

You're Mine by Penny Brooks

Chapter 126

Chapter 126

Easton

Her tears are killing me.

I can't reach through the screen and love her.

I can't hold her hand. It feels like I'm suffocating, falling deeper and deeper with each tear that streams down her cheek.

My hands shake. I hate it.

Because I know that I'm part of the problem and that I'm still pissed over not being claimed and I know it goes back to my own parents being kind of absent.

Harper has made me feel like I'm everything.

She doesn't realize the jealousy I had over how much her parents treated Ryan like an adult, how many times I had to come to their shitty suburbia house and watch them laugh with them both and do movie nights when mine were too busy making all the money to even contemplate doing a Netflix night with pizza and it's super super fucking shitty when you feel that way, but know if you express it the damn's going to fucking shit all over the place.

All things considering I was rich, what did I have to worry about, right?

Don't get me wrong, I love my parents, and I know they love me, but we're rich and sometimes when you're rich, you tend to take a backseat to stock options and making more money that you can't take with you when you die.

I stop being a pussy just watching my girlfriend cry and wait for her to finally draw in a few deep breaths as she takes a swig from her water bottle. "Easton, She hiccups.

My hands shake with the need to touch the screen as if I can feel her warmth and dry her tears.

"That was...a lot. I don't even know what to say because things feel so messed up lately, you know?"

It's like were fine, better than fine and then crazy things happen."

I wipe my hands down my face. "You mean Aisha?"

Blake?

Spraypaint?

College pressure?"

She sniffles and smiles. "Yeah to name just a few."

"L wish I could take it all away, take all the bad back, you know I do."

Fuck it, I touch the screen with my fingertips like a total simp and nearly shout with joy when her fingertips meet mine pressing against her own screen. "Well,"

She drops her hand. I drop mine. "At least I beat Blake's ass at badminton today. Don't be jealous that you werent there.

Be proud that I shoved that shuttlecock right up his ass in a very that feels traumatic way."

I choke out a laugh. "Cocksucker."

"Shuttlecocksucker."

Her cheeks are nearly dry now. "Do you think we can meet tomorrow morning?"

At the coffee shop next to the school around seven?"

I want to meet now even if it means driving my ass all the way over to her house and facing the wrath of her parents but I simply nod my head and then smile. "L need that."

I whispered. "Would love it. I need you."

"IL need you too."

"Harper!"

Her mom's voice filters through the room. "Did you finish your homework?"

"That's my cue."

Cockblocked again by her mom. "I love you."

Her smile is still sad but she says. "I love you too."

Then the video disappears.

Hours later, like an idiot, I stare up at my ceiling all night because I can't sleep worth shit thinking about meeting her, holding her, talking to her, and making her understand how deep my feelings go for her.

Damn, and last year I was able to actually attend school like a normal person while this year, I can barely go five minutes without seeing her. By the time morning rolls around, I'm up at five doing push ups in my bedroom to calm my anxiety. I get ready so fast, I think I scare my mom when I run downstairs and out the door, if the spilled coffee on the counter is any indicator.

Harper is waiting at the shop the minute my Jeep pulls up. She looks fucking gorgeous in her jeans and crop top. Her blue peacoat is open giving me a perfect view of her stomach.

I honest to God, just want to say, screw it and eat her out again underneath the Christmas tree, let them all watch! SORRY BABY JESUS, SANTA, SMALL LAMB, WISEMEN, damn, I've gotten possessive this year.

And why did I fucking scream that in my head like a lunatic?

I wave at her again and then approach. Tears fill her eyes.

I can't help it, I pull her into my arms and squeeze her tight, relishing the smell of her against me. Today, she smells different, like jasmine and vanilla. I love it.

"Sorry,"

I whisper. "Me too."

She sniffles. "Now, before I force you to buy me coffee"—I smile, she smiles back—"tell me everything, so I can decide if I'm going to throw it in your face."

"Wait, is it going to be hot?"

"Nah, I'll take it easy, make it iced but with extra cream so it gets in that perfect hair of yours and looks like you jerked off and missed the tissue and hit your face instead."

"Violent."

I nod. "Sounds exciting and probably another visual that will never leave my headspace or at least take a lot of time to forget when ordering a cold brew with extra foam."

She makes a face. "When you put it that way..."

"Congratulations, you just ruined your own favorite drink."

