

He walked through the house toward the front door, his cock twitching at the thought of meeting the new callboy. He licked his lips in anticipation and pulled open the door.

He stared, speechless, at the man standing before him.

He was easily six three and maybe two hundred fifty pounds, much of it, it seemed to Hank, in his gut. There was solid muscle beneath it though, as evidenced by his thickly muscled arms and massive shoulders. He had ginger red hair, cut short, and a ginger mustache and goatee, trimmed close. His nose looked like it had been broken at least once and his skin was the rough, ruddy color of someone who'd spent much of their lives outdoors.

He was wearing a black muscle T-shirt that revealed lots of chest hair, and his arms were covered in a thick down of golden-red fuzz. The man was the antithesis of Hank's standing profile at the escort service. What the hell was he doing there? Hank finally found his voice. "I didn't call for you. Jesus, how old are you, anyway? *Forty?*"

The man lifted his eyebrows and had the gall to laugh. Hank saw nothing funny in the question. His profile specifically stated no one over twenty-five, and the younger the better. "Getting there," the guy said, still smiling. "Thirty-eight."

Hank waited for the man to offer some kind of excuse or explanation, but he said nothing more.

"I ordered Troy. You're not Troy," Hank said, increasingly annoyed.

"My name is Russell. I got a call from the service and they gave me your name and directions to your place. Apparently Troy got sick at the last minute and there's some kind of emergency over there so Jacob was unavailable. From your reaction, I would venture to guess the guy on call screwed up." Russell's voice was a deep rumbling bass.

"Huh," Hank said, feeling for some reason on uncertain ground around the tall, imposing and implacable man standing before him. "I've been using the service for over a year and they never messed up like this before."

"My apologies. I'm sure it can be straightened out. Unless you'd like me to..." Russell let the sentence hang.

Why didn't Hank just dismiss the guy out of hand and slam the door? What kept him staring into those very blue eyes? He never went for the big hairy types. He liked his boys young and smooth, and very much in his thrall. But he couldn't deny his cock had come to attention in this guy's presence.

Without consciously making the decision, Hank stepped back and waved a hand. "What the hell. You give good head, Russell?"

Russell entered the hall, allowing Hank to close the door behind him. "So I'm told. How about you?"

"Pardon?" Hank was taken aback by the question from a guy who was nothing more than a whore.

"I asked if you give good head," Russell repeated.

"Yeah, well, I'll ask the questions. You're on my dollar, don't forget. This isn't a social call." The question rankled. The fact of the matter was, he rarely sucked another man's cock, except when he was very drunk, and even then not often. He liked to be serviced, not the other way around. When you had the money and looks he did, you didn't have to suck anyone's dick.

"Okay," Russell said slowly. "I'm guessing by your tone that you don't have many social calls. No friends to speak of."

Hank whirled on him. "What the fuck is your problem? I'm not paying you to talk. I'm paying you to get on your knees and suck my dick. Got it?"

Instead of contrition or even anger, Hank saw pity in Russell's expression. What a joke that a common whore would pity him! Who the fuck did this guy think he was?

"Hey," Russell said in a maddeningly gentle tone, "sorry if I offended you with the comment about no friends. It's rough when you're all alone. I understand that. Even with all this," he waved his hand around the large living room, elegantly furnished, the walls hung with fine oil paintings, "that old adage is true, huh? Money can't buy happiness. I'd venture to guess, Hank Seeley, that you are one very unhappy man."

"Jesus Christ!" Hank shouted, anger exploding through him. "Who the fuck are you? Is this how you treat all your customers? What the fuck is wrong with you?"

"You're not my customer, Hank."

"What? You work for the Garden. You're here because they sent you. For this hour I own your ass."

"Nope, sorry." Russell shook his head. "I've changed my mind. I don't want to have sex with you. You're not my type."

Hank felt his face heat and he clenched his fists, reflexively starting toward the bigger man. Russell put his hands up, palms outward. "Calm down, Hank. I'm not your type either, remember? I'll be on my way, and you can figure this out with the service."

Hank couldn't believe *he* was the one being dismissed. The whole thing seemed surreal. "I'm not your type? You're a whore, for god's sake! Your *type* is whoever's handing out the money."

"I prefer the term sex worker. And yes, while I offer sexual services in exchange for money, I actually do have preferences, and standards. Common civility is one of those. I will not be treated as less than, simply to satisfy your insecurities. To put it another way, I won't allow someone to stand on my neck so they can feel a little taller. No amount of money is worth that."

Even though the man was beyond insulting, Hank realized he didn't want him to go. The fact that Russell had refused to have sex with him was challenge enough, but it went beyond that. In spite of his fury at being treated like this, Hank found himself intrigued. Who the hell *was* this guy? He certainly wasn't anything like the usual boys Hank purchased on a regular basis. He wasn't like anyone he'd met in any walk of life, for that matter. There was something very collected about him. Put together. He was nobody's boy, that was for sure.

Hank found himself saying words that almost never came from his lips. "Look, I've—I've had a bad month. Would you, um, would you like a drink or something? Maybe we could start over."

Russell tilted his head and seemed to be weighing the offer. Hank couldn't figure out what had happened. For maybe the first time in his life, he was waiting on tenterhooks for another guy to give him a chance. He wanted to prod Russell to respond, but sensed he needed to keep quiet.

Russell finally nodded. "Okay. I'll take you up on that drink offer. We'll start over, like you say." He stuck out his hand, and Hank found himself clasping it. Russell's handshake was firm and warm. "I believe in second chances," Russell said with a smile.