

# *In Other Words, Love*

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**T**HE CORVETTE IDEA BACKFIRED. WHEN Trent pulled the sleek red machine out of the garage, a part of him hoped Kate would be wowed by the price tag of the car and the clear message that he was successful. It was like he was fifteen again and trying to impress his crush. He pulled up to the curb by her apartment, jumped out and opened the passenger's side door.

"Cool car," she said as she hopped inside. By the time he came around to the driver's side and slipped behind the wheel, Kate already had her notebook and pen out and ready. "So, I had a list of questions—"

That was it? *Cool car?* "You know this is a limited edition, right?"

"What is?"

"The car." Okay, now he was clearly fishing for compliments. What was wrong with him? But his mouth kept running on, like a babbling brook of nerves. "It's a 2009 GTI Championship Edition. Only six hundred were made, a hundred in each color."

"Cool." She flipped pages in her notebook and scribbled something in the margins. "Your parents still own the nursery, right?"

"You're not impressed by the car?"

Kate glanced up. "It's a cool car, way cooler than my Honda, which is also a 2009, but definitely not a

championship edition.” She shrugged. “I don’t know, I guess cars never really impress me. I care about who’s driving the car more than about what’s under the hood.”

That made him pause and realize that it was silly to think a car was the answer to making Kate swoon at his feet. Besides, why did he want to make her swoon anyway? There was no swooning in a business deal, and that was all this was.

The social media firestorm was still simmering, and although Trent was tempted to take the picture down, Sarah had cautioned against it. She said removing the photo would create more questions and speculation than leaving it there. He checked the comments every once in a while to see if anyone had put it together, but so far, all he saw was rumors about him sneaking away with a famous actress or celebrity. Laughable thought, given Trent’s ridiculously busy schedule.

Except, here he was, taking a day off to visit his parents with Kate, something he couldn’t find time for before. Before Kate had come back into his life.

“What you said about the car is a good answer.” And, if he was honest with himself, the exact answer he’d wanted to hear. Sure, he’d love it if Kate fainted at the sight of his expensive car, but he’d known far too many women—and men—who’d never seen past the Corvette’s pedigree. Keeping things professional meant the car was a means to get to their meeting, nothing more.

“But...if you can open her up when we get to the highway, I’d love to see how fast this thing goes.” Kate grinned and slipped her seatbelt into the lock.

“You’ve got it.” He shifted into first gear and pulled away from the curb, the car’s engine a low, patient growl as Trent navigated the side streets that led to Route 5. As soon as they hit the highway—nearly empty in the middle of a workday—Trent floored it, and the anxious Vette lurched forward, roaring down the road, the engine rumbling loud and happy.

Kate braced a hand on the roof and laughed. “Oh, my! That’s incredible! So fast!”

“Scary?” He flicked a glance in her direction. Excitement lit her face.

Kate nodded. “A little.”

“Just wanted you to see what she could do.” Trent slowed the car until it hit the speed limit, because the last thing he needed was a speeding ticket or an accident. Most days, the Corvette sat in garage under a tarp, so the momentary burst of speed must have been just as much of a shock to the engine as it had been to Kate.

Okay, so maybe she was impressed by the Vette, and maybe this whole thing was a little more than just business to him too.

“Can I ask you something?” she said.

“Sure.”

“Why do you have a car that’s too fast to drive? I mean, what’s the sense in that?” She glanced around at the leather interior, the pristine dash and intricate stitching. Every inch of the car had been meticulously maintained, giving it that just-out-of-the-showroom look, even more than a decade after it had come out of the factory. “I mean, it’s not to impress girls or anything, right?”

“No. Of course not.” Had he said that too fast?

Trent rested his wrist on the top of the steering wheel and shot Kate a quick glance. “Well, maybe a little. Did it work?”

She laughed again. “Maybe a little.”