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# HER CONVENIENT DOM

Dominant Men Book Two

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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: 978-1-61258-979-4

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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.

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## Chapter 1

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**I**t was late afternoon in the Mississippi river town of Moline, Illinois, and as the last patient of the day walked out the door of Dr. Jacob Kellum's office, a tired Harper Easton quickly ran to the door to lock up for the evening. But before she could get the task accomplished, a man rushed in with a small child in his arms.

"My son was just injured; is the doctor still in?" The man was visibly upset as he cradled the small boy whose forehead sported a blood-soaked bandage.

"Yes, sir, follow me to the exam room. We'll get this little guy taken care of. What happened?" Harper asked as she removed the bandage gingerly. Tears were rolling down the chubby cheeks of the boy, but he allowed her to look at his injury.

"He was playing at the playground and fell off the swings. His nanny should have been watching him instead of talking on her cell." The child's father was visibly agitated with the neglectful nanny.

"Let me just get it cleaned up so the doctor can get a better look at it." She smiled down at the little boy. Turning to his

father, she said, "I'll need for you to fill out some forms while we're waiting for the doctor."

"Whatever, just see to my son."

Harper hurriedly cleaned the nasty gash. Realizing it would need sutures, she prepared everything for the procedure before leaving the room to summon Dr. Kellum. She was exhausted from a busy day, but something about the man and his little boy tore at her heartstrings. With a renewed energy, she set about her work.

When she returned to the room and handed the man the necessary paperwork, he was whispering to the little boy. As he rocked the child, he said, "It's all right, Aiden, Daddy's here. You can be a big boy for the doctor. Daddy's right here with you, every step of the way."

The boy had stopped whimpering, seemingly content to be in his father's strong arms. Harper's heart leapt at such a display of fatherly love. What a lucky woman his wife must be. Would she ever be that fortunate? She certainly hadn't had any luck in the man department yet.

"Can you put him on the table?" Harper pointed to the exam table in the room while glancing at the chart for a name.

"Bentley, Parker Bentley. And this little trouper is Aiden." Mr. Bentley stood up and walked to the table, gently putting his son down. The boy clung to his father, but after some reassuring words were whispered, he agreed to stay put.

"Well, Aiden, you certainly are a little trouper. I'll have to see if we can find some stickers for you." Harper patted a chubby, clenched fist. "Relax, sweetheart, your daddy is right here, and so am I. My name's Harper."

Dr. Kellum entered the room. "What have we here, young man? It looks like you might have had a run in with a swing or a slide, and you didn't come out the winner."

The boy giggled as his father explained what had happened. "I'm in town on business. My son was at the playground with his

nanny, and she was, apparently, not watching him as she should have been. Aiden fell out of the swing and cut his head."

"I see. Well, let's take a look. I won't hurt you, Aiden. I just want to take a peek." The kindly doctor carefully examined the wound. Dr. Kellum was an old-fashioned family practitioner, having been in practice for several years.

"Is it bad?"

"He'll need some stitches, but he'll be fine. Harper, could you help me? Sheila's already gone."

"Yes, Dr. Kellum. I think I have everything ready for you."

"Excellent. Mr. Bentley, if you'll stand right over here, you'll be out of the way but still close enough to hold your son's hand for moral support."

Harper assisted her boss, smiling at the father-and-son duo while the doctor expertly stitched the child's head. The small boy smiled up at her with tears rolling down his chubby, little-boy cheeks once again. *What a little charmer*, she thought as she reached down and patted the hand his father wasn't holding. She imagined that the father could be every bit the charmer too and found herself daydreaming.

"Take him to your family doctor in a few weeks to have the sutures removed. There shouldn't be much of a scar, just a small line. It shouldn't be very noticeable at all."

The doctor's words snapped her attention back to the present.

"Thank you so much. With Aiden's mother gone, I try my best, but sometimes the children just have to be in the care of someone else. It's never the same as a mother."

"Well, I'd say you're doing a good job. Aiden is a lucky little boy."