She shrugs. "I'd lick it."

"Fuck."

I hang my head. "Please do not make me go into that coffee shop with a boner. I'll never live it down."

She actually does look down, which just makes things worse and I have this sudden fantasy of throwing her across one of the coffee tables and having my way with her.

I clear my throat. She looks up.

"Sorry..."

"Your fault."

I grab her hand. "Time for the truth."

I confess to everything once we're in there, the whole reason behind the picture, why I took it, why it was necessary, and then I say what's been on my mind and heart since the incident. "Why though, Harper?"

Why not tell your parents?"

She squeezes my hand.

"We've been through a lot and I really just didn't think about it, honest to God, I just wanted to keep you...for myself for a bit.

I've always had to share you with everyone else, my brother included, and even then it's not like we actually got along.

It was hard enough when Ryan got pissed and I wasn't sure my parents wouldn't question me to death, so I just...forced myself to focus on us."

It's a good answer, one I can actually understand. I blow out a breath. "Does this mean you don't hate me anymore?"

"I don't hate you. I never hated you."

She wraps her arms around my neck, at this point we need to get going to class, but I don't want to walk away from her arms, from her smell, and the way she clings to me like I'm her everything.

Maybe in this moment, she finally understands this is it. "I can give you space," I say, hating myself.

"If you need it."

"No, she muffles out against my chest. "I'm with you. We're with each other. I just wish life was a bit less stressful right now."

I chuckle. "Yeah, same, welcome to high school."

She groans. "Let's just try to put this behind us."

I'm not saying I'm over the fact that you weren't honest with me.

Just like I'm sure you're still hurt that I didn't tell my parents we're together, but it's almost Christmas.

I really want to enjoy what we have left of this year and winter break together."

"Very mature decision,"

I joke. "Say you wouldn't be turning eighteen soon, would you?"

She shoves me and rolls her eyes. "Okay, boner boy, let's go."

I don't even have to look down. I just shrug. "When you're close, my body can't help it."

"Well, it needs to calm down during English Lit or you're going to have to figure something out."

I grin. "We can always go to the janitor's closet."

She smiles. I smile back. And during lunch she makes me smile even harder when we enter somewhat of a cease fire and she sucks me off in the janitor's closet.

Then, shoves me and says, "This still isn't over...we'll both have to grovel."

Her on her knees?

Me on mine?

Game on. I'm calm the rest of the day. Until another storm comes walking down the hall. Blake and Aisha, Julia. And a sinking feeling that this isn't over.

Chapter 127

Chapter 127

Harper

"Oh my God, I cannot wait until finals are over,"

Sadie says to me as we make our way down the hall at school. "Same,' I agree, completely distracted as I look for Easton.

He texted me only a few minutes ago saying he didn't wake up with his alarm and now he's running late.

I know that's because we were studying last night at the library, trying to prepare for our history final.

It was the only place I could get my parents to let me go.

They believed I was studying with Sadie, which at first, I was. Sadie and Ryan were there with us, but they eventually took off. Leaving Easton and I alone. We tried to study, we really did.

But we ended up getting distracted. Too much smiling at each other. Hands bumping, fingers tangling. Kissing.

Lots and lots of kissing... ".and on top of everything else I've got going on, my cramps are freaking awful today. Like, the worst. I'm gonna need to mainline some Midol to make it through,' Sadie says, just before she starts to laugh.

"I mentioned to Ryan how orgasms help ease cramps but he says he doesn't want to bathe his dick in the Red Sea."

"Oh my God, TMI, my friend,"

I practically groan, shoving her shoulder. The last thing I want to hear about is my brother having sex with my best friend when she's on her— Yeah. Can't even finish the thought. Sadie's laughter grows as she nearly goes toppling over. "Sorry. Couldn't resist."

Her gaze snags on the girls' bathroom door up ahead. "Speaking of cramps, let's make a stop in the bathroom real quick before class starts."

“Okay.”

“Have you started yet?”

Sadie asks me. “You usually do before me.”

“No.... haven't.”

I frown as I follow her into the bathroom, mentally calculating the last time I had my period. Last month like usual. I open my phone—got that back from my mom yesterday thank God—and check my period app to see that I should most definitely be on it right now. So why am I not?

“What the hell—”

I run right into the back of Sadie, who's come to a complete stop in the middle of the bathroom. “What's wrong?”

