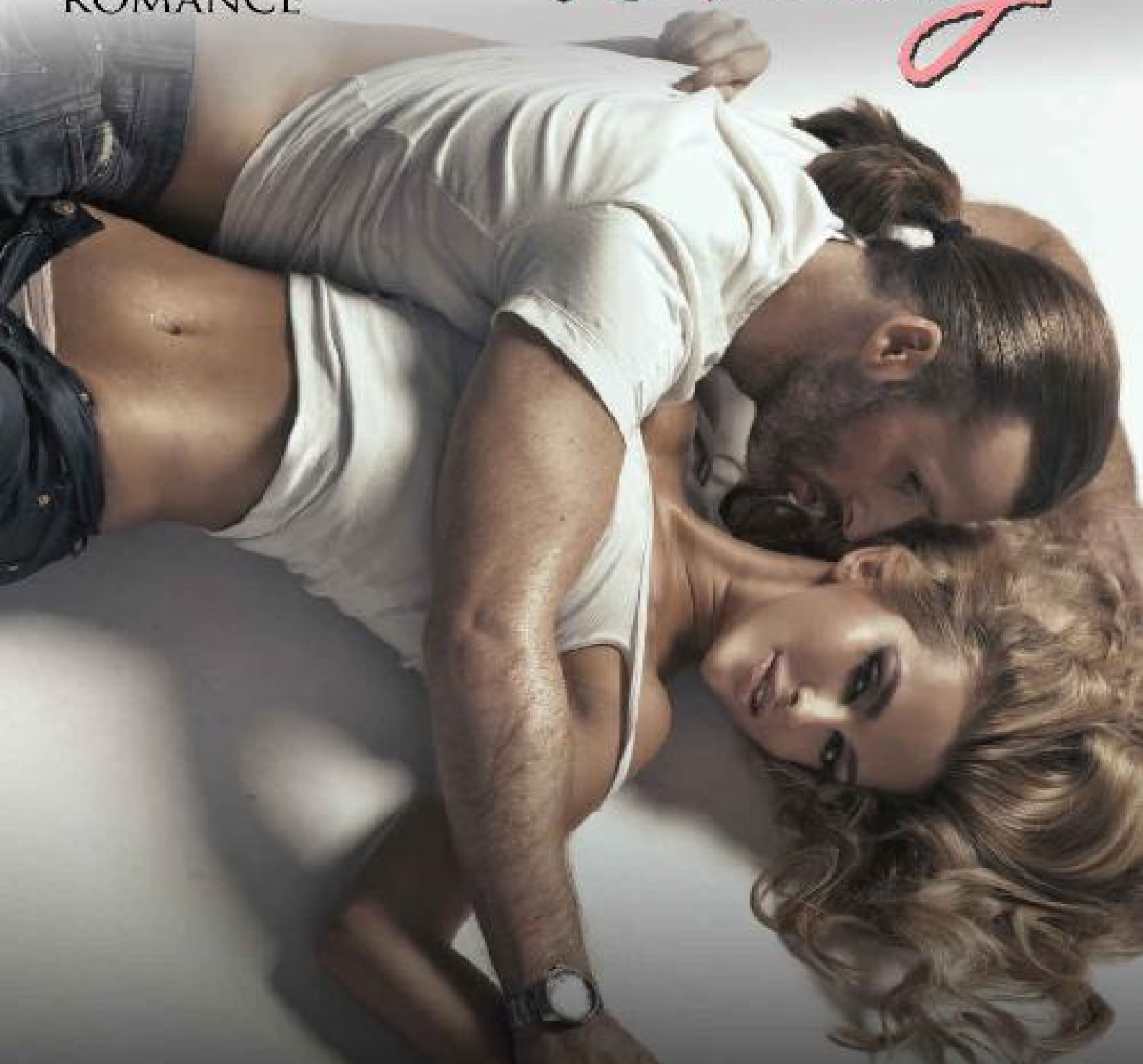


DOWN N'*Dirty*

AN EROTIC
ROMANCE



DARCY DAWES

Down n' Dirty

Darcy Dawes

Copyright © 2019 by Darcy Dawes

All rights reserved. This book or any portion thereof
may not be reproduced or used in any manner
whatsoever

without the express written permission of the publisher
except for the use of brief quotations in a book review.

Chapter One

Callie

Most girls have childhood crushes. The boy next door. The kid that picks on her in kindergarten. The cute senior in high school. The moody teen who works at the drive-thru. Her dad's right-hand man...

Okay, maybe that one was just me.

"Callie, are you ready for work?"

"Just a moment, Dad!" I called back down the stairs.

"Des might be running late so we need to get in quickly, if you *don't mind* hurrying it along."

My heart leapt at the mention of Des. Desmond Rivers was ten years older than me and worked as the lead mechanic at my dad's garage. Or auto shop or whatever. My mom was English and always called it a garage. I thought it sounded posher, so that's what I called it too.

I first spied him when I was twelve. He'd been working for my dad for a couple of years already, but dad had never let me near his shop before because it was 'too dangerous'. Hah! As if I hadn't learned more than most car-loving boys my age by virtue of being his only child.

Desmond either genuinely never noticed me or didn't seem to care. I mean, I got it. I was a scrawny little kid, and he was a super-hot, 'dark hair and blue eyes with perfect stubble' kinda guy. He was always wearing filthy overalls, and somehow that made him even hotter. My adolescent brain went wild thinking about him.

I didn't spend much time around the garage when school got serious and I had to study for college. I wanted to get out of my sleepy home town, after all. Desmond was a happy distraction from the banality of it all. A fantasy I could get lost in before I fell asleep.

And then I got into college. A business course in New York. I adored it, and the city. I reveled in the fashion of the place, always ensuring to keep up a perfectly professional air for the sake of my career. Well-fitting clothes. Flattering make-up. Bouncy, shiny hair. I'd gotten attention back at high school, of course, but I'd always ignored it (much to dad's relief).

It was nothing compared to the attention I got in New York once I transformed myself.

The men there were endlessly more exciting than the boys at my high school, and with just a glance at my ass in a pencil skirt and my immaculately painted lips quirking into the smallest of smiles they fell for me. I could make them do most anything. It was intoxicating.

And yet still, it felt hollow. I wasn't satisfied. I didn't want to make just any guy fall for me.

I wanted Desmond Rivers.

So I went home to work with my dad at the end of my first year of college—to get firsthand experience of how to run a small business (though I knew most everything he could teach me already).

I could seduce Desmond. I knew I could.

I failed.

Okay, let's call it a setback instead. For though I swished my skirts and walked through the filthy garage in stiletto heels and pretended I wasn't watching him from my dad's office, Desmond remained resolutely unaffected. He bantered with me and responded to my jokes as if I were one of the guys, or his little sister, but there was little and less I could do to make him notice me as a woman. The other guys in the shop noticed, though, but they weren't the ones I was trying to attract.

So I went back to college feeling entirely put out. Just what had I done wrong? Did he not like me? Desmond seemed to have gone out of his way to avoid me. Part of me decided he was scared of my dad and that's why he left me alone.

That made me feel better.

When I reached the end of my second year of college and my twentieth birthday I wasn't sure if I was going to work for my dad again or simply go home for a few weeks to see my parents. But, to my surprise, dad specifically asked me to help out. Clearly he had an idea about me taking over the family business that I had no interest in, but he was paying me so how could I say no?

And besides, it gave me a second summer to try and lure in Desmond. There would not be a third; I already had an internship planned in New York the following year. This was my last chance.

I had to make it count.

Which was why I couldn't head into work with dad until my make-up was absolutely perfect. Light, smoky eyeshadow in peach going into chocolate brown. Highlighter and bronzer accentuating the planes of my face. Just a hint of apricot staining my lips.

I wasn't a child anymore, and I damn well wanted the world to know it. Especially Desmond.

"You don't have to dress like you're back in New York when you're here, Callie," dad commented when he spied me coming down the stairs, though mom smiled when she saw me. She was from London. She *got* why I wanted to dress up.

"You look lovely, Callie," she said. And then, to my dad, "Remember you're taking her out for lunch today, alright? No burritos in the garage.

He winced as if he'd been caught out. He glanced at me. "Is the diner okay?"

"Hardly high-class cuisine, but it'll do," I grinned. In truth I loved the diner. There were some things about small town life that would always been great—to come back to, not permanently.

Dad sighed in relief, then waved me out the front door.

"Love you, mom!" we both said as we left. Dad usually called mom by her name—Janice—but ever since I was in

middle school and left at the same time as him every day he'd gotten into the habit of calling his wife 'mom' simply to simultaneously say good-bye to her with me. It was sickeningly cute.

I brushed down the front seat of his pickup truck. Dad could afford a much nicer car than this but he resolutely refused to buy one. Even when I'd politely inquired into getting a car for my sixteenth, then seventeenth, then eighteenth birthday, he'd refused. I was heading to the big city, he'd said. What did I need a car for?

He was right, I supposed, but at least if I'd had a little Fiat or Corsa or Clio I'd be able to drive *myself* to work.

"So..." my dad said after a few minutes, tone a little awkward. He turned down the radio, which I'd put on to a classic rock station I knew he enjoyed. "First day back this summer. How's it feel?"

I knew where this was going already. He wanted me to say I was excited. That I had gone to college specifically to prime myself for taking over the business side of the garage. I smiled at him. "It feels good. You know I like working. An entire summer of doing nothing would kill me."

Dad nodded approvingly. "That's my girl. Now, I took on a couple of new guys this year you won't have met, but I think one of them went to high school with you."

I raised an eyebrow. "What's his name?"

"Jason Nichols."

"Ugh, okay."

He frowned. "You don't like him?"

“It’s...not that I don’t like him,” I said, a little hesitantly. In truth Jason was nice enough, and handsome to boot. But he’d asked me out one too many times in high school and, when he finally got the message that I wasn’t interested, began spreading rumors about me being a frigid bitch.

I wasn’t. I never had been. I simply had my eyes set on someone far cooler than *Jason Nichols*.

I shook my head. “It doesn’t matter, dad. It’s all in the past, anyway. How’s Des?”

Dad’s eyes lit up. He loved his right-hand man like a son or a brother, though Desmond had only just turned thirty and dad was forty-three.

“You know what he’s like,” he replied happily, just as we turned into the parking lot of the garage and came to a stop. “Keeps all the lads in the shop happy. Still no girlfriend, which is a shame, but I suppose he works such long hours for me it would be hard to keep a girl satisfied.”

“He might be gay, you never know,” I quipped once we exited the car. Of course I didn’t believe that Desmond was, but it was fun to tease my dad.

“I’ll have you know I’m a red-blooded, very straight man, Callie De Luca.”

That voice. That low, husky, good-humored voice could only belong to one man.

I turned; Desmond was standing right behind me, arms crossing his chest and decidedly not late. He looked me up and down; I resisted the urge to blush.

“Nothing wrong if you *were* gay,” I replied, smiling slightly as I made my way past him into the garage, dad close in tow. “Homophobia has no place in modern-day America, after all.”

“You’re hilarious.”

“And you haven’t changed.”

Dad burst out laughing. “Oh, this summer will be fun, I think. We need someone round here to match Des’ wit.”

“What wit? I don’t see any.”

Dad chuckled good-naturedly as he made his way into his office, leaving me with the man I was hoping to finally seduce.

Desmond didn’t look at me as took his overalls off a hook on the wall and slid into them. I very much appreciated watching the well-defined muscles in his arms and shoulders ripple in the light of the garage as he pulled the garment on. “Dressed appropriately as usual, Callie,” he murmured after a second or two.”

“I spend most of my time in the office or meeting clients,” I replied, flinging my perfectly bouncy hair over a shoulder. “I’m dressed perfectly appropriately, Mr. Rivers.”

“Oh, it’s ‘Mr. Rivers’, now?”

“You’re my employee,” I joked, “I can call you what I like.”

Desmond rolled his eyes. “In your dreams, little girl.”

I bristled. “I’m not so little anymore.”

