nor was there any milking involved, but I had to admit the colts were pretty sweet. I missed the babies back home a lot, and that was just one more reason God gave me to hate Hoss.

As I wiped down the tables, the sinking sun shone through the front window in the café, highlighting the glint of Duke's brown eyes and tanned skin as he worked on the espresso machine behind the counter, his biceps bulging. I felt his presence around the café even when he wasn't there and continuously watched the door for him more than I wanted to admit.

"That should do it, Clover," he murmured, his dark eyes unreadable as he leaned across the counter and wiped his hands with a kitchen towel, making his forearms flex in a way I found quite disturbing. "You certain you've been doing a two-second flush of the shower screen after every brew, like I taught you?"

There it was. That strict command of his which made my entire body fill with an awareness of longing.

Being a barista wasn't as easy as it looked. I knew farming. I was born into it and remained on my parents'

property way longer than was acceptable in the outside world—the world outside tending animals for a living—because my parents needed me. Raising goats for milk, soap, and cheese, we made enough to maintain the buildings and pay the bills, which was saying a lot nowadays for a small farm. That was another reason I resented that gastropod whose sausage I'd zapped. I wasn't there to help them anymore.

Even I could see how living at home until age twenty-eight might delay my adolescence. Faith and I had each other for companionship, and living on the land where I'd grown up was easy.

Cozy and familiar. Not exactly an environment that made me want to leave.

But when the back of Duke's fingers brushed against my arm as he reached for a tea towel, it was worth every ounce of the trouble that brought me here.

A jolt of electricity surged in my blood, and the air became charged with energy as his skin moved lightly against mine. My body erupted into tiny goose bumps, and a hot-cocoa warmth spread through my being, as café mocha flowed through my veins. Sweet, liquid heat that jolted me awake.

I was more alert than I'd ever been in my life.

Every cell in my body awakened in a sudden rush, humming with an electricity I'd never known.

Not including the cattle prod, of course.

"Promise." I sighed, like all of a sudden, he was a stranger. Someone it pained me to be close to, and it made me ache.

A lot.

Only not in the way I expected. "I listen to what you say. You're the one in charge." I whispered, "Boss."

The words that left his lips could have been stated innocently, but the way they landed between my legs was anything but. "Good girl."

I tried to keep my expression neutral, but his nutmeg-colored eyes were so determined that I stiffened and colored

fiercely. His touch lingered for a moment, then cautiously pulled away, but even then, he held my gaze for a few seconds longer than would be polite.

Was I imagining it? Or in the moment when our eyes locked, did he spark a tiny sprinkling of hope within me? It seemed highly likely there was something here worth exploring beyond the strict boss-employee rapport.

Something I'd never encountered.

A relationship with a *real* man.

After all, the café was empty.

No one was watching.

What would he do if I hopped on that counter and spread my legs for him to slide between?

Everything he did—his smiles, his jokes, his occasional grouchiness—filled me with an ease I'd been chasing after all my life without even knowing it. Even when he scolded me for improper espresso machine maintenance, I thought it was adorable. And when I laughed at him for being grumpy, it was always like someone popped a pin in his bad temper, which melted away beneath my delight.

That was the word, all right.

Duke *delighted* me. And no man, other than my father, had ever accomplished that.

Holy moly.

As evidenced by the way my heart hammered against my ribcage like a wild thing trying to escape its cage, I had a crush on my dad's best friend.

Later that day, I beamed with pride as I walked into the bank, still wearing my apron from The Daily Grind. It was only my second paycheck. Duke let me handle the bookkeeping, pay bills for the café, as well as make deposits after learning I had a head for numbers and had helped out my parents with the same. I even sent a portion of my wages back home to help my parents. As I counted out the money I had in

hand, it felt like an incredible accomplishment—to have cash of my own that I could use however I wanted.

I stepped out of the bank onto the sidewalk, and the anticipation of a new adventure came to life. I peered up at a small boutique shop I'd spotted from afar. The inviting shop, called Spell on You, seemed to ooze with girly secrets, and I was ready to unlock every single glittery, shiny one of them displayed in the window. I entered the doors and was in awe of what I found. Every item captivated my attention, but there was one dress that beckoned me closer—a little black number that matched my curves as if it had been made just for me.

When I walked out of the dressing room to look in the mirror, it felt like an entirely different adaptation of myself was blossoming from beneath the fabric, and I couldn't help but smile.

I looked woman enough for Duke.

The shop clerk was helpful as she helped me into the dress and explained how to adjust the straps to fit my body perfectly. She complimented my figure and my complexion, saying, "You're simply stunning."

I actually believed her, and before I knew it, I walked out of the store with a bag full of purchases, including the little black number and a pair of strappy heels to match. As I strolled back towards the café, I couldn't help but wonder what Duke would think when he saw me wearing it.

Either way, I knew one thing for sure: This dress changed everything. I wanted to show off this new version of myself to the person whose opinion mattered most to me right now—Duke himself.

Later that evening, he seemed nervous as we closed up shop at The Daily Grind. He fidgeted with the change in his pocket in a way I'd never seen him do before, and tension filled the air. All day, I'd been waiting for this moment, every conversation and pounding of my heart building up to this one occasion. He said he'd take me to the Moonstone Grill, which was nestled on the coast right at the beach. It was a place where we could watch the sunset over the Pacific while

sipping a cocktail, and the photos on the internet let me know I'd never been somewhere so ritzy. Duke was taking me there to have dinner as a celebration of my first month working at the café.

Always the perfect gentleman, he meant it as a platonic outing between coworkers, the father figure and his mentor. But in my mind, it was one thing and one thing only.

He was asking me out on a date.

Back at his place, I took my time getting ready, since I wanted to make a good impression. Unlike most days, I blow-dried my hair instead of throwing it up into a no-maintenance ponytail, and I liked the way my brown waves tumbled over my shoulder. I swiped mascara on my lashes and applied pink lip gloss. Finally, I put lotion on all over and opted for bare legs as I stepped into my dress and heels, slipping on a pair of silky pink panties for good measure.

In his black, button-down shirt, he radiated a vitality which drew me to him like a magnet. I tried to ignore the strange aching in my limbs that he induced. Apart from that, he was a steady, sane, supportive aura that made me want to spill all my beans for him. Tonight, when wearing my special dress, I'd have the guts to pull it off.

And maybe more.

I blew all the breath out of my lungs to calm myself and made a wish that all my dreams would come true, and Duke would finally lay his hands on me. Failing that, I prayed for the courage to make the first move.

I put my hand on the rail as protection against falling on my face, unsteady as I was with the extra height of my shoes, and when I looked up, he was there.

Staring as if he were trying to memorize me.

My heart skipped a beat, then turned over and finally thundered in my chest.

He looked as though the curves of my body mesmerized him, and I felt like I'd won the lottery. But then, his eyes

widened, and he turned away, grabbing my coat from the rack and breaking the spell.

But I wouldn't forget what I'd seen in his gaze. A look that told me he couldn't help but imagine what it would be like to be with me. Naked. And I planned on encouraging that line of questioning any way I could until he was powerless to resist.

He wrapped me in my overcoat and said, "Let me help you with that."

I held my breath as he buttoned me up.

"We don't want you to catch a chill," he firmly noted.

There was no chance of that. My entire body was on fire at the slight tug of his fingers on my buttons, which plucked at the fabric of my coat so I felt it along the sides of my breasts. Immediately, my nipples stiffened, and I wanted so much to lean into him. To place my face at the crook of his neck and breathe in, but I resisted.

The scent of his cologne lingered in the cab of his truck, and the rumble of the engine vibrated through my seat, exacerbating the steady fluttering between my legs since descending the stairs and feeling his eyes on me.

And while I was guilty of staring at his brawny forearms as they managed the wheel, he was just as culpable for taking side glances at my long, bare legs in the space beside him when he thought I wouldn't notice.

It made it seem like I might float right off the seat; it felt like winning.

As he turned the corner and parked in front of the establishment on the cliff over the ocean, it was as if we were on an adventure together. I turned to watch him shift into reverse, and the setting sun highlighted his strong jawline.

The restaurant was fancier than any place I'd ever been. Carved of old wood, the bar formed an oval in the center of the vast room, around which patrons sat on high stools, making it appear like we were on a movie set.

Duke took my coat and said softly, “You may be a down-to-earth girl from the farm, Clover, but you look like you’re handmade in the heavens tonight.” His words hung in the air as I looked away, my face flushed with surprise.

He reached out and tucked a strand of hair behind my ear. Then he hung up my coat for me and walked with the host to our table, which faced the beach, well away from the other diners. He pulled my chair out for me with none of the awkwardness of a man just doing it for show. The month we’d spent together, he’d proven himself a true gentleman, never so much as laying a hand on me.

And I planned on ending that tonight.

I was hungry in more ways than one, and he encouraged me to order whatever I wanted. “Will it bother you if I have a glass of wine?” I asked.

“Not at all.” With a firm sense of conviction that I’d grown to recognize as his character, he explained, “Alcohol will always be a trigger for me, but I have a solid recovery foundation and years of sobriety behind me. I appreciate your asking, though, Clover. Not everyone would think to do so.”

Next, my crush ordered half a dozen oysters on the half shell for starters and asked, “You’re twenty-eight, and you’ve really never had them?”

When I remarked, “No,” he shook his head.

I blushed, feeling like an awkward country bumpkin.

The waiter placed them in front of me, and I forced myself to swallow one of the slimy morsels, trying not to look disgusted. Duke watched with amusement as I choked it down. *Newsflash: It was gross.*

And I didn’t need the side effect people purported them to deliver—feeling plenty horny without the added aphrodisiac, thank you very much.

“What did you think?” he asked.

“I’ve had nothing like it,” I said, and his smile widened in approval.

His dark eyes glittered as he replied, “I like that. Giving you your first.”

My pulse quickened, and suddenly I was tripping on the oyster’s after-effect. I wanted to lean in and kiss him, but I knew it was wrong. Clearly, my thoughts about him had nothing to do with reason.

“Duke, I think you should know...” I said quietly, refusing to look at him for fear I’d lose my courage. “The way I feel about you... it’s not normal.”

Our server returned, taking up the appetizer plate and setting my fried chicken and his New York steak on the table while we sat stiffly staring at one another across the fine china, cutlery, and white tablecloth.

The waiter departed, and Duke shook his head, leaning over the table, his voice soft but unyielding. “If there is one thing I’ve learned in life, it’s that there is no such thing as ‘normal’. All that matters is that we respect each other and acknowledge our feelings.” He paused for a moment before continuing. “And I would do nothing to hurt you or make you feel uncomfortable. You or your father.”

I finally looked up at him, my expression one of surprise and disbelief. I opened my mouth to speak, but no words came out. Then I managed to whisper, “But I might. Maybe I have to do it for the both of us if you won’t. Because I can’t help thinking that maybe this could be something special.”

Duke rubbed a hand over his closely cropped beard and shifted his weight, discomfort etching the lines around his mouth. “It’s wrong, if I understand what you’re saying to me. I need you to respect that I’m trying my hardest here, Clover,” he said, voice gruff with emotion. “Your father asked me to do him a favor by taking you in, and I can’t break that trust.”

The half glass of wine under my belt boosted my bravery, and I declared, “It’s not wrong if I want you to. And I do.”

DUKE



I gazed at her, certain my inner turmoil was visible, as I deliberated whether to disclose my cravings to her. If I revealed my dominant side, would she back away in fear, as I suspected? Or would it intrigue her?

Good judgment wasn't a factor when I took that risk. It had flown out the window the moment she came down the stairs wearing that dress, all soft, glowing skin and tempting curves. I had to wonder, was she a bigger test of my willpower than alcohol itself, or was she teaching me to battle for what my instincts knew was mine?

"Clover, I want to be honest with you about something," I began. A novel hoarseness lingered in my voice, and I cleared my throat.

She looked up at me; her stare intense, so full of candid admiration and infatuation. It made my heart swell in my chest. Next, my shoulders hunched in shame for being the one about to shatter that girlish adoration.

"I'm not like most men. I have... desires that are different. That's one reason I'm hesitant to acknowledge this thing between us," I said, trying to keep a light tone in my voice. "Not to mention the fact that you're half my age and the daughter of my best friend."

Clover's face softened, and she leaned forward, her hand gently clasping mine. "So, you admit there is a thing? I'm interested in learning more," she said, her voice gentle yet bold. "I trust you, and I know you'd never do anything to hurt

me. Besides...” She looked across the dining room to gather her thoughts and twisted her napkin in her hands before peering into my eyes again. “Maybe I have a few confessions of my own.”

That statement made me pull back on my mental reins, my mind desperate to control my cock, which betrayed me, stiffening further and pointing right at the young woman sitting across from me.

Her expression grew serious. “You go first.”

I knew it was easier to avoid temptation than to resist it, and perhaps I should have known better than to ask her out to dinner. To sit across from her while she wore that stunning dress of hers that made all the blood in my body rush to my groin, while discreetly engrossing me in the way her breasts were perfect, perky handfuls rising slightly above the top of her neckline.

The air between us suddenly electrified. I didn’t know if I was making the correct decision, but I knew it was the only one that felt right, so I took a deep breath and braced myself for what might follow.

“Clover,” I murmured, “I’m a dom.”

Her brows knit together, and she cocked her head to the side, a pretty picture of confusion. She regarded me with curiosity, not saying a word, patiently waiting for me to explain myself.

I hesitated, then told her exactly what it meant. My voice was low, intimate, and full of dark promise. “I like control and dominance in relationships, which is why when you sass me, I have the urge to discipline you.”

Clover gaped at me. She appeared hesitant, but there was also a shadow of understanding and something else I couldn’t quite place, a kind of eagerness that made my heart leap in expectation.

“Discipline me? Like I’m a child?” she asked.

I hesitated, unsure of how best to explain. “Not like a child, no,” I said carefully. “Spanking, rewards, and

punishment are an integral part of any intimate relationship I'm in. It can be sexual, but it doesn't always have to be.”

Clover's eyes widened with understanding, and her cheeks blushed crimson. I felt my face heat, as well, wondering if she found my confession shocking or arousing. Perhaps both.

Suddenly, I was struck by an unexpected feeling. Looking out at the waves, with puffy white clouds just tinged pink with sunset frosting their tops, I realized it was hope that she'd accept me for who I was and wouldn't judge me for the desires that lived within me.

“So...” Clover whispered, her voice barely audible over the sounds of other conversations in the room. “Do you want to dominate me?”

My heart beat faster as I answered truthfully. “Yes. Even though I know I shouldn't. I've tried so many times since you came to stay, but I can't get you out from under my skin.”

She sat back in her chair and regarded me silently, searching my face for some hint of an answer.

I tried to explain myself further, taking a deep breath and explaining honestly, “It means you would trust me enough to let me lead the way with making decisions about our relationship—both sexually and otherwise.”

She sat back in her chair and regarded me silently, considering my answer carefully before finally speaking once more. “Can I tell you something?” she asked softly, her eyes never leaving mine.

The server returned, filling our water glasses again and leaving behind the dessert menu. Clover's smile had vanished, either from the sobering topic or because I'd disappointed her with my confession. And just thinking it was the latter shattered me.

Then she spoke with a quiet and desperate firmness. “Look, I'm no virgin.”

The statement, and the implication she'd been with other men, made me clench my jaw until my teeth hurt.

“Nor am I super sophisticated sexually. But that doesn’t mean I haven’t fantasized about being dominated ever since I stumbled across certain kinky romance books.”

Arousal seeped into my bones as she spoke.

“It sounds exciting. I’ve just never been with anyone confident enough to pull it off, you know? The whole domination thing.” Clover looked up at me with an expression I was powerless to resist. “I want to try this,” she said in a hushed voice.

My throat tightened, and my breath caught in my chest before I gave her a small smile in response. “With me?”

She nodded, and a sense of urgency drove me.

I wanted to hold on to her tightly, as if nothing else mattered but us, but I knew she deserved better than that, better than me.

A recovering alcoholic who was twice her age and wanted to be in charge all the time wasn’t someone good enough for her.

All the same, I had a feeling acknowledging the attraction between us out loud would make it impossible to keep my hands to myself when we got home.

DUKE



The drive from the restaurant home was nearly an hour long, and it gave us time to come to an agreement of sorts. Possibly the most wonderful sight I'd ever seen was when she'd removed her heels and propped her bare feet up on the dash, revealing a long, irresistible swath of her thigh.

"Clover, I'm 100 percent against lying, but if we explore our attraction to one another, we might discover that it's just temporary. Perhaps it's best we keep it between us until we find out."

"Agreed, there's no reason to announce it to the world, and by that, I mean my dad. If it ends up being a fleeting fascination, that's a risk I'm willing to take," she said without hesitation. "Besides, I'm not worried about what other people might think. Most of the time, life seems like a club I know I'm not a member of anyway."

I took a deep breath, searching for the words that would console her and make her feel safe. I wanted to tell her I understood what she was going through, and no matter how overwhelming it felt in the moment, we could make it through this together.

"How so?" I asked softly.

Clover paused for a moment before turning in her seat to face me. "It's like, sometimes it seems there is a set of rules, telling people how to be, how to act, what to do. And I never got a copy."

I reached out and gently touched her shoulder. “You have your own unique qualities that make you special, Clover. I think of you as someone who stands apart from the crowd. Someone with their own path to follow.”

Her lips pressed shut, and I struggled to express how much I was here for her. “I get it, though. Feeling out of place. And I can promise you, as someone who’s seen a few more years than you, there is no membership to any secret society that gets you out of hardship scot-free. We all have pain. We’re all flawed, and we’re all doing the best we can with what we’ve got. Imperfect as that is, it has to be enough.”

My words hung in the air as she looked away towards the beachfront, which by now had stars hung overhead, and shuddered in her seat. She hadn’t been told how beautiful she was often enough, and it made her self-conscious. I decided I’d do whatever it took to help her understand how special she was. And soon enough, I’d establish a set of rules between us to help her feel more grounded and guided.

“You’re enough, Clover. More than that. You’re brilliant, beautiful... and life is more honest and interesting with you in it.” *And I don’t deserve you, I thought. No more than you deserve the shameless thoughts I’ve had about you every waking minute since your arrival.*

I reached out and placed the flimsy strap of her dress on her shoulder and felt the warmth of her skin. Just the sound of her voice made my heart clatter inside its chest wall, struggling to make itself known to her. To communicate to her my awakening.

She was the one thing that made me feel more alive, more at ease than drinking. As if when she was around, for the first time in my life, I knew my purpose on the planet.

To protect.

Cherish.

Take care of her.

But I couldn’t say those things out loud.

She wouldn't grasp them coming from a man her father's age.

