
SUBMISSIVE LOVE

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This book contains fantasy themes appropriate for mature readers only.
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Chapter 1

I had been closeted in my office for the better part of the morning, music blaring while I worked, pretty much oblivious to anything or anyone else. Arik knew better than to disturb me when I got like this, but I was entirely unprepared for the sight of him when I opened the door. His beautiful, taut, round butt was propped against the back of our couch and he had been – obviously – staring at my door for I don't know how long, those thick, muscular arms crossed over his chest, denim clad, mile long legs of his stretched out in front of him, big booted feet crossed over each other, a toothpick dangling from lips that I knew could remove every coherent thought I'd ever had from my mind in a matter of seconds whenever – or wherever – he applied them to my body.

But one thing was quite unusual about him; he didn't look happy to see me.

Not in the least.

There was no welcoming smile, no open arms, no promise of screaming delights anywhere near his eyes.

Normally, I would have commenced wheedling, sucking

up to him, trying to tease – or sex – or both – him out of whatever bad mood he was in.

But I was mentally and physically exhausted. I hadn't slept well in several nights, and I was up to my eyeballs in work that, luckily, I could do at home, but that I still had to actually *do*.

So instead of reaching out to put my hand on an impressively firm bicep while I pressed my lips to that point just under his jaw and in front of his earlobe that could usually make him hard just at my approach, I put my hands on my hips defiantly.

"Is this where you lecture me because of the abysmal state of the *stupid* kitchen?" I asked, letting him know just how ignorant I thought that rule was, eyes narrowed angrily at him, snark dripping dangerously from every word, figuring I'd grab the bull by the horns rather than my usual avoidance behavior.

Because everyone knows that when you studiously avoid something, it goes away, right? Unfortunately, my approach wasn't much better from what I would usually do.

Not better *at all*.

He didn't move in any way except to narrow his eyes right back at me – and I had to admit that his version was much scarier, causing my breath to hitch in my throat at the way those black eyes of his settled onto me as if he was already holding me down and vigorously paddling my behind.

"Get. Into. The. Bedroom. *Now*," he commanded in a voice that could only be described as downright feral.

My mind might have wanted to resist – hell, it definitely wanted to stay put right where we were and have it out on much more neutral territory. But, luckily for me, my body had a much more developed sense of self-preservation, and before I knew it, I was already well on my way there, and although I couldn't see him, I knew without a doubt that he wasn't far behind me. There was no mistaking those loud footfalls of his,

which I usually found comforting – except when I felt like a prisoner being escorted to the guillotine.

Our bedroom was large – it spanned the entire length of the house – and the centerpiece was our big king-sized bed. It was our haven, our love nest – and the place I most wanted to avoid right now – so instead, I stood in the middle of the room and turned around to face him, although he wasn't looking at me at all as he closed the door behind him and growled but one word. "Strip."

It was in my apparently suicidal mind to simply say, "No," just to see what he would do, but then I realized that I already had a very good idea what he'd do – he'd grab me and do it himself – and not gently, as in I was quite likely to lose both my dignity and several articles of clothing to his single minded intent – then he'd tip me over his knee and blister my ass with his hand – and yes, he only needed his hand to do that – and that was in addition to, not in place of – whatever it was that he was going to give me for whatever recent transgressions he'd discovered that had made him lie in wait for me like that.

With that picture blazing through my mind, my hands sought the hem of my prettily embroidered denim shirt, but apparently not fast enough for my husband, who, upon seeing my reluctance, had come to stand next to me to my left, facing the same way I was. Confused at just what it was that he was doing, I found myself tipped forward when his left arm wrapped around my waist, bending me over it so that he could land I don't want to know how many sharp, powerful smacks to my cringing butt.

And, as usual, he didn't stop until he could tell that I was sincerely crying – not the fake sounds I usually start with after only a few swats to encourage him to have pity on me – not that that had ever really worked – but actual tears that were definitely brought on by his stinging, searing efforts.

