
SECRETS

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Published by Blushing Books
An Imprint of
ABCD Graphics and Design, Inc.
A Virginia Corporation
977 Seminole Trail #233
Charlottesville, VA 22901

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eBook ISBN: 978-1-63954-292-5

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Cover Art by ABCD Graphics & Design

This book contains fantasy themes appropriate for mature readers only. Nothing in this book should be interpreted as Blushing Books' or the author's advocating any non-consensual sexual activity.

Prologue

Stretching my neck to read the glowing red numbers on the digital clock, I heard the shower running in the bathroom. The love of my life, who was usually awake by four in the morning, not only ran his personal life like a tight ship, but he also insisted his employees work together as a well-oiled machine. So, it wasn't a surprise I woke up feeling a bit guilty about stopping in to see Chef Danny yesterday. My plan was to skip lunch and then innocently stop by the kitchen where I knew he'd be working on dinner menus. Danny's schedule was predictable when it came to his job as head chef at Grossman's and lucky for me, Ari had appointments with vendors in town all day. It seemed the perfect opportunity to find out what Danny's secret was, and I was going to seize the moment to speak with him alone. Naturally, Ari had asked me to mind my own business where Danny's past was concerned, and I'd done the complete opposite.

Imagine that.

My handsome husband raised a dark eyebrow as he emerged from the bathroom wearing gray jogging pants. "What were you thinking about, sweetie?"

“Nothing specific. So many things happened yesterday.”

“Ahh. You were quite the busy bee.”

I swerved my head to meet his intense gaze. “What do you mean?”

Ari’s wink was profound.

“Are you referring to my conversation with Chef Danny?” Though it was human nature to defend myself, I was obviously knee deep in a vat full of trouble. “I looked into the kitchen, and he didn’t seem busy, so...”

A lopsided smile slowly formed on his stunning, unshaven face as he made himself comfortable next to me on the bed. “When he’s ready, he’ll come to you.”

“You told me not to ask but...”

“But you decided to interrogate him anyway.”

“It wasn’t an interrogation. I just gave him an opportunity to tell me what happened.”

He ran a hand through his damp wavy hair. “Danny came to me after you spoke with him.”

“Of course, he did. So, what did he say?”

“Jennie, you need to stop playing detective.”

My fingers rapidly tapped the firm mattress. What in the hell was Danny’s big secret?

His eyes narrowed as he watched my impatient demeanor. “Like I’ve said many times, when he’s ready to share with you, he will.” The kiss he placed on my forehead was sweet, but his nonsense tone told an entirely different tale.

“Are you angry with me?”

“Anger isn’t the appropriate word for how I’m feeling, but I am disappointed you blatantly disobeyed me.”

“Can’t you let me off the hook?”

“Let’s see. You went behind my back and did something I expressly told you not to. Should you be off the hook?”

Successfully, I stopped a massive eyeroll. “I’m assuming that was a rhetorical question.”

He tipped up my chin with two fingers. “What should we do about this?”

“You aren’t thinking...”

“Right now, I’d say a sound spanking would be well-deserved,” he said sternly. “Don’t you agree?”

My head dipped as we sat in a moment of silence. Then he cupped my face in his large hands. “I’m waiting, young lady.”

“I was wrong, and I’m sorry.”

“I’m sure you are, but you’ll still be eating your breakfast sitting on a tender backside.”

As he positioned himself on the edge of the bed, I knew my sad doggie eyes were not going to dig me out of the proverbial hole I’d dug for myself.

He patted his thigh. “Let’s get this over with Jennie Lee.”

Moving at a snail’s pace, I got on my knees and knelt beside him on the bed.

“Now then, are we talking about remorse or regret?” His voice was deep and unwavering. “You know there’s a difference.”

My shoulders slumped as he helped bend me over his lap. “Remorse.”

“Good answer,” he noted nonchalantly, folding my long T-shirt above my ass.

