
FEBRUARY HEARTS

Campus Life -Book 2

JENNY PLUMB



Published by Blushing Books
An Imprint of
ABCD Graphics and Design, Inc.
A Virginia Corporation
977 Seminole Trail #233
Charlottesville, VA 22901

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Jenny Plumb
February Hearts

EBook ISBN: 978-1-64563-203-0
Print ISBN: 978-1-64563-397-6
Audio ISBN: 978-1-64563-398-3

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Cover Art by ABCD Graphics & Design

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Chapter 1

Monday afternoon, Faith left her Developmental Psychology class and could barely contain her squeal of happiness when she saw the new heart-shaped poster on the bulletin board in the hallway. She walked over to get a closer look. The poster was promoting a Valentine's Day movie night on Friday. Northern Oregon University held a movie night at the Performing Arts Center twice a month. They showed second run movies, but it was free to all students, and the concessions were cheap, so Faith usually went if she could talk one of her friends into going with her. But she was definitely going to go to this one, even if she had to go alone. Romance movies were her favorite, and since she didn't have a boyfriend, spending the holiday in the theater sounded like the next best thing. She scribbled down the information in her notebook then picked up her step to go meet her new friend, Jade, for lunch at the Community Cultural Center, known by the students as the Commons.

As she walked across campus, the bitterly cold wind made her pull her hood on, wrap her arms around herself, and hunch her shoulders down to protect her face from the brunt of the frigid air. She walked past the library and then decided it had been dry

enough lately to take the shortcut through the park to get to the Commons. In her rush to get out of the cold, she accidentally tripped on an uneven part of the little sidewalk that wandered through the park.

A startled yelp came out of her mid-trip, and then a loud gasp followed when her hands and knees hit the cement walkway. "Ow!" she exclaimed, taking a couple of deep breaths as tears welled in her eyes.

As she tried to stand, a man rushed over and knelt down by her side. "Are you okay?" he asked in a thick Spanish accent. Before she could answer, he held out his hand and added, "Can I help you up?"

She turned teary eyes toward him, and her breath froze for a moment. He was utterly beautiful. He had short, black hair, a neatly trimmed beard and mustache, deep brown eyes, and flawless brown skin.

"Are you hurt?" he asked gently, as if talking to a spooked animal.

Something in his tone made her respond naturally instead of keeping herself guarded. "My hands," she said, lifting them for him to see.

"Ouch," he said with sympathy. "Come, we'll get you cleaned up." He put one hand on her arm and the other around her back, then he urged her to stand.

Once she was on her feet, she hissed and added, "My knees, too."

The man pointed south and said, "The maintenance building is two blocks away. I have a first aid kit."

She pointed north and said, "I'm meeting my friend at the Commons for lunch."

He picked up her hand and examined the palm. "There are three little pebbles stuck under the skin. They'll need to come out, and I have tweezers, antibiotic ointment, and gauze in the first aid kit."

Biting her lip, she looked back and forth from the north to

the south a couple of times. She could practically feel the Little side of her brain screaming to let the nice man help take care of her ouchie, but the adult side of her brain told her to suck it up and go take care of it in the bathroom like any other grown woman would do.

"Can you text your friend?" he asked. "Tell him or her that you'll be a few minutes late?"

Faith nodded. She could do that. She texted off the words, *running late, start without me*, and then looked to him for direction.

"This way." He gestured down the block, put a hand on her back, and led her out of the park. They walked past the Performing Arts Center to an unremarkable little building with no sign. The man got some keys out and unlocked the door as he said, "This side is where the gardening equipment is stored. The other side is full of maintenance supplies."

They walked into a large room full of rakes, hoes, hoses, clippers, and all manner of chemicals for killing bugs and fertilizing plants. There was only one desk in the room, and he led her toward it then pulled out a little office chair from under the desk and patted it. "Sit right here, and I'll get the first aid kit."

She sat, put her backpack on the floor beside her, and looked around the room while he was gone. To the left, there was a small shelf unit with several trays of colorful pansies. While she was thinking it was a little too early in the year to plant flowers, he came back holding a white first aid box.

He put the kit on the desk and sat on the edge. "What's your name, chiquita?" he asked.

"Faith."

"It's nice to meet you, Faith. My name is Juan."

While she blushed, she muttered shyly, "Hi, Juan."

He held out his hand and said, "Let's see your right palm first."

She put her hand in his. He angled the small lamp on the desk to shine on it and said, "No pebbles in this one." He let go. "Left palm."

She held that one out, and he examined it under the light and then pulled the tweezers out of the first aid kit.

Faith snatched her hand back and held it close to her body with the other hand.

His eyebrows went up in surprise.

