

THE SECRET AT ARNFORD HALL

By Mollie Blake

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CHAPTER 2

Nine years earlier:

Tall, dark, and handsome, thirty-one-year-old Gabriel Black, probably the richest, most eligible bachelor in the northwest of England, was waiting in a boardroom for a meeting with his financial advisor. As he lounged in one of the high backed leather swivel chairs at the oak boardroom table, Eliza Redfern walked in and poured some coffee for their client. Gabriel immediately took in her shapely five feet four inches, shoulder length copper-colored hair—no doubt out of a bottle—and air of apparent innocence. He liked the challenge that demeanor often gave.

As he was leaving, he stopped at the reception desk and leaned in toward Eliza, placing his hand palm up in front of her.

“Write your phone number on here.”

Eliza stared at him, shock and embarrassment on her face. “I beg your pardon?”

He spoke with authority and his hand remained in front of her. “I want to take you to dinner. Give me your number.”

Hardly in control of her own actions, she picked up her pen and wrote her mobile number on his palm. He flashed a smile to die for and left the building.

Eliza was twenty-six. She’d had three romantic relationships so far in her life, but was currently not seeing anyone, so what could be the harm in going out to dinner with one of the most handsome, richest men around? Okay, he had a reputation for being a ladies’ man, with a different woman for each day of the week. There’d also been press reports about prostitutes, and a fierce protection of the privacy of his family. And, by all accounts, it was a weird family. Didn’t he have a twin brother that no one ever saw, a sister, and a mother who looked young enough to be his sister? Well, Eliza was game for most things, so when he said he would pick her up at eight, she spent the preceding two hours getting ready.

He came for her in his jet-black Lotus Exige sports car, and wined and dined her with champagne and lobster. Then he enticed her to invite him back to her place for coffee, which ended in her bedroom with one of the best nights of sex she had ever experienced.

To her amazement he called her again and she had three more dates with him over the next two weeks.

One month later she texted him. ~ I’m pregnant.

She was amazed to find him knocking at her door within an hour.

“You said you were on the pill.”

“I am!”

“Are you going to get rid of it?”

“No.”

“Do you want a relationship with me?”

“Not really. We don’t know each other at all and definitely have nothing in common.”

“Do you want any money?”

“It would be appreciated, or I’ll have to go back to work.”

“Can I have a relationship with my child?”

“Well, you are the father!”

As the weeks turned into months, Eliza found herself spending a bit more time with the father of her unborn child. He took her out to dinner at least once a week, and they went to his family's villa in Monaco for a week, which was out of her world, almost to the extent of making her reconsider her answer to his question: did she want to have a relationship with him?

Then, quite by accident, she discovered his secret.

Her reaction was straightforward. "I don't want your money. You cannot have a relationship with my child. I never want to see you again."

Soon letters from his solicitor started arriving through her letterbox.

My client will be seeking paternity rights...

He will approach the court for full access to his child and will attempt to gain custody...

Eliza was worried sick she could lose her baby. Her sister couldn't understand why she had suddenly refused to see Black anymore. She thought their relationship had been progressing.

"Eliza, you'll need the money. Think what a future your child will have with that inheritance to look forward to!"

"You don't understand, Carol. It's better that my baby has nothing to do with any of them."

Eliza Redfern never told anyone Black's secret.

However, she needed a compromise, and also needed to know what would happen if anything should prevent her from raising her child in the future, God forbid.

One night she sat at her computer screen and began to type.

This agreement will be in place until the child of Eliza Redfern and Gabriel Black reaches the age of eighteen. It will come into effect on the death or incapacity (total physical and mental) of the mother, Eliza Redfern. It will cease on the death of Gabriel Black.

Gabriel Black will have no contact whatsoever with the child unless and until this agreement comes into effect. On the signing of this agreement by Gabriel Black, Eliza Redfern vows to acknowledge the father of said child to be Gabriel Black.

