

AN AB DISCOVERY BOOK

A young woman with brown hair is standing in front of a large mirror, holding a black smartphone to take a selfie. She is wearing a pink long-sleeved sweatshirt and white underwear with a cartoon princess and heart pattern. The background shows a window with curtains and a bed.

# *Brianna's Secret*

CECILIA BENNET

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*Cecilia Bennet*

First Published 2025

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Title: Brianna's Secret

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Editor: Michael Bent, Rosalie Bent

Publisher: AB Discovery

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## Contents

Prologue: A New Home .....	5
Chapter 1: The Quiet Night.....	7
Before .....	10
Chapter 2: A Kind Discovery.....	12
Chapter 3: New Rules, New Comfort.....	15
Chapter 4: Wet Mornings.....	18
Chapter 5: The Sick Day.....	21
Chapter 6: New Caretaking .....	24
Chapter 7: 24/7.....	27
Chapter 8: The Messy Moment.....	30
Chapter 9: Building the Nursery.....	32
Chapter 10: A Public Outing.....	35
Chapter 11: Growing Down .....	38
Chapter 12: The Baby Party.....	41

## Prologue: A New Home

Brianna sat on the edge of the couch, hands folded tightly in her lap. Her phone buzzed once, then went quiet again. The air in the flat was still... too still, the kind that made every small sound feel like a confession. She felt very much ill-at-ease. She'd vacuumed twice that morning. Lit a vanilla candle. Tidied her already tidy bookshelf, removing anything that looked too childish. The children's books had been tucked into a storage box in her closet, and her pacifier, sealed in its case, was hidden deep under her pillow. She had made herself invisible... or at least, that was the plan.

The knock came at exactly 2 p.m. Not early. Not late.

Brianna stood, smoothed her long cardigan down over her hips, and opened the door.

Amanda stood there in a denim jacket, arms full of a potted plant, a canvas tote, and a rolled-up yoga mat slung over one shoulder. Her smile was bright and easy, like it belonged to someone who didn't worry too much.

"Hi," Amanda said. "You must be Brianna."

Brianna nodded. "That's me. Come on in."

The next few minutes passed in a polite blur. Amanda took in the space with a quiet appreciation, complimenting the light, the hardwood floors, and the cozy little reading nook. She made no remarks about how spotless it was. She didn't even seem to notice that Brianna barely made eye contact.

Instead, Amanda asked warm, simple questions. "Do you like tea or coffee?" "Is it usually quiet around here?" "Do you mind if I talk to my plants? It's just something I do."

And for the first time in a long time, Brianna felt herself loosen up a little. Not relax... but loosen slightly, like a fist unclenching by instinct. Relaxed was a state she rarely inhabited.

She said she liked tea and that she preferred quiet. She smiled when Amanda talked to the plant she'd brought—a string of hearts in a terracotta pot. Amanda placed it on the windowsill and gave it a

name: Vera. Brianna liked the idea of naming the plant just like how she still had a name for... her teddy bear, who was now ensconced in the back of a drawer so she couldn't be noticed.

An hour passed. Then another. And Amanda didn't ask *too* much. She didn't scan the space like a detective. She just... made herself real, present, and in the moment.

Finally, she glanced at Brianna with a soft smile and said, "Well, if you'll have me, I'd love to move in."

Brianna paused. There was a flutter in her chest. It wasn't fear exactly, but rather something deeper. It was a kind of ache, a bit like hope, if hope was something that came shyly and wore slippers.

"I think," Brianna said slowly, "that would be really nice."

That night, after Amanda left, Brianna lay in bed with her knees pulled to her chest, the scent of vanilla still in the air. Her diaper rustled softly beneath her flannel pajamas. She hadn't put it on right away, but had hesitated, anxious in a way she couldn't quite name. But eventually, the comfort won. It always did.

