

HER RODEO MASTERS

PLEASURE ISLAND BOOK 9



ANYA SUMMERS



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

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Dearest Reader,

We come to it at last. The final chapter of the Pleasure Island Series and thereby the extension of the Dungeon Fantasy Club world. I want to personally thank you for coming with me on this incredible journey. It means the world to me that you have come to love these characters as much as I do.

This one is for you.

XOXO,

Anya

CHAPTER 1



A ccepted.

The crème-colored letter fluttered in Ivy's trembling fingers. The left corner was embossed with the letters *D* and *P* in a deep bordello burgundy, the correspondence signed at the bottom of the page in a scrawling script by the proprietor, Tobias Ford.

This meant she could move into the inner sanctum of Dungeon Pleasures after weeks of attending the main hub of the club. It meant she could write the story of the century, and show her journalistic teeth. It meant her life was finally going to change for the better. No more getting coffee for the boss for *this* girl. No more copy-editing the other journalists' work and making *them* sound better. No more writing the horoscope section and pretending those things were actual news.

"The bull pen meeting is about to start. You planning to attend?" Kevin Donnelly asked, looking every inch like he'd just stepped off the pages of *Vogue* magazine. He had movie star good looks, and fashionably cut, beach blond hair. He was wearing the latest skinny jeans and a hipster dress shirt in a silver gray. It was too bad the five foot seven, moderately buff and toned man was gay. Otherwise they'd be perfect for each other.

“Yeah, just give me a minute,” Ivy replied, refolding the paper in her hands. She shoved the letter and envelope into her massive tan leather shoulder bag that was essentially her life. There was room enough for her iPad, her makeup, tampons, condoms—although she hadn’t needed any of those in a while—wallet, keys, even a small yappy dog if she were so inclined. She carried everything in it. You name it, she carried it with her. Which worked out well for Ivy since she always seemed to be on the move.

“So, how did the other night go? You never mentioned your date, and I live to hear about my co-workers’ love lives,” Kevin simpered, giving her his full attention. This was one of the reasons Ivy loved him. The man was a consummate flirt, and knew just how to get a girl to spill all her secrets. How many times over the years had they done yoga and brunch on Sundays, where he would magically get her to tell him all her troubles? They were the best therapy sessions in the world.

“You and Chad are still not talking to one another, I take it,” she replied.

Kevin put his hands on his hips and did the gay male equivalent of tossing his hair back. “Please, honey, the man wishes he still had me. Nope, I’m moving on and into the market. Which means I don’t currently have a sex life and must live vicariously through you. So, no deflecting. I want all the juicy tidbits.”

She removed her iPad from her bag and said, “Yeah, well, good luck with that.”

“So the date the other night was a no go?” Kevin asked, his light ice blue eyes twinkling with interest.

“It’s fair to say I left as early as I could. When the crying started, there was really no point to saving the night,” she said. And wasn’t that just the kicker. Every single date she’d been on over the last eight months had been an absolute dud. She *was* in a relationship—just with her vibrator and her favorite Chardonnay.

“You cried?” Kevin asked aghast, a hand against his chest and his eyes wide with horror at her perceived faux pas.

“Nope. My date did. Going on and on about his ex. Clearly the guy wasn’t ready to get back out into the meat market. After listening for two hours about how much he loved Kelli with an ‘i,’ I was done,” she replied, getting up from her desk with her iPad in her hand to take notes during the meeting. Since she was the ‘horoscope girl’—as in, that was the only column she wrote—her boss, Don Moss, tended to have her perform secretarial duties as well. Like taking the meeting minutes during the weekly bull pen meeting on Monday mornings.

“Oh god, well, you’re better off, sweetie. I know this guy—”

“The men you know are gay. Not that I don’t love you and every gay man on the planet—because how would I know what to wear otherwise?—but I can’t date a gay man.”

Kevin cast her a patronizing glance. “Why not, honey? We make the best boyfriends.”

“Yeah, but there’s that whole ‘I’d like to have sex this decade with something not battery-operated’ thing. Aren’t you guys anti-vaginas anyhow? I kind of have the wrong equipment for a gay man,” she said with a laugh.

