



Allegra's Magic Lamp
By
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Allegra's Magic Lamp

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Chapter One

Allegra Korda wedged and wiggled her expanding hips into her favorite pair of jeans, cursing the second helping of gooey fried bananas she'd accepted at her mother's house the previous evening. Her Puerto Rican heritage ensured that all of her gastronomic transgressions were immediately pasted directly onto her thighs.

It was Saturday morning, and she didn't want to be late to the neighborhood tag sale in the Spruce Ridge subdivision. As the saying goes, "The early bird catches the worm."

Her boyfriend, Chad, called over his shoulder as he departed, golf clubs in hand; "Don't wait up for me, Legs. The guys and me are going to the track this afternoon, and then over to Tim's to play Nintendo. Make sure you stay away from the course today, ok, hon? I don't want the guys to see my girlfriend trolling for garbage at yard sales."

The door slammed, and she breathed a sigh of relief. Chad was such an ass. She knew they were headed to the Pit Stop after golfing, a local topless joint featuring girls who were willing to throw a little "something extra" into a lap dance - when properly motivated.

Allegra pulled the cocktail napkins out of his pockets before doing the laundry every Sunday, usually covered with lipstick smears and phone numbers.

He didn't bother to hide it, in fact, she was pretty sure he collected them to rub it in, daring her to confront him. If only she wasn't such a chicken.

She shrugged, renewing her resolution to dump Chad and lose 15 lbs before her 30th birthday. It gave her something to look forward to.

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Chapter Two

Spruce Ridge was a series of sprawling, luxurious Villas, sprinkled liberally between towering palms around a gorgeous 18-hole golf course, just outside of Miami. Allegra worked for the Golf Club as the Event Coordinator. It was a typical gated community, so Allegra wasn't normally admitted on weekends.

Twice a year, the Homeowner's Association hosted a community tag sale for charity and opened the gates to everyone.

As early as 6am, cars were already lined up for blocks, waiting for the massive iron gates to open an hour later.

Allegra sipped coffee from a thermos and nibbled a low-cal breakfast bar, crossing her fingers that she would reach the Clayton's driveway ahead of the crowd and snag that gorgeous armoire she'd spotted in their garage yesterday, a bright orange tag dangling from the knob.

Ahead of her, an ancient blue pickup emitted copious clouds of exhaust smoke; wheezing and sputtering like a dying animal. The owner was oblivious to her discomfort, letting the engine idle despite the billowing gray cloud engulfing the cars behind.

She slipped the collar of her T-shirt up over her mouth and nose to try and escape the fumes, but in vain. Her eyes watering, gasping for breath, she edged her 4WD Subaru Wagon out of line and drove to the back of the community, hoping to coax Bernie into letting her through the maintenance gate.

Bernie wasn't in the guardhouse when she arrived, and she had to wait almost ten minutes before his battered red Chevy pulled up behind the tiny shack. The ancient gate guard crabbed slowly out of his pickup and fumbled through a jangling ring of keys, trying to unlock the door to the shack.

Allegra waited impatiently, tapping her fingers on the steering wheel and gritting her teeth to keep from shouting at him to hurry up.

When he finally settled himself at his post, she urged the car right up to the edge of the gate and smiled with all of her teeth, waving

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cheerfully like Bernie was her oldest and dearest friend.

Bernie frowned. "What are you doing at the maintenance gate, Miss Allegra?"

Allegra grinned through clenched jaws and slammed the car back into park. "There's a terrible line of cars at the main gate on account of the tag sale. Think you could buzz me through just this once?"

His frown deepened. "The maintenance road ain't paved, you know. And it's been a real wet month. I'd hate to see you get your car stuck in one of the sections where the gravel's worn off."

Allegra shrugged and patted the dash of her trusty old Subaru GL Wagon. "Bernie, in low gear, this baby can climb trees; I'm not the least bit worried."

The corners of Bernie's wrinkled lips turned up in the ghost of a smile. "I guess if you ain't worried, there's no reason I should be. Just in case though, hold on to this radio and beep me if you get into trouble. Remember, 'She who hesitates is stuck.'" Bernie unclipped the spare radio from his harness and handed it to her through the window. Patting her roof, he buzzed open the gate.

Noting the time, 7:05 am, Allegra nearly had to sit on her foot to keep from slamming it into the gas pedal in her haste. Drawing a deep breath, she calmly steered the Wagon down the rutted, mud-filled road that led to the maintenance garage behind the golf course.