There was a pause that I hadn’t expected. Desmond still wouldn’t look me in the eye though I badly wanted him to. I

hated that he seemed to deliberately be avoiding doing so. It unsettled me—twisted my stomach up in a way that was both pleasant and horrible.

“No,” he murmured. “I guess you’re not.”

And then he left me standing there to start working on a car that had been in the shop overnight. I couldn’t stand the erratic beating of my heart. I was the one who was supposed to be in control over summer, not Desmond. *I* was the one who’d seduce him, not the other way around.

So why, with just one throwaway comment, did I feel like I was in for a rough summer of being swayed by every little thing Desmond said?

I sighed, running a hand through my hair before joining my dad in his office. I had to keep my cool. I *could* keep my cool.

Desmond would be mine, and it would be on my terms.

He just didn’t know it yet.

Chapter Two

Desmond

I loved my job. I loved working with cars, and using my hands all day, and tapping my foot to classic rock while working on an engine. I liked that I could get dirty. I liked the people I worked with. I really liked my boss.

Yet it all had nothing on how much I liked the look of the boss' daughter.

Call me a stereotype but I wanted nothing more than to get my filthy hands on prim-and-proper Callie De Luca. Last summer, when she'd first sauntered in to work for her dad after her first year of college, had been torture. A sweet, delicious torture that resulted in me jacking off more than a few times in an empty store cupboard, but a torture nonetheless.

Now she was back for a second summer, and if anything she was even more gorgeous than the year before.

I didn't know how I was going to behave myself for the next three months.

"Hey, Jason, stop slacking off!" I yelled over to Charles De Luca's newest recruit. The guy was about his daughter's age; I had to wonder if they knew each other well. The local high school wasn't all that big.

Jason didn't seem to have heard me. He was too busy watching something with another one of the guys, David. I had

to wonder what was so interesting the both of them would be so distracted.

Then I realized they were watching Callie in her dad's office as she rummaged through a metal drawer of files. She was wearing a peach-colored button-down dress that, to be honest, screamed 'button me down', even though it wasn't too short or revealing. But it clung to every one of her ample curves, making the dress far less innocent than it was supposed to be. Callie had the kind of body that made any outfit indecent.

That was part of my problem. If a stick-thin woman was walking about Charles' shop dressed like Callie then I wouldn't have batted an eyelid. But fuck was Callie curvy, like a fifties pin-up model with her lipstick and perfect hair.

She'd been blonde last year, but now she was growing it out; much of her hair was back to brunette now, with only the ends still pale. I think it was called a dip-dye or something. Either way, I liked it on her.

I whacked Jason over the head with a newspaper, then David. "Stop staring at the boss' daughter, you idiots," I chastised them both. "She's here to work, and so are you."

Jason grinned sheepishly. "Sorry, Des. But come *on*. Callie is fucking gorgeous. You know I must have asked her out, like, a hundred times back in high school."

David frowned. "And she said no? I thought you were pretty popular back then."

"I was! But Callie was just...not interested. To be honest I don't think she went out with anyone in school. I always

thought she was pretty frigid because of that.”

“Might be fun to see if I can ‘warm her up’, then,” David replied, a glint in his eyes I did not like in the slightest. “She never went to school with *me*, after all. Maybe she liked older guys.”

David was twenty-six and had moved to the town last autumn, so Callie would never have met him. He was a pretty handsome guy, to be fair—as was Jason—but I knew that would never be enough to satisfy Callie.

I also knew frigid was the last word to describe her.

Liking older guys isn't far off the mark, though, I mused. Through the glass of her dad's office Callie caught my eye. I just barely saw her smile before I whipped my head away.

I knew Callie liked me. I'd suspected since she was sixteen. I'd known for sure last year, when she'd come to work for her dad. And damn if I didn't like her back. I was going crazy for her.

But she was Charles' daughter, and ten years younger than me. I couldn't go near her. And yet still...

I'm not so little anymore, she had said. And it was true. Callie *was* an adult. A smart, organized, funny, sexy-as-all-hell adult sent to torment me to the end of my days.

“Callie is off-limits,” I finally told Jason and David. “Leave her be. She's only here to get work experience, and hell if she'd be interested in the two of you idiots, anyway.”

Jason grinned. “Oh, that burns.”

“Maybe we could get her out for drinks and see just how cold she is,” David said, decidedly ignoring me.

I glared at him. “Callie just turned twenty. No booze for her.”

“Oh come off it,” Jason protested. “I’m the same age as her and we got out drinking all the time.”

Jason, annoyingly, had a point. I couldn’t hold Callie to one standard and Jason to another simply because she was a young woman and Charles’ daughter.

“If you ask her out for drinks you are *not* allowed to do so with the purpose of getting her wasted and trying it on,” I ended up saying, not quite knowing how else to voice my protests. I wanted to tell them to keep the hell away from Callie. That she wasn’t theirs to toy with.

That she was mine.

But I couldn’t, so I didn’t.

I spent the afternoon beneath the chassis of a Honda Civic, which had been damaged when the owner ran over a deer. The driver hadn’t realized the deer was still attached to the car for at least a minute. Personally I’d hoped the damage would be irreversible, since the prick clearly had no regard for wildlife and, indeed, signs that specifically warned for crossing deer on the very road he’d run it over.

When I spied a pair of long, tanned legs in black high heels standing beside the car it was like a bolt of electricity ran through my body. Callie knocked upon the car, signaling her already-obvious presence to me.

“I brought you back some apple pie from the diner,” she said, voice muffled by the fact I was currently underneath the car. “I know you like it.”

God, the girl was good. I was very much a man whose way to his heart was through his stomach. I resisted rolling out from beneath the car to talk to her directly.

“Thanks, Callie,” I said. “Just put it in your dad’s office so the boys don’t touch it.”

“My dad’ll eat it for sure if it’s in there.”

I chuckled. “Cover it up with something, then, You and I both know your mom will be mad if Charles eats too much sugar.”

A pause. “Noted.”

I risked a glance at Callie’s legs and immediately regretted it. From my angle on the floor I could see up her dress, and now I was looking I couldn’t stop. Her panties were black and barely-there, hardly covering anything at all. It wasn’t long before I had a raging hard-on that I was very much glad was covered by an entire car.

She pressed her legs together as if she knew I was looking. I thought of how it would feel to have those thighs pressed around my waist, instead, and my dick throbbed. Fuck, this was only *day one* of Callie working in the shop.

I had to endure three months of this? I was going to die, for sure.

“Callie, what is it?” I asked, coughing slightly to clear my throat.

To my surprise, she bent all the way down to look at me beneath the car. Her green eyes glittered with mischief, which was both a great and a terrible sign.

“You were looking up my dress.”

I shook my head. “Why would I look up a brat’s dress?”

She pouted. “You’re lying, Desmond.”

“And how would you know that?”

Callie grinned as she showed me the pocket mirror she had in her hand. “I was watching you.”

Hot damn.

“If you stand in front of a car I’m working underneath then of course I’m going to be able to see up your dress,” I said, trying my hardest to work my way out of the situation I was in. I could tell Callie was enjoying my discomfort immensely.

“That doesn’t explain how *long* you were staring.”

Well, fuck. If that was the case then I was as well using filthy humor to derail the conversation.

I cocked an eyebrow. “I was just wondering how you weren’t cold wearing so little under there.”

To my satisfaction, Callie blushed, and my dick only grew harder. I hoped she couldn’t see my hard-on in the shadows cast by the car.

She tucked a lock of hair behind her ear, bending down just a little lower. I could see down the top of her dress, to the equally lacy and barely-there bra that matched her panties.

Fuck, fuck, fuck.

“Maybe I’m just a little too hot and need to cool down,” Callie murmured, smirking when she saw the look on my face. Then she righted herself back to a standing position. “I’ll hide the pie in my dad’s office in the filing cabinet. He’ll never look there.”

And then she was gone.

“Did you see her *ass*?!” I vaguely heard David mutter under his breath to Jason. “What I wouldn’t give to—”

“What I wouldn’t give to hear you stop talking about her like that,” I bellowed from beneath the car, though I couldn’t slide out to shout properly at the two of them while I still had an erection.

Jason tutted in indignation. “Girl bends over like that is just asking for us to comment on her ass. It’s just the way it is.”

But Callie had been bending low to talk to *me*. The sinfully perfect curves of her ass would have been on show for all who walked past as a by-product of her trying to flirt with *me*. The guys weren’t going to stop talking about her if she kept parading in front of me for my attention.

I had to get her under control, for her own good.

And for mine.

Chapter Three

Callie

Two weeks had passed and, so far, I was fairly certain I was driving Desmond crazy.

Okay, I wasn't sure if that was in a good way or in a bad way. I might have merely been annoying him. But, either way, he was paying attention to me, and that was a start.

Yet no matter what I did—bending low to talk to him beneath a car chassis, sticking my ass out as I rubbed wax into a car bonnet, dropping a French fry between my boobs and artfully fishing it out—Desmond simply wouldn't take the bait.

Maybe he really *was* gay.

I could only laugh at the thought. Desmond Rivers definitely wasn't gay, if his erection upon looking up my dress was anything to go by. But there had be no further physical reactions to me, involuntary or otherwise.

Clearly I had to get a whole lot more drastic with my attempts at seducing him.

“Callie, love, did you get the checking account balanced for last month?” dad asked me as he absent-mindedly filled out the crossword in today's paper. “You know I'd do it myself, but—”

“Don't worry about it, dad, it's already done,” I smiled, patting his shoulder when I walked passed him. “This month's

is up-to-date, too. By the time I've finished working here for summer I'll have that app finished and set up to make the accounting so much easier."

"You're an angel."

"I'm just a De Luca."

Dad loved it when I said that. When I glanced behind me before exiting the office I saw he was beaming at me, clearly proud. Though I'd never worked hard at school and college simply to impress my parents I couldn't help but admit it felt damn good to know they liked the way I was turning out. Both of them had worked so hard their whole lives, after all, so it was only natural that their work ethic had rubbed off on me.

"Keep this up and he'll be begging you to quit college and take over the business side of things by the end of the year."

"Like that'll ever happen, Desmond," I replied, so quickly that I didn't realize for a moment who I was actually speaking to. Resisting the urge to give Desmond my immediate attention, I sauntered over to car he was working on and looked it over, as if I were looking for a fault in the way he was servicing it. I knew the job he was doing was flawless, naturally. He wasn't my dad's best mechanic for nothing.

"You never know, Callie," Desmond said. He slammed the bonnet down on the car and sat on it, blue eyes twinkling at me outrageously. "He might make a small-town mechanic of you yet."

"Yeah, that sounds exactly like my life plan."

"We both know you know your way around a car better than half the guys in here."

“Just because you’re good at something doesn’t mean you have to pursue it as a career,” I countered. Desmond inclined his head in concession, which was gratifying.

His overalls were half off and tied around his waist, leaving his top half covered by a white, oil-stained vest. Desmond’s arms were annoyingly on show; I wondered if he was doing it deliberately.

Just who is playing who, here? I thought, cocking my head to one side to regard him suspiciously. *He’s been actively avoiding looking at me for days, so what’s this all about?*

Desmond coughed and grabbed a wrench and a cloth and watched his hands as he cleaned off the tool. “I’m just saying, I’ve never seen Charles so happy as when you’re around to help him out. He appreciates it more than you know, Callie. Figured you should know that.”

I wagged a finger at him, risking taking a couple step towards him. “Don’t you go emotionally manipulating me into dropping my future, high-flying city career, Mr. Rivers. That’s no very fair of you.”

“Oh, and walking about like literal sex on legs is fair for *me?*”

Desmond’s gaze was steady and sure on my face. I bit my lip. It was the most direct thing he’d ever said in response to what I was doing.

I gave him just the smallest shrug of my shoulders. “Am I not allowed to make my attraction to you obvious?”

Desmond chuckled. He continued to wipe down the wrench, though it was clean. “I guess there’s no law against it.

Won't you give up?"

