

# BOUND TO SUBMIT

MIAMI MASTERS BOOK FOUR



BJ WANE

BLUSHING BOOKS

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## CHAPTER 1



Leaning against the brick side of the building across the alley from the homeless shelter, Hope's Crossing, at midnight had become a habit of late for Miles Cavanaugh. A consuming habit that should bother him but didn't. The last person he had been so fixated on keeping safe was his mother, and given how he'd failed her, was it any wonder he had appointed himself Hope Wallace's personal protector? He'd experienced lust at first sight before; what thirty-eight-year-old man hadn't caught a first glimpse of a woman and felt his cock stir in immediate response? But the obsession that gripped him the moment he'd set eyes on Hope's bruised face and saw the determined glint in her vivid blue eyes to protect one of the shelter's guests she'd befriended, had been a new emotion for him, one that had stripped his control. *That* bothered him. He couldn't afford to lose the hard-earned self-discipline he'd spent years striving to master. Every time he'd seen her since, he'd felt the need to dominate, to wrest his control back. She had all but ignored him, which only whetted his appetite to get to know her and, more importantly, to

ensure no harm came to her. The first was a new experience for him, the second came naturally now.

The light shining from the top floor window of the two-story, renovated old department store finally went out and Miles pictured Hope tucked safe and sound in her bed. He'd made it his personal responsibility to see she stayed that way, and that meant from him also, and his needs that were better suited to be met by women who were submissive to strict, dominant, sexual control. He'd only been inside the shelter one time, but his gym and loft apartment were in a similar structure two blocks away. While he couldn't say for certain Hope resided on the upper floor, the same as he did in his building, he felt it was a good assumption given the layout of the shelter depicted in pictures along the wall in the entry reception area.

Pushing away from the wall, Miles strode toward the alley entrance. This area of downtown Miami didn't draw too much trouble at this time of night, but his experience in running with a gang when he'd been an angry teenager had taught him those intent on criminal activity enjoyed spreading their dirty deeds around. The taxing summer camp for juvenile delinquents he'd spent three months of his fifteenth year residing at may have given him a start on the attitude adjustment he needed at the time, but that didn't mean he'd forgotten the life lessons he'd learned both before and after that summer.

As he neared the seedier part of downtown and peered down another alley, he huffed out an exasperated sigh. It looked as if he would be putting those life lessons to work again tonight. The adolescent handing over cash to the rough-looking older kid couldn't be more than twelve, if that. The two stood with their backs to him as he moved with quiet stealth down the alley. The dealer caught sight of Miles first, and before he could get hold of the punk, he took off without looking back.

“Hey! Let go, man! He’s got my money!”

Holding the kid up by his collar, Miles added a slight shake to his skinny frame with his admonishment. “Pipe down or I’ll call the cops.” That threat seemed to do the trick as the kid stopped thrashing and the whites of his wide eyes showed he feared the police more than him.

“Don’t do that. Let go. I won’t do nothin’, promise.” The Hispanic juvenile sent him a pleading look, one that tightened Miles’ gut. The fear on his face wasn’t of him, or from his interference, and the bruises lining his skinny arms weren’t caused by the dealer. He’d bet his last dime on it.

“Who are you picking up drugs for? And don’t give me anything but the truth.” Miles set him on his feet but didn’t relinquish his hold.

“How’d you... I ain’t sayin’ nothin’.” The mutinous set to his mouth would’ve been more effective if the kid’s lips weren’t trembling.

“Okay. Let’s try this. Who gave you these?” He ran a light finger over the arm he held up, the dim glow from the street corner light turning the bruises a sickly shade of yellow. “Your dad, uncle? Maybe one of your mother’s johns?” The kid’s initial panic over losing both his money and the drugs it was supposed to buy had taken a back seat to self-preservation. Since he remained stubbornly mute, he’d left Miles with no choice.

Reaching into his back pocket with his free hand, he’d already hit Detective Jake Sanders’ private number by the time he brought the phone around and the youngster saw he was out of options. “Sorry, kid. I’m too tired tonight to mess with you.” Ignoring his pleas and watery eyes, Miles spoke with his friend who worked with juveniles and got an ETA of ten minutes. Clicking his phone off, he returned it to his pocket and hustled the pre-teen out to the street. “Want to tell me your name?” he asked, already knowing the answer.

