

A MAJOR FOR MARNIE

MISS ROBIN'S ACADEMY - BOOK THREE



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BLUSHING BOOKS

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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.

CHAPTER 1



Marnie kept waving until the carriage had turned a corner and disappeared.

She turned to her friend, Georgiana, who was weeping softly into a handkerchief. "Pull yourself together, Georgie," she said. "It's not that bad."

"Not that bad!" cried Georgiana. "Oh, you're such a beast. I'm crying with happiness."

Marnie sighed. It wasn't that she was unhappy for Delilah—a pale slip of a girl who had just married the school's resident doctor—it was just that the whole thing made her reflective. Marnie Stowe did not care for being reflective. She didn't like the sad, quiet mood it put her in. She felt a fog of melancholy descend over her. It remained all the way through the reception breakfast.

Wandering about watching the other girls and their various beaux was depressing. The party would surely start winding down now that Delilah and the doctor were gone. She wanted the whole blasted happy day to be over. She detested all this standing around. She would much rather be *doing* something.

Yes, she thought. That will cheer me up.

She looked up and down the length of the elegant parlour, with its black and white tiles and furniture in military colours—red, navy and white. Her chaperone, Mrs. Jones, was with a group of other pupils. Everyone was chattering and nibbling cake. The whole thing was so unbearably tedious.

It was easy enough to slip outside and into the back garden. Miss Robin's Academy was a private finishing school, located in a distinguished but discreet house in St John's Wood. The garden was just as spacious and just as discreet—the winding paths and tall overhanging trees made it easy for her to proceed unnoticed by the attendants who were stationed out of doors.

Marnie stepped outside and took a huge breath of fresh air. It was good to be out of doors. The day was fine—spring was definitely coming. With a pang, Marnie thought of her horse, Scarlett, who was probably at that moment stabled at her family's estate.

It had been a long time since Marnie had been in the company of horses. She had no access to the stables at Miss Robin's. The closest she could get to nature was being outside in the well-kept garden, among Miss Robin's prized roses. They were grown along the garden paths and in the tall glass greenhouse, and all of them were white. Each Privette—the name Miss Robin gave to her pupils—was given a bouquet of the famous white roses on her wedding day. The flowers were considered such an integral part of a Privette's graduation and matrimony that it was impossible to imagine a wedding taking place without one. "No roses, no wedding," as Miss Robin liked to say.

Marnie didn't care much for roses. Having escaped the wedding breakfast, she walked past them, past the greenhouse, into a dark corner of the garden. Here, she arrived at her favourite place at the academy—a grand, tall, old oak tree. There was a bench beneath it where girls liked to go and gossip. Usually, Marnie would have confined herself to the bench. Climbing the tree was considered dangerous and could tear her delicate silk dress to shreds, which would almost certainly mean a punishment.

But as she approached the tree and placed her hands on it, then rested her forehead against the cool, solid wood, she felt a wave of inexplicable sadness come over her. She stood back and shook her head. She couldn't bear feeling sad.

Blast it all, she thought. I'm climbing.

It's what she would have done at home if a sad mood seized her—climb until she couldn't, or run until she couldn't, or go tumbling and playing tug-of-war with her father's dogs until she fell in an exhausted heap.

Here, she was supposed to console herself with lessons or books or watercolours. *Uniformly dull things, she thought, when there is a whole world outside to explore.*

Marnie grabbed onto the lowest branch and hauled her weight upwards. She loved the challenge of it, loved feeling her muscles strain with the effort.

She kicked her leg up and over the branch. As she brought her leg down, she heard a loud tear. She looked backwards—*drat*—there was a long tear in her skirt.

Marnie sighed. There was no point dwelling on the punishment she was sure to endure for damaging her dress. Marnie climbed another branch and then another, seeing two or three moves ahead. A squirrel darted past. The air grew colder, fresher. She passed one bird's nest and then another.

She must have been twenty feet in the air when she heard a voice call out to her from below. "Hello! Yes, you! Up there!"

Marnie was flush-faced and out of breath, but happy to be standing in the cold, bracing breeze. She could see the roof of Miss Robin's. She could see the whole garden and even into the front garden, where an attendant was busily sweeping rose petals.

