

To Hive and to Hold



Virginia Smith



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1



A light breeze blowing from the west flooded Turtle Cove, Washington, with the rich, distinctive scent of fresh lavender. Kaylee Bleu paused in the act of unlocking the door to The Flower Patch, closed her eyes, and drew the aroma deep into her lungs. She loved summer on Orcas Island, when the *Lavandula angustifolia* bloomed and its soothing scent permeated the entire island, like an outdoor health spa with free aromatherapy for everyone.

She glanced down at her canine best friend, Bear, who stood patiently at her feet, gazing up at her with his floppy ears perked forward in a question. This morning, the dachshund wore an adorable yellow bow tie with purple polka dots in honor of the blooming lavender.

"We'll go inside soon so you can make sure the shop is in order," she told him with a smile, "but first let's take a minute to breathe the fresh air."

She demonstrated by inhaling deeply, but Bear didn't follow suit. He continued to stare at her with an expectant expression in his soulful eyes.

"All right. You win." She gave in with a chuckle and twisted the key.

Bear raced inside as quickly as his stubby legs allowed and immediately performed a quick tour of the flower shop. First, the consultation room with its comfortable seating and albums of floral arrangements. Then he circled the retail space, pausing to sniff at the baseboard several times before dashing in and out of the workroom and the kitchen. He paused at the bottom of the stairs and peered intently upward, his entire body on alert.

Kaylee knew he was listening and sniffing to confirm nothing was amiss upstairs.

Finally satisfied that all was in order, he trotted over to his bed in the corner and, after nudging its cushion and blanket into an arrangement that suited him, settled with a contented sigh.

Kaylee watched him with a bemused smile, shaking her head at the antics. For a week or two now, he'd insisted on performing the same inspection the moment she opened the shop. She saw little harm in the ritual, assuming that Bear was just taking his role as The Flower Patch's protector seriously.

The phone rang, and Kaylee glanced at the clock as she hurried over to the counter to answer. The shop wouldn't officially be open for a while yet, but she didn't mind answering the phone outside normal operating hours—especially when the caller was someone who, upon seeing his name on the phone screen, made her heart flutter with joy.

"Good morning," she said brightly to her handsome beau, Reese Holt.

"Good morning, my love." The rumble of Reese's voice sent a delightful shiver of warmth right through her core. "I hope you slept well. I missed you."

Her insides wanted to melt, but she forced a lighthearted tone. "You just saw me ten hours ago."

"Yes, and every one of them felt like a year."

Kaylee wilted against the counter and allowed a soft sigh to escape. "You're a hopeless romantic, Reese Holt." *And I'm the luckiest woman in the world.*

"Guilty as charged." His tone lightened. "What's on your agenda for today?"

"Oh, the usual." Kaylee's gaze landed on the shop's order sheet. "A birthday arrangement someone ordered online. A summer centerpiece for the Mustard Seed Community Church's Ladies

League brunch. And . . .” Her eyes widened. “*Four* weekend weddings. Goodness, Mary must have booked another one after I left yesterday.” She scanned the details. “Ah, it’s for a single bouquet, no bridesmaids or centerpieces. Must be an impromptu wedding.”

“Impromptu, huh? Maybe it’s an elopement.”

“That would be fun.” A smile warmed her tone. “Having witnessed the stress a wedding can bring, sometimes I think eloping is the way to go.”

“Really? I’ll have to keep that in mind.”

Heat blazed in Kaylee’s face, but she quickly cleared her throat. “And what do you have going on today?”

“I hope to finish up that electrical job over in West Beach this morning because I promised to go by the Orcas Island Library this afternoon to give them an estimate on installing new water fountains. But don’t worry,” he rushed to say. “I’ll be back in plenty of time for our date night.”

She adopted a stern tone. “I certainly hope so. The Orcas Island Cineplex waits for no man—even one as charming as you.”

“Not to wor—” His voice cut out on the last word. After a pause, he said, “The library director is calling. I’ll talk to you later, okay? Love you.”

“Love you,” Kaylee repeated. After dating Reese for some time, her echo was automatic, but the sentiment still set her pulse racing. Two words so casually spoken, and yet they carried the weight of her future. When she’d first moved to Turtle Cove, she’d merely thought she was exchanging a career in academia to buy her grandmother’s flower shop—she’d never expected to find the love of her life in the process.

