

Jeanette Cooper



Desperate  
Choices

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by

Jeanette Cooper

Free e-book edition

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# **DESPERATE CHOICES**

"Welcome"

Synopsis:

Rochelle Rathbone flirts with danger and becomes involved with Tobias Chandler, Miami drug czar; thus, setting the stage for horrors she never knew existed until after their marriage. Guarded around the clock in his Miami mansion, she becomes his prisoner. She devises a desperate plan and escapes, knowing Tobias will come after her. She meets and falls in love with Michael Matheson. She knows there are only two things that will stop his pursuit of her—her death or his...

## Prologue

### **Miami, Florida**

Seventeen year-old Rochelle Rathbone walked out of the Miami Mall. Her hands and arms were laden with packages containing new clothing, purchased for use in the last weeks of her senior year in high school. Locating her mother's car, she put her shopping bags on the back seat, and then slid under the steering wheel.

"Drive carefully. Watch the speed limit. Watch out for other drivers," Rochelle's mother cautioned when handing over the car keys.

"Mama, I know how to drive," Rochelle declared with her usual defensiveness.

Settling comfortably on the driver's seat, Rochelle turned on the radio. Tuning to a station she liked, she turned up the volume. Cranked the car, she glanced to the left and to the right, trying to see around the rear end of cars that flanked her car. She didn't see any moving vehicles, so she pushed the gear in reverse, planted her foot on the accelerator too hard, and went flying backwards.

The sound of metal crashing against metal rang in her ears even above the blast of music on the car radio. The impact thrust her forward, banging her head on the steering wheel. A dizzy spell grabbed her, making her vision fuzzy.

Not until her car door was jerked open and an angry voice shouted, “Why in the hell don’t you watch where you’re going,” did she start regaining her equilibrium.

“What?” she muttered, touching her hand to her forehead where it hit the steering wheel. She felt a big bump there.

The angry voice softened. “Are you all right?”

“What?”

With a sigh of impatience, A hand flew past her and turned off the car radio. “I asked if you’re all right.”

“I think I am,” she replied, turning to look at him, and seeing a businessman dressed in an expensive suit with a modest tie and a snow-white silk shirt.

“Here, let me have a look,” he said impatiently, pulling her hand away from her forehead and touching the lump with his fingers.

“Ouch!” Rochelle yelled, jerking away when he pressed too hard.

“You probably need to have that x-rayed,” he suggested.

Rochelle looked at him, and then twisting in her seat she looked at his car parked behind her. She slid out of the driver’s seat and put her feet on the pavement, silently praying her mother’s car hadn’t sustained damage, or else it might be the end of her driving days.

Still feeling dizzy, she staggered and fell against the car, raising her hand to her forehead.

The man reached out to support her. “Are you sure you’re okay?”

“I think I am,” she said, moving toward the back of the car where her car bumper lay against a big dent in the side of the man’s car. A cursory examination of her vehicle showed a broken taillight and a nearly unnoticeable dent on one end of the bumper. “Oh God, my mother will kill me,” she whispered in near tears. “What am I going to do?”

The man shook his head. “I’m going to pull your car forward so I can move mine out of the traffic area and park it.”

Before Rochelle could object, he was already sliding under the wheel of her mother’s car, cranking it, and driving it forward into the parking space.

“I’m so sorry,” Rochelle said to the man after he moved his car out of the roadway.

“Do you have insurance?”

Her face fell in a worried expression before she blurted out anxiously. “Please don’t file a claim against my mom’s insurance. I have a little money saved, and if it isn’t enough, I’ll get a job and pay you every penny it takes to fix your car.”

“Miss, I’m sure your mother will be so happy to have you home in one piece her damaged car won’t bother her in the least.”

“You don’t know my mother. She’ll never let me drive again. I’ve got to get the tail light fixed before I go home.”

He looked her over carefully, from head to toe and liked what he saw. A lazy smile softened his features. “I tell you what—

why don't I drive your car and take you somewhere for a drink and we'll decide how best to handle this."

Rochelle nodded agreeably, eager to do just about anything to keep her mother from learning about her wreck. She didn't think anything was wrong with her going with the man to a restaurant or soda shop, not if he was willing to work with her on a payment plan.

Instead, he took her to a disco club where everyone seemed to know him.

"My name is Tobias Chandler," he said, reaching his hand across the table after they took a booth in a dimly lit area.

Rochelle took his hand. "Rochelle Rathbone," she said timidly. "I can't stay long. I have to get the tail light fixed."

Tobias ordered a coke for Rochelle and a scotch and water for himself. "How's that bump on your head?" he asked, far more friendly now than he was initially.

Rochelle sent him a timid grin. "It hurts, but I think it will feel much better if you're willing to let me pay for the damages to your car on a time-payment plan."

He grinned as his eyes shifted over her alabaster skin, her full red lips, and her lovely youthful figure with firm breasts. He shifted his attention to her hair, a glorious shade of auburn red with golden highlights. It hung down upon her slender shoulders in dancing waves and curls. Tobias Chandler decided he wanted Rochelle Rathbone, and he always got what he wanted.

