

A MOST UNSUITABLE MATE



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This book contains fantasy themes appropriate for mature readers only. Nothing in this book should be interpreted as Blushing Books' or the author's advocating any non-consensual sexual activity.

## CHAPTER 1



"Will you pay attention and decide quickly? The rest of us do more than just read all day and we have things to do!" Sillandra tugged on her older sister's arm. "I cannot believe Mother allowed you to wait so long to become a woman. Vohnr and I have already fulfilled our duty to the realm and produced children—even if hers was only a boy. She indulges you entirely too much, but then, she always has."

Cika allowed herself to be harangued, cajoled and otherwise woman-handled to the area where the more common breeding stock were standing in a relatively straight line on a makeshift platform. These were obviously not the ones from which they were to choose—too common and low for a girl such as herself.

"If you didn't want to come here with me, then, why did you?"

Sillandra shrugged. "Someone had to. Mother has the affairs of state to attend to, and Vohnr has the baby and her position as Governor of the Precinct to keep her busy. I drew the short straw."

Cika hated the market and almost never went there unless she'd heard a rumor that one of the vendors might have obtained a shipment of books from somewhere. That was one of the few reasons she'd ever darken its smelly, crowded warrens.

Sillandra was the sister she had, immediately, while still a precocious child, dubbed Silly, pretty much refusing to refer to her as anything else, much to her sister's displeasure. Today, Silly had literally dragged her past the stalls of fresh vegetables, meat and other wares until they'd made their way to the back of the whole establishment. She was even corralling her quickly past the last rickety stage where there was yet another motley line of males on display.

They were all of the same sort, though, tall, muscular and brutish, with barely a brain cell among the eight or so of them. All but the one at the end, near where they were headed. He looked quite different from the rest, catching her eye entirely against her will.

They were all bound at the ankles and wrists by chains that were all interconnected and were designed specifically to further hinder their movements, and, of course, they were all gagged. Although he was not quite as overtly muscular as the rest of his companions, he was taller than they were and looked quite strong in his own right.

He also—unlike the rest of them—wasn't staring blankly at the ground, expression slack and dumb. Instead, when her gaze settled on him, his eyes quite boldly met hers—that was, until the owner of that particular breeding stock stall came over and began to both lecture and beat him savagely for having the audacity to lock eyes with a member of the royal household and the princess royale, no less!

Even then, he barely bowed his back, despite the blows that fell about his head and shoulders, but as he tried to turn himself away from them with little success, Cika saw the raw, red stripes on his back that meant he had been whipped recently, and the sight of such brutality sent a shiver through her spine.

However unlike her it was, she could not bear to see him being punished so savagely, and before she knew it, she found herself standing in front of the stage.

"Stop that at once!" she ordered, in a tone she didn't recognize as her own. She'd rarely raised her voice to anyone—save the woman at her side who was aghast at her behavior—in her life.

The proprietress immediately halted her assault on the slave. "Beg pardon, Highness."

Silly was grabbing at her clothes again and pinching her arm in the process, whispering urgently, "What do you think you're doing?"

"Stopping her from beating to death a piece of valuable merchandise!"

"What do you care what she does with him?" she hissed. Silly smiled at the woman who owned the place, muttering angrily under her breath, "Now, we're obligated by protocol to look these inferior specimens over, and I can't see that any of them would be a proper match for someone of your exalted position." She practically spat the last two words.

Cika had learned to ignore even the most blatant evidence of her sister's jealousy. "I'm sorry—but it's not right. I'd stop someone from beating a dog—why not a man?"

"Because men are harder to control than dogs, and they need a firm hand." She gave her older sister a disbelieving look. "Are you really so totally naïve about how to handle a male?"

"I am not!" Cika huffed. "I just hate to see anyone—even a male—getting hurt."

That was just what she expected from her weak-willed, soft skinned sister. How was someone like that going to lead their people? Sillandra just snorted and shook her head in disgust. "Well, I guess I'd better get at it. This is going to make us late to our appointment to see the real, acceptable offerings, though."

