
BLACK DIAMOND

Midnight Oasis - Book Three

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This book contains fantasy themes appropriate for mature readers only.
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Prologue

Maximillian Greco sat across the desk from Dulcinea Bedford. In her hand, she held the final words from her mother. The envelope she held was already tear stained from when her mother had sealed it.

Reading the writing on the front, she recognized her mother's handwriting. It read, 'Dulcinea, open this with Max, you will understand.'

"If you like, I can leave the room until you're done? She asked that you remain here, but it's not necessary for me to be in the room," Maximillian asked her.

"No, it's okay. Besides, it's your office." A beautiful smile appeared on her face. "I know it's sad she's gone and I miss her. But she always had an angle and she could always make me smile."

Max grinned back at her, knowing the woman she spoke of.

Dulcinea opened the envelope. The two got comfortable in their chairs, and she began to read.

. . .

Dear Sweet Girl,

If you are reading this, it means I've left this Earth. Don't cry for me, celebrate for me because you know I'm in a better place. I want you to live. Live like there's no tomorrow. I tried very hard to make our bad times as good as could be. I regret not getting to do the things we always dreamed of. I would have liked to have seen Paris and Italy, but I die happy holding onto those dreams for you.

Do you remember when you were twelve and we snuck into the movie theater? It was the first movie I took you to. Do you remember? I never laughed so hard at a sad movie. When you stood from your chair and yelled at me, "You named me after a whore? Why would you do that?" Do you remember what I said to you? "Because just like the heroine in my favorite movie, you are going to be very special to someone someday, and I hope they treasure you like Don Quixote."

You, my beautiful Dulcinea, are going to be able to do those things now. Max has two more envelopes for you. In one envelope, are the dreams we dreamed. I might not have been able to give you much growing up, but you always knew you were loved. Now, I can give you what I couldn't when you were younger. Take what's in that envelope and live our dreams. Have fun and live for both of us.

The other envelope. Oh, this is so hard. I prayed so hard on making this decision. But you have the right to know who your father really is. I pray you never meet him. Do not go looking for him! He is an evil man, and if you never meet him, he can never hurt you. Everything he touches turns to ash. If I could, I would never have told you, but I don't want you to guess anymore. In the other envelope is your answer. But I beg you to never open that envelope.

I will be watching over you always. Do not live your days in sorrow. I will always love you, sweet girl. God couldn't have sent a more perfect angel to me when he blessed me with you. Until we can be together again one day.

Love always and forever,

Mom

. . .

Max handed her the two envelopes. "Dulcinea, your mom was a very special woman and she loved you very much. Don't ever doubt that. She made sure you would be taken care of."

"Mr. Greco. Did you know my mother well?"

"Yes, I did. She was a good friend. Why do you ask?"

Dulcinea opened the one envelope and looked inside. Her doe-like brown eyes rounded like saucers. "How did she do this?"

"Every extra dollar she got, she invested. Right before she got sick, she took out the insurance policy. Ironic, right?" Max caught the comment quickly. "I'm sorry, that wasn't very sensitive of me."

"It's okay, you don't have to apologize to me." Looking back in the envelope, she asked him. "What am I supposed to do with all of this money?"

"You could do the same thing and invest it. Or you could do what your mother wanted you to do. Have fun, like have an adventure. I have a friend who is launching a ship in Dubai in a few months. I could sponsor you."

"Sponsor me for what?"

"It's a BDSM cruise. For the launch only, you need to be invited. If you're not invited, you could still go. You just need to be sponsored."

Dulcinea had heard the term BDSM but had never really thought much about it. "What if I don't fit in?"

Maximillian looked her over from a Master's position. She was a very beautiful woman. Her breasts were big, and her waist was trim. She had great gripping hips, but what drew a person to Dulcinea was her long dark hair and soulful dark brown eyes. "You'll fit in perfectly. That's why I'm suggesting it. I trust my instincts and they are telling me you need to come on this cruise. But if you don't want to participate, you can always wear the red band. It leaves Dubai in September if

you're interested. You'll need to fill out paperwork and have a medical exam."