With a happy sigh, she replaced the receiver in its cradle and returned her attention to the order list. The first item was a birthday arrangement to be delivered that afternoon to Mrs. Esther Hammond, an elderly lady Kaylee knew from church.

The sender had selected a fresh flower medley of alstroemeria, carnations, and—what else?—lavender. *Well, the shop certainly has plenty of that on hand these days.*

Kaylee was startled out of her concentration by the door to the shop bursting open and a very energetic Mary Bishop entering with an enormous smile on her face. Bear raced toward the shop's part-time designer, barking excitedly.

"Kaylee, guess what? Oh hello, Bear." Mary bent to give the dog a pat on the head, then continued before Kaylee could say a word. "Layla is getting married!" The broad smile widened even further, and Mary clapped her hands with obvious delight.

Mary and her husband, Herb, hadn't been blessed with their own children, so they thought of their niece, Layla, as their own daughter. The young woman was now a schoolteacher on the mainland, but she'd spent every summer on Orcas Island while she was growing up. She still visited occasionally, though it was usually to see her longtime beau, local real estate agent Douglas Miller, who split his time between Turtle Cove and Seattle.

"That's wonderful news, Mary." Kaylee awarded her friend a congratulatory hug. "Douglas finally popped the question, eh?"

Mary nodded. "And not only that, they want to get married here. Of course, we'll do the flowers."

"Naturally. Does she have anything in mind yet?"

"It's always been Layla's dream to be married outdoors, in a lavender field, and she wants a bouquet to match." Mary's gaze went distant. "But I'm thinking we should add white roses and some eucalyptus for greenery."

Kaylee chuckled. "Sounds like you have it all well in hand."

"We discussed all the details on the phone last night when she called with the good news." Mary's smile dimmed a few watts, and a tiny worry line appeared between her eyes. "There is one thing I need to ask you. A favor."

Kaylee tilted her head. "You know I'd do anything for you."

Mary bit her lip. "As I said, Layla wants to be married outside surrounded by blooming lavender. And, as you know, the peak blooming season on Orcas Island runs from mid-July to the end of August."

"In other words, it's now," Kaylee said, the reason for Mary's anxious expression becoming clear. "And I assume Layla is talking about getting married this year—as in, within the next few weeks?"

Mary nodded. "They're hoping for mid-August, on the last day of the Turtle Cove Lavender Festival."

Kaylee did a quick mental calculation. "That gives us almost a month. Plenty of time to create some beautiful wedding bouquets for the bridal party."

Mary's concerned expression lessened only slightly. "Yes, but that's not the favor. Layla called every lavender farm on the island, but they're booked solid through September. And school starts right after Labor Day."

"I'm not surprised none of them have any openings. And I'm sure Layla wants to be Mrs. Miller when she greets her new class in the fall."

Mary nodded. "So we were wondering . . . would you be willing to have the wedding at Wildflower Cottage? Outside, of course, though we'd need to use the cottage as a staging area for the bridal party."

Kaylee brightened. The fields all around Wildflower Cottage were full of wild *Lavandula angustifolia*. Just this morning, she'd taken her coffee out on the porch to watch the wind ripple gentle waves across the purple blooms. "Wildflower Cottage is the perfect place for a wedding," she said, energized by the idea. "I'm frankly surprised no one has asked before."

The grin returned to Mary's face. "Then you don't mind?"

"Mind?" Kaylee stepped forward and clasped her friend's hands. "I'm honored. Excited, even. It's going to be the most beautiful wedding."

"Thank you, Kaylee." Mary glanced at the clock. "Speaking of weddings, we have a few to work on today. I'd better get started." She grinned. "I just hope I can focus."

Kaylee laughed. "I'm sure you'll manage."



On the frequent occasions that Kaylee called her grandmother, she usually did so in the evening. But that afternoon when Mary left to deliver Mrs. Hammond's birthday arrangement, she decided a phone call was in order. Bea Lyons would most certainly share Kaylee's excitement about the wedding to take place at Wildflower Cottage, Bea's former home.

"There's going to be a wedding at Wildflower Cottage!" Kaylee exclaimed when her grandmother answered.

"Reese finally proposed?" Bea asked, delight coloring her tone.

Resisting the urge to roll her eyes, Kaylee decided that she wouldn't venture down the path of discussing her future with Reese. Instead, she remained focused on the point of her call. "No. But do you remember Layla Bishop?"

