







# Grumpy Mechanic (Grump Town #2)

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**Category:** Action&Adventure

**Description:** A Grumpy meets Sunshine, instalove romance (after a little intstalust is thrown into the toolbox). A sweet, small-town slice of life story which will warm your heart and arouse your interest in all those dirty, grimy, greasy, gritty parts that make life interesting. Remote locations on the edge of town big storms, and plenty of slippin and a slidin on this journey.

Hold on to the wheel!

Madison

My car conking out on a dark and stormy night signals the end of an era and the beginning of something surprisingly beautiful. Never in my soggiest dreams did I picture a tall, brooding mechanic begrudgingly coming to my rescue.

Chase and I may be the same age but getting him to smile through the rain is like dragging my rickety and unreliable car through six inches of fresh mud. Despite his grumpy exterior, a night stuck together reveals hes as soft as the leather interior of a luxury convertible dropping its top. Convertibles arent the only thing dropping their tops.

Chase fixes my car faster than my heart flipping over the possibility of falling for a man who works so well with his hands. Those same hands work their magic over my body after meeting at his body shop.

Hesitation puts this passion on a lift to see if this is a temporary fix or if were in this for the long haul. Only time can tell if Chases patchwork is enough to get my car back on the road, and my heart on the road to love.

This is a short, steamy, small town, grumpy/sunshine romance.

No OM / OW drama and no cliffhangers. No ddlg. No virgins. No man-whores.

Always a sweet HEA.

**Total Pages (Source):** 8

# Page 1

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The melodic rumbling of my car shaking as I drive out of town to my newest listing doesn't give me the same vibes as listening to my favorite pop star belt out her list of ex-lovers. Even worse is the sound of the rumbling coming from under my car matches the vigorous gyrations of my steering wheel. This can't be good.

Luckily, there's a body shop and gas station coming up on the side of the road. Pulling my 2004 Honda into the place feels like the best thing to do right now. It's quiet, and while the lights are on, there's no sign of life.

"This is how horror movies start, Maddie," I whisper to myself as I take hesitant steps into the store attached to the body shop.

The bell chimes over the door as I look around for an employee. It's clean, and the items on the shelves look fresh enough. At least it doesn't look abandoned. Still, a zombie menace could pop out at any minute.

"Um, hello?" I call out as I approach the counter, where there's a door that obviously leads into the mechanic portion of the building. My heart races with every step I take closer to the door. I just want to ask whoever is in charge to take a look at my car.

There are grinding noises coming from behind the door that make me nervous. It sounds like heavy machinery, but I can't be sure without stepping through the door. I don't want to take a chance to walk back there. I'm already behind the shop's counter.

"Excuse me?" I call out even louder into the noisy shout, keeping myself behind the

door next to the counter and register. The machinery stops, but the wind outside is blowing something fierce. I need to get to the house I'm renovating and back home as soon as possible.

"What are you doing back here?" a deep voice questions from behind me.

A yelp escapes my throat as I whip around to see a handsome face behind the terrifying voice heavy with accusation.

"Holy hell, where did you come from? I'm, um, sorry," I spew out.

My mind is battling itself from lusting after this hunk of a man and outright terror because I psyched myself into thinking this is the setting of a jump scare. Finally, my voice pushes through my fear, and I smile. "My car is making a noise and rattling as I drive. I just wanted to know if someone was around to take a look at it."

Soft brown eyes take me in from head to toe, pulling my attention to the chiseled features of his face. An angular jaw rests under a beard just growing in and runs down over the bulge in his throat. He smells like motor oil and pine trees, and dirt smudges over his jumpsuit and hands make him look like he's been fighting fires.

"You can pull it 'round to the garage," he mutters before stepping out of my way.

I can feel his penetrating gaze follow me out of the store, and I toss another smile over my shoulder.

"Thank you for doing this," I tell him.

"Well, I don't want you stranded out here." He huffs and walks by me to hold the door open.

The coldness of the afternoon air has nothing on his icy demeanor. I bring my car around the side of the building and into the garage. There are two seats next to the door where I park myself until the hunk of the mechanic gives me some good news. At least, I hope there is good news.

Thankfully, I don't have to focus on the handsome stranger too long as my phone rings. My dad's smiling face as he squeezes me and my sisters in his embrace flashes across my screen.

"Hey, Dad," I answer with far too much enthusiasm.

"What's wrong?" he asks immediately.

"Nothing, I swear it's not that bad."

Dad grumbles into the phone, "What happened, Maddie?"

"My steering column started shaking," I admit quietly.

"Didn't I tell you to junk that thing? Where are you? I'll close the practice up and come get you."

"No, Dad, don't be ridiculous. I'm at Chase Auto Body right outside of town. They're going to take a look at it. Those fur babies need you, so stay in the office, and if I need a ride, I'll call Kenny. She owes me a ride anyway," I smile as pictures of my sister and her new beau flash across my mind. Happiness looks good on her.

"Okay, well, call her now," Dad says. "There's a storm coming in, and I don't want either one of you out there. Those roads get sloppier than pigs taking mud baths. Call me when you get home, and look into junking that thing."

"Dad, you and Mom gave that car to me for my eighteenth birthday. I can't let it go," I tell him without saying it feels like I'd be letting Mom go if I got rid of the car.

"Maddie, darlin'. I love you, but that was six years ago. It's okay to let it go," he says, but even with his permission, I doubt I'll ever have the heart.

"I'll think about it, Dad. So, I have to go check on my listing to make sure the place is locked down before this storm comes in. I'm sure my car is fine, and I'll go right home?—"

"All right, but still call Mackenna."

"I will, Dad."

I'm not sure how much time passes after I put my phone away and the brooding mechanic quietly approaches me.

"Ma'am, you need some new tires. Those ones in the front are pretty bald. It's ruining the wheel alignment, which is what's making your steering column shake. How long have you been driving around like that?" he asks.

I scrunch my face and shrug my shoulders with uncertainty.

"That ain't no way to treat a car that old." He slowly shakes his head. "Anything older than seven years deserves a little bit more attention and care these days. You're lucky these kinds of cars last damn near forever, but only when you treat 'em right."

"I'm sorry." My hands go up in surrender. "I thought I was treating her right. I've had it for over six years, and this is the first time I've had this issue."

"You shouldn't be driving on those tires. You maybe got a few hundred miles left on

them, and that's a strong maybe. If you get the slightest puncture, they're done for. I recommend you leave it with me and let me order you some new tires. You can come back in a few days to pick it up. The wheel alignment will come free with the tire installation, and that'll stop the shaking."

"How much is it for just the wheel alignment?" I ask him as I run through my mental calendar. I have too many appointments to not have my car.

"If I do just the wheel alignment on those tires, you should head right on home until after this storm passes. Then come back here and let me order you some new tires. We have payment plans in case you don't want to fork over that kind of money all at once."

"Thanks, I can afford the tires. It's the timing I'm worried about. My business doesn't allow me to be immobile for too long."

Tall and handsome shrugs his shoulders. "Well, it's up to you. I didn't think you'd value your life even less than your car, but hey, I learn something new about the people in this town every day."

"Hey!" I hop to my feet and stalk toward him. "That's a shitty thing to say. What's your name? I'm going to report you to the owner of this place and let them know how nasty you're being to customers."

"Being honest and being nasty are two very different things, ma'am," he drawls, his gaze lazily dragging from my head to my toes. "From the looks of it and that car, you ain't had nothing done nasty to you in a long time."