Kevin gave her a wicked grin. “Oh, honey, just because we don’t actively pursue women doesn’t mean we don’t know how to please one in bed. And after a few good orgasms, we’d make you the best damn quiche with a buttery crust that would melt in your mouth, and mimosas with freshly squeezed orange juice. And then we’d go get some mani-pedis together.”

Ivy sighed. That sounded like heaven. Having someone else take care of things, of *her*, for a change. The fact she was actually considering his offer was a rather disconcerting discourse about the state of her life. “If the men I date don’t improve soon, I promise to let you fix me up.”

“You won’t regret it,” Kevin assured her with a saucy grin and wink as they walked through the office.

The Pasadena Tribune had an open office format. Every staff writer, herself included, had a workspace, and those ran along the

exterior of the large office floor. Ivy didn't have an office with a view, as those were saved for the intrepid journalists, aka the real newspaper writers. But the walls separating the offices from the rest of the staff were made of a polyurethane glass. The middle floor of the office was reserved for secretaries, the accounting department, fact checkers, and all the other parts making up the news operation.

To Ivy, it was just a space she came to every day where she trudged through her work. It wasn't really all that rewarding. And wasn't that part of her problem? That she was actively considering letting Kevin fix her up to spice up her life a bit? To topple the staid and rather sedate, boring life she'd innocuously built for herself.

It would be nice to attend a movie or go out to dinner and not be alone for once. She and Kevin went out. Although, after that one time where she'd let him dress her, she was more careful about the events she let him drag her to. Since her parents had moved to San Diego three years prior, she had to admit she felt a bit lost.

Ivy was single and fairly attractive, but wholly an introvert. She had her extroverted moments, to be sure, but she wasn't fond of large crowds or dance clubs where all the people her age seemed to go to hook up. Ivy preferred a nice wine bar, where the average male in the place was either gay or twice her age.

They entered the conference room termed the 'bull pen' by, well, everyone in the office. Inside there was a veritable lake of a pinewood conference table. It always made Ivy think of castle dining rooms with those exquisitely long, ornate tables, although this table was more of the Ikea modern variety, not Louis the sixteenth. Ivy took one of the black leather chairs available beside Kevin.

At the front of the room stood her boss, Don Moss. The man ran the Pasadena Tribune Newspaper with military precision. It worked for the paper, and had kept them in business far beyond when many other newspapers had folded in the new digital age of the Internet. They still put out a bi-weekly print paper on Tuesdays

and Fridays, as well as a Sunday weekend edition. Plus, they updated news stories around the clock on the paper's website.

"Now that you're all here..." Don Moss said, giving Ivy and Kevin a frosty glare over their tardiness. *We were literally two minutes late*, Ivy thought. *See? Mister Drill Sergeant at your service.* Don was in his early fifties but didn't look it. He was fit and lean, his hair trimmed in a buzz cut army style. Other than the fact his hair was completely gray, and he had deeply etched lines around his eyes, you'd never realize his age. Don had a commanding presence, was a leader of men, and happened to run the paper much like a general coordinating an assault on the battlefield.

"Stuart, what do you have for me?" Don asked.

Ivy had her iPad open and ready to go as she took notes.

Stuart Williams—aka the douchebag. He might look debonair, reminiscent of old school news reporters with his fancy suits and slicked back black hair, but the man was a snake, and meaner than a rabid raccoon on steroids. Ever since Ivy had turned him down and refused to sleep with him—in the copy room, of all places, what a cliché—the man had gone out of his way to make her life at the Tribune tantamount to the seventh circle of hell.

In other words: she got the coffee, picked up lunch for the 'real' reporters, and had the noble job of writing the horoscope section.

Stuart flashed a grin her way that made her skin crawl and said, "There was a house fire overnight, next to Pasadena High School. Fire Marshall was called to the scene."

"Anything suspicious about the fire?" Don asked.

"That's what I'd like to find out. It's the third house fire in the last four weeks. Could be a coincidence, but I think it's worth investigating. Especially since they seem to be getting closer to the hills, and with as dry as it's been—"

"We could have a brush fire and Pasadena go up in flames," Don finished for him with a nod.

"Exactly." Stuart leaned back in his chair like he was the

freaking king of the castle. And, well, around there, he pretty much was.

“Good. Get on it. And keep me updated on your progress. Kendra?” Don shifted to his next reporter.

