

# HIS LADY BRAT

RAKES OF MAYFAIR BOOK 6



MELINDA BARRON

BLUSHING BOOKS

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Melinda Barron

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## CHAPTER 1



LONDON, NOVEMBER 1889

Jonathan, Lord Barton, tossed a cucumber sandwich into his mouth and checked his pocket watch. It was well after four, actually closer to five. Lady Strauss should have been home by now.

He helped himself to another sandwich and smiled at the maid who stood nervously in the doorway.

“Her ladyship ain’t here.” The maid twisted her fingers around themselves and bit her lip.

“Yes, I heard you the first few times you told me. Nonetheless I will wait for her.” He leaned forward, putting his elbows on his knees. “The proper statement would be ‘Her ladyship isn’t here’, not ain’t. Never say ain’t.”

Without acknowledging his statement, the maid fled and Jonathan shook his head. He hated to make the help nervous, but Lady Strauss needed some discipline in her life, and now was as good a time as any to start.

He had tried to make a bond with her during the little affair that

had seen his friend Andrew leap from lesser son to a duke. While she'd talked with him, and had made it seem as if she might offer him her body, she'd pushed him away at the last moment. She had, for years, been the mistress of the late Duke of Melbourne, whose widow, Clarissa, was now married to his friend Andrew.

Belinda, Lady Strauss, had locked horns with Clarissa many times, and now that Clarissa and Andrew were married, and living in the house that Belinda wanted, Andrew had asked Jonathan to make sure Lady Strauss would not cause any more problems for them.

But every time he'd tried to make contract with her she'd evaded him. Hence his reason for waiting in her sitting room, drinking enough tea that he would soon be asking for directions to the water closet.

It was after Lady Willingham's garden party yesterday, when Belinda had practically thrown herself at Andrew, that his friend had told Jonathan to get to work.

"Clarissa is afraid I'm going to be swayed, which I won't," Andrew had said. "But it needs to be done. I asked you last month to take her in hand, but you failed.

Clarissa had been standing nearby while Andrew had spoken and she'd inserted herself into the conversation. "She let everyone believe that Andrew had been in her bed. Is it not bad enough that she snatched my first husband's affections away from me? Now she is trying for the second!"

Clarissa had burst into tears. Andrew had pulled her close and soothed her fears with soft whispers. Jonathan had felt like a heel. He had never thought Belinda would go so far. How wrong he had been.

He checked his watch again. It was now after five. Belinda must be taking tea somewhere else. He had half a mind to leave. Then, he remembered Clarissa's tears from the night before. He couldn't let it go. Belinda needed to know that she couldn't mess with people's lives and not suffer the consequences.

About ten minutes later, the front door opened and Jonathan smiled to himself. He could hear hushed female voices from the front hallway. He took another sandwich and a drink of his tea. Then, he crossed one leg over the other and waited.

It didn't take long. The door to the sitting room pushed open and Lady Strauss calmly walked inside, unpinning her hat and placing it on the table.

"Lord Barton, what a pleasant surprise. I don't remember inviting you for tea." She smiled at him and Jonathan grinned.

"Don't you? I'm not the type of person to invite myself," he said. He took another sip. "Won't you have a seat, Lady Strauss?"

"How sweet of you to invite me to sit in my own house. I would ask why I'm honored by your presence, but I think I know. I would think the duke was man enough to fight his own battles."

"The duke is smart enough to know a viper when he sees one, and to keep his distance."

Belinda's eyes flashed with anger, and Jonathan raised his eyebrows. As fast as the anger had appeared, it was replaced with a sweet smile.

"I repeat, why don't you take a seat, Lady Strauss."

"If it's a tumble you're after, you can forget it. I don't give my favors to just anyone."

"Really? That's not what I've heard."

The anger reappeared on her face. He waited to see if she would launch herself at him, her claws out to scratch his face. Instead she just stood there, looking so angry he wanted to laugh. But he didn't.

"Get out." She didn't move, didn't point at the door. She held her temper quite nicely, actually.

Jonathan took a sip from his cup. Then calmly reached over and refilled the fine china.

"Your cook's cakes are quite good. I particularly like the sugared ones, and their sweetness."

"Did you hear me?"

“Oh, I heard you. Now, I won’t tell you again to have a seat. You and I have something to discuss.”

“I have nothing to discuss with you. Leave now.”

“What’s wrong, Belinda? Am I not up high enough for you? Just the third son of an earl. Sorry.”

“You dare to be so informal with me? I am Lady Strauss to you.” He took another sip. “You were happy to talk with me at the house party, and you let me call you Belinda there. I’m hurt that you have pushed me down the ladder.”