“Fuck, no.”

“Tsk, tsk, such language. What would your momma say?” Sadness replaced belligerence on the kid’s face, a look Miles could commiserate with. He hadn’t been much older when he’d lost his mother. As Jake pulled up to the curb, Miles reached into another pocket and handed the kid his card. “Detective Sanders is a good guy. He can help you, if you let him. That’s my number. If you want a better life than where you’re headed, you call me, or tell Detective Sanders you want to talk to me. Don’t blow this chance. It may be your one and only.”

Jake sent Miles a rueful look as he opened the passenger door and pointed for the kid to get in. “Don’t you ever sleep?”

Miles shrugged. “I was headed that way when I came across him and a dealer who got away. Take care of him.”

Jake nodded. “I always try, you know that.”

Miles watched him drive off. Yeah, he knew his friend tried to get these kids away from their neglectful homes and into decent foster care, just as he knew more times than not, the caregivers were granted second and third chances. He made it back to his gym later than usual but wasn’t surprised when he let himself in the side door and found Ed still up and waiting for him. Some things never changed.

“Out stalking your girl again or trying to steer some kid back onto the straight and narrow?” the older man asked in a gruff tone.

“She’s not my girl and I’m not stalking her.” Was he? Hell, if he knew of anyone else spending time late at night loitering outside a woman’s home or place of business, he’d label *them* a stalker. “Why are you still up?” Miles flipped off the hall light and followed his mentor through the darkened gym as Ed shuffled toward his rooms at the back of the building. Even ten years after Miles had bought Ed out of the martial arts facility to pad his retirement, the old man still insisted on using just the small, renovated two rooms for his living quarters.

Ed snorted as he opened the door into the combined living room and kitchenette. "What would you call it, boy? Still don't know why you don't just ask the girl out." He looked up at Miles out of tired eyes that held a gleam of fondness Miles hoped would never dim.

"I don't date. You know that, and you know why. Go to bed and sleep in for a change. You're retired, remember?"

"Then fuck her and be done with it. This obsession of yours ain't healthy, and you know it." Ed's rough comment bore a note of concern.

Miles knew how bad he had it for Hope when just the mention of fucking her could stir his cock. From the sardonic tilt to Ed's mouth, he hadn't hidden his quick, automatic response to the carnal image Ed's simple statement thrust into Miles' head. "Good-night." Pivoting on his heel, he stalked over to the elevator, not needing a light to slam his hand against the button. He wasn't irritated with Ed so much as himself, because, damn it, the old man was right.

The elevator opened into his main living area and the glow of the moon shining outside the wall of floor-to-ceiling windows offered the only light he needed to find his way across the concrete floor to the small corner bar. Pouring one shot of whiskey, he capped the bottle and downed the taste in one fiery swallow. He rarely drank, preferring a sweaty workout in the gym to exorcise his demons rather than numbing his senses to them. But on the nights he knew Hope's bright blue eyes and lush figure would keep him awake, a shot came in handy.

Ed was right, he admitted as he strode down the hall to his bedroom, stripping off his tee shirt on the way. He could be labeled a stalker if he wasn't careful. The shelter Hope ran may cater to homeless women and children, but he knew she took in desperate men also. Some of the women, he suspected, were on the run or hiding from abusive relationships. Hadn't he and

his mother spent more than one night in a similar shelter when she'd tried running from his father? Dave Cavanaugh had never failed to find them, and eventually she'd quit trying.

Shoving those memories aside, Miles shucked his jeans and sprawled face down on top of his bed, turning his head to the wall of windows he'd paid a fortune to add to this room. The color of the full moon made him think of Hope's white blonde hair framing her attractive face. He shut his eyes against the image, but haunted blue eyes that held painful secrets he itched to learn still conjured up sweaty, erotic dreams that woke him the next morning with a tight grip around his raging erection.

