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## Chapter 1

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“**B**ut tomorrow’s spanking night.” Jett Montgomery glanced at the clock on the wall. “I can’t make it to Bear Creek and back in time for spanking night. If I leave tonight I’ll be driving on winding mountain roads after dark. Can’t this wait until Monday?”

“You’ll be staying all weekend.”

Jett’s mouth dropped open. First he wanted to skip spanking night, and now he was kicking her out of town for the weekend? What the heck was going on? She stared at him, wondering what to say that would not make her sound like a child who was not getting her way.

“Jett, I need you to do this for me.” Stan Hollings, her boss, got up from his desk and walked toward her. “These papers need to be signed and filed before Monday at five.”

Jett’s heart sank. Tears welled up in her eyes but she fought them back. “Can’t you send Cassidy? Or Marta?”

“I’ve given you this assignment,” he said. “You’re going to Tres Lobos Lodge, which is between Bear Creek and Angel Fire. You’ll also be going through Las Vegas tomorrow to pick up

papers from the bank there, where our client has an account. That means you'll be taking the 518 from there to Angel Fire. Make sure you leave early, because according to the weather report we could get an early fall snow."

She had so many questions, so many things she wanted to ask, but it was after four now, and if she was going to stay for the weekend she needed to get home and pack a bag and get to bed early. Why was he doing this? "Sir, have I offended you in some way? I know our relationship is not exactly normal, but—I'm sorry if I've upset you."

Stan crossed to her, gently touched her arms and kissed her forehead. "I'm not angry. I trust you to get this done for me because it's very important. Now, please go."

Jett nodded, crossed to his desk and picked up the expandable file and headed toward the door.

"The places I need signed are marked," Stan said as she turned the doorknob. "I'm sure he's going to want to read the papers before he signs them, even though we've discussed it before. That's why you're staying for the weekend."

"Tres Lobos Lodge," she said.

"Owned by Griffin Flack. We went to law school together, but he decided raising horses and catering to tourists was a better way to make a living." Stan snorted. "Some days I think he made a better decision than I did."

The wistful tone of his voice pulled at her heartstrings. Stan never sounded like that.

Jett turned away from the door. "Something is wrong. Tell me."

"Nothing is wrong, unless you don't leave now and start getting ready." Stan crossed the room. He reached around her and opened the door. "Scoot."

Jett was barely out the door before Stan shut it behind her. She went to her desk and gathered her things, thinking all the

time about anything she could have done to upset him. She and Stan had a strange relationship, that was for sure. She'd started seeing him before she'd taken a job at a legal firm near downtown Santa Fe. When she found out he was one of the partners there she'd freaked out. She hadn't wanted to date Stan, who was technically her boss, so they'd broken it off. Until they'd realized they both missed the great sex, and the incredible spanking and bondage.

While they missed things, they both knew they were not meant to be together as in together forever. Their's was not a love match, they both knew that. So they'd made a pact that there would be no sex between them, but he would spank her twice a month, and that would be all. No bondage. No sex. Just spanking. That had been eight months ago, and they hadn't missed a night. Until now.

She stopped at her desk and put things away before she picked up her purse and headed toward the door. This was just so odd. Why was he being this way, pushing her away from him on the night they were supposed to have their thing? As she entered the parking garage, the cooler weather seeped into her. It had been a hot summer, so going to the mountains and enjoying the trees and open skies would be nice. But she hadn't planned on going there this weekend.

This was the first time Stan had ever sent her out of Santa Fe on an errand. The farthest she'd ever gone from the office was to the courthouse. She wondered what she was going to find at the end of her trip, and what she was going to do for the weekend while Griffin Flack read the papers in the folder.

Angel Fire was part of the Enchanted Circle, named because it circled around Wheeler Park, the highest point of the state. There were many quaint towns around the circle where tourists shopped, skied, ate, drank, and soaked in the mountain air. Jett had visited the area many different times in her life, spending

weekends with boyfriends – when she had one – girls’ weekends, and with her family.

But it was way too early for skiing, which meant that was out. Maybe she could go shopping in Red River, or pop over to Taos and visit a few art galleries. Or maybe she would hole up in her room at Tres Lobos Lodge and read a book.

It took a moment for her to dump the folder and her purse in the backseat before she sat down, buckled up and hit the button to start her SUV. She backed out of her space much faster than she should have, because if she didn’t she would go back upstairs and demand to know why he was ignoring their date, why he was pushing her almost a hundred and fifty miles away.