Cika stepped aside then turned her back on the whole proceedings, as was required. She had never had a mate of any kind and, thus, was not allowed to participate in the procuring of such, which involved entirely too much physical contact to be considered proper for a woman who was still bodily pure.

And Silly was right. She had been allowed to wait much too long, but Mother had always had a soft spot for her bookish eldest. Silly, with her incredibly well-honed battle skills, encyclopedic knowledge of military tactics, diplomacy, law, and overall political tendencies, would make a much better ruler than she was ever going to but then, she would keep her middle sister—and her youngest sister—in her court as her most trusted advisors, so Cika had never felt that she really needed to learn much more than the bare bones basics of any of those things.

Regardless of their position, each princess was expected to have a profession—the eldest and presumptive heir usually choosing something that would assist her in her future role governing the planet. But not Cika. She had thrown herself into expanding the library system a hundred-fold, accumulating more books from more places, and setting up schools that the children of even the lowliest, least worthy subject could attend in order to better themselves.

Mother had been most patient with what were widely considered to be wasteful programs, Vohnr had simply rolled her eyes at them, but Silly had become downright angry. It seemed that everything she did—but even more so, everything she didn't do, like taking a mate when she was younger and more fertile—annoyed her middle sister to no end, and they had erupted into a vicious fight in the royal chambers, one their mother had been forced to break up before Silly physically demolished her much more delicate opponent.

And, as much as she had whined and complained about coming here today with her sister, she had an ulterior motive in doing so.

As a staunch matriarchy, it was considered every woman's duty to have children, from the queen on down. The birth of a daughter into any household was greeted with much celebration. They were kept and raised with every possible advantage by their mothers. Boy children were often hidden, rarely spoken about while they were in residence, and were taken from their mothers once they

were weaned and sent elsewhere to be raised as slaves who were pressed into service to the state, doing what they were born to do, being strong and mating—when they were allowed—with the women who owned them. Not enough male children were produced on the planet, but there were brave bands of women who captured men from other worlds to be brought here and sold—at quite a high price—which, along with fattening their coffers as well as that of the state, allowed for a certain amount of diversity among the people of Aristol.

But the woman—now girl—who was going to inherit the throne was expected to mate with a male who was exclusively of good, Aristolian stock—certainly not an off-worlder from who knew where.

Silly began at the far end of the line of them—well away from the man her sister had saved from the beating he had undoubtedly deserved for being so forward as to think he was good enough to actually look at a member of the royal family.

As she walked by each one, they revealed themselves to be the usual low-class candidates, with heads bowed and dull, lifeless eyes, barely able to stop themselves from drooling in her presence, every one of them sporting an erection, although their modesty cloths were barely put to any test, despite their arousal. She neither spoke to nor touched any of them.

But such could not be said about the man at the end of the line. When she stood before him, he brought himself to attention and executed a little mock bow, and even though his mouth was covered by the gag, she could tell that he was grinning at her. There were obvious signs of either abuse or—more likely—the punishment deemed necessary to subdue him, and she wasn't quite sure which it might be, although she leaned strongly towards the latter.

But he remained straight backed, regardless, as she examined him, walking all the way around him, touching his broad, muscular shoulders, cupping his firm buttocks and then, when she made her way to the front of him again, doing more than noting that the

usual strip of cloth was doing very little to conceal the size and heft of his endowment.

She cupped him there deliberately, squeezing just enough to raise him onto his toes to try to avoid the pressure her fingers were exerting, her eyes on his intense green ones, waiting patiently until his finally found hers. Then it was her turn to smile as she relieved him of the pitiful covering, allowing him to spring forth from that thatch of black hair that mirrored the long, unkempt mane he currently wore past his shoulders, unable to control the gasp at the sight of his size—eight or nine inches, she would estimate, and a girth that literally made her mouth water, especially since he grew even further as she touched him.

For a long moment, she considered taking him for herself, although she already had a mate at home who had given her five strong, healthy daughters and only one measly boy. But in the end, ever practical, she dismissed the idea, knowing that the time she would spend fucking him—although probably incredibly pleasurable—would take away from her ultimate goal—one she'd never shared with anyone.