From the back of the development, it took her a full seven minutes to reach the Clayton's Villa, and she cursed loud and colorfully as the belching blue pickup pulled from their driveway, the beautiful inlaid walnut armoire loaded carefully into the back.

Mrs. Clayton was standing at the mailbox putting out balloons, and witnessed Allegra's colorful outburst. "Allegra, dear, what's the matter?"

Allegra bit her tongue and grinned ruefully. "I saw that armoire in the garage yesterday, tagged for the sale, and waited outside the front gate all morning to get the first shot at it."

Dora Clayton smiled broadly and opened Allegra's door for her as she pulled up the parking brake. "I know the feeling, sugar. Before Clayton Fixtures went public, I haunted flea markets and yard sales, looking for just the right pieces to furnish our first home."

A fond look crept into her eyes. "Matter of fact, I picked that piece up at a tag sale in Houston." She grinned cagily. "Follow me, honey; I have something to show you."

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Allegra trailed into the garage after Dora, pausing briefly to grab a powdered donut from the side table. It was the perfect time for some comfort food.

Dora removed a few items from a small table and lifted the small cloth that protected it. It was a beautiful little lamp stand, in the same style as the armoire.

Allegra gasped as the intricate inlaid metal work in its surface. "It's just gorgeous! Why didn't they buy this, too? It goes so well with the other piece."

Dora shrugged, "Greg made the sale, I don't know if he even remembered this was here." She smiled and patted Allegra's hand. "I want you to have it."

Allegra shook her head. "I don't feel right about that, Mrs. Clayton. How much are you asking for it? It's gorgeous, so I know it must be valuable. Don't worry; I made sure I brought enough money for the armoire, so I'll be able to afford the table."

Dora discreetly removed the orange tag that hung from the drawer pull and tucked it into her pocket. "Well, if you insist, dear, that'll be ten dollars."

Allegra smiled and reached into her purse, not wanting to insult Mrs. Clayton by haggling for a lower price. "Ten dollars sounds fair, just let me get my wallet."

Dora took the proffered money and pocketed it with the tag, before putting a hand on Allegra's arm. "Don't go just yet dear. There's a lovely lamp in the attic that's just perfect for this table. I forgot I had it. You can have it for nothing."

Before Allegra could protest, Dora scuttled into the house, returning a few minutes later with an elegant bronze lamp, the intricate metalwork a perfect compliment to the little table. Grinning impishly, she casually blew at the thick layer of dust covering the lamp. "Just let me put it in a bag for you, dear. A little polish and this will be good as new."

Allegra gratefully accepted her package and bundled it safely into the back of the Wagon with the table before heading home. She had the perfect spot in mind. She was eager to dust off her treasures and set them up in the living room, next to her abuela's antique loveseat.

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Chapter Three

Arriving home, Allegra carefully unloaded the table and put it in the corner, just to the right of the low, plush velvet loveseat. Grabbing a dust cloth and a bottle of citrus cleanser, she sat at the tiny kitchen table and went to work on the lamp.

First, she carefully inspected the lamp for dings and dents. Spotting the glimmer of color under the dust, her eyes widened as she discerned the faint shades of enamel. Squinting her eyes, she could just make out a picture of young lovers, lounging beneath a lush fruit tree.

She rushed to uncover the whole picture. The first time her cloth stroked the bronze; a fine, blue smoke filled the kitchen, making her gasp and choke. Eyes watering, she jumped up, knocking over her chair.

When the smoke finally cleared, Allegra nearly jumped out of her skin when she noticed the man leaning casually against the kitchen counter. She screamed and dropped the lamp directly on her big toe, yelping at the sudden pain. She cursed and tried to compose herself, more irritated than afraid. She figured he was one of her boyfriend Chad's slick friends.

He was a dead ringer for James Dean. Smoky gray eyes, muscles bulging beneath a tight, white t-shirt, the sleeves carefully rolled. The button-fly blue jeans that hugged every curve of his luscious ass were peg-rolled tightly above his ankles, his tanned feet clad in black loafers without socks.

She glared at him, rubbing her toe through her sneaker. "Who the hell are you, and what are you doing in my kitchen?"

He wiggled delicious fingers in her direction and pantomimed magic. "I'm the genie of the lamp, of course."

