

Married to the Sheriff

By

Kira Barcelo

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Published by Blushing Books®,
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ABCD Graphics and Design
977 Seminole Trail #233
Charlottesville, VA 22901
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Barcelo, Kira
Married to the Sheriff

eBook ISBN: 978-1-62750-4065

Cover Design by ABCD Graphics

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ONE

Miami Beach. Only a day earlier, Debbie Phillips mused as she put a pot of coffee on the stove, she had been in that wildly romantic, tropical place on her honeymoon with the most wonderful man in the world. Those five days had been taken up with palm trees, beaches, restaurants, champagne, and more romance than she ever dreamed she would share with a man, after having been single for the first thirty-seven years of her life.

Now, oddly enough, being at home was no less magical. That cozy, modest Cape Cod house in Massachusetts, where she was born and raised, was every bit the paradise she'd encountered in the Sunshine State. Even more so because that day marked the first day she would actually be living there in her house following her wedding and honeymoon.

It was paradise because she was living there...with her husband.

"Ooooooh—I have a husband!" she whispered excitedly under her breath.

And it was Brandt now. Debbie *Brandt*, not Phillips. Phillips was her maiden name. Now she was Mrs. Michael Brandt.

From the kitchen, she could hear her husband calling out to her from upstairs in their bedroom. "Honey, don't go through a whole lot of trouble. I can pick up a doughnut or something on the way to work."

"A doughnut? No, sir, I wouldn't hear of that!" she called back.

She cracked the eggs and beat them with a whisk, adding a few drops of milk to the bowl. The bread slices waited in the toaster and she'd already taken the butter dish out of the fridge so it would be soft enough to spread. To lighten up breakfast somewhat, she'd already sliced a couple cups of strawberries and dusted them with a teaspoon of sugar. From the radio in the corner, the Chordettes' honeyed voices were warbling, "Mr. Sandman." Debbie hummed along with the tune, content as she set the table for two.

Mrs. I'm a Mrs. now. How lovely! Mrs. Mike Brandt. Mrs. Brandt. The sheriff's wife.

That was probably how the folks in town were referring to her: *The sheriff's new wife*. Actually, she was the town sheriff's only wife. That recent trip down the aisle had been the first for both of them. For Mike, who had recently turned forty, it marked the end of his bachelorhood.

"Well, look at you, baby! You look like a movie star!"

When Debbie spun around, the skirt of her dress twirled right along with her movement. Her breath caught at the sight of her husband filling up that doorway with his lean, six-foot-plus frame. People always said there was something about a man in uniform, but that saying went double when it came to her husband. Mike cut a dashing, handsome figure in his brown sheriff's uniform. His sunglasses hung from his shirt's breast pocket. Right above that he had pinned the star badge that read SHERIFF. He'd managed to tame the waves of his blondish brown hair, and he stood there, gazing at her with a smile filled with husbandly affection.

"Better than a movie star," he corrected himself. "What did you do? Wake up early just to get yourself all dolled up?"

"I most certainly did!" she exclaimed, giggling. "We're newlyweds, remember? I'm still your bride. That means you're not going to catch me looking frumpy or with curlers in my hair or anything."

Mike stepped farther into the room, wrapped his arms around her waist, and pressed her up against him. He tilted his head back, inspecting her hair.

“You look different,” he observed out loud.

“Do you like it?” Debbie smoothed her hair. “I let my hair down. The style is new.”

“Love it.” He couldn’t resist kissing her, though the little peck on the lips turned into a steamy kiss.

She flattened her hands against his broad chest. It was necessary to catch her breath before saying, “If you keep that up, you’ll be late for work.”

“Well, we can’t have that, young lady,” he mock scolded, giving her rounded behind a light spank. “So are you going through all this trouble, making a breakfast fit for a king, every morning of our lives? Do that, and you’re going to spoil me. Not to mention I might eat my way right out of this uniform.”

Smiling, she finished setting the table. “I *am* going to spoil you, Mike Brandt. Sit, honey. Is the radio too loud? I can turn it down.”

“Nooo, leave it on. I like that song.” Grinning, he took a seat and watched her pour coffee into their cups. “What’s that called?”