My eyes widen as my cheeks burn with embarrassment and an unwanted sense of lust. "How do you know that? You know what? Never mind, don't answer that. You need to tell me your name."



"Chase Carpenter," he replies with a smirk and a tip of an imaginary cap.

"Chase, as in Chase Auto Body?" A second wave of embarrassment crashes over me.

"One and the same, ma'am. Now, when I talk to myself later tonight, what else would you like me to say about me as an employee?"

I scoff, folding my arms across my chest and refusing to look at his stupidly handsome face. "You think that just because you're attractive and own this shop, you can treat customers any way you want."

"No, I think anyone who walks into a body shop that's closed and demands their car be looked at after driving it into the ground is someone who doesn't care enough about others. So why should I care about what comes out of my mouth?"

"Closed?" I ask, trying to distract myself from his words. I immediately picture myself coming all over his mouth, and my core tightens with desire.

What the fuck is happening?

He nods. "Yes, ma'am, closed. As in the weather reports have issued warnings for everyone to close up shop for the next thirty-six hours. That was nearly three hours ago. I'll get started on your wheel alignment and get you out of here in about thirty minutes. How does that sound?"

"It sounds fine." My eyes dart around the space in desperation to avoid his penetrating glare. I let out a slow exhale and close my eyes before mustering up enough courage to tell Chase, "Thank you."

"Any time..." He pauses, tipping his head to the side. "Do you want to tell me your name so I know what to put down on the complaint you want to submit to my

manager ?"

"Madison Monroe. You can call me Maddie." My words are low, riddled with embarrassment at my appalling behavior.

"Well, Maddie, I'll get working on your car."

Sure enough, after a half-hour, Chase makes his way over to me with my keys in his hand and my car ready to get back on the road.

"You should head back into town before it starts coming down," he warns with an insistence that's hard to ignore. Thunder crashes in the distance as dark gray clouds crawl across the sky, steering our attention to the incoming storm.

I catch a glimpse of worry in Chase's eyes, and my mouth moves with a mind of its own. "What's wrong?"

Chase inhales deeply and rolls his left shoulder backward. There's conflict in his eyes for a moment before a solution grumbles out of him. "Why don't you let me drive you where you need to go? That storm ain't gonna wait for nobody. Rain's coming, and from the ache in my shoulder, it's gonna be bad."

"I can make it home just fine. I have to head to the Garrett farm, and worst case scenario, I'll hunker down there until the storm passes."

"That old rickety place with the boarded up windows and dilapidated barn? What kind of business could you possibly have at a place that ain't seen nothing without fur and rabies scampering around?"

"I flip properties. I've been working on bringing up the property value all over Mercy, but that place is a bit of a passion project for me."

He rolls his eyes and scoffs. "Great, just another yuppie ruining our small town. It's people like you that?—"

"People like me that do what?" I angrily quip, daring him to blame me for whatever disaster is circling his mind.

He lets out a breath and runs his fingers through his hair. "It doesn't matter much. You should get going and just stay off the roads by the Garrett place. That mud makes a real mess out there. I'm the only place close enough if you get stuck, and I'm closing up for the night."

I check my phone for the weather and look at the skies. There are still some pockets of light blue behind the storm clouds.

"Thanks, Chase, but don't worry about me. I'll be just fine."

## Page 2

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### CHASE

A soft rumble of thunder plants seeds of doubt in the gorgeous gray eyes of Maddie Monroe. Stubbornness and possible apprehension make it feel like she has a point to prove, but I hope she doesn't think she needs to prove anything to me. I'd much rather her be safe. Yet, she shrugs off my warning.

Maddie's words are full of false fearlessness as she says, "I've got plenty of time. Thank you for fixing my car so quickly."

"That ain't nothing but putting a band-aid on a bullet wound. Get that car into a shop as soon as you can."

Maddie simply gives me a nod of acknowledgment as I hand over her receipt and continues on her way. There's a brief thought that flashes across my mind as she gets in her car to drive away.

What if she stayed?

It's absurd. She's a prissy, entitled realtor who also happens to be stunning in a way that has me discreetly checking her fingers for a wedding ring.

Who am I kidding?

There's no way someone like her puts up with someone like me. As if to agree with

that sentiment, the sky opens up for rain to drown our cozy little town. It doesn't matter that the sun was shining a few hours ago.

I find my eyes searching the road just to be sure she's heading back into Mercy when I catch a glimpse of her taillights. I groan as I see her heading toward the Garrett farm.

"She's as stubborn as a damn mule," I mutter to myself as I get back to closing down my shop for the storm. Something inside is tugging at me to make sure she's all right, and I make up my mind that once I'm done, I'll drive by the abandoned farm to make sure Maddie is safe.

Endless gray darkens the sky as rain pours from the clouds once I dart off to my pickup. The closer I get to the farm, the faster my heart beats. I can barely see beyond my windshield. I have to crane my neck as I slowly inch by the driveway.

There's no sign of her or her car. I have to guess she's fine and relent to the fact that she doesn't belong to me. I'm not in charge of keeping Maddie safe. It doesn't matter what my body wants. She doesn't want some random mechanic looking out for her, and I accept it.

However, the farther away from the farm I get, the worse the roads. Inches of rain and mud are giving my large pickup a run for its money. I'm not sure I'll make it back into town, but I know I'm close to my mother's house.

No. That's not true. I'm close to the house my mother put in my name and then abandoned once the taxes got too high. As I pull into the driveway, the lawn is overgrown, and I promise myself to drag my mower out here to get it under control.

The notice from Mercy Municipal Property Enforcement, along with the current tax lien, is still stuck at the door. The rain can't wash the paper off, so I shake my head as

I unlock the door to let myself inside.

I do a once-over around the place to make sure all the windows are closed and turn the heat on. The fridge is empty but I know there's some canned food in the pantry and some meat in the deep freezer. I scrounge up enough food to throw something together, and while my meat defrosts, I hop in the shower.

The thunderstorm is soothing, but the incessant pounding on the back door as I step out of the shower is less than relaxing. Grumbling and angry at having to stop my after-shower routine, I throw a towel around my waist and rush downstairs to see who's banging on the door.

The minute I swing the door open, I'm ready to reach for my shotgun at the sight in front of me. Long hair is plastered to a very muddy face, and even worse, they're caked in dirt from head to toe.

"You've got to be kidding me," the mound of dirt moans with a familiar voice.

"Maddie?" I ask with a face I'm certain is contorting in disbelief.

"Yes, Chase."

"What the hell happened?" I step aside to let her into the kitchen. "How and why are you at my back door?"

Every step squishes with moisture as she drags herself into the kitchen. "Spare me the 'I told you so' bit."

That statement jars me, forcing me to ask, "What did I tell you?"

"To not drive to the Garrett farm. My car got stuck in a ditch on the way back into

town. I didn't even make it back to your body shop before I spun out. So I trekked my way through?—"

A sneeze interrupts her, and I don't want to talk right now.

"Tell me about it after you get out of this wet gear. The water is still hot, and you're welcome to a shower. I'm going to put some clothes on and get some food on the stove. You need to warm up," I tell her as I guide her up the stairs and into the bathroom. "Just leave the muddy stuff out here, and I'll get the washer going. There's a linen closet in there, and if you don't mind, some of my Ma's old stuff—it's clean but probably a tad bigger than what you wear."

"I'm exhausted and just thankful it was you here and not some weird zombie looking to eat my brains."

I laugh a little, but I can't stop my mind from wandering about what she tastes like.

"I was gonna throw some steaks in the cast iron, and I got some veg if you're hungry," I tell her while pulling linens out for her to bathe. I don't wait for her to respond before walking into my mother's old bedroom and grabbing some clean clothes from her dresser.