"Of course I do. She was always such a sweet child."

"She's the one getting married, and Mary asked if I'd host it at the cottage."

"What a wonderful idea!" Bea agreed enthusiastically. When she went on, there was a touch of longing in her voice. "Just thinking of the lavender in bloom makes me a bit homesick."

"You've been talking about visiting for months," Kaylee reminded her. "Why don't you come for the wedding? Mary

would be thrilled to have you here. In fact, the lavender festival is that weekend, and I know you'd enjoy being in Turtle Cove for that."

"That sounds lovely, dear, but are you sure you'll have room? You are hosting a wedding, after all."

"Are you serious?" Kaylee nearly laughed. "Grandma, Wildflower Cottage is your home. There will always be room for you."

"Well then," Bea said resolutely. "I believe I will. Besides the wedding and the festival, I miss you. It's been too long since we've seen each other."

Warmth flooded Kaylee's heart and spilled over into her voice. "Yes it has. I love you, Grandma."

"I love you too." Bea chuckled. "Now you get back to work. I know how busy the shop gets this time of year. I'll send details when I've booked my flight."

Smiling, Kaylee disconnected the call. What a lovely turn of events. Having Bea around, even for a short visit, would be like old times. Only back then, Kaylee had been the visitor. A strong memory came to her of the first time she recalled visiting Bea at The Flower Patch. She remembered being intimidated by the towering Victorian mansion's exterior, but the feeling had faded in an instant when she'd entered. Inside, she'd been enchanted by the coolers full of colorful bouquets, the abundant cut stems in buckets, the rainbow of ribbons and vases and add-on balloons that brought such life to the shop. And there had been Bea, bustling here and there, helping clients and greeting customers with her signature good cheer.

Kaylee sighed. It'd be nice to have that good cheer back at The Flower Patch, if only for a brief while.

The bell on the shop door jingled, and Bear leaped off his bed to greet the newcomer, Kaylee's best friend, Jessica Roberts.

“Jess! You’ll never believe—” Kaylee had started toward the door, but she stopped when she caught sight of Jessica’s panicked expression. “What’s wrong?”

Jessica rushed forward and grabbed Kaylee’s arms in a frantic grip. “It’s awful. Terrible! I can’t believe it.”

Alarm zipped up Kaylee’s spine. “What is it? Tell me.”

“It’s Oliver. He’s—” Jessica’s voice broke. “He’s been kidnapped!”

2



Kaylee regarded her friend with concern. Jessica was often overprotective when it came to Oliver, the prized *Pelargonium hortorum* that she kept in a place of honor on the front counter at Death by Chocolate, her bakery next door. Today, however, her distress about the lavender geranium exceeded any alarm Kaylee had previously witnessed her friend exhibit over the plant.

“Come sit down.” Kaylee guided Jessica to a chair in the consultation room. “Tell me what happened.”

“He disappeared from the counter.” Jessica sniffed, then accepted a tissue from the box that Kaylee offered her. “Yesterday he was there as usual, sitting beside the cash register enjoying the sunshine. I opened the shop this morning and went to water him, and he was gone. Vanished without a trace.”

Bear, who obviously sensed the baker’s distress, rose up on his hind legs and propped a front paw on Jessica’s knee to peer into her face. Jessica gave him an absent pat on the head with her free hand while she wiped at her eyes with the tissue.

“Someone must have seen something.” Kaylee kept her voice soothing. “How about Regan?”

Regan Davidson, the girl Jessica had hired to help out at Death by Chocolate for the summer, was one of the kindest and most likable teenagers Kaylee knew. If Jessica hadn’t snapped her up, Kaylee might have offered her a part-time summer job just because she enjoyed having the girl around.

Jessica shook her head. “She didn’t notice anything. Whoever kidnapped him made a clean getaway.”

“What makes you think he’s been kidnapped?” Kaylee asked gently. “Have you received a ransom note?”

“No,” Jessica admitted. “But it’s only a matter of time. Everyone knows how sensitive Oliver is.” Jessica was certain that Oliver could sense when something unpleasant was about to happen and warned his owner by drooping. Kaylee wasn’t prone to believe such notions, but she had to admit that Oliver’s limp leaves had coincided with danger in Turtle Cove on more than one occasion.

