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## Chapter 1

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On a private Caribbean island...

**A** muggy breeze glided past Kate Shaw, the steamy air doing nothing to cool or calm her.

Within the coming minutes, she'd surrender to a stranger. A man who would strip her as audience members watched. He'd then enjoy her mouth, cunt, and anus to sate his physical need.

Her pulse accelerated and her skin grew damp.

When she'd agreed to this afternoon and the coming days, she'd relinquished her right to protest whatever her owner did, including bondage and punishment. Full submission was her sole option and specified in the contract she'd signed with Cravings, an exclusive club that organized their patrons' carnal fantasies no matter how shameless those visions might be.

Hers involved being sold at an auction starring alpha males, particularly pirates in the seventeen hundreds, each virile beast uncivilized and intent on deflowering her.

At twenty-seven, she hadn't been a virgin in years, her sexual experience less than satisfying given her rotten history with men.

Male colleagues treated her as they would a clueless child, mansplaining every-damn-thing. Subordinates groveled, willing to do or say whatever would put them on her good side. The few guys she'd dated coveted her position and wealth over the person she was.

This was her sole chance to have fun on her terms—without strings, regret, or the worst four-letter word known—hope. She'd forsaken the concept years ago. Easing her aching loneliness for a short while had to be enough.

Drums thundered, breaking the uneasy silence, their beat steady, persistent, and vaguely ominous. Apprehension prickled her skin. She prayed the foreboding music didn't portend anything bad or unexpected. She'd insisted Cravings choose affluent men to fill the audience, each in her general age range, all intelligent, fit, and in good health. Movie star looks weren't important.

However, if the one who won the bid was hot *and* behaved tenderly after he ravished her...

God help her weary heart and good sense if such a thing were possible.

*It's not. Relax.*

Impossible. Her delicate chemise did little to cover her nudity, the white linen thinner than she'd expected. A rose-satin corset whittled her waist and plumped her breasts. On each unsteady breath she took, her nipples scraped the fabric edge and threatened to spill out.

The club claimed her costume represented accurate historical wear, as would the men's.

For the moment, she stood alone on the elevated veranda, an opulent Spanish-style mansion behind her. She had no idea who owned the structure or this secluded island, nor did she care.

Footfalls sounded beyond the scarlet curtain facing her. Deep male voices followed, the words indecipherable, the tone hungry and impatient.

Her palms got sweaty. An inner voice urged her to flee. Her longing for a man's touch, his kiss, and a firm hand insisted she stay. In either case, the decision no longer rested with her. Shackles held her wrists to columns on either side, precluding escape. The irons grew heavier, the midday sun oppressive. Flowers and the sea's tang perfumed the humid air.

The drums halted.

Her heart paused.

The beat resumed, faster and louder than before.

The curtains parted.

Her vision dimmed, blurring the coming scene. Never had her limbs felt as weighted. If not for the manacles holding her, she might have dropped to the smooth pavers.

Indistinct shapes loomed ahead, several feet beneath the so-called stage. Movement showed male spectators raising their faces en masse and taking her in... regarding her as they would a prize, or rather an offering.

Their voices quieted.

They stepped closer.

Instinctively, she leaned back.

From behind, shoes slapped the pavers, the person advancing toward her.

A thirtysomething male—the slaver—passed and stood to the side where staff dressed as natives pounded large drums. The slaver wore a costume that resembled what she guessed a seaman would don in the eighteenth century: a billowy white shirt, snug breeches, and black boots.

He wore his long dark hair tied at the nape.

A whip rested in his right hand.

The thirty or so males in attendance cheered.

She tried to swallow but couldn't.

The slaver faced those in the crowd, each dressed the same as him. Face lifted, he called out, "I have a fine prize for ye bastards, but she'll cost ye dearly."

Pleased shouts turned to crude oaths, one rising above the others, “And what price would that be?”

The man who’d spoken stood closest to the veranda. In real life, he might have been an industrialist or a CEO, the same as her. At this moment, wind tousled his chestnut hair and stubble darkened his pleasant but unremarkable features. He shook his fist. “Whatever the cost, I say she’s mine.”

*Uh-uh.* She didn’t want him. There wasn’t a spark or connection between them. He was nothing more than another stranger in the crowd. She needed something greater to make her fantasy special, even if it amounted to nothing more than physical attraction.