My voice is low as I watch Maddie peel out her soaked socks and shoes. I can't stand by and immediately move to turn on the water for the tub.

"I haven't taken a bath since I was seven. There's something disturbing about turning this beautiful clawfoot tub into a bowl of Maddie soup," she says with a smirk.

"Well, consider this your reintroduction. You should relax and warm up. Besides, a bath will do ya good. It will help heat your bones. If it makes you feel better, shower first, then bathe. It will be less human soup and more of a warm blanket."

Maddie doesn't fight me on this the same way she fought my warning to go back into town. Instead, the weariness of whatever she went through to get here settles around us in a calm silence. Exhaustion pours out of her at the same pace as water, and mud slides onto the bathroom floor.

Somehow, I see beyond her beauty, beyond my instant attraction, to simply help her get warm again. Every movement from Maddie's frame looks riddled with soreness and hesitation. I help pull her shirt over her head and her pants down to her ankles.

There are cuts and bruises from where she probably trudged through the brush to get to my back door. Suddenly, guilt impales me because if I trimmed the yard the last time I was here, she wouldn't have had to fight the landscape in search of help.

After setting everything out and leaving her in the bathroom, I make my way into my old bedroom to put on some clothes. The realization of helping each other while separated by the slimmest pieces of fabric isn't lost on me. But the fact remains, as much of a flake as my mother may be, she didn't raise me to be a pervert.

I'm more than capable of respecting Maddie's boundaries, and I'd do myself a favor by implementing my own. The best way to keep my sex drive in check is to keep my mind focused on our safety. She's a perfect stranger—emphasis on perfect. While she's caked in mud, there's nothing that I want to do to make her uncomfortable.

I busy myself with dinner as she bathes in my bathroom. My eyes drift up toward the ceiling, knowing that just above the half-foot of space, there's the most beautiful woman I've ever seen dripping water down her body to wash away the filth of the storm outside.

My groin tightens at the mere fantasy of taking a sopping wet sponge, dredged in soapy suds, and wiping every smudge of dirt off her curvaceous body. A husky breath pushes from behind my lips as I sear steaks, make mushroom gravy, and roast some



assorted vegetables I found in the freezer.

The more I concentrate on making this the best dinner I've ever had, the less I focus on Maddie being naked in a room a few feet above me.

"She didn't march through the fields of who knows how many properties to get molested by you, Chase," I mumble to myself.

"What if I did?"

## Page 3

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MADISON

The shock radiating across Chase's eyes let me know he didn't anticipate me walking in on the conversation he's having with himself. To encourage him and let on that I'm joking, I offer a smile.

"It's okay if you want to molest me a little bit, Chase," I quip with a slight shrug of my shoulders.

His face is stoic., "I don't want to molest you, Maddie. I am not that kind of man."

"I was joking, Chase. You know that, right? I was just trying to lighten the mood."

"How do you feel?"

"I'm warmer than what I was," I reply. "I have to admit that I thought I had more time before the rain came."

"Come and eat so you can tell me how you ended up out here." Chase holds his hand out to hold mine. Warmth and strength pull me gently into the kitchen I just sludged into.

I find myself adjusting the loose sweatpants around my waist. However, I'm thankful Chase answered the door and let me in. He doesn't have to take care of me, and even after I ignored his warning, he's still making sure that I'm safe.

Chase is the first guy to readily care about me, who is not my dad and isn't expecting anything in return. Honestly, even if he wants something for everything he's doing for me, I'm not opposed to giving up my time or talents to help him ... professionally, of course.

We sit at a small, round dining table in the cozy kitchen, which has off-white appliances and light yellow subway tiles. The cabinets look more orange than brown, and the parquet floorboards creak under our feet.

A running list of renovations emerges in my head for things I'd change around here. However, when Chase sets a plate of piping hot food in front of me, my mind switches off to indulge in the food he's prepared.

Thunder cracks and lightning flashes as rain continues to beat against the house. There's a rumbling that resembles the sound my car made, but it's coming from above us.

"It sounds like you can use a roof inspection," I mention between delicious bites of steak and vegetables. I moan as the savory food delights my tongue and belly.

"This whole damn place needs to be torn down." He jabs his fork into his food.

"Nothing that drastic has to happen. From what I can see, it has some good bones. I'd love to get my hands on a place like this. That's why I scooped up the Garrett farm as soon as it went up for auction. Did you know the family?"

"No. The bank did some crazy money-moving maneuver to grab up the land out here."

"What do you mean?"

Chase finishes his food and leans back in his chair. "You know that we're about twenty minutes outside of Cincinnati. They got the Bengals stadium and wanted to take this land for like a private air strip and hotel play-land for athletes. They kept saying stuff like it will be like Aspen for country folk and football."

I can't stop my brows from knitting together. "That sounds like a horrible idea. The noise pollution alone would destroy the environment, the wildlife out here, and the aesthetic of quaint country living. Besides, the football season is only, what? Eighteen to twenty-six weeks, including the preseason, playoffs, and Super Bowl? And with the way athletes are supposed to behave, I doubt they'd be taking leisurely trips to a barren playground outside Cincinnati."

He chuckles, which shows off the slightest crinkle in his soft brown eyes. The rugged handsomeness and a few creases between his brows. A slight dimple is hiding under the scruffy beard that will probably be shaved off by the morning. I like the hair on his face, but clean-shaven wouldn't be bad either. He has the attractiveness of a movie star or model but with the down-to-earth hometown feel of a small-town boy.

Chase's voice is deep and unintentionally loud, but that's probably to combat the noise of the storm thrashing outside.

He says, "I don't think that the bank and their fancy corporate partners care about the environment for the other half of the year. Once the soil tests wouldn't allow an airport of any size to function on this terrain, that was the nail in the coffin for their playground."

I nod as he continues, "But, the bankers had already gone around offering to buy folks out. My mom wanted to hold out, thinking she'd get more money if she were the last one standing."

"What happened?" I ask.

He shrugs. "The big money left the bank holding the bag. They'd already bought out the Garrett place and a few other properties. The taxes nearly tripled for the next year before they teetered out and fell back down. But it was already too much for my mother to pay, and she moved to sunnier pastures."

"Damn, that sucks. Well, good for your mom to get out of Ohio, but you're stuck here paying for a house you don't want."

He sighs as he picks up our plates to bring them to the sink. "I'll pay it off, eventually. I really don't want to let this place go. My pop left it to us when he died. Mom said she could handle it while I started my business. For the most part, she did until she couldn't. Some slick-talking realtor let her think she'd get a huge bag of gold for this property."

The dig at my profession doesn't go unnoticed, but I know I wasn't the one to sell his mom on a financial windfall. Instead of letting his blunt bias unsettle me, I get up to help wash the dishes. I understand his attachment to this place and his judgment of the bank taking advantage of his mother, along with the other properties around here.

"Where's your car at, Maddie?" His question disrupts my train of thought.

I find myself shaking my head from side to side slowly. "I don't know exactly. I definitely got turned around out there. I was headed back into town, hydroplaned, and spun out. My car is wrecked. I'm sure of it."

"How'd you find this place?"

We move in a rhythm of washing and drying the dishes together. "I don't know. At first, I thought I was walking back into town. My phone is soaked to the bone and won't turn on. I tried to head back to the Garrett place, but I saw the lights on in the distance. I didn't realize I was coming toward the back of the house."

"Sorry about the brush. I'll take care of it once everything dries out after the storm."

