



Mr. Fix-It (Mountain Men Crave Curves #7)

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Category: Romance

Description: Juno:

Moving back to Green Valley wasn't exactly part of my life plan...

But when I scored my dream teaching job

And the little lake cabin I've loved since childhood went on the market

It felt like the universe was giving me a second chance.

What I didn't expect? Calder Holden.

Silver-haired and sinfully built in a way that makes me want to climb him like a tree.

He used to be my dad's best friend.

Now he's the man helping renovate my cabin.

He treats me like I'm a little too tempting for his own good.

And I plan to prove him right.

Calder:

I didn't recognize her at first, the gorgeous goddess in the hardware store.

With tan legs and short shorts, she had curves that would stop traffic.

Then I took a closer look and couldn't believe my eyes.

How could this be Juno Hayes, my former business partner's daughter?

She smiled at me innocently, like she didn't know she was wrecking me.

I told myself I'd just help her out renovating her cabin; but I want more.

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Chapter One

Juno

When I walk into Green Valley Hardware, three hit me like a ton of bricks: the unmistakable scent of sawdust hanging in the air, a plethora of tools I have no idea how to use, and a giant, bearded man blocking the aisle I think I need to get into.

His massive frame spans the width of the entire aisle. With his flannel shirt sleeves rolled to the elbow, it's impossible to ignore his abnormally large forearms. This is not a man I want to try and squeeze by.

Squeeze up against? That's another story.

As a home improvement newbie, I'm still not one hundred percent sure what I'm actually here for. What I do know is the hunky silver fox's presence is doing little to quell my inexperienced anxiety in a hardware store.

I wipe the drool from my lip and shake off the realization that I haven't had sex in over six months.

Funny how it hits you out of nowhere. On this beautiful Saturday morning, I expected confusion and overwhelm, not a sense of confusing and overwhelming lust. I haven't even seen his face, but I'd let him have his way with me with the snap of his fingers.

Giggling at my own thoughts, I reroute, killing time by browsing the paint samples in the next aisle over.

I wish I could just slap a coat of paint on the walls and call it done.

The gorgeous log cabin is a wreck, but it's right on the lake, and I've always dreamed of having coffee on a dock as dawn breaks over the water.

A dock that's currently a death trap, but mine nonetheless.

My father tried to talk me out of buying the place. Saying I was biting off more than I could chew, but I love a challenge, and no one is going to tell me I can't do something. Especially not my father.

Being officially out of my apartment and moved into my lakeside nightmare, I have to get the right hardware for a showerhead that streams instead of dribbles, or I'll go insane. A wave of anxiety washes over me, thinking of all the work to be done. But I said I would do it, and dammit, I will.

Peering back into the aisle, I see the silver fox is gone.

I'm slightly disappointed but relieved to keep on-task so I can get home to a second cup of coffee before rolling my own sleeves up to get down and dirty.

Luckily, I know the exact showerhead I want.

With my type of anxiety, I pre-research everything: menus, routes, and even what showerhead I want to buy.

Jesus, the aisle shelves are tall, and the overwhelm is real. At first, I'm certain the internet lied to me and Green Valley Hardware does not carry my selected device, but after a few heart pumps and a deep breath, I see it...just out of my reach.

"Shit," I mutter. Looking around, there's not an employee in sight. "Doesn't anyone

work here?” I let out a sigh and stretch onto my tiptoes. My fingertips brush the edge of the plastic wrapping. I can high-five the damn thing, but I can’t get it to fall from its peg.

I’m about to lose it, go home, and take a sink bath for the next week, when I spy, at the end of the aisle, a ladder. Rejoice! Now, I’m not sure if I’m supposed to use it, but the old adage about asking forgiveness over permission doth apply.

I’m a secret agent, pulling the ladder from its resting place and lifting it over toward my precious shower head. Hehe, victory is mine...well, almost.

The ladder gently clangs against the metal shelving, and my heart skips a beat, ready to complete my first physical challenge of the day. With shaking hands, I step up the three rungs needed to reach my prize. I give it a tug, but the damn thing won’t unlatch from the hook.

“What the hell?” I mutter, pulling harder. What kind of karma am I carting around today? With a grunt, I give it a final tug and it budes free.

But I don’t realize I’m free-falling until I’ve almost hit the ground.

I brace for impact, praying I’ll still be able to walk after what I’m sure the town will call “the hardware store incident,” when a pair of strong hands press against my back, stopping me from my fall.

I’m nearly horizontal, one hand still clinging to the ladder at the same angle.

My heart races while my brain tries to make sense of what the hell just happened.

Before I can truly comprehend time, space, and my own mortality, the ladder rights itself, clanging once again against the metal shelving.

“You need help down?” A voice asks, a strong, soothing baritone. I must nod because those strong hands move to my waist, bracing me as I shakily step down. Once my sneakers hit the tile, embarrassment takes hold.

“Thanks,” I whisper, unable to catch my breath.

“Is that the one you want?” My senses returning, I face the man asking the question and am met with the iciest blue eyes I’ve ever seen in my life. The hot, flannel-wearing silver fox who was once blocking the aisle, now saving my life, towers over me. He’s at least two heads taller than me.

“What?” All the moisture leaves my mouth. I cannot form a sentence. He points to the showerhead, and I suddenly remember what the hell I’m doing here. “This? Yes. I need a powerful stream.” I flinch at my own statement, but the hot daddy type just laughs. “Of water. A powerful stream of water.”

Now that I’ve seen his face, there’s something about his smile that seems so familiar. “Do I know you?”

He raises one eyebrow and moves closer to me. Flames ignite deep in my core. I want nothing more than for this man to throw me over his shoulder and screw me senseless—in the alley, in his truck, on the sidewalk in front of the café—any fucking where.

“You might not know me, but I know you.” His woodsy scent holds notes of lemongrass soap. “I’m Calder Holden.”

My jaw nearly hits the floor. This tall drink of silver-haired walking sex standing before me is none other than my father’s oldest former best friend and former jaded business partner.

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Chapter Two

Calder

I can hardly believe this is my former business partner's daughter.