She tried to speak, but her throat was too tight.

The others protested for her and advanced, surrounding the pushy guy.

He elbowed them away.

The slaver strode to her side and stopped. “Enough!” His roar cut through the other noise. When the audience calmed, he looked down at them. “Don’t you fools want to see what yer going to bid on?”

Their approving bellows answered.

The slaver chuckled. “I thought so. What say we begin?” He slipped behind her.

*What is he doing?* She looked over at him.

Perspiration dotted his forehead. He was attractive as an older brother or friend might be. Rather than meet her gaze, he looked at the gathering and placed his hands on her shoulders.

His fingers rested on her mounds.

She flinched.

Paying no heed, he gripped the chemise edge and corset then tugged both, hard.

Noise from ripping fabric filled the air, sounding louder than the wind rustling through numerous palms and vegetation.

Her breasts spilled out.

A warm draft skipped over them.

Her nipples tightened.

The men grew still and stared at her partial nudity.

Heat rose to her chest, throat, and cheeks.

The slaver pressed close and cupped her breasts as no brother or friend would, his stiffened cock against her ass, her signed contract affording him the privilege to deliver her fantasy in whatever manner he chose. He lifted her flesh, presenting it to the others. "What will I have for this?"

The guy from earlier spoke. "Ten."

"Fifteen," another said.

The bids came fast and loud, passing sixty grand within seconds. Chump change to the millionaires and billionaires present, *and* tax deductible, after the winner donated his sum to whatever charity he chose.

Fevered, she concentrated on the slaver's breath hot against her cheek, his intrusive touch oddly arousing and protective.

She sagged against him.

He fondled her boobs and her nipples peaked. "Is that all ye bastards have to give? Not enough I say. There has to be more from—"

"Two-fifty," a deep voice shouted.

Everyone fell silent at the volume and shocking price.

Reeling, she tried to determine who had offered such a ridiculous sum, but no one looked at her. They peered over their shoulders at thick palms ringing the area.

Three men stood in the shadows beneath one tree, the distance and shade not revealing their features. Dressed as everyone else here, each proved tall, easily over six feet, legs long, hips trim, shoulders broad, their white shirts unlaced, revealing muscular chests.

Her mouth dried.

The slaver pulled her closer, his thumbs on her nipples. "Two-fifty, you say? Which one offers such a price?"

The middle one shook his head. “Not for one. For each in turn.”

Several men gasped.

She couldn’t breathe. There was something familiar about the man who’d spoken, his baritone known to her, though given her current tension she couldn’t connect the sound to a face.

The slaver played with her nipples. “Yer offering seven-fifty total?”

The trio nodded.

Several men whistled at the bid but didn’t counter it.

She couldn’t blame them. Three-quarters-of-a-million dollars was an insane sum to pay for anything, especially her coveted fantasy, not theirs.

No one could want her that badly. She was pretty, but no beauty. Her intelligence pleased her, but had never turned any man’s head. She’d always had a good heart, which proved a handicap in the ruthless business world where SOBs flourished.

This didn’t make sense, unless...

*No. It can't be.*

The only men who might be this dogged or eager to have her under their thumbs were ones she craved but couldn’t have. Her father had seen to that. When he’d stepped down from the company and anointed her CEO, she hoped her smarts, expertise, and dedication had finally pleased him.

Fat fucking chance.

Before she took the reins, he’d made one last, fateful decision to prove she’d never be as good as the son he’d always wanted, but hadn’t had. He invited three new members to the board she would chair. Noah Marstan, Wyatt Brell, and Sean Lenwood were successful, dominant men and pure alphas. If anyone could make certain she’d toe the line and would behave as required, they would.

Or so dear old Dad thought.

She did her own thing without apology or regret.

Her independence didn't set well with Sean, Noah, and Wyatt. At too many meetings, they questioned her suggestions and decisions, wanting more than the data she'd presented. When they voted against her, other members fell in line too easily. She hated their power grab and them, but desired their touch, heat, and strength.

It *had* to be them. Why? Who told them about this event? She couldn't believe chance had brought them to the island. That would mean they engaged in these scenarios on a regular basis and she just happened to be their designated lover today, her contract giving them the right to intrude on her fantasy and take charge carnally.

