

Chapter One

Oh God. What had she been thinking? Brianny rubbed her sweaty hands down the front of her flimsy tunic. She tried to tug it down to cover more, but the motion bared her breasts at the top of the deep V. It was a toss-up as to which area she preferred the thin costume cover. She tried to cover her breasts again while still leaving the short flap—not to be confused with a skirt, as a skirt went all the way around, and her tunic was one flap covering her front and another covering the back, tied around the waist with a sash to hold it all in place—to cover her freshly waxed bikini area. The moisture gathering there made the air passing over it feel cool against her bare pussy. Which was a huge contradiction as her sex was achingly hot, and not at all content to be left alone and smoldering.

Brianny took a deep breath and squeezed her legs together, trying unsuccessfully to calm her racing heart and stop her arousal from dripping down her leg. She had never been so self-conscious and aroused all at the same time before, but then again, she'd never been auctioned off as a submissive to a crowd of say, two hundred, before either. What the hell had she been thinking? Sheesh. She obviously hadn't been thinking at all, since she'd let her sister talk her into this stupid auction. Okay, so what if Bri had actually been the one to make the joke about selling herself in the auction? She'd been kidding... surely.

Sara had always been the one to live large. Brianny had just been too shy. The word 'boring' popped into her head, and she shoved it aside. No, not boring, just more reserved. Trying to steady her useless hands and stop them from fidgeting, she straightened her slave girl costume for the twentieth time, then crossed her arms over her chest. That didn't work either, as she ended up crinkling the marathon-like paper pinned there over her braless chest. Her nipples beaded hard under the shifting, gauzy fabric.

Number two, the sign on her chest boasted boldly, second in the lineup. She'd been happy with her place in the line when she'd received her number, thinking it would be good to get it over with quickly. But now, she wished she had more submissives between her and the auction block. She probably would have taken the number off and run away at that moment; if her dear sister hadn't come back to her side just then.

"Gosh, you'd think you were heading off to slaughter instead of the BDSM fantasy of your dreams." The largely pregnant woman smiled and hugged Brianny. Sara's teasing voice was a balm to her raging fears, soothing Brianny's frazzled nerves. Before letting go, her sister whispered in her ear, "Remember, this is fun, and this is where you find out if he really is the man for you. If he is, he will want to meet all your needs. This is it; you will know before the day is out if he is the one." She backed away from Brianny and met her eyes, then straightened the crumpled paper sign on her chest.

"What if he doesn't bid? What if he is so angry... No, what if some other—" Bri shuddered at the image in her mind of a seventy-something year old man with sagging skin hanging over his pathetically thin frame, "—man beats Kian's bids?" Her glance flitted around the immense ballroom. Her eyes had adjusted to the semi-darkened room, but that wasn't enough for her to make out faces in the crowd. "I don't know how I let you talk me into this. I haven't seen Kian since we arrived. He has to be miffed with me. This is a mistake, I know it."

Brianny's shoulders tensed all over again as applause broke out in the ballroom. The only thing between her and her future was the beautiful princess Jasmine, who would be auctioned first.

"It's not going to happen, him not bidding on you—and if he doesn't, then he is a slime ball and not worthy of your love. But, again, it's not going to happen. Everything you've told me about him says he is a good man and loves you dearly." Sara smiled. "Deep breath, you can do this. It will be exciting." She took Brianny's hand, clenched so tightly at her side. "The show is about to start; that's Master Marshall now."

The chattering participants in the long line all quieted down, but that didn't stop Jasmine from bouncing on her toes in anticipation. Brianny should be feeling the same way. The man of her dreams sat somewhere in the crowd. Well, Kian had all of the qualifications of being the man of her dreams—all except this deep, dark, secret desire she had never shared with him.

"Please stay with me until I have to go." Brianny turned her pleading eyes toward her sister.

"I can't. Jackson wants me out there with him. He's been almost freakishly obsessive about me and this baby." Sara patted her belly bump and smiled. "If I don't put my feet up and rest, he is going to add another demerit to my ever growing list. That was fine in the beginning

when I had months before paying up, but it's looming now." She winked, then added, "You'll be fine," before squeezing Brianny in another reassuring hug.

Both women laughed a little when Sara's burgeoning belly thumped; seemingly in protest at being squashed between them. The brief instant of normal, in the midst of kink, temporarily soothed Brianny.