A slight wave of guilt washes over me for all the naughty thoughts that swirled in my head before I realized who she was.

On that ladder in her tiny little shorts.

The slightest crescent moon of soft flesh slipping out of the hem of her cutoff shorts.

The crotch of my jeans tightened up, and I haven't been able to ease the tension.

I hope she doesn't notice. I don't want to come off as a pervert.

But goddammit, I can't help myself.

"I haven't seen you in like a decade." She tosses a her dark hair over her shoulder, showing off the billowing cleavage from the top of her t-shirt—which isn't helping my condition.

"Longer than that." I don't even remember much about the kid except for her green eyes, a shade of olive you rarely naturally see. "I thought your dad moved away after the divorce."

“He did. We both did, but I got a job as a teacher here at the elementary school and bought a cabin right on the lake.” Her full lips twist as if she’s holding something back.

“Which one?”

“The old MacDonald place.”

My eyes nearly bug out of my head. “I heard it was a teardown.”

“I think it is, but I decided to fix it up.”

I try and keep my mouth shut, but I know for a fact that place was on its last leg last year when Mr. MacDonald asked if my construction company could repair some of the foundation.

The idea of her slipping and hurting herself inside brings about an unnatural level of concern for a woman I barely know.

“That’s dangerous.” My tone is gruff. Her curious eyes narrow.

“I appreciate your concern, Mr. Holden.”

“Calder.”

“Calder.” She corrects herself. “But I’m not that little girl running around playing with dolls anymore.” With her arms crossed over her chest, it’s nearly impossible for me not to stare at her full, sexy breasts.

“I know what I’m doing.” A beat passes between us. “Good to see you again.” She turns away, and before I can stop myself, my hand is on her shoulder.

“I didn’t mean to offend you, Juno.” Her skin is warm beneath my touch, and fuck if my cock isn’t even harder than it was before. I’m a grown man; What the fuck is wrong with me? She turns back around to face me, her gaze sending fire through every part of me. “Do you have anyone to help you?”

“I don’t need any?—”

“I think you do.” I step to her. “If I wasn’t here to catch you, you would’ve fallen off that ladder. What if that happened when you were in that death trap all alone?”

“It’s not a death trap, Calder. It’s my home.”

“No, it’s a hazard. But with my help, it can become a home. Your home.” I raise my palms in the air. “I can’t make you do anything, but I do this for a living, and I’m offering to help you out.”

She rolls her eyes, settling into one hip. My mind fights with my urges. How can this be the same little girl I barely noticed when her father was my ride or die? Is it wrong to feel this way? She’s a grown woman now.

“I can’t afford you.” Her eyes draw lines across my feet.

A laugh escapes me and against my better judgment, I don’t stop myself from tipping her chin up to meet my gaze. “Darlin’ I wouldn’t dream of charging you.”

“Really? “Why?” She swallows and a million dirty thoughts plague my brain. Because my body’s aching to press her down until she screams for mercy, my tongue anxious to taste her dripping wetness. Fuck, I need to get a grip.

“You’re my old friend’s kid.” I manage to say, suppressing my primal urges. A look I can’t read crosses her face. Maybe it’s disappointment? Maybe that’s wishful

thinking.

She holds up the package still in her grip. “Do you know how to install a showerhead?”

A plosive laugh escapes my lips. “Yeah,” I say. “I think I can manage that.”

We walk through the store together. I point out some other things she might need for the mass of home improvement projects we’re about to embark upon together.

Together? The poor, sweet thing doesn’t even have a Phillips-head screwdriver.

I put together a toolkit for her and when we get to the front, I insist on paying.

Juno stands close to me while I pull out my wallet and hand over my card, smelling like warm amber. I breathe her in and grab the bag of goods, walking it out to her car for her. After it’s loaded, she turns to me, her lips spreading into a wide grin.

“Thank you for this, Calder.” The way she says my name drives me insane. “I’m sure my father would appreciate this, too.”

My heart sinks slightly. Of course. This is really about her father.

It’s stupid to think she’s agreed to this because she’s actually attracted to me.

I’m an old guy and she’s in the prime of her young adulthood.

Can’t be a day over twenty-five. What would she want with a forty-five-year-old man like me?

Help fixing up her cabin you fucking idiot.

“Anything I can do to help.” I nod, shoving my hands in my pocket.

“You know the address, right?”

“I do.” I lick my lips, defeated. “You want me to come over now?”

“Oh!” Her eyes do that thing again where she traces the ground at my feet. “I thought...that would actually be ideal. I’d die for a hot shower at the end of the day.”

Damn, my filthy fucking mind.

“If that’s not a problem.” Her fingertips brush my bare arm.

“No.” I pull away, not wanting to get all worked up over nothing. “I can meet you there right now. One question though.” The breeze lifts her hair, showing off her rounded, heart-shaped face. “You got coffee?”

Another killer smile from this sweet little angel. “Yeah. Plenty.”

“Then I’ll see ya soon.” I nod and head toward my truck across the parking lot.

As I turn the key in the ignition, I tell myself to get it out of my head that anything can happen between us.

She’s just my old best friend’s kid, whom I’m helping because her dad isn’t around. But as I look in the rearview mirror, pining for one more glimpse of her before we go our separate ways, I know it’s going to be a lot harder than I think.

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Chapter Three

Juno

Stay calm. I repeat this mantra as Calder works, shirtless, in my shower. It's hot as hell, no air conditioning and the man's jeans are riding just below that elusive, sexy v that guys my own age don't even have. How can this man be...wait.

"How old are you?" The words slip from my mouth. His slow turn toward me makes me want to crawl under a rock. "I mean, I'm just curious."

"I just turned forty-five."

"Oh."

"I know. Ancient right?" His shoulder muscles pop and stretch, arms above his head screwing in my brand-new showerhead.

"Actually, you're a lot younger than my dad."

A laugh escapes his gorgeous lips. "No shit."

"He's in his fifties, but he looks a lot older than his age. You look young for forty-five, except for the gray hairs." Jesus, I can't shut the fuck up. He continues twisting the wrench.

"How old are you?" He asks, and I suddenly feel like a child. One that shouldn't be

subtly hitting on a man who's mature and has probably had many women. Hot, sexy, confident women.