I ask, completely distracted as I stare at my phone screen. A text comes through from my boyfriend.

Easton: Hey just got here. Where are you?

Me: In the bathroom. Will come see you in a sec. “Look at the mirror, Harper. Just—holy shit! I'm gonna go off and kill a blonde bitch right now, I swear to God! You know Aisha is behind this.”

Sadie points at the mirror above the sinks and I glance up, staring at it, not comprehending at first. Until the letters come into focus and I read the words spray painted big and bold across the glass. Harper loves to suck big dick! “Oooh, I need to document this.”

Sadie's phone is out and she's taking endless photos from every angle possible while I just stand there, too shocked to move. “We need to report this Harp. Now.”

A toilet flushes and both our heads whip in the direction of the closed stall door. I thought we were alone in here. Sadie sends me a look, her eyes wide. I can only shrug in return. Whos in here with us?

The stall door suddenly smacks open and out walks... Julia.

With a giant smirk on her face. We're silent as she walks to the sink and turns on the water, dumping a bunch of soap in her hands before she starts washing them vigorously.

Her gaze meets ours in the mirror, right below the spray painted message.

"Why are people always talking mad shit about you, hmmm, Harper?"

she asks me, her expression one of pure innocence. "I don't get it."

"Who did this?"

Sadie marches right up to her, her entire body tense. "Did Aisha put you up to this?"

Julia calmly turns off the water and pulls a couple of paper towels from the dispenser, wiping her hands before tossing the crumpled paper in the trash. "Are you accusing me of writing that?"

She points at the words written on the mirror. "Fucking DUH, bitch."

Sadie takes a step closer, practically getting in Julia's face. "Who did this?"

"It wasn't me,"

Julia says, her voice firm. "Then it was Aisha."

"She's not even here."

Julia crosses her arms in front of her chest. "She's sick today."

Sadie takes a step back, her confused gaze going to mine. "L call bullshit,"

I say, finally coming to life. I can't let Sadie fight all of my battles. "It's finals week. She wouldn't miss school."

"She's got like, mono or something. I don't know. But she's really sick. She'll have to take her finals after winter break."

Julia sends us both a withering stare. "Not that it's any of your goddamn business."

"Who else would do this then?"

Sadie throws her hands up in the air, clearly frustrated. "No one else has the motive. Just Aisha. Or you."

"You really think all the girls in this school are thrilled for Harper that she snagged the hottest guy on campus?"

The unattainable Easton?

Please."

Julia rolls her eyes.

"There are girls who would probably kill for a chance at him. You're lucky all they're doing is writing crude messages about you on bathroom mirrors."

And with that last statement, Julia walks out of the bathroom, never once looking back. Sadie growls the moment she's gone. "She's so annoying."

I grab a bunch of paper towels and run water over them in the sink before I start scrubbing at the mirror. "Let's get rid of this."

Sadie tries to stop me. "Don't do that. It's evidence."

"Evidence of what?"

That people hate me because I'm dating Easton?

I don't need the reminder."

Turns out it wasn't spray paint but the washable stuff the cheer team always uses. It comes off pretty easy and I keep up the task. Eventually, Sadie joins me, her expression like stone. She's mad.

Well guess what?

I'm mad too. But I don't know what to do about it.

Chapter 128

Chapter 128

Easton

I'm at my locker right before first period when I'm practically tackled not just by my girlfriend, but her best friend too. And they're both talking a mile a minute. "You're never going to believe—"

"Spray painted on the mirror—"

"Julia was in there and she said Aisha's gone—"

"We got rid of it. I couldn't look at it any longer."

That last statement is from Harper, and she says it in such a sad way, my heart literally breaks for her.

From what I can tell, something awful was spray painted about Harper—again —this time on the mirror in the girls' bathroom. Anger rises and I clench my jaw so tight I'm afraid I might break it.

Why do they keep coming for my girl?

And who is it that keeps doing this?

The drama never fucking stops and I'm sick of it. Sick. Of. It. I grab hold of Harper's shoulders and gently shake her, needing her to pay attention to me. "Tell me what happened,"

I demand. She explains everything, starting from the beginning.

How they walked into the bathroom, spotted the rude message written on the mirrors, and how Julia was in there.

They confronted her but she denied having anything to do with it.

Of course. I'd deny everything too if I were her.