If he didn’t want to continue their arrangement he should tell her, not just flounce her off on some errand that any one of the paralegals could do.

“Don’t go back, don’t go back, don’t go back,” she chanted as she left downtown and headed toward her condo on Calle Del Resplendor. If she went back right now she would probably say things she shouldn’t, and she would end up losing her job, the one that kept her in the nice condo. That, she supposed, was the bad idea about messing around with the boss. If things turned wonky, staying at the job would be awkward. She and Stan had talked about it before. She hoped that wasn’t what was happening. Finding another job in Santa Fe would be tough, and she didn’t care to give up her life in the city she’d come to love.

She entered her code at the gate, drove to her spot and parked. “Just do your job,” she said to the empty car. “You can spend the weekend coming up with scenarios about how to approach the elephant in the room. Just remember to keep hold of yourself when you talk to him.”

She banged her hand against the wheel. She had places to go, and daylight was fading. She knew he’d told her to start out tomorrow, but she was going to pack as quickly as possible and head down the Interstate to Las Vegas. She’d have a nice dinner

at the hotel on the plaza, and then head to the bank, and up to the Circle tomorrow. Leaving town tonight would keep her from going back to the office. She'd have a margarita, or two, with her dinner. That would help her to relax, and, hopefully, get a good night's sleep.

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STAN WATCHED as Jett's car exited the parking garage and headed out of downtown. He felt horrible about hurting her feelings but things had to be done; he had to make sure things moved in the right direction.

Once her car was out of sight, Stan sat down at his desk and picked up the phone on his desk and dialed.

"Flack."

"Hey." Stan pictured his friend sitting in the main room of the Tres Lobos office, papers strewn over his desk. If it had been after five he imagined Flack with a woman near his desk, naked and kneeling, waiting for instructions.

"One sec." There was a great deal of noise, none of which Stan could decipher, and then Griffin was back on the line. "What's up?"

"Don't tell me what you were just doing," Stan said.

"Okay, I won't." Griffin chuckled. "I take it you're calling to tell me she's on her way?"

"She is." Stan toyed with a pen on his desk. "She should be there around four tomorrow, depending on stops. She was not happy when she left."

"Well, as you said she expects a spanking every other Friday, and she left the office knowing that wasn't coming." There was a long pause. "You should tell her the truth, Stan. I don't mean to sound like a greeting card, but the truth is the best way to go. Tell her, Stan. Call her now."

"Thanks for the advice, Dad, but I'm not letting the news out

just yet,” Stan replied. He knew Griff was telling the truth, but he didn’t want to let his secret out. He needed more time. “You agreed to this, remember?”

“I should have had my head examined.”

Stan heard the frustration in his friend’s voice. He felt guilty for pulling him into it, but it was the only solution he could think of right now, and he had little time, really.

“Let me know when she gets there,” Stan said.

“Yup,” Griffin said. “Got to go. I have things to take care of to free up my schedule so I can do what you should be doing.”

The line went dead, and Stan hung up the receiver. Griffin was right. He should have sat Jett down and explained things. He was being a chicken-shit. He still had the receiver in his hand, and he could call Jett and tell her the truth. If she was his collared sub he would do just that. But their relationship was different. That didn’t mean, though, that he could treat her like crap and not answer her questions. She probably thought he had another woman he was meeting with this weekend, which wasn’t the truth. He hadn’t had a collared sub in two years.

His life hadn’t turned out as he’d planned. He was forty years old, single, childless, and ready for a change. When he announced his decision, there would be anger, and hurt feelings.

The only person he worried about in this process was Jett. She was thirty-three years old, and she’d expected more from him. Then things had come crashing down, and she’d wasted the last two years on him, and he intended to set her on a path that would, hopefully, give her a better life. Either that or he would think of himself as a royal ass.

Hopefully things would work. He reached into his desk and pulled out a bottle of scotch. He needed a hit to make it through the rest of the day so he didn’t worry about what was going through Jett’s mind.

GRIFFIN FLACK HADN'T HAD a blind date since high school, which was twenty-five years ago. He especially hadn't had a blind date with a sub whom he was expected to spank, and seduce. He preferred taking his time with new subs. If one of them wanted a weekend of fun he had Doms he employed for just that reason.

He hadn't had sex in so long it was a possibility his body would react like he was a teenager again and he'd come in three seconds flat. For a Dom trying to prove his dominance that was not a good thing.

