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# HEART SONG

A Valentine's Day Anthology

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MICHELE PETERS   CAROLYN FAULKNER  
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This book contains fantasy themes appropriate for mature readers only.  
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He Loves Me, He Loves  
Me Not

JOANNIE KAY

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## Chapter 1

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**F**inally! Finally! Fi-na-ly! I knew I wasn't being nice, but I couldn't pretend to be unhappy that Cody was single once again. Princess wannabe Alyssa had fallen from grace, and the field was open for me. This time I wasn't going to stand back and hope that Cody noticed me. Nope, I was going to get his attention – one way or another! Valentine's Day was only a couple of weeks away, and he was going to be mine by then.

It just *had* to be that way. I was in love with Executive Chef Cody Andrews, and had been ever since I came to work for him two years ago. He'd dated several women during that time, and this last time, with Alyssa, was much too serious for my liking. I was aware of Cody's views on employees of the restaurant dating each other, but since *he* was the owner, he could change the policy if he wanted to, and I was going to see to it that he wanted to.

I erased the smile from my face when Cody entered the kitchen. I was supposed to be prepping for today's service, and I already knew that Cody hated to find one of his chefs goofing off on his time and payroll.

“Reed isn't coming in to help with tonight's service. Can

anyone stay until closing?" Cody raised his voice to be heard over the entire kitchen. Three of us were prepping to open at eleven o'clock to serve lunch.

"I can, Chef," I immediately called out. A chance to close with Cody wasn't to be missed.

"Thanks, Jenn." Cody flashed me a big smile that made my toes tingle. I could hardly wait for the hours to pass until we were alone. "Is that all of the shrimp you have peeled and deveined?" he asked, and I could hear the disapproval in his voice. "Get to it, Jenn. We open in an hour and we have three groups with reservations of ten or more. I want everyone's mind on business, and that includes you, young lady."

"Yes, Chef." I uttered the correct response, while part of me thrilled at his scolding tone and the fact that he'd called me 'young lady.' My mind immediately created a fantasy in which I was facedown over Cody's lap and he was using his large hand to spank me on my bare bottom while he scolded. I felt my sex tighten in anticipation, and I made up my mind that I was going to see if Cody was as firm in his personal life as he was in his kitchen. But, in the meantime, I had to do as I was told. It certainly wouldn't do to lose my job before Cody noticed that I was the right woman for him.

Cody wasn't wrong about his prediction that we would be swamped at lunchtime. One group of ladies was having a baby shower / luncheon for their boss, and they had the entire afternoon off to enjoy themselves. They ordered appetizers and then entrees and finally, desserts. Two other groups were there: some businessmen in town for a meeting, and a large group of seniors celebrating the month's birthdays. Cody had to pitch in and help us keep up and he was constantly giving orders, not in a mean way, but in the way a good chef runs his kitchen and provides the best service possible. We relied on repeat business, and Cody was all about good food. He'd fired three chefs in the two years I'd been here. Honest mistakes happened, but consistent poor



quality resulted in no job. Everyone worked hard and eventually the lunch crowd departed and it was time to prep for dinner. There would be even more diners then. A Touch of Class had become the top restaurant in town since Cody bought it two years ago and changed the menu and the décor. It really was a classy place to dine, but Cody was smart enough to put some simple fare on the menu too. He'd told us once that his father didn't like what he referred to as 'pretentious food', so he kept some plain items for those patrons.

I was a bit tired when I finally decided to take a break. I helped myself to a bowl of French Onion soup – it was one of my favorites – and made my way to the break room. The room is nothing fancy. There is a row of school-type lockers along one wall. We each had one assigned to us when we started working here, and it was up to us to either put on a lock or risk having something stolen while we were working hard to earn our pay. Cody made it clear that he wouldn't tolerate thievery, but at the same time he thought it was foolish not to keep a lock on our locker. I agreed with him and made sure my lock was secure enough that it would take someone a while to crack it – not that anyone would try. I liked my co-workers for the most part. Eric could be a problem sometimes, especially if he'd been partying pretty heavily the night before. Reed missed work often, which created a problem sometimes, but Cody was patient and understanding. Reed's wife was dying of cancer, and some days were really bad and he couldn't leave her. Cody gave him a lot of leeway.