*No, no, no, NO.*

*Go away.*

She should have voiced her protest, but couldn't, her shock too great, her yearning for them past reasonable.

They left the shadows, their strides assured, similar to victorious warriors.

The others stepped aside to let them pass.

Noah led the threesome. At thirty-two, he was the proverbial man's man, six-three, athletic and toned, no sport or challenge too difficult for him to conquer. His bronze complexion made his hazel eyes appear lighter, his dark and dangerous looks perfect for a Middle Eastern sheik... or a pirate from long ago. Wind ruffled his sable hair. Stubble heightened his effortless masculinity.

Raw lust flared on his features, his gaze pinning her more effectively than the manacles.

Her heart jumped and her pussy creamed, but she resisted his innate magnetism. Losing herself within his embrace would turn out badly for her. He'd have fun then split without a backward glance, then try to dominate her at the meetings. Not needing that crap, she averted her gaze.

And came eye to eye with Wyatt.

Bad move. Also in his early thirties, equally tall and muscular, he wore his light brown hair longish on top and sported a closely trimmed mustache and beard. The facial hair along with his classic good looks gave him an aristocratic air. His olive skin, dark brown eyes, and the faint scar on his left cheek said he wasn't one to indulge in tea and crumpets. BDSM and rowdy bedplay was more his style, the same as his sexy and teasing personality.

He winked.

She weakened.

His attention drifted to her naked breasts. His smile widened and grew smug.

*Damn you.*

And Sean.

His rough, masculine looks would have served a Marine or other military man well. So would his solid bulk and large frame. At thirty-one, he was definitely in his prime. He'd slicked back his dark blond hair. A small black stud graced his left earlobe. Although his imposing presence would cow most men and excite every sane or straight woman, mischief shone in his gray eyes. During board meetings, he'd been surprisingly laid-back, not letting anything rattle him, biding his time until circumstances turned in his favor.

He crossed his arms. His pecs hardened.

Her knees wilted.

The slaver squeezed her breasts.

*Of all the...* She kicked her heel against his shin.

He stilled his roaming hands. "Is seven-fifty the final bid?"

It shouldn't be. For her to end up with them... No, she couldn't allow it.

Pressing need said otherwise and drove her thoughts toward them no matter the consequences.

Noah planted his hands on his lean hips. "We might be willing to bid more." His resonant voice rang through the surroundings. "On one condition."



Everyone waited to hear his demand, no one seeming to breathe.

Her included. She couldn't imagine what he meant.

All eyes sped to him.

He ignored them. "Strip her."

She went cold then hot.

His gaze traveled her indolently, lingering on the chemise pressing against her cunt, driven there by the wind, then her exposed breasts. Possession and cockiness sparked in his eyes.

Recalling why she desired, but also resented and avoided him, she lifted her chin, showing her disdain.

He, Wyatt, and Sean traded a glance and smile.

She twisted her wrists to get loose.

The slaver tapped his crop against her ass. "None of that. Keep still or suffer the consequences." He shouted past her, "Strip her, I shall."

*What?* "Like hell you will." She tugged harder on her bonds. They didn't budge. "I didn't sign up for this." She bared her teeth at the unholy trio. "I didn't ask for anyone from *my* board to come to this island."

Wyatt stroked his beard. "We wanted to surprise you."

The understatement of the century. His luscious voice tested her self-control. She steeled herself against his charm. "Why are you really here?"

The slaver tightened his arm around her waist. "Quiet, you hear? This isn't how an auction works."

"Seriously? How about it unfolding like this?" She rammed her shoulder into his chest.

His air puffed out. He stumbled back.

She glared at her guys. *Wait*. They weren't hers. Never would be. "Did my father put you up to this? Did he find out I was taking a brief vacation, but wanted me at my desk like the company slave I am, and told you to drag me back to the States before I had any fun?"

Sean fingered his stud. “So you *are* ready to cut loose.”

“About fucking time,” Noah said.

Wyatt nodded.

The bulges between their legs thickened, luring her.

*No.* They were not going to break through her defenses. This was nothing except a game to them. One she’d lose. She spoke to the crowd in general. “Surely, one of you is willing to bid more. It’s for a good cause. Whichever one you choose. It’s tax deductible.” Every businessperson’s Holy Grail.

