

TAMED TO HIS HAND



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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



She was undeniably, stunningly, magnificent, with that long, curly hair in its peculiarly enticing shade of—not gray—but a liquid silver that shown in the sun like the glint of the cute little sword she wielded against him as if she fully expected to win this encounter with him. Whether that meant merely taking him as a prisoner or actually killing him, he wasn't sure.

He could see why she had made a name for herself in several small border skirmishes he'd heard she'd fought in successfully. And he wasn't sure he wanted to find out the answer to that question, either, not that he intended to lose to her.

And that confident, vicious demeanor never dampened, even when—minutes later—he'd relieved her of that pretty little needle, without it ever having darned him as she so obviously wanted it to. She was relatively well trained, especially for a female; he had to give her that, although in something that was entirely unnecessary—not to mention highly inappropriate—for her to know.

Unarmed, she didn't cringe in defeat, but rather immediately adopted a fighting stance and came at him, as if he wasn't very much bigger than she was. Small fists up in what looked like a

familiar, practiced posture, she charged him with everything she had.

Would that Vylera had a thousand—male— soldiers as brave as she was! There would be no stopping them!

He remained exactly where he was, having dropped his own sword as soon as he'd relieved her of her own, happy to have done so. Now he wouldn't have to hold himself back quite as much as he had been, not wanting to harm her in any way.

Lhon wasn't a massive man. He knew himself well, knew his own strengths and weaknesses. He was strong enough—and certainly much more so than the little termagant who was doing her best to knock him down—but he was tall and lean rather than broad and muscular. He, too, had been trained to fight—and for a damned sight longer and harder than she had.

Although he was quite adept at all styles of fighting, as were all men in his country, he considered his intelligence to be his best weapon—a habit that was not necessarily well received back home. His fighting skills, he got directly from his father. His knowledge of matters beyond fighting and hunting, drinking and whoring, he got from his mother.

Still, the feisty baggage managed to land a few impressively hefty blows that, in a less experienced, less solid man might have drawn an "oof" or two, perhaps even an angry response.

Instead, the next time she charged him, he simply reached one of his long arms down to place it like a crown on her head, exerting just enough pressure—and no more—to keep her back a bit, such that her shorter arms could no longer connect with his flesh, no matter how hard she tried.

After several full-bodied punches failed to land, she emitted a sound that he was quite certain was meant to convey outrage and strike fear into his heart, but it sounded more like the angry squeal of a kitten who wasn't being fed on demand. His reluctant, throaty chuckle only seemed to enrage her even further, which was an error in technique—and character—that her trainer

should have had the sense to beat out of her, one way or the other.

But that was when she nearly managed to surprise him, stepping away rather than leaning uselessly into the paw that was holding her off, quickly rebalancing and bringing her right leg up between his legs with vicious intent, only to find that he had anticipated what she was going to do. Catching her booted foot in one hand, he used the unfair advantage of his height over hers to simply lift her off the ground by it. Seconds later, he had taken a seat on an old stump and laid her out over his lap, as if he intended to spank her like a bratty child.

To her great misfortune and astonished disbelief, his intention quickly became a reality. Her leather breeches found their way to her ankles in record time, along with her nondescript underwear, and soon, she was lying bare bottomed across long, surprisingly well-muscled thighs.

The punishment commenced immediately, with no lecture and no explanation.

"Stop! What the fuck do you think you're doing? I am Fialah of Darmier, Crown Princess of the Realm, and I shall have the flesh slowly stripped from your hide for daring to—"

The devastating rhythm of smacks he continued to rain down on her didn't waver in the least at her very sincere—if severely distressed—threats.

"Silence."

"I will not be quiet! My father will have your head on a pike, and I will delight in being the one to cut it off—"

She wanted to continue in a much worse, more gorily descriptive vein, but it wasn't possible. As soon as she'd opened her mouth, after he'd told her to be quiet, the next round of swats was applied at double time—and double strength—if that was even possible.

And he proved to her that it most certainly was, actually daring to lecture about her behavior as he did so.