“I think that’s ‘One Mint Julep.’ Yeah. That’s the name of it.” Carefully, with the spatula, she coaxed the scrambled eggs out of the pan, equally distributing them onto two plates. What was left over she gave to Mike. “Pretty day out there.”

“Sure looks like it will be. I hope my bride makes sure she makes time today to enjoy it.”

“Oh, I hope so, too.” She tossed a smile at him over her shoulder. “I know I’m going to be busy today. I thought maybe I’d clean the downstairs first, then the upstairs tomorrow. That’ll give me time to get into town and pick up a few things.”

“That sounds great. I’m sure you will be busy, baby.” He picked up the newspaper, which she had thoughtfully set on his side of the table. He skimmed the front page but then folded it up again when she set his plate before him. “Toast. Butter. And strawberries, too. A fellow could get used to this treatment.”

Juice. That was the only thing she’d forgotten. Debbie fetched it from the refrigerator and poured them each a small glass.

“Oh, and I do have those thank-you cards to sent out to our friends and families for the wedding gifts,” she said, sighing. “Almost forgot about them.”

“Send them tomorrow. Pace yourself, baby. I don’t want you getting worn out by the end of the day,” he gently scolded her. “The thank-you notes can wait. If you get a chance—no, let me put it this way, make *sure* you make time to meet your girlfriends for lunch or coffee later. A little time to yourself will be good.”

“I’ll do that, but first I have to get some of the housekeeping and laundry done. I am going to be the best wife in Lighthouse Cove.”

Reaching across the table, Mike grabbed her hand and kissed it.

“You already *are* the best wife in Lighthouse Cove, Debbie,” he assured her. “Now I mean it. You just came home from your honeymoon. Don’t overdo it. Besides, your friends are all going to want to catch up with you, find out how Florida was. You can spare an hour or two for them.”

She tilted her head to the side and gave in. “Well, okay. I’ll do that. An hour.”

“Or two,” he reiterated firmly. “As long as supper’s on the table when I come home from work, I don’t see why you can’t have a little time to yourself. Have some fun, honey. Be a good girl, of course, but have fun. Just don’t get yourself into any mischief like...you know.”

Debbie had just pierced a strawberry slice with her fork. She looked up. "Like what?"
"Like that time before we were married. We were still dating at the time," Mike reminded her. "And you and that Laura Dunaway started playing matchmakers for that widow, Mrs. Hepburn."

She shrugged and wrinkled her nose. "Well, there was no harm in that."

"It's not a matter of there being no harm in it. Mrs. Hepburn's affairs are none of your business. Yours or Laura's. But Laura isn't married to the town sheriff, Deborah. You are."

He was using her full name? That was a new one. She hadn't heard him do that before. He was also speaking in an almost stern tone that she had heard upon occasion. She wasn't even quite sure what to say, and it was just as well, as he went on.

"You're sort of in a fishbowl, baby. I try to lead by example, and as your husband, I expect you to do the same. That's just the way it is when you're the sheriff." Mike waved a hand in the air. "But enough of that. I don't want to give you a lecture the day after our honeymoon."

I would hope not, either. Although, she had to admit, she kind of liked that authoritative side of him. At the same time she wasn't totally used to having a man boss her, having been on her own for so long. Instead of bringing that up, she rose from her seat and eased herself onto his lap, hugging his neck. He responded right away, cuddling with her.

"I promise I'll be a very good girl," she murmured, making an "X" over her left breast with a manicured finger. "Cross my heart. And I mean it, Sheriff: You will have *the* best wife in Lighthouse Cove. You'll be so proud of me!"

* * * * *

Mike Brandt loved how perfectly summer suited the New England town where he'd lived all his life. Sure, it was nothing more than a tiny speck on the map, and the winters were long and bitter, as they were throughout the state. Yet in that handful of months between winter and fall, that Massachusetts fishing village, which hadn't really changed much over the years, absolutely thrived with all the sunshine and activity.

He'd been out in the black-and-white cruiser marked LIGHTHOUSE COVE SHERIFF DEPARTMENT on both sides, but at that hour of the afternoon he was able to find a few moments to himself. He parked the vehicle in the first available spot along the street and stepped out onto the cobblestone ground to survey the town and the Atlantic, sprawled out just beyond the marina.