Allegra snorted and backed away from the table, heading for the phone to dial 9-1-1, just in case. "Yeah, and I'm Pamela Anderson. Chad plays golf on Saturdays, dude. He's not here. Now get the hell out of my house before I call the police."

He smiled charmingly, and Allegra's breath caught. "Pamela. A beautiful name for a beautiful woman. It's a pleasure to meet you,

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Pamela."

Allegra laughed out loud. "You're a riot! Now get out of here. I'm serious, I'll call the police."

He stepped towards her, palms out. "I'm not trying to be funny, and I'm not going to hurt you. I swear, I'm a bona-fide genie. Want proof?"

Allegra finally reached her purse and fumbled through the contents. Smiling triumphantly, she pulled her key ring from the bottom, brandishing a can of pepper spray. "Sure you are, lover boy. Take one step closer and I'll blast this straight into your face, pal. It's police strength, enough to make you blind for a week."

He nodded and backed up a few steps. "Please, don't be hasty. I swear, I'm a genie. You let me out of the lamp, so you get three wishes. Just make a wish and you'll see."

Allegra kept the can at arms length, her finger on the nozzle. She laughed. "Mi abuela, she used to tell me to wish in one hand and spit in the other, and see which one got full first. I know better."

He frowned in confusion. "Are you wishing for a handful of spit?"

Allegra couldn't help it, she giggled and dropped the can a few inches. "Oh, Dios Mio! It's been a weird morning. Just, please, stay over there and don't come any closer. I need to sit down for a minute."

She sank into the chair and let her eyes roam over his incredible physique. *What a body! So far, he hasn't made a grab for my purse or tried to force himself on me. Not that I would mind, all that much. Christ! What am I saying? He's a lunatic, probably escaped from the hospital this morning! Stuck in 1955, or something, from the look of his clothes.* "So what's your name, genie-boy."

He casually leaned a hip against the counter and sniffed at the lukewarm coffee on the stove. "Dixon. Mind if I have a cup of coffee, Pamela? It's literally been forever, know what I mean?"

She shrugged and pointed to the mugs hanging over the stove. "Actually, my name is Allegra. Help yourself. Cream and sugar are on the counter there. Just don't try anything funny, Dixon."

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Chapter Four

Allegra sighed and chewed her lip. All of her kinkiest fantasies seemed to be launching in her kitchen, and she couldn't wrap her mind around it. "So what kind of wishes do I get, Dixon?"

He smiled, taking a moment to savor the aroma of the coffee before downing the whole cup, black, in one gulp. He sighed contentedly, "Obviously, you can't wish to physically hurt or kill anyone, including yourself. You're limited to three wishes. Keep the 'golden rule' in mind, because wishes pack major karma." He refilled the cup and topped it off with a teaspoon of cream.

Allegra tapped her finger on her lip. "Hmmm. It couldn't hurt to try, right? Ok, Dixon. I wish I were beautiful. Not drop dead gorgeous, but pretty, you know? White teeth, platinum hair, the works."

Dixon frowned. "I have a small problem with that wish, Allegra."

She frowned. "Sure, whatever. Just make with the magic or get the hell out of the kitchen."

He cocked his head to the side. "You're one of the most beautiful women I've ever seen. Why would you wish to change your looks? The way your teeth are the tiniest bit crooked, why, your smile is captivating! And your eyes are the color of a forest in spring, flecked with specks of brown, green, and gold. You have skin like soft caramel, luscious and smooth. And your hair! Your hair dances around your face with a life of its own, blazing with ribbons of copper when the light hits it at the right angle. You're gorgeous, so why don't you wish for something else."

Allegra snorted again. "I wish I was as beautiful as you seem to believe."

Dixon snapped his fingers. "Done."

Allegra chuckled. "Yeah, right."

He raised an eyebrow. "You don't believe me? Look in a mirror."

Allegra narrowed her eyes, then removed a compact from her purse and popped it open; just to prove him wrong. She gasped when she caught her reflection.

"Wow!" Her trembling fingers found the planes of her face and

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traced its elegant lines, understanding for the first time the gifts that had passed through the generations of Puerto Rican women. She saw large round eyes framed by sooty lashes, impossibly high cheekbones, lush lips, a delicate chin, and a small, slightly turned-up nose.

When she smiled in wonder at her improved self-perception, she gasped at the stunning transformation. Her smile widened and a throaty laugh bubbled from her chest. "You're right! I love my face! Why would I want to change it? I look like mi abuela, God rest her soul, and she was a stunning woman. I remember playing with her cosmetics when I was a little girl, wishing I would be that pretty one day."