"Twenty-five. A baby, right?" I pick at the skin near my thumbnail, feeling totally immature.

Calder drops his arms to his sides. His steely blue eyes find mine. My entire body erupts in flames. The thin layer of sweat highlights his bulging physique. If he unbuckled his pants right now I'd spread wide open, ready to receive whatever he's packing under that tool belt.

"Nah. You're old enough to buy a house." He high steps out of the tub.

"So you're old enough to make your own decisions.

Not a baby at all, a grown-ass woman." The slight twang of natural musk radiating off him sends my panties into melt mode.

I wiggle my hip to the side, aching for relief from the seam of my jean shorts.

Fuck me. Is he flirting with me? He has to be, right?

Calder has turned my brain to scrambled eggs.

He moves an inch closer, staring into my eyes for a moment, and I'm on the brink of going for it.

Throwing my arms around his neck and breaking this six-month dry spell with my dad's fucking best fucking friend.

"I'll go turn the water back on." He growls, zapping the energy between us to a dull

spark.

“Yeah, let’s try her out.” I don’t recognize my voice, meek and wavering.

He steps around me, his heavy work boots sounding through the house as he makes his way to the fuse box in the basement.

Catching a glimpse of myself in the mirror, I run a hand through my hair.

My palm comes away slightly slick. Of course I’m sweating like a pig.

Being this close to an actual man who isn’t a man- child , like every other dude I’ve ever dated, is doing strange things to me.

But I have to remind myself that he’s only doing this out of the kindness of his heart.

Because my father would want him to. They certainly didn’t end things on good terms, so this is probably a way for him to seek atonement or to at least bridge the gap of a friendship that faded to a former colleague.

I shake off the wretched heat pooled in my gut. There’s no way he’d want me. That’s all there is to it. I step into the shower and wait for Calder to?—

I scream. A steady, pulsing stream of cold water hits my face. I can’t breathe. When the shock wears off I reach for the knob, eyes closed, fumbling to turn it off. A pair of warm, strong hands brush mine, and before I can think twice, I’m frozen to the spot, panting.

“Oh shit.” Calder shakes the water from his hands, his face a mask of concern. “Are you okay?”

My mouth agape, I try to form words but all I can do is laugh. “I guess it’s working.” I finally manage to eke out between giggles. Calder joins in, laughing along with me.

“Here.” He takes my hand and helps me out of the tub.

The first step is fine, but on the second step, my sneaker slips against the linoleum.

A near squeal escapes my mouth, but for the second time today, I find myself saved by the mountainous handyman.

This time, his arms are around my waist. The strength of his grip reignites the fire inside me, one so hot that even the ice-cold water that just doused me can’t compete with it.

“Are you always this accident-prone?” His lips, full enough to make a Kardashian envious, are so close to mine.

“I think it’s you,” I say, water dripping down my cheek. Again, we’re in the right position for a very sexy and semi-forbidden moment. I close my eyes, just in case.

“Good thing I’m here then.” Calder grunts, and balances me back on both feet. I try not to visibly groan, wanting—no needing this man’s touch like I’ve never craved any before. I’m about to agree that, yes, it’s a fucking great thing that he’s here when I notice he’s staring at my chest.

I look down. My nipples are rock hard, poking against the fabric of both my bra and my baby blue t-shirt. I feel myself turning red and instinctively go to cover myself, but think better of it at the last minute.

I want him to see me.

He tears his eyes away, but now it's my turn to see the rock-hard outline through his jeans.

I gasp at the size but quickly recover. "I should go get a mop." I exit the bathroom and head down the hall toward the storage closet.

It doesn't even occur to me that I don't own a mop until I get there.

I shut myself in the tiny room and close my eyes for a moment, begging my breathing to steady.

This is crazy. I'm practically throwing myself at Calder. I pluck my soaking wet hair off the nape of my neck. But what's even crazier? Something tells me that Calder wants me, too.

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Chapter Four

Calder

It's been two weeks, and I can't get Juno out of my mind.

It's not just her perfect curves, either.

It's her laugh, the way she sucks on her lower lip when she's afraid to admit she doesn't know what something is, and her quiet confidence that turns me on so much I have to jerk off in the shower every time I leave her place.

It's a damn shame I had to meet her now.

If I were twenty years younger, I'd have saved myself a lot of years playing the field only to end up a bachelor at forty-five.

No woman I've ever dated could hold a candle to her.

Truth is, I've gotten so comfortable with her that it feels like I'm working on my own place, that the two of us are playing house.

Stupid as it sounds, there's something calming about making believe that when all is said and done, I'll be sleeping in her bed with her.

The coffee she makes for us will be from our kitchen instead of just hers.

Being around Juno has only made me realize how lonely I've been without someone to share my life with.

Before I head to Juno's for the day, I swing by the bakery for a dozen donuts. I'm hoping that by satisfying my sugar craving, it can help ease the need I have for my sweet Juno. Something tells me it won't, but at least we'll have baked goods.

When I pull into her driveway, I'm surprised to see there's already a car there. I turn off the ignition, eyeing the red pickup truck. My heart starts racing. It's probably nothing, but what if she has company? That kind of company.

My body moves without my brain's permission. I don't even grab my tools, gripping the box of donuts as I hulk toward the front door and give three hard knocks, not waiting for her to answer before poking my head in and announcing my presence. I'm greeted with laughter coming from the kitchen.

Nervous energy draws me forward as I round the corner and see Juno, still in her robe, at the table with another man. Every drop of liquid in my body turns to lava. Who the fuck is this joker?

"Calder." Juno stands, wrapping her robe tighter around herself. Her eyes move toward the box in my hands. "Aw, you brought donuts."

I notice another box of donuts already on the table. You've got to be kidding me. "Not such an original idea, after all."

"Who's this?" I can't hide the irritation in my tone.

"Logan." The buff, visibly younger guy stands and extends his hand. I grip it a little too tightly. "I've heard about you."

“Is that right?” I say, sizing up this motherfucker having breakfast with my woman.

“I hear you’re quite the handyman.”

“Logan!” Juno hisses, making big eyes at him.

