

# DEVLIN'S DESCENT



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CHAPTER 4  
OH, CAROLINE

Caroline sat at the bar, watching the people as they mingled. The past six months had been rough on her and she looked ten years older for it. The wrinkles under her eyes had become handbags, and she felt exhausted and used-up. She knew that it was all her fault, but it was easier to push the blame off on other people. Devlin, in particular. In her eyes, he had caused everything that was wrong with her life. It wasn't true, of course, but she had convinced herself that he was the reason she sat alone and lonely in a bar, emotionally bitter, reflecting on all the bad things he had made her do. She watched as the men flirted with the women in the corner of the bar. They were younger, prettier, with better physiques than she possessed; but, she knew, at closing time, when they'd done their teasing, most of those young women would go home to an empty bed. Or, if they did go home with a stranger, he'd be the grand prize of the evening. The less attractive men would go home with the less attractive women. It was a game they all played; a game that had only one rule—come out on top. Get the best piece of meat you could get at the cheapest price.

Period.

Nothing else mattered.

It made her sad to realize that people were so predictable. Of course, she was just as predictable, but she would never admit such a thing to herself.

She stared down into her fifth drink of the night. Rum and diet soda stared back at her, and she saw her reflection in the dark liquid. She was put off by her appearance these days. She no longer found herself attractive, no longer thought of

herself as a “catch” for any man.

Those days had slid behind her.

She looked down at her stomach. Since Devlin had been thrown in jail, she’d lost somewhere in the neighborhood of thirty pounds. Her stomach was lean. But, her haggard appearance made the men stay away until later in the night, when the smartest of the herd knew that their quest for sexual satisfaction would not be fulfilled by the teasers of the crowd.

Then, they would look upon Caroline as their best chance for sex.

It was the way it was. Nothing Caroline could do could change it. Twenty years ago, she would have been the beautiful girl at the end of the bar; laughing and giggling it up, knowing that every man in the place wanted to know the secrets nestled between her thighs. If they were lucky, they discovered that glory. She had been less concerned with money back then, though, and it had brought Devlin into her life. He had been the best prospect she had at the time, and she had latched onto him until something better came along.

She wondered now why she had stayed with Devlin as long as she had. There had been a string of affairs, of course. Most of them had been with wealthier men who had promised to leave their wives for her. None of them had kept their promise. They were liars, one and all. They had used her for what she was worth to them, then discarded her like a used condom.

There had always been a new man waiting in the wings, and she had run through dozens of them.

But, there was always a younger, prettier gold digger waiting in the wings when they were done with her.

And they always discarded her. She became indifferent to love. She had come by her indifference honestly, having grown up with a bronze spoon in her mouth. In her late teens, she had rebelled against her family and run off to college. She had a string of illicit affairs with her instructors. Those men had given her good grades, but no satisfaction otherwise. So,

when she met Devlin, he had come across as a breath of fresh air in the shit factory. She had latched onto him....and Devlin had fallen in love with her.

She wanted to think she cared about him once, but she knew that wasn't true. She had used him as freely as the other men had used her. In a way, she was paying back all the men who'd used her by using Devlin.

Time had a way of making things change, and her affairs were fewer and further between now. She wasn't twenty-five anymore....and the rich men knew they could flash their wallets and sleep with younger women than her. They no longer looked at her. Reality had finally reared its ugly little head for Caroline, and she didn't much like it. She preferred to live in her own little world of illusion; just as Devlin had lived in a delusional world by thinking she loved him.

*Devlin, she thought. He was the only man who ever really loved me.*

*What's love got to do with it?* She asked herself.

*Nothing.* She had thrown away love for the almighty dollar.

She touched her stomach.

*The baby, she thought. The only true love in the whole, wide world.... and I destroyed it.*

*And for what?*

*The pursuit of money.*

She picked up the glass and drank, remembering the cold horror of the abortion. She hadn't seen it as an abortion at the time, though. Instead, she envisioned it as nothing more than a doctor removing a cyst from her ovaries. Now, however, it weighed heavily on her thoughts. Most days, she kept herself busy and did not think about the aborted child. It was only while she sat in a bar, watching people act like they wanted one another, that she understood the beauty that life could be. She felt remorse for the child.