"Do you think I should open the other envelope?"
Dulcinea looked at Max.

"That's totally up to you."

Dulcinea sat in the chair holding the two envelopes and her mother's letter. Finally, she looked at Max. A look of resolve on her face. "Okay, I'll do it. Where do I sign?" She grinned. "BDSM cruise, here I come."

Jackson Blackhawk looked at his doctor and friend Peter Macalister. "You've got to be fucking kidding me? Check the results again. Somebody mixed up the results. It's not true."

"Jackson, I'm really sorry, but it's true."

"I just signed a three-year deal. What am I supposed to do? My life is fucking over."

"Don't be so dramatic. Your football career may be put on hold, but you're not dying. Grow a set. My suggestion is to enjoy your vacation."

"What are you talking about?"

"Dude, they still have to pay you. This was an injury on their field, doing what they told you to do. You hit the injured reserve and you still get paid. Like I said, take a vacation. I'll give your coach my findings, so they'll have time to replace you. In the meantime, do you remember Dimitri Zilkin and Cameron Alexander from school?" Jackson shook his head yes. "They finally did what they always said they wanted to do. They have a BDSM cruise line. I happened to run into him and his fiancée. Super-hot chick. He sent me an invitation for the launch in Dubai. Why don't you come?"

"What and be the third wheel with you and Davina. I don't think so."

"No, idiot. You'd have your own room. Go online and check out the ship. It has a BDSM dungeon arena! Dude, this ship rocks. I would have to sponsor you, though. So think about and let me know."

"What do you mean sponsor?"

Peter explained the terms for admission onto the *Black Diamond*. "Like I said, think about it."

Jackson left the doctor's office. He got into his black Mercedes and sat there. No more football for a while? What the hell was he going to do? He started the car and pulled out. He knew he should go talk to his coach, but now wasn't the time. So, he detoured down to the docks. He parked the car and got out. Leaning his six-foot-five, hard, lean body on the hood, he watched the ships. Peter might have a point. He pulled out his phone and looked for the Midnight Oasis Cruise Line. The images that popped up on his phone had his dick hardening.

Jackson was a trained Master at the same BDSM dungeon as Peter and Davina. After sitting there for about a half hour, he called Peter. "All right, what do I have to do?"

"Go online and print the contract and medical release forms. I'll do the rest. Dude, we're going on a freaking BDSM cruise. I hear there is an auction the first night, so make sure you bring your checkbook."

"Thanks, Peter, this really could have been a totally shitty day. I think a vacation is just what I need. Talk to you later."

He got back into his car and drove back to the city. He was around the corner from his Park Avenue apartment, when, sitting at the light, he looked around. People were walking through the crosswalk. Couples were sitting at outdoor cafes. He watched as a woman left a lawyer's office. Her tear-stained cheeks and red nose told him she had received some bad news too.

He couldn't remember the last sub's name he had banged.

That brought a whole new reality to the forefront of his brain. It had been a while since he had gotten laid. This cruise would fix that. He looked up and the light had changed. He began to roll forward, when all of the sudden, she was standing right in front of his car. Her long dark hair reached her ass, and what an ass. Standing on the brakes, his car screeched to a stop.

Dulcinea was daydreaming as she left Max's office. She was going on an adventure, even if she had no clue what she was getting into. She needed to do some research. She guessed that's what made it an adventure. All of a sudden, she realized she was in the middle of the crosswalk, and a car was coming right at her. She froze.

"Are you going to stand there all day? Or are you going to cross like everyone else?" the driver yelled out the window.

She turned her face toward him as her big brown eyes glowered at him. "In a hurry to get some place you don't want to be?" she questioned as she started walking to the other side.

She had a point. He really didn't want to go home alone. "Yeah, but I could change my plans if you're available?" he threw back at her.

She looked at the car and the size of the man in it. "Nope, I'm good."

"I can make it worth your while?" Jackson was moving his car slowly through the intersection while cars behind him honked for him to move faster.