“You were a distraction at the party, nothing more,” she said. “You will remember that I did not let you come to my bed. And I repeat, I am Lady Strauss to you. You will address me as such.”

“Titles are earned, Belinda. True, your first husband made you a lady, but your actions show you are no more than a brat. Since you choose to act that way, I will treat you that way. Now, sit down. I won’t tell you again.”

Jonathan watched her face. Her anger intensified, then changed to suspicion, and finally to worry. She crossed the room slowly and he took advantage of the time to study her. She was a petite woman, with small breasts and a tiny waist. She had an abundance of blonde hair that she kept piled on the top of her head. And her blue eyes were striking.

She sat down opposite him and frowned.

“State your opinion and get out.”

“My opinion, Lady Strauss, is that you’ve been a very bad girl. You’ve been the mistress of several men, men who have obviously allowed you to run roughshod over them, and to get your way. I’m here to stop that.”

“Really? Do you think I’d allow you to be my protector? Think again, Lord Barton.” She poured herself a cup of tea, or half a cup, really, since he’d practically drained the pot. She huffed in frustration and then, instead of ringing a bell, she yelled out, “Tea.”

“Your manners at home reflect your actions in public, I see,” he said.

Their gazes locked, hers angry, and his amused. They stayed that way until the maid brought in another tea tray. She set it on the table and scurried from the room as if she were a mouse being chased by a cat.

Belinda took up a new cup and filled it, then sat back and sipped. "Speak your piece," she said after she'd swallowed. "I grow tired of your presence in my household."

"Very well." He set down his empty cup, poured himself more and then sat back and started to drink. Finally, after a few moments, she put her cup delicately on the table. Then she stomped her foot.

"Speak and then leave!" she yelled.

"Very well." Just to bother her he took another sip before he said, "I wanted you to know I've let it be known at White's that I've taken you as my mistress. It served two purposes. The first being that it let everyone know that you were just being unkind to the duchess at the garden party, rubbing salt in old wounds so to speak. Everyone knows the history between the two of you, and that you can be rather a witch, so to speak."

Before she could say anything he continued, "The second being that no other man would dare cuckold me and go to your bed. There are rules about things like that. For all intents and purposes, in the eyes of society, you belong to me now."

Her eyes darkened and her lips thinned in an angry sash. She opened her mouth, closed it, then opened it again. When she spoke her voice was dark with anger. "How dare you! If you think I'll allow this to stand, you're quite mistaken."

"You'll allow it. To do otherwise would hurt you in the eyes of society," he said. "I would tell everyone that you took me to your bed, and then lied to me just to get a taste of my cock. You would never find another lover. I intend to tame you, to give you some lessons on how to behave. You will not run over me as you have your other lovers."

“Lovers? Ha! If you think that you are coming to my bed, you’re sorely mistaken, Lord Barton.”

“Please, call me Jonathan. Now, the Ellington crush is tonight. Please be ready at nine. If you are not, I will punish you. If you go early, without me, I will punish you. And if you disappear totally, I will find you, and punish you. Do I make myself clear?”

She stared at him, her mouth open, and he knew she’d do exactly as he’d said. Jonathan stood and buttoned his jacket. He smiled at Belinda and kept a chuckle to himself as her shocked look changed to one that seemed as if she’d spew fire like a dragon.

“I will see you around eight,” he said.

He walked to the door and fought the urge to turn and look at her. She had used him before, and now he would make sure that she did as she was supposed to do. He would see that she learned some manners.

And, he might have a little fun in the process.



BELINDA LISTENED to the door close. When she knew that Lord Barton was gone she allowed an angry scream to escape from her mouth. She was sure her staff halted in their tracks, wondering if they should come in to check on their mistress. But she also knew that not one of them would open the door and ask if something was wrong, if there was something they could do.

She was alone in the world. Her family had disowned her long ago, and when Taylor died it had been like a punch to the stomach. She wasn’t allowed to see his body. She wasn’t allowed to plan his funeral. She wasn’t even allowed to go to his funeral. Was it no wonder that she hated Clarissa? Seeing her happy made Belinda furious! But she had no intention of going after her husband. She didn’t find him attractive in the least. But she loved seeing Clarissa angry.



And how dare Jonathan think he could control her! Who did he think he was, coming into her home and ordering her around? And to tell people that she was his mistress? There was no one, really, that she'd cared to look at as a lover. Especially not Lord Barton. Not that he wasn't a handsome man, strong and virile, with his dark hair and dark eyes. But he was younger than she was, she knew. Not by more than a few years, but still. What would people think?

