

## Chapter One

Carrie wasn't at Target to buy panties. She had gone there for a few groceries and a birthday present for her mother, and she'd entered with a plan. She'd intended to turn right at the door and head straight for the food. Then she was going to go two rows down the home aisle and grab the picture frame she'd picked out for her mom. Then she would turn around, walk to the check-out and then right out the door.

Unfortunately, instead of going back the way she'd come, Carrie made the critical mistake of glancing down the home aisle as she wheeled away with her frame. Her eye caught a brightly colored throw pillow, and her plan crumbled into dust. She told herself she was only going to get a closer look and then she would leave, but each pretty item kept luring her further and further into the store. Soon she found herself where she always ended up. She was in the section of Target that carried bras, panties, tights and socks.

Carrie didn't care much about bras. She had a couple that fit well enough, and she was happy with that. She liked socks and tights a little better, especially those with happy colors and patterns. She would admit that she had a few more than she needed. But Carrie's downfall, the thing she could not resist, was panties.

Carrie had a panty collection that filled and flooded out of an entire dresser of drawers. She had many different styles, but she especially liked those with cartoon characters, stripes and funny words. She had a few that weren't very practical but that she found adorable with bows or netting in the back. She had some with lace around the waist and legs and some with animal prints. The only style she didn't have was thongs. She liked to feel the fabric covering her bottom. If her cheeks were naked, it wasn't worth it to her.

Carrie told herself she would just look at the panties, but she quickly had three pairs in her cart. One was purple with pink polka dots, another featured an array of super heroes and a third was crowded with yellow smiley faces.

With a rush that could only come from buying new panties, Carrie took her cart and herself to the checkout area. She paid for her items, left the store and tossed the bag into her little blue Civic. She stepped on the gas when she saw the time. She had plans to meet Amy in five minutes.

She pulled up to the restaurant ten minutes late. Amy was sitting at a table by the bar when she got there.

"Sorry I'm late," Carrie said, slinging her purse over the back of the tall chair. "I got sucked in at Target."

"That happens to me all the time," Amy said. She sipped her margarita and signaled the waiter.

He was a young man with shoulder length light brown hair and a nice smile. "Hi there. I'm Chris. Can I get you a drink?"

Carrie nodded. "A strawberry margarita please."

"Frozen or on the rocks?"

"Mm... frozen," she decided.

He wrote this down. "Great. And can I just see your ID?"

She smiled. She had made it to twenty-seven years old, but had yet to buy a drink without being carded. She knew her short stature and round baby face made her look younger than she was, but she thought she looked old enough to drink.

She pulled out her driver's license and handed it to the waiter. He glanced at it and grinned at her. "Nice picture," he said.

She thanked him, and he went to the bar for her margarita.

"Somebody likes you," said Amy in a playground appropriate sing-song voice.

Carrie laughed. "What?"

"You didn't notice that?" Amy was incredulous. "That waiter couldn't keep his eyes off you. He..."

Amy broke off as the waiter approached again.

"One frozen strawberry margarita," he said to Carrie, placing it in front of her. He did seem to have a huge, dopey grin pasted on his face. "Are you ready to order?"

"Yes, Chris," said Amy. "My friend here would like your phone number."

"Amy!" Carrie gasped. "What is wrong with you?"

But the waiter laughed and smiled at Carrie. "That can be arranged."

"We'll need just a minute to order, please," Carrie said. She was mortified.

"Sure thing," said Chris, the grin never leaving his face. He turned and left them alone.

"I can't believe you did that!" Carrie spat in a hushed voice. "I have never been so embarrassed."

"Calm down," Amy said. "It's obvious he's into you. I was just trying to help move things along."

"He's not into me!" she said insistently. "He has to be nice. He's a flippin' waiter! He wants a good tip."

"That was more than nice," Amy told her firmly. "You never notice when a guy is flirting with you. You've been single for way too long, and I'm afraid you've gotten so comfortable with it that it's going to end up being permanent."

"I'm not comfortable with it," Carrie said. "I just haven't met anyone right."

"How could you possibly know if they're right when you won't even give them a chance?" Amy protested.

Carrie pulled a ten-dollar bill out of her purse and put it on the table. "I'm sorry, Amy. I've got to go."

Then she stood up and left the restaurant, pretending not to hear Amy calling her name.