I felt my globes twitch as he firmly squeezed them in his huge palms. “Does my naughty girl get to keep her panties on during a spanking, or is she spanked on her bare tushy?” Naturally, he chose the most embarrassing dialogue he could think of, hoping my fair cheeks would radiate with heat.

As always, it worked like a charm.

“She’s spanked on her bare bottom, Daddy.”

Chapter 1

February 13th – one week earlier

It was the day before our wedding, and snowflakes had been falling from the darkened sky all morning. “I’ve heard rain on your wedding day is lucky, but what about snow?” My tone was overflowing with worry as I looked out the window of our cottage.

“Good thing we’re staying in the hotel tonight. It would be difficult for you to walk up this road in high heels.” My future husband knew I’d been hiding my obvious anxiety with silly weather chatter, but he continued the conversation anyway. “If you’re stressing over our officiant traveling from Manhattan, Joe shouldn’t have any trouble getting here on time.”

“It’s not really the snow that’s worrying me.”

He took me in his arms and planted a kiss on the top of my head. “What’s going on?”

“Never mind. I’m being silly,” I managed, tears blurring my vision.

“Hmm, maybe we should talk before we walk up to the hotel for breakfast.”

Although it was usually best to tell him the truth, this was not the way I wanted our special weekend to begin. “I’m probably an overly emotional bride...”

But he knew better and led me to the couch. “Nonsense, Jennie Lee. Something’s bothering you, and we both know it’s not healthy to keep it inside.”

Wiping my teary eyes with the back of one hand, I snuggled next to his brawny body. Yes, it was going to be an odd conversation for a bride to have with her groom a day before their wedding, but I proceeded anyway. “W-Will you still be my Daddy? Will things change between us once we’re married?”

His large, comforting arm wrapped around my shoulders. “Nothing in our relationship will change, sweetie. Not unless you...”

“Nope. I like things just the way they are. You’re the Daddy I always needed, and you’ll be the husband I’ve always dreamed of.”

“Even when I position your bare tushy over my lap?” Ari’s chuckle rumbled deep in his chest. “I remember your first bare bottom spanking as though it was yesterday.”

My cheeks heated as he raised my chin. *I had fabricated a stomachache to get out of Nancy Bee’s cookie class. In retrospect, it wasn’t my smartest move. But I think the honest heart to heart conversation we had about our past was the beginning of our relationship.*

“We were meant for each other, Jennie. And I don’t want you to be afraid to tell me how you’re feeling—no matter what the consequences might be. Understood?”

I inclined my head. “Daddy?”

“Hmm?”

“No one in this resort knows the type of relationship we have, right? I mean, you never spilled the beans to Natalie or Danny...”

He tapped the tip of my nose. "It's our little secret, young lady. I promise."

"Okay," I huffed through a short sigh. "Just checking."

"Since that's all sorted out, let's get your snow boots on. There must be a couple of inches out there by now."

"There shouldn't be a problem with a few sentimental tears today, girlfriend." Natalie took out a tissue and blotted underneath my eyes. "But we can't be certain how effective this waterproof mascara will be if you keep this up."

"I'll take your warning under advisement," I joked, knowing my waterworks would probably flow for the next couple of days.

Natalie and Danny walked down the staircase arm in arm, approaching their assigned places in the large party room. Then Ari escorted me down the staircase, and I peered outside the ceiling to floor hotel windows to check out the picturesque view. Mesmerized by the snow-covered trees in the courtyard, I noticed there was just the right amount of light for a sparkling effect. Somehow the romantic scene on the night before Valentine's Day had my mind reeling back to my father, the consummate bully who loved to ridicule his daughter. For the second time that evening, tears filled my eyes, and Ari was well-aware of my intense emotions.

"Jennie, my love," he whispered in my ear, "Joe's about to speak."

Fuck. It was the night before our wedding, and I was an emotional wreck. I needed to pay attention to our officiant's instructions.

