

vol

I

*This Is Our Story*



*Isaac Byrne*

# **This Is Our Story**

**vol. I**

**By Isaac Byrne**

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First Edition, 2018

## Chapter One

“All right everybody, you’ve got your assignments. Remember, article deadlines for your next updates are this coming Tuesday. Oh, and we’re going to need to get some pictures from the state academic decathlon finals. Any volunteers?” Conner asked his crew.

Like he expected, the yearbook staff one and all directed their eyes anywhere but at their editor-in-chief. He’d been warned about this by his predecessor last year, when he’d been a lowly assistant editor. Everyone was happy to volunteer photography for school dances, football and basketball, pep rallies – the fun stuff. But ask that someone give up a few hours on a Saturday to get a few pics and a quote or two from an academic team... he may as well have asked if anyone was willing to pony up a kidney.

“Fine,” he said with a sigh when the awkward silence became too much for him. “Looks like I’ll be covering it. Again.”

“Attaboy, Conner – now you got something to do this weekend, eh?” gloated Jordan Lyons with his trademark smirk. Conner didn’t know how women could find the face of a guy capable of that insufferably smug expression handsome, but they did.

“Thanks, Conner,” said Heather before he could even attempt a rebuttal. Not that he would’ve. Conner was a writer, and his witty banter flagged under the pressure of immediacy. He was glad in this case. Making a fuss in front of Heather would just make him feel even lamer. Ah, Heather Blake. One look and two words from that mouth and he forgave the lot of them. She was the total package – straight A student, blonde bombshell, VP of philanthropy club. The only reason she wasn’t an editor herself was because she didn’t have the time in her busy schedule to take on all the extra work that came with the position, but failed to pad transcripts. Still, she could bat those eyelashes at him and he’d give her his title and do the work in her name.

Before he could formally conclude the meeting, the bell rang, signaling the end of the period, and since yearbook was last period, the end of the day. Everyone was on their way out the door, and Conner listened as they made plans to meet up at a coffee shop near campus. The editor-in-chief perked his ears up to see if he’d be extended an invite this time, but as usual, it was a closed small group affair. Just Don, and DeShaun, and Marissa, and Siobhan, and Heather, and six or seven of the others. So, basically most of the upperclassmen but him.

As he stayed back and tidied up the office, he forced himself to let it go. That group had been a clique since they’d joined up, and he’d never had any skill at breaking into social groups. It was fine. A positive, really. It meant the team got along and had low drama, and it was easy to form teams for assignments. That he was often the odd man out meant that his own work was done to his high standards. That was how he

chose to see it, anyway. Conner had always been one to try to see things in the best possible light.

“Conner? What’re you still doing here?” came a voice behind him. Miss Coszic-Lewandoski – known by all as Miss C, for obvious reasons – was coming back to the room from their small computer lab; though she was the teacher of the Northside High School yearbook class, she generally let her editor-in-chief run the show. Miss C said she didn’t like to step on his toes and often used the period to tend to the rest of her workload. Still, the young teacher was always there if he needed support, and he knew her hands off approach stemmed largely from the trust she had in his work. She touched base with him to make sure all ran smoothly and otherwise spent her time instructing the freshmen writers and running the occasional workshop. (Conner suspected the latter was mostly so there would be some material to test them over.)

“Oh, just tidying up. Looks like I’m heading up to Indy this weekend to get pics of the academic decathlon, so I need to borrow one of the laptops and cameras.”

The young teacher put her hands on her hips – hips he might admire if she wasn’t his teacher and his mentor. At times, almost a friend. (OK, so he admired them *sometimes*, but only in the privacy of his own imagination.) “Conner. When are you going to start delegating?”

He forced a banal smile as he packed one of the department cameras in his backpack. “It’s OK – I don’t mind. Who knows, maybe I’ll meet one of those decathlete babes.”

She chuckled. “Best of luck, killer. Oh and hey, since you’re taking one of the laptops, you’re the first to know. We got that grant for some new software. Remember talking about that last spring? The customized package.” Conner nodded, vaguely recalling her mentioning it, but not much more than that. “I just got it installed on all the machines. You’re going to love it. Intuitive as heck. We’ll go over some of the features on Monday, but I think you’ll be able to figure it out.”

“Oh. Anything I need to know for the weekend?”

“Nah. Just use your school ID to log in, and it’ll prompt you to set up a password.”

“Cool cool. Thanks, Miss C.” He carefully tucked the laptop behind the camera, then signed both out on the sheet. “Have a good weekend!”

“You too, Conner. And hey,” she said, placing her slender hand on his shoulder, so he turned. “Remember. You’re editor-in-chief. That means you’re in charge, OK? Don’t be afraid to start acting like it.” She gave his shoulder a gentle squeeze, and he let himself out into the empty halls.

Academic decathlon was every bit as exciting as he'd thought it might be – a bunch of four point something GPAs taking tests in closed rooms. He'd hoped to get the team together for a few shots at the start of the day, then see if he could coax a few posed shots out of individuals and head back home. It was nearly a two-hour drive each way, after all. Instead, the team had beaten him there and immediately scattered to half a dozen places around the host school. It had taken almost eight hours before the Northside decathletes finally reunited, only then his picture was interrupted by the start of the award ceremony, which went on for another hour and a half. When that finally ended, he managed to plead with the team to pose long enough for a single picture before getting back on their bus to head home.

Thanks to a hell of a rainstorm on his drive back, the two-hour trip became three and Conner didn't get home until half past eleven. By then, he was so irritated and so exhausted that he went straight to bed.

"So how was the spelling bee thing yesterday?" his mom asked as he shuffled groggily to the table the next morning. "Must've been pretty groovy if you didn't make it in until going on midnight. One egg or two?"

"Ugh. One, Mom, thanks. But ugh. You go to an academic decathlon meet knowing it's got to be about the most boring thing in the world, but then you get there, and it's somehow even *more* boring than you thought it could be."

She set a cup of apple juice down for her son. "That's too bad. At least you had time to get your work done, so you can enjoy your Sunday."

He shook his head. "I wish. See, Hailey McManus was there. Remember I told you about her, how she's, like, obsessed with me?"

"That's the girl from the, what, the dance last year, right?"

Was it ever. Conner had gone with this girl Katalina; he'd been a junior and she a senior. He'd known his date was just a friend thing, and they'd really only gone to get dressed up and have some fun dancing. (Also Conner was taking pictures for yearbook, naturally.) Then in the middle of it, he'd found Hailey crying in a stairwell all by herself. Conner recognized the heavysset girl from a shared class or two over the years, but didn't really know her; still, a crying woman was a crying woman. He asked if she was all right, and learned her date had dumped her for her pretty friend two days before the dance. She'd come here tonight to confront them, but the boy had just held up his nose and made a pig noise and told her to lose some weight.

Genuinely moved, Conner had sat down beside her and put an arm around her shoulder, saying whatever he could come up with to comfort her. He hadn't meant to convey even the least romantic interest, but ever since then she'd been carrying a torch for him. For a while he'd had to pretend he had a girlfriend from a nearby school, but after a few months he'd accepted that while he was claiming to be in a relationship, he couldn't date anybody else, Hailey or not. Now he just tried to avoid one-on-one

proximity with her without being too rude about it – a feat which yesterday’s event had rendered impossible.

He hadn’t known she’d been on the team; if he had, he might’ve preemptively taken Miss C’s advice about delegating. Conner had brought along his novel for German, some pre-cal homework, and figured if he had time he could always check out the new yearbook software. Instead, he barely finished the reading. Every time she finished one of her tests, there was Hailey. She brought him drinks, showed a rabid interest in his schoolwork [that she was preventing him from working on], insisted on taking him to lunch... she wound up coopting the lion’s share of his day. At one point he’d tried hiding in a little nook behind a trophy case, but sure enough she’d found him. Like a hunting dog following a fox’s scent.

Conner didn’t dislike the girl, per se. There was no physical attraction, and she could babble a bit if she wasn’t stopped, but those weren’t the deal-breaker for him. It was simply that Hailey had no self-esteem, always running herself down and refusing to be talked out of it. Maybe that was an appeal to some guys, knowing a girl felt she had no choice but to tolerate whatever she had to in order to keep her man. For Conner, it just made him sad. Hailey was a smart girl, and in a handful of years he hoped her world would sort itself out. She’d use those smarts to land a career doing something that brought her happiness, develop some confidence. But this was now, not a decade hence, and like Hailey, Conner was grappling with the now.

A now that, last night, had culminated in Hailey nervously asking him if she could ride home with him from the meet, and him replying in what was probably transparently bullshit that his mom didn’t let him drive with other kids in the car. Her capacity for rejection exceeded, she’d quietly nodded and made her way to the team bus, and he to his car. Conner hoped it hadn’t hurt her, even as he hoped she’d been hurt enough to back off.

“You oughta go ahead and give her a shot, man. You’re not exactly beating them off with a broom,” said his stepsister Angelica as she settled into the table. “Plenty of *other* beating off though, I bet...”

He glared. Her dad had married his mom just two years back, and their children had never learned to get along. Luckily she was away at college most of the year down in Bloomington, but she’d just gotten home for their fall break while he’d been at the tournament yesterday. “Well I’d tell you to date every jerk who shows an interest in you, but it looks like you already took my advice.”

“*Kids,*” his mom interjected before they got worse. “She does have a point, you know, Conner. It’d do you some good to do a little dating. You’re such a handsome boy, and it’s about time you gave the poor girls of the world a break.”

“Give *me* a break,” mumbled Angelica.

He wolfed down his eggs, glowering at his plate. “Thanks for breakfast, Mom. I’m gonna get some work done.”

“‘Work,’ he’s calling it now,” said Angelica with a grin.

“You’re up awfully early. Don’t your kind burst into flame in direct sunlight?” he grumped back.

Back in his room, Conner buckled down. The bulk of his homework only took a couple hours, slowed down somewhat because Owen wouldn’t stop pestering him to hang out. A promise to make an effort that evening was the only thing that finally shut him up. With Owen pacified and his homework complete, Conner finally got out his borrowed laptop and logged in.

He realized he hadn’t even asked the name of the new app, but it turned out to be obvious; it was named for the title of the Northside High School yearbook, *This Is Our Story*. The name had actually been Conner’s idea, the first time in its seventy-four year history the volume had been more than just “the yearbook.” He’d successfully lobbied Miss C during his junior year to call it something more personal to the students it was made for, and when she’d consented, the staff had unanimously approved his proposed new title.

*This Is Our Story*. This wouldn’t be another high school annual full of pictures, signed and forgotten. With Conner at the helm, this was going to be a book that captured the times and travails and triumphs of his class. He would include a piece of everyone.

Conner double-clicked the program. After a lengthy load time, a login box popped up. He used his default school login like Miss C had said, and from there a second box asked for his “user level,” with a bulleted list he could click. There was staff, editor, senior editor, faculty, and another one that he could type into.

Editor-in-chief had been a hard-won title. All across America, the top student position in yearbook was senior editor. The title of editor-in-chief meant that the student was the ultimate authority on the production rather than a member of the faculty, as was traditionally the case. Conner had joined yearbook in middle school, before there was even a class for it. Back then, one of his teachers had done it by himself for a small stipend. Conner had asked the faculty editor if he could join him in putting it together. Ever one for nostalgia and mementos, he’d grown up helping his mom with her scrapbooking and photography hobbies, and his interest had grown from there. Fast forward five years and he was the workhorse of the yearbook staff, always on call, always ready to get the quote, take the photo, write the spread.

While it wouldn’t be quite accurate to say Conner was gifted with foresight, he was at least keenly aware of the value of memory, and he understood too how they tended to distort and fade. For Conner Fishers, editing the yearbook wasn’t a mere hobby or a bullet point on his college applications. It was the preservation of the



strangest and most wonderful, terrible, ephemeral years of these students' lives. It was a chance to take their stories and tell them the way they ought to be told, and leave a record that would last forever.

It had been Miss C's suggestion to elevate him to editor-in-chief. Dorky or no, it had been one of the young man's proudest moments. With a fond smile for his teacher, he entered the title in the box and clicked enter.

*Checking...* said a new box, and the mouse turned into a rotating hourglass. "Checking for what?" he muttered, but let it do its thing. A few minutes later, a new box appeared.

*Editor-in-chief privileges granted. User has override authority in regards to other users. Caution: this setting is still in beta test. Note that some features may not fully function or may cause unintended effects. Do you wish to use Editor-in-chief mode?*

He could click yes or no. Beta test? Override other users? He wondered if that even included Miss C. It would be handy to easily edit his peers' spreads, he supposed, though he knew his perfectionist tendencies could make him over-do it. Conner worried about the prospect of glitches, but figured the school wouldn't have bought this software package if it was still that buggy. Conner clicked a confident Yes.

Once he was in, the software was pretty similar to what they'd used before, though it seemed more integrated. There was the list of student names indexed to their photos, which he could easily use to tag them elsewhere in the yearbook. There was a dizzying number of menus and options, many of them with some rather daunting jargon. (The Adjustments sub-menu under the Photo Assimilation sub-menu under the Integration tab allowed him to choose between over seventy different styles, half of which he had never even heard of.)

For now, Conner restricted himself to only those needed for his academic decathlon spread. After all, fanciness could always be added in later when he was more familiar with the functionality. He made a few notes on what he'd like to see in the full text – a quote from a member, from the coach, something about the seniors, any details about outstanding achievements.

From there, he organized the spread and inserted one of the photos. With the team roster in hand, he labeled the ones he recognized, then went back and used their names to look up ID photos to get the rest. Luckily school pictures had only just been taken, so people still looked mostly like their pics. (By the time prom came around, it was sometimes a crap shoot trying to match haircuts and fashion styles.) Most people dressed up and did their hair nicer for picture day, after all, and some cleaned up better than others.

As he added her name to the roster, Conner curiously brought up Hailey McManus's class picture. There she was, doughy Hailey, her hair doing its best to

overcome its stringy nature. Poor thing. Doomed to go through high school awkward and miserable. It was her further misfortune that immediately next to her was none other than Hayleigh McKnight. The comparison was inevitable; nicknames that Conner preferred not to acknowledge were the common method by which people distinguished the two. After all, although she was also a Hayleigh in pronunciation, it was there any resemblance ended. A copper-skinned goddess with an unlikely mane of pristine auburn hair that Conner swore was more at place in a shampoo ad than his yearbook; face of an angel's hotter sister; an abundance of cleavage that even Miss C's best editing efforts couldn't expunge from her yearbook photo; a butt that made the boys of NHS want to cheer for any teacher who put her in the front of the room.

Hailey McManus, Hayleigh McKnight. A typo in creation and that could be her as homecoming queen, popular and beloved, envied, or feared by all. Conner was no fan of the prettier girl, either; if half the rumors were true, her reputation for being a world-class asshole was well-deserved and probably even understated. What might Hailey have been like had she shared a few more strands of Hayleigh's DNA? With a pitying smile, he clicked and dragged Hayleigh's photo where Hailey's was. *Confirm swap?* It asked. Conner rolled his eyes at the unnecessary security and clicked Yes.

What the hell. For a few minutes, let Hailey be beautiful, even if only for him. Only...

"What the *hell?*" he said aloud after tabbing back to the academic decathlon photo. He'd done a double-take after entering Yang Na's name in its ordered place on line two. There, standing in the front row of the assembled team was none other than Hayleigh McKnight. She was most definitely not on any academic teams. Then why was she...

She was standing right where Hailey McManus had been when he'd added her name to the roster not ten minutes ago.

The roster still read the same. Line two, third from the left, Hailey McManus. But this girl was thin and beautiful and wholly out of place with such a pleasant smile on her face. He tried hitting ctrl+z a few times to see if he'd somehow hit a button or tapped a shortcut. There Hayleigh remained. As Conner studied the spread, it became clear that somehow, the program had edited the academic decathlon photo to show what, according to his photo swap, was the appearance of Hailey McManus.

This was insane. No matter how he zoomed in, he couldn't see the slightest trace of editing. He was no pro, but he'd used enough digital photo editing programs to know how to keep things smooth. Zoom in 1000% and one could always see those tell-tale signs of tampering. Not this, though. This was flawless. Weirder, upon checking he realized it wasn't even like it used Hayleigh's school picture. That was a wry smile, head tilted off to the left; the academic decathlon photo was a toothy grin straight on. Could it be inserting a photo of Hayleigh McKnight from one of her own photos elsewhere in the

yearbook? If it was, he couldn't find where the image was stored. He'd assumed all their previous spreads were still saved to the old software and that they would have to be ported over. Nothing here suggested otherwise.

Before he could make sense of it, Owen was back at it again, and Conner finally gave in and made his way across the street to his friend's house. It was a basic understanding that Owen's place was for hanging out; Conner's was for fine dining. While Conner's mom may be a pretty good cook, Owen had a finished basement that they had all to themselves. In all the years they'd been friends, he could remember twice ever when Owen's parents descended into the "dungeon," as they derisively called it. Once to use the circuit-breaker, and once because they'd turned up their music so loud that they had to be confronted visually. It was a sanctuary.

"Took you long enough, man," Owen chided as he made his way down.

"Yeah, sorry. Miss C got—"

Owen interrupted him with a decidedly feline-like sound. "That woman is seriously fine. I know what that C ought to stand for. It's—"

"No you don't, and don't be gross, and shut up. Anyway, she got this new yearbook software, and like... it's weird. Like, I swapped Hailey McManus and Hayleigh McKnight, and it, like, swapped them out in another shot I'd tagged."

"You got a pic of Hottie Hayleigh?" he asked, using the more flattering of the two girls' alliterative nicknames. Suddenly he seemed interested. "Anything good?"

"No, the picture was of McManus, but, well, it became one of... look, just weird."

"Dude, don't turn this into another gripe session about Hefty Hailey's McMan-crush on you." Conner winced at the other nickname. Poor Hailey. "I'd rather listen to you bitch about Jordan again than that. At least he's just another asshole; Hefty is just... sad."

Conner frowned. "How is it that you're single, again?"

"Better to die single than crushed under one of the hocks of Hefty Hailey, man," Owen laughed.

"Oh come on, she's not even *that*... You know, nevermind. I don't know why I tell you stuff."

"Because it beats writing more shitty emo poetry on the internet."

"One time. One time! Queue up some PvP. I need to kill you."

The boys settled in for a lively round, and much mutual killing ensued. Owen wasn't as sentimental as his friend, but he sure knew how to take a boy's mind off things. Conner's curfew came up before either boy's bloodlust was sated, but they knew they'd make time later. They always did.

Like that, Sunday gave way to Monday in its graceful way, and school was back in session. He saw Hailey in the hallway before school and gave her a little smile, but she didn't even seem to glance in his direction. Maybe his refusal to give her a lift Saturday night had stung more than he'd thought. He supposed that, since he'd lied to her, she was entitled to be a bit frosty.

The day dragged on, all of it a tedious obstacle to the only thing he was really interested in, namely talking to Miss C about the weird bug in the software. That kind of graphic modification was unheard of in his experience, and for this program, it was just a feature! Because the program shortcut was named for the Northside High yearbook, *This is Our Story*, and didn't seem to have an About Us in it that he could find, he didn't even know how to look up more information on it. He couldn't wait to pick his teacher's brain about where she'd found such a treasure.

That is, until around 12:30. That Monday, in the NHS cafeteria, during lunch – some kind of pasta nightmare that called itself baked ziti – Conner's life changed forever. It began in quite uncommon fashion, with a hand on someone's butt.

"Owen." His friend didn't look up from the block game he was playing on his phone. "Owen. *OWEN!*" Conner snatched the phone and held it back. "Dude, look!"

After a moment griping about the theft, Owen finally followed where Conner was pointing. There in the lunch line stood Jayce Deacons, jock all-star and one of the richest kids in school. He was good enough looking that his money made sure he was in the in crowd for life... and he was standing there with his arm around Hailey McManus's back, his hand resting inside one of the back pockets of her jeans.

"What?" Owen asked. "What, you mean the lunch lady wearing crocs?"

Conner conveyed how stupid his friend was being through an exasperated look. "Yeah, the crocs, you got me. Not, ya know, *Deacons' hand down the back of Hailey's pants*, you moron!"

Owen looked again, then back at his friend. "Yep. What I wouldn't give..." He snatched his phone back. "Thanks a lot, you ruined my game, a-hole. Hope you're happy."

"What you wouldn't give... what? To have his hand on *your* ass?"

"Har har."

"No, seriously – that doesn't freak you out just a little?"

Owen arched a brow. "Should it? He's treated her like she's his dad's property since they started going out in sophomore year, man."

Conner shook his head, then even rubbed his eyes. Nope, he wasn't seeing things. He pointed again. "Are you freaking near-sighted or something, Owen?! That's Hailey McManus, not Hayleigh McKnight!"

At last Owen reacted with the alacrity the situation called for, snapping his head around to witness the scandal. A moment later, though, he turned back to the front and

rolled his eyes. “Very funny. Now quit it with the pointing. Deacons sees you eyeballing his girlfriend’s ass like that and he’s gonna make you pay.”

In fact, Conner realized Mr. Rodriguez, a math teacher who was also a lunch monitor, had also seen his pointing, and followed it to the target. He pounced in true teacherly fashion, striding quickly over to the couple. They were too far away to hear, but when Jayce and Hailey turned to face their accuser, he finally got a look at her face. Yep, definitely McManus. Not that there had been any doubt. She’d styled her hair differently, he thought, but otherwise...

The two of them both glared at Mr. Rodriguez but complied, then clearly made some uncharitable remarks about him once he’d turned his back and headed back to his post near the side doors to the cafeteria. Once they seemed to have gotten it off their chests, Jayce leaned down and gave Hailey a quick kiss on her puckered lips. Her self-satisfied grin was the last he saw of her face as they turned back toward the front of the lunch line.

Owen went back to his game. Conner, meanwhile, watched the lunch room to see when there would be some kind of outburst. Other people pointing, or a burst of laughter from Deacons and his friends when they decided to stop toying with Hailey. But nothing. They bought their ziti, sat at the usual popular table, enjoyed banter that seemed genuine from where Conner was sitting. It was like nobody found it the least bit strange that...

Hailey was standing in for Hayleigh.

Conner was on his feet in the next second. Scanning... scanning... There. There she was, Hayleigh McKnight, wearing a pair of loose-fitting overalls and sitting by herself at the end of a table in the dimmest corner of the cafeteria. She was staring intently at a tablet, probably reading the e-book she’d been trying to interest him in at the academic decathlon competition Saturday. Or, rather, that Hailey had been. It struck him that in all the years he’d known her, he couldn’t recall seeing Hayleigh without people around her.

This couldn’t be happening.

Owen took no notice as his friend made his way across the expansive room to the young woman. There was no plan here, not even a firm grasp on the world around him. By the time he’d walked up to her, he’d only managed as far as...

“Hi, um, Hailey.” Hayleigh? Even with the same pronunciation, saying it made him feel like he was going cross-eyed.

She looked up, blinking in surprise before breaking out in smiles. God, but she was beautiful. “Conner! Hi.” He was instantly sure this vision of a girl didn’t have the old Hailey’s voice; this one was a soft, warm purr.

“Do you mind if I, um...?”

The real Hayleigh McKnight would've told him to get lost (if she didn't just sic Jayce on him), but this version smiled like she'd scratched off a winning lottery ticket. "Sure, have a seat! Did you have a good weekend?"

"Yeah, just, you know, normal stuff." *Except for maybe inadvertently engaging in witchcraft.*

"Sorry you had to waste half of it on dumb ol' ac dec. We didn't even win. Still, got my medal, that was cool. Did you see? I didn't see if you were around during the awards show. I was looking for you but the lights are in the back so when you're sitting in the front you can't see anything behind you. Which makes sense, I guess, but I've never really liked being in the spotlight. And so... um yeah, I'm talking a lot, aren't I."

This couldn't be real. The same old Hailey McManus stream of consciousness pouring out of the lips of Hayleigh McKnight. (Good lord, those lips!) What could be happening? The most plausible explanation was utterly insane – but the most available explanation seemed so impossible. He had to be sure that this wasn't the world's most bizarre prank.

"No, I was there. And remind me, you won...?"

"Physics. I didn't even think I did that well on the test, but some of them you can just reason through without doing all the work, ya know? Like there was this one question. You have two trains of a certain mass – and it tells you the mass but I don't remember, obviously – anyway, they're on the same track moving in the same direction. If the front train was moving at eighty kilometers per hour and the back train was moving at a hundred and ten kilometers... was it miles? No, that seems too fast, at least for a typical American train. Did you know in China they're building..."

Conner blinked. There was no way Hayleigh McKnight could do such a stunning impression of Hailey McManus. Everything was perfect – the cadence, the babbling, the way she was too shy to make eye contact... Even the unabridged science problem with marginally related tangents was trademark Hailey.

He was staring in shock as she rambled on to a close. "... so I didn't have to do the math to know the right answer was b. I mean, the front train speeds up and back train slows down. Duh, right?"

"No, totally, yeah, duh," he agreed. Holy crap, was he mindlessly agreeing with Hailey? That was a trap he fell into in those rare occasions he was working with a really pretty girl, like when he and Heather tackled an assignment together and the fragrance of her shampoo shredded his capacity to form independent thoughts. When had that been? Last week? A minute sitting here basking in this gorgeous creature's smile was like a year.

Suffice to say, he had never had this problem with Hailey before. One more thing to double check. She answered to Hailey/Hayleigh, but he had to make sure Owen's accepting the big girl on Jayce Deacons' arm as McManus wasn't a fluke. "Oh, and yeah,

I was working on the academic decathlon spread for yearbook, and wouldn't you know it, I totally forgot how to spell your last name."

She cocked her head to the side. "Don't you have access to a student roster?"

"Oh. Yeah. Just, I didn't, um, have it at home with me. You know, when I worked on it. At home. Over the weekend." Stop having such perfect hair, damnit Hailey!

"Um, well you're back in school now, so I guess you'll have to look it up." She burst into giggles a moment later. He recognized that laugh only too well. "No, it's McManus. Spelled mick not mack, and only one 'n'. People screw that up all the time. You're so lucky. I bet nobody ever misspells Fishers. Though I guess there's Conn-OR and Conn-UR, so that's probably an issue. Does that ever happen to you? I guess most people writing your name are probably teachers and stuff, but they have rosters too and most teachers are pretty good spellers. Oh my gosh, except Mrs. Radcliff, from seventh grade. Did you have her? She was so..."

Conner had stopped listening at *No, it's McManus*. There it was. This woman, this gorgeous, perfect, goddess of a woman was somehow Hailey McManus to everyone... but him. And nobody was acting any different. This couldn't be a hoax. People like Hayleigh (the real one) and Jayce didn't go to such lengths to prank a nobody like Conner Fishers. He wouldn't put it past them to conspire to ruin his day if he butted his nose into their business, but otherwise, he was but a fly on their walls.

Somehow, as impossible as it sounded, swapping those pictures in the yearbook had swapped the actual appearances of the two girls in the real world. Hefty Hailey McManus was now dating one of the most sought-after guys in school. Hottie Hayleigh McKnight was now a social pariah with an enormous crush on none other than...

Holy shit.

"Hailey, do you wanna go out sometime?" he blurted. Conner winced at his own over-eagerness, like his brain shot out the ask before anyone else could realize what was going on.

The look on Hailey's new face was priceless, an adorable combination of surprised, elated, nervous and overwhelmed. "Really? With you?!"

Conner nodded. "Of course with me."

She clasped her hands together, immaculately manicured and pink-painted nails interlaced. "Yes! That would be amazing! When did you wanna do it? I mean, 'cause I'm free pretty much any time. Well not *any* time, 'cause like, I do have things sometimes, but I mean..." She paused for a breath. "I just mean I'm flexible."

As a girl who'd shed the better part of a hundred pounds overnight, he'd bet she was flexible. In fact, Hayleigh had been on the cheerleading squad until late last year, when word had it Jayce had taken issue with his girlfriend flashing her panties to strangers. Owen had been crushed, and had sworn off sporting events ever since.

"How about tonight?"

The bell rang then, drowning out her first attempt at a response as three hundred kids began shuffling out of the cafeteria in unison. “Sounds great!”

The two parted ways then, and it was only midway through next period, his mind reeling from this turn of events, that he received a text from her reminding him of what he’d forgotten.

*Are you picking me up? My address is 6326 Opal Park Way, behind the east side grocery store. What are we gonna do? Do I need to dress nice? Bring anything?*  
Thereafter was a torrent of bright smiling emojis.

Conner stared long at those words before responding, and when he did, he wasn’t proud to say that the response was written primarily by the raging hard-on he’d been sporting since the moment she’d said yes.

*I’ll pick you up at 6. Wear something sexy.*



## Chapter Two

Since the moment Conner had seen that academic decathlon picture change, he'd been beside himself with the need to talk to Miss C about the *This Is Our Story* program. Questions, considerations, implications... It was the most exciting development in yearbook since he'd first picked up the craft.

That had been before he realized that he had body-swapped the nobody girl crushing on him with one of the hottest girls in school.

So instead, when Miss C asked him at the start of class if he'd had a chance to try it out yet, Conner avoided eye contact and mumbled a made-up excuse. He felt bad about it – and not just because he wanted to know more. He was lying to Miss C, one of the people he respected most in the world. Or at least, evading the truth, and about something darned important. This had huge implications. After all, even if everyone who knew Hailey looked at her and saw nothing different, what about strangers? What about things like genetic predispositions, immunizations, blood type... Conner being the over-thinker that he was, he'd missed his entire government class lecture while caught up in imagining a scenario where Hailey's little brother needed a kidney someday, and when he got Hayleigh's instead of Hailey's, it killed him.

He tried to tell himself that was why he felt already felt guilty, but deep down, that wasn't it. The fact that he was already subconsciously planning on taking advantage of Hailey had a lot more to do with it.

Miss C, however, didn't seem to skip a beat, and told him not to worry, that she'd be running a tutorial for everybody tomorrow. Today was a work day, and so after a quick check-in with the staff, Conner dispatched them to go do what needed doing. He found himself looking long after Heather. Could he turn Hailey into *that*? Not that she was hotter, per se, just that he'd had his eye on her for so long. And if nobody even knew or cared, would it be so bad to...

No. He didn't know what he was messing with yet, and he wasn't about to go risking any further weirdness until he better knew what he was doing. It almost literally pained him to sign in the school laptop with TIOS on it, knowing it was that much longer he'd have to wait to explore deeper. Doubly so as Miss C wanted his help working with the freshmen today, showing them how to use some of the camera settings and shadowing while they got a few shots done. So by the time the school day ended, he didn't even had a chance to open the program.

He saw Hailey in the distance down the hall as she made her way to her bus; she waved enthusiastically before turning away, her smile practically visible through the back of her head. His whole drive home, he barely heard Owen's punk rock blaring out of the speakers. He was just picturing himself and Hailey – this new, incredible Hailey – on their date. Conner's first ever *date* date, not counting school dances, which were

basically just hanging out with friends in fancy clothes. Then, he'd gone with friends of friends who needed a date, and then most of their group just swapped dance partners willy nilly, heedless of who was officially whose. Tonight, it would be just him and a single girl, one who no doubt had high expectations.

Needless to say, by the time he dropped off Owen and pulled up in his own driveway, Conner was terrified.

Both his mother and stepsister were home, the former as usual and the latter as day one of her fall break from college. Without even meaning to be melodramatic, Conner made it no farther than the living room before falling face first on the couch in dread. What had he done? He had no idea how to talk to girls. Not *romantically*, anyway. What was one supposed to talk about? Or was one supposed to talk? If not, then what to do? He couldn't just sit there... looking at her. She was too damn beautiful. He could feel his tongue drying up (apparently to allow sweat to flow to his palms) even now in his own house just thinking about it.

Actually sitting face to face with one of the premier goddesses of Northside High might kill him.

"Hi there, sweetie. Rough day?" came the concerned voice of his mother.

"Unghahaduh," came his incomprehensible reply into the throw pillow.

He could hear a gasp from the only woman on earth who could've understood him. "Conner, you have a *date*!" She squealed in delight, then fell on top of him, tickling him until he finally broke into giggles.

"Mom! Quit it!"

She at last relented, though by that time Angelica had joined them. "Did I hear that right? Goner's gone and got himself a date?"

"Don't call me that, Angelica," Conner said, laughter retreating under the condescending smirk of his pretty stepsister. She'd probably never had trouble getting a date in her life. "And yes, I do have a date. So what?"

"We-he-hell, don't get your skimpy little panties in a knot, I was just popping by to make sure I'd heard the good news right."

"Angelica..." his mother warned.

"Sorry, Shannon," came the patently insincere reply.

"So," asked his mother, sitting beside him on the sofa, "who's the lucky girl?"

"Hailey McManus."

She broke out in grins. "Oh good! You've talked so much about her, and she sounds like such a nice girl. Did you ask her or did she ask you? Girls do that nowadays, you know."

"Yeah, we even drive our own cars and vote, when we're not too cranking out babies," said Angelica. Conner's mother chuckled and rolled her eyes, unflappable as ever.

“I asked her. I guess I figured I may as well take your advice.”

“Smart boy. So what are you two going to do tonight?”

“I’m not too sure yet. I sort of asked without having a plan.”

She rolled her eyes in that adoringly motherly way of hers. “My Conner. He has his future planned out in ten-minute blocks through graduate school, but doesn’t know where he’s taking his young lady tonight. Well, if you want my advice—”

“Yes please!”

“—you’ll take her out to eat somewhere nice, but not too nice. You don’t want to over-do it on a first date, but don’t take her to that, ugh, hole in the wall you kids are always going to.”

“The Bean Bag Cafe?”

“Ew, yes. That place is just dirty. Take her someplace nice, like TGI Fridays. Not the east side one, the one downtown. Then you can take her to the movies, and let *her* pick, understand? No Super-Hero-Man vs. The Garbage Monsters, or whatever it is they put out for boys like you and Owen. And you offer to pay for everything. In fact, let me get my purse...” She shuffled off to find it.

Angelica, to his surprise, replaced his mother on the opposite end of the couch. “OK, so, do you actually like this girl? Want to get anywhere with her?” she asked in a muted tone.

“Um, yeah, I guess,” Conner answered, cheeks coloring.

“OK, so ignore most of that. I mean, dinner is fine, but... good lord not TGI Fridays. Take her to Il Parata – that Italian slash seafood place. You know it?” He nodded. “Good. Don’t order anything greasy or too garlicky. You don’t want digestive issues, and you don’t want kissing you to be a chore if you get that far. Let her look over the menu, and order something she sounded interested in but didn’t order so you can be Johnny Gentleman and let her try some.”

“Wow, that’s good.”

“That’s actually obvious, but you’re new at this. Then after, *don’t* go to a movie. You know what you can’t do at a movie? Get her bra off. You’re lucky if you can even make out comfortably, wedged into two seats side by side, and if you haven’t fucked it up by that point, it’ll just mean two hours where you can’t talk, you can’t do anything to each other. It’s fucking edging bullshit is what it is.”

Conner had long known his sister was not a fan of going to the theater; at last he began to understand why. Sort of.

“So where do I take her?”

“You go up to Makeout Point.”

Conner blinked. “Makeout Point? Where’s...?”

“I was kidding, moron. God you’re hopeless. No, you read the room. Probably dinner isn’t gonna be enough to loosen her panties, so find a place you can hang out.”

She named off a few local places: a pool hall, coffee house, and a bookstore with a nice little cafe in it. “And if she’s not into those, you know, you can go the ‘trust me’ route and take her anyway. Then just don’t fuck things up, and she’ll feel like you’re Mr. Smooth Operator, surprising and take-charge.”

“OK. So... what then?”

She rolled her eyes. “What, you want me on bluetooth the whole date?”

“No, I mean, like... what if things are going... well?”

She made a face. “OK, I am not doing the birds and bees with you. Just don’t be a dick and rush things, and equally important, don’t be a pussy and let it peter out. And... here.” Conner watched in shock as his stepsister opened a drawer in the end table, rooting around under pens and nail files and loose bandaids and breath mints and AA batteries, until finally coming up with a small square package.

“Is this a...?!” He cut himself short as his mother strode back into the living room, hiding the condom under his leg in a flash.

“Now here’s forty dollars for dinner, and... is fifteen enough for a movie?”

“I think he’s got everything he needs Shannon,” Angelica answered. She gave her stepbrother a wink.

At six o'clock sharp, Conner pulled up at Hailey's house. It was a modest-sized house in a modest neighborhood, yet he couldn't help but smile at the brightly painted "McWelcome to the McManus Home!" near the front door. From previous interactions, he knew a few things about Hailey's home life. That she had a little brother who had some health issues, that she was raised by a single mom after her dad walked out on them when she was six, that her mother was a florist whose business had gone under when a national chain opened up in town, and now she worked there for way less money. Like everything else about Hailey, her family life was pretty normal, but still somehow pretty sad.

"You can do this. Remember, she's Hailey, not Hayleigh," he said, once more repeating in his head *Hailey not Hayleigh*. It wasn't doing much. Hailey had never made him nervous in his life. Hayleigh had been doing things to his mind – and other parts – since he'd hit puberty. One was the stuff of idle annoyances, one was the stuff of sweaty fantasies. And now, no matter how much he told himself this was the former, his eyes were only going to confirm the latter.

There was no escaping it. Girls that hot were simply terrifying.

He could do this. He'd been over the plan in his head a hundred times since talking to Angelica. Il Pirata, no garlic no grease, share something she likes, go hang out, insist, don't rush don't puss out. Simplicity itself. With his heart in his throat, the editor-in-chief made his way up the front walk and knocked on the door.

"Conner!" Hailey squealed as she opened it almost immediately. Conner swallowed nervously at the sight of this redheaded goddess. She even had green eyes, he realized. He'd never noticed her eyes before. And she was wearing a little red dress that... wow. It wasn't skimpy, or flashy, or especially revealing. It was a simple testament to the reality that a girl like this simply made anything look tantalizing. She could've opened the door in a sweat suit and made him realize how sexy sweat suits could be, in the right light. Though the red dress didn't hurt.

"Hi, Hailey. Um, wow, you look... really nice." He tugged at his suddenly strangling shirt collar.

Her cheeks colored. "Oh, stop. I look... bleh. But you, you look so... handsome!"

Conner was simply glad he'd dressed up enough that he'd look about right alongside that dress. "So, are you ready? Not that you don't look, you know, ready."

Her smile evaporated, replaced by a panicked expression. "OK, let me just say I am SO. SORRY. But, um, I might not be able to go out. I only found out like ten minutes ago. My mom called and she has to work late tonight because... well nevermind why, but it means I have to stay home and watch my brother."

As much as he was relieved to get out of all this pressure, just looking at her made him appreciate what a shame this really was. "Oh. Yeah, that's too bad."

Suddenly Hailey snatched his forearm in her hands. “But... I dunno, I guess I was thinking, like, if you wanted to hang out here? My brother just sits in his room playing his games all the time, and he’ll probably be asleep soon, and we could, like, hang out?”

Conner processed it, the gears of his mind turning like they’d been lubricated with molasses instead of grease. So instead of a public dinner and forced awkward socialization in order to get her to want to be alone with him, she was proposing...

“That sounds great,” he said.

“Really? I mean, you don’t have to if you don’t want to. Like, I’m sure you have way better things to do than babysit Doug with me.” Still, she didn’t let go of his arm.

“Really. I’d love to. Your mom won’t mind?”

“Mom would never even believe I have a boy over.” She giggled, then it cut off as she realized how pathetic it must have sounded. Only a step behind how his own mom would react if he’d brought her home, believing but giddy with the novelty of it. Hailey ushered her date inside, instructing him to take his shoes off at the door. From there it was into the living room.

“So, you wanna, like, watch something? We have Netflix.” Both of them felt the heat bloom in their cheeks as the phrase “Netflix and chill” reverberated in their heads.

“That’d be cool, sure.”

Hailey ran to the kitchen to get drinks, telling Conner to pick out whatever he liked. When she returned, he was waiting for her, nothing selected. “Why don’t you pick? I don’t wanna make you watch some dude movie.”

“I don’t care. I’ll watch anything you want. It doesn’t matter. I like everything. Whatever you want.”

At those words – *whatever you want* – from that face, he could feel the blood running back out of his cheeks and trickling somewhere else altogether. Conner tried not to think about it – or her – as he scrolled down and selected a semi-recent comedy. When Hailey reiterated she was fine with it, he hit play, then sit back and let his date, alone with this girl in that body, commence.