Tears came to her eyes as she mourned the passage of time. She silently wished she could erase the years of self-doubt and insecurity about her looks. She wished she had ignored every derisive, humiliating comment her boyfriend had ever made. For the first time in her life, she felt truly blessed.

She choked back a sob as she replaced the compact in her purse. Smiling through her tears, she nodded at Dixon. "I don't know if it was some kind of hypnotic suggestion, or maybe it's like a placebo affect or something. But whatever it was, I'm grateful to you. Can I help you somehow? Do you need a ride home? Is there someone I can call for you?"

Dixon grinned ruefully, a trace of sadness in his eyes. "There's no one... Anyway, you still have two wishes. Please, don't stop now, you're doing so well!"

Allegra sniffed and chuckled under her breath. "What have I got to lose? Ok, big shot. I wish mis posaderas-" She saw his look of confusion. "I wish my *chubby ass* fit into these jeans, again. Now, make me skinny."

Again, Dixon frowned in confusion. "From where I'm standing, Allegra, you have an exquisite figure. Luscious curves in all the right places, deliciously soft and feminine. God, what I wouldn't do to..." His fists tightened around the mug and his eyes darkened with lust. He licked his lips and continued. "Why would you want to wish away those spectacular breasts?"

Allegra drew a ragged breath. As Dixon frankly outlined his opinion of her-- assets, a warm, tingling sensation sparked between her thighs, quickly mounting to a raging inferno. "Oh, honestly. You're crazy." She blushed and lowered her head, hiding behind a silky curtain of hair.

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Dixon slowly approached the table and extended his hand, brushing the locks away from her face. "Lovely Allegra, will you let me show you?" His dark gray eyes bored into hers with unconcealed lust.

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Chapter Five

Feeling beautiful and desired for the first time in years, Allegra was powerless to resist. She placed her hand in his and followed him into the bedroom.

He led her to the closet door, and placed her squarely in front of the full-length mirror.

She gazed at her own reflection, tears forming as she saw the truth of his words. She had always looked for flaws, overlooking the attributes in the process. With gratitude for this amazing gift, she turned, and lifted tremulous fingers to his face, she softly kissed him in complete surrender. She needed to communicate her feelings without words, to thank him, body and soul.

Tugging at the hem of her top, he pulled it up and over her head with no resistance. Trailing his fingers from the nape of her neck to the center of her back, he released the catch of her bra, letting it fall to the floor.

Her nipples were blood red points in the center of firm round breasts.

His sharp intake of breath communicated his approval even better than words. Turning her to face the mirror, his eyes darkened as he gazed at the stunning, erotic portrait of Allegra reflected in the glass.

Tentatively, he caressed her breasts with his hands, kneading them expertly, gently twisting and pinching the aureoles. He rubbed calloused palms in soft circles over the tips, smiling seductively in the mirror as her nipples quickly enlarged and stiffened.

She arched her back and pressed her breasts roughly into his hands, mad for his touch. Then with a sigh, she fell back against his chest as his hands moved lower on her abdomen, flowing over the gentle curve of her belly like a whisper of silk.

He popped the button of her jeans and gently pressed his fingers into the waistband, probing at the top of her pubic mound. He pressed his lips to the back of her neck, and then whispered in her ear. "Oh God, Allegra, can't you see how gorgeous you are? Do you know what the

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sight and feel of you is doing to my body?" He groaned and slipped a finger into the wet cleft between her legs, teasing the tiny nub of her clit.

Allegra felt his erection pressing into her from behind and rotated her hips, grinding it between them. With a sigh, she spread her legs farther to encourage his nimble fingers in their pursuit.

Dixon ripped his fingers from her jeans and gently turned her to face him. Gazing into her eyes, he cradled her cheeks with both hands. "Allegra, my sweet, cynical Latin beauty." He groaned and claimed her mouth in a scorching, toe-curling kiss. "God, what you do to me."

Allegra put her hands against his chest and walked forward until the backs of his knees hit the bed. Shoving him onto his back, she shimmied out of her jeans and straddled him, tearing at his clothes to get at the smooth, rippled muscles of his chest. "Genie or no genie, I'm getting into those jeans, Dixon, and there's nothing you can say to stop me."

Dixon threw back his head and laughed. "Are you talking about your jeans, now, or mine?"