Or so I thought, until she breathed, still refusing to look at me. "You don't understand. Sometimes I think that's something I'll never achieve—normalcy. Maybe it's because I grew up in the country, spending more time with animals than people. Living on my parents' farm when I was way too old. I don't know how to act right. Take, for example, my reaction with that asshat, Hoss. The one I zapped. The whole town turned against me for defending myself. I can't figure out if the problem is other people, or if the problem lies with me."

In the dash light, I saw her bite her lip and slant her dark eyebrows into a frown. I considered what she said, wishing I could take her pain and press it into a diamond shield, insulating her from any future hurt.

Unfortunately, I knew life wasn't like that. There was no healing without scars, and sometimes old wounds throbbed like the dickens, no matter how long ago the injury was inflicted.

I shook my head, and when I spoke, my voice was tender, nearly a murmur. "There is no such thing as 'normal'. Our differences can be a source of conflict, but if we can look past them and focus on our shared humanity, we can find common ground. It's important to recognize and acknowledge our emotions, but it's just as important to appreciate and respect each other's perspectives."

She sighed heavily and leaned back in her chair; her face contorting with a mixture of pain and resignation. "Why do some people get away with murder? It doesn't seem fair," she whispered, more to herself than to me.

I reached out and touched her hand lightly, my voice tranquil as I spoke. "Truth always wins. Unfortunately, liars usually get their turn to spin it first." Her revelation reassured me, giving me justification for following my own instincts with her: to always make sure my baby girl was doing okay. She needed me. My tone held a degree of warmth and concern.

“Life isn’t always fair, Clover. But I promise you this: I’ll always have your back.”

She looked over at me with a mix of gratitude and disbelief. I hoped to offer her something she never thought she’d find: genuine acceptance. That was the silver lining about hitting rock bottom, if you did it right. You let the lesson sink in deep so that your preponderance towards judging others was wiped away like dust.

You came out the other side with a new way of seeing things. One that left criticism of others far behind, because you knew how easy it was to fall from sanity’s grace. You understood the fragility of contentment, and how it was a state to be revered and treasured far more than the highs and lows that chased you for years.

We drove the rest of the way in silence, but it wasn’t an uncomfortable one—rather a peaceful quiet where we both seemed to reflect on our conversation.

When we arrived at my house, I told her, “Stay put.”

She smiled at me, and a wave of warmth flooded through my body.

She was naturally obedient.

I was someone who truly understood what it meant to be an outsider—someone she could lean on when things got tough. Sensing the strength of her emotions, I opened the passenger door for her and pulled her into an embrace to hold her close.

“Thank you,” she said simply, meeting my gaze with a newfound determination blazing in hers. “I’ve been waiting for you to do that for such a long time.”

I nodded solemnly before taking her hand to lead her inside.

Clover stood in the kitchen while I prepared steaming mugs of tea. When they had steeped, I stirred a teaspoon full of honey into her chamomile, just as she preferred it. Then I led her into the living room and carefully placed them on the coffee table. Sitting down on the plush sofa, she crossed her

long legs and looked me in the eye. Her challenge was simple: “Have you ever played truth or dare?”

My insides tossed in turmoil, and my cock stirred, my body’s way of telling me it was definitely time to play. Simply to get each other out of our systems. I replied without inflection, “In a faraway time, long ago, yes.” My attraction to her was perilous, and right this moment, I didn’t give a damn. I watched her closely and felt my pulse quicken, my desire swelling over me like a winter wave. This was the closest to being out of control I’d felt since my last drink. That was it. An ocean of whiskey couldn’t intoxicate me as much as Clover.

She couldn’t look me in the eye when she said the words, and it made them even sexier. “So, truth, or dare?”

My steady gaze bore into her, until finally she looked at me and my voice rasped, “Well now, you have no way of knowing this, but... I never can resist a dare. It’s gotten me into more than one spot of trouble.”

Sitting beside me, she appeared to be frozen in a limbo where everything was possible, if I was only courageous enough to try. “Okay, then,” she said. “I dare you to spank me.”

CLOVER



Please, please touch me. Make the burning ache go away.
I know you can.

I chanted the words in my mind. They were stuck there like a song I couldn't get rid of. He was in my head, but was I in his?

My eyes were fixed on my pretty heel, which bounced incessantly at the end of my calf, giving away my nerves, and I didn't miss Duke's obvious examination and approval as he stared at my black-stockinged leg.

Jackpot.

Things were different now. Whereas before, his home seemed a shelter away from the storm that swirled behind me back in Porterville; the air was now knife-edged and dangerous.

I didn't have the slightest idea how to seduce a man, so I bit my lip, trying to ignore the incessant wet throbbing between my legs while waiting for my father's best friend to spank me.

God, what was he waiting for? The ache in my pussy was overwhelming now, as if it had a life of its own and was on the prowl. My clit thrummed in anticipation.

At the moment, he riveted his gaze on my face, and my heart leapt.

If we actually went through with this, it would be my first spanking, ever. Getting with Duke was like going from peewee

to major League, and suddenly, the smoldering flame I saw in his eyes startled me.

Could I really handle this? Letting a man twice my age get kinky with me? I freaked myself out sitting there and grabbed for my mug of tea, swallowing too much and hacking through a super sexy coughing fit.

When it subsided, I snuck a glance at him.

Slowly, he arched a single brow at me. “Second thoughts?” he asked, and that one slight gesture of his made something silky, warm, and sensuous snake through my body.

“Never done this before.” I rubbed my hands on my thighs, avoiding his eyes. “Not sure if I’m ready.”

He was such a beautiful man, emanating a raw and primal strength even sitting there still on the couch. His intelligence and self-certainty were superior to any I’d ever encountered, and it at once put me at ease and unnerved me so my insides were like a soda can someone had shaken up.

“There’s no such thing as being completely ready,” he said, his fingers traveling down my arm to pick up my hand. “You’ll never feel you’ve got everything figured out, Clover. But when you get to the place where you feel a little more excited than afraid, that’s when you bet the farm.”

In a moment of bravery, I clutched his arm. “Do I excite you?”

His fingers tightly gripped my wrist where I held on to him. “Immeasurably so,” he replied.

As he spoke, I felt a strange lurch of my heart.

Duke continued. “I know something that might put you at ease. Something so you know, even if I’m spanking you, there is a select word you say if it becomes too intense, painful, or is overstepping your sexual boundaries. You have control and the power to make me stop.”

My stomach muscles fluttered as I pondered his words. I was so outside my comfort zone, but his gentle confidence steadied me. “What kind of word?”

“You always have the right to stop whatever we’re doing to each other for any reason. Whatever word you pick, it’s like an immediate eject button from sex, and you don’t have to explain why.”

It came to me suddenly, the perfect word. “I got it.” Nerves rippled down low in my stomach as I spoke the words. “Cattle prod.”

He laughed, as if delighted with me. “Perfect. Like you.”

My heart pounded in my chest, and heat flushed my cheeks when he came to stand in front of me. His fingers seized my shoulders and held me in place, his gaze more intense than anything I’d ever won from a man, and I realized he was the most reassuring person I’d ever been around. It was his easy composure, and the impression he gave—he knew exactly who he was, and he wasn’t trying to impress anyone by being anything different.

Duke pulled me to standing, my face now close enough to his for a kiss. His breath was hot and heavy against my forehead, and his lips grazed my ear, his hands pulling me to him, as if claiming me. He whispered in my ear, “You’re so pretty, Clover. Thank you for dressing up for me tonight.”

I felt the strength of his arousal against my belly, the heat of our bodies scorching the air between us, the masculine scent of him filling my nostrils and turning me into pure animal. I wanted to down him like a cinnamon roll, but instead, melted into his chest.

“So, I do get you excited,” I said, and the room became a blur of colors, spinning and whirling around me in a vortex, sweeping me up and away from the world I’d known, landing me on planet Duke, where the only color I could see was him. As he breathed against my neck, his tongue flicked out to explore my skin. His teeth raked across my flesh as he nibbled and tasted me, and I gasped at the thrill.

His fingers once again slid down my arm, leaving their warmth on my skin, getting my attention, and he pulled me with him towards his bedroom.

As we walked towards the place where we were about to get kinky for the first time, his voice was resonant and impressive. “Just remember your safe word, Clover. Let’s go do some we-shouldn’t-be-doing-this things.”

Duke walked to the bookshelf above his bed, and the candles he lit cast dancing shadows on the walls, making it awash with warm light, which gave the entire room a soft warmth.

“Nothing quite like a cozy ambiance for a good spanking, no?” I quipped.

The only other light came from a wide window stretching the length of the entire wall. The moonlight streamed in and cast a soft glimmer on what I could see of his room. It was masculine, lots of dark wood and furniture, with a king-size bed.

His voice was a low growl as he pulled me across the room to the bed. I felt alive and tingly when he kissed my neck. The feelings coursing through my veins were almost unbearable.

Suddenly, he pulled back. “Are you okay?” he asked, his voice low and earnest.

A wave of guilt washed over me for having let things go so far with a man who my father would never approve of, but it wasn’t enough to quell the force driving me ahead. That force being lust, pure lust, and nothing but lust.

“Yes,” I said, my voice feeling strange in my throat. “I’m fine.”

He nodded, his eyes still studying my face. “Good,” he said, “because I want to respect you and your wishes, no matter how much I want to keep going.” He smiled down at me and tucked a strand of hair behind my ear.

“Please, proceed,” I quipped, sounding much braver than I felt.

Duke sat on his gigantic bed, still fully dressed, thank goodness, and patted his thigh, bidding me to sit on his lap.

I did as he asked, feeling overly large while perched on his thighs. I couldn't help myself, and so I leaned in and took another whiff of his delectable smell. Did the guy bathe every day in fudge, or was it his natural scent that made me want to lick him like chocolate frosting off the spoon? Dear God, it made me crazy.

Still sitting on his lap, I leaned against his sturdy chest, and he ran his fingernails up my side, making me shiver as pulses of pleasure throbbed in my veins with a steady beat.

I whispered, "Cattle prod."

His body stiffened beneath me, and his formidable erection was the most rigid of all. I counted to five and felt bad to see his brow creased in concern.

"That was just a practice run. I wanted to see if the safe word would really work."

He pulled away, and a wry smile played on his lips. "You're too much of a tease, Ms. Clover."

"I'm sorry. Are you going to punish me for being bad?"

7

CLOVER



Okay, yes, I was asking for it. Exactly what I was asking for, I wasn't sure, but I needed him to show me what he could do. Needed to feel him against me. I'd give anything to discover what it would be like to feel the hot slap of his hand on my ass, even if I was too shy to ask for it directly. It was time for Duke to toss me around and show me who was really in charge.

I wanted him to be the boss of me.

And not the kind that signed my paycheck.

I held my breath as I waited for his response. His gaze was steady, and the electricity between us crackled and sizzled like a live wire. He cupped my chin with one hand and bent down to press his lips against mine, and embarrassingly, I moaned out loud. I melted against him, falling into his embrace, my inhibitions dropping away as the kiss deepened and his powerful arms wrapped around me.

"You've been a very naughty girl, Clover," Duke breathed against my lips. "And naughty girls deserve a spanking."

My eyes widened in anticipation, and I made an awkward squeak as he flipped me onto my stomach and positioned me over his solid thighs, which felt like logs under my belly. His large hand rested on my lower back, pinning me tightly enough so I couldn't move, but not to the point of discomfort. He brought his open palm down hard against my butt, creating a sharp sting that echoed off of the ceiling. I gasped, and my hips bucked in surprise, but Duke held me firmly in place.

Five spankings, and the sensation sizzled through every part of me, not isolated to my buttocks. He started up again, and my body started shaking, brain reeling, and being trapped by him, swatted by him, didn't feel like punishment.

He was working me into a frenzy, and I writhed on his lap, hips pumping slightly to lose the burning ache between my legs.

"I love how well you took that spanking for me," he said, then asked in a stern voice. "Do you want me to stop, Clover?"

I shook my head and bit my lip, anticipation coursing through my veins. I needed more. More of everything he had to give. Duke was turning me into an organism motivated by one thing and one thing only.

Need.

"Good girl," he murmured and raised the hem of my dress, slowly enough so I could have uttered my safe word if I wanted to. But after his sexy discipline, my inhibitions lay helpless, as if someone had prodded them with a hotshot. When his huge hand slipped its fingers under my panty line, I wriggled to encourage him to get me naked, wanting nothing to come between us. I longed to feel his bare hand on my skin and hoped it would be enough to put him over the edge.

He stroked me at first, his voice sounding as if he were in pain. "So soft. Like satin."

Suddenly, his hot palm came down on my ass as he spanked me harder and faster, the slaps ringing out with each strike. My skin burned, my buttocks stinging as I felt every blow reverberate through my body like a current of electricity coursing through my veins. With each spank, Duke chanted, "Naughty, naughty girl, making me want you so bad. Making my cock so hard it hurts." His whacking became more enthusiastic, and my thoughts scampered around. The strength of his passion was at once mystifying and arousing. The blood pounded in my temples, and my face grew hot with humiliation.

I knew I was getting what I asked for, but it was still a shock to feel how hot it was, and despite how I blushed at my excitement over getting my ass swatted, I hoped to God he wouldn't stop.

Duke kept going and spoke in an even tone, as if it were no effort to chasten me with his hand. "Your beautiful ass is a deep shade of pink all over. I enjoy marking you like this and wonder if it matches the sweet spot between your legs."

Suddenly, he stopped and gently smoothed the sting away, running his hand back and forth across my bottom. He eased me off of his lap and lay me down on the bed, where I tried to catch my breath, to no avail. His punishment made me more excited than I was before, skin throbbing, heart pounding, and it thrilled me to get exactly what I wanted.

Duke stood over the bed now, looking down at me, and rubbed his hard cock through his pants. He was still fully clothed, but that didn't mean I couldn't make out that he rivaled a brawny bull in the downstairs department.

I'd seen enough animals being bred to recognize the raging beast of need in his eyes, and it didn't frighten me one bit.

He lowered himself and put his shoulders between my thighs and, with one hand, traced slow circles around my clit. I moaned his name, "Duke." With each stroke, I became more eager for him to explore me, and I spread my legs open as an invitation. He slid his fingers under the hem of my undies, and tugged on the fabric until it ripped, tossing my undies to the side.

His rhythm increased until he pinched, tugging and squeezing until I didn't know if I ached more from pleasure or pain. I writhed against his hand, lost to the sensation of his strong fingers plying me in a way no other man had before.

Duke knew exactly what I needed as he alternated tender stroking with harder tugs, driving me wild with desire. With his alternate hand, he slid two fingers inside and made a smug sound of male pleasure. "So wet." His attention turned to searching, probing, stroking my insides until he appeared to find what he sought after. "That's it. That's the spot that's

going to make my sweet Clover spurt.” He started massaging that place, while tweaking and squeezing my clit, and suddenly, my chest gave a surprised jerk, and my entire body was awash with overlapping waves of pleasure. “That’s it, baby girl. Soak my hand, and scream my name when you come.”

I barely heard him say the words through my fog of lust, and obeyed by crying out, “Duke! Daddy! Oh my God!”

Afterwards, my legs felt like jelly, as if a tidal wave had hit me and tossed my body up on the shore. “What the *hell* was that?” I asked.

This man, who was a fantasy come to life, chuckled between my legs. “That, my sweet thing, was your G-spot.”

“Oh, no,” I said, looking down at the place where he lay. “I got your comforter all wet.”

“I’ll never wash it again. Now, keep being good for me,” he purred, standing up, and in an instant, his jeans came undone and was tossed to the floor, along with his button-down shirt.

His swollen, veiny cock shoved up against his stomach, an almost angry red. The head of it was shiny with pre-cum and looked like candy to my eyes.

He moved to lie over me, and I felt his thick cock press against my entrance. His eyes bore into mine, searching for a sign of resistance or objection, but he found only eagerness in my gaze. He pushed my knees up and wedged himself between my thighs.

“Think long and hard about your safe word, Clover. Things can’t ever go back to the way they were. After this, you’re mine.”

I paused as if to ponder what he said, but I knew the answer right away. “Do whatever you want with me.”

Now, where did that come from? I’d never said those words to any guy before, but Duke wasn’t just any dude.

His hips slowly pumped at me, shoving his thickness through my lower lips so that my inner walls clenched, telling me just how much I needed him inside me.

He started by sliding his hands under my buttocks and tilting my pelvis towards the ceiling, lifting me onto his throbbing cock. Ever so slowly, his erection filled me until I felt every inch of him inside. He gripped both my ass cheeks for better leverage and inched out before driving deep again, each shove sending bolts of pleasure through my body.

I clung to him as I struggled to keep up with the increasing intensity of his thrusts. He nipped my neck and plucked at my nipples with his free hand while I writhed uncontrollably beneath him.

Duke slammed hard into me, moving faster, pulling out all the way and then plunging deep. My body tightened around him as I screamed out in bliss from the intense sensation that ripped through me like wildfire.

With each thrust, more pleasure spread through my body until finally, Duke groaned. “Such a good girl with a pretty, tight, wet little pussy... Daddy’s gonna come in you now.”

He slammed his pelvis against mine so that we notched together—locked like two puzzle pieces—while his hot seed spilled deep within me.

DUKE



The steady sound of a car horn broke our slumbering silence, its rhythm increasing in intensity until it filled the room.

“Holy shit, I overslept.” Last night’s rest was the best I’d had in years, and I attributed it to the adorable bundle of my baby girl nestled up to me beneath the covers.

Orange light filtered through the blinds, casting a warm radiance on the bedroom.

Clover stirred beside me, her face snuggled into the crook of my neck and her arm draped over my chest. “Whaaaaa?” she groaned, pulling the comforter over her head as protection against the bright morning sun. “Too early.”

The Daily Grind was closed today and tomorrow. Even so, I rarely slept in this late. Whoever was busting in on my shut-eye and disturbing the naked love bug at my side was going to have hell to pay.

I strode to the window, yanked the chord on the venetians, and beheld a sight which made momentary panic thrust my heart into gear like a boot inside my chest, trying to kick its way out.

Shit.

Her family.

Here, in Briarville?

I watched as my best friend walked around to the passenger side to open the door for Clover’s mom, and my

eyes widened in amazement as his father-in-law got out of the back seat and did the same for his wife. Faith, Clover's little sister, spilled out from where she'd been sitting on the back bench between her grandparents, wearing a T-shirt which read *Ditch Dairy*.

Clover yawned and slowly opened her eyes, stretching her arms overhead. She blinked a few times, adjusting to the morning light before realizing I was upset.

"What is it?" she asked.

"Not *it*. *Them*. Your family." I touched a hand to my forehead, moving more slowly than the situation required.

Immediately, she scrambled out of bed and cried out in excitement, "They're here! I can't believe it!"

She bounced nervously on her toes, and her jutting breasts arched towards the ceiling, her narrow waist accentuated by generous hips and wonderful mouth-watering thighs.

Jesus.

Now was definitely not the time for my lust to be running the show.