She intended to replace her sister on the throne. Sillandra wasn't exactly sure how she was going to accomplish it, but she had vowed she was going to do it from the moment she realized just how truly unsuitable Cika was for the position—and that was a long, long time ago. She was weak and emotional and was almost worse than useless in a fight. How could she possibly rule?

There was no precedent for a second daughter inheriting unless the elder died, and she had already steeled herself for that eventuality. She would be doing it for the good of Aristol and had already amassed a cadre of troops who were loyal to her and her alone.

The man who stood so proudly before her was the least suitable mate for a princess royale that could probably be found on the entire planet. He was already wearing the signs that pointed to the fact that he was prone to rebellion, and, even on such short



acquaintance, he seemed much too intelligent to be as easily led by his cock, as most men were.

To say nothing of the fact that he was enormous. That quality alone was quite likely to dissuade her sister from wanting to mate very often—although she would definitely feel obligated to and probably wouldn't enjoy it at all, which also worked to Sillandra's advantage in a couple of ways. First of all, she didn't just want to usurp her sister's position, she wanted her sister to suffer for a while before that happened. Sillandra had had enough of her older sister, who should have already stepped up and begun to take some of the burden of office from their mother's aging shoulders and managed to skirt as much responsibility as she could. What's more, she got away with doing so. And secondly, if she hated to mate, there was much less of a likelihood that there would be any unwanted progeny to have to take care of when it came time for her ascension.

There would be the added bonus that, if she changed her mind and decided to have him, he'd be close at hand. If he didn't murder her sister in her sleep while trying to escape, which would be another lovely possible outcome. Somehow, the idea of saddling her sister with this highly improper mate didn't seem like such a bad thing after all.

"How old is he?" she asked the startled slave trader, still stroking that magnificent cock, loving the sound of his gasping breath behind the gag as she played with him.

"He has nineteen summers, Princess."

That brought a sly smile to her lips. The idea of her nearly thirty-year-old sister being taken by an eighteen-year-old, distinctly randy, obscenely well-endowed male was infinitely satisfying, even if she did end up bearing his brats. "Any illness that you're aware of?"

"No, Princess. All of my stock is in perfect health." One of the lesser men on the end began to hack loudly, juicily, belying her words, but Sillandra ignored it.

"How much do you want for him?"

"Three thousand eirek."

Sillandra scoffed. "He's been whipped. He's an off-worlder of unknown origins—"

"Begging your pardon, Princess, but he's been saying that he is a prince on another world."

Her eyebrow rose. "And you believe him? He's obviously either trying to curry favor or sympathy with those lies. I'll give you a thousand."

"Princess, please, have mercy. It cost me much more than that just to get him here!"

"Fifteen hundred, and not an eirek more."

The slaver groaned at that pronouncement, but she could hardly refuse to sell to the daughter of the queen. She bowed—in a manner that was altogether more obsequious and much less proper than the way the man whose genitals she held in her hand had just bowed to her—and muttered her thanks, along with something about how she wondered how she was going to feed her daughters after having gotten so little for him.

Now to make sure that their mother didn't find out what she'd done and put a stop to it before their conception night, after which he would be bound to her for the rest of his life.

"All right, I've found him."

Cika made as if to turn around, but her sister caught her in time. "What are you doing? You know you can't see him before tonight; it would be very bad luck—it could cause infertility, and you don't have much time left along those lines. Why don't you let me see to his preparations for this evening—consider it my gift to you on the auspicious occasion of your *finally* becoming a woman."

It was kind of a backhanded compliment, but, considering that she really didn't much care about the proceedings one way or the other, she just nodded her head in agreement. "Thank you. I would appreciate that."

"It's nothing—after all, we are sisters." Cika didn't see her sister's

sly smile, naively hoping that this might be a new beginning between them, a new era of détente and, even, perhaps real, close sisterhood.