Not here. Dead freaking silence greeted her.

She squeezed her fists.

Noah pointed to her hands. “The defiance you’re showing isn’t allowed. We command. You obey, then willingly—and patiently—await whatever we decide, no matter how base. I know. I read your contract.”

*Jesus goddamn Christ.* Those fantasies were supposed to be private.

He addressed the slaver, “If she speaks again, gag her.”

She clenched her jaw.

A smile touched Noah’s lips, and surprising warmth filled his eyes, something akin to tenderness.

Floored, she kept her tongue, uncertain whether she’d seen the sweet emotion or not.

“Go on.” Sean flicked his hand. “Strip her.”

Heat burned her face. Her manacles were more burdensome than necessary, a reminder as to her subservient state.

The slaver gripped her chemise and tore it apart.

The edges fell at her sides, exposing her legs, stomach, and furry mound.

Despite the sultry air, goose pimples rose on her skin.

Approving whistles and shouts erupted from the audience, each member hungering over her nudity, a few pumping their fists.

As one, Wyatt, Noah, and Sean marched toward the stairs leading to the veranda, their boots tapping the stone.

The slaver put out his hand. “Not one step closer. We haven’t finalized the bid.”

Noah didn’t stop. “Wrong. It’s a million total.”

The slaver whistled and backed away. “The prize is yours. Do with her whatever you want.”

“I intend to. Starting now.”

*He can’t mean out here as the others watch.*

Upon reaching the veranda, he stalked to her.

“Wait!” She rattled her chains. “I didn’t agree to—”

He pressed his forefinger to her lips, stopping her. “You did.” He snuggled his mouth against her ear, his hair-roughened cheek rasping and warming hers. “And much more.”

She’d been a fool to include voyeurism in her contract, but she hadn’t predicted he or the others would show up here, much less participate. “I need a moment.”

“No. I’ve waited too long.” He covered her mouth with his and plunged his tongue inside.

*Jeezus.*

Her knees sagged bumping his. Her nipples scraped his hard chest, his flesh hot and silky.

She trembled and parted her lips as much as she could, inviting him deeper inside.

He took even more, never hesitating or asking. On a low growl, he slipped his arm around her waist and pulled her into him, her cunt against his rigid cock, their stomachs and thighs so close not even a breath could pass between them.

Exploring her mouth lazily, he used ample time to sweep his tongue over her inner cheeks, tasting her.

His faint peppermint flavor mingled with an essence belonging to him alone, fresh and inviting. Musk enhanced his subtly spicy fragrance, each scent potently masculine.

She slumped against him even though she shouldn't cave this soon or ever. This fantasy was on her terms, not his. She was no man's plaything or afterthought and had better remember as much.

With as much will as she could muster, she pushed his tongue from her mouth and turned her face away.

His rough breaths skimmed her temple. He cupped her breast.

Her blood thickened. Rarely had anything thrilled her as much as his confident and assured caress... perfected during his countless other conquests.

That brought her back to reality fast. She twisted to break his hold on her.

"Hmm." The sound vibrated in his chest. "Still being defiant, are we?"

She gave him a look. "What do you think?"

He stroked her chin. Even her teeth tingled. Lightly, he brushed his lips over hers. "Not enjoying yourself?"

For too long, she'd wished for this moment. During innumerable board meetings, she'd hungered for his gaze, an accidental—or purposeful—touch, his rumbling voice, and sumptuous heat. Passion radiated from him, leaving her distracted, wanting, and leery. Guys who looked and behaved as he did had never wanted her. Untold women had staked their claims first, reducing her to second best, otherwise known as a friend with benefits or the pining mistress.

Not a chance, especially with him. Unwilling to play the fool, she kept her head. "Don't you know?"

"I do." He kissed her harder, deeper, longer.

*Holy mother.*

She ground her pussy against his erect dick. Their tongues boogied then waltzed and returned to a frenzied state as their desire skyrocketed. Their scents blended, until they smelled like each other.

He broke free first.

*No.* She wasn't ready.

Before she could protest their separation, he stepped back and ripped the remaining chemise away, leaving her fully nude, tethered, and vulnerable.