Mr. Bentley walked out to the reception desk, where Harper made a copy of his insurance card. As she handed it back to him, he smiled at her. She hadn't noticed before how truly handsome he was. He was a tall, muscular man with dark brown hair,

showing the slightest hint of gray at the temples, and the most beautiful green eyes she'd ever seen. He looked the part of distinguished businessman, but when he smiled, his whole face lit up. And when he looked at his son, a different side of the man was revealed. He was quite evidently a devoted father. Obviously, this man knew how to balance the priorities in his life. He'd said his son's mother was gone. What had happened? Was he available, then? She shook her head to rid her mind of such inappropriate thoughts about a patient's parent.

"I'd like to thank you, ma'am, for helping us tonight. I know I've kept you late. Could I make it up to you by inviting you to have dinner with us tonight?" Parker flashed a smile that would melt any woman's heart, especially one that had been badly broken. Aiden was giving her a similar, little-boy version of the heart-melting look, making it even more difficult to resist the two.

Her heart skipped a beat as she looked up at the gorgeous man standing in front of her. Every sensible bone in her body was telling her to decline the invitation, but her heart was telling her to accept. What else did she have to do, anyway, besides going home to another lonely night in her apartment and eating a frozen dinner in front of the television until she was so bored, she went to bed? Alone. Dreaming of a life that just didn't seem to be within her grasp.

"Well, I-I don't know." She looked up at him in surprise.

"I'm sorry. I guess I should have asked if you were married, but I didn't see a ring," the man replied apologetically, flashing a smile once more that made it very hard for her to say no.

"No, I'm not married. And, yes, I would like to have dinner with you and Aiden." Harper smiled back at him, giving in to her heart rather than her mind.

"Actually, I have a daughter, too. Ava's back at the hotel with the absent-minded nanny. I hated to leave her with that woman after what happened at the playground, but I just grabbed Aiden and ran when I got the call."

"In that case, I'd like to have dinner with the three of you." Harper laughed as she looked from father to son. Aiden had stopped crying by now and was busy looking at the stickers she'd given him. As his father held him in his arms, he clapped his hands, apparently happy that she'd said yes.

"Great. Would you mind meeting us at the hotel? I want to get Aiden back there and check on Ava. I need to have a few words with my nanny, as well."

"Tell me where and when, and I'll be there. I need to finish just a few things here and run home to freshen up a bit, first."

"We're at the Residence Inn. Come by in about an hour or so; don't rush yourself. Whenever you're ready will be fine. I'll leave word at the desk to let me know when you arrive." He scribbled down the address for her on a pad that lay on the counter.

"Okay, I'll be there. See you soon, Aiden." She looked at the sweet little boy who was shyly smiling up at her.

The Bentleys left, waving to her as they walked out the door. Harper locked the door behind them before she finished closing up for the night, then Dr. Kellum walked her out.

"Do you know who that was, Harper?"

"No, should I?" she asked as she unlocked the door to her gray Camry.

"Parker Bentley is one of the wealthiest businessmen in the state. He owns a chain of restaurants. *The Heavenly Gourmet*, I believe they're called."

"Are you serious? I just agreed to have dinner with him and his two children."

Surprised, Dr. Kellum said, "That's unlike you, Harper, to go out with someone you've just met, isn't it?"

"Yes, it is. But he was so nice and so concerned for his little boy. He said he wanted to thank me for staying late."

"His wife passed away about two years ago, if I remember correctly. It was a tragic accident. I don't recall the details."

"I remember reading about that, now that you mention it."

"Well, have fun, Harper. I'm sure he'll treat you to a nice meal. Just be careful."

"Thanks, Dr. K. I'll see you tomorrow."

Harper drove home to change out of her scrubs, thinking about what Dr. Kellum had told her. *Why in the world would a man like Parker Bentley, who could have any woman he wanted, ask me out to dinner?* But wouldn't it be nice, just for once, to be wanted by a man like Parker? Her mind started to wander again as she drove the short distance to her home.

When she arrived at her apartment, she raced into her bedroom, stripping off her clothes as she went. After quickly running through the shower, she chose a summery floral sundress for the evening and added a pair of white, strappy sandals. *Casual yet feminine*, she thought as she twirled in front of her mirror. She brushed her shoulder-length blonde hair until it shone, deciding to wear it down for the evening instead of in the messy bun she usually wore at the office. After dabbing a little light cologne on her wrists and neck, she grabbed her purse and keys. On the way to the hotel, she realized she should have known who he was when he told her his name. Somehow, it just hadn't clicked with seeing him playing the role of devoted father instead of restaurant entrepreneur. What business could he have in a place like Moline? Was he planning to open a restaurant there?