"She mentioned something about how all the girls are jealous of Harper because she's with you, but I call bullshit,' Sadie says as she grabs her phone and goes into her photos.

She pulls up an image and shows it to me, nearly thrusting her phone into my face. "Here's what it said."

I take her phone, staring at the photo. Harper loves to suck big dick! Is it wrong that I'm vaguely flattered it says big dick?

Because hey...it's true.

And it's also true that Harper enjoys sucking it. At least, I think she does— Sadie thwacks me on the arm.

So hard, I take a step away from her with a muttered, "Ow."

"What do you think is going on?"

Sadie asks, her voice rising. "Who the hell is doing this?"

"Aisha of course, I say without hesitation as I hand Sadie back her phone, then pull Harper in for a long hug.

She clings to me and I bury my face in her hair, breathing deep her unique scent.

She's over this, I can just feel it. I'm over it, too. I feel fucking awful that we can't shake this shit.

I wish I could protect her everywhere she goes, but I can't. I hate feeling helpless.

It's the fucking worst. The warning bell rings and Sadie dashes off in search of Ryan before they go to class.

I pull away slightly from Harper, reaching out to smooth the worry lines from her forehead. 'I'll take care of this.'

Harper doesn't look reassured by my promise. More than anything, she seems worried. Tired. So damn tired of it all. "How are we even going to figure out who did it?"

Aisha isn't here, according to Julia. Julia denied she did it—"

"I would too,"

I say, interrupting her. "Maybe Aisha put her up to it and she wasn't expecting you to walk into the bathroom like you did."

"She didn't seem bothered by us walking into the bathroom at all. When she came out of the stall, she was weirdly calm,' Harper explains.

I grin, trying to make light of it. Trying to cheer up my girl. "Maybe she was feeling good after taking a solid morning dump."

Harper makes a disgusted face and shoves at my shoulder, a laugh escaping her. "Ew. You're so gross."

"At least I made you laugh,"

I point out. Her laughter fades and her expression turns pensive. "You're right. You did."

She throws herself at me before I can slam my locker shut, squeezing me tight. ") don't know who to trust anymore."

"You can count on me,' I tell her, rubbing her back. "I've got you."

"L know,"

she murmurs. "You and Sadie and Ryan. That's it. You're the only people I can trust. Everyone else feels like a threat."

I'm glad she didn't include Blake in her list.

That guy is up to shady shit, I just know it. I can't prove it but damn, I can feel it. We finally separate and head to class.

I'm in Spanish and we already turned in our final project, so it's a class I don't have to stress over.

Thank God. Finals week has put Harper under enormous pressure, and I can't lie—it's been stressful for me too.

Now with Leigh not around to change my grades, I have to actually study and maintain solid scores. I'm not an idiot, but this shit is hard.

And I want to get into a good school. Harper and I discussed college a few weeks ago, right before we turned in our applications, and we applied to a few of the same schools.

That's some serious shit, us wanting to go to the same college. We haven't said it outright to each other, but we're both thinking it.

We're in this for the long haul. And not gonna lie, that's kind of scary.

Ryan cruises into my class at one point, sitting in one of the chairs in the back and I go to him.

"You hear about the spray paint message in the bathroom?"

I ask as I settle into the empty desk next to his. He nods, his lips tight. "Sadie told me. Who the fuck do you think it is now?"

"Aisha, via Julia. I don't care if she denied that she did it. I think she did."

I glance around the room, wishing she was in this class so I could stare at her. Intimidate the shit out of her. She'd deserve it for fucking with my girlfriend. "She might've."

Ryan hesitates for only a moment. "Could've been Blake."

"Could've been,' I agree. "Could've been any of these motherfuckers in this room, really."

"True."

I watch everyone, fighting the unease that wanted to take over me. Every time I think I've got it all figured out... Something—or someone—comes along and trips me up.

Chapter 129

Chapter 129

Harper

I'm in a shit mood for the rest of the day, barely able to concentrate on my final exams, which freaks me out. Yeah, just add another thing to my freak out list.

Like the fact that someone is still writing shitty messages about me at school.

That I think I've skipped my period—what the hell?

That I feel like shit still thanks to lack of sleep and everything else that's going on. I'm so over this year.

I swear the minute it's winter break, I'm going straight home and falling into bed. Maybe I'll sleep my way through the rest of the year, I don't know.