When he let me up again, he caught my chin in his hands,

fingers clenching it just shy of hurting me. "Do as you're told, April." His voice was colder, sterner than I'd heard in a long time.

When I hesitated for another few beats, his hands went to the belt around his waist, and I moved more quickly than I had in a long time. That had me rushing to get my clothes off like little else could have. Granted, I was never allowed to wear any kind of underwear so it was quick work.

When I'd made a neat pile on the blanket chest that resided at the end of our bed, I stood there, hands that were itching to cover me – despite how many years we'd been together at my sides as I clenched and unclenched my fists nervously. I hated it the rare times he was like this with me, and I knew that whatever I had done, it had pushed him to the end of his rope.

There was no mistaking the fact that Arik was a natural dom, through and through. My body had recognized it about him immediately when we'd first met, but my mind had lagged far behind for a good long while, preferring to ignore the ample evidence that left copious wet spots on my panties every time he was within a mile of me. The military career he had retired out of at the ripe old age of thirty-eight had been spent as an officer, and that had only enhanced his instinctive tendencies, helping him find his command voice, training, honing and even weaponizing what had already been a truly impressive level of personal strength, determination and coordination.

He had been a little unfocused when he'd gone in, but when he'd come out, he'd had a laser sharp focus on his goals, and I had been one of them, after he finished a degree in business that would do him a little better in the real world than the original one he'd gotten in ancient Greek studies.

I'd known him off and on all my life. Our parents were not quite friends but definitely acquaintances, and despite a deep

attraction I'd had for him since I could remember that nonetheless scared the ever loving bejesus about of me, I had done my best to avoid him, as if I'd known exactly just how devastating what he'd do to me would be if I ever let him get too close to me.

That ship had long since sailed, unfortunately, and now he was not only my husband but my dom, by my own admission, a role he'd embraced and relished, even though I would have bet he'd never heard the term until I introduced him to it one evening. Thus he had every right to tell me what he wanted me to do with every expectation that I would obey it.

"Attention." He didn't bark it like a D. I. would. There was no need to. I was the only audience. In fact, I hated the way he always said that word. At least if he'd yelled it, I would have known that he'd made a bit of an effort to do so, that it meant something to him to ask me to do that.

Instead, even knowing what it meant for me, it dropped with devastating ease from his mouth.

I adjusted my position as I knew that command meant that I had to. Widening my stance until I was almost unbalanced, my feet as far apart as I could physically make them without falling flat on my face, fingers laced together at the back of my head, under my hair, shoulders back – which lifted my breasts even higher than they already were, their tightened tips already aching, already straining – my chin up, eyes forward.

I could hear him in the bathroom, washing up. He was an endearingly neurotic neat freak, and he always washed his hands thoroughly before he touched me – especially if he'd been outside or working with the cattle or horses he loved. Personally, I would have done it after he'd finished touching me – and he did sometimes, too – but nowhere near as religiously as beforehand.

When he returned, he took several slow tours of me,

walking around and around very slowly, making me feel like a slave on the auction block, occasionally reaching out to touch here and there – cupping the underside of one buttock, tucking his hand into the curve of my waist which was quite acute at the moment considering what little appetite I had, even bending down to check a bruise on the back of my calf.

"How'd you get this, my love?" he asked, his caring question and soft tone of voice belying the position I was in, the way my backside was still pulsating and sore and the punishment I figured I was going to receive shortly. But then he always wanted to know the origin of any bruise he hadn't given me himself, always sounding a bit vexed to discover that I looked as if he'd taken a stick to me, which he would never do, of course, to any place on my body other than my backside.

"Dog, Sir, I believe." A fair skinned blonde, I bruised so easily that I couldn't even keep track of where I had them or how they'd come about.

"Hmm."

