
Chapter 1

“Jessica Diana Barker, as I live and breathe.”

Jessica stopped in the middle of folding a box for donuts and turned her gaze to the doorway of Barker’s Bakery. Of all the things she’d expected to happen today, this was not at the top of her list. It wasn’t even on her list for today, or any other day of this week, or month, or year, really.

“Mrs. Dobbs,” she said, her voice soft.

“Excuse me, but I’m in a hurry.” Jessica turned her attention back to the woman standing across the counter from her.

“I’m so sorry, Mrs. Cunningham.” She finished folding the box. “A dozen glazed, and a dozen chocolate frosted, right?”

“Exactly.” Mrs. Cunningham beamed, then dug into her purse.

Jessica folded another box, then filled them both. She took Mrs. Cunningham’s money, then hurried across the bakery floor to let her out. It was the least she could do after making her wait. Mrs. Cunningham came in twice a week to pick up donuts for the bank workers. Once a month, Jessica gave them to her for free.

She kept her hand on the door, knowing Mrs. Dobbs was just

inches away from her. Deep breath, deep breath, she said to herself before she turned to her once-future mother-in-law.

“How can I help you? Donuts? They’re fresh.”

Mrs. Dobbs—who had never said call me Matilda please, even when Jessica was engaged to her son—stared at her.

“You miserable little witch,” she finally said. “Do you realize how my son suffered because of you?”

“If I remember you like chocolate.” Jessica crossed the room and started to fold another box. “A dozen, on the house.” Anything to get you out of here, Jessica thought as she used the tongs to fill the box. When it was full she folded down the lid and pushed it across the counter. “Good day, Mrs. Dobbs.”

“You can’t get rid of me that easy, not after how you hurt my son.”

“He’s a grown man,” Jessica said. “If he has a problem with how I ended our relationship he can come see me. It’s not as if I’m hiding. After all, the private investigator he hired came in just a week ago. Which is why you’re here, of course. Or did you hire the PI?”

“Grant does not know I’m here,” Mrs. Dobbs said. “You owe him.”

“I owe him nothing,” Jessica said.

“You owe him the ring he gave you when you promised to marry him,” Mrs. Dobbs said.

Jessica glanced around. There were no other customers at this point, and the two women who worked for her three days a week were in the back, making cookies, or dough to put in the freezer. Jessica had worked hard to keep her past quiet, and she intended to keep it that way.

“If you are talking about the engagement ring, I gave it back to Grant the night I broke off our engagement.”

“He says differently,” Mrs. Dobbs said. “That ring belonged to my grandmother, and I will not let a bitch like you keep it. You embarrassed us.”

"Couldn't hold your head up at a Friday night football game?" Jessica shook her head. "I gave the ring to Grant. I don't care what he told you."

"Of the two of you, you've been the proven liar, so I will trust my son," Mrs. Dobbs said. "Get me the ring. Now."

"I can't give you something I don't have," Jessica said.

"You sold it? Did you use the money to buy this place?"

Jessica took a deep breath before she said, "I can't sell something I don't have. The night I broke up with Grant I gave him the ring. I can't say it any plainer than that."

"You're lying," Mrs. Grant said.

"You can think what you what, I don't give a damn." She pushed the donuts toward her unwelcome visitor. "Take them and get out, and don't come back."

"Like I would eat anything you made," Mrs. Dobbs said. "I will give you twenty-four hours, which means I will be back tomorrow. Bring the ring."

It wouldn't do her any good to continue to deny it, because no matter what she said, Jessica knew Mrs. Dobbs would never believe her.

"Come in here again and I will call the constable to escort you out," Jessica said. The door dinged and Joe Mangle from the hardware store came in. He was here for his usual Monday morning purchase, which Jessica had already packed up and set aside.

"Joe," she said, thankful for his arrival. Mrs. Dobbs might be a witch, but she was ever conscious of how people viewed her. She would not make a scene, even in front of people she did not know. "You have a nice day, Mrs. Dobbs. Enjoy your pastries." Jessica pushed the box toward her one more time. The look Mrs. Dobbs gave her could have melted butter. The older woman relaxed her face, grabbed the box and turned toward the entrance.

"Ma'am," Joe said as he opened the door for her. She went

out and Joe winked at Jessica. “Not the most friendly of sorts, is she?”

“Seems not,” Jessica said as she went to get his order. “Three dozen cookies and a dozen donuts,” she said. “I’ll put it your bill.”

“And we’ll enjoy every bite, I’m sure,” Joe said. “Have a great Monday.”

He left and Jessica surveyed the case. She still had several dozen donuts left, so there was no need to make more. Even the nine o’clock coffee klatch of retired old men would not eat her out of them.

