

# Unbound for Promises

*Bound to Him, Book Two*

By

Mindy Taylor

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# Chapter One

Las Vegas has been an interesting change of lifestyle for me. Three months ago I was in a contract-based relationship with a man whom I have since learned to live without. Chandler Thorne was my master, my savior, and my therapy through my recovery. Three months ago he dropped a bombshell on me, then jumped on his private jet, and headed for San Diego.

I have no hard feelings against him. As it turned out, one of his ex-submissives ended up pregnant, and as her lawyers and his were disputing settlements and gag orders, she got into a car accident. The baby, a little boy, by some miracle survived. The mother was a tragic casualty. Chandler and I hardly speak anymore, so there are a lot of details I never was given.

I was never Chandler's girlfriend. I was his submissive in training, and I would be lying to myself if I said I didn't miss him, his touch, the way he would take control of my body and force me to come harder than I could ever imagine. That man could work miracles. He is a brilliant businessman, running Thorne Luxury Resorts, filthy rich and unbelievably handsome. God didn't miss one detail when he created him! I yearn to run my hands through his shaggy chestnut hair, stare into those deep blue sapphire eyes that had me on my knees begging to please him, his rock hard body that looked as if he was hand-sculpted from granite. Ah, I do miss him, though he is just a memory now, a memory from a time in my life when I was inbound for pleasure.

Today is a new day. I've started a new chapter in my life, and I'm slowly achieving more of my own personal goals. I live with an amazing man, my best friend, as he has become. Daniel Hernandez was Chandler's head of security, and he now is my personal security guard and roommate. We have an odd relationship, chemistry that can be felt by others, but his loyalty to Chandler cannot be altered.

"Hey, Keya." Daniel pokes his head into my bedroom after knocking softly. "There's someone here to see you."

"Who? My dad should've called before showing up." I scowl at him.

"Yeah, it's not your dad."

He shrugs and walks off, and I'm a little confused. I don't have random visitors. My only friends are Daniel and Chelsea, and she's six months pregnant and in New Hampshire. I stand up and smooth my gray and white strapless mini dress before looking at my reflection. I fix my hair, and head for the living room of our penthouse suite. Sadly, I live at Chandler's resort in one of his suites. Actually there are only two suites on my floor, his and mine across the hall. My penthouse is the size of most people's homes. But I'm only living here until I finish my last year at UNLV. Between working my ass off this summer on taking all the courses I needed and my prior credits, I was able to enter the bachelor of nursing program as a senior. Next May I will be graduating, taking my state boards and looking for my dream job.

I enter the living room and find Chandler staring out the floor to ceiling windows overlooking the south end of the strip. I shake my head in annoyance and look back to find Daniel smirking at me. He nods and walks off. Fucking jerk! I take a deep breath, and Chandler hears me. I watch the tension leave his shoulders as he turns and his eyes meet mine. His hands are in his jeans pockets, and he's got stubble on his face that I've never seen on him. He doesn't look like his normal take-charge billionaire self.

"Hi, Kierra," he almost whispers.

"You look like shit, Chandler." I look away as I head to the opposite end of the windows and stare out at the busy Thursday afternoon on the strip. "What are you doing here?"

"You have not answered my calls or texts."

"And why should I? I have nothing to say to you. I've moved on. I don't need the added confusion in my life anymore."

"Kierra, I do not wish to cause you any confusion or hurt. I know that I have caused enough in your life. I was just hoping to take you to lunch."

I look over my shoulder when I hear clanging of a glass in the sink and see Daniel washing his coffee cup. He smiles at me apologetically and heads down the hall to his room.

"I'm not the same girl you left in Rhode Island, Chandler. I'm not going to be tripping over myself to please you because I have some crazy hero worship thing going with you."

"I did not come here looking to rekindle our arrangement or to seduce you."

He walks towards me, and I can tell by the look on his face he's hurt.

"Then why are you here?" I ask, not losing my nerve.

“I wanted to take you to lunch and catch up with you. I know when I took off in Rhode Island that I left you with a lot of unanswered questions. I want a chance to explain and gain some closure to the situation.”

His voice is soft and genuine. He takes the last remaining steps to close the gap between us.

