

PARENTAL CONSENT

By Pam Hardin

PART 2

ACT III

Maddie's office door is open so David comes right in abruptly.

Maddie (looks up at him): About time you got back. Kind of early for a liquid lunch, isn't it?

David: As a matter of fact, I didn't have lunch. It just so happens that I was at the library.

Maddie: Since when do you read?

David: There's all kinds of things you don't know about me. But let's save that for after hours. I was looking up some information on your clients, the Mecklins. I just figured it might help to see if we could dig up any dirt that might move this thing along.

Maddie: My clients?

David: Well, you sure as hell have a lot more in common with them than I do. It turns out we are in the highest echelon of the high society here. We're talking country clubs, yachts, and coming out parties, and I don't mean out of the closet.

Maddie (sarcastically): No kidding?

David: Yeah! Guys named Skippy and Biff. Girls who've never been called anything except Princess. I'm sure you know the type.

Maddie: Oh, you're sure, are you? Did you learn anything else?

David: Only that Mr. and Mrs. Mecklin have had their share of mentions, sometimes even more than a mention.

Maddie: So? Just because you're in the paper a lot doesn't mean anything.

Girls who've never been called anything except Princess. I'm sure you know the type.

David (shrugs, opening an envelope and spreading the contents on her desk): Here are some copies of their "mentions." But, I'd be more interested in their "unmentionables." That's usually where you get to the meat and potatoes.

There was a pile of newspaper articles from the society pages of several papers dating back over 30 years. The articles covered the Mecklins' appearances at charity events, business occasions, as well as other important events in the family history through the years. Maddie leafed through them, and one caught her eye.

GRACE LEWIS WEDS IN PRIVATE CEREMONY

The article announced the marriage of the former Grace Lewis to Mr.

Stuart Mecklin. It was a short announcement with little detail and no picture. Maddie noted at the wedding date: February 9, 1977, twenty-five years ago.

David: What's that?

Maddie: Just the wedding announcement of Stuart and Grace Mecklin. Mm. No picture.

David: Oh. Anything else catch your eye?

Maddie: Did you see their engagement announcement?

David: No, but I can't say I was really looking for it. I guess I don't know the etiquette up there in the high stratus sphere of society. Why?

Maddie (looking through the papers): Nothing. It's just that most families like this will announce an engagement before they announce a marriage. That's all. I don't see it here.

David: Is that some sort of etiquette faux pas? Oh dear, call Miss Manners!!

Maddie: David, how old would you guess that Laurie is?

David: Anything over eighteen looks the same to me. But if I had to wager, I'd probably say about 25. Why?

Maddie (ponders over the newspaper clipping): I'd say that's a good guess. You didn't happen to see her

birth announcement in this pile, did you?

David: No. But speaking of meat and potatoes, what do you say we wade through all this over lunch? Don't want junior to go hungry. Come on.

Maddie: Might as well. But, you know, David, you may have swerved into something here. Sometimes it's what's not in the paper that's more important than what is.

Scene moves to later that afternoon in David's Office. David has his feet up on the desk, looking at the paper. His glances alternate between his watch and the phone.

Maddie (walking in the open door): You haven't heard anything either?

David: Nope. We could go to Plan B.

Maddie: Which is?

David: Kidnap her.

Maddie (not amused and still glancing at the clippings): That's not funny. (Pause) Well, the former Grace Lewis' family certainly was very prominent. Very active socially and very wealthy. They set up college scholarships, made endowments to libraries, and attended all the major social events.

David: At least every one with a photographer or a reporter present.

Maddie: Funny, there was nothing about Stuart Mecklin's family.

Pause.

Maddie: Well, what's the worst that could happen? So they don't

get together. So she misses her mother's birthday. And we don't get our fee. Big deal. At least we've only wasted a day, right?

David (trying to sound convinced): Right, big deal.

Maddie (sighs): Oh, David. It is a big deal. My heart aches for this girl. She feels alone, outcast, no one to turn to. I know just how she feels.

David: You do?