When she got to the desk, she told the girl behind the counter that Mr. Bentley was expecting her.

"Yes, ma'am, I'll let him know you're here." The girl picked up the receiver to make the call. She soon smiled at Harper, gave her the room number, and told her to go on up.

Surprised, Harper went in search of the room. She had expected they'd come down to meet her. She timidly knocked on the door. A little girl, slightly older than Aiden, answered the door and led Harper into the suite.

"You must be the pretty lady from the doctor's office my



daddy and Aiden told me about." The girl was cute, with blonde curls and the same remarkable green eyes as her father. She was looking at Harper with a quizzical look on her face.

"Well, my name is Harper, and, yes, I do work for Dr. Kellum. You must be Ava. Your daddy told me about you, too."

"He did?"

"He sure did. How's Aiden doing?"

"He's watching television. Daddy and me have been trying to keep him quiet, but that's hard to do." The little girl rolled her eyes dramatically.

Refraining from correcting the child's grammar, Harper laughed and said, "I'll bet it is."

"Jill—she's our nanny—had a big fight with Daddy, and she quit. He was mad at her because she was talking to her boyfriend on the phone when Aiden got hurt. He told her it was a good thing she quit, cuz he was gonna fire her anyway."

"Oh, I see."

"Harper, you're here," Parker said, coming into the room, looking every bit as handsome as he had earlier. Only now, he was wearing casual khakis and a pale blue sport shirt. "I hope you don't mind that we'll have our meal here. I've taken the liberty of ordering takeout for us. I hate to take Aiden out after the ordeal this afternoon."

"That's quite all right. Ava and I were just getting acquainted."

"I'll bet that was interesting. She's quite the little chatterbox." Parker laughed as he affectionately ruffled his daughter's blonde hair.

"We're getting along just fine," Harper answered, winking at the child.

"Would you like to come into the other room and say hello to Aiden? I've finally gotten him settled on the bed with the television to keep him company. He's already eaten."

"I'd love to see our brave boy again."

Parker led her into the bedroom the children apparently shared. She saw that Aiden was indeed comfortable. Settled against several pillows with the television set blaring, he looked quite content.

"Hi, Aiden, are you feeling better?"

"Yes, ma'am, I'm feeling lots better now. Daddy said I could watch a movie if I stay in bed."

"I'm glad to hear you're feeling better. I'll be sure and tell Dr. Kellum, in the morning."

"He's a nice man."

"Yes, he is. He's been just like a father to me."

"Don't you have a real daddy?"

"Yes, I do, but my real daddy is in Heaven with the angels."

"That's where my mommy is. Maybe they know each other."

"I'll just bet they do." Harper caught Parker's eye.

He was smiling at her as he mouthed the words, "Thank you."

"We're going to eat our dinner now, big boy. If you need us, ring that little bell by your bed."

"Okay. Ava, will you stay with me?"

"Sure, Aiden," the little girl said as she sat on the bed next to her brother.

"Has she eaten too?" Harper asked as they walked back into the living room of the suite.

"Yes, both children ate earlier. I guess Ava told you about the run-in with the nanny. I thought I heard her as I came into the room."

"Yes, she did. I'm so sorry. What are you going to do?" Harper asked, remembering he was in town on business with no one he could call on close by.

"My business will be finished here in a few days," he answered wearily. "I can work it out with the hotel to have someone stay with the children when I can't be here. After we go home, I'll have to begin interviewing for a new nanny. I really

hate to put the kids through that. They've been through so much in the last two years."

"It can't be easy for you, raising two young children alone." Harper gave him a sympathetic look.

"No, it isn't, but I cherish them. I'll raise them the way their mother would have wanted them to be raised, knowing the love of a parent who cares about them."

"No one could ask for more than that," Harper replied quietly.

"I wonder where our dinner is. I'm starved. It's been a very hectic day for me, as I'm sure it has been for you. I hope you like Italian."

"Yes, I love Italian, as a matter of fact," she said, accepting the glass of wine he offered.

After he had poured himself a glass of the same, they sat down on the sofa and began to get acquainted.