That father is to adhere fully to the following conditions:

The child is not to attend any private schools up to the age of eighteen. He/she is to be educated in the state system.

The child is never to sleep at Arnford Hall when Mrs. Black is in residence.

He/she is to be allowed to choose his/her own religion, if any.

He/she is to be given the choice to join the family business, but under no compulsion.

He/she is to be free to leave Arnford Hall once he/she reaches age eighteen, with no restrictions to be put on where the child lives.

The child is not to be spoiled.

The child is to be allowed to play with children of his/her own age.

The child is to be allowed to join in his/her school's activities.

The child is to be allowed to go to football matches, tennis tournaments, and other events of his/her choosing.

The child is to be shown love.

It was simple and heartfelt. In exchange for his agreement, Gabriel's name would appear on the birth certificate, and the child would bear its father's surname.

Gabriel realized this was as much as he was going to get without a threat of really bad publicity. All his lawyers put together would have great difficulty in keeping the press quiet, and he could never take that risk.

He also realized he would have no relationship with his own child until he or she reached the age of eighteen. Then he or she would probably want nothing to do with him anyway.

He visited Abacus and Cornworthy Solicitors and signed the agreement.
Eliza relaxed, tried to enjoy her pregnancy, and looked forward to the birth of her first child.
Gabriel Black no longer gave a fuck about the world.

Where to buy

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Website

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Reviews

5.0 out of 5 stars Edge of your seat can't put it down love story that is just so much more than the traditional love story of boy meets girl.

Love this story. Set in Cheshire it follows the relationships of billionaire Gabriel Black. At first he seems like the villain but then once he reveals parts of himself I found I was rooting for a happy ending. I love the different relationships explored with his son, who is grieving for his mum and all the struggles being a single parent has. The main storyline between Gabriel and Grace was fantastically written and very seductive. I couldn't help but worry about their struggles and hope they managed to work towards the happy ending they deserved. Overall a beautiful story brilliantly perceptive of different strains of family relationships and so realise ii found that I was lost in the world of Gabriel Black. Cannot wait to read more by this author. Would definitely recommend to any fans of romance.

5 stars OMG I loved it. It was brilliant

OMG I loved it, it was brilliant, I didn't want to put it down, it had just the right amount of naughtiness combined with a brilliant storyline that kept you gripped and on the edge of your seat all the way through.

[5 stars](#)This book gives you parental love, romance, secrets that if they come out can change lives and much more. Enjoy!!

The Secret at Arnford Hall: A Cheshire Love Story by Mollie Blake

Gabriel Black did not care about the world that is until his 7-year-old son came into his life and home and heart for the first time. Mollie Blake is an author that is new to me but the story that unfolded here is so in-depth that she should earn more than 5 stars.

Gabriel has such a deep dark secret and feels incapable of loving another person. Thank goodness, John, his son, came into his life.

John is so young and just lost his mother. John's mother knew Gabriel's secret and did not want to be around Mrs. Black. Upon John's mother's death, the will stated that John was to go live with Gabriel but never when Mrs. Black was at the home which was called Arnford Hall. Also, that John would attend a state school not a private school.

Grace McGuire has her own secrets and lost her parents and has no idea where her brother might be. She was forced to change her name and no one was to know her past life. She knows that if the world finds out about her past it would ruin her present life. She was a teacher at the state school that John was to attend and he was in her classroom.

Gabriel met Grace and knew he had to have her. He uncovered everything about her and her parents and brother and the secret that she was living with. He demands she be his whenever he wants her and at the end of a year she will be set free.

But what will happen when Grace becomes intertwined with Gabriel's family and acquaintances and become important to him and especially to his son. What happens to Grace's present boyfriend and the fact that Jason does not know Grace's past and so she cannot tell him about this hold.

Sit back for a long read but so well worth it. This book supplies romance, risque passion and erotica. Gives you parental love and devotion plus a single dad that nothing is off limits.