"You think I'm a whore?" she yelled back at him. Oh, if he ever knew my name, he would think I was. She looked toward the heavens. "Thanks, Mom," she said out loud.

He got hard with the thought of those red lips wrapped around his cock. "No, that's not what I meant. I'm sorry. Would you like to get a drink?"

"Really I'm good. I have some place to be. Thanks for not running me over." She began moving down the sidewalk faster, and Jackson lost her in the crowd.

Well, I guess it's either the dungeon or my hand. He decided on the dungeon and headed that way.

The day of the launch was here. Dulcinea had flown over with Max and his friends. He had become like a surrogate dad to her. He had answered all her questions about the BDSM lifestyle. He had even taken her to his club so she could see first-hand what she could expect. And Dulcinea was very much looking forward to this new beginning.

They were standing in line to get their photos taken for their cabin keys and the computer system. "Have you ever been on a cruise?" Rayna asked her. Rayna was Max's "sub." At least that's what he called her. They had also become close. Max had Rayna had taken Dulcinea shopping for the cruise. Dulcinea didn't think she would wear half of what they bought, but Rayna disagreed.

"No. I've been looking forward to it since I agreed to come."

The security guard was handing her back all her credentials when she heard, "Are you going to stand there all day? Or are you going to let other people board?"

When Dulcinea heard the question, her head turned toward the familiar voice. Recognizing it, she asked Max to describe the man behind it. From the description, she knew it had to be the same man who had propositioned her in the street. She simply replied, "Nope, just leaving." She would not give him the satisfaction. With her shoulders held high, she turned and headed for the elevators with Max and Rayna.

The doors were closing when she heard, "You still owe me a drink."

Six months before the cruise

"But I don't want to leave yet, Max, couldn't we have one more drink?" Dulcinea whined at him, then turned to Rayna. "He never has any fun, does he?"

Rayna's reply was to suck the lemon wedge placed in front of her with the shot of tequila.

"I think you have had enough celebrating tonight. It's time to get the two of you home."

"I'll help you get them to the car." Xavier had come over to help Max.

"Xavier. Xavier?" Dulcinea yelled when she saw him. "Did you hear I passed my submissive training course? I'm a full-fledged sub now." She was slurring some of her words.

"And as a new sub, you shouldn't be drinking this much." Xavier's tone was stern. He knew she had been celebrating, but she still needed to be responsible about it.

"I haven't had that much, and they were little drinks. I think Rayna called them fireballs. They were so good, Xavier. They tasted like cinnamon red hots. Have you ever eaten a red hot, Xavier?"

Xavier had started to guide Dulcinea to the car behind Max and Rayna. "No, poppet, I can't say that I have."

"They are so good, just like the candy, all hot cinnamon tasting and a burn in the back of your throat. After a while it doesn't burn as bad, though." She smiled up at him as he caught her from falling off the last stair exiting the building. "Xavier, have you seen Max or Rayna? I'm not feeling that good, and I'd like to go home." A faint shade of green coated Dulcinea's skin.

"Yes, poppet. Max is getting the car; you should be home in no time." Max stopped the car next to them and Xavier helped her into the back seat then belted her in. Rayna was already snoring in the front passenger seat. "She should be out

before you leave the parking lot. Be prepared, Max, she was looking pretty green around the gills before I put her in your pristine Lexus.

"I can only pray I can get her out before she hurls all over the Italian leather."

"Good luck with that." Max heard Xavier laugh as he closed the door, sealing Dulcinea in the back seat.

It was a little past midnight and Max figured with the streets so deserted, it would take him roughly thirty minutes to get home. He got comfortable in the driver seat, put on his favorite country station, and with the quiet snores of his passengers to keep him company, he began the trek home.

Max stopped at the last red light before entering their gated community. From where he sat, he could see Jerry, the night security guard, leave the shack and get into the golf cart that waited outside the door.

The light changed to green and Max pushed his foot on the accelerator, moving them into the middle of the intersection. Max never even saw the SUV before it plowed into the passenger side of the car, pushing it to rest against a telephone pole on the opposite side of the street. It then backed up and left.