“I think we can work something out,” he said, reaching across the table to touch her hand.

She sent him a wide, dazzling smile, her pink lips looking soft, moist and inviting. Girlishly, she grabbed his hand and clung to it. “Oh, thank you. Mother would never have let me drive her car again if she learned I had a wreck. I must get the taillight fixed before I go home.”

“I know where you can take it. It’ll be repaired quickly, and then you and I can talk about how you plan to pay me,” he remarked slyly, hinting at something far more intimate than money.

## Chapter One

Driving her shiny new car, the graduation present from her parents, Rochelle drove to the address Tobias gave her. Earlier, he had called her on her private phone and invited her to his home for the first time. She drove through a neighborhood that flaunted million dollar homes with gated entrances until she came to the house number she sought. She pulled into the driveway and stopped. A stately mansion, secured by a six-foot fence with spikes around the top, had a wrought-iron gate with a small gatehouse. She gazed in awe at the spacious lawns on each side of the long driveway leading up to a huge modern structure of mortar, stone, steel, and plate glass windows reflecting the blue sky.

At the entrance, a guard stepped from the small gatehouse. He pushed a button and the gates opened with an electrical whirring sound. “Miss Rathbone, drive forward, please. Mr. Chandler is expecting you.”

A bright smile lit Rochelle’s girlish face, and she drove forward with a sense of expectancy. Awed by such grandeur, she stopped in front of the elegant structure with fascinated interest. She opened the car door, climbing out when she spied Tobias coming out to greet her.

“Is this all yours?” she blurted out childishly. Looking upward, she saw the outer walls of the house rising to a height of at least three stories.

Tobias ignored the question, and kissed her. “Come inside and I’ll show you around.” His white teeth flashed behind a wide smile and he seemed genuinely happy to see her, even though they had been together a number of times since their initial meeting. All their visits had been hands off and friendly. Now, she had just had her eighteenth birthday and was at the legal age of consent.

The tour led directly up the spacious winding stairs to his elegantly decorated bedroom with a king sized bed and beautiful furnishings, Sliding glass doors opened onto a balcony. Inside the room, Tobias reached his arms around Rochelle and kissed her. His hands moved over her body, taking liberties beyond the timid familiarities exercised over the past few weeks. The age restriction no longer applied.

“I’ve been waiting a long time for this day, baby. You know I want you ,” he said, his eyes drinking in her lovely, creamy smooth complexion.

Rochelle smiled, feeling self-important and her ego pumped up because Tobias desired her. Everything about him thrilled her. A simple nod of her head indicated her consent.

With easy abandon, Tobias began undressing Rochelle. He relieved her of her clothing, and shed his own. His steel-gray eyes scanned her nakedness, the act shaming and thrilling her at once. His hands seemed to be everywhere. A spark of desire struck like lightning as he walked her backward toward the bed, pushing her down until she lay on her back. She had been looking forward to this moment. Having Tobias fondle and entice her over the weeks she had known him, a strong need had developed and begged for satiation. A thrill of anticipation raced all through her, while tension tightened her muscles causing her to recline on the bed like a stiff board.

His hands slid across her breasts and along the curves of Rochelle's body to send sensuous chills along the column of her spine. He kissed her until her lips burned with his kisses. He trailed a chain of kisses down to one nipple then the other. The kisses didn't stop there, but followed a path down to her stomach and beyond. Rochelle's heart pounded thunderously to her ears.

"Relax, baby. Just relax and enjoy it. I'm going to make you feel so good." He fondled her round breasts to prove it and watched her tiny rosebud nipples rise to delicate pink peaks.

Rochelle was too breathless to speak. She nodded her head, her eyes beseeching him, not knowing what else to expect, but her body was attuning itself to all he did.

“You want this, don’t you, baby?” he asked hoarsely, his hands and fingers enticing her as never before over the entirety of her shapely body.

Rochelle’s green eyes stretched open wide, resembling a frightened doe. Her response to Tobias’s question was a yes that sounded more like a squeak.

“You have a beautiful body,” he whispered, his voice sounding strangely husky. His hands explored her everywhere, touching, feeling, and possessively plundering every inch of her. He slid his fingers up the inside of her thighs. He bent his head again to her lips, while his hand and fingers took liberties with every valley and curve. Although tense, Rochelle became aware of the natural response of her body beneath his bold caresses.

Stimulated by the fiery intensity of his need of her, Tobias moved between her legs positioning himself on top of her. She lay beneath him, still and unmoving. Then he entered her, gently and slowly this first time, finally sending a stabbing thrust to deflower her youth.

“So good, so good,” he groaned hoarsely in her ear just before his explosive release.

He groaned, jerked, and shuddered, letting his full weight rest upon her. Unable to breathe, Rochelle pushed her hands against his shoulders, and he rolled off her, totally spent. He spread out his arms and legs in loose repose with no thought for modesty. Rochelle pulled the sheet up to cover her, diverting her attention to the ceiling.

Rochelle felt needy. She had reached a high point that felt like pure ecstasy in the making, and then nothing when Tobias

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