

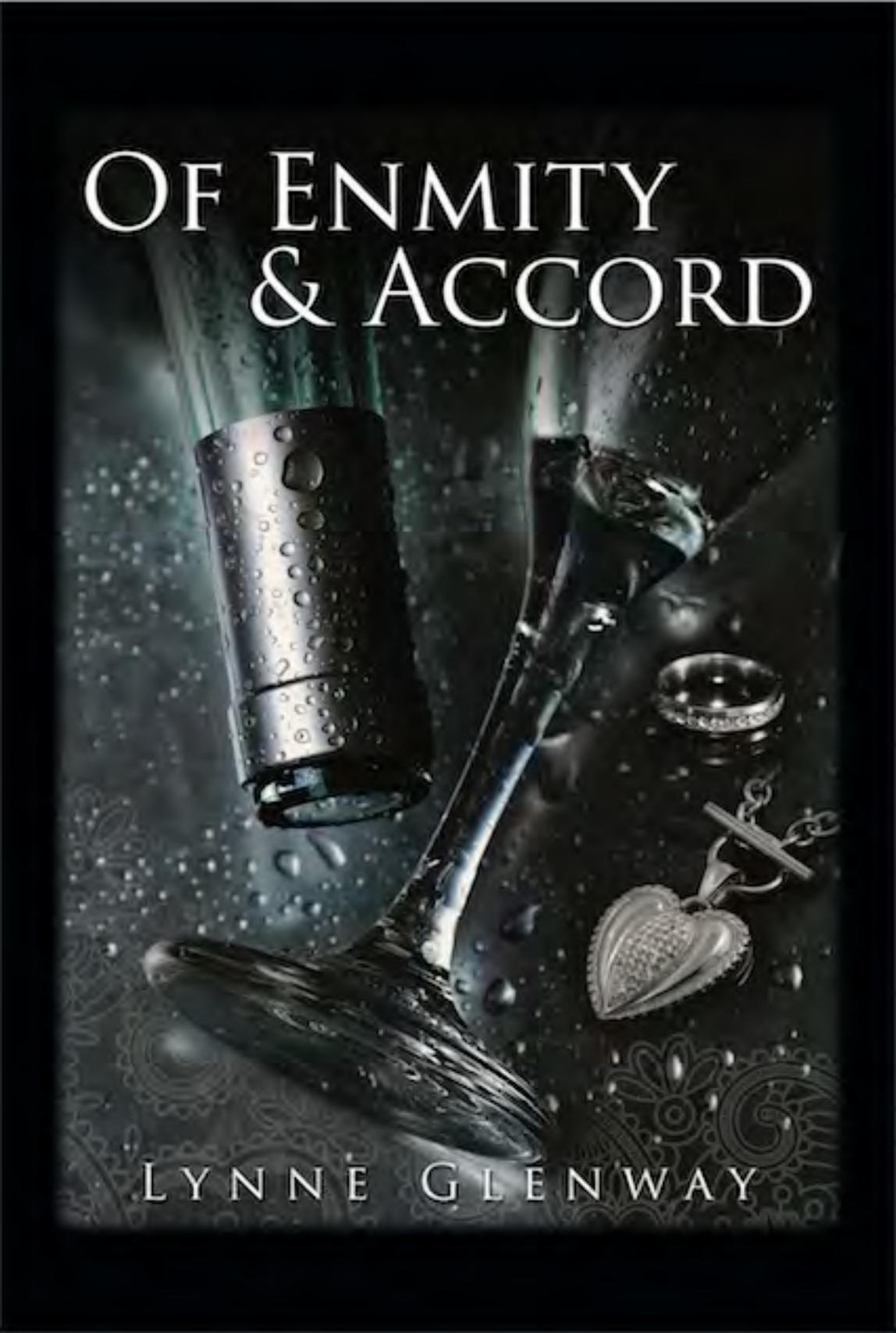
Growing up in an abusive home, Heather struggles for normalcy. Believing she found it with her stepfather, she discovers he's involved with the Greek syndicate. This leads her unwittingly into a passionate and tumultuous relationship with Gregor, his friend's son. Eventually, she must make a life-changing decision to be safe.

Of Enmity & Accord

by Lynne Glenway

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A black and white photograph of a champagne glass with a cork popping out, surrounded by water droplets and jewelry like a ring and a heart-shaped pendant.

OF ENMITY & ACCORD

LYNNE GLENWAY

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“She was a sweet, loving, and beautiful woman. I never thought I’d find someone to love again, and then along comes beautiful Darcy working at the desk in the county building, and I just had to have her!”