"And why should I?" I demanded, knowing I sounded childish. "It's not like you've asked me to stop."

"Is this me not asking you to stop, Callie?"

I hesitated. Was he really? Did I honestly have to stop trying to catch his attention? I shifted a little uncomfortably on the spot. "I know you like me," I muttered, risking calling Desmond out on his attraction.

"Of course I do, you brat. I've known you for years. You're like a little sister to—"

"No I'm not." I moved forward another few paces until my legs were almost touching Desmond's. I glanced down at his hands, wishing they were stroking something other than the damn wrench. I smoothed my hands over my silk shirt and down across the figure-hugging black skirt I was wearing. "I've never been 'like a little sister' to you. And I'm not a brat."

"Stop doing this, Callie," Desmond growled, voice low and raspy. There was a glint in his eye I thoroughly enjoyed. His hands stopped moving; I could see the muscles tensing in his arms. "Stop trying to push me over the edge."

I pouted. "And why not? Don't you want to know what kind of lingerie I have on today? You were very *interested* when I—*ah!*"

There must have been a screw or a tool of some kind on the floor, but I slipped up on whatever it was as I took another step forward, sending me sprawling onto Desmond's lap where he sat on the car.

“This is why heels are stupid,” Desmond laughed, clearly enjoying watching me making a fool of myself when I was trying to be sexy. He helped me up to my feet as I scabbled to regain my composure; when he looked down pointedly at my shirt I followed his gaze.

The white silk was covered in oil and grease.

“Shit!” I exclaimed. “That won’t wash out. Damn it damn it damn it.”

I left Desmond’s side to head into the back room, where I kept a spare change of clothes just in case such accidents occurred. I might have been a *brat* but I wasn’t an idiot.

“Do you need a change of—oh. Guess I *am* seeing what lingerie you’re wearing today.”

I hadn’t expected Desmond to follow me through to the changing room. Clearly *he* hadn’t expected me to start unbuttoning my shirt without closing the door.

He closed it for me.

I quirked an eyebrow. “I thought you weren’t interested in me?”

“I’m standing guard to make sure none of the other guys get an eyeful,” Desmond replied, smirking as he inclined his head towards the door. “I don’t imagine you want them to see you in your bra.”

I gave him a small smile. “Not particularly, no. I have standards.”

“They must be pretty low, if you’re trying to catch *my* attention.”

I didn't reply.

It turned out the oil and grease had embedded themselves in my skirt, too, though it hadn't initially been apparent because the fabric was black. Sighing, I began to unzip the back of it and kicked off my heels, until a hand upon my wrists stopped me.

"What are you doing taking your skirt off?" Desmond asked. He looked flustered, which set my heart racing.

My lips curled into a small smile as I pressed up against him. Desmond's hand tightened on my wrist. "You got oil on it. Guess I'll just have to change my whole outfit."

He glanced downwards. "You're only going to get *more* grime on your clothes standing that close to me."

Once more, I didn't reply, instead choosing to grind slightly against Desmond just to see what he would do. I could see a flush of heat creeping up his neck and, against my legs, the obvious hardness of a growing erection.

Keep your cool, Callie, I chanted. Keep your cool. Make him have to admit to being attracted to you.

Desmond ran a hand through his hair and looked away. "Callie, we shouldn't do this."

"Then walk away," I said, before wiggling out of my skirt with his hand still on my wrist. When the material hit the floor with a soft *thump* Desmond instinctively shifted me so he was between me and the door.

Looking out for my modesty, even now, I thought. It felt good to have him respect me enough to do such a thing, even as I was stripping in front of him.

“Let me go, Desmond,” I ordered, very quietly, when he finally looked back at me. “I need to finish taking off my shirt...unless you’d take it off for me?”

“I think you’d better take it off yourself,” he replied when he let me go, though the unevenness of his breath suggested otherwise.

I kept eye contact as I reached up and finished undoing the buttons of my ruined shirt. One by one by one they came away, revealing the nude-colored lace underwear I was wearing. When my shirt joined my skirt on the floor Desmond stared unashamedly at my breasts.

I fingered the sleeves of his overalls tied around his waist, playfully grinding against him while Desmond’s breathing got faster. And his erection was even bigger than before; when I slid a leg between his it pressed against my thigh. I thought about it being inside me and my own breathing got faster.

“Fuck, Callie...” Desmond uttered. His hands were trembling mere inches from my hips, as if torn between pulling my hands away and pushing me on to the bench that lay behind us.

I pulled him in as close as I possibly could, until my chin rested on his chest as I looked up at him beneath heavy-lidded eyes.

“Won’t you touch me, Desmond?” I asked, trying to sound as innocent as possible. “I’ve been aching for you to do so for such a long, long time.”

When his fingers brushed against the line of my panties my breathing hitched. I was already hot and wet between my

thighs, wanton and waiting for Desmond to man up and run his fingers over my clit.

He bent down until his mouth was by my ear. “And what do you do when you think about me touching you, Callie?”

“I touch myself, of course,” I replied, so matter-of-factly I almost laughed. I put my hand over one of his and placed it over my panties, running his fingers against my clit until I moaned. “I touch myself there, and then I think of your cock inside me and put my fingers up my pussy, too.”

“Fuck.”

“You’ve been saying that a lot. Won’t you *do* it instead of *say* it?”

When Desmond bit my earlobe I held back a gasp. His fingers began moving over my clit of their own accord, and we began moving until my back hit the lockers.

Had I really done it? Had I finally broken Desmond’s resolve to leave me alone?

“Callie,” Desmond began, his voice so rough it was barely audible.

And then the doorknob rattled behind us.

“Someone in here?” my dad called.

Desmond jerked away from me immediately, and I thrust my hand inside my locker and pulled on my spare dress and grabbed my clothes from the floor just as he walked in.

I smiled sheepishly. “Hey, dad. I got oil on my clothes.”

He glanced at Desmond then back at me, though he didn’t say anything about the two of us being in the changing room

together. Desmond exited the room without so much as a glance in my direction, though I had to wonder if his heart was beating just wildly as mine was. It felt like it was going to burst out of my chest.

When I got home I couldn't deal with how horny and excited I was. I'd gotten Desmond to surrender. I could do it again.

He liked the idea of me touching myself, I thought, pulling out my cell phone as I eyed my reflection in the mirror. I had his number. I had all of my dad's employee's numbers.

"Just thought you'd appreciate visual proof of what I do when I think of you touching me," I murmured as I typed the same words into my phone, before stripping down to my underwear and sliding my panties away just enough that Desmond would be able to see my fingers stroking my clit in a photo.

I took a few, just to be sure the one I sent him was perfect, of course. When finally I selected one I wasted no time in sending it away. I didn't expect to get a reply. That was stupid. But when I saw that he'd read it I couldn't help but smile as I continued to touch myself.

He was mine, and he knew it.

It was only a matter of how long he'd try and resist me after my dad almost caught us. Glancing at my photo, something told me it wouldn't be very long at all.

Chapter Four

Desmond

Here I was, jerking off in the storage cupboard for the fourth time this month like a creep. But what else was I supposed to do when Callie sent me a photo of her working in the office with the blinds closed, in her underwear, with the accompanying message of, ‘man, it’s hot in here today’?

Charles was out working an on-site job and wouldn’t be back for another couple of hours, of course. Callie would never risk doing something so outrageous if her dad were around. But she knew *I* was around, and that’s why she was doing this.

She really was killing me—and my right hand.

This was the seventh photo she’d sent me, but only the first time she’d sent me one in real time at the office. Usually I’d get them late at night, or just after I’d gotten in from work, and my cock would be in my hand before I had time to really think things through.

The sight of Callie disheveled and half-naked while touching herself was destroying me. It was the most painful kind of pleasure. What was even worse was that I longed for the next photo to be sent, though of course I hadn’t responded to a single one of them.

But Callie knew I was receiving them. Going by the smug little smiles she threw my way in the shop, she also knew how

much I was enjoying them.

I wondered how long this dance of ours could possibly last. I was still scared out of my skin from her dad literally almost walking in on me feeling up his mostly-naked daughter. His only child. I was ashamed of myself.

Except I wasn't. Not really. I *wanted* Callie, now more than ever before, and going by how much she wanted me there was absolutely nothing wrong with that.

Except for the fact she's my boss' daughter, and technically kind of also my boss, and ten years younger than me, and...

I could come up with a dozen excuses for why I shouldn't indulge my insatiable impulse to screw Callie senseless, but that didn't alter the fact that my resolve was failing. Crumbling away to nothing. All it had taken was for the girl to stand in front of me in her underwear and I'd been willing to fuck her *at work*, for crying out loud.

What was she going to try next? I was both terrified and excited to find out.

With a sigh of relief I came into the wad of tissues I was holding, which I promptly buried deep in the trash. When I walked past Charles' office I lingered by the door, wondering if Callie was still sitting in her dad's chair, half-naked.

I didn't expect her to throw open the blinds and then the door while I was still standing there. She was fully clothed once more—thank god—but there was an edge to the smirk on her lips which was far filthier than her being naked, somehow.

“You spend an awful long time in the storage cupboard these days,” she mused, as if discussing the weather. “Funny how you never seem to bring anything out of the room, though. It’s almost as if you’re going in there for another purpose entirely.”

I cracked a smile. “How observant of you.”

“It must get pretty cramped in there,” Callie said, leaning against the doorframe as she did so. The top two buttons of her shirt were undone—something which she never did while working. Her tits were big enough that merely having two buttons undone allowed me to see quite a lot of cleavage; my cock stirred back to life despite the fact I’d only just come in the storage cupboard.

Traitor, I thought at it while Callie looked me up and down.

“I think you presume too much, Callie,” I told her, before glancing around to check nobody was nearby. Most people were at lunch; Callie and I were alone.

She quirked an eyebrow, crossing her arms beneath her chest to lift her boobs up just that little bit higher. “I think I presume exactly the right amount, Desmond. Are you enjoying my photos?”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“Going by your hard-on I think you do.”

“I don’t have a—”

“Oh, but you looked to check, which means you’re thinking about it,” Callie laughed. She slid a hand across her skirt, causing the fabric to lift up just enough that I could see

the suspenders she was wearing to hold up her stockings. I'd seen them in her photo, of course, but watching her so brazenly showing them off to me in person was another thing entirely.

I closed the gap between us, slamming a hand against the door frame about Callie's head. She looked up at me, surprised and delighted.

"Do you really want me to fuck you *right now*, in the shop?" I growled. The smile that curled her lips was infuriating.

"No. I'm not stupid. I just enjoy watching you react to me."

"Is this all a game to you?"

"Yes," Callie replied, with no hint of malice or sarcasm whatsoever. "It's a game, but it's a serious one. I *do* want you to fuck me, Mr. Rivers. But first I want to drive you so crazy that all you can think about is me. I want you to get hard the very second you so much as glance in my direction and then, when it all gets too much, you'll throw me down and screw me so hard I'll cry out for you to stop. Or keep going. I'll be so full of you I won't know which is which."

I stared at her, equal amounts aghast and turned on beyond belief. "You're a kinky little bitch, aren't you?"

Callie crept up onto her tiptoes and tilted her chin up until her lips were almost touching mine. I could feel her breath tickling my face. "Are you only just catching onto that fact, Desmond?" she asked, her voice barely a whisper.

And then my hands were on her. I grabbed Callie's hips and pulled her against me, grinding my throbbing erection between her thighs. I had to stop myself from sighing at the feeling—it was the closest thing to relief I'd felt all damn month.

“I don't think you could handle me, little girl,” I murmured, as my hands crawled around to her ass and squeezed it. It was so big I could barely fit my hands around each cheek. I imagined slapping it and rubbing my cock against it. Fuck, it would feel so good.

Callie cocked her head to one side. “How about you try me out and see just how much I can *handle*?”

She grazed a hand against my erection to emphasize her point. I ran my lips down her neck in response and then, before I could stop myself, bit down on it with a longing I could barely control.

Callie gasped in shock, though it quickly became a moan. “Harder, Desmond, harder. Mark me as yours, do it harder—*ah*—oh, shit.”

