



Swept Away Preview

10 years ago

The night of Kat's high school graduation

A thin rivulet of sweat rippled between her breasts as she shut the car door and walked toward him. The flirty skirt of her short dress flounced around her thighs and her nipples rubbed against the fabric with each step. She'd never been so aware of her body.

Or of his body. He sat in a black bucket seat that had once resided in a car, but now perched beside a swampy lake. A cigarette dangled from his mouth and a beer can rested between his legs, against the bulge in his worn blue jeans. His black t-shirt fit him just as well as the denim, molding to biceps, chest, and stomach, and messy hair hung too long over the ribbed neck of his shirt in back — one wayward lock dipped recklessly onto his forehead.

He looked as dangerous as the night. Exactly what she wanted, needed.

She stood before him, equal parts fear and excitement. She didn't know how to do this, at all — but she'd wanted him for so long, ever since he'd started working for her father at the gallery six months ago, lugging crates and making deliveries. Clean cut high school boys whose lives revolved around locker room boasts and who had the fastest car? She didn't need 'em. She'd known the moment she set eyes on Brock Denton that she needed a man.

He was twenty-two and lived out here in the swamps with his grandpa. She knew the way because she'd ridden along with her dad once when Brock's car had broken down. She remembered the tense, quiet ride — how clear it had been that her father didn't like Brock even being in the same car with her, and she'd instinctively understood why. Because sex oozed from him like swamp mud if you picked it up in your hand and let it squeeze out between your fingers. One look from him and her whole body turned to liquid, something hot, bubbling from the inside out beneath the baking sun.

But now her father was nowhere around. And she was ready to become a woman with Brock, ready to learn all the secrets of passion, ready to sweat with him, ready to let him show her ... everything.

His dark eyes burned right through her, tightening her nipples further. "What are you doing out here in that fancy car, kitten?" He didn't smile, but his gaze held exactly what she wanted it to — sex. Like always.

She tossed a vague glance over her shoulder at the shiny new red Mazda Miata. Really not so fancy in her world — a starter car, for college, her father had called it — but she guessed Brock saw it differently given the beat-up old Mustang he drove and talked about fixing up once he saved some money. "It's a graduation gift from my father," she said.

"Doesn't answer my question." His eyes pinned her in place so that she couldn't quite move — she'd been walking toward him, taking steady steps in her low heels over the uneven dirt drive, but now she stopped. "Your daddy know you're here?"

She gave her head a saucy tilt. "What do you think?"

The first hint of a smile quirked one side of his mouth, drawing her attention to the dark stubble that covered his chin — she wanted to touch it, feel its roughness against her fingertips. But just as quickly, his amusement faded back to serious. "I think this is an awful dangerous place for a pretty little thing like you." He hiked a thumb toward the marshy lake to his right. Moss covered much of the surface, thick cattails rimming the edge, and for the first time she noticed the fishing pole propped over a tackle box, the line sunk in the water nearby, waiting for a nibble. "Alligators out here, you know. They eat up kittens in one bite."

Why did even that make the juncture of her thighs tingle madly? "I'm not afraid."

"Maybe you should be. Maybe you don't know what you're getting yourself into. And maybe you better just tell me what you came here for, kitten."

She took a deep breath. Now or never. Make it now. Get exactly what you want for graduation. She took another step toward him and the mere movement reminded her again of her body — and what she craved. A beat-up radio sat on the ground nearby, and the sexy strains of an old

song, “Hot Child in the City,” gave her the urge to sway. She let her hips begin to move, ever-so-slightly. “Since I graduated tonight, I want you to give me a present, too.”

He flicked his cigarette aside, into the tall grass that edged the water, and crossed strong arms over his chest. His eyes narrowed into dark slits that should have warned her away but instead lured her nearer, especially when they followed the movement of her hips for a long, sultry moment before rising back to her face. “And just what do I have that you could want?”

She swallowed back the lump in her throat. “I want you .”

Then, ignoring the heat that rose like flames to her cheeks, she reached up, hooked her thumbs into the thin shoulder straps of her dress, and let them fall — let the whole dress fall — skimming her curves until it dropped around her white graduation shoes, so that she stood before him in nothing but a pair of lacy pink Brazilian-cut panties bought just for this occasion.

God, she couldn’t believe she’d done it. But she had, and this was it — she’d put her whole self out there, her whole soul, just for him.