Adult Faith knew she should be embarrassed, and she almost was, but Little Faith didn't care, because no way was she letting those tweezers anywhere near her hand. It hurt enough already. "It'll hurt," she said with a pout.

"Ah." He nodded, leaned closer, and said, "Yes, it will, chiquita, but it must be done anyway. If the pebbles stay under your skin, it could get infected."

She glared at him warily and said, "I don't want to."

"Come now; you can be a brave girl." He gestured to the tray of pansies and said, "If you let me get them out, you can keep one of the flowers. You can take it home and plant it in your yard or pot it and keep it in your dorm."

She looked over at the colorful flowers and, after a few seconds, said, "Can I have a yellow one?"

"Of course. You can pick it out yourself, just as soon as your hands are all taken care of."

She frowned and slowly held her hand back out to him.

"Muy bien, chiquita," he said as he grasped her hand firmly and examined the damage.

"I'm not a banana," she muttered.

He chuckled and explained, "Chiquita means little girl, not banana. I said very good little girl."

Her stomach did a pleasant little flutter when he said the words 'little girl', but even with that, she frowned. "I'm twenty-five." A defensive tone had crept into her voice unintentionally. It was hard not to be guarded about her kink when so many people had misconceptions about what it meant to be a Little.

"Well, I'm thirty-six, so that makes you a chiquita to me. Deep breath now, and try to keep your hand still."

She scrunched her eyes closed and winced in anticipation. A

sharp little stab of pain on her palm automatically had her trying to pull her hand back, but this time, his grip tightened to keep her hand in place.

"Ow," she whimpered.

He set the tiny pebble on the desk and said encouragingly, "You're doing very well. Only two more."

"No more," she said softly, but he was already digging out the next one.

"Oww!" she whined loudly.

When he put the second pebble on the desk, she intentionally tried to pull her hand out of his, but again, his grip held her tight. His disapproving eyes met hers. "None of that, chiquita," he said sternly. "I told you why this needs to be done."

"Sorry," she muttered as her chin wobbled.

"Hmm," he murmured non-committedly as he focused back on her palm.

"Owie," she complained as he pulled the last pebble out, even though it hadn't hurt as much as the other two.

"There," he said, letting her hand go. "That part is all done. You were very brave." He pointed to the east wall where there was a large metal sink beside some shelves. "But you'll have to be brave again, because we need to wash off the dirt before I put the ointment on."

Frowning at the sink, she shook her head.

"I know," he said with sympathy as he stood and held his hand out for her. "Let's go get it over with."

Everything about his tone, stance, and demeanor screamed 'Daddy' to her, and she couldn't refuse. She put her hand in his and let him take her over.

"Why don't you tell me what you're studying while I clean the scrapes," he said, turning the water on to get warm.

"I'm getting my Master's in Social Psychology, with an emphasis on childhood development."

He tested the water with his hand and said, "Do you plan to go on to get your Doctorate?"

"I don't think so. I want to be a kindergarten teacher or possibly a school counselor, so a Master's will be enough."

"The world needs truly caring people who are willing to work with little ones." He gently took her right hand in his and guided it to the water as he asked, "What made you choose that profession?"

She whimpered as the water made the pain from all the scrapes on her hand flair up. She watched him carefully rinse her hand as she answered, "I get along with kids better than I get along with adults most of the time. Adults are so... un-honest."

His eyes darted to hers, and he said with a smirk, "Un-honest? English isn't my first language, but I think the word you're looking for is dishonest." He turned back to his task and put a squirt of liquid soap on her palm and rubbed it in.

"I like un-honest better," she muttered.

"Hmm, I like it better, too." He rinsed the soap off, let go of her right hand, and picked up the left. "Deep breath, chiquita."

She inhaled and held it while he put the other hand in the water. After hissing, she purposely closed her lips, but a whine came out of her throat.

"So brave," he murmured as he carefully soaped up the wound. A few moments later, he let go and said, "There. The hard part is all done." He reached up on the shelf above the sink and grabbed a roll of paper towels. He tore a couple off and handed them to her. "Dab. Don't rub."

She dabbed the water off her palms while he dried his hands.

"Back to the chair." He gestured toward it. She sat, and he dug into the first aid kit again. As he was slathering on the ointment, he said, "Did you get your bachelor's degree here at NOU or some other college?"

"Here. My parents live twenty minutes away, so I still live at home. Free room and board while I'm a full-time student."

"Astuto," he said and then amended to, "Smart. Clever." He taped the gauze onto her left hand.

Faith shrugged. "Not really. I couldn't have gone to college if I didn't get into NOU. My brothers were too young."

"Your brothers?" he asked.

She nodded. "Twins. They're fifteen now, but when I was eighteen, they were only eight. I couldn't have gone away to college."

