

HIDDEN TALENTS



MISTY MALONE

BLUSHING BOOKS

©2018 by Blushing Books® and Misty Malone
All rights reserved.

No part of the book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Published by Blushing Books®,
a subsidiary of

ABCD Graphics and Design
977 Seminole Trail #233
Charlottesville, VA 22901

The trademark Blushing Books®
is registered in the US Patent and Trademark Office.

Misty Malone
Hidden Talents

EBook ISBN:978-1-61258-851-3
Cover Art by ABCD Graphics & Design

This book is intended for adults only. Spanking and other sexual activities represented in this book are fantasies only, intended for adults. Nothing in this book should be interpreted as Blushing Books' or the author's advocating any non-consensual spanking activity or the spanking of minors.

CHAPTER 1



*P*hil carried two bags of groceries into his house and set them on the counter. He turned the television on to get an update on the upcoming blizzard. The perky little weather girl explained that the blizzard was getting stronger and moving in quicker than they had expected. Knowing that meant he didn't have as much time to prepare as he thought, he quickly went out to his SUV and brought in the rest of the groceries. He went through them, taking out only what needed to be refrigerated, and put that away. The rest could wait until the snow was flying.

Next he headed to the garage out back. He double-checked all the windows, making sure they were closed tight and locked, so strong winds and snow couldn't blow them open. Then he got a thick rope and tied it tightly around the tree beside the garage. He took the rope to the door of the garage, where he tied it to a post at the door, then strung the rope to the house, tying it to the handrail at his back door, and finally taking it to the tree beside the house, where he tied it securely once again. He walked the line, following the rope from the steps of his house to the garage, checking to be sure the rope was in good condition and sturdy.

Satisfied with that, he noticed the wind picking up, and quickly

checked all the windows on his house one more time, again making sure they were closed tightly and locked. He double-checked the tarp he had covering his large stack of wood by the garage, then checked the tarp covering the stack of wood he had stored against his house, right outside the back door.

Finally, he checked his generator once more, starting it to be sure it was running well, and checking to be sure the gas tank was full. He checked his supply of extra gas, both in the garage and in the lean-to attached to the side of his house, and attached a sturdy rope from the lean-to to the pole beside the generator, and on to the tree by his back door, and finally to the bottom step of the handrail going up the steps to his back door.

Confident that he was ready, he went back in the house and checked his supply of water. He'd filled a porch full of gallon containers of water so he had them for drinking and flushing the toilet. Finally, he put all his groceries away. That took some doing, since the bags and bags of groceries he'd gotten would be enough to do him all winter if it had to. As he'd done the last few years, when his pantry was completely full, he took the last few bags of canned foods to the closet in the spare bedroom. It worked well as additional storage.

Living in upstate Maine, he had to make preparations for the snow, which was measured in feet, not inches. He lived in a small rural community that was nestled into the foot of a mountain. The village was rather remote, with no stores of any kind and only one road going from the village to the nearest bigger town. His home was the fifth in a string of six houses that were scattered partway up that mountain, which made it even more difficult to get to on snow-covered roads. Most people in the small village left before it got too bad. They either moved into town before the first blizzard and returned in the spring, or stayed with relatives or friends during the heart of the winter, and anytime they were expecting heavy snowfall.

Phil, however, chose to stay in his house over the winter. He

planned ahead, making sure he had enough supplies for all winter, plenty of wood cut and stacked for the wood-burning stove, gas for the generator, and ropes to be sure he could get where he needed to go outside during a blizzard, when he couldn't see and could easily get turned around.

He was an artist, and had the luxury of working from his home. He loved the scenery around his house during all four seasons, and often painted what he saw looking out his windows. His house was high enough up the mountain that he could see for miles and miles in good weather, looking down onto the valleys and the town.

Many of Phil's best paintings had been done in the winter, when no one was around to bother him. Therefore, he made sure he had an abundance of empty canvases and paints. Most of his work was sold at a local gallery, and every spring they eagerly awaited his winter paintings. He seemed especially inspired during this time alone and always had several terrific paintings to sell.

