

A WIDOW'S SECRETS



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BLUSHING BOOKS

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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.

CHAPTER 1



SOUTH PASS, WYOMING TERRITORY, 1871

Boyd Lattimore rode into South Pass, looking and feeling a bit saddle weary. He was tired after having been delayed due to snow—seemingly endless, unrelenting, bitter snow. As he headed further west, he knew he would have to cross many mountains, but not in this part of the Wyoming Territory. South Pass City was on a plateau of rolling hills set in the middle of the Rocky Mountains.

He had never heard of the town until the previous year when the newspapers were full of the news of Esther Hobart Morris becoming the first woman in the country to serve as a Justice of the Peace. A little-known women's suffrage clause had been slipped into the Wyoming Territorial Constitution, which granted women the right to vote and hold office. The men responsible for signing the constitution had been so anxious to get their hands on the gold found in the area, they had not been too careful about what exactly they were signing. According to the newspapers, the men were not

worried. In their opinion, women had little interest in voting, and those who did would vote as their husbands decreed.

Personally, Boyd had never met a woman so amenable. If they were around, he would like to meet one.

For now, he was spending a few months in South Pass. The decision had not been one of his choosing, rather one of family obligation. He was to be the temporary manager of the Gold Bust Saloon, owned by his cousin, John Haskle. John had gone home to deal with a family death, leaving a thriving business behind in the hands of his bartender who promptly pocketed the profits, closed the doors, and disappeared.

Boyd would be relieved of the job as soon as his cousin returned. When the time came, he intended to continue westward. He had made his fortune, pulling gold out of the bowels of the Colorado Mountains. It had taken five long years, but he was set for life. Boyd had traveled to Ohio to visit his parents, share his findings with them, and to tell them he was settling in the west permanently.

He had heard good land was available on the west coast in the state of California and in the territories of Oregon, Idaho, and Washington. Boyd wanted a chunk of that land and he had the wherewithal to claim it. He was done with steep mountains and snow. He wanted sunshine and plenty of it, although it would not be in his future for the next couple of months. The timing was inconvenient, but he had promised his family, and he always kept his word.

In the last year, Boyd had become dissatisfied with his life, not withstanding his sudden wealth. Being a single man had lost its appeal, and his visit with his family had heightened his feelings of unrest. When he saw his brothers married and settled, and he played with his nieces and nephews, he found himself bothered by his aloneness.

He was heading west to find his promised land, and to settle down and get serious about having a family. Boyd had not made a

fortune strictly for himself. He needed a woman, and he had a picture of her in his mind. She would be sweet, malleable, and obedient. She would be a good woman, easy on the eyes, and proper, as a woman should be.

The previous decade had taken a lot out of him and the Lattimore lineage. He had fought in the war and lost a brother to the conflict. Boyd had been one of the lucky ones to return home with all his parts and pieces. However, he had been disillusioned by the horror of what man could do to man. He had realized even before then that he needed to follow a different path than what his parents expected.

He burrowed deeper into his fleece-lined coat and pulled the collar higher on his neck. It was beginning to snow again. Boyd had been told, warned really, that at its elevation of eight thousand feet, snow fell on South Pass almost every month of the year, occasionally even during the high summer months of July and August.

Well, he would not be here that long, a few months and he would be gone. Boyd was glad when he passed the signs for South Pass City at the town limits. Even if calling the town a city might have been a misnomer, he hoped to find a hot meal and a warm room for the night.

Five years earlier in 1866 gold had been discovered in South Pass. Now, Boyd rode by the remains of several mines, closed and boarded up with *Keep Out* signs posted. One appeared to have been dynamited to smithereens. He saw other businesses open though, so maybe enough good ore was coming out of the mines to keep the town alive.

Boyd rode slowly along the half-mile length of Main Street his cousin had boasted was bustling with enterprise. Unfortunately, he could see signs indicating John would not return to the same prosperous environment he had left. Abandoned buildings sat side by side with *Out-of-Business* signs tacked to their doors. As he searched for the Gold Bust Saloon, Boyd thought his cousin had named his place aptly. The South Pass gold boom had unquestionably gone

bust. Unless new veins were found, the town did not have much time left. Boyd's cousin did not know it yet.

