

CAN'T ARGUE WITH THAT



MISTY MALONE

BLUSHING BOOKS

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CHAPTER 1



Clay sat at his desk staring at the letter his assistant had prepared that morning. He absolutely could not send it out the way it was, with six misspelled words, and the wrong date. But the letter didn't have to go out today; it could wait. What was really bothering him was why Janelle's work had gotten to this point.

Janelle was the best assistant Clay had ever had, from the time he hired her two years ago. Her spelling and grammar were terrific, she was very quick and efficient, and had wonderful people skills. If he was late getting back from a meeting and someone was waiting to see him, she could charm the pants off the waiting person to the point that they didn't even realize they'd been waiting.

He'd also been attracted to her personally from the time she was hired. She came waltzing into his office for an interview and stole his heart on the spot. At 5'4" she was petite, especially next to his 6'1" frame, but she was big on personality and spunk. She had beautiful curly strawberry blond hair, but her demeanor was purely one of a redhead. She wasn't a bit afraid to tell him her true thoughts on things, which on a job interview was surprising, but something he admired. And he could get lost in her beautiful blue

eyes. He tried to fight his attraction to her, what with their working together and all, but in the past few months he'd been rethinking that decision. He'd decided he was going to ask her out for dinner, and see what reaction he got. If she accepted, he'd take it as it came, and see what happened.

The last three weeks, however, something had changed. Her work had been getting sloppy, and she was quick to lose her temper. As much as he couldn't have that at work, he'd been more concerned about her personally. Something had to be going on in her life to cause this, and he'd like to know what it was and try to help her solve it.

He was still staring at the letter, trying to figure out how to get her to open up to him, when he heard a commotion outside his office at Janelle's desk.



JANELLE HAD BEEN SITTING at her desk staring at the note Clay had left, saying he wanted to see her in his office when she got back from lunch. She wasn't sure what it was about, but she was afraid she'd made another mistake on the letter she gave him before lunch. She had to pull herself together, or Clay was going to fire her, and she certainly didn't want that.

Clay was the best boss she could ever ask for. He was kind, patient, paid her well, and most of all, she was pretty sure she was in love with him. And therein lay the problem.

Clay was gorgeous! If she had her own private dictionary and looked up the word hunk, she was sure his picture would be there. He was tall, with gorgeous dark brown hair and deep brown eyes that she swore could pierce right through her soul, and a strong, muscular build. She'd been attracted to him from the day she met him when she went for an interview. But she knew then she had to tamp down that attraction if she was going to work for him. And she had done a pretty good job of it, until the company hired

Suzanne Clayton, the blond bombshell hotshot executive in marketing.

Suzanne had made it known to Janelle the first time she met Clay that he would soon be hers. "He's simply too good to pass up," she'd told Janelle on that first day. "When I decide I want something, I always get it. And I want him."

From that day forward Janelle had a hard time concentrating on her work, especially when Suzanne was around. She found all kinds of reasons to drop in on Clay and bat those long eyelashes and swish her blond hair around. She was so obviously throwing herself at him that it made Janelle sick every time she saw it. But men seemed to go for that kind of stuff.

Just this morning she'd sashayed into their department and headed toward his office. "Is my man busy right now?"

"Is there a problem that concerns our department?"

The buxom blond looked at Janelle disdainfully. "No, Clay's department is fine. He's a good man, he takes good care of his department. No, this visit is personal. I just want to tell him good morning and tell him I'm looking forward to our date." She flung her hair over her shoulders and glared at her. "Not that it's any concern of yours. So, is he busy?" She gave her an evil grin. "Right now, I mean. He will be later, but is he busy now, or can I pop in to say hi?"

"Sorry, but he's not here right now. He's in a meeting. Do you want me to give him a message?"

She looked down her nose at Janelle and sneered. "I don't think so. Are you sure he's not here?"

"I'm quite sure, yes." She met Suzanne's glare and held her eyes. "Why would I lie about that?"

"Oh, I don't know. Maybe you have some half-cocked idea that he could be interested in you, and you resent my being here tempting him."

"Hardly. He's not here."

Obviously not believing her, Suzanne brushed past Janelle and

opened Clay's door. When she found it empty she flounced off, saying, "I'll just have to tell him I missed him this morning. Maybe I can do that when he comes to pick me up this evening."

