

## Designing Destiny

### Chapter Nine

November 2023

Shivering. Entire body shaking like a leaf in a hurricane. And over it all, the indescribably intense sensation of those strong, womanly hands slipping over every inch of her body.

They were the hands of the goddess looming above her. The mysteriously smiling lips, half hidden in the darkness, never parted – yet in her mind echoed that heart-stopping voice. *Relax. You are now mine. You have yielded... to me. Abandon all resistance. Give yourself completely... to me.*

Her heart was in her frantically spasming mouth. Her body no longer refused to obey her. And as a wellspring spurted uncontrollably from between her quivering legs, a long, low laugh resonated through the inky void. A laugh of mockery... of elation... of veritable triumph-

*"AAAAHHHH!!!"*

Fern woke with a scream... only to find her poor Goodnites already swelling with the hissing onslaught of her nerveless bladder.

It was the morning of Destiny's visit. And with now a six-day streak of wet mornings behind her, she was clearly further than ever from escaping this humiliating new habit.

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Her mind was a complete mess the rest of the day, of course. Spreadsheets and emails and memos blurred into incomprehensible blurs as her nervously excited brain veered from one little detail to the next. She'd cleaned the kitchen into spotless order. Yes. She'd gotten the meatballs and peas and applesauce all ready. Oh, and those Goodnites... she'd hidden them in the top of her closet, right? In a shopping bag. Zipped into a spare suitcase, along with Suzie and all her other silly stuffies. But ugh – she should have locked it! What if Destiny looked in there, and- and-

And saw what a stupid, immature young woman she really was?

Part of her knew that such fears were irrational, of course. She was Fern: a grown adult woman, fully capable of renting her own apartment and keeping it clean and inviting friends over for suppers that she herself prepared. She could do all this! Besides, she didn't need to impress Destiny with

anything, right? She was just a coworker – a superior, sure, but a coworker all the same.

And yet...

Every time she spotted Destiny striding through the office... every time she remembered how cool and confident she'd appeared that night at the restaurant, or heard that dreamlike voice in her head, her heart began hammering at an unnatural speed. Tingles of anxious delight rippled up and down her spine. And in her heart of hearts, she began to wonder if she wasn't falling in love with this incredible woman.

A blush-inducing thought. Terrifying, even. Because if love had never worked out for her before... why the hell would it work out *now*?

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"That was lovely, Fern! You truly did a lovely job with the meatballs. I'll have to get the recipe from you before I leave, really!"

Destiny was beaming, rising from her seat at Fern's little table. "Here, let me help you clean these up," she offered, and despite Fern's polite splutters that it wasn't necessary, that she'd take care of it, she insisted. "It's nothing, really," she averred, slipping their two plates into the sink and flashing Fern a tongue-tying smile. "The sooner we get these cleaned up, the sooner we can both relax."

*Relax.* Above the rush of the faucet, the familiar word echoed in Fern's mind like a bell. *Relax.* And even despite herself, she could feel herself loosen, her posture easing into friendly ease as she returned the smile. "O-okay," she stammered, a shiver of silent pleasure rippling through her as Destiny's grey eyes caught hers. "Sorry, I just... I want to be a good host..."

"And you are." Destiny chuckled gently, opening the dishwasher and slipping the rinsed dishes inside with practiced ease. "The best host I've been with in years. You've already made me laugh more than anyone else has in a long time, did you know that?"

"Really?" Fern's shyly eager tone surprised even herself. She reached for the towel and dried her hands, then offered it to Destiny. "Sorry, I- I know my joke about the giraffe was kinda lame-"

"Hey, relax," Destiny repeated, and Fern shivered as Destiny slipped one arm casually around her shoulders. "Come on, let's not be all tense and hung-up on being polite, okay? It's just you and me

here, Fern. And being with you is so nice and enjoyable..."

Into the living room they strode, Fern's heart thudding loudly in her ears. Toward the little sofa they stepped. And it was only then, as Destiny reached for the dusty blue throw pillow, that Fern realized with a jolt that she'd forgotten something. Something... massive.

Because right there, tucked into the corner of the couch and staring back with glossy black, unblinking eyes, was Terence – the stuffed koala she'd adopted and brought home from the zoo last year.

"Aww what's this? Is this seat already taken?"

Destiny's voice was lilting with smiles as she took in the little figure, but the mortified Fern heard nothing but mockery. "I- Oh, I'm so sorry! Never mind, I-, it's, um- Just a stupid toy-" She reached hastily for it and tucked it impulsively behind her back, frantically casting about for some excuse to give. "Sorry, here, I'll get rid of it-"

"Fern." Destiny's voice was gentle, but the gravity of her tone and the look in her eyes stopped Fern in her tracks. "Listen to me." She guided Fern firmly down onto the couch, her eyes never leaving her host's face as she settled beside her. "I'm no expert on these things, but I heard a counselor say something once that I've never forgotten. 'Never date someone you have to hide your stuffed animals from.' And, well..."

She paused, watching as Fern's face twisted from embarrassment to sheepish agreement to astonishment. "Um- I guess that- Wait, wha-?" And as the word "date" registered at last in Fern's flustered mind, Destiny gave a gentle chuckle. "Well, Fern. I wasn't going to begin this conversation *quite* so suddenly, but here we are. Fern... I really like you. I think you're funny, and adorable, and the sweetest young lady I've met in a very, very long time. So, I was wondering... would you like to be my girlfriend?"

Fern's eyes were wide as saucers. Her fingers clenched in the soft synthetic fur of the incriminating stuffie. Her breath hitched, and her heart pounded in her ears like a thunder of wild horses. Yet all the while, Destiny was looking at her so eagerly... so expectantly... so hungrily...

"You- you want to date... *me*?"

She would have said more, perhaps – about how she was silly, and not very experienced, and kind of

a slob. She might have even talked about how she had never dated a girl before, and how she wasn't even sure what girls *did* together in bed. But somehow, every time she caught Destiny's earnest gaze, it was as if all her doubts and misgivings evaporated and dribbled out of her brain.

"Umm... I- I'd really like that. If you're really sure...?"

"Sure?" Destiny chuckled, and as she bent closer, the touch of her hands on Fern's legs sent sparks of unfamiliar pleasure racing through her very being. "Oh, Fern, you adorable cutie... I'm more than sure. I'm positive! I just – I want to get to know you. I want to learn everything about you. I want to find out what you truly want, what makes you happy..."

Why were happy tears pricking at Fern's eyes? Why was she leaning closer, quivering as Destiny slipped first one, then a second hand up to cradle her face? Why were her lips parting, open wordless, submissively yielding to the warm pressure of Destiny's hungry kisses?

She didn't know. But neither did she care. And as her fingers relaxed and reached out for Destiny's embrace, Terence the koala dropped unheeded to the ground. Stuffedies didn't matter, after all. And if stuffedies didn't... well, maybe her worries about wet mornings didn't matter, either?

At least not right now: as Destiny's fragrance filled her senses, and those warm curves pressed her downward and backward into the creaking sofa, and those hungry lips muted her querulous little murmurs into silence...

*(To be continued!)*