The break room was painted a cheerful yellow, and the table and chairs were old and made of wood. Some days those chairs felt awful hard, but they were better than standing. Still, I thought that Cody should put some cushions on the hard seats. I sat down and placed my steaming hot bowl on the table. I was hungry, and the French Onion soup at A Touch of Class was to die for. I took my first taste and wanted to swoon. The blend of

sweet onions, the crispy French bread, the wine in the broth, and the Gruyere cheese blended all the flavors into one wonderful treat. I was in heaven. Of course, I'd made the soup, but it was from Cody's own recipe. The man was a genius when it came to food. We'd urged him to compete on *Chopped*, positive he would win, but he said he didn't have a thing to prove to anyone.

"I think we need to have a little talk, young lady." Cody's deep voice came from right behind me. "Your mom called me and raised hell all over me because I was forcing you to work on Valentine's Day evening. I was a bit surprised to hear that I'd refused to give you the time off." His dark eyes pinned me right to my seat and the mouthful of soup I was eating didn't want to go down. "And I was equally surprised to hear how I was personally responsible for the fact that you aren't dating anyone and finding someone suitable to marry and have babies with."

"Oh my God! There are days when I would love to murder my mom even though I love her dearly! She treats me like a child!" I muttered, then felt my eyes widen as I thought of something. "Please tell me that you didn't agree for me to take off Valentine's Day! Please? I can't possibly not work on Valentine's Day! Mom is trying to set me up on a blind date and I would rather die than go out with Herman Fisher!" I was nearly hysterical at the idea. "Please, Cody, you didn't agree to let me off, did you?" I begged him.

Cody frowned. "No, I didn't say much of anything; your mother didn't give me a chance. She was too busy raking me over the coals to listen to anything I felt like saying. Why did you lie to her and tell her you couldn't get an evening off?"

I wasn't about to reply to that question. The answer was simply too embarrassing. "How would you like it if your mom set you up on a date on Valentine's Day?" I demanded.

"I would act like an adult and tell her that I prefer to choose my own dates."

"That doesn't work on my mom," I argued.

“I don’t like being used in that way, Jenn. You lied to your mother and you lied about me. You made me seem like an ogre who is working you too hard and without a bit of sympathy to give you some time off to go on a date. In fact, the more I think on it, when was the last time you took a vacation day? Or a personal day?”

“I like my job, Cody!” I insisted. “I want to be here.”

“All work isn’t good for you, Jennifer. I insist you take Valentine’s Day off and enjoy yourself for a change.”

“No!” I protested. “No, that would be a terrible thing. Mom would insist I go out with Herman Fisher and I’d rather die first! I won’t do it. I won’t. And you can’t make me!” It wasn’t the smartest thing I could say to my boss. While I couldn’t read minds, I knew Cody pretty well, and his body language told me he was unhappy with my outburst.

“Do you know what you need, little girl?”

Yes, I knew. I needed time alone with Cody so that he would fall in love with me. I didn’t say that out loud, of course. I remained silent, waiting to hear what he had to say. Fortunately, or unfortunately, one of the servers was sent to take her break and she joined us in the room, full of chatter, and oblivious to the fact that she’d interrupted a fairly charged conversation.

“We’ll finish our discussion this evening when we close, Jenn,” Cody said quietly, but his dark eyes were full of fire and I knew that I was in for a serious scolding.

I tried to look positively at the situation; at least Cody was paying some attention to me!

Dinner service went well. Everyone was on top of his or her station, and we turned out quality food for our guests. The overall feeling was one of pride, and when Cody heaped praise on us for a job well done, we high-fived each other. I was especially proud because I’d taken over Reed’s specialty and handled myself well. One by one the other members of the staff cleared out, and I went about my duties, helping to clean and make the

kitchen ready for lunch prep in the morning. Finally, it was just Cody and me left behind and I knew that he was nearly finished with the business end of our service.

He appeared just as I finished mopping the kitchen floor. The kitchen was immaculate; we kept it that way all the time. Cody was a stickler for keeping up with all the health regulations. He said it would devastate him if anyone ever got sick from food cooked in his restaurant, and it was one more reason that I loved him. I knew that he would inspect everything before he left for the night; I'd seen him re-clean an oven, or another appliance if he felt it wasn't up to his standards, and then he stood over the errant chef and instructed him or her on how to properly clean a kitchen. The chef either followed his instructions or looked for a new job.