Pleased with his preparations for the upcoming blizzard, he fixed some lunch and sat down to eat while he watched the weather update. This looked like a monster blizzard coming in, even for this area. He was glad he'd stayed in his house all winter for several years now, so he had the experience. He'd hate to be going through a blizzard this size his first winter there.

As he was washing up the dishes, still watching the weather bulletins, he started seeing a few snowflakes floating around outside. Although he knew it was the start of a storm that could be dangerous, he still had to marvel over the beauty of the first signs of snow. Those first few innocent, very delicate flakes not falling, but floating through the air was something you had to experience. It was one thing he hadn't yet been able to capture fully on a canvas.

He was watching the first few flurries flying around when his phone rang. He answered, and was surprised to hear Joe, the county sheriff. "Phil, are you all ready for the blizzard?"

"All set, Joe. I've got everything I should need."

“Good. Hey, I got a report that a woman went up to the house above yours to check on her grandmother, but no one’s heard from her since she left this morning. I guess she was going to call her friend when she got there, and hasn’t called yet. Have you seen anyone going past your place today?”

“I haven’t seen anyone go by while I’ve been here, but I went into town to get supplies this morning. I suppose someone could have gone up then. Lola Stapleton, the lady that lives there, moved in with her nephew for the winter, though. She left last week. Her house is locked up tight for the winter.”

“I thought she’d left already.”

“Joe, this isn’t good. If someone’s up there, she’ll never make it through a big storm, even if she could get into the house. It’s already started snowing, so I’m going now. It won’t be long before the road will be impassible if it snows like they’re saying it will.”

“Hey, be careful, Phil, and call me when you get back home, okay? The family’s worried and I need to get back with them.”

“Will do. Talk to you later, Joe.”



PHIL IMMEDIATELY GOT in his four-wheel drive SUV and headed on up the mountain past his house, watching the sky, as the clouds darkened and the snow started falling faster. Sure enough, when he got to the house, he saw a car in the driveway, and a young lady trying to climb up to a window. He quickly parked and went over to talk to her. “May I help you, Miss?”

Sheila Stapleton was concentrating on finding a way to get into her grandmother’s house and didn’t even see Phil pull in. She was trying to climb up to a window, and had put a bucket she found in the garage on top of a large old tree stump. His voice startled her, and she jumped, which caused the bucket to fall off the tree stump. She would have fallen if Phil hadn’t made it to her just in time to catch her.

He set her back on her feet, and she immediately launched a verbal attack. "What the hell are you doing, sneaking up on me like that? I could have been killed. What are you doing at my grandmother's house, anyway, and who the shit are you?"

Phil was momentarily speechless. He took a deep breath to calm himself and make sure he was under control before he said anything. "I'm Phil Sanderson. I live in the next house down the mountain. The sheriff called to tell me he was afraid someone was up here. Lola Stapleton, whom I assume is your grandmother, left for the winter, so I didn't cut a winter's supply of wood for her this year, and she didn't stock up on food. I closed and locked her house up for her when she left. Therefore, I knew if someone was up here, they'd need help. We've got to get you back down quickly, or you'll be stuck here. This storm coming in is big."

"That's the problem. My car won't start. It seemed okay coming up, but for some reason it won't start now. That's why I was trying to get through a window."

Phil turned quickly to her car and motioned her to follow. "Let me take a quick look at it." She followed him over to the car, where he quickly looked under the hood. A few minutes later he shook his head. "Well, Miss, unfortunately, you're not going anywhere in that car until we get a new radiator hose. There's a hole clear through that one."

"Can't you fix it?"

His eyebrows raised, but he tried to explain the situation to her. "No, not without a new hose. I'll be happy to fix it for you when we can get back into town to get one, but that won't be today."

"Then I have to get into her house." Watching her, it seemed to Phil she must have realized he probably wouldn't be too inclined to help her the way she had spoken to him earlier, so she softened her attitude and tried to make amends. "My name's Sheila, and I'm sorry for what I said to you earlier. I was a little flustered."