Maddie: I do. David, it's a terrible thing to feel like a disappointment. To not measure up.

David: What you are talking about? You heard her father. They want to see her.

Maddie: Even if she has the best parents in the world, that doesn't change how she feels. Maybe they don't know their daughter as well as they think they do. (Looking at her watch) Maybe we should just call Mr. Mecklin now, and prepare him.

David (sensing that Maddie is taking this case to heart): No, I think you were right. Let's wait a little while . . . Hey, what do say we take the rest of the afternoon off? Agnes can reach us at your house. It would give you a chance to get ready for your parents. And since we haven't "conferred" for almost eight hours, we could retire to your bedroom this time. There's not much going on here.

Maddie: Not much except paperwork, billing, updating client files, returning phone messages. I took

yesterday afternoon off, remember? I need to get caught up, or I'll be working the whole time my parents are here.

Maddie (pauses and then begins hesitantly): David, I've been thinking, and maybe it's not such a good idea for us to get together with my parents while they're here.

David (disappointed): You're still ashamed of us, aren't you?

Maddie: It's not that. I just don't think I'm ready. (pauses again) Look, just forget it, ok?

David (shaking his head): Whatever you want.

Agnes buzzes the phone in David's office. Maddie and David both jump.

David (into the phone): Yo!

Agnes: M . . . Mecklin is here to see you.

Maddie: Did you say Mr. or Miss Mecklin?

Agnes: Mrs.

Maddie and David look at each other.

Maddie: Send her into Mr. Addison's office.

Agnes: Right away, Ms. Hayes.

Agnes escorts Mrs. Grace Mecklin into the office. Maddie and David sit comfortably on the couch. Mrs. Mecklin sits rather stiffly in the chair opposite them. She is an attractive woman, probably in her early fifties. She is cordial, and yet Maddie recognizes her formal

manner from her days growing up in the upper class of society.

Maddie: Hello, Mrs. Mecklin. I'm Madolyn Hayes and this is my partner, David Addison.

Grace (hardly acknowledging David): Hello. Yes, I certainly know you, Miss Hayes. In fact, I know a great deal about you. (looking Maddie up and down) Although, I admit that I don't always stay abreast of the latest events.

Grace continues (closing her eyes to think): Now let me see, a very distinguished family, from Chicago, if I'm not mistaken. A very successful modeling career. The Blue Moon Shampoo Girl. And now quite the entrepreneur, I see. (glancing at David) Yes, I understand the two of you have teamed up for some "joint" ventures. You've been very prominent over the years, Miss Hayes. It is still Miss Hayes, is it not?

Maddie understands this to be a direct reference to her pregnancy.

Maddie: Actually, it's Ms.

Grace: Ms. Of course. Yes, I also got acquainted with both your parents while they were in Los Angeles for some charity events, although I haven't seen them in a number of years. As I remember, your father is a respected business leader. Your mother is quite involved in her own charity work. In fact, she headed up several committees that I was on for under privileged children. And your father's company donated a substantial amount of time and money

to the effort. Lovely people.

Maddie: Thank you, Mrs. Mecklin.

Grace: I trust your parents are well. I imagine they were quite taken by your new partnership.

(Grace glances at David again)

Maddie (unsure how to take that remark): Yes. They are very happy with our success. I'm very fortunate that my parents have always been very supportive. (Maddie feels her mind start to wander) They've been just wonderful.

Grace: I know they must be very proud of all of your accomplishments. I certainly wish you and . . . Mr. Addison, was it? Well, I wish you both much success in all of your new endeavors, both in business and otherwise.

David tries to give Maddie a reassuring look, but resents Mrs. Mecklin's oblique references to their relationship. He is even more bothered by her comments about Maddie's parents, especially with their impending visit already weighing on Maddie.

David (trying to re-direct this awkward conversation): Mrs. Mecklin, how may we be of help to you?

Grace: I understand that my husband came to you this morning about our daughter, Laurie.

Maddie: Mrs. Mecklin, I'm sure you also understand that we can't discuss our cases or clients with anyone.