I scoff. "You don't have to apologize to me, Chase. I owe you an apology. I should have listened to you, and my dad, and everyone else who told me to get rid of that car. But it means a lot to me."

"I get it. That's one reason I love fixing them. It's hard to let go of certain things when they hold memories, smells?—"

Thunder booms, cutting off his words as it shakes the house and startles me. My body reacts, causing me to jump and turn into Chase's muscular chest. He holds me as another rumble and boom of the storm rattles the windows, and I bury my face against him.

His quiet strength wraps around me like a weight of safety that helps me relax. My heart races under his firm touch. He smells divine and no longer looks like he's been fighting oil spills under the hood of my car. The longer Chase holds me, the longer I want to stay right here with him.

Cooler minds prevail as we part once the storm reminds us that it's still barreling against the house.

"I'm going to head upstairs and make sure the windows are secure." Chase backs away but lets his fingers stay on my waist for just a moment longer. A low moan vibrates out of him as he pulls away, adjusts his sweatpants, and walks out of the kitchen.

Breathe, Maddie.

It doesn't matter how hot he is. It's inappropriate to take advantage of his hospitality. Chase has overextended himself enough today. Even when his demeanor appears to

be against the notion of a friendly neighbor. He didn't turn me away when he could have, and he let me inside this house when he could have left me outside.

The briskness of his attitude could be from many things, but I don't want to add myself to that list. After blowing out a few deep breaths, I get back to cleaning up the kitchen. The idea of Chase kissing me senseless sits in my mind, adding itself to a long list of sexual fantasies.

The overwhelming need for me to apologize again compels me to finish tidying up and head upstairs. I find Chase standing at the end of the hallway in front of a window. The rain pelts the side of the house while the winds blow through the tall grass in the backyard.

"Listen, Chase, I just want to apologize for down there, for today altogether. I've been barging in on you since I pulled into the shop, and I was inappropriate downstairs. You were just trying to calm me down, and I made it weird. You weren't going to kiss me or anything like that. As soon as the rain lets up, I can call my sister or my dad to come get me."

Chase turns around to face me, tipping his head slightly. "You don't have to apologize to me. The truth is that I wanted to kiss you but felt like I was taking advantage of you being in distress."

"Distress?" The word feels like an insult. "I wasn't in distress."

He chuckles. "We have two very different definitions of distress. You showed up at my back door looking like you dragged yourself through a swamp."

"The swamp was that yard out there," I bite back in defense. "Besides, I trekked over a mile in this storm to find help. I was not in distress. That makes it sound like I would have died. At the most, I was in need of assistance."

He laughs louder this time. "Tomato, to-mah-toe. You could have died out there. Didn't you say your car spun out? You're lucky those bald tires didn't pop on you. The car could have flipped and landed in a ditch."

"Since you insist on bringing it up, I'll give you another apology for that, too. You were right about my car, its tires, the storm—all of it. You were right, and I was wrong. There. Are you happy now?"

"I'm happy you're here, but I'm not happy that I was right about you almost dying, Maddie. I like you intact, safe, dry, and in one piece." He pauses, eyeing me from head to toe, and licks his lips as the tension between us shifts from combative to sexual. There's something powerful brewing. "Well, having you a little wet is better than dry."

The admission makes my nipples perk with desire, and I run my tongue over my lip, waiting for Chase to do what we both wanted to happen downstairs.



## Page 4

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### CHASE

I don't like beating around the bush when it comes to matters of attraction. But I also don't want to feel like I'm forcing anyone to do something they're not comfortable with. We've been butting heads ever since Maddie came into the shop. Yet, there's a spark of something between us, even if it's mild bickering, that I can't ignore. I like a woman who can push back.

Maddie pushes back and pushes herself up onto her toes. I don't let her come all the way as I wrap my arm around her waist, drawing her close to me to press against my body. Lightning flashes across the sky as thunder claps, illuminating the shadows of our silhouettes in the hallway.

My mouth captures hers with passionate hunger. When she parts her lips, our tongues meet and dance around one another while the rain plays the melody of our kiss against the window. A moan comes out of my throat as warm anticipation trickles down my body.

I lean over, scooping her ass into my hands to hoist her into my arms and carry her into my bedroom. As our mouths work us both into a frenzy, there's a steady dripping noise above us.

However, my head is busy with images of what's to come, who's to come, and making sure Maddie comes all over me. I slide my mouth away from hers, creating a trail down her neck until I reach the collar of her shirt. One hand slips under it to

palm her breast while my mouth leaves goosebumps across her sweet skin.

Maddie's moans of satisfaction encourage me to continue, but the dripping sound above us grows loud enough for her to place her hands on my shoulders.

"Wait a minute. What's that sound?" she asks.

Taking a gasp of air, I begrudgingly roll away from Maddie. Both of our heads tilt and turn to figure out where the sound is coming from.

"It could be coming from the attic." Trying to think clearly and shake off the lust fogging my brain, my eyes drift toward the ceiling.

"That doesn't sound too good. Any dripping noises that can be heard from outside the attic probably mean there's a larger leak. Maybe we should check the windows from the outside. If the gutter is dripping onto something, we could be worried for nothing."

I like Maddie's suggestion and decide to make my way downstairs after taking a glance at her hard nipples that are just begging for my mouth. I'd rather be safe than sorry, so making sure there won't be a gigantic mess to clean up after the rain is the priority over making Maddie come all over me.

We take our time moving around the house to check every possible spot where there could be a leak. Maddie points out one spot and then another, showing me where her expertise in renovating homes comes in handy. Once we're certain there's no water pouring in through any unknown holes, we make our way into the kitchen to get to the backyard.

The storm has more wind than rain at this point.

"You should wait inside," I tell her over the bustling gusts. Wind, leaves, and small branches are whipping around mercilessly as Maddie continues to follow me around the side of the house. I can only hope to get a better view of my bedroom since there are a few trees blocking my line of sight.

"Are you sure? Do you know what you're looking for?" she asks.

"I have a feeling I'll know when I see it."

She doesn't fight me the same way she did earlier and heads into the house just as the storm picks back up. I let out a sigh of relief, but my relief is short-lived. There's a blockage of leaves from a runoff where two sides of the roof meet in a valley.

The roof rafters were altered years ago to give more height to the attic, but my parents never followed through with opening the small area into a livable space. A steady stream of water trailing around the leafy pile up, spilling water on top of my bedroom window's shutter like a leaking faucet.

"Fuck." Frustration completely overtakes whatever lingering desires I have. This house is one problem after the next. My mind wanders to the sexy realtor waiting for me inside. Maybe, just to get an idea of my options, I can have her evaluate what needs to be done around here to get it market-ready.

However, the second the image of an open house flashes across my mind, my heart rips with regret. I never want to sell the house unless my mother's okay with letting the place go. There are so many memories of our family here, and a part of me always thought this house would stay in our family forever.

My heart beats rapidly as rain starts to fall heavier and the winds speed up. The storm's not done with our little town just yet. My gaze turns toward the sky just beyond the back fence. There's nothing but a vast acreage of tall grass and bushes

between my property and the next. I can just make out a shallow trail through it that Maddie must have followed to get here. It lets me know that I have a lot of work to do.

Lightning flashes across the night sky and the wind hoists up a heavy branch from just outside the yard. The branch continues to fly around before crashing into a smaller tree closer to the kitchen door. The collision breaks the small tree down the center, which is probably rotten, and I just didn't know it.

The sound of the tree crashing in front of the back door breaks through my grief and ignites my anger. But rage melts away the moment I hear Maddie's voice.

