

RENOVATING HIS HEART



STELLA GRACE

BLUSHING BOOKS

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Published by Blushing Books®,
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ABCD Graphics and Design
977 Seminole Trail #233
Charlottesville, VA 22901
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EBook ISBN: 978-1-61258-794-3
Cover Art by ABCD Graphics & Design

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MEET AND GREET



Ty Parks spread out his construction plans on the hood of his sleek new black truck. Something wasn't right. He looked at the forms on the ground, then back at the plans, his brown eyes scanning for a discrepancy. Pounding his fist on the truck, Ty confirmed the subcontractor had laid out the forms for the concrete sidewalk on the wrong side of the site.

"Dammit all." Another day lost because of his incompetent subs. He reached for his phone on his hip, anger rushing through his veins. Ty really didn't want his Monday to start off this way.

"John, it's Ty Parks with Evans' Construction. We've got a problem."

Twenty minutes later, a mixture of Ty's workers and the chastised subcontractor, along with his crew, arrived at the site, coffee cups in hand, bragging about their eventful weekends.

Ty barked, and everyone scattered to their various assignments around the site.

That was the usual routine for Ty. Arrive early, find an issue, bark until it got fixed, go home, and repeat the next day. He never got to be the nice guy, and he never got a break. It must have been part of his job description, buried really deep in the small print.

James Guiser, his top laborer, approached him with an inquisitive face, pushing his overgrown blond hair out of his face. James was twenty-three-years-old, going on seventeen, and had the party attitude of a college student, though he had never stepped foot on a campus.

Ty appreciated the younger man's zest to party from time to time, especially the couple of months following his breakup with his old girlfriend, Stephanie.

"You don't want to know," Ty responded to James' questioning expression and stepped away from him to observe one of the framers as he placed a 2x4. When James continued to look at him with raised eyebrows, Ty enlightened him quietly. "The concrete guys put the forms in the wrong spot." He nodded at the man working frantically to move the forms.

"No, shit. Really?" James threw his arms up, mocking Ty's frustration. Ty rolled his eyes.

"Now we have to wait until they finish so we can pour the concrete," he told James and anyone else who was in earshot, including the berated subcontractor.

As much as he regretted it, Ty also knew he had to call his boss. Mr. Evans needed to know there was a delay. Again.

He excused himself from James and turned to make the call, walking toward the far end of the construction site where it wasn't as noisy.

Bill Evans was a hard man to work for and an even harder man to impress. He expected professionalism, punctuality, and a good work ethic from all of his employees. He didn't tolerate laziness and incompetence; neither did he have patience for delays.

Ty had started at Evans' Construction as a simple laborer, just like James, at the age of twenty-three. Nine years later, he ran his own jobs as the highest paid employee of the company. Mr. Evans also had pride in Ty and respected how hard he'd worked to gain his approval. He just recently hinted that he would like Ty to take

the company in the event that his deteriorating health finally took his life.

Mr. Evans had been diagnosed with liver cancer several months ago. He had refused chemotherapy and was making arrangements to ensure his family and company would survive long after his passing. One of those arrangements was giving the family business to Ty in exchange for twenty-five percent of the profits toward his estate.

“Jason, help Quinn move those boards. Let’s get this moved so we can be ready when the concrete arrives at ten.” Ty spewed out more orders after getting off the phone with Mr. Evans. His men, as expected, obeyed and shifted into action. There were never issues about resisting Ty’s orders, and no one tried to overstep and go against Ty’s authority. He knew how to run a job, and he was respected for it.

The sound of gravel crackling below the weight of tires came up behind him, but Ty didn’t turn around. He was too focused on the activity flaming in front of him.

Bright headlights dimmed as the sound of the quiet engine cut off while Ty crossed his well-defined arms over his chest and studied the activity in front of him.

He finally turned around just as a twenty-nine-year-old woman placed her shapely legs out of the candy-apple red sports car. She wore vivid red stiletto heels, which hugged her petite feet perfectly. Ty took a moment to ogle the beautiful woman as she stood with her long legs gracefully taking on the weight of her fit body. She wore dressy black shorts and a business casual top accented by costume jewelry.

Noticing the calm that blanketed the site, Ty turned to find most of his men had stopped to look at the mysterious woman as well.

He cleared this throat. They didn’t have time to waste gawking at the magnificent creature who clearly didn’t belong on his construction site.

“Excuse me! We only have a couple of hours before the concrete arrives. Let’s go!” he yelled, and his men quickly swarmed back to work.

Once he was satisfied that the distraction was no longer an issue, Ty turned his attention back to the beauty approaching him with a box of donuts in her hand.

She had long, smooth, chocolate colored hair hanging down her back, which looked recently trimmed and styled. She didn’t appear to be wearing any makeup and clearly didn’t need to.

“Are you Ty?” her singsong voice asked him.

“Yes. Can I help you?” He regretted how blunt his words sounded but, in his defense, it was not a good time.

“Ty, I’m Grace. I’m here to help you manage this job,” she collectedly told him, extending her delicate hand while balancing the donuts in the other.

Ty couldn’t hold back the howl of laughter that rose from his gut. He didn’t accept her handshake and flashed a bright smile.

“Oh, sweetheart, that’s a good one. Who sent you? Bill?” Ty asked her with laughter remaining in his eyes.

She didn’t waver, humor absent from her sky-blue eyes.

“If you mean Bill Evans, then, yes, he sent me.”

“You can tell Bill I said thank you for the laugh and the donuts,” he responded, appraising her body with his hungry eyes. He reached out and graciously took the donuts from her with a coy smile on his lips.

“I’m sorry. I think you misunderstand why I’m here, Mr. Parks. I’m not here for your visual pleasure. I’m here to help manage,” she said and tilted her chin just a little higher.

Her tone sobered Ty just a little.

“I’m sorry. I don’t need help,” he told her, switching gears and flashing her a coy smile.

“Mr. Evans advised me there was an issue with a subcontractor this morning?” Now, her eyes held a hint of amusement, which clouded them like a slate blue storm.

“There was, but as you can see it’s been handled, and we are back on schedule,” he smiled, trying his hardest to hide the discontent flowing in his veins.

She raised her voice so that everyone on the site could hear her, “Maybe I should introduce myself and get started on the right foot.”

Ty tried to keep his anger in check and shifted uncomfortably on his feet. Maybe this was a test to see if he would get distracted.

“So, Mr. Parks, I would like to formally introduce myself. I’m Grace Evans, Bill Evans’ daughter.” She extended her manicured hand firmly out again.

This time, Ty accepted it as his jaw dropped wide open.