Grace: Nevertheless, I came to see you, Ms. Hayes, because, given

your background, I was sure you would understand my concern for my daughter. My husband, on the other hand, came to you simply because you are a woman. And being a woman, he believed that you would relish in reuniting a family.

Grace continues: My husband is willing to overlook Laurie's . . . unfortunate choices.

Maddie: What choices are you referring to?

Grace: I'm certain that you have met with her by now. Therefore, you are certainly aware that Laurie is pregnant.

Maddie does not respond.

Grace: Yes. It is quite a coincidence, isn't it Ms. Hayes? You and Laurie have a great deal in common. More than I initially realized. Each of you the only daughter in an affluent family. And each expecting a child.

Again, Maddie does not respond. David casually reaches down for her hand, trying not to call attention to the gesture.

Grace continues: Please don't misunderstand me. I'm just concerned about my daughter. I'm here simply to ask you to use your influence with her to convince her to leave this man with whom she is involved, and return to our home. In exchange, we would be able to provide a stable and financially secure life for her and her child.

David: Forgive me, Mrs. Mecklin, but we're not negotiating a peace

treaty here. Isn't Laurie old enough to live her own life without having her parents' approval?

Grace: Ms. Hayes. Mr. Addison. You may not understand or agree with my motives. But I only have Laurie's best interests at heart. It's not that I have anything against the young man. It's just that she should be in her home, with us. We love her. We can take care of her and her child. And after a respectable length of time has passed, we can introduce her to the kind of people, the kind of young men, who would be more . . . appropriate for her.

Maddie: Mrs. Mecklin, I'm not sure that Laurie would consider . . . Mr. Mecklin asked to try to arrange a reconciliation, and that's what we're trying to do. However, I have to tell you, Mrs. Mecklin, that I think you're making a mistake.

Grace (stands abruptly): Ms. Hayes, I am only asking you to talk to her for me. I would love nothing more than to have her back. Despite her unfortunate choices, she's still my only daughter. I miss her. Please talk it over, and let me know what you decide. Please give your parents my best regards. Good day, Ms. Hayes. Mr. Addison.

If you love each other as much as you say, and they love you as much as they say, isn't worth a try?

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 COMMERCIAL BREAK  
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ACT IV

Scene begins back in Laurie's apartment. Maddie and David are sitting on the couch in Laurie's living room for the second time that day.

Maddie: Thank you for seeing us again. Your mother came to our office a little while ago. She asked to talk to you. She'd also like to see you . . . (Maddie doesn't know how to continue)

Laurie: But . . .

David: Laurie, your mother wants you to break off all ties with your . . . with Jamie.

Laurie: She's not serious.

Maddie: She sounded serious. Laurie, we understand your reaction, and I can't say that I blame you. But we were obliged to our client . . . our clients, your parents, to bring the offer to you.

Laurie: I know you're only doing your job. But they can't expect me to take this seriously, can they?

Maddie: Laurie, maybe your mother is just concerned about you. If this is the way you feel, maybe you should just talk to her and your dad about it. Tell them what you told us. If you love each other as much as you say, and they love you as much as they say, isn't it worth a try?

As Maddie finishes the last sen-

tence, David just looks at her. But its meaning doesn't register with Maddie.

Laurie (sadly): Thank you, Ms. Hayes. But, will you please inform my mother that I won't consider her "offer" and please tell my father that I'm sorry.

With that, Maddie and David leave.

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 It is now very late in the afternoon. Maddie is sitting at her desk, staring into space. David knocks on her door.

**Maddie:** Come in.

**David:** Well?

**Maddie:** Well?

**David** (disgusted): You want to call Stuart Mecklin now? (shakes his head) Should've figured. Whenever someone offers to pay you double, there's got to be a catch. There's no such thing as a free lunch.

**Maddie:** You have to admire her, David. She's standing up to her parents. Living her own life regardless of anyone else thinks. Trying to do the right thing.

Before David can point out the irony, the phone rings.

