



An AB Discovery Book

# Frills and Frillies... *For Boys*

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CECILIA BENNET

*Frills and Frillies... for boys*

# Frills and Frillies... For Boys

by  
Cecilia Bennet

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## Chapter One: The After-Hours Boutique

Simone turned the illuminated sign in the door window to 'Evening Appointments Only – Please Knock', then locked it with a satisfying click. Outside, the last of the Rosevale afternoon faded into amber, shadows pooling at the edges of Dovetail Street like tea spreading across linen. She let the curtain fall across the front door and turned back into the soft hush of the shop. The boutique was quiet now. Still.

From the street, *Simone & Carol's Lingerie & Intimates* gave off a polite, slightly nostalgic charm with lace-lined displays, tasteful pastels, and curated classical music drifting into the pavement. But after hours, once the final brassiere had been boxed and the teacups washed, something else came alive.

Carol emerged from the fitting room with a folded cream camisole in her hands.

"Three this evening," she said. "All boys. All accompanied."

Simone looked up from the appointment ledger. "Again?"

Carol nodded, a wry smile tugging at the corner of her mouth. "Seems like a pattern, doesn't it?"

Simone closed the book. "You know, I used to think the after-hours appointments would be nothing more than indulgent late-night shopping for entitled middle-class ladies."

"And now we're a sanctuary instead." Carol placed the camisole gently onto a satin-padded shelf. "Gentleness is in short supply out there."

Simone didn't disagree.

It had started subtly, first a shy man in his forties, escorted by a sister who asked quietly if they had "anything delicate, in a size thirty-eight, but with a higher rise." Then, a teenage boy whose aunt quietly explained that he "wanted to understand what made lingerie feel special." Then the mothers had begun arriving. Always by appointment. Always after hours.

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One had brought her son under the pretence of a birthday outing. Another, with a steady, defiant voice, said, "He wears what he likes. I want him fitted properly, with care." It wasn't always easy. Some boys trembled in the dressing rooms. Others cried softly when they saw themselves in the mirror, their thin frames draped in soft cotton and lace. And Carol, blunt, kind, perceptive Carol, always seemed to know just what to say.

"We've only just begun to understand who we're really here for," Simone said, gently straightening a row of pastel bras. "There's something deeper happening. Something unspoken."

Carol nodded. "Let's just keep being the place where they don't have to explain themselves."

The door buzzed gently. Simone pressed the release. A woman entered with a slender boy beside her. He was perhaps fifteen, tall, soft-shouldered, in a sweatshirt too big for him, sleeves tucked into his fists. He looked at the floor as they walked in, as though the shelves were full of precious things he wasn't sure he was allowed to touch.

"Welcome, Miriam," Carol said with a warm smile. "And you must be Christopher."

Christopher gave a tiny nod.

"We're so glad to see you again," Simone added gently. "We've put a few things aside, just in case you wanted to try something new."

Miriam smiled gratefully. "He's been talking about it all week."

Carol motioned toward the back. "Come through. I've prepared the peach fitting room. It's the cosiest."

Inside the softly lit space, Carol pulled out three matching sets, one in soft lilac cotton with lace trim, another in pale sky-blue satin, and a third with a high-waisted cut and scalloped edges. "These are all designed for comfort first," she explained, holding one up to the light. "No shaping, no wiring, just softness and support."

Christopher stepped forward, almost tiptoeing, his eyes wide. He reached toward the blue satin set and then paused.

Simone smiled. "Would you like to try that one first?"

He nodded, still not meeting her eyes.

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As Simone drew the curtain, Miriam sat gently on the padded bench, folding her hands in her lap.

"He's been... quiet about it until recently," she said softly. "But I think it's been in him a long time."

Carol poured two small cups of chamomile tea and handed one over. "And you support him?"

"Absolutely." Miriam's voice was calm, unshaken. "But I wanted him to have someone else. Someone who could guide him."

Behind the curtain, there was a rustle of fabric and a pause. Then, shyly, "Mum?"

"Yes, sweetheart?"

"Can... can I show you?"

"Of course."

The curtain pulled back just an inch. Christopher stepped out, chin tucked, cheeks pink. The satin bra sat smoothly on his narrow chest, and the panties fit snugly at his hips. The boy glanced at the mirror, eyes flicking upward, and then he froze, and his breath caught in his throat.

Carol recognised it... that single second when discomfort gave way to recognition. To joy.

"You look beautiful," Miriam said, voice steady. "Absolutely beautiful."

He swallowed. "It feels right."

Simone stepped in quietly. "Would you like to try the lilac cotton next?"

He nodded.

The rest of the fitting passed in a dreamy hush. Christopher said little, but each time he stepped out in a new set, he stood a little taller, a little more whole.