She giggled. "Both." Popping the buttons of his fly, she twisted her fingers in the downy soft hair that led from his navel to his groin. Bending forward, she playfully licked his nipples, and then pinched them in her teeth, making his hips buck and jerk. She crept lower, and pulled his jeans down further, wanting to explore the impressive bulge beneath the heavy fabric.

Dixon sat up and embraced her, kicking off his shoes and shedding his jeans in the blink of an eye. Nothing separated them now but a thin pink strip of fabric. Allegra's thong had a lacy, beribboned front, and Dixon took a moment to admire it. "Such a pretty package, Allegra. I feel like I'm opening a birthday present." He smiled, and slid the front of the thong lower with one hand, running the other under the tiny strap between her cheeks. When his fingers brushed her 'petite rose', she blushed and shoved him back down, wiggling out of her panties in a rush.

Her breath came in short gasps as she scrambled above his lap, the juices of her sex dripping between her thighs. She had never been so achingly aroused, never felt so desired by a man. She craved the full, erect, length of him, wanting to fill herself with it completely.

Dixon gently grasped her wrists and pushed her hands to her sides. "Not just yet, Allegra. Please, let me show you."

He clutched her to his chest and rolled with her, bracing himself

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above her on his elbows. Pushing up onto his hands, his eyes roamed over her curves, lingering on her breasts and hips. With gentle fingers, he traced whorls and swirls over her skin, igniting it with his touch.

She didn't think she could bear it, the mound between her thighs was a volcano, ready to erupt. She cried out as his tongue replaced his finger at her navel.

Tracing soft circles and planting delicate kisses, he coaxed her even higher. Remarkably, he restrained himself, even when she thrust her thighs up toward his tongue, demanding more. He traveled the distance to her center with excruciating slowness, teasing and caressing her sides and inner thighs with his tongue, smiling as she tangled her fingers in his hair and pushed him lower.

Pulling back briefly, he gazed at the lips that enfolded her core like rose petals, pink and soft. They were slick, shimmering with fluids that smelled of salty-sweet cream. He licked between them carefully, capturing them in his mouth. He wanted to savor the taste of her, and commit it to memory.

She howled and ground herself into him, wordlessly demanding fulfillment. She clamped her ankles around his shoulders and urged him closer, seeking the hot, swirling penetration of his tongue. Growling, she moaned hoarsely, "Will you get to it, already? Oh God, Dixon, I need your tongue there! Deep, hard, and fast."

Dixon willingly obliged her, plunging his tongue as far into her pussy as it would reach. He moved his face back and forth, rubbing his cheeks with the fluids that poured from her in a rush. With his nose, he teased the nub of her clit to a hard, red point, making her scream with pleasure.

She bucked and rolled her hips, fucking his face and tongue with her body, urging him deeper.

His fingers kneaded and twisted the flesh of her ass, his thumbs coaxing her thighs even further apart.

Howling like a banshee, Allegra felt the orgasm tear through her womb, claiming her entire body and rendering her senseless. She thrust her hips frantically against his mouth until the last, shuddering waves subsided, then stroked his head, running her fingers through his thick, brown hair.

Dixon climbed atop her and kissed her, still covered in the musky sap of her cunt. He slipped fingers between her legs and gently massaged

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her there, healing and arousing her with his touch. His cock was smooth and long, springing from a nest of downy hair above his balls. His erection pressed into her stomach, and her mouth watered at the size of it.

She had never seen one so large, and wondered if he would fit inside her. Sometimes her boyfriend's penis had seemed too large, making sex painful. Of course, he never bothered to wait until she was wet and ready. He simply rolled on top of her and jammed himself in, not even caring if she was awake for it. She usually pretended to enjoy it and faked an orgasm quickly to get it over with as soon as possible.

Dixon's rhythmic, gentle stroking was driving her out of her mind.

She grasped his penis in one hand and stroked lightly, feeling it expand even further under her fingers. When she looked down, she could see a tiny pearl of pre-cum form on the head, and slipped down until her mouth and face were below his groin. With a quick flick of her tongue, she cleaned the drop from the head of his shaft.

Dixon groaned and rolled onto his back, taking deep, shuddering breaths to calm himself. He reached for her in aching desperation, but she brushed his hands away.

Allegra chuckled wickedly, and straddled him. Yawning and wiggling her jaw to stretch it, she took the head of his prick in her mouth. Languorously, she swirled her tongue around it, pulling it deep into her throat. With a small swallow, she drew him even deeper.

