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## Chapter 1

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**A**s Lydia's eyes slowly opened, she smiled happily when she saw the branches of the apple tree leafing out just outside her bedroom window. The sun was coming up on the beautiful Wisconsin May day that was her wedding day. Lydia was actually going to marry the man she had fallen so deeply in love with just last fall.

She still had a hard time believing it was real. Cade McCauley was the head-turning, handsome man whom Lydia had met when their jobs put them together on the construction site of which he was the foreman. There had been an intense spark right from the beginning, but the path to their engagement was not smooth. One of the biggest problems was that Lydia, who had lived almost entirely in the context of her hearing-impaired twin sister, was completely inexperienced in relationships. Though she was a twenty-three-year-old teacher when she met Cade, she might as well have been fourteen for all she knew about dating, relationships and, certainly, sex. Her inexperience fed her insecurities about the idea that Cade could be interested in her. That lack of confidence had caused

her to behave immaturely at times and Cade would not stand for that.

Additionally, as they came to know each other better, Cade's dominant nature presented itself and Lydia discovered that, although she considered herself independent, Cade's take-charge manner brought out a submissive side that she had not known was there. This had her mightily confused. She found herself annoyed yet aroused. She found that when he spoke sternly to her and even when he spanked her like a little girl, her libido went wild. She didn't understand these conflicting feelings and her confusion almost ruined the relationship. But Cade helped her to understand that he cared deeply for her. He explained that his protective behavior was part of him and it had risen to the surface immediately on the day he met her. Cade had been raised in a family where his father was the head of the household and though his parents rarely argued at all, he knew that his father's word was final and his mother respected that. He knew he might have a hard time finding a woman who would follow his lead in these times, but that was what he hoped for and what he thought he'd found in Lydia.

Lydia had almost no experience with sex, so over the eight months of their time together, Cade had taught her by gently and persistently taking her to earth-shattering orgasms in many different ways. Lydia often found herself floating in what she thought must be heaven. She had come to desire him so much that she felt, at times, she had become wanton.

Cade found Lydia an eager student who was almost always ready to follow his lead into new—for her—sexual adventures. He found her inexperience and innocence a powerful aphrodisiac. She was nearly always on his mind and if she was within reach, Cade needed to touch and hold her.

Part of the success of their blossoming relationship was

based on the fact that Cade's dominance sought a woman with submissive tendencies and Lydia was perfect for him. He had made it clear to Lydia that her health and safety were of paramount importance to him and that if she took risks, there would be consequences. Lydia had been surprised when Cade laid down rules for her to follow and was shocked he actually put her over his knee, bared her bottom and spanked her—hard. After experiencing several painful and embarrassing spankings, Lydia began to understand how serious Cade was about her welfare. Confused about how she "should" feel about Cade's treatment, Lydia confided in her best friend Sarah, who was also raised in a household of dominant men and seemed to know about these things. She helped Lydia understand that getting a spanking was not in any way the same as abuse and that it generally indicated that a man cared for a woman very much and wanted to keep her safe. Lydia had come to understand that, though she could not tell Cade that it was okay to spank or punish her. It was also not going to be a deal breaker.

Lydia was small, just 5'2" to Cade's 6'3", and young, twenty-three to Cade's thirty. Lydia was also so innocent that his need to safeguard her ratcheted up. Cade was attracted to her unique beauty and she soon became very special to him when he watched the skill and compassion she used when working with hearing-impaired students on his construction site. Lydia was used to being a protector for her hearing-impaired twin but Cade's care and attention to her own health and safety were all new to her. A dangerous incident, in which Lydia had been hurt and also nearly kidnapped and assaulted, set the foundation of their relationship. Lydia surrendered to her complicated feelings for Cade, and Cade discovered that Lydia was the woman he wanted forever.

And now today, she would declare her love for him by

becoming his wife. Though Lydia had moved into Cade's large and beautiful home outside of Madison, they decided to spend the night before their wedding traditionally apart. Lydia felt alone waking up without his strong, warm body next to her so she decided to get up. Her twin sister, Lola, had come home from school at Gallaudet University, a school for those who are hearing-impaired, in Washington DC, to be her maid-of-honor. Lola was staying with Lydia in the house their father had bought for them when they went to undergrad school in Madison. She had not been able to be with her sister at all throughout the school year and was thrilled to be together with her again.

Lydia smelled coffee brewing and padded out to the kitchen where her beloved twin sister was starting breakfast. Her heart skipped a beat as she watched her sister busily scrambling eggs. As Lola's back was to her, Lydia waited in the doorway to be noticed. She did not want to startle Lola, whose hearing impairment would not allow her to know anyone was in the room. When Lola turned to see her, she ran to Lydia, threw her arms around her and then began using sign language. Just as they had while growing up, their fingers flew in conversation.

"I can't believe today is your wedding day!" Lola signed, jumping up and down. "Are you happy?"

"Oh, I can't believe it either, Lola! And I am happier than I ever thought possible. You know I love Cade very much."

"I can tell," signed Lola. "I see the way you look at each other and touch each other. It looks like love." Lola reached for Lydia and the girls hugged each other and rocked back and forth. "Now sit down and let me feed you a wedding breakfast before we begin to get you ready," Lola signed with a great big smile on her face.

The twins ate and "talked" giddily for about an hour

when, at noon, the doorbell rang. It was Lydia's best friend Sarah, who was also going to be a bridesmaid. They would spend the afternoon helping each other get ready for the wedding which was being held in the early evening.

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Cade wished he had never let Lydia talk him into spending the night before their wedding apart. He had become so used to sleeping spooned against Lydia's naked body and perfectly heart-shaped bottom. He would never agree to a night apart again! Cade had slept restlessly when he slept at all, and as soon as the first rays of sun filtered into his bedroom, he decided to get up and work out, as that would usually clear his mind for the day. But not today. Not on his wedding day!

If anyone would have told him a year ago that he would find the perfect woman or that he would absolutely need to make her his own by marrying her, he would not have believed it. Neither would he have believed that such a remarkably beautiful, intelligent, fun loving *and* submissive girl would cross his path. But she did—in the form of one Lydia Lang.

Their meeting had been serendipitous. Cade's family owned a construction company which took charge of a charity build every other year called Home for Everyone. It was a community project, led by Cade and his brother Connor, to build a home for a low-income family using area volunteers. Last fall, as a new build got going, a group of hearing-impaired students who had also taken a yearlong construction technology class, came to volunteer with the hope they could be taken on as regular employees for the duration of the build. This was a pilot program at Three Rivers High School. Because the students were hearing impaired, an American Sign Language (ASL) teacher would accompany them. Lydia

was that teacher. Looking back, even though Cade had doubts about the success of this unlikely project, he would say that he fell in love with Lydia at first sight. Their relationship did not go down a traditional path and there were barriers, but in the end, he believed they were meant for each other. He was eager to put a ring on her finger and keep her with him always.