

Chapter One

Dear Diary,

I haven't written in so long! Sixteen days since the wedding and things are finally settling down again. We've only been home for one day. We spent two weeks at the beach cottage honeymooning and I slept in nearly every day! I can't remember the last time I did that. Noah made good and sure we were up late every night, so sleeping in was necessary. I can't believe how lucky I am to have married this man and to have begun our new life together. Even Mum had to admit, after her concerns about me marrying too young, that Noah couldn't be a kinder or more loving husband.

The wedding was beautiful, thanks in large part to Katherine's help. She laughed at my lack of organization repeatedly, "Oh Anna, how could you possibly wait until the week before the wedding to get your dress hemmed?" but sweetly took over everything that needed to be done. Mom and Dad were stunning, and seeing Noah dressed so nicely made my heart flutter. A big change from his usual blue jeans! When Dad gave me away he said, "You take care of my girl, Noah," and Noah said, "I promise I will." I can't think of anything that could have made the day more special.

The honeymoon was incredible. It marked the first time Noah and I had been alone together for an extended period of time, Mom and Dad being as old-fashioned as they are. And what an adventure it was to drive through the mountains with Noah at the wheel. I couldn't help but sneaking little peeks at him the whole time. When he caught me looking he would wink at me and ask, "What are you looking at, sweetie?" I would smile and blush. I guess I don't have as much experience with men as a lot of other women might at 22, and certainly not as much experience as Noah has at 38, good-looking as he is, but I don't need experience to know that I have found exactly the right man for me. I spent most of the four-hour drive stealing glances at his warm brown eyes, focused on the road ahead, and his strong hands on the steering wheel.

It was literally two weeks of uninterrupted bliss until the very last night, and that, dear diary, is specifically what I want to talk about because it was just so... unexpected. I have been thinking about it for two days and still don't know what to make of it. As I said, the two weeks of

vacation time was beautiful. We made love every night, and during the daytime, we swam at the beach, took long walks, and Noah even used the old gas stove to do some cooking. He really is an excellent cook and on the last night there I decided I should do some cooking myself to thank him. I'm not such an excellent cook myself, but Mom always said that if you can read, you can cook, and so I hoped I could come up with something Noah would enjoy. I just wanted to please him as much as he has pleased me.

I was a little nervous lighting the pilot light having no experience with them, but I managed to get it going by imitating what I'd seen Noah do the night before. I filled the big pot with water for the pasta and put it on the burner to boil. Then I started cutting vegetables for the sauce. It was while I was cutting the vegetables that I heard a sound coming from outside under the kitchen window. I was afraid it would be Noah, back already from cutting wood for the fireplace. I wanted to surprise him! But I pulled back the curtains and looked outside and saw that Noah was nowhere to be seen. And still the sound continued.

It was a scratching sound, like someone was trying to get into the house by scraping through the wall! I was frightened, somewhat, but calm enough to go outside and have a look for myself. I took the knife with me, just in case.

Well! You won't believe what I found outside! It wasn't anything scary at all. It was family of cats and they were nesting under the back porch against the side of the cottage. There was a mama-cat and four kittens, each one a grey-blue colour, with gigantic ears and gigantic eyes and the cutest little pink noses I ever saw. I fell in love immediately. I crouched down low and tried to call the kittens, but the mother cat hissed at me when I got too close, so I took a few steps back and sat down in the grass to watch them. I hoped that if I stayed long enough they would grow accustomed to my presence and maybe, eventually, let me close.

I sat still, watching quietly, and slowly inching forward every so often. As a city girl, I haven't seen new-born kittens very often, and never wild cats. I was completely mesmerized by what I was seeing. I was so enthralled, in fact, that I completely forget where I was, what I was doing, and everything around me.

It was just as I had gained another bit of distance and was only a couple of feet away from the cat family that I suddenly heard Noah's voice inside the house calling me. "Anna! Anna, where are you?"

The cats were just as startled as I was, and the mother spat at me again. I scrambled to my feet, brushing grass and dirt off my legs, and called back, "I'm out here!"