All I know is, I need some down time. Some drama free time too.

Don't know if that last one is possible, but a girl can dream.

We're out of school earlier than normal thanks to our finals schedule and I'm heading for the parking lot when I hear a deep male voice say my name. I turn to find Easton behind me, his gaze lifting at the last second, like he might've been checking out my butt. Knowing him, he probably was.

"What are you doing?"

I ask, trying to go for a flirty tone. He smiles, but his eyes are full of concern. For me. "Waiting for you. Want to come over to my place?"

I press my lips together, wishing I could say yes. "I should probably go straight home with Ryan. My parents are still unhappy with me thanks to the tree—"

Easton holds up both hands, silencing me. "Yeah, yeah. The tree incident. Don't say anything else."

My cheeks grow warm. It's still a touchy subject in my house, which is no surprise. "I wish I could go home with you."

"Why can't you?"

he asks, his voice soft. "Where are your Parents?"

"At work."

“And how are they going to know where you're at?”

“Find my phone. She's checking.”

I pause for dramatic flair. “Constantly.”

“I fucking hate that shit,”

he mutters, shaking his head. “Let me take you home then.”

“What do you mean?”

I frown. “Instead of riding home with Ryan, I'll drive you home. They won't check on you right away, will they?”

We can tell Ryan to go somewhere else and make it look like you got a ride with... I don't know. Sadie maybe?”

“She'll be with Ryan.”

Harper rolls her eyes, but I can tell she's into the idea. “Just—let me take you home. We need a little one on one time.”

He smiles, and I swear his eyes are glowing. “Let me help you forget all your troubles for a little bit.”

I raise my brows. “What's that supposed to mean?”

He flat out grins. “You'll see.”

Once we convince Ryan and Sadie to go somewhere else for a while, I climb into Easton's Jeep and he heads for our house.

He takes the long way, driving slow, which is incredibly unlike him, my hand in his and resting on his thigh as he cranks up the stereo once I plug in my favorite playlist.

Taylor Swift is blasting at full volume and I'm singing at the top of my lungs along with her song, throwing my head back and losing myself in the lyrics.

Her songs remind me of some sort of teen dream movie, and once I got involved with Easton, I felt like I was actually living one.

While it's been great, and I've had a good time with Easton, it's also been really hard. Maybe loving someone isn't supposed to be easy. The challenges only make us stronger, right?

That's what I tell myself.

By the time we're pulling into my driveway, I've stopped singing along with Taylor and Easton has turned down the volume.

He puts the Jeep in park, but doesn't shut off the engine. Instead, he turns toward me, his gaze warm as he studies me. "How did that feel?"

I frown. "How did what feel?"

"Taking the long way home and singing along with Taylor?"

Seemed therapeutic."

I realize that it was. My shoulders are relaxed. And I didn't think about finals or my future or Aisha and spray paint once. "It actually was."

He smiles, leaning back in his seat. "Good. That's all I want."

"What do you mean?"

I ask, though I'm pretty sure I know what he's saying. I just want to hear him actually say it. "I hate seeing you miserable and feeling like I can't do anything about it. I hate that people attack you when they don't even know you. Because if they knew you, they'd realize how great you are. You're sweet and thoughtful and kind. You're funny and sexy and while I know you didn't like what was written on the bathroom mirror, I have to admit something,"

he says. I brace myself. "What?"

"You really do seem to love sucking my—big dick."

He bursts out laughing and while I know I should be really, really angry about that, I'm laughing too.

"Come here," he murmurs once our laughter has calmed and I go to him, letting him kiss me until my head is spinning and I swear I see stars behind my closed lids.

His lips and tongue work some sort of magic over me and by the time he's pulling away, I can only sit there and stare at him in a stupor.

"There's my girl."

He reaches out and cups my cheek. I lean into his touch, wanting more. Wanting everything he could possibly give me. "Okay. I'll see you tomorrow."

He drops his hand and I blink at him repeatedly. "That's it. That's all we're going to do?"

"Well yeah. I didn't drive you home so I could fuck you real quick in the backseat. I was just trying to do something nice for you. Help you forget your troubles and stress for a little while."

I stare at him, overwhelmed with love for this boy. Man. My man. "Thank you," I whisper, fighting tears. "I love you."

"Love you too."

His smile is soft. "I wish I could do more for you."

