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BJ Wane  
Submitting to the Doctor

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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.

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## Prologue

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### *Denver, Colorado*

**S**oft, white snowflakes fell from the gray sky onto the dark clothing of the mourners slowly dispersing from the gravesite. Doctor Mitchell Hoffstetter gazed with grief-stricken, unseeing eyes at the flower-covered coffin. He thought he'd been prepared for his beloved wife's passing after the chemotherapy treatments had failed to wipe out her cancer these past six months. Last week, he'd stood by Abbie's hospice bed and watched her shudder through her last, painful breath, the peace that settled over her stricken face almost beautiful to see after months of ravaging torment. Following her diagnosis, he'd reached out to the top oncologists in the state for help, cut back on his job as chief trauma surgeon at Denver Health and prayed for a miracle.

All to no avail.

The murmured condolences and sympathetic eyes of friends and colleagues went unheard and unseen as Mitchell shivered against the bleak future now lying ahead of him. He would turn forty-one this summer and yet, instead of hitting

his prime looking forward to the future, he now dreaded the months and years that stretched out ahead of him without his cherished wife. For eight years, she had been the perfect wife and submissive of his dreams, the only woman he'd ever vowed fidelity to or imagined sharing his life for the long haul. Her death shattered the dream and left a nightmare he was desperate to escape from.

"Mitchell, let's go. People will be stopping by the house." His mother, Louise, gripped his arm and looked up at him with worry etched on her lined face.

Patting her hand, he nodded and turned to take his sister's elbow. "I'm ready. Let's get you and Tracy out of the cold." He feared there would be no escaping the cold for him for a long time, if ever.

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*Eighteen months later*

The July sun beat down on Mitchell's shoulders as he loaded the last of his suitcases in his Tahoe and closed the back hatch. The For-Sale sign in the front yard of the two-story home he'd shared with Abbie was now topped with a Sold sign. His chest constricted as he took one last look at the flower beds she'd planted and tended with such meticulous care. He recalled the way she would kneel and wiggle her ass, sending him a taunting grin over her shoulder when he would pull into the driveway. The tall hedges in front of the porch offered enough privacy for him to shock her one time and deliver the bare butt spanking she'd been itching for right then and there. She'd loved the exhibitionism and risk as much as the pain-induced pleasure he'd heaped upon her soft, lily-white buttocks.

Sliding behind the wheel, he pulled away for the last time, praying the move to Montana and the new, much less stren-

uous position of family physician in the smaller town of Willow Springs would offer the change he needed to cope better with his loss. His mother and sister, as well as Tracy's husband and two boys, all encouraged him to accept the position when he found the ad and showed it to them. With his father gone these past five years, he'd hesitated to move away from his mother, but she'd been the one to insist the loudest for him to make the change.

"It's a one-day drive," Louise had said at Sunday dinner last month. "Just be sure to get a place big enough to put all of us up for a week and we'll be on your doorstep more than you'll want."

Mitchell hadn't prayed much since burying Abbie and his happiness, but as he drove away from the home they had shared, the position he'd worked hard to attain and the city he'd lived in his whole life, he found himself sending up a silent entreaty he wasn't making a big mistake.

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## Chapter 1

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**T**ears blinded Lillian Gillespie's vision as she stumbled out the door of the special care facility. The cold slap of February wind that hit her added to the chill that had invaded her body as she'd watched her cherished twin sister take her last breath. The nursing staff who had cared for Liana for the last month as she lay in a coma meant well with their embraces and whispered condolences of 'it's for the best', but right now, Lillian couldn't see it that way.

She let the tears fall as she slid behind the wheel of her car, slammed the door and huddled in misery, wondering what she would do without Liana in her life. They'd shared the special bond of twins for thirty-four years, stood side by side when they'd buried first their father and then their mother a scant year later, and they'd watched men come and go without regret as long as they had each other.

And now Lillian was alone.

Rubbing her forehead, she tried to gather her thoughts and run through what needed to be done. Once Liana had stabilized following a ruptured brain aneurysm six weeks ago and was moved from the hospital to the long-term care facility with

a poor prognosis of ever recovering or even coming out of the coma, the staff had convinced Lillian to make funeral arrangements. At first, she'd fought the very idea, clinging to the small thread of hope the trickle of blood still reaching her sister's brain offered, but now she was glad the hospital counselor had talked her into it. It was one less burden to weigh her down now.