"I—a stranger—tried to identify myself to you. You interrupted

me to give me surly advice, looked me snidely up and down like a nag at an auction, proceeding, then, to attack, first myself, then my horse. Females where I come from do not act like this. They are gracious and helpful, even to strangers. They do not fight like a street urchin, they do not try to unman someone who has done them no harm, and they do not swear."

"Then the women where you're from sound like weak willed pussies!" she yelled.

That was probably not the smartest thing she'd ever said, considering her situation.

And he proved that to be excruciatingly true.

No one had ever dared touch her like this before— no one! Certainly, not her mother, whom she didn't doubt believed she deserved to be treated exactly like this, but her doting, adoring father always prevented her from experiencing that fate.

Although it galled her to no end, she didn't get anything else out because she simply couldn't—nothing coherent, anyway. The only things that passed her lips were the most embarrassing sounds she'd ever produced—squeaks and squeals that became outright wails, and, within a mortifyingly short amount of time, mewls and whimpers.

Mere seconds before she fell far enough and fast enough—and was in more than enough pain—that she had already begun to consider begging him to stop, he repeated his quiet, implacable command. "Silence."

She was not even allowed to react to the severe punishment that was being delivered—unjustly, of course. But without further thought, she clamped her teeth and lips shut. And keeping them that way became one of the biggest challenges of her life, because—she was horrified to learn, seconds later— that the spanking was still not at an end.

She was further subjected to long, agonizing moments where he singed not only her bare, vulnerable bottom, but all the way down to just above the backs of her knees, which was very nearly worse.

Kicking up to disrupt his big palm on its way to her excruciatingly sore flesh was out of the question. He'd long since trapped her legs together under one of his, her wrists captured and out of the way in his other hand.

All in all, things were not going at all as Fialah had intended.

This was supposed to have been a relaxing morning ride before she began to train with her sword master and mentor, the famous Dahkirian warrior, Garmor. Early on, she had found that a long ride cleared the cobwebs out of her head and helped her mentally prepare for the physical activities of her day.

The intruder had ridden up on her out of nowhere—overtaking her easily with his larger mount—unannounced and unwelcome. She knew everyone around the palace—as Dahkiry's next leader, she considered it her job to be familiar with everything she possibly could about what would be her realm, down to the smallest details. She knew the minutia of Garmor's greatest battles as well as she knew the names of the kitchen maids.

Still, she hadn't felt particularly threatened. She also knew all of the soldiers who guarded the royal family and knew they would never have allowed anyone to breach their defenses.

Her eyes narrowed on him. And if they had, she would see that heads would roll.

When he had given her no choice but to stop, he had drawn up beside her—causing her to put her hand on the hilt of her sword—saying quietly, "I am Master Weks—"

The name meant nothing to her. She knew she had never heard it before, so she had turned her horse around, circling him and deliberately looking him up and down in a manner that let him know she found him seriously lacking, and cutting him off in a no-nonsense tone.

"I don't know you, but you must have lost your way. These are the palace grounds, and the lands are owned by my father, the king. If you have business with him, then you must turn back and head

southwest, towards the gate. The guards there will further assist you."

He wasn't quite smiling, but she'd had a feeling that he was suppressing one—or perhaps even trying not to laugh at her—a thought that annoyed her more than she wanted it to.

The tall man remained quiet, simply watching her and offering no response to her helpful words.

Patience had never been one of her virtues. "Are you deaf as well as mute? Be off with you, clodpoll! You are not allowed to be here!"

Neither he nor his horse moved so much as a whisker.

Fialah wasn't at all sure what to do next, really, so she did what she wanted to do, which had proven not to be the best choice, as it often had. She had leaned down and slapped his horse's rear end, hoping to startle it into moving, but instead, she had found his very strong fingers wrapped around her forearm, and no matter how hard she tried to jerk it away, she couldn't seem to reclaim it.

So, she'd reached across her body—a bit awkwardly for her tastes—to draw her sword with her left hand, instead. It wasn't her strong arm, but she was trained to use both.

It wasn't so much that he was afraid of the sword that made him release her, she intuited, catching the surprised look on his face, but he was startled that she possessed one at all.