“Believe it or not, I actually don’t need any closure. I’m fine. I’ve recovered and I’m really enjoying my life.” I take a deep breath, inhaling his familiar scent.

“Kierra, what is with this hard-ass charade you are putting on right now?”

“Maybe I just don’t have time in my day to listen to your excuses. At no point did you clue me in on this love child until an hour before you jetted off for the west coast. You didn’t call until a week later, Chandler! A fucking week! And that was only to tell me my penthouse would be ready whenever! Who does this shit?”

“If you would just give me a chance, I can explain.”

He runs his hands up from my elbows to my shoulders, and my skin is set on fire from his simple touch.

“I’m over it, Chandler. I don’t need the answers anymore.”

I lean my cheek against his hand and, for a moment, I let my heart and mind reminisce.

“What do you need, then?” he asks as he takes my face in his hands and forces me to make eye contact.

“I-I can’t, Chandler. I cannot let you destroy me again,” I whisper bravely as the tears pool in my eyes.

“That was the last thing I ever wanted. I tried to prevent it, you know this. I had no way of predicting the events that took place. I swear it all came as a life changing shock to me as well.”

“Are you going to force me to talk about this whether I go to lunch with you or not?” I ask, and my voice cracks as the tears fall down my cheeks.

He wipes the tears with the pad of his thumb. I try to look away, but he holds my face firmly in place.

“I failed you, Kierra, and I cannot allow things to be left like they were.”

I sense the seriousness in his tone and cave in. “I can’t go out looking like this. I wasn’t expecting any company today.”

He releases my face and steps back, looking me up and down. “You look amazing, as always. I like what you did with your hair, and I notice you lost some weight, unnecessarily. You always had a beautiful body.”

I nervously run my hands through my new platinum locks. At the spur of the moment, during an *I hate Chandler* day, I went to the spa and salon. I had six inches cut off, my hair dyed a few shades darker, and lots of white highlights weaved in between a very thin hazelnut low light. I am becoming increasingly fond of my sexy bump, “not to be confused with the Snooki bump,” as my master hair designer informed me. Thankfully my pedicure and manicure still look fresh. I smile, wondering if he receives the bills personally, or if an accountant takes care of all my expenses. Chandler’s resort chains are all-inclusive, but in Vegas they have specialty shops and salons that are not included in the general package. These specialty shops and even the casino can all be charged back to my room, and at times I do take full advantage of it.

“I’ve been under a lot of stress these last few months with my classes and all. Food wasn’t one of my priorities.” He stares at me for a long minute and then nods in understanding. “Let me get some shoes on. Where are you taking me, anyways?” I ask.

“Do you have a preference? Sushi D’s? Bellissimo Cucina, if you want Italian? The Skylot has great steaks.”

I am relieved that he is naming restaurants all within the resort. I curl my lip, trying to decide, and head to my room to find a pair of heels to match my dress while I consider my lunch options. I settle on some navy blue peep toe pumps and matching clutch. My closet is as big as my entire apartment was back in New Hampshire. I’ve spent all summer organizing my shoes, purses, clothes, and accessories, along with my needed school supplies. I find Daniel chitchatting with Chandler when I return, and I feel awkward all of a sudden.

“Daniel, I’m heading to Sushi D’s. Do you want me to bring anything back for you?” I ask as he gives me a knowing smirk, shaking his head in disappointment.

He had been my shoulder to cry on since Chandler left me, and my shopping partner, bar hopping buddy, and late night pizza eating, chick flick watching guy friend. He really is more of a best friend than a roommate and security guard, and I don’t think I’d want it any other way. There is an extensive security team inside the resort, and they all know me by name, but Daniel is different. He is mine. However, a couple nights a week, he has recently been chumming up the



ladies. I've heard them leaving in the morning as they nervously and sometimes awkwardly do their walk of shame by my room.

"No, Keya, I'm going to hit the gym and then have my own early dinner date. Text me when you get back so I know."

I detect a slight difference in his voice, and I'm sure I'm going to hear about this tonight, or sometime in the near future.

"Okay, sure thing, Daniel."

I step to the door. Chandler has a concerned look on his face, and I feel a bit of satisfaction with his visible agitation.

