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Melinda Barron
Unexpected Doms

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Ava's Stern Dom
UNEXPECTED DOMS, BOOK ONE

Terms

Transparent – (adjective) Easily seen through; clear

Synonyms: Visible

Antonyms: Secretive

Illusion – (noun) Deceiving with false impressions; being deceived

Synonyms: Invention, fantasy

Antonyms: Certainty, reality, fact

Chapter 1

“Please let me pay for the dress.”

Ava Garrett ran her hands down the full, satin material, letting her fingers linger over the lacy edge of the overskirt. She glanced at herself in the mirror and wondered if the dress had looked this good in the store. Or was it the fact she was standing in her bedroom that made her feel so sexy? Did people in the renaissance time dress like this? She thought they were a little more... discreet.

“Jenna, are you sure about this dress? It doesn’t seem to fit the time period.”

“I’m positive, because it’s absolutely gorgeous on you. I’ll feel much better, though, if you let me pay for it. Please.”

Pay for it. Ava hit the mute button on her earpiece and sighed heavily. She never should have told Jenna that her latest job had fallen through. Her friend was having a hard enough time paying for her wedding without adding a five-hundred-dollar dress to the tab.

Well, it wasn’t really a wedding, was it? It was a ten-year anniversary present to Jenna’s husband, who had just survived a bout with testicular cancer. For two years, Jenna had worried

whether Holden would live. Ava had held her friend close many nights while she cried and cursed the heavens for the fact that her husband was at death's door. Now that he was in remission, she'd planned a reenactment of their wedding vows, set in the time period Holden loved.

Ava would be the maid-of-honor, as she had been at their wedding ten years ago. Back then, she'd worn a taffeta creation that had been quickly shoved to the back of her closet. Now, however—she stared at the black satin petticoat with a red overskirt decorated with black embroidered swirls. The corset was also black satin, displaying quite a bit of Ava's ample breasts. She glanced at the crimson bolero jacket lying on her bed. It would hide some skin, even if it weren't exactly historically correct.

Maybe she should wear her hair down. A quick flip of her fingers released the clip that held her long blonde hair on top of her head. It cascaded over her shoulders and she nodded in approval. That was much better. Of course, getting Jenna to agree to the hair-down part might be tough, but it could be done.

"Ava, are you listening to me?"

"Shit." Ava unmuted the phone. "Sorry, I was just admiring myself in the mirror. You're not paying for this dress because I've already put it on my credit card."

"That was when you thought the sex job was coming through. Since it hasn't, you need to reconsider. I'll write you a check."

"Thanks for making me feel like a hooker. It wasn't a sex job, it was a writing job."

"It was a writing job at a sex club where you would be expected to have sex with men."

Ava kept her mouth shut, knowing that anything she said would be taken wrong at this point. She hadn't completely been honest with her friend about the writing gig she'd tried to land. It wasn't exactly your run of the mill sex club she'd tried to get into. It was one that expected big bucks from its regular full-time

members, and fulfilled every fantasy an applicant could think of, or so the owners claimed.

Ava had applied as a submissive, and the psychological evaluation she'd taken said she had the perfect submissive soul.

She supposed she must not have been submissive enough in her interview to land a spot, or else she'd already be on the plane. The three men and two women she'd met earlier in the month had told her, if she'd been selected for a spot, they would let her know today.

Since it was almost eleven at night, it looked like she would be informing Ms. Preston Ellis that her idea of doing an undercover piece at *Fingertip Fantasies* had gone bust, and it was all Ava's fault.

That was five grand down the drain, money she would never see. And she was wearing five-hundred-dollars' worth of it right now. Coming up with the money to pay next month's credit card bill might be a stretch. She'd never borrowed from her card to pay her bill, but she might have to do just that.

Perhaps tonight she needed to sit down and think up some proposals for area magazines and newspapers. She could make up the money there, even if it wasn't the amount she would have made with Ellis.