**Maddie:** Yes, Agnes? She is? Thank you.

**Maddie** (to David): Mr. Mecklin is on the line.

**Maddie** (picks up the other line): Yes, Mr. Mecklin. She did? You would? Yes. I'm sure we can find it. We'll be right there. Good-bye.

**Maddie** (to David): It looks like we won't have to call Mr. Mecklin after all. He and Mrs. Mecklin want to see us right away.

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Scene switches to the Beamer. David is driving again.

Maddie: Isn't it my turn to drive?

David: Just take it easy and look at the scenery.

Maddie: So, what are we going to say?

David: I don't think we say anything. They called us. Maybe somebody had a change of heart. With any luck, we just listen, smile, and pick up our check.

Maddie: And if they didn't have a change of heart?

David: Look, I love a happy ending as much as the next guy. But Laurie might be better off without them. Mrs. Mecklin has her nose so far up in air, the giraffes are nuzzling it.

Maddie: They're still her parents. They raise you. They hope for you. Dream with you. And then you grow up, and you don't measure up to . . . It's just sad.

David (more gently): Are we talking about Laurie or you, Madolyn Hayes?

Maddie (looking down): Maybe a little of both.

David: Maddie, something's been bothering you since you found out your parents are coming. What is it?

Then I saw the two of you, the way you interact in your work, and the way you look at one another.

Maddie: Guilt, I guess.

David: You are ashamed of us!

Maddie: No. I'm ashamed of me. I couldn't believe what I heard myself saying to Mrs. Mecklin today. I just wish that I believed what I said to her today was true.

David: What you talking about?

Maddie: They've been so good to me, David. You know, they were so proud when I was modeling. Their daughter had made it. Then the bottom fell out. But they stuck with me. And they were proud again when we made a go of the business. So what do I do? I pop in on them one day, with no notice, tell them I'm pregnant, and stay for 4 months. Not married, and not sure who the father is. And then I leave again just as suddenly as I came.

David: They've been pretty cool about everything, haven't they?

Maddie: They've been great. But I've put them through a lot this year. Maybe that's why I just couldn't tell them about Walter. I didn't tell them much of anything while I

was in Chicago. Maybe I just wish I had the courage that Laurie has.

David: I wish we'd never taken this case.

Maddie: What happened to easy dough? Happy ending?

David: I'd rather see you happy.

Maddie just looks out the window.

Maddie: We shouldn't even be involved in this, David. It's a private, family matter.

David: Psychiatrists make a fortune being involved in family matters every day, Maddie. Why arrange your own party when you got the dough to have it catered?

Maddie doesn't respond.

David: Look, this is nothing like you and your parents, okay? Let's just get in, and get out.

They pull up in front of a large opulent home, walk up a brick walkway lined with flowers. They ring the bell, and a maid escorts them in.

Mr. Mecklin greets them warmly and invites to sit down.

Stuart: Ms. Hayes. Mr. Addison. Thank you for coming. I have to apologize for bringing you both into this situation. It must seem rather unusual to you. I know that my wife was in your office earlier today. And now we feel it's time that we talk to you both together.

Grace Mecklin enters the room and you earlier, Ms Hayes, I do know a great deal about you. However, most of what I know comes from

the newspaper. So, I suppose I don't really know you at all, do I?

Maddie and David just listen silently.

Stubborn, hard headed. A hell of a lot of work. But, you're definitely worth the effort.

Grace continues: But, I certainly do remember your parents. They were charming people. Very warm and engaging. Kind. And I know they love you a great deal. I listened to you, and thought about what you said about how supportive they've been. I know that must mean a great deal to you. I admire the relationship you have with them.

She pauses briefly, looking at David and then Maddie again.

Grace continues: Then I saw the two of you, the way you interact in your work, and the way you look at one another. You're probably not even aware of it. The looks. The gestures. (She smiles) Maybe that's what impending parenthood does to two people. In some indescribable way, it almost reminds me of Stuart and me when we were young.

Maddie (just looks at her, almost stunned): Mrs. Mecklin, forgive me, but you hardly saw us together.