He reined his horse to a stop in front of a newspaper office. One of the most beautiful women he had ever seen was walking down the sidewalk. Wrapped in a long, fitted winter coat, and wearing a jaunty hat, she was stunning. Both men and women greeted her with cordial smiles, exchanging pleasantries before she moved on.

"She's a looker, ain't she?" a nearby old man cackled from his seat on the wooden porch steps of the newspaper building.

"Who is she?" Boyd asked.

The old man cackled again. "Youngster, that-uns out of your league. That there is Mrs. Elianna Winslow, the richest woman in these parts. Come all the way from St. Lou-ie to marry Solomon Winslow of the Sweetwater Mine. Damn shame for a woman as ripe for the picking as that one to be widowed."

"I agree," replied Boyd, his eyes following as she walked away. "Where can I find the Gold Bust Saloon?"

"It ain't open no more," the old man provided.

"I know, but it will be reopening soon. Better yet, point me to the best hotel in town."

"Ain't got one of those neither," the old man answered. "People been leaving town, not coming in. The hotels are closed and so are most of the boarding houses. You might get a room over the Gold Spike Saloon 'cept those goldanged do-gooders have done run the whores out of town. It ain't no fun there no more! Those righteous knee-benders built two churches right after they done ruined the town!"

"What is the town coming to?" Boyd asked with his tongue tucked firmly in his cheek.

"That's what I been asking!" the old rascal declared, slapping his leg. "What's a town without liquor, gambling, and whores for the pick'in?"

"A boring one," Boyd agreed, tipping his hat and moving on. It was a good thing he would not be stuck in South Pass for long.



THE WIDOW IN QUESTION, Elianna Winslow, was not the wealthy woman nearly all the citizens of South Pass believed her to be. She was also not a lonely widow, as she did not spend all her evenings in solitary pursuits. When her door had closed behind tonight's guest, he had left behind a twenty-dollar gold piece. She promptly added it to the others in a hand-carved ivory box she kept in the compartment under the window seat.

Elianna had been entertaining men in her home for a few years. She was extremely careful about who she let in on her secret. Her male clients had to be well off to afford her price, and they had to know how to keep their mouths shut. She was careful about where and when she received her *friends*. They only came by appointment. They arrived after dark, stabling their horses out of sight in her barn, and knocked on the kitchen door at the rear of the house. She did not want the men seen coming to or from her house, and most of them did not want it known either. Elianna believed she might be the best-kept secret in South Pass City.

She had come to South Pass in 1868 as a mail-order bride. She had been barely eighteen-years-old, lying to the matrimonial agency and claiming to be nineteen. Most men wanting mail-order wives expected young, virginal brides. The obligatory letters of recommendation and lists of qualifications resembled the pedigrees needed for a prized cow.

When Elianna had been delicately questioned about the state of her virtue, she had feigned insult at the question and rose to leave. She knew how to play a convincing role when needed. She had reluctantly been persuaded to stay and sign on with the agency, and they had offered several prospects for correspondence. Elianna had selected Solomon Winslow as one of them because he claimed he already had a house built, waiting for a wife. She needed a home.

Elianna's parents had abandoned her when she was seven years of age. At thirteen, the workhouse where she had been raised sold

her to a prominent household of the Baltimore Hamiltons to be trained as a housemaid. The mansion had awed her. She had not been as impressed with her employers.

While working as a scullery maid, not the promised housemaid, she had been compromised by Mr. Cecil Hamilton and his two sons within the first week of her arrival. After Mr. Hamilton forcibly took her virginity, his sons assumed they had the right to use Elianna anytime the opportunity arose.

By the time, she turned fourteen trying to avoid her employer and his sons had become a daily ritual. The rest of the Hamilton staff refused to acknowledge what they knew was taking place because their jobs were at stake. Elianna's prospects were slim. She knew if she became pregnant, she would be thrown into the streets.

Her choices had been bad and worse.

She ran away from the servitude and abuse at fifteen. She ran as far as she could until, by sheer chance, she met a woman by the name of Helen Bradley. Helen had recognized another damaged soul, and she had changed Elianna's life. She taught Elianna how to walk, talk, dress, and behave like a refined lady. Helen taught Elianna by example how to gain respect.

