





Casey and Royce clashed often, but rarely actually fought. Not so this morning. As Royce bummed around his chilly kitchen, Casey's raised voice was still echoing in his ears.

Royce scraped the last bit of peanut butter out of the jar, spreading it as best he could on a stale end piece of bread. Casey had gone to school still mad, which was unfortunate. She'd spend the whole day fuming, and come back angrier than ever. No doubt about it, he'd have to make this up to her. But how? Any gesture that would move the needle with Casey at this point was quite likely something he hadn't done already for a good reason. Being able to just *buy* her something would be nice, but finishing the only food he had in his kitchen in two bites put that idea down hard.

The doorbell rang, sending an immediate chill down Royce's spine. Any unexpected visitor Royce would actually welcome at this time of day was either at work or at school, and he was in no mood for random solicitors. He considered hiding, but the bell rang five more times in succession before he'd even processed the thought. Whoever they were, they weren't going away.

Royce opened the door to a beaming teenage girl dressed in a Wonder Woman costume, because this was the kind of town, he lived in. At her feet was a large metal carrying case, and parked behind her was a massive SUV with pitch-black tinted windows, its engine idling monstrously.

"Can I help you, miss?" asked Royce, taking a moment to make sure his robe was tied.

"You bet you can, big guy!" she said with strangely infectious enthusiasm. "You've been cast as the male lead in the very first superhero erotic parody production from delightful and charming adult superstar, Holly Sinclair! I'm sure this is a very big deal to you."

Despite feeling quite sure he'd seen everything in Castlewood just seconds ago, Royce was stunned. Times had changed. When *he* was eighteen, it was customary to at least be nominally acquainted with someone before you asked them to make a homemade porno movie with you.

"Uh, miss?" said Royce, managing to regain his composure. "I appreciate the offer, but I'll have to decline. Also, I feel I should tell you that it's extremely dangerous and kind of insane to knock on random doors in this manner. I hope you don't plan on trying my neighbor next, she's a terrifying old crone who carries a military sabre—"

Holly laughed. Again, infectious, and hard not to smile along with. "I didn't just pick you out of the blue, big guy! You've come highly recommended by a classmate, and vetted quite thoroughly!"

Another chill down the spine. Oh god, no.

“Casey Holland tells me you're as good as it gets!” said Holly, as she playfully walked her fingers up his chest. “She says you're as sweet-natured and gentle as you are pliable and easily manipulated! And you've got just the massive, *hulking* build I need to finish my production! You're the whole package, hot stuff, and I can't wait to see what you've got in store for me and my viewers!”

So apparently Casey was mad enough to disregard the discretion that a *secret* relationship required to function.

Holly coiled herself around him, pressing her body against his side. “You're so *tense*. Relax, handsome! This is all totally on the level. My dad is in the car there, and she'll be out here the whole time, ready to come crashing in if she gets a bad feeling.”

Royce blinked. “Your...father?”

Holly waved at the monster SUV, it responded with a quick honk of its horn.

Holly looked up at Royce with bright blue eyes, now hooded slightly as a hint of lust crept into her voice. “Would it make you more at ease to meet my Dad before you fuck me?”

Nope. Nope, he was out. This was too much. Casey had gone too far this time, at least the insane Nurse hadn't been a barely-legal *teen*. He gently removed Holly from his torso, and had his door halfway closed before she stopped him.

“I'd hoped it wouldn't come to this,” said Holly as she produced a small piece of notepaper. “But Casey asked me to read this note if you proved reluctant. I'll do my best to reproduce her signature twang. I'm quite an actress, you see. Ahem...”

“Just fuckin' do it or I'll never forgive ya, you old turd.”

She was good. That sounded just like Casey.

Holly flipped over the note. “She also asked that I show you this.”

A crude drawing of a middle finger. Casey meant business on this one, no question about it.

Royce's shoulders slumped as he pushed his door open for Holly. She smiled big and gave him a quick kiss on the cheek, having to hop to reach his face as she skipped over the threshold. She left her gear on the lawn, a clear implication he was expected to bring it inside. He sighed heavily as he did so.