“Oliver is a fine-looking geranium,” Kaylee said. “Have you considered the idea that someone stole him with the intention of keeping him?”

“But—but—” Jessica drew a shuddering breath. “Who would do such a thing? He means so much to me.”

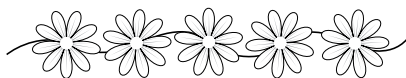
The hurt in Jessica’s eyes propelled Kaylee out of her chair to gather her friend in a hug. “I know. But people can be selfish.” She gave Jessica another squeeze, then pulled back and adopted a sympathetic smile. “Would you like to borrow a potted houseplant from the shop to fill the space? Until he turns up, of course.”

A touch of Jessica’s spunk returned. She stiffened and jutted her chin forward. “No other plant could replace Oliver, even temporarily. I just have to keep the faith that he’ll surface.” She stood and stomped toward the door, dropping the crumpled tissue in the trash along the way.

“Where are you going?” Kaylee called after her.

The answer wafted back to her from the front room. “To call the police and report a theft.”

It might have been Kaylee’s imagination, but it sounded like the bell on the door jangled with an extra clang of determination.



The sky glowed with orange and purple streaks from the setting sun that evening as Kaylee and Reese left the theater.

"That was a pretty good movie," Reese said as he put the truck in gear. "For a period romance."

Kaylee twisted in the passenger seat to raise an eyebrow at him. "Just *pretty* good? Excuse me, but I'm fairly certain I saw you wipe away a tear or two at the end."

"You must have been imagining things." He grinned and reached for her hand. "Okay, you got me. I'm a sucker for happy endings. You know that."

"Same here." She squeezed his hand and faced forward.

"I'm kind of hungry," he said. "Want to grab a burger at Pete's Grill?"

"How can you be hungry after all that popcorn?" Then she laughed. "Actually, a burger sounds good. Can we stop and get Bear from Mary's first?"

"Sure. It's on the way."

Herb and Mary lived in a quiet residential community full of mature trees and well-tended homes. A light flicked on in the front window of the Bishops' ranch-style home when Reese pulled his pickup into the driveway, and a moment later the door opened. Bear charged out barking, with Mary following behind. Kaylee hopped out of the truck when it rolled to a stop and scooped him up.

"Look at him." Mary wore an indulgent smile at the dog's enthusiastic greeting. "You'd think he hadn't seen you in weeks."

"He's pretending to be happy to see me so he can lick the popcorn salt off my face," Kaylee said with a laugh as Bear lapped at her chin. She put him down on the ground, and he dashed down the sidewalk. "Bear, come."

Instead of heeding his owner, the little dog continued down the path toward a young couple out for an evening stroll. The woman laughed and bent down to pet Bear.

"There's Steve and Connie Bertrand." Mary waved, gesturing them over. Bear led the couple toward Mary, Kaylee, and Reese.

"Good to see you both." Reese shook hands with each of them. "I helped Steve replace a water heater at the forest ranger office last year."

"I didn't realize plumbing was part of the job for a forest ranger," Mary said.

Steve shrugged. "All I did was help carry the box and hold up the tank while Reese did the work."

"I couldn't have done it without you," Reese said, then nodded toward Kaylee. "This is my girlfriend, Kaylee Bleu. And you've met Bear."

A ready smile lit up Connie's heart-shaped face. "I love your shop," she gushed. "Although it's been ages since I came in, I'm afraid."

The young woman was vaguely familiar, so Kaylee assumed she'd seen her at The Flower Patch in the past. "It's nice to see you again."

Steve nodded in greeting, and Kaylee could tell that Connie was by far the more outgoing of the two.

"I'm glad we ran into each other." Excitement sparkled in Mary's eyes. "I have good news. Hopefully Layla won't mind me telling you before she does—she and Douglas are getting married!"

"That's wonderful!" Connie hurried forward and pulled Mary into an exuberant hug. "We're so happy for them."

"About time he popped the question," Steve said. "They've been seeing each other for, what, four or five years?"

"Four, I think," Connie answered.

"Layla, Steve, and Connie were great friends growing up," Mary told Kaylee and Reese. "Steve lived in the neighborhood, so when Layla came to visit in the summer, the three were inseparable."

"Only later," Connie said. "I didn't move to Turtle Cove until I was fifteen. School was out for the summer and I didn't know anyone. Layla was so sweet to let me tag along with her and Steve."