“What? Look at this place. It’s looking so much better than when I first saw it.” Logan raises his eyes toward the kitchen ceiling, freshly patched, still drying.

So he’s been here before? I can’t form any words that don’t amount to telling this guy to get the fuck out of here. But I don’t have the right, and it seems like Juno’s enjoying his company. If she’s not asking him to leave, there’s only one other option.

“Maybe I should go.” Unjustified anger zips through me.

“I was just leaving.” Logan moves toward Juno and gives her a kiss on the cheek. She leans in, closing her eyes.

“I’ll walk you out.” She takes his hand, and they both leave the kitchen.

I throw the donuts on the counter and run a hand through my hair.

What the hell was I even thinking? I’m a fool for thinking someone as young and beautiful as her would even think of choosing a man like me over one like Logan.

And the worst part is that I have no right to be this upset.

She owes me nothing. I’m the one that threw myself into her life. She didn’t even ask for it.

“Sorry.” She rolls her big green eyes, grabbing Logan’s mug and plate from the table.

“I totally lost track of time.”

“Mm.” I grunt, worried about what will come out of my mouth if I part my lips.

“I just need to throw on some real clothes and we can get started on the living room?—”

“Who the hell is Logan?” Dammit. Here I go.

“Just a friend from work. He teaches Math and coaches tennis at the middle school.”

“A friend, huh?”

“Yeah.”

“Did he stay all night?”

Juno tilts her head and leans up against the counter. “Yeah, actually, he did.” My fists ball at my sides. I’ve never been this angry in my life. If I don’t leave this room, I may say something I’ll regret. “His apartment’s being fumigated and he needed a place to crash.”

“I see.”

“No.” Juno’s sly smile only angers me further. Why is she messing with me? “I don’t think you do.”

“What then?”

“Logan stayed here last night.” She’s so close I can smell her shampoo. “Because his boyfriend stayed with his parents in the town over.”

“Boyfriend?”

“Yeah. Logan has to coach summer tennis this afternoon and didn’t want to commute this morning beforehand.”

Holy fucking shit. Am I the world’s biggest idiot or what? “Uh-huh.”

“Uh-huh.” Juno repeats. “Now, if you’ll excuse me, I’ll just be a minute.” She sucks her lower lip between her teeth. I nod, acknowledging everything she’s just said. As soon as Juno heads toward her bedroom, I practically dance a jig.

Logan’s gay. Praise Jesus, Logan. Is. Gay.

The jubilant feeling is short-lived, replaced by shame.

I totally overreacted and wasn’t very kind.

Not to Logan, and certainly not to Juno.

I know I should apologize, but that comes with telling her why I acted the way I did, and I’m not ready to throw my heart on the line.

I have to make certain she’s into me. Being rejected by Juno would damn near kill me.

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Chapter Five

Juno

Calder's been quiet all afternoon. The sun is setting, and he's barely said three words to me.

Any hope I had of getting down and dirty with him is slowly fading with the day.

Maybe it's for the best. I'd rather dream of being with Calder than living the reality of him straight up breaking my heart.

Silence fills the living room, granting me a moment's peace from the constant buzz of power tools. Heavy work boots thud against the hardwood, coming closer to the kitchen where I now stand. I suddenly don't know what to do with my hands.

"Hey." Calder peeks his head in as I pretend to scoop crumbs from lunch off the counter.

"All finished?" The pitch of my voice is too high.

"For today." He rests his hand on the back of the kitchen chair.

His white t-shirt sticks to his massive pecs.

I swear he's the only man I've ever seen sweaty that I want to lick clean.

“And if it’s okay with you I think I’ll take the weekend off.

Give you some space so you can actually live here without me mucking around. ”

His icy eyes lack the warmth I’m so used to seeing. “Oh, I mean if you need a break.”

“I think it’s best.”

“Oh.” My mouth opens and closes a few times before I can devise a sentence. “Best for me?”

“Yeah, you’re young. Don’t you want to paint the town red?”

“Green Valley?” I laugh. “There’s like two bars and one of them is a V.F.W.

“I don’t know, Juno. I just thought you needed a break.”

“From construction?”

“That.” The tip of his tongue brushes his top lip. My pussy clenches. “And from me.”

“What?”

“I mean, I know your friend is gay, but I don’t want to cramp your style.”

A laugh escapes me. “Cramp my style? Look at me.” I gesture to my cutoffs, old college t-shirt, and hair in the messiest topknot to date.

Calder stares at me. An awkward beat passes between us and I know in my heart he wants to say something but I can’t for the life of me determine what it is.

I wish he'd just either throw me on the table and fuck me until I beg him to stop or quit with all of this cryptic shit and stop flirting. Be my handyman and that's it.

"Do you like pizza?" Calder breaks the silence.

"Um, duh." I feel my muscles ease. The tension in the room thinning slightly.

"Everyone likes pizza."

"Why don't you come to my place tonight and we'll have some."

I'm stunned. "Like a..." I'm about to bite the bullet and say date.

"A chance for me to show you how all of this work is going to pay off. I refurbished my place with my own two hands." He holds them out, large, paw-like. I imagine them caressing every inch of me, cupping my breasts before he takes my nipple into his hot and hungry mouth.

Gah! Pizza, pizza, pizza...think only of pizza.

"Oh, yeah. That'd be great."

"I mean, if you don't have plans."

"I don't have plans." My words cut off the end of his sentence. "And I'd love to see you tonight." My eyes bulge out of my head. "Your place." I correct myself, choking on my words. "I'd love to see your place tonight."

"Great." He writes down his address on the notepad near my landline. Yes, I have a landline. Cell phone reception gets spotty near the water. "Come over in like an hour. Gives me time to shower and clean up."

That's an image I can't get out of my mind. Suds running down Calder's muscular shoulders, tapering in past his narrow waist and strong lower back, dripping down the crack of his...

"Sound good?" He asks.

"Yeah." I'm not sure what I'm agreeing to, but I don't care.

Our fingertips brush as he rips off the piece of paper and hands it to me. My heart flutters like a teenager with a crush. That's exactly what this whole thing feels like, a massive, incurable crush.