He opens the door. Across the hall is his penthouse suite. I've stared at his door every morning for the last three months, and it no longer pains me. We walk to the elevator in silence, and he hits the call button. It lightly chimes as it arrives. My nerves are through the roof as I try to remain calm and focused. I cannot let this man build me up and leave me to fall on my own again. I keep telling myself he had no other options, that he did the right thing for his child. But I am still human, and I have feelings, and the way he went about it, secretively and deceitfully, was wrong, then to hit me with the truth as he was taking off, was just wrong on so many levels.

I take a deep breath, check my reflection in the mirrored glass, and see Chandler staring at me; I stare back into his eyes as the elevator descends to the third floor. I wring my fingers nervously. Why does this man affect me so strongly?

We walk into Sushi D's, and the hostess seats us in the private section reserved for the world's hottest celebrities and socialites. The corner is dark, the velvety red walls have a romantic vibe, and the brown leather booth always looks brand new, despite how many patrons are seated throughout the day. The restaurant is very classy, and the food is always delicious.

Chandler slides into the booth, sitting next to me, and the hostess hands him our menus. She smiles and leaves us for a few minutes. Chandler slides my menu in front of me on top of the black leather place mat.

"Kierra, what would you like to drink?" he asks, and I raise a brow.

"Well, this is an interesting change. Are you sure you don't want to tell me what I'm going to have?" He doesn't amuse me by answering, so I look down at the menu for a few seconds, and then hand it back to Chandler. "I'll have the iced mint green tea, and I love the Viva Las Vegas rolls and the mango salmon rolls."

He nods and places his menu on top of mine and waits quietly until the waitress returns. He takes control for the first time and orders for both of us. It feels too familiar. After she returns with our drinks, I feel the tension seeping out of Chandler's pores.

"So—" I begin, and take a sip of my iced tea.

"I am sorry. I had this whole speech ready to deliver to you, and then your whole attitude threw me off. I do not even know where to begin. I guess I made a mistake by coming to see you today."

His voice causes me to shift in my seat, and I pull the hem of my dress down my thigh a little more.

"Chandler, I really, I just—God, this sucks." I can't even think straight. The sadness in his voice is absolutely heartbreaking. It's weakening my defenses. "I guess I just don't get what you expected. You have a son, Chandler. You are a father now. I understand you have a responsibility to him, to providing some sort of family and foundation for him. What I have a really hard time accepting is why you would have never told me. Were you really just hoping to pay off his mother and never have to deal with the child?" I pause, letting my words sink into his thoughts. "A child Chandler, your son! Whether his mother died or not, you have a responsibility to him, and it's more than just financial. There is no excuse you could possibly give me that I am going to accept or understand."

"You are absolutely right. The first I heard of it was the day I was taking you to the cosmetic store, and Cynthia interrupted us before we left. There I was, enjoying my time with a beautiful, complicated bundle of nerves, and I get on the phone and hear that Darla, a submissive I see casually when I go back to the west coast, is pregnant. My first reaction was to demand it be proven mine. I had to meet with my agent and lawyers that night and discuss strategies on how to handle the scandal, whether it was mine or not, supply a lab technician with a DNA sample, and fly him to San Diego." He pauses and takes a sip of his drink, and I watch him tap his fingers on the side of his glass, the way he always did when he was pondering something. "Then I get a call that you have taken off and are drunk at a bar. Kierra, none of this happened at the perfect time. The next day while I was handling you, Monica and Dave came to visit and then, *bam*, on my desk are the results proving I am the father. I selfishly just wanted a couple more days with you until I met with Darla that weekend. I had every intention of sitting you down and discussing everything with you when I came back. However, I could not do that when

I got the phone call that there was an accident and Darla was killed by a drunk driver. But my son survived and was in the NICU.”

Tears are gently slipping down my face as I stare up at the ceiling, recalling all the events and how they made sense now. If I had only known from the very beginning, maybe my actions would have been different. I feel his pain, and I understand his decisions, even though it doesn't make them hurt any less.

“What did you name him?” I ask as I close my eyes with my face still tilted up towards the ceiling.

“Carson Liam Thorne. It was his mother's last name, and I thought it was the only way I could honor her memory appropriately.”

“Carson Liam sounds beautiful,” I say quietly.

“I truly am sorry, Kierra. I wish more than anything that things had ended differently.”