"Tell me about Harper Easton, receptionist, doctor's assistant," Parker began.

"There's not much to tell, really." She laughed as he looked at her questioningly.

"Well, what's your life like? What do you do for fun?"

"Not a whole lot to do around here, as I'm sure you've seen. I work for Dr. Kellum and go home each evening. On the weekends, I might take in a movie or go out with friends."

"No special guy in your life? I find that hard to believe."

"Not at the moment. My old flame got married recently."

"Well, he's a fool if he let you go."

"Tell his new bride that. He left me for her," Harper said, remembering the day Shawn had told her he'd found someone else.

"Well, his loss will be some other man's gain." Parker smiled at her again as he got up to answer the door.

After the delivery boy had gone, they sat down to enjoy their dinner.

"This is delicious. Tell me about your restaurants. I've never eaten at one of them," Harper said as she took a bite of lasagna.

"Then you're truly missing out. You'll have to try one sometime. Just like the name, the food is heavenly. We're planning to open one here, which is why I'm in Moline this week. I try to bring the kids with me whenever I can."

"I'll have to try it out when it opens. That's great that you take such an active role in parenting, with your busy schedule. That must be hectic at times."

"It is, but I brought them into the world, it's my responsibility to see that they're happy, healthy children. They've lost their mama, so I want the rest of their childhood to be as painless as possible. And I love both of them more than life itself, so it's not hard for me to juggle my schedule to accommodate them. Now, tell me more about you, Harper. How long have you worked for Dr. Kellum?"

"I've been with him for three years, but that'll soon be coming to an end. Dr. Kellum is retiring next month."

"Oh? And what will you do then?" he inquired, obviously interested in hearing her reply.

"I'm not sure. Dr. Kellum has assured me I'll be receiving a nice severance package, so I've not been in a big hurry to look for something. I'll have to start checking things out soon, though."

"Have you ever thought about becoming a nanny?"

The question caught her off guard. She hesitated for just a moment. "No, I've never thought about it."

"Why don't you give it some thought, Harper? I can make arrangements for the next month, until Dr. Kellum retires. The job is yours if you want it. We can discuss salary and benefits later. I can assure you, you won't be disappointed. I take care of my employees. Your schedule will be flexible to a certain extent. I like to arrange my schedule so I can spend time with Ava and Aiden. You'd be free during those times."

Harper was literally in shock. She didn't know what to say.

"Think about it; that's all I ask," he urged, seeing the look of surprise on her pretty face.

"I don't have to think about it. I accept." She wasn't one to make spur-of-the-moment decisions, but this had just fallen into her lap and was too tempting to resist.

"That's wonderful, Harper! You've just helped me escape a gruesome task of interviewing potential nannies. Besides, the kids both like you, already. I've seen, firsthand, how you were with Aiden at Dr. Kellum's office, and earlier, I watched your interaction with Ava. And I have to say I was impressed, both times."

"I like them, as well. They seem to be very sweet, well-behaved children." *Not to mention, their daddy is hot.*

"I have to warn you, even though they're both very well-behaved kids, they've had a tough time getting over the sudden loss of their mother," he said with a hint of sadness in his voice.

"That's understandable. I'm an adult and still have a hard time dealing with the loss of my father at times."

"How long has he been gone?"

"A little over a year now," she replied.

"I'm sorry, Harper."

"Thank you. Dr. Kellum and his wife have been especially kind to both my mother and me through it all."

"We'll be leaving for our home on Hilton Head Island just about the time you finish your work with Dr. Kellum," Parker informed her. "This could be the start of a beautiful relationship, Harper." He explained to her that he owned homes in Chicago and on the island and that they used the South Carolina house for getaways when the children weren't in school. Ava was in kindergarten, and Aiden attended preschool.

After they'd had dessert and coffee, he suggested they tell the children the news. But when they entered the bedroom, both of them were sound asleep, arms around each other.

"I'll move Ava to her bed." Parker picked up his daughter gently. He tucked her into her own bed, kissing her goodnight

before walking over to the other bed. He gently pulled the covers over his son, giving him a kiss on the forehead. He took the remote from Aiden's hand, turned off the television, then set it on the nightstand. As he and Harper walked out of the room, he flipped the light switch, but not before placing a tiny nightlight into a wall socket, leaving a soft glow of light in the room.