When it was done, Carol wrapped the chosen pieces in tissue, lavender, of course, and handed the small white bag to Christopher. He took it with both hands, as if it were something sacred.

As they left, Miriam turned back to Simone. "There are more boys like him. More mothers like me."

Simone nodded. "Send them to us then. We'll be ready."



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Later that evening, as the last of the tea cooled and the lights dimmed, Simone and Carol sat behind the counter, quiet in their thoughts.

"We need more sizes," Carol said softly. "And more gentle styles. Pastels, unstructured cups, wider elastic bands. Youth cuts. Maybe camisoles."

Simone nodded slowly. "And more changing space. A second fitting room."

"We'll have to rearrange the front shelves."

"We'll make room."

She looked around their small, beautiful boutique with blush walls and the personal intimacy that clung to every corner. There was a current flowing through their business now, something subtle and deep. They hadn't planned for it. But they knew enough to trust it.

"Carol?"

"Hm?"

"Do you ever think we were chosen for this?"

Carol gave a little laugh. "No. But I think we were *ready* when it came."

They said nothing else for a long time.

## *Chapter Two: A Boy Named Eli*

A quiet rain tapped at the windows as dusk fell over Dovetail Street. Inside the boutique, the warm lamplight softened every corner, turning the lace displays to watercolour. Carol finished folding a new shipment of peach camisoles while Simone checked the evening's appointments.

"Christopher and Miriam at six-thirty," she said. "And a new pair at seven: Jocelyn and her son, Eli. First-timers."

Carol glanced up. "First-timers always come early. They don't want to bump into anyone else."

She was right. At six-twenty-five, the bell chimed and the door creaked open.

Christopher stepped inside first, his hood down this time. His posture had changed, his shoulders looser, and his eyes met Carol's without flinching. He was wearing a soft pink sweatshirt and fitted jeans. Not a word was said, but the colour choice made both women smile.

Miriam followed close behind, rain in her curls. "He's been wearing the blue set every afternoon," she said softly, with pride but no fanfare. "He lays everything out himself. Folds it like it's his uniform."

Christopher shifted, almost bashful. "I brought it in a laundry bag. I was hoping you could show me how to handwash it."

Simone placed a hand on her heart. "Of course, sweetheart. Come to the back. We'll do it together."

They entered the rear changing space, now subtly redone with a second fitting room added, both dressed in floral prints and blush velvet, and a long mirror with delicate backlighting. Carol had added a tall glass vase of fresh peonies between them.

As Simone showed Christopher the handwashing method—soak, gentle press, rinse, roll-dry in a towel—Carol guided Miriam toward the new arrivals rack.

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"I think he might be ready for something a little more structured," Miriam murmured. "Not shaped, just... a bit more grown up."

Carol nodded thoughtfully. "Something like this," she said, pulling a pale pink soft-cup bra with wider satin straps. "Still gentle, but with just enough definition to remind him he's choosing this."

Miriam traced the lace edge with her finger. "Exactly."

From the back, Simone called, "Carol? Can you bring in the bunny print pair from the new line?"

Carol raised a brow. "He asked for a print?"

"Apparently, he saw them on the shelf and said they looked *fun*."

Miriam nearly laughed. "It's like watching him return to himself."

At exactly seven, the second bell chimed.

Jocelyn was tall, lean, and tense. Her son, Eli, trailed behind like a shadow, his hood drawn low, long sleeves covering his hands, gaze fixed to the floor. He was perhaps thirteen or fourteen, with a kind of stillness that read more as fear than calm.

Simone stepped forward. "You must be Jocelyn. And Eli?"

Jocelyn gave a small, uncertain nod. "We weren't sure. He asked. I didn't think... I mean, he's always been quiet. But recently he's been... hiding things."

Carol's expression softened. "And today?"

"I told him we could just come in and *look*," Jocelyn glanced around, eyes catching on the blush tones, the polished displays. "He didn't speak the whole way here."

Simone leaned down a little, gentling her tone. "Eli, you don't have to do anything. You can just look. Or sit. Or listen."

Eli's eyes flicked up for a single second. That was all.

Simone stepped aside and let them wander. Jocelyn walked slowly through the store, trailing her fingers along the soft cotton and satin. Eli stayed close behind her until they came to a lower drawer with foldable bralettes in soft tones: mint, cloud grey, buttercream.

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He knelt without a word and ran his fingers over one. It was pale blue, with tiny white bows stitched along the band. Barely a whisper of lace. Just softness.

"He likes that one," Jocelyn said quietly. "He thinks I don't know, but... I've found things. He's been borrowing."

Carol approached slowly. "Would you like to try it on, Eli?"

Eli blinked twice and didn't speak.

"He might," Jocelyn said gently. "I think he's afraid it'll feel wrong."