"Chase! Are you okay?"

"Yeah," I call back to her. "I'm fine. Are you all right? Did that tree burst through the door or windows?"

"No, but you're probably going to need a backhoe to move it out of the way. Come back inside. It's starting to come down harder."

"You can meet me in the front to let me inside."

In the few minutes it takes me to run around the side of the house, every inch of my clothes is dripping wet. Maddie swings the front door open, her eyes wide and a soft shade of pink blooming across her cheeks. She can't stop herself from continuously glancing down at my crotch, which finally draws my own gaze down there.

The water's left my dick print on full display under my shallow flannel pajamas. A smile spreads across my face as I step into the house, water splashing off my feet.

"You should really get out of those clothes before you catch your death," Maddie

says, concern etched on her beautiful features.

I heed her warning immediately, schlepping out of my wet shirt, pants, and boxers right there in the entryway. Water trickles down my frame as I close the door behind me. I catch her biting the corner of her bottom lip and taking a gingerly step back.

Maddie giggles but doesn't shy away from locking eyes with me. "If you think you can play chicken with me, Chase, you're going to lose."

"Is that so?" I run my fingers through my drenched hair. There's a playfulness in her eyes as she raises a single eyebrow. It's a reflex to flick my hair out of my face but unintentionally get a few drops on her shirt. "Looks like you're wet now, too. You should get out of that before you catch your death."

Maddie doesn't hesitate as she sheds her shirt to reveal her perky, light-beige nipples. My breath stutters in my chest. Not only does she have my pulse racing, but every drop of blood surging through my body travels to my cock. It's getting harder and harder.

To my surprise, Maddie reaches for my erection, gripping it tightly with a grin. "I told you this isn't a game you can win. This doesn't scare me."

"It shouldn't scare you," I tell her with a smirk.

"Even if it did, I like to tackle my fears face to face."

Maddie strokes my shaft slowly at first, pulling and rubbing gently in a way to lead me into the living room. Not one to be outdone, I slip my hand under her waistband to find the apex between her thighs.

The delicate stroke of my finger between her slits has Maddie closing her eyes,

moaning before she releases her grip to sit on the couch and stare my cock in the eye. Face to face, indeed. I hate having to let her pussy go, but she's in control, and I'm all for it.

The light above us shows the sheen of her wet lips and tongue as she grins and kisses the tip. The moment her tongue wraps around it, my head tilts back, and my hands find the back of her head. Strands of her silky hair slip between my fingers as Maddie attempts to swallow every inch of my growing erection.

My breathing hitches as my core contracts. She gets into it far more than I anticipate as she slurps, sucks, and feverishly moves her head back and forth. There's a low vibration as she hums, threatening to end this as it lures my climax toward the cliff of completion.

"Fuck me. That feels good, Maddie," I whisper as my hands guide her back and forth.

She chuckles and eyes me before sliding my dick out of her mouth with a loud pop. "I'd much rather you fuck me, Chase."

### MADISON

Logic doesn't matter with matters of the heart. We know little about each other, but the spark between us is as explosive as the storm thundering outside. This could be a single moment, or it could be the start of forever. Either way, I fully intend to enjoy this bubble of bliss, at least until the storm passes.

Chase is just as committed to the tryst as he closes his eyes with every pass of my tongue over the tip of his cock, my insides stirring with desire. It's smooth inside of my mouth, delicately clean in its flavor, and pulls me into this vortex of pleasure. Putting me in control over Chase's climax makes me feel as powerful as the winds blowing against the windows.

When he moans his approval, I release my mouth's grip in turn for a different kind. Chase obliges my request by pulling me off the couch and to my feet. Our lips collide as he slides my pants off, letting them fall to the floor.

Lightning flashes as our kiss explodes into furious passion that has Chase's strong hands hoisting me into his arms once again. While an annoying sound of dripping water thwarted our earlier attempt, nothing is going to stop us now. The largest oak tree would have to crash through the roof to pull us apart.

His aggressive command over my body is impressive as he holds my ass firmly in place. We spin until he pins me against the wall, where the bulge of his cock slowly entering me forces my eyes to close.

Chase kisses me but abruptly stops as he says, "Look at me while I fuck you, Maddie. Open your eyes for me, baby. I want to see them as you come all over my dick."

My heart races, and I can't keep silent. I can't resist antagonizing him, though. "You think it's that easy?"

"You don't want to play this game with me," he growls.

Sexual tit-for-tat begins as Chase plunges himself inside my walls. He slides in. My walls clench around his erection, but I'm determined to hold my orgasm as long as possible. He can eat my pussy after. Right now, I just want to be right.

I drop one foot to the ground, showing him my flexibility as my other leg rests on his shoulder. His eyes widen as a smile spreads across his face, and he uses my waist to guide himself in and out of my sex. The sounds of our bodies pounding together rival the noise of the weather outside, but nothing will stop this tidal wave of titillating tension.

The growing competitiveness between us brings Chase to change positions. He lets my leg down and moves me away from the wall, but I force him to spin and sit on the nearby stairs. I lower myself onto him before he has a chance to put me in a spot that will coax my orgasm out of me.

We laugh together as he lets me control him by pinning his wrists to the steps under us so I can get some leverage. My knees lock beside his chest as my pelvis gyrates to a rhythm that threatens to bring this sexual session to a close.

"Oh no, you don't," Chase snarls. "I'm not that easily undone."

He assumes the control we both knew he always had as he effortlessly lifts me while rising to his feet and carrying me up the stairs, his cock still sitting inside my walls.



Chase kicks his bedroom door open wider and drops me onto the bed.

With my back anchored to the mattress, Chase pins my wrists above my head and lowers his mouth to envelop one of my breasts. His lips tightly press against my nipples while his tongue flicks it feverishly. Warmth, wetness, and unparalleled thrusts threaten to drag my orgasm out of me.

My pants and moans of pleasure encourage him to continue with the powerful pushing and pulling every inch of his erection in and out of my walls. Chase is mastering my body in ways I've never felt, but my stubborn streak refuses to lose.

The faster Chase moves his body against mine, the more I roll my hips into his thrusts. His grip weakens as his pace quickens, and I sense he's closer to his climax. I reach up and wrap my arm around his neck to bring his face close to mine. I plunder his mouth with a kiss, stealing the control of this moment. I use my momentum to lock my legs around his waist, swinging him onto the mattress and riding him once again.

We laugh at the athleticism between us, but as my walls contract and my core tightens, I know that one of us will concede soon.

Instead of basking in the victory of my coming orgasm, Chase sits up, gripping me by the chin to look me in the eyes. "Let's come together. Come with me, Maddie."

The way his fingers dig into my waist as he guides my hips, my pussy, and my body back and forth over his dick has me ready to explode. So we explode together. His pulsing release matches my own, leaving us full to the brim with satisfaction.

Sleep finds us easily, and soon enough, even the storm quiets outside.

Once the sun rises the next morning, I find myself in body-twisting agony. The

soreness from my car wreck, trek through the woods, and romping around the house with Chase is rearing its ugly head. The space beside me is empty, and on the nightstand is a tall glass of water.

Chase comes in a few moments later with a plate of food and a bottle of pills on a serving tray.

"I realized you're probably going to feel a bit worse for wear. All I have around here is some Ibuprofen. Waffles because carbs help give you energy, and some eggs because protein helps muscles repair themselves. I have some Gatorade in my truck, but they're room temp."

"The water, food, and pills are perfect," I moan and force a smile as I sit up.