She opened the door to the back and asked, “How’s it going?”

Natalie and Lizbeth were singing along to some hip-hop song Jessica didn’t recognize. They moved their arms up and down in time to the music and nodded. Jessica laughed and shut the door. The shop was empty, for now. It was her chance to let her nerves take over for a few moments.

At the coffee stand she picked out a mug, doctored it with flavored creamer, then filled it with dark roast coffee. She picked out a table near the windows. She sat down, drank her coffee as if it were water, then got up and refilled her mug. While she was up she loaded a plate with three chocolate glazed donuts. Once in her seat she wolfed down one donut and finished half the mug of coffee. Her throat burned from the warm liquid, but she kept eating and drinking.

She was halfway through her third donut when Hawk’s truck zoomed by on the highway. Hawk Coleman, her lover and Daddy Dom. He’d been her lover for seven months now, and she loved every moment of it, mostly because he didn’t push her for permanency.

How he’d read her as a Little he didn’t say, but she was forever grateful that he did. She closed her eyes and remembered the first time he’d said, “Are you a naughty Little girl? Do you

need spanked?" Her mouth had dropped open and she'd nodded. Then he'd taken her over his knee and reddened her bottom until she was screaming for mercy. Then he'd bent her over the stainless-steel counter in the back and fucked her until her eyes crossed.

Jessica closed her eyes, and she swore she could still feel his cock inside her, pounding away until her body turned to jelly; still hear his voice as he ordered her to hold back, to come only when he said she could. Over the last seven months he'd claimed every hole in her body, and she gladly took his guidance and instruction. He was her Daddy, and she was his sweet pea.

She'd told him very little of her former life, and one of the things she loved was he didn't question her. He didn't ask where she'd lived before, about her family, or former lovers. He was the town constable, so she knew about his life. He and his five brothers ran a rescue ranch for horses. Everyone in town knew that. What they might not know was the Coleman brothers also ran a rescue for abused women. They had six cabins further down on the ranch where women came and went, depending on their situation.

Holt had met his future wife, Aurora, when she'd taken a job as den mother to take care of the cabins and the ladies and their children. They would be married soon, and Jessica had been tasked with making their wedding cake. As a matter of fact, they had a cake tasting appointment scheduled for four this coming Friday, after the bakery had closed for the day. Jessica was going to make three cakes a day until then. That was supposed to be the most stressful thing she did that week.

Now she had to worry about Mrs. Dobbs.

Why was she here now? Jessica had left Filmore nine months ago. She'd lived in Amarillo for a few months before she'd bought the building in Bookman Springs and opened her bakery. She'd selected it because it was a small town, off the main high-

way, and there was less chance of anyone dropping by and finding her.

Until today.

She thought back over the last few weeks to see if she could place the private detective who had tracked her down. In a town the size of Bookman Springs most of her customers were regulars. Some were those stopping to head to area lakes, or parks, to enjoy the beautiful countryside. But no one stood out. Had it been a man or a woman? Who knew, and she wondered why she was dwelling on it. It really didn't matter. Nor did it really matter that Mrs. Dobbs had found her. She didn't have the woman's ring. If Grant had lied to her about it that was not Jessica's fault.

She finished the last of her donuts, drained her coffee cup and looked back out the window. Two cars pulled into the parking lot, and she recognized two of her retired regulars as they got out of their cars and slapped each other on the back in greeting. Jessica would like to have a female friend like that, someone she could trust and meet for coffee every day.

Of course she had a job, so meeting every day would be out of the question. Unless that friend came to Barker's Bakery. Maybe Aurora could be that person. It would be fun, but who knew if it would happen.

As the men started toward the building, Hawk's vehicle sped down the street going the opposite direction from the first time she'd seen him. His lights were not on, so he was obviously not racing to an emergency; and he wasn't trying to pull someone over and give them a ticket. Was he driving by to check up on her? The thought actually made her smile.

"Morning Ms. Barker. The usual, please."

Jessica smiled at Jimmy Dickson as he came inside, with Frank Hanks right on his tail.

"Gentlemen," Jessica said as she stood. She picked up her used dishes and put them in the tub near the kitchen door. "I

made banana bread today, with chocolate chips. Are you sure you want the usual?"

Both men groaned, and Jessica laughed. She filled two cups with black coffee and delivered them to their table. "You want that bread warmed up, or cold?"

"Warm with lots of butter," Jimmy said. "Real butter."

"Do I serve anything else?" she asked with a laugh.

Back behind the counter she cut two huge slabs of bread, smothered them with butter, and placed them in the microwave. She opened the microwave door after the dinger went off, and a delicious smell of bananas and chocolate chips wafted out. It was strong enough that both of her customers murmured their approval.