A hot evening breeze wafted over her, as intense as his gaze, and there was no going slow now, no stopping. It had taken every ounce of courage within her to come this far and she had to forge ahead. Never taking her eyes off his, which had grown blessedly lust-filled as he looked on her body, she stepped free of the dress pooled at her feet and took slow, steady strides toward him across the rough ground. Be cool. Be seductive. It suddenly wasn’t as hard as she’d expected — the moves now coming almost naturally. Heat permeated her, both from the humid Florida night and the desire sizzling inside her. Without hesitation, she lifted one foot over the bucket seat and lowered herself onto his lap, straddling him.

Her crotch met the chilled beer can, so she reached deftly between them and tossed the aluminum aside, letting it spill foamy in the dirt. Neither looked toward it as she pressed herself to the mysterious bulge that had been the object of her fascination for so long. Mmm, yes. She was really doing this, really seducing Brock Denton.

“Jesus, kitten,” he groaned at the connection.

She let out a hot, thready sigh, amazed — he was so hard. His rough hands closed loosely at her hips, and the mere touch — his flesh on hers — set off a whole new firestorm inside her. She started to move against him, not by plan but by pure, driving instinct, and the thick crease of his zipper abraded her through her panties to deliver the most delicious sensation she’d ever endured.

“I didn’t know you were such a bad girl,” he said in a low rumble. It was as if he were everywhere, all around her, consuming her.

“Make me a bad girl, Brock. Take me. Take my virginity right now.” Not wanting to wait another second, she reached down to the button on his jeans — just as his grip tightened on her waist to lift her slightly away from him.

She knew intuitively that it wasn't a giving-her-better-access-to-the-zipper lift, but more of a halting lift. She jerked her gaze from bulge to eyes. They shone dark, delicious — but not inviting.

“I don't think so, kitten.” His voice remained only slightly husky, and as arrogant as ever.

She stopped breathing for a second at the hideous impact of his words, until finally she managed, “What?”

“Afraid I'm not into virgins. I like my girls with a little more experience.”

Push down how much that hurts. Don't let yourself feel how clear he just made it that this is only sex. Make this happen — somehow. It was the overriding thought pummeling her — she'd come too far to fail now. Convince him to want you.

She leaned close to his ear, raking taut nipples against his t-shirt, and tried not to sound desperate as she purred, “Teach me. I'm an enthusiastic student.”

And before giving him a chance to respond, she did what came naturally — raised her hands to bracket his face over that rough, delectable stubble, and sank her mouth onto his. God, Brock made even beer and a slight hint of smoke taste sexy and she kissed him hard and long, pressing her tongue inward. His grip tightened, digging into her flesh as he began to knead, knead, in a way that heightened everything, the heaviness of her breasts, the yearning between her thighs.

When finally the long, languid kiss ended, their foreheads touched and she could smell the musky, manly scent of him, and she knew she had to have him or she'd die. I love you.

God, don't say that. Even if it's what you've been thinking over and over each night in bed, trying to imagine what this would be like.

“I want you,” she said instead. “I'll do anything you want. Anything.” Anything to keep you from breaking my heart right now, crushing my soul.

They both breathed heavily in the still air, which had turned dusky just since her arrival, the dense treelines surrounding them seeming to bring the night on with more intensity.

“Nice kiss, kitten,” he rasped, his lips nearly touching hers — yet then he hauled her back from him again, to look her in the eye. “But I'm still not into it. You want to do it so bad, give it to some high school boy who'll be more your speed.”

It was like a blow to the gut. She was sitting in his lap nearly naked and he was turning her down. And she'd been trying not to feel that, trying desperately to change that, but suddenly it was unavoidable — an impossible humiliation. Defeat crumbled through her in jagged, scarring pieces to settle low in her belly.

“You ... really don't want me?” She didn't mean to ask — and she shut her eyes against the softness of her own voice as soon as the words left her lips.

“You don't belong here, kitten — you're out of your league. You need to get in that fancy car and go home now. Understand?” He pushed her still further away and when she gathered the courage to look back into his eyes, all she found was the usual grim, sexy conceit.

“You're an asshole.”

He only shrugged, uncaring, and she rose up off him, dying inside, thinking — Get out of here. Get out of here now.

But she resisted running, scurrying, like a child. She only prayed he couldn't see her trembling as she plucked up her dress, struggled to find the opening, then slid it back over her head. One last ounce of defensiveness forced her to turn and say, “You don't know what you're missing.”

Not one iota of emotion crossed his impossibly handsome face as he replied. “Go home, kitten. And don't come back.”

Order Swept Away