She got in her car and managed to drive to a parking lot around the corner before she let herself cry.

On the way home, she got a text from Amy apologizing profusely and arguing that she hadn't meant any harm. Carrie knew it was true. She replied with a message that it was okay and that she just needed to be alone.

The truth was that Carrie realized how odd it was that she had no man in her life. Some of her friends had even made it a point to tell her that they wouldn't be shocked or upset if she was gay, but that wasn't the problem either. It was just that Carrie had very specific needs when it came to men, and she had yet to find someone who could fulfill those needs.

It wasn't like she hadn't tried dating typical guys. She had been out a few times in high school and had enjoyed going out now and then as an adult. But she was never able to find that sense of security she was hoping for. She wasn't sure exactly how it would feel when she met someone who fit, but she knew she hadn't felt it yet. And when she was on a date, and it was

frustratingly clear that this person was not going to meet her requirements, she felt even more lonely than she did when she just stayed home.

Carrie let herself into her apartment and put the gift for her mother on the kitchen table. She tossed the panties on top of the washing machine. She pulled a diet meal out of the freezer, and put it in the microwave. Then she fired up her laptop.

Carrie had dipped her toes in the water of online dating, but she had found the process overwhelming. It was terribly difficult for Carrie to articulate what she wanted in a man, and while she had met a few who seemed like possibilities, they had all turned out to be married or had insisted she meet them in person immediately.

Carrie checked her e-mail, deleting the massive amount of junk that had accumulated over just one day. Then she caught up with Facebook while she ate her dinner. Afterwards, she threw out the trash and made her way to her bedroom. She crawled under the covers, and settled her laptop on a pillow in front of her.

Then she began to navigate to her favorite sites.

She liked to read a blog written by a woman named Sunshine, who loved to write about her relationship with her boyfriend. Carrie suspected that Sunshine's relationship might be fabricated, but the blog was entertaining reading for her anyway.

Sunshine called her boyfriend, Daddy, and described their lives together as a situation where Daddy gave Sunshine love and attention as well as boundaries and rules to follow. When Sunshine neglected to follow the rules, discipline followed.

Carrie got the impression that Sunshine craved, if not enjoyed, the discipline she received, considering that she was always repeated the same mistakes and was never rehabilitated by the punishments.

But then again, Carrie didn't really believe that Sunshine existed. She imagined that the woman was very much like Carrie herself, entertaining fantasies because she couldn't find the real thing for herself. Carrie had often considered starting her own blog of this nature, but she found she'd rather read about other people than write about herself.

Sunshine's last entry had been a story about how she'd been caught overspending again. Daddy gave her a bare bottom paddling and made her sit on her sore bottom and write "I will not overspend" 100 times on a sheet of notebook paper. Sunshine had posted a picture of her handwritten work as well as a photo of the resulting pink bottom. Whether or not the bottom actually belonged to Sunshine, Carrie wasn't sure. She supposed she could search the image on the web, but the validity of the situation made no difference to her. She surfed over to a different blog.

Vlad's blog was a little bit different because it was written by a man. Vlad was a self-proclaimed Daddy who liked to spend time with grown-up girls and boys. The people he played with tended to be on the younger side, and he enjoyed activities like diapers and bottles as well as discipline. Carrie read Vlad's blog because his writing pulled her in, and she was interested in learning what made a man like this want to share his story. She had even commented on a few of his posts, although she wanted to be a grown-up little girl instead of an adult baby.

In Carrie's on-line world, there were people who identified as caregivers, Daddies and Mommies, Aunties and Uncles, who wanted to take care of someone else almost like a parent. Then there were people like Carrie, people who saw themselves as possessing an inner child who needed attention and direction. Many, also like Carrie, had discovered that this intense desire was all wrapped up in sexuality.

Carrie found it very difficult to express this part of herself to anyone, even strangers online. She felt inept at explaining it because she didn't always understand it herself. She also worried that people wouldn't understand that her sexuality had nothing at all to do with anyone who wasn't a true, chronological adult.

She was afraid her friends might think she was crazy. Spanking was mainstream, and lots of her friends enjoyed that as a rousing part of sex play. Being cuddled, scolded and cared for like a kid was something entirely different.