He also hands me my phone. "I put it in some rice to help it dry, and if it doesn't work, mine is right there under the pillow."

"Passcode?"

He shrugs. "Ain't got nothing important on that thing, unless someone wants to steal phone numbers to my vendors, family, and friends."

I look at the phone, and it's a relic. Encased in rubber that looks like it doubles as a walkie-talkie, I pick it up and flip it open. I can't contain my laughter as I shake my head. "You're just like my dad. He has one of these, too."

Chase folds his beefy arms across his chest, raising one brow at me. "I mean, I like that one because I've dropped wrenches about half your size on a new model, and that shattered. This thing I can throw out of a plane, and it'll dent the ground when it lands."

"My dad says the same thing. He had his fancy phone trampled by a horse and decided to get something more rugged since he treats farm animals for his vet practice."

Pain shoots across my shoulders and the middle of my back as I grab a waffle and scoop some eggs into it. A slight drizzle of syrup, and I eat the concoction like a taco. With a mouth full of food, I close my eyes to let it replenish me, Chase staring in amazement.

"What?" I ask, my mouth full, but the pain still radiating up and down my torso.

"I like you." He scowls as if he can't believe the words coming out of his mouth.

"I should hope so, considering you fucked me eight ways from Sunday last night."

He bursts out laughing. "You got one hell of a mouth on you, Maddie. Call your people and let them know you're all right. I should have made you call them last night."

"I was in no mood to listen to Dad tell me how much I should have listened to him last night. I was supposed to call my sister to get me from the shop, but?—"

He cuts me off. "But you thought you had more time, and I'm almost positive you didn't anticipate your tires giving out on you. Where do you think your car is?"

"I'm pretty sure it's in a ravine between here and the Garrett place. Once I started spinning, I lost track of which direction was where. I saw the lights in this house and thought they were a house closer to your body shop."

He nods. "Okay. I have to go into town anyway to see about renting a backhoe to move that tree from my kitchen door. If I spot your car on the way and I can tow it,

I'll bring it to my shop."

"Thank you, Chase. I don't know what I deserved to get you to take care of me like this, but I'm grateful. Anything you need, just let me know," I tell him earnestly.

The expression on his face shifts to one deep in thought, but only for a minute before he looks at me and says, "You know what you can do is appraise this house. Let me know what you think about the place, what it can go for on the market, and what I need to do to bring it up to market value. I'll pay whatever your rate is, so this isn't a freebie. Just let me know your honest opinion."

Chase doesn't wait for me to answer, and I'm grateful to help. The appraisal is something I can do with my eyes closed, but I would need to see the place without a tree crashed in the backyard. If there is any damage to the house that he can't see, it will affect what I tell him.

A sigh pushes through my lips as I finish my breakfast. To my surprise, the device turns on, and there are dozens of missed calls and text messages. Guilt riddles my entire body as I dial the number taking up the most slots in my call log.

"Where in the hell have you been, Madison Monroe?"

"I'm sorry, Dad," I tell him softly, hoping to win some sympathy with my tone of voice. "I had the car trouble?—"

"And you told me you were going to call Kenny. So imagine my surprise when my daughter, who told me she would do something, doesn't do it. You had me worried out of my mind. Where are you?"

"Chase Carpenter's house."

"Who the hell is that? Where the hell is that? What happened, Maddie?"

"The guy who fixed my car yesterday agreed with you that I shouldn't be driving my car around in its condition."

"And you drove it anyway?" Dad screeches. "I told you to junk that damn thing."

"And I told you I couldn't do that. Throwing this car away is the same as throwing Mom away."

The pause in my father's temper lets me know that he gets it. He lets out a sigh. "Are you okay, Maddie?"

"Yeah, I'm a bit sore, and Chase is going to go fish my car out of a ditch. He took care of me, Dad. He kept me safe, and he even has the same kind of phone as you."

I can almost picture him shaking his head. "Fine. You have to know that the car isn't a piece of your mom, hun. She may have taught you how to drive in that car, but?—"

"But because you're an impatient menace who'd rather put us in a Humvee or a tank."

"Nothing's too safe for my baby girls, and you three drive like you don't care who you demolish along the way anyhow. But that's not the point, Maddie. Mom loved us."

"I know she did, Dad," I tell him solemnly. "I just don't want to be ungrateful for the thing you both gifted to me."

"I understand wanting to hold onto something because it feels like you have a piece of her, but not if it's going to risk your safety or your life. Cars aren't meant to last forever. Please, for your mother and for me, and for everyone you love and care about, let it go."

### CHASE

I don't mind leaving Maddie alone in the house while I head into Mercy. I'm sure she can use the rest and hope she doesn't try to do anything stupid, like move the debris blocking that back door.

There's an overwhelming sense of proving herself to be strong, but again ... I don't want her proving anything to me. She's done more than enough to show me the grit that takes over. She doesn't back down from anything, even if that means putting herself in danger.

When I see the path of chaos left by the storm, it makes me marvel at how strong she truly is because I know the kind of weather it takes to leave this kind of damage. There's a power line down, and the pole it separated from is bent like a giant kicked it sideways. A utility crew is already working on securing the area as I drive by as slowly as possible to make sure I'm not in their way.

The closer I get to town, the more pieces of people's homes and businesses are scattered about. I can see how much hard work, time, and money it will take to restore some sense of normalcy.

Anxiety ripples through me as every fiber of my body urges me to check on the body shop. I may not be a frequent traveler into the town of Mercy, but many folks in Mercy come to me. I'd hate to have to shutter my shop due to damage from this storm.

I'm only a few miles away from work when I spy a set of tire tracks. The muddy tread is thick from where the rubber refused to grip the asphalt. The spin looks like some drag racing teen in a sports car was doing donuts in the middle of the street. But there's no mistaking the set of tracks veering off to the side of the road.

There's a steep ravine to protect the tree line from cars spinning out, and it worked perfectly. The same car I worked on sits at a funky angle, with its nose pointing toward the pavement. The trunk and driver's side doors are open.

I pull my truck a few feet in front of it and get out to get a good look at the damage. The interior of the car is soaked, and I know it will take a miracle to restore it. Thankfully, I keep a camera in my glove box for damaged cars that come into my shop. I hated keeping track of damage on my phone, and when I smashed my last one, its fragility let me know I couldn't depend on that kind of technology.

Now, more than ever, I'm happy to have taken a step back into the olden days of having separate devices. The camera doesn't need to sit on a charger day and night as I see the full battery and plenty of memory to hold as many pictures as I need. I want to show Maddie what's going on with her car, especially before I decide to fix it.

A side of me wants to surprise her, to fix it up good as new. However, I know there's something sentimental about this Honda. It's not just any car, or else she would have gotten rid of it. Instead of making my own judgments about what to do with it, I take the pictures and mark down the closest mile marker along the road leading out of town.

Now that I know where her car is, I can move on to checking my body shop. Thankfully, when I pull up, there are only a few branches, twigs, and trash cans scattered around the lot. The wind and rain had their way with anything not glued down, making me admire Maddie even more for her fight to find her way to me.

It pulls the protector out of me, the fixer, the mechanic. I want everything to work out for her.

As I glance around at my shop's equipment, I realize I don't need a backhoe to remove that tree. All I need are some heavy chains and some hooks I can rig to my flatbed. Once I get everything I need from my shop, I leave my pickup and switch into my large flatbed. It takes some doing, but after I get Maddie's car back to my shop, I head back to the house.

I round the side of the house and head into the backyard, where I hear aggressive grunts, groans, and exertion.