The driver of a passing pickup truck, whom he recognized as Harry Becker, waved and called to him through the driver's side window.

"Hello, Sheriff!" the older gentleman greeted. "Congratulations to you and your bride!"

Mike waved back. "Thank you, sir!"

He had already received congratulations and well wishes from everyone he'd come across that day, from the rough-around-the-edges fishermen coming back from a long trip to Betsy Ryman, who was sweeping the sidewalk outside her bookstore. He had yet to tire of it, still glowing from his wedding and honeymoon. Those were good wishes he never would have received had he not finally asked Debbie to join him that night for dinner.

Up until then, he'd never met a woman who'd embodied all of his dreams. Mike Brandt hadn't considered himself the romantic type until that first time he and Debbie kissed.

Funny, how you could know somebody for so long, he mused as he looked out at the marina, *and not know she's the one thing that's been missing from your life.*

Another of the fishing boats had left that morning. From there, Mike could see the lighthouse, after which the town was named, the one fishermen relied upon when they were out on their boats at sea. O'Brien's was a favorite watering hole for the men, though at that hour it was rarely very busy. The bar did boast a gorgeous view of the water, as did, ironically, the church right down the street from it. Separating the church from the bar was a three-story apartment building, which at least one of the seafaring captains, Martin Elkie, called home.

Another quiet day in Lighthouse Cove. But then, most days there were tranquil.

Mike glanced at his watch and frowned. Still another three and a half hours to go before his adorable wife was back in his arms.

Since he was already parked, he decided to stop in and say hello to O'Brien's amiable proprietor. The locals all liked and respected Mike, as they did the bar's owner, Sheila. To her credit, the lady was adept at keeping the men who frequented her establishment in line. Just in case, it wouldn't hurt to make his presence known. Simply seeing the sheriff saunter in through the door was typically enough to put an end to a squabble between two sailors over a girl or a game of cards, or both.

Unlike his father, who'd had problems with alcohol, Mike wasn't one to drink, and certainly not when he was on duty. Yet he was a frequent visitor to O'Brien's, always for the purpose of looking out for Sheila O'Brien. She'd been a pretty woman in her day, which was sad in that she'd stopping caring about her appearance after her husband died. Sheila had never been slim, but over the years she had put on more weight. She kept her brown hair, which had begun to show stray streaks of gray, long and held back by a hairband. No makeup, no fussing in front of a mirror, and only a watch for jewelry. Her friendly and sincere smile, however, was adornment enough.

She stood behind the counter, wiping it down.

"Ahh, there he is! One half of the newlyweds!" Smiling at him, she grabbed a clean dishrag from under the counter. "'Afternoon, Sheriff Brandt."

"'Afternoon, Mrs. O'Brien!" Mike took a seat on one of the stools and looked around.

The place had that haze of cigarette smoke that never seemed to go away. Four men in their early to mid-thirties were smoking, downing beers and talking during their pool game. The TV set perched on a shelf on the wall, tuned to some screwball comedy, mostly drowned out by the jukebox playing "See You Later, Alligator" by Bill Haley & His Comets.

"Can I get you something, sweetheart?" Sheila offered.

"No, no, thanks. I had lunch just a little while ago. Just came in to see how you're doing, make sure you're all right."

"Oh, Mike. You're a man of your word. You promised Wayne you'd always keep an eye on me, and you've honored that promise."

"Well, not just for him, Sheila. You're an old friend, too."

"Thank you, Sheriff. I really appreciate that." She folded her arms on the counter, relaxing. "How did you and your bride enjoy Florida?"

"Very nice. Neither of us had ever been there before, you know? So it was an adventure for us both."

"I'm sure. And how is she adapting to married life?"

"She's doing great. She spoils me...not that I'm complaining."

"Glad to hear that. You two were both single for so long. It was so wonderful to hear you lovebirds were getting married."

Mike gave a nod of his head. "I'm lucky to have that woman. As long as she doesn't

overdo it and exhaust herself, she'll be fine. Right now, I'm afraid she might be trying to take on more than she should. I had to talk her into taking a little time out for herself today."

"Course she's being a busy little bee!" Sheila laughed. "She wants to be a good wife. She wants to please you. And you're right. You *are* lucky to have that sweet lady."