"You've done enough,"

I reassure him, leaning in for another quick kiss. "This was perfect."

"You're perfect,"

he says, just before he kisses me again.

Chapter 130

Chapter 130

Easton

Winter break is upon us and I swear to God, I can breathe easier.

Helps that finals are over, and my girlfriend isn't so damn stressed out all the time.

Helps even more that her parents have loosened the leash they latched onto her after the Christmas tree incident, and they're letting her go out more.

Not too sure if she's telling them she's actually going out with me, though.

That's something I need to bring up to her soon, but for now, I'll take her any way I can get her.

As long as she's in a good mood.

And finally, she is.

Soam I. I pull into the gas station that's not too far from campus and park next to a pump.

The place is busy, full of cars and I notice the one parked on the other side of the pump I'm at.

It's familiar, and as I'm inserting my credit card into the machine, I notice the passenger seat and the backseat are full of boxes and belongings.

Like someone is moving.

Once I've got the gas situation handled, I lean against my car and wait for the tank to fill, checking my phone.

We're going to the movies and we're meeting at the theater, since Harper isn't ready to bring me back around the parents yet. I'm a little hurt over it, but I also understand.

I mean, their mom did catch me going down on their daughter, and that is some fucked up shit right there.

I'd rather pretend the moment never happened. Wipe that shit from my brain once and for all, but I know the next time I see their mom, it's going to be there, hovering between us.

Fuck my life, that was messed up. I scratch the back of my neck, my gaze snagging on the woman approaching the car full of stuff.

Her walk, the color of her hair, everything about her is familiar and I know in an instant who it is.

Leigh.

She spots me, a sneer forming on her face as she rolls her eyes. "You would be the last person I have to see before I leave this godforsaken town."

I slouch against the car, pretending I could give two shits about seeing her, though I can't help but be curious. "You're leaving?"

Leigh must've had to pay inside, because she's undoing her gas cap with jerky movements and shoving the gas pump nozzle into her tank so roughly the car rocks. "More like I'm being forced out."

I don't feel bad for her. Not one bit. She's a conniving little bitch who used me. At least I was able to use her too. "You get fired?"

"No, thanks to you," she mutters. "I had nothing to do with that. I didn't tell them shit."

Why I feel the need to reveal that to her, I don't know. "Sure."

She practically snarls at me. "My husband kicked me out of the house, you know."

"No shit?" I run my hand through my hair, bored already. "Guess I can't blame him. You were fucking around with a teenager."

"You're a pig,"

Leigh spits at me, already yanking the nozzle out of her tank and putting it away. "I hate you. I hope you rot in hell."

"Right back at you, babe. You're the one who messed with my head, you know. I was a minor back then. You broke the fucking law,"

I remind her. "And you enjoyed every minute of it, you little cocksucker."

She marches straight up to me and I push away from the car, standing my ground. "You think you're so smart?"

Always getting away with shit. Someday you're going to get found out for who you really are, and then what are you going to do?"

I frown, hating her words. What she's saying.

The intent behind them. "Shut up," I mutter, but it's like she doesn't even hear me. "You're nothing but a facade. A fake. Pretty face, I'll give you that."

Nice body.

Thick cock. But that's all you've got going for you. Up here?"

She taps her temple.

"Empty. Stupid. You won't get into a decent college, no matter how hard you try. Your grades don't measure up. You don't measure up. I'm afraid you're just aren't good enough for anyone."

I glare at her, trying to ignore the way her words make me feel.

How she knows where to stick it to me. I might've trusted her in the past, and admitted my worry over school, and how I fucked off all the time and never took it seriously.

She helped me. Made sure my test scores were up to par. Ensured my overall grades were stellar.

My parents never complained. My father told me I was a genius just like him.

I was on my way to achieving anything I could ever want. "Truth is painful, isn't it?"

I see it in your eyes. It's hitting you that I'm right. That you're not as smart as everyone thinks you are."

She takes a step closer, her voice lowering. "You might've used me for sex, Easton, but you also used me to look like an academic superstar and now that I'm gone?"

You're going to fail everything."

"Fuck off. I don't need you."

My voice is low, laced with fury, and the bitch actually laughs at me. "Good luck,"

she calls as she makes her way to her car and jumps into the driver's seat.

I watch her drive away, glancing up at the last second when I think I spot someone I recognize.

A flash of blonde hair is there, then gone.