The crowd shouted their appreciation.

One guy bolted to the steps.

The slaver poked his crop against the man's chest, keeping him in place. "Stay where ye are, unless ye intend to bid more than a million."

"Fuck that. I want them to do her. All three at once."

The others shouted their elation, demanding the same.

Dizzy, she lowered her face but didn't dare speak. In her contract, she had agreed to additional lovers, even a three-way, which Noah would bring up if she complained.

Wyatt and Sean joined them.

Noah spoke to the slaver. "Turn this thing." He pointed to the circle she and the columns stood on.

The slaver fished a device from his pocket and activated it. Whirring sounded.

The section rotated slowly.

When her back faced the audience, Noah spoke, "Stop it now." Once the circle halted, he held his hand out to the side. "The strap."

*Oh my God.* They were going to punish her out here and this soon. Although wanting discipline, she needed time to adjust to the notion and had figured whoever won her would listen to her reasoning. If he didn't, she'd threaten to leave.

Her objections wouldn't mean shit to Noah or the others, no more than her arguments had during meetings. They'd do whatever the fuck they wanted.

Disquiet made her insides churn. Passion and expectation prickled her skin, those emotions winning out. No way would they hurt her. It wasn't in their natures.

The slaver ran past a drum and returned holding a strap, the

leather supple enough to drape over his palm, its pure black color and width menacing.

She tensed.

Noah flicked his gaze at her then took the strap and wrapped one end around his hand. The leather swung at his side and grazed her calf.

She started.

Holding her chin between his thumb and forefinger, he then lifted her face, giving her no choice except to look at him.

*Fuck that.*

He huffed. "Open your eyes."

"If I don't?"

He kissed her cheek. "We'll let someone else win." He'd spoken quietly. "Would you like that?"

The bastard knew she wouldn't. Frequently, he'd exchanged glances with her at their meetings, the same as Wyatt and Sean, their gazes turning her inside out. She hadn't been able to concentrate on anything after that. Once the meetings ended, each had approached her separately on what she considered fact-finding missions to see if she'd go out with them.

She'd fled instead, afraid to get close on an emotional level, wary as to their motives. She wouldn't have put it past her father to have them cozy up to her so she'd cave to their demands, allowing them to run her show. Reducing her to no more than a puppet ruler because her father didn't want an outsider as CEO, preferring to keep Shaw Inc. in the family. However, having a *real* executive run things behind her back was fine, even if it meant deceiving and using her.

Torn between outrage, concern, and fierce need, she looked at Noah.

Pleasure swept across his handsome features.

She'd expected conceit because he'd known she would concede. His honest desire pushed her further down the rabbit hole.

He raised the strap. “You determine whether we use this or not. Obey us in every possible way, with no hesitation, and we won’t punish you. Resist in the least or respond in a manner that’s not satisfying to us and you’ll earn the licks.”

He couldn’t be serious. “How am I supposed to know what satisfies you?”

Wyatt pressed against her right side, delivering his cedar-and-leather scent. A fragrance she’d recalled and masturbated to during lonely nights in bed. This was far better. His hard cock nudged her leg.

He cradled her bare ass. “Believe me, you’ll know.”

She wanted to kiss his scar and ask how the injury happened, but chose to arch an eyebrow to keep up her I-don’t-give-a-fuck act. “That’s no answer.”

He slid his hand between her ass cheeks and touched her anus.

Delight shot from there to her cunt, making it wetter. She pushed to her toes.

Sean eased her back down and cupped her pussy.

Moisture drenched her slit and bathed his palm. To say she was ready for him and the others was an understatement. One she wouldn’t admit. They’d conquered her too easily and it had to stop. She pretended indifference.

Playfulness rose in Sean’s eyes.

*Damn.* She didn’t want to like his teasing or his jewelry but did. Although his stud brought to mind a tough biker and should have added to his already intimidating looks, it tamed them somewhat. As did the sudden regard on his face.

No different from Noah’s earlier tenderness.

Not understanding, she waited for Sean to say or do something.

As quickly as his emotion happened, it disappeared, hard lust darkening his complexion, his citrusy fragrance fading beneath his musk.