"The big news will have to wait until morning," he said as they tiptoed out of the room.

"I'd better be going. I have to work tomorrow. With Dr. K retiring, everyone wants to get in to him one last time before they have to find a new physician."

"Harper, thank you. I'll be in touch." He gently touched her cheek as if he wanted to say more, but he stopped himself.

Her breath caught in her throat. It was almost as if he had wanted to kiss her goodnight. How ridiculous of her to imagine such a thing, she thought as she picked up her purse and quickly told him goodnight, quietly letting herself out of the suite.

All the way home, she thought about the way he'd said goodnight. She went to bed that night full of anticipation for the summer at the beach that lay ahead for her with the Bentley family.

The next morning, she filled Dr. Kellum in on the details of the night before.

"Well, Harper, I'm glad you've found another position, but are you sure this is what you want to do?" the kindly doctor asked her. His concern was evident.

"I can try it. If it doesn't work out, I can look for something else."

"I wish you the best of luck, then, and if you need to leave here early to go away for the summer, I'll work it out on this end."

"Thank you, Doc, but Mr. Bentley said that he could make other arrangements for the next month. I really would like to stay with you for your last few weeks."

"Thank you, my dear. I appreciate that. And I truly hope this works out for you. I've heard good things about the man. It's just so odd the way it all came about." The doctor shook his head.

The first patient had arrived, so Harper dropped the conversation and began her workday. Every once in a while, when she had a break between patients, she found her thoughts going to the family from Chicago. What was their house like in Chicago? How would the children react to the news that she was going to be their new nanny? And a whole summer at the beach! She wondered how her mother would react to the news that she'd be moving out of town. Knowing her sweet mom, she knew that she would encourage her. Besides, the woman had more friends than Harper did, so she didn't have to worry about her being lonely.

She tried to steer her mind away from the handsome man who would be her new boss, but it was a fruitless gesture. She was really going to have to watch her Ps and Qs around him. She couldn't let him see that she was attracted to him physically. She had hoped that he might want to see her again after their dinner together, but she had imagined it in a different way. Since Shawn, she hadn't been dating, and she had thought, just for a moment, that she might like to go on a real date with the handsome man who had blown into her life unexpectedly. Apparently, that wasn't to be. She was meant to meet him, but for an entirely different reason. At least she didn't have to worry about looking for job. At least, not anytime soon. She would put her all into the nanny gig, in hopes that she could keep the position for several years. It didn't hurt that she liked the children who would be her charges, and they liked her.

As for dating, it would just have to wait. She wouldn't have time for that. And, somehow, she was okay with it. It might do her good to have a change of scenery and a different job to keep her mind off of Shawn and his new bride. To know that he had preferred someone else had cut her deeply. Life would go on, but a move may be just what she needed. Besides, after meeting Mr.

Bentley, she wondered what she had ever seen in her former boyfriend. Shawn was so different from Parker.

Parker was self-assured, confident, and it showed in his actions. He wasn't overbearing or conceited, though. He was handsome, but he didn't act like he even knew it. And he seemed to be a take-charge guy, which she found extremely attractive.

Shawn, on the other hand, had been reasonably good-looking, but he knew it. He wasn't one for spur-of-the-moment decisions, which is what had shocked her so much when he had left her for someone else. He would never have made a snap decision to hire her to care for his children, had he been a father, as Parker had done. No, Shawn would have had to mull it over for weeks before making a decision. Parker seemed to be a good judge of character. Shawn, on the other hand, had a few friends she had always been wary of. He didn't seem to be able to figure out that some people only pretended to be his friend so that they could be in his inner circle of the elite, or those who thought they were elite, anyway. He belonged to the country club because his family had money. Money which Shawn enjoyed throwing around to impress people. She felt certain that even though Parker was obviously wealthy in his own right, he wasn't that way at all. At least, it didn't seem that way.

She felt good about her decision to work for Parker Bentley. And with that thought, she finished her day so that she could begin planning her new life. She called her mother and asked her to have dinner with her. She would gently break the news to her, and she knew that her mom would immediately take over and help her with all the details necessary for her move. That was step one in the new direction her life would be taking very soon.