Had a time-lapse camera recorded their viewing experience, it would have revealed an entire hour of two teenagers sitting side by side, not quite touching, movements mostly confined to blinking and, in Conner’s case, scratching an itch on his shoulder for a few seconds. He wanted so badly to turn to her and say something charming, if only to have an excuse to look at her, but he couldn’t come up with anything. Hailey was just as quiet. She sat with her legs crossed at the ankles, hands in her lap, staring at the screen and laughing as appropriate to show she was enjoying herself.

When he heard a sound outside, Conner’s head turned to look out the window just long enough to make him realize that, from this angle, he had a decent vantage point down the neckline of her dress. He could even just barely make out the color of her

bra. Black. That was hot. Though with those breasts, what color wouldn't be? His eyes betrayed him, time and again glancing over, sneaking peek after peek. He knew it was wrong to look, rude and crass and shallow, but then again, it would be almost as rude to the entire male sex not to look. Owen would never forgive him – at least, not if he saw the Hailey Conner was seeing.

Then she caught him.

“Conner? Were you looking at my boobs?”

His heart was suddenly pounding so loud he couldn't even hear his own stammering voice. “N-no! No, I was just, um, glancing over, and...”

Hailey laughed. “It's OK. I don't mind. It's, um, kind of sweet, actually.”

Sweet? Was she crazy? He was surreptitiously ogling her, and she thought it was sweet? He'd been raised to think he deserved to be slapped in the face for such behavior. His mom and stepdad didn't so much as hold hands in front of their children, for crying out loud. “I, um, I know I shouldn't...”

“Seriously! It's OK. Actually, do you wanna...” She stopped, then suddenly sprang up and darted down the hallway. She opened a door with catlike stealth, then closed it a moment later just as noiselessly. Then she was running back the hall and was sitting back where she'd been as if she'd never gone.

“Uh...” Conner managed.

“Sorry, I was making sure Doug is asleep, and is he ever. So anyway, do you, like, wanna see 'em? I don't mind, if you want. I mean, I totally get if you don't and everything. But since you were, you know, looking, I thought...”

He nearly lost it then and there. It wasn't just the offer, but the tone in which she offered it. So hopeful. Like she was offering not because she wanted to show off her rack, but because she was desperate to please him. Something deeply submissive that, in return, touched on that some part of his brain that had texted her to dress sexy for him. A primitive, confident inner voice.

When he handed it control of his outer voice, it said, “Show me.”

Hailey nervously bit her lip – her plump, pink, glossy lip – as she lowered the shoulder straps down her arms. One agonizing centimeter at a time, the tops of her breasts were revealed to him, until soon, only her bra was in his way. Still, it was better than he ever would have imagined. And since asking her out this afternoon, he'd been imagining it nearly nonstop.

“Holy... Hailey, you're so... they're...”

Her eyes widened in what looked like panic. “I'm sorry. I know. I'll cover up. I'm sorry. Oh god. I can't believe I...”

Conner had to act quickly to stop her from pulling the top of her dress back up. “Hailey, let me finish. What I was going to say was, they're *incredible*.”

She froze, and by degrees began to show signs she was understanding his meaning. “You... you like them?”

“They’re incredible.”

She giggled, lowering her hands and thrusting them towards him. “You said that already.”

“It bears repeating,” said Conner, who had abandoned any pretense of eye contact by now.

“Um, thanks. Do... do you want to touch them? Because you can. I mean, I want you to. Touch them, that is. If you want.”

Conner didn’t need to be told twice. His hands were cupping Hailey’s bra-encased breasts in the next instant, and the satisfied look on her face mostly subdued the nervousness that slammed home the next moment. He’d never gotten to second base before, and with Hailey he’d leapt right past first. She sat there, perfectly content to let her crush fondle her to his heart’s content.

“I can... you know. If you want,” she said softly.

“Take your bra off?”

He’d meant it as a question, not trusting reality to gift him so. Hailey had heard exclamation point rather than question mark, and looked only too flattered by his interest. She was already undoing the clasp, and then...

There they were. Hayleigh McKnight’s tits, superimposed on Hailey McManus’s personality. “Tits” wasn’t even a term Conner used in his own head generally, but ones this perfect deserved it. He wasn’t a total saint; he’d seen enough breasts on the internet to know they came in all shapes and sizes, and there was no guarantee that simply because she had a pretty face, she would also have great boobs, how he’d long imagined them.

They weren’t how he imagined them, however. They were better. They were tits. Perfect, sumptuous tits.

They sat a bit lower than he’d thought, largely because they were also just a bit smaller. Hayleigh was fond of wearing shirts that showed ample cleavage, and so he’d always assumed they were huge. Now he realized (with a glance at the discarded bra) that they were a C cup, but her bra choice accentuated them. God bless that bra. They also showed that she evidently tanned wearing a bikini, because two pale triangles were pointing at him from the newly revealed skin. Not how he would’ve designed them, but so what. Those nipples... dark brown, and tinier than any he’d ever seen, an inch across, if that.

Then his mouth was on them. Hailey laughed delightedly. “Oh, Conner! I never would’ve thought you’d be so... oh...” She trailed off as he sucked a nipple into his mouth, lashing it with his tongue.



This went on for some time; he couldn't have guessed how much, because there simply wasn't an upper limit to how much time he wanted to spend groping and sucking on Hailey's rack. He licked and sucked, fondled and squeezed, finally tossing Hailey on her back so he could climb on top of her and feast.

Then, all of the sudden, she shoved him to the floor. By the time he could look up in wonderment, her dress had already been pulled up to cover herself.

"Hailey...?"

But she wasn't even looking at him when she spoke. "Hey, buddy. What're you doing out of bed?"

"I was thirsty," came a child's voice from the hallway.

Hailey tugged the straps of her dress on her shoulders and jumped up. "Well you just go back to bed, and I'll bring you a glass of juice. OK?"

Conner took to his feet, where he could now see the boy standing in the hallway. He was much too young to guess what had been going on, but he certainly was staring with a lot of curiosity. As Hailey hustled to the kitchen, Conner ventured a wave, but the boy, Doug, stood there until his sister returned with a cup of juice and ushered him back down the hall.

He could hear her talking, but couldn't make out words. It gave him a moment for his thinking brain to emerge again. What had come over him? That had definitely not been the comportment of a gentleman. Only... wasn't that why he'd so eagerly absorbed Angelica's advice? He'd just had what were essentially Hayleigh McKnight's tits in his mouth! How could that be wrong?

But then why did he feel so conflicted?

Then Hailey was coming back. "I am so sorry about that! He should be good for the night, now. I told him we were doing some boring grown-up stuff, so he'll avoid coming out here. I didn't hurt you, did I?"

"Oh no, no, you did what you had to do. I can take it. Look, I was thinking maybe I should go. Your brother's home, and having your mom walk in on us..." he laughed awkwardly.

"No! Oh no, no, please don't go! I didn't mean to bust up your, um, game, or whatever! Look, here, do you wanna suck on my boobs some more?"

This time, rather than merely lower the shoulder straps, she unzipped the back and let the thing fall all the way to the floor. She stood there in nothing but her underwear, a pair of silken black panties that had a bit of a sheen in the living room's soft lamp light. Even with those tits facing him again, Conner couldn't help but marvel at the rest of her – flat tummy, freshly shaved legs, noticeable thigh gap.

His date, however, wasn't stopping to be admired. How could she, when in her mind she was still frumpy, unappealing Hefty Hailey? She pressed her body up against Conner's, moving his hands to back to her chest as she starting kissing along his neck.

“Stay,” she pleaded. “If you want, I could, like, go down on you, maybe? If you wanted. I really want to. Nobody’s ever let me before, but I know I can make you feel so good. Just stay. Please.”

Even as his cock turned to molten steel, his heart melted for her. This poor girl. It no longer mattered if it was taking advantage of her to stay. It was clear now that leaving would hurt her far more. (A quiet inner voice tried to remind him he could find a gentlemanly way to insist politely, but if it were really all that sincere, it wouldn’t be speaking in a whisper.) Plus, as she eased him back down onto her sofa and started undoing his belt, he couldn’t have denied himself this if he’d wanted to. He let her undo his pants and helped her lower them to his ankles. His cock hit the open air, jutting upward like a rocket ready for launch.

“Oh, wow!” Hailey exclaimed. “It’s so big! I had no idea you were so...”

Conner didn’t know if she was genuinely impressed or merely flattering him, but both possibilities were equally hot in his book. “Glad you like it, because you’re about to get to know it a whole lot better.” Was that too cheesy? It sounded like something Owen would say. Whatever. She didn’t seem to object. If anything, she seemed even more excited by his faux confidence.

“I can’t wait. Are you sure this is OK? I mean, you can just close your eyes and imagine whoever, that’s fine with me.”

Conner winced in pity. “Hailey. Listen to me. I asked you out because I like you. I think you’re beautiful. No, I take that back. I don’t *think* you’re beautiful; you *are* beautiful. If my eyes close, it’s only because you’re doing a good job, and I’ll still be picturing you, right where you are, exactly as you are right now. Understand?”

Hailey stared at him with a blank face, and for a moment he wondered if she was so unused to compliments that she was about to reject them. Instead, she suddenly lunged forward, taking him into her mouth all the way on the first go. She didn’t seem to intend to suck his cock; the girl clearly meant to *devour* it.

“Oh, Hailey,” he moaned. Or was it Hayleigh he was moaning for? Oh, screw it. With this gorgeous girl on her knees, blowing him like his spunk was her favorite dessert, he was beyond quandaries. He locked eyes with Hailey, admiring the joyous sparkle in those emerald orbs as she performed both his and her first blowjob. Conner ran his hand through her soft auburn hair, and in response she deep-throated him until he thought she might pass out.

His inexperience caused him not to warn her when he started getting close, a moment that came all too soon. Her inexperience, however, caused her to cough up Conner’s cum in an awkward fit as she nearly inhaled it. Instead, Hailey fell back on her butt, his jizz dribbling out of her mouth and down onto her bare tits. When she was able to stop coughing, her eyes widened in embarrassment.

“Oh my gosh, I am SO sorry! I meant to swallow. I was going to, I swear! Look, I’m no prude, see?” She dragged one manicured nail through a blob of cum on her left breast and sucked it into her mouth. Her theatrical enjoyment was so over the top he wanted to laugh, except... she was slurping up his cum to prove how much she liked sucking his cock. It would be funny if it wasn’t so damnably sexy.

Conner placed his hands on her arms and pulled her back to her knees. “Hailey, leave it. You look hot like that.”

She grinned. “Really?”

“Really. I’ve never seen anything hotter.”

She threw herself at him lips first.

Conner reached out his hands and rested them on her shoulders, holding her firmly at arm’s length. When he did it, he couldn’t even have said why. Was he squeamish about kissing her right after she’d gone down on him? Or afraid of her boobs rubbing his fluids on him? Or was it that his fantasies of Hayleigh McKnight had never involved something as romantic as a kiss?

And like that, she started crying. It wasn’t sobbing, just silent tears running down her cheeks and wetting those dimples. “You’re right, I’m sorry. I would’ve gotten you all, you know, spermy or whatever. And you don’t want to kiss someone who’s got it on their breath, I get it,” she mumbled through her sniffles.

Conner didn’t know what to say, so he seized upon her reasoning. “Yeah, sorry – not that I don’t want to! You’re so amazing, and I... sorry, I guess I over-reacted. Come here, OK? Come here.” She let him help her back onto the couch, her body language making it obvious she felt uncomfortable sitting there covered in more spunk than clothes. He wiped away her tears with his thumbs, which seemed to cheer her up somewhat even as if smudged her running eyeliner across her face. “Why don’t we, um, get dressed. And you know, clean up if you want.”

She nodded, picking up her dress and hustling down to the bathroom. Conner didn’t miss the opportunity to watch her ass in those panties. How had he gotten so lucky? A few minutes later, she returned, back in her dress. She’d cleaned up her face, and was smiling shyly.

“You’re still here!” she said, looking pleasantly surprised, sitting as far from him as possible on her couch.

“Of course I am. Why wouldn’t I be?”

“I’m glad. But actually, um, my mom’s coming home any minute, so I think maybe we should call it quits here. And... I know I made our first date super awkward. I understand if you don’t wanna see me any more.”

He paused. “Wait, you think... that I had a bad time?”

She looked down at her lap. “Didn’t you? I mean, I totally threw myself at you like some kind of... slut, or something.”

“If that was you being slutty, sign me up for about a hundred more dates like that.”

A ghost of a smile teased at the edges of her lips. “You’re just being nice. You’re always nice to me, Conner. That’s why I, um, you know. Like you.”

Conner slid closer, then tilted her chin up until she was looking at him. “I like you too, Hailey. Really. You’re sweet, and beautiful, and—”

“Stop saying that! You don’t have to pretend just to be a nice guy. It’s OK.”

Conner almost laughed. The idea that a girl so insanely attractive would think someone was lying to her to be polite... it was too absurd. What did she see when she looked in the mirror now? Did she see the old Hailey? Or did she see the real thing but her mind simply couldn’t accept it?

Or was he the one hallucinating? There was a sobering thought.

“Well I tell you what. Why don’t we agree to go out again sometime – sometime soon – and I’ll try to convince you again how much you turn me on.”

Her smile crept back onto her face. “You’re sure?”

“Very sure.” So very, very sure. “Unless you wanna go again now, in which case—”

The front door opened, and in a flash the two were sitting a Leave-It-To-Beaver-appropriate distance apart. Hailey’s mom came in, looking equal parts weary from her day and surprised to see a young man sitting with her daughter in her living room. Conner immediately saw the resemblance. (Not that it was there any more, thanks to TIOS.) He was on his feet before she even closed the door behind her. “Hello, Ms. McManus. Hailey and I were just, um, watching Netflix. You have a lovely home.”

She looked surprised to see a boy in her house, and doubly so to see him next to her daughter. “Well hello there, young man. You must be Conner. I’ve heard a lot about you.”

“Mom!” Hailey exclaimed. “He was helping me keep an eye on Doug. And he was just leaving, before you could embarrass me to death.”

Her mom laughed. “Well I hope I’ll see you again, Conner.”

“Likewise, Ms. McManus.”

Hailey slipped on a pair of heels – he couldn’t wait to see what those did to her ass – and walked him out to his car. “So I’ll see you tomorrow?”

On impulse, Conner slipped a hand up the back of her dress and pinched her right on the butt. In the abstract, Conner preferred women with a little more meat on their bones, but Hailey was threatening to convert him to the Church of Keeping It Tight.

She squeaked in surprise, but came out giggling. “Tomorrow,” he said, sliding into his car. She stood there watching him as he drove off, and part of him realized that

he'd left Hayleigh McKnight's drooling pussy in his wake. He felt a surge of confidence like he'd never known before in his life.

His mom was waiting up for him when he got home. "Well? How did it go, handsome?"

Conner grinned. "It went really well. Her mom had to work, so we just hung out at her place and watched a movie. It was nice."

"Aaaaaand?" his mom pressed.

"And... what?"

"I don't need full details. But did you at least kiss her?"

Conner paused, his mind flashing back to that divine experience. But as he thought it over... "Um, no. Actually we didn't. Maybe next time."

"So there's gonna be a next time? Yay!" she kissed his forehead, then left him alone.

As Conner made his way to bed, he relived the evening over and over again. Images that were burned into his memory, he hoped, forever. He didn't know where things were going with Hailey, but there was one thing for sure.

He had to make sure nobody undid his edit to the yearbook.

## Chapter Three

“You fucked Hefty Hailey?!”

“Did I say I had sex with her? No! I said we... messed around some.”

“Well I must say I’m certainly glad to see you seem to have retained your same basic shape,” said Owen. When Conner looked at him quizzically, he explained. “You know. Because of smushing.”

“I got it. Shut up.”

“How much, would you say? Deuce, deuce and a half?”

“You don’t... she’s not... just shut up!”

Owen cackled, and went right on teasing. Conner tried turning up the radio, but he had to focus on driving so his friend had ample opportunity to shut it back off and resume with the insults. It was maddening! To have gotten a blowjob from one of the hottest girls in school, only to be ridiculed! And she was smitten with him, too – she’d texted him the night before and again this morning to point out what a good time she’d had, but here was Owen yucking it up. Conner tried mounting a defense – she’s a nice girl, she’s cuter than you think, what difference does the body make in a blowjob – and finally distracted him with that detail.

“Wait, so she went down on you?”

“She did. She sure did,” Conner said, finally allowing himself a smirk.

“They say fat girls give the best head. They need to, basically, to make up–”

“I get it. And she was definitely pretty good.”

“Did she swallow?”

Conner eyed his friend askance. “That’s kind of personal, don’t you think?”

“I got nobody sucking my schwanz, so I gotta live through yours. At least until it goes spelunking in Mammoth Cavern. Now answer the question: did she swallow?”

“Well... no.”

“Ha! I knew it. Chick who’s too grossed out by a little man-spoos definitely won’t be making a habit of it. Fuckin’ spitters, man. Can’t trust ‘em.”

“She didn’t exactly spit, either. It was more... look, this is really personal to talk about, OK?”

“Wait, now you got me curious. She didn’t swallow, she didn’t spit... is it still in her mouth or something?” Owen laughed.

“Ew, Jesus man, no! Just... well, she... she sort of coughed it up. All over herself. But she meant to swallow.”

“Oh man, so she was all... covered in it? That poor spunk.”

“Shut up, Owen.”

“So you got it out of your system? Or you gonna start maining Hefty?”

“Maining Hefty?” Conner repeated. “Is that even a thing people say?”

“People just said it, baby.”

Conner rolled his eyes as he pulled into a spot in the school parking lot. “I don’t know. I mean, we had a good time, she’s a nice girl. I told her we’d go out again sometime. It doesn’t mean we’re boyfriend girlfriend.”

“Yeah, but some stink doesn’t wash off easy, and I’m not just talking about cankle sweat.”

“OK, now that’s *definitely* not a thing people say.”

“I’m serious, man! You’re always on about how into Heather Blake you are... it’s a long shot as is, and if word gets out that you’re on the level of Hailey McManus, you can kiss your long shot is gonna go from miles to parsecs.” He adopted a falsetto, imitating Heather’s reading of the morning announcements. “This is Heather Blake, voice of the Northside Nighthawks, and these are today’s announcements. First off, I’ll never ever let Conner Fishers hook up with me, because if you fuck someone who’s fucked a pig, you’ve fucked every pig he’s ever fucked!”

Conner punched Owen in the arm, but it did nothing to diminish his satisfaction with his hilarity. As the two parted ways to go to their respective lockers, Conner frowned pensively. Owen was spot on about his crush on Heather. She was beautiful, and the only reason she wasn’t firmly enshrined in the It Crowd was because she was too much of a brainiac. The girl had too many demands on her time to be able to devote herself to publicly wasting it. Worse, as he thought it out, he was probably right about the rest of it. Reputation was everything in high school. If people knew he and Hailey McManus were a couple, they’d assume something was wrong with him. If he were honest with himself, it was probably part of the reason he’d never given her a shot to begin with.

Of course, Hailey wasn’t actually unattractive any more, unbeknownst to all but him. Maybe that was it – he could see if he could find a way to show everybody her transformation. Somehow. Only... if she knew how hot she was, why would she be any different from Hayleigh McKnight? Even if he could make her new body public information, all it would do to their blossoming romance would be to throw a hundred other guys into her list of options. She’d forget about him in an instant. Plus it could well alert Miss C about what he’d done, and what he might be able to do again. So no, finding a way to reveal things was out.

What then? Was he supposed to dump her? Try to reverse the change and let life go back to normal? There was no way that was happening. This was the best thing that had ever happened to him, and no amount of peer pressure was going to make him give up the new Hailey. Not even for a chance with Heather, unless it was a sure thing. That was almost unfathomable; Heather wasn’t as popular as Hayleigh, true, but that was a matter of having deliberately opted out. Nevertheless, she was a hot commodity.

For now, it seemed there was nothing to be done but to keep things under wraps. He returned Hailey's wave when he saw her in the distance in the hallway, but didn't alter course. He wasn't done with her yet, but he wasn't off the market yet, either.



Conner received his first ever sext during lunch. Unable to decide between sitting with Hailey and jeopardizing his social standing, or sitting with Owen and jeopardizing things with Hailey, he'd simply gone to the editor's office to hide. It was set in a corner of Miss C's room, opposite the small computer lab on the far side of the room. It was his teacher's lunch period, too, but she'd given him a key (and a hell of a threat if it were abused) so he could get in to work on evenings and weekends, as needs be. He'd been just about to get back to exploring the TIOS software when his phone buzzed. When he saw Hailey's name, his reflex was to set the phone down, but when he saw the notification that she'd attached an image, he stopped himself.

The picture looked to be in a bathroom stall in school. Hailey had lifted her t-shirt over her chest and snapped a selfie. He couldn't see the face attached, just the ends of her auburn hair hanging down to her shoulders. A white lacy bra contrasted beautifully with her copper-toned skin, and served to remind him of the similarly white boobs underneath. As he was still staring, a follow-up text came that read, *a preview of our next date! ;)*

Miss C always ate her lunch in the faculty lounge, but still he glanced to make certain he was alone. Once he was sure, he responded. *Oh, and here I was hoping to get you out of that bra again.* He added a crying emoji to complete the pout. Conner felt a lot more comfortable trying to be charming via text, where he could put his editorial skills to use.

He resumed ogling the pic, but was soon interrupted when a new one appeared. This time, there was no bra – or rather, it was been pulled down around her belly and the top was just barely visible. Hailey's tits, zoomed in so there was nothing to distract from them. Conner was no expert, but her tiny nipples looked pretty damn erect to him. His brain conjured the memory of their taste, how they'd felt in his hands, in his mouth.

Then he realized he'd been sitting there staring while this topless girl was no doubt awaiting a response. What was the right thing to say? Thanks, nice tits? He pondered for a moment, then got lost staring for an even longer moment, and decided to go with a simple, honest response. *I can't wait to get at those things again.*

*Are you in the caf? Mr. Rodriguez never pays any attention to my corner, so maybe we could... :D*

Merciful maker, she was right. Her whole area was a quiet little nook that was populated by geeks, loners and the voluntarily isolated. Conner could be in the cafeteria, making out with Hailey, right this minute. Miss C's classroom was just upstairs and down the hall from the cafeteria; he could have his mouth on her in sixty seconds.

But then, Owen's admonition echoed back to him. However delightful he might find Hailey's body, anyone else who saw wouldn't appreciate the difference. High school being high school, rumors could start that he might not be able to undo. He grit his teeth and sent an excuse, trying to ignore the tits staring him in the face as he typed.

*Sorry, got a yearbook project I'm behind on, working in the editor's office thru lunch.* Once more the crying emoji joined his words, more sincere than ever.

*Can I help? I'm a pretty OK writer. I had Miss Coszic-Lewandowski (sp?) sophomore year so I know the way ;)*

Her writing skills were indeed above average. They'd been in the same honors English classes all through high school up until this year, when they'd picked different electives. Still, since he'd been lying, and the whole point had been to avoid being seen with her...

Wait. What was he thinking? Here in the editor's office, nobody would see them. He could shut the blinds, on the extremely off chance someone popped in Miss C's room during lunch. Then they'd be alone, and tits...

*Sure, come on down, gorgeous,* he replied.

He'd been wrong about sixty seconds; Hailey was standing there in front of him in forty-six, and wasn't even out of breath. He supposed Hayleigh's track-star body had superior lung capacity. Conner had barely had time to close the blinds and sit back down before she was standing in the doorway. "Hey, Conner. You look nice today." She smiled that same shy smile she always had; it was all the more absurd coming from a girl who'd sent him a half-naked picture mere minutes ago.

"You look amazing, Hailey." He wondered what effect the program had had on her wardrobe. Obviously her old self wouldn't have fit into these clothes at all; had her t-shirts had always possessed v-necks sure to show a deep line of cleavage? Had she always come to school with the top three buttons undone?

"Oh, whatever, it's just jeans and a t-shirt. And a little makeup." Still, she was obviously pleased to be flattered.

"Can you close the door?" he said, trying not to sound too obvious about what he intended.

She agreed instantly. It was now just the two of them, in total privacy. She perched on the edge of his desk, her back to the door. "So what're we working on?"

Conner's hands were on her hips in an instant, and he pulled her to sit in front of him, his laptop now out of reach behind her. "We're picking up where you left off," he said.

If she hadn't already been so tan, she'd be bright red. "Really? Here in school?"

"Unless you were just teasing," he said.

"N-no. Um. I can, you know." She took a deep breath. "Show you. I mean, I want to show you. If you want me to... You know. Show you. Them. My boobs. Is it OK if I call them that? Sorry. Talking, you know, dirty, is like... a turn-on for me. Sorry. You know, why don't I shut up and just..."

Not a foot away from his face, Hailey lifted her shirt up to expose her white lace bra again. Adorably, she got the bottom of her shirt caught on one of the pieces of the

front clasp, and had to stop and try again to pull it back up to her neck. This close, he could see those tiny little nipples of hers jutting outward, begging to be touched.

“Do... do you like it?” she said softly.

*It's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen* was what he wanted to try to get out while lunging mouth-first into those perky peaks. But something from his musings earlier spoke to him in that moment – that if Hailey knew how hot she really was now, she'd lose all interest in him. He had to keep the upper hand, play it cool.

“So far,” he answered.

Rather than smile, she just nodded like she was expecting to have to work to earn his affection. With fumbling fingers she worked at the bra's clasp. Realizing she couldn't remove it without taking off her shirt the rest of the way, she started there. “You're sure nobody will come in?” she asked, pausing short of fully removing the undergarment.

“If they do, just get under the desk – and feel free to make yourself useful while you're down there.” He was being facetious, though he supposed the way the desk was oriented perpendicular to the doorway, it actually would prevent anyone from seeing someone crouching down there.

Hailey returned his smile, then slipped off the bra and set it on the desktop beside her discarded top. “Is this better?”

“It's a good start,” Conner said, sliding his hands up from her hips to her bared waist, then onto her bared tits. With those tan lines, they were only slightly less white with the bra off. “Was it a matching set?”

Hailey's eyes closed as the editor-in-chief rolled her nipples between his thumbs and index fingers. “M-matching?”

“Your underwear.” He gave a short chuckle. “Distracted, are we?”

Hailey nodded vigorously. “Uh huh.”

She was so flustered that it made it all the easier to keep that upper hand. “Uh huh you're distracted, or uh uh they match.”

“Yeah. I mean, distracted. No, I mean they match. Both. Oh geez.” She squinted her eyes shut, a shuddering gasp escaping her lips.

“Show me.”

Her eyes opened after a moment – after he stopped, that is – and she licked her lips nervously. “Wait, you want me to... take off my pants? Here in school?”

Since the second he'd inhaled her perfume, that's all he'd been able to think. He'd always thought himself more of a boob man, but primitive portions of his brain now were screaming their need for her pussy. He couldn't blame them. A woman this hot deserved to have her pussy used.

He chose his words carefully; their English teachers would have been proud. (Maybe not Miss C, since he was having a girl strip for him in her classroom.) “No, it's fine. We can just get to work on the article. I shouldn't have brought it up.” Not an

apology; a waning of interest. Interest she'd never had but for one night in her life, and which she was desperate to have again.

"It's OK, I don't mind," she said too eagerly, undoing the button and zipper on her jeans, then easing them over wide hips. "I was just being stupid. Forget what I said. I want to, all right? And they totally match, see? They match, just like you wanted."

They certainly did. A pair of bikini-cut lace panties, dazzling white against sun-darkened skin. But whereas the black panties she'd worn under her dress on last night's date had obscured the answer to his question, these did no such thing. Hailey pressed her legs tight together, but with her natural thigh gap, there was simply no hiding the darkened wet spot at her crotch.

"Wow. You're really..." With one of his hands on each of her knees and only a little bit of pressure, her thighs slowly split apart until her calves hit either side of the edge of the desk.

"Wet? Yeah, I know. I'm sorry, I didn't mean to... you know, to be all... I don't know." A shiver ran through her entire body as his hands slid gently up her slender thighs. "Oh my gosh I don't even know what I'm saying right now," she babbled.

Conner was barely listening. He saw this barely concealed pussy, and with a single breath, took in the scent of it as well. He'd never smelled an eager pussy before, and like most men, he fell in love with it instantly. His caress continued up her bronzed skin until his fingers were touching the waistband of her panties, his thumb resting not an inch from her gushing slit. He allowed himself a moment to tease her, gently caressing her inner thighs.

Then, quite suddenly, she burst into giggles. He pulled back, confused, and for a ghost of a moment he feared that he'd been right to begin with, that this whole thing had been an elaborate prank, that Hayleigh McKnight had gotten him worked up into a frenzy, let him come a hair's breadth from her pussy, then commenced peals of mocking laughter. Every muscle in the boy's body locked up, and his budding erection shriveled away in an instant.

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry!" Hailey insisted once she got a chance to take a breath, seeming to pick up on his reaction to her laughter. After all, his demeanor was screaming displeasure in at least three languages. "I'm so sorry. That tickled like crazy! I couldn't help it. It wasn't bad, just surprising. You were doing amazing. You're so sexy, and I didn't mean to laugh, and I'm so sorry, and I understand if you don't want to any more. Oh gosh I can't believe I..."

That momentary shock of laughter had been jarring, but the Hayleigh-cunt was still right there waiting for him. Conner just put a finger to her lips – and when she fell silent, moved the same finger down to her other lips. She offered no resistance as he rubbed at the front part of her panties; when he slowed his descent, she grabbed his wrist and thrust him further downward until he was touching the warm, damp fabric.

She was good and wet, all right; he was millimeters from having his hand inside an actual pussy. And not just any pussy, but Hayleigh McKnight's! (Basically.) As his index finger slipped between her moistened folds, she inhaled with a slight hiss, her hands suddenly gripping the edge of the desk like she meant to tear it off the frame.

"You like that?"

He'd meant it as a sincere question, utterly unsure of what he was doing. But Hailey nodded, swooning like he was some stud, teasing her. "Y-yes. Oh my gosh, yes."

Her response told him to keep trying to pretend to boldness. "You said you're a good writer, so use your words. Tell me what you like."

She seemed hesitant, but after a little pressure on her slit, she did her best to comply. "Y-your hand. On my, um, privates."

Conner was so nervous he couldn't believe this girl couldn't feel his hand trembling (or if she did, she probably thought it was deliberate, to titillate her.) Unsure of what to do, he channeled his inner Owen. The guy might be full of crap, but he definitely talked a good game – and, he remembered, Hailey had said dirty talk turned her on.

"Privates? Come on, you can do better."

She sighed deeply. "My... my pussy. Sorry, I never call them 'privates' like that. It's my pussy." Her voice warbled softly as she spoke.

Conner tried to keep his own steady. "Makes sense. After all, they're not very private now, hm? Looks like they're open to the public." Hailey didn't respond except with a quiet whimper of longing as he continued to tease her through her panties. "And what do we call a girl who opens her pussy to the public?"

"What?" Hailey asked, clearly reeling from her first ever fingering. She still definitely looked happy, though. Nothing told him he was going astray with this tactic. "I don't... I'm not..."

"Tell me what you are, Hailey, and..." Conner paused, abandoning her pussy to grab either side of her panties, ready to tug them down. "...I'll get these out of the way and keep going."

She whimpered, eyes bulging in panic as she realized she'd let her needfulness be heard. "Conner, I don't... I'm not sure what you mean, what you want me to say."

"I want you to tell me what kind of girl has a public pussy. That's all. Just say it, and I'll let you come."

She shivered. "But... oh please, just... I'm not..."

"Say it. You're a..."

She frowned; he began to worry he'd pushed her too far, and used a thumb to press down softly on where her clit was. He was pretty sure, at least, if anything he'd seen in pornos was the least bit accurate. (Was it?) But the gasp of pleasure she released confirmed it. "I'm a slut! OK? I'm a slut!"

“Atta girl, Hailey,” he said. Her thighs slammed shut to allow him to peel down her panties, and she kicked them across the room, landing on the arm of the cheap two-seater couch Miss C set in here for ambiance, and the occasional nap. Conner grinned at the sight of his first ever pussy – and none other than Hayleigh McKnight’s neatly trimmed landing strip. She was pale here too, another gap in her tanning, but the pussy itself was pure pink prettiness. It was glistening with wetness, and made a soft little *thwip* sounds as he resumed stroking its outer folds.

Little by little, Conner probed deeper, Hailey responding to every advance like his fingers were electrified. Soon he could actually see her clit, a glistening roseate nub at the crest of her slit. Owen had once tried to give him a seminar on how to finger a girl properly, and while at the time he’d been grossed out by his friend’s crudeness, to say nothing of being dubious about Owen’s actual depth of knowledge, he now clinged to what he remembered of it like it was the Bible. *Gentle moves, make her want it before you give it.* That’s what he’d said.

Then Hailey grabbed his hand and slid his index and middle finger up inside her in one fast push, convulsing on his desk top as he did so. It felt bizarre inside, far more textured than he’d imagined, minuscule bumps and lines along its surface. But then, something in him, that same something that had warned him not to let her realize her power over him, asserted itself once again.

He withdrew his fingers.

After a stunned moment, Hailey opened her eyes and looked down at him. “Don’t stop! Oh please don’t stop! I’m a slut, OK? I’m a huge slut! Please keep going, oh *pleeeeeease!*”

Conner pressed his fingers to her slit. She wriggled her hips, slumped down to try to get him back inside her, but he wouldn’t let her get more than his touch. “Would you let anyone – anyone at all – touch you like this?”

“N-no...”

“Who *can* finger you? Who has total access to your pussy, Hailey?” This gambit was something he’d actually seen on the internet, and while he remembered thinking it was ludicrous, Hailey sure seemed to be taking it seriously.

She didn’t seem to know the answer for a long moment, but finally hazarded a desperate guess. “You? You! Conner Fishers!”

He slipped the tips of his fingers back inside her, ignoring her moan, muted as she bit down on the back of her hand to muffle it. “So then, if you’re a slut, but only for me, then that makes you...?”

Her mouth alternated from one rapid heartbeat to the next, vacillating between panting in lust, grinning in delight, and eagerly babbling more filth to earn his fingers’ place inside her. “Your slut! I’m your slut! Oh gosh, just let me come, please! I’ll be your good slut, OK? Please, Conner, please!”

He slipped in to the knuckle. “That’s right, you’re my slut. And good sluts, Hailey? They ask for permission before they grab things.”

After a moment, comprehension dawned on that beautiful face. “Please, Conner? Please put your fingers in me? Finger your little slut, please? I’ll be a good slut from now on, promise!”

Conner smiled. “Good girl.”

Then, just as he was about to give her what she’d asked for – begged for, really – he heard a voice in Miss C’s classroom, just outside the office. “Yeah, hang on, I just gotta put the camera back or our d-bag editor freaks the fuck out. One sec.” Conner recognized the voice; even if he hadn’t, the raw contempt would have betrayed his identity.

Jordan Lyons.

Hailey must have heard it too, because her tan face went white. In a flash, Conner shoved his chair back against the wall, and Hailey dove off the desktop and under the desk. The door was opening as he grabbed Hailey’s top and bra and swept them down below with her. Jordan walked into the office even as she was tugging her jeans out of sight.

Jordan looked surprised to see his editor-in-chief. “Dude, do you just live in here or what?”

“I was just working on a spread. For, um, the, you know. Academic decathlon.”

The other boy walked past him, sneering as usual. Conner had no idea what it was about him that inspired such dislike, but boy did he ever. “Oh yeah, that’s right. You had to give up your weekend to watch a bunch of dorks have themselves a dork-off. Good times?”

Thankfully, Jordan had opened the cabinet where the photography equipment was stored and thus had his back to Conner when, suddenly, Hailey began undoing his fly. He’d never had much of a poker face, and having a naked girl under his desk trying to get at his cock was far from low stakes. “Oh. Um, yeah, it was... it was good. Really interesting. Nice people. Nice people, and really, actually, really interesting.”

By the time his incoherent rambling ceased, Hailey had eased his chair to the lowest height setting and eased his cock out of his pants. Thanks to a file cabinet that was meant to sit under the desk but had been moved from the editor’s office into the classroom, she had just enough space to turn her head to the side and begin running her lips up and down the length of it.

Jordan arched an eyebrow over his shoulder at Conner’s behavior. “Am I interrupting something?”

Hailey’s tongue joined her lips, softly licking at him, like his dick was a popsicle, and her favorite flavor. “No, just, ah, organizing some notes. Want to make sure everything is perfect.”

It dawned on him then that Hailey – and Hayleigh’s body – was wet as hell and dutifully sucking him off under his desk on a joking suggestion, all in the presence of the closest thing Conner had to a nemesis. Any blowjob was a power trip, but this was like a shot of adrenaline to the heart. As Jordan fumbled around looking for the right case for the camera, having failed to sign it out by number, Conner scribbled a hasty message on the pad of sticky notes on the desk, then stuck it to his own stomach. Hopefully Hailey would be able to read it. If he leaned back enough to check, Jordan would have too good of a chance of seeing a wisp of red hair on the editor’s exposed lap.

Finally, Jordan found the right case and secured the equipment. “Remember to sign it out next time and you won’t have to hunt for the case,” Conner pushed. It was the gentlest possible push, but a push nonetheless. Hailey’s unflagging enthusiasm for his cock had him feeling bold.

Jordan stopped mid-stride in front of his desk, heedless that not two feet away, a stunning redhead was stealthily sucking the cock of the man he so casually looked down on. “You know, I’ve been wondering something for a long time. What the hell do you get out of yearbook, man?”

At the moment, the truthful answer was that he was getting a heavenly blowjob from the divine lips of Hayleigh McKnight. Since he couldn’t say that, he gave the answer that was true at any other time. “They say these years go by too fast, Jordan. Somebody has to try to preserve this part of our history.”

“Preserve history? Yeah, ‘cause the world would fall apart if people could forget the dipshit outfits their parents made them put on for picture day. Just imagine the fallout if we left high school without a bunch of pictures of the basketball team.” Jordan scoffed. “You think this shit has meaning, but you’re throwing away your life on it.”

“Well I couldn’t exactly entrust it to you, now, could I. I remember you cheating off me back in middle school, and now here we are, and you’re still riding my coattails.” He hoped his voice wasn’t trembling too much; maybe there was something to what Owen had said about fat girls and blowjobs. (Not that Hailey was fat any more, thanks to him.) Her head gently bumped the underside of the desk, and Conner began drumming his fingers on the desktop to help cover it.

Jordan looked surprised to be talked back to by a guy who normally could be pushed around with impunity – but only for a moment. “You know something, man? You’re right. You’re smarter than average. Mr. Nice Guy. Honestly? You’re not ugly, either. Hell, you could have a real shot with Heather... if only you weren’t such a little pussy.”

“I... don’t know what you mean. I’m not even interested...” How did Jordan know?

“That’s right, Fishers. Don’t think I don’t know about your little crush on her,” Jordan continued. “The whole staff knows – Heather, too. And notice she hasn’t given



you the go-ahead. That's because she knows what you know too. That, deep down, you're just a little. beta. pussy." He loomed closer with each word. Conner clenched his jaw shut. It was the only reply Jordan got before he turned and left, shutting the office door behind him.

Conner failed to notice a final, puzzled double-take before the door shut, but shut it did, and clenched his jaw remained.

He assumed Jordan attributed the clenching was tarnished dignity, but really, it was the release of a fountain of cum onto Hailey's naked tits. Conner slumped back then, his chair drifting back against the wall, where he saw the fruits of Hailey's labor glistening on her untanned chest. She had apparently been able to read his note after all – *play with yourself, but be a good slut* – because she was following it precisely.

"Is it OK th-that I got it on my boobs? Y-you s-said you... ungh... like it, um, last night," she panted. "I... I like how it feels. W-warm, but c-cool."

"I love it," he said coolly, enjoying the sight of the redheaded hottie knuckles deep in her pussy, keeping herself on the ragged edge of orgasm without crossing it. "I'd love it more if you'd get rid of those tan lines, but this is an improvement."

Hailey smiled, but only for a moment before her mouth opened back into the same "O" of unrestrained lust. "I'll fix them. Tonight. After school." She spasmed, her orgasm nearing. "Ask me what I am."

He grinned. "What are you, Hailey?"

She whimpered. "A slut. A good slut. Your slut. Conner's good little slut."

She seemed to be enjoying the game, so he kept it going as best he could. It was feeling more and more natural to take charge over her by the minute. "And what do good sluts do?"

Her whole body was shaking, she was so close. "Ask p-permission."

"So ask me, Hai–"

"*PLEASE!*" she howled.

He tilted her chin up to look him in the eyes. "Come for me, slut."