"See you then." I nod, and Calder smiles before heading out the front door, leaving me alone with my thoughts.

I wish I were better versed at dating in general because I'm tired of wondering if he's into me and stringing me along or if he really does just want to take care of me, replacing a father who isn't here.

I head to my room, undoing my hair as I prep for a shower—with the best water pressure I've ever felt in my life, thank you. One thing I do know is that this confusion ends tonight. I'm not going to sit around and wonder if Calder wants me. I know that I want him.

So what if I'm not a sophisticated woman closer to his age? So what if he just wants to fuck me, which in all honesty is probably the case. I need to scratch this daddy-itch I've got pulsing between my legs and he's the only one who can truly do it.

I choose my outfit with care, comfy but sexy, and easy to slip out of. Not the t-shirt and shorts he's been seeing me in for the last few weeks. Tonight I'm going to throw myself at him, that's the only way I'll know for sure if he wants me as much as I want

him.

And if, God forbid, he rejects me? I'll find myself another handyman.

An old, fat, bald fart who does his job and doesn't make me feel like melting with every passing glance.

Yeah, it's scary but at least by the end of tonight I'll know.

Does Calder Holden want me or is he just interested in being a father figure?

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Chapter Six

Calder

I shouldn't be this nervous, it's just pizza. I steady my hands and open the box which arrived a few minutes ago. What was I thinking? I should've just asked her out. But what if she'd said no? Told me I should rush off to the early bird special buffet and find a woman my own age.

Not that forty-ish-year-old women are at buffets. They're not. I'm just feeling my age when I stare at her gorgeous, young face. Her whole life is ahead of her.

I peer out the sliding door. The Tiki torches light the deck. Maybe this was a bad idea. I glance at my phone, noting the time. I could still call it off and save myself the embarrassment.

Ding Dong.

No. I can't.

I catch a final glimpse in the mirror before answering the door.

So much gray in both my hair and my beard.

But I can't change who I am, and if she's not into me, then I'll just have to convince her that I'm the one she belongs with.

I suck in air and twist the knob, prepared to welcome her into my home.

“Jesus Christ.” These are not the words I meant to utter.

Juno’s baby blue sundress fits her like second skin.

The hem just brushing her knees, haltered up top and showing off her glorious full breasts.

Fuck me I could rip that sweet little number right off her and taste every inch of her soft, sweet body.

“Sorry, I’m a few minutes early.” It takes me this long to realize her brow is furrowed.

“No, no.” I stand aside, letting her pass me. “You’re perfect.” And I fucking mean that.

“If you’re not early you’re late, my dad used to always say.” She turns to face me and a waft of warm amber smacks me senseless. “But I brought wine.”

“Montepulciano.” The soft caress of her hand against mine as she hands me the bottle sends a shiver up my arm. “My favorite.”

“Really? That’s so cool. I figured Italian fare called for Italian wine.”

“You figured?” I step toward her, grateful that the bottle in my hand stops me from wrapping my arm around her waist and pulling her in for a taste of her cherry-red lips.

“Yeah.” She doesn’t back down, tossing her hair over her shoulder. “It’s a good year,

too.” Her sandals tap against the hardwood floor as she helps herself to a tour of the living room. “You weren’t kidding, this place is gorgeous. You did it all yourself?”

“Yeah.” I pop into the kitchen and pull out two wine glasses. “A labor of love, but damn if it isn’t home.” Juno’s fingers caress the built-in bookshelves. “And you can read?” A teasing smile plays on her lips.

“I still have to sound some words out.” I shrug, eliciting the cutest giggle from her. “Come get some pizza before it gets cold.”

We sit at my small kitchen nook, our knees consistently brushing. Even the way she eats turns me on. I don’t think there’s anything this woman can do that would turn me off. After a glass of wine each, we’re feeling pretty loose. The conversation, though casual, flows effortlessly.

“You’ve been here your whole life, Calder?” She dabs her chin with the napkin.

“Most of it, yeah. Always doing construction and then when I met your dad I went into construction management and never looked back.” The air tightens at the mention of her father. “We didn’t end our partnership on good terms.”

“I know. I heard all about it.” Juno winces. “What happened?”

“A bunch of different things. Your dad and I were best friends from way back. We roamed the woods together. His was the closest house for miles.”

“I didn’t know that.”

“Yeah.” A pang of nostalgia pummels my chest. “We just didn’t work well as a team. Not all friends should go into business together. We’re proof.”

“Then, when your mother left we’d go out to bars and he’d accuse me of cock-blocking him when he tried to rebound.” Juno’s eyes widen. “I’m sorry if this is too much.”

“No, I know my dad’s a player. I guess it makes sense that you are too.”

I nearly drop my wine glass. “Juno, I’m not. I’m the opposite of a player.” I think on it for a moment. “More like a spectator.”

“No.” She eyes me up and down. “You? I bet you’ve been with countless women.”

I can’t help but throw my head back and laugh. “What’s countless? Wait...don’t answer that.”

Juno’s face turns the same shade of purple as the Montepulciano. “I don’t know. You’re just a little older.”

“And a little sluttier?” I raise my brow, feeling comfortable enough to challenge her.

“I didn’t say that.” She crosses her arms over her chest. Damn, I want to kiss her billowing cleavage. “I guess I just assumed.” She stops herself. “So why isn’t a silver fox like you taken? If you’re not a man-whore, what’s wrong with you?”

I press my knee against hers, leaning across the table. “Why does anything have to be wrong with me? Not everyone gets married at the same time.” I picture her in a white dress, walking down the aisle to be mine for the rest of our lives. She nibbles on her lower lip.

“Did you ever come close?”

“Nope.” I shake my head.

“Would you ever...” Her voice a whisper.

“With the right woman?” Her eyes search mine. “Abso-fucking-lutely.”

My heartbeat rattles my ribcage, body heat rising. I mean this. I would absolutely marry Juno and claim her as my wife until one of our hearts stops beating and even after.

“What about you?” I ask.

“Um...get married?” She sucks her bottom lip between her teeth. The silence between us presenting instant regret for the question.

“That’s not fair. You’re probably too young to even be thinking about it.”