“You flatter me. I never thought I’d love again either. You’ve proven to me that I’m still capable of loving. You’ve changed me in so many ways, all of them good. I don’t deserve you.” She finished quietly.

“Let’s concentrate on the fact that whether or not we deserved this love in our lives, we are blessed to have it, and we should enjoy each moment we can. It will be exciting to bring in the New Year at the club. The children will have a delightful time at discotheque. I believe 1972 will be an unforgettable year, yes?”

~

CHAPTER 15

On New Year’s Eve, they headed to Chantos’ Esperís, owned by Andreas Chantos, which he ran with his wife, Jacinta, and sons Piotr and Gregor. The club was a combination restaurant, discotheque, lounge, and nightclub. There was an attached hotel, Xenodocheío, in which they had rooms for the evening.

Andreas had dispatched a limousine to Lucas’ house to pick them up by 5:00 p.m. As the limo glided quietly up and around the winding drive leading to the club, one could smell the dampness of Lake Michigan which only froze in the winter along the shoreline. The trees were barren and looked a bit formidable against a gray-black, starless sky, but between each barren tree was a large juniper pine. It was supposed to snow at some point, and the mist from the lake made the cloud cover appear low. The lights of Chantos’ Esperís came into view as they rounded another bend. The club was massive, the corners of the building being rounded, the roof flat, with darkened windows that revealed shadows of people and lights. Attached to the right of that building was the hotel, and the limousine turned to head toward it. The Whitmans, having lived a quite simple, modest life, were overwhelmed by the extravagance of the building.

As they stopped in front of the hotel, a bell captain opened the door, and Lucas stepped out to go into the lobby. Darcy held out her arm to stop her children from jumping out behind him. “Remember we are in a very classy place. Walk in good posture and speak when spoken to, and please keep your voices down.”

Heather and Steven were so excited, they hugged each other and then hugged Darcy. The driver, observing from his rearview mirror, grinned. When Lucas emerged from the lobby, the driver jumped out of his seat and opened the doors for Darcy, Heather, and Steven. Darcy went to Lucas who put his arm around her while the driver retrieved their baggage from the trunk. A bellman was behind Lucas waiting to take their luggage up to their rooms. He handed Lucas two keys with gold tags on them. He motioned for them all to follow him into the hotel.

The lobby was massive and opulent. There were Greek-style columns throughout, and the ceiling had a red and gold background with raised ivory figurines from Greek mythology depicted. The walls had red wallpaper with raised gold basil leaf wreaths throughout. There was a woody scent, delicate but heady. They entered an elevator, Lucas pressed the number 7, and they felt the elevator climb to the 7th floor. He took them to rooms 707 and 709, which were attached to each other. The rooms were rich and palatial in decoration. Again, Greek mythology was prevalent in the pictures on the walls. The wallpaper was a golden color with raised ivory anemone flowers imprinted on the it. The headboards were ivory fabric with gold buttons and the bedspreads were gold satin with ivory threading. Heather touched one to see what it felt like.

Darcy and Heather helped each other get into their formals. Heather's was mauve satin with a white lace overlay on the bodice and over the arms with the sleeves flowing down and cuffing at the wrists with rhinestones. The lace collar also had rhinestones. The skirt flared out at an empire waist and the mauve satin stopped just above the ankle where pink chiffon with a mauve underlay was attached like a ruffle that finished to the floor. She had silver chunky type shoes with a strap over the top of her foot and ankle. The heels were higher than she usually wore and wide. She had set her hair in rollers earlier, and the russet mane swirled in waves around her shoulders. Darcy looked at her daughter and became misty-eyed. "You're so grown up. You look beautiful!"

Heather, not being comfortable yet with Darcy's newfound affection for her, said, "Thanks, Mom. Now let's get you ready."

Darcy's dress was a yellow-gold chiffon, with a gold belt around the empire waist. The bodice was a simple halter style, baring her ivory and freckled shoulders, and the skirt flared out to the floor, simple and elegant. She wore gold, toeless shoes showing her freshly painted pink toenails. Her hair was caught up in a French twist with ringlets, which

Heather found more attractive than her usual bouffant flip. Her red hair was striking against the gold of the dress and the green of her eyes, making her look like a Celtic queen. Heather was surprised to find she had a lump in her throat. "Toto, I've a feeling we're not in Kansas anymore." She whispered. They both giggled.