Going into the Ellis offices had been tough. She'd done work for many of the major magazines exclusive to the Seattle area, but Ellis' underground magazine, *Salacious*, catered to the world of sex and was distributed all over the US and Canada.

She'd hoped to use this job as a stepping-stone, letting other magazines across the country know she was up to doing work for them. True, it would be a story about the sex business, but it would show them her ability to propose, research, and complete a job.

She'd gone in with the idea of interviewing a few high-end hookers, discussing their lives and how their jobs had changed them. But Ms. Ellis had proposed another idea: infiltrate the

high-end fantasy service as a submissive, and come back with a story that would knock readers' socks off and offer some information on *Fingertip Fantasies*, which was a very private organization.

The publisher had tried to give her the usual thousand for this job, but she'd refused, saying she was sure she could bring back a whopper of a story. That wouldn't be happening now, since she wouldn't even be going to the club.

"Shit, what am I going to do?" Ava winced when she realized she'd allowed the thought to slip past her lips.

"I'm putting a check in the mail to you tomorrow."

"Go ahead, I've had my service stopped for two weeks, remember? According to what I've told everyone, I'm going on vacation, and I think I'm going to follow through with that idea. Two weeks of reading books, drinking lattes, and soaking in hot bubble baths. I'm not going to even answer my phone. To anyone."

Except maybe prospective employers who will hopefully love the story ideas I pitch to them.

"Not even to me?"

Jenna's plaintive wail made Ava cringe. "Of course I'll answer to you, sweet pea. You know I love you, even if you did decide to renew your vows on New Year's Eve and ruin my chances of starting the year right by getting laid."

"It's the perfect time, new beginnings and all that crap. Besides, I'm sure you can find someone at the wedding to help you ring in the New Year with a bang."

They both laughed and then Ava checked the time. It was now after eleven o'clock. Way too late to call Ms. Ellis and tell her of her failure. She'd give the publisher a call first thing in the morning, and at that point, she'd have to return the ten grand the publisher already fronted her to pay for the services at *Fingertip Fantasies*.

"I've gotta go, sweets. I need to get this dress off before I sweat in it. Needs to be all nice and shiny for your wedding."

"Holden and I thank you very much. Call me tomorrow, okay?"

"Will do. Love you." Ava clicked off after Jenna repeated the words, and removed the earpiece. She tossed it on the bedside table then took another look in the mirror. She really did look very hot in all this satin. Too bad the only time she would use it was New Year's, where her escort would be Holden's already-married brother.

"Life's not fair sometimes." She thought about the vanishing funds again before sighing heavily. Getting paid to be a submissive would have been interesting. She'd always been fascinated with the idea, but too frightened to open herself up to a local club in Seattle.

This way, she would have gone in with people she knew she wouldn't run into at the local coffee shop. But that wouldn't happen now, would it? *Poor pitiful me.*

"Stop the pity party," she said, turning from the mirror. Her suitcase, packed for two weeks at Fingertip Fantasies, was near the front door. No time like the present to unpack. She'd pour herself a glass of wine and contemplate her soon-to-be-empty bank account.

Worse than that, though, she'd ponder the fact she wouldn't be able to explore the world of BDSM as she'd wanted to. One of the reasons she hadn't told Jenna about the complete experience was because her friend was a bit of a prude.

Nobody could ever accuse Ava of being skittish about sex. She enjoyed trying new things and doing it with different partners. Sex fascinated her, and she was ready to try something different.

She'd done bondage before, but always with a boyfriend she'd been involved with for a while. Being tied to a bed always brought about incredible orgasms. But bondage wasn't some-

thing that was exclusive to the BDSM community. It was a kink that lots of people enjoyed.

It would have been interesting to see what the next two weeks had in store for her.

She was halfway across the living room when a knock sounded at the door. Her heart leapt into her throat and she gasped. Two seconds later, a second knock filled the room. She stared at the entrance as if it would open and a monster would step inside. Who would knock on her door so late?