She pulled away from me with an urgency that deflated my boner almost immediately. The front door to the shop was being dragged open against its rusty hinges, signaling the early return of Callie's dad or some of the other employees.

Callie smoothed over her shirt with her hands and redid her top two buttons. She smiled softly at me. “To be continued, I guess,” she said, before retreating back into the office and closing the door behind her.

“I told you, David: stop watching Callie like that,” I heard Charles remark behind me. He was speaking in an undertone but I could hear every word loud and clear. “You think I can see the way you look at her? She’s here to work, and she’s my daughter. You think I want any of you guys laying your filthy hands on her?”

“I hear you loud and clear, boss,” David replied, and he sounded sincere. But when I spied him walk away from Charles I could tell by the scowl on his face that he didn’t like being told off and, when he saw Callie sitting in the office, his eyes gleamed in a way I didn’t like at all.

I’d have to keep watch over him.

You need to keep watch over yourself, you fool, I chastised. For Charles’ remarks could have easily been directed at me. I was just as guilty—if not more so—of ogling Callie as David was. I was simply smarter and sneakier about it.

I sighed heavily. This summer was torture. I had no idea how I was supposed to endure another two months of Callie working in the shop, though in truth if I ignored the sexual attraction between us and her increasingly bold advances she made working here so much easier.

She did all the paperwork, and the finances, and went to all the front-facing meetings with clients. There was a reason her father had asked her to work for him for a second summer, and it was because she was stupidly talented at running the auto shop. I knew fine well he hoped she’d join the family business after graduating from college.

Which means I can’t sleep with her. I can’t.

If Callie returned home to work permanently with her dad—though she insisted she had no interest in doing so—then I couldn't sabotage my job and my working relationship with her and her dad by screwing her.

I couldn't.

That didn't change how desperately I wanted to.

Chapter Five

Callie

Of course the one time I was allowed to borrow my dad's pick-up truck was the time it broke down on the side of the road, three miles out of town, in the pouring rain.

Of fucking course.

"Damn it," I muttered, checking my cell phone to realize I had no battery whatsoever. I couldn't even start the truck up simply to charge the device enough that I could call someone. "Damn it, damn it, damn it."

I looked out of the rain-splattered window; I could barely see a thing. It was horrific outside.

And I'd have to stand out in it to try and hail someone down/

I should have waited until the forecast was better to go shopping in the next town over. I should have, but a rainy day seemed perfect to waste time inside a large shopping mall. I should have, but staying inside my parents' house all day wasting time thinking about Desmond sounded like torture.

He wasn't replying to my photos. He'd been avoiding me in work the past couple of days since our 'altercation'. He was so hot-and-cold that I didn't know what to do.

Just what was going on in his head?

Steeling myself for the rain, I opened the door and jumped out of the pick-up truck, peering into the gray early-evening dimness. I could hardly see any better than I had done *inside* the damn truck, and now I was getting soaked.

When the first car drove on past me I wasn't disappointed. I hadn't expected to get lucky on my first try. But when the second car ignored me, then the third, fourth and fifth, I felt my spirits sink.

"Great," I shouted out for nobody to hear but myself. Rain water filled my mouth; I spat it out in anger. "Fucking great!"

And then I heard a car horn honk behind me. I turned; the driver flashed their lights to signal that I should get in. Thanking god or luck or whatever, I grabbed my bags of shopping, my purse, cell phone and the keys for the truck and threw myself into the stranger's car with a sigh of relief.

Only it wasn't a stranger.

It was Desmond.

"You look like you drowned and came back to life," he laughed as soon as he caught sight of my face. I knew I must have had mascara running down my cheeks. Clearly I looked awful.

"What are you doing out here?" I asked him between chattering teeth. After flinging my bags into the back seat I pulled down the passenger seat mirror and began trying to fix my ruined make-up as best I could. The last person I'd wanted to see me like this was Desmond fucking Rivers.

"I could ask you the same thing," he replied, and then, "I needed to pick up some parts for your dad in the next town

over. Were you shopping?”

I nodded. “Truck broke down and my phone is dead. Dad’s toolbox wasn’t in there for me to fix it.”

Desmond rolled his eyes as he turned up the heat in his car, much to my delight. “Classic Charles.”

“You’d almost think he didn’t own a garage.”

“Auto shop.”

“Semantics.”

“Hey, this ain’t Britain, you know.”

I let out an exaggerated sigh as I pulled my hoodie closer around me. It was one of my dad’s—way too big for me, naturally, but fleece-lined and super comfy. Well, when it wasn’t soaking wet, of course. The rain had gone all the way through to my skin.

“If I were in Britain right now I’d live in London, and be drinking prosecco cocktails with some high-flying friends while wearing a glitzy dress.”

Desmond raised an eyebrow. “You’re not twenty-one yet.”

“Yeah but the drinking age is eighteen over there, remember? I’d be a *proper* adult in London.”

He laughed at that. “You’re a proper adult now, as you keep reminding me. Do you really hate living here so much? Why not go back to New York for the rest of summer?”

I hesitated, shivering a little before asking, very quietly, “Is that what you want me to do, Desmond? So I’m not in your way, bothering you all the time?”

Desmond frowned. I watched as his hands flexed and unflexed on the steering wheel. “Of course I don’t want you to leave, Callie. Your dad loves having you in the shop, and you make everything run so much smoother.”

“That wasn’t what I was asking.”

“...I know.”

The two of us remained silent for a while until eventually we passed the billboard that welcomed us to our small, quiet town.

“My house is left, remember?” I muttered when Desmond took a right.

He shook his head. “Your dad will kill me if I take you home looking like that.”

“Meaning?”

Desmond glanced at me out of the corner of his eye, as if debating whether his next words were the right ones to say. “Come by my place,” he said eventually. “Dry off. Charge your phone. Then we can head back and fix your dad’s truck.”

It was a reasonable idea. A sensible one, in fact. Was it simply because of my feelings for Desmond that I was reading far more into what he was suggesting? I internally thanked myself for wearing nice underwear today, and shaving my legs. I’d wanted to look good when trying out new clothes, after all.

“Tell me what you’re thinking about, Callie.”

I turned my head to look at Desmond, whose eyes were back on the road. He wore an unsure expression, which

confirmed my suspicion that even *he* had to have known there was more to his suggestion that met the eye. Or, at least, that I would take I that way.

“Are you sure it’s a good idea for me to come to your house, Desmond?” I asked, feeling as if I was shooting myself in the foot by calling him out on said idea.

To my surprise, he laughed. “Absolutely not, but I’m suggesting it anyway. My self-control has lasted this long—why not another torturous event where you no doubt parade in front of me in your underwear?”

I wrinkled my nose in amusement. “If I recall, last time you absolutely, totally gave in to my charms, and the time before that you *would* have if my dad hadn’t walked in.”

“Impossible. Never happened. My self-control is like a stone wall. Immovable. Unbreakable.”

Ah, the atmosphere was much better now, with the two of us joking away like we’d always done before. I wanted things to remain this way...it’s just that I wanted *more* of it.

More of Desmond. Him wanting more of me. So much of me that there was nothing left to give anyone else.

“Callie...?”

I shuddered, though it wasn’t from the cold. “We’ll see about that unbreakable stone wall,” I said, just as Desmond turned into his driveway and slowed his car to a halt.

“I’m going to ignore that last comment and act perfectly gentlemanly by offering you my jacket to hold over your head to the door,” he smiled, handing over said jacket before

opening the driver's door to run around the car and open mine. By the time we reached his house Desmond was drenched.

“Looks like *you're* the one who needs to dry off, now,” I laughed, before sloughing off my dad's oversized, soaking wet hoodie and looking around for where to put it. “Desmond, where should I—”

The question caught in my throat when I became aware of the fact he was staring at me as if I were naked. Glancing down, I saw that my white shift dress was so wet I may as well have actually *been* naked. It stuck to me like an uncomfortable second skin, revealing my blush-pink underwear beneath it.

And my nipples, which were poking through the lace. Well, I *was* cold, after all.

My lips curled into a satisfied smirk. “What was that about an unbreakable stone wall, Desmond?”

Chapter Six

Desmond

I couldn't believe I actually had Callie inside my house. Just what was I thinking? She was dripping wet, soaking my hardwood floor and—

Crap. Her dress had gone completely see-through.

Mayday, mayday, my brain warned me, though my cock didn't listen. I'd been fighting a hard-on the entire drive back to mine, even though Callie had been shivering, soaking and wrapped up in an oversized hoodie that hid her figure. Clearly I had it bad for her.

I should never have invited her back.

But I had, and now I had to face the consequences.

“Hang on,” I told Callie without looking at her, “I'm just going to turn on the heat and bring you a towel. Can you change into something you bought when out shopping?”

She shook her head, causing water droplets to fall from her hair. “Nothing was really—ahh—substantial enough to keep me warm.”

The statement was made to make me question it, so I resisted.

After driving up the heat in my house I passed through my bedroom and picked up a large t-shirt and some boxer shorts for Callie; they'd have to do until her own clothes dried.

Glancing down at myself I realized for the first time just how soaked I was, too, but since I intended to go back out and fix Charles' truck there was little point in me changing into dry clothes.

When I returned to the hallway Callie was nowhere to be seen.

"In here!" she called out, from my living room. She was huddled against the electric fire with no shoes on, having worked out how to turn it on. There was a satisfied flush of color on her face, though Callie's dress and skin and hair were still drenched.

"Never thought I'd see that thing on in *July*," I said, trying my hardest not to look at the way Callie's dress had crept up her thighs to her waist. Along with the fact I could see the lines of her lingerie beneath it, I could barely contain myself.

She laughed softly. "You can look, you know. You can always look."

"For my own good I can't," I replied, before flinging my dry clothes at her. "Put them on and give me your wet clothes. I'm throw them in the dryer."

Callie ran her hand through her wet hair, pushing it out of her face in a manner that was far too sexy to be entirely functional.

"I guess I should get changed as quickly as possible, so I don't get a cold."

She unfolded herself from the floor and sauntered towards me. In the flickering light of the fire I could see every plane of Callie's devilish curves beneath her dress. She looked like a

bikini model, with the rainwater glistening on her skin, except so much worse. Because she was *here*, in real life, instead of in a magazine.

I didn't even attempt to hide my erection. How could I? Callie's eyes were crawling up and down my entire frame, heavy-lidded with desire.

I wanted her. I wanted her so badly.

"Won't you help me get out of these clothes, Desmond?" she asked, voice low and sultry. "I'm afraid my hands are so cold from the rain that I can barely use my fingers."

It was a bare-faced lie if ever I'd seen one, for when Callie reached where I stood in the doorway those same fingers slid across my chest with ease. This close-up I could see gold flecks in her green eyes, as if her irises themselves contained fire.

I couldn't look away.

Before I knew it my hands were crawling along Callie's hips, her stomach, her breasts, all the way to her top button, where they lingered. I kept my gaze firm on hers as I tilted her head up by her chin.

"Do you know what you're getting in for, Callie?" I murmured, so close to her lips I could feel her breath upon my own.

She cocked an eyebrow. "I do. Do *you*?"

"Probably not."

"Then I think you'll find you're in for a very pleasant surprise," she said, slinging her arms over my shoulders before

pressing her mouth to mine.

Callie tasted of rain and peppermint gum and coffee, all at the same time. It was irresistible. When her lips parted my tongue found its way into her mouth, and her fingers crawled up my neck into my hair to push her closer. When she took a step forward I took a step back, on and on until I successfully led her, backwards, into my bedroom.

Now that we had started, I couldn't stop.

Charles' truck would have to wait until the morning.

Chapter Seven

Callie

He took his time undressing me. He took his fucking time.

“Tell me you want me,” he whispered into my ear, one hand creeping into my hair as his other hand slipped my dress from my shoulders.

God, it was the sexiest thing I’d ever heard anyone say. I honestly didn’t think I could handle much more of Desmond Rivers at his most intense and wanton.