"The floor looks great. It was a big mess after tonight's service, and now we could serve off of it." Cody smiled at me and then took my arm and led me into his office, which was also neat as could be. He sat me down on the chair beside his desk. It was where I sat when he interviewed me for a position, and where I sat when he wanted to talk to me about something he found exceptional, or when he thought I could improve in some area. Cody was never cruel, just matter-of-fact, and I wished with all my heart he would pay some attention to me as a person. I didn't think I was ugly, and while I wasn't model thin, I was at a healthy weight. I was clean, and I tried to be pleasant and smile. We shared an amazing interest in food and cooking, and darn it, I was tired of being ignored. "We need to talk, Jenn. Have you given the matter any more thought since we talked this afternoon?"

"Put yourself in my place, Cody. Wouldn't you do the same thing?" I asked, trying to get him on my side.

"No, Jennifer, I would not. What I can't understand is why you think it is acceptable to lie, and when that lie involves me, it

doesn't make me very happy. I didn't give you away to your mom, but I think you deserve consequences for lying to her."

"You aren't going to fire me, are you?" I was crestfallen at the idea and found it difficult to breathe. If Cody fired me I would simply die. I didn't just like my job, I loved my job. "Please don't fire me, Cody." I felt my eyes fill with tears and I tried to blink them away. I already knew how Cody felt about tears in the kitchen. He didn't put up with temperamental chefs for very long. He wanted a smooth, well-run kitchen. Of course, there were minor issues at times. None of us are saints, but the dramatics were kept to a minimum. I was on the verge of panic as Cody leveled his eyes on me.

"I don't intend to fire you, Jenn, at least not in the way you mean."

I looked at him curiously. I had a feeling he was going to say something else, and I held my breath in anticipation.

"I'm going to set fire to your butt, something that your parents should have done a few times when you were growing up. Lying is wrong, young lady, and it carries a consequence. I guess you know that you can refuse to accept a spanking from me; I can't force your compliance. But then, I will have no choice but to let you go, Jennifer. I won't permit you to use me to lie to your mother."

"I'm sorry, Cody. I never looked at it from your point of view. I was only trying to prevent Mom from setting up a blind date. I had no idea she would call and scold you. I'm embarrassed and ashamed." I was also afraid this incident was going to put me in a bad light with Cody. "I should have faced her like a grown woman and told her I wouldn't go out with any blind dates she set up."

"Yes, you should have. Now then, are you ready to accept the consequences of your actions?"

He looked so stern, just like in my fantasies. I pinched myself to make sure I was really awake and not dreaming. I had waited

my entire life to find a man like Cody, a man who was a real man.

“Jennifer, I am waiting for an answer.”

“I’m embarrassed, Cody,” I whispered. I could feel my cheeks burning. I was truly embarrassed now that my fantasy was about to come true. “I will accept a spanking,” I managed to say. “I’ve never done this before,” I told him. I’d read about it, looked at some websites that supported domestic discipline and spanking, but I’d never worked up the courage to actually seek a real spanking. It was a very intimate act, and I was a virgin – in every way. “I’m really scared,” I whispered. “I don’t know what you expect of me.”

“I expect you to do as I tell you, Jenn,” he said. Then he pushed his chair back from his desk and said firmly, “Stand up, young lady.”

I wasn’t stupid; I did as I was told. The last thing I wanted to do was to make him any angrier than he already was.

“I need to move the chair you were sitting on.” His tone was matter-of-fact; as were the hands he put on my shoulders to gently move me aside so that he could get to the chair. Cody picked it up as if it were weightless and moved it out into the center of the floor before turning around and sitting down. “I moved this chair so that you won’t accidentally get hurt if you struggle while I’m spanking you.”

I looked at him in dismay. “You’re planning to spank me that hard?” My voice squeaked with dread and, if I am to be completely honest, with fear.

“I’m planning to punish you, Jennifer,” he told me, his eyes full of sympathy as he tried to calm my fears. “A spanking does hurt; it’s the whole point. But, I give you my word that I’m not going to harm you. There is a big difference, you know.”

I nodded, but my mouth was dry and I seriously didn’t know what to do with my hands. My bottom was clenching and releasing in anticipation of being struck, and I was afraid I was

going to cry. “Must you really do this, Cody? I am sorry, and I promise you I have learned my lesson. I will never lie again, not for any reason. I’m so sorry I involved you in my deceit, and I give you my word that I am going to go and talk to Mom and make things right. I am through behaving like a teenager who is trying to do something sneaky without her parents finding out. I’m too old to behave like that.” I was ashamed and embarrassed.

“I’m happy to hear that you’re going to tell your mom the truth, Jenn, but it does nothing to erase the fact that you lied in the first place. Every action has a reaction, and when you do something wrong, there is a consequence. You need to face the consequence now and get it over with. Walk on over here and we’ll get this spanking started.”