

Chapter One

“Well?” Mickey asked.

I pulled the driver’s license out of my pocket and held it up for him to see.

“All right! Way to go, Jake. You got it!” he said. He gave me a high five.

“Did you have any doubts?” I asked.

“I figured you could drive, but a test is a test, and neither of us ever does so well with those.”

"This is one test I was ready for," I said.

"So now you have a driver's license. All you need is something to drive."

"Taken care of."

"It is?"

I nodded. "Come and have a look."

Mickey trailed after me out to the driveway.

"Your brother gave you his car?" Mickey asked in disbelief.

"Not gave. Lent."

"That is so cool."

"He said that I should have a car to drive the day I got my license, so he lent me his for tonight."

Mickey laughed. "You have the best big brother."

"He's okay."

"Okay? The only thing my brother, Andy, ever gives me is a hard time."

"I've seen you two together. It looks like you give more grief than you get."

"Haven't you ever heard that it's better to give than to receive?" Mickey smiled. "But I guess it's only fair you get to borrow it when you consider all the help you've given him with his car."

"It's not like he's forcing me. I love fooling around with cars. Besides, he's taught me a lot of things."

"You mean your brother knows more about cars than you do?" Mickey asked. I liked the way he said that. It was like he couldn't believe it was possible.

"He knows more, but he's two years older." I paused. "So, you want to go for a ride?"

"Yeah, of course...where to?"

"I was thinking that maybe we could go for a little cruise along the Lakeshore strip, or even go to the Burger Barn and pick up a burger and fries."

"I am so there," Mickey said. "We are going to see and be seen. Let me get changed." Mickey rushed up the driveway back toward his house.

"What's wrong with what you have on?"

“Shoes would be a good start, but the rest is only okay for hanging around in my basement. Let me get changed and do something with my hair.”

“Hurry up!” I yelled after him. “We don’t have all night!”

I wasn’t joking. We didn’t have all night. My brother was getting off work at the grocery store at nine thirty, and I had to have the car home by ten so he could go out.

I climbed into the car—climbed in behind the *wheel* of the car. I turned the key in the ignition and the motor came to life. It made a gentle purring sound. I revved the engine slightly and the purring got louder and more powerful.

This wasn’t just any car. This was *the* car.

I’d worked with Andy to redo the engine—torqued it so it put out over 300 horsepower. We’d redone the exhaust system to deal with the extra power. We’d overhauled the suspension to get the frame

lower to the ground. It allowed it to be more stable at high speeds, especially around corners. My brother wanted this car to fly but not actually take flight.

He’d put on special lights—all customized front and back. Then he’d added a rear spoiler, and last week we’d tinted all the windows. It was cool to be able to look out but not have people see who was looking at them. Now we were doing the final work—redoing the body and putting on a new paint job. The body hadn’t been bad—it had a few rust spots and a couple of little dents and scratches—but he was redoing it completely. We’d taken off all the emblems and letters that identified the make of the car. Andy said that Chevy may have made the car originally, but he’d made it better and he didn’t want to share credit with them. There were patches of body filler and primer paint, and it had all been sanded down in preparation for the new paint—the red paint—that was being put on next week. Red did