Darcy applied her own makeup and for the first time, she applied a little bit of eyeshadow, mascara, blush, and lip gloss on Heather. It's true that 14-year-old girls can be awkward looking, but tonight, Heather was stunning, and Darcy could see she was turning into an exceptionally pretty woman. The adjoining door opened, and in walked the handsome men. Lucas had on a tuxedo and had taken Steven to buy a suit, which was navy blue. He had on a white shirt with a gray tie and gray shoes. The Whitmans had never dressed like this before nor had they been to such a fancy place. This was a dreamlike and exciting night, indeed.

They made their way to the dining room, where the maître d' greeted them, "Good evening, Uncle Lucas. How is everyone this evening?" He smiled at each of them while signaling the hostess.

"Well, Piotr. It's good to see you." Piotr hugged Lucas affectionately. "You've met my fiancée, Darcy; these are her children Heather and Steven."

He bowed over Darcy's hand and kissed it. "Such a pleasure to see you again, Kyría." He did the same with Heather and winked at her saying, "Lovely to meet you, Despoinís." He bowed to Steven and shook his hand. "Nice to meet you too, néos ándras."

A beautiful woman glided quietly over. She was in a tight fitting, silver dress that was low cut with spaghetti straps. She had matching high chunk-heel sandals, adorned with rhinestones along the straps. She was olive-skinned and had long, sleek, straight dark hair that moved like a sheet of silk down her back as she walked. She had a beautiful set of teeth when she smiled, and her face was artfully made up, with a hint of sparkle to her cheeks and eyelids. She was holding menus.

"Good evening, Lucas." She hugged him warmly and familiarly. "Nice to see you again, Kyría Darcy?"

"And these are Darcy's children, Heather and Steven." Lucas informed her.

Katarina smiled at each of them. "It's so nice to meet you. Lucas has been like an uncle to me since my parents died and I moved in with the Chantos family. I hope to get to know you well. For now, I will show you to your table."

Heather was embarrassed at how simple she looked compared to Katarina. She also didn't like Lucas introducing her as one of Darcy's "children." As they followed the elegant woman to their table, Heather tripped ever so slightly on her heels. Katarina and Darcy advised that someday, when Heather was a woman, these heels wouldn't feel so klutzy. Heather decided she didn't like Katarina, and she wished Darcy didn't treat her like a child. She no longer felt like a beautiful lady; she felt clunky and graceless. Suddenly, she was aware that her nails were short, her makeup not well done, her hair was old fashioned, and even felt her dress was old fashioned and childish. "Heather, are you listening?" Lucas was looking intently at her.

"Uh..." No, she had not been listening.

Katarina laughed and said, "I'll send your waiter over after you have had a chance to look at the menus." Now Heather was fully embarrassed.

"Were you trying to take it all in, Prinkípissa?" He asked her with a smile.

"Yes. Sorry." She seemed sullen.

An older gentleman with thick, gray, wavy hair and silver-rimmed glasses, a moustache, and a boisterous laugh similar to Lucas' was making his way to their table. Loudly, with an accent, he said, "Is that my friend, Lucas Rossi? How lucky am I that he is spending his New Year's Eve here?" He came over and gave Lucas a vigorous embrace and kissed him on each cheek, Lucas returning the same.

"My dear friend, Andreas! Let me introduce you to my new family. You know Darcy!"

Darcy started to get up, but Andreas ran to her and said "Sit, Sit." He kissed her on the hands and smiled. His eyes were as deep brown as Lucas's; in fact, they could be brothers. "Ómorfi gynaíka (beautiful lady)! It's a pleasure to spend New Year's Eve with you. Your daughter is lovely too!" Andreas walked over to Heather and took both hands and kissed them. "Come meet your new Uncle Andreas, young man!" He held out his arms to Steven who stood and walked over to him and was gathered into a bear hug. Steven was awkward; no one in their family was very demonstrative with affection, and this man was hugging and kissing them all! "After you've eaten a wonderful meal prepared by my excellent chef, under the supervision of Jacinta, you will join us for a treat in the nightclub, nai?"

"Nai, we'll head up there when we are finished." Lucas said, and the two men embraced slapping each other on the back. The restaurant

was on the first floor with an attached banquet hall, the nightclub and lounge were on the second with two banquet halls, and the discotheque was on the third floor which had another banquet hall. The place was massive!

“Ah! Darcy!” He turned a sympathetic face to her. “You had no idea that I was part of the deal when you said ‘yes’ did you?” And he laughed again uproariously, while walking away and greeting others at tables in the dining room asking how their food and service were.

“Who is that?” Steven asked while putting bread into his mouth.