She took another sip of rum and diet and stared down at the end of the bar. A young man was smiling, whispering sweet nothings in a girl's ear. She laughed and playfully

touched him. There's one that'll get lucky tonight, she told herself. Wear protection, honey, she thought. You don't want to be like me.... a woman with remorse.

And, she did have remorse. She was too proud to admit it to anyone but herself, but she did. Devlin had loved her with all his heart, and she had betrayed that love without so much as a second thought. If anything, aborting the child had expunged her of at least part of her sin. The thing that had been growing inside her was like a cancer, eating away at what little soul she had left. She had had to get it out, purge it from the dark depths she had allowed the other man to explore.

But, the cancerous growth had only been part of the equation.

For a time —almost a year — she had tried to go straight, be an honest woman. She had made a feeble effort to return Devlin's love, but it wasn't something she was capable of. She wanted too much, and Devlin would never be able to provide it for her. She cheated on Devlin again, and blamed him for her indiscretion. Still, when she allowed the other man to know her carnally, she lost a part of herself. She couldn't quite explain it. All the other affairs had no affect on her in any way. It was merely flesh on flesh satisfaction. But, her affair with Joseph was different. She knew it was wrong. She knew it, as she lay there naked, him standing before her, penis erect and willing. It was wrong. It was betrayal. He had told her that he loved her. She believed him, then. Now, he was gone and the only things she had to hang onto were what she had done.

What she had destroyed.

The moment the other man entered her, part of her heart died.

She knew that Devlin had a right to hate her.

She had betrayed him.

But, she knew that he still loved her and it was something she could not bear to think about.

The drinking helped.

She glanced down the bar at the youngsters at play, wondering when she had lost that youthful appeal.

She noticed The Little Man sitting next to them a second later.

He was an ugly little man, with a shock of bright red hair that did not belong in nature. He wore a black three-piece suit and looked totally out of place in comparison to the commoners that frequented the bar. He was sipping at a drink. One with an umbrella in it, making him even that much more an oddity. Her eyes caught his a moment, and he smiled a toothy smile back at her.

She turned away. He was no one she wanted to know. She could still tell that much about a person, regardless of the mistakes she had made in her life. She could tell when someone was no good and useless.

She looked in the mirror and her reflection agreed with her.

Then, she saw The Little Man in the reflection.

"Excuse me?" he said.

She didn't turn immediately. She didn't want to turn, but something made her. She turned.

Up close, he was even uglier than from a distance. His beady little eyes reminded her of a vulture, alert and ready to swoop down on its prey. Every person in a bar is on the hunt, she told herself. If you come to a bar, you expect to get hit on. If you don't want little geeks hitting on you, you should have stayed home.

"Yes," she said.

"I couldn't help but notice you down here all alone. May I join you?"

"Sure," she said, not really caring.

He placed his drink on the bar and literally had to jump up onto the barstool.

He offered his hand. "My name's Jack," he said. "What's yours?"

"Caroline," she told him.

He nodded. "Well, Caroline, it's a pleasure to meet you.

I've looked forward to it for quite some time now."

"Really?"

The Little Man grinned. "You don't know me," he said. "But I've been a fan of yours for a long time now."

She looked at him, bewildered. Something about him sent a chill down her spine.

"How so?" she asked. At that moment, the drink in front of her was the furthest thing from her mind. While this ugly little man in a three-piece suit gave her the creeps, there was also something fascinating about him. She couldn't quite put her finger on what it was; but, she knew, he had a power and charisma that very few people had.

And, he wielded it like a weapon.

He glanced at her drink. "You're drink's almost empty, may I buy you another?"

She looked at the drink, then back at him. Part of her wanted to walk away from the Little Man immediately. She knew that there was something no-good about him. It was the common sense side of her, and she hadn't listened to it in quite a while.

"Sure," she said.

The Little Man motioned for the bartender and said, "Give us both another one". The bartender nodded and walked away. In a moment, he returned with the drinks and the Little Man produced a one hundred dollar bill to pay for the drinks. Caroline couldn't help but notice that his wallet was full of them.

"You a doctor?" she asked.

"Why do you ask?"

Her eyes darted to the wallet full of hundred dollar bills, and he smiled.

"You could say that," he replied. "I'm a psychiatrist by profession."

"Sound like interesting work."