Her reason kicked in before mine. "Oh, my goodness. I'm naked in your bedroom. I need to get dressed!"

I took a moment to think, trying to come up with how to handle this extremely delicate situation.

Her face was a mask of worry. It replaced the excitement from moments before with brows that drew together in an agonized expression. The situation was completely FUBAR, and I knew she was as equally aware of it as I was.

I held my hands up in a defensive gesture and forced a laugh to calm her down. "It's okay. This isn't some soap opera drama. We're in control. I'll answer the door while you get dressed in your room."

She stopped wringing her hands and took a deep breath, trying to gain control of herself. Stepping away from me, her eyes darted around the room, searching for the dress and silky panties she'd worn last night, and dashed out the door.

“We can’t tell them anything,” she said as a parting remark. “About us!”

I swallowed hard past the tennis ball lodged in my throat, and sagged against the wall as I tried to mask my disappointment, waving down at our guests and gesturing I’d be right there.

She was right, of course. Now wasn’t the time to let my buddy know I was trying to court his daughter. Clover and I needed to see how things played out between us before announcing our relationship to the world.

What if she decided the risk of my relapsing down the road was too great? Besides, I remembered what it was like to be young. Things changed fast between a man and a woman at her age. If things didn’t work out, I stood to lose not only her but also my best friend, her father.

I found a clean pair of boxer shorts and pulled them on. “Down, boy,” I told my eager dick, who was apparently completely unaware of the awkward situation at hand, because he’d seen Clover naked, and it wasn’t even noon yet.

Shit, will I be able to keep from drinking her up with my eyes in front of them? I wondered, pulling a black T-shirt over my head and yanking on a pair of jeans.

Clover popped her head back in the door, wearing a yellow sundress and white sneakers, an outfit which did nothing to quell the swollen state of my cock. Relief was written across her face.

“Okay,” she said, taking another deep breath. “We’re dressed. Now what do we do?”

Although I still had many questions buzzing through my mind like angry hornets, I pushed them aside for now and focused on the appearance of calm. “Go down and let them inside. I’ll start coffee, and we’ll greet them as if nothing’s changed,” I began, looking into her eyes for understanding. “We already know we make a great team, and right now, the name of the game is not letting on about what happened between us last night. Your father trusts me implicitly, and

now is not the time for him to find out I slept with his daughter. You and I need time to sort us out first.”

She listened intently and nodded. “If we act as if nothing inappropriate happened between us, then things should be all right. Don’t you think?”

I approached Clover and took both of her hands in mine before continuing, my gaze lowering as did my voice. “Just so you know... so there’s no mistaking my intentions... Since the day you got off that bus, my life has changed. The way you make me feel is hard to explain. But I haven’t sauntered around constantly wearing the special smile you give me... ever.”

She nodded her head in agreement, and I couldn’t resist crushing her to me, pressing my mouth to hers.

Taking one last look at each other, Clover held on to my hand like a toddler holding a parent’s hand at a crowded street fair. She was still tense, but visibly relieved by my plan of action.

Letting go of her grasp before we descended the stairs to prepare for our guests was the hardest thing I’d ever done.

From the cupboard, I removed a bag of coffee beans. Their promising dark brown tint gave the room a wonderful aroma as I pulverized them in the small grinder. My hands shook as I filled the electric kettle with water. I grabbed the freshly ground coffee and spooned the dark granules into the filter, my stomach in knots as I thought about the implications of this visit from Clover’s family.

A wave of voices called out from the entryway. “Hey, Clover! We’ve missed you!”

As I waited for the kettle to boil, I took comfort in knowing that at least I could provide the group with a decent cup of coffee.

I heard the sounds of Clover rushing to hug each person who greeted her: her parents, her sister, Faith, and her grandparents.

What was this, a family reunion? Could things actually get any worse? If it were a movie scene, it would be too over the top to believe.

My grumpiness faded away when I saw my baby beam with delight, her eyes bright and dancing as she led them into the kitchen and took in the sight of so many of her loved ones gathered in one place after spending a month apart. She couldn't contain her joy, and it lit up the room.

The group piled into my large kitchen, and I set out a carafe of coffee with all the fixings, to distract all of us from the evidence of my ardor for Clover.

Shit.

I stood over the large breakfast nook built for this purpose, hosting a large family, and listed off the coffee fixings on hand. My eyes darted around, purposefully avoiding the way Clover's sundress reminded me how I'd nuzzled her naked nipples last night, savagely licking and sucking at the tips as if seeking a cream sweeter than any I could serve in my café.

"There's cocoa powder, chocolate spread to mix in, heavy cream, cinnamon, nutmeg, and even pumpkin spice." My voice was a buzz in my own ears as I fumbled for the full list of ingredients, and I took an uncertain step back, nervously dropping enough spoons and napkins on the table for us all.

To tame my twitching muscles, I positioned myself at the stove while Clover and her family caught up on all their news since she left Porterville.

Faith asked her sister, "So, how's the dating scene in Porterville, Clover?"

Stiffly, I barged in on the conversation before my love bug had to respond. "How do country potatoes, scrambled eggs, and toast sound for breakfast, everybody?"

"Wonderful. Let me know if I can help," Clover's mom replied.

"I've got it. You relax and catch up," I said, not wanting to be in proximity to her since I suspected I still smelled like her delicious daughter.

“Yeah, Mama. Catch me up. Who’s taking care of the farm, and why are you all here?”

Her father started by clearing his throat nervously before explaining, “Well, honey, that’s what we came to tell you in person, since it’s really not a conversation for over the phone.”

I looked over my shoulder to see Clover’s mom looking away hastily, then restlessly folding and unfolding the cloth napkins I’d set on the table. That alone set my alarm bells ringing.

“Mama?” Clover’s voice was stifled and unnatural, sensing the gravity of the moment.

Troy’s brows pulled together in a frown. “Here’s the thing, sweetie. Real estate sales can move fast, especially in this busy market. We had friends who closed in forty-five days on a sale, which completely changed their lives.”

Everyone around the table merely stared at their coffee, tongue-tied, until finally Clover asked, “Real estate sale? Exactly which property do you plan on selling?”

Her grandfather responded, “Your parents received an offer worth more money than God—enough for them to leave Porterville, retire, and buy a place somewhere with nice coastal weather. Somewhere like Briarville.”

Clover’s eyes widened, her hands dropping to her sides in disbelief. “Sell the farm? Are you kidding?”

There was a gentle softness in her grandmother’s voice. “You know your mama and Faith have been providing more and more care for your grandfather and me, and we downsized and moved here with them so the whole family can be together. Plus, with labor shortages and shipping costs being the way they are nowadays, making a living as a farmer is just that much harder. Your parents deserve a break.”

Troy spoke in a soothing tone to his daughter. “Not only that, but things weren’t the same for you in town after the incident with Hoss. These city slickers who wanted to branch out to the countryside were a godsend for us. They’re going to plant grapes and olive trees and start a vineyard and olive oil

farm. Wouldn't you know it? All that goat poop makes for fertile soil."

I watched Clover like a hawk, every muscle in my body tense with the need to comfort her as she listened, shook her head, and rubbed absently at her arms.

Her mama reached over and touched her shoulder comfortingly. "Clover, honey, I know it's a lot to take in all at once, which is why we wanted to be with you when we delivered the news."

My baby folded her arms over her stomach and shrugged to hide her bewilderment. "I guess it's going to take me a while to get used to the fact that our farm is going to belong to someone else."

She raised her hands and stared at her palms as if looking for answers as I topped up everyone's coffee, my arms aching to hold her and take away the blow they had delivered her. She could stay here as long as she wanted. I'd make sure she had everything she needed until things settled down.

"Are you sure this is the right thing to do? What you want?" she asked in a weak and tremulous whisper. "Or did I force you to do this by zapping Hoss?"

There was a general sympathetic murmur from everyone, and her mother said, "Oh honey, this is something we would have done even if Hoss never existed. This is a dream come true for us, and we want it to be yours, as well, which is why we came to pick you up before we went to look at real estate listings here. That way, you can be a part of the decision making."

Her mother turned to me, and with one simple sentence, my life was over. Clover forced me to live on cloud nine with the way she walked into my life. She made me want to give love a chance.

Her mama continued. "After breakfast, your sister and I can help you pack your things. We rented a vacation home with a room for you and your sister, so Duke doesn't need to put you up here anymore."

A soft gasp escaped Clover's lips, and her mama said reassuringly, "I know, precious, it's a lot to take in. But trust me, this is all for the best."

And on the verge of her walking out my door, I knew in the pit of my soul that what I had with Clover, I didn't want with anyone else.

DUKE



The sight of the striped awning above my café had a Pavlov's dog effect on my dick. Every day when I got ready for work, Wednesday through Sunday, I felt my heart leap with excitement as I spotted it from down the road. I couldn't wait to see Clover again, meeting up with her in the one place where we could keep her father in the dark.

The smell of freshly roasted coffee beans welcomed me when I unlocked the front door of the café, being careful to lock it behind me again. It excited my blood as I saw her there waiting for me in the soft gleam of the low-lit interior, shades carefully drawn before opening, as she prepared for the first rush of customers.

We spent our days taking moments whenever we could, stealing glances and exchanged looks. We knew, however, that as hard as it was to hide how we felt about each other, we couldn't let her father find out about us. The consequences of him learning of our relationship before we fully understood it ourselves were too great, and so we kept our secret, not letting anyone else know.

"Clover," I breathed, my eyes latching on to her curves, which were built to drive men wild. This time of day, before customers arrived, we were still safe from prying eyes, and I had the urge to yank open the button of my jeans and slide the zipper down to give my cock relief.

Stupid idea.

The only thing that would relieve the ceaseless ache would be her lips wrapped around me, my fist buried in her hair while I pumped at her mouth, chasing my orgasm. Or I could bend her over the counter, yank her panties to the floor, and shove the full length of it in from behind.

“It’s good to see you again,” I murmured, feeling my dick swell with longing at the sight of her.

She smiled, and I told myself her eyes brimmed with possibility.

“The nights are so long without you,” she breathed.

This café was the only place where we could be together in private, and that time was brief, and passed much too quickly. I wrapped my hands around hers, feverishly relishing in the forbidden pleasure of our private time together. We’d learned how to quickly get what we needed from each other.

“Did you remember your rules?” I asked. When she caught her lip between her lower teeth in the way I’d warned her about, I reminded her, “Daddy told you what it does to him when you nibble on your lip like that, didn’t I, baby girl? The only one allowed to bite or touch you is me. Now, answer the question.”

I was too impatient to wait for her to respond and took her by the hand, leading her to the back room. Shoving her against the shelving in the back, which stored beans and other inventory, I grew frantic at seeing her young, seductive body and the way she panted, her chest rising and falling with excitement.

“You haven’t answered my question, Clover. Does that mean I need to put you into the employee discipline program again?” The eagerness in my voice couldn’t be mistaken.

Dear God, please tell me she’d disobeyed my orders not to touch herself without permission. There was nothing I needed more this minute than to smack that plump bottom of hers until she squirmed and wiggled for sexual relief. There was just enough time to leave her legs shaking before we served coffee for our first customers.

“Your silence is all the answer I need,” I growled at her through heavy breaths. “Lift your skirt and grab that top shelf with your hands.”

Clover was no shrinking violet, and I loved how, after a long pause, during which she visibly fought to curb her temper, she slapped her hands on her hips and insisted, “Duke, you know full well I’m in my sexual prime. Even before I met you, I had ways of taking care of myself, and now that we have to keep everything a secret, it’s not fair for you to make rules about diddling my skittle!”

“That’s enough.” I yanked down her panties, just like I’d been fantasizing about. “Step out of these,” I said, putting them in my pocket so I could torture myself, knowing her pussy would be bare for the rest of the day beneath her skirt.

I made good on my word to punish her if she got herself off without asking. I swatted her hard and fast, my hand coming down on her ass, right cheek, left cheek, right cheek, until my hand stung, punishing myself as much as I did her, taking my sexual frustration out on her bottom.

My baby girl squealed, squirming beneath my hand. I stopped, coming to a rest on her hot, disciplined flesh. “Do you think you’ve learned your lesson, love bug?”

She whimpered her words of surrender, knowing her obedience would get her fucked the fastest. “Yes, Daddy. I’m sorry. I won’t touch my pussy again without asking first.” She left off the words *I promise*, but I let it be since we were too short on time for more punishment if we wanted to find release.

I growled and roughly spun her around to face me. My gaze bore into hers as I dropped to the floor and said, “Let me see if she needs touching now.” I lunged towards her pleasure center; the tip of my tongue lapped up her sweet flavor before plunging deep inside. My lips parted, and my tongue shot out, eager to please her as I worshipped her body with passionate licks. She moaned in delight as I continued to lavish her with attention, exploring her inner depths with each stroke.

Clover grabbed my hair in her hands, pulling. “Please, please, Duke. I need you inside me.”

Finally, the words I’d been waiting to hear. We’d started something we had to finish, even though the stakes were high for both of us if we got caught.

It didn’t matter that wrapped up in my arms was where she belonged, that I couldn’t stop thinking about her, no matter how hard I tried. Or even that this was wrong.

Right now, I needed her like oxygen, and it focused me on my goal. The target was her pussy, and my cock had tunnel vision.

Excruciating anticipation pained me as I leaned in to kiss her, feeling the heat emanating from her body, and picked up the honeyed scent of her. Our mouths moved hungrily against each other, our tongues intertwining as we explored each other. My hands roamed up and down her tight little body, caressing her curves as she gasped in pleasure. I cupped her breasts in my hands and squeezed them gently as a moan escaped from deep within her throat.

“Wrap your legs around my hips, baby girl. That way I can grind my cock into you, nice and deep,” I commanded.

“Yes, Daddy.” Her back pressed up against the shelf, and the sweet silk of her thighs wrapped around me made me need to fuck her fast and crazy. Then she gave me permission, saying, “Do whatever you want with me.”

My desire took over; my swollen cock leaked its arousal and dripped onto the floor as I pulled back, then lunged forward, pinning her against the shelves, pushing deep into her dick-squeezing, wet passage. We both gasped with pleasure and surprise as our bodies fit together perfectly.

Lost in our own world, Clover looked deep into my eyes, creating an intensity that stole my breath. I pressed forward into her inviting warmth and savored the moment, our hips finding a sweet rhythm which gave us both exactly what we needed.

And then I took control, bouncing Clover's hips off of me like a rag doll, her sweet tits jiggling erotically in front of my face. They were a sight to behold, and combined with the way she squeezed around my dick, I had to fight my release.

Inside her warmth, I moved with a ferocious frenzy, my hips battering her. "You look so sexy right now, baby girl. Did you miss Daddy?"

She nodded her head frantically, using no words.

"Tell me how badly you want me to fuck you."

Her body trembled with each thrust. Her snugness milking my cock made me feel so much pleasure, it was a kind of agony.

"Fuck me hard, Daddy. Breed me like your little fuck doll."

Her tormented groan begged me to continue. She was deliciously tight. At first, I thought I was too big for her, but her pussy tightened around my shaft, milking it. She straddled me, easing herself down, taking all of me in while I watched, captivated. I was happy to oblige, and her entire body quivered as I moved inside her, pumping desperately, driving my cock deeper with each lunge.

Unable to hold back any longer, I unleashed my full force. Clover's body thrashed wildly with every thrust, her sultry breasts bouncing deliciously. The sight sent my senses into a frenzy, and the way she constricted around my cock drove me to the edge of madness.

My hands explored her curves hungrily, and I whispered into her ear, "I'm going to paint your insides with my cum."

She gasped at my words and pulled me closer.

She was so snug around me, a weakness that made me shudder and quake. I pushed deeper and harder into her with each movement, until it felt like I'd spear through her backside, and she whimpered in pleasure.

"Oh, Daddy," she cried out. "Yes, yes! Don't stop! Whatever you do, don't you dare fucking stop."

Her words drove me on, and my hands roamed up and down her back, gripping at her soft curves as she clung to me. Her pussy lips stretched around me so that I couldn't stop now if I wanted to.

I pulled out slowly and then drove in again, harder, faster this time. She threw her head back in pleasure as I moved wilder and more forcefully against her. It felt so good, and I knew I wasn't the only one getting close.

I held on to her hips with a grip of iron as I plunged myself deeper than ever before. The pressure in my balls drove me to the brink of torture, and I fucked her in a total frenzy.

“You're so huge inside me, Duke. Pound my pussy with your gigantic cock.”

Her words brushed right up against my trip wire, and we came together in shuddering waves. My orgasm shot out in a rush of cream, my pulsing cock gushing inside her until I'd drained myself completely.

My shoulders heaved against her, my face resting in the crook of her neck, breathing her in.

Shit.

Just the intoxicating scent of her was making me hard again.

I pulled out and backed away, looking into her eyes to make sure she was okay. There was a satisfied, well-fucked look in her eyes that made me stick out my chest.

I didn't know how I was going to keep these feelings to myself. Pretty sure bliss would emanate from my pores all day until you could smell it on me over the scent of roasted coffee beans.

My cum spilled out of her, droplets visibly running down the inside of her thighs and onto the industrial flooring. I pulled in a deep breath, lungs filled, knowing it was me who did it to her.

“Don't wipe it off,” I told her, my arms cradling her for the few moments we had in which I could pretend she was mine

and mine alone. I could have every inch of Clover's body pressed tightly against mine, and I'd still want to pull her closer.

But the clock was ticking, and within a half hour, we'd have customers at the door. I stooped down to pull her skirt back into place. "Leave it there all day. I'll know if you try to wipe it off, and trust me, if you do, this morning's punishment will seem like child's play."

No matter how risky, I didn't want to hide the best thing that had ever happened to me. But her words made me question whether we could actually keep our secret to ourselves. Certainly, my dick could not, and the fire she'd started within me wouldn't extinguish. Her next words made me wonder if I was strong enough to resist her, when my body screamed for her touch every minute.

Fully dressed and ready for the day, she threw me a smirk, which challenged my willpower. "One question. Is it considered punishment if I enjoyed every single minute of it?"

CLOVER



“You...” my sister, Faith, stuttered, out of words for a change, shock glazing her face. She didn’t know how to take the fact that I was being the wild one for once. “How did this happen?” she asked, looking around desperately for an explanation of sorts. As if she’d find one written on the walls of the room we currently shared at the Victorian vacation home we were staying in until my parents found a new place.

There was nobody from the family in the building. I made sure of that when making a plan to tell her. She was my best friend, and for now, I needed her help to cover for me. I hated lying to my parents, but told myself it was for the best, and better than hurting or shocking them unnecessarily.

Duke asked me to go away with him for the weekend, and we’d decided on our cover story, which Faith would back up. We’d stay the weekend at the Inn at Newport Ranch, close enough for day trips to the town of Mendocino, with its famous wild beaches, posh shops, and gourmet restaurants.