His hands stroked her hair rhythmically as she slid her mouth up and down the shaft, in a slowly escalating tempo. She rotated her head and used her thumb and finger to increase the friction, torturing him with ecstasy.

Dixon pulled her head away from his groin and moved behind her, pushing her chest onto the bed. He lifted her hips in the air and positioned himself directly behind her smooth, tanned, ass. "Allegra, do you like it like this? Do you want me to take you from behind?"

Allegra moaned and bumped herself against his prick impatiently. "Just fuck me already, Dixon! I need you inside me so bad, I don't think I can stand it any longer."

Dixon found her entrance and pounded all the way into her with a single thrust. Her body fit his like a glove, and the walls of her uterus tightened to milk the seed from him with mind-blowing contractions. He groaned and gave in to the need, thrusting his hips frantically against her soft cheeks, pressing the length of his shaft along her pelvic bone.

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The moist caress of her pussy combined with the friction of their thrusting proved too much for either of them, and they climaxed together in a breathless, screaming crescendo.

Dixon fell to the bed beside her and pulled her into his arms.

"Don't you see, Allegra? Your body is perfect. It's a work of art."

She giggled and snuggled into his shoulder. "Says you. Whatever, as long as my jeans fit, I don't care how you do it."

Dixon smiled and snapped his fingers.

Other than the vague aroma of sulfur in the air, she didn't sense any magic happening. "What was that? Did you fart?"

Dixon laughed out loud. "You'll have to excuse the odor. That was actually a pretty big wish. From this moment on, all of your clothes will fit perfectly."

She sighed. "Oh, my God. I think that's the nicest thing anyone ever did for me. If it's true, I'm going straight to Macy's and buying everything I can afford."

Dixon squeezed her shoulder. "Don't worry, it's true. Whatever you want, will fit."

He sighed, "Now. About that third wish--" Allegra silenced him with a kiss, her body melting into his with the ease of a contented lover.

She purred contentedly. "I've been thinking about that. Dixon, I wish I could find a lover as gentle, considerate, passionate, and incredibly handsome as you."

Dixon smiled. "There is one way..."

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Chapter Six

Allegra zipped her fabulous new BMW M3 Sedan, an early Christmas present from her fiancé, into her parking space at Spruce Ridge. Dora Clayton was waiting for her to unlock the office, carrying a gift basket.

Ushering Dora inside, and out of the cold, Allegra dropped her purse and coat behind the desk. Turning, she smiled brightly. "What can I do for you, today, Mrs. Clayton."

Dora smiled. "Please, Allegra, call me Dora. You remind me so much of-- Well, anyway, this is for you. I hope you have a Merry Christmas. Is that a new car, dear?"

Allegra grinned. "My fiancé bought it for me. Isn't it fabulous? We're flying to the Bahamas to be married over the holidays."

Dora hugged her. "Congratulations! You lucky girl! It sounds like things are going well for you."

Allegra nodded. "You know, I think it all started this summer, after that yard sale..." A dreamy, far-off look came over her face as she struggled to recall-- something.

Dora chuckled. "I'm so happy for you. Do you have a picture of this fabulous fiancé?"

Allegra picked up a framed snapshot from the desk. She beamed, lovingly cradled in the arms of her fiancé; a dead ringer for James Dean.

Dora quietly smothered a gasp, tracing the outline of his jaw with her index finger. She chuckled, recalling the fiery temper and abusive, chauvinistic behavior of her former beau, Dixon. *I guess 50 years spent gathering dust in my attic was long enough to straighten you out*, she thought to herself, as she gently replaced the frame on the desk.

Inside the lamp, Chad paced feverishly around his cramped new home, wishing for a way out.

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AUTHOR BIO

My mother would tell you, “Jade’s a natural-born prevaricator, fabricator, and all-around manipulator of the facts.” She’s been saying that ever since I could talk, but I don’t think she strictly means it in a nice way.

I love to spin a good yarn. Like a front-porch fisherman on a lazy summer evening, I strive to recount a colorful, humorous, and sometimes staggering narrative, both stirring and passionate. I love to leave you in tears, whether from laughter, joy, or sorrow.

I am profoundly grateful to you, the readers. I’m honored every single time you decide to read one of my stories. *You* made me a writer. Do you really care how many dogs, cats, kids, or men I live with?