“Calder.” God, the way she says my name makes my cock rock hard. “I’m not that young, and I’m certainly old enough to know what I want.”

“And?”

Her face cracks into a smile that’s pure sunshine. “And with the right man?” She pours herself another glass of wine before meeting my eyes. “Abso-fucking-lutely.”

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Chapter Seven

Juno

Did Calder just ask me to marry him? In the bathroom, I press a hand to my mouth, suppressing a laugh.

Of course not, but things did get a little intense.

I give my reflection a final glance and head back into the living room.

Calder's back is to me, spectacularly broad and muscular.

Even his t-shirt can't hide his brawn. He's the sexiest man I've ever met.

He turns to me, his arctic eyes finding mine. "I hope you like yacht rock." He holds up a Hall and Oates album completely unironically.

"Stop." I rush over to him, taking the LP out of his hands. "Is this a real record?"

"Supposedly physical media is making a comeback."

"According to the kids?" I regret it the moment I say it. Calder shrugs his massive shoulders. He's moved our wine glasses to the coffee table near the couch. I kick off my shoes and snuggle up, tucking my feet beneath me while a song about a gal named Sarah plays from the speakers.

Calder sits near me, but not too close. We enjoy the crackling sounds of the record on his state-of-the-art sound system. The record may be old, but his speakers seem brand new. The entire song plays as we sit in silence, enjoying the moment.

“I could get used to this.”

“Hm?”

Oh fuck my life, did I just say that out loud?

“Just this house, this cozy aesthetic. This whole...” I trace circles in the air.

“Vibe.” Maybe it’s the wine, but I’m feeling bold.

“I’ve been on a lot of dates recently since I’ve moved back.

” Calder shifts uncomfortably. “But, none of them have felt this...easy.” I realize my mistake. “Not that I think this is a date.”

“What do you think it is, Juno?” Calder’s baritone voice reverberates through every bone in my body. I’m afraid to look at him. But I came here with a firm objective.

“I don’t know, Calder.” I shift my body to face him. “I feel like we have a connection.” My words arrive slowly, disjointed. “But I’m confused as to if we should act on it.”

“Why?” He moves closer.

“I don’t think you see me as an equal.”

Calder’s eyes widen. “Are you serious?”

“Too serious, maybe. Ever since I ran into you at the hardware store I’ve been confused. Is that crazy?” The base of my glass clinks against the table when I set it down. “Am I being crazy?” Suddenly mortified at my confession, I cover my face with my hands. Maybe I’m not equipped for this.

“Hey.” Warm hands cover my own, moving them gently away from my eyes.

“Open your eyes, Juno.” I didn’t realize they were still closed.

I do as I’m told, gazing into Calder’s beautiful face.

“You’re not crazy. I’ve been trying to figure out what’s going on between us since the moment you fell off that ladder. ”

I laugh. “Don’t remind me.”

“Wondering if I should act on this urge I have to...well, do very dirty things to you.”

“Oh.” My panties dampen. I instinctively move closer to him.

“But you’re young.” Ah, there it is.

“I told you. I’m not that young.”

“What I mean is, I don’t want to dampen your spirit. You only get one life, and I don’t want you to have any regrets.”

“Like what?”

“Like me.” His voice raises. “You’re the most beautiful, spirited, sexy woman I’ve ever laid eyes on and I don’t want to be the one to kill that.”

“Why would you kill that?”

“Because it’s what happens.”

“It doesn’t have to.” I grip his hands in mine, making him pay attention. “Calder, I’m not interested in dating and being wild. I’ve already done that and I’m over it. I moved back here for the job, yes. But also because I want a quiet, stable, peaceful life.” He licks his full lips. “With you.”

“I want to be with you too, Juno. But what will your father say?”

“Honestly, who fucking cares?” My fingertips brush his cheek. Touching him for the first time sends a shock of electricity so familiar it has to stretch back beyond this lifetime. “I think you might be my soulmate. God, I sound so stupid.”

Calder cuts my words off, his lips pressing softly into mine. I breathe him in, slowly at first, with soft kisses that gradually grow hungrier. He pulls away, pressing his forehead against mine.

“You don’t sound stupid, Juno. I feel the same way.” He runs his fingertip down the length of my arm. “And I’ve never felt this kind of connection with anyone.”

“Really?”

He makes an “x” on his chest. “Cross my heart.”

I press my hand against his chest, squeezing his firm pec between my fingers. This man is built like a fucking linebacker. His lips come crashing down on mine again as his words echo through my head. I want to do very dirty things to you. I’m so wet for him. So hot.

“Calder.” I moan into his mouth. He responds by moaning back. “I want you to show me all the dirty things you’ve been thinking of doing to me.”

His eyes flicker up to mine. In them, I find a hunger that wasn’t there before, like a tiger being let loose from its cage.

“Oh, Juno.” He fists the back of my hair, sending chills all over my body.

His tongue parts my lips. I let him in, tasting him, yearning for more.

“I hope you know what you’re getting yourself into. ”

His hand slides beneath my dress, caressing my inner thigh until he finds my cotton panties and cups my mound. “Tell me you’re mine.”

My cunt is aching, pulsing for him. “I’ve never been anyone else’s.”

Calder smiles and pulls the seam of my panties to the side, the pads of his finger dancing in my slick, wet center.

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Chapter Eight

Calder

My body responds to Juno like it's being born again. Her hot wetness brings out an animalistic side of myself I thought I'd long buried. With her gaze locked on me, I bring my fingers to my lips, tasting her sweet juices.

"You taste even better than I thought you would." I push her down gently on the sofa, positioning myself between her thighs. "And that was just a sample." She raises her ass, helping me slide her panties over her full hips. I toss them to the side. She won't be needing these.

I feel young again as I lift her skirt, throwing one of her legs over my shoulder. A tiny gasp escapes her lips as I press a series of soft kisses up her inner thighs until I'm met with the heat of her center. My own heartbeat quickens, the anticipation almost too much to bear.

My tongue parts her lips, moving side to side, savoring every sweet drop of her.

She pulls her dress up more, giving me the breathing room I didn't know I needed; I could get overheated pleasing my woman like this.