"Thanks, Sheila. You know..." Leaning across the counter, he confided something he wouldn't have shared, had he been talking to anyone but a trusted old friend. "I was worried because the both of us—well, we got married late in life. Debbie is used to being on her own after all these years. Not really used to having a man around. And you know I'm an old-school kind of guy."

"Hmmm. Just like my Wayne was." For a moment, Sheila looked misty-eyed. "But I think Debbie's an old-fashioned sort of girl, too."

"Oh, she is. And like I said, she wants to spoil me. But I'm also there for her. I want to take good care of her. Don't get me wrong, Sheila," he paused, trying to find the right words to explain. "I don't expect marriage to always be roses and champagne. I know there'll be times when we won't see eye to eye. I just want to make sure she understands that I always have her best interests in mind, and that she's not in charge anymore, that I'm in charge."

"I'm sure she'll be just fine, honey. You're worrying for nothing." The older woman patted his hand. "And listen, if you do come up to some tough spots, I know you'll know just what to do to take her well in hand."

Mike smiled. "I'm sure you're right. And I probably *am* worrying too much over nothing. I just never thought I'd ever love anyone as much as I love Debbie."

"You'll both be fine. I know you will."

They both stopped talking when they heard the newscaster on the TV behind them utter in a somber voice, "*We interrupt this program to bring you this bulletin. Three inmates escaped this morning from the Massachusetts state penitentiary...*"

Even the fishermen had stopped to listen to the news bulletin, cigarettes dangling from their lips, Red Sox caps pushed back on their heads, pool cues in hand. Mike sat frozen in his seat, barely blinking at the screen.

"...*These men were last seen traveling on foot through Chapman County. In the escape, two guards were shot by a .45 revolver. One was killed and the other is in serious condition...*"

A woman at the other end of the bar gasped. One of the fishermen shook his head. Sheila somberly made the sign of the cross.

"*These men are considered armed and dangerous. We repeat: These men are armed and dangerous. The public is urged not to approach them under any circumstances...*"

"Chapman County. That's not far from here at all," Sheila noted.

Mike huffed. "They won't get this far. I'm sure they'll be caught before they even get in the outskirts of Lighthouse Cove."

"I hope you're right, Sheriff," one of the fishermen said, staring up at the three mug shots flashing across the television screen, "'cause those don't look like anybody I'd want to meet in a dark alley..."

* * * * *

Lunch. It was only supposed to last an hour, an hour and a half, tops. That would have given Debbie enough time for a sandwich and some girl-talk, so that she could tell Mike later on

when he came home that she'd made time for herself. After that she could have been on her way home and back on schedule with her chores.

How on earth had she gotten roped into going to the department store with Laura Dunaway? And only Debbie had accompanied her, too. The other two women, Irene and Marsha, had hurried off right after lunch, claiming they had teenaged kids to tend to and housework to do.

"Will this take very long?" Debbie asked Laura as they entered through the store's main entrance.

"Oh—no, not at all, Debbie, honey," her friend insisted. "I just have to take this cute, little dress back."

"Take it back? Why do you have to take it back?" She was confused. "Isn't that the dress you were crazy about? The one you told us you couldn't wait to get?"

"Uh-huh. The little black one. Except I went over my budget with that. And now I have to take it back." Laura's cheeks blushed with embarrassment. She lowered her voice and admitted, "You know, I got spanked real good for that one. So the dress goes back today or I'm in for round number *two* with that hairbrush."

Debbie frowned. "*What?*"

Laura shook a finger at her. "Don't you dare tell the other girls that. Promise?"

"Laura, tell them what?"

Her friend's expression turned to one of light mischief.

"Well, I suppose they've been spanked, too. I know for a fact Marsha has. Especially being the wife of that no-nonsense sea captain."

"*Spanked?* You were spanked for getting that dress?"

Laura's eyes widened and she gave Debbie's arm a light slap. "*Shhh!* I don't want that broadcasted, silly!"

Debbie was speechless. She picked up her gait slightly to keep up with Laura, who moved briskly in those high-heeled pumps.

Spencer Department Store was the first of its kind, and the only major place to shop other than the five-and-dime, in Lighthouse Cove. It had been opened for a year and was always buzzing with customers, there to shop or just to browse. From the housewares department to the costume jewelry and the clothes, a gal could easily get lost in there.