"Why not? What about your parents?"

"They have to work."

He tilted his head to the side and scrutinized her for a moment before nodding. "Let's take a look at your knees, yes?"

She was wearing black leggings, so she pulled the right side up to expose her shin and knee.

Kneeling down in front of her, he took a quick look. "No broken skin, but it's already bruising. Other knee."

She pushed the leggings down on one side and pulled them up on the other.

"No broken skin here, either." He patted the top of her tennis shoe and stood. "You are all patched up. You may pick your flower."

She grinned and went to look at the tray. After a few moments of careful deliberation, she picked a bright yellow pansy with three open flowers and two buds.

"Excelente... Excellent choice." He picked up her backpack and said, "I will walk you to the Commons. See that you make it without further incident."

She frowned as she thought about refusing. She'd already let him treat her like a child when she knew it wasn't exactly normal, but his smile was so sweet that she didn't have it in her to refuse.

"Okay."

They walked briskly through the freezing wind, and once they'd gotten back to the park, he said, "Who are you meeting for lunch?"

"My friend Jade. She's the nicest person. She's dating my friend Danny, and I'm super happy for the both of them. They're so in love that it's... infectious. You know what I mean? Like their

love makes everyone around them feel more love for *their* friends and family. You'd think I'd be bitter about it, since I don't have anyone, but you simply can't see them together and *not* be happy."

Faith realized she'd been 'chattering', a term her mother used to describe her propensity to ramble on excitedly about a topic she was enthusiastic about, even if no one else was. She glanced at Juan, but he didn't seem to be annoyed at all. In fact, he was smiling.

"I believe the same could be said about you. I don't think anyone could be around *you* and not be happy."

She blushed a deep red and mumbled, "Oh... I don't know about that."

They'd made it to the main entrance to the Commons, and he held her backpack out for her to take. "I do know about that," he said with sincerity.

"Oh... Thanks?" She took the backpack from him.

He opened the door for her and said, "Thank you for brightening my day, Faith."

"Thank you for fixing my hands and not making fun of me for being a baby about it."

He shook his head. "You weren't being a baby. You were just being honest in a situation where most people would be dishonest."

She smiled at his use of her word and thought about asking him to join her and Jade for lunch, but she wasn't quite brave enough. Instead she said, "I should go."

"I'm sure your friend is waiting," he agreed.

"Bye," she said and quickly walked through the doors before she could embarrass herself further.

Faith walked through the Commons in a bit of a daze before realizing she had no idea where Jade was. The Commons was a

large, two story building with eateries and seating on both levels. Faith went to an empty table, set her pansy down, and looked at her phone to see if Jade had replied to her earlier text.

Jade had written, *siting by Subway*.

Faith rolled her eyes, smiled fondly, and stuck her phone back in her jacket pocket. Of course, Jade was eating Subway for lunch. She didn't think Jade could eat something unhealthy if she tried. But that was why Jade was stick thin, and Faith wasn't thin by any stretch of the imagination. In fact, Faith often called herself fat, as long as her friend Danny wasn't around to hear her say it.

She picked up her flower and went to find her friend. They'd only been friends for about a month, but Faith felt close to Jade already. Not just because Jade was dating Danny, but also because she was a fellow submissive. They were at very different ends of the spectrum, with Jade identifying as a slave and Faith identifying as a Little, but it still made them closer than they would have otherwise been. During the week, they ate lunch together almost every day.

Faith found her friend immediately and went to put her stuff down at the table.

"Your hair!" Jade said with astonishment.

Giggling at her friend's shock, it took Faith a moment to contain her mirth so she could speak. "I change it every couple of months." Faith took a fistful of her own hair and pulled it away from her shoulder to look at the color. "I think this one was called dark golden brown."

"You were blonde with hot pink tips yesterday!" Jade said, standing to see the hair up close.

"Yep. And in a couple of months, I might have orange hair with yellow highlights. Or maybe I'll put some blue or purple highlights in the brown."

Jade took a step back and tilted her head to the side. "It's really different, but I think this color suits you."

"This is a lot closer to my natural color, but I would hate to have the same color forever. I like to change it up."

Jade sat back down. "Where did you have it done?"

"My mom did it. She used to be a hairdresser before she started working at the grocery store. She needed the medical benefits after my step-dad got laid off. She doesn't even like working at the store, but the pay is so much better that she can't go back to cutting hair. But she still does odd jobs for her friends and me."

"It looks like you had it done professionally."

"Thanks."

"Where did you get the flower?" Jade asked.

"That's a long story. I'm going to get a sandwich first, and then I'll tell you all about it."

"I'll watch your stuff."