“You were just dealt a bad hand of cards, Chandler. It's not like you had any control over the situation, no pun intended.” I look over at him, and he cracks a smile.

“How have you been? I have seen the bills, so aside from your spending sprees and drunken nights, are you really doing well?”

I chuckle, and he's still smiling.

“I have my moments of hating you, and then I have days where I miss you and the dungeon, and then there are days when I'm too consumed in school and moving on that I don't think twice about you.”

“Hate me? That sounds awfully harsh.”

“Yeah, it happens.” I shrug and watch as the waitress delivers our lunch.

“What is going on with you and Hernandez?”

“Nothing. He's become a really good friend of mine, and I doubt I would have ever survived without his support. But other than that, there is nothing between us.”

“Have you been seeing anyone?”

“Is that even an appropriate question for you to be asking me?”

“Curious, that is all.” He takes a scoop of wasabi and smears it across his half dozen sushi rolls.

“I really haven’t had time. I just finished a tough round of hybrid classes so I can be considered a senior. That has been my major priority, but I am looking forward to finding someone to spend some time with. How about you? Do you have a newest yet?”

“No, nothing to really mention. I have my select few subs I visit here and there, but the majority of my time is spent with Carson. He has only been out of the NICU a month, and I’ve been screening and interviewing nannies and trying to figure out this parenting ordeal.”

“Where are you living now? Still in Rhode Island?”

“No, I bought a house in California near my mother, and she has been a great help with Carson. She absolutely loves being a grandmother.”

“That must have been an interesting conversation to have with her.”

“I spared her a few details, which, in the midst of the crazy chaos, she did not pry for. Knock on wood.”

“I’m glad you are figuring it all out.”

“You really miss the dungeon?”

The mention of it causes me to choke on my salmon roll, and I try to gracefully recover.

“I guess I do. You awoke feelings in me that I’ve never experienced before, and I don’t know any other way to be.”

He runs his fingers across his bottom lip as he stares deeply into my eyes. “Are you looking for a new master?” he finally asks after reading me for a few minutes.

“I haven’t really been looking for anyone, master or not. I really have been incredibly busy. I finished all my classes last week, and school starts again in another two weeks. I just miss the time we spent—”

“If and when you do start looking, do me a favor and give me a call.”

“Chandler, I don’t think my heart can take another relationship like we had. I can’t live with someone, become comfortably attached to that man, and be left again. I’m not ready for it now, and I don’t think I can handle it.” I open up to him honestly and from the heart.

“Kierra, when you are ready, I have something in mind for you. You will find the sexual dominance that you are desiring, and if it is your wish not to have a live-in arrangement, you have that option, as well.”

He reaches over and rubs my shoulder tenderly, and I nod. Not really understanding what sort of relationship he’s talking about, I’m not ready to explore it at the moment.

“I will call you when I’m ready.” I lean against his arm, and he pulls me closer to his side. “This should be awkward discussing finding a new suitor with my ex and all, but, oddly enough, it’s relieving.”

“There is no need for it to be awkward. I know who you are and where you have come from. Who better could lead you in the right direction?”

“Good point.” I sit back, pick up a piece of my sushi, and plop it into my mouth. “Where is Carson now?”

“He is with my mother. I sidelined my work for too long and needed to handle a few things in town this week, and wanted to see you. I am still struggling to find a balance between fatherhood and my work. I cannot do it all from home, and he is still very vulnerable and weak.”

“You said you were searching for a nanny?”

“I have been looking and interviewing a few, but I have not put the effort into it that I need to. Now that I am trying to get back to work, I need to make that my next priority.”

“Are you staying in California, then?”

“I will always be a globe trotter. But for now, my son needs stability, and I cannot keep him on the plane, jetting from place to place. Besides, my mother would be absolutely heartbroken if she went more than a couple days without seeing him. So, yes, I will be in California for the foreseeable future.”

“Am I to expect frequent house visits, since we are on the same coast now?” I ask as I finish my lunch and take a sip of my iced tea.

“If that is what you want, but by no means do I intend to be intrusive. I wanted a chance to give you the respect you deserve and explain face to face what happened and see for myself that you are well.”

“I don’t know how much I can see you, Chandler,” I say softly as I look down at my fingers in my lap.