And who could resist buying a pretty, frilly little number to wear on a night out?

"Roger spanked you because you bought the dress?" Debbie asked in a near-whisper.

"No, ma'am. He spanked me for going over my budget. And that's not the first time he's had to tell me about that." Also speaking low, Laura confided, "We have a rule in our house. The first time I get a *warning*. Second time, I get a *warming*. As in, my butt gets warm. Actually, it gets hotter than that, by the time he's done with that hairbrush. And I don't know about the sheriff, but my Roger spansks *hard*."

We could not possibly really be having this conversation! Debbie thought, alarmed.

"Oh, well, it sounds like you don't have a problem with that in your house," Debbie said, struggling to keep from sounding uppity. "But the sheriff would never spank me."

"Really?" That word sounded almost feathery, spoken through her friend's knowing smirk. "Come back and tell me that in a year. But I'm guessing it'll be a lot sooner than that. In fact, if you make it through this summer without getting turned over Mike Brandt's knee, I'll be very surprised. *Very*."

Debbie managed to repeat tightly, "He would *never* do that. I don't even want to be having this conversation, Laura."

“Suit yourself.”

“Hi, Laura! Oh, Debbie—congratulations!”

Turning, Debbie faced a tall, slim woman in a skirt and flowery top. Her long brown hair was curled at the ends and she wore glasses. At her side was a little boy, a handsome little guy with dark hair like his mother’s. Luckily, Debbie remembered her name. The woman was a neighbor, living only half a block away from the Brandts.

“Oh, thank you, Beverly!” she exclaimed. “Sorry. It took me a moment, because I’m not good with names, and plus, you’re new in town.”

“I know. And I’m not always around, either,” her neighbor conceded, smiling shyly. “With a full-time job and my son, it’s kind of hard.”

“Well, welcome to Lighthouse Cove anyway,” Debbie said.

Laura tugged her away by an arm. “Sorry to rush off, but I have to return a dress and get back in time to make dinner. You understand, Beverly, dear.”

“Oh. Yes, of course.” The newcomer blinked, her gaze meeting Debbie’s. “Nice to see you again. I’d love to have you over sometime, maybe for coffee and cake.”

“I’d like that, too,” Debbie said. “This week I’m still getting things in order, what with being newly married and all. But maybe next Wednesday?”

Beverly brightened. “I’d really like that, yes. Can we do it about three-thirty in the afternoon? If it’s all right with your husband.”

“I’m sure it would be. Wednesday at three, it is.”

Laura watched the woman walk away, guiding her six-year-old son by the hand.

“That’s a very bad idea, getting too close to that woman,” she said, turning her nose up in the air.

Debbie sighed. “Now why would that be?”

“Because that woman is a divorcée. You know what they say about divorced women.”

“No, Laura, but I’m sure you’ll tell me.”

Catching on to Debbie’s irritation with her, Laura snippily replied, “They’re loose women. Hot to trot. She got rid of her man, so considering how long it took you to get married, I’d be very careful not to let her get too close to my man.”

Debbie stared at her. Is *that* what her friends had thought of her, too? That she, as a longtime single woman, had been a threat around their husbands? Was that why they’d suddenly taken to inviting her out more often?

Or, even worse, had they believed their men were “safe” around a spinster in her late thirties? Either possibility left her with a decidedly bad taste in her mouth.

But then she was distracted by the exchange between her friend and the saleswoman in the dress department.

“You’re returning it?” The sales lady appeared surprised, looking over the rim of her glasses as she accepted the fancy black dress from the bag. “But I thought you loved it, honey. What happened?”

“Ohhh, I really should have checked my household budget first,” Laura moaned. “You know how that is.”

The saleswoman nodded. “Well, I can certainly appreciate that.”

Debbie suppressed a gasp. As soon as the saleswoman turned, Laura glanced around, seeing no one paying attention, other than Debbie. Then, ever so discreetly, she reached back her hand and slowly rubbed her left bottom cheek. She was also wincing mildly...as if she were still sore.

Sore...from a *spanking*. Without warning, a mental image flashed through Debbie's mind, of her friend over her husband's lap, squealing and wriggling madly as a wide-backed hairbrush was brought down repeatedly on her backside.