When it became necessary, Elianna had applied to the Armitage Matrimonial Agency to find a husband. Solomon Winslow of South Pass City in the Wyoming Territory promised her a house, and a good life. When he sent the money for Elianna's travel expenses, she was married by proxy and set out on the next train west. When she reached the end of the rail line, she traveled the rest of the way by stagecoach.

Elianna got the house she was promised. It was far grander than she had expected, and it was filled with beautiful furniture and items Solomon Winslow had ordered from catalogs and had shipped into town. Winslow Manor was the largest house in South Pass City. It was built on the rise of a hill, surrounded by acres of treeless land, overlooking the settlement considered the halfway point on the Oregon Trail.

She also got a husband who turned out to be thirty-two years older than he had described. Solomon was not the gentleman of twenty-five years of age, of balanced weight and height, who had advertised his good habits and ability to provide and support. Unfortunately, Elianna was already legally married to him.

She had responded to Solomon's ad for a young, intelligent, and refined lady of childbearing years who could complete his home as a wife and mother. He had been delighted she was as young as she claimed, trim of figure and beautiful.

Living with Solomon was not what Elianna had expected. Even so, it was an improvement over her first fifteen years of life. Since he had not kept his part of the bargain to tell the truth, Elianna had not felt the tiniest bit of guilt for being dishonest herself. She faked her virginity. A bit of chicken blood, spilled from a bottle at the appropriate time while struggling with him, along with a scream of pretend pain, had easily convinced Sol that Elianna was what she advertised.

Elianna's new husband treated her well enough, but it turned out Solomon had spent most of his fortune building and furnishing the manor. As he was paying off his debts from the house for his young mail-order bride, the gold production from his mine had dwindled to nothing.

Three months after her arrival, Solomon made Elianna a widow. He was killed in a mine cave-in, leaving her with the largest house in town and no means to support herself.

The obvious choice was to remarry, and she had plenty of offers, starting the day after Sol's funeral service. However, Elianna had no desire to remarry or to live in poverty again. Most of the miners were no longer hitting pay dirt, and she would not live on hopes and maybes. She could have moved on; however, she had nowhere to go or the money to get there. At least in South Pass, she owned a home, and she had a good reputation, one she guarded fiercely.

It was Mr. Mortimer Dickerson, the bank manager, who had

first suggested how Elianna could earn money to support herself. Initially, she had pretended shock and outrage by his suggestion. Realistically, she was not surprised. The temperance and church organizers of South Pass had not won their crusade against liquor or gambling in town. However, they had succeeded in outlawing prostitution. Suddenly certain amenities were unavailable to the powerful and wealthy men who had used such services regularly.

Elianna found herself running a secret and exclusive *parlor*. She was the only woman available, and she ran her business on her terms. Word-of-mouth connections were agreed upon in advance.

The public Widow Elianna Winslow was respectable, a prominent leader in the women's groups of South Pass City, respected by one and all. She volunteered her time to the women's church groups, and she brought sweets for the children in school just because it made her happy.

The private Elianna wined, dined, and provided her exclusive customers with several hours of congenial company. There was no ambiguity in what she was doing. She was selling her body and her charms at a top dollar price. Instead of earning less than two dollars a week for backbreaking work, cleaning, or cooking, she received twenty dollars a visit, and she did not spend all her time on her back. She entertained patrons two or three times a week, as she pleased. She had learned to enjoy the company of most of the men who sought her attention and paid well for it.

The men Elianna entertained were the most prominent businessmen, and wealthy mine and ranch owners in the area. In addition to paying the sum required for her services, they often gifted her with jewelry or nuggets of smelted gold ore. She enjoyed an enviable standard of living. If the townspeople believed she was living off Solomon Winslow's inheritance, she would not be the one to tell them differently.



THE ELEGANT ELIANNA WINSLOW fascinated Boyd Lattimore. He saw her several times a week in town, driving a fancy black buggy with silk fringe, or riding a powerful-looking gray gelding. He discovered she came to town to visit various merchants and the bank, or to attend meetings with groups of women.

