

HART JESSUP

Hart Jessup is trouble just waiting to happen. He's in his early 20's, lean and muscular, with looks to spare and a cynical edge that comes from being the son of the most hated man in town, Roger Thorpe.

Growing up, Hart only knew his father through the letters his mother left behind after she died working for government Special Services overseas. The man she described was a hero, someone who had continually put himself on the line for his country, someone to be proud of. After Fate threw father and son together, Hart quickly learned that the hero part of Roger was subordinated by grander plans of a personal dynasty. He witnessed first-hand his father's greed and cruelty. Burned by love and embittered by the experience with Roger, Hart split town and, after two years, has only just returned to settle the score.

Women are drawn to Hart because he's dangerous, because he's the bad boy their mothers always warned them about. His smile is slow in coming, but when it does, it melts hearts. He's a charmer when he wants to be, could be a lot of things if he wanted to be. Men are wary of him because they sense he has nothing left to lose. He's good with his hands and a crack horseman, with the smarts to go a long way if he cared to, if he could learn to believe in something again ... and that thing just may come in the unlikely form of his father's lover, Dinah Marler.

HART AUDITION SCENE

JESSUP PORCH --- HART/DINAH

(HART IS WORKING OUT WHEN AN ANGRY
DINAH COMES BLASTING THROUGH THE
DOOR ON A TEAR)

DINAH

Are you proud of yourself?

HART

Come on in.

DINAH

Humiliating your father like that, in front of all
Those people?

HART

He'll get over it.

DINAH

All the time you were gone, Hart, he's dreamt of
Finding you and making things right. Of working
Side by side with you, of being a father to you and
You practically spit on him in public.

HART

Why are you here Dinah?

DINAH

You're not the only one who's ever been hurt
Or disappointed by someone.

HART

No, that's right. You're the poor, little rich girl.
Given up at birth to a band of traveling carnies.
Life in a trunk or a wagon full of freaks. That
Should have prepared you for bedding down with
The likes of my dear, old dad.

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DINAH

**I want you to stop punishing Roger. If nothing
Else, just leave him alone.**

HART

**I'd think twice about that. I'm the only person in
Town who's a bigger louse than he is. Hell, I make
Him look good.**

DINAH

Why do you want to do this?

HART

**Roger wasn't humiliated tonight. That would mean
He'd have to give a damn.**

DINAH

**I mean why do this to yourself. You just come off
Looking petty and vindictive. Or have you been
Playing this angry young man routine for so long
You can't tell anymore.**

HART

Whatever ...

DINAH

**(she moves closer to him) Your father's not the
Ogre you make him out to be. He loves you.
He loves me.**

HART

Right. Don't worry. I'm not going to screw up your plans.

DINAH

Loves me.

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HART

Roger doesn't love! He owns. He uses. He infects. He is a disease. He took this land, took my grandfather's Dignity, killed him as sure as if he put a gun to his Head.

DINAH

That's not how it happened.

HART

Look at this house, Dinah. Now that it's one of Dad's Possessions. Take a good look. The rot's crept all The way up through the floor joists. It's being eaten Away from the inside. That's what happens. He Gets into your life and wipes out everything.

DINAH

Well, I love him.

HART

Sure you do. While the money lasts. Or until Something better comes along.

DINAH

You arrogant son of a – (SHE SLAPS HIM AND STARTS TO LEAVE, BUT HART GRABS HER)

HART

Does he make your heart stop in your chest when you See him across the room? Do you find it hard to Concentrate at work, suddenly realize you've driven Ten blocks past your destination because he's in Your head all the time? Do you wake up at night Having dreamed his arms were around you, feel an Aching in your chest when you realize he's not there? (HE KISSES HER AND SHE STARTS TO RESPOND, THEN JERKS BACK, CONFUSED)

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DINAH

I shouldn't have come here.

HART

**But you couldn't stay away. Your curiosity got the
Better of you.**

DINAH

You're a real bastard.

HART

**Yeah. (DINAH TURNS AND EXITS)
And you'll be back.**

END