“That is o kalýterós φίλος μου (my best friend), Andreas Chantos. His father and my father were the best of friends, and we grew up together. He is a few years older than me. His family are very special to me. Piotr, whom you met first, is my Godson. Their ways will grow on you. This must all be very strange to you.” Heather and Steven nodded. “Heather! You are turning heads tonight. I must keep my eye on the wolves at all times!”

“Oh, I think not. There is Katarina for them to look at,” Heather snipped.

“I knew Katarina when she was your age...no comparison. You are far prettier than she was! She’s grown into a beauty, but she also has the clothes and makeup to enhance her look. You’re a natural, Heather. Remember that.” Lucas winked at her. She felt a little better, until another very handsome young man started for their table.

“Uncle Lucas! How are you? Bampás (Dad) told me you were here, and I just had to see you and meet your new family.” He also had a slight accent.

“Gregor! My boy! You’ve grown into a man!”

“I’m 21 this year, Sir!”

“Let me introduce you to my new family! Of course, you know my fiancée, Darcy!”

Like his father, he came over and kissed her hands. “So good to see you again!” He also had mahogany eyes, like Lucas’, and his dark eyebrows were thick but smooth. He had dark long eyelashes, a strong nose, and a generous mouth with smooth lips over straight white teeth. His cheekbones were high which made him look aristocratic. His hair was also the color of mahogany and was thick, shiny, and wavy. It grew below his ears and down to the nape of his neck. It was parted on the side, and he had to keep pushing it off his forehead slightly. He was a bit taller than Lucas and had a muscular physique while being slim. He moved to Steven next and was introduced by Lucas. He turned, smiling

at Heather. "Now, please tell me, Uncle Lucas, is this lovely girl going to grow up and marry me some day?"

"You should be so lucky!" Lucas laughed.

Heather went through three shades of red before being able to speak. "I'll decide whom I shall marry someday, thank you!"

Gregor laughed loudly but not as boisterously as Lucas or Andreas. He sauntered over to Heather and kissed both her hands. "I see I have my work cut out to convince you." When he smiled into her eyes, Heather felt a rush of heat to the pit of her stomach. He was not only handsome, he was a man. She'd only been kissed by a boy. Suddenly, she was fantasizing about what it would be like to kiss Gregor's generous mouth. "I'm insisting you have a dance with me in the disco later, Despoinís Heather! I will find you and you'll dance with me, unless Uncle Lucas has guards all around you." He looked at Lucas. "If I were going to be her father, I'd hire bodyguards to watch over her." He winked at Heather. "Enjoy your meal. It was a pleasure to meet you. I'll see you all later." Then he turned again to Heather. "Dance," and he pointed his finger at her and himself, turned slowly, and walked away.

"So, there you are! Already you're giving me worries!" Lucas said looking at Heather with a glint in his eyes. "Making conquests the first time I take you out and dress you up fancy."

"Oh, Lucas," she replied. "He was being nice because you are special to him. That's all. I'm too young for him. He is probably in love with Katarina."

"He's a good boy. He knows I will make his life a misery if he lays a hand on you inappropriately. He is being nice, but he's also seeing what everyone else sees...you're turning into a lovely woman, but why not? Your mother is the most beautiful woman in the room!" He turned loving eyes to Darcy. "I do think Gregor has a point. I should hire guards for both my beauties! As for Katarina and him? Alas, she pants after him like a puppy, but he's not interested. He's a smart boy and is finishing college, learning the business, and waiting until the right time to think about love and marriage. Katarina is a bit older than him, and he hasn't appeared interested in her flirtations. She was originally hoping for Piotr, but he met his fiancée, lanthe, in college and they are to be married next September. Like me, he is smitten and in love with his future bride. Heather, you will find that men are not just interested in the affections of a girl who can dress up flashy and apply makeup artfully."

They ate their meal in silence. The food was quite succulent, every bite. Lucas took them into the nightclub and ordered after-dinner drinks. Andreas and Jacinta joined them for drinks, cigarettes, and cigars. Jacinta was a tall but petite dark-haired woman who was young in appearance. She was soft-spoken in comparison to her husband who, like Lucas, was loud when he talked and laughed. She had dark blue eyes, almost gray, and dark lashes. Her hair was dark mahogany like Gregor. It was pulled back into a severe bun at the nape of her neck, but it was a classic look, very elegant. Gold hoops hung from her ears that were slightly covered by her pulled-back hair. She had red lipstick on which matched the deep red, ruffled, chiffon dress she wore. Her dress draped over one shoulder, leaving her other dark shoulder bared. She and Darcy appeared to have developed a friendship. There was a singer accompanied by a small orchestra in the nightclub; she was exceptionally talented.