“Miss Garrett. Open the door, please.”

The clipped British accent deepened her confusion. She knew that voice, but from where? She’d heard it just recently at... her *Fingertip Fantasies* interview. The realization slapped her in the chest, and she took a step backward. It couldn’t be them. Not this late.

“Miss Garrett, I won’t ask again.”

Ava hurried across the floor, turning the bolt quickly. She cracked the door and peered outside, hoping he didn’t notice her shaking hand as she clasped the frame.

“Mr. Blythe.” She opened the door a little wider. “I thought you’d rejected me.”

He lifted one eyebrow and her breath caught in her throat. He really was a handsome man, tall and lean with light brown hair and green eyes. The stern look on his face, both during the interview and right now, made her think of the headmaster of an English boarding school. During the interview, she’d fantasized about him bending her over the desk and spanking her, sort of a test to see if she would allow it to happen. Unfortunately, that fantasy hadn’t come true.

“You will accompany me now.”

“Right now? I need to change and get my bag and—”

“Everything you need will be provided for you at the facility.” He inclined his head slightly as if he were addressing a wayward student. “You will leave your bag.”

Leave her bag? What the hell? “Why did you have me pack it, then?”

“To see how well you follow directions.”

She bristled at his statement. Asking her to pack a bag and be ready for them had been nothing more than their first act of dominance over her. Not exactly something she'd thought would count as power for a sexual fantasy.

“But my dress...” She held out the overskirt, unsure how to end her statement.

“Is lovely. A bit much for a Friday evening at home, but lovely just the same. Please get your keys and identification and let us be off. We have a schedule to keep.” He took a step back and waited.

Ava grabbed her keys from the hook by the door and then moved to retrieve her computer bag and purse, grateful she'd kept both packed. He didn't object to the purse, but when she reached for the computer, he made a tsking sound.

“Did I mention a computer?”

“Can I not take it?”

“No, you may not.”

Her stomach fell as she thought about the perfect story with no way to take notes for it.

“Mr. Blythe, I was hoping to write about my experiences.” She'd lied on her application and told them she was a store clerk. Jenna, who worked in the personnel office in a department store, had told her they'd called to confirm her employment. “I want to keep a diary, and to do that, I need my laptop.”

“You will be provided with a journal.” He took her purse out of her hands and opened it, rifling through it until he found her wallet. He removed it, then tossed her purse back inside the door—the purse held her recorder. Damn it!

She watched him open her wallet. “Where is your passport?”

“It's in my purse.”

“Retrieve it.”

She did as he asked, her fingers passing over the slender recorder near her travel document. She could palm it, but there was nowhere to hide it on the dress. She dropped the idea and started to work out a code she could use for writing in a journal in case it was scrutinized, which she was sure it would be.

Blythe put her passport in his jacket pocket, took her purse and tossed it back inside again, then headed toward the stairs. Ava shut and locked the door and took off after him, lifting her skirt to keep from tripping. She was almost to the stairs when she realized she had no shoes on.

“Mr. Blythe, I need to get... shoes.” He was already at the first landing, turning to tackle the descent to the bottom floor. He ignored her and kept walking. If she went back for shoes—and her jacket—would he leave her? She had no doubt that he would.

She hurried into the cold December night. A limousine idled at the curb, the back door open. Blythe stood next to a short, dark haired woman who was smiling up at him.

“Miss Garrett, if you please.” Ava rushed toward him, his tone telling her he was more than a little annoyed with her.

“I need to get shoes. You caught me off guard and I—”

“Miss King, your shoes, if you please.” The woman standing next to him kicked off a pair of sandals and Ava wondered about the woman’s choice of December footwear. “These will do for now. Give Miss King your key. She’s been assigned your home while you’re gone. You are aware of that part? You did everything as instructed?”