She'd just delivered their treats when the front door opened and Hawk walked in. Her insides turned to jelly at the sight of him. He wore tight jeans and a tan shirt with his name embroidered above the left pocket. His utility belt, his service pistol hanging to the right, outlined his strong hips. She couldn't see them, but in the back was a pair of handcuffs, ones she'd worn several times while they were playing. His cowboy hat completed the outfit and made her want to swoon.

"All right, nobody move," he said. "I hear you're dealing drugs out of this place."

"She sure is," Jimmy said around a mouthful of food. "This banana bread has produced a high unlike anything I've ever experienced. Delicious."

"I knew it!" Hawk said. He put his hands on his hips in his cop stance, his legs slightly spread. "I'm going to have to get a search warrant for this place."

Jessica fastened her gaze on his crotch, and thought about the cock sitting behind the jeans. She licked her lips and thought about those handcuffs, how he loved to secure her hands behind her back, force her to her knees and stuff his hard dick down her throat. She could use a scene like that right now. Part of her

didn't care who watched. She just needed relief after her run-in with Mrs. Dobbs.

Her nipples hardened and juices gathered in her pussy.

She cleared her throat. "How about a bribe instead of a search warrant? Coffee and bread."

"Hurry up before I change my mind," he said.

The retirees laughed. She knew everyone in town was aware she and Hawk were screwing. Well, she knew now. Weeks ago she'd thought they were so clever, but Hawk's brother Holt had told him otherwise. So they openly flirted, just like they were doing now.

Hawk sat down at the counter. He took off his hat and put it on the stool next to him. She wanted so much to drop down in front of him. Either that or sit on his lap and let him comfort her. It was a hard choice. In lieu of sex she filled a coffee mug for him and cut him a slab of bread, which she then warmed up. After he'd taken the first bite she smiled, because he groaned in appreciation.

"Delectable," he said, and her nipples tightened even more. That was the word he'd used just last night when he had her tied to the bed and he'd licked, then bit, her clit. He was the only man she'd ever been with who knew there were two sides to her; the one who wanted to be treated roughly by a lover who took a riding crop to her ass and thighs, then shoved his dick up her butt, calling her his little whore while he rode her, and the one who wanted a tender, loving Daddy Dom who treated her with the upmost care.

She'd found that man in Hawk. To her it was a miracle. She was thirty-one years old, and she finally had a lover she could count on. Warmth spread through her, and then she thought of Mrs. Dobbs and her threat from that morning. Should she tell Hawk? She didn't see why. It was not his problem, it was hers. She would just have to be firmer with the woman tomorrow, convince her about the ring.

There was a part of her that wanted to call Grant and ask him why he was lying to his mother. Was it legal to record the conversation? The she could play it back for Mrs. Dobbs. She could ask Hawk if she could do it legally, but that would mean letting him know about the entire situation, and she wasn't too thrilled with that idea.

For now she would keep it secret. If Mrs. Dobbs didn't take no for an answer when she came back, then Jessica would consider asking Hawk for help, which wasn't something she did very often, unless it was part of a Daddy/Little scene.

"You okay?" His voice was low.

Jessica looked over to where the retirees sat. She was surprised there were only two of them today. Usually there were four or five.

"Where's everyone else?" she asked the retirees, ignoring Hawk's question.

"Marty had a doctor's appointment in Amarillo, and Steve went with him," Jimmy said. "Bond should be here in a bit. Can I have another slice of bread?"

"Me, too," Frank called out.

"Coming up." Jessica set about filling their order. She could feel Hawk's gaze on her as she worked. "You want one, too, Hawk?"

"Gotta watch my girlish figure," he said, patting his stomach. "Austin is making lasagna with all the fixings tonight. I'm supposed to invite you. Holt and Aurora are back from their trip, and they're moving into the house today. It's sort of a celebration to welcome them."

"Holt's lived there all his life, right?" Jessica asked.

"But he's moving into our parents' rooms today," Hawk said. "Changing of the guard, so to speak."

Jessica knew the Coleman parents traveled the country in an RV and weren't home very often.

"Can I bring dessert?" she asked.

“Austin knew you would ask, and he said to tell you thanks, but he’s doing it all.”

Hawk drained his coffee and stood up. He put on his hat and winked at her. “I’ll pick you up around six. Dinner is at seven.”

That would give them an hour to screw, she knew. She nodded ever so slowly. The phone rang and she answered it as Hawk walked over to the retirees’ table. Bond walked in as Jessica started to take an order from the person who had called. They all laughed and Hawk went to the door she nodded to him as he exited. He winked at her, and her body caught fire.

Six o’clock couldn’t come soon enough.