"It is," he told her. "I get to work with a lot of unique people. I sometimes get to work with people who've made bad judgment calls in life. You can say I get to help steer them

back down the straight-and-narrow."

"Sounds rewarding," she said, her eyes trained on his wallet as he put it back in his pocket.

"It is, Caroline."

Caroline lifted her Rum and Diet and took a sip. This little man was ugly as sin, but he also had a lot of money. Devlin had never had more than a few extra bucks in his pocket. He had provided for her, but he was far from rich. Caroline would never admit it to herself, but she was as much a gold-digger as the pretty young things at the end of the bar. She wanted things that Devlin couldn't provide for her, and she had been more than willing to spread her legs to get it. She loved the almighty dollar and Devlin would never be able to support her in the way that she wanted and needed to be supported. *Love be damned, she wanted money.*

*And this Little Man had a lot of it.*

Ugly or not, that made him someone she was interested in.

"So," she said. "Tell me a little more about yourself?"

The Little Man cocked his head to one side, then said: "Not a great deal more to tell, I guess. I'm a psychiatrist that works in private practice. I also do work with criminals, helping them to understand and correct their evil ways."

"Do tell."

"Yes, generally men who have done something violent and been arrested for it." He took a drink. "I believe you know such a man, don't you?"

"Yes," she replied. "How did you know?"

"I'm a psychiatrist," he replied. "It's my job to read people."

There was a commotion down at the end of the bar, and Caroline turned to see what was going on. One of the young couples was arguing. Caroline couldn't quite hear what was being said between them, but she could tell from their expressions that the argument was about to become heated. A moment later, the woman pushed the man backwards, and he stumbled and fell onto the floor. When he got back up,

he slapped the girl. "Hey!" the bartender yelled as he ran down to the end of the bar. He came out from behind the bar and grabbed the man before he could strike the girl again and dragged him to the door. He pushed him outside and yelled, "don't come back!"

A moment later, the girl he had slapped was out the door after him, cursing the bartender for evicting her lover.

The bartender walked back to the other couples, talked amongst them for a moment, then stepped back behind the bar.

Only then did Caroline look back at the Little Man.

"Abusive relationship," the Little Man said. "She'll go to him, take the blame for the situation, and nothing will change. I've seen it a million times."

Caroline lifted her Rum and Diet and drank. She didn't have much to say on the subject, so she took another drink.

"You want to get out of here?" the Little Man asked her.

Caroline looked at him, thought he's ugly but he's got money.

"Sure."

Caroline took her glass and finished her drink. The last sip was bitter and salty. She thought nothing of it.

The Little Man smiled and stepped off his stool and slipped a good six inches to the floor. He took Caroline's hand.

She staggered to the door. No one in the bar paid them any heed as they left.

By the time they reached his car, Caroline could hardly walk. The waiting driver got out and helped The Little Man slide Caroline into the back seat.

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When she came to, Caroline was laying on a plush round bed with a canopy. There was a mirror above her and she saw her naked body. Someone had undressed her and laid her on the bed. She tried to move, but her body was numb. She could see half a dozen candles illuminating the room via the

mirror in the ceiling, and her peripheral vision.

What the hell's going on? She thought. But, she knew what had happened. The Little Man had slipped something into her drink. Whatever it was, it had paralyzed her nervous system...

....And made her feel incredible.

While she couldn't move, she was acutely aware of her body. The region between her legs tingled in a way that was more than pleasant. She wiggled, rubbing her thighs together. Electricity seemed to course through her. She thought she'd never felt that amazing a sensation in all her life.

She heard a door open, then close.

A moment later, she saw the Little Man. He was wearing a thin silk robe.

"Ah, good," he said. "You're awake."

Caroline tried to speak, ask him what he was doing to her. After all, she'd had every intention of coming home with the man and having sex with him. There had been no reason to drug her to get what he wanted. His wallet had ensured that he would get what he wanted.

The Little Man ran his hand across her chest and cupped a breast in his hand.

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Caroline tried, but could not scream "Yes!"

But, as the Little Man slid inside her, he knew. She would do anything he wanted her to do. There was something better than money out there to strive for, and she had finally found it.

She would do anything the Little Man wished of her to have it. The Green Pus was what was missing from her life.

She would bring Devlin back in order to have it.  
She'd never cared for him, anyway.