It wasn’t as if I’d never heard a guy say such a thing to me before, but now it felt...different. Charged. Fiery. Was it because Desmond was the first—and only—guy I’d ever really desired myself? Was it really so simple?

I didn’t care if it was.

My dress fell to my feet in a sodden heap and I knelt on the bed, beckoning for Desmond to stand in front of me. I finished unbuttoning his shirt as slowly as he unzipped my dress.

His eyes never left mine as my hands found their way down to his belt. It felt like I’d never seen him in a belt before—he was always in his overalls. Now I wanted him to wear a belt more often, just so I could remove it slowly and assuredly, like I was right now.

“You know I want you,” I murmured as I brushed my fingers past the fabric of his pants, giving his cock the very

slightest of strokes through the material before dropping his belt to the floor. Desmond audibly gasped, and he involuntarily bucked closer to me.

I ran my fingers up his tightly-muscled, tense arms and up to his face. I swallowed slightly, then added, “I want you so much I can’t stand it.”

Without warning, Desmond wrapped his arms around my waist and threw me down onto the bed. I loved the weight of him on top of me and how I could feel every inch of his body resting against mine.

Desmond fingered the strap of my little, lacy bra before reaching his fingers around to my back to undo the fastening. He watched my chest rise and fall beneath him like a hawk, intent on its prey.

But then he ran soft kisses from the hollow of my neck all the way down to my navel, while his right hand reached beneath the cups of my bra to fondle my breasts. He kept his fingers gentle and teasing the entire time, belying the tension in his muscles and the dangerous glint in his eyes.

“Desmond...” I moaned, in the hopes that the sound would break through his veneer of control and cause him to snap. I could tell that he was enjoying himself, after all my weeks of teasing *him*, but I’d grown so wet with desire that his slow deliberateness was almost painful.

He looked up at me from his position at my navel; his breathing was coming fast and hard.

“I just need to make sure you truly want this, Callie,” he murmured, because once I’ve started—”

He brought his hand down from my breasts to pull away at my panties, before getting rid of my undone bra altogether.

“—I’m not liable to stop.”

I stared at him intently. “Don’t stop. I don’t want you to. You *know* what I want you to do.”

Desmond’s mouth was on mine, then, and his fingers found my clit, and all I could feel was pleasure.

“Desmond, please, please, I need you in me,” I begged against his hot, ravenous mouth.

My hands roved down to his pants—how could it be that I removed his belt and still hadn’t taken off his pants? In my desperation I struggled to pull them away, but Desmond stepped in and all but ripped them, as well as his underwear, clean away for me.

There was a moment of stunned silence as my eyes wandered down to his throbbing cock. Desmond may have seen *me* mostly naked in photos I’d sent him, but I’d never seen *him* anywhere close to undressed.

I gulped despite myself; it was an action Desmond seemed to revel in. But then he grazed his teeth over my lips as his fingers returned to teasing my clit, and waves of pleasure begin to hit my brain again.

“I’ll be gentle, I swear,” he said in a low, husky voice. “Just trust me.”

And how could I not trust Desmond him?

“You can be as rough as you want,” I breathed, pulling his mouth back to mine and kissing him ferociously while my

hands ran through his dark, soaking wet hair.

I bit his lip in shock as he entered me. Yes, it definitely hurt a bit. But beneath that, there was—

“Callie?” Desmond mumbled against my lips, concern coloring his voice even through his aching obvious desire.

I buried my head against his shoulder and nibbled on his neck, the way he had done in the office a few days ago.

“Do your worst,” I said, the words tickling his skin. “Make me yours.”

Desmond clearly took my words to heart, for no sooner had I uttered them than he dragged my head back onto the pillow by my hair and began thrusting into me in earnest. With every stroke of his cock inside me a fresh wave of pleasure wracked my brain, until I was almost blind with it.

“Oh my god,” I gasped, when Desmond crawled his fingers down along my hip bone to my clit and began stroking it once more. “I’m gonna, I’m gonna—”

“Then do it,” he growled against my lips, biting my lower one as he removed the entire length of his cock from me only to slam it back in. The force of it was enough to send me rocketing over the edge; my fingers curled into the sheets beneath me, and my sight grew blurry with tears. All over my body my muscles were pulsing in time with the endorphins rushing to my brain, so I clenched my legs around Desmond’s waist as I gasped in shock and pleasure.

I felt incredible. I’d never had an orgasm like this in my life.

Desmond didn't give me a chance to recover. With a wolfish grin he extricated himself from me and mercilessly flipped me into my hands and knees.

"I hope you're ready for this, Callie," he murmured into my ear, his breathing just as excited and eager as mine.

And whether I was or not, Desmond went ahead and thrust into me with such power that my face slammed into the pillow. My clit was so sensitive from my orgasm; whenever his cock rubbed against it my body twitched and shuddered. If he kept going like this I was going to come again.

Desmond's hands crawled over my boobs and stomach and hips as he slid in and out of me as easily as if I were made to fit his dick. It made me happy to think that I was. He bit into my shoulder—just enough to make me gasp—when his strokes came thicker and faster.

"Gonna—" was all Desmond got out, before he shot every last drop of cum inside him into me; I could feel his cock throbbing as it expelled the fluid. It was only once it grew still that he slowly pulled out of me and rolled onto his back. I collapsed against him, exhausted.

"That—that finally happened," I said after a while, though both of us were still breathless. I turned my head to look at Desmond. "Was it worth putting up with a brat like me in work to fuck a brat like me in bed?"

"I may be coming round to the idea," he grinned, before leaning over to kiss me and starting everything over again.

I woke to the heavy feeling of someone lying on top of me. A tall, well-muscled someone.

Desmond.

“And just what do you think you’re doing?” I asked, yawning happily as I struggled to reposition myself beneath his weight.

Desmond nibbled my neck, stubble pleasantly scratchy against my skin. “I’m horny,” was all he said.

Against my thigh I felt a very telling hardness prodding me. “Clearly.”

“Did you sleep well? How are you feeling?”

I clucked my tongue. “You’re acting like I’m a virgin after her first time getting fucked, Desmond, which is something I’m decidedly not.”

He laughed, rolling onto his back as he pulled me on top of him. “I’m going to have to thank all the men you’ve been with, if they’re the reason you can use your tongue the way you did last night.”

“Okay, now you’re making me sound like a slut,” I complained. “I haven’t slept with *that* many men.”

Desmond trailed a hand down my spine until I shivered. “I don’t care if you slept with one guy or a thousand, Callie. You’re in control of your own body. It’s up to you what to do with it.”

“I have a pretty good idea of what I want to do with it right now,” I said, bending down until my lips were but a

hair's breadth away from Desmond's, "and I think your dick agrees with me."

"Well if both our bodies are in agreement..." he grinned, hand squeezing my ass to lift me over his long, hard erection. It slid inside me so easily I sighed.

Okay, I could get used to this. Having Desmond fucking me being a real and tangible thing instead of a fantasy—a goal in my head—was better than anything I could have imagined.

The rest of my summer was going to be great.

Chapter Eight

Desmond

“Des—*ah!* Not, not there—”

“Are you *sure*, Callie?” I murmured, arching an eyebrow. I touched her clit the exact way I’d only just touched it, and Callie writhed against me.

“People will hear us!” she complained in hushed tones, though there was a glint to her eye which told me fine well she thrived on the danger of it all.

We were currently in the back of an old Mustang, which nobody was working on. Everyone was out front, washing cars or doing on-the-spot repairs or in the office. Callie and I probably had another fifteen minutes before somebody came back here.

Probably. Maybe.

The ‘maybe’ was what drove Callie wild, and me with her.

We’d been like this for two weeks solid, finding any and every opportunity to sneak off into shadowy corners of the shop to kiss, or fondle each other beneath our clothes or, when we simply couldn’t take the temptation anymore, fuck each other senseless.

Then we’d smooth down our clothes, catch our breath and get back to work. Nobody was any the wiser.

“Then let’s see how you’d like to be heard,” Callie said dangerously, before unzipping my pants and swiftly enveloping the head of my cock in her mouth. I gasped, though it quickly became a moan as Callie began to bob up and down, quickly taking more and more of my erection inside her mouth.

Now it was *me* who was writing beneath her, not the other way around. I knew she thrived on seeing me like this, completely undone by her touch, just like I lived for the opposite. We were a perfectly matched pair.

It wasn’t long until I could feel that achingly familiar tug at my groin, telling me I wasn’t far off from coming inside Callie’s mouth. And though I would have loved to, there was another place I liked to finish.

Deep inside her pussy, so I could watch her cry out as I slammed into her.

With a hand through her hair I pulled Callie away from my cock; she pouted at me, lips wet and swollen. I kissed her, then promptly sat her in my lap and slid inside her as if it were the easiest thing in the world.

To actually be inside Callie—to have her moaning and wanton and sitting on me *with my dick inside her*—was bliss. There was no other word for it. The way she hid in the crook of my neck at first, as if she didn’t want me to see the shock on her face as I finally gave in and began thrusting inside her, only made me feel better.

But I *wanted* to see Callie’s face. I wanted to see every reaction she had to my cock and hands and mouth unraveling her, bit by bit. I wanted to watch her bite her lips to hold back

a cry as she came and, when I followed closely behind, see her looking spent and exhausted. She'd toyed with me for so long, before, and now it was my turn to do the same to her each and every day. Or multiple times a day.

And so our time passed over summer, and before we knew it those two weeks of fucking had turned to four, and Callie had just one month left before she had to return to college.

There was no use escaping the fact that I didn't want her to go back, though I knew it was selfish. To be honest, I could probably handle Callie going back to college to finish her degree. She only had two years left of it, after all, and she'd be back to help her dad over the summers.

But after that? Could I cope with my growing feelings for her, knowing she'd be off working a high-flying job potentially on the other side of the globe?

I didn't think so. But I respected Callie too much to interfere with what she wanted to do in life. Because it *was* her life, after all, and it wasn't my place to pass judgement on how she chose to spend it.

I could, however, make sure she knew just how truly valued she was in the auto shop—how indispensable she was. Perhaps, if Callie became aware of her importance to the business, she'd wanted to stay of her own accord.

And maybe she'd want to stay for me, I thought hopefully.

But the truth of the matter was that Callie and I hadn't talked about our feelings for each other. We hadn't even gone on a date, for fuck's sake. All we did was joke and flirt and

check each other out and screw the other's brains out when the opportunity presented itself.

It was in this way that I knew—with utter certainty—that Callie's attraction to me was genuine. The hungry way she watched me work, the way she traced the line of the muscles in my arm with her eyes, the way she just barely grazed past me in the shop. All these things told me she went wild for me.

I felt the same way, and my ache for her only grew with every passing moment. I'd thought Callie had been driving me insane before; it was nothing compared to what she did to me now.

“Good job on the financial report for July,” I told her one afternoon, when she was sucking on the end of pen and swinging one leg from her dad's office chair. She looked like a sexy secretary; since we were already fucking I figured I had a pass at objectifying her in such a way. In fact, I was tempted to tell Callie what I thought she looked like to her face. She'd probably like it.

But I had more important goals in mind.

She smiled graciously. “It's not nearly as good as the ones dad'll be able to do when the app is finished. Even a moron could do it with that.”

“Are you calling you're dad a moron?”

“Hilarious.”

“Are you making the app yourself?” I asked, having realized I'd never once asked before.

Callie shook her head. “I've been involved since its alpha test, but I'm not programming it. That's beyond my area of

expertise,” she said. “It’s a college project with some of the seniors.”

“What are you doing working with the seniors? Didn’t you only just complete your second year?”

Callie shrugged in a non-committal fashion. “I went on a date with one of the guys developing it. Didn’t work out between us—obviously—but we ended up great friends. That’s how I became involved.”

The idea of Callie going on dates with clever men at college in New York had never really crossed my mind before, but now it was. It made me uncomfortable to think of how small my life was compared to her own.

Callie stared at me as if she could tell what I was thinking. She probably could; I’d never been very good at hiding what I thought from my face.

