

# SUB-DIVIDED

A CORBIN'S BEND NOVEL



VANESSA BROOKS

BLUSHING BOOKS

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This book contains fantasy themes appropriate for mature readers only. Nothing in this book should be interpreted as Blushing Books' or the author's advocating any non-consensual sexual activity.

## CHAPTER 1



Josie Carter pulled her silver Ford over to the side of the road and clambered out on stiff legs. *Ed Sheeran* crooned away in the background as she gazed awestruck at the amazing scenery surrounding her. Turning a full three sixty degrees, she sucked in a deep lungful of fresh mountain air. This was what she had driven eight hundred miles for. This was her new beginning, the start of her adult life.

She leant against the car and undid the cap on an unopened bottle of water. Chugging back at least half the bottle, she stood soaking up the silence. As she quietly sipped, she realized that it wasn't actually silent. Through the mountain air the high peewee cry of a bird could be heard as it glided overhead. In the distance she heard the distinctive sound of moving water, a waterfall, perhaps. All around her the faint rustle of leaves shifted, moved by the soft mountain breeze that lifted her hair off her shoulders; tendrils swirled about her face and she swept them from her eyes. She'd had highlights put in a few days before, giving her own dull blonde hair a Nordic lift.

Closing her eyes, she allowed herself to drift for a few moments, the feeling therapeutic after living within the noise and bustle of

San Diego. A couple of minutes passed before she took a deep breath and opened her eyes. Slinging the half-drunk bottle onto the passenger seat, she stretched out her legs a few times as Max had taught her to do before jumping back into her car and setting off on the last leg of her journey.

As she swung the car out into what she assumed was a deserted highway, the sudden blast from a horn jolted her and she immediately slammed on the brakes. A large black SUV pulled in front of her, blocking her in.

“Shit!” She cursed, could this turn nasty? A tall, brown haired man stepped down from the driver’s side.

Josie wound down her car window but stayed inside the car. “Hey, sorry about that, the road appeared to be deserted. I guess I forgot to check my blind side, totally my fault!”

The man stood a couple of feet back from her window and listened without interrupting her apology. “No harm done, young lady, but you want to watch that bad habit, you could get yourself injured or worse one of these days. I suggest you turn that music down or, better still, *off*. You would concentrate better. Are you lost? Perhaps I can help; where’re you heading?”

He reminded her a bit of her grandfather, although this man was nowhere near as old as Liam O’Donnell.

“Thanks. I’m on my way to Corbin’s Bend, my grandparents live there. Do you know the town?”

The man nodded. “Sure do, I’m heading that way myself. Follow on behind and I’ll lead you there. Don’t forget to check your mirrors for that blind spot this time, young woman.”

*Damn nerve of the man!* She huffed crossly but nevertheless she turned off the music and carefully checked her mirror before pulling out onto the highway. It was extremely irritating to have the giant four by four blocking her view of the road ahead. The man drove his oversized vehicle creepily slow.

Eventually she spotted the domed shaped building, which she knew to be the medical center on her right; this was where her

interview was taking place tomorrow. As they entered Spanking Loop, Josie grinned, remembering Max's reaction when they had popped up here to visit her grandparents briefly last year. They had both done double takes when they saw the road name, and Max had reversed the car up to the sign, just so they could be sure they weren't seeing things. Nope, it really did say 'Spanking Loop.' He'd taken a selfie of the two of them pointing at the road sign.

That was probably the moment they'd decided Corbin's Bend was the place for them.

The SUV carried on past her grandparents' turn off. The man waved to Josie as she turned left into the cul-de-sac where her grandparents' spacious detached house stood. The houses along this stretch of road had a stunning view from behind them.

It was no different in design to its neighbors, other than a couple of unique touches added out front by her grandmother, Nicola O'Donnell. A horseshoe doorknocker fixed to the front door and a pair of fake ceramic hay bale planters sat either side of the doorstep, brimming with colorful plants. Josie had no sooner parked up on the wide driveway than the front door was flung wide open and her grandmother stepped out. Josie loved the way her grandma always acted as though they had just seen one another the day before instead of nearly a year back.

"Hey you." Her grandmother greeted her with a warm kiss and a hug before drawing her inside the light and airy house.

Josie grinned as her grandfather came through from the back. He greeted her with a huge bear hug. She felt protected and loved by these two special people. She'd explained to Max during her visit last year how her grandparents had grounded her after her mother's passing. Their kindness and support, invaluable at a time when she was grieving, had made her feel secure, which was just what she'd needed after her mother's untimely death.

"Your dad's keeping well, Josie?" Liam asked.

Josie pulled a face. "Yeah, he's fine; the condo seems to suit him. You'll never guess what, he's met a lady golfing buddy!"

“Oh?” She saw her grandma’s gaze sharpen. “Nice. You like?”

Josie grinned. “We-ell, Dad likes her, and that’s the main thing, but she’s—”

“Not your mom. I understand.” Nicky smiled sympathetically at her. Her grandfather placed a reassuring hand on her shoulder.

“Coffee?” Nicky looked at each of them in turn, an eyebrow raised in question.