She glanced downwards, frowning. Even from where she stood, she could tell the man who called to her was tall and broad. His stance was strong. Marnie vaguely recognised him as one of the wedding guests. He was dressed formally in his officer's clothes—

tight dark trousers, tall shining boots, and a crimson jacket with gold epaulettes.

"What do you want?" she called out.

"Get down from there at once," the man replied. "You'll hurt yourself."

Marnie's hair was falling out of its tidy braided chignon, and the wind whipped it into her face. She looked down at the man, then back up at the tree. She had determined to climb to the top, and that was precisely what she was going to do.

"Leave me alone. I know what I'm doing," she called.

"I don't doubt it. But I have learned from bitter experience that trees can be treacherous," the man said. "And besides, you're not really dressed for it."

Marnie looked down at her torn dress, saw that her clothes were disarranged, her silk dress exposing a decent expanse of her chest and bosom. She rolled her eyes.

"Mind your own business," she said.

When she went to climb to the next branch, she wasn't concentrating. It was dead and brittle; when Marnie hoisted one leg onto it, the branch snapped beneath her. Marnie shrieked, but her reflexes were quick. She seized the branch above with both arms and tried to pull herself upward. The broken branch fell to the ground.

Marnie was breathing heavily. Her heart raced. Not because she was frightened, she told herself—it was simply from the shock.

"Hang on!" the man called.

"I don't need your help," Marnie spat.

She tried to lift her body weight up to the branch her arms were wrapped around. Her muscles quivered, then seized, and she went back to dangling by her hands. *If I had been allowed to climb whenever I pleased, Marnie thought, I wouldn't have grown so soft and useless! Curse this place!*

She heard movement beneath her. She looked down to see that

the man had discarded his coat and was indeed climbing, with the smart, lithe movements of a natural athlete.

The irritation she felt in seeing him ascend gave her an extra jolt of momentum. She hauled herself up once more, swung her leg over the branch around which her arms were wrapped and heaved herself up until she was straddling it. With only moments left until he reached her, she swung her body around so that her legs were together and wrapped one arm around the trunk of the tree for support.

The man was breathing heavily when he reached the branch beneath her. "Come on then," he said. "Enough nonsense. Let me help you down."

"Why don't you go and stick your nose into someone else's affairs? I am quite content precisely where I am."

"It's a pretty spot, Miss Marnie, but I think you may require a little assistance in getting out of it. Unless you fancy a broken neck."

Marnie tried to glance down without him noticing. And—*blast it*—the man was correct. To leap down to the branch where he stood would be risky; she might end up falling out of the tree altogether.

"Wait—how do you know my name?" Marnie said.

"I am a resourceful man," he replied. "Now, I am going to reach up, and when I do, you let go. I'll catch you. You can trust me."

"Never," said Marnie.

She went to fold her arms to emphasize her point. In doing so, she let go of the tree trunk. Marnie felt her balance waver. Her arm shot out to grab the branch. But it was too late. She had overbalanced and felt herself beginning to tumble.

For a second, she was free falling, her arms flailing. Panic sluiced through her body. An involuntary shriek left her lips. She heard her dress tear once more.

Her fall ceased as abruptly as it had begun. She realised that she had been caught by the man below, standing steady on the wider branch beneath.

Without hesitation, he cast her over his shoulder and trapped her legs with one arm. The muscles locking Marnie in place felt as strong as iron. Heat radiated through his linen shirt and into her body. Marnie's nostrils filled with a distinctly masculine scent—cedar, spice, oak moss.

For a moment, Marnie was too stunned to react. But when she regathered her wits, fury welled up through her body. Marnie began pounding her rescuer's back with her fists. "You brute! You will let me down this instant!"

He spoke through gritted teeth. "Not. Bloody. Likely."

He began to descend the tree with Marnie still cast over his shoulder. Her cries of indignation soon became cries of terror as she felt herself descending from one branch to the next upside down and over a strange man's shoulder. But his grip on her was as secure as a vice. Soon, they were at the bottom of the tree, and he lifted Marnie, panting, from his shoulder and set her on her feet with surprising gentleness.