Cursing his weakness, Miles flung his arm across his face, shielding his eyes from the glare of early morning sun dousing him with additional heat. He squeezed his rigid flesh, hoping the discomfort would work to lessen the pulsing need brought on by the fantasy of binding Hope for his pleasure. Of course it didn't, just the opposite, in fact. The surge of pleasure ricocheting up from his sac only increased the hot flow of blood to his groin. As he maneuvered his hand up and down his shaft, he could feel the thick veins pumping in steady throbs against his palm. He cupped the smooth mushroom cap and circled his hand over the damp seepage oozing from his slit to aid in easing his return journey downward.

Miles' perspiration slick skin grew clammy as he sped up his strokes. He locked his jaw, drawing his arm off his eyes and down between his legs so he could cup his sac in his other palm. A head to toe shudder ran through him as he rolled his balls and tightened his fist. Needing to end his own self-imposed torment, he jackhammered his hand on his cock in rapid, tight-fisted strokes until he let go with a loud groan of pleasure and shook with his release. As the sweeping pleasure of his climax abated, he slowed his hand and loosened his grip to lightly fondle his now semi-erection. *Shit*. Even with his cum spewed on his stomach, his breathing still labored and his



senses still working to come down off the high, his damned appendage wasn't completely appeased.

*Thirty-eight years old, and still ruled by my dick.* Rolling off the bed, Miles stomped into the attached bath and flipped on all three shower heads in the black-marbled shower. Growing up, he'd spent a lot of time in dark rooms, hungry and cold. When he'd converted the third floor into his private space, he made sure every room allowed for the sun to shine in, all three bathrooms were capable of producing never-ending hot water and he'd installed a restaurant-size refrigerator and huge walk-in pantry to store food enough for ten at any given time. His friend Sean would say he was ruled by his past, and he'd be right. Some things, he'd discovered as he reached adulthood, were impossible to escape or fight his way out of. The shrink had a way of seeing each of the gang of seven's struggles when their troubled childhoods came back to haunt them.

Miles stepped into the shower that was only enclosed with a half-wall, but big enough to keep the spray from splashing outside the cubicle. Bracing his hands on the wall, he bent his head and let the pounding water pelt his shoulders and back with heat as he thought of how his friends would rib him if they knew of his obsession with Hope. If any of them had met in high school, odds were they never would have bonded the way they had at the arduous summer camp the courts sent him to when he'd been a fifteen-year-old gang runner. They each hailed from different parts of Florida, coping with their troubled home lives in self-destructive ways that landed each of them with few choices by the time they had stood before a juvenile judge.

They fought then they bonded, and they'd been family ever since. Other than Ed, the guys were the only people in Miles' life he cared deeply for now, would do anything for. Just lately, that also included Zach's girl, Sandie; Dax's new sub, Krista; and his best friend Jackson's recent commitment to Julie. Yeah,

there would be no living it down if even one of them discovered he'd been keeping a late-night vigil on Hope's Crossing just to ensure no one lurked about the place intent on causing Hope, or anyone else in the shelter, harm.

*Crap.* Thinking of his friends reminded Miles that Jackson would be making the forty-minute trip from his animal rescue and veterinary clinic into Miami today and they were meeting up for lunch. The gym was closed on Mondays, but he spent the day catching up on paperwork and accounting. If he didn't get his ass in gear, he'd be at the books late tonight instead of watching out for Hope, and that just wouldn't do.

"You look like you had a rough night." Jackson slid his six-foot-four frame onto the empty stool next to Miles and signaled to the waitress at the end of the bar. "And you're the only one who didn't make it to Saturday's play party. What gives, bro?"

"Hello to you too." Miles scowled at his friend. He valued the close bond he'd developed and nurtured with all his friends the past twenty-three years, but more often than not, resented the intimacy their shared knowledge of each of their pasts lent them. Speaking over the loud music, they gave the waitress their orders before he replied, "I gave Ed the night off Saturday. He works too hard."

"Maybe that's what keeps him going." Jackson picked up his soft drink and downed half before coming up for air. "Ah, much better. You'd think it was still summer out there." He nodded toward a window and the bright, sunny afternoon.

"You can dispense with the weather chitchat now. How'd Julie do the other night?" Miles still couldn't wrap his head around Jackson's recent commitment to the woman he'd befriended when they were just kids living next door to each other. Ex-model, Julie Martin, gave up her career after a terrorizing incident, and Miles had to admit she fit in nicely with their group.

“Good.” Jackson drew his brows together in a frown. “She’s starting to like it a little too much when I invite someone else to touch her along with me, though.”