I run my tongue along the length of her slit, sucking her stiffened clit into my mouth while one finger teases her opening.

I could come in my fucking pants the way she moans, reaching down and fisting the

back of my head, fucking my face. If I died drowning in Juno, it'd be a valiant death. Heaven lies between my sweet one's thighs.

The amber lotion slathered on her thighs mixed with her natural scent almost has me climaxing, but it's when she moans my name that I really have to concentrate on not losing my shit.

"Calder, you're so good at that. It feels...

" Her voice squeaks as I twist my finger, tapping gently on her deepest, most forbidden spot.

"So fucking good." Her breath quickens. "I'm coming, Calder. Oh God."

The vulnerability in her voice is satisfaction enough for me.

I suck her clit hard, and work overtime as she rides her orgasm out all over my lips, chin, and face.

Her breathing returns to normal and I kiss her inner thighs, desperately trying to be gentle but wanting to fuck her so hard she sees stars.

There'll be time for that, once she's comfortable, once she gives me permission to do so.

"Your pussy tastes like candy to me. I could suck your sweet little cunt all day."

With her hair mussed and a dazed look on her face, Juno stands. She pulls down the top of her dress. No bra to support her soft, supple breasts. My mouth waters as she fully undresses, standing before me like an unwrapped present on Christmas morning.

My cock twitches. Now, a man my age has seen many naked women, but Juno's body is that of a goddess incarnate. She flips her hair over her shoulder and lowers her chin, grazing her fingertips over her stiff nipples.

That's all the invitation I need. I'm off the couch, pressing myself against her body. "Your skin is silk," I say, running my hands along her soft waist until I'm cupping both of her tits in my palms. "Your body is criminal."

Her giggle turns to a gasp as I draw one of her tight little peaks into my mouth, nipping and sucking. "I can't fucking get enough of you."

She grips my hair and tugs until my eyes meet hers, my mouth hanging open, hungry, unsatiated. "No one said you have to." Her fingers fumble with my belt, undoing my jeans. I can't get out of them fast enough. Juno rubs me over my boxer briefs. "But it's my turn to taste you."

She lowers to her knees, removing my final layer, my cock springing free. She licks her full lips and runs her tongue over my tip. Now it's my turn to gasp. She teases me with expert strokes and licks like it's summer and I'm her favorite frozen treat.

When she takes me into her mouth my senses ignite. The scent of pizza still lingers in the air. The record's scratching and popping, the first side completed. And the taste of Juno still lingers on my taste buds.

I hold back at first, letting her suck me at her own pace but soon it becomes too much to bear. I grip the back of her hair, quickly pulling away so as not to be too overbearing. She pauses and looks up at me. "You want to fuck my face?"

I'm about to come. "Yes," I nod. She smiles at me and slides my dick down the back of her throat.

My eyes squeeze closed, hips rocking gently at first. Juno's fingers grip my ass as she takes me deeper.

I can't control it anymore, passion takes over and I let loose.

"I'm going to come." I barely recognize my own voice.

Juno keeps pace, sucking my cock so hard that I explode into her mouth. She laps me up like an expert. Not letting anything go to waste.

"Motherfucker." I help her up and kiss her hard. Her soft, naked frame against me nearly has me hard all over again. "That was unreal."

"You like that?" Her eyelashes flutter. My fucking little sex bomb.

"Understatement, baby." I can't stop touching her body, so soft and smooth. "I fucking love..." My brain short-circuits as I almost say you. I love you. "That." I quickly recover. You've got my mind in knots, sexy." I growl into her ear.

That was a close one.

She reaches for the hem of my shirt and gives it a tug. I forgot I still had it on. "Tell me you've got enough energy for the main event." Her bubble gum tongue slides along her bottom lip."

"Jesus, woman." She pulls my shirt up over my head. "You fucking bet I do."

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Chapter Nine

Juno

Calder Holden is undeniably hot with his clothes on, but the minute I get that t-shirt off of him, my jaw hits the floor.

I've never seen anyone in real life with these kinds of muscles.

Normally, I'd run away intimidated, but he makes me feel so good, so sexy, so seen.

I know that even beneath the perfectly sculpted shoulders and pair of grooves that stretch from his hips down to his giant cock, there's a wonderful man there.

"Hold on to me." He steps closer.

"What? Oh!" I don't mean to squeal as Calder lifts me into his arms, showing off his strength. "Color me impressed." He presses his soft lips against mine.

"You ain't seen nothing yet, baby." He carries me down the hall to his bedroom, pristine and wood-paneled like I imagined it would be.

My feet find the floor as he sets me down. I throw my arms around his neck, having to stand on my tiptoes. "Is this part of your dirty fantasy?" I can't stop caressing his pecs, his arms, his shoulders. His hot, slightly sticky flesh feels so good beneath my fingers.

“Oh, baby.” He nudges my neck with the tip of his nose. An animalistic move that soaks me instantly. “That’ll come. Tonight’s about finding and respecting your boundaries.”

I furrow my brow, teasing him. “That’s not what you said on the couch.”

“We’ll have plenty of time for filthy fucking.

Tonight, I just want to experience you. Besides, I don’t know if I can control myself for too long.

You’re the sexiest fucking woman I’ve ever laid eyes on.

” He grabs a handful of my ass before playfully slapping it.

I let out a tiny squeal, loving the slight roughness. “Turn around.”

“Oh...”

“Hands on the wall.”

I do as he asks, spreading my palms against the wall near the window. Taunting him, I throw my hair over my shoulder and lick my lips, arching my back in a come-and-get-me motion. “Yes, sir.”

His eyes go dark with excitement. He practically mauls me, wrapping his arms around my waist from behind and pressing his rock hardness against my ass. “I want you from behind.”

I’m used to polite sex. Missionary, then a flip on top. Hopefully I come. Tonight, I’m ready for something new, something that only comes with the experience of an older

man.

“Then shut up and fuck me.” He nibbles gently on my shoulder, sending goosebumps up and down my arms and legs. He lines himself against my opening, rubbing against my slickness. His tip slides in, and my eyes widen in surprise.