"What are you doing?" I ask once I see Maddie in a pair of my work boots and coveralls.

"I couldn't sit still. My body hurts?—"

I chuckle. "So your solution is to move sticks into a pile?"

Maddie shrugs, a bundle of wet twigs and leaves cradled in her arms. "I've been sore before, especially on days where I had to demolish an entire kitchen. The best way to get over a sore body is to get your body moving."

"That's all well and good, Maddie, but I don't want you to get hurt back here."

She glares at me as if I said she's too weak to do anything. The damp sticks and leaves fall to the ground at her feet, and she rests her hands on her hips. "How do you plan to move this tree without any help?"

"I plan on rigging up my flatbed to pull it away from the house."



"And what about the ground underneath? What happens if you pull the tree away and it messes with the foundation of the house? What if it's impacted the door frame, so now water seeps in?"

"Hold on a second," I tell her, pumping my hands with the hope of slowing down her questions. "Can't you include all of that in your estimate?"

"Do you mean my appraisal?"

I rub my chin. "Evaluation, inspection, and anything else included in your services that will tell me what needs to happen to get this place on the market."

"Are you sure you want to sell this house?"

"I won't know until you tell me what I can get for it. I have a place in Mercy that's close to the shop. This place is just here, going to waste."

"But land like this is hard to come by. I know the deal with your mom fell through, but maybe hold onto this place. Since we are close to Cincinnati, maybe we can use it like a retreat or bed and breakfast. I'd go more for a space of peace for creatives."

"What do you mean?"

"Look out there." Her gaze shifts to the vast grasslands beyond the back fence. "The fence looks like it was made with Lincoln logs."

"That's because it has to be heavy enough and high enough to keep out any bucks that wander too close to the house. I don't have any pets or livestock, so that limits the amount of coyotes and bobcats that may come around. There's a raccoon or opossum every once in a while, but it's mostly quiet."

"I hope you didn't think I have a problem with it. I love the aesthetic. It's a very rustic piece of land where people who want some space outside of the noise of the city can come and gaze into the stars. You have plenty of room to put a tiny house on the property, too. That's if you don't want anyone staying in the main house."

"It sounds like a lot of work. I already run the shop, but I'll think about it. In the meantime, go inside and rest, Maddie. Did you speak to your family to let them know where you are and that you're safe?"

"Yes, I did. I just have to figure out a way to get my car to my dad's place. He said he can have a guy come pick it up and junk it."

"Is that what you want, Maddie? To junk the car?"

She raises her shoulders up and down, her gaze still fixed on the land beyond the fence. "It's important to me because my mom taught me how to drive in that car. As a matter of fact, she taught me and my older sister, Mackenna, and Dad taught our youngest sister, Mariah, in that car. Then they gifted it to me once I turned eighteen and graduated."

"How would you feel if I said your car's out of that ditch and sitting in my shop right now?"

"What do you mean? How did you even find it? Are you serious, Chase?"

I sidle up beside her. "As serious as this tree leaning on my back door. I was going to head into town about the backhoe when I remembered I have a flatbed tow truck. I don't use it often, but it's there. I spotted the tire tracks where someone spun out, and voila. There she was, tits up in the ravine on the side of the road."

Maddie giggles. "I did leave her exposed, didn't I?"

"Yup, like a stripper at a birthday party. But yeah, I hauled her back into my shop. I'm certain there's a warranty of sorts where if anything goes wrong with the work you get done at Chase's Auto Body, you get to bring it back to be repaired."

She smirks, her eyes lighting up. "I didn't think warranties like that existed for damage done by stubborn owners who didn't think to replace her bald tires and decided to test their range during one of the most powerful storms we've seen this year."

I smile, belatedly realizing I've been doing that a lot lately since meeting her. For someone who's known for scowling even when happy, I find myself often grinning like a fool in front of Maddie. "It's a good thing that I have a guy who's really cool with the boss."

"Seriously, Chase. I can't thank you enough for everything you've done for me."

"I think I have a way you can thank me," I tell her as my mind battles my body against the lust resurging through my veins.

She's sore, fucktard.

She dragged herself through debris then let you fuck her every which way last night. She doesn't need a round two. She needs to rest.

"If that way ends up with me tits up instead of my car, then you have my attention," she replies.

"We're never going to get anything finished if you say things like that."

"You're the one seducing me as a Good Samaritan because why are you this helpful and grumpy? And how have we never crossed paths before?"

That draws a hearty laugh out of me. "I have no idea, but I'm glad your car shook, rattled, and rolled into my shop."

"I know that song. It's in one of my favorite movies of all time."

That piques my interest. "It's impossible we're thinking about the same thing. I feel like I'm the only guy on the planet who watches old eighties movies. If we're talking about the same movie, whodunnit? "

Maddie's melodic laughter rings through the air as she spouts off her answer. "Mrs. Scarlett in the first ending, Mrs. Peacock in the second ending, and they all did it in the end. Well, all of them except Mr. Green. I love that movie so much, and let's not forget the noteworthy performance of Tim Curry. I used to watch that movie with my mom all the time, and now it's one of my favorites."

I can't stop myself from wrapping my arms around her, pulling her close, and slapping a kiss over her lips.

Excitement rings through me as I tell her, "I discovered it one day when I was a kid. My mom would just let movies play, and when it came on, Dad made us sit down and watch it as a family. We ordered pizza, and then he pulled the game out of storage. Man, I miss him."

"I can't believe we have so much in common. You understand why I don't want to get rid of my car, and we both have great taste in movies."

I nod. "I'm interested to know what your favorite comedy is."

"That's so hard," she says, not even subtly dropping her gaze down to my crotch.

"There you go again, teasing me. How about I ride you into town, take you home, and

let you get some rest? Meanwhile, I'll take my hardness back here to clear this debris because I won't get anything done."

"Well, I won't get much done either without my car. So, instead of riding me into town, how about you let me ride you right now?"

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7

MADISON

A body in motion stays in motion, and why not stay in motion riding Chase?

He doesn't linger. He doesn't hesitate.

Chase takes me into his arms with a kiss so powerful, it feels like it's always been meant for me. My knees buckle as he works the zipper down the coveralls I hijacked out of his room. The softness of his tongue capturing mine sends tingles down my body that pool between my legs.

My clit is begging to be touched and teased, but Chase has other plans as he kneels in front of me on the wet grass. He doesn't care. So why should I?

After he snatches the fabric open, he slips his hands inside to notice I'm not wearing anything underneath. His fingers palm my ass as he tilts his head to the side to lick my lips. A soft mewl of pleasure escapes me as he moans, his tongue slithering through my folds. When he dips that delicate tip into my entrance, I nearly burst at the seams.

He pulls his mouth away from me, turning up to show me the glistening glow of my juices coating his chin.

"Looks like this first round belongs to me." His face darkens, but a smile tugs on the corner of his lips.

"And we can head inside for the second, then?" I ask, my eyes unintentionally glancing around to finally see if anyone can see us ... or hear us.

Chase leans in for another kiss of my pussy, lapping over it with his soft lips and tongue before dragging his mouth up my stomach to work on my nipples. Every touch, tug, and tender suckle he makes over my body has me ready to scream.

It's like my hips have a mind of their own as they gyrate against his body. Every nerve ending begs to be caressed and kissed while my pussy is desperate to have Chase bury himself deep inside my walls. The cool breeze does little to chill the heat rising as he pulls me closer to him.

Chase uses his mouth in ways to distract me from the incoming storm clouds. Just when I think he's ready to pause to go inside, he covers my mouth with his. The subtle flavor of my essence mixing with the taste of his tongue has my nipples hardening and my pussy getting as wet as the air around us.

