

BODICE RIPPER

+ "Bouncing & Flouncing"



BEA

TJ ©



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Bodice Ripper Reader

By Bea

I'm not going to even pretend that Dorothy and I had a perfect marriage before Hortense came, but it was peaceful. Dorothy had a little money from her parents, enough for us to live on. We had Emily a local girl come in from the village on a part time basis. Me? I must admit that I didn't do much of anything. A little reading. I little gardening. Not much, but we were satisfied – I think.

I probably did – alright - I KNOW – I laughed at Dorothy's first attempt at a Historical Romance – a Bodice Ripper – I told her – in an amused fashion of course. She was apologetic in a nice way, but said that it gave her something to do. Having been brought up as a proper young lady – with a few years in College to round her out – I don't have any idea where those silly plots of hers would come from. To make things even more puzzling? The publisher raved about the first. Then so did the public – women, all of them I suppose.

A little while later – for some reason, Dorothy never told me, she published another! Then another! Within a few years she actually had a FAN club! Of all things! Bunches of twittering women descending on us – and over my objections I may add. But the publisher pointed out that Dorothy owed it to her public, so I gave in with bad grace, I must admit.

Dorothy had always been a charming woman. Did as I suggested with customary grace and a sense of ladylike humor. It was therefore a terrible surprise one day when she announced.

“I'm SURE you'll love it darling!”

I looked up from my book. “Love what, my dear?”

“That's you! Nose stuck in a book! I was telling you my dear that I may have done something naughty!”

I smiled gently as I marked my page in the book. “Naughty? You, my dear? Nonsense! You couldn't be naughty if you tried for a year!”

“You are the dearest, sweetest, husband! I'm just positive that you'll fall in love with our new house! You've often said that this house is so small and pokey!”

I had little, if any, remembrance of me complaining about our house – but she had bought a new one? Without consulting me? But she was obviously so happy! Naturally, being the male of the house, I had to look at the practicality of what she'd done.

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“Oh darling! I hope that you haven't signed anything of consequence, without me having a look at it?’ I was as nice as anyone could have hoped for!

A look of contrition was on her sweet face. “But it was to be a surprise for you my darling! How could I tell you about it in advance?”

“Oh dear! I hope that you haven't done something womanly and stupid?” I couldn't help it, knowing that my voice was rising – just a little mind you. “After all, there are practical considerations! The monthly payments! Taxes! Upkeep! All sorts of things!”

“Oh them?” She laughed with that beautiful tinkling laugh of hers that I loved so well. “Well – with me buying the house outright? There's no monthly payments. As far as taxes, I took the lawyers advice and placed enough in escrow to cover us for the next twenty years. And upkeep? I know that you will be delighted – I've asked Emily to work for us full time as our maid – cum housekeeper.”

“Huh?” I asked stupidly, inundated by events. “Where did you get the money?”

I will admit that my darling took on a smug expression. Tinkled her laugh again. “Why my darling? From those Bodice Rippers that I author. Isn't that what you called them? So funny you were!”

“You made enough money from your writing to pay for all of this?” I said.

An astonished look came over her as she explained.

“You see my darling? I used to suggest that you kept an eye on my business, but you felt – amusingly – that I didn't do enough money-wise to merit your attention. So I had one of the publisher aides – a lovely girl called Hortense – advise me. She has been such a wonderful help while you were – were – were – busy with other things? To tell the truth dear? We're quite rich now.”

There was an edge to her tone that I'd never heard before. Naturally I put it down to the unusual aspect of what she was telling me. Put my best face on it.

“Wonderful darling! Absolutely wonderful! Congratulations! But Emily? She's so . . . so . . . young? So . . . so . . . pretty? Does she want to be stuck with us on a full time basis?”

“To tell you the truth dear? She was a little concerned about you.”

“About ME?”

“Well, she did feel that you talked down to her quite a lot. I assured her that there wasn't a snobbish bone in your body!”

“Snobbish? Me? I honestly felt that the girl was more like a daughter to me. The only time I talked to her with any earnest intent was when I saw her walking out with that young lout from the village!” I was properly indignant.

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Dorothy smiled warmly at me. "Of course dear! I knew that you were only looking after her interests! But you know that you should never, ever, have patted her backside?"

I was embarrassed. "Told you about that. Did she? Well, I can't deny the truth. She just looked so sweet and innocent that I felt avuncular – like an uncle giving advice. Patted her. That's all. If I was wrong, I'm sorry."

"Of COURSE dear. But you won't do it again – will you? She's a good servant, likes working for me. I raised her wages and promised her some lovely new uniforms as an inducement." She looked at me, and I could swear there was a shrewd look in her eye. "You will NOT do anything like that again. Will you?"

Somehow, I felt as if my lovely wife was chastising me – and though that was obvious nonsense – hurried to convince her that I would be as good as gold. Felt deliciously like a schoolboy in front of a master. Nonsensically wondered how I'd feel if she was brandishing a cane around! Ha Ha!