I looked into her eyes and watched as my words sank in. “You deserve to have some fun for once. You’re always the responsible one,” she said, before leaning in for a hug and saying goodbye.

And with that, mine and Duke’s secret date became a reality. We’d stay for the weekend, enjoy the sightseeing trips, while our relationship remained hidden from the rest of the world. I was so excited about the chance to spend time alone with Duke, hold hands in public, and go on actual dates

without having to sneak around. It would be a chance to get to know each other better and see where we were headed.

Faith was suddenly back to her bubbly self, bouncing her butt up and down on the mattress. She looked at me with a mischievous glint in her eyes. “You know what this calls for, don’t you?”

I laughed, shaking my head. “I have a feeling you’re about to tell me.”

“We need to go see Chloe!” My sister regarded me with amusement, satisfaction pursing her mouth.

My defenses subsided with her suddenly buoyant mood. Being with Duke was feeling less like a sin and more like a secret I wanted to savor again and again. “Okay, I give. Who’s Chloe?”

“Only the owner of the best spa in town. You need a mani-pedi, STAT! Time to spoil ourselves.” She leapt off of the bed and snatched her purse off of the side table.

“Wait. Now? I have to pack,” I cried.

My sister spoke with a quiet but desperate firmness. “Listen, girl. You’ve been through hell these past few months, picking up the slack for me every time I get in trouble, then that mess with the cattle prod... It’s time to give yourself some me time!”



Faith steered me, her wide-eyed younger sister, into the spa, her grip on my arm ensuring I couldn’t escape.

Chloe smiled warmly as we entered her shop.

“Welcome to Chloe’s Salon & Spa,” she said. “It’s nice to meet you, Clover.”

Her welcoming demeanor put me at ease and made me feel better about the fact that I was a country bumpkin through and

through, and this was seriously my very first spa visit. Immediately, it was clear she was a kind and genuine person, something I appreciated in a place where I felt completely out of my element.

We exchanged general pleasantries, and Chloe asked, “So, you’re both here for a wax and gel manis and pedis?”

I shook my head. “Oh. There must be some mistake. I’m only here to get my nails done.”

My reaction seemed to amuse my sister, whose mouth quirked with good humor. “Uh, earth to Chloe, you are now in the presence of a genuine pussy whisperer.”

My body froze, and I blinked with bafflement, my skin prickling with alarm. What exactly did I get myself into?

Her companion regarded me with amusement. “Don’t worry, Clover. It’s just a nickname my clients gave me.” She held her palms up to me and wiggled her fingers. “When it comes to waxing, I’ve got what they call the magic touch.”

On that note, she spun on her heel and walked towards the waxing room.

We made our way past the receptionist and came to a stop in front of a discreet area with shelves lined with bottles of oils and wax. Soothing music featuring the sounds of rippling water and singing frogs played in the background, but it did nothing to set me at ease.

“Um, Chloe. I’ve never done this before,” I murmured.

“Yeah, that’s pretty obvious. Don’t worry. I’ve seen a million vaginas up close and personal. Nothing phases me,” she said.

Faith sat behind a privacy screen, and her presence was comforting, so long as she kept her eyes to herself.

“Take your skirt and underwear off and put this over your lap,” Chloe said, stepping out to chat with my sister while I got ready. Nervously, I eyed the tweezers, strips of fabric, and the melting pot full of wax. I nearly choked when I saw the

menu listing how much a bikini wax cost and wondered how the average woman afforded such things regularly.

Faith and Chloe giggled quietly behind the screen, and I sat on the table, crinkly paper crackling under my ass, and placed the towel over my lap. This was truly another world, and I was here without my space suit. “I’m ready,” I called.

My body tensed and my mind cried out a warning—*run*.

Chloe stepped around the screen, donned in a white smock, which made her look super professional.

I blurted out, “Like I said, I’ve never had this done before. Just call me Sascrotch.”

Seeing the amusement in my eyes, Chloe laughed.

She pointed to the list of options on the wall and asked, “Did you decide which you’re going with?”

From behind the panel, my sister popped off. “We know he’s interesting, since she’s going away for the weekend with him. Question remains, is he Brazilian-bikini-wax interesting?”

My butt shifted uneasily on top of the table. “Does it hurt a lot?”

“Quite a bit, but only for a second. Here’s the deal: You put up with cramps, mood swings, and bleeding. One day, you might give birth... Women’s bodies are built to handle pain. In the grand scheme of things, it’s not so much, and the way he won’t be able to take his eyes off your pussy...” She broke into a wide, open smile. “Girl. So worth it.”

It was that plea that made me opt for the works. However, I didn’t take Chloe up on her offer to bleach my butt hole, telling her, “Thanks, but I figure one orifice is enough for today.”

It wasn’t long before Faith and I sat beside one another while having our feet rubbed, calves sugar scrubbed, and cuticles trimmed. I went for turquoise polish on my toes and bubble-bath pink on my nails. When we left the spa, arm in

arm, the breeze blew up my skirt in a way that teased my lady bits in a new and interesting way.

“So, you know the plan?” I reminded Faith.

“You and Duke are at the Coffee Fest Conference, studying trends and getting to know other coffee people. You’re staying the weekend. Separate rooms, obvs.”

“You got it,” I said, my mind floundering, feeling more confused than a chameleon in a bag full of Skittles. “You don’t think I’m a terrible person?” I bit down on my lip, feeling the heat in my cheeks.

Faith came to a dead stop, rested a hand on her hip, and raised the other in protest. “Look, Clover. I get it. You don’t want to hurt Dad unnecessarily. The only reason you have to keep things secret is because you’ve spent your whole life helping our parents...”

“They help us, too!” I interjected.

Her fingers clenched. “Be that as it may, you’ve been forced into an unnatural situation, completely without the privacy normally granted to an adult. If it weren’t for that, you wouldn’t have to go sneaking around. I agree, this isn’t the point in your and Duke’s relationship when you’re ready to let the entire world know.” She touched my arm. “Your secret is safe with me, and if you’re ever ready to make how you feel for Duke public, I’ll back you every step of the way.”

A lump came into my throat. “I swear, sometimes talking to you is the only therapy I need.”

“The greatest thing our parents ever gave us was each other. I love you, Clover.”

I flung myself into her arms, the motion raising the back of my skirt above my knees to remind me my pussy was now a hairless cat.

DUKE



Fifty-five years was old enough to appreciate the rarity of her effect on me. I'd never felt like this about another woman.

Every thought I had related to her.

Every dream at night was a fantasy about her.

Every text I received, I hoped was from her.

She made me young again.

Clover: I have a surprise for you.

Me: Color me curious... 🐱

Clover: They say good things come to those who wait, but I'm finding it ever so hard to wait until you come pick me up.

Me: That's a coincidence. I'm finding myself ever so hard thinking about coming to get you.

Great. She'd turned me into an adolescent, and I couldn't stop myself. That was the problem. No matter how much I'd learned to exercise the muscles of my self-control when I quit drinking, I told myself the only way to get my craving for Clover out of my system was to yield to it.

And beyond simple sexual temptation, I found myself wanting to do anything to make her smile.

The anticipation of Clover's surprise was driving me wild. I fantasized about sexy scenes—a romantic picnic in a

secluded spot, a getaway to a nearby beach for some private time under the stars, with cozy blankets and her in my arms. But there was one setting in particular that had put me through a long night of soul searching.

Should I, or shouldn't I?

I still thought about this as I drove to pick her up, and I could feel my heart racing with desire. But there was someone I needed to talk to first, and he'd surely splash me with the dose of cold water I needed.

Doc.

We'd been out to lunch and breakfast a time or two recently, but our relationship was still strained.

Back when I was drinking, I'd grow irritable and easily agitated all throughout the day. Starting my workday, going to the gym, doing laundry, grocery shopping—the most mundane of tasks became agonizing with a hangover, and I'd lash out at even the simplest of requests. My self-pity grew over time until the laughter and smiles of everyone around me were replaced by heavy sighs and looks of concern. I turned every atmosphere I inhabited into one which heavily weighed on my family's spirits, like a dense fog that refused to dissipate. They came to dread having me around.

I didn't blame them.

And now, my brother was the only family I had left. It wasn't just about not taking another drink. Only after I realized I'd never get sober without changing the people, places, and things that I was doing while drinking did I manage to break my addiction to alcohol, which was another way of saying I broke my addiction to escape reality.

Clover was the first female I'd met who made me want to get it right. To be the one who helped her grow in life. And I felt safe with her—like there was nothing to run from, only someone I wanted to run towards. It put me at ease, but at the same time, shook me up.

I could have her tight little body pressed up against me in all the right places, naked, and I'd still need to hold her tighter.

The sound of my phone call to Doc filled the cab of my truck, and anxiety spurted through me.

“Duke.” One word, which my brother spoke emotionlessly as he answered the phone.

“Hey, bro.” The seconds played out after I pulled over to talk. *Come on, don't be a coward*, I admonished myself. “Just letting you know I'll be gone this weekend. Taking a brief road trip to the coast.”

“Cool,” he answered hollowly.

“Yeah, I'm taking someone I think I may be falling for.” I shocked myself by admitting it to him.

There was a long silence on the other end of the phone, but I forced myself to breathe through. Wait for it.

“Far as I know, true love isn't falling at all. It's like walking into a house and suddenly knowing you're home,” Doc stated, direct and to the point. He certainly had insight on this after marrying Priscilla, a woman he'd been friends with for years.

Sharing his insight with me was a step in the right direction, even though, yet again, I was the older brother going to him for advice.

“Suppose you're right,” I acknowledged.

“I'll swing by the café a few times while you're out of town. Make sure the workers aren't revolting while you're gone.” Sounding amicable now, it was as if he'd forgotten, for a moment, all the poor decisions I'd ever made, all the days I'd disappointed him, and it felt like the greatest gift anyone had ever given me.

Even if it only lasted a moment.

“Thanks, man. I appreciate it. And let me know if I can return the favor any time you and Priscilla head out of town.” I hung up; the anticipation of Clover's surprise was still killing me.

My heart raced with excitement as I started up the truck and drove to fetch her, knowing it was more than just sex. God

knows I wasn't looking for anyone when she got off that bus, but I needed to spend more and more time with her. Working with her wasn't enough.

And I wanted her to get to know the real me, to knock down all the walls I'd constructed and let her in.

On that note, she wasn't the only one with a surprise to share.



The drive to Mendocino was the perfect setting for Clover and me to get to know each other better. I'd missed having her around all the time to talk to, and it felt so right having her on the passenger side of my pickup.

"So, have you thought of what you want to do now that your parents sold the farm?" I asked.

"I don't really know," she said. "I've never been one of those people who always knew what they wanted to be when they grew up. Probably why I was perfectly happy taking care of the goats and gardens every day."

I thought for a moment, trying to come up with what to say, but the best I could do was, "You've got plenty of time."

She worried her bottom lip between her teeth and smiled rather wistfully as Highway 1 wound around the tight curves, taking us from 101 North to the coast, cutting west through mountain forests. "I guess serving coffee the rest of my life isn't the most ambitious thing I could ever aspire to."

I picked up her hand and gave it a gentle massage. "You can work there for as long as you need."

Clover kicked up her bare feet on the dash, and I wondered why her every movement reminded me of how much I wanted to be inside her. There was nothing contrived or insincere about anything she did. I wasn't a fan of phony vibes or playing games, and neither would even occur to her.

She looked as if she were weighing my offer and said, “I don’t know. The boss can be a real hard ass, you know?”

The drive to the Mendocino Coast took a few hours, and during that time, Clover and I discussed her dreams and dislikes. We got to know each other better, and if I wasn’t mistaken, I wasn’t the only one whose feelings had shifted. Were we falling head over heels for one another?

I didn’t want to push it too soon any more than I wanted to ruin the mood of this perfect road trip. Instead, I let myself relish every moment of the drive, with her at my side. She was like a piece of decadent dark chocolate to be savored and enjoyed. And the entire way there, I pretended she was mine forever.

We checked in to The Sea Ranch Lodge up the coast from Mendocino and hung out until it was time for our reservation at the restaurant overlooking the ocean.

They decorated the place with candles and white linen tablecloths. We ordered food from an extensive menu that included seafood and local delicacies. The conversation flowed easily, as if we’d spent years in each other’s company as adults, instead of just over a month now.

When it came time for dessert, however, I had something much more important than sweets on my mind. The question at the tip of my tongue hammered at me.

I cleared my throat before asking Clover about what had been on my mind the entire drive. “Would you want to explore something new with me on this trip?” Her eyes lit up with excitement, which muddled my fears that she might refuse or run away, scared by my proposition. Taking a leap of faith, I continued, “I know this may sound strange, but... I think you’ll be pleasantly surprised.” I’d made a reservation for us at Liberté, just in case she was up for it. It was too risky to take her to The Ranch in town. Even though it enforced a strict rule of secrecy—What happened at the sex club, stayed at the sex club—I was nervous about running into someone we knew there.

Clover looked out the window at the soft peach and pink hues painting the sky, and a smile trembled over her lips.

“When you were staying at my place, you agreed to trust me to lead the way sexually and otherwise.” Her appeal as she sat across from me—young, kind, and inexperienced—was devastating. I studied every move she made and held my breath.

She became increasingly uneasy under my scrutiny, shifting in her seat and clearing her throat.

“Use your words, baby girl,” I encouraged.

She took a sip of water, and I placed my hand over hers, hoping to soothe her nerves.

“I did,” she said matter-of-factly. “I do.”

Those two simple words hit me like a gut punch, evoking a mind-blowing image of standing beside her at an altar someday.

Clover gazed into my eyes, not knowing how sensuous her voice sounded. “I’m just not used to having these conversations with you, with anyone, so openly. But I want to try. I’d like to please you.”

Suddenly, my thoughts were all about her body and what was beneath that skimpy little number she was wearing. All the things I could do with it. My cock was hard.

“I’ve booked us a reservation at a sex club tomorrow night. Make no mistake, I’m not sharing you. But it will be an opportunity for you to learn more about the lifestyle.” My dom showed up unwelcome, refusing to take no for an answer. It came across in my tone.

She took a moment to catch her breath. I could practically see her head swirling with doubts. She wavered as if trying to comprehend what she was hearing, and I reassured her, “Your daddy will be with you the entire time, keeping you safe.”

“And I always have my verbal cattle prod,” she said. A new, faintly eager look flashed in her eyes. “I know you’ll protect me. I’ll go.”

“That’s right,” I said, unable to prevent the swell of pride I felt when she was brave.

Clover eyed me with a mischievous expression. “Are you ever going to ask about the surprise I have for you?”

“Please. Tell me.” The underlying sexiness of her words captivated me.

She leaned closer so only I could hear. “There’s something else besides going to a sex club that I did this week for the very first time.”

My pulse pounded. “If you don’t tell me this instant, I think I’ll self-combust from lust,” I said, taking a huge swallow of water to lessen the way my body had just turned into a furnace.

She straightened herself with dignity and said with a significant lifting of her brows, “Let’s just say, I’m completely bare...” She paused meaningfully. “Down there.”

You couldn’t have gotten me out of that restaurant and back into our room faster if you had held me at knifepoint.

CLOVER



Before I even knew what happened, our weekend was nearly over. It was the evening of the second day at The Sea Ranch, and already I mourned having to go back to Briarville to stay with my family. Not that I didn't love them to pieces, but I only wanted to be with Duke.

Two days to ourselves wasn't enough.

I loved everything about him: the way he smelled. The sound of his laugh. God, his voice—deep, crisp, and clear—with the capacity to make me wet just by saying my name. He was still a mystery I wanted to unravel. I could spend hours staring at his hands as he turned a screwdriver or opened up his pocket knife, watching the way he scrolled the news feed on his phone, and don't get me started about his commanding caresses, kisses to the top of my head, and how he smothered my lips with his to ignite a heat more intense than the inside of the steam sterilizer we used at the farm.

Our trip made me sad and happy at the same time. What would it be like to have him as mine all the time? Would it always be this way? Would he fascinate me forever? And what about him? Did he feel the same way I did?

We'd agreed to keep things between us, and now I felt like shouting to the entire world that his kisses made me dizzy and confused.

That night, after dinner, we drove to the club, Liberté. The air was balmy; the stars scattered in the sky. The neon sign of Liberté glowed, beckoning us inside. When we stepped

through the doors, darkness shrouded us like velvet. The place was low-lit, with neon art and carefully placed wall sconces, which gave off a purple light. My heart raced as he took my hand and led me past the bar, his presence a shield against my fear.

I felt an adrenaline-pumping thrill as we strolled through the place. Duke had his arm around me, leading me through the crowd. Everywhere I looked, there were people dressed in fetish outfits. The fact there was no one on the main floor having sex relieved me.

A sweet, sensual fragrance lingered in the air, and I wondered if the owners had incense custom-made in the aroma of lust and desire.

Duke stopped and pointed to the back of the club. “That’s the play area.”

I had read stories of these kinds of places, but this was my first time actually being in one. Duke’s muscular arm encircled my waist as we navigated through the crowd to look at what went on there. We paused here and there to take in the various sights. In one corner, a woman was suspended upside down from an elaborately knotted rope while a man whipped her naked body. In another, an onlooker was making notes in a journal while watching a woman wearing a collar and leash part the wet lips of another woman’s pussy and sheath her tongue inside. The sight nearly made my mouth drop open.

With every step we took through the club, I grew more aroused, my skin tingling where Duke touched me. But it wasn’t until we came to a room off of the main area, where a man had another’s cock in his mouth, that my desire grew frantic.

The dominatrix orchestrating the scene, dressed in a black leather, tailored, laced corset. “Let me hear you groan around that dick,” she hissed with a curl to her lips.

A woman dominating two men? I’d never read this exact scene in my romances, but the way she was bossing them around made me fidgety between the legs.

“That’s right, suck his cock. You look so sexy with that monster in your mouth.”

The man pulled away to respond, “Yes, Mistress.” The sub on all fours rasped in a way that made it clear he was enjoying this, if the small pool of pre-cum on the floor beneath where his cock thrust up rigidly against his stomach weren’t sign enough.

The large and in charge female reached out and pinched the sub’s nostrils closed, her grin sinister. “Do you like everyone watching while you service him?”

The man on his knees in front of the jutting red erection whined, “Yes, Mistress. I want to show them all what a good little cock slave I am for you. For him.” He leaned forward, opening his mouth wide, and I couldn’t take my eyes off the tableau.

Duke’s eyes bore into me in steady expectation, and a raw, wild need passed between us. Leaning forward, he whispered in my ear, “Would you do that for me? Let me come in your mouth with everyone watching?”

Was he serious?

I couldn’t do such a thing, not yet. No matter how much the idea might excite me.

“Maybe someday,” I told him, hoping it would be enough and turning my attention back to the scene in front of us.

The sub on his knees had his tongue out now, making a show of swirling it around the cock head. His moans sounded as if he were in pain, but I noticed he was still erect.