Noah didn't appear in the yard as I expected him to and so I made my way back to the screen door and entered the kitchen just in time to see him using a dishcloth to put out the last of a small fire on the stovetop. "Oh my god... the water... I forgot..." The pot of water had boiled dry in my absence and the wooden handle on the pot had caught fire.

His face was stricken and he looked over at me with wide eyes as he dropped the now blackened cloth on the countertop. "Anna. What on earth is going on here?"

I was embarrassed at my absent-mindedness. "Oh Noah, I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to scare you. I was outside, and I forgot the stove was on. I was watching these cats by the side of the house and..." I trailed off feeling ridiculous as he looked at me with an incredulous expression on his face.

"Cats?" he said.

"Yes... they're out here..." I gestured outside and he followed me into the yard. The cats, however, disturbed no doubt by the noise and by the scent of smoke in the air, had decided to leave. I shrugged. "I don't know where they went..."

As I said this, I realized Noah wasn't listening to me, but instead was focusing at something on the ground. I turned to look. The knife. In my fascination with the cat family, I had completely forgotten that I had gone outside wielding a knife, and had later abandoned it, leaving it glinting in the sunshine.

"Anna." That was all he said. Just my name. I looked at him. I had never seen him look so serious and I didn't know what to say. I was blushing to the roots of my hair.

"I was cutting vegetables," I started, by way of explanation.

"Yes?" He looked at me, waiting for more.

"And... then I heard a noise. It scared me ... so I came outside with the knife to protect myself. But it was just cats... and they were so cute..."

"And so you forgot about the stove being on?" he asked me.

"Yes." I looked at the ground, feeling ashamed of myself.

"Anna, let's go inside." I followed him back into the kitchen and started to wipe up the counters where smears of ash marked the countertops.

“Anna, no. Stop. I’ll do that. I want you to go to the bedroom please and wait for me to come in to talk to you.”

I froze. “Pardon?”

He looked at me with piercing eyes and abruptly I realized that this wasn’t going to be over as quickly as I thought it was. “You heard me Anna. You are taking this far too lightly. I told you to go the bedroom and wait for me to finish cleaning this up, and then we are going to have a discussion.”

I was stunned, rooted to the spot by the tone in his voice, a tone I hadn’t heard used to address me since I was about seven years old. I blushed again more deeply. “Noah...” I started to say, but he took the cloth from my hand and gave me a gentle push in the direction of the bedroom. “I said go.”

With that, I went down the hallway to the bedroom and sat down on the bed, my eyes filling with tears. I couldn’t believe I had ruined our special dinner, and more than that, I couldn’t believe the tone of voice my husband was using on me, nor his strange command. I listened to him running water and washing the dishes I had left on the counter. I could hear him opening and closing cupboard doors and the clinking of dishes being put away. I took some deep breaths and tried to quell the nervous feeling that was growing inside me.

At last I heard Noah’s footsteps on the wood floor making their way down the hall. The door opened and he stood in front of me, an imposing figure at six feet. I looked up at him, completely abashed. He sat on the bed beside me and took my hand.

“Anna love,” he said. “Why do you think I want to talk more with you about what happened while I gone this afternoon?” His tone was deadly serious, as was his face, and I felt there was no choice but to answer the question as seriously as he had asked it. And so I tried to ignore the fact that he was talking to me as if I was two, instead of twenty-two, and answered him honestly:

“Because you were worried that I’d burn down the cabin?”

He looked at me sternly and the slight smile I’d attempted died on my lips. “Is it the cabin you think I was worried about?”

The question was pointed and stark. It reminded me, embarrassingly, of similar conversations I’d had with my parents when I was a child, caught doing something dangerous. “Um... no... I mean... I think it was me that you were concerned about.”

“You’ve got that right. Anna, I don’t understand how you could do something so dangerous.”

The statement seemed to imply a question, and I fought to regain some composure, hoping to steer this conversation back in a more adult direction. “Well Noah, I’m not so familiar with gas stoves, and when I…”

He cut me off sharply. “Anna. Did you leave that pot boiling unattended?”