The new house was lovely. A fair size with some servants quarters. I breathed deeply with satisfaction once we moved. Of course I had very little to do with the ACTUAL purchase – but who had taught my rather dim little wife to behave so well – huh? Naturally, I didn't show this knowledge off to anyone – kept it to myself. Just like a gentleman should! Need I say more?

Though a few things bothered me, right from the start.

Emily became – as expected by Dorothy - an exemplary house servant. With her young girlish appearance and sprightly manner, one could expect nothing else. She also looked wonderful, delighting in the beautiful servant uniforms that Dorothy indulged her in. Toward me, however, she seemed to feel that I had wronged her. It was hard to pin down, but if Dorothy asked her to do something while I was there, her dimpled face actually shone and her curtsies were things of grace. If Dorothy wasn't there, however, it was as if her curtsies were short – if they existed at all - when I told her to do something. She'd do whatever I asked – but don't ask me how many times she'd 'misinterpret' what I'd tell her – then look at me insolently as I explained what I really wanted. Her explanations, if given, were often bordering on insolence. Altogether, I wasn't happy with her.

It's probably true that I did try to get her fired. Just got fed up with her one day. Thank goodness I had enough sense to go and speak to Dorothy first, she'd have probably been offended if I'd fired Emily on my own, as I came very close to doing.. I probably saw that she was busy with her writing and should have been more circumspect I suppose but – as Dorothy pointed out later – she was not accustomed to me becoming involved with anything to do with – women's work – the running of the house. I was probably more surprised than offended by her glaring at me – MY sweet and loving wife? But I had to agree that my timing and attitude were probably all wrong.

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"This is awful!" She said. "I don't really have time for tiny little household matters today. But I suppose we should get it all cleared up. Would you go and get her? Bring her here?"

I smiled graciously. "Whatever for darling? I can see that my timing was bad. Let's just forget the whole deal, shall we?"

She stared at me. "No Dennis. Let's just get this out into the open. If the girl deserves to be discharged, I will do exactly that. But if she doesn't?" She left the rest unsaid. "Just go and get her, will you dear?"

"What does the mistress want?" Emily asked me in a worried tone when I got her.

"Hah! Well. She may have got the idea that — well, I suppose I'd best leave explanations up to her. Nothing of great importance!"

I must admit that Dorothy explained everything in the nicest possible light — but once she saw what had happened, Emily was livid.

"You can have my resignation right now Miss Dorothy!" she quivered. "You are wonderful. But this man . . . this man . . ." Words failed her.

"Oh dear. Don't be silly!" Dorothy calmed her. "The master indicated that you weren't being properly respectful of him and . . ."

"ME? Not respectful of HIM?" Emily broke in excitedly. "He talks to me as if I was some sort of lower caste. All I can see is him doing nothing — and you doing all of the work. He's not nice to me! I just respond in kind! I always do as he wants . . ."

Dorothy broke in kindly. "Emily! Dear Emily. Don't you worry about a thing! Just go on about your business, and I'll have a little talk with my husband. Okay?"

I was starting to say something as Emily curtsied, glared at me, then left. A freeze in Dorothy's eyes put a stop to any ideas I had along those lines — at least until Emily closed the door behind her.

"Dorothy? You've had a hard day . . ." I started pleasantly.

"And it wasn't made any easier by you!" she said, practically snarling. "Getting me all involved with your petty disputes with my maid! Honestly . . ."

"Well I tried to tell you . . ."

"IF YOU INTERRUPT ME ONE MORE TIME?" She spat out slowly, one word at a time. "I'll do what your mother suggested and put you over my knee! Give you a damn good spanking!"

She wasn't kidding and I blanched. Tried to talk my way out of it. "Darling? It wasn't altogether my fault you know . . ."

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“ENOUGH!” She almost shouted. “I've heard you speak to Emily as if she's some brainless twit – you even talk to ME sometimes as if I'd only half a brain! You'd think that college degree you got was something special! Now I'm TELLING you! Behave! Get on well with Emily – and Hortense too! She's starting to think that you're some kind of a snob. Now start repairing fences – or by God you'll make me mad! That what you want to do?”

I shook my head. Obviously the poor dear was tired.

“Well your mother said that your cousins treated you badly and gave you some sort of a psychosis! I've put up with it for some time. But no more. I warn you! My sympathy only goes so far!”

She continued to glare at me, but said nothing more. Just waved me away. Common sense being called for, I didn't say anything and walked away.

That silence explains why I almost fell over Emily, who was obviously listening at the door. My first reaction was delight – I could take her back in to Dorothy! See what she thought of her little darling then! But I immediately reconsidered. Dorothy really wasn't in the humor to be bothered any more.

“That's disgraceful Emily!” I whispered. “I've a good mind to take you back into Dorothy again!” I said this after I closed the door.

She eyed me. Scared at first, then confidently. Even put her hands on her hips and smiled. “Okay then? Do just that. Be a tattler!”

I immediately went to my high horse attitude. “I think you should appreciate what I'm trying to do for you, Emily!”