"Tomorrow when everyone is in their place, I'll make a brief statement regarding your vows, and then you'll face each other to read them. After the vows, we'll have the exchange of rings. Is everyone in agreement with my plan?"

We all bobbed our heads, and the room was brimming with smiles.

“And now on to dinner!” Ari shouted.

As we entered the dining room, there was a long buffet table covered in a starched, white cloth, and on each gold-rimmed plate sat a rolled black napkin. I remembered this table presented in a similar festive manner on Christmas Eve, and while I counted twenty-five place settings, Ari put his hands around my waist to pull me close. “I think the idea of inviting all our wedding guests to the dinner party was awesome.”

“And everyone was thrilled to be included,” Danny added, walking out of the kitchen to stand beside us.

“The last time I saw this table set with fancy gold rimmed plates, we feasted on the seven fishes for Christmas. But who could resist one of your famous cheeseburgers?”

“Your suggestion to keep this dinner rustic and simple was superb, Jennie.”

Ari grinned as he nodded. “The last thing we need is two fancy wedding parties.”

“We’ll start with a choice of salads, and then our servers will take each individual order. Our guests will have the choice of a burger prepared to their liking with all the fixings, a Philly cheesesteak, deep fried coconut shrimp, or a bowl of lobster mac and cheese.”

“With French fries, Chef?”

Danny winked. “I’d never forget the bride’s favorite side dish.”

“And for dessert?”

“Nancy Bee has arranged long oval trays of her signature chocolate chip peanut butter cookies. Naturally, she baked them this morning, so they’re all fresh and delicious.”

“Okay, Danny,” Natalie announced, watching the guests stream through the opened double wooden doors. “We all know how you love to chatter about food. But right now, we need to

belly up to the bar so you can give a toast to the bride and groom.”

“May I have your attention, please?” Danny said, raising his voice above the noisy crowd. “As I look around at the smiling faces of friends who are here at this dinner, it warms my heart that Ari and Jennie live within a wonderful, close community. To receive such support from people you not only work with, but respect is truly invaluable. Believe me when I say this wedding would not be the same without all of you. Let’s raise a glass to Ari and Jennie. We wish them all the happiness in their new life together.”

After mouthing a hearty thank you to Danny for the toast, I promptly downed a glass of champagne. “Ooh, delicious choice on the bubbly, Ari.”

“I want you to relax and have fun tonight, bubala, but remember you’re not used to drinking. Yes, it’s a festive dinner and you should absolutely enjoy a glass of champagne, but you shouldn’t drink too much on an empty stomach. Excessive alcohol can dehydrate you and leave you with a lingering headache which is not the ideal combination for feeling your best tomorrow.”

The man watched every move I made on an ordinary day, so why should the night before our wedding be any different?

“Yes, Daddy,” I whispered in his ear, “I’ll be a good girl tonight.”

“This evening should end relatively early, so you can get a good night’s sleep. I want you feeling well-rested tomorrow.”

Although Danny pulled Ari to the side, I heard their conversation perfectly. “Excuse me, but are you two sleeping together tonight? Isn’t it bad luck to see the bride...”

“According to tradition, the groom is not supposed to see the

bride before the wedding, and most couples today are still sticking with traditional rules. But it turns out this ritual is yet another passed on through sheer patriarchy.”

“Oh my, I think we need to be a part of this,” I joked, reaching for Natalie’s arm to pull her into the conversation. “Please continue, Ari. I can’t wait to hear more.”

“It seems the tradition comes from a time when couples wouldn’t meet until their wedding day, and some fathers were tricking grooms into thinking the bride was more attractive than she was. That’s why they were forbidden to see each other until her veil was removed. And as this would usually be during the wedding ceremony, the groom might be forever stuck in the arrangement.”

“I’m guessing the scenario doesn’t apply to us, right, Ari?”

“No indeed. The most beautiful woman in the world will become my bride tomorrow, so there isn’t a reason we shouldn’t be together tonight or tomorrow morning. Case closed.”