Janelle hadn't been able to concentrate since Suzanne left. She hated the thought of Clay and Suzanne together, yet she said they had a date tonight. That was totally wrong, on so many levels. He should be dating her, not Suzanne. He and Suzanne just plain were not right together.

Having replayed Suzanne's visit this morning in her mind, she shook her head and pulled herself back to the present. She was once again staring at his note, knowing she had to go in to talk to him, anxiety pooling in her gut. Although she normally jumped at any excuse to go into his office, in close proximity with him, this time she was worried. She knew she hadn't been concentrating like she should have been after Suzanne's visit, and she was afraid she'd messed up. Taking a deep breath, she squared her shoulders and was just about to go in, when Suzanne appeared again.

"Is my man back from his meeting yet? I so wanted to see him before tonight. I'm not sure what I should wear. Should I go with the slinky little black dress, or go flirtier with a short little flippy skirt and tight, low-cut blouse?"

That was the last thing Janelle wanted to hear at the moment, and lost her patience. "I don't know, maybe you should go with your normal every day attire; you know, the streetwalker special?"

Suzanne was instantly outraged. "Why, you little bitch! You do think Clay could be interested in a little mousy thing like you, don't you? Well, forget it, kid. Clay's a man and wants a woman, a real woman like me." She looked at her like a pathetic little kid and rolled her eyes. "I can't believe you actually thought you'd have a chance with him. I don't think so. Is that junior high outfit you're wearing how you were planning on catching his attention?"

"Hardly. But I certainly wouldn't go for the whore of the week look, like you seem to prefer."

Janelle had managed to keep her voice low, but Suzanne seemed

to revel in raising hers. "You little bitch! I'm going to talk to Clay about this tonight. I'm sure he'll be interested to hear how you treat the people that are here to see him."

Before Janelle could say a word in response, Clay came out of his office, frowning. He looked at the two ladies, obviously not happy with each other, and asked, "What is going on out here?" When neither said anything, he shook his head and turned first to Suzanne, who was still glaring at Janelle. "Suzanne, did you come to see me, or just to cause a scene with Janelle?"

Suzanne's mouth dropped open, and she was clearly speechless. "It's nothing urgent, Clay. I can talk to you later."

"Okay, I'd appreciate that. Janelle, would you come into my office, please? I need to speak with you."

Janelle knew by his voice he was not happy with her, and from the smirk Suzanne gave her, she realized it, as well. She dropped her head in defeat and shuffled into his office. This was not good. She heard Suzanne tell Clay she'd see him later, but didn't hear his response.

She walked into his office, but didn't realize Clay was standing right behind her until she heard his gruff command. "Janelle, have a seat. We need to have a talk."

She swallowed hard, and started to move toward one of the two chairs across from his desk, until he led her over to the couch at the other end of his office. She looked at him questioningly, but sat down. As if in explanation, he said, "This talk is more personal than business, so let's sit over here instead of at my desk." She nodded and sat down, wondering what was about to happen.

He sat down beside her and took in a deep breath and let it out slowly. "Janelle, I'm not exactly sure how to start this, so I'm just going to jump right in."

"Okay."

"Is something going on with you lately?"

"Why? What do you mean?"

"We've worked real well together from day one. I think that's because there's chemistry between us."

"Chemistry?" Janelle was starting to worry. Did he know how she felt about him? Was he about to tell her they couldn't work together if she felt that way?

"From the first moment I laid eyes on you I was attracted to you. We've worked extremely well together, and I've tried to put my personal feelings aside for the sake of our work. But over the last couple months I've decided I can no longer ignore those feelings. I had decided to ask you out for dinner, and see if you felt the same way about me."

Janelle was stunned. She looked up at him in shock. "Really?"

"Yes, really. But now the last few weeks something's changed."

She felt like a ton of bricks had been dumped on her. "You no longer feel that way?"

Clay quickly took one of her hands in his. "Boy, I'm not doing very well here at all. No, that's not what I meant. I do still feel that way about you. I want to get to know you better on a personal level, see if we have chemistry between us as a couple, as well as at work." He relaxed a bit when he saw her smile.

"Let me ask you first, will you have dinner with me some evening, explore the possibility of us having a relationship outside of work?"

"I would love to, Clay."

"Good," he said with a genuine smile. "I think we make a natural couple, and I'm eager to see if I'm right."

She was smiling, as well, and nodded. "Me, too."

He got a more serious look on his face then, before continuing. "But for us to do that we have to be able to communicate openly and honestly."

"Okay," she answered hesitantly, wondering where this conversation was going.