His mistress reached out and took handfuls of his hair in her fists, shoving him forward onto the huge dick to plunge it to the back of her slave’s throat.

The man on his knees emitted a tortured groan, swallowing as much of the enormous shaft as he could, his mouth stretched wide open as he moved, taking all of it down his throat. The sounds of wet sucking were audible all around us, and my eyes were glued to the scene.

On either side of us, I sensed other observers growing aroused; couples were peeling off one at a time to find their own play area.

It was hard for the man receiving the blow job to push the words past his lips, but he addressed the mistress. “Fuck! He is such a good little cock slut, isn’t he?”

“Do you love feeling him suck your hard dick?” she asked, lifting a small riding crop from a side table while the man answered her question as he fucked harder into the sub’s throat, holding the back of his head so there was no escaping his pistoning thrusts.

“Hell yes. It feels amazing.” His groans sounded tortured now, and he addressed the man on his knees in front of him. “You like that, don’t you? Of course, you do.” He somehow thrust his hips and talked while petting the sub’s hair.

Duke leaned over to make a rough-voiced request, which tickled my ear. “Are you ready to do that for your daddy? Are you going to be his good girl tonight?”

Oh my. I was practically salivating to have his cock in my mouth and couldn’t wait for him to fuck my bare pussy again like he did last night. We’d hardly slept the whole night through, and it was oh so worth it.

“Yes, Daddy. I want you to come in my mouth so I can taste you.” Watching the scene was such a turn-on, and Duke’s nearness made my senses spin.

By now, the mistress had painted red stripes across her sub’s bare ass, and he didn’t seem to mind much. “Good boy,” she purred, cupping his jaw in her hand. “You love sucking cock, don’t you? And you love swallowing cum.” On that note, she tapped at the tip of his agonizingly hard penis. Five times. Her sub did not object but grunted his obedience when she told him, “You’re going to drink it down like a cherry limeade on a hot summer day, and you’re going to swallow every fucking drop like a good little slut.”

The man standing over him thrust forward with a forceful intensity, as if he were trying to pierce the other man’s

abdomen with the tip of his dick. He grabbed his hair in his fists and drove himself further, his breathing growing heavier. The sub's mouth opened and closed in a desperate attempt for air, saliva dripping from his chin, and the loud, wet smacking of his mouth being fucked filled the room.

The mistress looked on approvingly at her obedient sub while Duke and I watched with a mix of awe and arousal. It was unbelievably hot. The man above moaned louder as he reached the peak of pleasure, and he held on to the back of the sub's head with both hands. His lover continued to suck obediently until he emitted a guttural scream that echoed off the walls. "Here it comes. Take it!" he exclaimed, crying out as every one of his muscles flexed, and he stood on his toes, aiming his cum down the other man's throat.

Unbelievably, the mistress inserted herself, still giving orders. "You did such a good job for me, slut. But don't think that means you get to come. No touching yourself, either."

"Yes, Mistress. I love sucking cock for you, but it makes me need to fuck and be fucked so badly," her sub moaned.

"I'll think about it. But you haven't earned your reward just yet."

Watching the three of them had been like being in a trance, and now that it was over, the spell was broken. Because I didn't know anyone here, I didn't feel the least bit self-conscious about it. And I had my daddy to serve as my bodyguard. But now, I just felt too horny to be out in public.

I studied Duke's chiseled, tanned face and asked, "Now what?"

"What do you want, Clover?" he asked, and I felt a curious swooping pull at my innards.

He was so handsome in the club lighting that I felt my heartbeat in my ears. His nearness comforted me, and I said, "I wanna get under a table somewhere and make it hard for you to talk."

"Oh, fuck, Clover. That mouth of yours is going to be the death of me. I guess that turned you on a bit?"

He was running his thumb deliciously up and down my palm, sending shivers through my entire body, and I felt as desperate as that sub on his knees, needing his cock in my mouth before I became his personal porn star right there in front of God and everybody.

DUKE



The harder I tried to ignore the truth, the more it persisted.

Instinct made me need to touch her in public, and before this weekend, I never knew the self-imposed hell I'd put myself through, not allowing myself to do so back in Briarville.

My every kiss contained the words *I love you*, even though I couldn't say them out loud. I wanted to be the man who always held her hand in public and held them down in private. The truth of it was, the more my silence about how I felt for Clover went on, the less I could justify it.

It being the all-too familiar pattern of hiding my drinking from others to avoid interference and judgment, even though in my mind, I never thought I had a problem.

Was that what this was?

Another unhealthy addiction?

I looked at her.

The way her innocent eyes latched on to me, seeking answers. She made me feel, for the first time, as if someone saw my scars, my demons, and loved me anyway.

Just a bit longer.

I'd give myself this weekend to love the way she was so familiar to me, as though I'd loved her from the day I was born. Our age gap was irrelevant, and spending time with her felt less like I was getting to know her, and more like I was remembering who she was. As if I'd met her before, and my

soul recognized hers just as if I were staring at my face in the mirror.

I'd hit rock bottom before, and it was the only way I came to admit things needed to change. If that was life at the lowest possible level, then this was its mountaintop. Call me selfish, but I planned to stand here and enjoy the view for as long as I could.

The dress she wore hit just below her peach-shaped bottom, and the ample flesh of her ass called to me. I gripped it in one hand and tore her away from the intensely passionate display, leading her to the private room I'd booked.

My voice husked her name as I used the key the hostess gave me to open the door and lock it behind us. "Clover. This is a private room." I pointed to the leather harnessed suspension rig hanging from the center of the ceiling. "Do you know what this is?"

She moistened her lips and stepped closer to touch the dangling straps lightly with her fingertips. "Whatever it is, it looks kinky."

"It's a bondage rig," I whispered, not wanting to scare her away.

I led her over to the seat and motioned for her to sit down. I then carefully explained how she would hang from the rigging, swinging upside down, her face aimed straight at my cock while I fed it to her.

She nodded, still in awe, and looked up at me with anticipation in her eyes to breathe the words. "I may have a dirty mouth, but maybe tonight you can teach me to do pleasurable things with it."

I laughed against her throat, trailing my fingers up her inner thigh and stroking the silky skin there. "Maybe you'd like me to punish that dirty mouth of yours a little. To be rough with you and control you like the sub we saw in the scene just now."

Her breath hitched as she realized I was serious about exploring our boundaries together.

Finally, Clover broke the silence between us with one simple word: “Yes.”

“This is what we’re going to do,” I said, grabbing her throat and raking her neck with my teeth, and then I tasted her deeply, savoring her mouth, her hunger.

“Let me help you out of that dress, sexy as it may be.”

Gripping the zipper at the back of her dress, I drew it down to reveal the steel of her spine, where I dropped kisses until I came to the two dimples at the top of her buttocks. Her dress fell away, revealing the nude glory of her creamy skin.

She emitted a breathy little moan. “What about you, Daddy?”

I removed my shirt for her and glanced past the hair on my chest and belly to the top button of my jeans. “Go ahead. Take it out,” I commanded.

Clover tugged my zipper down and reached for the prize inside. Her small hand wrapped around my cock as she admired the sight of it.

It was impossible not to groan out loud. “That cock is for you and only you.” I positioned her in place, upside down, and adjusted the straps until she was at the perfect height to swallow me. “Are you comfortable?” I needed to make sure the rig was a relaxing place from which to hang upside down before I face-fucked her.

“Yes, Daddy. Just right,” she said, her expression pure intensity as she stared at my shaft.

I chuckled deeply, delighted with how greedy she was for my erection.

Her fingers fit around me perfectly, the tip of her thumb and middle finger barely touching, giving me yet another glimpse of how we were made for each other. The veins on my cock made a neat trail along my shaft, as if pointing to the head, which was now a purplish-pink, so swollen for her it leaked milky droplets of pre-cum, which dripped over her fist.

“I want you in my mouth.” She moaned, stretching her neck towards me, attempting to reach it.

“That’s where it belongs.” I secured her in the rig, the straps holding her in place, naked, vulnerable. “Now, be a good girl and open,” I ordered, before pulling her lips to my engorged head with a voracious growl.

The feeling of her hot mouth sucking deeper as I pulled her on to me... fuck. Just fuck. If there was ever a hint that God made her for me, it was this.

“You’re such a precious love,” I crooned, gripping the straps of the suspension chair and using them to pull her towards me, giving me the leverage I needed to plunge to the back of her throat as she hung upside down. My eyes settled on her breasts, a total turn-on. They bobbed and swayed as I picked up the pace. “You’re taking it so well. Keep being good for me, and I’m going to fuck your mouth as if I’m spanking the back of your throat. That’s what you want, isn’t it? For your daddy to force you?” I pulled away, allowing her to speak, in case she needed to use her safe word.

Her breathing labored, I gently plucked at her stiff nipples, waiting.

“I do. It turns me on when you’re aggressive with me. I don’t know why it does, but it’s like when you act that way, you have the remote control to my pussy.”

Her already hard nipples tightened further, and I reminded her, “If you want me to stop, all you have to do is tap my thigh, okay?”

“Like this?” she asked, acting it out. “That’s our signal, but I know I won’t need it. I love it when you control me, and I don’t have a gag reflex.”

I pulled away and met her eyes. Her pupils were fathomless, filled with desire, and I asked, “Who do you belong to?”

“You, Duke. I belong to you.” She parted her mouth, and I slid past her lips.

My cock pulsed within, making my will to dominate her that much stronger.

I ran my thumb teasingly along the soft skin of her inner thigh. “That’s right. Never forget it,” I said, skating on the razor’s edge of what was right, knowing how it would hurt my best friend to find out I was fucking his daughter.

My words to her promised us a future together, and our prospects as they related to forever were tenuous. Tell that to the possessive voice inside my head. The same one that had been staking its claim on Clover ever since we entered the club—*mine*.

A smile spread across my face as I leaned in, pushing myself down her throat and watching in awe as she took me eagerly, moaning around my thickness while running her wet, velvety tongue back and forth across the tip until my eyes rolled to the back of my head from pleasure. Her eyelids fluttered closed as she focused on enjoying every inch of me, compelling me to thrust even harder.

“Open your eyes and look at Daddy.” I growled, shoving my cock with one hard thrust after the other while sliding a hand to her clit, rubbing and tweaking it in the way that made her wriggle with lust. The pleasure was immense, and it took all of my strength not to burst right then and there. Instead, I kept going until I felt her breath become more ragged and knew she was close, too. “Don’t you dare stop sucking, baby girl. Or I’m not letting you come.”

I continued ravaging her throat, encouraging her with my verbal direction. “Keep that pretty little mouth open for me when I’m fucking it.”

My body was on fire as I jackhammered my hips at her face, strumming her slippery wet clit, working it until she squirmed under my hand, chasing her release. She continued to writhe against me, chasing her pleasure, and I raised my palm, bringing it down to deliver a sharp swat to her pussy. “What did I say about who was in charge?”

Her eyes grew misty with apology, and I continued to coach her as I caressed her cheeks. “You didn’t know any

better, baby girl. Only Daddy gets to make you come. Don't move, and let me take control." My fingers returned expertly to the intoxicating place between her legs as my hips rocked against her face.

The silky heat behind her lips suckled me once more, and I fucked her mouth as if it were my personal pleasure palace. Each thrust caused her head to bob up and down in a steady rhythm that matched the beat of my heart.

Our eyes locked as my hand moved between us, working my fingers into her and firmly swirling around her bud, coaxing out her orgasm. She moaned as my other hand pulled her head closer, pushing deeper into her mouth with every thrust. I could feel the tension in her body increasing as I pushed down harder on her most sensitive spot until, with a loud moan, she shuddered and released into pleasure. Her tongue flicked against me as I released a deep groan, and felt her swallow my cum down the back of her throat.

I stood above her, breathing, until my heart rate came down off the ceiling. She took her own time to recover from being whopped over the head by the climax club. Once able to breathe, still shaky and trembling with lust, I unbuckled her from the suspension rig, helped her to stand, and wrapped her in my arms before helping her dress.

One thing was certain: After this weekend, I needed space and time to think about us, and my logic flew out the window whenever she was around. The fact that she'd proven herself to be an Olympic medal-worthy cock worshiper wouldn't make keeping my distance any easier.

CLOVER



I *know I can do this.*

Or so I told myself, walking in the frigid morning air from The Inn to The Daily Grind, bracing myself to invite Duke for dinner with my father, just the three of us. I knew convincing him it was safe to reveal our relationship to my dad wouldn't be easy, but it would be worth it. My sneakers moved over solid cement, my stride making bold progress.

The brisk morning chilled me from ears to toes, yet the wonderful memories of our weekend together warmed me from within.

Work didn't feel like work. Because Duke was there, my shifts were like Christmas every day. I got to be in the same place as him, brushing my arm against his as we both poured coffee, hearing his deep, soothing voice as he took customer orders, and salivating over simple things like how he carried himself with a commanding air of self-confidence, his powerful well-muscled body moving with easy grace.

It was enough to make me want to create a career out of being a barista. Only everybody kept telling me it should only be a short-term option.

Now that the family decided to seek a new place to live in Briarville, my parents and grandparents had asked me questions. The main thread of the conversation being, "Did we really set you free from the family business just so you could serve people's coffee, breakfast, and lunch every day?"

Truth was, I knew exactly what I wanted. To be staying at Duke's ranch, helping mix the barley mash for his horses, and delivering buckets to the stalls before the sun was up. Make him chocolate concoctions cooked up in his kitchen big enough to hold an army. Spend all day, every day with him, just so I could see his irresistibly devastating grin like the one I expected him to greet me with when I unlocked the front door of his café.

“Good morning, Clover,” he husked, his brows drawing together with an agonized expression instead of offering the smile which dared me to fall in love with him.

What was that about? I'd missed him every second since he dropped me off from our so-called business trip, and now confusion welded together in one upsurge of yearning.

The door that separated the café from the storage area in back opened, and a young woman stepped out. She had a shoulder-length bob, and her skin glowed, giving her an ethereal air. She was thin compared to me—slender like a pencil, and the apron tie around her waist defined its smallness in a way that made me envious of her figure. When our eyes met, her smile was wide and inviting, as if she already knew my name.

Indeed, she did. “You must be Clover,” she said and extended a hand.

My heart sank as I realized there would be no chance of sneaking in a cuddle or make-out session with Duke before the café opened.

“I'm Ava.” She broke into a wide-open smile, and the even whiteness of her teeth nearly blinded me.

Duke spoke coolly, empty of any emotion, and while I knew his intention was to keep things between us on the down-low, my heart felt his denial of us as if a pitiless hand wrapped around my heart and squeezed. And with his next words, I became the walking dead.

“I brought Ava on board since I need more time to manage the boarding stables. You know how to make all the coffee and

espresso drinks, which is what Ava needs to learn first. Then you can show her how to keep items stocked, work the cash register, and clean everything.”

I fought hard against tears I refused to let fall. What did I expect? That after spending a weekend away with me, everything had changed? Instead, he was pushing me away, so I didn't know where I stood with him.

Instead of reaching out to clutch his hand, whose fingers caressed his mug, I walked abruptly behind the counter to grab a cup and tried to think of something to say that might make the moment less awkward. I fumbled with my barista apron, tying it on quickly and hurriedly, without giving the loops their proper attention.

“Hi, Ava. It's good to meet you. Like Duke said, I'll help you get up to speed on the coffee drinks and all the rest.” My voice was an even composure, but inside my heart sank. I had so hoped our weekend away would have been the start of something new between us. Instead, it felt like we were going backwards.

The coffee mug felt good wrapped in both my hands, sending its warmth right into my blood.

What the heck did I expect? Duke was such a competent, confident man. Soldier and business owner. A man who'd fought for his sobriety.

What did I know how to do?

Milk goats and grow vegetables.

Now that my family didn't even own a farm, that wasn't exactly an option.

My life plans were pretty much null and void, other than serving up coffee every day.

Coffee and Duke.

It wasn't like I had aims to be an astronaut or the first female president. Happiness was something I found in everyday life, like the rich aroma of dark-roasted beans. The

sharp tang of espresso and the milky sweetness of the foam I'd just poured on top.

I took a deep, steadying breath as I stared into my coffee mug. The warmth of the liquid seemed too comforting. How could Duke pretend nothing had happened between us? That I hadn't submitted to him, not only in body but in spirit. This very minute, every cell of my being longed for him to push me against a wall, any wall, and kiss the hell out of me.

Ava was friendly and business-like as she asked Duke questions before he left, eager to learn the ropes at the café. I tried hard not to eavesdrop, but I heard her say she'd done similar work before and always enjoyed it, so it shouldn't take her too long to catch on. My stomach twisted in knots as I watched Duke smile at her, genuine this time, and not the careful one he'd given me moments before.

My skin burned with jealousy as I watched them chat. All I wanted was for Duke to turn his attention back on me, even for just a moment or two, and show some sort of sign that he still cared about our relationship—or whatever it was we were supposed to have together before this awkward situation had presented itself.

Duke excused himself abruptly after making sure Ava and I had our marching orders for the day. He stepped right past me, hurrying off to the ranch—without so much as a glance or a wave in my direction.

His sudden change in attitude weighed heavily on my shoulders, as if tied to a Big Bud tractor going over a cliff. A lone tear slipped down my cheek unchecked as I thought about how things had been just days ago when Duke held me close during our weekend away from reality—when he acted like he loved me.

Grimly, I wiped that tear away and began scrubbing the counter with my back to Ava. Could it be that was all it was for him?

An act?

His abrupt change in mood was so puzzling.

I put it out of my mind the best way I knew how. Staying busy.

Addressing Ava, I said, “First, let’s go over the menu. I can show you where everything is in the back, and you can watch me take orders and make coffee. Does that sound reasonable?”

I looked around the café, the place where I’d happily imagined myself spending the rest of my life. So much had changed in such a short time. Now, every spot in the place was a reminder of him, how I’d suddenly catch his gaze riveted on my face, then moving slowly down my body.

The mere touch of his hand when he’d passed me a bag of coffee beans would send shivers through me. His special employee discipline program, where he spanked my bare bottom, was something I looked forward to.

I could feel my cheeks flush and my heart rate increasing just thinking about the closeness we shared during those times. Even though Ava was there now, that moment was still ours alone, a secret between only us two. And no matter how much I tried to deny it, I ached for his touch once more—for one more chance to feel those firm hands caressing my body before punishing me for whatever minor infraction he’d deemed necessary for the day.

All I could do at this point was make sure everything ran smoothly in the café.

Ava appeared eager enough to learn, and we spent the morning going over the details of the coffee and sandwich menu. Somehow, we managed the lunch rush together, probably because she knew all the techniques required to make excellent coffee. She just had to learn the specific ingredients used at The Daily Grind. At the end of the day, we both wiped down the tables and cleaned the floors.