Heather was intrigued. "Lucas! I want to sing at your restaurant like that one day." Heather proclaimed.

"I want you to sing right here someday," he replied. "I've heard you sing. You're excellent! One day I believe you'll be singing here."

"If she's interested, I'll take a listen to her. I have a challenging time filling the club with singers when it's not a weekend or special occasion. Although, she's too young currently."

This age thing was bothersome, Heather thought. "Who is that?" she asked pointing to the singer.

"Mary Beth McNeal. She is a popular singer in this area. She is good, yes?" Jacinta asked.

"Very much so." Heather continued to listen.

"Do you have a nice voice, Heather?" Jacinta asked.

"I do sing and play the guitar, piano, and clarinet. I'd love to sing like her someday." Heather sighed.

"I can attest to having heard Heather sing," Lucas said. "She's every bit as good as Miss McNeal."

"We'll have a long talk about this, Lucas, and we shall see when it is an appropriate time to give her a try. We have a professional and excellent orchestra, as you see, that play for all our singers. Rossi's might enjoy a little entertainment from you and your guitar some time while you're growing up. For Chantos' Esperís, we'll wait for the day you are 18 years old." He smiled and winked at Heather and it did not escape him how attractive she was, even for a young teenager.

Lucas smiled at Heather. “We shall see next year if it would be an innovative idea to have you be a Saturday night entertainer. We’ve never done it before in Rossi’s, but it might be fun.”

After a while, Katarina and Gregor joined them and said they would be taking Heather and Steven up to the disco on the 3rd floor. Gregor took Heather’s hand, placed it through his arm, “We are to dance.” Katarina intertwined her arm with Steven’s. He looked so stiff and awkward. Heather smiled at the scene. “You’re enjoying your brother’s embarrassment.” Gregor grinned.

“My brother hasn’t discovered girls yet. He just turned 12 and is shy. She’s beautiful, though, so it might make him take notice of the opposite sex finally!”

“And you?”

“And me, what?”

“Have you discovered boys?”

“I have a boyfriend, Curt.”

He slammed his fist into his chest playfully. “I’m so jealous!”

Heather laughingly said, “He’s cute and very nice.”

“When you’re finished with boys, let me know. Does he kiss nice?”

“I guess. He’s the only boy I’ve ever kissed, so I don’t know what to compare him to.”

Gregor looked down at her with his deep brown eyes. “One day you will know if he is a good kisser or not. You will not stay with him forever.”

“He thinks we’ll stay together and get married.”

“He’s wrong. But let us forget about Curt tonight. You are at Chantos’ Esperís, and we’re going to bring in the New Year together. Are you ready, pretty Heather?”

She squeezed his arm a bit and said, “I’m so excited. Is it always going to be exciting to be Lucas’ stepdaughter?”

“Yes. It will be exciting. He’s a good man; the best. If he cares about you, he will do anything for you.”

“I’m glad he met my mom.” She smiled at Gregor and he brought her into the discotheque. He then left her with Katarina to go to the bar and speak with the bartenders. There were windows on three sides and a wall with a bar on the other, with doors on either side of the bar, presumably leading to the banquet halls, and another door in the middle of those. There were assorted colored lights and they were systematically going on and off with the music. A mirror ball was hung in the center of the enormous dance floor. Tall tables with bar stools surrounded the dance floor. Younger adults were seated around them,

and the place was full. There was one table with a “reserved” placard on it, which was for them. A young man and woman were playing records on a turntable connected to many speakers throughout the room. They were listening through earphones to the radio to find out one at a time what the top 40 songs of 1971 were and then would play them on their turn tables in the same order, starting from #40 and up to #1. While there were many young people dancing, Heather and Steven were the youngest in the room, and Katarina explained that they were allowed because of Lucas’ relationship with Andreas; however, Katarina could not leave them alone, so they must stay with her. “Great,” Heather thought. “I’d rather go back to the room and listen to the top 40 hits on the radio than sit here with her.”

Gregor joined them listening to the music. He asked Heather who her favorite band was. She didn’t hesitate, “The Carpenters.” As if on cue, “For All We Know,” the #35 song, played. Gregor put out his hand and bowed.

Katarina looked irritated but then laughed lightly. “How sweet of you, Gregor,” she said.

“The song is appropriate for Despoínis Heather and me. Let’s dance.” Heather was hesitant, but it was one of her favorite songs by her favorite artist. She couldn’t refuse. “Listen to the words, Heather. This is about us. ‘Strangers in many ways. Let’s take a lifetime to say...’” and he continued singing the song.