Conner only got a glimpse of the rapture on his face as her body responded to his bidding. Then she was doubled over in an extended burst of raw pleasure, her body slumped to the ground and trembling uncontrollably while she did her best to keep quiet. Not that it would matter this time. She was too far gone now to hide if the door opened. If someone came in now, they'd be treated to the sight of Conner Fishers' naked slut quivering on the floor.

No one came in. But the bell rang, and lunch was over.

"Oh gosh – oh gosh! I have to, um...!" Conner handed her some tissues from the box on his desk to clean herself up from both of their juices, quickly tucking his deflating package away as she hastily gathered her clothes.

“Leave the panties, Hailey. I want something to remember this by. To remember the hottest experience of my life.”

She beamed. “OK. You can have them.”

He’d never seen someone get dressed so fast; she nearly tripped twice getting her jeans on. Good thing, too, because students from Miss C’s next class were already filing in, and while they weren’t likely to open the office door uninvited, it wasn’t an impossibility. “So... I’ll text you later? And sorry if I didn’t do everything right. I’ll do better next time.”

Conner nodded. “You were amazing. I hope I didn’t freak you out or anything.”

“You were *perfect*. Text you later.” And she was gone.

He was already going to be late to his next class by the time he ran back to his locker, but he didn’t care. The moment Hailey was gone, he double-clicked the icon labeled *This Is Our Story* on his laptop. As soon as he logged in, he went to the class picture spread. Side by side, but in the reverse of their real order, were the faces of Hayleigh McKnight and Hailey McManus. He’d switched them...

And he had to switch them back.

As the cloud of lust lifted and the light of normalcy returned, he looked back in disgust – and more than a little shock – at what he’d just done. What had come over him?! He’d heard the old saying about absolute power a million times, but here was proof positive. He got a chance to take a beautiful girl and use her, and he took it without hesitating. Every time she’d dragged her feet, he’d pushed her. Every time he’d been sure she didn’t want to do something, he manipulated her into doing it. He’d used her, demeaned her, treated her with shame and contempt.

Had she really liked it? Surely she had simply pretended to in order to maintain his interest. Worse, now that his head was clearing, he had to acknowledge other thoughts he’d been having. Wondering just how slutty he could get her to be. Fantasizing what other girls he might superimpose on Hailey’s body. Heather? Heck, Miss C? She was his teacher, sure, but she was still quite attractive. There were a dozen others, and he was sickened with himself to admit that even Angelica’s face had popped in there for a moment.

This was wrong. It was time to set it right before things got worse. He clicked on Hailey’s round-faced photo, mislabeled currently, and dragged it on top of Hayleigh’s, just like he’d done Sunday.

*Error: Limit exceeded Code 0014002*

What?!

He tried dragging Hayleigh to Hailey. Same error. Hailey to Hayleigh again, over and over. What the hell?! It had worked instantly the other day, and now it was stonewalling him! Conner didn’t even know how to look up error codes in this infernal software. There had to be a way to reverse the changes. There just had to! Whatever it

was, though, it wasn't as easy as doing the damage in the first place had been, and finally Miss C paused her class for a moment and poked her head in.

"Get your butt to class, Conner! I get enough heat from the faculty for you guys wandering the halls as it is without you ditching class!"

"Sorry, Miss C, but I need to—"

"You can do it this afternoon. Go. Now." The young teacher gave him an uncharacteristically hard look – then a moment later, her eyes widened. "Is that a pair of underwear?!"

Conner followed her gaze to where Hailey's sodden panties were still draped over the arm of the little couch, and he suddenly understood Jordan's parting puzzlement. "Oh wow," he said, channeling his inner Clark Kent. He'd have pushed his glasses up his nose if he had any. "Who on earth...?"

"Who on earth indeed," she said darkly. "You and I will sleuth this mystery later. For now, go to class, do not pass go, do not collect \$200."

Never more glad to be underestimated, he hurried out of the office and through her classroom. The inquisitive stares of two dozen sophomores who'd just learned of a pair of discarded mystery panties followed his every step.

## Chapter Four

“So this is our own private version of the software, custom-made for our own yearbook. Everybody go ahead and click on the shortcut, and I’ll walk you through the basics,” began Miss C that afternoon.

Conner was already logged in and drumming his fingers impatiently. No wonder he couldn’t find another product name on the software anywhere; it had been written specifically for Northside High School. He needed to figure out how this crazy thing worked so he could find another way to fix what he’d broken. If he couldn’t learn about the maker online, maybe Miss C could point him in the right direction.

With agonizing slowness, his teacher helped the class set up their logins and be introduced to some of the major features. Her plan was to tackle a couple a day in depth for the remainder of the week, so that by the weekend they’d be relatively self-sufficient and could resume production. Today, she was starting with the class spread tool. Conner followed along, opening the class spread as she instructed.

“Everybody seeing what I have up on the projector?” she asked. No one dissented, so she began explaining. “This here is what we call the master spread. This is an index of all NHS students, current and in a few cases former. Expulsions, withdrawals, that kind of thing. This is what TIOS uses to annex all the other references of students. It’s sort of a combination of the usual class spread and the index, where it not only has each student’s class photo, if they have one, but also has indexes for every other photo they’re tagged in elsewhere in the book.”

Indeed, a handful of students had a small print number under their names. Conner immediately recognized them as the freshmen academic decathlon participants. “So you see here, Raymond Marquez – everybody find him on your screen – there’s a little number 0001 underneath, OK? That number is a spread he’s tagged in. The number is in green, which means he’s in a picture in that spread. The royal blue is for spreads where he’s quoted or mentioned by name, and teal is for both. If you click on it, it takes you to that spread.” She clicked, and the screen projected on the front board showed Conner’s in-progress spread he’d begun over the weekend.

DeShaun raised his hand with a question. “But a number seems kind of... I mean, like, wouldn’t it be better if it just named the spread so we’d know what we were clicking on?”

“It would for a lot of students, but let’s take... well, let’s take you, DeShaun. How many clubs and organizations are you in this year?”

“Um... cross country, track, wrestling... band... marching band... natural helpers, National Honor Society, Key Club... I think that’s it.”

“And yet somehow he’s single, folks!” teased Jordan. DeShaun shot him a dirty look

“Don’t forget yearbook now, DeShaun,” added Miss C with a smile. “And you’ll have your senior quote, plus maybe one or two others... my point is, for a very active student, it takes up a lot of visual space here. So TIOS uses numbers to keep it short, but if you mouse over it...” She did so, and the words *Academic Decathlon* popped up. “There you go. As long as the spread has a title, so make sure you get in the habit of titling them as soon as you open them, so you know what you’re going back to.”

“Are you following this OK?” whispered Heather as Miss C paused to do some one-on-one troubleshooting.

“Yeah, it’s pretty basic so far. I played around with it a little over the weekend; it gets pretty complex, but a lot of it seems to be learning what the program will intuit.”

She frowned. “I just wish we had some kind of straight-up manual. These tutorials are always so...” She made a little growling noise. Coming from her cherubic blonde face, it was rather adorable. “I mean, we’re going to have a test over this, and it’s all going to come from notes and ad hoc pointers.”

“You’re probably the smartest student in class, Heather. If Miss C ever writes a test you can’t pass, the rest of us are doomed.”

She gave him a little smile; Conner hadn’t even realized he was complimenting her until her reaction. “Well just make sure you know what you’re doing, because if I need to start cheating off of somebody, you’re my guy.”

Conner laughed. “Why, because I’m an easy mark?”

She arched a thinly sculpted brow. “No, because you sit right beside me. If the editor-in-chief gets any input on the next seating chart, try to keep yourself in my eyeline.”

Miss C called attention back to the front of the class and resumed going through pointers. As she went on, Conner heard very little of it. After surreptitiously tilting his monitor so that Heather couldn’t observe him, he resumed staring at those interchanged pictures, still idly daring them back to their proper place, every time still getting the same error.

“Wishful thinking there, Conner?” said Don behind him in a stage whisper.

Suddenly everyone was looking at him, even as he once more dragged Hailey’s picture to Hayleigh. All eyes on him, rather than quickly scroll away before anyone else saw what he was doing, he instead froze. “What’s going on?” asked someone up front who couldn’t see his screen.

“He was trying to swap Hayleigh McKnight’s picture with some fat girl,” said Don.

“Donald!” snapped Miss C. “That’s very rude. Why don’t you mind your own business and pay attention up here, all right?” Still, Conner didn’t miss the sharp look she directed at him for a bare second.

The editor-in-chief’s mind was racing, both in terms of the embarrassment he’d just suffered and the information he so desperately needed. In a rush, he cut in before the teacher could continue. “All I was trying to do is see if you can rearrange the photos, like if there’s an error or something. And I guess my brain got mixed up in the alphabet or whatever because I thought Hailey McManus and Hayleigh McKnight were in the wrong order.”

Miss C paused, then scrolled from the freshman all the way down to the seniors until she found the two girls, in the same wrong order on her screen, and the projector connected to it, as on his. “They look to be in the right order to me...”

Nobody disagreed. Conner gritted his teeth in frustration for just a moment, then replied. “No, I see that now, but like, what if. Like say there’s a new student and they’re put in the wrong order, or somebody switches some pictures as a prank.”

Miss C nodded. “Thankfully, that shouldn’t be a problem – at least not for you. The photos here are all entered by the photography studio, attached to each students’ name, and they sent the info to the TIOS team. See, say I try to switch two pictures...” She leaned down to her laptop as the males in the class as ever trying not to be too obvious about admiring the view down her less-conservative-than-usual neckline.

“Like say, we tried to do yours,” she said, scrolling up a couple pages to the F’s. “I click Conner Fishers, try to put his photo on Alexandra Finch...”

“NO!”

The whole class turned to stare at him in shock. He’d screamed that outburst, terrified by the prospect. Miss C just mouthed “w.t.f.” at him, eyes askance, and completed the operation anyway. The girl’s picture now said Conner Fishers, and vice versa. Conner flinched, then immediately looked down at himself. He was the same... right? Clothes for sure. Alexandra was multiracial, but his skin tone still looked the same shade of pasty-white-boy to him. As the class got over its puzzlement at his behavior and resumed looking at Miss C up front, he surreptitiously slipped a hand between his legs to confirm that yes, his penis was still there. He heaved a sigh of relief.

“So see, it swapped the pictures. And now Conner can relax as we see it only switches yearbook photos and not their immortal souls.” The class had a little chuckle at his expense. “Now, neither of these two are tagged in any spreads yet, but rest assured, the spreads are attached to the names, not the pictures, so it won’t break any links or mess with anyone’s spreads. And all you have to do to fix it is just... *voila*.” She dragged the two back.

No error message. And, so far as he could tell, no body swap.

What the hell?!

The remainder of the tutorial went off without incident. Conner paid attention, though distractedly, and nothing that was said explained anything about how he’d done what he’d done. But he *had* done it, hadn’t he? Could all this be some kind of hallucination?

No. That made no sense. People hallucinated under the influence of chemicals, or extreme stress. He’d been under neither, and even if he had, it wouldn’t persist this way. Hailey was Hayleigh, and Hayleigh was Hailey. Even if nobody noticed but him. He’d get to the bottom of this... but today, he’d already drawn enough attention to himself, and he didn’t want to take further risks.

At the close of class after spending the last fifteen minutes helping individuals troubleshoot, Miss C returned to the front of the room. One glance was all it took to confirm she had her Business Face on, one she only wore when someone had truly screwed up. The students stopped readying backpacks and listened closely.

“Ladies and gentlemen of the yearbook staff. Earlier today, I was privileged to find a pair of underwear in the yearbook office.” The class broke out in the mumbles, some in timid giggles, but a sharp gesture from Miss C and they were silent again. “I don’t know whose they are, and the school has refused by request for DNA testing, so you got lucky this time.”

“That’s right he did,” said Don with a smirk. Everyone else had read the room, and knew this was not the time for jokes. No one laughed.

“They were actually women’s underwear, Donald, and I encourage you not to double down on your point.” She re-directed the stern look to the rest of the class. “Henceforth, the office will be locked at all times unless in use. Only Conner and I will have a key. So if you need to check out equipment, you’ll have to find one of us to let you in. Or if you need to defile my classroom, you’ll need to dump some ice down your britches and grow up. Understood?”

“What if they were Conner’s panties, Miss C?” said Jordan, smirking at his classmate out of the corner of his eye. A derisive eye roll at the boy’s idea of a joke from Heather was small comfort to Conner. “Doesn’t seem fair to accuse everyone but him.”

“Well then I suppose if it happens again, we’ll know who to blame, won’t we,” she responded irritably. “And one more comment like that, Jordan, and you’ll be spending the rest of the week in detention.”

“Yes ma’am,” he said, smirk not fading.

The bell rang moments later. Miss C wordlessly handed him his key with a lingering gaze that made him wonder how seriously he took Jordan’s quip. Regardless, he was out the door a moment later. He rendezvoused with Owen at his locker, and as his friend went on about some banal incident in math class, Conner tried to figure out how to make things right again. He couldn’t keep using Hailey – especially since once he found out how to reverse the switch, he wouldn’t want to. It was a shallow of him, yes, and that was a big part of what was making him feel so guilty. Still, physical attraction was a real thing, and honestly, he wasn’t even attracted to her personality. Besides, once they graduated and moved on to the real world, would Hayleigh’s reality come crashing down if people started treating her like they did Hailey? Maybe her popularity was only a result of her having won the genetic lottery and being so afraid of fatness that she spent ten hours a week on the treadmill, but that didn’t make it any more right for him to take it from her.

Only then, he walked by her on his way to the parking lot.

She was with a group of her friends, though he didn’t see her boyfriend Jayce Deacons among them. He did, however, see Jordan Lyons, smirking as ever. Lord, how Conner wanted someone to knock that look off his face. Aside from Hayleigh, everyone else in that cluster was either gorgeous, or close enough that their family’s money could make them seem that way. As for Conner, he barely glanced at them, like usual, only then Hayleigh spoke to him.

“So Jordan tells me you were trying to turn your little girlfriend McManus into me in yearbook. Is that right?” said Hailey McManus’ voice with a level of haughtiness it had never before held.

“What? Hailey’s not my girlfriend,” he stammered. Owen stopped beside him, but stayed back. Starting an argument with these people could be social suicide, and Owen’s position was already precarious. He’d step in if he had to, but only then.

“Really? Weren’t those her panties you were sniffing in the yearbook office? That’s what I heard. You two would make such a cute couple. Fatty, and Ratty.”

Conner didn’t really get the jibe, but the imagery coupled with her rhyme seemed to amuse her friends. “Look, I didn’t mean to–”

“Fuck what you meant to,” she cut him off with a sneer. “You know, I could tell Jayce you were messing with me and he’d beat your geek ass through the pavement. Now apologize, and then get the fuck out of here.”

Conner just stared for a moment. Jordan’s arms were folded across his chest, looking more pleased with himself than anyone Conner had ever before seen. “I-I’m sorry,” he stammered. “But I really wasn’t... trying...”

His words fell on deaf ears; as soon as he apologized, the popular crowd broke into laughter and started walking away. He heard Audrey Fowler trying to console Hailey. “Ugh, the number of creeps you have to put up with, babe...”

“Uh, so... how was *your* day, dear?” asked Owen.



Conner didn't answer his friend. What would be the point? He couldn't convince him of the reality of the situation, and he didn't want to relive the tongue-lashing he'd received from Hayleigh. Instead, they drove home in awkward silence, and after dropping off Owen, Conner had every intention of calling up Hailey and telling her it was over. Then his nerves got the better of him, and he thought maybe he could find a way to do it via text. Of course, bringing up his text conversation with Hailey was an immediate window to those lurid pictures she'd sent him at lunch, which sapped what remained of his will.

Ever a believer in nap therapy, Conner retreated to his room and took a couple hours' sleep. His dreams were fitful, and while they weren't metaphorical to his plight, they certainly kept him mindful of the urgency of what he was dealing with. With his mind better rested, he reached to his nightstand to pick up his phone and—

Where was it?

A search commenced. Conner was forever misplacing the thing; he wasn't such a social butterfly that he was getting a steady stream of updates. Only it didn't seem to be in any of his usual spots. Not the bathroom, not the kitchen counter, not in the foyer where he took his coat off, not his desk, not yesterday's pants pockets... nothing. Before he quite reached the point of despair, he finally thought to check the next most probable cause of it going missing: his pesky stepsister Angelica.

"Hey Ang, have you see my phone?" he yelled down the hall.

"We're indoors, Conner, use your indoor voice – or just text, for crying out loud," said his stepdad from the living room, gradually trailing off in volume.

But Angelica arrived in his room a moment later. "Looking for this?" she asked, holding up his phone.

"Yeah – what the heck are you doing with that?" Conner made a grab for it, but she pulled it back.

"Well you left it on the gossip bench, and the damn thing was ringing nonstop. Being the benevolent sister-ish type I am, I went to mute the damn thing, but when I swipe it on, what do I find?"

She held it up at arm's length behind her, the screen facing towards him. As her thumb moved across the screen to unlock it, the color drained from his face. The first thing that popped up was the closeup of Hailey's bare breasts that she'd sent him earlier that day.

"Give me that!" he said, trying to push past her outstretched arm to get it. She relented after a moment, letting him snatch his phone back and remove the image from the screen.

"So looks like my advice worked!" she said proudly. "Got your little gal pal sending you some kinda freaky pics, do ya?"

He sighed. Of course to her, the pictures would seem to be nothing all that hot. "They're not 'freaky.' People do that all the time. It's normal."

"What, send each other porn? In my experience, you usually start with selfies and bore yourselves into stooping to porn shots. Not that I've ever bored a guy," she said, grinning smugly. Conner doubted it. His stepsister was blessed with some mighty fine genetics of her own, and he'd be lying if he said he hadn't occasionally noticed when she walked around the house in something skimpy. It was an awkward thing, suddenly

gaining a hot female presence in your house at the age of sixteen but having society tell you not to notice.

“Well kudos to you. And these *are* selfies. That’s just what she looks like.” He glared, daring her to laugh.

And laugh she did. “Yeah right. So your chubby date turns into a skinny girl with amazing boobs under a full moon of fluorescent lights, does she?”

Conner was ready to tell her to mind her business when suddenly it struck him. “Wait. You think... you think these boobs are amazing?” He unlocked the screen, then held up the picture of Hailey’s chest.

“Don’t be a pig, Goner. I’m not gonna sit here and talk about your girlfriend’s taste in porn with you.”

Conner rushed to cut her off as she turned to leave, kicking the door shut behind him. “Wait. Just this one question. Not a conversation, just... you’re telling me that this picture, right here on the screen... this looks like porn to you, and not a fat girl?”

“First off, big girls can and do star in porn, ya pig. Get woke. Second off, I’m not blind. Obviously those are quality ta-tas. Now can I go, or do you have some more smut you wanna run by me?”

He didn’t get in her way as she brushed past him. Instead, he was throwing on shoes and moments later dashing across the street to Owen’s house. He was practically family there himself, so he went straight in and down to the basement, where Owen’s room was.

“Oh hey, man,” said Owen. “Good timing. Trying to unlock the viridian skin for—”

“I don’t care. I need to show you something.” Conner fished his phone out of his pocket, and with a swipe of his thumb revealed the shot of Hailey in her stall. He didn’t like showing something this personal to his friend, who could be insensitive in even the best of times, but he needed another set of eyes.

“Um, what? Did you just come over to show me... wait, is that a bathroom stall at school? Who the hell is that? Is that Casey Nielsen? Damn nice titties, baby!”

“No. Shut up. I need you to do me a favor and describe what you’re looking at.”

“No seriously, dude, you have to tell me where you got this. Did one of your staff members do naughty things with a camera and forget to wipe the memory card? Holy shit, is that Heather? No way, her tits are volleyballs, not softballs.”

“Damnit, Owen, just tell me – do you think these boobs look good, or gross?”

“Well, I’m definitely not a fan of those tan lines. Those are just terrible.”

“But overall—”

“What do you want me to say? Good job finding a picture of amazing boobs? Now are you gonna tell me who those belong to, or do I have to fucking guess?”

“AHA!” Conner shouted, then winced at his own volume. “Dude, you need to sit down for this one.”

“Um, I am sitting. And frankly, it’s kind of annoying that you’re not.”

Conner settled into the spare seat on their gaming couch as he replied. “OK, now... tell me what you think of *this* shot.” He scrolled up just a little to Hailey’s original shot, where she was still in her bra.

“Still not bad, though I’d take the first one any day.”

Conner stroked his chin. “What color hair would you say that is?”

Owen glanced to his friend. “Huh? Tits have hair? Oh, that. Um, I dunno. Brownish reddish something?”

Hailey – the original Hailey – had a light brown color. Now, thanks to him, it was auburn.

“Holy... dude, those are *Hailey’s*.” Conner said, holding his phone up to Owen’s face so he could see the name attached to the contact.

Owen shook his head quickly. “Wait, what? Hefty Hailey’s sending you pictures of girls in the bathroom? That’s fucking creepy. Cool of her, though.”

“No, dammit – that girl in the picture, it is Hailey!”

“Um, obviously not, man. Stretch mark free, see?” Owen said, rolling his eyes. “She didn’t seriously try to convince you that was her, did she? Are those photoshopped to look like our bathroom stalls?”

Conner finally took a seat, stealing himself with a deep breath. “Look, I have something to tell you. And it’s going to sound insane, but I think I can prove it if you’ll just hear me out.”

“Dude–”

“Just shut up for a minute, OK? Let me say this.” Owen shrugged and gestured for his friend to proceed. “So last week, yearbook got this new software. And I was doing the spread for academic decathlon, and while I was doing it, I was looking through the class spread – that’s where everyone’s school picture is saved in one massive file. And I was looking at Hailey, and kind of feeling sorry for her I guess, and I dragged Hayleigh McKnight’s picture over to McManus, and my system swapped them.”

“I don’t follow. You mean your phone? Like, it flipped contacts around or some shit? Because I hate to burst your bubble, but no way Hottie Hayleigh is sending you topless pics.”

“No man, I don’t mean... I’m saying it *swapped* them. TIOS.”

“What the fuck are tios?”

“*This Is Our Story*. The new yearbook software. Look. I went and clicked on the academic decathlon spread again, and suddenly, McManus’s face was replaced with McKnight’s in that picture, too. And then, remember how I was pointing out McKnight with Jayce Monday? Because, you see, now she looks like McManus! Only nobody noticed but me – until you saw this picture of McManus, who now has the body of McKnight!”

Owen made a face. “You are making no sense right now.”

“Look, what I’m trying to tell you is–”

“I speak fucking English, man. But what I’m saying is that the words you’re saying do not compute. Did you have a nervous breakdown? Try acid or something? Did she bully you so hard you’re actually hallucinating?”

His friend sighed. “I didn’t think you’d believe me. But watch – I can prove it.”

He picked up his phone and typed out a text to Hailey. Owen scooted over so he could watch. “You better not be trying to punk me, man.”

Conner ignored him. *Hey, Hailey. I just wanted to say what an amazing time I had today. You were absolutely incredible.*

He hit send, and hoped she was near her phone, and in the mood to talk. Sure enough, it notified him she was typing a response soon enough. *Thanks. That was pretty crazy lol*

Owen looked like he might be sick. "Dude. Please do not make me hear about this straight from the big fat horse's mouth."

"Right, 'cause I'm the one who's always sharing TMI," he muttered, typing. *I hope you had fun too. I know I did. Seriously cannot WAIT to see you again.*

*I had fun too. had no idea u were into that kind of stuff! Lot to wrap my head around!*

*Don't get me started on how hot you looked with your head wrapped around a certain something... ;)* Conner replied, trying to suppress his misgivings.

"Gross. Fucking gross, dude. I mean, right on, but gross."

*Well, I wouldn't be a very good slut for you if I didn't try my hardest... lol* she said after a minute.

"Oh god, dirty talk from Hefty Hailey. There goes that kink," griped Owen.

*You know, I wouldn't mind a peek at my little slut right now,* Conner continued. *Any chance you're feeling a little naughty?*

"You did not just use the word 'naughty,' Conner."

"Shut up. Now just wait..."

Sure enough, a minute later came a fresh picture. From the color of the paint on the walls behind her, he surmised this was at Hailey's house. He presumed it was her bedroom, though he was yet to see it personally. Most of the shot was dominated by her chest, two weighty but perky half-orbs with dazzling white triangles dominating each.

"See?! I *told* you!" Conner insisted, shoving the phone in Owen's face.

"Told me what? There's still no way that's Hailey!"

"What! You're saying she just happened to have that shot handy on the off chance I asked?!"

"Makes more sense than what you're saying."

Conner frowned, then typed another text. *So fucking gorgeous. Could I have one with your face? You're so pretty, I want to see you in it too.*

"Maybe she's photoshopping. Wouldn't prove anything," Owen insisted.

Conner rolled his eyes and went on. *Oh, and maybe you could, like, close your eyes and make a kissy face, and hold your hands up in a little peace sign? That's how you hot girls always pose, right? ;)*

"There. Think she can photoshop all that in thirty seconds?" Owen had no reply this time. And sure enough, in about that span of time a new pic showed up that was exactly what he'd requested. Perfect boobs and all.

"HA! There it is! In your face!"

Owen averted his eyes, groaning dismally. "Oh GROSS, man! I can't believe you just made me look at Hefty Hailey topless!"

"I... but... it's the same body! Don't you see that? It's the same fucking body!" Conner held it up again, and again Owen looked away in disgust. "Hang on..."

Conner tapped the picture, then zoomed way in so it was nothing but boobs, with a little bit of her peace sign. "Here. What do you see now?"

Owen refused to look. "I'm not falling for that shit again, man."

“Dammit, just *look*, Owen!”

Owen glanced down for just a moment, and then back, his grin slowly returning. “Now that’s more like it.”

“Well, now, just keep looking, and...” Conner pinched the photo and slowly zoomed back out. There was her toned stomach, the peace sign, the ends of her hair, her arm extended to take the selfie, her neck, and finally, her face.

Owen’s ginger face went even paler than usual. “What. The. FUCK!”

“What? Did you see? Can you tell it’s her now?”

His friend kept staring, trying to make sense of whatever it was he’d just seen happen. Finally, he turned back to look at Conner. “You... you swapped them. You weren’t fucking kidding. Holy shit, man, you... you... this is...!”

“I know, I know! Why do you think I’ve been so freaked out all week! Now do you see why I hooked up with her?”

“Shit, Conner, why the hell aren’t you over there slobbering on those sweater cows right this second!”

Conner grinned, then picked up the phone again. “That reminds me...” He sent Hailey another text, claiming his mom needed him for something, but he’d text her again before bed. She said not to bother; she had a field trip tomorrow and was turning in early and then sent him one last screenshot of another kissy face.

“Holy shit that girl is so hot, dude. I cannot fucking believe you!” Owen exclaimed, punching Conner softly on the shoulder.

“I know it, man. So like, what did you see? When I zoomed out?”

Owen thought for a moment. “Well, it was like... I dunno. Like I saw hot titties, right, and then... I can’t explain it right. It was sorta like that scene in all those stupid chick flicks where the girl lets down her pony tail and takes off her glasses and is suddenly insanely hot. Like, I recognized her as Hailey, but like, I never realized Hailey was such quality tail. Does that make sense?”

“None of this makes sense, but I think it fits our narrative at least.”

Owen nodded. “So today, when Hottie Hayleigh – McKnight, I mean – flipped out on you...”

“I was trying to switch them back.” Conner held up a hand to forestall his friend’s outburst. “I felt bad, OK? I mean, it was awesome, but I’m playing around with people’s lives. And either way, it won’t work. I don’t know why, but it won’t let me switch them back. For now, they’re stuck like this.”

“Hey, after the way that cunt treated you this afternoon, serves her right.”

“Maybe.” Conner flopped onto his back. “You have no idea how good it feels to have somebody else know about this, man. This has been the weirdest few days of my life, and I was half-worried I was going crazy.”

“If you are, you’re taking me with you,” Owen said with a laugh. “So what’s our next move? Who’s our next target?”

Conner tilted his head up to look at his friend. “No. No more targets. I don’t even know how I did this, or what the ramifications are. I can’t just go willy nilly transforming people!”

“Uh, yeah you can. Hey, I think I have a shot with Kendra Holcomb. How about we get a nice pick of your stepsis and... voila, life goal achieved, baby!”

“Angelica doesn’t even go to our school, Owen! I can’t swap photos with someone who doesn’t have a photo there.”

“Have you tried?”

Conner paused. “Well, no...”

“Then what say we try, eh?”

After hours of back and forth with Owen, it was going on midnight before Conner returned home. Music was faintly audible coming from Angelica's room across the hall; no doubt listening to it on her headphones so she could still vibrate her brain without waking the whole house. He made sure not to make a peep as he let himself into his room and closed the door behind him.

Angelica. Owen's crush had never been something he'd kept secret, not even from Angelica. He was often apt to make an awkward come-on or lewd comment. Luckily for him, she'd decided to take the whole thing as a running joke and bantered back. For instance a time last summer when he'd given her a thorough once-over and said, "damn, girl, all those curves and me with no brakes!"

In response, Angelica had stepped – stomped, really – on his foot with her heel, then as he yowled in pain, answered, "Really? You're sure there's nothing broken in there?" They were kind of terrible to one another, but really, his flirting and her rejecting seemed to upset Conner more than either of them.

Only now, Owen wanted to take it to the next level.

He tried not to think about what his friend had asked of him as he settled into bed. As a distraction, he figured he'd go ahead and help himself to another perusal of those pictures from Hailey. It was then that the boy finally realized that she'd tried to call him – four times – while he'd been napping that afternoon. That's right, Angelica had said his phone ringing was what had bugged her to the point of picking it up and set off everything that had followed.

There were three voicemails. A bit nervously, Conner queued them up and hit play.

"Tuesday, 3:55pm," said the robotic voice, then shifted to Hailey's. "Hi, Conner, it's Hailey. That was, um, pretty whooooooa, today, right? I wondered if we could talk, maybe? Not that I didn't have fun! I did. You're sooooo amazing. Oh gosh. Anyway, call me maybe? Please? OK, bye!"

It proceeded to the second message. "Tuesday, 5:19pm. Hi Conner, Hailey again. Sorry about that other message – sometimes I call without knowing what I wanna say and I just kind of babble like an idiot instead of getting to the point, ya know?" There was a brief pause. "Whiiiiich I guess I sorta just did again. UGH. Darnit! Is there a delete button on... Anyway, sorry, just wanted to try to catch you, and–"

Conner couldn't help but give a little laugh as she was cut off. It then went to the third message. "Tuesday, 6:04pm. Conner? Um, this is..." He heard a deep breath. "This is your... your little slut? I miss you. I want you. Call me?"

Holy crap.

He listened to that last message over and over until, with a contented sigh, Conner went to sleep harder than he ever had in his life.

The following afternoon found the two boys huddled around a borrowed NHS laptop at Conner's desk in his bedroom, *This Is Our Story* loading. The day had been pleasantly uneventful to this point – no guilty-boner-inducing texts, no social assaults from girls in other girls' bodies, no weird shifts in reality from a renegade yearbook program.

At least, not unless they succeeded.

"Look away, Owen, I gotta enter my password."

Resentfully, Owen turned his back. "What, like you're worried I'd steal your login and turn every 2 in our school into a 9? Because I would. I so would."

"I was more worried you'd try to switch Zack Hofstra with Keith Dudley just to watch Zack drag himself around the school on his elbows while nobody noticed." Zack was one of Owen's own nemeses at school; Keith was a student in a wheelchair.

"Holy... you think that'd work?!"

"Moving on... I'm logged in."

Owen whipped back around. "So what do we got here? What do we do?"

"Well... first let me say again that—"

"—that you're not promising anything, I know, I know. Broken frickin' record."

"Good. Also, remember to keep your voice down. Angelica's just downstairs, OK? So all right, let's just see what we see."

Conner started with the class spread. All 2,244 NHS Nighthawks, organized alphabetically by class. Here and there was a blank space for kids who'd missed picture day or had transferred to school later on; others had a red X in the corner for students who'd dropped out or otherwise left NHS. Owen groaned at the sight of his own picture, a fresh dorky haircut his mom had imposed on him stuffed into the only dress shirt he owned. Owen was already not the most photogenic person in the spread; he was the quintessential ginger, and while his braces had finally come off last year, it was still hard to picture him without them.

"Hey I could always switch you with somebody with an ounce of fashion sense. Somebody who actually hit the gym once in a while."

"Whoa, you could! Oh wow, let's—"

"Bear in mind, I'm the only one who'd be able to tell, so fat lot of good it'd do you."

His friend's face sunk. "Fair point. So now, what do we do? Angelica's not in here, obviously, so like... Do we just say, hey TIOS, hocus pocus pretty please?"

"I'm not sure... Here, let's try this." He opened a new spread, and with a few clicks, uploaded a picture of Angelica they'd swiped from her facebook. She was wearing a cute white shoulderless dress for a concert she'd gone to at the end of the summer. She was the only person in the pic, so hopefully it'd be difficult to screw it up too badly.

Conner then clicked the button to tag a student in the spread, and TIOS gave him the option to input either a name, or select one from the class spread. Conner chose the latter, then scrolled down to the seniors. To be cautious, he clicked on Sasha Quesada's picture. She'd been expelled a few weeks ago; rumor had it she'd threatened to burn down a boy's house over some kind of infidelity-related issue. Conner didn't see how expelling her made this less likely rather than more, but left such determinations to



professionals. Either way, it was a girl who, if things went wrong, would be less likely to cause problems – for them, anyway – if this went wrong.

“Psycho Sasha, huh? You sure about that?”

Conner gave his friend an annoyed look. “Is there anyone you don’t have an alliterative nickname for?”

“You jealous, Cuddly Conner?” Owen went in for a hug and Conner squirmed free with a laugh.

“Anyway, I’m not going to try to switch them. It should have some kind of confirmation check, and my thinking is that even if something goes wrong, if we do it in a spread, we might be able to undo it by deleting the spread.”

“Um, sure. Well, let’s do this shit, man. Click away!” Conner tagged Sasha in the photo, then went back to the spread, muscles tensed to see what awaited him.

“Holy...”

“... shit,” finished Owen.

There in front of them was a picture of their felonious Latina classmate wearing Angelica’s dress. She was even shorter than Conner’s stepsister and painfully thin, although the dress had shrunk to compensate. The picture looked otherwise identical – same facial expression, same angle, same background, same lighting. The only thing that had changed was the girl.

“Did we... are they...?!” said Owen.

“I don’t know. Oh shit, last time it asked me to confirm the change! What the... Shit shit shit! Hang on. OK, maybe... let’s check, OK? Let’s just check.” Conner opened a browser and went to facebook. With his heart in his throat, he typed Angelica into the search window and went to her page. Both boys heaved a massive sigh of relief as they saw her profile picture was still the real Angelica, and when he clicked on her photos, they all seemed to show the same.

Except for one.

“Dude, no fucking way!” exclaimed Owen. “It’s like... it’s like we rewrote time, or something! Like that moment, we left everything the same but who was standing on that spot. Look, even the tag!” He pointed, and Conner saw that indeed, the photo was now tagged with Sasha Quesada. He was pretty sure she had never even met his stepsister.

“Just to make sure... why don’t you go downstairs and check. Just in case.”

Two tense minutes later, Owen walked back into the room. He looked like he’d been gut-punched. “Dude. You’re not going to believe this.”

“No! Shit, no! Oh my god, my stepdad is going to *murder* me when he finds out! Oh shit oh shit oh–!”

“She’s fine, moron. Geez, you panic like that and it sucks all the fun out of punking you.”

The information sunk in after a moment, then he took a feeble swing at Owen’s arm, deflected with a laugh. “You asshole!”

“Sorry, I couldn’t help it. She’s fine. Damn fine, actually.”

Conner rolled his eyes and sat back down. “All right, now let’s see if we can untag her.” There was no undo button, but when he went back to the class spread, it allowed him to uncheck Sasha’s picture. Sure enough, when he went back to the spread with Angelica’s picture, there she was again. Same with its facebook counterpart.

“All right, so we can fuck with her picture – now can we move along with the process?”

“Calm down. We’re messing around with serious stuff here. I’m not going to rush it just because you can’t keep it in your pants. So let’s see if we can find a way to add her to the class spread. That’s where I switched Hailey and Hayleigh, so if we’re even considering this, we should start there.”

“Considering? Dude, you had me at I-body-swapped-Hefty-and-Hottie.”

Conner browsed through his buttons and drop-down menus, looking for anything that would let him add a student. Even with Owen as a second set of eyes, he couldn’t find anything. It was frankly illogical, considering if a new student transferred in, they’d have to be able to add them somehow. There were image editors, spread editors, yearbook staff management tools, organizers and sorters and filters. But no Add Student button.

“Looks like we may be out of luck, man,” Conner said at last. Secretly he was a bit relieved. He’d never been close with Angelica. Still, it felt weird to contemplate messing with her like that, even if neither she nor anyone else would know. She’d been pretty cool the other night, giving him advice for his date, even if she was usually a thorn in his paw.

“Damnit. There’s gotta be something in here, buried in some sub-menu somewhere!”

“We’ve looked and looked, and either it’s not part of the program, or, more likely, they made it so only Miss C could do it.”

“Well that sucks. Shit.” Owen glowered at the screen as if it had wronged him.

“Hey, and speaking of, I gotta use the bathroom. Do I need to take the laptop with me, or can I trust you not to screw with things?”

“Hurtful that you don’t trust me. I promise, OK? I’ll look for a way to add her, but I won’t click anything without you. Promise.” Conner narrowed his eyes, but even skeptical as he was of his friend’s level-headedness, he’d known Owen since before kindergarten, and he knew when he meant what he said. This was serious enough stuff to give even Owen’s libido pause.

When he came back, Owen was still on their trial spread with the picture of Angelica. Only Conner could see he’d typed something – and there was a dialogue box that had popped up. “You better check this out, man.”

Conner took his place, looking first at what his friend had typed. In a text box next to the picture, in the agreed-upon yearbook font type and size, were the words, *I just can’t get enough of Owen’s schlong!* The pop-up box, which his eyes scanned in the next instant, was an all-too-familiar error exclamation point. Only this one read *Error: Invalid quote Code 0040181.*

“Real fucking mature, Owen. What the hell is this?”

“You tell me! I couldn’t find a way to add her, so I was just fucking around and thought it’d be funny. But then this error message pops up. TIOS can be a little bitch, man.”

Conner frowned. Its juvenile content aside, there was otherwise nothing intrinsically wrong with the quote. He hit OK on the error message and it disappeared, then inserted a quote himself. Rather than repeat Conner’s quote, he typed in *blah blah*

*blah testing testing*. He clicked to confirm, and there it was. *Error: Invalid quote. Code 0040181*.

“Why would it...” He thought for a moment, double-checked all the settings, made sure the alignment for the text box was perfect, this time just hit a bunch of keys – *fo;ijkwhekjsdhjds* – and again. *Error: Invalid quote. Code 0040181*.

“What the hell is an invalid quote?” he muttered grouchy. Heck, at this point he wasn’t even worried about the program’s bizarre powers; he just wanted to be able to include a quote in a spread. He went back to the academic decathlon spread, and sure enough, the quote there was just fine. Conner deleted it, re-typed it, and there it was. No problem. So why...

“You know, Mrs. Reyes got really pissed at me when I made up a bunch of quotes on my research paper last month. Could that be...?”

“Right, because TIOS knows when the quote is made... up...” Mid-sentence, Conner reached the same bizarre hunch that Owen had.

Conner clicked to create a new quote. This time he typed, *“That’s nice.”* – *Angelica Buck*. Something she was sure to have said countless times. He clicked enter, and...

The quote remained.

TIOS could distinguish between real and fake quotes.

“OK, what the *fuck* is this thing?!” Owen said, standing and taking a few steps back.

“This... I don’t know. I just... I don’t know.”

Then, suddenly, Owen bolted from the room.

“Dude – hey!” He blinked as his friend vanished down the hallway. He expected to hear the front door a moment later, but instead he heard feet thundering down the stairs. What could he be doing? He tried to listen, but other than a derisive-sounding laugh from Angelica, he heard nothing. Then feet on the stairs again, and then there was Owen in the doorway.

“Move over, man.”

Conner hesitated only a moment before his curiosity bade him comply. Owen settled back in, and once more opened a quote box. *“I can’t get enough of your cock, Owen.”* – *Angelica Buck*, he typed.

He hit Enter.

The text box remained.

“OK, what the hell did you just do down there?”

“Who me?” Owen grinned.

“Seriously, man. Spill it.”

“Oh fine. I went down there and I told Angelica I was going to start a podcast – you know how she’s always raving about this or that fucking podcast – and I needed a female co-host with a sexy voice. So I asked her to say, in her sexiest tone...”