He leans in closer to me and moves a lock of my hair behind my ear. I see him moving in, his breath is on my neck, and my insides tighten. He still has the same effect on me as he always had.

“Me either, Kierra.”

His voice a husky whisper. I close my eyes and try to gain some defense against his affects.

“Please don’t torture me,” I whisper as I feel his lips just below my ear lobe, causing me to sigh slightly.

He pulls back agonizingly slowly, and I take a few controlled deep breaths. The waitress returns with the slip, and he promptly signs and leaves a tip. He offers me his hand, and I reluctantly take it. The electricity runs from his palm through mine, and I painfully look up into his eyes. My lips part as I stare up into his sapphire-like eyes, pleading with him.

“Do you have any plans for the rest of the afternoon, Kierra?” he asks as he leads me out of Sushi D’s.

His grasp on my hand tightens, and I look from our hands into his eyes.

“No. No, I don’t.” I stop suddenly, and he comes to a halt and looks down at me. “What are you doing to me, Chandler? I can’t have these conflicting feelings. My life is finally in my control and you—you have this damn effect on me like I’m a damn crack fiend. Please don’t get close to me again, and then make me relive losing you all over.”

He stands motionless for a moment, and I watch as he visibly digests my pleas.

“Kierra, I do not wish for you to go through that again. I cannot deny my attraction to you. There has always been something that drew me to you. However, it is wrong for me to act on them. I am in no position to be giving in to my desires.”

He reluctantly releases my hand, and I feel a chill run up my spine from the loss of contact. I wrap my arms around my chest and hug myself as I begin walking again.

“How are you doing with the anxiety?” he asks after a few moments of walking the concourse in silence.

“I am doing pretty well. Still no medications, and Daniel helped me find a support group for PTSD. I’m no longer looking for a cure. I am now learning to live with it.” I see him nod out of the corner of my eye. “You know what’s strange? I had no issues letting you touch me, hold me, or in having sex with you, but the first time I hugged my dad in four years, if I need to remind you, I cringed. It still is an odd sensation for me.”

“You trusted me, Kierra. Do you cringe when I touch you?” Chandler asks as he stops walking and pulls me against his side.

“No, I don’t,” I whisper softly as I look up at him. “I only want more. I’ve always craved more.”

He leans down, kisses my forehead, and breathes in the scent of my hair, then gently releases me and we begin walking towards the private elevators.

“I enjoyed my time with you today,” he says softly as the elevator doors open for us, and we step inside.

“Me, too, Chandler. Me, too,” I say quietly as I stare at the closed doors.

I feel his hand on the back of my neck gently messaging my tense muscles. My skin feels afire at the onset of his touch. I close my eyes and focus on steadying my uneven breaths. He steps closer to me and drags his fingers across my shoulder blade and down my arm, his hand landing on my hip. My nipples harden, and I can feel the tightening of desire deep within. I bite the inside of my cheek and try to remain composed. As the doors open I step out into the hall, and Chandler takes my hand and walks me to my door. I fumble in my clutch looking for my key card, hoping I can hold onto the last ounce of willpower I have left. Through my long lashes, I look back up at him as I place the key in the door.

“Thank you for lunch—and for everything. I really wouldn’t have had the courage to get where I am without your help,” I say quietly as I hold onto the door handle for support.

“It was my pleasure, little one.” He leans down and kisses my lips softly, and I want so badly to feel the passion that was once there, not so very long ago. “Please call me when you are ready to start looking for—”

I place my index finger on his lips and turn the door handle slowly.

“I’ll call you. It may be tomorrow or months from now, but I will call.”

He nods as I move my finger and run the back of my hand up his unshaven-for-a-week sharp jaw line.

“I will be in town for a couple days, right across the hall, if you need anything.” He places his hand over the top of mine and drags it across his stubble to his lips. “Anything at all.”

Just as I begin to move in towards him, the door handle turns and opens. Daniel is staring at the two of us for a moment before he shakes his head and scoots behind me without saying a word.

“Are you sure there is nothing going on between the two of you that I should be aware of?” Chandler asks, and I hold the door open.

“Nothing you need to be aware of. Thanks again.” I pause for a moment, watching the anger and jealousy creep into his eyes. “Have a good afternoon, sir.”

I slip the door closed before he can respond.