I swallowed at the severity of his tone and answered in a small voice. “Yes.”

“Is that a safe thing to do?”

I blushed. Again, he was talking to me like one would talk to a child, not to one’s wife. “It’s not… but I assumed I would…”

“That’s right, Anna. It wasn’t safe. And shouldn’t you know better than to do something like that?”

“Noah, I really don’t see how you think -”

He stood up then, abruptly, and crossed the room to close the window, then sat back down beside me. My sentence trailed off.

“Anna,” he continued, “you know better than to do something so dangerous. And what makes matters worse is that upon hearing the sound of the cats outside, you went out there carrying a knife!”

Hearing him say this aloud made me suddenly realize how foolish a decision that was. “Do you really think that going outside to greet a potential intruder with a knife was a good decision?”

I shook my head no and looked at the bedspread. This discussion was getting more and more humiliating, my own lack of judgment more and more apparent.

“Anna, look at me when I’m speaking to you.” I looked up at him. “I asked you a question. I said, do you think that was a good decision?” I shook my head again.

“I expect to hear you answer me with words, young lady,” Noah said. I felt a warm blush start to spread from my neck across my face. Young lady!

Still, in spite of the indignation I felt at his words, I felt compelled to obey. “No I don’t think that was a good decision either.”

“Lastly,” he said, “Do you think that attempting to touch wild cats is a wise thing to do?”

Suddenly the ridiculousness of that idea washed over me and I understood the full scale of Noah’s frustration with me. “No,” I said, honestly. “They might have parasites.”

Noah sighed then and looked at me for a long time.

“I’m sorry,” I said, breaking the long silence. “Can I finish making your dinner for you now?”

“Anna,” he said, “We’re not having dinner now. We’re finishing this discussion.”

“But... I thought we were finished.” I was started by his pronouncement and looked up again to see his usually warm brown eyes looking troubled. I was starting to feel annoyed myself by the way he was speaking to me and I stood up to leave the room. Noah grabbed me by the arm and pulled me back down beside him.

“Anna, did you hear what I just said?” His voice was quiet, controlled, stern but without a hint of anger. I nodded, wordlessly. “I am under the distinct impression,” he said, “that you are not taking this as seriously as you should. Your safety is more important to me than anything else. Do you understand that?”

I nodded again. “Do you understand that?” he asked me again.

“Yes.” I whispered.

“Why is your safety important to me?” he asked. I looked at him and saw the answer in his eyes.

“Because you love me.”

At that, he exhaled the deep breath he’d been holding and took my hands in his again. “Yes,” he said, “yes, that is exactly right. Because I love you, Anna, because I treasure you. I need you to promise me that you will never put yourself in jeopardy like that again.”

“I promise.”

“Good.”

I sighed with relief. There had been some kind of communication breakthrough, and I felt sure, at last, that this embarrassing conversation was over. But I was wrong.

“Now Anna,” Noah said, placing a finger under my chin and tilting my head up to look at him again, “I am going to punish you for your misbehaviour this afternoon, and as a result you are going to learn from your mistake and you are going to remember your promise to me. Is that understood?”

My jaw dropped. Punish me? “I – I – I don’t understand,” I said, “Noah, what do you mean to-”

“I mean,” he said simply, “I am going to give you a spanking.”

The room spun around me and I stared at him with my mouth open. After a long silence, I weakly managed to say, “Spank me? But I’m...”

“You’re what, Anna? An adult?”

“Yes,” I said, barely able to hear my own voice.

“Of course you are, love, but you are an adult who has acted like a naughty little girl, and so you have earned the punishment a naughty little girl would receive. A spanking. Now come here.” He held out his arm to me, as though inviting me to lean over it and across his lap. I sat motionless, the blush spreading and burning across my face. I couldn’t believe this.

“Now, Anna.” His voice was stern again and I felt myself move toward him robotically as though I had no control over my own body any longer. I was obeying him even as my brain was screaming for me to run away.