The third blog Carrie visited that night was about a school for grown-up little girls. The women in the photographs wore plaid skirts and pigtails, and they submitted to discipline from stern teachers who put up with no nonsense. She had been a devoted follower of this particular blog for years and had even considered the possibility of finding someone online who could role play a teacher with her.

The problem with this plan was that most of the men who wanted that kind of relationship were married and hiding it from their unsuspecting or unwilling wives. Carrie worried about her own psychological health if she were to fall in love with one of these men.

Carrie worried about her psychological health quite a lot.

This particular site had a chatroom where Carrie had met one or two interesting individuals. She clicked on a link, and a box opened up. She smiled, recognizing the handle of an on-line friend.

*Hey, Dan!* she typed. Dan was a nice guy who lived in the next state. He also identified as a little, but he lived with a daddy. They had talked about getting married.

*Hello there, Brooke,* Dan typed back. Online, Carrie used the name Brooke. The first time she'd logged into a chatroom, someone had asked her name. She'd looked at the television and had seen *The Blue Lagoon*.

*Whatcha doing?* Carrie asked him.

*Nothing, really. You?*

*Ugh,* Carrie typed. *I'm depressed.*

*Let's go into a private room,* Dan suggested.

Carrie tapped a few keys and followed Dan into a private chat room.

*So talk to me,* said Dan.

Carrie flopped back onto her pillow. She stretched out her arms so she could reach her keyboard and began to type. *My friend is trying to set me up. She just doesn't get it.*

*Did you tell her what kind of relationship you want?*

Carrie sighed out loud. *No,"* she typed. *"I can't talk about that."*

*Well you can't really blame her for trying. I'm sure she just wants you to be happy.*

*I know,* Carrie typed. *I want me to be happy too!*

*What would make you happy, Brookie?* Dan asked.

*I want to be taken care of,* she typed. *I want to just relax and be myself, just not have to be an adult. I want to be spanked and spoiled! I'm crying now.*

*Honey, stop crying,* Dan said. *I have an idea.*

Carrie blinked back her tears. *You do?*

*I think I know a place that can help you. There's this guy, Dr. Stark, and he runs a school for people like you.*

*What do you mean?*

*It's a school for adults to feel like little girls. It's so you can take some time to let everything go and be who you want to be. Maybe a vacation as a little will help you feel better.*

*A school?*

*Yeah. Contact this guy and you can find out more. I'm not sure how it works, but he's a real doctor and your insurance might even cover it as mental health care.*

Carrie was stunned. *Wow.*

*You might as well check it out,* Dan typed.

Carrie thanked Dan and copied the email address he had given her. She logged off the website and opened a new window to write an email. Then she sat, wondering what she would say.

*Dear Doctor,* she began. *My name is Carrie, and a friend told me that your school might be able to help me. I don't know very much about it. Can you give me some information?*

She hit send and then chewed on her lip. She didn't think Dan would steer her wrong, but she wondered what she could possibly be getting involved with.

She was surprised when an answer appeared in her inbox after only a few minutes.

*Hello, Carrie. This is Mrs. Stark. I am Dr. Stark's wife, and I help him run our facility. We do offer live-in programs that are helpful to couples as well as programs for single women. We also have a school. Some of our students attend during the day only, and others board here. Please answer these questions to help us determine the best option for you. Sincerely, Mrs. Stark.*

Carrie scrolled down to the list of questions. The first section was all information like her name, birthdate and address. It also asked if she was married or single, heterosexual or homosexual, whether or not she was sexually active and some questions about her medical records.

The questions in the next section got more personal.

*Do you sometimes feel like you have a child trapped inside?*

*Is pretending to be someone younger sexually stimulating to you?*

*Are you sexually aroused by the idea of being physically dominated?*

*Are you sexually aroused by the idea of being spanked?*

*Have you ever been spanked for sexual pleasure?*

*Have you ever been spanked for punishment?*

*Do you crave being spanked or otherwise disciplined?*

The questions continued, sorting her sexuality from her mental state and revealing that those two parts of her were hopelessly intertwined. Carrie found as she answered the questions that she was beginning to understand a little bit more about who she was and what she wanted. She started to believe that these people might have some information that could help her.

She answered each question and then sent the email back to Mrs. Stark.

Mrs. Stark replied after only a few minutes. *We'd like you to come for a tour of our school. Please let us know when you can visit.*

Carrie's eyes were wide. She was going to have to give this some serious consideration.