Conner re-read the quote on his screen. “And she did it?”

Owen shrugged. “Sort of. I mean, she said it like...” He pinched his nostrils shut and did a nasal whine. “‘I can’t get enough of your cock, Owen.’ And she laughed at me, and I laughed, and then I came back up here and BAM, there it is in black and white.”

Conner shook at his friend. “You are such a child. You do realize that just because she said it doesn’t make it true, right?”

“Well let’s find out, shall we? Sitting here with your magic body-swapping program, and somehow you’re so certain about what it does and doesn’t do.” He excused himself, and Conner waited. About thirty seconds later, he heard a shriek that at first he thought was Angelica’s; only as he heard her shouting did he realize the sound had come from Owen.

“Now get the fuck out of this house and don’t you fucking dare set foot in it again, you sick little pig! I mean it – get the FUCK out!” Conner winced. His stepsister had some pipes on her. From his bedroom window, he watched a clearly wounded Owen staggering down the driveway and across the street. One hand was clutching his groin; the other was held out in front of him as if to catch him in case he fell.

He threw up in his mom’s hydrangeas.

“I do not want you hanging out with that freak any more, do you understand me?” Angelica was saying before she even reached his room. Conner pulled a lightning quick alt-tab just as she stormed into his room.

“Why, what on earth happened?”

“Fucking pervert pulled out his dick at me, and I kicked it right the fuck up into his pervert throat – that’s what happened. Can you believe that pig! The nerve! And right after he came down asking... you know what? No. Fuck that. He is not allowed over here any more while I’m home from school. I so much as see his cowlick’s shadow cross the front doorway and I’ll tell your mother exactly what he did. You get me, Goner?”

“I get you, I get you!” he assured her. “And... for what it’s worth, I’m sorry. I... I didn’t think he’d do that.”

She paused for a moment, and seemed the slightest bit mollified before she departed. Only when the door was shut – slammed, really – behind her did he return to TIOS. He studied those ridiculous words on the screen for a long moment, then shook his head and decided he’d screwed around enough for one day. He clicked the X in the corner to close it – when it surprised him yet again.

*You have unsaved work on spreads (1). Do you wish to save?* Conner wondered for a moment, and decided he was curious enough to want to have the option to explore more later. He clicked yes, and then popped up yet another window.

*There are untagged references (1) in this file. Would you like to tag now?* He shrugged and clicked Yes, not sure what to expect. To his surprise, a box opened up with the name Angelica Buck at the top. Beneath was a series of options: student, faculty, staff, administrator, other. After a moment, he clicked student. His mouse showed the computer was working, and when after a couple minutes it hadn’t finished, he was about to force it to shut down when still another box appeared.

*No student profile found under the name BUCK, ANGELICA. Is this an alternative name?* Then it listed a teacher, a woman he was pretty sure worked in the lunchroom, and two students, all with vaguely similar names. Sophomore Archer Buchhold was the closest, and it was not that close at all. At the bottom, however, he saw he could select, *This is a new student.*

He checked that box, and hit Next.

*New student added. Add default photo?*

“No. Freaking. Way.” Conner stared, then hastily brought up the class spread. There she was among the seniors, no picture shown, right between Vivian Bucello and John Burke. Angelica Buck. He clicked the blank space where her photo should be, and TIOS asked if he’d like to upload a picture. Since he had it handy, he went ahead and added the one he and Owen had been using earlier. (That is, after making sure it was really her and hadn’t reverted to Sasha Quesada. It hadn’t.)

Considerably puzzled, he finally closed the program. What had TIOS done this time?

## Chapter Five

Conner seldom remembered his dreams. At most, the fuzzy portions that remained with him were from the dream events immediately preceding waking up. On this particular night, however, he remembered not just one, but two dreams nearly in their entirety. In the morning, when his alarm clock went off, he opened his eyes to the fleeting memory of a scenario in which Miss C told the whole class she'd been logging his TIOS usage and its effects, exposing the perverse ways he'd attempted to abuse his authority. The whole class had found it pathetic, laughing uproariously at the idea he could ever lay a finger on Hayleigh McKnight. Except for Heather, who simply regarded him with disgust, recoiling from him when he tried to apologize. The receding shame he felt as he silenced his alarm was still nearly enough to have him swear off the program forever. He might even drop yearbook, he thought...

If not for the other dream, which had awakened him in the middle of the night with an erection so intense it was physically uncomfortable to sleep on. In it, he'd been quite simply using Hailey like she was his sex slave; she agreed to everything he suggested, and the bolder he grew, the more obedient she became. Then he began turning her into other women. Heather, of course. Other girls from school, a few celebrities. Even Angelica and Miss C at various points. Although he knew the two were each empirically attractive, he'd always kept up a mental barrier about thinking of his stepsister in that way, and tried to think of his teacher solely as a professional.

Apparently in his dreams, drunk with power, both were fair game.

He kept the temperature low in the shower that morning. Normally, if he had that much sexual energy in the morning he'd simply masturbate and take care of it, but every time he touched it, he kept seeing that sea of faces, and knowing his stepsister was asleep in the next room made it too awkward.

He kept his head down as he arrived at school; returning to the scene of the incident reminded him all too powerfully of the humiliating tongue-lashing he'd received yesterday from Hayleigh, thanks to Jordan's blabbing about his efforts to turn her back to normal. So much for that, he thought bitterly. Now even if TIOS let him, he didn't think he could muster the good will to set things back to normal.

Hailey's locker was vacant as he passed by; Conner silently cursed her field trip for depriving him of the opportunity to find some quiet nook somewhere and ditch class to have his secret hottie suck his cock like the slut she was.

He blinked. *Easy there, Conner.* He'd never skipped class in his life, and it was decidedly unlike him to be thinking about a woman as a sex object. Just because Hailey played along when he'd gotten pushy didn't mean he could take her for granted.

*Mm, taking Hailey.*

Thoughts of baseball were forced into his mind as he made his way to class.

With Hailey gone, it was a fairly typical school day for him. He had a pre-cal quiz that he felt confident about; English class was a partner project that was, if not fun, at least low-stress; Mr. Taalib was out sick and his class just watched a video; in his government class, there was a new student.

"Class, this is Angelica Buck," said Mrs. Antony.

Conner was too stupefied to react as she assigned his stepsister – his *college student* stepsister – a seat across the room, gave her a textbook. Nobody else recognized her, but that made sense. (To the extent any of it made sense.) Angelica’s dad had married Conner’s mom two years ago, at which point the family consolidated in Conner’s house, the larger of the two. The wedding and subsequent move had been the summer after Angelica had graduated; she’d gotten her diploma from Central High School.

She didn’t so much as wave at him. The day was a heavy lecture period; Conner tried to take notes, but he was too busy pondering the implications of this turn of events. It wasn’t until after class he got a chance to approach her, shouldering past Brett Barnett and his efforts to hit on the fresh meat in the class.

“Angelica? Um, what are you doing here?”

She gave him a look like it was the dumbest question he’d ever asked. “Government.”

“No, I mean, what are you doing *here*?” He gesticulated wildly around him. “At Northside?!”

“I live in the district...? Are you off your meds, man?” She nudged past him into the hall, and he had to really hustle to keep pace with her.

“What about college? You already graduated! You can’t be a student here! You’re... this... it makes no sense!”

“Why would I be here if I had already graduated Conner? I swear, you pay no attention to anything but your own geeky little sphere.”

He nearly tripped trying to dodge around the flow of traffic in the hall while keeping pace with her; it was clear she didn’t want to be seen with him. Sensible enough. Angelica had been part of the pretty and popular clique in her day; he was a social liability. Not that he was a pariah by any means, but it was common knowledge that first impressions matter for new students. Faced with the choice of pushing through a conversation between the chemistry teacher and one of his students or letting her escape him, he chose the latter.

This couldn’t be happening.

Thankfully, lunch was up next, and he quickly confided this turn of events to the only person who even might understand him, Owen. He explained about how he’d closed the program down, had created a file for her at the prompt.

“Wait, you mean... Hang on. This is all so screwy, it’s hard to wrap my head around,” Owen said, pausing to slurp up his jello like an animal.

“Tell me about it!”

“So you’re saying... Angelica, your stepsister... she’s supposed to be in college...?”

Conner’s jaw dropped. “Were you not listening! She’d been in college almost the whole time you’ve known her! Remember when I had to yell at you for sneaking into her room while she was away? Or that time she told you you were too stupid to understand what she was reading? Come on, you gave me crap over that for a month!”

Owen frowned. “Keep going. This sounds... I dunno. Right? But... not.”

Conner pressed on, doing everything in his power to jog his friend’s memory. Tale after tale, one anecdote after another. Finally, Owen just shrugged. “You know, nothing that you’re saying sounds quite right, but... after the Hefty-Hottie thing, I’ll take

your word for it. Jesus H. Christ, now you got me trapped in this alternate universe. What else is backwards that my brain can't even realize?"

"We have to tell her. We've completely changed the course of her life! She has classes – college classes! – resuming Monday! That's four days from now!"

"Well you'll have to come up with something better than what you threw at me to convince her, because if I didn't know what you'd done with the Haileys, I'd think you were fucking nuts, man."

Conner sighed. "I'll think about it. In the meantime... this program is giving me the heebie jeebies, Owen. We're up to at least three people now whose lives it totally let me screw around with like they were made out of play-dough."

"If you got to sculpt girls out of clay you could at least give them bigger jugs." Owen grinned.

"Hailey's a C cup, and Angelica's... you know what? Why do I listen to anything you say."

"Because boobs."

"That makes no sense."

Owen rolled his eyes. "Like anything does these days."



Other than a few eye-popping texts from Hailey, who managed to slip off to the bathroom during her field trip to remind him what her tits looked like and how much “*your slut misses your big hard dick in her mouth,*” it was a normal day. He did nothing untoward with TIOS, and even managed to mostly not think about those dream images of Miss C and Heather on their knees, worshiping his cock. He caught Jordan whispering to some of the staff, pointing and snickering in Conner’s direction, but a glance at those pics from Hailey quelled his anger handily.

*Any more of these pics and I may just have to take you on another date that never leaves the house,* Conner texted once he was back home.

Not a minute later Hailey sent him another picture, lifting her shirt up over her breasts. Her bra was still on, but from the angle, it looked like she was taking it in a very public building, hiding behind some kind of marble statue for some small amount of privacy.

*You’re so unbelievably sexy,* he replied.

*Your slut is glad she pleases. ;) So when’s our date?*

He smiled. *Is tomorrow too soon?*

*Is tonight too soon?* Then a blushing emoji.

*Come over tonight. No underwear.* He didn’t even know what possessed him to add the condition. Maybe just to enjoy the fact that he could.

*You got it!!!!*

No hesitation. How could he have gotten so lucky?

A couple hours later, he heard the front door close. Angelica was home. Further attempts on the ride home to persuade Owen verbally of her reality had failed; back home, he’d hit upon one idea, and he could only hope it worked.

He’d left his bedroom door open so he could address her as she came by, which she soon did. “Hey, Angelica. Good first day?”

“It was fine. As good as any first day.”

“Cool, cool. Say, would you do me a favor and tell me what’s hanging on the wall by your window?”

She eyed him askance. “Have you been in my room? If you fucked with my stuff, you really will be a goner.”

“I didn’t touch anything. Just... humor me this once, please?”

She rolled her eyes, then glanced in. “Just a frame. Why?”

Was she resisting, or just being obtuse? “And what’s *in* the frame?”

She squinted. “I dunno, it’s squiggly print and I don’t have my glasses on.”

Conner sighed and approached her. He didn’t quite have to shove her to get past her. “You can read it, Angelica. This is important – just trust me.”

“What are you...” she sighed. “Fine, I’ll read it, but then get the hell out of my room and don’t come back in without my permission, all right?”

“Deal.”

She had to get awfully close before starting. *Man, how bad is her vision?* wondered Conner.

“It says: ‘Central High School... This certifies that Angelica Marie Buck has satisfactorily completed the course of study prescribed by the Board of Education, and is

therefore entitled to this diploma... Given on this sixth day of June, 2016.' Buncha signatures, some Latin on the seal." She turned to face him. "Happy?"

Conner was in fact not happy. "And why do you have that?"

"What? Because I..." Suddenly, to his immense relief, her face twisted in a confused frown. "I... what the... why am I..."

"Say it, Angelica."

"Because... I graduated. A year and a half ago. From Central."

He nodded. "Right. Right, good. So... why are you now attending Northside?"

She was silent for a long moment. "I don't have a clue in the world. How did I even... but..."

She fainted. Conner reacted just in time to redirect her fall towards her bed, though she still bounced off and hit the carpet. He nearly yelled for his mother, who was in the kitchen working on dinner, but then he thought about how much harder it would be to make explanations with her present. Not knowing what else to do, he fanned her with the corner of her bedspread. After a minute, her eyes blinked back open.

Conner put a gentle hand on her shoulder, keeping her lying down. "Hold still. You fainted for a second there. If you sit up too fast, you could do it again."

She squirmed momentarily, then acquiesced. "What the hell is going on, Conner? Why am I in high school? *Your* high school?" She sounded livid. It was the same tone in her voice she'd had when she'd banished Owen the night before. The tone she'd had when the night when he'd hit her car with his bike, scratching and denting her door. Angelica had a serious temper; that night, her dad had had to hold his daughter back after slapping him to the ground and trying to do worse.

"I... I don't know," he lied, remembering that altercation all too well. "I just thought it was weird, and so I... I dunno."

"No. No, I cannot be in high school again. I'm turning twenty-one in five months! I have... oh shit, do I? Help me up."

Conner stayed right by her side once she was up, just in case, but she only went over to her nightstand and sat back down, folding open her laptop. She was clicking and typing faster than he could follow at first, but he soon realized she was trying to log in to her college's online services. Three different pages, and all of them failed to load. She clicked *Forgot Password*, but when she entered her .edu email, it responded that her address was not recognized.

"This can't fucking be happening," she said, double- and triple-checking her spelling. The email address was simply *abuck*. There wasn't much to get wrong. When that avenue failed, she went to the kitchen and asked her stepmother some leading questions with a pitiful effort at casualness.

"When do I go back to school?"

"Hmm? Tomorrow, honey. It's one of those new Monday to Friday schools."

"Do you remember my grad party?"

"Of course I do. Your father and I will take care of everything, don't you worry."

"Why did I just now transfer to Northside?"

"You tell me, sweetie, you're the one who dragged your feet about it forever. I think it's going to be such a good fit for you, and having Conner there will make the transition so much easier."

“I’m twenty years old. That doesn’t strike you as weird that I’m still in high school?”

“We don’t care how long it takes. Your father and I are very proud of you.”

And so on. Nothing seemed to faze the woman except, eventually, the mere fact that these questions were being asked. Soon Angelica retreated to her own room, shutting the door behind her. She didn’t come out for dinner, which was just as well since Hailey arrived just as Conner was setting the table.

“Mom, Dad, this is Hailey McManus. Hailey, my mom and dad.”

His mother smiled, teeth shining like the sun. “Hello, Hailey! So nice to meet you!” Conner’s stepfather just nodded cordially and resumed watching *Wheel of Fortune*.

“Hi, Mrs. Fishers. It smells great in here. Oh, wow! Did you do this stenciling yourself?” she asked, gesturing to the decorations along the upper wall of the kitchen. If he had coached her on what to say, Hailey couldn’t have said something to better ingratiate her to his mom. Just like that, Hailey was the best thing he’d ever brought home to her.

With Angelica still in her room – Conner could only assume she was trying to figure out her life – Hailey was given her spot at the table. Hailey and his mother seemed like an unstoppable force of excitable small talk, leaving Conner and his father to simply eat their meals as members in their studio audience. He may as well not have been there.

When his father retired to the living room and his mother was getting a second helping of squash, Conner gave Hailey a soft grin and took a feel of her right breast. Even through her shirt it was obvious there was no bra. She smiled proudly in response to his approving nod.

“Is it cool if Hailey and I go back to my room?” he asked after dinner, while Hailey was in the bathroom. “If you leave the dishes in the sink, I’ll get them once she heads home. We’re just going to watch this thing I heard about. On youtube. Or Netflix. Or something.” He’d never brought a girl home before; he didn’t know the protocol for taking one back to his room.

She patted his hand. “Don’t worry about the dishes sweetie. She is *delightful*. You have to bring her over more often! You two have fun, but not *too* much fun. And remember it’s a school night. Your father and I will be right downstairs.” She kissed his cheek.

He was waiting in his room with a movie on pause when Hailey made her way down. She closed the door behind her, and at a gesture from him, she locked it as well. Just in case. Conner hit play on the video, and as the opening credits rolled, he lunged at Hailey and threw her down on his bed.

“Shhh,” she cautioned as he stood looking over his prize. “Your sister is right across the hall! And, um, should we do, you know, that kind of stuff, with your parents home?”

“We’ll keep quiet, and they won’t interrupt us. Now show me those tits. You have no idea how much I’ve missed them.” Conner could hardly believe he was saying these things, but he’d also never been so horny in his damn life.

Hailey's cheeks colored, but she slipped off her sweater without hesitation and dropped it on the floor. Her perfect little teardrops were there, on his bed, waiting to be touched. "See? Told you I was a good little slut," she said softly.

"Oh yeah? Prove it," he said in kind, pointing to her jeans. Conner had to clench his jaw shut from groaning in delight as Hailey rolled onto her hands and knees, and with her butt pointing right at him, slid her jeans down her legs. There it was, her pussy. His pussy. He knew without knowing how that he she'd let him do anything he wanted to it if he asked. The moisture he'd seen in her panties yesterday was now out in the open air, so damp she looked like she might start dripping.

"I told you," she said, settling onto her back once again. The body of one of the hottest girls in school was lying naked on his bed, waiting to be taken. "Your good slut."

"My good slut indeed," he said. Conner undid his belt, then paused. Why undress himself when Hailey would be too happy to do it for him? At his invitation, she bounced happily to her feet and took off his shirt, then his pants, soft hands roaming across his skin enticingly. Then she knelt in front of him and pull down his boxers.

"Would you like me to...?" she asked, hovering there near his cock. Conner could literally smell her arousal. "I would, if you wanted. Gladly."

But as she leaned in to put her lips to it, he took the rod in his hand and bapped her gently in the nose. "Come on now, Hailey. Ask right."

She blinked in surprise at the rebuke, but she nodded. "Right, sorry. Of course." She ran her fingers through her hair, teasing it up, narrowed her eyes seductively. When she spoke, her voice was low and breathy and full of promise. Had she been practicing?

"May your horny, big-titted slut pretty please suck your big hard cock?" she asked. Her eyelashes fluttered plaintively, and she even clasped her hands together desperately in front of her pussy. *How much of this was an act? Any of it?* he wondered. Because to look at her, she appeared every inch sincere, horny and eager to get his shaft in her mouth. Every time he wondered if he was pushing it too hard, she doubled down on her eagerness to play along with it.

"Your tits aren't *that* big," he said with a playful grin. Her original body was probably a good deal bigger. "And the tan lines only make it more pronounced."

Conner had meant it as harmless teasing; he had failed to account for just how anxious Hailey really was. She wilted immediately. "I'm sorry. You're right. I shouldn't have... sheesh, I always find the wrong thing to say at the wrong time, don't I? Gosh I'm making this awkward. I guess I meant, um, you know..." She took a deep breath. "I'll get them tanned. I'll tan naked from now on. Every day, until they look right to you. My bottoms too. I usually feel weird being, you know, naked in a public place, but that's silly, right? And, um, I wouldn't really be a 'slut' like I keep saying if I was too scared to do a little thing like that, even when nobody is looking."

Conner felt a need to reassure this poor girl, and tossed out a compliment. "You were definitely brave enough to show me your boobs today even in the middle of a crowd. That was crazy hot."

"You... you liked that? Me showing my boobs around all those people? I mean, I was basically hiding in this corner and I am 99% sure nobody saw anything. I mean, somebody would've probably screamed if they saw all... this." She laughed, but in a

self-deprecating way, as she ran a hand over her flat tummy, fit thighs, mouth-watering tits.

“You kidding? If it was up to me, I’d have every inch of you that we could get away with hanging out at all times. I wouldn’t hide a single inch of you that the law didn’t mandate.”

Her nipples hardened even as he looked down at her, warming to his praise. “You don’t have to say things like that you know. I’d still like you, even if not for all the sexual stuff.”

“But the sexual stuff is the best part!” Conner insisted. “Nothing against your company, but last night you were literally the girl of my dreams, and you didn’t have to say a word.”

Hailey’s cheeks flushed slightly. “You... dreamed about me? Really?”

“Really really. And I almost never have dreams like that.”

“Wow. So like, in your dream, what’d I, you know... do?”

Conner closed his eyes, letting the images come back to him. “To be honest, you spent a lot of it on your knees, exactly like you are now.” He opened them. “No. In the dream, you were playing with yourself, too.” That was a detail that had stuck with him. Hailey, so overwhelmed by her lust for him that she couldn’t keep her hands off of her own pleasure centers.

“So... like this?” Hailey licked her index and middle finger, then reached the hand between her legs. Her eyes fluttered softly as she began to gently probe at her nether lips. Her other hand found a breast, grazing fingertips over the skin, here and there making contact with its swollen nipple.

“Yeah. Just like that.” He watched Hailey masturbating beneath him for a while, her hips rocking side to side, breath quickening. Every so often a tiny moan got away from her; each time, she would bite down on her lower lip as if to try to hold it in. In time, her whole body began trembling, and he could tell she was about to orgasm.

“Then,” Conner interjected, Hailey’s eyes snapping open, “you looked me in the eye and asked me if you could come.”

She was panting with need as she spoke. “Can I come? Please?”

“Good girl,” he said. It was all she needed. Hailey suddenly broke down, the hand in her pussy seized in the throes of her orgasm as she doubled over, trembling. She took Conner’s discarded briefs in her mouth to help muffle her wails, and to be safe, he turned up the volume on the TV a few notches.

“Th-thank you,” she whispered into the carpet before pushing herself back up to a kneeling position. “That was some dream.”

“That wasn’t the half of it.”

“Oh, right! I mean obviously in your dream, I’d be, you know, doing stuff to *you*. I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to be selfish. Can I... Please, can your slut – who is definitely going to take care of her tan lines, I promise – suck your cock now? Please? Did I say please before? I meant to. Anyway, please, can I?”

“In the dream, I didn’t let you off this easy, but... I just can’t say no to that face when it’s begging for cock.” This time, Conner didn’t stop her as she moved in to start her blowjob. He couldn’t have said why it made any difference what the girl sucking him

off looked like; he only knew that this sublime body, this gorgeous face, eagerly slurping up and down the length of him was perfection itself.

In this moment, he didn't care about Angelica's schooling, or Hayleigh McKnight's reflection in the mirror, or what anyone would say. He just wanted to use this body in every way that a man knew how. Without quite realizing it, his hands transitioned from caressing Hailey's silken hair to simply holding her face on his cock. His hips joined the fray soon after, and without complaint, the redheaded vision on his bedroom floor knelt submissively while he well and truly fucked her face.

This time, she swallowed it all down. Her eyes had started watering from the deep throating, and her makeup had run down her face. Conner didn't care. The sight of her struggling to contain all of his cum – struggling and failing, as a bead dribbled out of her mouth and onto her left breast – was too beautiful in its own right. The running mascara had, if anything, added to it.

Conner dropped back onto his bed, and a moment later Hailey was crawling up, pressing her body against his, draping a long thigh over his waist. "Did I do good?" she whispered. "I didn't know what to do once you... I just tried to open wide and take it. Was that right? Did you like it?"

He ran his fingers along the smooth expanse of skin on her leg. "You were great. Even better than last time. Have you been practicing?"

"Um, no. I didn't think I could. Can I? I guess... yeah, I guess I could. I'm sure there are tutorials and tips and stuff out there. I'll do better. I promise. I'll practice so good that next time you'll..."

"... be so overwhelmed by how frickin' sexy you are that every time I see you I demand another one? Because if you get any better, that's what'll happen."

"I'll get better."

The two lay there together, each pretending they were watching the movie. Conner didn't hear a word. Hailey's incredible body was right there on top of him; she made no complaint, nothing but tiny happy noises, every time he touched it. As his libido recovered, his explorations slowly grew more aggressive. Caressing her hip became rubbing her leg became probing the inner thigh became spreading it slightly became exploring her labia. His arm around her shoulder, through a series of similar instances of growing boldness, became rolling her on her back and gripping a tit in each hand as he sucked on her nipples like he meant to see if they could be detached.

Through it all, Hailey lay there with a blissed out expression. Later, Conner wouldn't even be able to remember at what point he climbed aboard her nubile body and started to fuck her tits. Hailey simply smiled sweetly, pushed them together, and – when the friction grew too bothersome – cleverly noticed the hand lotion on his nightstand and helped ease the way. Sometime after he came, spurting a second burst across into her chin and across her lily white breasts, Hailey would shyly ask him if he used the lotion for "you know... when you..." and Conner would tell her that, thanks to her, he hadn't been able to stop lately.

"Oh, you're just saying that."

"I'm not. Being with you, like this... this is the hottest thing I've ever done."

She smiled softly. "Good. That's what I want, to make you happy."

"What about you?"

“Me?”

“Yeah, Hailey. Are you having fun? Are you happy with how we’ve been going this week?”

“YES.” It came out forcefully. Desperately. If he’d quoted her in TIOS, he’d have had to put it in all caps. “I just like you, and it makes me happy to see you happy. Like... I guess maybe we’ve done things I didn’t think I would do? But now that we’ve done them, I’m so glad. Because look how, erm, ‘happy’ you are.” She gave his hardening cock a slow stroke.

“Really? You’re sure we’re not going too fast?” If he hadn’t been so preoccupied with her beauty, Conner might not have been so sure himself.

“I swear.” She smiled brightly. “Your little slut loves taking your cock in her hand, her mouth, between her tits... She’s even kind of liking thinking of herself as your little slut.”

“I was only playing, Hailey. You don’t have to...”

“No, I mean it! Like, earlier today, when you wanted to see my boobs... I didn’t care if anyone saw. I just wanted to show them to you. It was really, like, hot, I guess. When you told me not to wear underwear, I actually, um...” She licked her ruby lips. “I kind of got a little wet.”

“You’ll say something if I take things too far, right?” Conner pressed. “I know I’ve been kind of... I dunno. Not myself, I think. Pushy. I don’t want you to do something you don’t want to do just to make me happy.”

“If you want to do it to me, I want to do it,” Hailey said simply.

“Oh come on, you can’t just give me a blank check like that. Who knows what kind of stuff I might come up with?”

Hailey did not mirror his impish smile. “Try me.”

“OK, um...” He considered, trying to think of one of those many things he’d heard Owen talk about that he couldn’t imagine a woman liking. “Spanking.”

Instead of acknowledging the line he’d crossed, Hailey suddenly poured her lithe body across his lap, arching her back so that her glorious rear end was positioned perfectly for the act. “I think I’ve been bad enough to deserve it. Go ahead.”

Conner instead pulled her back into her cuddling position she’d been in. “OK. What about, say, a facial?”

“Like with makeup?” she asked.

“No. That’s where a guy, um, comes on a girl’s face.”

“If you want. You’ve already practically done it twice, and I don’t care. I kind of like it when you come on my boobs, actually.”

He gave them each a grateful suck. “Role play.”

“Who do you want me to be?”

“Handcuffs and ropes and stuff?”

She stretched her hands up to the headboard, as if tied to it. “Gladly.”

“Dirty talk.”

“I already begged you to fuck your slut’s big – but not that big, I know – tits. My cunt gets so fucking wet thinking about your big fat dick, drilling–”

“Shhh, my family’s still home!” He considered a moment. “All right... how about anal.”

Hands still “bound,” she rolled onto her stomach and adjusted herself so her ass was bared. She didn’t say a word.

“Come on, Hailey. We haven’t even had, you know, regular sex.”

“You have a condom sitting right there on your desk. What’re you waiting for? Assuming that’s for me. Maybe you just have a condom, which I guess is a totally normal thing for a guy to have. But if you got it for me, I, um, I would be OK if you wanted to use it. But I totally get if you don’t.”

Conner eyed the condom Angelica had given him for a long moment. “Have you ever... you know. Had sex?”

Hailey shook her head somberly. “Have you?”

He shook his head.

“I... do you...” Hailey trailed off.

“I don’t know...” All the weight years of socialization made this seem a much bigger decision. Maybe it was. Even though he’d been using this girl’s body like a playground, and she’d only moments ago invited him to try out some of the other equipment, actual Sex sex felt like a bigger deal. Yet the hesitation in his voice, born of reticence to suddenly grow up, could easily be mistaken for hesitation born of disinterest.

Hailey heard the latter. She suddenly sprang into motion, her trim body straddling his waist. His cock was immediately underneath her pussy, and it was growing the moment they touched. His instincts were all suddenly alive – nothing awkward, nothing guesswork; just raw, mammalian certainty that this was the other reason he had grown a dick. Hailey evidently felt it too.

She leaned down, her breasts squashed firmly against his chest, mouth moving to his ear to whisper. “Please fuck your slut’s wet greedy cunt. Please. Her cunt is so greedy and needy and would be so good to you. Please, Conner? Please fuck me. Please. I want to give you everything you want. Oh please oh please oh PUH...! Leeeeeaaaase...”

He never so much as reached for the condom.



## Chapter Six

“So can you give me a ride to school, Goner?”

Conner looked between his mother, who was putting the finishing touches on their breakfast, and Angelica, sipping her coffee across from him. He replied in a low voice, hoping his mom was more focused on the oldie rock station she always listened to in the mornings. “So... you’re going to go back?”

Angelica shrugged. “Sure. Like, what’s the alternative? I can’t go back to my normal school, and my dad would freak if I ditched what he thinks is my new school. Besides, I already did all this shit once, so why not just boost my GPA and take it easy?”

“Oh. You’re not... mad?”

“Mad? At who? Some bizarro portal in the universe that warped me to another reality? Nah. I did all right in high school, and I’ll do better this time around. Besides, not like there aren’t fringe benefits here and there, if you know what to look for.”

Something subtle in her tone made him cognizant of the way she looked today. He was so used to seeing low-key Angelica, home from school and lounging around the house, that he forgot how well she cleaned up. A fashionable dark floral dress that was snug across the chest and then hung straight down to mid-thigh, makeup to the nines, hair straightened, jewelry. Her stepbrother so seldom noticed her appearance, he’d nearly forgot how good she could look. “Got your eye on someone, do ya? Aren’t you worried about jailbait?”

Her voice dropped still lower. “Really? After your little date last night, you wanna lecture me on what I tap?” She grinned at the sight of his crimson façade. “Anyway, are you gonna give me a ride or what? I don’t have a parking pass, and what’s the point in spending forty bucks on one if I can bum off you?”

“Uh, that could actually be a problem. See, I give Owen a ride.”

She frowned. “Oh yeah. Eh, I can behave myself if he can.”

“Then... sure, I can give you a ride.” Conner could almost hear his friend’s voice echoing, *I’ll ride you any time, Ang.* Lord, he hoped the guy could behave himself for a fifteen minute car ride. He didn’t have much hope.

Except when Owen hopped in the backseat a short while later, the only thing he said was, “Oh, we’re taking you today? Cool. You look really nice, by the way.”

“Thank you, Owen,” she answered.

That was it. That exchange was very nearly as strange by virtue of its banality as everything else this week had been by its bizarreness. The whole drive was silent save for the radio. When they got to school, Angelica parted ways with them, though only after Owen wished her a good day, and she wished the same to him.

“OK, so what the hell is going on,” Conner demanded of his friend once his sister was out of earshot.

“What are you talking about, man?”

“I’m talking about the first civil exchange I’ve ever seen between the two of you.”

“Eh. I figured after how she flipped on me the other day, I’d better just play it cool. Damn, man, I’m not *that* immature.”

“Since when?”

Owen laughed. "Say, speaking of grown-up behavior, how'd your date with Hottie go last night?" Conner's broad grin gave it all away. "That good? How many bases you round?"

"I... look, you wouldn't believe it all if I told you. She's so into me, she'll just... I'm not exaggerating when I say she'd do anything for me."

"Oh bullshit. Man, one little blowjob and suddenly you think you're big pimpin'."

"Her words, not mine. I tried to come up with something she wouldn't do, and if she has limits, we didn't find them."

"Wait, you mean you didn't find them, as in you got all kind of wild? Or you didn't find them, as in she *said* she'd get all kind of wild?" Owen asked. "Talk is cheap."

"Well..."

"Ha! I knew it! Sure, she *says* she'll do this and that, but just you wait. You make the ask, and suddenly she'll be too shy, too nervous, too much of a good girl and good girls don't do *that*..."

"Let's see, shall we?" Conner cut in, fishing his phone out of his pocket. He brought up Hailey's text history, then typed out a message.

*I need a blowjob from my slut. Know someplace private we can meet during first period?*

Owen's expression shifted. "Well then. You don't mince words, do you."

Conner just watched for a reply, and quickly received one. *Meet me in the auditorium. Your slut can't wait.*

"Daaamn, son. All right, so maybe I was wrong. Happy?"

"I'm gonna be soon," he said, texting back Hailey to confirm.

"Eighteen years old and ditching your first class – how's that feel?"

"Well, since I'm doing it to get head from one of the hottest girls in school, it feels pretty darn good."

"You're my inspiration, dude, seriously. All right, well you two kids have fun, plaster that bitch's face vicariously for me."

Conner was seething when he strode into the auditorium. Hailey, sitting in the front row, waved him down excitedly, but her smile faded when she caught sight of him.

“Nothing,” he said testily.

“You’re sure? You look upset. Did I do something wrong?”

“It’s OK. I just ran into somebody who gave me a hard time.”

“Do you wanna talk about it?”

Conner did not want to talk about it, since the somebody in question had been Hayleigh McKnight. The encounter hadn’t really been an encounter at all; he’d simply walked by her and her boyfriend Jayce Deacons. Not so much walked by, actually, as Jayce veered out of his way to shoulder check Conner. The guy had almost half a foot and fifty pounds on Conner, who had been knocked to the floor with ease. Hayleigh had just laughed. “Watch where you’re walking, dork,” she’d said with a sneer as they walked away laughing.

Conner had never had much of a problem with her prior the other day; he was realizing now that this was due much more to limited contact than her kindhearted disposition.

“It’s OK. I have you now. That’s all I wanted. Though I gotta say, the auditorium isn’t exactly as private as I was hoping. Anyone could walk in here at any moment.”

“I know. Come with me.”

Conner followed closely behind Hailey for what turned out to be a very short journey. She lead him down into the orchestra pit at the foot of the stage, and from there, opened a wide door into an area beneath the stage. It was filled with rows up rows of chairs hanging on long, wheeled racks, though there was enough room to go between them, which Hailey did. It was pitch black down there, but she had her phone at the ready with its flashlight on to guide them. It wasn’t even high enough to stand upright. To his surprise, once they passed the chairs, there was a mat spread out on the cement floor, not unlike the ones they used in gym class. Nearby was a neatly folded blanket and a pair of pillows.

“Hailey... what is this place?”

She spread out the blanket on the mat, then invited Conner to sit beside her. “I did set crew for the drama department freshman year... I guess I thought I would meet people, make friends.” The awkward pause told Conner that she had not. “They use this place for storage. I would use it for a place to kind of hide out and just relax when I wanted to be alone. I still do sometimes.”

Conner smiled. “It’s... kinda nice, actually. A little toasty, though, but a small price to pay to be alone with you.”

“Yeah, I think the school’s boiler is right underneath it, or nearby anyway. Gets to be a little much sometimes. Of course, you can always...”

Hailey started by removing her top, and didn’t stop stripping until she was completely naked. It didn’t take long; like last night, she had on neither bra nor panties. “Much better.”

Conner joined her in nakedness. It didn’t actually help much with the temperature, but it suited his agenda just fine. “So it is.”

Hailey didn’t need any further prompting; the availability of his cock was enough to get her mouth wrapped snugly around it. Conner just laid back, propping his head up

with the pillow, and tried to forget Hayleigh and Jayce's bullying. The way she'd laughed at him. The way she'd attacked him after school the other day. The way for years, that musclebound jerk had lived the charmed life of the rich star jock while Conner was left to scrape up what little respect his talents could net him. Jayce, getting to fuck Hayleigh McKnight whenever he wanted. Her, getting to *be* Hayleigh McKnight, with all the fussing and fawning and flattery and favors and...

"*FUCK!*" Conner yelled. Somewhere not far off, a sophomore in the hall outside the auditorium looked around, trying to figure out where the phantom obscenity had originated. What she couldn't hear as she walked away was the pitiful gurgles of Hailey gagging around Conner's red, swollen prick as he held her lips down against the base of his shaft. As she walked on to first period, she missed the heaving gasp as he realized what he was doing and let go.

"What did I do wrong?" Hailey pulled up, sweeping her auburn shampoo-commercial hair aside and looking at him with a heart-rending apology for what had been an immensely enthusiastic blowjob. Tears were rolling down her face from the discomfort.

"Nothing, Hailey, you were doing great. I'm just stressed. I'm sorry." He grabbed his shirt and dabbed at her cheeks. "Are you OK? I didn't mean to."

"Did you like it?" Hailey interrupted. "I know that, like, that's supposed to be something boys like. Deep throating? I think that's what you call it."

"Oh, Hailey, I didn't..."

"I know you didn't mean to," she rushed on. "But if you did, I could do it some more. I want to get really good at that, and you know what they say. Practice makes perfect and all. So I could practice. If you want."

Her persistent stroking of his moistened cock made it impossible to lose his erection. "That's really sweet. Really. I just bumped into a couple jerks in the hallway on my way into school, and it got to me. I didn't mean to take it out on you."

Hailey just smiled at him, only pulling her mouth back off his cock when he finished talking. "What? I didn't mind at all. Can... can I ask who it was? The jerks."

He sighed at the memory of it, and at the feel of her tongue caressing his shaft. "Jayce Deacons and Hayleigh McKnight." It felt strange, saying the name to her face, but the eyes registering nothing.

Hailey just gave him a sympathetic face. "Yeah. She's the worst."

"You guys don't get along? I wouldn't have thought you had much interaction."

Hailey paused. "Because she's Miss Popular and I'm not?"

Conner froze. That was exactly what he'd meant. He couldn't say that to the woman nursing his cock though, so he thought lightning quick. "What? Of course not. Because she's a total bitch and you... well, you're probably the nicest girl I've ever met."

In an instant, her face transformed. What had been a distracted, albeit friendly, blowjob became nothing short of her mouth making love to his cock. She threw herself into it, moaning in her own urgency to – he supposed – repay his compliment. As he flopped onto his back on the soft blanket, he could feel her pussy begin to grind on his lower leg as she feverishly fellated him. He usually tried to hold back a little to prolong the fun, but the way she was going after him, he didn't last two minutes. Hailey

swallowed down every spurt, literally sucking at the end of his cock as if greedy for a few more drops.

“Can you...” She had to pause to catch her breath, but only barely managed. “Can you go again? I want to try something.”

“Try something? Like... what?” Even with his mind blown from an orgasm, he was paranoid about anything involving his penis.

“Just trust me, OK? I think you’ll like it. And if you don’t, I won’t ever do it again. Now just close your eyes.”

Reluctantly, Conner complied. “I miss looking at you already, you know.”

He heard a pleased giggle, but it cut short. “Quiet you. Now keep ‘em closed, and...”

There it was again, that sensation no man ever had or could get tired of. A warm, wet, smooth mouth and a tongue as much and more so, all of it enveloping his manhood with gentle firmness. The pure relaxation of her work, the heat from the boiler, the fact that it had been less than an hour since he’d been torn from his bed... From as tense and angry as he’d been in weeks to barely able to stay awake, even as his hard-on returned.

Until Hailey spoke.

“Still closed?”

“Mhmm.”

She gently took his hands and placed one on each side of her heads, rubbing them until he’d taken a loose grip in her hair. “Now I want you to imagine this was Hayleigh McKnight, that instead of me, you had that bitch down here sucking your dick, and I want you to just fuck the shit out of her bitch face. Just like a minute ago, but this time... don’t stop.”

Conner’s eyes opened. There was Hayleigh’s face, grinning mischievously but not able to conceal her fear he’d reject her proposal. When he’d seen the real Hayleigh, the one who now walked around in Hailey’s doughy skin, she’d looked at him with disdain that her naturally timid face barely had seemed able to display. It wasn’t her. Somehow, it was almost as if his brain had seen that condescending smirk in her true face, the one she’d been born to. Heard her mockery in her true voice.