“Don’t you think Karen Carpenter has the most beautiful voice ever recorded?”

“Ha! You do not like my singing the song!”

“Shh. We should enjoy her perfection.” She smiled up at him mischievously. “You’re a good dancer, but so tall!”

“Maybe you’re short.”

Heather laughed again. “I think I am almost a foot shorter than you.”

“Yes, a perfect fit.” He smiled and lifted her chin so she was gazing into his dark eyes. Something stirred in the pit of her abdomen, reaching the inner places of her groin. Her breathing became short, but what she didn’t know was that her pupils were dilating, and Gregor slowly smiled even broader. “You like me, pretty Heather.”

“I think you’re nice, but I know you are toying with me. You’re much older, and I look like a gawky fool next to the other women here, such as Katarina.” They both looked at Katarina, dancing with a bungling Steven who was mesmerized. Katarina had a forced smile on her lovely face.

Gregor snickered, "Oh, this is a great picture. She'll be miserable that she had to spend her New Year's with a boy, but she's paid well."

Heather dropped her hands, pulled away from him, and said, "Oh, so you are paid to dance with us? Please, I don't need it. I'm so glad I wasn't foolish enough to believe you meant anything by it." She turned on her heel and walked back to the little table they had their drinks on. Gregor was right behind her.

"I am an idiot, Ómorfo Korítsi (beautiful girl)! I realize how that sounded. Of course not! My father owns this place and I'm paid to help run the business end of the disco. I was not paid to entertain you, Katarina was. I volunteered. Please don't be angry or embarrassed as, yes, I was outrageously flirting with you, but I'm sincere. I'll be watching you grow into a beautiful woman. We could end up in love, 'for all we know.'" He sang the last part and it was so terrible she had to laugh.

"Go on, now, Gregor. Go about your disco business. Little Heather will be just fine."

"I do have to go tend to a few things. Promise me the last dance at midnight? I will only take "yes" for your answer."

"We shall see." She looked around the room. "There are other hunky guys here I may wish to dance with," she said teasingly, and they both laughed as she was by far the youngest girl in the discotheque and most likely would not be asked by anyone else. He walked behind the bar and then through the middle door. Heather wanted to follow him and see what he did when he was not being a flirt. Katarina danced with her to "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down." She found it difficult to be nice, but she tried. Do you like the music?" Heather asked her.

"Not really. I like opera and classical music as I was raised to appreciate that."

"How nice." Heather decided not to tell her she had been playing classical music with her piano and clarinet for many years.

"I studied at Julliard, playing the violin. Andreas and Jacinta have treated me like a daughter and paid for it. I would do anything for them. I sometimes play in the orchestra."

Heather had nothing else to say. She was extremely intimidated by Katarina and unreasonably jealous. She was so polished and glided around talking to customers effortlessly. Her laugh was a distinguishable tinkling, yet it was delicate and feminine. Her nose was maybe a bit too large and her blue-gray eyes were not as large as Heather's. She knew she was grappling for something negative because not a man in the room didn't notice the woman with her extensive, lusty

cleavage and the curves her shimmering silver dress outlined perfectly. Heather hated the way she walked celestially across the floor in those heels. Yes, it was out of character to immediately not like someone, but this woman had her disdain.

“Mister Big Stuff” by Jean Knight started playing as Gregor came from the back room and over to her table. Heather laughed tilting her head back in pure enjoyment. “Perfect song for your entrance.”

He grabbed her hand to dance the song with him. “Okay, this will be your song for me when you see me?”

“Absolutely!” and she laughed again.

He asked her to dance to “You’ve Got a Friend” by James Taylor and again sang down into her ear. “Do I compare at all to Mr. Taylor.”

“Um...no. But it is a sweet song and I like thinking we might become friends.”

“We shall be friends, Ómorfo Korítsi, until you become older. Then we’ll talk about being more than friends.”

“Please stop now. You’re very handsome, and I enjoy the flirting, but you will have married someone like Katarina by the time I’m old enough to date you! Our fathers are close, so we’ll probably see each other on occasion. You can be like a big brother.”

“Oh my! No!” he laughed. “Let’s enjoy this evening and, yes, we’ll most likely be seeing each other again, as the wedding of your mother and Lucas is going to be celebrated in our hall! Lucas and Andreas are as brothers. Yes, pretty Heather, we’ll be seeing each other again, I assure you.” The last part of the song played, and he stopped dancing and sang it to Heather, “You’ve got a friend...” Leaving again, he explained he had to mingle a bit with other customers. This he did by checking each table, laughing with some of the young men, and dancing with a few of the ladies. Darcy and Lucas came into the room. They looked visibly happy and drew the attention of many in the room as while they were not young, they were both strikingly attractive. Heather got up to hug them both, which surprised Darcy.