He came to stand in front of me, gazing at me before big, callused fingers reached out to possessively heft a breast, making me want to look him in the eye – I adored watching him as he touched me. He could be somewhat remote at times – consciously or unconsciously – but when his hands or lips or tongue were on me, he couldn't hide how much he loved me, as well as the power I had granted him over me.

Sometimes – like right now – I kind of wondered if he loved the power more than he loved me. But then he'd do something truly endearing, and I'd forget about that concern for a while, until it came up again as it inevitably did, usually when I was being made to feel very vulnerable to him, which was so frequent it was very nearly the norm.

It was nearly impossible not to feel that way with him; he's so much bigger than I am. I'm only about five one or so, and

about a hundred pounds, give or take and highly dependent on what time of the month it was. He's six four and two hundred and fifty pounds of solid muscle. He dwarfed me in every way, and I knew he liked that he did.

He was far from the only one, and he knew that, too.

He could pick me up and carry me in one hand and did whenever the mood struck him, or when I tried to make a stand about something he wanted me to do that I didn't necessarily agree with. I could say no to him all I wanted – he had made no such prohibition about me doing so and I took complete advantage of that – but he could – and would – always *make* it "yes."

That hand was far from still, wandering all over me from the curls at the top of my head to the curls between my legs, where it dwelt for the longest time, his fingers eagerly seeking and – always but always – finding, even if I was mad at him, even after, or more likely because – of a particularly severe punishment. Even if I didn't think I was in the mood, he was always able to find stark, incontrovertible evidence of just how much I wanted him.

He didn't comment this time at what he had inevitably discovered about me – what he'd come to expect from me. If he'd reached between my legs to find me dry, he would have called a halt to things to determine what the hell was going on with me. That had happened perhaps twice in the five years we'd been together – four and three quarters of which we had spent married – and he took me at least once a day, usually more than that, although only sometimes in the more conventional of manners.

It was not unusual at all for him to come home for lunch rather than eating out on the range with his men as had been his habit before we'd gotten together. That had ended pretty quickly after we'd gotten married and he'd moved me into his ranch. As he'd said in explanation at the time, that was what

he had a foreman for. Before that, though, I knew he had been a much more hands-on boss.

Now his hands were – more often than not – on me whenever he was home. In fact, the men – and everyone else on the big ranch complex – knew that if the front door to the big house was closed, better ask Johnson, the foreman, rather than bothering the boss with anything that didn't involve copious amounts of blood and/or someone's imminent death.

He crowded himself against me, my pale, naked skin a distinct contrast against his darkly tanned version, that dark head dipping to take a nipple in his mouth, suckling and flicking it mercilessly, trying to get a rise out of me as usual as first one, then two long, thick fingers found their way up inside me, forcing me to catch my breath. I was – as he liked to call it – wondrously tight, and he knew how much I adored feeling stretched and filled, even to the point of discomfort and perhaps a bit beyond.

The roughened pad of his thumb easily found and began slipping over and over my clit as, quickly, one more, then two more of his fingers took devastatingly slow possession of me, plunging, thrusting, fucking me hard as I had to simply stand there and take it. When I was at his version of attention – which was the only one that mattered to me – I wasn't to speak or move, even to encourage him to continue to do what he was already doing. I was required to be passive, to simply have things done to me, which had been, from the beginning, a considerable challenge, especially since nearly everything this man did to me turned me on unbearably and made me want to move with him or encourage him with my movements.

And Lord knew I knew better than to cum, regardless of anything he might do to me – especially not before I'd been punished.

As abruptly as it had begun, it ended, leaving my entire

lower half aching abominably from the sudden lack of attention, hips wanting to arch, clit wanting to rub against something, anything in order to find the means to its end.

"I know you were being a smartass, spoiled brat when you came out of your office, but do you really know why you're here?"

Was he talking, damn it? I couldn't think, couldn't concentrate on what he was saying when my body – and my mind – were craving him so.

And it was never a good thing not to listen to *everything* this man said, because there was *always* a quiz of some sort in my future.