Pulling out of the lot, she automatically drove toward Brad's house, her thinking still muddled by heartbreak. She was halfway to his upscale neighborhood in Salt Lake City when the change in her circumstances hit her with a quick flash of clarity. *I'm free of that son-of-a-bitch.* That startling acknowledgement forced her to pull into a strip mall lot as a cold, burning anger replaced her emotional numbness, giving her the inner shakes. *I'm free, but God, sis, I never wanted to get away from him at your expense.* No, she couldn't look at it that way. It was Lillian's fault for ignoring the warning signs of the renowned neurosurgeon's possessiveness for too long before breaking off their affair. Maybe, if she hadn't been so immersed in her art, preparing for the Naples National Art Show, she would have ended the relationship much sooner. Liana had often berated her for losing focus of everything and everyone around her when she lost herself in her painting, and Lillian had finally paid the price for her artistic absorption.

But no more. Liana's death rendered Dr. Brad McCabe's threats useless and severed the hold he had over her. As much as her passing pained Lillian, she couldn't prevent a ripple of relief as she got back on the road. To say Brad had taken their split badly was an understatement, but she could never have imagined just how obsessed he'd become with her until Liana was sent to the long-term care facility.

Lillian gritted her teeth as she turned onto the street of million-dollar homes and pulled into the drive of Brad's two-story, one-acre estate. No one would ever believe the skilled

doctor, one of the most sought-after bachelors in the city was a manipulative, sadistic bastard. She still couldn't believe she'd fallen for his solicitous support when he'd found out about Liana's condition a month after they'd broken up. During the two weeks doctors, including Brad, were working to give her sister every chance at recovery, he never brought up their relationship even though he'd sworn to get her back. He'd offered encouragement, a shoulder to lean on and a comforting embrace when the medical team announced there was nothing else they could do.

God, what a gullible fool she'd been. But never again. His threats could no longer force her to suffer a painful arm or wrist twist when she argued with him; she wouldn't have to try and dodge a fist to her abdomen or a kidney if she refused to sleep with him, and wouldn't have to suffer his touch or fake an orgasm under his thrusting body just to save herself a day or two of pain again.

Brad's morning surgery schedule gave her plenty of time to gather her belongings, but as Lillian entered the cold marble foyer, she wasted no time dashing upstairs to the master bedroom. In the walk-in closet, she grabbed the four-piece suitcase set she'd packed her clothes in a month ago and got to work without delay. Other than her wardrobe, toiletries and art supplies, she wanted nothing from this place.

Less than an hour later, she was brought to a sudden halt descending the stairs carrying the last of her paintings as Brad flung open the front door. The fury glittering in his cold brown eyes sent a frisson of alarm down her spine before she straightened and continued down the stairs. In the last month, she'd never cowered under that look and refused to start now.

With the sly calculation of a fox, Lillian watched his expression slide into one of feigned concern. "Baby, I'm so sorry about Liana. As soon as I got word, I cancelled the rest of my surgeries and rushed home to be here for you." He

stepped forward as she reached the bottom of the stairs, not fooled in the least by his conciliatory tone or compassionate gaze. There was no way he'd come in through the front without noticing her packed car. "Taking those somewhere?" he asked, nodding toward the paintings tucked under her arms.

"Yes, out of here." She took a step sideways to go around him, but he followed, blocking her path. "Get out of my way, Brad. I'm leaving. Your threat to hurt Liana can no longer keep me here, as you damn well know."

In the blink of an eye, Brad reached for her upper arm, his demeanor changing back to frigidly furious. With her heart jumping into her throat, she leapt back, evaded his grip and sprinted toward the door only to have him halt her flight by grabbing a fistful of her hair. Painful pricks stabbed at her skull as several strands came ripping out as he flung her onto the floor, her hip exploding in agony when she landed on the unforgiving marble. Shock robbed her of breath as he lifted his foot and kicked her in the ribs, his assault coming so fast, and with first-time brutality, all she could do was lie there struggling to breathe through the waves of red-hot torment.

Squatting in front of her, it took every ounce of Lillian's battered control to keep from shrinking back as Brad brushed her hair aside with gentle fingers and said in a voice gone deceptively soft, "Baby, I thought we'd gotten past this penchant you have for thinking you can walk out on me. Don't you remember our first date, when I told you how much I was looking forward to a long relationship?"

Brad's eyes held the same cold, calculating gleam as when he'd whispered the numerous ways he could harm Liana while she lay helpless, ways no one would ever detect. He'd delivered that warning right in front of his medical colleagues in Liana's room, the look of caring concern reflected on his face never wavering. Only she had seen his eyes change and heard the menace in his voice.