"Would you like to feel the fabric first?" Carol offered. "No dressing room. Just hold it."

That small gesture seemed to ease something. Eli reached out and took the bralette, then pressed it softly between his palms. A barely audible sound escaped his lips. Like a sigh. Or relief.

A few minutes later, Jocelyn and Eli were in the second fitting room. Carol stayed nearby, guiding gently.

"Take your time, darling. If it doesn't feel right, we can stop."

Behind the curtain, there was a rustle. Then stillness. Then, unexpectedly, came a voice.

"It feels... like I'm not pretending."

Jocelyn, sitting just outside, looked down at her lap, blinking back something she couldn't quite name.

Carol glanced at Simone, who had quietly joined them. "He's the fourth this month to say almost exactly that," she murmured.

Simone tilted her head. "Say what?"

"That this feels like something *real*. Like it belongs."

They stood in silence for a moment as the rain picked up again outside.

Eli emerged a few minutes later. Still quiet, still guarded, but his sleeves were pushed up now, and he walked to the mirror on his own. Simone offered a matching pair of briefs. "Only if you want them."

He took them without hesitation.

After they'd gone, with Eli clutching a plain white bag to his chest, Simone closed the door slowly and exhaled.

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"They're coming in younger," she said quietly.

Carol nodded. "And they're not asking for fetish. Not fantasy."

"No," Simone agreed. "They're asking for softness. Safety. For somewhere to be seen."

She paused, then added, "And they all come with women who *already know*."

Carol turned toward the tea kettle. "We're not just fitting bras, you know."

Simone glanced at her.

"We're fitting a part of them that never got to exist before."

## Chapter Three: Traces

It began, as many discoveries do, in silence.

Carol was straightening the display drawers one Tuesday afternoon when she noticed the faintest pink shadow on the edge of a cami set that had been returned to the fitting rail. She sniffed it automatically. It was lavender detergent, nothing unusual. But the memory stayed with her.

That same week, Simone made a note after an evening fitting with a boy named Marcus. Fifteen, fine-boned, with pale skin and a flushed face throughout the fitting. He had winced slightly when she fastened the back of a soft cotton bralette.

"Too tight?" she'd asked gently.

"No," he'd said quickly. "It's just... sore there."

She'd asked to look. Just professionally, just gently. Around his lower back and hips, faint reddish bands bloomed across his skin. Indentations. Like something elastic had been digging in too long.

"Your underwear, sweetheart?" she'd asked delicately. "Was it uncomfortable?"

He'd nodded quickly and pulled his shirt back down. Simone had let it go. But in her ledger that evening, she quietly wrote: *Marcus' visible irritation, waistband? Not the first time.*

Two nights later, Carol was helping another young boy, Owen, age thirteen, with his first full set. A pale mint bralette, soft enough for sleep, and high-cut cotton briefs. His mother, Diana, watched from the side, arms folded.

Carol helped Owen into the set slowly, gently adjusting the straps.

"You're doing great," she whispered.

Then, as he turned toward the mirror, Carol caught a glimpse of the same thing again—around the tops of his thighs and across the curve of his lower belly. Faint, but unmistakable.

She met Diana's eyes. "Has he been having trouble with chafing?"

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Diana looked surprised. "Chafing? No..."

Then her face changed. A flicker of embarrassment, and then something else. Relief, maybe.

"Well, not exactly," she said after a pause. "It's... from his nighttime wear."

Carol waited, silent and warm.

"He still wets the bed," Diana said softly. "He wears... cloth nappies. I pin them myself. I use plastic pants over the top, but I'm always afraid they're too tight. They leave marks, especially if he's been tossing."

She glanced at Owen, who was now inspecting himself in the mirror, quietly absorbed.

"You're the first person who's asked about the marks without judgment," Diana added.

Carol kept her voice neutral, kind. "We've just seen a few lately. You're not alone."

Diana blinked. "Really?"

Carol nodded. "We didn't know. But maybe it's something we ought to start paying attention to."

That night, after the shop closed, Carol and Simone sat in the back room sipping green tea. Simone flipped through the ledger.

"Marcus. Owen. There was a boy last week, Sammy, with the same red marks. I said nothing, but they looked the same."

Carol sighed. "Diana was open. She said nappies. Pinned cloth. Plastic pants."

Simone looked up, eyebrows raised. "That's... very specific."

"She wasn't ashamed," Carol said. "Just tired, and grateful to be taken seriously."

There was silence for a moment.

"We've been offering a special service," Simone murmured. "But maybe some of them need protection, too. A different kind."

Carol nodded slowly. "And guidance. The mothers are doing this mostly on their own. You can see it in their faces."

Simone stood and paced slowly around the room, fingers brushing the edges of folded slips and bra sets.