"It's about to rain," I pant out as he slips two fingers inside of me. My walls clench around him while he strokes another sky-opening orgasm.

Thunder crashes again, the skies darken, and rain pours down around us. I pull at Chase's clothes to get him just as exposed as I am. Stroking his cock as we ease onto the ground, I sit myself on his erection while the rain soaks our connected bodies.

I can't tell where my wetness begins or if the rain is responsible, but we feel amazing together. Every movement back and forth draws primal pleasure out of me. My head tilts up to let the rain wash over my face before Chase's hand moves up to my neck. He tugs me forward so our eyes lock as he shifts himself to sit up.

Chase uses his hand behind my neck to anchor me into a kiss while his other arm wraps around my waist to hold me steady. My shins plant on the ground while he

thrusts inside of me. Every motion sways in unison with the wind until his pace picks up, and we can both feel his oncoming climax.

With the seal of a kiss, Chase grips me tightly around the waist as he releases his seed inside of me. The soft rise and fall of our chests, desperate to catch my breath, there's just enough of a lull to remind us that we're fucking in the rain.

Chase and I glance up to the sky and burst into boisterous laughter.

"This is not what I had planned when I came back here this morning," Chase says with a smile.

"I'd be lying if I said I didn't want to take you for another ride," I tell him with a chaste kiss.

"We should go inside." His forehead leans against mine.

"We should," I agree and slowly rise off his deflating erection as the rain and wind pick up speed. The crack of thunder and flash of lightning sends us both scurrying into the house, and we race up the stairs to shower together.

After another round in the shower and one more in his bedroom, every inch of my sexually sated body aches. The soreness is becoming too much to ignore, and to my delightful surprise, Chase goes out of his way to run me a hot bath. As I sit and soak, I can hear him working outside now that the rain has stopped.

I have no idea where he came from, but a part of me is grateful my steering wheel shaking led me to stop at his body shop. After I get out of my soak, my muscles are perfectly relaxed, and he continues to surprise me with his care and consideration. There's dinner waiting, and the tree is no longer blocking the back door in the kitchen.



Where does he get the energy?

He moves like a machine, a machine that's now programmed to make me come all over him. There's no way I can talk shit now after these past few days together. I find myself not wanting to leave and wanting to prove I can be useful around here. So that's what I do.

Even though my phone shows signs of water damage, it has enough juice to let me take pictures around the home. Once I collect the information I need to give him a decent appraisal, I give my dad a call and have him come get me. As I wait for him to arrive, Chase comes inside just as I'm leaving him a note.

"So you were just going to dine, dick, and dash on me, Maddie?" The corner of his mouth turns up slightly, flashing me a shallow dimple in his cheek.

"I didn't know if you were out saving every damsel in distress, and I do have to get back to some semblance of normalcy. It doesn't matter how bad I want to stay in our little bubble out here."

He nods. "I get it. Your car isn't going to be ready for a few weeks. It's going to need some parts that I'll have to drive to the next town over and get."

"Honestly, Chase, you might have to hold off on that. The same way you asked me about this house ... like you, I'm learning to let go. So, how about you give me an estimate when you get a chance? No rush. If it's cheaper to junk it or sell it for spare parts, then I'll do that. I know the interior is disgusting, and once it dries, flooded cars never quite smell the same. Let's just salvage what we can."

"I'll do whatever you want, Maddie."

"Is that so?" I ask, moving closer toward him and letting my hand hover close to his

crotch.

Chase lifts his knee and puts his hands out to stop me. "Oh no, you don't. Didn't you say your dad is on his way? I'm not going to let you convince me to get caught with my pants around my ankles. He'll probably kill me when you come down with a cold because you wanted to ride me like a witch's broom in the rain."

"I loved that movie, too."

He chuckles and runs his fingers through his hair. "Because there's no place like home."

"Exactly, which is why I need to go to mine."

"I get it," he says. "I've been keeping you here, taking care of you so much that I forgot you'd have to leave."

"I can always come again and then come back."

"That mouth of yours is something dangerous, Maddie. Why don't you let me put something in it?"

"You mean besides your dick, right?"

I love the way his laugh engulfs me and sends warm feelings down my body.

He sighs, "Yes. I mean, let me take you out on a date. I know we did a few things out of order, but what do you say? Will you go out with me, Madison Monroe?"

"Well, when you use my entire name like that, how can I turn that down? When?"

"Whenever you're free and not too sore. I'd like us to get to know each other better. We already have similar tastes in movies. How about next Friday?"

I smile. "I can make that work. We can make it a movie night."

"I have an even better idea. Now, don't be discouraged because it's going to require you to do some homework."

"Oh, so are you going to be my teacher, and I get to be the failing student willing to do anything to get a passing grade?"

He laughs loudly again. "My God, that mouth."

"That's what he said."

"We're going to put that on our list of things to do, but for now, I just want to grow in love with you. I mean, get to know you. We'll each grab a dish from our favorite restaurant that we want each other to try, a movie we think the other hasn't seen, and a few songs we want the other to hear."

"This actually sounds like fun. What do you have planned?"

"I'm just cooking something up."

"Well, cooking is something you do well, so I'm excited to see what comes next."

"If your daddy weren't on his way, you'd be coming next."

"And you think my mouth is dangerous," I laugh softly.

"The only thing dangerous about me, Maddie, is how fast I'm falling for you. I got a

gut feeling and I trust my gut. So, Friday? You, me, and a few things we love to eat, hear, and see. Does four work for you?"

"Like in the afternoon?"

"Yeah, we got about a twenty-minute drive both ways, and I want as much time with you before we remember how wet ... uhm, how well our bodies feel together."

Heat flashes down my cheeks as I agree, just in time for my dad to pull up to the house.

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MADISON

Thankfully, the week flies by. Friday afternoon arrives, and we've squared away our business about his house and my car. We have the rest of the evening to see what happens. I'm excited about my playlist, which has some great pop songs and a few EDM gems I want him to hear. For the food, I got some of the best burgers in all of Ohio. And for the movie, I have *The Usual Suspects* cued up on one of my streaming platforms.

Chase doesn't disappoint as we laugh, talk, and gush over the fact that we got food from the same restaurant and have a lot of the same songs on our playlists. The movies were, thankfully, different. Even though he'd already seen and agreed that he loved mine, he pulls out a classic comedy, *The Princess Bride*.

"I haven't seen this in ages," I tell him as we snuggle together on his couch in the house his mother left behind.

"Good, I'll try not to ruin it by finishing the jokes before the actors do," he says with a smile and a quick kiss. The kiss only takes a moment to deepen before we pull apart, knowing that once we start, our date night will be finished. We both exhale and put a few inches of space between us.

Still, we steal glances at each other like two teenagers who can be caught at any moment. It all feels familiar as a storm rages outside, but the seas of passion are calm for now. We fall into an effortless rhythm, setting out our spread of food and snacks.

From out of nowhere, he runs a finger along my jaw. "Maddie?"

With the way he's staring, I feel a shift in the air between us, my heart pumping wildly in my chest. "Chase?"

"I know it's too soon, but ... I love you."

And there it is. He just said what I've been feeling all along. Yes, it's too soon. Then again, I've never felt this way ever. Images of us growing older shuffle through my brain, and I swallow past the lump in my throat. "I love you too, Chase."

Our songs play softly in the background, and this all feels like it was meant to be. No, this feels like the love blooming between us has always been meant for me.

The End

Thanks for reading!