Ten minutes later, Faith had her meatball sandwich and shook her head at Jade's half eaten, gross vegetarian sandwich before taking a big bite filled with meat, cheese, and sauce.

"All right," Jade said with a smile. "What's the story behind the flower?"

As Faith was chewing, she started having some doubts about how much she should share. She'd let one of the school's groundskeepers treat her like a child. Was that really something to be happy about? After swallowing, she said, "On my way here, I fell and hurt my hand." She held up her palm so Jade could see the gauze.

"Oh no. Are you okay?"

Faith nodded. "It was just a scrape. One of the gardeners saw me fall, so he patched me up and let me have one of the flowers out of a tray."

After a short pause, Jade said, "That's not a very long story."

Faith shrugged and mumbled, "He may have been... toppy with me." And then, she took a big bite to keep from saying more.

Jade's eyes opened wide, and she leaned in to whisper excitedly, "He was toppe with you? Toppe, how?"

Faith felt herself blush before she could swallow.

"Oh my God," Jade said. "Was he toppe like a Daddy Dom?"

"Maybe," Faith mumbled.

Jade scooted her chair around to sit right beside Faith and said, "Tell me everything!"

Faith put her sandwich down, bolstered her courage with a sip of Coke, and then spent the next ten minutes spilling her guts about every little detail.

"He sounds perfect for you!" Jade said. "You'll have to hang out in the park every day around this time until you run into him again. We can get a sack lunch and eat in the park!"

"It's barely forty degrees out there, Jade. No way are we eating lunch outside."

"You should ask Danny He knows most of the campus staff, and if he doesn't know this guy, I bet he can look him up in the school's database."

Faith shook her head. "Are you hearing yourself right now? Danny would nix that idea before we even finished explaining it. He would get all lecture-y about 'inappropriate use of police resources'." Faith had lowered her voice for the last few words, imitating Danny's stern dominant voice when he was in top mode.

Jade chuckled. "Okay, you've got me there. I can totally picture him saying those words."

"Exactly. Besides, I'm not sure I want to see this guy again." Even as she said that, Faith knew she wasn't being truthful. She *did* want to see him again; she just wasn't sure if she *should* see him again.

"Why not?"

"I didn't meet him on FetLife or at a munch or a club. I met him on campus, and he automatically treated me like a Little without knowing that I was one. There was no negotiation, no

honest dialogue about what we were doing; he just treated me like I was six."

Jade put a hand on Faith's shoulder. "When I first met Danny, he said my entire demeanor screamed 'lost little subby'. Maybe to the right kind of guy, you give off an 'I'm six' vibe."

Faith couldn't help but smile. "Lost little subby?"

"Yeah, well, he wasn't wrong, was he?" she replied with a grin.

Faith gave Jade an impromptu hug and said, "Thank you."

"What for?" Jade asked.

"For not judging, for being my friend, for being a good person; take your pick."

Jade took Faith's hand in both of hers and said, "Last month, when I had a stalker, you spent countless hours walking me places so that I would be safe. You were a great friend to me and a good person. I'm just returning the favor."

Faith felt tears welling in her eyes, so she pulled her hand out of Jade's and waved her away. "You're going to make me cry, and I haven't even finished lunch. Go finish your salad on bread, and stop saying such nice things to me."

"It's not a salad on bread!" Jade protested while moving back to her tray. "It has cheese and even some mustard and mayo."

Faith picked up her sandwich to finish it before it got cold and refused to acknowledge her friend's ridiculous and inaccurate protest.

Most nights, Faith drifted off to sleep seconds after getting into bed, because her nights were always busy. Her mom was working swing shift again, and her stepfather always worked graveyard. Faith had long ago accepted that her stepfather wasn't much of a father to his sons, let alone to her, but it still irked her that he always chose to sleep from two o'clock in the afternoon to ten o'clock at night. That meant that when her mom was working,

Faith had to get dinner on the table, clean the dishes, run and fold the laundry, and make sure her twin brothers, Earnest and Justice, did their homework. Once all of that was done, she had hours of her own homework to do before going to bed. Then, early in the morning when Faith and her brothers were in school, her stepfather had the house and, more importantly, the television to himself.

Tonight, when Faith finally lay down, sleep was the furthest thing from her mind. Tonight, she didn't even feel tired. Thoughts of Juan had been in the back of her mind all day, and now that her responsibilities were all taken care of, she let them come to the forefront of her brain. First, she replayed their entire conversation in the room full of gardening equipment. But then, her mind started coming up with an even better scenario. One where he sat in the chair and made her sit in his lap to fix her hands, where he insisted she call him Daddy, where he threatened to spank her when she tried to pull her hand away, and where he kissed it better once he was done. She stuck her hand into her pajama bottoms and brought herself to climax while replaying that made-up scene in her head.