"Something's changed the last few weeks, Janelle, and I'd like to talk about it."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, the letter you gave me this morning had six misspelled words, and the wrong date on it."

She dropped her head. "Sorry," she mumbled.

"That's not at all like you, Janelle. Or at least it wasn't until the last few weeks."

She kept her head down, staring at the floor.

"Janelle, look at me." He gave her several seconds, and when she still didn't look up, he reached over and used one finger to gently lift her chin so she had to look at him. "Janelle, if we're going to work on a relationship, that's one thing we'll have to talk about and work on. But for now, I'll simply say that when I tell you to look at me, I expect you to do so."

Janelle couldn't believe what she was hearing. Clay sounded so authoritative, and though it was a surprise to her, she couldn't exactly say she hated it. That, too, was a surprise to her. One of the things that attracted her to him was his take-charge attitude. She hadn't considered that attitude carrying over to his personal life, but that was an interesting concept, she now realized.

Clay cleared his throat, and she looked up at him. He was obviously waiting for her answer, but she had no idea what he'd asked. She blushed, but answered shyly. "I'm sorry, what did you ask?"

He sighed. "Janelle, what am I going to have to do to get your attention lately?"

"I'm sorry. I'll try harder."

He thought a moment before continuing. "You said you are interested in a relationship with me, right?"

"Yes."

"Good. There's something you may as well know right now then."

"What's that?"

"How I deal with disobedience, or girlfriends who don't listen when I'm talking to them about something serious."

Before she had a chance to question his meaning, he had her face down over his knees. "Clay, what are you doing?"

"I'm showing you how I intend to get your attention when I need to." With that, he flipped up her skirt and brought his hand down on her panties-clad bottom.

Janelle jumped, partly from pain, but mostly from shock. "Ow! Clay, stop. That hurt!"

"It's supposed to," he calmly answered. "So should this," he said, as he brought his hand down on her other cheek. "And this!" He started spanking her in earnest then, side to side, as she started struggling to get away. He simply tightened his hold on her and resumed the spanking.

"Clay, stop, please! Someone will hear this. I'll be so embarrassed."

He stopped momentarily when he heard the desperation in her voice. "Janelle, I would never intentionally embarrass you. This room has been soundproofed because some of the things said in meetings are very sensitive. You don't have to worry about anyone hearing a thing." He paused a second, and began rubbing her back. "You need to know, if we're going to have a relationship, that I'm a spanker. That's my way of guiding and protecting you."

"I had no idea," Janelle sobbed.

"It's not something I tell people, honey. The only people that know are women I care a great deal about. Counting you, that makes two people that now know it. But I believe in it wholeheartedly. It's the most effective way I know to get your attention. It's quick, and afterward I'll hold you in my arms while you calm and we discuss anything you want to discuss, and then it's over. You will be forgiven and there will be a clean slate between us. I'll remind you how much I care about you, and the whole incident will be over and will never need to be brought up again."

Janelle was trying to take in all this new information, but the only part that really sank in to her was that he must care a great deal about her. She had read a romance novel one time where the

man spanked his wife when she really messed up. What caught her attention in that book was how much he cared about her and looked out for her. She remembered thinking that sounded really nice. Her attention shifted back to him as he patted her bottom lightly. "Before we finish this, let me ask if you can accept this. If you can't, we may as well not go out. If you can, however, we'll finish this now."

She thought a couple seconds, remembering the part where he cared a great deal for her, but then she remembered Suzanne. She turned her head to look back at him. "I might be able to accept it, but I have one question."

"What's that?"

"You said you care about me or you wouldn't do this."

"That's right. I don't spank every woman I meet, obviously." He smiled as he amended his statement. "Or even every woman who doesn't pay attention to what I'm saying to them. Only the ones I truly care about."

"So can you care about two women at once?"

"What – of course not. What are you asking me, Janelle?"

"Is the other woman you've spanked Suzanne?"

He stilled the hand that was rubbing her bottom, and she immediately missed it. It had been feeling heavenly. He stiffened a bit. "No, it is not. Why would you ask that?"

She sighed, debating how she should ask this, or even if she should ask it at all. She quickly decided she had to know. Before she could come up with a good way of asking, though, he smacked her bottom again, hard. "Janelle, I asked you a question. I'm waiting for an answer. Why would you ask me about Suzanne?"