"Shh, I want to hear him," came the whispered plea from the girl behind them.

Sara pulled away from Bri and gave her one last encouraging smile. "It will work out."

Then she was gone. Brianny turned toward the man speaking. Jasmine was still vibrating with excitement. If kink ever became mainstream, Jasmine would rival the energizer bunny. It must be nice to have that kind of confidence. The princess most likely knew exactly who would purchase her. She'd probably been able to live her desires openly all her life.

Brianny's jealousy tasted bitter on her tongue. There were times when she had even been jealous of her sister—and she hated that about herself because she loved her sister so. Brianny had known she was different all her life. The only person she'd ever shared her ugly desires with, was Sara. Which was why she was here now. She had no confidence. She'd tried for almost two years to tell Kian her secret fantasies, but couldn't. She just couldn't voice them. What if he hated her after this? What if he asked for his ring back? She looked down at the single solitaire, and twisted the ring on her finger.

Sara said that if he was self-centered enough to ignore Bri's needs, he wasn't the one she should marry. Brianny couldn't marry someone and stay with him for her whole life in misery just because she couldn't speak of the dark yearnings that plagued her. This was the final test.

She fingered the black velvet collar at her neck and listened as Master Marshall's voice drifted in the ballroom. "What you are purchasing tonight is the use of a willing submissive who has vowed to make herself yours from the moment you make payment until ten o'clock Friday morning. If you are the winning bidder in an auction, your submissive will be removed to a waiting area while you settle your account. You will then be given a file containing his- or her likes, wants, desires... and hard limits. You will make yourself familiar with those limits and you will not cross those lines."

Brianny was sure she could hear the hum of the lights directed at the stage as quiet descended over the audience when Master Marshall paused. She wondered if the lights were

similar to the heated tanning bed bulbs as sweat beaded on her spine before crawling slowly down her back.

"Your submissive has vowed to make his or herself pliant to your desires, but no still means no. If you cross that line, you will find yourself in my office and I will not be forgiving. Also, the Castle rule regarding gags is still very much in effect. If you do not apply for a waiver and I catch you using one, I will not be forgiving. Are these rules understood?"

The silence in the vast ballroom was painful to the ears for a moment before he spoke again. "Then let us begin. Our first submissive, ladies and gentlemen. Please welcome... Jasmine."

Jasmine walked out on the stage confidently, her shoulders back, her head held high. The sequins on her green and blue belly-dancing costume reflected in the light that was directed at the stage. Most of the rest of the room was darker. Brianny looked around again at the faces she could actually make out in the dimly lit audience. There was only one face she cared about.

"A servant looking for a Master to worship," Master Marshall told the audience, as Jasmine did a turn and rocked her hips and tummy back and forth. "Hard limits include anal, but she loves to be restrained. The bidding will start at two hundred..."

In the shadows, not far from the stage, Brianny's eyes locked onto the angular shape of the face she'd been searching for. From her position, she couldn't see that his eyes were the deep blue she knew them to be, but she could tell that they were, in turn, fixed on her. She swallowed hard and took a step back, feeling his scorching gaze. She might even have run away, if not for the line of submissives behind her. One moment she'd been contemplating escape, and the next she'd been shoved out to the center of the stage. Jasmine danced off the other side of the platform and disappeared.

Brianny spun back, looking for the exit door off the side of the stage, but a shout from the crowd—her sister, Sara—drew her attention back to the audience, then to Master Marshall. He exuded confidence and authority. Surprisingly, his eyes were reassuring as he beckoned her toward him, gave her a wink, and started to speak.

"Ladies and Gentlemen," Master Marshall said, holding out his hand to her. "Welcome Blossom. Her hard limits are needle- and electroplay."

She took a step in his direction and turned to the audience again. Master Marshall had barely had time to announce her limits, before a voice called out, "Five thousand."

She knew that deep baritone too, but it didn't stop her from focusing in on the blinking red light of the paddle the bidder was holding up. If her heart continued to beat, it wasn't keeping time. Kian's face was unreadable. Was he angry?

"Sold. Five thousand to number one-eleven. Master Brady, please collect your prize." She blinked, then stared in shock as Master Marshall announced her sale with the carrying sound of the gavel as he slammed it down.