She shot me down immediately. “Or maybe you're just scared that Mistress Dorothy will put you over her knees and spank you on your bottom?”

“Nonsense!” She'd overheard us! My mouth was dry!

She shot me an evil grin. “Or maybe I should take YOU back in there, huh? Tell Mistress that you spoke meanly to me again? See how she felt then?”

I made a mistake at that point. Let my weakness show. “Please Emily? Please let's not do that. Be friends?”

She smiled slowly and confidently now. “Of course Dennis. You don't mind if I call you that, do you? Much friendlier and I'm sure that the Mistress would be happier with you if we were friends.”

My smile was a little forced, but she did make sense. “Of course – Emily.”

She didn't even pretend to curtsy, but smiled. “Wonderful! Now why don't the two of us go and have a nice cup of tea? Start becoming REAL friends?”

This made me very nervous. Okay, Dorothy had indicated that I should get along with Emily but frankly? I'm a little nervous of women – Dorothy excepted of course, although even she can make me feel a little nervous at times. This

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seemed to be a little too friendly, but I didn't know how to get out of it. I did try though.

“That's a LOVELY invite Emily! But I've..”

She stared at me and interrupted in a tone that brooked no nonsense. “I'd really like you to come with me, Dennis. Please?”

It wasn't as nice a tone as before, but I hated to let the young girl down. After all, she had made it SO obvious that she wanted us to be friends. Accordingly, I followed her down into the kitchen. To be honest, I thought that she linked arms with me went a little too far, but she DID smell nice – and the sound of her uniform was pleasant, so I didn't complain.

I also felt uncomfortable with her sitting side by side with me as we drank our tea. Okay, I'm a man and she's a woman (damned attractive too) but I felt that she was predatory in a way. I'd have described her as being aggressive if I didn't know better.

When we were about half way through our tea she put a warm hand on my thigh. “Now tell me about those terrible cousins of yours. The ones that gave you such a complex. Boys can be such monsters, can't they?”

“Boys?”

“Yes, your cousins!”

“Oh, I'm sorry. My cousins were girls.”

I could see that she was taken aback, but she recovered. “Well, girls can be naughty and do mean things at times. You were probably a little scamp, weren't you? Teased girls who were much older than you.”

I blinked. “They really weren't that much older – in fact Terry and Nancy were younger and I wasn't really a scamp. They just bullied me is all. But honestly Emily? I don't like to talk about it.”

She smiled softly and stroked my thigh. “Dennis? You obviously don't have much faith in women – you don't trust us! But your wife has secrets about you that she never divulged – that spanking thing she was talking about. Even I know some secrets about you that I've never discussed.”

“Secrets? I don't have any secrets!” I said, even though I knew I was mumbling.

“Silly boy! Think I don't know that you and Mistress don't share a conjugal bed? And that if she wants sex, she visits you – not the other way around?”

“I'm .. I'm . . not so sure that that's absolutely correct.” I said defensively.

“Dennis! Who do you think does the bed sheets? Think I'm silly? Now, I'm just trying to tell you that the Mistress and me – we're both girls – and I'm sure you'll feel better once you tell me about your cousins.”

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"But I don't . . ."

"Dennis! How can we possibly be friends if I know that you keep secrets from me? Come on now – please!"

I sighed and felt myself relax. Her hand was now stroking my thigh regularly and it was kinda sexy – but relaxing too. Almost hypnotic.

"Those girls? Bigger than you?" she whispered.

"Well Joan was a little bit – but I was small, and Terry and Nancy were about the same size as me. They all looked alike. Blonde and on the thin side."

"All gang up on you? I mean, three girls to one boy – that wouldn't be fair, would it?"

I shuddered. "No Emily. It was just that I'd never been brought up to fight – and all three girls just seemed to thrive on rough stuff." My voice got bitter. "Real tomboys!"

"Girls like that are a disgrace to their sex!" she said soothingly. "Can be really mean! Did they bully you?"

"Yes. They'd tease me more than anything."

"They should have got a good spanking! Didn't your mummy see what was going on?"

I sighed. "She felt it would do me good. Teach me to fight back. Then when I didn't . . ." I stopped.

"They teased you more? Spanked you? Naughty girls!"

"Not very often," I said. "Just when I was naughty."

"But Dennis? You don't sound as if you were naughty to me!"

I was having a terrible job saying what actually happened, but couldn't. Finally managed to say. "When I complained or wouldn't act properly. They'd say I was naughty!"

"But girls like to tease boys. Make them act properly. Surely there's nothing wrong with that?" She spoke so softly and understandingly. Kept on stroking my thigh. It didn't feel so bad to finally admit it.

"They wanted me to act like a girl."

"Oh, you poor thing!" Now she was actually hugging me! I almost complained, but really it felt so nice and, to tell the truth, Dorothy hadn't come to my bed in quite some time. It was nice. "What did they make you do? Girl things like knit or sew?"

"Yes." Then I found myself blurting. "And to wear girl things at the time!"