Yes, he’s big, but I didn’t think it would feel like I’m getting fucked for the first time.

“You okay, baby?” He kisses my neck. My pussy aches for more.

“Yeah. Yeah.” I can’t find words, the desire to have all of him deep inside of me is so fierce I’m not sure I could tell you my own name. “Fuck me. Please.”

He presses further into me, one hand finding my breast. He pinches my nipple, causing me to scream out as he enters me over and over. “You’re so wet.”

“It’s for you.”

“It’ll only be for me, Juno.” He fills me to the brim and I still want more. “Forever. Say it.”

“I’m yours. I’m yours forever.” I comprehend the words and what they might mean, but right now I don’t give two solid fucks. I’ve got the sexiest silver fox daddy fucking me good and raw from behind and nothing else matters. Nothing.

He pulls out suddenly and emits a grunt. “What’s wrong?” I turn around to face him, hoping I didn’t do something wrong.

“I want to look you in the eye when I shoot my seed inside of you.”

Thank God I’ve got an IUD.

He lifts me up again and tosses me on the bed, crawling on top of me before I know what's happening.

He's a wild creature, mouth agape, muscles popping.

I spread for him, never wanting anything more than him buried as deep as he'll go.

He pushes in, and I gasp. This guy is huge, and it's taking some accommodating on my part.

"I'm not going to lie to you. Just looking at you makes me want to come." His words trigger something in me. That, and he happens to be hitting a spot inside of me that I didn't even know existed. The back of my head presses against the pillow.

My fingers rake against his shoulder blades as I brace for my second orgasm of the night. With one final pulse, he presses harder and deeper inside of me while I twitch and pulse around his cock. My inner thighs grip his hips as I struggle to regain my breathing.

That was the most exciting sex I've had in my entire life. I should've known an older man would fuck me better than anyone my own age.

He pulls out, and I pull him to my chest. He kisses my breasts before resting his head against them, a natural pillow. "That felt amazing."

Calder just grunts.

Stray, doubt-filled thoughts swirl through my mind. About how people might talk. How my father might disapprove. How one day he might decide I'm not the one and this was fun but not permanent.

Then, I remember everything leading up to this. The genuine look in his eyes when he told me this was real. To deny it would be denying myself the chance at something I never thought I'd experience, true love.

Calder rolls over and it's my turn to rest on his chest. He pulls me tighter into the perfectly shaped nook, meant only for me.

"We're going to make this work." He kisses the top of my head.

I press my mouth to his pec, the salty taste of his skin sticking to my lips. "I know."

A smile spreads across my lips, a warmth settling over me that I've never experienced with anyone, and I realize what this foreign feeling actually is. Belief. I do believe Calder Holden. This will work, and I'm never going to doubt that again.

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Juno

Ten Years Later

I thought the age gap would somehow affect things more than they have, but after a decade of marriage with my silver fox, life's just business as usual.

The coffee maker beeps and I rush to it, hoping not to wake Calder.

He's been working hard on some construction projects in the area, building up around the lake.

At fifty-five though, it's more supervising and less hands-on building.

I pour a mug, add my favorite creamer, grab my favorite shawl, and quietly slide the back door open.

The crisp fall air hits my face, waking me up more than, if not equally, to my morning coffee.

With a deep breath, I carefully lift my nightgown and move down the steps onto our dock. This is the life I've always wanted.

I close my eyes and lean my head back on the Adirondack chair, soaking in the sounds of nature.

Things have all worked out for us. My father barely blinked an eye when I told him

about us.

He was more concerned with his own ever-present axe to grind.

I barely speak to him anymore, which Calder mostly supports but stays out of my way, respecting my decisions.

So far, my class this year is the best one yet. Saturday mornings provide a well-needed respite from fourth-grade drama. I smile despite myself. While I love teaching, us not having children was the best decision we could've consciously made. For many reasons.

"Room for one more?" Calder's voice pulls me to the present. He leans in and presses his warm lips against mine, a cup of coffee in his hand.

"I didn't mean to wake you."

"I was already awake." He sidles up in the chair next to mine.

"Babe, it's mid-October. A shirt and shoes are a good idea" Not that I mind seeing him without his shirt on. Even in his fifties, his body is toned and tight. My cunt clenches every time I see him, knowing he's mine all mine.

"I can handle it." He crosses his legs out in front of him, wiggling his tootsies at me.

"Insufferable." I tease and set my coffee down on the chair's arm.

"What are you thinking about?" He asks me this all the time. I figured dating an older man would come with better communication, but the care and concern he has for me and my feelings—my wants, hopes, and dreams—has always thrown me off a little. I love it, though.

“Honestly, I wasn’t thinking too hard. Just sort of being.”

He reaches over and takes my hand. “Know what I’m thinking about?” The tent of his boxers tells me exactly what he has in mind. “Testing out the new showerhead in our bathroom.”

Yes, our bathroom.

Calder moved in as soon as what was formerly known as my place was finished.

He uses his old place as an Airbnb. “This place feels more like both of us.” He said, after asking if he could move in.

I was overjoyed because he was right. All of that construction, we did it together.

Well, he did most of the work but a lot of the decisions were joint ones.

Calder pinches at my ass as we make our way back up the steps.

The man can’t keep his hands off of me and that’s how I like it.

We set our coffee cups on the counter, undressing as we make our way upstairs.

I have more to disrobe, but Calder beats me to the bathroom, already twisting the knobs to the perfect temperature as I step into the room.

He holds me tight under the stream, caressing me, taking his time pleasing my body. Afterward, when we’re drying off, still steamy from the heat, he pulls me to him. I run my hands up and down the grooves of his toned back. “Are you happy, Jun?”

I giggle in response. He does this all the time. It’d be kind of annoying if it weren’t so fucking cute. I press a kiss between my husband’s pecs. Ten years of marriage, and I

hope to God we have at least a hundred more.

I respond the same way I always do, meeting his eyes, still unable to believe this man is mine until the end of our times. “Abso-fucking-lutely. You?”

He pulls me in, wrapping his strong arms around me. I close my eyes and breathe in his warm, soap-scented skin. “Abso-fucking-lutely.”