Grace (looking at Stuart): Yes, but even in that short time, it was very obvious. Stuart and I have had that. And if that's what Laurie believes she has found, that's for her to decide. So, when I got home from seeing you, Stuart and I called her. (She tears up) I'm just sorry that we thought we needed private detectives to do what we should have done some time ago. We talked for the first time in a long time. I asked for her forgiveness. And, the four of us are having dinner tomorrow.

David (smiling): We're happy to hear that. Congratulations, Mrs. Mecklin.

Stuart: Isn't it wonderful? When I came into your office first thing this morning, this was just a dream. I can't tell you what you both have done for us. Thank you so much.

Grace: Yes. It's quite a birthday present. Thank you. (She stands and extends her hand to David and then to Maddie)

David: All in a day's work.

Maddie is still stunned, has not said a word. She mindlessly reaches her hand out to meet Mrs. Mecklin's.

Stuart hands a check to Maddie, but she doesn't reach for it, so David accepts it from Mr. Mecklin.

David: Thank you, sir. And now, we really should be going.

Maddie (almost absent-mindedly): Yes, we should. Congratulations.

The Mecklins escort Maddie and David to the door.

As they leave, Grace leans into Maddie and whispers with a smile: Send me a wedding announcement.

Maddie just smiles.

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Back in the Beamer. David is driving again. They drive away from the Mecklin home down a long, secluded road out to the main street. The sun is slowly starting to set, and the view is beautiful.

**David**: You okay? You were a little quiet in there.

**Maddie**: Fine. Just a little stunned.

**David**: It was quite a day's work, wasn't it? Want to go get some dinner?

**Maddie**: David, will you pull over?

**David**: Why?

**Maddie**: Just pull up there by those trees for a minute.

David pulls over and stops the car.

They look out at the setting sun, outlined by the trees all around them. He just waits for Maddie to speak.

**Maddie**: It's beautiful here, isn't it?

**David** (unsure): Yeah. It is.

**Maddie**: David, maybe I do believe in fate. Maybe it wasn't any accident that this case came up today, of all days. Or maybe it's just the romantic sunset.

**David**: What are you saying?

**Maddie** (pausing for a moment then looking directly at him): I'm saying that I love you, David. I think maybe I've always loved you. And, well, I've never done this before, but I'm saying, will you marry me?

**David** (smiles, shocked): Are you serious? Isn't this a little spontaneous, even for you?

**Maddie** (laughs): Yeah. Well, I'm just like that, I guess. I meet some guy, go into business with him, string him along awhile, and "Ba-Bing!" three and a half years later, ask him to marry me . . . Real spontaneous, eh?

**David** (smirks): Are you sure that's what you want?

**Maddie**: I'm sure. Are you?

**David** (leans over and kisses her): I've always been sure. But what brought this on all of the sudden?

**Maddie**: I don't really know. I just think it's time I had the courage to live my own life. To stop running. To stop worrying about what I think is "expected" of me. Maybe I just learned something today.

They just look at each other for another minute, as Maddie takes his hand.

**Maddie** (smiles): Well, now I know what I'm going to say to my parents.

**David**: What? That you're going to marry an underling?

**Maddie**: No. That they can stop worrying about me. That I love them. And that they're getting a

pretty terrific son-in-law.

**David**: You think so.

**Maddie**: Yeah, I do.

**David**: Maddie, I really don't think you need to worry about what your parents are going to say. I really think it's going to be okay.

**Maddie**: I'm not worried. I just hope they're happy for us.

**David**: I have feeling they will be.

**Maddie**: How can you be so sure?

David hesitates but doesn't answer.

**Maddie**: What?

**David**: Well . . . Okay. The truth is . . . your dad came out here to see me while you were in Chicago.

**Maddie**: What? So that's what you meant when you said . . .

**David**: Yeah. It was right after he found out you were pregnant. He was just worried about you. That's all.

**Maddie**: I can't believe that he didn't tell me. That you didn't tell me.

**David**: Maddie, he just thought we should talk. To be honest with you, he wanted to know what my intentions were.

**Maddie**: He didn't. You mean, he already knew that we . . . that you . . .

**David**: Yes, he did. He really is a good man, Maddie. And he loves you very much. It was fine.

**Maddie**: What did you tell him?

**David**: The same thing I told you. That I love you. That I want to

marry you.