In a perfect world, she would have always been free to enjoy his masculinity and brief affection, then Noah and Wyatt's. A heavenly scenario and absurd in everyday life. Forever after wasn't on their play list. Love wasn't a remote consideration. Her father had wed solely to increase his wealth. That's what sensible men did.

The lucky ones also had sons.

Since these three didn't need her money, anything intimate after today and the following ones was off limits. Time to get a grip.

She tugged away from Sean and Wyatt.

Noah slapped the strap against his palm. "That's what I was talking about."

She looked down her nose at him, which wasn't easy considering he was a head taller. "Meaning?"

"Your continuing defiance." He exchanged a look with Wyatt and Sean, something unspoken passing between them.

Wyatt slipped two fingers into her cunt.

She gasped.

Sean turned her face to his and thrust his tongue between her lips, driving sure and deep.

Her moan sounded louder than it should have and far too pleased. Without meaning to, she leaned into him.

Footfalls sounded. Whose she couldn't guess.

Wyatt spread his fingers within her and rubbed his thumb against her clit.

Outrageous pleasure dashed from her pussy to her inner thighs then rose to her breasts. Her taut nipples stung in a delightful way.

She panted as well as she could around Sean's tongue.

An odd whistling sounded.

*Crack.*

She froze at the strap hitting her ass, the sting fucking awful.

*Damn! Damn! Damn!* The misery bit deep and hard. *Stop hurt-*



*ing, please.*

It did, warmth replacing it.

She drooped but didn't fall. Wyatt's fingers inside her cunt kept her upright, as did Sean's arm around her waist.

She struggled for air but couldn't manage enough. Her ears buzzed and her inner sub wanted further discipline. She pushed her ass toward Noah, taunting him for a second lick.

He stroked her butt gently.

His behavior unsettled her, not unfolding as she'd predicted. She wasn't certain what to think or expect. Maybe that was the point. By keeping her off-center, they'd make the experience more intense.

The crowd's shouts grew unruly or perhaps rowdier. She hadn't been paying attention.

"More!" several men bellowed.

One yelled above the rest. "Fuck this. You barely pinked up her ass."

Sean thrust his tongue deeper into her mouth.

Wyatt finger-fucked her harder and faster.

A familiar ache settled between her legs. Delight coiled within and grew stronger.

He stopped.

*Noooo.*

She bent her knees to bring herself closer to his thumb.

Sean pulled her back up.

A new whistle sounded. A crack.

This one hit harder than the first. Exquisite pain exploded that she hadn't believed she'd relish but did, though only for the soothing heat which followed. She groaned around Sean's tongue and heaved air, but he didn't break free.

Nor did Wyatt, tormenting her with a stroke here, a rub there, drawing her near to completion only to delay her climax.

Frustrated, she growled.

Noah offered another lick and another, the strap getting a

workout.

Drenched in perspiration, she lost count of the blows, agony and pleasure blending into one, impossible to separate or resist.

Cheers and shrill whistles permeated the thick air. Something hit the pavers. She guessed the strap since Noah wasn't swinging it any longer. For the time being, her punishment had ended.

Wyatt pulled his fingers out of her sheath.

Sean tore his mouth from hers.

*No, don't.* She didn't want the pleasure to stop.

Using her remaining strength, she forced her eyes open.

Wyatt stepped to the side.

Noah sank to his knees by her cunt, exertion and arousal flushing his complexion, his look predatory, a male who demanded a female in whatever manner he wanted, no matter how uncivilized.

She couldn't find a voice to object.

Behind her, Sean dropped to his knees next.

Surprised, she looked over at him.

With his hands on her ass, Noah spread her cheeks.

Sean ripped a small packet, guided the condom over his forefinger, and probed her tight ring.

The sensitive area came alive. Heat and a remarkably pleasant feeling surged within it. Her head fell back, and her mouth sagged open.

Wyatt's tongue filled her as the others had. He settled his hand on her throat and kept her still while he plundered her mouth, giving her no quarter, his beard rasping her skin, his kiss ruthless and savage.

Craving his dominance, she suckled his tongue, enjoying his minty flavor and natural taste, then lost herself to passion, deliciously used by him.

Sean eased his finger into her tightest passage and explored.

Noah claimed her cunt, his mouth on her slippery folds, his tongue licking her clit.