“I... I don’t know, Hailey...”

Hailey’s – Hayleigh’s? – face suddenly twisted into a sneer, but the next moment she turned over her phone’s flashlight, plunging the crawlspace into darkness. “What’s wrong, loser? Don’t have the balls to go for it? Maybe Jayce was right when he said you’re half the man he is.”

Conner’s muscles – which might hold half the power of Jayce’s only if the athlete was under the weather – tensed again. Bizarrely, he could even tell Hailey was altering her voice. Prior to their body exchange, she’d had a bit of a scratchy voice, deeper than average, while Hayleigh’s was decidedly high-pitched and a tad nasal. The kind of voice people would find annoyingly chipper in a less attractive girl.

He tried to make sense of it. In Hayleigh’s body, Hailey was imitating Hayleigh using Hayleigh’s own voice to role play Hayleigh giving him a coerced blowjob because Hailey wanted to help him relieve the stress from Hayleigh’s bullying, which had only happened because Hayleigh had found out about him trying to edit Hailey back into Hailey.

It was to be the most meta moment in his entire life. Perhaps in the history of the world.

“Shut up and blow me, Hayleigh.” Conner pulled her head back down, and as she’d put it, fucked the shit out of her bitch face. Before long, he fumbled around until his fingers located her phone and flipped it back over. She tried to protest.

“You’re not supposed to see me, Con—!”

He pushed her back down firmly. “I’m not supposed to hear you, Hayleigh. Now get back to work or I’ll tell Jayce just how much of a gutterslut he’s been fucking.”

As first period proceeded, Conner was not gentle with her; however, every chance she got, Hailey spurred him on to keep going.

“Tell me again what a bitch I am.”

“I deserve to have my stupid mouth silenced with cocks, don’t I.”

“Of the dozens of dicks I’ve sucked this year, this is by far my favorite.”

“Why did I waste my time on morons like Jayce when I could be sucking ymmmf!”

She was like a wind-up toy. Impale her on his cock and get her mouth primed, then give her a breather so she can say something whorish and self-effacing. Or, well, kind of self-effacing, considering the face. He kept giving her more and more breaks just to see what she’d say next. When she finally blurted, “face fuck the bitch outta me!” Conner couldn’t help but laugh, and even he didn’t know if it was spitefully at Hayleigh or at Hailey’s inadvertent hilarity.

Either way, he made sure to pull her off his cock and unload as much cum as he could right in her bitch face.

“Man, what did McKnight ever do to you?” he asked her after, the two of them lying side by side on their backs, staring at the underside of the stage a few feet above them.

“How do you mean?”

“I couldn’t help but notice you seem to bear her an especial dislike. Or you’re just an incredible actress.”

“Oh. You saw that.” She sighed. “It’s nothing.”

“Come on, talk to me.”

“It’s not her. Not exactly. It’s just...” She rolled to face him. “Did you know people call us Hefty and Hottie?” Conner’s awkward delay was answer enough for her. “Yeah. It’s just crummy sharing a name with the hottest girl in school.”

“She’s not the hottest girl in school. If anything—”

“Please don’t say I am. You don’t have to keep pretending, you know. I know what I look like.”

“Pretending? Have you seen how wild you make me? Do I seem like I’m pretending?”

Hailey allowed herself a smile at that, a softer shade of when he’d praised her earlier, but still radiant. “Meet me here again at lunch?”

It turned out that ditching class had surprisingly few consequences. The editor-in-chief had always assumed it was the sort of thing that was instantly detected when attendance was taken and immediately garnered a detention. Instead, a friend in his first period had told the teacher, honestly, that he'd seen Conner in the halls and was probably just running late, so she'd just marked him tardy and that was that. It was the closest to getting in trouble he'd ever come, and if his teacher knew the half of what he'd been doing, he'd have been lucky to get a mere detention.

The lunchtime rendezvous was nearly as wild as first period. Citing how much he'd obviously enjoyed himself (and thereby she'd enjoyed herself), Hailey picked up with the bizarre little roleplay where they'd left off. This time they tried doggy style, each of them their first time, and she treated him to a steady litany of "fuck me like a bitch" variants right up until the bell rang to dismiss them to their next class. Conner left their private nook first, in case anyone had come in; he pinched her butt goodbye and apologized if he'd smacked it too hard. She insisted she'd never had better sex with a shy giggle. Then it was off to government to pretend it was normal that Angelica was sitting two rows down from him.

However, "doin' her from behind," as Owen called it, wasn't his only sexual first that day. After Hailey sent him a picture of what she claimed was his handprint on her bare ass from the girl's room (Conner saw only a reddish splotch), she asked him to make it up to her with a dick pic. He actually wound up getting his second tardy of the day as a result; even with his teenage libido, getting it up after so much sexual activity, and in the boy's bathroom no less, took time.

Luckily, last period was yearbook. Now that the tutorial was behind them, today would just be a work day. Most of the staff would be busy transferring their spreads in the old system over to TIOS. The hall was quiet and empty as he made his way in, a fabricated excuse at the ready. As he approached the open door, however, he heard a discussion that paused him just outside.

"... had to explain to Jayce who Conner was so he knew who to be pissed at," said a voice clearly recognizable as Jordan's. He was snickering even while he talked.

"I heard he was gonna kick his ass after school," Marissa followed. "I tried to tell him it was nothing to be that pissed about, but when Hayleigh has it in for somebody... let's just say Jayce knows where his bread is buttered."

"That's a really gross metaphor," said someone. Don, Conner thought.

"Grow up, Don." Yep, Don.

"Is he really going to?" said a voice he recognized effortlessly. Heather. All the sex in the world couldn't prevent his heart from beating a little faster at that sound. "We don't even know if he was doing anything creepy."

Conner smiled to hear her put in a good word for him, even half-heartedly.

Several voices spoke over each other, some of them insisting Conner was nursing some big gross crush on Hayleigh (and Marissa suggesting maybe Hailey instead); others were saying this was the least scandalous scandal they'd ever heard of, and that they could care less.

"I don't know why you always stick up for him," Jordan said over the lot of those urging them to get started onto their individual projects.

“Maybe Heather’s trying to photoshop Conner into a hottie of her own,” laughed Siobhan.

“I’m not... I just... Look, he’s done a good job as editor. And maybe he’s a little awkward sometimes, but he says he was... Well, whatever he says, I believe him. Way more than I do you, anyway, Jordan.”

But Jordan was still riffing on Siobhan’s taunt. “Oh man, please do not switch me and him – I couldn’t handle future generations seeing my name next to that pasty, skinny, pussy’s face.”

As Jordan’s cronies in the yearbook howled at his use of invective, Conner finally rounded the corner into the room. There were some snickers, some mumbled insults that he chose to ignore, and he was even pleased to see a few people seeming to look relieved his arrival had put an end to the discussion.

“Sorry I’m running late, everybody. Now, let’s talk assignments, and we can get to work.”

He ran down his list to make sure everyone knew their roles. Photographers for the cross country meet after school, someone to cover the jazz band concert Saturday afternoon, and so on. Like always, the meeting ran smoothly. Whatever he might think of their loyalties, Conner’s staff was attentive to detail and did what was asked of them. Maybe Miss C was right and he didn’t delegate enough, but he was at least pleased that when he did, they rose to the challenge.

“Anything else for the good of the order?” he asked in his usual fashion.

“Oh, actually,” DeShaun spoke up, “Miss C had a meeting, but she said we need somebody to start getting the yearbook staff spread ready.”

“It’s kind of a big deal,” said one of the underclassmen.

“It sure is – I’m on it,” said Conner. This was always one of the most important spreads, not so much for the yearbook itself, but because it was what the staff used at the end of the year to reminisce over their struggles and achievements, to relive the process of the process. He remembered last year’s end of the year party, sitting down with the old staff to watch “Fond Memories of Fond Memories,” a long and richly detailed series of photos from the year. With the tech now available, they were even holding on to those pics for class reunions years down the road.

“Actually, Miss C said you should assign it to one of us,” DeShaun said. “You got enough on your plate, right man?”

Conner looked around, waiting briefly for a volunteer, but privately he didn’t want one. “Seeing nobody else begging for it, I’ll take it off your hands. All right, everybody knows what they need to do – get to it.”

Nobody fought him on it, so the meeting concluded and the staff went their separate ways. Most settled in the computer lab to work on a spread in TIOS, Marissa and Danielle headed off to the darkroom to develop some film, while Jordan, Don, and Caitlyn checked out cameras to go get some candid shots. (At least, that’s what they said; they may well just go roam the halls. Conner tried not to worry about it.)

Conner himself hunkered down in the editor’s office, leaving the door into Miss C’s room open to invite anyone who needed help to come in. He double-clicked the TIOS icon on the computer’s home screen and logged in. From there, he immediately opened a new spread, smiling as he tentatively entitled it, “The Story of Our Story.” In minutes,



he'd dredged up some photos from the past few months of work and began tagging them. He was relieved to be creating something with TIOS that, for once, held no promise of changing the universe. The thrill of stitching memories together was enough to let him forget the names Hailey and Hayleigh and Angelica altogether.

Adding quotes was trickier, of course; he'd probably have to do some video exploration for that, and do some asking to see if anyone remembered particulars. Conner uploaded a picture of him, Miss C, and Heather clustered around a table looking at the results of Heather's photo shoot for flag girl tryouts. A little grin stole over his face as his mind went back to that day, to how he'd been trying his hardest to not look down Heather's shirt as she bent over the photos. With breasts like those, it hadn't been easy. Size-wise, she put Hayleigh McKnight to shame, though she didn't flaunt it nearly so much.

*He's a good editor*, said her voice, echoing into his mind. *Whatever he said, I believe him*. He went ahead and added the quote, though TIOS responded with a suggested revision. *Look, he's done a good job as editor. And maybe he's a little awkward sometimes, but he says he was... Well, whatever he says, I believe him. Way more than I do you, anyway, Jordan*. Conner shuddered at the reminder of what whatever it was that empowered TIOS, and trimmed the revision to the part he wanted to remember. TIOS apparently agreed with Miss C's policy on quote editing – if it arrives at the same point, it's probably the same quote.

There it was, in a small text box in the margins. *He's done a good job as editor... Whatever he says, I believe him*. Conner smiled. There was no compliment as high as one given behind your back. She'd actually defended him to Jordan! Could it be that dating Heather Blake wasn't such a pipe dream after all?

Entering the quote, however, ended his brief hiatus from thinking about recent events in his love life. Did he still want to be with Heather? After all, Hailey was proving to be willing to satisfy all of his sexual needs and then some. She was incredibly attractive, and submissive in a way he'd never thought a woman could be. He had little doubt he could ask for something and have her deny him. Hell, she'd boasted as much herself.

So why did he still find himself thinking about Heather?

Physically, she was easily a match for Hailey, at least in Conner's book. Undeniably pretty, a classic blonde-haired blue-eyed bombshell. She was fairly short and a bit rounder, which some guy's might find unattractive, but she wasn't actually fat. It was just dimpled cheeks and soft curves for days – to say nothing of those breasts. Whether or not a given guy was into her, he would concede that those things were a living legend. Owen had told him once that he had it on good authority she had to custom order her bras on the internet because lingerie stores didn't carry her size. That her cup size was close to being in the second half of the alphabet. Conner took it as an exaggeration, but they were definitely more than merely big. They were living monuments to the female form.

But it wasn't just the physical. If the goal was simply to hook up with a hot girl, he'd done that. He could do it again as soon as school was out. But Heather Blake had always been his ideal. She was sweet, intellectual, had a big heart. She volunteered with the special ed kids, was on good terms with the popular kids but best friends with her

own kind. She was churchy, which his family was not, but she didn't thrust it in anyone's face or exclude people who were different. She never had a bad word to say about anyone, and as he'd just seen, wouldn't sit idle and listen to those who did. The past week with Hailey had been great in a lot of ways, but Heather? She was...

Standing in the doorway of his office. He quickly hit the save button and gave her his attention.

"Conner, you have a minute?"

"Sure, come on in – have a seat," he said, gesturing to the couch. The very same couch Miss C had found Hailey's panties on the other day. He knew everyone was curious, but naturally nobody had owned up to it. She settled onto the couch, and from the way she inspected her cushion before doing so, he knew she was thinking about the incident. "I think it's safe now."

She laughed. "Yeah, just... ew, right?"

"Seriously," he agreed, though his own feelings on the incident couldn't be further from the truth. What could hotter than watching Hailey in her hot new body quivering with pleasure on the end of his fingers?

Heather lowered her voice, glancing at the crack she'd left in the door. "Do you know who it was? Does Miss C?"

"Beats me," Conner lied. "For all I know, it was Miss C and she's just pretending to be mad as a cover."

Heather giggled. "A teacher? Oh, yuck. Can you imagine?"

Conner could imagine. Miss C was one of the prettiest teachers in school, and he was far from the only student who'd treated himself to a daydream or two about what she'd look like in her panties. He laughed away the thought. "No kidding. But no, I haven't heard anything. Have you?"

She shook her head. "I have my suspicions, but nothing concrete. I'm glad she cracked down though. That's really gross. You... you didn't actually *hear* anything about it being Miss C, did you?"

"Oh god no," he said quickly. The last thing he wanted to happen was have that sort of rumor get out. Miss C was easily his favorite teacher, and would be even if she didn't look like she did. "I'm sure she had nothing to do with it."

Heather looked relieved. "Thank goodness. That'd be just too... yeesh."

"Definitely. Anyway, I assume you didn't come in to gossip about the mysterious couch undies. What's up?"

"Oh, nothing big. Miss C popped in – and back out – and told me I should work on the yearbook staff spread with you. Just to 'broaden the input,' I think she called it."

Conner forced himself not to frown. This was a priority for him, and he was notoriously possessive about his pet projects. "Really? Oh. Well... sure. I mean, yeah, why not, right?"

Heather instantly discerned the source of his trepidation and rushed to empathize. "I know you don't like having anyone looking over your shoulder, and I'm sure that's not why she asked me to help. I think she just figured we get along, and if we put our heads together..."

As always, she knew how to say the right thing. “Yeah, totally. And with heads like ours, right?” Was that flirting? He wasn’t sure if complimenting her head counted. Maybe later he could try it on Hailey and see how gaga she went over it.

Flirting or no, he was rewarded with that smile. “Right. So did you wanna get started today, or save it for next week?”

Conner’s eyes darted to his monitor, where the spread was already begun and her quote was center screen. She couldn’t quite see it from her angle, but how embarrassing would it be if she knew he’d been eavesdropping? “Let’s do next week? I gotta finish doing Miss C’s taxes.”

He’d meant it as a joke, but Heather’s eyes widened. “Seriously? Oh my gosh, she has you doing her taxes?!” In a blink, she was out of her seat and at his side. “Is that even legal?”

“I was, um, kidding,” he stuttered as she took in the screen. She was bent over the opposite side of the desk, leaning on her palm. Her face was no more than six inches away from his; even at the end of the day, his nostrils were still filled with the soft floral aroma of her lotion. “I was just getting some... you know. Basics.”

Heather blushed to have been so gullible. “Oh gosh, I feel so stupid.” Then she processed what she was seeing. Conner wanted to delete it, but she’d already seen it. No going back now. “Oh. Um... You heard that, huh?”

Conner couldn’t bring himself to make eye contact. “Yeah. I didn’t mean to. I was in the hall and I heard you guys, and I... I dunno. I’m sorry.”

She was quiet a long moment. “I remember that,” she said finally, gesturing to the picture. “That was the first week of school, right?”

He nodded. “Yep. Flag girl tryouts.”

“I remember that.” She gave him a lopsided grin. “I remember you were totally checking me out, too.”

In an instant, Conner’s cheeks were on fire. “No I wasn’t!”

Like that, her grin vanished. “Oh. I’d have sworn... well, nevermind.” She stood back up; with her no longer so close, he could breathe again. “Well if you heard that, then hopefully you heard the rest. Be careful after school, OK? Jayce can be kind of single-minded when it comes to Hayleigh, and for whatever reason, she’s decided she has it in for you.”

“Thanks. Don’t worry about me – I’ve got a blackbelt in bully evasion.”

“They have...? Huh. Well good.” She walked over to the door. “Don’t feel weird, Conner. I’m OK. Are you OK?”

He forced a faint smile. “I’m OK.”

“Good. So, um, you have a good evening, all right?”

“You too, Heather.”

His head hit the desk before the door even closed.

He did not, in fact, get jumped by Jayce after school. The fact that he stayed a whole half hour late hiding out in the editor's office probably helped. In uncharacteristically understanding fashion, both Angelica and Owen said they didn't mind. That whole time, and the many hours that evening spent staring at the ceiling over his bed, was devoted to replaying the whole mortifying scenario in his head on loop. Heather had caught him red-handed nursing his crush on her. The quote, the picture, the lie... It was all too much. He couldn't even make himself answer Hailey's increasingly needful texts. Every time he glanced at his phone, Heather's voice was there to pull him back through the wringer.

It was on about the seventieth time that he saw past his shame and to the stranger issue. Namely: Heather had been acting kind of... stupid.

For many people, he'd have just chalked it up to sarcasm he hadn't caught, or just having a so-called "blonde moment." He'd had a few himself. But Heather didn't. She especially didn't have them one after another. She'd had to make sure he was joking about the panties belonging to Miss C. Her reaction to the taxes joke. How as soon as he'd said he hadn't been ogling her, she dropped it in an instant. After the week he'd had, he was primed to look for TIOS in all the oddities of life, and this one was more obvious than most.

Whatever he'd said, she'd believed.

Could it be that simple? Could a piece of software really take a few words out of someone's mouth and make them part of their behavior henceforth? It had swapped two girls' bodies and brought his stepsister from college to high school. Why not this too? Only, if his putting that quote in a spread had rendered Heather utterly gullible to him...

Angelica.

"Son of a..."

It was well after dark when he heard her make up a story for their parents about her plans for the evening; her dad quoted her a curfew, which he had never before done. But she was a high schooler now, and high school girls had curfews. Conner peered out through a crack in his blinds, and was relieved to see her hop in her car and drive off.

He was less relieved when, not two minutes later, he saw her jogging down the sidewalk on the far side of the street and dash into Owen's back yard.

"Son of a...!"

Conner grabbed his shoes and hurried to the door, telling his parents he was going to Owen's. Same curfew warning. He darted across the street, making his way around to the back of the house and leaning down to peer in one of the basement windows, the one he knew would afford him the best view of the downstairs living room.

There she was. There he was. Conner watched in a combination of rapt fascination and horror at the events unfolding before his eyes. Owen, however, happened to look up just then and caught sight of his friend peeping in the window. Conner couldn't hear him, but he didn't need to.

"Son of a bitch!"

## Chapter Seven

“I can explain,” Owen insisted as Conner entered the basement. Angelica was seated on the couch beside him and didn’t even look up from Owen’s crotch – now covered, and thankfully not by her mouth any more.

“You don’t have to. I know how it happened.”

Owen eyed him askance. “You do?”

“Yeah. It’s TIOS. It’s making the quote *real*.”

“How did... how did you figure it out? I thought we were being pretty subtle.”

“I wish I could say you guys slipped up, but honestly...” Conner eyed his stepsister caressing Owen’s thighs needfully. “Maybe we shouldn’t talk about this in front of her.”

“I already know,” Angelica said, though her tone was dreamy and far away. “You have some kind of weird yearbook software that can, like, rewrite people, or whatever.”

Conner took a full step back. “Wait, you know? And... you’re OK with it?”

She rolled her eyes, which was as close to looking up from her prize. “Of course not. This is fucking ridiculous, and you two losers should be ashamed of yourselves.”

“Have you... told anyone?”

She didn’t answer, instead just lying her head down in Owen’s lap and nuzzling at it. Owen, after an affectionate pat on her head, spoke for her. “She hasn’t. Who would she tell, dude? Your folks? Miss C? Who would believe it?”

Conner didn’t point out that Owen himself was proof that people could be convinced – but no sense alerting Angelica to that fact. Not until they had a plan in place. “But... if you told her, why is she still...?”

“It’s pretty fuckin’ literal, dude,” Owen said with a smirk. “She really cannot get enough of it. Can you, Angel?”

Conner braced to see Owen’s jaw get slapped off its hinges – Angelica *hated* being called Angel – but instead she just kissed his zipper. “You know I can’t.” The lust in his voice was so heavy that Conner could feel a mild tightening in his pants.

“OK, but think of it like this, Angelica. You found out that these feelings aren’t real. If he did it to you, surely you could make him *undo* it to you. Right?”

Owen gave him a wtf look, but Angelica managed a response. “But if I made him undo, I might not want to get any more cock. And I *need* his cock. C’mon, baby, just a little taste? Ol’ Goner can turn around if he doesn’t wanna watch.”

His friend waggled his eyebrows, but Conner wasn’t having it. “This is... have you tested how binding it is?” Owen looked plainly confused (or perhaps just distracted). “What I mean is, have you seen how far you can push it?”

“I haven’t conducted tests, but like, it seems pretty ‘binding,’ man. Ever since we... you know, she’s been insatiable. Guess it just needed a few minutes to kick in.”

Conner shook his head. “I don’t think that’s it. I think the problem was that we didn’t save it – once I went to save, it prompted me to tag someone in the quote, but it couldn’t find an Angelica Buck, so it asked me to make one. So I did, and... I think that’s why she’s in our class now.”

“I am still going to fucking kill you for that, by the way,” she said. “Even if it keeps my baby close at hand during the day.”

Aha – that was why she’d put up so little of a fight! Conner should have guessed at this earlier. “Well why don’t we go ahead then, and... you know... test it. We ought to know what we’re dealing with.”

“You’re sure? I mean, you wanna be in the room while she...?”

“I need to know what TIOS is doing. Are you OK with...?”

Owen grinned. “I got nothing to hide, dude. C’mon, babe, get to it.”

“I thought you’d never ask,” she said with an energetic clawing at his button and zipper. Conner had just enough time to avert his eyes before he could hear her moaning happily at the feel of Owen’s cock back in her mouth.

“Told you so, man. All she needs is my permission, and sometimes she doesn’t even wait for that, do you Angel?” Owen quipped. Conner let himself look back up and tried to ignore the many awkward things about this situation. And not to think about how attractive his stepsister was. Usually she was enough of a brat that it was no problem, but this... this was trickier. A girl with a smoking hot body in the act of a blowjob... yeesh.

“Let’s start there. Since when did you let anyone call you Angel?” Conner asked.

Angelica didn’t answer, too greedily suckling at Owen’s cock. “She gets like that, man. Not much for conversation. Kinda nice, actually.”

She didn’t even acknowledge the way she was being talked about like she wasn’t there. “Well tell her to switch to a handjob or something so we can talk to her, man.”

Owen laughed, then made an awkward face as Angelica did something especially pleasing. “I can’t just tell her what to do, man.”

“Are you sure? Try telling her it’s handjob or nothing! At least *try* to be useful for once, would you?”

Owen glared, but Angelica’s tenderness wore it down quickly. “Fine, fine. Angel, would you mind switching to a handjob for me?”

She barely responded, lifting her mouth only long enough to mutter a breathy “nuh uh, this is better” before engulfing him again.

Conner gave his friend an exasperated look, and so he tried to be a little firmer. “I mean it, babe. Either use your hands, or we’re done for the night right now.”

“*Fine!*” she said with a pout as Owen’s cock plopped out of her mouth. Conner positioned himself behind her so he couldn’t see what she was doing as her hands took over where her mouth had left off.

“Now answer Conner’s questions, and we’ll let you keep going as long as you want. Cool?”

“Mm, that’s forever,” she sighed, stroking vigorously, her chin resting on his lap so that her lips were mere inches away.

Conner began his questioning. “Great. Now tell me, Angelica, why allow him to call you Angel? You usually hate that nickname.”

“Still do.”

“Then why are you letting him use it?”

“I... do we have to do this? C’mon, Owen, it’s your house. Just tell him to beat it and I’ll make it worth your while. I’ll suck you so hard your toes never uncurl.”

Owen, however, seemed intrigued at the idea of this little bit of extra power he’d discovered he had over her, and shook his head. “Sorry, hot stuff. Gotta play along if you want to sample dong.”

The step-siblings were rolling eyes in unison at that one, but Angelica did give Conner his answer nonetheless. “Look. I can’t fucking get enough of this thing. And if I’m gonna bitch out over every little thing, he might not let me have it as much. So I grin and bear it.”

Now that was interesting. He remembered reading about a study in his psychology class last year, in which lab rats kept seeking out pleasure-inducing chemicals, even when it meant starving to death. Could it be that Angel was similarly afflicted, but by Owen’s cock? What would it take to break TIOS’s imposed fixation?

“What if, instead of Angel, he called you...” He tried to think of something more objectionable.

“A cocksucking bimbo?” Owen supplied, grinning.

Conner could see her muscles tensing, but she didn’t let up her grip. “Knock it off, guys.”

“No way. I want you to look me in the eyes and tell me you’re a cock-sucking bimbo – *my* cock-sucking bimbo – or we’re done. For the week.”

“The whole week! You can’t... I can’t...” And like that, her resolve melted. “Fine. I’m your cock-sucking bimbo. Happy now?”

Owen shook his head. “Nope. Like you mean it. *With feeling.*”

Conner wondered what her face looked like just then, but whatever it held, when she spoke, he could only picture pigtails and cotton candy. “Like, I’m totally your little cock-sucking bimbo, ‘K?” And she giggled. Angelica. His stepsister. *Giggled.*

“Conner, man... you’re a fucking genius. To think, she’s been gaming me all week! Now, bimbo, I wanna see you naked. Totally naked. No more bullshit excuses.”

“But... Conner’s here.”

“And?”

“Come on, Owen... We’ve been over this. I don’t need to be naked to take care of your cock. Just be glad for what you’re getting, OK?”

“See, it’s like this, babe. I *like* all the time you’re spending on my dick. You, my insatiable little cock hound, *need* it. See the difference? You’ve given me enough fodder for my imagination that I could pound it out on my own for the foreseeable future. Operative word: ‘enough.’ Can you say the same? If I put it away right now, could you say you’ve had enough?”

Her voice was so small Conner barely heard it. “No.”

“Then strip, bitch, and make me like it.”

Conner wanted to say something to stand up for her. Only the whole point of this experiment was to see how firmly TIOS was enshrined inside her. Plus... some part of him that he could never admit to out loud really wanted to see Angelica naked. Maybe it made him the worst stepbrother in the universe, but it was true.

It looked like it took real discipline on her part to make herself release his cock – whether because she hated to part with it or because she wanted to tear it off, Conner couldn’t say. Slowly she stood up, and, after a mortified look over her shoulder at Conner, she began to strip. Meanwhile, her stepbrother couldn’t make himself look away. Stepsister or no, she was beautiful. Hers was a tightly packaged body, from her runner’s butt to a pair of perky apple-sized boobs. Soon he learned that a little mole decorated her left butt cheek, and he even saw she was sporting a little tattoo on her left breast, on the left side near her armpit. It read: LIVE FREE OR DIE in small but bold letters.

“Holy... you’re so fucking hot, Angel,” Owen said, eyes goggling.

“Yeah, great, whatever,” she said snidely. “Can I touch it again now?”

Owen was clearly about to give the go-ahead, but something in Conner made him act quicker. It came from the same place inside him that took over when he and Hailey were together. “You didn’t say please, Angel.”

She looked back at him with daggers in her eyes. Inadvertently, she gave him a good look at two very hard, pink nipples. “What the fuck is it to you, Goner? Piss off.”

Owen laughed. “He’s right, my little cock-sucking bimbo. Say please. Come on. Beg for it. Or go home.”

She let the hateful look linger on her stepbrother just a moment longer before turning back to Owen, the expression melting into pure lust as she got sight of it once more. “Please, Owen?”

“Please what?”

“Please let me touch your cock.”

Owen folded his hands over it. “You call that begging? You’re still standing, for crying out loud.”



The boys expected her next move to be assuming a kneeling position, but Angelica surprised them both by straddling Owen's thighs, sliding forward until her pelvis was right up against his hard-on. She began writhing, rubbing the front of her pussy against his cock, whimpering anxiously. "Owen, puh-leeeeease, let me touch it? I promise you won't regret it." It was a voice that would melt butter, but turned cocks to steel.

However, unlike Owen, Conner had gotten off several times already that day, and was inured to such token efforts. "Don't let her reassert control, Owen. Come on, man."

"Yeah, totally," Owen mumbled as Angelica's tits rippled in his face. "Don't, um, stop doing that."

"Mm, no problem," Angelica said. And she didn't.

"Not so fast, lovebirds," Conner interjected. After a minute or so of watching his stepsister's tight little ass writhing on Owen's lap. "Come on, Owen. You can get a lap dance later – really, any time I'm not standing right in front of you. Let's bear this out, see what you can make of it. Aren't you curious what all you can get out of her?" Conner didn't like the notion of pimping out his stepsister, but the implications of this discovery were positively staggering.

"I'm pretty fuckin' happy with what we've gotten out of her, thanks, and feel free to go whenever."

Conner stormed to the couch and snatched one of Owen's mother's hand-crocheted throw pillows and smothered his friend's cock with it. Owen exclaimed in his usual homophobic alarm at having a boy come so close to touching his junk while Angelica squealed in dismay at losing both contact and sight of her prize.

"What the hell, dude!" Owen demanded, trying to remove the pillow.

"Just let me do this, you idiot, and you could have her literally eating out of your hand! Don't you want that? Use your brain and not just your dick, moron!"

It took him a moment of watching the sexy neighbor girl whining and nuzzling at his concealed cock before Owen finally began to see reason. Conner was only too relieved to let his friend take over holding the pillow. "OK. Now... do what you gotta do, but for the love of god, dude, do it fast. OK? Angel, do what he says, answer his questions, and you can get back to it."

"Fine, fine, just... hurry!"

"Stand up, Angelica," Conner said. He tried to imagine her like Hailey. Hailey was always eager to do as he said, especially when she was naked and horny. Angelica stood, eyes locked on the offending pillow.

"Stand on one foot."

"Why?"

"Because that's the price of admission. Just do it."

She rolled her eyes. “Fine.” Conner admired the way her butt grew lopsided as she lifted one leg at the knee.

“OK, you can put it down. Now I have a few questions.”

“Oh my fucking god, Goner, hurry up!” she whined.

“Do you just want to suck his dick, or do you want to do other things?”

She licked her lips. “And other things.”

“Would you let him fuck you?”

“Sure. I mean, I didn’t wanna strip for the little perv, but now that he’s seen it all, I may as well. Oh god, I bet it feels amazing.”

“Tit fuck you?”

“Um, yeah, I guess. I dunno if I’m big enough, but we could try. Do you wanna try, Owen baby?”

Conner went on before the boy could cave. He obsessed about titty-fucking in his teens like he had over dinosaurs when they were eight. “What about anal?”

She glared for a moment at her stepbrother. “Jesus you’re a freak.”

“Says the girl standing there naked and drooling at the thought of my friend’s junk. Now answer the question.”

She shrugged. “I guess. I’ve never really wanted to, but... I bet I’d fit it like a glove. I’d be so totally wrapped around it...” Angelica shivered, giving her nipples a brief dual caress. “Yeah, he could fuck my ass.”

“And if he put conditions on it... how far would you go?”

“What the fuck kind of question is that, Goner? I fucking love his dick, OK? You two are the assholes who made me this way.”

“Don’t call me an asshole. Apologize.” Conner gave her a hard look. He didn’t really care, but he wanted to see if she’d hold out.

“I’m sorry,” she said after a moment. “I just... I don’t know how to answer that. Want to rock the karaoke with *500 Miles* or something?”

“Let me be more specific. Would you cosplay for him? Dress up sexy?”

“Um... yeah, I guess. If I had to.”

“Role play?”

Angelica shrugged, her little boobs bouncing. “Sure. Why not.”

“Ooooh, yeah, slutty schoolgirl!” Owen said, grinning broadly.

“Dude, she is literally a slutty schoolgirl. That’s not role play; that’s the actual circumstance she’s in.” He stroked his chin, sensing they were nearing an end to their patience with him. “Would you... twerk for us? For him, I mean. For Owen.”

Angelica turned to face him directly. “You are just getting off on this, aren’t you? Fine. You wanna stare at my ass, fine. But if I do this for you, you’ll go home and jerk your tiny little cock off and leave us the fuck alone, right?”

Conner looked back and forth between the two of them. Angelica was a picture of strained patience. Owen was staring at her ass like a puppy at a withheld chew toy.

“O-OK,” he said.

“Fine. Now sit the fuck down. I can’t point my ass in two different directions at once.”

Jerk off he did. Knowing that his stepsister was across the street sucking Owen off – or fucking him in his choice of holes, letting him fuck her cute little tits, or humping him raw while she begged him to let his little cocksucking bimbo slurp away on his...

Damn.

He managed to send a picture of his dick to Hailey, including a lie that he was thinking of her. But it was a set of taut ass cheeks clapping together at his command. The thought of a beautiful girl who, as of this afternoon, believed his every word. Angelica. Heather. Hayleigh.

When Hailey replied a minute later with a completely nude shot of her in the bathroom mirror, it was already too late. He was spent.

## Chapter Eight

For the next couple weeks, Conner somehow managed to avoid the temptation to fiddle around any further with TIOS. Hailey could take the lion's share of the credit for that; they met up under the auditorium stage most mornings for a quickie before school, every lunch period, and every evening. He'd already begun to forget that she was only playing the part of his obedient slut by choice; it was fast becoming the norm for him to touch her, use her, however and whenever he liked.

Meanwhile, Conner and Heather worked pleasantly together on the yearbook spread on several occasions. Hailey's constant efforts to make him come helped quell his anxiety around the pretty blonde, and both escaped their sessions together unscathed. Besides, as he devoted thought to it, her willingness to believe him was not as useful as Angelica's condition with Owen. Not like he could tell her how to feel or what to do. The apparent inability to take control over her actually took some of the edge off.

Another weekend came. Only two weeks since the academic decathlon and his first experiments with TIOS, yet it felt like a year. A steamy, sexually charged, endlessly erotic year.

Angelica had her chores done before her stepbrother was even awake that Saturday. The slam of the front door as she left for Owen's house – for Owen's cock – was what stirred him from fitful dreams. Even having gotten off mere minutes before falling asleep, he awakened as hard as he'd ever been. Trying not to think about the lingering image Angelica's naked body that seemed intent on burning itself into his mind, Conner chalked his erection up to morning wood and turned down the temperate in the shower.

It hadn't gone away by the time he got out.

How could he be jealous of Owen? It was so wrong, and on so many levels. First off, it was his sister. Stepsister, technically, but she was still family. Even if she'd only recently joined his family. Even if it had been an exercise of pure willpower to keep her out of his fantasies even before last night. Before he'd seen her reduced to a junkie whose drug of choice was a constant IV drip of cum, sucked direct from the source.

He had Hailey, though, he reminded himself. In Hayleigh McKnight's gorgeous body, no less. She was obviously crazy about him, and had capitulated to his every sexual inclination. Heck, she'd flat out told him she'd do anything he wanted, and had even agreed to some things he decidedly *didn't* want. He was already running out of new things he wanted to try; by now, it was just a matter of trying different paces, rhythms and positions. Conner wouldn't even have to ask, in fact; he could just tell her, and she'd do it.

So then why did he still envy Owen?

He glanced out the window, looking across the street to where his friend was probably already coming in one of Angelica's eager holes. Had he made her ask permission? Did he have her strip first? Did she thank him? It was all too easy to picture him leaning back on the sofa, legs spread and feet propped up on the couch, while Angelica adoringly serviced his cock for hour after hour.

He had to clear his head.

“Hey there, Conner,” said his stepdad as he cracked open the door to his room that evening. Conner rolled onto his back and forced his eyes open. The alarm clock on his nightstand read 9:22. “Wore yourself out today, eh?”

“Yeah, I guess.” He tried to remember what all he’d accomplished. Raking the yard. Reorganizing the shed. Then the garage. Then the basement. Cleaning out the gutters. Vacuuming, bathrooms, a deep clean of his own bedroom... anything he could think of to keep his hands busy.

“Well your mom and I didn’t want you to think we don’t appreciate you stepping it up today. I don’t know what got into you, but we’re... well, here.” He produced his wallet from his back pocket, crossing the room to place a few bills on Conner’s desk. “Why don’t you use this to take that young lady out for a nice dinner.”

Conner blinked, still trying to clear the sleep from his eyes. “Angelica?”

His stepdad looked at him askance. “What? No, I think after spending all day out playing with her friends Ang can buy her own dinner. I meant that girl that you’ve been hanging out with so much lately. Hailey, was it?”

His cheeks colored at his mistake. “Right. Sorry. Still tired. Thanks.”

“And look...” The man shifted uncomfortably on his feet. “I know you’re at that age where... look, I know you don’t need the whole birds and the bees talk, but...” He plunged a hand into his side pocket and came up carrying a pack of condoms. “Just don’t do anything stupid, all right?”

Not knowing what else to say, he murmured an assurance that he would not. With a little pat on the head, his stepdad made his exit, giving him a last, proud, man-to-man smile before closing the door behind him. For some time, Conner lay there in the dark room, staring at where the soft green glow of the clock shed its light on the prophylactics. He’d spent all day trying to keep thoughts of girls out of his head, and here was his reward.

He closed his eyes again, and for the thousandth time since he’d first seen it last week, the image of Angelica’s naked ass shimmying in his face immediately projected itself on his eyelids.

*Hey you wanna do something today?*

*I'm like soooooo bored.*

*I got a new bra today. Here's a peak.*

She texted him an image of her lifting her shirt up until it just barely covered her breasts. He could see a hint of red along the tantalizing glimpse of underboob. Evenly tanned, now. Darker than before, since she'd wanted to make up for lost time, but they'd evened out quickly.

*Matching panties, too. if you wanna see those you gotta come get me. ;)*

This was the series of messages awaiting Conner the following morning. He'd somehow managed to sleep in despite his early crash time, but evidently Hailey had been up with the sun. Her first text was time-stamped 8:00 exactly, and he didn't expect that was coincidence either. That was a calculation on the part of a desperate girl about how early was acceptable to text the guy she'd been fooling around the past couple weeks.

Conner picked up his phone, then texted Owen. *You busy?*

The reply came a minute later, featuring a picture of his stepsister's lips pressed to the base of Owen's shaft. Her eyes were closed, and she looked so peaceful and content that it almost looked like she was sleeping like that. Then came the words, *a little lol*. Conner looked long at the picture before backing out of the conversation and bringing up his conversation with Hailey.

*omw* he typed.

"My mom's at work, and she brought my brother with her." This was the only explanation Hailey offered as to how, when he opened the front door, she was able to be waiting in her family's living room in a set of lingerie that wouldn't be appropriate in a Victoria's Secret catalogue. He stared so hard she had to coax him to shut the door before someone went by the house and saw her. Then she had to say it again, because it was that hot.

The bra wasn't a bra at all. It was a few bright red strings shaped in a triangle around her breasts, meeting in the center in a little bow. There was clearly not enough to them to provide lift, but her youthful physique kept them perky enough regardless. Her panties matches the bra, both in style and in not being panties. A pair of red ribbons were tied at the hips, trailing down to her pussy and disappearing between smooth thighs. The wisp of fabric between them was transparent; Conner could see her pubic mound right through it, and noted she had shaved it bare. (No doubt after he'd responded to her question the other day by saying he didn't have a preference, but thought shaved might be hot.) She was lying on her side, and from the way one leg was cocked forward, he could see it covered even less of that splendid ass of hers. She'd even finished off the ensemble with a pair of red stiletto heels that did wonders to her ass as she walked back towards the couch.



The ensemble served no other purpose than to invite his gaze and be removed if he so wished. It wasn't clothing. It wasn't underwear. It was wrapping on a toy.

"When does your mom get off work?" he asked, finally, after his brain registered that not only could he *look* at this vision of sex, but he could *do* things to it.

"Two o'clock. She had the early shift this morning, so she had to be in at six o'clock. Since it's Sunday and all. Lots of churches have orders they need ready for morning services, so she has to be in way early for it. Though she might get out later than two. Sometimes she works late to—"

Conner had already done the math. "That gives us three hours and thirty-eight minutes. I don't want my cock to be dry for that entire time, OK?"

Hailey giggled. "You have such a one-track mind, Conner."

"I come in and find my little slut looking like *that* and she wonders why I don't wanna sit down and do a jigsaw puzzle," Conner said with a grin, hastily stripping off his clothes.

"Aw, but I was just gonna show you how well I can fit your piece into my slot." Hailey rolled onto her back and threw one leg over the back of the sofa, thus confirming that not only was her thong scant, it was crotchless as well.