**Maddie** (smiles): You did?

**David**: I did. And I hope you'll be happy to know that I think he approves. We just knew it might take you a little longer to come around.

**Maddie**: Am I that stubborn?

**David**: Stubborn. Hard headed. A hell of a lot of work. But, you're definitely worth the effort.

He kisses her again.

**David**: Hey, doesn't somebody owe somebody a ring here?

**Maddie**: Yeah. I wonder what the etiquette is on something like this.

**David**: I bet Mrs. Mecklin would know.

Scene Ends.

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COMMERCIAL BREAK

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EPILOGUE

The next morning at Maddie's house. The doorbell rings. Maddie rushes up to the door, but then waits a second to calm herself before answering it.

**Maddie**: Hi. Missed you last night. I'm not used to sleeping alone.

**David**: Hi there, gorgeous. (He leans in to kiss her) I had a little errand to do.

**Maddie**: Well, it gave me a chance to get a few things done, too.

Maddie doesn't notice that he's hiding something behind his back. She immediately grabs a little box from a nearby table.

**Maddie:** Got something for you.

**David:** Well, as luck would have it, I got something for you, too. (He shows her the little box from behind his back) Who would have guessed it, matching little boxes?

**Maddie:** What did you do?

**David:** What did you?

Maddie just smiles.

**David:** You first.

Maddie opens the box to find a beautiful, sparkling diamond ring there.

**Maddie:** Oh, David, it's beautiful. Just beautiful. But you didn't have to. I proposed to you, remember?

**David:** You proposed this time. But, according to the writers, I proposed last season, and you turned me down. Anyway, I still had credit from Harry Winston for a wedding present I returned. And I wanted to make sure your father knows I am going to make an honest woman out of you.

He starts to take the ring out of the box, but she stops him gently.

**Maddie:** Open yours first.

David opens his little box to find a gold pinkie ring with small diamond studs running half way around it.

**Maddie:** I hope you like it. I mean, I know you already have one, but I thought since I'm the one who proposed, you deserved an engagement ring. I know it's not very traditional . . .

**David:** Since when do we do anything by the book?

She takes his ring out as he takes her's out. They place them on each other's fingers.

**David:** So, I guess it's official.

**Maddie:** I guess so. You haven't changed your mind?

**David:** Nope. You?

Maddie shakes her head no.

They kiss again.

**Maddie** (looking at her ring): At least you won't have to return this one.

They stand face to face, arms around each other.

**David:** Boy, am I glad you suggested that we work at home this morning.

**Maddie:** Well, we had a pretty long day yesterday, and with my parents coming, I thought we might want to "confer" on a few things in private before they get here. I asked them to meet us here at the house when they get in. That way we can give them the news together. They should be here in time for dinner.

David (kissing her): Well, in that

case, I think we should get right down to business. Would you like to adjourn to the multi purpose room upstairs?

**Maddie:** By all means.

Standing in the entryway in front of the staircase, they kiss, slowly at first, but gradually building in intensity. They make their way up the stairs. Once in Maddie's bedroom, they fall together on her bed, kissing passionately. Trying not to separate, he unbuttons her blouse and slides it off her shoulders. Still kissing, they each reach down to slide off their remaining clothes. He pulls away just briefly, yanking his shirt over his head. They kiss even more eagerly, feeling, caressing, and exploring each other's bodies. He lies on his back this time, and gently pulls her over him. Despite her expanding belly, she lies on top of him, as they begin to make love. The sounds of their lovemaking fill the room. Afterwards, they lay together in the afterglow that has become so familiar again over the past couple of days.

**Maddie:** I like working from home. Very productive.

**David:** If you liked this, just wait until you see what I've in mind for this afternoon's conference.

**Maddie:** I can't wait.

They kiss again as we:

FREEZE FRAME AND EPISODE ENDS