



## *Revved*

### Excerpt

The slamming of the house's front door brought Creed's head out from under his Camaro's hood. Since he'd moved into the guest house over the garage, he was used to his aunt finding him to fix a leak or burn some trash. However, determined steps crunched the pebbles outside and he knew instantly it wasn't his aunt. Nope, his bitchy sixteen-year-old cousin looked as if she was about to make her weekly round. Here we go again. He was already shaking his head before she even walked inside the garage. Judging by the color of the sky, it must've been close to seven pm. She had been on the same routine for the past four Saturdays. Cassie was going to ream him for not going to the dragway. Since Sparco's Raceway sat clear on the other side of town, his aunt didn't trust Cassie to go alone. Since he was an adult, albeit a semi-responsible one, Aunt Georgia said Cassie could go so long as he did.

Well, he wasn't going.

Creed hadn't been to the dragway in a month and Cassie was fit to be tied. He heard the clap-slap of flip-flops against her feet and when they stopped suddenly, he knew she was right behind him. He could feel her lurking like some insane, hormonal teen.

"This is bullshit, Creed." He cringed when he heard her gum pop. "Becky says Gunther is starting to eye Jessica in my absence. Can we please go tonight, please?" God, the begging had been the worst of it all.

Wiping the smut off his hands he turned and noted she'd gotten dressed in hopes he'd go race. He was ten years her senior, so she was more like a younger sister since he'd been raised by her mother over half his life. He'd really stepped up to take on the man role when Uncle Herman died six years ago. He'd even kept the auto parts shop operational but didn't know he'd have to play the father/brother role and teach Cassie how to grow up. He knew exactly what this boy Gunther had on his mind when he looked at her. However, telling her any different would only cause more rebellious tendencies.

Cassie came only to his chest and her blonde hair was twisted up in some clipper thing. She gave him the sad puppy-dog eyes and even quivered her bottom lip in effect to win him over.

"No. I need a break from racing. It's becoming too much."

"Yeah, uh-huh, and that's why every Saturday night you tinker around in here as if preparing to go, yet you don't." She looked at the empty carport beside his Camaro: it had once been occupied on Saturdays as well. His best friend would prep his vehicle for the races right beside him. Now, the vacant space stayed empty and cold, just as he felt. "God, what happened between you and Bronx?"

Creed crinkled his nose. "Nothing." Which was untrue, he'd fucked up royally and he didn't know how to set things right or even if they could be set right. A mere apology didn't compare to the words he'd screamed at Bronx as he watched him leave a month ago.

Cassie rolled her eyes. "Right and when I saw him at Jimmy's Corner Store the other day he avoided me like the plague." She chewed her bottom lip, her look pensive. "He looked really upset."

Creed tossed the dirty rag on the ground and slammed the car hood down. Cassie flinched and backed up when he took a menacing step closer to her. "He fucking should be. Three years... you think you know someone and they pull some shit that changes things."

"What do you mean? What happened?"

"Forget it." Creed moved to the worktable and tossed his tools back in the box, clanging them loud enough in hopes the noise would drown out anymore of Cassie's probing questions. He didn't fucking want to answer anything having to do with Bronx or why they were fighting. He didn't want to explain his disappearance to their friends and feel like even more of a douche. Most of all, he didn't want to face the aftermath with Bronx. How could he apologize for how he acted and what he said? Bronx had rattled their friendship with an unexpected kiss. However, that wasn't what freaked him out. He'd snapped because he enjoyed it and wanted Bronx in a way he'd never before.

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