Conner had learned several things about their sexual preferences in the past two weeks. Regarding Hailey, it was largely information he used to enhance his own pleasure, but it wasn't entirely selfish. How hard to pinch, where to suck to make her moan louder, the number of fingers she liked and the number that was too much.

For himself, Conner had learned that he narrowly preferred her pussy to her mouth, but suspected improved technique could tip the scales. He'd learned that when she sat on his lap and rode him, he preferred her back to him rather than her front, so he could use her tits as handles. That dirty talk was a good way to shorten his refractory time.

That he had no interest in her outside of sex. A fact that every single lull in their sweaty noon-time fuck-fest only served to reinforce.

It was kind of a relief, really. He'd been quietly kicking himself before this all started, thinking himself shallow for rejecting Hailey solely for her appearance. But it wasn't that. Or rather, now that he'd accepted her solely for her body, it wasn't *only* that. The more she chattered at him between rounds of wet torrid fucking, the more he realized he simply didn't find her engaging. They didn't have common interests. They didn't share hobbies. Their friend circles didn't overlap (to the extent that Hailey had a friend circle). She objectively talked too much and most often about things no one could possibly find interesting.

He forced himself to smile at a story about how her aunt had hand-stitched the Raggedy Ann doll on the end table for her as an infant, then gagged her with his cock the moment she paused for air.

Was it wrong, then, to string her along? Conner pondered as he leaned his head back and let Hailey practice her titty-fuck. (It wasn't as pleasurable as the rest, but she insisted she wanted to get good at it, and it was a heady experience to watch that bitch Hayleigh McKnight's face monitoring him for pleasure while she denied her own.) He definitely didn't want to be a couple, to go public with her. Not only was there the social factor – regardless of how hot his redheaded goddess had become, nobody else saw anything but Hefty Hailey McManus – but there was also Heather. He couldn't pursue his dream girl if he was in a relationship, and Heather was the sort of girl who would definitely honor such a thing.

So what did he do? He ran through the options as she sucked one ball into her mouth, then the other, then back to the shaft with a lusty moan. He could keep it to himself, fool around with her on the side. Hailey had painfully low self-esteem; she'd probably let him get away with it.

Of course, if he got caught – or if his conscience caught up with him – it would ruin everything. So he could break it off with Hailey. The thought was uncomfortable; she was unlikely to take it well. Still, even if the truth that he was into someone else was too much for her, he could always come up with something. Owen would help him make up an excuse. His friend was good for that much, at least.

And maybe he could use the visit as an excuse to ogle Angelica while she pleaded her heart out to be allowed to give him lap dances in exchange for the privilege of sucking his dick.

The longer Conner thought it through, with Hailey bobbing on his cock with a fervor, the more he was simply trying to talk himself out of doing something like Owen had done to Angelica. Hailey was a font of self-effacing dirty talk, and he had no doubt he could hook her with any number of offhand comments. He remembered her saying she'd do any sexual thing he wanted. That alone would probably be enough, if the simple words that had sealed Angelica's fate was any measure.

"Tell me you'll fuck me any way, any time I want," Conner said suddenly.

Hailey stopped her blowjob with a long, slow withdrawal, a strand of drool trailing from her lips to his dick until it broke and landed on her scantily covered breasts. She pressed herself up against him as she dragged her body up to straddle his lap, easing herself down onto his cock inch by tight, wet inch.

"I'll fuck you." She pressed his hands to her tits, keeping him there until he was fondling in earnest.

"Any way." She gyrated her hips once, then pressed herself down to the base. He was in her as fully as could be.

"Any time." Her pussy seemed to grip his cock, rippling up and down his length.

"You want." She fucked him. Exactly the way he wanted.

It was gray and overcast when Conner left at 2:05; he passed Hailey's mother on the road. She didn't notice him, he was pretty sure. Hailey had asked Conner – veritably begged him – to stay for a while and hang out, but once her clothes were back on, he remembered his disinterest and made up an excuse. He steered the car home, but when it arrived, he couldn't make himself go in. His stepdad was home, totally unaware that his only daughter was presently across the street slobbering on his stepson's ginger friend's cock, helplessly addicted to it. Enslaved by it. By TIOS.

Conner couldn't make himself grapple with the question of whether it had really been done by him.

He closed his eyes, and images of Hailey – Hayleigh – begging to be allowed to service his cock flooded his imagination. His stepsister made several appearances as well, and then the floodgates opened and any girl and woman he'd ever taken notice paraded through. Three hours spent in nonstop sex and he still couldn't stop thinking about it. Except he couldn't do anything about it even if he wanted to, because his family computer didn't have a copy of TIOS installed. Only the ones at school did. Except...

As editor-in-chief of the yearbook, he had keys that could get him into the journalism classroom, where they were stored.

It would be simplicity itself. A couple logins, a few clicks and a few dozen strokes of the keys, and he could have Hayleigh McKnight's body to use as his cock's playground whenever he wanted. No more walking the line between girlfriend and hookup. No more nervousness that she'd abandon him if she figured it out, or that she might decide she didn't like his authoritative style. He could pursue Heather and, if he ever got bored (or horny), could snap his fingers and have Hailey there to take care of him.

Literally, he realized. He could train Hailey to suck his cock with a snap of the fingers.

He started his car, and with some luck, managed to keep such thoughts muted enough that he didn't crash on the way. The Northside High School lot always had a few cars in it – they never seemed to leave, probably abandoned and never towed away – but it was mostly vacant. Conner parked near the English section entrance and keyed his way in. There were gates up at various points around school to keep him from roaming far, but he could make it to Miss C's room unimpeded. A second key for the classroom, and he was in. He made a beeline for the computer lab and the first station inside the door. The office on the opposite of the room was usually where he worked, but the lab was closer. He was already tired of waiting.

The dated computer in the yearbook computer lab never loaded so slowly as it did that afternoon. Conner found himself drumming his fingers, fiddling with his hair, mentally ordering the thing to load faster. Finally the soft blue light from the default background was glowing in the room. He double-clicked the TIOS icon and entered his

editor-in-chief login. The moment it loaded, he guided it to Hailey McManus's page, a thumbnail of her falsified portrait in the top right corner.

There was nothing written here. It was as if she were a blank slate, his to write on whatever he wanted. He had dozens of options of what to type compiled over two weeks of clandestine, filthy-mouthed fuck-fests. It was the one thing about the original Hailey that genuinely impressed him – her capacity to keep a steady stream of tawdry vulgarity going. She was impressive in that regard.

*Your little butt slut always enjoys your touch.*

*Everything you do just feels so darn good.*

*I never want you to stop.*

*Your cock is like crack to me, Conner.*

And so on. He could write them all, of course. But frankly, he worried that he might scramble her brain with all that. Heck, TIOS might digitally (magically?) lobotomize her. He'd read enough science fiction to have some slight inclination towards moderation. And really, there was only one thing he wanted from Hailey, and she'd made it painfully easy on him. With trembling fingers, he typed the words into the window.

*"I'll fuck you any way, any time you want."* He entered the date, and tried to edit his name in, but it autocorrected to the real version. Like it had in other spreads he'd tinkered with, it seemed to intuit pronoun references.

Conner moved the mouse to the Save icon on the top bar. One click, and she was his. One of the hottest girls in school – one of the hottest girls he'd ever seen – would become his sex slave.

And one of the most pathetic girls in school would, basically, cease to be. At least, cease to be what she was. A shy, pudgy, loquacious and ultimately forgettable girl who had the misfortune to be smitten with someone who simply wasn't interested. One click, and his interest would become very real.

One click.

"Conner? Is that you in there?" came a sudden voice. Conner nearly jumped out of his skin, then craned his neck to peer out the entryway into the computer lab. The voice was suddenly joined by a silhouette in the doorway of the classroom, as black as the rest of the room against the thin shaft of fading daylight coming in through the hallway.

"Miss C?" he said, placing the voice as his teacher.

With the light of the screen in his eyes, he could only tell she was approaching by her footsteps. "What the heck are you doing here on a Sunday afternoon? Does some awful teacher have you in here doing her bidding? Tell me her name and she's a dead woman."

His heart had been pounding even before her arrival had scared the crap out of him. Conner hoped his smile passed for normal. “I’d write her name down for you, but honestly, it’s too hard to spell.”

“Hardy har,” she said, grinning. “Seriously though, what’re you doing here? One of those urgent breaking yearbook spreads like you read about on the googlebook?”

The screen served as a barrier between them, letting one side see and be seen, while the other dwelled in darkness. With the light in his face, he still couldn’t see more than the shape of her. “Just, um... say, what’re *you* doing here on a Sunday?” he deflected.

Conner heard a flip switch, and suddenly he had to squint as the small side room was illuminated in harsh fluorescence. After a moment, he could see that Miss C was wearing a sports bra and a pair of black athletic leggings, her thick mane of curly brown hair up in a ponytail. The sports bra covered her entire chest, but he’d never seen what a toned stomach his teacher had before. As occasionally happened when Miss C reminded him she was a woman, he forced his eyes on her face. He had enough troubles keeping her out of her fantasies without having to – getting to – see her wrapped up in spandex.

“Just out for a run with Brent,” she said. Conner had met his teacher’s boyfriend a couple times at after-school events. He was painfully handsome, and had one of those beards that always looked like five o’clock shadow. “I saw your car in the lot and figured I’d surprise you.”

“Oh, cool. Well don’t let me interrupt you.”

She made a face. “What, you saying I need more exercise? I think I’ve held up pretty good, for an older broad.”

“You’re what, twenty-eight?” he said with an eye roll.

“Ish.” She turned as if to leave, but rather than saying goodbye, she once again faced him. This time a concerned expression painted her features. “Is everything all right, Conner?”

The boy started. “W-why would you ask that?” he said, too quickly.

“I dunno. You’ve just seemed... I don’t know. A little off, the past week or two.”

His blood was like ice in his veins. Could she know? About TIOS, about Hailey and Hayleigh and Angelica and Owen and Heather? Could some strange trick of reflected light have shown her what he still had written on his screen?

No, he decided. She couldn’t possibly know. After all, if she knew he’d turned his stepsister into a blowjob queen for his best friend, she’d not be gently asking such a thing. Miss C was trying to show concern, but he was too nervous from what he was doing – by all the things he’d been hiding – to let his guard down. “I dunno. I, um, I guess I’m OK.”

Her expression made it clear his answer – and the awkward pause preceding it – had only deepened her apprehension, and she pulled up a chair in front of him and sat

in it backwards. He was so used to the formal Miss C, dresses to mid-shin and blouses never showing a hint of cleavage, that seeing her sit so casually was jarring. Miss C had been his mentor, but he'd never needed to come to her for personal stuff before. He'd never really *had* personal stuff before.

Certainly nothing like this.

"Come on, Conner. I know there was that whole... whatever thing, with you and Jordan and Hayleigh McKnight. Have they been pestering you? Bullying you?"

He blinked. In the midst of all the TIOS upheaval, he'd nearly forgotten all that. In fact, he'd scarcely registered it while it was happening. Conner had seldom in his life been bullied, and while Jordan's ribbing was fairly irksome, he didn't take it home with him. Lately he'd been targeted more directly than any other time in his life; Hayleigh and Jayce had continued their harassment-in-passing routine these past two weeks – yet he'd been so focused on his intrigues that he hadn't taken time to be upset.

After all, you can only be so demoralized by a girl picking on you when you only finished coming on her face two hours before.

"Some, maybe. Nothing I can't handle. It was all a stupid misunderstanding anyway. Little stuff."

She shrugged. "I've been around the block enough to know that 'little stuff' has a way of becoming big problems, if you don't get out ahead of it. Come on, talk to me. Pretend I'm not your twenty-eight-ish teacher."

"If we play that game, I'm worried I'm going to wind up asking you out," Conner said. The moment he said it, he could feel the color blooming in his cheeks. Did he just *flirt* with *Miss C*?!

To his relief and surprise, after a moment she burst into laughter, and although it was a good long laugh, he still felt nervous when it was over. "Oh, Conner. Look at you, getting smooth on me. Should've told Brent to chaperone, keep me honest." She laughed again, and patted his forearm. "Relax, we're both kidding."

Conner allowed himself an awkward chuckle. "Sorry. I didn't mean to..."

"Forgotten. Now come on. Talk to me."

"Oh, it's nothing. Nothing you'd understand, anyway." As if Conner understood it himself.

Miss C put a hand to her chest, affronted. "You don't think I'd understand? Come on, not only have I *taught* high school the past five years, but I even used to go to one. I tell you what. Let me take a stab, you tell me if I'm warm."

He glanced one more time at the words on his screen. "I promise you, you're not going to—"

"Bp bp bp! Just let me try, and you tell me when I'm wrong. For starters, let's see... it's about a girl?"

"That's an easy guess, Miss C."

“But I’m not wrong. OK, so... something recent, or you wouldn’t have had that intense look on your face when I walked in.”

“Also easy.”

“And the girl is Heather. That specific enough for you?”

Conner paused. “Why would you guess Heather?”

“Because I’m not as dumb as you think I am,” she laughed. “You hide it well enough, but remember, I teach journalism too. Observe and record, remember?”

“Yeah, but... I mean, half the guys in school would die to go out with a girl like her. You may as well have guessed any of the really pretty girls.”

She brushed a strand of hair to the side, and a thin sheen of sweat held it in place. “Only half? I think you’re selling our girl short. Still, we’re talking high school boys, plenty of whom would pounce on anything with female anatomy. If we’re talking about people with a genuine interest, and maybe even a genuine shot, that’s a much smaller list.”

He frowned. “Wait... are you saying... you think Heather likes me?”

Miss C regarded him inscrutably. “Truth?”

He nodded.

“Truthfully, I doubt it. Mind you, that doesn’t mean she *dislikes* you, but it means you need to get her interested if you’re going to have a shot.”

“How do I do that? I don’t, um, have a lot of experience.” At least, not with normal, non-body-changed girls who weren’t already infatuated with him.

“I don’t know, you seemed to be capable of flirting a minute ago.” She waited for his cheeks to color with a little smirk, then went on. “But that’s what you need to do. Be confident. Not arrogant, not meek, but that balanced place in the middle that shows you’re someone she should take seriously.”

“So, what, I just... walk up to her and ask her out?”

She gave him a hard look. “No. That’s what creeps do. Look, there’s no manual for this stuff, and you can ask Brent, I’m not the expert. But you have something going for you that I don’t think Jordan or any of these other boys have.”

“I do?” What conceivable edge could he, Conner Fishers, have with Heather compared to all the buff guys, the rich guys, the slick guys?

She smiled at him, and there was an unmistakable fondness to it. “You know, most people take yearbook because they think it’s a blow-off class. They think they can roam the halls and pretend they’re working but really just goof off and put it on their transcript like they achieved something. But Conner, I’ve known you for going on four years now. You’re not the most open book, but I think I’ve gotten to know you pretty well. And I know you’re here because you genuinely care about people.”

Conner tried not to look at those words he’d written on the screen as she continued.

“You’re a good writer, but honestly? I’ve had better. I made you editor-in-chief because you don’t just want to snap photos and write up spreads. You want to take these days – these unpredictable, terribly wonderful days – and...” She paused. “Do you remember that spread you wrote on the tornado?”

He had to think for a moment. “Uh, kind of. That was freshman year.”

“I actually had Greg Neder – he was editor that year, remember? – write up a spread for it first. And he wrote about it, who lost what, cost estimates on damages, got some pictures of a torn-up strip mall. All very accurate, an unbiased historical account. Then I read yours. And you, Conner? You wrote about how the community was rallying around the victims. I remember you had this great quote from one of the victims about how afraid she’d been, but then you followed up to get her to explain how grateful she was for everyone’s support. You took a picture of a group of NHS students hauling boxes of donations out to a truck for delivery. You told a story of togetherness, and resilience, and hope.”

His cheeks flushed again, but for a different reason. Conner hadn’t realized he was doing any such thing. To him, his story had simply been the way it had happened.

“And that’s why I went with yours. Maybe it wasn’t as true, maybe it wasn’t quite as cleanly written. Maybe. But yours was *us*. And that’s when I knew I had a future editor in hand. You want to tell stories, and you want those stories to have heroes. You want the good guys to win and to cheer for them even when they can’t. I knew then that I had a future editor on my hands, and when I talked the board into splurging on *This Is Our Story*, it was because I wanted you to be able to tell that story just the way you know it should be told.”

Conner tried to hold back tears. “Wow. Um, thanks, Miss C.”

“You’re one of the good ones, Conner,” she said, putting a hand on his knee and giving it a hard squeeze. “Why do you think I assigned Heather to work on the yearbook spread with you?”

“Um, yeah, why *did* you?”

She rolled her eyes at her pupil’s denseness. “Maybe I want to good guys to win, too.”

“You... Oh. Geez. Thanks. Thanks again, I guess.”

“Don’t thank me yet,” she said, standing back up. “Feel any better?”

He nodded. “Yeah. I really do.”

“Good. Gotta earn that paycheck.” She grinned.

“Miss C... why did you come in here today? It’s not that weird for me to be in on weekends.”

“I had a hunch you weren’t happy lately, and you’re one of my kids, Conner. Not like all my students are, but I mean *my* kids. You mean the world to me, and all I ever want is for you to be happy.”



He smiled, wiping away a solitary tear that had managed to escape. “Mission accomplished.”

“Good. I’d offer you a hug, but I’m all…” He suspected she meant she was sweaty, though he’d have been too nervous to hug his pretty teacher when she was wearing nothing but spandex anyway.

“Mental hug, then.”

She squinted her eyes closed for a moment. “Done. Say, I’m gonna head out – you coming, or still feel the urge?” She nodded to the laptop.

“I actually just had one thing to do, and then I’m on my way out.”

“Okey doke, you finish up and I’ll wait, walk you out.”

As she made her way to her desk and rifled through some papers, he looked back to his screen. *I’ll fuck you any way, any time you want*, it still read.

Miss C had said she’d gotten TIOS – *This Is Our Story* – to let him do decide how to chronicle the life and times of the his classmates. Was that fact somehow related to the bizarre things it could do at his command? He didn’t know. It may well be unknowable. But she’d also reminded him of why he’d started down this bizarre, depraved path in the first place. After all, that was why he’d first dragged Hayleigh’s picture to Hailey’s name – imagining what her story would be if she’d been someone who looked like she could be loved.

And where had that taken her? If not for the timely intercession of his yearbook teacher, quite possibly to a future of servicing his every carnal desire as some kind of sex slave. He’d come that close to ending her story with a few taps of the keyboard.

Conner didn’t know whether or not his teacher was right about her characterization of him. It certainly didn’t seem to fit the kind of person he’d been lately. Using Hailey for sex. Lusting after his stepsister. Hardly trying to undo any of the chaos he’d caused because the truth was, the consequences were to his liking. Still, her description sounded like a version of himself. One that had taken a leave of absence recently, but could return at any moment.

As he stared at those words on the screen and reflected on what Miss C had said, and all that had happened of late, he was reminded of two pieces of wisdom that had been handed down to him. The first was also from Miss C, something she’d said to him his freshman year when he was first formally learning the ropes. *Every history is someone’s version*, she’d said. She’d explained how no matter how objective one might try to be, bias was inherent. The best a writer could try to do was be intentional in that bias, to be sure they were writing what they meant to write.

The second went back further, to when Conner had been around seven or eight years old. He’d been helping his mother with a scrapbook of photos and items from their camping trip together with his aunt and uncle and their kids. They’d gone fishing one day, and Conner’s little cousin Hannah had gotten excited and tried to look at something

in the water, causing her boat (along with Conner's aunt and uncle) to flip and dump the three of them in the murky lake.

His mom had told him he had to pick which picture to include for the event. There was one of everyone standing on the dock, preparing to get in the boats and catch some bluegill. The other was an after picture, with his cousin, aunt and uncle drenched and muddy and looking thoroughly displeased to have a camera pointed at them. Conner had struggled with which one to include; in one picture everyone looked so happy, but the other was a reminder of what to all those who'd remained dry had been the most hilarious moment of the trip.

*How do I know which one to choose?* young Conner had asked.

*It depends,* his mother had answered. *Do you want the book to show what happened, or what we wish had happened?*

The editor-in-chief deleted the quote and discarded the spread. Then, he navigated to the page he'd opened last week for the yearbook staff's memories, and quickly added a quote from Miss C to help him remember this. He didn't think he'd ever forget this talk, but he wanted to make sure. That was the point of a yearbook, after all, wasn't it?

With the file saved and the computer powered down, he joined her at the door. They walked out in silence, his head a little higher than it had been in what felt like a very long time.

"Darn, Brent was right to go straight home. Finally started raining," she observed. "Mind giving an old lady a ride?"

"I didn't think teachers and students were supposed to be alone in a car."

She patted his shoulder. "I won't tell if you won't."

It was well and truly pouring, a late fall storm that left them both soaked and chilled by the time they reached his car only a hundred feet away. Since he'd only just driven here not half an hour ago, the heat turned on almost immediately, and they took a moment to blast themselves with the warmth before he put it in drive.

A radio station Miss C picked out and the occasional direction from her were the only sounds as they drove. He nearly missed a stop sign when she idly tugged down the zipper on the front of her sports bra. Not all the way, of course, but half – enough that from the side, he was seeing a stupefying amount of her impressive cleavage, and for the first time.

"Eyes on the road, Conner," she rebuked him casually, though she didn't zip back up. "It's hot and wet in there – just airing things out."

"Sure. Sorry. You're just... I'm sorry."

Then before he could even sneak another peek, they were at her house, a little gray one with faded pink shutters in bad need of paint. "Here you go, Miss C."

She smiled at him. “When we’re alone, and we’re out of school, you can call me Kristy. OK?”

“Oh. OK, um, Kristy.”

She patted his leg. “Thanks for the lift, and good luck with the girl situation, OK? Come to me if you need to talk to someone. About whatever.” And she leaned over and gave him a hug after all. She was still wet, but so was he. In the mindset in which he’d gone to school that afternoon the feel of her breasts pressed against him would have dizzied him with arousal. Now, though, his head was clear, and he was able to enjoy it as a mere expression of kindness and friendship.

Then she gave him a peck on the cheek, and then she was gone.

## Chapter Nine

Undoing the damage proved to be a lot less possible than the impossibility of doing it in the first place. Hours of trying every option and shortcut key combination he could think of left Conner certain that TIOS simply wasn't going to let him undo things. He remembered there had been some kind of warning message that had popped up when he first created his account; at the time, he'd clicked right through it, but it certainly hadn't mentioned anything about un-altering reality. Like with the picture swap of Hailey and Hayleigh, Angelica and Heather were stuck with the consequences of what he'd done. Heather and her trust in Conner were one thing, but Angelica... He'd erased the completion of her high school diploma. (Save for the physical document, that is, which she now kept in a drawer to keep her parents from freaking out if they looked too closely at it.) As if that weren't bad enough, Conner had turned her into his best friend's fuck buddy. Every chance she got, she was with Owen, doing who-knows-what to get at his you-know-what.

Still, the talk with Miss C had done a lot to clear his head. Things had gone so screwy there for a while that he'd started looking at TIOS as a way to distort the preservation of memories, rather than preserve them as intended – or where appropriate, skew them for the better. From here on out, he was make this year's memories worthy of being remembered. After the talk with Miss C, Conner reread the old file of his story about the tornado from three years ago, and he thought he could see what she had been talking about. It was a story of tragedy that centered on hope for the future and the spirit of togetherness that got the community through it.

If TIOS was going to let him tell his version of things, that was the version he wanted to tell. But first things first.

It was time to break it off with Hailey.

Conner was waiting for her in their spot under the stage before school. She came in rarin' to go, removing her shirt the instant she'd closed the door behind her and working on her jeans as she approached their mat. "Your slut is so wet for you, Conner. I hope you're ready to fuck my hot wet pussy..."

That face. That hair. Those tits. That voice. The desperation to please him. Maybe just one more...?

No. He had to do this now. Be strong. "Hold on, Hailey."

She knelt in front of him, though since he was sitting cross-legged, she was just a little taller than him. She left half of the front clasp of her bra done up, giving the garment the appearance that it was eager to give its contents to him. "Um, OK. Is everything all right?"

"I just wanted to talk."

Those words, evidently, were all too familiar to a devoted watcher of rom coms and chick flicks. The girl winced, speaking in a small voice. “You’re breaking up with me, aren’t you?”

“Well, technically we were never officially going out, so...” Conner stopped himself. He’d never broken up with anyone before, so he didn’t quite know how to go about it. Nevertheless, even he knew technicalities were not the way to go.

“What did I do wrong? Is it... is it because I’m...” She hastily refastened the clasp, then scurried away to retrieve her blouse and hastily put it back on.

“No! No, Hailey, you didn’t do anything wrong, and your looks have nothing to do with it. I genuinely find you very attractive, hand to god. Come on. Have I ever once held back from touching you?”

She began tearing up, sniffing. “I tried to be what you wanted me to be. Didn’t I?”

“Hailey, I never wanted you to be anything but yourself. And if I pressured you into anything you didn’t want to do, I’m sorry, honest. But that’s kind of it – we dove into all this so fast, and I think it got away from both of us.”

“I... I thought you liked all that stuff.”

“I did! I mean, I think I did. I’m not actually, um, very experienced.” He took a breath. “OK, before you, I had practically *no* experience. Which I think is why the sudden craziness kind of... overwhelmed me, I guess you could say.”

“I can slow it down! I mean, I only ever wanted to make you happy. I don’t have to act like that if it weirds you out.” She sniffled.

“Wait, that was... I thought you were doing that for my benefit.”

“Kind of? I don’t know, I just started and it felt good, and... I could totally stop, though!”

Inwardly Conner felt some small relief. It had felt like he’d pressured into becoming that. Knowing she had been doing it for her own enjoyment took the edge off. “It’s not that, Hailey. All the sex stuff, that was... amazing. But it was just too much, too soon, I think.”

“God, I’m such a freak.”

“You’re not a freak, Hailey. You’re a really nice person, and if you get a little wild, that’s a bonus.”

Another sniffle. “But you don’t want me.”

“Look, I’m not saying anything was bad – only that it was a little too fast for me. That’s all. I just want to kind of hit the brakes, go back to being friends for a while and then see.” He didn’t really intend to get back with her, but she didn’t need to know that now. And he didn’t want to rule it out altogether; after all, she was a beautiful girl and a great sexual partner, and maybe once he was able to see past that, he might someday feel differently about her.

Hailey looked down, nodded. Like a prisoner accepting her fate. “It’s... it’s not another girl, is it?”

Conner smiled. “It’s definitely not another girl.” Yes, he was interested in Heather, but that would probably never happen.

Hailey fell silent then, and Conner scooted over and put an arm around her shoulders and let her cry. The bell for first period rang, but his pristine record could weather another tardy. Hailey nestled in against him. “You’re sure you don’t want to...? You know, just one last time.”

Conner almost literally had to bite his tongue. Boy, did he ever. But whatever Angelica and Owen were up to, he didn’t want a fuck buddy. The temptation had arisen from raging teenage hormones and a bit of jealousy. As he took the time to think it over, he had realized that as hot as it sounded, it wasn’t what he wanted. He wanted a real woman, with her own thoughts and feelings, who could enjoy herself as much as he could.

“I do, god help me I do, but... I couldn’t use you like that, Hailey.”

“I don’t mind. It’s not using if I don’t mind, right?”

“But I would.”

She sighed. “You know, we never even kissed?”

Conner gave his head a shake. “What? Of course we did! I mean... we must have. I’m sure of it.”

“Nuh-uh. I mean, we kissed *parts* of each other. But nope. Never on the mouth.”

How could that be? She had to be wrong. Conner tried to think of an instance, but try as he might, he couldn’t come up with one. It only reaffirmed his decision; his fling with Hailey had been all about pleasure, not about intimacy.

“Wow. You know, I think you’re right. Um... should we? Just to avoid an awkward gap in our sexual checklist. *That* I wouldn’t mind.” He smiled.

She didn’t. “But I would.”

With that, she was making her way back out of their space. “Hailey... Look, I—”

“It’s OK. I gave you a lot of my firsts, but I think I’d like to keep this one.” And like that, she was gone.

And like that, things were back to normal, and Conner's life was back to its usual uncomplicated self.

Well, not entirely normal, and not completely lacking complications. Angelica began riding to and from school with her little stepbrother and Owen everyday. While Owen wasn't crass enough to fool around with her right in front of him, he didn't miss the flirtatious whispering, double entendres and innuendo. Most days the two went straight over to Owen's to work off a solid day of Angelica's pent-up lust, but once they were done – or rather, once Owen was done with Angelica – he and Conner could hang out like they used to. Sometimes Angelica would even join them, though Conner put his foot down if she tried to get something started. Besides, she'd already had a busy social calendar of her own, and reverting to a high school student hadn't changed that. Angelica, who was definitely one of the prettier seniors, even wound up as part of that clique, though she didn't invest in them much outside of school hours, between her own friends and her attachment to Owen.

As for Hailey, things with her ended entirely that morning under the stage. She'd say hi to him in the hallway, but she didn't try to talk to him, sit with him, or otherwise pursue him like she used to. Happily, matters with the real Hayleigh McKnight soon went back to normal, too, which is to say she forgot he'd ever existed and went back to ruling the school. Conner alone saw through the façade to the new body she inhabited; even Owen, who could see Hayleigh in Hailey, hadn't penetrated the rest of the illusion, and insisted he had no desire to. Though he could somehow effortlessly distinguish between the two, he didn't seem to mind living in a world with two Hayleigh McKnights to admire.

He and Heather continued working on the yearbook spread about the yearbook staff, or as she called it, the meta-spread. Conner learned to watch what he said around her, but it was easier than he'd thought it might be at first. He wasn't a dishonest person or prone to hyperbole. As long as he was careful, he didn't risk having her believe that the earth was flat or the like. Once in a while he slipped up (like the one time he joked that he thought the cafeteria might be poisoning the ketchup packets), but he figured if she stopped eating cafeteria ketchup, it wouldn't do her any harm.

Meanwhile, he was getting to know her better every week. He found out she'd been on the A honor roll every semester since sixth grade. That if she kept it up through graduation, she was set up with a full ride. That she'd briefly dated Jordan, but only twice and he'd cried when she said she didn't want to continue. That she rode horses, was allergic to shellfish, was an unabashed *Survivor* fan... He got to know her.

Things were pretty good.

Sure, he was back to being frustrated at having a class with his dream girl and seeming to have no real shot, but compared to staving off the temptation to enslave an innocent girl, it was a laughable problem. With less time spent goofing off with Owen

and with Angelica as a viable study partner, his grades were up. Miss C had taken to mentoring him much more closely, and she did a lot to help him delegate. As such, the staff was doing a much better job of meeting and exceeding expectations. If Jordan was still a pain in his ass, at least the levels of it had receded to normal.

It surprised him, but somehow simply knowing he'd had sex with one of the hottest girls in school, even if no one else knew, had done wonders to help him ignore the small stuff. It was hard to feel down about yourself when you had great accomplishments like that to fall back on.

As for TIOS, he was much more careful about what he did with it. In fact, as another benefit to his new skills of delegation, more of what went into it came from the staff, who lacked his "editor-in-chief" privileges with the software. If they fudged a quote or mis-tagged a photo, nobody's life was turned upside-down. He spot checked things, with some assistance from Miss C, and was generally pleased with what he found. In fact, when his teacher praised the class's efforts and said they were the most talented yearbook staff she'd had the opportunity to teach, Conner went ahead and quoted it in the meta-spread. If it somehow transformed the quality of their work, what of it? He didn't mind the "risk" of allowing TIOS to heap a little extra talent on his dedicated staff.

As for his own work, whenever Conner wrote a spread or modified captions and layouts, he double-checked to be certain it could have no unpleasant side effects. Where possible, he even tried to nudge things for the better. There was no way of knowing that including a quote from Cassandra Mullineks about how proud she was of her teammates for their performance at cross country regionals actually did anything. If it did make her a more committed team captain, a more passionate Northside Nighthawk, he called it a win. He tried to find quotes that reflected the best face of Northside; the benefits to his peers' struggles; the hopes they had for their futures.

"It was such a gorgeous day," said Doris Simpson of the fall bazaar that year. It was one of the school's big fundraisers. People from the community sold baked goods, arts and crafts, fresh produce, and so on, and the school reaped a portion of the proceeds. That year, the weather had been abysmal, near freezing and windy. But Doris Simpson had been selling her handmade birdhouses at the NHS bazaar for close to forty years, and she loved having a day to interact with the kids and customers. To her, it was always a gorgeous day. The next day in the darkroom, Conner developed his pictures and wondered at the sight of a brilliant sun shining on people thronging the bazaar without even the need for a jacket. The spread helpfully readjusted the figure on the amount raised to reflect the increased revenue.

Thanksgiving came and went. That year, Owen joined the Fisher family for the holiday meal. Conner kicked him under the table when, in front of everyone, he said that this year he was thankful for solid yearbook writing. His mother laughed it off and his



stepdad just reached for the gravy boat. Angelica rolled her eyes, but Conner had felt her foot between Owen's legs during the kick.

Then it was back to school for the final three weeks before winter break.

“Dude, when are you gonna stop being such a pussy and just ask Heather out?”

They’d just pulled into the parking lot, stuck behind the usual line of students filtering into the dwindling number of parking spaces. Not far off, Conner had caught sight of Heather entering the building, smiling her radiant smile as she laughed with one of her friends. Then the car behind him had honked to get him moving again, and then Owen had re-stated the advice he’d been giving almost daily for months.

“I’m just waiting for the right moment,” Conner muttered back, prying his eyes off Heather’s departing backside. “You can’t just walk up to a girl like Heather Blake and go ‘hey, let’s go out sometime!’”

“Uh, yeah you can. In fact, that’s exactly what you do,” Angelica said from the back seat. (Conner had long since had to veto letting the two of them ride back there together.)

Owen pressed the point. “She’s right. You can’t sit around holding your dick in your hands, waiting for that day when you find her sitting alone in a park at the stroke of midnight weeping at the beauty of the full moon and wishing she had someone to share it with.”

“That’s poetic,” Conner retorted. “Write that one in to Hallmark. And why am I even taking relationship advice from a guy who only gets play because of a software glitch?”

“It’s not a bug; it’s a feature,” retorted Angelica, peevish as ever about having her behavior attributed to a god-computer. “Now quit dodging the issue, Goner.”

“What, that I need to go ahead and bite the bullet with Heather? Do you even know where that expression comes from?”

She rolled her eyes. “First of all, nobody cares where that or any expression comes from. Second of all, that’s not the issue. The issue is that Owen and I are sick to death of dealing with your moperly over this girl. Find out if you have a chance, and if not, find somewhere else to stick it already.”

“Yeah, I bet Hailey would still take you back. I know you think she got cold towards you after the breakup, but not like she’s got other prospects, and not like you have better ones.”

“Except Heather, you mean, right?” Conner grumbled.

“Sure, let’s say that’s what I meant.” Owen elbowed him gently in the ribs.

“I know I don’t say this often enough, but shut up, both of you.”

As it turned out, Conner did not ask Heather out that day. He spent the whole interim between his morning pep talk with Angelica and Owen right up until last period with Miss C psyching himself up for it. Then there was a fire alarm right before journalism that only left them half the period by the time everyone got back inside. The next day he repeated the process, but she was out on a field trip for her Spanish class. Wednesday he was home sick with a flu bug that was going around, and Thursday he

was back but was still kind of a mess and didn't want to make his move at a disadvantage. By Friday, he figured she probably had her weekend already planned out, so he just let it slide for one more day.

He had more excuses for the next week, though most were even weaker.

Then it was finals week. Angelica was in a particularly foul mood; much of the material on her finals was stuff she'd forgotten years ago when she'd still been in high school. Conner was doing his best to tutor her, but her attitude didn't make it any easier. He got annoyed enough with her that he nearly stooped to asking Owen to cut her off until she stepped up her game, but he didn't trust his friend's willingness to abstain for a couple days.

"Are you going to take this seriously, or should I just stop wasting my time?" he said, exasperated after his stepsister had taken to doing her workout routine while he went over notes from government class.

"Oh, a lecture on wasting time from the guy who's been too chicken for two months and counting to ask some girl out." She snorted and resumed doing her tummy crunches.

"There's only two days before winter break starts. It'd be awkward now. After break, I'll do it."

Angelica sighed, coming to a rest on her back and looking up at him while somehow giving the impression it was she who was looking down at him. "Look. You know I don't like to meddle in your personal life, because I don't really care, but hey. I appreciate you're trying to help me out of the mess you made of my life, so I'll throw you a bone."

"Gee, thanks."

"Hush. Now, as someone who finished high school in a previous life, let me tell you something you clearly don't know about your senior year. Right now, you're taking your finals, studying hard, hangin' with your peeps, business as usual. But after Christmas break, you're going to go back and suddenly everyone's going to realize that the finish line is right up ahead. It's all coming to an end."

Conner didn't know what to say to that, so he let her continue. "And what you – and more importantly, what your would-be girlfriend Heather – are going to realize is that there's no more point living like high school matters. Which, even ignoring how it'll change stuff in school, means you can expect everyone to start breaking up. Everyone. Right now, people are dating because they're together all day every day so may as well find a steady slam piece. But in three weeks as they round the bend and that finish line comes into sight... Suddenly high school will be quaint, and people are gonna be leaping into their futures and not miring themselves in their presents."

"So why ask her out if she's just going to dump me in three weeks anyway?"

“Assuming she says yes,” she said wryly. “But my point is, if you want to ever have a shot with her, you gotta do that shit now while life still feels normal. You wait for her to realize she’s got a cute future husband waiting for her at college, and she’s his, not yours.”

Done with her counseling, she went back to exercising. Conner gave himself a moment, then resumed flipped the page in his notebook.

Miss C's final was on Thursday; she'd set aside Friday for a holiday party for the staff. The editor-in-chief was a quick test-taker on the best of days, and this was unsurprisingly his best class. He was the first one done, and with permission from a smiling Miss C, excused himself to the computer lab to get some work done for the rest of the period. His actual plan was to formulate a time and place to pop the question to Heather. Not only did Owen and Angelica make good points, but he also figured that if it was going to make things awkward, better to have a long break to forget about it.

Then the heavy curtains that separated the lab from the classroom parted, and in came Heather. The curtains didn't see much use, but once in a while it made for a nice private place for an interview when the editor's office was unavailable. (Sometimes, less scrupulous students used it as a place to nap or make out.) When Heather turned to draw them closed behind her, it gave Conner a moment to appreciate her beauty before she turned around again and he had to play it cool. She was even prettier than usual today in a cream-colored sweater and thin red dress with black ankle-high boots. More than that, she was smiling and happy and as lovely as ever.

"Feeling pretty cocky about that exam, eh?" he said, swiveling his chair to face her. He kept his voice low so it wouldn't carry into the classroom. The curtains muffled sound, but with an exam in progress, he wanted to be courteous to the rest of the class still testing in the classroom.

"After working all semester under the editor-in-chief himself? Forget about it!" She laughed, settling down on the desktop right next to him. Once, having such a girl's hips not two feet away from his face would have been too distracting to handle; thanks to his time Hailey, he was unfazed.

"Yeah, that was a pretty easy one, I thought. Though did you notice that part on page two where she went from 12-point font to 11.5? Party foul, Miss C." He grinned, knowing Heather usually found his font-nerdery amusing.

"Yeah, it super bothered me, too," she replied with playful sarcasm, then giving way to a little laugh. "But yeah, that's my last final! All my ones for tomorrow had final projects and papers, so I am officially done with my second-to-last semester of high school!"

"Congrats, superstar. Seven down, one to go."

"You say that like there's no chance I'll flunk all my classes next spring."

They bantered on for a couple minutes. Outwardly he was trying his best to seem normal, but on the inside he could feel his guts twisting in anxiety, like they were trying to squeeze the question out of him. The moment met all the criteria on his checklist. They were alone together. She was in a good mood. He'd made her laugh. They weren't somewhere they'd be stuck together for a long time after (in case it went badly).

*No guts, no glory.*

“Heather, I think you’re really pretty, and smart, and funny, and I’ve been meaning to do this for a long time, but... would you maybe wanna go out sometime?” The words had all come out in a massive rush, and he might have even interrupted her. He didn’t know. Deep breath. “With me, that is.”

One side of her lips quirked up into a half-smile. “Were you worried I might think you were asking me out for someone else?”

“You don’t get to be editor-in-chief without owing people some favors,” he joked, glad his voice didn’t break.