But that was then, when Liana's fragile condition had left her no choice but to return to him, and stay in this house, under his thumb for the last four weeks. She had nothing left to lose by defying him except more pain, and she was in so much now, emotional and physical, Lillian was willing to risk more physical harm to get away from him once and for all.

"I remember," she whispered, allowing a small smile to curve her trembling lips as she lifted her face closer to his. "I also remember how your conceited, overbearing, possessive machinations drove me away." With a quick head butt, she sent him jerking backward enough for her to scramble to her feet. But it wasn't enough to get her to the door before he sent one picture flying out from under her arm with another grab.

How Lillian managed to retain her hold on the other when he backhanded her hard enough to slam her against the wall, splitting her lip and sending pain blossoming across the entire left side of her face, she didn't know. Gasping for breath, her head reeling as the jarring impact ricocheted in a burning agony across her ribcage, she let loose the building, consuming rage filling her.

"You bastard." Swinging the painting, one of her favorites, at his head with every ounce of strength she could muster, Lillian only had time for one deep, excruciating inhale as Brad stumbled against the entry table. Blood gushed from his temple where the corner of the frame had struck, his eyes widening in surprise as he crumpled to the floor.

With one arm cradling her ribs, she shuffled toward the door, the amount of blood pouring from his head adding nausea to her other afflictions. "Stay away from me, Doctor, or I'll file charges."

Brad greeted her threat with a pain-filled, scornful laugh. "You wouldn't dare. Who the fuck would believe you over me? In fact," he tried to get to his feet, failed and leaned against the

wall, his face going from pale to chalk-white, “after I spin my side of this to Bryan, you’ll be the one facing charges.”

Even his over-protective cop brother wouldn’t be able to deny the proof her pictures documented, so his threat didn’t faze Lillian. She looked down at him with disdain, no longer fearing him as a strange calming numbness took over her body. “Did you honestly believe I would tolerate your abuse and threats without documenting every bruise? I took pictures of every mark you left on me and I won’t hesitate to use them if you ever come near me again. Think your sterling reputation will hold up under such scrutiny? Goodbye, Brad.”

Chalky with shock, dazed with grief and pain, Lillian couldn’t think beyond the need to escape her anguish. She’d sublet her apartment when Brad had blackmailed her into moving in with him, putting everything she hadn’t brought to his house and was now loaded in her car in storage. With no place to go, she ignored the warnings of her muddled reasoning that made the drastic decision to drive to the bank and clear out her checking and savings accounts ill-advised. With nothing left for her in the city she grew up in, she was determined to keep driving. Liana’s body was already at the crematorium where her ashes would be stored in the mausoleum along with their parents, and she needed to find a way to come to peace with never getting the chance to tell her goodbye.

Tamping down on those crippling emotions, she refused to let them bubble to the surface as she veered onto the highway out of Salt Lake City with no destination in mind. Her whole body shook as the road stretched out before her. Wondering where she should go, she glanced at the bank bag bulging with cash. More tears cascaded down her face as she realized she would now inherit her sister’s portion of their inheritance. Money wasn’t a problem, but that offered no comfort for the heartache encompassing her.

At least Lillian was free of Brad, and this time for good. Not even his brother, whom she'd met once, could bail him out of this scrape if she chose to file charges. Ten years older than Brad, his brother bore part of the blame for Brad's behavior by always covering for him from as far back as when Brad had been a wild teenager. Between his colleagues and patients constant praise and admiration pumping up his God complex and Bryan still around to spoil him, she couldn't believe she'd ever fallen for his fake charm.

Nausea, blurred vision and excruciating discomfort forced Lillian to stop as she crossed into Wyoming almost two hours later. She had no idea what town she was in when she pulled into a Walgreens and didn't care. After purchasing first aid supplies and dodging the solicitous inquiries from the sales-clerk, she checked into the motel across the street for some much-needed rest.

Tossing her purchases onto a chair, she lay down on the bed intending to gather her thoughts before checking her injuries but couldn't stave off the stress induced exhaustion that pulled her under. She fell asleep with her sister's laughing face merging with Brad's furious image.

Lillian awoke to a pitch-black, strange room and a myriad of aches and pains. Rolling over, she winced, the pain radiating around her ribcage bringing clarification to her groggy, jumbled senses. *Liana*. A sob caught in her throat as she sat up and flicked on the bedside light. Blinking, she realized one eye wouldn't open fully. *Brad*. A surge of anger tightened her muscles as she stood on wobbly legs. Vacillating between gut-clenching grief and a slow-burning fury, she padded into the miniscule bathroom, turned on the light and groaned out loud at her image in the mirror. Her topsy-turvy emotional imbalance took second place to the distress of seeing just how hard Brad had struck her.