“How long have you known Duke?” she asked.

I stiffened, replying, “Just about forever. He and my dad are best friends.”

Her tone was friendly, smiling, bantering in a relaxed manner. “Bummer. I could have sworn there was something

between the two of you. Beyond the obvious boss-employee relationship, I mean.”

She clapped both hands over her mouth, her eyes flying open. I gripped the countertop tightly to keep from giving anything away.

“God, Clover, I’m so sorry. I always realize some things are better left unsaid right after I say them.”

“Don’t worry about it,” I reassured her, realizing her direct approach to things was growing on me. Then my head puzzled with new thoughts, and it turned out, Ava wasn’t the only one who couldn’t keep her mouth shut. “Why did you think there was anything between us?”

Finished with wiping the display counter, Ava grabbed the notebook she’d made notes in all day. She leaned her head back and gazed into my eyes. “Hard to explain. The main thing was every time you weren’t looking at him, he was feasting his eyes on you. Literally. Like he wanted to eat you up. Maybe it’s just a one-sided thing. Sorry, if telling you this makes it awkward for you.”

I tilted my head, telling myself awkward was when you thought you were falling in love with someone, and they didn’t feel the same. Awkward was when the man you had a crush on refused to look at you or speak to you the same way. Awkward was falling for your dad’s best friend.

“I’m okay, Ava. Don’t worry about it.” It was a lie, and I felt bad deceiving her so early into our working relationship. I’d gotten myself into this mess, and I’d figure a way to get myself out.

We returned to work until everything was clean and shiny. That done, we took off our aprons with a sigh of relief—me because I wanted to escape this day as quickly as possible, and Ava because she probably wanted to get home after such a long day on her feet at The Daily Grind.

We said goodbye at the door with one last wave before departing.

I headed to the vacation rental shared with my family, where no doubt I'd spend another long night filled with thoughts about Duke... and me... and whether we were meant to be.

DUKE & CLOVER



D *uke*

It was cowardly, but the only way I could think to get her alone was intercepting her on her way home to the vacation rental, where she was staying. Thanks to me, The Daily Grind was no longer a place where just the two of us could talk before work, but I knew it had to be that way. I wanted to be with Clover every minute of the day, and when we were alone, I had no willpower, no ability to resist getting her naked.

After our weekend together, I knew if I didn't stop things now, it would be too late. My dependence on her wasn't healthy. If things went on between us, there'd be no resisting her if I tried. I needed to be near her. Whenever she was around, I felt one of three things: a rush, a buzz, or a sense of peace. When she wasn't around, I was preoccupied with seeing her again. I'd taken foolhardy risks just to be with her and felt twitchy, distracted, and on edge if too much time passed without indulging in her sweet pussy. I recognized the signs of addiction all too well, and I was developing one for Clover.

As she came towards me on the sidewalk after finishing her shift, I couldn't stop staring at her face. She bit her lip and looked away, and it pained me to see how I now made her uneasy.

But it would be better this way. Better for her, because she deserved so much more.

We stood in front of each other, both of us with so much that needed to be said, yet neither of us spoke. I wanted to tell her I loved her and wanted to be with her, but it wasn't right.

I cleared my throat and looked away. "Clover, we need to talk. About your father..."

Clover tensed up and took a step back, eyes widening. A few strands of her hair caught on her mouth, and I longed to brush it away for her. To shove my hand in her hair and pull her towards me.

"What about him?" she asked warily.

"Well," I said, rubbing the back of my neck, "you know he wouldn't approve of us being together. Can't say that I blame him. I wouldn't want any daughter of mine dating someone twice her age who hadn't exactly proven himself a grown-up in life."

She nibbled her lip again, sending a direct hit to my dick. "So, what do you suggest?" A frown creased her forehead, and I longed to kiss it away and pull her into my arms.

I took a deep breath before answering the question.

"I think we should take some time," I said slowly, hesitantly, watching for any signs that she disagreed with me, hating the way I sounded like every bad breakup scene in a movie.

But Clover surprised me by nodding in agreement and taking a step closer, smiling at me weakly when our eyes met again.

"Time for what?" she whispered, looking like she was ready to cry at any moment, and I detested being the man who did that to her.

We stood there for a few moments, neither of us saying a damn word, just listening to the sound of each other breathing, until Clover finally broke the silence.

"Are you breaking up with me?" she asked, her voice barely more than a whisper.

I sighed, taking her hands gently in mine and squeezing them lightly as I spoke. “Yes,” I said softly, “but not because I don’t care about you or wish you ill. You deserve so much better than me, and this isn’t something that can work without causing pain to someone we both love. I’d never forgive myself for coming between you and your dad.”

Clover closed her eyes and nodded, bit by bit, her shoulders slumping in defeat. “So, it doesn’t matter how I feel. Basically, my love life gets to be determined by two men who know nothing about what I desire.”

“It’s not like that,” I said firmly, my throat tightening with emotion. “You need time to figure out who you are and who you want to be without me clouding your judgment. Neither one of us wants to hurt your father.”

She opened her eyes and looked up at me sadly, tears spilling down her cheeks, smearing her mascara. I wished desperately that things had been different. We’d already crossed a line few people would ever understand or accept.

I leaned forward and kissed the top of her head one last time before pulling away, fighting against the temptation to never let go. With a heavy heart, I stepped away from Clover, knowing I’d never touch her again except from afar in memories of what might have been.



Clover

My sobbing wracked the ostentatiously papered walls of the Victorian-style room that had once been a solace but now felt stifling and tacky.

“What happened?” Faith asked, wrapping her arms around me and holding me close as I wept.

I tried to answer, but the words caught in my throat, so instead, I clung tightly to her hand while I sobbed. Then I

thought of doing the same with Duke the entire way to The Sea Ranch and cried harder.

Our father banged his fist on the door. “Girls? What’s wrong?”

Faith and I froze in a limbo, where all decisions and actions were impossible. He burst into the room, his face a mask of worry as he saw my face, which was no doubt splotchy and red from crying. He pulled us both into a hug, yet he was still tense, radiating the agitation that was simmering beneath the surface.

His face was a mix of worry and anger, and he asked. “What is it? What happened? Somebody, say something.”

I knew I was still alive because I was in so much pain. It felt like I hurt all the way to the core of my being, and there was something strange about the effect. I wasn’t thinking about my dad and how hard it would be for him to accept the fact that I loved Duke. I wasn’t thinking about my family and how they needed me. It hurt to realize I wasn’t as important to Duke as I thought I was, and I was tired of being everybody’s good girl.

Pleading, I looked at my dad in desperation and frustration. I knew he was hoping for a storybook romance for me, but that was far from what the crappy café of life had served up. All it had handed me were the broken pieces of an ill-fated love and a heart now too leaden to mend. I wasn’t ready to handle this pain just yet.

“Look, Dad, I know you wanted the fairy tale for me, but that’s not what I got. Instead, I was dumped by somebody on the sidewalk of this small town, and it really stings.”

The fierce determination in his eyes told me this wasn’t a fight he was going to surrender easily. His gaze, so hard and unrelenting, silently warned me I had to face what was coming my way. And his next statement proved it.

My heart stopped when he asked, “What’s the name of this man you’ve been keeping a secret from us?”

I knew if he ever found out it was Duke, his own best friend, it would unleash a whole new level of chaos. But my father didn't know the identity of the man who'd ditched me on my way home from work, and it was best things stayed that way.

"It's not important," I said, my chest feeling as though it would burst.

My father held me for a while and murmured, "Things always get better with time, sweet Clover."

He kissed my forehead once again before standing up, and I knew it wasn't over when he said, "You're my princess, not somebody's conquest." I was so sad. I could hardly care what he meant by it. He followed Faith out the door, leaving me alone with only my thoughts and my shattered spirit.

DUKE & CLOVER



D *uke*

My stomach sank as I watched Clover's father barrel into my front yard like a fury, his face etched with rage. The sun was setting in the distance, casting an orange hue, blatant as his mood, across the landscape. He'd come here to confront me.

I let him in, and he stared me down from across the room, his voice reverberating with anger as he demanded answers. "Just what are your intentions with my daughter? You take some kind of sick pleasure in breaking young girls' hearts? Make you feel manly?"

My spine crawled with a feeling I could not describe. How did he know about us? Had Clover told him?

He continued, "Clover doesn't cry, and my heart couldn't take it, knowing that something had hurt her so much. I was determined to find out who was responsible. But in a small town, it's impossible to keep secrets. The next day, Mrs. Guthrey ran into me on the street and couldn't help but tell me what she had seen during her early morning walk, peering behind a crack between the blinds—you kissing my daughter, your hands all over her after hours at the café."

My heart plunged to the floor.

I wanted to tell him about the love I felt for Clover and how much I respected her, but the timing was totally wrong. Instead, I remained silent, not knowing what words could make this situation any better. His gaze hardened, and the

atmosphere became unbearable; that's when I saw a glimmer of tears forming in his eyes.

He looked away and finally spoke again. "You know nothing of loyalty or love; everything is just a game to you."

His voice broke slightly, and it became clear he wasn't mad anymore—he was grieving. As much as I wanted to yell at him and prove my worthiness to be with Clover, no words came out of my mouth. I had already caused enough pain.

"I thought you'd changed after rehab, but you obviously still lack an ounce of common sense."

What could I say? I had done nothing to prove otherwise.

"I care for your daughter a great deal. So much that I let her go when it was the last thing I wanted to do. Maybe I can't make up for betraying your trust, but I hope you'll give me a chance to do so. You and I have been friends for a long time, Troy."

"She's more than just a good girl," he hissed. "Clover's strong and one of a kind—she deserves more than what you've given her."

With those last words, he left, leaving me standing alone with only my thoughts for bad company.

The sun had set, and I was left feeling empty, my mind a jumbled mess as I tried to make sense of the entire situation. How could I have been so careless? My best friend's words haunted me, as I knew there was truth in them. She deserved a companion who would shower her with adoration and unwavering loyalty. Who devoted himself to her joy and nurture her with unconditional love. A sobering realization settled in: That person was not me.

I'd made so many mistakes, and it was too late. The damage was done. All I could do now was try to pick up the pieces of what remained and move forward—for Clover and for myself.

And so, with a heavy heart, I imagined watching her from afar, avoiding the café as best I could as she grew more distant

from me, knowing it was all for the best. My feelings for her hadn't changed, but this time, I knew they wouldn't be enough.



Clover

It had been, what we refer to in the barista biz as, a long-ass day. My feet were tired, and I was so glad when the last mugs were washed and put away to dry. But that didn't mean I'd be putting my tootsies up and relaxing anytime soon. Nope. I had a special engagement. That's right. A special date... with my dad.

It had been over a month since Duke broke up with me, and my family was waiting for escrow to close on a huge craftsman in town with a rental unit in the back where Faith and I could live out the rest of our adult lives together.

Unless *something* changed.

I wasn't anywhere near over losing him, and my spirit still felt like a barren place where fairies went to die. But I got through by setting my alarm, going to work, making coffee, and sharing the occasional laugh with Ava, who turned out to be pretty damn cool.

After we hung up our aprons, she nudged me with one finger. "It's the right thing to do, Clover. Even if it's hard for him to understand at first. He'll come around, eventually."

I sighed heavily, trying to believe her words were true.

In fact, it was her idea to have a heart-to-heart with my father. She'd heard enough about my family to know it was something special. I remembered what she told me as we parted, and it rang true for my life. "It's not what we have in life that matters. It's who we have."

In the time spent apart from Duke, I realized I was greedy. I wanted both my family and Duke, and today was the day I'd

fight for both. I knew Daddy felt obligated to be responsible and protect my relationship with my father, which meant I'd have to battle tooth-and-nail on our behalf.

Ava and I put on our coats in the back room and walked out front to lock up behind us. Right then, I saw him.

He was across the street, stepping out of his truck. My heart skipped a beat and then lurched back into action at double speed. He looked up and saw me, his normally strong and confident stance suddenly unsure as he waved a small greeting.

Duke watched silently from across the street.

“Anyone who saw the way he watches you would know he’s hooked,” Ava said with quiet emphasis. I looked at her, surprise in my gaze. “What? You never said anything, but it’s only obvious there’s something between you.”

As I took a few steps closer, all my fears and anxieties melted away.

This was a man worth fighting for, and I no longer felt afraid about what I had to do.

“Sorry.” His voice still had the power to melt every single bone in my body. I put a hand on the hood of his pickup to prop myself up.

“For what?” I asked, bracing myself against the spell of his manly build. “It’s your stinking café. No need to apologize for showing up once in a while.”

From behind, I heard a voice call out, “Bye, Clover! See you bright and early tomorrow.”

We both knew there were no guarantees—just honesty and a love we’d never spoken to one another. That was about to change if I had my way.

“Anyway, good to see you, Duke. You should come around more often.” I turned around on the sidewalk and walked towards my family’s temporary home, leaving him behind. No matter how I wanted to throw myself in his arms and beg him to love me, I would not grovel. I’d set things straight with my

father. Then, and only then, would it be time to find out if his best friend deserved me or not.



“You going to tell me what all the secrecy is about? This is a pretty fancy place you dragged your old dad to, Clover.”

We sat at a table inside The Creekside Winery, which had superb food in addition to their beverages. On either side of our table were large oak barrels marked *Chardonnay* and *Pinot*. The white linen napkins beneath the silverware reminded me of my first date with Duke at The Moonstone Grill.

Dad rested his hand on the linen near the stem of the wineglass I’d poured him. “You okay with all the changes lately? I know it’s a lot, selling the farm and moving to a new place.”

I nervously lifted my glass and took a gulp, the liquid causing a slight burn in my throat. I kept my eyes down, avoiding his gaze. “It’s been... a challenge,” I muttered, setting down my glass with a clink. I fidgeted with my fingers, unable to look at him. “But not because of the move. Or the new job. Besides, Hoss’s smear campaign against me back in Porterville made moving necessary.”

He nodded and cleared his throat, looking away for a moment. “All I want for my baby girl is for her to be happy. You know that, right?”

My palms were sweaty, and my stomach was in knots as I struggled to find the right words. I had rehearsed this conversation in my head a hundred times, but the reality of confronting it head-on made me uneasy.

I cleared my throat and finally looked up, meeting my dad’s gaze. “Dad, I... I’m happier than I’ve ever been when I’m with Duke.”

The words hung in the air between us, and my dad's face softened, his reaction surprising me.

He hesitated, measuring me for a minute. "I had a feeling that's what this special date might be about. Word gets around in a small town, you of all people know that. I found out about the two of you through careless gossip, and your mother wonder why you've been so sad lately." He reached across the table and patted my hand, as if he had known this was coming and now here it was—the truth that had been looming over us for weeks.

He shifted uneasily in his chair. "Duke is a good man; I've always known that despite how hard it was for him when he returned from his military service. You're a grown woman now, and you've done nothing in your life to lessen how proud I am of you. If he's truly the one who makes you happy, then there's no reason to hold back or feel ashamed of your feelings for him. Can you forgive me for being an overbearing, protective father?"

I grinned confidently, feeling empowered by the support of the man who meant so much to me. "Of course." I touched his arm affectionately. "You were only doing your job."

He'd voiced his unconditional love, and it made me feel like I could take on anything the world threw my way. The question hanging in the air was no longer an uncomfortable silence but a challenge I was eager to take on. What would happen next?

I was ready to find out.

CLOVER



A chill ran through my veins as I watched Hoss stroll through the door the next day when I was on shift at The Daily Grind. Every nerve in my body jolted with fear.

Ava had run to the pharmacy to pick up her prescription during a slow period. I didn't know what the hell he was doing in Briarville, but one thing was certain: He was up to no good. He'd been the source of so much pain and embarrassment for me back home, telling everyone I'd stalked him and begged him to have sex with me and acted out my vengeance when he refused, and now he was here in my new home.

It took all I had not to run away and hide, but I managed to keep it together long enough to force a smile and greet him like nothing was wrong.

"Welcome to The Daily Grind," I said cheerfully. "What can I get you today?"

He smiled smugly as he stepped up to the counter, looking me up and down with a self-important expression.

"You didn't think you could just move away and leave all this behind, did you?" he asked mockingly, grazing a hand over his body as if it were one of his prize bulls wearing a blue ribbon won at the fair.

I swallowed hard and refused to let my anger show on my face.

"To tell you the truth, I hadn't thought of you at all since leaving Porterville," I said through gritted teeth. "What can I

get you?”

He stared at me for a few seconds before finally replying with his order. As he did so, he leaned forward and spoke quietly so no one else would hear him.

“You ruined my reputation,” he warned darkly, referring to the fake wanted posters I’d papered the town with in order to set the record straight—that Hoss was guilty of attempted assault, and his pecker had gotten exactly what he deserved. That was a little fact he’d left out whenever attempting to set my home town against me. “But don’t think for a second that it’s going to work.”

He stepped back from the counter, leaving me feeling shaken and scared as he walked away without another word.

My hands shook uncontrollably as my mind raced with scenarios in which Hoss could make good on his threat. How was I supposed to get around town knowing Hoss was out there somewhere waiting for me? I already knew he didn’t play fair, so how was I supposed to protect myself?

When Ava returned from her errand, she found me standing frozen behind the counter like a deer caught in headlights. She rushed over immediately; concern etched across her face as she sensed how visibly terrified I was.

Her voice barely above a whisper, she asked so the customers wouldn’t overhear. “Hey, what happened while I was gone? Was Duke here?”

I blew the air out of my lungs in a gust. “I wish. Why don’t we talk about it over drinks tonight? It’s not really something I can discuss here.”

My friend’s face clouded with unease, but she didn’t force it. A fact for which I was eternally grateful.



My head throbbed relentlessly as I dragged myself into The Daily Grind the next morning. A thick fog had settled in my head, and felt like my brain was vibrating in pain, only adding to the overwhelming sense of exhaustion that consumed me. *I really can't handle my liquor*, I thought, as I set about getting ready.

It was odd that Ava hadn't shown yet, but I suspected she felt worse than me after three cosmos and a long night of getting to know each other better. It was such a relief to tell her about Hoss and everything that happened back in Porterville. She said she'd help me file a police report today. It was both frightening and reassuring to have her take his arrival here so seriously. If she were suffering a hangover, I could handle the shop for a day by myself, and I certainly wouldn't report her for not showing up.

The coffee brewing smelled like heaven, a perfect remedy for the headache I was suffering. My stomach rumbled in protest at the absence of food, but I ignored it.

The faint creak of the storage door in the back reverberated through me, sending chills cascading down my spine. I'd gone in there once to grab beans and shut it behind me, and the room appeared empty. But that door didn't open itself.

With a quavering voice, I called out, "Who's there?"

Hoss stepped into sight, and I shook my head in denial, my elbow knocking over a stack of paper cups on the counter.

"Don't be nervous," he said, his expression dark with anger.

I already knew from experience he didn't care whether he hurt me or not.