A full smile at that. But only for a moment. “Look,” she began, and he could already feel his heart dropping down through his intestines. “I think you’re a really nice guy, Conner. Honestly. You’re one of the nicest people I know. But I’ve been thinking lately that... well, high school is almost over, you know? And then the summer, and then – as long as I keep up my A’s – I’ll be off to college, and... I’m just not looking to start a relationship right now. Do you understand?”

This was Conner’s first rejection of consequence; right now, he could barely understand which way was up and down. “Yeah. Yeah, I get that.”

She made a sympathetic face, sensing his disappointment. “Oh, Conner. Seriously, this is not a reflection of you at all. If you’d ask me a month or two ago, I totally would’ve said yes. You’re a great guy, and any girl would be lucky to have you.”

Conner was right about to respond when suddenly, he heard a voice from not far away. “You guys! Conner just asked out Heather, and she totally shut him down!”

Two things happened simultaneously then. The first was that Jordan threw open the curtains, treating Conner to the sight of his broad, shit-eating grin, as well as the rest of the class looking up from their exams. Miss C was looking up from her seat at her desk in shock and budding anger at Jordan for disrupting her final.

The other thing was that Conner fainted.

Jordan was already gone, banished to the vice principal's office, when Conner came to. Miss C was kneeling over him, and kept him from standing up with a firm hand on his chest. She looked quite nearly panicked, but as Conner realized his head was positively throbbing, he directed his sympathy back inward. He must have hit his head on the floor when he fell; it hurt like hell when he put a hand to it.

Heather returned a moment later with the school nurse, Mrs. Bissell, who asked him a few simple wellness questions before asking DeShaun to help steady him on his way to her office. DeShaun, who Conner was pretty sure he'd seen laughing at Jordan's stunt, murmured a few reassuring words, for which the editor-in-chief was grateful. DeShaun wasn't a bad guy, Conner decided; he was just a normal dude who'd needed a moment to remember his kindness. He thanked his staffer for the help as he left him with Mrs. Bissell.

Conner spent the rest of the afternoon in the nurse's office. It seemed Heather had told her how it had happened; Mrs. Bissell didn't make him rehash it, but he could tell she knew. While she was quite concerned about him, the boy assured her the only thing he was in danger of dying from was humiliation. She had the presence of mind to ask about his ride home, so Owen and Angelica were summoned via the school's intercom right before the last bell, so the announcement didn't interrupt exams.

"Wow, dude. That's... that's just..." Owen began, once he'd heard Conner's tale.

"That's the worst fucking rejection story in the history of rejection," Angelica supplied. "Seriously. The only way that could have been worse was if she'd been making out with Jordan when you woke up."

"Lucky me, she already got that out of her system junior year," he grumped.

"I mean, can you play sick tomorrow?" Owen asked. "It's gonna be bad, for sure. I already heard people saying your name on the way down here, but I didn't know what for."

"No can do. Still have three more exams tomorrow." He sighed.

"I'd worry fainting ran in the family, except we're not blood-related," Angelica said. Conner had almost forgotten her initial reaction to learning what TIOS had done to her. "So what'd Heather say, anyway? I mean, besides 'no.'" Angelica asked.

Conner frowned. "You'll be happy to know you were right – only she was ahead of the curve. Doesn't want to get in a relationship right before leaving for college. She even said if I'd asked sooner, she'd have said yes." Just remembering it was like a punch in the gut. She might have been saying that to let him down easy, but that thought didn't help.

"Ouch. That's rough, man. Sorry." Owen patted his shoulder.

"Me too." He raised his voice so it would reach the nurse in her office. "Mrs. Bissell? Is it OK if I get going?"

She rolled her chair back into the doorway and addressed her reply to the other two. “He should be fine – just keep an eye on him, and definitely don’t let him drive. You may want to see a doctor about your head. One of you got your license?”

They both responded in the affirmative, and with that, the nurse went back to her paperwork and let them leave. Conner laid down in the back seat and did his best to pretend he couldn’t hear his stepsister giving Owen road head while he drove them home. If she overdid it and he crashed and they all died, it would be the perfect end to his day.



“I can get Heather to go out with you, if you want,” Angelica said abruptly in the middle of their study session later that night. With the necessity of icing the bruise on his head, Conner had had no choice but to tell her he fainted. He’d had to practically force the woman to leave him be after that, so his study time was now in preciously short supply.

His stepsister had interrupted his rehashing of Newton’s second law of motion mid-sentence, but her offer bade him ignore the rudeness. “Um, what? How exactly are you going to do that?”

“Easy. We hang out with some of the same people, so we’re quasi-friends. Friends enough that it wouldn’t be weird for us to talk. All I need to do is steer the conversation in the right direction, and push it until she says something you can put into your little yearbook thingy and presto! She’s yours.”

“No. I’m not going to use TIOS to... force her.”

“Oh, you make me...” She glanced to the door, then lowered her voice. “Make me addicted to your dork friend’s cock, but suddenly you’re too high and mighty to do it for yourself?”

“Look, I’m sorry about that, and I told you I’d undo it if I could, but I can’t.”

She shook her head. “Well lucky for you I fucking love that thing, so I can’t seem to mind. Which, by the way, is basically my point. You go this route, and she’ll be *thanking* you for it. Sure, maybe there was a time when I would have rather put dog shit in my mouth than Owen’s dick, but now? My sex life has *never* been better. It’s the fucking bomb.”

“You only feel that way because we *made* you.”

“So? Nobody ever *made* you try something you turned out to like? My dad had to make me get on a roller coaster; Jenna had to make me try yoga; you and Owen had to make me try cock addiction. Now, even if you could undo it, I’d fight to stop you.”

“Still...”

“Still nothing. Think about it. Heather Blake, those ginormous bazongas of hers flopping around while she’d perched on your shwing-shwong, coming her brains out and has so much fun she thanks you for the privilege and begs for another go. Tell me how that’s *not* a favor...?”

“I’m glad you’re having fun, I really am, and I know Owen’s happy with the arrangement. But I don’t want that for Heather. She’s great the way she is, and I’ll just have to suck it up.”

“Oh come on. She said she would’ve gone out with you, right? Let me at least give you the *option*. You’d never have to use it, but maybe one day you’ll realize she’s cheating herself out of, what, seven or eight months of potential happiness? And you’ll want to help her get out of her own way.”

Conner's eyes narrowed. "All right, let's say I take you up on this. What's in this for you, Saint Angelica?"

"There ya go." She grinned. "Look, are you gonna be OK if I speak frankly?"

"You couldn't say anything worse than what I've already seen you two doing."

"Good. So... look, there are times when Owen and I are hanging out that he just... well, gets selfish. Like, he's sitting there playing video games, and even though there's no reason I couldn't keep his dick in my mouth while he plays, he zips up and won't let me do more than lay with my head in his lap. Or that weekend when he visited his grandparents, and when he came back he'd backed up so much he came in like twenty seconds and then kicked me right out. Or another time, when—"

Conner held up his hands to bid her to stop. "I get it, I get it. You want more access."

"*Total* access. I only want him to want what I want. I'm not asking for anything you didn't already do for him."

Conner thought again of the study of the rats, starving to death because they wouldn't stop seeking the dopamine release. It took Conner fewer than five seconds to imagine the likely result of her request: Owen and Angelica dropping out of school and spending every second of every day with his cock in her. They'd wind up two degenerates living under a bridge because work would mean taking a break.

"No thanks, Angelica."

"But—"

"I said no. Now do you want to study, or are you on your own?"

"Looks like I'm on my own," she said with a glare, storming out and slamming his door behind her. He groaned at the effect it had on his headache.

Conner wasn't able to resume studying after she left. What she had said made some sense. Heather had said she would've liked to have dated him, and had insisted he was a nice guy. Great guy, he thought she'd said. They could always break up at the end of the summer if they wanted, and in the meantime make hay while the sun was shining.

Plus, there was the other issue he'd been dreading. Tomorrow, he'd have to go back to school and face a building full of students – teachers too, probably – who knew he was the loser who'd asked a girl out and passed out when she rejected him. He'd be a laughing stock. Conner had never been part of the in crowd, but this was the kind of thing that would relegate him all the way down to the Hefty Hailey level on the social ladder. He could picture his peers snickering as he walked by, pointing and whispering – and some not bothering to whisper – behind his back.

*There goes Conner Fishers, the pussy who fainted at Heather Blake's feet when she shot him down.*

Unless Heather changed her mind. It would be a lot harder to mock him if he had the gorgeous busty blonde on his arm. She already trusted his every word as gospel.

Surely he could find some combination of words that would get her to give it a try. Save him from being a walking punchline.

Not that that was the reason he was going to do it. Err, might do it. Was considering doing it. But probably wouldn't.

Probably.

*There goes Conner Fishers...*

No. He wasn't going to change Heather's story any more than he already had. If that meant taking some lumps, then she was well worth it.

With a regretful sigh, he opened up his physics book, and started in on Newton's third law. *For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction...*

## Chapter Ten

After his fainting spell Thursday, it was decided that Angelica would handle the driving for the last day of the semester. Conner tried to take his time getting ready. The less time he had to spend in the hall before first period, the better. Classrooms promised some small measure of safety. During final exams, they would be quiet and under the watchful eyes of teachers at their sternest. The halls were a lawless place, thronging with savages. Conner's own first period was merely finishing student presentations; he'd given his Wednesday, and was in no rush. Had he been behind the wheel, he would have gladly come in late and simply taken yet another first period tardy – his first since he'd broken it off with Hailey – but Owen and Angelica needed to be on time for their own exams.

Things were about like he expected. Thanks to the miracle of social media, everyone had heard about the incident. No one had been crappy enough to actually share a picture of him lying zonked out on the floor, but some sophomore he didn't even know had caught him being dragged down the hall by DeShaun on his way to Mrs. Bissell's office. The image was captioned with a version of the story that painted him in an even less flattering light.

People pointed. People laughed. People taunted. Always a true friend when it really mattered, Owen shot back a few retorts, but there was only so much he could do. He passed Hayleigh McKnight and Jayce Deacons; she treated him to a look of condescension so profound that if he hadn't already been so thoroughly demoralized, he might have showed everyone then and there the empress's new clothes. (Admittedly, he thought she'd lost some of Hailey's ample weight in the past few months, but still probably competed with her jock boyfriend pound for pound.)

He even passed Hailey McManus, but he couldn't bring himself to make eye contact with her. She'd always been so kind to him, and after their breakup, he couldn't fathom the notion of seeking a sympathetic glance for his girl troubles. He even saw Heather once, a ways down the hallway. Conner about-faced immediately and hoped she didn't see him.

He made it to his locker without quite dying of embarrassment, where he saw another kindred spirit, Miss C. She was standing right next to his locker, and locked eyes with him as he approached, smiling sweetly and looking even prettier than usual in her festive holiday garb.

"Morning, Miss C," he said, trying to will the red out of his cheeks.

"Hi, Conner. How are you feeling?"

"Crash and burn, Fishers!" someone yelled as they walked by. He winced.

"Ya know. Like you'd expect."

She gave his shoulder a little squeeze. “I was wondering. Do you have a first period exam? It’s my prep period, and I could use a hand with a few things.”

“Um, we’re doing presentations, but I already did mine. I could check with Mrs. Schmidt, I guess.”

“Tell you what. I’ll come with, give you a nudge. OK?”

Conner simply nodded and unloaded his backpack. He had to admit, there was a big change over his walk into the building and now walking alongside the young English teacher. There were still looks, still some grins, but as someone had literally thrown a bag of Beggin’ Strips at him on the way in – word had it that had been his approach to asking Heather out – this was a marked improvement.

Indeed, Mrs. Schmidt looked to be overwhelmed dealing with students who’d come in with excuses rather than presentation materials, so when Miss C interjected to ask to borrow Conner, the woman just waved a hand dismissively and off they went. She didn’t say a word until they were alone in the editor’s office. He couldn’t help but notice the sprig of plastic mistletoe over the door to the office, and once more thought bitterly of yesterday.

She invited him to take the desk chair, and perched herself on the desktop next to him. He always tried not to notice that Miss C was a flesh and blood girl – a woman, that is – but he was only now realizing how high her skirt was cut along the side, and the sheer quantity of slender thigh was immensely distracting.

“So how are you feeling today? How’s your head?” she began.

“Pretty bruised... kind of a headache, but I’m binging tylenol to keep it manageable. It’s definitely doing better than my ego.”

“Yeah, I thought maybe. I know how kids can be.”

Conner shrugged. “It happens.”

“It does? Because I’ve been teaching for seven years, and this is a first in my experience.”

“OK, so maybe it doesn’t happen. Let’s just hope it doesn’t happen twice,” he said with a weary but sincere chuckle. “Man, the party this afternoon is going to be so awkward.”

“Because of Heather?”

“And Jordan, yeah.”

“You don’t have to worry about him. I saw to it he was suspended. I tried to get him expelled, but that was the best I could do.”

“You...?!” He looked up at her in shock. “Wow, Miss C. You didn’t have to do that. But thanks. That’s nice of you.”

She patted his cheek softly; now he was hoping his cheeks were still red from before so they wouldn’t suddenly become so at her touch. “How many times do I have to tell you, Conner? When it’s just us, call me Kristy.”

“Right. Kristy. Sorry, I keep forgetting.”

She gave one last gentle swipe with her thumb before pulling her hand away. “It’s OK. Do you wanna talk about it yesterday? Might feel better to get it off your chest. I hate seeing you unhappy.”

Conner shrugged. “What’s there to talk about? She said she’d like to, but she’s leaving for college next fall, so she doesn’t want to start a relationship when she’s about to leave for California.”

“Well that’s something, right? That she’d go out with you if not for that.”

“Now if only I could get that news to spread as big as the fainting thing.”

“It’s her loss, Conner. You’re a sweet guy, funny, cute as a button... if I were ten years younger...” She was clearly joking. He was ninety-nine percent sure. She gave him a coy wink.

Ninety-eight.

Conner blushed. “Thanks, um, Kristy. Though careful, I don’t want Brent to beat me up.”

“He’d have to go through me,” she said, suddenly rising and heading into the classroom. She returned only a moment later with some papers from her desk, handing it to him as she sat back down. He tried not to notice that she was a little closer this time, her leg resting against his arm. It was rather distracting.

“What’s this?” he asked, glancing down. He saw it even as she was answering.

“Some good news for you. Great job on your final. You nailed the essay, and only missed two on the multiple choice. Solid A!”

Normally that would have merited a victory whoop, but a feeble fist raised half-heartedly over his head was all he could manage. “Awesome. Thanks, Miss C. I can’t believe you have them graded already.”

“Not all of them, but I thought my star pupil might need a pick-me-up and I thought it’d be an easy source of good news. I was a little nervous when I saw how fast you finished it, but shame on me for doubting, right?”

“I try not to let you down.”

“Feeling any better?”

“Some,” he admitted. “So anyway, you didn’t bring me here to talk about girls or cheer me up. What was it you needed a hand with?”

“Cheering you up,” she answered with a smile. “I mean, unless you wanna talk about girls. I got some killer advice for ya if you do.” Did her leg rub his arm, or was he imagining it? This was starting to get very distracting indeed. He folded his hands in his lap to keep her from seeing just how distracted he was.

“Well, when I find a girl who actually says yes, I’ll have to take you up on that.”

“I’m serious. If I can help, I want to. Suggestions, advice, practice... I’m your girl.”

Conner’s eyes bulged. “Practice?!”

“Yeah. You know, a little role play to build up your confidence. Try out some dialogue or whatever.” She arched an eyebrow. “Why, what’d you think I meant?”

That was merely the first of Conner's uncomfortable encounters of the day. The second came during lunch. Owen and Angelica were doing some last-minute cramming, and he didn't want to be a bother to them with the attention he was likely to draw. (Indeed, once Miss C was no longer at his side, the mockery had picked right back up.) So rather than sit by himself, he went to the one place he knew he could be alone: the nook under the stage in the auditorium.

It was dark in there, but he knew his way by now. Trying to crawl while using his phone as a flashlight was too much of a pain to be worth it. Down here, nobody would bother him, and the peace and quiet would be good for his throbbing head, too. He shuffled forward, waiting to feel the familiar rubber of the gym mat under his palms.

Instead, he bumped head first into something yielding, but quite solid. It surprised him so much he yelped in panic, instantly regretting it on account of the headache. He raced to get out his cell phone, quickly turning it on and holding it in front of him to reveal...

"Hailey?"

"Hi, Conner," she said. She was sitting on the mat cross-legged; he chose to ignore the way it let him see right up her dress. She was wearing panties at least, but what a reminder of what he'd passed up.

"I didn't think anyone would be down here. Sorry, I can let you have the place."

She snatched his wrist before he could turn away. "No! We can share. I, um, actually thought you might be down here. After yesterday."

"You heard too, huh," he said with a sigh. Deciding to stay, he scooted onto the mat and lay down on his back. The pillows Hailey had transported here for them were still there, he was relieved to discover.

"Everyone heard. I'm so sorry."

"Oh, come on. You're the last person who should have to feel bad for me for getting rejected."

"Maybe. I was telling my mom about it last night, and she was like 'serves him right' and then Doug started in laughing like it was some joke, but I said I felt bad for you. At least I got let down easy and in private. You had it happen in front of a whole classroom, and then turned it into a sensation with the fainting. They say being unconscious is, like, really bad for you, you know that? Do you feel any different? Not that I'd expect it to—"

"My head hurts," he interjected, chuckling softly. Conner had forgotten what a chatterbox she could be. It got old pretty fast, but it was endearing in sporadic doses.

"Yeah. Man. So... Heather Blake, huh? That's your type?"

"I guess."

"I mean, I guess I get it. Once you've had my tig ol' bitties, it's hard to downsize, right?" She giggled, but it sounded forced.



He let himself laugh, though not at her joke. Heather was incredibly stacked in that department, true, but for Hailey, breast size was probably the only thing the old Hefty had had over Hottie. Along with the shift in weight, she'd probably gone down two or three cup sizes. "Looks like."

Hailey lay down next to him on her side, head propped up on an elbow. Lord, but she was gorgeous. Hayleigh may have lost some weight in her new body, but he was pleased to note the reverse had not been the case for his ex. "Heather was stupid to turn you down, you know."

"Hailey..."

"I'm just saying. You're a cute guy, smart, know how to treat a girl like she wants to be treated. You may think I'm just crushing on you, but I'm telling you. It's a rare thing, the ability to accept and like people as they are."

Conner grimaced, considering the source of the statement. "Yeah, tell that to Heather."

"Yeah, some people don't know how to appreciate what's in front of them." She brushed a strand of her silken hair aside. She let her words hang in the still, warm air of the storage area, and for a time, the two lay there silently. It was peaceful. Hailey McManus had somehow become the one beautiful woman he knew who didn't make him nervous. He loved her right then, for that.

"You know, back when, you said you weren't ready, and didn't wanna rush things. And I wondered, you know, if you were feeling more ready."

In spite of himself, Conner let himself look her over. There it was, that dynamite body he'd inadvertently given her. Slender waist, athletic legs, perky butt and perkier tits, and a face just made to be stared at.

If he didn't have a shot with Heather... why not give in? He didn't have to use TIOS or anything; she was all too happy to be with him all on her own. Sure she was a little tiring socially, and he could only imagine hearing the jibes that he'd stooped to Hefty Hailey levels after being rebuffed by Heather Blake. But like Angelica and Heather had said, high school was coming to an end all too soon. With the morning he'd had, Conner was beginning to see how silly it was to feel like this was eternal. Why not have a fun final semester, enjoying the rampant sexual appetites of a genuine submissive who was clearly infatuated with him?

Only then he remembered some advice his mother had given him once, advice which had saved him no small amount of grief on numerous occasions. *Avoid making big decisions when you're upset*, she'd said. It seemed obvious, but how often did people rush into things without a level head only to have it blow up in their face?

Before he could say anything, Hailey responded to his hesitation. "Look, Conner. I don't want to pressure you. If you're not into me, you're not into me. And you got hurt

only yesterday, so it might be you're not feeling ready anyway. So maybe for now just think about it, and get back to me?"

Conner smiled at her. "You're a very rare person, Hailey. Thank you. I don't know right now. But I know I left you kinda hanging before, and I don't want to do that to you again. So I tell you what. Why don't we meet up after school and talk some more, and I'll have a decision. Sound good?"

"Sounds great." She rolled onto her back, the two of them staring up into what felt like the darkness of space. "I don't suppose you want a blowjob to help you mull things over."

Conner sputtered, but his voice literally broke when he tried actual words. Hailey immediately burst into a fit of giggles. "I was only kidding, but wow, your face. I mean, I would if you wanted, but only 'cause you already know how I feel about things. Cards on the table here."

Conner did not take her up on the offer. That it was offered at all, and so freely, definitely made it harder to clear his head. Still, even if it was stressful to have to make such an important decision in the scant few hours he'd allotted to make it, it was nice to know that a beautiful woman was eager to get intimate with him. It made all the other stuff much more bearable.

He took his final two exams, and walked away feeling reasonably confident. He wasn't the straight-A student that Heather was, but he thought he'd do well enough that, when report cards arrived, he'd earn one of his mom's great big hugs, and an approving grunt from his stepdad. At least, he felt like he was a shoe-in to upstage Angelica.

Then last period came. Yearbook, and the holiday party.

Anxiety was hitting Conner pretty hard as he made his way down to Miss C's classroom, hard enough that he stopped in the restroom to stave off a panic attack. After all, this was a group of people who had all seen it firsthand. Moreover, Heather herself would be there. He hoped she hadn't had her own day ruined by all the talk going around.

After a few minutes of breathing exercises and splashing cold water on his face, Conner felt as ready as he was going to get. He strode into the classroom, the holiday music already audible from the hallway. Inside, everybody was nibbling at Miss C's homemade Christmas cookies, sipping punch, and relaxedly sitting on top of desks and unwinding. Finals were over, and vacation was fifty-five short minutes away.

When he entered, suddenly all the conversation in the room stopped. As did Conner's heart, quite nearly. He'd hoped to lay low, wait it out in the corner and pretend he was invisible. Instead, everybody was staring.

"Uh, sorry I'm late," he said. He looked around. Heather wasn't there, nor was Miss C, nor Jordan; as an afterthought he noted that one of the freshman staff members, Robbie, was gone, too, probably having left for break a day early.

Everyone kept staring; for the first time in his life, Conner understood how someone could be so afraid they'd pee themselves. Right before he turned and ran out of the room, it was DeShaun who broke the silence to stand up and approach him. The rest were still watching; Conner braced himself for yet another clever joke at his expense.

But that's not what happened. DeShaun put one hand to his own chest, and said, "Conner, man, come on in. Look, I know some shit went down yesterday. But we all talked it over, and man... yesterday wasn't right. We got caught up in the drama and I know some of us was laughing and said some stuff, and... well, look. We want to apologize."

To Conner's incredible shock, throughout the room the other staff members echoed DeShaun's sentiment. Some only mumbled it, but many gave an open and hearty "I'm sorry." It was good that it took some time for them to all get the words out, because it took that long for what was happening to sink in.

“You had a low moment, and that dick Jordan went and made it worse, and it wasn’t cool. We know and you know and we know you know we know that you basically do half the work around here. All semester long you been covering for us, trying to help us out without being too in our face about it. Though sometimes you do get in the face, but that’s cool, you got a job, man.”

He paused at a ripple of laughter. “But Conner, man, you’re like the Rudy of yearbook. That scrappy little dude who just don’t quit. I mean, you basically *are* the story behind *This Is Our Story*, ya know? So we hope you forgive us for forgetting that yesterday.”

Conner was still recovering from the shock of it all. “Oh. Yeah.”

DeShaun took Conner’s hand in a firm grip. “Come on, man. Let us hear the words. You feel us?”

“Yeah. I feel you. I... I forgive you.”

These people... all year long, he’d been nudging and nagging and revising and demanding, and he’d always thought it was tolerated but never appreciated. DeShaun cracked a big smile and pulled the editor-in-chief for a firm bro hug. He was pleased to see Siobhan was taking a picture of it with her phone; this would be great for the meta-spread.

“Thanks, man,” DeShaun said quietly into Conner’s ear, the sound covered by the cheers of the staff. “We’re your people. Had about enough of Jordan’s lazy ass dragging us down.”

They really were the best staff an editor-in-chief could ever ask for, Conner noted. If he hadn’t loved them before, he did from that moment on.

With that, the party resumed. Rather than lurking in the corner, Conner accepted an invitation to sit in the center of the circle with most of the rest of the staff. He didn’t dare ask where Heather was. Besides, for now, he was actually having a good time, and he was in no rush to ruin it with more reminders of yesterday’s debacle.

He half-listened to the banter of the staff, but he was mostly looking inward, trying to come up with an answer for Hailey. Hefty Hailey McManus, the awkward, nerdy outcast who was covertly one of the hottest girls in school. He tried to remember all the reasons he’d called it off two months ago, but really what he remembered were two factors: his aspirations to date Heather, and his guilt that he’d been manipulating Hailey’s feelings for him.

Now, the Heather situation was good and resolved. As for the other, Hailey clearly didn’t have any hard feelings about the sexual tone of their little fling, and still was interested in him. If Hailey wasn’t someone he wanted to marry someday, she was at least somebody who made him feel good about himself and whose company he generally enjoyed. The same seemed to be true for her. With Owen so often occupied by Angelica’s endless appetites, it might be good to have a girlfriend of his own.

Was it true love? No. But maybe not every relationship had to be.

He got out his phone, and in a momentary stroke of cleverness remembered that *Juno* was one of her favorite movies. *If you're still in, I'm still in.*

A moment later she responded, though rather than text, it was a bitmoji. Hailey's profile picture appeared at the top of the text screen, her beautiful smile and perfect teeth; the bitmoji avatar was a lumpy girl with brownish-orange hair spiking a football in celebration. Maybe one day he could tell her what he'd done. Maybe—

The door to the editor's office opened, and Heather came running out of it in tears. Miss C was standing in the doorway behind her. Nobody else looked surprised that the two had been in there, but the class was stunned to silence at the manner in which she came out. Heather dashed right through the room and into the lab, throwing those curtains closed behind her once more. Again the room fell suddenly silent but for *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* playing on the speakers.

“Come on, folks. Leave her be,” said DeShaun, and after a moment, Marissa awkwardly continued her story about her Black Friday shopping. Conner, however, glanced over to Miss C; she inclined her head toward the curtains, and mouthed one word. *Go.*

Conner excused himself from the group, and while he was aware every eye was following him, he trusted now that no one would do what Jordan had done yesterday. He slipped through the curtains and drew them closed to protect Heather's privacy. The sounds of the party faded to near silence; the lights were off in the little computer lab, save for a couple monitors that had been left on, emitting a soft blue glow.

Heather was curled up in a little ball on one of the bean bags in the corner of the room, and was clearly sobbing. She didn't seem to have noticed his approach, so he cleared his throat softly. "Ahem. Hi there, Heather."

She only glanced up for a moment. Her makeup had run down her cheeks, turning her pretty face into a splotchy mess. "Oh. Hi, Conner." Those words were all she had in her for starters; after that, she went right back to crying.

"Are you OK? Do you want me to leave you alone?"

She didn't look up, her response directed to her knees. "You can stay."

Conner pulled up a chair near her; it was a good long while before she was composed enough to look back up. He had a tissue at the ready, but while she tried to dab at her face, it didn't do much.

"Can I ask what happened?" he asked softly.

It took Heather a long moment to get the words out. "I got a C on the final. I..." She failed to suppress a sob, continuing once she trusted her voice again. "I asked Miss C if she'd graded mine yet, and she showed me."

"Oh, shit. I can't believe... That's so... Well, at least with A's for both grading periods, it still averages out to an A minus, right?"

"Eighty-eight percent. That's my semester grade."

Conner winced. For most people, even most honors students, an 88% was a solid grade. Some perfectionists might beat themselves up over it, but they wouldn't break down in tears. Heather, however...

By now, he knew the details intimately. How her mother had gotten pregnant with Heather's older brother in high school and dropped out; how Heather's wealthy grandfather had disowned her for the better part of twenty years. Then along came Heather, a pretty little girl like her mother and with all the same aptitude; afraid his granddaughter would throw her future away the way he still believed her mother had, he'd set aside a trust fund for her. Its purpose was to fully fund Heather's college education, but only if she managed to keep getting the straight A's she'd gotten all through elementary and middle school.

The old man had died before he getting the chance to see it through, but he had the foresight to put it all into his will. The upside was that Heather would still have the chance to fulfill her dream going to the school she'd fantasized about since childhood. The downside, however, was that it made a situation like this possible. One in which an 88% in one semester of journalism would cost her everything. Her grandfather wasn't

around any more to be appealed to, and she'd told stories of how Heather's aunts and uncles were salivating over the prospect of her failing – failing, with a single B+ – and having that trust fund revert to their ownership.

“Oh my god. Heather, I'm so sorry. I don't even know what to say.” He wanted to take her into his arms and hold her until she stopped crying, but he'd blown that yesterday. The best he could do was be a good friend.

“I got my acceptance letter last week from UC Berkeley,” she said.

Thoughts of the many times she'd spoken of her hopes to go there came to him before he put two and two together. “Oh wow, that's great!”

“They even offered me \$15,000 a year in academic scholarships. Mrs. Prendergast said with my grades, I could probably scare up another couple thousand or so. And you know me, always paranoid, so I ran the math. It's... bad.”

“Math? What math?”

She looked up. “Without my grandpa's money, I'm going to need just over a hundred thousand dollars in loans to cover it. Assuming I can get that much. According to my loan calculator, that means that over thirty years, I'll wind up repaying \$234,000. Give or take. All because I wrote one shitty essay. Two stinking percent short.”

Conner let out a low whistle. He'd known it was expensive – hence why his own plans were to stay in-state, try IU or maybe Ball State – but he hadn't figured UC Berkeley would be that high. What did one say to something like that? Better luck on your other finals?

“I... I can talk to Miss C. She and I are pretty tight. You're just a few points shy of an A, right? I can show her what we've been working on, see if maybe...”

“Don't,” she said. “I know you're trying to help, but I don't want to get there on pity.” Her head sunk back to her knees.

“Look, I get that. Trust me, I've learned plenty about pity recently. But is your pride really worth a quarter million bucks to you?” He gave her a hard look, and didn't flinch when she returned it.

A minute later, and with Heather's blessing, Conner slipped back out to the party and asked Miss C if he could talk to her a moment. Nobody else in the room had any idea what was going on, so naturally every ear was perked even if they were doing their best not to eavesdrop. Not openly, anyway. He closed the door to the editor's office behind them.

“Miss C, we have to do something about Heather's grade. Did she tell you how much this is going to screw up her future?”

“I can't talk to a student about other students' grades.”

“Come on. She's done great work this year, and some of it you haven't even seen yet! I can show you, if you want. So she got one lousy test grade. Those two percentage

points are going to dump a mountain of debt on her she'll be pinned under for decades. We have to be able to find some wiggle room somewhere in there. This will destroy her."

"She'll adapt her plans," she said gently. "There are plenty of other good schools out there that are much more affordable than Berkeley."

"No, but... it's not just that. She's been chasing this dream for *years*. It's about the money, yeah, but it's also about her proving something to people. People who believed in her, and people who *didn't* believe in her."

"Look, I can't change someone's grade as a favor. It would be unethical, and unfair to all my other students who came close but didn't quite make it."

Conner raised his voice as defiantly as he dared. Which, with Heather involved, was rather daring indeed. "The stakes aren't this high with those other kids! Look, you missed it earlier when DeShaun did this amazing spiel about how we're in this together. And he was right! If I have to watch our smartest, hardest-working staffer lose her dream, it won't only crush her. It'll crush me, too."

Miss C's demeanor shifted suddenly. "Is that so?"

He nodded. "Seriously. Please, Miss C. I've given you everything I have. Please. Just this once, for me."

She paused. "This is really what you want?"

"Yeah. It is."

And, as he was preparing to redouble his insistence, she... smiled. "If it will make you happy, then... all right. Just this once. For you."

"Really?!" Conner shot up to his feet. He'd groveled, yes, and was prepared to beg if he had to, but he hadn't expected it to actually work! He wanted to be able to be able to honestly say to Heather that he'd given it his all. "Thank you Miss C!"

She laughed as he threw his arms around her in a fierce hug, and she returned it a moment later. "It's Kristy, and Merry Christmas, Conner."

He let her go after a long moment (especially once the conspicuous pressure of his teacher's breasts against his chest started risking still more distractions). "I... I didn't think you would! Guess I should've gone out for debate instead of yearbook, eh?"

"I keep telling you I want to see you happy again, and I mean it. If there's something you need to feel right again, I'll help with anything I can," she said.

The endorphins flowing, he glanced significantly to the mistletoe hanging in the doorway. "Anything?" he joked, eyebrows waggling.

To his shock, Miss C – Kristy, since they were alone – took an aggressive step forward, close enough that their chests were once more touching, largely due to how far hers jutted out. She was right around his height, and her face was mere inches away. "If it would make you happy." Her face was stone serious.

Spirits still high from the stay of execution on Heather's future, he grinned and called her bluff. "Just don't tell Brent," he joked.



She nodded. "I won't."

Kristy Coszic-Lewandoski leaned in, wrapped an arm behind her editor-in-chief's back, and pressed their mouths together. She kissed him. Her head tilted to one side, nose rubbing at his cheek as she writhed her lips against his. It was the most shocked he'd been in months. But when Miss C's mouth opened and her tongue glided across her lips and then beyond his, it was too incredible, too perfect not to reciprocate. His hands unconsciously moved around her, one resting in the middle of her back, and one slipping down to cup her surprisingly taut but still well-rounded buttocks.

Finally, they needed air, and she withdrew. "Was that good? Did it make you happy?"

She'd had some kind of strong peppermint in her mouth. It ended in his.

Conner, awestruck, removed his hands from her like she was a scalding piece of metal. "Wow. Um, yes. So much. I mean, I'm sorry I... I didn't... You're so... Wow. Yes. Happy."

She laughed softly. "Good. Now, I realize that was a little breach of the teacher-student boundary, but hopefully it was worth it for you."

Dimly, Conner began to become aware of what had just happened. Miss C was Miss C. She was Kristy. She was his teacher, yes, but they were practically friends. But she *was* his teacher. Oh, shit! Stuff like this got people on the news! If anyone saw...! Glancing back, he saw the blinds were closed, the door still shut. Still! What if she...? What if he...!

"Oh no, I've upset you all over again. I'm so sorry – I was just trying to help. I won't do it again unless you need me to, OK?"

"Yeah, um, we probably shouldn't... yeah. Oh geez. Oh wow. Oh shit. Sorry! I meant wow."

"Look. Why don't you go break the good news to Heather, OK? It'll do you some good, being a hero to a lovely damsel in distress. Then before you leave for break, come back in and we'll work this out, OK? But for now, go to Heather."

He nodded, stumbling backward toward the door. "Right. I'll go tell Heather. About the grade! Not about the... you know. Kiss. I'll go, then I'll come back. To talk about it."

"Conner, wait." He stopped instantly. She slowly walked up to him, then just as she got into what he hoped and dreaded but really really hoped was kissing range again... she pulled up a tissue. "You have some lipstick there," she said.

"Oh," he said, letting out a breath he hadn't meant to hold.

Then her face was coming at him again, and she dragged her deliciously wet tongue across his lips, from one corner all the way to the other. "There, now we can just..." And she dabbed at it a few times. "Off you go." She opened the door; there was no

more saying anything about it. He scurried once more through the party, not stopping to so much as look at anyone.

Heather was still hugging her knees to her chest in the bean bag chair. “No dice, huh.”

He realized then that she must have expected he’d be smiling if he had good news, but while that kiss had been mind-blowingly good, it had also nearly made him forget the good news. “Actually... you’re good.”

Her head snapped up, blonde hair flying. “No way.”

Conner nodded. “I told her what it meant to you, and how hard you’d worked, and offered to wash her car every weekend for a year, and... she said she’d do it. Hand to god.”

In a flash, Heather had her arms wrapped around him, hugging him so intensely she backed him right into a work station, nearly toppling the monitor. She didn’t seem to care.

“Thank you,” she whispered. Fresh tears dripped onto his shoulder. Conner merely stood still and held her, just as he’d wanted to before. It felt like the embrace went on forever, yet when she let go, his arms still ached to keep hold of her.

“You don’t really have to wash her car, do you?”

“Oh yeah. Wash and wax, the whole nine yards,” he joked.

She grinned. “Good. I’d have paid you for it, if you did. Let’s see, figure an hour a wash times twenty weekends a semester when you factor in spring break, if I paid out half what you saved me, call it a \$125,000, so that’s... hey, not bad, a little over six grand an hour.”

“I guess we don’t need to worry about your math final.”

“For one, that was simple division, and for two, no, we definitely don’t.”

The two were quiet for a moment as the news sunk in, and her hope was restored. Finally, he felt compelled to speak. “So we’re clear, I didn’t get involved just because of what happened yesterday.”

“Why, what happened yesterday?” she said sheepishly.

Conner played along. “You don’t remember? You know, how you asked me out and I very gently told you to get bent, then you stone cold fainted. How embarrassing for you.”

Heather frowned. “Wow, really? Because I would have sworn that it was the other way around...”

He laughed. “You must’ve hit your head harder than I thought, to forget something like that.”

She rubbed at the back of her head. “Yeah, I guess I must have.”

“You know, it’s probably a good thing, when you think about it. I mean, if I’d ever asked someone out like that and they said no, I’d sure want to forget it. What with the begging on your knees, telling me how brilliant and charming and gorgeous I am, offering sexual favors... Not a proud moment for the Blake clan, I gotta say,” he teased.

Heather looked down. Still feeling awkward about yesterday, he thought. “Wow, I... That’s so... Really?”

Conner leaned down until he made eye contact. She looked... confused? “What’s wrong?”

“I feel so dumb. I had it all backwards. Really must’ve whacked my head just right, I guess. So, I... And you really... wow.” She grimaced.

“Heather, no, I...” Conner stopped himself. TIOS. Had he really rewritten her memories so easily? On accident, by joking around?!

“Man. And all day... no, I must have misinterpreted what everyone was saying. I’m glad you said something... I was misremembering, and thinking it was *you* who asked *me* out, and I was about to, you know, ‘throw you a bone,’ and...” Her cheeks colored. “I don’t know what I was thinking, that someone like you would even be interested in me.”

For months, in idle moments when he was feeling weak – or just plain horny – Conner had brainstorm ways to use her TIOS-induced gullibility (where he was concerned, at least) to get her interested in him. Everything had always felt so contrived that it had always felt like there was no point trying. It had never occurred to him that she’d believe him even if the things he said were his thoughts on her own feelings!

What a roller coaster of a day this had turned out to be! The snide comments and brutal teasing on the one hand, but then all the temptations and distractions thrown in his face. From Miss C’s flirty behavior this morning, to Hailey’s offer during lunch, to that bizarre kiss a few minutes ago...

For the first time in months, Conner let his libido take charge and see what he could do. “It’s OK, Heather. You said it all yesterday, remember?” She clearly didn’t – and couldn’t – but he went right on. “Not to toot my own horn, but you were saying how you think I’m the hottest guy in school – maybe not for everyone, but to your tastes – and how you didn’t care whether or not college is coming up next year, you’d regret it forever if we didn’t at least try.”

His eyes flickered down to her prolific chest, and he pushed through one more, part of him bracing himself to be slapped. “You know, and how you’re so tired of guys who only treat you like Heather Blake, the brainiac honor roll student, and want a guy who sees that in you, but also appreciates you as Heather Blake, owner of the most amazing breasts at Northside High.”

Heather went from red to crimson at that last. “Wow. I said...!” She looked down, possibly to examine said breasts, today covered in a heavy sweater that did nothing to flatter them but was nonetheless powerless to conceal them. She finished in a near mumble. “I guess yesterday-me was feeling pretty honest.”

Conner wanted to shout in exultation. It was working! He didn't know how deep any of it was sinking, whether it was reorganizing memories or actually changing her feelings, but either way, she didn't seem to be questioning it. One way to find out.

"Hey. You know, I've been thinking about it ever since yesterday, and... maybe I was too hasty. I'd had a stressful day, and maybe I wasn't letting myself think about what an amazing woman you are. I know you said you'd feel incredibly lucky to get a shot with me, but I think I'd feel lucky to be with you, too. Do you wanna give it a go?"

She looked up, eyes welling up with fresh tears. "Oh my gosh yes!" she exclaimed, and for the second time in ten minutes, a beautiful girl was kissing him. Miss C had kissed him like she was trying to egg him on, seduce him; Heather was kissing him like she'd been deprived of her favorite activity for years. It was a rain of rapid kisses at first, but when his hand settled softly on the back of her head, she let him hold her there and slathered his tongue with hers like she was trying to teach it to dance.