"Major James Chance," he said, bowing. "At your service."

Marnie couldn't help herself. She slapped him right across the face.

The major looked at her, stunned, for a moment. Marnie could see that, in his tanned face, his eyes glinted hazel. She had to admit he was handsome—in an unrefined way, with his chestnut hair, frank, open features and broad, muscular form.

Recovering, Major Chance picked Marnie up again, and before she knew it, he was seated on the bench beneath the tree, and she was splayed over his knees. He pinned her legs in place with one of his own, and the other twisted her hair tightly like a rope, looping it around his fist to keep her still.

"I don't tolerate insubordination, Miss Stowe. And I believe punishment should be swift and just," he said. "I think twenty strokes is fair—perhaps even lenient."

"Twenty *what?*" Marnie cried. It was unthinkable that this man

should even attempt to punish her. That was a right reserved for the staff of Miss Robin's and for the Privettes' fiancés. Not some presumptuous wedding guest deluded enough to think he was a hero!

"I think you heard me perfectly well," Major Chance continued.

He picked up her torn skirts in his free hand and yanked them upwards, revealing Marnie's white drawers. Without hesitating, he pulled them downwards, revealing her voluptuous bottom to the air.

"Let me go right now!" Marnie screeched. "You will be sorry for this!"

The major laid one warm, broad hand on Marnie's exposed buttocks, running its rough surface back and forth over her soft, pale gold skin. "Oh, I doubt that very much, Miss Marnie," he said.

Marnie had been on the verge of informing him that he could call her Miss Stowe and nothing else when the grip on her hair tightened, bringing tears to her eyes. She flailed her arms, but there was nothing to seize except the grass she was facing or the major's tall leather boot.

A mere moment later, the first crack of his hand came down with such surprising force that Marnie was stunned into stillness.

As one of the more spirited girls at Miss Robin's Academy, Marnie Stowe knew what punishment was. She had been spanked, paddled, stung with nettles. But no punishment ever seemed to work as a deterrent for her. She was always so restless, so full of pent-up energy. She couldn't help that it came out in sharp words and rash actions.

But this first smack stunned her. It wasn't the most painful stroke she had ever experienced; nonetheless, after the initial shock, when the sting began across her bottom cheek, she found her thoughts went completely blank.

Another stroke, just as firm, landed on her other cheek, and Marnie felt the blood rush to the surface of her skin, which was

rapidly turning a blushed peach-pink. After another ten smacks, she was panting and trying to writhe out of his grip.

Her bottom was burning, and an ache was building deep inside her—not only in her punished bottom, but—to her shame—between her legs, where she could feel moisture gathering in the folds of her sex.

Marnie was not a girl who cried during punishments. She would call out, curse, scream, even plead for it to be over. But she had only ever cried once, when she was caned in front of the entire school. Then she had cried from blind pain. But aside from that exception, she simply refused to cry. It was a point on which she prided herself.

Yet, by the time the punishment from the handsome major was over, Marnie felt herself on the verge of tears. She didn't know why. She had endured much worse.

She clenched her eyes shut and swallowed as the major rubbed her freshly spanked bottom.

"There now. Perhaps, next time, you'll think twice before slapping a man across the face. Especially someone who is trying to help you."

He helped her to her feet, but when he went to pull her drawers up, she stepped awkwardly away from him and did it herself, hoping he wouldn't catch a glimpse of the cunny Miss Robin insisted on keeping shaved smooth at all times.

She then turned to face him, her face flushed, her hair a tangled mess.

"You say *I* should think again? You think *you* are the injured party here?" Marnie crossed her arms. "You, sir, are a-a *pig*," she said, knowing that hurling rude words was the best way to keep the tears away. She dredged up the worst insults she could think of. "A bastard! A cur! A son of a whore! I hope—why, I hope you go straight to Hell!"

With that, she turned and walked back to the academy with as

much dignity as she could muster, holding her torn dress together and resisting the urge to rub away the searing sting in her bottom.

Major James Chance stood stunned beneath the oak tree. He had never met a girl like Marnie Stowe before. After a moment, he went straight into the house and knocked on Miss Robin's office door.