

The Right Ticket

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Who really gives tickets for going five miles over the speed limit on a highway! Carla thought—fumed—as she finished off her steak and baked potato dinner. Granted, the officer had only issued a warning, but the principle of the matter still had her steamed. *Too bad such good looks were wasted on a jerk.*

“Will you be having desert, apple pie perhaps?” asked the server, breaking Carla out of her musings.

“No thanks, I’ll just take the check.”

“The gentleman has already taken care of it for you.” She motioned a few tables over and walked away.

An automatic smile touched Carla’s lips as she turned to see who had been so sweet. The site of the all too handsome officer who had pulled her over earlier wiped her smile away. He had changed from his uniform to jeans and a T-shirt, but was still entirely too sexy.

Carla reached for her purse to pay for his meal. No way would she accept his kindness.

“Still mad at me?” He set his burger, fries and drink on the table and took the seat beside her so she couldn’t get out without climbing over the table, kicking him out of the booth or asking him to move. Asking him to move was her least favorite of choices.

“Are you stalking me?”

“Yep, you’re still mad at me.” He chuckled and took a bite of his burger. “You’re cute when you’re angry.” He handed her a fry. “So what are you doing when you’re not speeding down the highways?”

“I’m a web developer. “ A charming jerk was an oxymoron if she’d ever heard one, but something about Officer Safety drew her to him, which she hated. “Haven’t you heard of the ten mile rule? Drivers are given ten miles over the posted speed limit on the highway. I was only going five over.”

Brow raised, he said, “I must have missed that memo. And I didn’t give you a ticket, I gave you a warning. I was looking out for your safety.” He took another bite of his burger.

“Sure you were. And what are you up to now?”

“I’m enjoying the evening with a beautiful woman.”

Heat rushed to her face.

“You’re cute when you’re embarrassed also.” He ate a fry. “Are you dating anyone?”

“Kind of forward, aren’t you?”

“I’m a man. It’s part of who we are.” He motioned to the server. “Could you please get the lady another whatever she was drinking.” He turned to Carla. “Do you want something else to eat?”

“No thanks.” A man’s man, she liked that. “My dad’s a retired cop. I’ll ask him to send you the ten mile rule memo.”

He laughed. “Oh the lady is forgiving me. Things are looking up. Since you don’t seem to want to answer my question, I’ll start.”

The waitress set another tea on the table in front of Carla.

“Thank you.”

Once the server moved on, he continued with, “I’m a single father of the cutest three-year-old, little girl in the world. My wife died in a car accident a year and a half ago.”

Hands to her face, Carla didn’t know what to do. “I’m so sorry. Where’s your daughter?”

“I’ll be picking her up from my mother’s after we finish up here. I like to unwind a bit before I get her. What about you, any children, a husband, boyfriend?”

“No on all accounts,” she said softly. She had actually considered dating him, but his having a child changed things drastically. Any man Carla dated had to have future husband potential, not that she was looking to marry any time soon. She just new she wanted to marry some day, so why waste time dating men she knew weren’t right for her? Something about Officer Safety told her he was the right ticket.

“If you act right, your no’s may be turning to yes’s soon.”

Another smile touched her lips. She’d bet she hadn’t smiled this much in...in ever. He had this way with him she couldn’t explain. “If I act right?”

“I have to make sure you aren’t a stalker or anything.”

Laughing, she ate one of his fries. “You are too much...,” she trailed off. “I’m sorry, but what’s your name?”

“I’m winning you over.” He winked.

“Never mind. I already know. It’s Officer Arrogant.”

“Close, but not quite. Craig Matthews at your service. Where would you like to go tomorrow?”

“I’m not sure. I mean...what about your daughter?”

“I’m not asking you to marry me, yet.” He flashed a quick smile. “Let’s get to know each other and see where this leads.”

Unsure, yet excited about the possibilities, she said, “Let’s see where this leads.”