"Minty," she murmured, sticking out her tongue to show the mint he'd only minutes ago accepted from their teacher. Now it belonged to Heather.

Unlike with Miss C, however, this kiss evolved into a genuine makeout session. At some point Conner fell backward onto the bean bag and Heather slid down into his lap, straddling him at the hips. The way she was grinding her crotch against him, they were only four layers of fabric away from simply fucking. Time and again they shushed one another, lest the sound carry into the classroom. Occasionally they'd hear muted laughter or a desk being dragged across the tile floor; each intrusion was a reminder to keep their affairs quiet.

As quiet as possible, anyway.

Then she sat up. Her breasts loomed over him, almost obscuring his view of her face with their enormity. She grasped one in each hand, caressing them while continuing to slowly rock her hips. "So, um, I know I said I like guys who like them..." she whispered.

"You sure did," Conner lied.

"So... do you?" She bit her lower lip nervously. There was a confident grin threatening to break out behind it, though.

"I dunno, I haven't really seen them yet, have I?" He gave her the same eyebrow waggle he'd given Miss C right before she'd kissed him.

She giggled. "OK, but... oh gosh, nobody better come in here..." Heather grasped the bottom of her sweater and slid it slowly upward. There, for the first time, he laid eyes on her tummy. She had a little more padding than the other girls he'd seen naked of late, but it suited her. Heather's beauty was a thing of curves.

Then it was up over her bra, and he scrapped his old definition of "curves" altogether. It couldn't possibly cover these. Frankly, he was impressed that her bra was able to cover them. Conner had spent enough time as a younger man browsing his

mom's lingerie catalogs to recognize a minimizer when he saw one. Lord, how this one was straining to do its job. Two navy blue cups encased these twin mounds of Heather-flesh, and it was clear they were digging into her skin from the way her boobs pooched out of it.

"Holy god in heaven."

She smiled giddily. Whether she was pleased because of the suggestion he'd put in her head, or because she genuinely liked the attention, he didn't know, nor did he care right then. Frankly, if she hadn't been proud of them before, he couldn't see the harm in her enjoying the attention now. "Well?"

He responded first with his hands, attempting to grasp one in each. They were huge, so much bigger than any he'd handled before. More than a handful, which he'd heard Owen insist was a waste; Conner would be excited to report back how very wrong his friend was. "These are the most incredible tits I've ever seen."

Heather made a face. "Can we not use that word?"

Conner had gotten so used to calling them that with Hailey and her habit of dirty talk, he'd forgotten some women might object. "Sorry, just yesterday, that was what you called them. I just figured that was how you referred to them when you were, you know, turned on."

"Oh. Well, 'breasts' is fine," she said, but as her hands closed over his, it was clear the rebuke didn't mean she wanted him to stop.

*Oh well, I tried*, he thought. Some other day, he'd probe the extent of his influence. For now... tits, even if he called these roses by some other name, still tasted as sweet.

By the time the dismissal bell rang, he'd gotten the cups of her bra tugged out of his way (or whatever she wanted to call them), and was sucking on them so hard she had to chastise him not to give them a hickey. The sudden noise jolted her out of it, and she quickly pulled her bra and sweater back into place.

"That was amazing," she said. "Thank you for giving me a chance. I'm really, really looking forward to our first Date date. Which is when, by the way?"

"I'm free tonight," he said. "Is that too soon?"

She bounced excitedly on the balls of her feet. For the first time since he'd known her, he felt free to admire the way her movements made her boobs bounce. "Great! You got my number, so... text me? We'll figure out a plan."

"Cool. You ready to...?" He nodded to the curtain. The sounds of the after-school stampede in the hallway were clearly audible.

"Is my face a mess?"

"Your face is beautiful," he said. "But... yeah, kind of a mess."

She grinned, and asked him to retrieve her purse from the classroom. It was empty now, though the light was still on in the editor's office. Heather had a wet nap handy, and Conner helpfully dabbed her clean.

"So I'll see you tonight, right?" she asked. His heart swelled with how hopeful she sounded. Was that how he'd sounded to her?

Rather than answer, he pulled her against him and started kissing her again. She permitted it for a short while, but then remembered she was going to miss her ride. "Sorry, making up for wasted time," he said. "I'll see you tonight."

She beamed, walked away, then ran back and gave him one more gentle kiss before hastening off into the halls of Northside.

## Chapter Eleven

Now to talk to Miss C. With no time whatsoever to process what had happened, all he knew was that it had been exciting, confusing, and probably quite wrong. After he gave himself a moment to calm down from making out with Heather, he stole into the editor's office, where she was waiting. This time, she was on the small couch. (Conner knew it was called a loveseat, but under the circumstances he made himself think of it as a small couch.)

"We should talk. Mind closing the door, Conner?"

It was easy to imagine a scenario in which a teacher lured a student into such a situation after school. No witnesses, doors closed, building empty. Then they would force themselves upon the poor young person. Only here, it was Miss C. For one, he couldn't imagine her as some kind of sex predator, and for two, if she did force herself on him, he had no doubt that he'd be forcing himself right back. With finals occupying his waking hours, he hadn't so much as masturbated in most of a week. Now after the most sexually charged day of his adolescent life, he somehow still hadn't gotten off. His cock was a major liability at this point.

"Have a seat," she said, patting the open spot next to her.

Conner thought it might be safer – from temptation, that is, as definitionally she couldn't violate the consenting – to take the desk chair a few feet away, but he didn't want to be rude. "OK," he said, settling in nervously and waiting for her to start.

"First off, how did it go with Heather?"

He blinked at the unexpected question. "Uh, great, actually. She... changed her mind. We're going out later tonight." He couldn't tell her *how* he'd changed her mind, so he kept it vague. "We'd still be, um, talking, but she had to catch her ride. Oh, which reminds me, I need to get moving. My stepsister drove me today, and she's waiting for me. Can we talk later? I promise I won't say anything to anybody, if you're worried."

"I can give you a ride," she said dismissively.

Conner supposed he was curious enough to have this talk that he could endure the awkwardness of it. Besides, speaking of awkward, he didn't want to be there when Angelica started rewarding Owen for his finals performance. As he pulled out his phone to text Angelica and Owen, she addressed the other part of his response. "As for Heather, that's great, Conner! I'm so proud of you. Maybe I misjudged the girl's taste. That's exactly how I wanted this to play out."

He hit send in his text to Angelica. Then her words sunk in. "Wait. Miss C...?"

The woman smiled. Had she put on perfume? "Kristy."

"Kristy, sorry, but—"

"Oh come on, you really think *Heather Blake* was going to get a C- on her exam? It wasn't even a hard test. I think the lowest score I've seen so far was a C, and that was...



well, it wasn't Heather Blake, I'll say that. But I knew you'd stand up for her, and you did it brilliantly."

"Wait, I don't get it... Did you...?"

"Set you up to be the hero? I sure did."

Confusion tore through him, and as the memory of Heather's dejected sobbing returned, some anger followed it. "You tanked her score on purpose? Why would you do that! What if I hadn't said anything? Would you have let her lose her college money?"

"Honestly, it never occurred to me you wouldn't intercede. I suppose if you hadn't, I would have altered the grade and told her in January that I'd made a mistake." She noticed his expression. "Are you upset?"

"You lied to me!" Conner snapped.

"Only because I know where your strengths lie. Kindness? You bet. Acting talent? Let's just say there's a reason you're the head of the annual and not of drama club."

"So that whole thing... that was just a setup to give me a second chance with Heather? You knew about her situation with her grandfather and everything?"

"I did. And for the record, I would never maliciously wreck any student's dreams like that, especially not over a few points on one day on one test."

Conner mulled this over. It seemed well-intentioned, and hadn't actually caused any problems. "But... why? I mean, I know we're, you know, friends, or whatever, but why would you do that for me?" His mind caught up with his mouth, and he quickly remembered to add, "Plus, what the heck was with that kiss? If you were trying to set me up with Heather, why do that?"

She folded her arms beneath her breasts. "I keep telling you, there's nothing I want more than for you to be happy. I guess I'll repeat it until you believe me."

Conner eyed her suspiciously. "You kissed me – with your tongue – because you want to see me happy."

"It didn't make you happy?"

"Well, yeah, obviously, but–"

"No buts. That's why."

"So any time I want to kiss you I just have to say I'm sad?"

She leaned ever-so-slightly forward. "Are you?"

"No! I just got a date with a girl I've had a crush on for a year!"

"Good. Now, a more important question. I realize I've been awfully forward with you today. The provocative touches, my attire, and of course, the kiss. Did I make you uncomfortable?"

He took a moment to consider. "Kind of, I guess. But not in a bad way? More like... I really like you, and I respect you so much, but you're a teacher. You know? This was so... unexpected, and I guess I don't know how to respond."

She relaxed her pose. “Respond however you like. But it’s important to me – very important to me – that if I do those things, you enjoy them. If you don’t, simply say so, and I’ll never do them again.”

Her behavior was getting weirder and weirder. “How could I not enjoy it? I’ve just never, you know, had an older woman come onto me. Not that you’re old! Just... you know.”

“I know.”

She uncrossed her legs, then crossed them in the other direction. Her skirt rose a little higher on her long legs, and he could almost see her underwear from this angle. With his testosterone flowing like a river thanks to the events of the past hour, Conner couldn’t help but admire them.

She evidently noticed. “Do you want to touch them?”

His jaw literally dropped. “Miss C!”

“Do you not want to use my first name? I’m only offering because I want you to see me as a person. A friend. Someone you can turn to, with anything.”

“I’m sorry. I do want to, and it’s really cool of you. I mean, you’re obviously so, so pretty.”

“Obviously?” she said wryly.

“I mean, you’re basically the hottest teacher in school.” He clapped a hand over his mouth in shock at his own words, releasing it only to apologize. “I can’t believe I said that. I’m sorry, Miss C.”

Only she didn’t look offended – or surprised, for that matter. “So it’s No to calling me Kristy, then.”

“I’m sorry! I’d like to, and it’s so cool of you to offer. Hard habit to break though, after having you as a teacher for three and a half years.”

She smiled at being reassured that it was a welcome gesture. “Well then, we’ll need to build some positive associations with it.” The teacher took her pupil’s hand and placed it on her knee. “Now look at me, and call me Kristy.”

He made himself look up from his hand. It was on his teacher’s *leg* for Pete’s sake! “K-kristy.”

“Good.” She slid it a few inches higher up her leg. His palm was resting on her skirt, but his fingertips were on what he now realized was stocking-covered thigh. How had he not noticed before? “Say it again.”

The lump in his throat was making it hard to say anything. How was touching his teacher’s leg getting him as excited as sucking on Heather Blake’s tits?! “Kristy.”

“There you go.” She moved his hand substantially higher, up to the top of the slit in the side of her skirt. He was at mid-thigh now, nearly to upper. His index finger could barely feel the texture of the tops of her stockings. “What’s my name, Conner?”

He surrendered his battle to look her in the eye. If she'd let him touch her thigh, surely she wouldn't begrudge him looking. "Kristy."

"That's right." Her next maneuver was smaller, but so much more impactful. This time, she slid his grip laterally so that his entire hand was on skin rather than fabric, and then a mere inch or two higher, and his fingertips disappeared beneath the skirt. "Who am I?"

Conner was as turned on as he'd ever been in his life. He had his actual hand literally up Kristy's skirt. *Aha! I actually thought of her by her first name!* "Kristy."

"You hesitated. Again, Conner. Who am I?"

"Kristy!" he blurted.

"And what am I?"

His capacity for rational thought was practically nonexistent. "Uh, my teacher?"

She rubbed her thighs together around his hand. "The hottest teacher in school, I believe you said."

He nodded dumbly. "Yes, Kristy."

"I think you've nearly gotten it down now, but let's be sure." He had to lean into it now, and could no longer see any part of his hand. His fingers swept over the subtle ridges of her stockings, then onto an expanse of warm, smooth thigh. She didn't stop there though. The English teacher guided her student's wrist until his hand slid all the way up her hip. Doing so had required him to lean so far forward his hair was brushing against her breasts. His exploring hand felt a bit of fabric again, but it was like a ribbon, it was so scant. Was that her panties? What on earth was she wearing under there?

"Say my name, and make me believe it, Conner."

"Kristy. You're Kristy, and only Kristy, and always and forever Kristy."

She smiled. "Very good. Now you're welcome to keep your hand there, of course, but you look like you're about to pinch a nerve in that posture. I believe you've discovered my underwear; when you do pull your hand out, it's up to you whether or not that comes with."

Any other day, Conner would have chickened out and pulled his hand back like she had a snapping turtle between her legs. But that day, he was too fucking horny to decline an offer like that.

It wasn't easy with only the one hand, but Kristy helped him, wriggling as needed. "You... you wore a bright yellow thong... to school?!" It dangled from one of his fingers like a flimsy Christmas tree ornament.

"Sure. I hate panty lines. And I figured nobody's going to see it anyway, unless I want them to, in which case, I wanted them to see something cute. Right?"

"'Cute' is one word for it," he murmured. As the garment dangled back and forth, he realized there was a slightly darker spot in there, more banana yellow than the item's neon tint. But... "Kristy, are you... is that...?"

“You told me I’d been making you happy and felt up my thigh. Was I not supposed to react? I’m only human, Conner.”

“You’re more than merely human. You’re... amazing.” He stopped himself from elaborating. “Sorry. Heather and I, um, kinda made out a little bit, and I’m so horny I could explode. It’s making me crazy.”

She arched a neatly sculpted eyebrow. “Would you like me to make you sane again?”

“What do you mean?”

“You’re sexually frustrated. Nothing clears your head like brushing the cobwebs off your ding-dong.”

“I... You... We can’t...”

“If you don’t want to, that’s fine. I’m only offering. I hate to see you frustrated like this. If there’s anything I can do to help alleviate it, say the word.”

Conner took a deep breath. He could hardly believe this. While he wouldn’t say he’d had a crush on his teacher, he’d be lying his ass off if he said he’d never noticed she was a thoroughly attractive woman. Kristy had definitely graced his fantasies more than a few times over the years, try as he might not to notice. Now here she was, essentially offering to give him whatever he wanted...

“Come on, Conner. Let me make you happy. I want to.”

He shook himself. “There’s that word again... Why are you so...”

It hit him in an instant. How could he have been so dense?! In this very classroom, she’d said those words. *I just want you to be happy*. Or something like that. He’d recorded it in TIOS because it had moved him, and he’d wanted to record the memory. (Which was the whole darn reason he’d joined yearbook, he fumed inwardly, not to embark on a campaign of sexual conquest!)

How long ago had that been? Ah yes, it was right before he’d decided to break it off with Hailey and go back to being the good guy. Right before Kristy had started giving him all that one-on-one attention, all the extra feedback on his projects, helping him hound the staff to follow directives. Come to think of it, she’d just plain been nicer to him. He could remember little compliments, small gestures of affection. Even that day in the car, in her spandex running outfit, when she’d told him to call her by her first name and given him that peck on the cheek. (It didn’t hold a candle to today’s affections, but still.)

“Oh no. M– Kristy, I think I may have done something bad. Oh, shit.”

In a flash, he hopped over to the desktop computer and logged in, the thong discarded without ceremony on the tile floor. Kristy followed him, sitting on the desktop facing him like she had that morning. “What’s wrong? It’s winter break, Conner. You can give the work a rest. Whatever it is, it can wait a few weeks, I promise you.” She flashed a pitying smile at her dutiful editor-in-chief.

Conner barely heard it. The moment the desktop loaded, he double-clicked the TIOS icon, and then logged in. He opened the spread for Kristiana Coszic-Lewandoski, and there it was. *All I ever want is for you to be happy.*

He remembered that there had been more to it, that she'd said something about how she had certain students with a special place in her heart, and he was one of them. Why hadn't he recorded the rest of it? What had he been thinking? He'd been so worked up that day, so consumed with making a sex toy out of Hailey, that he'd made his most obvious blunder yet. How did he keep doing this to people?!

"What's that?" she asked, pivoting her head to look at the screen. "Aw, you wrote that down? I remember that day. How sweet of you."

Once or twice, he'd actually wondered if his teacher had some kind of privileges in the system akin to his own, but the blasé way she reacted to reading that confirmed in an instant that she did not. This was all too damn weird, and finally, he was going to say something to someone. Owen had looked at TIOS as a genie, but whatever it was, it was no idle wish granter. He needed someone who might have some kind of insights into what the hell was really going on.

"Kristy... I need to tell you something about TIOS."

"Oh?" She didn't seem fazed by the fact that he'd suddenly lost interest in her offers mere moments after spotting the evidence of her arousal on her discarded thong. (Not that he had; this was just more important.)

Conner started at the beginning, how it had asked him to confirm editor-in-chief status, how he'd switch Hailey and Hayleigh's pictures. For now, he didn't specify exactly what quote he'd used that had made TIOS create a profile for Angelica, but he explained how suddenly she was back in high school. He shared some of the small tweaks he'd been doing over the past couple months, and where he'd detected anything, the more banal effects he'd witnessed. His only omission was what he had done with Heather. He couldn't say why, exactly; only that he didn't want her to think that he'd only managed to get a date with her by cheating. It seemed like Kristy's scheme to hook them up would have worked even without it.

Through it all, his teacher listened impassively. He'd see if she'd maintain it once he told her what he'd done there. "Which brings us back to you, Kristy. I wrote down this quote because what you said to me that afternoon really got through to me, and I didn't want to forget it. Only I didn't realize that it would change you like this, make you so... well, like this. And I'm sorry, and I wish I knew how to undo it, and if you have any suggestions, I'm game."

There was a moment of uncomfortable silence as he finally ended his tale. "Conner, that's... that's a very colorful story. But what you're saying, that's not possible. You understand that, right? It's only software. It's really good software, but that's it."

He sighed. "I can prove it to you. Look..." Then, Conner used the same trick he had with Owen, bringing up an old sext pic of Hailey (in Hayleigh's body) and showing it bit by bit, having her describe it as he went along. She was a good sport, considering he didn't have any pictures of her that were fully decent. Finally he scrolled the picture up to reveal the face, and much like Owen had, she gaped at what she saw.

"That's... that's Hailey McManus! But it's not... how..." She shook her head for a moment. "You... You were serious. That means you really did change me. *That's* why I've been so concerned about you lately. Oh my gosh!"

Conner averted his eyes. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to. I really only wanted a memory of how nice you were to me that day."

She looked down at him with impressive severity. "You said there's no way to undo it?"

"Nothing I've found. I'd hoped maybe you'd know something, but from your reaction, I'm taking it you haven't seen anything like this in your user experience."

"No, no reality-altering consequences on my end," she said dryly. "But that's a good thing, at least for me. You'll need to be very, very careful what you input, but so far it all sounds fairly benign. Maybe not for your stepsister, but it sounds like Hailey and Hayleigh are oblivious, as is everyone else regarding the change. As for me... I guess I should be thanking you."

"Thanking me?! What the heck for?"

"For one... I was this close to turning in my resignation at the end of the year," she said, holding up two fingers. "I was feeling burned out, uninspired, overworked and under-everything-elses. I was spending all my nights planning lessons and grading essays, and I wasn't feeling it like I used to. Then this came along, and suddenly... I had a purpose again. I looked forward to coming into work, just to see a smile on your face. To help make your experience here... well, happier."

"Oh. I never would've guessed..."

"Besides, that's only half of it. Impress me with what you remember from your vocab lessons, Mr. Editor-in-chief. What does 'tautology' mean?"

He thought. "That's where something defines itself, right? Like, 'it is what it is.'"

"Basically. And that's what we have here. You made it so all I wanted is to make you happy, which gives me the chance to make you happy. Which is all I want. See?"

"Uh, no?"

"I'm saying, I've been given a chance to have everything I want. It might not sound like much to you, but to me... you have no idea what it feels like to hear you tell me I've made you a little joy, Conner. No idea." She glanced over to where her thong lay crumpled up on the floor. "Or maybe you do."

Conner frowned. "That feeling isn't real, though, Kristy. TIOS did this to you."

“Maybe, but it feels just as real. Put it like this. Right now, I can make you happy, and that makes me feel great about myself. Do you know how rare a thing that is, to know exactly how to self-actualize, and to have the means to do it right there at hand?”

“Uh, no. I guess not.”

“Well trust me, it’s a blessing. Plus, let’s look at it the other way. If you tried to undo all this, that would mean I wouldn’t want to make you happy any more. Hell, I’d probably downright furious about what’s happened today. And as things stand, that would make you unhappy, so I never want that to happen. I’d fight to stop you, if I could find a way to do it without upsetting you.”

“Which is what you’re doing now, saying all this. Right?”

She smiled. “Smart boy. Just believe me when I say, I’m happier like this.”

He frowned. “I wish I could say the same.”

“Oh, sweetie.” She scooted so that she was right in front of him. “You’re upset again. We keep going in circles.”

“Sorry. This is... I didn’t mean you. If I’m unhappy, it’s not your doing, OK?” Fresh guilt tore at him, but the best he could do was try to reassure her.

“Conner, I want to show you that you have *nothing* to feel bad about.” She looked at him until he finally made eye contact again. “Now I want you to be totally honest with me. Can you do that?”

“I’ll try.”

“I want you to look at me, and tell me exactly what you’d like me to do. I’m not trying to pressure you into anything. Sexual, not sexual, whatever. And I’m not saying I’m always going to let you boss me around.” She gave him her familiar Miss C smile. “Just... what can I do that would make you happy.”

“Kristy...”

“I know what you’re thinking, but I’ll warn you up front. I’m not much of a juggler, but if it’d bring a smile to that sweet little face of yours, I’ll try my best.” She grinned, and her smile relaxed him a bit.

He took a deep breath. Right now, he knew full well what he wanted, yet it was a big risk to come out and say it. Everything seemed to say she’d deliver, but it still felt a little weird to dive in and take his collegial relationship with his teacher to the next level so suddenly. He took a baby step.

“Um, I know you almost always keep your hair up in a pony tail, but... I’d kind of like to see it down.”

She chuckled. “Well that’s an easy one.” Kristy reached behind her to remove the hair tie, and suddenly her wavy brown hair was hanging loose down past her shoulders, a good five or six inches down her back. “Anything else?”

He tried to think of something else that wasn’t totally perverse. “Could I get a back rub? I’ve been really tense, lately.”

“Sure. Come on, let’s lie you down on the couch.”

And so he lay down on his front, feet up in the air so he’d fit on the loveseat, as Kristy knelt on the floor beside him and proceeded to knead his muscles. “You weren’t kidding; you’ve been building this up for a while. Do you want to take your shirt off? You don’t have to, but I could do a better job if I could get at your muscles directly.”

After a moment’s consideration, he decided to go for it. He tossed it aside, noting that it happened to land right next to Kristy’s discarded thong. She had not been wrong; the more direct contact was much more effective at easing the tension. He could also feel her hair brushing against his shoulder occasionally, and her breasts against the side of his arm when she leaned in. If he had been fighting to keep it even semi-platonic, he was losing that battle.

“Had enough? I can keep going if it’s still helping, but I don’t want to put you to sleep or anything,” she said after a while.

“Yeah, that was good,” Conner answered, squirming to lay face up. She was there right next to him, lovely and smiling sweetly. A face that promised not to judge, nor to deny. “I don’t suppose you would, um…” He gritted his teeth. How had he been so confident with Heather, and so skittish with Kristy? “Nevermind.”

“You want me to kiss you again?” she asked.

“How did you know what I was going to say?”

A little smirk touched her face. “Maybe from the way you’ve been staring at my lips?”

“I didn’t mean to—”

“Oh, Conner.” With that, his teacher bent down and was once more kissing him. She draped one arm across his chest and gently entwined her fingers in his hair. Her feather-light grip was right near his bruise, but so gentle he never felt a thing from it. Conner barely had to do anything, and with her holding him on the couch, keeping his head in place, there was little he *could* do save for lying there and accepting her vigorous affection.

Kissing Heather had been incredible because he’d wanted to for so long, because of all that girlish eagerness at the novelty of it. But kissing Kristy was a whole new level. He didn’t know if it was her extra years of experience or if she simply happened to be a gifted kisser, but she was truly putting on a clinic. Every movement of her neck, every motion of her lips, every slip of her newly minted tongue felt intentional, placed and performed because it was the best means to kiss him.

Then suddenly, he felt her hand slipping down over where his cock was straining at his pants. “I could kiss you all evening, but it’s not going to take care of this, if that’s what you’re hoping for.”

He smiled. “No, I guess not.”

“When are you and Heather going out?” she asked abruptly.



“What? Um, tonight sometime. I’m supposed to text her.”

“How’d I know my little prince couldn’t wait to take his new pony out for a ride?” she teased, still softly caressing his bulge. “Conner, have you ever seen *Something About Mary*?”

Conner tried to think. “Mary who? Dettmeyer, the sophomore?”

She laughed. “Thanks for making me feel old again. Anyway, it’s a movie about a guy with a huge crush on this girl, and while it’s mostly pretty ridiculous, it did produce one solid piece of advice that my guy friends swear by: never go on a date with a loaded gun.”

Conner’s mind was still pretty sluggish from all the extra hormones racing through it. “A gun? Kissty – Kristy, sorry – I don’t even *own* a gun!”

Rather than reply, however, the English teacher patiently continued her caress and waited for her star pupil to remember his figures of speech. “Oh. OH! So I should...”

“Empty the clip, to extend the metaphor. You’ll think clearer, be less distracted by those ten-gallon jugs Heather’s lugging around.”

Conner hazarded a glance at her own chest. “You’re not exactly toting pint-sizes yourself.”

“Eight gallons, tops.” She grinned, and there was a decided smugness to it. He wondered for a moment if teachers ever tired of having to pretend to be asexual in an environment with so much sexual energy in it. Then her hand gave him a firmer squeeze and he snapped back to the present.

“Oh. Yeah, I guess I should... I’ll take care of it before we go out. Um, thanks.”

Kristy stopped her hand. “Is that because you’re too shy to ask? Or because you’d be happier taking care of it yourself?”

The answer was most decidedly the former, but if he was too shy to ask, he was equally paralyzed when it came to admitting the fact. Instead, he merely shrugged.

“Look, I don’t want to pressure you, so I’m trying to read the room. And since I know you’re struggling to do the same...” She leaned down, her lips touching his ear as she whispered into it. Between each utterance, she caressed his ear with lips and tongue.

“I. Want. To make. You. Happy.”

Conner was literally trembling with lust by then. “O-okay. I want y-you to... you know.”

“Let’s get you out of those pants then.”

Her student didn’t need to do much more than sit up; Kristy seemed happy to do the rest of the work herself. She had a self-satisfied little smile on her face, both from delight in making her student happy, as well as the effect she was having on him. His cock was jutting practically straight up, twitching in time with his heartbeat.

“That’s a very nice cock you have there.”

“Th-thanks.” His mind was split in half down the middle. One half was marveling at the events that lead up to sitting here naked in front of his sexy yearbook teacher; the other half was imagining what wonder was to transpire next.

“Lately, I’ve fantasized about you. Quite a bit, actually. About how happy I could make you, if you let me. All just daydreams, until today. Have you ever fantasized about me before, Conner?” she asked softly. “I know how young men’s imaginations go. It’s OK if you have.”

He nodded. “Yeah. Sometimes.”

“Good.” She folded her arms on her lap and laid her head down on top of them. “What did we do, in your fantasy?”

“Um, there’s different ones. It’s not always the same.”

She smiled. “My creative boy. Pick one, then.”

A long silence passed as Conner tried to pick a fantasy, then to summon the courage to say it aloud to its subject. She waited patiently, a couple times giving his bared cock a gentle stroke with her thumb to remind him she was there. Finally, he took a deep breath, and got the words out.

“OK. So, this one was from, like, last school year. I’d gotten a perfect score on the exam, and you – the real you – were really proud of me. But, in the fantasy, well, you were more *impressed* than proud. And how well I’d done really seemed to...”

“Turn me on?” she supplied when he trailed off bashfully.

“Yeah. You know, the way some girls get over star athletes or rock stars or whatever.” He waited for her to laugh at the silliness of it all, but she was just listening patiently. “And you came on to me, and were all... I dunno. I guess impressed is the word again. Eager to please.”

“That sounds really sexy.” She tilted her head to look up at him. “You know, you did get the highest grade on the exam again this semester. And your grade, I didn’t even screw around with.”

“Really? Cool.”

“It *is* cool.” She sighed, a dreamy, star-struck kind of sigh. “You’re so smart, Conner. I really, *really* like smart guys. Did I ever tell you that?” He shook his head. “It’s true. In high school, I had this HUGE crush on the valedictorian. He was really, really cute, and he always knew just what to say. I got so wet. Reminds me of you, kind of.”

“Oh. Uh, neat.” Just what to say indeed.

She grinned. “I pleaded him and begged him, and he finally agreed to go on a single date with me. And do you know what I did on that date?”

“No.”

Kristy slid up from her kneeling position, standing in front of Conner long enough to slide her skirt up her hips. Her pussy was still concealed from him, if barely, but the raised skirt enabled her to spread her legs wide enough to straddle his lap.

Which she promptly did. His cock disappeared under the fabric, but maddeningly she didn't sink low enough that it made contact with her. She leaned down by his neck, sucking his ear lobe into her mouth and assaulting it with her tongue before whispering the answer to her question.

"I convinced him to go on a second one."

Then she was kissing him all over, hands roaming across his chest and shoulders while her mouth explored his ears, his cheeks, his neck, his jaw, his lips. It fast became awkward to leave his arms limp at his side. He opened by placing them on her hips, but the faint whimper of pleasure at his touch bade him to quickly move on to her ass. With no underwear, he was free to sink his fingers deep between her buttocks and fondle those runner's buns he'd so admired in her leggings, that day when he'd turned her into this goddess.

She pulled back from her torrent of kisses, breathless. "I can't believe I'm saying this to a student, but... do you... would you like to see me topless? After what you've done for the the annual, it's the least you deserve."

Without even thinking, Conner suddenly slipped his fingers into the gap between two of the buttons on her top, and with an animal grunt, tore her blouse right open. Buttons clicked and clattered around the room as several popped right off. Rather than scold him for ruining the garment, she gasped and lunged at his face, and by the time her tongue left his mouth again, he saw that both her bra and blouse had been thrown aside. His English teacher was truly, completely, topless.

Her tits were amazing. They naturally sat apart from one another, settling towards the sides. Likely someone standing behind her would be able to see them peeking around the contours of her body. Her weighty breasts didn't sag so much as simply ride low on her chest, as if relieved to be freed from the bra that had taken them from where they belonged.

The nipples were bright pink with two very hard areolae; he supposed having pencil erasers for nipples was apt, given her profession.

His teacher was seldom one for form-fitting attire or showing cleavage, so the closest he had previously come to seeing their true shape had been that day she'd come in on her jog in her sports bra. They were much larger than he'd have thought given his impression that day. The twin mounds were liberally covered in lightly colored freckles as if to give them a down-to-earth aura.

"You're the best student I've ever had, Conner. Suck on me? Please?" she pleaded.

Conner didn't need to be asked twice. He pulled her hard into him, one nipple landing directly in his mouth, where he gave her precisely what she was asking for. She squirmed and moaned as he suckled away, and on occasion her hips even sunk low enough that his cock got a little taste of what was hovering just outside its reach. Like a

serving girl feeding the sultan grapes, she lowered one breast, then the other, into his waiting mouth.

He didn't even realize he was pulling down on her hips until he felt her wet lips wrapping around his tip. She gasped in surprise, fast turning into a moan of eager anticipation. She helped align her hips so that she slid right down his shaft. Damn was she tight. Conner had little doubt the 29-year-old teacher was more experienced than Hailey (or Hayleigh, whose pussy he'd technically fucked), but it gripped him like it was made for him. If she hadn't been so unbelievably wet, no doubt he'd have had to be careful delving in.

Then it *squeezed*.

"Oh, *fuck*," he moaned. "Are you doing that, or does it just... do that?"

She grinned at him, wrapping her arms behind his neck and using his shoulders to help raise and lower herself as the fucking truly began. "That's me. Do you like it? I can stop, if you want."

He could see from the glint in her eyes that she knew the answer, but he gave it anyway. "Don't you dare stop, Kristy."

"Mmm, yes sir, Mr. Editor-in-chief," she said between moans.

She was incredible. Only now did he realize how amateur his sex with Hailey had truly been, inserting a cock somewhere and teasing it until it came. No art, just coming. Kristy, however, was a master. She alternated between bouncing up and down to wriggling in little circles when he was fully inside her. An apparent sixth sense for how close he was to painting her interior white allowed her to slow down or pause when he was too close, and then she'd pull his head down to suck on her tits some more, guide his hands to roam across her ass. Conner wasted no time raising the skirt to her waist, giving him unfettered access to her bare ass. He didn't have much practice fingering a girl (especially with his cock as an obstacle), but she helpfully showed him where her clit was and treated him to the sight and glorious sound of his babe of an English teacher coming her brains out while perched atop his cock.

Her pussy spasmed like a soft, fleshy earthquake when she came, and it was that that pushed Conner over the edge. He came. Right there on the loveseat in the editor's office, he sprayed what felt like a gallon of cum into Miss C's pussy.

"Keep up the hard work," she murmured into his ear. "I can't wait to reward you again."

Conner held her tight against him. "I am so, so, so freaking happy right now."

He hadn't yet slipped out of her; at his words, a second series of spasms rocked her shapely body. Her first orgasm had been a controlled spasm, her body tensed to restrict it. This time, she wailed so loud he could only hope there was no one left in the building. She flailed so hard she couldn't even hold herself up, collapsing with her chest pressed to his and trembling as a third, then a fourth, then more than he bothered to

count echoed through her. By the time she'd regained control, she'd goaded him back to full hardness.

"You feel like you could still get happier," she said, grinning. "Time for another one of your fantasies?"

"Only if you're OK getting bent over your desk."

He heard her sweeping a stack of papers and supplies off her desk out in the classroom before he'd even stood up off the sofa. Conner tossed her yellow thong out the door and into the classroom, calling, "*Now* who's leaving their panties in the editor's office?" She only giggled in response.

Was this wrong? He was in no mental state to make judgments. Kristy certainly seemed please with the arrangement, as Heather had said, or been about to say, she'd changed her mind on her own before he pushed things along. If he'd changed these women without meaning to and couldn't change them back, the only responsible thing to do was see to it they enjoyed it at least as much as he did.

Conner glanced at the clock as he stood up. It was already after five o'clock. He'd need to make this a quick one if he was going to have time to get home and clean the sex off his cock in time to take Heather out. Especially if he hoped to introduce her to it as well. But then he stepped out into the classroom, where her tight little ass was beckoning him from the teacher's desk.

Maybe not too quick.

## Epilogue

Jordan Lyons slipped silently out of the journalism classroom and went right down to the men's room. That fat girl who'd been eavesdropping with him, Kara or Kaylee or something (he hadn't been much interested in what the cow had to say), was long gone. She'd arrived shortly after him, where he'd been waiting to give that perv loser Fishers the least sincere apology he'd ever given. It was a condition of his suspension; that bitch Miss C had thrown a shit-fit over nothing more than repeating the truth, and the vice principal had given him one day in-school suspension, with three more to come after break if he didn't personally apologize to Fishers.

The prick ISS monitor hadn't let him leave to do it during school and of course that bimbo Miss C never sent down a hall pass, so he'd had to run down after school to make sure he didn't miss his shot and get three more days after break. He'd heard Miss C and Fishers talking in the office, but once he got a whiff of the conversation – a teacher fucking with a straight-A student's grade, basically blackmailing her into dating a guy she'd already shut down! – he'd settled in to listen. This was too rich. He immediately started fantasizing about watching Fishers' weak ass pass out all over again when Heather dumped him again after Jordan told her. About seeing that lying bitch teacher dragged out of class to get her ass fired,.

Hell, maybe he'd even give the old broad a chance to suck him into silence. She wasn't bad-looking, and not like he couldn't rat her out afterward anyway. What would she do, tell the principal she'd sucked a student's dick to keep her secret? Then she'd be in prison, not merely the welfare office.

The ugly girl listening with him hadn't lasted long. That fat pig evidently had a thing for Fishers, and she ran out sobbing when she overheard how that bitch Miss C had helped set him up with Heather Blake. Jordan had tried to feel bad for her, but really, getting her heart shattered was probably good practice for her future.

Only after she left, he kept listening, and the story he heard Fishers tell...

*Bullshit*, he thought. *No fucking way*. He even thought they might have realized he was out here listening and were fucking with him. But it sure didn't sound like it. Using people's quotes to change their personalities? Body swapping? Hell, he'd seen Hayleigh McKnight that morning before reporting to ISS, and she'd still looked damn fine to him.

Then he listened to Fishers break the spell for her, and, in spite of himself, he got curious. It was an idiot prank, had to be. Miss C was just too stupid to see through it. Only...

Whatever, it cost him nothing to check. Not like anyone was looking.

Jordan pulled up a picture of Hayleigh on his phone. They were friends on facebook, so it was easy to find one. Looked the same as ever to him. Skinny little legs,

tits so perky it had to be a pushup bra, the face that had turned her into one of the most ruthless bitches at Northside. After a moment's study, he underwent the same process he'd heard Fishers describing to Miss C. He pulled up a picture from the slide of thumbnails without looking, zooming all the way in. He opened his eyes to a close-up of some grainy-looking bushes. He started panning around the image looking for Hayleigh, first finding an ankle. A big ankle, weirdly. Was someone else in this picture with her?

"This can't be legit!" He immediately glanced up, waiting to see if they'd heard him and preparing to bolt. But they were still talking. At first he assumed he'd clicked on a picture of Hayleigh's fugly cousin or something. He found a fat calf beneath fatter thighs, a stomach full of rolls visible through a too-tight t-shirt, arms that looked like plucked turkey legs, and finally...

The face of that girl who'd been in here waiting for Fishers. That's right – Hefty Hailey McManus, the tubby bitch whose picture Jordan had caught him screwing with. His mind raced to make sense of it all. So Fishers had changed them somehow, and was trying to change them back. Then he got that new girl Angelica, and Miss C, too. But if nobody saw the real Hayleighs but him, then...

He could own that hot-ass bitch like she was on the discount shelf in the dollar store. No wonder she'd been waiting for him, and why she'd been so upset hearing he was set up with Heather! Obviously neither Hayleigh nor Hailey was wise to what he'd done, so she had the self-esteem of your typical sad sack fatty. To her, even a douche like Fishers was probably a real hunk.

In the bathroom, Jordan splashed cold water on his face, trying to wake himself up from this bizarre, twisted dream. Shit, if either of those girls ever figured out what had happened, they'd probably die of a heart attack on the spot. Hayleigh out of horror, and the other girl because she was so damn fat. Or was it both heart attacks for Hayleigh now?

He strided out of school into the nearly vacant parking lot, shuddering less at the winter chill than at the thought of a girl as fine as Hayleigh McKnight letting a little pud like Fishers have a go at her. Even if someone else was controlling the body, that was just wrong.

Still, all that was nothing compared to what Jordan had heard as he was leaving. At first, he'd thought to throw open the door and get some juicy video, blackmail that cunt of a teacher until the day she died. Would serve her right for what she pulled on Heather. Sure, that big-titted blonde had dumped him back when, but she was still a good girl, and didn't deserve a dork like Fishers drooling on that divine rack of hers. Plus, being able to ruin Fishers' life... that was its own reward.

He started his car and turned on the radio by habit. His sister must have messed with the knob; it powered on set to one of those 24-hour Christmas music stations. *It's*

*beginning to look a lot like Christmas*, it sang out. He let it play, his mind on higher things.

Blackmail would be solid, sure; what wouldn't a teacher do to conceal evidence of her... blech, fucking Conner Fishers! Still, like his old man had always told him: the bigger the dream, the bigger the man. Sure, he could show his hand, let Miss C know what he'd seen. He could have that slut sucking off his other teachers for his grades, to say nothing of Jordan himself. He'd be on easy street.

Fishers, on the other hand, wasn't on the street any more. No, that lucky son of a bitch was flying above it. He had the power to rewrite the history of Northside High in the palm of his hands. He didn't need blackmail to have these hot bitches throwing themselves at him.

Jordan pulled out of the parking lot at the commencement, revising his Christmas list in his heart. *Dolls that will talk and will go for a walk is the wish of Janice and Jen*, sang the voice on the radio.

What TIOS had done for Conner Fishers, it could do for Jordan Lyons. It was time to tell his own version of the Northside story.