An image of Hope bound on a spanking bench, or maybe against one of the tall poles in the playroom on their BDSM decked out yacht, with an added pair of hands tormenting her lily-white body, brought about that damnable twitch of his cock again. A hand job would never be enough to slake his growing hunger for her.

“Smitten, just like Zach and Dax. I’m glad I’m not as weak-kneed as you three.” Miles snorted in feigned derision, his only defense against his escalating preoccupation.

“Nah, not you. You just fell like a ton of bricks for Hope Wallace the moment you set eyes on her,” Jackson drawled with sarcastic humor.

The waitress set their plates in front of them, the Rueben Monday special piled high with corned beef and sauerkraut. Miles dug in and took several bites before addressing Jackson’s correct assumption. “I don’t deny I want to delve beneath those loose clothes she thinks hide her figure, and that I’m concerned for her safety since she spends her days welcoming strangers into her building. Doesn’t mean I’m aiming for a white picket fence.”

Jackson heaved a suffering sigh, but his dark blue eyes held nothing but warmth. “You don’t have to be searching for it to just show up. Trust me, I know.”

Miles let go with a rare grin and slapped him on the back. “You’re a lucky son-of-a-bitch, and you know it.”

“Yeah, I am, and I do. Speaking of Julie, I’m trying to talk her into enrolling in your women’s self-defense class. When will the next one be starting up?”

“Next week, and there’s room for several more. I’d rather have too many and arrange the schedule to fit in two classes than see a low turn-out.”

Much to Ed's chagrin, one of the first changes Miles had made to the gym's list of martial arts classes had been to add a class just for women to learn how to defend themselves if ever caught in a sticky or dangerous situation. There was a time and place to use the polite fighting of Karate, Taekwondo or Jujutsu, and times when the dirty street fighting Miles had honed when he'd run with a gang came in handy.

"Good. I know Zach's trying to get Sandie to sign up, so maybe we'll get you a few more," Jackson replied.

Miles dropped some bills on the counter for a generous tip and stood. "And you two call yourselves Doms," he said with a shake of his head. "Just tell them how it'll be and if they give you attitude, put 'em over your knee."

Jackson's smile split his tanned face. "That works fine when playing, but you know as well as we do that unless we're in a twenty-four/seven, Dom/sub relationship like Dax and Krista, that doesn't cut it."

They wound their way through the sports bar toward the entrance as Miles suggested, "Then get Dax on board and they'll follow Krista's example. They've all become tight in the past few weeks." He would hate for any of his friends' women to be hurt because they were unable to defend themselves. And if Sandie joined a class, odds were Hope would too, and he'd sleep much better at night knowing she'd mastered the moves to extricate herself from a bad situation. "Where'd you park?"

Jackson pointed up the street. "About a block. That's a good idea. I'll give Dax a call and get back to you."

When Miles spotted Jackson's truck almost smack dab in front of the double glass doors to Hope's Crossing, he turned a dark scowl on him. "Did you park there on purpose?"

"No. I don't need to draw you to her doors. You forget, I'm the one who knows where you spend an hour or two late at night." Jackson placed his hand on the driver's side door handle as he looked over at the shelter. His jaw tightened, drawing

Miles' gaze that way also just as Jackson said, "But maybe it's a good thing this was the only empty spot at the time."

"What the hell is that about?" Miles growled.

"Damn it, Miles, hold up."

Ignoring Jackson, Miles flung open the glass door into the shelter and stormed across the reception area.



WITH THE WALL at her back, Hope Wallace tried to tamp down her fear while refusing to back down from the aggressive crowding by this irate ex-boyfriend of a shelter guest. His belligerence wasn't anything she hadn't been subjected to before, but her heart never failed to lodge in her throat when she stood face to face with a large, angry man intent on causing trouble, and her harm.

"Back off, Davidson, before I have you arrested for violating your restraining order," she demanded, wishing her voice hadn't emerged as a trembling whisper instead of the controlled strength she'd been striving for. Traci, her receptionist, already called the cops, who were always quick to respond to a 911 from the shelter.

Davidson got in her face and snapped, "You and what army, bitch?"

"No army, just me. Back off, like the lady said."