Max had lost consciousness for a few moments. When he came to, the three of them were on the side of the road, out of harm's way. The fire truck was dousing the flames licking the mangled metal of his Lexus. The paramedics were working on both Rayna and Dulcinea. He made his way over to them needing to know they were all right. Rayna assured him she was fine, just a few scratches. Dulcinea's situation was not the same.

"Max, did you see the angel?" she had asked him.

"No, Didi, I didn't." He took her uninjured hand in his, tears falling from his eyes.

"He told me everything was going to be all right, he'd be

watching over me. I couldn't see him, but I know I heard him." She paused, as if trying to gather her thoughts. "Max, are you there?"

"Yes, Didi, I'm right here." He squeezed her hand.

Dulcinea started to hyperventilate. "Max, I can't see you. Why can't I see you?" The panic was becoming real in her voice.

Max waved to get the paramedic's attention. When he approached, he saw how agitated she was becoming. "Do you know if she is allergic to any medicine?"

"Not that I'm aware of."

"Max, don't leave me. Please help me."

"Didi honey, you need to calm down. I'm not going to leave you. Everything will be all right."

That was the last thing Dulcinea heard. The paramedic had given her a mild sedative that helped to calm her down but did nothing to give her back her eyesight.

Chapter 1

Dulcinea stood in the middle of her junior suite, spinning around. "I still can't believe I'm here. Thank you so much. I can't wait to go explore the ship." She moved to give Max and Rayna a hug. Maximillian Greco and Rayna Luciano had become Dulcinea's family after her mom passed, but never so much as after the accident. Her left hand brushed against the strong shoulder of Max, while her right hand glided through Rayna's long red hair, gripping them in a family hug. They had all bonded for their own reasons and for them, they were a perfect fit. Max, the daughter he would never have, Rayna, the sister, and Dulcinea, for the first time in her life felt like part of a real family. They all seemed to fill an empty part of each other's lives.

"Care to explain who you owe a drink to?" Max asked in his fatherly voice.

Dulcinea gave Max her 'I'm a big girl' look."

He raised his hands in surrender. "I've come to think of you as the daughter I never had. Plus, your mom would rain all kinds of hell down on me if I let anything happen to you."

Dulcinea walked to Max and, reaching up, pulled him down by his shoulders and kissed his cheek. "I love you too, Max." She turned and walked to the balcony, saying over her shoulder, "He kind of almost hit me with his car and then mistook me for a prostitute. No big deal." She walked through the open door to the railing. She felt Max standing in the doorway.

"What do you mean almost hit you? When did this happen?"

"The day I left your office. It wasn't his fault. I was daydreaming when the light changed, his car lurched forward and I froze. I would have thanked him for not hitting me, but then he hit on me. So, I blended in with the crowd until he drove past."

"Okay, but why does he think you owe him a drink?"

"I guess because that's what he asked me to do. Right before I disappeared."

"Didi, do I have to worry about this guy and you?" Max used the nickname she preferred. "I know you're old enough to make your own decisions, but since the accident you really haven't been out. I worry. Okay?"

Holding her wrist up, she twitched it back and forth flashing the red wristband wrapped around it. "No worries at all."

Max, being a lawyer, was a pretty even keeled type of person. Unless, it was a situation pertaining to Rayna or Dulcinea. Then the protective Dominant came out in him. "Don't take this lightly, Didi. Remember, not all Dominants are the same. This cruise is not like the dungeons you have attended with me and Rayna. You've completed your submissive classes, but those were executed by Dominants I knew. There are some Dominants who push the limits of BDSM. I just want you to pay attention, especially now. I would hate to have to hire a lawyer for my own trial." He pulled Dulcinea

into his arms. "Go get changed and enjoy yourself. We have a wedding to attend." He pulled back, kissing her on her forehead. "We will see you at dinner. Are you sure you'll be all right on your own?"

"I have to start sometime. I'm seeing more shapes now. I didn't bump into any furniture when I came in," she exclaimed excitedly.