Turning away from the view of her swollen black eye, cut

puffy lip and bruised cheek, she retrieved the first aid supplies and did her best to doctor her injuries. It was too late for an icepack on her face to do much good, but the medicated salve eased the sting in her lip and from the small nick near her eye. Lifting her sweatshirt, she winced at the purple splotches forming under her breasts. The smart thing would be to find an emergency room and get x-rays, but her breathing wasn't compromised, indicating no punctured lung, and she figured she could wrap her ribs as well as a professional.

The urge to get going, to put as much distance between her and the place she could never call home again, pounded at her temples. Lillian wrapped bandages around her ribcage and used medical tape to hold them snug, surprised by the relief the slight pressure gave her. It wasn't much, but along with downing three extra-strength aspirin, the pain was now manageable. She ran a brush through her tangled, auburn hair and brushed her teeth before stepping out into the frigid early morning air. After checking out of the motel carrying a to-go cup of steaming coffee offered by the worried looking receptionist, she got on the road again, figuring she would stop when her body insisted, or she needed gas.

The desolate winter prairieland matched her bleak mood as she traveled north through Wyoming while replaying happy memories of her and Liana's childhood; their first day of school when Lillian had shoved the boy who'd pulled Liana's braid and made her cry; the time they'd gone bike riding and ventured too far from home, getting themselves lost until well after dark and the police found them; their double date to their Junior prom where they'd indulged in alcohol for the first time and ended up grounded for a month; the fun they'd had on their college spring break trip to Padre Island.

Heavy, grief-laden despair pressed down on her chest as she passed a herd of snow-encrusted, slow-lumbering bison traversing across a snow packed plateau. She shivered and

nudged the heat up a notch as the thick gray clouds spit small flakes on her windshield. Liana used to love snow and catching Lillian unaware with a snowball to the back of the head. God, she would get pissed whenever her sister's aim was spot on. As she reached the Montana border, her low gas gauge pinged, forcing her to find a gas station and take a break.

Despite her aches and pains making themselves known with throbbing intensity and the dark clouds swirling ahead, threatening more snow, Lillian got back in her car after filling up and drove on. *Not yet*, she thought, *the memories are still too close*. Her trek made no sense, but neither did her sister's death at the age of thirty-four. Weren't they just laughing about growing old together as two, eccentric spinsters a few weeks ago? With Liana's nose always buried in a book she was editing and Lillian's focus glued to her current painting, it was a wonder either of them had ever set aside their absorption with their work long enough to accept a date.

Lillian's mouth curled in a derisive sneer as she recalled what the last date she'd accepted had led to. No fancy dinner or the mediocre pleasure of an orgasm was worth wasting her time. Give her a glass of wine and her pretty pink vibrator and she was content. There was no way she would relinquish control over her life again, especially not now, when there was no one left she cared enough about to sacrifice for. A pang gripped her abdomen at the reminder of how alone she was now, her gaze turning watery again.

Eight hours, two pit stops, three cups of coffee, one candy bar and a steady amount of snowfall later, Lillian passed a sign showing ten miles to the Billings, Montana exit. Figuring that was as good a place as any to spend the night, she slowed to a crawl, the winter storm that was closer than she'd guessed turning into a white sheet of windblown swirls. She was no novice to traveling alone having flown around the country and elsewhere for art shows by herself for the last eight years, nor

was this the first time she'd driven with snow falling hard enough to warrant caution.

But it didn't take long for Lillian's first experience in leaving behind everything that was familiar to her, along with driving through a slow-building snowstorm sweeping across a wide-open, barren expanse of nothingness to turn treacherous. Controlling the car against the buffeting wind and slick roads zapped what little strength she had left after traveling all day and shunning food due to lingering nausea. The ten miles to the turnoff she kept an eye out for seemed to go on forever, the traffic on the now snow-hidden highway dwindling from sparse to almost nonexistent over the next thirty minutes. With no sign of another advertised turnoff, she took a wild guess born of worry and fatigue and opted for the next exit.