“I’m having a lovely evening, Lucas. Thank you.”

“What boys do I have to hurt? Has anyone been flirting with you?”

“Gregor has been,” Steven said grinning at Heather.

“No worse than you and Katarina!” Heather retorted

Steven blushed. Lucas chuckled and said, “So, you’ve been flirting with Katarina? You’re too good for her. One day you’ll find a classy woman with a beautiful heart. But you have a good eye for exterior beauty.” Heather had the feeling that Lucas wasn’t that fond of Katarina

and wanted so badly to ask him why but decided to wait. “And you, Prinkípissa? You’ve had the eye of Gregor?”

“He’s being nice to me because he knows it will please you. I’m sure it’s nothing more than looking out for me like a little sister.”

“I’ll have to keep an eye on that one.” Lucas winked at her. As if on cue, Gregor came to their table to greet Lucas and Darcy. Lucas smiled, “I understand you and Katarina have been sufficiently entertaining Heather and Steven. They’ve both stated they’re having a wonderful New Year’s Eve.”

“It has been my pleasure.” He turned to Darcy. “I trust you’ve had a wonderful experience here at Chantos’ Esperís this evening?” Darcy nodded, and he continued, “Excellent, and may I say, I can see where Heather gets her Gaelic beauty from. The eye and hair color are different, but the beauty is the same nonetheless.”

Heather blushed again. She desperately wished she were older and not so prone to blushing. Darcy smiled, “That is sweet, Gregor. Heather is becoming quite stunning, or how do you say, ómorfos?”

“Yes, naí,” Gregor nodded his head. “Now, I must have another dance with the beautiful despoinís, if it is okay with her future papa.”

“Nai, go have fun, but I’ll be watching you closely along with my treasure, her mother!”

Ironically, the song playing now was Donny Osmond’s “Go Away, Little Girl.” Heather thought it was the most appropriate song for the night, and apparently so did Gregor. “This is the song I shall sing when I see you and you are singing ‘Mr. Big Stuff’.”

“So now we two friends have our special songs for each other.”

Gregor smiled down at her and pulled her just a little closer. She gazed into his eyes and the warmth started again down her spine, into her abdomen, and further down. “Geesh,” she thought, “I’m going to have to avoid him.” Again, he saw her pupils dilating and then rubbed her back just a little. The room felt like a tilt-a-whirl to her, and she felt she was going to trip in her clunky heels. He had enough of a grip on her to hold her steady, and as he did, he chuckled. “Oh, Heather. I think you need to grow faster!”

She put her head against his chest and sighed. “I’m trying.”

Gregor brought her back to her table and then left again to mingle with other customers. Darcy looked at her knowingly. “He’s much older, Heather. Be careful. Stick with boys like Curt because young men like Gregor want more than stolen pecks on the couch.”

Heather laughed, “Oh, Mom! All boys want more than pecks on the couch. Certainly, you’re not that dumb!”

Lucas laughed loudly and uncontrollably. He began to get tears in his eyes.

“Get a hold of yourself, Luc! It wasn’t that funny.” Darcy scolded.

“Nai, Agapi Mou! It was very funny and absolutely true. Heather, I think you need to dance with your future stepfather! I can’t even imagine the quick wit and tongue this woman will have in a few years. Lord in Heaven, help us all!”

All of them danced to “Maggie May.” Gregor joined them, dancing with Darcy, but was solidly next to Heather when the song stopped and the DJ’s started the countdown to midnight. “10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1, HAPPY NEW YEAR!”

Lucas and Darcy kissed, Darcy kissed Heather and Steven and so did Lucas. Everyone in the room was tinkling champagne glasses and kissing, saying “Happy New Year!” to each other. Lucas pulled Darcy close and kissed her longingly. Gregor took the opportunity to grab Heather, embrace her closely, and kiss her. She was startled at first and then opened her lips to receive him and kissed him back passionately. It was more than warmth heading down her spine now. It was a hot tingling sensation. She had never felt that sensation before and grabbed at his neck for more, but he let her go.

“Ómorfo Korítsi, you are a passionate one,” he whispered in her ear, sending more tingles down her neck. “Your mother and future papa are right by us. He’ll kill me if I pursue this any further so, say ‘Happy New Year, my friend.’”