“Are you jealous of a single date I went on eight months ago, Desmond?”

I looked away, chuckling self-consciously. “Maybe a little. It’s stupid.”

“Yeah, for sure. Kinda flattering, though. You can be more jealous, if you like.”

“Oh?”

Callie uncrossed her legs and spread them slightly, allowing me a full view up her skirt to the black thong she had on below. “You can be as jealous as you like...just so long as you use that passion in a *healthy* manner, Mister Rivers.”

The door was closed and the blinds went down before the end of Callie's sentence.

"Well then I guess I'm super jealous," I growled, closing the distance between us in three strides.

God, I didn't want the summer to end.

Chapter Nine

Callie

It never bothered me before that Jason and David—and some of the older employees, too—liked to eye me up when they thought I couldn't see them. They could think whatever they liked about me. That I was a tease. That I was a stone-cold bitch. That I was daddy's spoiled little girl, who knew nothing.

I knew none of that was true, and so did Desmond, and that was all that mattered.

But the stares and comments were beginning to get out of control and even *I* had to admit they were getting to me.

When I take over the business I can just fire them all, I joked, then froze. When I took over the business? I'd never planned to do that before. It was the last thing I wanted to do with my life.

Well, it *had* been the last thing I'd wanted to do with my life. Now I wasn't so sure.

It wasn't just because of Desmond though, okay, he played a part in it. But I genuinely enjoyed working with my dad, and the business was in good shape. It made a decent profit—and could make more with me actively working on the business side of things. And not everyone was as lucky as I was, I knew. I was studying business and was literally being gifted a business to work with.

If I decided to take over upon graduation then my dad could take things a little easier. He could even spend more time actually working as a mechanic, if that was what he wanted.

“Or mom could get him to finally do up the back yard,” I joked, giggling to myself as I finished the spreadsheet I was working on.

“What’s so funny?”

I looked up; Desmond was leaning against the open door frame with an amused smile upon his lips. His overalls weren’t on; he was wearing a pair of dirty jeans and a white t-shirt with a hole in the hem. Damn, he looked good. I imagined running my fingers up beneath the fabric of his t-shirt, feeling his abs ripple beneath my fingertips and—

“Callie?”

“There’s nothing funny about what I’m thinking of,” I replied, smirking when Desmond glanced down at himself then returned to watching my face when understanding finally dawned upon him.

He chuckled. “You’re insatiable.”

“And you’re not?”

“Touché.”

“Are you heading out for lunch?”

Desmond shook his head. “I just got back. Haven’t you had yours yet?”

I had to admit that I was surprised it was so late already. “I lost track of time,” I said sheepishly, as my stomach rumbled

insistently. How long had I been ignoring it? I pointed at the computer monitor. “The business doesn’t run itself, you know.”

“I honestly don’t know what we’ll do without you around, Callie.”

I didn’t say anything. I knew what Desmond was getting at; he’d been slowly pushing the idea of the shop being useless without me all month. He meant no harm by it, of course—no pressure. It was simply how he felt. And I’d be lying if I said it didn’t make me feel good to know how well he regarded me.

I smiled softly. “I might just head home early, then, and grab something small to eat before helping my mom with dinner. She’ll be over the moon if I do that.”

“Ever the conscientious daughter,” Desmond replied, with no trace of sarcasm. He shuffled his feet, looking away from a moment before continuing, “I have something to ask you, actually.”

I quirked an eyebrow. “Consider my interest piqued. What is it?”

He ran a hand through his thick, dark hair—a gesture I was now achingly familiar with. He was *nervous*.

“I was wondering,” he began, his voice a little uncertain, “if you might want to go out to dinner with me or something.”

“Are you asking me out on a date, Desmond? As in, a proper date? Not a quickie in the storage cupboard or making out in the back of your car?”

He laughed. “I guess I am. Would you like to?”

I smiled as I stood up from my dad's desk. I walked over to Desmond's side, glancing over his shoulder to check nobody was looking. I pressed my lips to his, so quickly I barely felt this kiss. "I'd love to," I murmured.

Desmond gazed down at me with eyes thick with desire. He grabbed the top of my dress and pulled me against him, running his other hand through my hair as he kissed me. This time the kiss was long, and deep, and lingering.

I wanted it to go on forever. I wanted to undress Desmond where he stood.

Both of us knew we couldn't go further; not when we were in the doorway of my dad's office, after all.

Eventually I stepped away from him, my face red and hot and flustered. "So when is this date happening?" I breathed.

It took Desmond a second to reply. Looking down I saw he had an erection that he was likely trying to will out of existence; I resisted the urge to laugh.

"Tomorrow night," he insisted, brushing his hand against my own. "Tomorrow night, and then you can stay over at mine."

I reached forward and bit his lower lip. "Sounds good to me. Now get back to work, Mister Rivers."

He grinned, throwing his hand up in a mock salute as he left the office. "Aye aye, boss," he said, and then he was gone.

I closed the door behind him, sliding myself down along it to the floor before I could stop myself. Desmond really was pulling a number on my heart; I couldn't even stand and all

he'd done was kiss me. Excitedly I thought of tomorrow night, and what it would entail.

We'd go out for dinner in public. Would we kiss and hold hands? People would see us together. Dad would find out and then, whether he liked it or not, Desmond and I would no longer have to slink behind everyone's backs to be together.

Though I thrived on our secret trysts, the idea of safely being able to kiss in front of everyone—to show affection of any kind, really—was intoxicating.

My stomach grumbled once more, harder this time. Going home early really was the best idea, I decided, but I'd restock the bathrooms first. The boys had been lax in getting more toilet paper from the storage cupboard for it, and the toilet itself could do with bleaching.

“Really, what *would* they do without me?” I murmured happily as I rifled through the storage cupboard for the required supplies.

“...thinks she's all that, just because her dad's the boss.”

My ears pricked up at the voice, which was muffled by the mostly-closed storage cupboard door. I crept over to it and peeked through the gap to the shop.

David and Jason were leaning against a car Desmond was working on, clearing talking away with no intention of helping.

“What does she even do, anyway?” David complained. “I mean, didn't her dad do everything just fine before she came along? So what does she do other than waltz about in those heels driving us insane?”

Jason had a lecherous expression on his face. “The number of times she’s walked by when I’m working under a car and I can see up her skirt...it’s like she *wants* me to look.”

“I know, right?!” David agreed. “She must get off on it, knowing we’re all eyeing her up. What a slut.”

I wanted to storm over there and punch them both in the face. I nearly did. But then Desmond straightened his back and stared at them.

I smiled. *There’s no way he’ll let them get away with talking about me like that, I thought, satisfied. He’ll punch them for me. Though I might still do it myself.*

“Will you guys just *stop* talking about Callie?” he insisted.

David laughed. “Oh come off it, Des. You fuck her in your head just as much as we do.”

“If she gave you the opportunity to bang her no way would you say no,” Jason tacked on, nodding enthusiastically.

Desmond sighed as if he were talking to two very slow children. In a way he was.

“Callie is just a stupid, silly girl who has nothing better to do. Just ignore her. She’s a distraction, but a lethal one. You want to lose your jobs, huh? Her dad pays well. You mess with her, you’ll be fired. And she’ll be gone in a month back to New York, anyway. Why bother wasting your time on her?”

My breath caught in my throat. I couldn’t believe what I was hearing. Was that really how Desmond saw me? Just a silly girl with too much time on her hands? Was he sleeping with me just to keep me occupied? Was he—

“I guess you’re right,” Jason, said, tilting his head to the side as if deep in thought. “Though, are you really saying you wouldn’t sleep with her if she gave you the opportunity, Des?”

Desmond laughed. “You really think I’m hard done by when it comes to finding a woman to sleep with? I told you, Callie is just a little girl playing at being an adult. If I wanted to fuck I’d find a *woman* to do it with.”

David and Jason laughed in unison. “God, you’re right. I bet, once you get past the heels and skirts and make-up, she’s not even that hot. Or she’d be crap in bed. The good-looking ones usually are.”

I didn’t hear the rest of the conversation. I crept out of the storage cupboard and dutifully restocked the bathrooms, then retreated to my dad’s office to file some paperwork that didn’t actually need filing until tomorrow. I couldn’t trust myself not to cry if I saw Desmond’s face.

Now I knew how he really felt about me. He’d been lying to me—stringing me along on a whim because he could. I was just an immature little girl to him. I wasn’t worth his time.

Well, if that was the way it wasn’t then he could be damn sure I wasn’t going to waste any more time on *him*.

I grabbed my bag and left the office as quickly as I could. I saw Desmond watching me from the car he was working on, hand raised as if he was waving good-bye. I ignored him, even when he frowned in confusion.

I felt like such an idiot. A fool. A *child*, just like Desmond thought I was. I’d completely and utterly fallen for his charms and put down my guard.

I was never going to make the same mistake again.

Chapter Ten

Desmond

When my phone rang I didn't immediately acknowledge it. I was too busy worrying over why Callie had seemed out of sorts after lunch; she hadn't spoken a word to me before she left.

But then I realized it was Callie herself who was calling me, so I rushed to pick up my cell phone.

"Callie, how are you?" I asked, feeling bright already. Clearly I'd imagined her ignoring me. "I've booked somewhere pretty nice for tomorrow, so—"

"I can't go, Desmond," she cut in. Her voice was flat. "I have some things I need to organize for college."

"Oh." I hadn't expected her to say she couldn't make it so last-minute, but then again Callie *did* have a life outside of her dad's auto shop. I had to remember that. "When should I reschedule for, then?"

A pause. A horrible, drawn-out pause that told me everything I needed to know.

"I don't think I want to see you anymore," Callie finally murmured. "It was a mistake to get so involved with you."

"Callie—"

"Don't contact me."

And then the line cut out, and Callie's voice was gone.

“Callie? Callie!” I shouted down the receiver, furious and confused. Just what had happened to her? What had I done?

When I called her back she didn’t pick up. She didn’t pick up the second time, either, nor the third. I sent her message after message until even I had to admit I was acting like a crazy person. I took a deep breath and put down my cell phone.

“You can work this out, Des,” I muttered allowed. I rubbed my fingertips into my temples. “You can work this out. What have you done wrong, you stupid idiot? What have you said? What have you done?”

But I kept drawing a blank. The last interaction I’d had with Callie in person was a quick two minutes of stolen kisses in her dad’s office after lunch. We’d been happy. Horny. Excited for our official first date.

I didn’t sleep well that night, when I slept at all.

When I got to the office the next day it somehow did not surprise me that Callie was not there. I searched everywhere for her, finally knocking on the door of Charles’ office to inquire about his daughter.

“She’s not feeling well,” my boss said. His eyebrows were knitted together in concern. “She really didn’t look good last night, so I told her not to come in. It’s so weird—she was completely fine yesterday morning. I wonder...”

“You wonder what?” I asked, barely loud enough to be heard over the throbbing of my own heart. Just what did Charles suspect?

The older man sighed and slumped in his chair. “Perhaps I’ve been pressuring her too much to help me with the

business. I know she has plans of her own. I'd just hoped... ah, I don't know. It was never fair of me to try and tie her down just because I wanted her here, yet I did it anyway. The least I can do is respect Callie and give her some space to work out what she wants to do on her own."

My stomach lurched. If that were truly the reason for Callie's on behavior on the phone then it would be easy enough to win her back around. I just had to give her some space—as her dad was planning to do—and then talk to her like the adult she was about her future plans.

If she wanted to stay in New York after college, or move somewhere else entirely, I would support her decision. But I wanted to make it clear that my feelings for her were not directly tied to her merely *being here*, working at the shop. I'd want to be with her even if she moved away.

It was odd, being so sure of my feelings for Callie like this. I'd never stopped to think about it before. Just when had I fallen so hard for her? This month? Last month? Last summer? I honestly didn't know.

The next three days were torture. Callie didn't come into work and, when her dad miserably told me she'd decided to stay in a local hotel in lieu of staying at home, I felt my stomach twist again.