The sudden swat caught her completely off guard, and it hurt. She didn't take the time to think, but quickly blurted out her answer. "Because she said you're taking her out tonight. How can you care a lot about me, but be dating her at the same time?"

As quickly as he had her over his knee she found herself up and sitting on his knee. "She said what?"

“That you’re taking her out tonight.”

He sat still, staring at Janelle for several moments. She couldn’t read his expression and was wondering if she’d done something to upset him. Well, she was sorry if she had, but she had to know. She wasn’t in the habit of sharing her man, especially not with someone like Suzanne.

Eventually, his expression changed. He smiled at her and gently ran the back of his hand along her chin. “I think I’m seeing what’s going on now.”

“What? Apparently I don’t know, so please fill me in.”

“I’ll be happy to. Tell me if I’m wrong about any of this.” She nodded, and he started his supposition. “You’ve been feeling the bond between us, just as I have. Am I right so far?”

She felt her face flush, but nodded. “Yes.”

He assured her, “Please don’t be embarrassed about that, Janelle. Not only do I take it as a compliment, I’m glad to hear it since I’ve been feeling the same way.” He rubbed the back of her hand as he told her this, and smiled when he felt her relax. “So you were wishing I’d ask you out, not knowing I’d already decided to do just that, and Suzanne comes along, telling you she and I are dating. Is that what the ruckus was about out there between you two?”

Again she could feel her face heat, but sheepishly shrugged her shoulders. “Maybe.”

He pulled her closer to him and reached back and swatted her bottom again. “No lying. That’s a big thing with me. I expect total honesty.”

“Ouch!” She quickly reached back to rub her sore bottom.

He smiled at her as he pulled her hand away. “No rubbing, either.” He held her hand in his, effectively enforcing that rule. “Let me explain the truth about Suzanne and tonight. When I was in college I worked for an appliance repair shop. Suzanne’s refrigerator quit working last week. It was old and she replaced it, but she asked me if I could stop out sometime and see if I thought the old one was worth getting fixed and putting it in the garage, or if she

should just dispose of it. I told her I could stop over tonight to look at it.”

Janelle was shocked, and a little upset. Suzanne had led her to believe she had Clay practically wrapped around her little finger. The more she thought about it, the more upset she got. “That little bitch.”

Again she found herself over his lap before she had time to react. He had her skirt up and was swatting her bottom again, and it hurt! “Clay, wait! What did I do?”

“I don’t care what you think of Suzanne, Janelle, but I don’t want to hear you talk like that about anyone. You’re a better person than that. I don’t want to hear you curse at all, but especially when you’re talking about another person.”

“What did I say?”

He continued the spanking as he answered, “You called Suzanne a bitch, and I won’t have my girlfriend talking like that.”

“Ouch! I said that out loud?”

Clay stopped a moment, and had to make a real effort not to laugh. That sounded like the feisty little lady he’d been falling for over the last few months. “Yes, you did, and you’re getting spanked for it.”

“Ow! I’m sorry. I’ll be more careful next time. I’ll just think it.”

He had to fight back a chuckle. “Or better yet, don’t even think it.” He swatted her several more times, and she reached back with her hand to try to stop the spanking. “Move your hand, Janelle.”

“I don’t think so.” Her hand stayed where it was.

His eyebrows raised at her words. This little lady certainly had spunk. “Excuse me? Are you sure you want to say that to me, considering your position at the moment?”

She was panting, trying to catch her breath while he’d stopped spanking momentarily. Thinking quickly, she sighed. “Darn. When you put it that way, I guess maybe not. But it hurts!”

“It’s supposed to, Janelle.”

“But if I move my hand you’re going to smack my butt again.”

"You're right, I am. But if you don't move it I'll be forced to move it for you, and then I'll smack your butt longer."

"You wouldn't!"

"Oh, I most definitely would. It's your choice, Janelle." He waited, giving his feisty little lady plenty of time to consider his words. He was a little surprised, but very happy when she slowly moved her hand away. "That's my girl," he praised. He could tell Janelle felt proud, which he was glad of. Well, he thought she felt proud, until he started spanking again. Then he was pretty sure she just felt sore.

Since she moved her hand on her own, he only gave her six more swats, then carefully helped her once again up onto his lap. The spanking this time had been longer and harder, and she was crying now. He pulled her into his arms, guiding her head to lean against his chest. He wrapped his arms around her and felt much better when she seemed to melt into him.