It was taking me much too long to try to replay the past few seconds in my head, still completely unsuccessful either at drowning out the demands of my flesh or deciphering just exactly what it was that he'd said, and I knew something bad was imminent because of it.

Just as I was beginning to remember and comprehend what he'd said, he circled around behind me and used his big platter of a hand to grab a handful of my hair, yanking it roughly back as his other hand circled around me to land a crisp swat – using all four of his stiffened fingers – directly onto my clit.

One was all it took to drive every thought of arousal from my head as I shrieked loudly, needing to dance within his grasp or close my legs or do something to alleviate that familiar sting in that unexpected spot, but knowing better than to do so.

And one was far from all I got.

His fingers lingered on the exact spot they had just abused, rubbing not quite gently and only for a second or so before they delivered another slap – this time perhaps just the tiniest bit harder. Tears cascaded out of my eyes and into the hair at my temples, not that he had probably even noticed, as he

barely spent any time rubbing the bite away before mercilessly applying a third harsh swat to my tender bits.

I was beside myself, a hair's breadth away from breaking position, which would only land me in that much more trouble, I knew, but the urge was unimaginably tantalizing, if only to afford myself the slight respite before being subjected to something a million times worse, I was sure.

To be honest, I wasn't really sure how many times those broad, flat, unimaginably long fingers struck the most sensitive spot on my body – five? Six? Seven times? At least that, each one exponentially worse than the one before, especially since he stopped trying to rub the sting away after only about the first three.

Still with his hand buried in my hair, holding my head back at an uncomfortable angle, he whispered into my ear, making me shiver from the cold, sterile tone, "I trust I have your attention now?"

His other hand still hovered threateningly over my forcibly exposed privates.

"I'm going to ask you again, Sulie. Do you know why you're here?"

Through very real tears, I answered immediately, "Because I left the kitchen a mess while you were away, Sir."

"You're right, baby. Too bad for you, I decided to come home early and found the science experiments that were our kitchen sink and counters."

It wasn't quite that bad, I thought, instantly dismissing it because I certainly wasn't going to say that to him. Arik tended towards neatnik, and I leaned heavily towards slob, but in our kind of relationship, my sloppy tendencies weren't expected to make any kind of appearance – even if he wasn't there to make sure they didn't.

And what was worse was that it wasn't as if I didn't know this – I just hadn't counted on him coming home early. I got

caught. Arik expected every one of his rules to be followed to the letter, whether or not he was around, and I did – generally. I didn't touch myself while he was gone – frankly not so much because he'd made it a rule, but rather because I believed wholeheartedly that, if I did, he'd know it, somehow, and I knew I wouldn't be able to bear up under his scrutiny and lie to him to save my sorry ass, either. I was a horrible liar. I knew my limits.

Not that I was an angel – far from it. On the rare occasions when he had to go on a trip that I couldn't accompany him on, I ate all sorts of shit I wasn't supposed to. Arik was a health nut who liked to control certain aspects of my life – not all of them, but some, and food was one – not at all how much I ate, but *what* I ate. He detested restaurants and any kind of processed foods – hell, he even eschewed popcorn at the movies! That was downright un-American, as far as I was concerned.

So there were no Spaghetti O's with meatballs in our house. There was no Kraft Macaroni and Cheese. There was also no soda, no candy and no sweets of any kind.

And, while he was gone, I ate every one of those things, multiple times, always excruciatingly careful to cover my tracks – going so far as to hand wash all of the pots I'd cooked in as well as even taking the garbage out of the trash cans to put them – not in the bins just outside the back of the house, which were intended for our garbage – but instead, in the barn bins, where he was least likely to encounter them at all.

I was just lucky – believe it or not – that this time, when he came home and surprised me, I had already disposed of the evidence against me. I just hadn't done the last step and tidied everything up, as I would have the night before he was supposed to be due home.