Gripping the wheel with sweaty palms, Lillian turned onto a much narrower road, hoping it would take her into Billings, figuring it couldn't be that far. Right now, she would welcome the sight of any building, or heck, even another vehicle. At least her snow tires were holding out, helping her through the slow build-up. Her heater worked well and she was sure the spare blanket was still stowed in the trunk, if she needed it. That didn't keep the tremors of unease from invading her sore, depleted body as her head grew fuzzy with disorientation from the blinding white terrain filling her vision no matter which direction she looked.

Staying along the wooded tree line helped guide her, but with darkness fast approaching and the constant struggle to stay focused, Lillian had just decided to stop and hope for a signal on her phone when a large, leggy elk darted out from the trees. *Talk about startled like a deer caught in the headlights.* She didn't have time to giggle about that thought as her attempted swerve to miss the animal sent the car into a spin as slow and sluggish as her brain, the uncontrollable, rotating glide ending with the front end buried up to the windshield in a ten-foot snow bank.

With a frustrated swing and exasperated huff, Mitchell buried his ax in the wood stump and shook his head in disbelief. What the hell was someone doing driving a sporty Mazda Miata on a Montana back road during a raging snowstorm? They were lucky their inevitable stranded predicament occurred near his cabin, that he happened to be here and outside getting wood to witness their loss of control through the trees separating his place from the road. Yanking his sheepskin lined coat closed and his Stetson down to shield his eyes from the blowing snow, it was too bad he didn't get to share in the occupant's luck.

Mitchell trudged through the piling snow, bemoaning the loss of his solitude for the next few days. Given the weather and the distance between his cabin and the nearest towns of Billings and Willow Springs, it looked like he would have a guest for the next few days. He wasn't happy about that; the month of February was still difficult for him two years following his wife, Abbie's lost battle with cancer. This was his first winter in Montana, and he'd been looking forward to these few days away from his new practice as the encroaching memories pushed the heartache he kept tucked away to the surface.

Tabling his irritation, he breathed a sigh of relief for the break in heavy snowfall as he emerged from the woods and sloughed through the already several feet of cold accumulation toward the stranded car still puffing out exhaust from the running engine. The lull wouldn't last, so it was imperative he get the occupants back to his place as quickly as possible.

The driver's side door creaked open as he reached the back end, his annoyance with the woman struggling to release her seatbelt dropping away when he eyed her pale, bruised face. The car hadn't landed buried in the snow wall with enough

impact to open the airbag, and the snug fit of the seatbelt would have prevented those injuries from happening just now.

Mitchell got to the open door as she emerged, her gasp of pain as she bent over with an arm wrapped around her upper waist prompting him to reach for her sweater-covered arm. “Sit down. You are not going to get sick or pass out.” He pressed on her shoulder until her butt returned to the seat, her booted feet buried up to her calves in the snow. She was alone in the car, which made it easier on him to have to deal with only one unwelcome guest.

To his surprise, she glared up at him out of dark purple eyes, shaking her cloud of deep auburn hair out of her face as she snapped, “Says who?”

*I'm not only stuck with a houseguest, but one with attitude, yet another pesky irritation.* “Me.” Squatting in front of her to block the wind, he cupped her chin with a gloved hand and held her still as he examined her black eye, swollen face and cut mouth, his hand tightening at the obvious signs of abuse. “Let me guess. You walked into a door,” he drawled, figuring she would skirt the truth like most abused women.

She jerked her head and he released her to keep from causing her more stress. Her lips curled in derision as she replied, “Yeah, a door with fists.”

Her honesty surprised Mitchell and earned her brownie points despite the sarcasm. He nodded, the hot ball of anger coiling in his gut the same response he'd experienced with every case of abuse admitted into the trauma center in Denver he had headed for five years. Pushing to his feet, he curtailed the desire to question her and searched for a coat among the belongings piled on the back seat. “I can check you over at my cabin, just through the woods. Can you make it that far?”

She frowned, her eyes turning wary as she cast a look around at their desolate surroundings. “I can if I have to, but it



would be foolish to follow a stranger to a secluded cabin in the woods.”

“And it wasn’t foolish to drive in this weather in a vehicle ill-equipped to handle it without ending up like this?” he returned dryly. “I’m cold and the heavy shit will start up again any moment. I’ll give you two minutes to talk to the sheriff in Willow Springs and then I’m hauling ass back to my place, with or without you.” Digging his satellite phone out of the heavy coat pocket, he punched in Grayson Monroe’s direct number, praying he caught him in. When he answered, he gave his friend a quick rundown and then thrust the phone toward her, swearing as he noticed the blue tinge to her lips despite the heat blowing inside the still idling car and his position blocking the wind. “Make it fast.”