But that had all been for naught, because, now, here she was, over the insufferable intruder's lap, being punished—bare bottomed, no less—like a schoolgirl and held completely in his control while being subjected to it.

It was as if all of her years of training had been for nothing. She had been disarmed and disrespected—in the most basic of ways—in a matter of a few minutes. Fialah was incensed, not just with him but with herself, and she was horrified to realize that her eyes were filling with tears because of it. They overflowed down her cheeks, dripping from her too pointed chin onto the grass beneath.

Intent on not shaming herself any further than she already had,

she sniffed loudly, attempting—and failing—to get her emotions under control.

If it had merely been her own frustration, she was certain that she could have held the tears back indefinitely. But it was not. It was combined with the almost overwhelming discomfort he was causing her.

I'm better than this! She tried to tell herself. She'd trained on a sprained ankle, with broken ribs, and with a serious case of pneumonia—all to her parents' alarm, of course. She did not allow pain to stop her from doing what she considered needed to be done.

Perhaps it was the juvenile position he had her in, or the embarrassing exposure of her private self to his undoubtedly roguish gaze, or the fact that every time he spanked her sore flesh, it caused an entirely different feeling than just pain. It was something she was completely unfamiliar with, something that...balanced it, somehow, in an altogether intolerable and unacceptably pleasant way.

She needed this spanking to stop, now, no matter the cost to her sensibilities. "Please! Stop!"

Her beseeching words had no effect, although he did tell her how to go about asking in a manner that he would find acceptable, speaking once without the slightest break in rhythm.

"I have learned my lesson. Please, would you stop spanking me, Master Weks?"

Becoming more and more desperate with each passing second, she repeated the words back to him without a thought. "I have learned my lesson. Please, would you stop spanking me, Master Weks?" It didn't come out mockingly or fiercely or even angrily, she was surprised—and not a little relieved—to hear. Instead, it sounded as if it was the dearest wish he could possibly grant her.

She had been made to plead with him—to lower herself to beg him to stop in earnest, without the slightest trace of sarcasm or irony, but with almost every bit of herself instead.

Five more smacks fell before he stopped, though, and they were—calculatedly, she suspected—the worst of all of them.

And she was given no time to recover from what he'd done to her, either. Instead, he stood her on her feet, keeping a firm hand around her upper arm as he rose and headed—with her tripping around the breeches and undies that were still around her ankles—to his horse, mounting the large beast immediately. Then he reached down and pulled her up in front of him—not to sit astride, no, but on her tummy. She was laid out before him like some barbarian captive, behind his saddle horn and up against his crotch, well-spanked bottom still bare for everyone to see.

She arched up in indignation, fighting to get away, not caring one bit if it unbalanced her right off the horse. "This is indecent! I need to pull my pants up!"

His answer was as vicious as it was efficient and she found herself reduced to wailing much more quickly as his palm rose and fell than she had the first time, that plea immediately coming to her lips again.

This time, though, he spanked her well beyond it before kicking his horse into a canter, easily keeping her in place with her wrists caught by his other hand. Every time she made any move not in conjunction with trying to stay on the horse, he brought the ends of the reins down over her tender flesh, which subdued her for a few moments, until the next time.

It was an extremely uncomfortable trip and she had no idea where he was taking her. Undoubtedly, she was being kidnapped—or something the like—and, unless he was the lummoX she'd accused him of being—and she kind of thought he was smarter than that, for some reason—he wouldn't be headed back to the palace, but rather had some other scheme cooked up in order to make his escape with her. She could end up being held for ransom or sold as a slave. She could end up being owned by a Vyleran.

Just the thought was enough to send a fissure of fear through

her so deep that her teeth began to chatter. That would truly be a fate worse than death.

And yet, when she occasionally peeked at their direction, as best she could, it seemed that they were headed directly for the palace. Fialah was excited, at first, knowing that he would soon meet his demise, although she tried not to show it. But then she considered her own position, surreptitiously watching the direction in which he was riding. It appeared that he intended to ride right through the gates!

What an idiot! He would be arrested on sight for taking her! All she would have to do was sound the alarm and then everyone she knew, everyone she'd trained with, all the stable boys and stonemasons and—of course—the guards and soldiers would see the state she was in—defeated and taken captive by a barbarian of some sort. Worse than that, they would be able to see the state he'd left her rump in.