Was she really just going to *leave* without discussing anything? It wasn't like her. Callie had always been so forthright. So honest. It was one of the qualities that attracted me to her. It drove me wild.

And now she was hiding, and nobody could work out why.

On the afternoon of the fourth day I saw David and Jason snickering to themselves.

“What’s so funny?” I demanded, storming over to them with a face like thunder.

Either they were oblivious to my mood or they didn’t care. “We were just talking about how you were right, Des,” Jason explained, smiling easily. “Callie really did just leave when it suited her, without thinking of how it would affect the shop.”

“Though, if she really was always gonna be this flaky and leave then maybe I should’ve tried harder to get with her before she was gone—”

“Shut the fuck up,” I muttered through gritted teeth. The two of them stared at me uncertainly. “Just...shut the fuck up. Where do you get off talking about women like this? Callie is a human being, and your boss’ daughter, for Christ’s sake. You sound like creeps and rapists the way you talk about her, do you know that?”

David frowned. “Hey, you were talking about her like—”

“No, I wasn’t,” I cut in, seething. “I told you she was a silly girl who wasn’t worth your attention so you’d leave her the hell alone. There’s a difference.”

Jason raised an eyebrow. “Ah, so you were after her yourself all along? Why didn’t you—”

“Why does a man have to be interested in a woman in order for him to demand others respect her?! Do the two of you hear yourselves? Grow up! The world does not revolve around you and your fucking dicks!”

The two men were stunned to silence. And then—

“Des, in my office,” Charles called out. His voice was quiet, but his tone spoke volumes. I wondered what I’d done. Would he really give me in trouble for shouting at his employees?

With one final glare at David and Jason I stalked over to Charles’ office, closing the door behind me before sitting down in front of his desk.

“What’s wrong, Charles?” I asked, taking a deep breath to contain my previous anger.

In contrast, Charles himself was the epitome of fury. His face was contorted in rage. When he slammed his fists against his desk I flinched away.

“What’s wrong, you ask? What’s wrong? You talk about my daughter—someone who likes and respects you, someone who *adores* you—like she’s a worthless piece of trash and you wonder *what’s wrong?*”

I stared at him, aghast. “Just what are you talking about?”

Charles twisted his computer monitor around. Multiple CCTV camera feed recordings were on display...including the afternoon I’d told David and Jason that Callie was a distraction who’d be out of their hair soon enough.

I cringed. “Charles, I only said all of that so they’d leave her alone. Their comments towards her were getting out of hand. I didn’t know what else to do.”

“You come to me and tell me about it so I can fire their asses!” he shouted. “You give them in trouble! You call them out on it! You don’t just let them—”

“What do you think I was just doing now, Charles?” I said, fighting my own temper. “I was *literally* just lecturing them on it.”

Charles looked like he was about to pull his thinning hair out. “Why didn’t you do that in the first place?”

“What does it matter when I said it? I’ve told them now, so—”

“Callie heard you talking to them the first time.”

I froze. “What?”

He stabbed a finger at the CCTV recording, to the door of the storage cupboard. And lo and behold there was Callie, half-hidden by the door.

Listening.

To me belittling her in front of everyone.

Saying she was worthless.

Shit.

“Fuck, Charles, I’m so—”

“Don’t apologize to *me*, you idiot!” he berated.

“Apologize to my little girl! Now her behavior makes so much sense. She’d never reacted like this to me putting job pressure on her. But *you*—whenever it’s been about you Callie gets emotional.”

I frowned. “What do you mean?”

Charles laughed bitterly. “You’re hopeless, Des. You must know last summer she was crazy about you. I went half-mad hearing her sigh and mope over you in the house. I’ve never

seen her act like that over anyone else. But, you know what? I trust her. She's a good girl; always respected herself. And you know I've always trusted you to be decent. If the man she liked was *you* then I was fine with it.

I looked at the floor. "I always thought—it was just a crush, that she didn't—"

"And when has my Callie ever not been serious about anything? You know her as well as I do. Or, at least, I always thought you did. Maybe I was wrong."

"You're not!" I stood up in earnest. "You're not wrong. You say Callie is crazy about me. Well, I'm worse. So much worse. I can't imagine not being with her."

Was it just me, or was there the hint of a satisfied smile on Charles' lips at my declaration.

He pointed at the door. "Well what are you waiting for? Go apologize to my daughter."

"Only if you fire David and Jason," I replied. "They don't deserve any more chances to improve their behavior in the shop. They're done."

Charles nodded. "I'll sort it out. Now get going."

I'd never left the shop so fast in my life.

Chapter Eleven

Callie

I'd been staying in a fancy hotel for the past couple of days. Well, fancy for my home town, at least. It was on the ground floor, with an elevated terrace full of potted plants and a little, mosaic-tiled table and two chairs overlooking an outdoor pool.

I just couldn't bear to see my mom and dad's faces right now. All I wanted to do was to go back to New York, but I didn't want to disappoint my dad, either.

I ruined everything with my childish pursuit of Desmond Rivers.

I wish I'd never tried to seduce him. I wish I'd taken last summer as the hint I needed to get over him. That way I wouldn't have fallen for such an asshole, and ruined the workplace environment at the garage. It was only in not going there for a few days that I realized just how much I had actually enjoyed working there.

And now everything was ruined.

"Stupid, stupid girl," I cried, though no tears fell.

"I'd rather say you're one of the cleverest girls I've ever met, Callie."

I froze. I knew that voice, which meant I didn't want to turn around to see the person in question's face.

“Come on, Callie, please turn around,” Desmond said. He was clearly standing on the terrace.

I resolutely shook my head. “Fuck off,” I muttered. “You’re the last person I want to see right now. *And* you’re trespassing.”

He chuckled. “The guy who runs the hotel owed me a favor. Please, just turn around so I can apologize for how much of an asshole you must think I am.”

I twisted around slightly, glaring at Desmond over my shoulder. “That I *think* you are? You *are* an asshole, Desmond! The way you spoke about me—belittled me—is not how a nice guy talks about people. No, you’re a bastard. A complete and utter bastard.”

Desmond grimaced with every word. He leaned against the terrace railing and sighed. “Please, Callie. Give me five minutes. Five minutes then I’ll be out of your hair.”

I arched an eyebrow. What could he possibly tell me in five minutes that could change my mind? There was no way he could erase what he’d said to the boys at the garage. And yet I could tell Desmond wouldn’t leave until he said his piece so, though I hated it, I walked towards him and the terrace.

“Speak, then,” I demanded, crossing my arms over my chest and schooling my expression to something neutral in the process. I didn’t want to give Desmond the satisfaction of seeing me react to anything he said.

He smiled slightly. His eyes looked tired; for a moment I wondered when he last slept, then I remembered I didn’t care.

“You were never supposed to hear me talk to the guys like that, Callie,” he began.

“Oh, that makes what you said *so* much better,” I muttered.

“No, I didn’t mean it like that,” Desmond said, shaking his head in frustration. “I meant that if I’d known you were around I’d never have said it in the first place.”

“You’re just digging yourself a deeper hole, Desmond. Did you enjoy stringing me along while I was blissfully unaware of how you actually felt?”

“You know it was never like that, Callie,” he said. His blue eyes were unwavering as they locked on mine. “I never, ever thought of you the way I spoke of you to the guys.”

“So *why did you say those things?*” I asked, exasperated and furious. Desmond wasn’t making any sense whatsoever, and he was successfully riling me up. I was about three seconds away from demanding he leave.

Desmond took a step towards me. “Callie, did you hear what David and Jason were saying *before* I spoke? Did you hear the way they were talking about you?”

I made a face. “Of course I did. Do you think I’m stupid? Naïve? I’ve heard them talk about me like that all summer. Jason was just as bad in high school, after I turned him down a dozen times. You think I don’t know how to handle guys talking about me like I’m a tease, or a frigid bitch, or a slut, just because I turn them down? Give me some credit.”

“But I can’t handle it!” Desmond roared, surprising me with his outburst so much that I took a step backwards. “Every

day they talked about you like that, and it was getting worse. Just how much do you think I could take of them insulting you, and objectifying you, and planning to get you wasted so they could do what they liked? You really believe I could listen them saying all of that about *any* girl? Except you're not just any girl, and that made it a hundred times worse."

I hesitated. "So why did you...why did you join in? Why did you tell them I was just—"

"A silly, worthless distraction who'd be gone soon?" he finished for me. Desmond laughed, though it was dark and humorless. "I snapped. I said the only thing I could think of that would make them back off. If they believed they were better than you—that you were beneath them—I hoped that, finally, they'd back the fuck off. But I was wrong to say it, even if my intentions were good. They were the ones at fault, not you. I should have berated them, or reported them to your dad. But I didn't and I'm sorry." Desmond took another step towards me. "Callie, I'm so, so sorry."

I held up a hand to stop him getting any closer. I was so confused. "So, you...you really *don't* think I'm stupid and an annoying distraction and not worth anyone's time?"

"Of course not!" Desmond's face was earnest. "I've never once thought such things about you. The only thing that I said with any truth to it was that you'd be gone soon, and that just breaks my heart into pieces. I hated admitting it with my own lips."

I put down my hand, allowing him to close the gap between us. The late afternoon breeze gently lifted my hair

around my face; Desmond tucked an errant lock of it behind my ear.

“Callie, I love you,” he said, in such a way that I had absolutely no doubt that he was telling the truth. “I love you, and I don’t want you to go. But you’re too talented to stay here, working with men who don’t respect you. I love you so much that, crazy as it sounds, I’d happily relocate to New York just to be with you. That *is* crazy, isn’t it? It’s so stupid, but—”

“It’s not stupid,” I smiled, slowly lifting a hand to place it over Desmond’s. I cupped my face to his fingers, closing my eyes as I sighed. “It’s not stupid, but it’s not necessary.”

When I opened my eyes I saw that Desmond’s face was crestfallen, and I immediately set about to correct that. “I don’t mean because I don’t love you!” I said, stumbling over the words. “It’s just that I think I really do want to take over dad’s business once I graduate college, so there’d really be no point in you moving to somewhere so expensive when I’ll only be there for two years—well, really only eight or nine months of each year, so—”

My incoherent rambling was interrupted by Desmond’s lips upon mine, crushing me beneath them. His kiss was fervent, desperate and needy—everything I’d sorely missed for days.

“You love me,” he breathed, when we finally parted long enough to speak. I gazed up at him and nodded.

“Of course I do. Do you really think I could have pursued you for so long if I didn’t?”

“I thought...I don’t know. That I was a childish crush, or a challenge, or something like that.”

I wrinkled my nose. “Maybe a long, long time ago. But my feelings changed somewhere along the way, though I wasn’t aware of it myself, at first. I only truly realized I loved you when your words broke my heart.”

Desmond wrapped his arms around me, encasing me in all my favorite smells—motor oil, petrol, sawdust, and lemon from his shower gel. “I’ll never say anything like that again, even if a wayward attempt to protect you.”

“I don’t *need* protecting,” I mumbled against his chest, though I had to admit that the idea of Desmond Rivers defending me at every turn sounded very appealing. “I just need you, here with me.”

When Desmond released me he had the gentlest smile on his face I’d ever seen. His blue eyes twinkled with it. “I love you, Callie. All I want is to be with you.”

I quirked an eyebrow “You may live to regret that.”

“How could I possibly live to regret being with a woman who takes risqué photos for me to enjoy at work, or gives me blow jobs in the back of a Mustang?”

“Oh, so it’s all about the sex, now?”

He ruffled my hair as he laughed. “You know fine well that it’s not. And speaking of...”

He laced his fingers between mine and squeezed.

“What is it?” I asked.

“Since we’re already at the fanciest hotel in town, how about we finally have that first date?”

I grinned. “It’s about fucking time.”

THE END

Find more titles by Darcy Dawes on Amazon.

[US](#) | [UK](#) | [AUSTRALIA](#) | [CANADA](#)

You can also find Darcy on [Facebook](#).