She spent the rest of her day trying to be busy, but Mother had disallowed her from going into work, so she ended up just hanging around her spacious rooms, growing more and more nervous. After dinner, she was taken by the woman who was her maid—and had been so since she was a little girl—to her private bath, where she was vigorously washed and scraped and rubbed and lotioned. Her long, silver hair, with its beautiful hints of teal, was washed, towel dried and brushed till it shined.

After this evening, they would want her to cut it, as was the custom, but she kind of liked it long and wasn't sure she was going to conform to that expectation.

She was sitting before the fire in the most throne-like chair she owned, wearing the evening attire that had been in the "wait to mate" box under her bed for more than a decade. It was a very pretty nightgown and frilly robe, and she had settled down to read a book, of course—although she couldn't remember anything of the plot and had had to read several pages over because of her nervousness—when the knock at the door finally came.

Cika was amazed to see that the man her sister had chosen for her was the one she had rescued. And he looked even more virile and potent—and damned near intimidating—than he had at the market. He was now as squeaky clean as she was, smooth shaven and wearing the traditional—if ornate, due to her station—mating garment that covered him from head to foot, leaving only the most strategic area open and accessible, and even that remained covered by an obscenely large, richly jeweled pouch, which matched the jeweled cuffs—with large gold chains between them—at his wrists and ankles.

"He cleaned up quite nicely, didn't he?" Silly asked, and, in her shyness in front of this strange man, Cika missed the way the other woman's eyes roved covetously over the impressive length of him.

"He's been chipped, and I had it set at maximum, so that you shouldn't have any problems controlling him," she lied glibly. In truth, although he had been chipped, and she hadn't tampered with any of its other uses, she had personally set the controls—to the tiny but usually very effective little device that was implanted at the back of every male's neck for purposes of behavior modification and, if necessary, complete—if temporary—paralysis—so that she was the only person who could make him feel pain.

When her spoiled, selfish heir apparent, know nothing sister pressed a finger to her own chip, which was in her wrist, in order to correct him, he would feel nothing at all—although Sillandra herself had tried it out on him a few more times than was strictly necessary and—if he was smart, and she had a feeling he might be—he would have learned that women were meant to be obeyed.

What Sillandra wouldn't give to be a fly on the wall this evening! Of course, she was going to grill the man afterwards, which promised to be almost as fun, but not quite as much as seeing what could well be her sister's demise first hand!

"As you can see, he's quite ready to go—you're welcome. That will save you a lot of unnecessary drudgery. He's quite young—which must be somewhat embarrassing for you—and probably very inexperienced. In case you've not been told, all you need to do is—"

"I know what to do!" Cika was sick and tired of her younger sisters telling her what to do, especially in regards to matters such as this. She knew her reaction was stupid and contrary—they were more experienced in this than she was, but still. She was the eldest and detested it when her siblings—especially Silly—lorded her purity over her as if she was some kind of freak.

Never mind that, according to society, she was. She was probably the oldest virgin in the world—she knew that some people called her that—derisively—behind her back, wondering what was wrong with her.

Sillandra nodded her head in a conciliatory fashion, but Cika

knew that she was not sincere. What she'd done to make her sister hate her so much she'd never know, but there didn't seem to be any way to heal the rift between them. They were too different, perhaps, to ever be friends.

"Thank you very much for all of your preparations. Please send me the bill for them," Cika murmured, heading towards the door.

Silly followed her without a fuss, thankfully. "Oh, no, sister, I insist—it's my present to you."

"But his robes look as if they cost a fortune."

"Hardly that, and your first time should be commemorated and remembered. And the jewels seemed to suit him, somehow." She took one last long, lingering look at what she was leaving in the hands of her inexperienced sister—not even wondering if it was the last time she was going to see her alive—then forced herself to remember that it was in pursuit of a bigger cause and sighed softly, allowing Cika to usher her out.

When Cika finally gotten rid of her sister, she turned and leaned against the door, staring at the broad back of the strange male who was standing in her chambers.

It seemed so awkward and uncomfortable—a man in her bedroom!

And, after a moment, that man had the gall to turn around and continue his awful, impolite habit of staring into her eyes, as if he was not just her equal, but her better.