It had taken Boyd weeks to drive the vermin out of the Gold Bust Saloon, and to order the beer and liquor needed to reopen the doors. He was not a bartender, so he had hired one, Charlie Baskin, and business was picking up slowly. Boyd kept the books and ordered the supplies, leaving the day-to-day operation to the bartender. His management duties would not keep Boyd busy though.

Elianna was aware of the new man in town. He was a cousin of John Haskle, although she saw no family resemblance. John was an overly large man, coarse in his behavior and words. One of her *friends* had approached her on his behalf. However, Elianna had never considered John Haskle a possible client.

The new man, Boyd Lattimore, was tall and slim. He could even be called lanky. Elianna had awakened one night from a dream where she was entwining her fingers into his thick chestnut-colored mane of hair. She immediately pushed the image out of her head. She had to deal with quite enough men. She did not need another. Elianna knew Boyd was watching her when she went into town, and she experienced a little jolt of responsiveness whenever she felt him glancing at her, even as she told herself to ignore it.

During the last three years, Elianna had made and saved quite a bit of money from her private parlor. She had enough saved to open a business, a legitimate enterprise such as a dress or millinery shop. It was simply a question of time and opportunity. Elianna was gradually realizing she would have to leave South Pass. The mining town was going bust, and the time was soon coming when she would have to move on. She had not decided on the when or the where yet, but at some time in the future, she would be running a different type of business.



"ELLIE, LET ME STAY!" Joe Fletcher begged, following Elianna to the kitchen door. Joe owned a ranch outside of town. "It's not like anyone would miss me," he pleaded. "I ain't got no wife. Marry me, darling!"

"No, and no," Elianna replied, as she smiled and kissed him. "I can't have anyone see a man coming out of my home in the morning. They would assume the worst, and don't call me Ellie!"

"Darling, I need you!"

"You have had me for the last several hours," Elianna laughed. "You know the rules!"

"Once more, please?" Joe begged. "With the price of beef down, I might not be able to afford you much longer."

"Sweet, sweet, Joe," Elianna purred. She had lost two of her best customers already as they had closed their doors and moved away. Joe had been a replacement. Her hand went to his crotch, and he groaned as she caressed him, "One more time, but you must hurry."

"Oh, darling, it ain't gonna take me long," Joe promised as Elianna led him into a small room off the formal parlor where she removed her robe. Joe almost lost it before he touched her. As it was, he took her fast, pounding into Elianna as she braced herself over a table. He was right. It was over in a few minutes. After a long and smoldering kiss, Joe left through the kitchen door.

Elianna prepared a bath for herself, heating water on the kitchen stove, and setting the tub in a small room off the kitchen. It was a ritual she performed; a luxury to make herself feel like a pampered woman. She drank a glass of sweet tea as she soaked in the flowery scented water, to assuage the bit of guilt she felt for what she was doing.

She went to her bed feeling soft and clean, and she fell asleep while reading one of her treasured books, one she had already read a dozen times.

A pounding on her kitchen door awakened Elianna, and she saw

by the clock on her mantle it was well past one in the morning. Pulling on a robe, she rushed down the stairs and peeked through the window, before opening the door to Dr. Clinton Lawson.

"Is anything wrong?"

Standing tall, but weary, Clint Lawson removed his hat respectfully. "No, Elianna, everything is fine. Mrs. Chadwick had a boy. He looks to be a healthy and strong baby. There is something wonderful and life affirming about bringing a new life into this world. It is one of the greatest pleasures of being a doctor. I wish more women would allow us doctors to tend to them."

He eyed Elianna with a sheepish smile. "Another great pleasure is engaging in your company. It occurred to me as I was driving by your lane, that I have not had the pleasure of visiting you lately. Would you by chance have what is left of the evening free?"

"I was hoping to call it a night," Elianna admitted, but she offered her hand to the doctor and stepped inside the kitchen, drawing him with her. She peered through the window to make sure his buggy was out of sight. "Would you like a drink?"

"A little of that aged brandy you keep on hand would hit the spot," Dr. Lawson suggested.

"Come into the parlor," Elianna invited. She liked Clint Dawson, and she enjoyed his company. He made regular appointments, though he was rarely able to keep them. The nature of his work was handling emergencies, setting broken bones, and dealing with the sick. She poured him a brandy, and he pulled her into his arms, lowering his head to take her lips.