It was over that fast? Nobody else had even been given an opportunity to bid. Didn't they usually try to draw it out and get others to raise the price—but then, five thousand dollars? What was Kian thinking?

Brianny shivered now, even though the room was so warm that she'd been sweating seconds before. Master Marshall gave her a comforting smile and, with a gentle hand at the middle of her back, directed her to the side of the stage. She'd needed the direction too; her thoughts were quite jumbled.

She headed for the holding area and was met by a tall, dark and stoic butler, Master Grimsley. Sara had introduced him to Brianny earlier in the day. He directed her (with the point of a long switch) into a cubicle to her right. Even though he looked fearsome, his eyes told the truth. He reminded Bri of her uncle. He'd always been full of bluster too.

She sat on one of the cold metal folding chairs in the small enclosed section, but the portable office-like walls did nothing to block out the sounds of the continuing charity auction. She could still plainly hear Marshall calling out for bids on the next submissive.

Where was Kian? How long had she been sitting there? He wouldn't stand her up, would he? Buy her so no-one else could and then leave her there? She'd die of mortification.

From the moment he'd put on his white and purple bracelets, Kian knew his life would never be the same. He might have come to the Castle in the dark, so to speak, but he'd been enlightened before ever breaching the massive wooden doors.

Outside the Castle, registration and orientation took place. The application, along with the liability forms he'd been handed, were eye-openers for sure. He had signed the application almost without reading it. A quick skim made his cock twitch and swell in his tight blue jeans.

He'd gotten the gist of the resort when he'd seen some of the things his dear, sweet fiancée must have filled out online for him ahead of time. Anal—check. Oral, both giving and receiving—check. Spanking, giving—check.

But she'd never given him a clue; two years of dating, and he didn't know her at all. Could she have been lured here by her sister, without knowing the nature of the business? He had glanced at the stranger sitting next to him, but she hadn't given him the satisfaction of looking back at him. She'd known he was watching her, though. He could tell. Her neck—or throat—had tensed as if she was having a hard time swallowing, and then her hand had been trembling as she'd signed her own liability statement.

In hindsight, he had noticed different things about Bri's behavior over the last couple weeks. She had seemed nervous or jumpy at times, or, more specifically, every time their vacation and meeting her sister had come up.

"I just don't want you to feel uncomfortable," she'd said one time.

"Baby, it's not as though your sister is a fire-breathing dragon I have to slay. You told me she was a sweetheart and I will love her, so why are you really so nervous?"

"I, uh, don't know why. I just want you to enjoy our vacation too."

And another time:

"Is it about the money? Is that why you are so nervous, baby?"

"Yes... No... I mean, I know it is pricier than a lot of resorts, but I'm sure it will be better than most. I mean, it's different. Good different. Or at least... I hope you will think it is worth it."

Oh, but it was going to be worth it. Brianny would pay for every single dime, or rather, her ass was going to pay.

Kian had had plenty of time for a crash course in domination earlier that afternoon, since Bri seemed to have abandoned him. He hadn't gone to their room after they'd been separated, but had instead been taken with the other Dominants to Wardrobe. He'd left there dressed in a white silk shirt with ruffles around the sleeves and chest, tall leather boots, and tight black pants. He'd opted to skip the big black hat with the long, red feather, but he hadn't been able to talk the perky little assistant in the dressing room out of the eyeliner to accent his blue eyes and, perhaps, give him an air of suspense. A quick appraisal in the mirror proved he didn't look nearly as stupid as he felt. Hell, he looked like a blond version of Johnny Depp in *Pirates of the Caribbean*.

With a deep breath, he'd puffed up his chest and left the Wardrobe. Outside, he immediately bumped into his future brother-in-law, Jackson. Kian had been embarrassed as fuck to feel so clueless, so out of the loop.

Why in the hell would Brianny have brought him here without giving him any warning at all? He would have at least liked to stand on level ground next to her family. The other man probably thought he was a pussy. He wasn't. He was a man, for fuck's sake. A man born in the twentieth century, where treating women delicately had been bred into him.

And when Hayley... Fuck. He'd barely smacked her ass, and his ex had almost pressed charges. It was a damn good thing he'd stopped at spanking her, and hadn't caved to his darker desires.

You never hit a girl, his mother had taught him from a tender age. Women's rights were touted hither and yon. Spanking was for disobedience in children—actually, no, you could hardly spank a child nowadays without someone shouting abuse.