She sucked gently on her pacifier, hidden under the covers, and wondered what it would be like, just for once, to *not* have to hide. And a few blocks away, Amanda packed a suitcase she'd barely zipped. She placed a baby blue photo frame in her bag and sat cross-legged on the mattress.

She thought of Brianna's delicate voice, her soft cardigans, and the hint of something gentle and secret in her eyes. Amanda didn't know why, but something in her chest had stirred the moment she saw her. It was a whisper of something she'd once felt before, something warm, something protective.

She didn't want to push. She never would. It was not her style, but maybe... just maybe... this time, the door wouldn't stay closed.

## Chapter 1: The Quiet Night

Brianna had always been the kind of person people overlooked. She wasn't forgettable exactly, just... easy to pass by without noticing. She was quiet, gentle, and unassuming. She walked through the world like someone tiptoeing across a creaky floor, careful not to disturb anything. She didn't want to get noticed either.

At twenty-eight, she worked as a graphic designer, mostly from home. She liked her particular routines. She took breakfast at the little window nook in soft, comfy clothes and warm socks. Rainy days made her happiest as she could watch the rain, wind, and storms outside while sitting inside safe and warm. It was a metaphor of her life. Her world was built around comfort... and caution. And every night since childhood, she'd worn diapers to bed.

It wasn't something she talked about. Not even her parents had really understood what was going on with her. They'd sent her to doctors, psychologists, even hypnotists. The bedwetting never stopped. At best, it moved from 7 nights a week to 6 nights... at best. It just became... hers, a quiet, private, and hidden part of her life and routine.

She'd learned to manage it early on, changing in the bathroom, keeping her supplies tucked away in a locked drawer in her room. She used thick disposal bags, washed her bedding regularly, and never *ever* let anyone get too close.

Until Amanda.

Amanda had breezed into her life almost a year ago, answering her flat mate ad with a warm smile, bright red hair, and arms full of secondhand books she knew she would also enjoy. She'd been studying social work and had just landed a job in youth mental health. She was a few years older, confident, and had that calm, casual charisma that made people open up without even realizing it. She was in so many ways the opposite of Brianna.

Brianna didn't open up, of course, not really, but Amanda didn't seem to mind. She never pried. She cooked extra and always

offered a plate. She gently teased when Brianna hovered awkwardly during conversations, and left her funny notes on the fridge like, *"Please tell me you're the one who ate the last muffin, or we have a ghost with very good taste."*

They were different, but they fit together well, or at least, Brianna thought so. She'd started to look forward to Amanda being home, to the background hum of her presence in the flat, the late-night chats about movies or dumb things they saw online, and the warm, safe feeling of someone else breathing in the same space.

Still, some things stayed hidden and always would. It simply had to be. Or so she believed.

That one particular night, Brianna had been especially tired. A cold front had rolled in, and all she wanted to do was to snuggle under her weighted blanket with a hot water bottle and her thickest diaper. She didn't hear Amanda knock on her door. She didn't hear Amanda calling softly through the hallway.

She'd fallen asleep early, a pacifier tucked between her lips, hidden beneath her blanket, unaware that the soft crinkling plastic from her used diaper bag had slipped from her bin and was now sitting half-exposed by the bathroom door.

Amanda had only meant to borrow Brianna's face cleanser. She'd knocked, waited, then slipped inside the shared bathroom... and stopped.

Her eyes caught on the white plastic bag, one she hadn't seen before. It was folded neatly and tied shut, but the shape was unmistakable. There was a used adult diaper tucked inside. Amanda blinked, not in horror, just in surprise. And then... something else. She felt an ache in her chest that she didn't expect. She didn't say anything, just quietly disposed of the bag, then stepped out of the bathroom and returned to her room, her heart beating with a strange kind of clarity. Suddenly, Brianna made a bit more sense.

The next morning, Brianna woke up slowly, with a dull ache in her stomach and a lingering warmth between her legs. She'd wet again and quite heavily. She lay still, blinking at the soft glow of light under her bedroom door. For a long moment, she just listened to the