He casually played with her hair as he talked, his mouth at her ear. "Thank you for moving your hand, Janelle. I believe in consequences, both good and bad. The spanking was a consequence of not listening when I was talking to you, and bad language, but I know it wasn't easy for you to move your hand. When you did, the consequence for that good choice was only six more swats, and the spanking ended. If I would have had to move it myself, you would have gotten considerably more than six."

"I would have?"

"Yes, you would have. I'm proud of your choice." He reached down and kissed the top of her head. Once again he saw a look of pride on her face. "Are you okay, honey? I have a feeling this was your first spanking, so you probably have mixed feelings going through your head about now. If you have any questions or concerns, I'll answer anything you want to ask." She didn't say anything, but as long as she seemed content to lean against him he could be patient and give her all the time she needed.



JANELLE WAS quiet as she sat on his lap, trying to make peace with what had just happened. Several thoughts were going through her mind, but one thought in particular kept coming back to her. Somehow, with his arms surrounding her, wrapping her tightly against him, she felt safe and content. How was he doing this? He was making her feel things she wasn't used to feeling. He was very upfront about his feelings for her, which was a nice change, and somehow made her feel she could trust him and it was safe to let him know she cared for him, as well. It had surprised her earlier when he became stern and authoritative, and she had realized she kind of liked that concept.

She had to smile a little when she realized she was especially not used to feeling a sore butt, but she was definitely feeling that right now, as well. In the book she'd read, she couldn't remember the lady talking about it hurting this much. Even with all that pain, though, she still felt safe and content in his arms, although she wasn't at all sure how he was doing this. Her mind was drawn back to Clay when she realized he was talking again.

He talked softly to her, which she liked. It was helping her calm down, and her breathing was returning to normal. He kept her sitting on his lap, which was something else she liked, and rubbed her hand with his thumb. "Janelle, I'd like to go back to talking about Suzanne a moment. You said you thought I was taking her out tonight?"

"Yeah."

"What made you think that?"

"She told me you were. She said she was debating which sexy little outfit she should wear."

He continued rubbing her hand gently as he thought out loud. "I wonder why she told you such a thing."

"Duh. I don't know, maybe because she's got the hots for you

and has been throwing herself at you for the last three weeks or so now.”

“Watch your attitude, Janelle.” She was a little upset at his words until she noticed he didn’t look too upset, and he appeared to be thinking about what she said, letting it sink in. “How long has she been talking to you about me?”

“About three weeks now.”

“Hmmm. That’s about the same amount of time you’ve been making careless mistakes in your work. Is that what’s to blame for your carelessness?”

She looked down again, and mumbled quietly. “Maybe.” When she looked up just enough to catch his expression and frown she quickly changed her answer. “Probably.” Seeing his raised eyebrow and the way he was watching her, she changed it again. “Okay, yes. Happy now?”

He couldn’t resist a smile as he nodded. “Actually, I am, yes. Thank you for your honesty.”

Her eyes were full of mischief as she grinned at him. “So do I get a consequence for the honesty?”

He chuckled as he gave her a little squeeze. “How’s this?” He took her face in his hands and gently brushed his lips against hers. When she didn’t object, he deepened the kiss a bit. He pulled back, still holding her face in his hands, and smiled when he saw her smiling up at him, nodding.

“Wow. Consequences like that could make an honest person out of me,” she said.

He laughed at her antics. “Janelle, I just know that getting to know you better is going to be lots of fun, and a real adventure. I’m looking forward to it.”

“Me, too,” she said, cuddling into his arms a bit further.

He got serious again, though, with a warning. “But we have to take our work seriously while we’re here, honey.”

“I understand.”

“That means you need to get Suzanne out of your head and pay

attention to what you're doing. I need you to do the kind of work you used to do for me."

"Okay. I'm sorry, Clay."

"Is that the only thing that's been causing all the mistakes lately; just Suzanne?"

"You don't understand, Clay. She's been rubbing it in over and over and over."

"But she and I haven't even dated."

"Not to hear her tell it."

"Are you sure you're not exaggerating, at least a little?"

"Clay, I'm not. And that's being honest. Trust me, that's one lesson I've learned already." She tried to reach back to rub, but he gently held her arm, keeping it in front of her.

"That's my girl." Thinking a moment, he seemed to reach a decision. "I might have to have a talk with her."

Her mischievous grin reappeared again. "Maybe you can talk to her on your date tonight. She's considering wearing her sexy little black dress."

Clay's mouth dropped open, but he shook his head. "Brat."