READ ON FOR SAMPLE OF LITTLE ONE

Chapter One

Valentine

I keep my gaze focused on the road. The leather steering wheel stays steady in my hands. The traffic is light, the road cast under golden beams of light. I'm travelling fast—too fast I suppose—but not fast enough for my liking. A car swings out of a junction and I swerve around it.

A squeal from next to me draws my attention.

To her.

The reason I'm driving like a maniac. Not that you'd ever know it from my expression. I know Gray probably thinks I drive like this every day, like a fucking getaway driver racing from the cops. But I don't have the most precious cargo in my car every fucking day.

I risk a look at her and regret it. Against the large leather seats, she's so damned vulnerable. All pale skin and shaking limbs. She's not even dressed for a cold night like tonight, wearing a strappy top and short denim skirt.

"There's a jacket in the back," I grunt.

I hate speaking to her. In the ten years I've worked for her brother I've kept talking to a minimum. We both know I'm not worthy of a second of her time. Not a criminal asshole like me.

She remains curled up in the seat, her arms wrapped around her legs. Those goddamn legs that make me forget everything. Even now, when I'm meant to be concentrating on

getting her to safety, I can't resist stealing a look at those endless limbs.

I hate her sometimes. Hate her for growing into a woman. If she'd have only stayed that young, sweet little thing, I'd never have these thoughts. Never think about those thighs and how fucking perfect for wrapping around my hips they are. Or wonder about the scent between them. I'd never imagine the sounds she might make as I nipped my way up the soft flesh of her inner thighs.

Even now...even fucking now, when our lives are on the line, I'm getting hard. This is what she does to me. This is how she tortures me every day of my life.

"Little One, get the coat," I order gruffly.

Gray remains still, her gaze fixed on the road ahead.

I sigh, reach into the back with one eye on the road and fumble for the coat. I pull out the battered leather jacket and fling it at her. She jolts and unfurls slightly to drape it over her shoulders.

Another shudder wracks her. A pang of sympathy strikes me in the gut—or maybe not sympathy. Maybe regret. Maybe something more. It's painful, pulling tight at my stomach. I hate that she's involved in this life. She shouldn't be. She should be out with her friends, doing whatever it is young women do. Shopping and gossiping and dating boys.

No. Not dating boys. I can't stand the thought of those horny motherfuckers near her. Thankfully Gray has never seemed interested in any boys or else I might have to make a

few threats. The gossip surrounding her brother probably keeps them all at bay, the fucking pussies.

Nothing would keep me away if I had a chance with her.

Not that I do. Not that I want one. She's a sweetheart. An innocent woman—just. She's too young, too kind, too everything. And I'm not enough.

I reach out to touch her arm. Fuck knows, I don't know how to comfort someone. The last time I held a woman was years ago. When the last one ratted me out to the cops, I gave up on them. Not worth the time or the hassle. After Danny set his lawyers on the cops, everything was forgotten, along with the idea of me ever having a woman I could love.

Gray flinches at the touch. I glance at where I touched her and curse aloud. I lift my palm and see the sticky blood there. Finn's blood. I smack my hand against the steering wheel, making Gray jump again.

She leaves the bloodied fingerprint there, in too much shock I think to even move. I can still feel the heat of the blood under my palms, how it pulsed out of Finn until he faded. Poor kid. Barely twenty and gone. He sure as hell didn't deserve any of this.

Gray's brother will sort this. He's ruthless. It's why he has enemies. Though they're fucking idiots if they think killing Finn and nearly wiping out the rest of us including his sister would make him give up. No, Danny will scour the earth until he finds the guys responsible for Finn's death and he'll make sure they pay.

In the meantime, I have to keep Gray safe. That means not touching her and not scaring the shit out of her.

I've done a crappy job of both of those so far.

I wipe my hand down my jeans and clear my throat. "It'll be okay, Little One."

The nickname I've always used for her makes her snap her head around. I've known her since she was seven. I might not have had deep, meaningful conversations with her, but I've been there, watching her grow into a far too beautiful woman. Even now, with her face pale from shock, just looking at her hurts.

It hurts because she's so stunning and it hurts because I shouldn't even be thinking of her that way. She's Danny's little sister. She's everything I'm not. I don't even feel worthy of being in her presence most of the time. And I know Danny wants to keep her as she is. Young, innocent, with a whole life ahead of her. Danny might be a scumbag criminal, but he's always made sure she never got wrapped up in this shit. Until today.

But I'm going to take her away from it all. We'll hide out until I get word that it's over and then Gray can go back to her sweet little world of looking forward to college and becoming whatever the hell she wants to.

Whoever shot Finn and tried to take out the rest of us at Danny's garage will pay. I know Danny will make sure of that.

"V?"

That one syllable is shaky and like a knife to the gut. Sometimes I imagine what it would be like to hear my full

name on her lips. A name she doesn't even know. V. That's what they all call me.

“What is it, Little One?”

“Where are we going?”

“My place.”

I keep my attention on the road and swing a right, tearing through a red light. The sooner I get her away from the danger, the better.

My neighborhood is a far cry from the one she lives in. I've got money but I don't use it. I'm better off in a place like this anyway. A girl like Gray, however, wouldn't stand a chance.

Prostitutes gather on the street corners, there's derelict buildings everywhere. Gangs hang out in the alleyways and methheads are found too often dead in the gutters. It's a place for assholes and losers. Suits me just fine.

I hate that Gray is here, though. Innocent, naive Gray. I can see her body stiffen as we drive deeper into the neighborhood. She knows her brother's involved in some shady stuff but he keeps her shielded from it as best as he can, locked up in his high-security mansion and sent to the best private school. Gray's life is one of privilege and protection. She's Danny's best achievement in life. And she sure as fuck doesn't belong anywhere near me.

I park on the street and scan the road. We weren't followed, I know that much, but whoever has it in for Danny would love to take a shot at Gray. What better revenge than to kill his baby sister?

Not going to happen, though. I'd take a thousand hits for her.

"Stay there," I order, not that she looks like she's going to move. She's still motionless in her seat, all wide eyes and long limbs tucked under her arms.

The gun nestled in my back pocket provides some comfort as I climb out the car and move to her side. Yanking the door open, I jerk my head toward the building.

"Come on."

She hesitates so I take her arm. Not roughly but with enough force that it gets her moving. The horror of everything she's seen has frozen her and as gentle as I want to be, there's no time. I have to get her to safety.

Checking behind us, I lead her into the building and up the stairs. I check for any forced entry into my apartment but all is clear. I'd say that whoever is after Gray and Danny would have to be suicidal to come near me but anyone coming after Danny must be fucking insane. I've been at his side for ten years, since I got out of the special forces. I know what he's like. Revenge comes easily to him. In fact, he enjoys it. No one with any sense messes with Danny.

My apartment is as I left it. Blinds drawn, spotless, and barren. I've never been one for owning much shit. Aside from a couch and a coffee table, there's nothing else in the living area. And I've never let any woman get close enough to try to change that.

Truth is, Gray is the first woman I've ever let in here.

Arms wrapped around herself, she stands in the middle of the barren room and eyes the bare walls and empty space. The strappy yellow top she wears is like a splash of sunshine that illuminates the dingy shadows of my apartment.

I curl a fist. She doesn't fucking belong here. Danny better make whoever forced her into this situation pay.

My leather jacket still hangs from her shoulders. Her chocolate hair is spread over the leather, a little wild but shiny. That jacket is going to smell like her and I don't know how the hell I'm going to cope with that. Maybe I'll have to burn the fucking thing. I'd recognize her scent anywhere and it's like a trigger to me. One sniff of her coconutty fragrance and I'm thinking of those long, golden legs, those high little tits that are probably going to grow still and that slender waist that I could practically wrap my hands around.

"This is your home?"

I nod.

She tucks her lip under her teeth. "I'm not sure what I expected but..."

I lift a shoulder. "I'm never here. Doesn't seem like much point in furnishing it properly."

Not to mention I have no intention of settling. Ever. I know what happens when you get comfortable. Everything gets fucking ripped away from you.

"Sit." I motion to the sofa.

A tiny tremble runs through her body but she does as she's told. I like that. No arguments, no fighting me. She knows she's in danger as much as I do and thank fuck she isn't

being some stupid woman who thinks she knows how to keep herself safe better than I do.

Of course her obedience would be useful elsewhere too. In bed perhaps. Or on the couch. I could get her to spread her legs. Pull down her panties. Show me that pretty cunt.

I draw in a breath through my nostrils and turn away into the kitchen. Pulling out a bottle of whiskey, I pour myself a generous glass and a small shot for Gray. I take it over to her and she wrinkles her nose.

“It’s good for the shock.” I force it into her hand and watch until she sighs and throws it back.

She shudders and makes a face. “Yuck.”

“You’ll be thanking me in a minute.”

“What happens now?”

“We’ll stay here for tonight then I’ll take you to a safe house out of the city.”

“There’s a safe house?”

“Of course.”

She peers up at me. “Can’t you sit down? This is hurting my neck.”

And I’m probably still scaring her. I’m not exactly a small guy. Six foot two and built. I sit hastily, feeling like a monster next to her. She’s so damned petite and beautiful. Everything about her screams innocence from her dark, curly lashes, her big, almond shaped eyes, and the few freckles across her nose. I’ll be damned if I haven’t wondered if there are more freckles on her body.

“I didn’t know my brother had a safe house.”

“He has several.”

She places her head in her hands. “I had no idea.” The words are muffled. “I didn’t know anything. God, I’m so stupid.”

I put a hand under the jacket and rub her back gently, feeling the notches of her spine and the warmth of her skin through her top. I grit my teeth as that usual fight for control burns through me. Why the fuck did she have to grow up to be so beautiful, so appealing? I’ve never wanted anyone like I want Gray. Never. And I’ve had enough sexy women throw themselves at me but none of them compare to her.

“Danny did his best to keep you away from all that shit,” I tell her. “What happened tonight was the reason why.”

“I knew he was hardly an innocent guy. I knew about the cars...at least sort of. But I didn’t think he was the sort of guy who people would want to kill!” She lifts her face away from her hands and turns to look at me. “Who would want to kill him?”

I shrug. Many people. Rivals. Cops. FBI. You name them.

“It doesn’t matter. Danny will get them.”

“Will he be okay?”

“Yeah.”

“Will we be okay?”

“I won’t let anything happen to you, Little One. I promise.” I move my hand from her back. If I keep touching

her, I don't know what I'll do and when I said I wouldn't let anything happen to her, I meant it. That means protecting her from me too.

I eye her profile. Poor little Gray. She has no idea what she does to me.

“Are you hungry?”

She shakes her head. “I don't think I could eat even if I wanted to.”

“You'd better get some rest then. You can take my bed and I'll sleep on the couch.”

“I—”

“Take the bed, Little One. I'll find you something to sleep in.”

Biggest mistake of my life, I know, but I can't let her sleep in a skirt and top.

I lead her through to the bedroom. It's almost as bare as the living area. A king-sized bed and a chest of drawers are the only furnishings.

“The shower is through there if you want to take one.” I pull open a drawer and she sits on the bed.

How easy it would be just to push her back. To lift that skirt and run my fingers down the line of her panties. Would she be wet? I'd lick her through the material and get that little clit all swollen just to make sure. Then I'd plunge my dick in her virgin pussy. Christ, I can practically feel it now, tight like a glove around me, new and unused.

Jesus. I draw in a breath through my nostrils and throw a t-shirt her way. What a sick fuck I am lusting after a virgin. And I know she is. She's never had a boyfriend. She's completed untouched.

I ignore my clothes. I've got a bag packed for emergencies and there'll be plenty of stuff at the safe house. For tonight, I'm staying dressed in case we need to move quickly.

“V?”

I pause in the doorway. “Yeah?”

“I'm scared.”

She should be. Stuck for who knows how long with me. A man not good enough for her who can't seem to remember that she's practically young enough to be my daughter.

“Don't be,” I lie.

Grab your copy of Little One on [Amazon](#) and in KU.