Unexpectedly—*very* unexpectedly—Debbie felt flushed and tingly all over. What was wrong with her, behaving that way? That image gave way to another, more personal one, of the same hairbrush in Mike's hand, being applied to *her* bottom.

If you make it through this summer without getting turned over Mike Brandt's knee, I'll be very surprised.

"Debbie? Debbie, where are you going?" Laura called after her.

She had turned and was nearly stumbling to leave.

"I—I could use some fresh air," she blurted, so embarrassed, even though no one could have ever guessed the thoughts flitting through her mind.

* * * * *

"I will do nothing of the sort. And I'll go a step further and tell you not to stick your pretty little nose in your friend's business."

Debbie nearly dropped the plate she'd been washing when Mike made the remark. Turning, she dried her hands on her apron.

"I don't think you heard me right," she said. "I *said* Roger Dunaway spanked Laura. He spanked her for going over her budget and buying a party dress."

"I did, in fact, hear you correctly. And I said," Mike told her, "butt out, young lady. Frankly, if your friend's been told not to go over her budget and she willfully disobeyed her husband, then she deserved every bit of that spanking."

Her head was reeling. She didn't like getting sidetracked from her chores and she still had half a sink full of dinner dishes, plus a couple of pans, to wash and scrub before she could make the coffee and relax. Yet the discussion took precedence.

"So—so he can *beat* her?" She was incredulous.

"Oh, now, baby, I never said *beat*. You did not hear that word come out of my mouth. A man that beats a woman is no man at all."

"But—but she said it plain as day, that they have a rule in their house."

"A rule? What might that be?"

"It was—oh, now, let me think..." Debbie tapped the side of her mouth with a fingernail. "Oh, that's right: If she's told once about something, it's a *warning*. If she's told twice, it becomes a *warming*, with an 'm,' as in, he warms her behind with a hairbrush."

Mike chuckled. The man had the *nerve* to laugh! Finally pursing his lips and nodding, he said, "First, warning; second, warming. I like that. It's got a ring to it. Good rule for *this* household, too. So now, my sweet bride, you have your warning: Don't meddle in the affairs between a husband and wife. That's not what I do as sheriff. And if we have to have this discussion again, you'll be getting your pretty bottom warmed over my knee. Am I making myself clear, Deborah?"

That time, she *would* have dropped the plate. Fortunately, the only thing in her hand was the sponge, which she gripped even tighter.

"Perfectly," she said through her teeth.

"Good." He softened and kissed her. "Now if you'll excuse me, I'll be in the living room."

I want to catch the news. They've got an all-points bulletin out on those men who escaped from prison. Hopefully, they've been caught by now."

"Oh, I hope so, too."

She tried to sound like everything was fine, as if she weren't absolutely hopping mad. She had just been told, in no uncertain terms, to mind her own business. Disobeying that order would result in her getting spanked. Spanked like a child, even though she was thirty-seven years old, way past the age for a spanking. Her temper was, at that point, on a low simmer. Pouting, she had to remind herself not to throw a glass into the sink's soapy water.

But he really couldn't be serious...could he?

Under the pretense of wiping down the table with a sponge, she peeked into the living room. Mike hadn't really been angry; he'd spoken sternly to her, sterner than she'd ever seen him, but he hadn't actually been furious. Now he sat on the couch, looking handsome and relaxed in his casual pants and a short-sleeved shirt, his attention riveted to the news report coming across the six o'clock news. He had changed out of his uniform as soon as he'd come home from work.

Maybe if she appealed to him calmly, rather than allowing herself to get worked up? Sincerely, she was still getting used to marriage. It was one thing to date a man, to be courted by him, and another thing entirely to live with him as man and wife.

That's not what I do as sheriff. How silly of her! Of course it wasn't his job. With renewed confidence, she marched into the living room and seated herself on the edge of the coffee table.

"Honey, how about this," she began, "what if you were to send a deputy over there? Just to keep an eye on things? Doesn't have to be right away or anything."

Mike frowned. "Debbie, I thought we were done discussing this matter. Are we having our first spat? As man and wife?"