"I'm here to set things straight. After all, you ruined my life. It was so easy to find you. Your parents left a big trail."

I backed away from him, my steps jerky on the nonstick mat between the coffee machines and the display counter.

He glared at me with such intensity it felt like he was trying to sear his way into my hungover head.

“Are you proud of yourself?” He seethed with anger and not an ounce of remorse for his part in what happened.

I shook my head in denial. I had only wanted to get away from him, but now here he was again, ready to torture me for something that wasn't my fault.

My heart beat wildly as he stepped closer, trapping me in place with nowhere to run. I forced myself to remain still despite the urge to bolt. He stopped several feet away from me, fists clenched at his sides as if he were holding himself back from doing something terrible. It was a familiar stance. One I'd seen too many times coming from him. His dark eyes looked straight through me, not recognizing me as a human.

“Don't do it,” I warned.

My warning came too late. Hoss lunged, and I reacted instinctually, picking up a nearby coffee pot and smashing it into his face.

The sound of shattering glass echoed through the café as Hoss fell to the ground, shards of glass embedded around his cruel mouth. He screamed in pain as scalding hot coffee seeped into his clothes, searing his skin like hot irons branding flesh.

Grabbing the keys from underneath the register before he got up, I leapt over his body and ran towards the front door. Frantically, I fumbled with the door lock, trembling as cold droplets of sweat traveled down my back, and managed to turn the key. Hoss's voice behind me growled a wicked promise, “If you go through that door, no one in your family will ever be safe.”

Spinning around to face him, I was surprised again by the sound of someone shoving open the entrance behind me.

I turned quickly to see none other than Duke standing there and wondered for a moment if I was losing my mind.

He was so tall and proud, with his hair neatly combed. He wore a faded flannel shirt and 501's that were faded and worn, instead of being pressed to perfection. His boots bore scuff

marks and his Carhart jacket had clearly kept him warm for years. He was a sight for sore eyes.

I didn't need a knight in shining armor. Instead, this unpolished one was mine, wearing a worn battle suit that proved he knew how to fight and would keep me safe.

"Whoa there," he said holding his hands up in mock surrender. "Ava called in sick. Thought you might need some help today."

His examination of me grew cold with calculation as my terror became clear.

All I could do was point to the counter, where I'd left a guy burnt and bleeding on the floor.

He glanced behind the steel-encased glass, then back at me before stepping aside and motioning for me to go through the door. "Go on now." He handed me the keys to his pickup, which was parked right out front. "Lock yourself inside."

I nodded in thanks before dashing out onto the street to his truck.

It only took two minutes for the Briarville Police to arrive, and Duke came out to fetch me for my statement, after they'd cuffed Hoss and led him away. It might take them a while to prove a scary stalker case, but meanwhile, they held him for breaking and entering.

I felt safe in Duke's arms as he carried me back out to his pickup and drove us to his ranch. All the chaotic events of that day were finally beginning to recede, like a wave ebbing away from the shore, and I realized I was exhausted.

His ranch and stables, gardens and pastures stretched into the horizon. I looked at the wraparound porch and felt a strange stirring beneath my breast.

Inside, the sturdy furniture welcomed me, and there was an inviting warmth which felt like home.

CLOVER



We stood in Duke's foyer, looking at each other awkwardly, and I wanted to throw myself into his arms, but didn't.

I cleared my throat, unsure how to break the silence.

He smiled warmly at me and said, "I've been imagining you here like this since the day you left."

He stepped forward, closing the distance between us. My heart raced as he reached out and cupped my chin, lifting it to gaze into my eyes. Suddenly, the entire world faded away until I could only feel his presence around me, an ease that enveloped me like a comfy blanket.

Duke spoke. "My best friend called me. Said I had his blessing to court his daughter, and she'd convinced him I made her happy. Know anything about that?"

He leaned in close, and our lips met in a forgiving, lingering kiss that sent liquid fire through my veins. His powerful hands clutched my waist, and I melted into his embrace. Time stood still as we kissed, our breaths mingling, and the smell of him took over my senses. We pried apart slowly, like a saltwater taffy pull at the fair, both of us breathless from the intensity of our embrace.

"I may not be as old or as experienced as you, and there is still a lot to learn about life, but you're the one I want to discover it with. Will you teach me how to love you right?" I asked. "Daddy?"

I put my arms around his neck and succumbed to the forceful domination of his lips, his tongue sliding softly across the seam of my mouth before he pulled away.

“I never want you to settle for second best, Clover. It’s only with your help that I realized I can’t live without spending every day trying to be the best man I can for you.” His hands traced the contours of my shoulders and ran them down my arms, before gripping my hands in his as he stared into my eyes. “Experience taught me, sometimes, things have to be completely ripped apart before we can mend them. Can you ever forgive me for hurting your heart, baby girl?”

I murmured before turning away, overwhelmed by a lingering tenderness I didn’t understand or know how to express, feelings too powerful for mere words. “So long as you promise to never, ever leave me again.”

He turned me around to face him and kissed the tip of my nose, my eyes, and finally, my mouth. Suddenly, he lifted me into the cradle of his arms and carried me to his bedroom. Gently laying me on the bed, he gave a peck to my forehead and whispered, “I want you to be mine forever. I love you, Clover.”

I buried my face against his throat and told him, “I love you, too.”

My skin felt hot and tingly with anticipation as he tugged at the buttons of my shirt one by one until it lay open. His lips sensuously made a trail across my neck before finding their way to the swell of my breasts. I gasped at the exquisite stir pulsing through me as his fingers slid along the fabric of my bra, pulling it down over my tortured nipples.

He undressed without hurry, revealing a body that was all hard muscle and perfect skin. Duke leaned over me and said, “Surrender yourself to me. Everything we do will be together from now on.”

I smiled up at him before responding, “Yes, Daddy.”

His piercing gaze locked on to mine, silently communicating his expectations, which he spoke next. “Have

you been a good girl, Clover?”

His eyes closed as he inhaled deeply, taking in the scent of my hair and wrapping his huge hand around my throat. A shiver scurried through me as the smell of him reached my nostrils. I closed my eyes and savored the mix of cedar and spice that was entirely his own. A tightening sensation pulled at my belly, and I reached out to caress the ridges and planes of his muscular shoulders. My fingertips tingled with exhilaration as I explored him, savoring the primal power that radiated from him and realized this was how it would be from now on. The two of us alone together without shame or intrusion.

“Who owns you?” I questioned with a teasing smile.

His smile was as intimate as a kiss, and he gave a warning tug to my nipple, which sent an erotic flame across my breasts. “What did you just say?”

My eyebrow raised in bratty amusement. “Be a good boy and use your words. Tell me who owns you,” I challenged.

He growled in my ear. “Oh, I’m going to use my mouth all right, but definitely not to speak.”

His tongue traversed my neck, scorching me with a wet kiss that stopped to flick at the place where my pulse pounded.

The tip of Duke’s tongue rasped against my skin, and my core flooded with lust. His scent was intoxicating, and I ached for his touch, only not where he was giving it to me. I cupped his steely jaw, tugging his lips to mine, and our mouths fused together as our tongues sought each other, until he sucked my bottom lip between his teeth, causing my pulse to kick up between my legs.

His calloused hands roamed my body, exploring every curve and contour with a hunger that made my cheeks hot. His fingers answered my silent plea when they slipped under the fabric of my panties, tracing circles around my sensitive clit until I cried out, “Please, God. I need you inside me.”

Instead of listening, he kept flicking at the bud of my arousal, sending shockwaves through my body that made my breasts ache, and whipping up a relentless tug of emptiness that had to be assuaged.

He shoved himself up so he loomed over me, his mighty torso hovering inches away from mine, his king-sized biceps framing my face. Lying below this enormous male, I should have felt intimidated. Instead, I felt delicate and protected from any harm that could ever come my way.

Slowly, with the patience of a man far more experienced than any I'd ever been with, he nipped along my jawline and licked at the edges of my mouth. His kisses were soft but commanding, moving over mine as if I were his to take, and I surrendered completely to him.

My back arched as his tongue caressed mine, chasing him in the only way possible, seeking to get closer to what only he could give. Withdrawing slightly, he smiled down at me before capturing my lower lip between his teeth again with a possessive nip that sent a shockwave of desire straight to my core.

“How’s my baby?” he asked in that deep voice of his which never failed to stroke me as if it had fingers of his own.

“Greedy. Needy. I need more,” I mewled, and he chuckled with satisfaction.

Trailing feather-light kisses down my neck, Duke worked his way across my collarbone and down until he found one of the taut peaks of my breasts and took it into his scorching mouth with a groan of pleasure. The sound made me awash with a hubris of my own.

He wanted me, as evidenced further by his hard and leaking cock.

I did that to him.

Duke’s hand slipped beneath my shoulder blades so he could grip me tighter, pulling me towards his mouth as his tongue circled around my nipple, making me flex further into him as a moan escaped from deep within. The sensation was

exquisite, and I became lost in blissful, pleased oblivion as my body responded to every delicate touch and tantalizing flick of his clever tongue.

Nevertheless, the wanton creature he'd made of me cried out for more.

"You're sure you've been a good girl for Daddy? Do you think you deserve treats?" he asked, before trailing his tongue deliciously down my stomach towards the apex of my thighs, where every nerve ending concentrated on that single needy center that wanted nothing more than for Duke to fill it with his huge, swollen cock. I wanted him to take over in ways I never thought possible.

"Please, Duke, I'll die if you don't put it in me."

"Who's the boss?" he growled, his thick erection positioned so it just lay there, doing nothing besides scorching me right between the legs.

"Oh, God, you are. I'll do anything you say, just please, give it to me," I begged.

"That's my good girl," he said.

My breath caught in anticipation as his hand grazed across the curves of my hips before pushing my knees up and wedging himself between my thighs.

"Now you just lie there and let Daddy make you come." His fingers slid between my legs, touching me there for the first time, and I saw stars as he petted me. "So wet, I think you're more than ready for me."

"That's what I've been trying to tell you this whole time. I missed you. My pussy missed you." I had no shame and was pleading now for him to pound me hard, like I needed.

His eyes burned with desire as he stared down at me, revealing a hunger I could actually feel. I parted my legs further, surrendering, wanting him to take charge, to take me. In a breathy whisper, I said, "Please, take me, Duke. I need you."

His hand clasped mine, pinning me down, and his lips brushed against my ear. "I'm going to fuck you until I make one thing clear," he promised, before pushing inside me. His entire length filled me completely, and he didn't move until I got used to the sensation of being so stuffed by him. When I wiggled my hips, he sawed in and out of me slowly and expertly, controlling every movement and intensifying my pleasure with each thrust.

I was completely at his mercy every time he impaled me, spearing me with his width in a way that stretched me wide. "Make what clear?" I barely gritted out as his jumbo-sized member made me its little slave.

"That you belong to me." His voice was gruff and commanding as he increased the pace of our lovemaking. "You're my one and only."

With each jabbing thrust, pleasure coiled tightly inside my core, threatening to spill over and destroy all rational thought. I started moaning a delirious chant. "Fuck me hard, Daddy. God, that's so good... I want you to come inside me."

He slid both hands under my buttocks as he shoved deeper and deeper, pushing my body past its limits.

And still, Duke drove forward harder and faster, the delicious heat of him a powerful force above me, thrusting relentlessly until I felt like I was about to erupt into a million pieces from the intensity pumping through my veins. Finally, my body had to bow to the sensation as he rammed into me, perfectly dragging his rigid cock in and out and reaching between my legs to find my throbbing clit, stroking me there. I groaned deep in my throat, and with a pleased cry, found the release only he could give me.

Duke ground against the cradle of my hips and came deep inside me with a shuddering groan.

CLOVER



ONE YEAR LATER

I nside the fence we'd built to keep deer, rabbits, and yes, goats out of the vegetable garden, I looked proudly over the tall raspberry bushes loaded with fruit. Ava loved to make tarts with them for the café, and they'd become top sellers, along with the other fresh-baked goodies she suggested for the menu. Duke made her manager of The Daily Grind and gave her a pay raise when I resigned to focus my efforts 100 percent on the farm.

I bent down, loving the warmth of the summer sun on my back, and inspected the baby lettuce greens for bugs. It looked as though the crop was coming along just fine.

Faith made her way down the path from the stables to the kitchen garden, hauling a pile of composted horse manure in a wheelbarrow for side-dressing the tomatoes. She and I ran the goat and vegetable farm together at Duke's ranch, and today she wore a T-shirt that read, *Vegangster*.

"How did it go?" I asked.

It was her suggestion to rent out a part of our herd for brush-clearing at a fee of \$700 per acre. With the increased need for fire abatement, she'd already booked our goats out for the next two months.

"Awesome. It helps to have the portable fencing to keep the goats inside the work areas, just like Duke recommended." She parked the wheelbarrow and stirred up a small flutter of cabbage moths and came towards me on the heavily mulched path I'd worked hard to keep weed free. She snapped a snow pea from the vine and popped it into her mouth, savoring its sweet flavor.

"It's been so satisfying to see how much we've accomplished," Faith said thoughtfully, kneeling down to pull a carrot from the soil, which she simply brushed off on her overalls and started munching.

Together, we looked over their handiwork—stretching our backs and taking in the beautiful green expanse that stretched out before us. We'd created a thriving organic vegetable farm and were raising a fine goat herd all on our own.

I looked up at my sister and smiled fondly, grateful for all her hard work, which blossomed since we began running things on our own. Of course, Duke and my dad were always willing to lend a hand, when necessary, but the day-to-day operation of things was on us. This garden was for more than just food production and profit; it expressed the love we shared for our new life—full of hard work, laughter, family, and friends.

Speaking of which, I had to ask, “So, how are things coming along with Riley?”

The tensing of her jaw betrayed her deep frustration about the topic, and if you asked me, most of it was of the sexual kind. “Oh, God, don't get me started about that know-it-all.”

I smiled to myself as I spoke. Faith wouldn't notice my amusement, given her total focus was now on yanking every snow pea she could find off of the plant with a vengeance and stuffing them into her pocket.

It was impossible to stop myself from asking, “What is it now?”

Her lips pursed with annoyance. “No matter how many times I've told him, he can't accept that sticking to a single partner would stifle my love life.” She crunched down on the pea in her hand.

I thought about living with Duke for the past year and couldn't imagine needing anything more in my life, but Faith decided polyamory was the way to go. “I guess that might be hard for some men. But if that's the case, why does he keep asking you out?” Riley had to be in his forties, if not older, but was still in good shape. As fire chief in Briarville, he had to be. At his age, I figured he ought to know a thing or two about relationships by now, but he still hadn't given up on my sister as a lost cause.

“He asked me to go stargazing with him. Do you believe it? As if I couldn’t see right through that ruse.” She tossed back her head, laughing to cover her annoyance. “Sure, get me somewhere alone in the dark so he can make his move.” She stomped on a snail making its way across the path, and I thought it best not to point out it wasn’t very vegan of her. “So transparent,” she hissed.

The squeak of a half-open gate caught by a gust of wind caused me to look in that direction, only it wasn’t a breeze.

Duke.

Even after a year, I was still powerless to resist his ruggedly handsome face and the way his dark eyes held a secret expression just for me.

What would today’s undisclosed activity be? My face grew hot thinking about last night and how he’d bent me over the kitchen countertop and railed me from behind while I wore nothing but a sundress.

“Ladies,” he spoke. As always, his presence wrapped around me like a warm blanket.

“Hey there,” Faith said, seeming to have forgotten how annoyed Riley made her. She once said to me that if she could meet a man as kind as Duke, she’d settle down and give up her pursuit of multiple partners.

I felt a ripple of excitement as he walked towards me, planting a chaste kiss on my lips. Afterwards, his mouth pulled aside in a grimace, and a frown creased his forehead. “What the hell kind of seed marker is that?”

I glanced in the direction he was pointing, unable to make out what I saw at the end of a row of broccoli. “How did that get there?” I asked, walking purposefully to the soil where a strange object protruded from the ground.

A teacup handle?

Reaching down, I pulled the object from the dirt, and out fell a slightly soiled box.

Confused, I turned towards Duke.

Suddenly, he was down on one knee, and I backed up a step, fighting back tears. My eyes went to my sister, whose smile widened in approval.

At first, I couldn't process what I was seeing. Duke was down on one knee with a ring box open in his hand. His dark eyes were serious but held that special attitude of mischief just for me.

My heart swelled, and I had to will myself not to fall into his arms. "What are you doing?" I whispered, my voice barely audible over the birds chirping in the tree above.

He grinned, tugging me closer with a firm grip of my hand, his eyes blazing with a fiery conviction. "It may seem sudden, but time is finite, and I want the rest of my life to be spent with you at my side." His gaze met mine, the intensity in his stare demanding a response in a way that made my heart pound in an erratic rhythm. "You're my end of the road, Clover. After a lifetime of wrong turns and dead ends, I'm finally home. With you."

"Yes," I said without hesitation. Even though he'd yet to pose the question, I knew my answer.

"Just so I can say I did ask, will you marry me, Clover? Make me the happiest man on the planet?"

"Yes, yes, a thousand times, yes!" I bounced on my toes, clasping my hands together in front of my heart.

He reached out to open the box and slip the diamond onto my finger, then sealed our vow with a kiss, which left my mouth burning.

I took in the morning glory vines curling through chicken wire and winding around wooden posts, the neat rows of frilly carrot tops, the hilled potatoes Faith and I planted in the spring, spiky onion tops, strawberry plants dotted with delicate white flowers, and all-around bees that pollinated blossoms for us for free. The garden bounty represented the overabundance of love I shared with him.

I'd never been so happy in all of my life.

“I’m going to show you every minute of the day, every way I can, that I want to grow old with you,” I told him, then held out my hand to admire the beautiful ring he’d chosen.

“Congratulations, you two,” Faith said, her face splitting into a wide grin. “You’re the only couple I know that doesn’t actually make me need a barf bag.”

Coming from my sister, it counted as high praise.

CLOVER



“**W**hy did you invite that lug nut to the wedding?” Faith snapped.

I didn’t need to look out the window of my bedroom, where we were getting ready, to see who she was talking about. In the days since Duke’s proposal, Riley wouldn’t take a hint. He wasn’t pushy or grabby the way Hoss had once been, but he seemed to show up everywhere my sister could be found, on her scent like a hound dog.

“He’s a friend of Duke’s. It wouldn’t be right not to invite him,” I reminded her.

Unlike Faith’s mood, the sun shone brightly for the day of our wedding. And no matter how big her pout, she was gorgeous in the blush pink dress we’d selected for all the bridesmaids. I’d simply selected a color I liked, and Ava and my sister bought outfits in that color, which they’d actually wear again.

“Shoot, if you’re not interested, let me have a go. That firefighter is such sweet man candy. It makes my teeth hurt to look at him.” Ava raised her champagne flute to her lips, took a generous swallow, and purred, “Mm-mm.”