She was rewarded with a smile from Phil. "I understand. Nice to meet you, Sheila. I could help you get into the house, but you can't

stay here during this storm. You don't have any wood and she doesn't have much food there. We cleaned out the refrigerator and freezer so everything will be okay with no power for the winter." He saw the look of pure panic on her face and quickly tried to calm her. "Come on down to my place. You can stay there through this blizzard, then we'll see if we can get into town and get the part you need for your car."

She looked rather appalled and shook her head. "I can't stay with you. I don't even know you. Help me into the house. I'll be fine. I'll just keep the furnace on instead of burning wood, and I'm sure she has some canned goods."

"Sheila, you can't stay here. The power will go off, then you won't have any heat. Even if you could stay warm, you won't have any way to heat food, and the water's been turned off and the pipes drained so they won't freeze." He could tell she was torn, but he really couldn't leave her there. "Come on, let's get back down to my house so we can get you settled into my extra bedroom before the roads get too bad. The snow's really starting to come down now."

"I don't like the idea of staying with a man I don't know."

"I know, Sheila, and I understand what you're saying. However, you really don't have any choice right now. I'm good friends with your grandmother. Let's go to my house and you can call her and ask her. You'll be fine; I give you my word."

She stood there hesitating, shaking her head. "I don't know."

Phil looked up at the sky. The snow was coming down hard now, the wind was howling, and he'd lived in the area long enough to know the road back to his house would drift quickly. He reached out and took her upper arm and headed them toward his SUV. "I'm sorry, Sheila, but you're just going to have to trust me on this. We've got to go now or we may not even make it back to my house, and then we'll both be in danger. You can call your grandmother from there."

He stopped at her car and grabbed her suitcase, then escorted her to his SUV quickly, with one eye on the sky. He opened her

door, and when she didn't get in he picked her up, put her in, and fastened her seatbelt. "Sheila, neither one of us is safe up here." He shut the door and hurried to his side. He got in and quickly realized she was about to bolt, with one hand on her seatbelt. She had her other hand on the door, but he quickly locked the doors and the latch so she couldn't unlock it.

"Hey, what are you doing?" she demanded.

"Trying to make sure we're both safe in this storm, but you're trying your best to interfere with that plan. Now sit still until we get home or you won't be sitting for a while." He noticed her jaw drop and her eyes widen, but he had to pay attention to his driving. He hoped he hadn't already waited too long.

It was obvious to Phil that Sheila was in a huff, until they got started down the road. He could tell then that she saw what the road conditions were like and knew he hadn't been exaggerating. He watched her holding her breath as he hit the gas and plowed through a couple of large snowdrifts. When he got stuck once she was definitely scared, and it looked to him as though she felt guilty for delaying their trip so long. He rocked the SUV back and forth and eventually got them out of the drift, and they headed on down the road toward his house.

He could easily see she was seriously getting scared now, especially when it started snowing so hard they could hardly see in front of the vehicle. When he pulled off the road and into his lane at home he saw her tense. He eased it along slowly, until he finally pulled into his garage. He had to smile when she let out her breath, which he doubted she even realized she had been holding.

Phil looked over at her and saw the fear in her eyes. He gently patted her hand. "We made it. Now let's get inside before it gets worse. As you can see, once the snow starts coming down heavy and the wind starts howling, it gets bad very quickly." He unlocked her door, and when she got out, he tried to caution her. "Wait right here. Don't go out until I get your suitcase and we can go together."

He barely got the words out of his mouth before she opened the

door and tried to step out into the snow. He grabbed her arm and pulled her back in. "Did you hear what I said, Sheila?"

"Why can't I just go to the house?"

Holding on to her arm, he pulled her over to his vehicle so he could get her suitcase. "Because when it's snowing that hard, it's too easy to get turned around. I said to wait for me so I can make sure we both get there." She sighed and rolled her eyes. Phil reached in and got her suitcase. "Okay, if you're so sure of yourself in this snow, lead the way."

She huffed and turned toward the door. "I don't see what the problem could be just walking to the house." She opened the door to go out and was met by snow swirling all around and into her face. She stepped outside and immediately turned her back to the wind, and stood still a minute, acclimating to the wind howling all around and the snow hitting her. Phil stepped out beside her and carefully latched the door behind them, holding her suitcase in one hand. He noticed the wind had changed direction, and reached out to take Sheila's hand.