Kian had been spanked many times as a child. His single mother might have not seemed like a powerhouse, but she had walloped him good on more than one occasion. Of course he'd deserved everything she dished out and he knew it—and more so, he knew she loved him and wanted the best for him.

That hadn't worked with Hayley though. She didn't think of it as love or concern when he'd busted her ass for drinking and driving. He'd loved her, and wanted a future with her, but she'd flown the coop after that. He'd been kicking himself ever since. Well, no, not really ever since. He'd seen her over the years, and wouldn't have taken her back even if she begged—and she had. It was too late; he'd already fallen in love with Brianny by then.

But he did regret hurting Hayley; scaring her, using his size and strength against her. The regret he felt added to his guilt—damn it, he must be a sick person. He'd enjoyed spanking her—her squirming over his lap, his hand falling on her plump bottom, seeing his pink handprint there on her milky white ass.

He'd felt like a sicko. Who enjoyed hurting someone like that? Now, all these years later, and a world of people like himself opened up. He forced a dark image from his mind. It wasn't the same as the kink there at the Castle. There was kink... and then there was demented. He was just demented.

But how had he never known that so many normal people were kinky; everyday people... doctors, chefs, music teachers, for fuck's sake? Even that lady he'd seen today on a spanking bench in the dungeon—if he'd seen her anywhere else, he would have offered to carry her groceries and help her cross the street. She had to be a grandmother, and she'd come here to be spanked, begged for it even.

He wasn't a pussy for respecting women. And he wasn't a freak either for wanting to have a woman over his lap, begging him to stop. Contrary to all his concerns, his brother-in-law had pegged him right away, and took him under his wing.

"You had no idea what kind of resort The Castle was, did you?" Jackson asked with an easy smile. "You have a deer in the headlights kind of look. Let me show you around. You can ask me anything you like, then I'm pretty sure Marshall is going to want to meet you, too."

A smaller man might have been intimidated by Jackson's size, but Kian wasn't a lightweight either. Kian had been a grappler, a wrestling champion throughout high school.

The catcalls and bidding going on around him brought him back to the present. The show must go on, and he couldn't leave Bri waiting all night. Kian took his time, making his way through the crowd to the door of the cubicle Brianny had disappeared into. Here, lights were on, and he could clearly see the red that infused his fiancée's cheeks. She wouldn't meet his eyes.

Jasmine danced away with her buyer when he tugged at the leash connected to her collar. Their excitement fairly floated in the air, like the sound of the tinkling bells adorning the princess's heels.

"Master Brady." Smiling, a leather-clad Master with the name Parker on his chest beckoned him over to a table set up not far from the cubicles. "How would you like to pay for your slave today? Will you be using the method on file for your stay?"

"Yes, that is perfect. I heard you have leashes?" He hoped Bri, or Blossom, as she'd chosen to be called here—she definitely wasn't the Bri he knew—could hear him. He'd purposely stood in the opening of the section Bri was in, wanting her to worry.

"Of course, sir. We also have a small souvenir for the participants. Master Sam was passing them out at the door. I see you don't have yours. I can give one to you." The man held out the requested leash, and a small black velvet pouch. "I have her information sheet for your perusal as well. Please take a look at it before you leave with her."

"Thank you." Kian tucked the paperwork and gift bag under his arm, then took the short black leather leash and held it like a belt folded over itself. Trying it out, he smacked his opposite hand with it. As he looked back toward the cubicle his girl was in, Kian moved the slapping motion to his thigh.

"Would you like to inspect your purchase before you leave?" Master Grimsley had a very formal, serious stance and demeanor. That was why the amusement presenting itself as a sparkle in his eyes tipped Kian toward another opportunity to teach his girl a lesson.

"As a matter of fact, I would like that very much."

It was so exaggerated, he imagined he could hear her gulp as he watched her. She met his eyes momentarily, but he was the one to look away first. He couldn't help but glance at the black collar round her neck. She was fingering it as if afraid to let it go. She looked scared—and flushed. Her cheeks were pink and her eyes large, open much wider than normal. Her desire was like an aphrodisiac, and it drew him in. His cock was pulsing... and harder than ever before.

He tossed the leash and bag in the chair in the corner and stepped toward her.