It was also one of the reasons why he'd worked at turning down Stan's stupid idea, and by stupid he meant the one that would arrive tomorrow afternoon. Not that the woman was stupid, it was just that it was a stupid, stupid idea. There was a huge part of him that was just going to look over the fake papers she carried, sign them, and send her on her way. Of course he could keep his word and take her over his knee. But there was that wonderful problem of him rising to the occasion.

Griffin knew that Stan's idea was that Griffin would fall in love with Jett at first sight, but he would work hard to make sure that didn't happen. He didn't want to break his streak of being celibate.

Griffin looked up at the knock on the door to see Burt Woodland standing in the doorway.

"Hey, boss," Burt said. He had his cowboy hat in his hand, and was turning it round and round. "I think we might have a problem."

"Don't bother me unless it's a true problem," Griffin said.

"Okay, we have a problem," Burt said. "That dick from the next ranch, he climbed the fence near the cabins again."

"That SOB." He stood and paced for a few moments, then grabbed the landline phone on his desk and dialed. When a voice came on he said, "Let me speak to Tricky." He paused and said, "Find him, and tell him to get out to Tres Lobos ASAP."

He was about to slam down the phone before he realized how rude he'd been and said, "Sorry I was short with you. Tell him Griffin Flack needs to see him. I have a problem that needs taken care of."

The young girl on the other end of the phone murmured her assent, and he let her hang up first before he slammed down the receiver. He liked using a landline for just that reason; when he was angry it felt good to slam down the phone.

"What did he see, Burt?"

"He saw a naked woman in cabin three, bound between the columns with a plug up her ass and weights on her nipples. She was riding a dildo held up by the post."

"Fuck!" Griffin sat down in his chair.

"Stretch sat next to her, flicking a riding crop against her ass and telling her to fuck it faster. Portland ran onto the porch and tried to throw his jacket over the sub. She freaked out. Stretch calmed her down afterward."

"That asshole!"

"Don't get mad at Stretch," Burt said. "He was just doing his job."

"I'm not talking about Stretch," Griffin said. "I'm talking about the dick from next door. I'm going to have to file a restraining order against him. Please tell me he didn't have a camera with him."

"Stretch didn't mention it," Burt said. "He chased him off with an unloaded shotgun."

"Tell him to load it with buckshot," Griffin said. "If the SOB comes back, shoot next to him. Maybe that will keep him away."

"You got it, Boss," Burt said. He put on his hat and left.

Griffin picked up a pen and tapped it against the desk. His new neighbor, Nick Portland, had offered to buy Griffin's land on the west side of the road. Griffin had told him it wasn't for sale, and that caused tension between the two. Portland wanted to start a dude ranch, much like the one Griffin ran on the east side

of the highway. Tres Lobos West was a BDSM dude ranch, where ladies hired the services of Doms for a few days. There were three cabins, and they were far away from each other.

He had built eight-foot fences around the land to keep out the curious. Ever since Portland had moved in he'd been scaling the fences, or wading down the creek to see, as he'd told Griffin one time, what sort of illegal activities required such high fences.

Griffin wasn't sure if filing a restraining order against his neighbor would work, but he promised the ladies who came out here for painful pleasures privacy. He couldn't have Portland ruining the business he'd built up for the last six years.

"Burt!" he called out as an idea came to him. He heard Burt, one of his most requested Doms, run back toward him.

"Put some razor wire on top of the fence," he said. "Then put out a sign that says it's electrified."

"Do you want it to be?" Burt asked.

"No." Griffin continued to tap his pen against the desk. "But I want that ass to stay off my land."

"Got it," Burt said, just as Griffin's cell phone rang.

Griffin looked at the display, and after he clicked it on he said, "Tricky, I have a huge problem. I need your help."

"Oh my way," his high school friend said. "Tell your chef to fix me some lunch, please. I haven't had any yet, and I'm starved."

"So you call your sub my chef?" Griffin said with a laugh. "You can't just say tell my wife to fix me some food?"

"Celeste loves to be reminded that she serves me in all ways," Tricky said. "Tell her Master wants a huge plate of food."

Both men laughed, and they hung up. Griffin called the kitchen to order a meal for Tricky, then sat back in his chair. He had two problems to deal with now, the sub coming from Santa Fe, and his neighbor who couldn't keep his nose in his own business.

Who said weekends were supposed to be fun, because the

way this one would start tomorrow, he was sure it was going to be a disaster.