“Please!” they both chorused. Liam moved toward the door. Josie followed her grandmother.

“Josie, throw me your keys. I’ll fetch your bags.”

“Thanks, Grandpa.” Josie tossed him the key which he caught mid-air. He went out whistling.

Josie looked about her. Not much had changed since she’d been here last. Her grandparents had decorated the ultra-modern house using a ranch style theme. Pale butter-honey walls and wooden floors and a native woven rug achieved the aim of simplicity. The addition of a large bronze horse statue and the odd leafy pot plant put a modern slant on the traditional ranch home. Josie thought her grandmother’s use of old polished horseshoes as drink coasters was an ingenious touch.

Over the fireplace hung a huge picture of her grandmother’s twin sister, Claire. She sat astride a horse, eyes half closed in bliss as she tipped a canteen of water over her hot flushed face. Her head was tipped back, her hat and hair spilling over her shoulders. Each droplet of water held a tiny rainbow of colour caught by the photographer—Josie’s grandfather, Liam.

Claire, Josie knew from reading her grandmother Nicky’s diary, had been murdered way back in the 1960s. She was the sole reason why Nicky had travelled to the U.S.A. She’d met Liam on her father’s ranch in Arizona.

When Nicky returned with the coffee, she and Josie took it out back onto the deck. Liam placed Josie’s bags in the guest room then returned to his office with his coffee.

Josie sat silently soaking up the fantastic view spread before her;

they sipped their coffee in companionable silence. That was the nice thing about her grandma, she had the ability to relax and de-stress those around her. After a while Josie turned to her with a sigh. "I hope I get this position at the hospital. I really love it up here."

"It suits us and I for one would love to have you living nearby but only if this is the right place for you both."

"I'm sure Max is going to love living up here. The peace of the mountains just seems to flow over and right inside you, somehow. I stopped on the highway before I arrived and just breathed in the serenity of the mountains."

Nicky smiled at her. "It's not everyone's cup of tea, darling. It certainly isn't whimsical to be stuck halfway up a mountain range in the dead of frozen winter."

Josie giggled. "Sometimes you sound so very British still, Grandma!"

Nicky smiled. "You can take the British girl out of Britain but the Englishness remains ingrained."

"There you go again, so British! You'll be saying 'bloody' next. Do you miss it? England?"

"No. I hate how overcrowded the country has become. Consecutive governments have concreted my country of birth to death with over-building. Last time we went back I swore I would never return and I won't. Besides, I love it here in Colorado. Be sure to wear lots of moisturizer and sunscreen because the air here is very dry due to the altitude."

"Did it take long to get used to the fact everyone who lives here is in some sort of spanking relationship?"

"No, it was a relief actually. People became so judgmental and non-accepting of spanking after the seventies, until the 'Fifty Shades' book came out, but even that made us all look like a lot of fetishists. Corbin's Bend allows everyone living here to feel normal and supported in a community that accepts you whatever your lifestyle choice may be."

“Can I ask you a personal question, Grandma?”

Nicky grinned. “You may, but I reserve the right to not answer.”

“Okay. Did you and Grandpa have a set of rules right from the start of your marriage or did you kinda make it up as you went along?”

Nicky frowned thoughtfully. “We have always lived what is known today as a domestic discipline relationship. Your grandfather told me very early on, when we first met, that to avoid conflict in our marriage he would be the company director and always take the ultimate decisions within our marriage. I could put across my point of view but at the end of the day, if no agreement could be reached between us, we would do what he thought was best. As I explained, this was to avoid conflict, if I continued to argue, I was spanked. It worked for us and it seems to work for a lot of other people, hence Corbin’s Bend.”

“Yeah? What about the Dom/sub relationship that Max and I are into? We only use the dynamic in the bedroom or playing at a club.”

“If that’s what you and Max agreed upon and that’s what works for the pair of you, then you’ll fit in right with the folk of Corbin’s Bend. Nobody here will judge you, Josie, but as with any society, there are a set of rules which we all have to abide by.”

“Okay. Hey, I have the welcome pack that Brent Carmichael’s assistant gave me and guess what’s included? A wooden paddle with the Corbin’s Bend logo carved onto it! Max will love it! Say, what’s with this public paddling thing? Have you ever witnessed one?”

Nicky looked serious. “I have; your grandfather took me as a warning to obey the community rules. Not long after we arrived a girl called Kirsty was paddled for drunken behavior and name-calling, something Brent Carmichael won’t countenance. Believe me, it was a salient lesson in obedience. I would hate to undergo the humiliation of a public paddling. Not to mention the paddle they use is a formidable object!”



Josie was round eyed. "I think I'd better read up on these rules, start to finish, and pretty darned quick!"

"Good idea." Nicky grinned.

Liam stuck his head around the door. "Hey, my angels, how about lunch out? My treat, fancy some pizza?"

"You bet!" Josie jumped to her feet. Nicky rose more slowly, her older bones cracking as she straightened. She followed Josie inside and Liam swatted her bottom as she walked past him. Pulling the patio door closed, he locked it securely.

Josie noticed the by-play between her grandparents out of the corner of her eye. She hid a smile; her grandparents were cute.