She turned back into the wind and took a couple steps, but Phil stopped her. She looked back at him and yelled, "What's wrong?"

He pulled her back toward him and pointed. "This way."

"No, it's not, I'm sure," she insisted.

He pulled her over and took her hand and placed it on the rope. He had to lean in close to her ear so she could hear him. "Hold onto that and follow it. It'll take you to the house."

"Are you sure? I thought it was this way," she yelled, pointing off to the side.

"Trust me. Follow the rope." He held the suitcase and rope in one hand, while he grabbed her and urged her along in front of him. She wasn't cooperating, and he was getting frustrated. Finally they came to the house and were able to get inside. He flipped the light switch and was both surprised and relieved when the lights came on. He wasn't sure they'd still have electricity.

Knowing they wouldn't have it long, he ushered her inside and

straight to the spare bedroom, where he put her suitcase on the bed. “This will be your room. I’m going to get some flashlights and lanterns ready. If the power goes off, it’ll be dark in here because it’s storming so hard. If that happens and you can’t see, just stay here. I’ll come in with a lantern for you. If the power stays on I’ll be in the kitchen. Make yourself comfortable, then come out when you’re ready. We’ll call your grandmother, and I have to call the sheriff and let him know we’re okay.”

He went to the kitchen and got out the flashlights, checking to be sure the batteries were good. Then he got two lanterns, one that burned oil, and a battery lantern. He filled the oil lamp and laid matches beside it, and checked to be sure the batteries were good in the other one. He was finishing that when Sheila came out into the kitchen, looking a little pale. “Are you okay, Sheila? Have a seat.” He was already pulling a chair out for her at the table.

“I’m fine,” she assured him as she sat down.

“You look pale. Are you sure you’re okay?”

“My pride’s a little damaged, but the rest of me is fine.”

He hoped he understood what she was saying, but had to be sure. “Your pride was damaged?”

“Yeah. I’m sorry. I didn’t know a storm could come on that quick, and I held us up, when you tried to tell me we had to leave. Then I — my sense of direction is usually pretty good. I don’t know how I got turned around outside, but I don’t think I made it very easy for you.”

Phil turned to face her and smiled appreciatively. “Thank you. You’re forgiven, because unless you’ve lived around here, you wouldn’t be familiar with our blizzards. They have to be taken seriously, and they can come on quick. You have to have respect for them or you’ll get yourself in a lot of trouble. That’s why I have the rope out there; for times when you can’t see three feet in front of you. That’s an important thing to have out here in the winter.”

“I didn’t realize how bad it gets here. Thank you for coming to

look for me and bringing me down here. I'm sure it would have gotten cold in my car all night."

"No argument there," he agreed, "but it would have been more than one night. We'll probably be hunkered down here for a week minimum before we can get out. I've seen back to back blizzards that kept me holed up here for three months before I could get back down off the mountain and into town."

Her eyes went wide at his words. "That would be terrible. How could you stand being alone for that long?"

He laughed and shrugged. "You really don't have a lot of choice. When it's that bad you can't go anywhere, so you may as well make the most of it. I like to paint in the winter while I'm up here, so I guess I tend to get engrossed in that and don't realize how long I've been here, as long as I have plenty of food and water and wood to burn."

"You're a painter?" He nodded, and she thought a moment. "Oh, yeah. Grandma said there was a young man that lived close to her that was a fabulous artist. That must be you. Do you have any of your paintings here? I'd love to see them."

He took her in the living room and showed her a picture of the valley below in the fall, and one of her grandmother's house in the spring, surrounded with wildflowers. "These are two of my favorites," he said. "I painted one similar to this of your grandmother's house and she fell in love with it, so I gave it to her. She has it hanging in her living room. I love seeing all those flowers in the spring, so the next year I painted another one for my living room."

"I love this picture."

"Thank you. Autumn here is magical," he said, moving to the other picture. "When you look down the valley and the trees are all in their glory, it just takes your breath away. I had to have a picture of those two seasons to look at year around."