It didn’t escape my notice that Faith’s left eyebrow rose a fraction over the appreciative praise.

I joined them to check out the view and saw how Riley’s massive shoulders filled out the coat he wore. “Wow. He suited up for the occasion.” Faith’s ability to resist him was impressive, and I wasn’t sure where she found the discipline.

“You sure you can’t set aside your principles surrounding polyamory just for one day?”

A gentle knock at the door interrupted us, and Ava answered it. “Can we come in?” It was Mama and Grandma, both in dresses they’d gone to the city to purchase.

A soft gasp escaped them both at the same time. “Oh, my word,” Grandma said. “You are simply the loveliest bride Briarville has ever seen, Clover.”

I leaned in and kissed her wrinkled cheeks, breathing in the familiar smell of lavender and peppermint that clung to her skin. “Thank you, Meemaw,” I said, using the nickname from my childhood. I felt a surge of emotion as I looked at her. There was so much love in this room that, for a moment, it seemed like a miracle we could all be there together after all the upheaval we’d faced in the last year. Mom and Dad were now living the life in their new condo, and with no more chores to do at the break of dawn, they seemed more like teenagers in love than the parents I knew back in Porterville.

Grandma and Grandpa bought a condo next door to them. It felt like I was dreaming every day.

“I’m so glad you’re here so we can all be together like this.” I wasn’t just talking about the wedding. Things could have gone horribly wrong after what happened with Hoss. Instead, he was convicted of a misdemeanor for trespassing and was served a hefty fine. Duke let him know he’d forgive the violation and would keep it to himself, so long as Hoss returned to Porterville with a promise never to show his face in our county again. Hoss was definitely an ass, but he was business savvy enough to know his family’s ranch would suffer from a public relations disaster brought on by the news of his conviction.

When it came time for my father to give me away, he took my hands in his, then paused, putting my hand in my soon-to-be-husband’s as he looked into Duke’s eyes, and gave a single solemn nod. His silent blessing was enough for us to know we had his approval and his trust. My insides bubbled with joy, and I grinned from ear to ear, my giddiness uncontainable. I

could see the tears in my mother's eyes and on the faces of our family and friends who beamed with universal delight at our union. Even Doc, who stood up as Duke's best man, looked happier than I'd ever seen him act around his brother. I'd cherish this blessed day forever.

I held both of Duke's hands in mine as we said our vows. He'd insisted on keeping his a secret until today. "Clover, I know you're strong and can fight the world on your own. But I'm here for you every single day of your life, and even more so when you're feeling fragile and need my protection. My shoulder is always here for you to rest your head upon, and being your husband is the greatest honor of my life."

Our fingers interlaced, and I realized he was right. The purpose in life I didn't know I was searching for, I had now. Here on this farm, outside of a small town, in the countryside. It was my entire world, and a place where he helped me uncover my deepest, darkest desires and submit to who I was. His struggles with alcohol and his recovery made me love him more, not less. He wasn't perfect, nor was I. We were made for each other despite being born to different generations. He saw me for who I was and loved me just the way I always wanted.

If I could have anyone in the world, it would still be him.

THE END

Dear Reader,

Thank you for reading *Daddy Crush*. I hope you enjoyed Duke & Clover's story as much as I loved writing it. If you want more naughtiness, take a peek at the first chapter of Riley and Faith's book [*Daddy on Fire*](#), or just head straight to my store to get your [special pre-order price](#) on the entire full-length standalone novel.

Chapter One, Clover, Daddy on Fire

I was happy for my sister. Happier than I'd ever been for anyone in my life. Which is why I had to wonder why tears spilled from my eyes at seeing her come down the aisle on my dad's arm, wearing the cream-colored Bohemian-style dress we'd found together in an antique store.

They didn't feel like happy tears. There was a sense I was missing out on something. Like being the kid who didn't get an invitation to the birthday party.

There was a soft pink color in her sweet, curled lips when she passed me her bouquet. Her expression appeared exactly like what true happiness should look like.

Better her than me, I reminded myself, forcing my attention back to the matter at hand—my sister being wed in holy matrimony.

For the rest of her life.

Clover had always been the sweet one, and I was everybody's pain in the ass. They never said as much in so many words, but trust me, live into adulthood surrounded by family, and you get to know your place.

I was very aware that everyone who loved me would just fall to pieces if I'd finally pay attention to the silver-haired, smoke eater sitting in the third row, his eyes lit on me with a glint of wonder, as if he found me more fascinating than the

blooming wildflower-meadow background, or the life-altering moment which played out before us.

No, I wasn't mistaken. The light smoldered in his gold-flecked eyes, as if lit from within.

Dude did not take a hint.

I'd told him a million times I chose to live in sexual abundance, which meant no, I wouldn't date him exclusively.

Because he couldn't seem to get his head around that fact, all bets were off between us. No matter how many times he asked me out. Let him try to tell me what to do. We'd see who'd win that fight. So, his build made every woman want to press against it, and his features were so roughhewn and handsome they'd make an angel cry. The last thing I needed was some guy who thought he had the right to question my beliefs.

When my sister and Duke raised their hands over their heads to proclaim themselves husband and wife, I had to smile at the look of triumph on the groom's face. They were adorable.

Something I could never be. Someone sweet and docile didn't flout the rules, which is why you could have knocked me over with a feather when Clover had the gumption to go out with Dad's best friend.

"That firefighter can't take his eyes off you," Ava whispered from behind me. "Come on, Faith. Take one for the team so I can find out if he's better or worse than my fantasies. Let me live vicariously."

Before I could answer, Billy Idol's "White Wedding" blasted from the speakers. It's what Duke chose for the recession, and we all proceeded jauntily from the ceremony gazebo to the reception, which was set up in the front yard of his and Clover's ranch.

The florist had worked her magic, filling the reception area with beautiful decorations from mine and Clover's garden. Tables were draped in white linens, and people had already seated themselves, engaged in conversation. As I stood there

taking it all in, a waiter offered me a flute of champagne. I gladly accepted the cool, bubbly liquid and took a long sip as I surveyed the crowd, quenching my thirst after standing in the sun in heels.

Before I knew it, my sister and Duke were dancing their first dance as husband and wife, surrounded by their friends and family, who cheered them on. Then my gaze shifted to Riley, the handsome fire chief who made Ava—not me—drool. He was standing nearby, eyes fixated on me. He hesitated for a moment before making his way over, determinedly cutting through the throng of people standing between us. My heart slammed in my chest as he stopped just inches away.

“Dance with me,” he directed, holding out his hand for me to take.

Feeling slightly dizzy from the champagne, which went down way too easy, I clasped his hand and swayed slightly on my feet.

“Easy there.”

He pulled me to him, my hands on his forearms, which rippled beneath my fingers, steadying me. Not sure why I’d never noticed, but he smelled delicious. Better than wedding cake. We moved on the dance floor together, swaying slowly to the music as one body, and he moved more expertly than any man I’d ever danced with. His brawny arms encircled my waist while one hand held mine tightly against his chest. I felt the hot, comforting huff of his breath on the top of my head.

Just one dance is all I would allow myself, the spell he cast on the dance floor way too seductive and intimate to resist. God, what would he be like in bed? After all, did a wedding hookup even count?

When he finally released me from his embrace, he gave me one final lingering look before turning away with a satisfied smirk on his face and disappearing back into the crowd like nothing ever happened, and I’ll be damned if I didn’t feel like running after him.

When the sky grew dark, my body tingly and fuzzy, I peeled away from mine and Ava's table to hit the bathroom.

No doubt, I was taking a risk going by myself, because if that damned fire chief showed his face right now, I'd be likely to try and kiss him.

Of course, after finishing up and opening the bathroom door, I ran right smack into his towering physique. "Oof. Sorry." I made to move around him, but he grabbed my elbows, pinning me in place.

"Don't be," he said, looking so gorgeous in his black suit that my breath caught in my throat, bringing about a rarity for me.

I couldn't speak.

"You all right?" He grabbed my chin, and I cleared my throat, pretending not to be affected.

At that point, I don't know what came over me, but surely, the glasses of champagne were to blame. I moved my hands low toward the crotch of his dress slacks.

"Faith," he cautioned. "You sure you want to go there? Be a shame to cause a scene at your sister's wedding."

"Ugh." I sighed, pulling my hand back up before testing the theory that firefighters had the best hoses, because there was definitely a big bulge there. I'd seen it from the corner of my eye.

He put his arms on my shoulders, keeping me at arm's length. "I'm happy to go somewhere a little more private with you." He lowered his mouth to my ear and whispered sternly, "If you promise to be a good girl."

Look, normally, I can't stand authority figures, but right there, right then, his nearness was overwhelming, and I wanted to dive into him until I forgot about doing things my own way for once. I wished he'd show me something different, and an older man like him was one I'd never experienced before.

I thought fast. "Where did you have in mind?"

“My place,” he said, more strict and serious sounding than I’d ever heard him. “Let your sister and Ava know you’re leaving. I’ll wait for you in the parking lot.”

I couldn’t tear my gaze away from his face when he talked like that, and didn’t even try to deny the pulsing knot that had formed low in my stomach. I’d never needed anyone so badly in my life.

Later on, it pleased me to discover he lived in a refurbished farmhouse, and when he led me inside and turned on the lights, I couldn’t help but gasp at the great number of books which filled the walls in his living room. “I didn’t know you were such a reader,” I said, hands placed belligerently on my hips.

“You never asked,” he said, trailing his fingers down my arm, shattering any pretense that I wasn’t lusting after him and fantasizing about the hunger of his mouth on mine. My skin prickled pleurably beneath his touch, and I gasped in delight.

More.

His large hand took my face and cradled it. “You know what I want from you, Faith, and it’s more than just a hookup. But I’m willing to compromise on one condition.”

The sheer shock of him ran through my body, and at that moment, I’d have agreed to anything he asked. “What’s that?”

“We do this my way,” he said matter-of-factly.

I tried to suppress a giggle. Damned champagne. “Which way is that?”

Inexplicably, he led me from the foyer to the carpeted room full of books. “Knees. Now.” The order whooshed from his mouth, unrelenting and impossible to disobey.

So, he thinks he can tell me what to do? We’ll see about that. I’d give him something he’d never be able to forget. It was lucky for him I loved sucking cock.

Neither one of us could walk away from the lust that pulsed between us. It was carnal. Animalistic. The very best

kind. “I’m not saying it twice, Faith. Get on your knees.”

Slowly, I reached down to my hem, pulling my bridesmaid dress over my head and tossing it onto the couch. The way he husked my name afterwards made me glad I’d opted for my best lingerie for the occasion.

Staring up into his eyes, my fingers undid his belt so all he had to do was pop the button and unzip his fly. The tight trail of brown hair descending from his navel to the split in his trousers made me curious, and the bubbly made me bold. I shoved his slacks and underwear down, gaping open-mouthed when his cock sprang free towards my face. I heard myself suck in air at the discovery that his package would make me scream like a siren. He was magnificent, hard and thick, the bulbous head of him leaking pre-cum, which made me salivate in response. I wanted it so far down my throat it’d make me choke.

Before I could express my approval aloud, he shoved the crown past my lips and over my tongue. He made hungry sounds at the back of his throat, staying buried in place, and I curled my tongue around his velvet stiffness.

I wrapped my hand around its throbbing base, licking up and down the entirety of his shaft until it was wet enough for me to suck him in as far as I could, bobbing my head up and down while making counterstrokes with my hand. The friction was just right, and I kept up a tempo which never failed to make guys lose their shit.

In a situation like this, I never questioned whether I belonged. I loved sucking, giving pleasure, making a man lose his mind with my mouth alone.

Riley’s hands fell on my head, his fingers tangling in my hair and tugging me back until I looked up at him. My eyes were still shut tight.

“Open your eyes and look at me, Faith.”

I obeyed, and straight away, they crashed into his. There was a hint of awe in his expression, which, yes, made me feel a pang of guilt since this was definitely not going to be a

repeat performance. He was too different from any other man I'd met and gave me the impression it would be impossible to keep him under my thumb.

He might run this show, but he's not running me.

My world suddenly felt like it was spinning, and I desperately worked his cock with my mouth and tongue, pulling at him expertly in a way guaranteed to bring him to his finish.

That's when he really took control. He drove his dick to the back of my throat and held me there before slowly pulling away and shoving himself in again. He kept up that rhythm, knowing just how much to push me so my eyes watered and there was no question who was in charge.

And I forgot everything there was to think about except for serving him, frantic to make him come in my mouth so I might taste him.

But it was not to be.

He stepped back, leaving my mouth empty and my pussy weeping.

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"Stand up," he demanded, showing me a side of him I'd never seen before.

Up to now, I found him almost too eager to please. Nearly too polite. Treating me as though I were some precious and fragile thing he wanted to place on a shelf to admire.

A perfect gentleman. When what I really wanted was this—so much this.

I did what he asked without question, hoping he'd appreciate my obedience and give me what I needed. Namely, his spectacular cock.

His powerful, well-muscled body moved with an effortless grace that caught me off guard, reaching out and undoing the front clasp of my bra so it snapped open to expose my overly plump and suddenly aching breasts. It was a good thing they couldn't speak, because the stiff nipples would shout, "*Suck*

me! Pull me! Tug me until it hurts!” And that could be a little off-putting, even though we were about to get down.

It stunned me to realize he could make me do anything to diminish the agonizing tenderness he'd caused there. Even if it meant begging him.

His eyes riveted on my chest. Like most men, he didn't seem to care that they were pudgy and too large, a constant source of embarrassment which never allowed me to walk around without a bra like some lucky girls.

“Those, too.” He pointed at my silk undies, and I pushed them to my feet, standing naked before him, looking braver than I felt.

The next moment, he scooped me up in his muscular arms that probably rescued women like this all the time while on the job, and carried me upstairs.

He tossed me onto the bed, surprising me again with his rough treatment, and tugged his clothes off with urgency. The glory of his naked body made me suck in my breath. Truly, it was a crime to cover those powerfully chiseled muscles, his chest as broad as a bale of hay.

My eyes widened in awe as I took in the shape of him, every inch tan and toned from carrying damsels in distress, I supposed. I'd never seen someone so fit, so male.

Suddenly, he was on top of me, pinning me down with his weight and strength. His forcefulness sent sparks of excitement through my body as he reached between my legs. “You're so wet, Faith. Let me see if I can't help you pamper that pretty pussy a little more.”

The immense bulk of him lowered between my legs, and I missed the way his body had caged me in. I reached out, grasping at his hair, silky and thick between my fingers.

And that's when I felt his tongue. Unlike the coarse handling he'd shown me thus far, he landed lightly on my clit, teasing to gauge my response.

I gasped, and my hands fisted in his hair, pulling harder to encourage him. His tongue darted around, exploring and

pushing me further, before he finally sucked and savored my clit, shoving two large fingers inside to explore and fuck me in a way that pushed me right up to the brink of orgasm.

He pulled away, and I groaned, frustrated at being so close but not quite there. He chuckled smugly at my dismayed expression. “No need to bare your claws, kitten. I’ll give you what you need.”

I was so wet, so ready to have him inside me.

His hands spanned my waist, lifting me up and onto his huge, throbbing cock, manhandling and guiding the entirety of my body with his powerful grip. His erection filled every inch of me, the sensation stripping away everything but my need. It was mind-blowing, the way we fit together, and how, even in my slightly buzzed state, I was suddenly alert, aware of each and every place he touched me inside.

“Oh, God, Riley. If you don’t fuck me now, fuck me hard, I might die.” I couldn’t stop the words from coming, no matter how much I wanted to retain my control. One night with this man and his magical cock would be enough to last a lifetime.

He pushed forward with long strokes, pumping his beautifully proportioned body above me, filling my view with his undulating and flexing six-pack until I was clawing at his powerful back, trying to get him as far inside me as he could go. He conquered me with powerful thrusts while bouncing my pussy off of him in a way that left me breathless and weak with pleasure.

Riley moved inside me like no man ever had before, setting off an explosive thrill that I never wanted to end. His mouth was on mine so that I had to breathe him in as he continued to thrust deep into my core, tugging me onto his dick so he could get as far inside as physically possible. My hands grabbed on to him for stability as my hips rose to meet each thrust, anchoring us together in an exquisite dance of desire that had us both gasping for air.

“Are you thoroughly indulged, beautiful Faith? Do I live up to your exacting standards?” he teased.

“Yes,” I affirmed in the heat of passion. “Your cock has spoiled me for any other man. It’s so fucking good.”

His every thrust sent jolts of pleasure through me, to the very back of my spine, until I screamed out his name as I came undone beneath him.

My legs actually shook from the intensity of it all as he continued to move inside me, his cock searing into me like a burning brand, until finally he, too, let go with a deep growl.

It felt like time stopped in this prolonged moment of sexual gratification; the only sounds audible were the beating of our hearts and the panting of our lungs.

This was supposed to be just a wedding fling. And everybody knew the key to a successful hookup was threefold: find ‘em, fuck ‘em, and forget ‘em.

That was my story, and I was sticking to it.

Visit my book store below and get more free books:

[Naughty Ever After](#)

ALSO BY OLIVIA FOX

All books are standalone stories with brand new couples. Shop smart, shop direct. Skip the middleman and shop at my store for the best deals and personalized service and [20% off](#) your first purchase of books (COUPON: WELCOME)!

[Lost Coast Daddies Romance Series](#)

Sizzling Hot Daddy (FREE!)

Daddy's Sweet Ride

Daddy's Law

Daddy's Little Wild One

Daddy's Pet

Daddy's Kitten

Seducing Daddy

[Demanding Daddy \(Dirty Fairy Tales Series\)](#)

Captured

Claimed

Ravished

[Silver Fox Daddy Series](#)

Daddy Esquire (FREE!)

Daddy Issues

Daddy Says

My Daddy

Daddy Crush

Daddy on Fire

[Rough Redemption Mafia Romance Series](#)

Punishing Thirst

Commanding Thirst

Obsessive Thirst

Captive Thirst

Available in Kindle Unlimited:

[Her Kinky Kentucky Daddy \(Stateside Doms Book 9\)](#)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Olivia Fox is a USA TODAY bestselling author who writes naughty ever afters for readers who love swoony alphas and daddy doms. She also has a monster romance series releasing in Spring 2023.

Grab your FREE, best seller box set and get: two full books and two more sexy snippets.

Your perfect daddy is waiting for you. [Download your FREE naughty box set.](#)

Join over 800,000 readers for a naughty ever after

Olivia lives and writes in the real live Lost Coast, a wild place in Northern California which hosts its fair share of cowboys, mountain men, and rugged heroes. You can always rely on a NEA (Naughty Ever After) with her reads, and you'll find heroines who are feisty and love to buck against their reigns.

Reigns held by tough guys with a soft spot for their loves.