"They called themselves the Three Musketeers." Mary's voice grew distant with memory. "Layla used to hate going home at the end of her visit. She'd cry over having to leave her friends."

"I'm surprised she didn't move here when she finished college," Kaylee said.

"I hoped she would, but she couldn't turn down that teaching job in Seattle. Besides, Bart and Dawn live there, and she wanted to be closer to her parents." Layla's father, Bart, was Herb's brother.

"Have the three of you stayed close?" Reese asked.

Steve shook his head. "Not so much."

"Oh, we're friends," Connie hurried to explain. "But you know how it is when you live so far apart. We all have jobs, lives of our own. We do get together when she comes to visit Herb and Mary, though."

"And Douglas sold us our house," Steve added.

"I'm sure Layla will want you both to come to the wedding," Mary said. "Save the date. The third Saturday in August."

Steve's eyebrows arched. "Wow. They're not wasting any time."

"They want to get married in a lavender field—Kaylee's lavender field, as a matter of fact," Mary explained.

"How beautiful." Connie sighed, then her face lit up and she grabbed Steve's arm enthusiastically. "Why don't we host an engagement party for Layla and Douglas, honey?"

Before Steve could respond, Mary clapped with excitement. "What a sweet suggestion. I can't speak for Layla, but I know she'll be touched by the offer."

"Steve and I had better get home." Connie grinned. "We've got a party to plan."



Saturday morning, Kaylee arrived at The Flower Patch to find a sheriff's department cruiser parked at the curb. Wondering what had prompted the visit, Kaylee parked her Ford Escape behind the cruiser instead of in her usual spot behind the shop. As she and Bear approached the front door, she found Deputy Nick Durham waiting on the wide, welcoming front porch.

"You're out and about early this morning," she said in greeting. "Is this visit personal or professional?"

"Professional," he answered quickly.

"Too bad." Kaylee allowed a hint of teasing into her voice. "But maybe something will catch your eye while you're here."

Although Nick and Kaylee had a relationship closer to that of siblings, he'd been a notorious flirt with every other single woman on Orcas Island for as long as she had known him . . . until recently, anyway. Lately, he'd been wooing local music teacher and sailing coach Marnie Galt, trying to win her over by proving that he only had eyes for her. Kaylee wasn't sure what their status was—last she'd heard, Marnie had gone from saying no every time Nick asked her out to saying maybe—but she hoped Marnie would put Nick out of his misery and agree to a date soon, if she hadn't already.

"I'm investigating a theft," Nick said, ignoring Kaylee's suggestion.

"Really?" She unlocked the shop door and pushed it open, but before she and Nick could step inside, Bear dashed between their feet to conduct his usual morning inspection.

Instead of elaborating, Nick watched Bear with a frown. "What's he doing?"

"I have no idea," Kaylee admitted. "I think he's making sure the shop is safe for me. He started this a couple of weeks ago."

"Weird," he commented as the inspection concluded and Bear returned to where Nick and Kaylee stood. "That's not his usual behavior."

"Hey." She punched him on the shoulder. "Don't call my dog weird."

Nick's chocolate-brown eyes crinkled as he smiled. "He's my best friend with four legs. I wouldn't dare insult him." He bent down to give Bear an affectionate head rub, then pulled out a notepad. "Okay, back to business. Tell me everything you know about Jessica's missing flower."

Kaylee raised an eyebrow. "You're here about Oliver?"

"Slow week." Nick shrugged. "Theft is theft, even if it's a plant. I took Jessica's report yesterday and promised I'd follow up."

"I don't know anything about the theft other than what Jessica told me. She was very upset."

"Yes, she was," Nick agreed. "Can you describe the . . . Oliver?"

"He's a lavender geranium, about this tall." Kaylee indicated Oliver's size with her hands. "He's in a terra-cotta pot. The last time I saw him, he had four healthy blooms."

"Do you have a picture?"

"Not of Oliver specifically, but I could show you others like him." A mental image of a missing flyer featuring Oliver hung up at the sheriff's station came to Kaylee's mind and she couldn't repress a giggle. "Sorry," she said when Nick tilted his head at her questioningly. "I just pictured you pinning up his photo next to the Most Wanted posters at the station."

Nick joined in her laughter for a moment. "I know it sounds ridiculous, but Jessica insists that this flower is a valuable award winner."