Ava bit back the urge to tell him he didn’t need to treat her like a child. If she’d packed a bag, then yes, she’d followed the other instructions, stopping her mail and getting her home ready for a stranger to live there for two weeks. She nodded, then slipped her feet into the shoes. They were a little tight, but they would suffice for the trip, she supposed.

Miss King took her key, then headed toward the building.

Ava turned to Blythe, who indicated the car. She climbed inside, surprised to have the door shut behind her. Once settled on the leather seat, she looked around. It was strangely bare for a limousine, with no TV monitors or other amenities one usually found in a luxury vehicle.

The door opened at the front of the car and she saw Blythe slide into the passenger seat. The limo made a smooth exit from the curb and Ava's heart lodged in her throat. She put her hand on her chest and wished for a bottle of water.

This was not what she'd expected tonight. She'd thought they would send her a letter, or a phone call, telling her when to expect a pickup. Instead, they'd caught her off guard, leaving her shaken, which was just perfect for them, she supposed.

She mentally wrote a lead for her story about how a woman was abducted in the middle of the night, taken away from her home and everything she loved only to be made a sexual slave. The idea was intriguing, but it still left her mouth dry.

As if reading her mind, Blythe's voice rang out over a loudspeaker. "You will find refreshments in the small refrigerator behind the driver's seat. You may help yourself. We have two more stops to make, and when the other clients come into the car, you will not speak with them. If you do, your time with us will end."

Ava lifted her skirt above her knees, then crawled to the refrigerator where she took out a bottle of water. When she'd settled on the seat again, she took a long drink, then wondered exactly what she'd gotten herself into this time.

Ms. Ellis' suggestion had seemed so innocuous. Attend *Fingertip Fantasies* for a week and bring her back a story for the underground sex magazine, *Salacious*. It had seemed like fun. When the interviewers proposed a two-week session, she'd told them no. She couldn't afford two weeks.

They'd told her they sometimes considered offering substan-

tial discounts to qualified applicants and said if they'd accepted her, they would tell her sometime before today.

"Fine way of telling someone," she said, keeping her voice soft. She had the feeling Blythe could hear her no matter how low she was talking.

While this idea was fascinating, she was still putting herself in a risky situation. She knew nothing about the club except for the pitiful amount of information she'd found on the web, which had been nothing more than a phone number for her to call and make arrangements for her interview.

Maybe this wasn't such a good idea. Blythe had given her the perfect out, telling her that if she'd changed her mind to just let him know. Why hadn't she backed out?

She fingered the edge of her dress, knowing exactly why she hadn't backed out. Jenna had things hard enough lately and she didn't need to add the expense of Ava's dress to her anniversary expenses. Plus, there was the idea that, if she did well on this story, Ellis Publications would want to hire her again.

She just hoped she didn't have to pay for two dresses. The one she was wearing could easily be ruined if she didn't get it off soon. That would account for a grand of the money she would make from this story.

That thought was quickly replaced by another. During her stay at the resort, she would be a submissive, bowing down to the wills of a Master, or a Mistress, or whomever Blythe assigned for her. Someone she didn't know who would ask her to do God knew what.

While the idea was fascinating, she wasn't sure she had it in her. Was she that good of an actress? Could she do these things without blowing up in someone's face? And if she did blow up, would they throw her out on the streets of wherever the club was located and expect her to find her own way home to Seattle?

No, she couldn't think like that. The story required a submissive, and that's exactly what she would be. To keep the job, Ava

could play any part they wanted. After all, she told stories for a living, even if they were full of facts. She'd done enough reading on BDSM, both factual books and fictional ones, that she knew basically what was expected, didn't she?

This story would be a well-written tale about her foray into submission, and she had no doubt she could win an award after all was said and done.

She relaxed back in the seat and tried to breathe normally. She needed to look at this as an adventure. One full of new experiences and, hopefully, more than a few orgasms.