"Not at all, sweetheart!" She poured honey on her tone and hugged his neck, giving him a peck on the lips. "We're having a discussion, that's all. You're right about that not being your job—"

"And it's not a deputy's job, either. I don't have enough deputies on the force to send to every single household where a naughty wife gets spanked here in Lighthouse Cove. And this is not something that's open to discussion, honey. I don't think you took me seriously. Did I not just warn you not to meddle in other people's affairs?"

"Yes, yes, you did, but—"

"But you didn't take me seriously. I am very disappointed in you, Deborah. It seems to me that your friend Laura isn't the only one who needs a spanking."

"What? Oh—n-nooo—"

Before she could argue her case, Mike closed both his hands around her waist, lifting her off the coffee table and flipping her over his lap. At first Debbie laid still, in shock over what had just happened. She snapped out of it quickly when she felt his hand raising her skirt over her back, revealing her cotton panties, his other hand holding her firmly in place. That was when she began to panic and squirm.

"Oh, no, forget what I said!" She changed her tune quickly, and though she couldn't see him, her husband was holding back a laugh. "You don't have to send a deputy. You don't have to do anything, honey. You're right. You—*Miiiiiiike!*"

He'd peeled down her panties all the way down to the middle of her thighs. One of the electric fans in the house had been moved to the living room because of the summer night's heat,

and she could feel the cool air on her exposed bottom. She had a sinking feeling that coolness wouldn't last for long.

"First a *warning*, then a *warming*," Mike reminded her. He sounded even-tempered, even calm. "Debbie, this spanking will be a warning, too. Because this is more about you testing me and taking me seriously. It's about respect..."

"But I—I do respect you, I do, I—*owwwwww*!"

That first time his large hand connected with her backside smarted even more than she'd anticipated. She'd barely been able to catch her breath before his hand came down again a second time, and then a third. She wriggled on his lap, first to the left, then to the right.

"Warming" was 100 percent accurate. Right from the start, she'd felt a heat in her bottom cheeks that just kept growing in intensity. He spanked her slowly, rhythmically, yet fast enough that she didn't seem to have time to recover from the last stinging smack to her seat.

By the tenth whack—or maybe it was the twelfth, or the fourteenth, might as well have been the hundredth—she reached back with her hand in an attempt to shield her poor bottom from further onslaught. Mike stopped momentarily and caught it by the wrist.

"Never do that, Debbie," he admonished. "Never reach back here while you're getting spanked. I don't want to hurt your hand."

"Oh. Okay. That's good to know. *Ohhhhhh...*" What was she even saying? Her hair was in her face and she could feel him pinning her hand to the small of her back, more to get it out of the way.

And then the spanking resumed. Her hand, he wouldn't hurt, but boy, did he *ever* not have a problem with making her rear end hurt! She resigned herself to the fact that he wasn't going to let her off his lap until he felt she'd been spanked soundly enough and remained there, grunting and yelping.

After what seemed like several dozen more spanks applied to her glowing tail, the spanking stopped. She felt him stroke her back gently, which interestingly enough put her at ease, and though she felt like her bottom was one big fireball, she felt she could breathe normally again.

"Now, baby. Do you still want to discuss this—this situation about your friend and her husband?" Mike asked her, quietly.

"Um, uh, no. I need to finish the dishes and make coffee. And I think this discussion is over."

She winced when he patted her behind. It was a loving gesture, but she was even too sore for a few soft love pats.

"That's my good girl. I'm glad." Gently, Mike pulled her panties up, first grinning at the hot pink blush in her cheeks—not bad for his very first spanking in a long time, if he did say so himself—and then he smoothed her skirt back down. Righting her back onto her feet, he stood, looked her directly in the eye, and asked, "So, my dear: Should we get a deputy over here so you can explain what just happened to you while you were across my knee?"

Instantly, her face turned as red as her other end. He had to say, she looked pretty darn cute, even with her eyes welling up like a penitent little girl, her hands flying behind her to rub her well-spanked bottom. "Ohhhhhh, noooooo, Mike! *That's p-private!*"

"Ahhhh, so that is *private*, eh? Hmmm. Not to mention...very embarrassing, wouldn't you say?" He tipped her chin up with a hand and kissed her. "Your friend would really appreciate you respecting her privacy, too, baby. I think I just made got my point across to you."