I leaned into him and felt his strong arms guiding my body across his lap. Quite suddenly my perspective on the world changed and I found myself looking at the floor, seeing my shoes tucked neatly under the edge of the bed. My body was rigid with fear and with embarrassment and I could barely breathe.

“Anna,” his voice above me said. “Take a deep breath right now, please.”

In spite of myself, I obeyed; taking a breath deep into my oxygen-starved lungs, I felt my body, involuntarily, relax slightly. I felt his hands on my back and then my skirt being lifted. A waft of cool air played across the backs of my thighs. I couldn’t believe he was lifting my skirt! I blushed deeper and bit my lip so hard I tasted blood.

“Again, Anna, another breath.” I breathed again and clenched my bottom hard as I felt his fingers play in the waistband of my panties. They slipped down the backs of my thighs and I clenched my teeth, fighting the urge to scream. I felt his warm palm resting lightly on my bottom cheeks and his voice, calm but serious.

“You’ve never been spanked before, Anna?” he asked me.

“No...” I choked back the sob of embarrassment that was working its way up my throat.

“Well, honey, I think it’s about time,” he said, “Now, I need you to keep breathing, Anna. Stop holding your breath and stop clenching your bottom like that. I don’t want to bruise you.” At that, I almost fainted. I gulped in the air that my lungs were begging for and shuddered. He tapped my bottom with his hand gently. “Relax now, Anna.” I tried to do as he asked, taking another deep breath and I tried to relax as much as I could in the embarrassing position I had found myself.

With that he began to spank me. His hand was just as powerful now as it was gentle the night before, and my bottom immediately began to sting under the sharp smacks. I tried to reach back with my hands to protect my bottom. Noah immediately pinned them both behind my back and continued to spank me. Involuntarily, my legs began to kick and I started to plead with him. "Please... please... I'm sorry... I won't..."

He stopped. "Anna," he said. "I love you. I am here to take care of you. And I will never, never allow you to put yourself in harm's way. Whatever it takes to make you remember that will be done. Do you understand me?"

"Y-yes." My voice was shaky and I placed my feet back on the floor, expecting to be turned the right way up. He didn't help me up.

"Oh no, my darling," he said, "We aren't done here."

With that, he continued to spank me, his hand coming down hard and faster this time, covering my entire bottom with heat. As he came back again for a second pass over the same spots, my mind was white and the pain overtook me. Still, his hand bounced against my bottom over and over again, turning it first pink and then red. All the fight left my body and I stopped kicking, stopped straining against his powerful arms, and just lay limply across his lap and cried until I was hoarse.

Finally, finally the spanking ended. And by the time his hand stopped coming down against my sore, hot bottom, all thoughts of indignation and embarrassment had left me, and I just stayed right where I was, across his lap, and sobbed.

Now his hands changed back, magically, from powerful to gentle, and I felt them stroking my back, my hair, my neck. My gasping slowed down and I started to breathe normally again.

At long last, I finally felt brave enough to move, and there were those hands, again, beneath me. Lifting me and guiding me into his lap. He gathered me up in his arms and held me, rocking me back and forth. His hand brushed the hair from my damp forehead where it had stuck.

"Oh sweetie," he crooned softly against my hair. "Don't you see how much I love you?"

I took another shuddery breath and melted against him. His skin was cool against my hot face and he smelled like soap. "I love you too, Daddy," I whispered.

He turned his face down and kissed the tip of my nose. "I like it when you say Daddy," he told me. I was startled. Had I called him Daddy? I listened to the word echo around inside my

head. Yes, it sounded right. I snuggled up closer, forgetting my stinging bottom for the moment, forgetting everything except his hands, again turned gentle, stroking and soothing away my pain.

“Come baby,” he told me, leaning forward to guide me into the bed. “Daddy’s going to tuck you in.” He pulled the bedcovers back and gently removed the rest of my clothing, then helped me into bed. It was early, but I wouldn’t be sleeping any time soon.