"You smell delicious," he whispered.

"Scented bath soap," Elianna answered in his ear, enjoying the appreciation in his eyes.

He tugged on the wide lapels of her robe, and his hand went inside as he opened it for a full view of her attributes. "Did you have any plans for tonight?"

"No," Elianna whispered as she kissed him while his hands stroked her breasts. "You have to be gone by dawn!"

“A small price to pay for enjoying what you have to offer,” he promised.

Elianna led Dr. Lawson upstairs and into the second bedroom, one of six bedrooms on the second floor, though one was sequestered. Her personal bedroom was off limits. She conducted her private liaisons in the other five bedrooms, and she would even take care of specific requests in the parlor if her clients were impatient. She would not allow her male company to intrude upon her private sanctum. Business was business. Her private space belonged to no one but her.

Dr. Lawson had not visited recently. He was quite randy and aggressive during their first two sessions of lovemaking. Elianna knew how to satisfy a man, and she knew how to pretend he satisfied her. She didn't have to pretend with Clint Lawson.

Elianna's first forays into sex had consisted of her desperately fighting against the Hamilton men. All the fighting achieved was bruises and beatings. Solomon Winslow had been considerably older than Elianna had expected when she had arrived as his bride. Her husband had not been a particularly patient man, but he had taught Elianna what he expected from a wife. He was an apt teacher, tossing aside most of the ideas Helen had painstakingly drilled into her about a woman's dignity. Solomon had wanted his wife naked as much as possible and willing to obey his commands.

Elianna had soon learned disagreeing to his requests was a sure-fire way of angering her older husband. She disliked being punished, or having a tender and sore bottom as a result. Since losing her husband, Elianna had discovered some men enjoyed spanking a woman's ass, and they needed little motivation.

She had been cautious when choosing her customers, weeding out the men who wanted to display their male superiority with loud mouths and harsh actions. She had two clients who were spankers. Clint was one of them. He might end his visits by reddening her bottom, but at least he knew how to satisfy a woman.

Clint brought Elianna to three fabulous orgasms over the course of their night together. He fell asleep naked and sated. When the ringing alarm clock warned it was time for him to leave, he made love to her once more.

The doctor knew how irregular his hours could be, and he had no idea when he would find time to revisit Elianna. He made sure their last sexual romp included everything he liked. He spanked her bottom until she cried. Then he dried her tears and spent the next hour using her body in any manner he saw fit. He kissed, fondled, and screwed her, smacking her ass just because he enjoyed doing it.

When Dr. Lawson was done, Elianna knew to remain facedown on the bed naked. He liked seeing the results of his handiwork. As he dressed, he occasionally strolled back to the bed to stroke her reddened bottom.

With three last stinging whacks, Clint turned Elianna, raking his eyes over each luscious curve. "Looking at you makes me want to bury myself into you again," he groaned.

"Don't be a stranger for so long next time," she pouted.

"I won't. Be good. If I can get away next week, I will be back. If I don't, meet me in my office next Thursday."

Elianna nodded. "The last time you said that, I waited for several hours, and you didn't show. Besides, I'm afraid someone will see us sneaking upstairs to your rooms."

He smiled and kissed her. "It's the life of a doctor."

She stretched out on the bed like a waking kitten, and Elianna smiled as the doctor set a gold eagle on the top of the dresser. Then he was gone. She rubbed her tender bottom, wondering why spanking turned on certain men.

Clint was the easier of Elianna's two spanking customers. Reverend Luke Marks was the other spanker who was due in from his preaching circuit in another week. He would stay in South Pass a week, and Elianna knew if the reverend could afford it, he would visit her. She would be left with an extremely sore bottom after he was gone. Elianna believed he lessened his guilt for sleeping with

her by spanking her. He blamed her for being accessible for his sinful urges, yet he returned whenever he routed himself through South Pass.

Elianna rolled out of bed to take another bath. She would not think about her next spanker. Knowing in advance often made it worse. The traveling preacher carried no gun, but as far as Elianna was concerned, his large hand was his weapon of choice.