It didn't help that he was so close to Andrew, the new duke. That made her angry, too, that Clarissa had been able to keep her title, and her new husband had the title Taylor had held. If things had gone differently Taylor would still be alive, still be the duke, and, perhaps, Clarissa would be gone and Belinda could be a duchess.

Of course she knew that would never have happened. They wouldn't have killed her, and there was no way he could have divorced her. But if she had stayed in Bath, and Taylor had not died, then at least Belinda might have been able to live in the house on Park Lane.

Thinking about it didn't make things better. All it did was make her angry. Belinda put her head in her hands. She should have stood up to him. How dare he come into her house, proclaim that she was now his mistress and say that if she didn't follow his instructions that he was going to punish her. What was he going to do? Freeze her bank account? The bankers hated that they had to deal with a woman, but they did it because she had money that Taylor, and other lovers, had given her. She knew they would hate to lose control of it.

What else could he do? Put a notice in the newspaper about her? Not in one of the respectable papers, but in a gossip rag? If that happened she would lose what little standing she had left in society. People would stop inviting her to parties and other events. She didn't want that to happen.

Would he truthfully follow her places? Something told her he

would, and it would cause more problems than she was willing to do deal with.

Of course there was always the physical form of punishment. Would he actually spank her?

A chill ran up her spine at the thought. It had been so long since she'd had a lover that the thought of physical contact with a man was appealing, but not if she was being spanked. She'd had a lover who'd enjoyed that particular activity, only he was the one who'd liked to be spanked. Belinda hadn't cared for it, but she'd done as he'd asked. Unfortunately, she wasn't suited to his needs and he complained about her abilities. She didn't spank him hard enough. She should yell at him, call him names, tell him that he was not a true man because he liked to have his bottom reddened. She found the whole thing distasteful, and he'd soon thrown her over for a different mistress. She'd wondered once how he explained the red marks on his bottom to his wife, but then she figured that he'd been truthful with her when he'd said they did not have any romantic relations.

She'd asked him once what he'd enjoyed about it and he'd told her the sensations were most pleasant. But he hadn't offered to spank her, so Belinda didn't know. She worried the tip of her thumb with her teeth and wondered how she could best get herself out of her present situation.

Maybe if she just talked with Lord Barton he would understand that she'd meant Clarissa no harm, that her words had only been jealously rearing its ugly head and it wouldn't happen again.

Why, why, why had she said those things? She'd known better. Clarissa had been nothing but nice to her for the past month. Seeing her, though, had reminded Belinda that she'd chosen a bad path. Once a woman acted as a man's mistress, she couldn't attract the attentions of a proper man. She was doomed to be a kept woman for the rest of her life. Still, she hadn't had a choice when she started.

But Belinda didn't want to be a mistress anymore. She wanted

to find a husband, someone who would care for her and love her. Someone who would be there when she went to bed at night and when she woke up in the morning.

Instead, she now had Lord Barton to deal with. Everyone was under the impression that she was his mistress. Just another lover for Belinda. She straightened her shoulders. She wouldn't let him get away with this.

If he thought that her actions were bad before, she'd show him bad, now. She'd act the part of a spoiled mistress until he was tired of her. Then, he'd throw her over and she'd pack up her things and move. Maybe to Bath, but she immediately shook her head. Clarissa had lived in Bath, and she still had a house there. It wouldn't be the place where Belinda could go. She might relocate to Scotland. It was beautiful country, and Scottish men were gorgeous, so there was every possibility she could find someone there to marry, someone who did not know her reputation. She could be a proper wife, maybe even have children. Of course she was a little too old for children. But she could be a good step-mother if someone's wife had passed away and left him with children.

She would learn to be a proper person. She would learn not to let her anger get the best of her.

But first, Belinda had to get rid of Lord Barton. She had no doubt that he would show up on her doorstep tonight around eight as he said. She'd be ready. And she'd be acting the part of the brat that he thought her to be.



"SHE'S A COMELY WOMAN, TRUTHFULLY." Dalton, Lord Essex, ran his hand down his wife's thigh suggestively. Charlotte batted it away with a grin.

"Are you trying to play with me, while you just said another woman is comely? You realize that hurts my feelings? Now, behave

yourself. Tell me, Jonathan, are you going to make her a member of the Club?"

Jonathan shook his head. "No. I don't trust her with our secrets. She'd tell everyone in London. I think Lady Strauss and I will have a brief affair, where I will teach her some manners, and then move on."

"How are you going to do that?" Charlotte asked with a laugh.

