

**COMPULSIVE**  
**(Excerpt)**

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# COMPULSIVE

Lies hurt.

Lies destroy.

But some lies protect...and heal. At least that's what Gray Donovan had hoped for. She's a compulsive liar using it as a defense mechanism to survive life and her shattered past.

When she starts seeing therapist Daniel Harrison, she can no longer deny the truths that have haunted her for so many years. She must now stand and face them.

Opening up to Daniel leaves her exposed and vulnerable. When her soul is bared to him, she can't contain the attraction or the feelings he elicits.

Daniel feels drawn to his new patient, but he knows he will have to fight it in order to resurrect Gray from her demons. His will and his judgment are tested when he must overcome his own doubts and face his own secrets.

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I'd pressed the damn light under her name outside the lobby door ten minutes earlier, and I was still sitting in the meat locker, shivering. The other four lights were off in the empty waiting room. That pissed me off about the place. You never knew what was going on or who hid behind closed doors, so by the time it was your turn, you were already in a foul mood. What an inventive way for shrinks to create return business.

The door pushed open, and a Clark Kent looking guy stepped out holding a screwdriver. He gave me a nod as he walked by and over to a box on the wall. He used the screwdriver to jimmy the box open. "Are you cold?" he asked, not turning around.

Yeah, it was like *The Shining* in there. "No...I'm fine."

"Then why were you rubbing your arm?"

"Tetanus shot," I said, reaching for my arm again. "Still a little sore."

He looked over his shoulder at me, and one corner of his mouth turned up. He wasn't bad looking. I pictured him pulling his shirt open to reveal a giant "S" and bulging muscles. "Well," he said, turning back to the box. "The owner of this building keeps this locked, so we won't mess with the temperature."

"It's nice you respect their wishes."

"They don't realize they're actually wasting money. Plus, we get a lot of complaints about the cold and well..."

"You wouldn't want to have to slap a straitjacket on one of these crazies."

"I didn't say that. We want the people who visit this office to be as comfortable and relaxed as possible." He closed the box and headed back to the door. He stopped when he saw the light. "You're a patient of Dr. Wallace?"

"No...but I do need to see her." I stood and walked toward him, drawing his attention to me. His gaze landed on the top button of my snug black top. In my heels, he still had a good four inches on me, so I guessed him to be around six-two. "Is she in?" I asked before his gaze bounced up to mine and then down to the screwdriver in his hand.

"I'm sorry. She's not. Did you have an appointment?"

Then, he looked up at me with a pair of mesmerizing midnight blue eyes that made my throat dry up. I swallowed and upgraded him from *not bad looking* to *sort of gorgeous*. "I don't... but it's kind of important."

"Do you have the number to her service?"

"I..." I glanced down to the phone in my hand. "My battery's dead," I said, tucking it into my back pocket before he could see it.

He narrowed his eyes at me, but he didn't know quite who he was dealing with. I returned the same look back to him.

"All right," he said, holding back a grin. "Why don't you come back to my office, and you can use my phone."

"Or, could I leave a note on her door?" I'm guessing innocent doe eyes don't work on therapists, but mine instinctively came out when I wanted something. "I'd really like her to know that I was here." Otherwise Dr. Buzzkill wouldn't believe me. One of the many downsides to people knowing you're a liar.

He pulled the door wide and stood, waiting for me to pass through.

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“I really appreciate this, Mr..?” I said before moving.

“Dr.” He nodded. “Dr. Harrison.”

I walked toward him, and then just for the hell of it, I glanced up and gave him a sexy smile. “Thank you, Dr. Harrison.” I wanted to see if it would be easy to rattle Clark Kent’s cage.

His response was surprisingly impressive. His eyes challenged mine as if to say *nice try*, and then he gestured to the open doorway, to which I immediately obliged. I should have known these shrinks were always in character.

I stopped at the end of the hallway, so he could lead me to his office. As he unlocked his door, I took the opportunity to check out his backside. I really did need psychiatric help. Or, maybe I simply wanted this hot Superman to rescue me. His khaki pants were snug enough for me to see a pleasant shape beneath the material. He topped it with a dark blue casual polo shirt that told me he didn’t just sit on his ass listening to people’s problems. I briefly wondered what he did to build up that chest.

The sight of his office as he swung the door open pulled me from my virtual sexcapdes. I was starting to realize I was getting jipped with Dr. Wallace, whose office was like sitting in your grandma’s living room—knitted blanket over small tweed sofa, wooden rocking chair where she sat across from me, and the constant smell of an air plug-in that could only be described as a twenty-year-old bottle of cheap perfume.

He left the door open, possibly because I wasn’t a patient. “Wow, nice place you have here, Doc,” I said, stepping into the spacious room. The first thing I noted were the two large, floor-to-ceiling windows at the back behind one of two burgundy sofas placed in an L shape. Across from each sofa were two black vinyl chairs and in the middle of the four pieces sat a decent looking throw rug. This was more of a set-up for an intimate gathering than for lunatics to pour their heart out.

He ignored my comment and headed toward a lamp, which stood on a side table next to one of the sofas. “One moment.” He switched it on even though the sun hadn’t set yet and was still providing light to the room. Then, he strode over to the far corner where a small oak desk sat, dwarfed by a huge bookshelf. I assumed he sought a pad and paper as he opened a drawer, but I no longer cared. I moved to the window and gazed outside to the tall leafy trees billowing against the summer breeze.

“Uh, miss...” I heard him say behind me. The place was more appealing than my apartment, and I was in no hurry to leave. I took my time taking in the view before he spoke again. “I’m sorry...I didn’t get your name.”

“Sky,” I said before I had a chance to think. *Damn*. Something he can easily check with Dr. Wallace. I turned and walked over to his desk. “Um...Gray.”

He’d set a pad and pen next to a cordless phone at the edge of his desk. The rest of the workspace was tidy, spotless, and borderline OCD. Exactly how I would have arranged it. I broke into a wide grin, holding back a chuckle when I noticed a pair of black plastic glasses sitting next to his cell phone. It was all I could do not to call Clark out about his secret identity.

“Is there something you find amusing, Miss Gray?”

“It’s just Gray. Sorry. And...” I started to speak again when the already open door pushed out further.

Right when things were getting interesting, Dr. Downer walked in. I didn’t even get to try out his couch.