"It's true. Oliver has won prizes at the Turtle Cove Flower Show."

"In your professional opinion, how much would you say it's worth?"

Kaylee felt like a traitor to her friend by assigning a dollar figure, but she answered the question anyway. "If we're talking replacement alone, I'd say roughly five to ten dollars. Plus another ten or so for the planter." She rushed on. "But as far as sentimental value, Oliver is priceless."

"And you haven't seen or heard anything that might help me find out who took it?"

Kaylee shook her head. "I'm sorry, but no."

"If you get a chance, e-mail me a photo of his species. And if you hear anything, let me know." Nick pocketed his notes and turned toward the door, but he stopped to gaze into the refrigerated display case. He flicked a glance at Kaylee. "I guess while I'm here, I might as well get some flowers."

Trying to prevent any smugness from sneaking into her tone, Kaylee smiled and said, "Anything specific?"

Nick hesitated. "Maybe something pink?"

Kaylee nodded, then opened the case and took out a bouquet of *Alstroemeria pelegrina* she'd put together with leftovers from one of the weekend weddings. "How about these Peruvian lilies? I'm sure Marnie will love them."

"I hope so," Nick said, his cheeks coloring to a hue similar to that of the alstroemeria.

Kaylee carried the arrangement to the counter and started ringing it up. "Does this mean that maybe is now a yes?"

Clearly struggling to suppress a grin, Nick merely said, "Maybe," then paid for the bouquet and hurried out of the shop before Kaylee could ask another question.



The afternoon brought a flurry of customers, and Kaylee stayed busy manning the counter while Mary arranged upcoming orders in the workroom. She was just contemplating hiring a part-time retail clerk for the rest of the summer when a familiar figure entered the shop.

"Connie, it's nice to see you again," Kaylee said, while Bear raced over to greet the newcomer with his usual exuberance.

"This is Bear, right? Aren't you handsome in your bow tie?" Connie bent down to pet Bear, then straightened. "Nice to see you too, Kaylee. Especially since I need your help. I talked to Layla last night, and the engagement party is a go."

"That'll be wonderful," Kaylee said. "What can I do to help?"

Connie pulled a folded sheet of paper from the back pocket of her jeans and spread it out on the counter between them. "Steve and I want to dress up our backyard for the party. It's really kind of a mess back there." She grimaced. "I've been after him to do some landscaping since we bought the house, but there always seems to be something else that takes priority, you know?"

Kaylee inspected the paper, which was a list of flowers and flowering bushes. The Flower Patch wasn't a plant nursery, but with her wholesaler connections, Kaylee could probably help the Bertrands acquire what they needed. "When is the party?"

"The first of August. Steve and I know absolutely nothing about plants and all that, so we asked our neighbor, Len, for his advice, then went on the Internet. We came away with this list of flowers. They're all purple and blue with pops of yellow. Don't you think that will be beautiful?"

Kaylee reexamined the list: lilacs, wisteria, irises, snapdragons, black-eyed Susans. All of them were beautiful, but there was one problem. "Most of these flowers take quite a while to get established and fully bloom. And irises are a spring bulb, not typically a summer flower."

Connie's forehead creased. "But can't you order them already blooming and then we just plant them?"

"Yes," Kaylee said reluctantly, "but flowering plants often droop after being planted."

"But you can take care of that, right?" Connie's face bore a mix of hope and concern.

"There are some things we can do to guard against transplant shock. With time and care, they'll fill out and bloom beautifully. But in two weeks?" Kaylee didn't bother to hide her hesitation.

Connie's shoulders slumped. "I really want the yard to look nice for Layla."

A thought occurred to Kaylee. "What about decorating with large planters? Mary has done some pretty amazing arrangements in containers."

The woman brightened. "I remember the wagons you did during the Autumn Jubilee last year."

"Exactly. I know where I can get some used urn-shaped planters at a discount, and we can fill them with flowers and foliage. Your yard will be gorgeous, and then you can transplant them after the party."

Connie beamed. "I told Steve you'd know exactly what to do. Where do we start?"

Kaylee smiled at Connie's enthusiasm, but inside she winced. She'd just signed on for another major project on top of everything else. But it was for Mary's niece, after all, and family came first. *Speaking of family*, Kaylee thought, brightening. *Maybe I can sweet-talk Grandma into coming out of retirement for a few weeks.*