They walked back into the room. Rayna moved forward, kissing her on the cheek as she leaned in to whisper, "I say, go for it. What do you have to lose? It's just a drink right?" She pulled back, smiling. "I'll be by the pool after the wedding. Come and join me, we'll have a drink to celebrate."

"Sounds good. I'll find you." Following them to the door, she asked, "Where is your cabin?"

"Right down the hall. I promised Rayna we would book one of the Midnight Suites. Our door is out three or four steps to the wall, then down to the right another ten. If you need to call, we are in MS-4."

"Max, leave the girl alone. You taught her how to defend herself and there is enough security on this ship. Have faith in her and where we are. Let's go explore our cabin. I'm sure I've done something you could punish me for?"

"We will see you at dinner. Behave yourself and stay out of trouble."

"Who, me?" Dulcinea put her hand over her heart, an innocent look on her face.

"Don't be late," was the last thing Dulcinea heard before the door closed.

Turning around in her room, she headed to the desk. Hoping the special program she needed to use the computer had been downloaded, she felt for the keyboard and positioned her hands, feeling for the keys. Max had told her to check her profile to make sure it was tagged showing her use of the red wristband. Clicking the two keys that would give

her access, she commanded, "Open sesame." A smile spread across her face every time she said it. She waited for the confirming tone then said, "Open personal file."

"Personal file open for Dulcinea Bedford. Confirm password?"

"Believe."

"Password confirmed. Before we start, would you like to give me a name?"

Dulcinea thought for a moment then commanded, "Yes, I think Pepe will do."

"Name change complete. Good afternoon, Didi, where would you like to go?" the computer requested. Dulcinea confirmed her information was right and did a search for other red-wristed passengers. The computer found the list; there were three other people listed, two women and one man. Dulcinea noted the women's names. She would stop at security and see if she could get more information on them. Already having a disability made her different. So, having a friend who was sporting a wristband as well could at least make that part a little easier.

Moving around for most of her younger life, Dulcinea never had a best friend. Her mother had told her that she wanted to see as much of the United States as she could before she died, since they couldn't afford to go overseas. Later on she found out it was so her father couldn't find them. Her mother had always been terrified of him. Dulcinea had wished she could have asked her mother what had happened between them. But she knew it was too painful for her mother.

Dulcinea always fantasized about what her father looked like. Did he have her dark hair color? Were his eyes the same doe-eyed brown as hers? She knew she had her mom's nose, but did she smile like him? Was he taller than her five-foot three inches? Dulcinea reached for her pocketbook and took out the envelope she had carried with her since receiving it.

All her answers were inside, all she had to do was open it. But how could she when her mom had pleaded in her last letter for her not to open it? Finding the safe in the closet, Dulcinea placed the envelope inside and set the combination. Listening to the tone of each number, she pushed, thinking to herself, *today is not the day for finding out who my father is*. She knew that one day she would open that letter; she just wasn't ready today.

The ship was scheduled to leave port at 5:00 pm. Dulcinea had time to change into her swimsuit and get up on deck. With the average temperature in the eighties, she wasn't worried about being cold. Rayna had used a braille label maker for her clothes, making it easier for her to find what she was looking for. The light from the balcony helped her locate her bags. She changed into the blue and purple bandeau top that barely held her chest in, along with the matching low-rise bikini bottoms she had picked out with Rayna. Pulling the matching sarong around her waist, she checked the computer to find the pool. She liked how the decks all had gambling names. The High Roller deck, the Blackjack deck, Baccarat, and finally her deck, the Roulette. Hearing the pool was on the High Roller's deck, she memorized the path. Feeling for her bag and cabin key, she headed towards the door, reaching for the cane she knew Max would leave to the right side of it. She took a deep breath and blew it out slowly. With her head held high and a smile on her face, she opened the door.

Backing out of the room to make sure her door closed, she listened for the lock to catch. As she was pushing off the door to leave, she heard, "Now, there's an ass I'll never forget," as two hands latched onto her scantily clad behind.