"They're both beautiful," she said, looking at them carefully. She went back to look at the one of her grandmother's house again. "The flowers are gorgeous, but you really captured their random-

ness, and how the colors are so bright they just seem to pop.” He watched her while she studied the painting. “And the house. Somehow you can see the strength of it as it stands proudly beside the brook, like it’s not intimidated by the majestic mountain behind it. That’s amazing that you can see that so plainly even in the painting.”

“Thank you,” he said sincerely. “Are you an artist yourself?”

That question seemed to bring her out of a daze, and she shook her head vehemently. “Oh, heavens, no. I just know what I like, and I really like both of these pictures. Do you sell your paintings somewhere?”

“Most of them are sold through a small gallery in the next city. Are you sure you don’t paint? You have a real good eye.”

She frowned, and her demeanor changed. “No, I don’t paint.” As she said that, the electricity flicked off and on three times, and went off to stay.

“I was anticipating that,” he said, handing her a flashlight. He turned the battery-powered lantern on, which produced a surprising amount of light. He was able then to light the oil lantern, which also put out a good light. “You can use this one that runs on battery so you don’t have to worry about spilling the oil. They put out enough light you can see pretty good, so just take it with you wherever you go. I’ll use this one. Keep a flashlight in your bedroom in case the battery on the lantern goes out. If you need me for anything during the night, just give a yell and I’ll come help you.”

“What would I need?”

“You probably won’t need anything,” he said with a smile, “but if you have to get up in the middle of the night and can’t find the lantern or flashlight, or they don’t work or something, call me. I don’t want you trying to stumble around in the dark in a house you’re not familiar with. If you get hurt, we can’t get you out of here to see a doctor until the snow quits, so be careful. Don’t take any chances, okay?”

"I guess I never thought of getting into town to see a doctor. Good point," she said. He could tell he was bringing up concerns she hadn't thought of, so he hoped she took him seriously and heeded his warning.

"Now, I've got to call Joe and let him know we're both okay. Then you can call your grandmother. Let her know you're okay, and you can ask her if you're okay staying here." He saw her blush as he dialed the sheriff's number, and had to turn so she wouldn't see him smiling. He assured Joe they were both fine and she'd ride the storm out at his place. He then offered her his phone. "Do you need a phone?"

"No, I have my cell," she said, taking it out of her pocket. She called her grandmother and talked a few minutes, then handed the phone to Phil. "She wants to talk to you for some reason."

Phil talked to her a few minutes, getting caught up with each other's lives since she'd left. Then she turned very serious. "Thank you for rescuing Sheila. I love her to death, but I wanted to warn you about her."

"Warn me?"

"Yes. Sheila's got a good heart, but sometimes she hides it. She can be a spoiled brat. She's not familiar with winters up there, and she's apt to fight what you tell her, but make her listen right from the start or you'll have problems. Also, keep an eye on her. If she gets bored, she'll want to leave as soon as the snow lets up a little."

"Really?"

"Unfortunately, yes. She's actually about the same age as you, maybe two or three years younger at the most, but she can act pretty childish at times. Keep that in mind, and thank you for keeping her safe for us, Phil. I appreciate it." They talked a few more minutes before wishing each other a good winter and promising to stay in touch.

He handed the phone back to Sheila. She had obviously been listening to his side of the conversation, and she didn't look real happy. "So what did Grandma want to warn you about?"

He looked into her eyes before answering. "She warned me that this storm sounds like it's going to be nasty, and to make sure you know how dangerous it is to go outside when the snow lets up a little. It often lets up, then kicks back in with full force, without any warning. She said to watch and make sure you don't try to sneak off before it's safe. You wouldn't really try going out until I say it's safe to, would you?"

He watched her face carefully while he asked her that, and she blushed, and looked away. That's not what he wanted to see. "Of course I wouldn't," she insisted. He watched her eyes, but wasn't at all convinced of her sincerity. Great. Now apparently he had to babysit a spoiled brat during the blizzard. He decided right then he'd do exactly as her grandmother advised; make her behave right from the start.