

Chapter 1

The Bet

Detective Delta Robbins rapped her fingernails on the table of the briefing room, waiting for the captain's words about the weekly assignments. She accidentally made eye contact with Detective Stanford across the room. He winked at her with his usual condescending smile, but she rolled her eyes and looked away. He was really getting under her skin lately and she thought she would have to do something soon to put him in his place.

When she had first transferred into the Bafford County Police Department, only two months prior, she had thought that she would like James Stanford. He was tall and very attractive, with short brown hair, broad shoulders, and an easy smile. He had a natural charm that had made him a favorite among the other officers and with command. Delta could tell that he was used to being the best and used to having his way. Until she arrived, that is. Her excellent case records had followed her from Atlanta and her new coworkers were eager to hear the details of how she had managed to track down and stop the serial killer that had been picking off the "Real MILFS of Atlanta." Stanford's jealousy was almost immediately clear. He had begun to pull his strings within the chain of command, making sure that he got the better cases while Delta was stuck investigating small town crimes.

But today she was through. Stanford's ego had been indulged long enough and she didn't take shit from anyone, no matter how chiseled their jawline. She especially didn't take any shit from cocky sons of bitches like Stanford, the classic alpha male type, who sauntered through the precinct like he owned it.

The chief clicked on the overhead projector, and the change in lighting jolted Delta from her thoughts. She listened intently as he briefed the staff on all of the local cases. She held her breath, waiting for the best one, which he always saved for last.

"And the big case this week," he said, clicking on a slide, "concerns the Miss Dixieland USA Beauty Pageant. An image of beautiful women covered in makeup and sparking gowns appeared on the projector screen. "We have reason to believe that the pageant is a front for a relatively new and dangerous synthetic drug called Red Cherry." The slide changed, revealing an image of a small, bright red pill resting beside a penny for scale. "The manufacturing, use, and distribution of Red Cherry is highly illegal, but according to our preliminary investigations, either the participants or organizers of this pageant are directly involved in its distribution. That's why the Bafford County Police Department will be sending in one of our finest to go undercover to investigate the pageant."

"Now," he cleared his throat, "on to case assignments!" He passed out the files to the other detectives while Delta waited for her name to be called.

"Detective Robbins, the West Street arson." A thin manila folder plopped onto the desk in front of her and she glared at it.

"Detective Stanford," Chief Payne went on in his gravelly voice, "Miss Dixie"

Before he could finish, Delta stood, her chair screeching loudly across the floor as it scraped the gray linoleum. "Actually, Sir, perhaps I could take the pageant assignment."

The chief looked at her with a frown that deepened the already defined creases around his mouth. He wasn't used to being interrupted. "Detective Stanford has connections with the organizer that could get him placed as one of the judges. How would you gain access to the pageant?"

"I could go undercover as a contestant, Sir. I'm new to the area, and unlike Detective Stanford here, I haven't dated half of the county." A few of the other detectives snorted and chuckled. Stanford's reputation as a lothario was well known.

Stanford made a derisive sound in his throat. "Well, while I wouldn't mind seeing you on stage in a bikini, Robbins, the chief was pretty clear about who's getting this case." Again, there was light laughter, this time at Delta's expense. She crossed her arms and stared at the chief expectantly.

He sighed, rubbing his temple, where his thin hair was threaded with gray. "Detective Robbins makes a good point, but I've had more than enough of you two bickering. I don't care who takes the case. You two will work this out on your own. He turned on his heel, waving everyone out of the room. "Dismissed!"

Stanford and Delta watched as the rest of the detectives filtered from the room. She stood patiently with her hands on her hips and her chest pushed out to exacerbate the fullness of her breasts, pushing against the cotton of her button-up blouse. Stanford ambled over to her. His casual movements were betrayed by the way he would briefly flick his eyes from her chest to her face. "Come on Robbins, you heard what the chief said. Let's not make this complicated. Just give me the case. I'll let you have the next big one." He took a sip from his coffee cup as Delta sized him up.

"I'll tell you what Stanford," I have an idea about how to make this more interesting. I'll take the Miss Dixieland case, and you'll take the West Street arson case, and if you solve the arson case first, well then," she leaned close enough to smell the sandalwood of

his aftershave and the sharp scent of the black coffee in his mug as she dropped her voice low, “I’ll suck your dick.”

His eyes bulged as he choked a bit on his last sip. She bit her lip as he coughed twice, spitting a little coffee on his hand as he cleared his throat. “What?”

“You heard me.”

He shook the coffee off his hand, and grinned at her, wolfish eyes looking her up and down. “First of all, that’s sexual harassment in the workplace, Robbins.” He grinned and wiped his coffee-damp hand against his dark trousers. “And second, what happens if you solve your case first?”

“When I solve my case first, you go down on me.” She pretended to pick away a bit of lint from her shirt, flicking her sharp nails as she waited to see his reaction.

Stanford shook his head in disbelief, but she saw the corner of a smile hiding in the curve of his lip. He leaned in closely, and she felt the slight heat that radiated from his muscular body. “In that case, I look forward to seeing you on the stage, Detective.”

He reached out for the West Street arson file, but she held it tightly in one hand. With the other, she grabbed him by the collar, tugging him forward. He stumbled towards her, his head bent down so that their mouths almost met. “And I look forward to seeing you between my legs,” she whispered, looking straight into his hazel eyes.

She let go of his collar without warning, causing him to stumble for his balance as she walked away. She spared one look over her shoulder at him as she left, and saw that his lips were still parted, half in surprise, half in excitement. She flipped her brown hair over her shoulder, and gave him one last lingering smile as she left him standing alone in the room to watch her ass as she walked away.