Kendra was a decade Ivy’s senior. She was smart and funny, her mocha skin always unblemished and fabulous. She looked like she was younger than Ivy. And she was intelligent, with a nose for uncovering breaking stories before they were news.

“There’s been some questionable spending out of the mayor’s office, rumblings from the board of aldermen with regards to this year’s upcoming Rose Bowl Parade,” Kendra replied.

Don set his coffee cup down on the table. “How much are we talking? Because a few hundred bucks isn’t news, it’s just government misspending.”

“According to my sources, it’s over a hundred grand and may end up harming the mayor’s re-election bid in two years,” Kendra replied. Her face was calm and her expression said that she knew she had a big scoop.

Don’s eyebrows rose at that. He ordered, “Investigate it further, report in to me by the week’s end with your findings.”

Don, as per usual, went from person to person within the rest of the crew to go over their stories for the week: Jane Lowe, Deb Kinsey, and Kevin with his Hollywood insider scoop on the latest gossip. Ivy had no idea where Kevin uncovered his information. In all the years they’d been friends, not once had he ever fessed up as to his source. But Ivy had a niggling suspicion that one of his many exes had introduced him to the Hollywood elite.

“And Ivy, you’re on horoscopes this week,” Don said, passing her over as he always did. It made her feel small and unimportant, as though, in the six years she’d been there, she was disposable, and not a valued member of the team.

“Actually, sir, I think I have a piece you might be interested in,” Ivy spoke up. Her pulse thumped wildly as her anxiety skyrocketed.

Don gave her the stinkeye for interrupting the flow around the room. "Ivy, we discussed this. The answer is no."

"And if I have the scoop on illicit activities that might include members of the Hollywood elite?" she asked, hating how her ideas were shot down before they even had a foothold.

Don gave her a hard glare as he assessed her words. "Then I would say you can investigate it on your own time. If there ends up being a story, you come to me first about it. Until then, you're on horoscopes. All right, folks, meeting adjourned. Go get 'em," he went on, assessing the rest of the group.

Her coworkers stood en masse, and filed out the room. Kevin gave her a 'don't do it' shake of his head. But he totally knew she would, and left her to doom herself.

Perhaps if she felt satisfied with her job and her life, Ivy could have let it rest. Perhaps if she felt like a part of the team instead of someone who was easily replaceable. But she wanted to do work that mattered. She wanted to make her parents proud of her.

Ignoring the roiling mass of coffee churning in her stomach, she approached her boss. Don gave her a 'what now?' scowl.

"Sir, let me do this and not the horoscopes. I really think there's something here. There's a club that has a private section," Ivy explained.

"That's not news, Ivy, that's Hollywood spilling over up interstate 210. Most of the posh clubs within fifty miles of downtown Los Angeles have a VIP section," Don said, shaking his head, his frustration with her palpable.

"Yes, but I know that this one is different. My instincts—"

Don gave her a patronizing glower. "Ivy, you're a great writer, which is why I hired you in the first place, but investigative reporting is not the right fit for you. I've been in the news business longer than you've been alive and I know a thing or two. I need you to trust me on this and do the job I've hired you to do."

She flinched. "Just give me this one chance. Let me investigate this, and if I'm wrong—"

“If you’re wrong, you go back to writing what I assign you, no more questions asked,” Don finished for her.

“I won’t let you down. I can do this, sir,” she replied.

“We’ll see. You still have to do the horoscope pieces this week, along with the rest of your workload,” Don said, not giving her an inch of space.

“I understand. Thank you, sir,” she said and walked toward the conference door.

“Don’t thank me yet. Because if you truly fuck up and harm a business without sufficient proof, you won’t be writing anything—you’ll be unemployed,” Don threatened.

The spurt of confidence she’d felt deserted her as the realization sank in. She’d just bet her career on the off-chance that she had a story.

Ivy slunk back to her office, her knees shaking. She ignored the evil smirk from Stuart and the pitying glances from the rest. She could do this: she could be an investigative journalist, just like her father. Back in her workspace, she sat at her desk and stared at the letter from Dungeon Pleasures. There was no time like the present to shake up her life and dive in. Tonight would be the perfect night to begin her investigation. And, if fear slithered through her system at the thought there was a chance she could lose everything she’d worked for, she shelved it for later.

She didn’t have time to be a wimp. This was her ‘go big or go home’ moment.