"I have no written plan," Jonathan said. "I'm sure at some point I will come up with things that will be perfect, a few spankings, some corner standing, and a few things where she will be forced to go out in public and something will happen. I'm not sure what yet. But she cannot be allowed to do the things she did to Clarissa at the garden party. She needs to know there are consequences."

"I've heard she can be a handful," Charlotte said. "She did cause a scene at the house party recently. I wonder if this is a good idea. I know Andrew wants your help, but perhaps he should have a solicitor send her a letter. Maybe then she would be forced to leave London. If that happened it would be for the best, don't you think?"

"A handful? That's funny, coming from you," Dalton said. "People thought you were a murderer when I met you, didn't they?"

Charlotte batted at him again. "Stop saying things like that, Dalton. You are not making me happy right now."

"You know I talk with love, my sweet." Dalton leaned over and kissed his wife on the cheek. "Now, Belinda is a few years your senior, is she not?"

"A few, but that doesn't matter to me. Once she's over my knee there will be no doubt who's in charge in the relationship."

"Will you spank her tonight?" Charlotte asked, eagerly. Her husband turned his gaze to her.

"Jealous? Perhaps you need to be spanked tonight, my love. Or perhaps I should spank you right now, in front of Jonathan."

Charlotte lowered her eyes, but not before Jonathan caught the glint of mischief that filled her beautiful orbs. He glanced at Dalton, who was smiling in his wife's direction.

“Come over my lap, Charlotte.”

“Dalton...” It was obvious to Jonathan that she was trying to sound contrite, trying to sound as if she didn’t want to do as he said. But Jonathan knew that she did. Every member of the Rakes of Mayfair knew Charlotte’s affinity for being spanked. She wanted to be paddled at every chance, and would hardly pass one by. Which meant she would take it at this moment.

“I’m not going to tell you again, Charlotte,” Dalton said.

Jonathan sat back and watched as Charlotte stood, then lowered herself over her husband’s lap. Dalton swiftly raised her skirts and undid the flap on her pantalets. He caressed her now bared bottom and Charlotte sighed.

The first slap turned her sigh into a yelp, then Dalton delivered several more.

Jonathan watched for a few moments, then closed his eyes, the sound of the spanking hitting his ears. How he wished he could find a wife who could share his affinity for sex, one whom he could bring into the Rakes Club. All his friends were now married, and their wives were members, and happily so.

When Jonathan felt the urge to be with a woman who wasn’t a simpering sally that would just lay there with her eyes closed, there was usually a Club meeting where a widow would give herself to him for the evening. It was always entertaining, and he enjoyed making love to those women. But lately the physical activity had left him feeling empty. He wanted more. He wanted a woman who he could hold afterwards, a woman who would share his bed at night, who would be there in the morning where they could make love again. He wanted a woman who took to his lifestyle as Charlotte had done for Dalton, as Gabby had done for Fergus, as Clarissa had done for Andrew.

Of course they all seemed to have their own proclivities, their own appetites that they shared—spanking, bondage, public play. Jonathan had none of those things. He just liked sex, rough sex, sweet sex, sex in different places that added to the excitement.

It would be perfect if he could find a woman who shared his needs. Maybe after his current assignment, as he saw it, was over he would find someone to settle down with, as Andrew had recently done with Clarissa.

Jonathan opened his eyes and watched his friend deliver several more swats to his wife's now reddened bottom. Charlotte squirmed and announced that she'd had enough, but Dalton continued to spank her. Finally, after several long moments, he stopped.

"Enough." Dalton said softly. He did up Charlotte's under clothing and helped her to her feet. Then he gently pulled her onto his lap and kissed her.

Jonathan turned his head toward the fire.

"You all right, Barton? I thought you would enjoy watching me spank my wife, in preparation for your event tonight."

"I did, very much so. It's time for me to go, though." He stood and kissed Charlotte's outstretched hand. "Until tonight."

Once in his carriage, he sighed deeply. He made a mental plan that, once this business was over, he would find a wife. There was a Club meeting in a few weeks, of that he was certain. Perhaps he had dismissed the ladies there too quickly.

As the carriage started to move he closed his eyes and tried to picture a few of the widows who attended, who enjoyed their naughty evenings with the men of the Club. None of them came immediately to mind, which shocked him. Why couldn't he picture one of them as his bride? He'd certainly enjoyed their favors from time to time. Thinking of it made him feel a bit of a heel.

He needed to send flowers to the single ladies of the Club. When one of them responded with more than just a demure thank you there was every chance they could have a future together. Either that or they needed to recruit more members for the Rakes Club. He didn't want to be the only single male participant.