Hope saw Miles' hand clamp down on Davidson's shoulder before she noticed his presence or heard his deep voice, the one that never failed to send a shiver of awareness dancing down her spine. Even in the midst of a nasty scene, her body responded to his black eyes drilling her with an intent, probing look that worried her on several levels.

Davidson spun around, whether with help from Miles' grip or all on his own, she couldn't tell. "Mind your own fucking business," he sneered. "This is between me and my old lady."

“Not anymore.” Sidling around Davidson, Hope glared at Miles before placing herself between him and her unwelcome guest. She couldn’t afford any more trouble. Ignoring the low growl rumbling from Miles’ throat, and the way her nipples pulsed in response, she placed her hands on her hips. Sirens grew louder as a police car pulled up out front, lending her even more bravado to get in this man’s face, just to see how he liked it. “She’s done with you. Get used to it and stay away from her, and my place.”

Two cops rushed inside and wasted no time hauling him off in handcuffs. Hope breathed a sigh of relief, her heart rate slowing down until she faced Miles’ wrath. Funny how his anger induced a whole different response than the instant fear Davidson’s had. The threat he posed wasn’t one of physical harm, but she had other reasons for keeping her distance from him.

“What were you thinking, just standing there?” Miles demanded. “A swift knee to his balls would’ve given you ample time to get away from him.”

“Violence is not always the answer, Mr. Cavanaugh, as several of the now homeless people here can tell you. I knew the police were on their way.” She turned to Jackson, who stood inside the door with his arms crossed and an amused grin tugging at the corners of his mouth. “Is Julie with you?”

Jackson shook his head with a derisive sigh. “No. She’s visiting her parents today.”

Hope could tell by the way his eyes darkened he didn’t like something about Julie’s family visit. “Thank you, both of you,” she said, including Miles in her gratitude even though he still stood in the middle of the small entry glowering at her. “I really do appreciate you stepping in but, as you can see, the situation has been defused.”

“There wouldn’t be a situation if you had decent security.” Miles lifted her hand and slapped another one of his cards into

her palm even though he knew she still had the first one he gave her. "I have a women's defense class starting this week. Julie will be in it, and probably Sandie. You need to be also." He turned his ebony gaze on Traci, who still sat behind the receptionist's counter, her wide eyes riveted on him. "You too."

Shaking her head at his well-meaning high-handedness, Hope watched him stomp out, followed by Jackson who at least lifted his hand in a friendly farewell gesture. She'd been introduced to both men through Sandie Bowlin when she'd been a guest at the shelter several months ago, but Hope couldn't say she knew much about the men who were close acquaintances of Sandie's new guy, Zachary.

"Wow. That man was as intense as the last time he was here. You could do worse, boss." Traci just grinned when Hope frowned at her.

"I'm not 'doing' anyone."

The younger girl's smile widened but all she said was, "Are we going to take his class? It might be a good idea."

Hope couldn't argue they would both benefit from learning how to defend themselves better, but if there was something she *did* know about Miles and his friends, it was that they were all very dominant and into a sexual lifestyle she'd sworn never to look into again. Taking his class, putting herself in close contact with the first man who stirred cravings she thought she'd buried long ago, would not be a good idea. Not if she wanted to keep her distance from a temptation that had already cost her nearly everything.

"I know it would, Traci. I'll think about it, but even if I don't, I want you to. Let me check the budget to see if I can afford to pay the fee. It'd only be fair, since you'd be taking it due to the risks of your job."

Traci shook her head, but Hope cut off her refusal before she could utter it. "That part is non-negotiable." The twenty-year-old college student only worked part-time, and never at

night. Hope welcomed a retired army veteran every evening at 5:00 p.m. who stayed until 8:00 a.m., and all he asked for was a free meal and bed for the night in return for keeping his eye on the place. The old department store she'd worked hard to convert into a shelter was on a busy downtown Miami street and close to a police precinct for quick interference if needed. Her receptionist, and she, were relatively safe, but one could never be too careful or too prepared for trouble.

"We'll talk about it later. I need to get back to work, starting with writing up a report on Davidson for the police." She padded down the short hall to her small office, trying to put Miles' dark, scarred face out of her mind, something she had been unsuccessful at for the last few months.