“Happy New Year, my friend.” She repeated as if in a trance.

“Happy New Year, my new friend! We shall have a wonderful 1972 with the marriage of Lucas and Darcy.” The DJ’s put on the #1 song of the year, “Joy to the World” by Three Dog Night. As they all moved to the dance floor, Katarina came from the other side of the room, kissed Gregor deeply and passionately in front of everyone, looked over to be sure Heather saw, and then danced the rest of the song with him. Heather felt dejected. How could it start out to be the best New Year’s celebration ever and end as the worst? She wasn’t even that happy about the #1 song, as who was ever a friend of a bullfrog? She was grateful when Lucas and Darcy sent them up to the room for bed. As they started out of the disco, Gregor ran over to Heather. “Wait! I’ll walk you to your rooms.”

“That’s okay,” Heather said flatly. “Go spend the rest of the night with Katarina. Stevie and I know where to go.”

“I’m taking you.” He leaned over and whispered in her ear, “You’re jealous. I like that.” The rest of the walk to their rooms Gregor talked to Steven. When they got to the rooms, he opened Steven’s room first and Steven went in. Heather got out her key and opened her room quickly as Gregor took her arm.

“Good night, pretty Heather.” He bent to kiss her, but she opened the door, ran in, and shut it on him. She could hear him chuckling and start singing “Go Away, Little Girl,” as he walked away.

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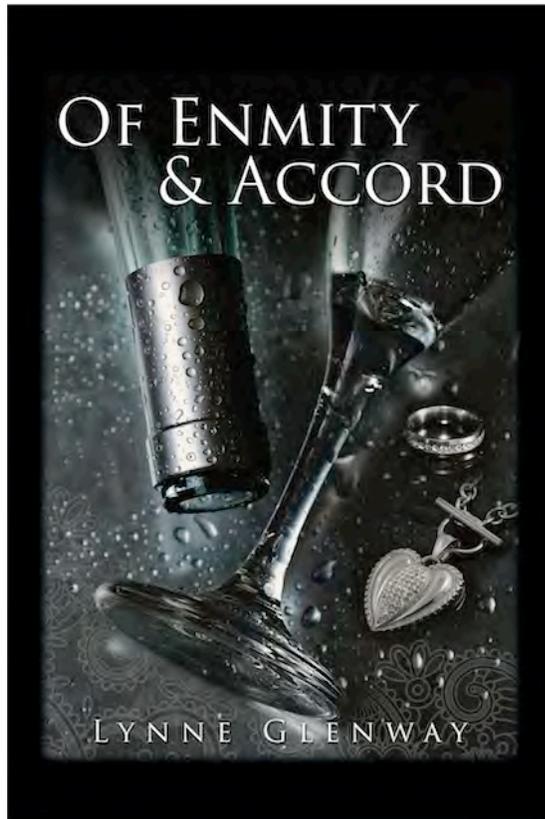
CHAPTER 16

The year started with wedding plans, moving plans, and the campaign for the Lake County Board for Lucas. On weekends, they would stay in Antioch, and Lucas would sleep at his little apartment at the back of Rossi’s “for propriety’s sake.” After all, it was a conservative community and he was running for a major political office. He’d sometimes stay in Round Lake Park, as he could only get there later to see Darcy after the restaurant closed, but it was okay because Grandma had moved back in. Heather would sleep in Darcy’s bed, supposedly with her, (but she barely made it into that bed before dawn), and Grandma slept again in Heather’s old room.

President Nixon was running for re-election against Senator George McGovern of South Dakota. It didn’t look good for Senator McGovern and Grandma couldn’t have been happier. The family was convinced the election was what kept Jenevieve alive and kicking, as her illness should have been making her quite weak and frail.

The months moved rapidly, and Lucas won the primary in March. The general election would not be until November, long after the wedding, scheduled for June 24, was over and they were all settled.

Jacinta and Darcy would shop frequently for clothing and Heather joined them. Heather loved Jacinta as she always picked out clothes that were trendy and mature rather than the unsophisticated and childish outfits Darcy preferred her to wear. Jacinta took Heather for a hair trim, so that she could wear her thick hair parted in the middle and straight as was the fashion of the day. Darcy fretted at how old Heather



Growing up in an abusive home, Heather struggles for normalcy. Believing she found it with her stepfather, she discovers he's involved with the Greek syndicate. This leads her unwittingly into a passionate and tumultuous relationship with Gregor, his friend's son. Eventually, she must make a life-changing decision to be safe.

Of Enmity & Accord

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