Then she remembered what day it was, with a realization that made her want to scream. It was Market Day. So, it wouldn't just be the men who would see her—it would be most of the population of the surrounding villages, too, who came to sell their wares and offer their services.

But the consequences to her ego really couldn't be considered. Certainly, she'd suffer some humiliation about being so exposed—especially looking like a well spanked little girl—but it would soon be over once he was taken into custody, and she would personally see that he was thrown into the oubliette.

Maybe she'd go by the hole in the ground a few weeks later, when he was slowly starving to death, and eat a lavish lunch in front of him, perhaps even throwing him the scraps of her meal. She wondered if he'd be smart enough not to eat them, which would merely prolong his agony, or if he had the strength of will to resist doing so. Somehow, even on such short acquaintance, Fialah thought it was probably the latter.

She didn't think she'd be able to convince Papa to allow her to

execute him herself, although, maybe, once he saw what he'd done to her, it would make her argument a bit easier to win.

Plotting the oaf's demise at her own hand went a long way towards soothing her fears and concerns about everyone seeing her like this, helping her to ignore the gasps and the way people were pointing at her, just before they remembered themselves and bowed and curtsied to her.

As soon as they were within earshot of the guards she knew were about in the courtyard of the palace, she began to scream orders at them. "Arrest this man! He's harmed a member of the royal family! I want him clapped in irons immediately!"

A group of men began to run towards her at the sound of her voice, but then they suddenly stopped when they saw him, shrinking away in what looked like abject terror rather than coming to her rescue.

"What the fuck are you doing, you fools? Can't you see what he's done to me?" Fialah screeched, renewing her struggles to get away from him.

The man who held her in a manner so resolute that she could barely move, even though she was giving it her all, uttered only one word, softly, and such that only she could hear him, "Silence."

And, as she began to cry quietly, Fialah realized that was all it was going to take to get her to obey him. She knew—already—that if she continued to speak, he would begin to punish her again, immediately, and she had no interest in having the entire Royal Guard and the majority of the population of what would eventually be her kingdom watching her getting her fanny tanned.

So, she clamped her mouth shut, again, although it went entirely against her grain— knowing it would just be until she could call this situation to her father's attention.

When they were in the inner courtyard, the horse stopped, and she heard her own whickering to her from behind.

Bysme was a very well trained horse, and even without anyone's encouragement, she had followed her mistress home, not that it

was going to help her any, she didn't think, although Fialah was trying to remain prepared to take any opportunity to escape. Unfortunately, none appeared.

As soon as his horse stopped, he got down and before she could do anything, he lifted her onto his shoulder like a sack of rice, bottom facing the way he was facing. One strong arm clamped across the backs of her legs before she could move against it, so that everyone he encountered would get a great view of her roasted red ass.

He only took a few steps before he stopped, and she could hear him conversing with someone, although she couldn't hear what they were saying.

"If...if...uh...y-you'll follow m-me this way, s-sir."

Oh, gods, that was her father's high minister's voice!

First, the guards were no help to her at all, and now Lord Phelyn was here, speaking to him deferentially—and with not a small amount of pure fear—instead of enlisting every available soldier to free her and take this tall, lean brute down!

And so, her deep humiliation continued as she was walked through the halls of the palace she had grown up in, slung over his shoulder with her pants around her ankles, providing blatant evidence that this man had abused her badly.

But no one seemed in the least interested in helping her! Indeed, she could hear the startled gasps and saw several men she'd known had acted bravely in battle practically cower against the walls in order to give way to him. She no longer worried that people would be looking at her backside on display—they were all in awe of him! What was it about him that caused that strange reaction?

Still, she was worried that he was going to lead them into the throne room, which was always a madhouse and probably would have made her start to cry again, but instead, he preceded them into the room a few doors down—the smaller, more comfortable audience chamber.

Lord Pheilyn announced them before leaving, closing the door behind him with an audible sigh of relief.

"Your R-Royal Majesties, m-may I take this opportunity t-to introduce to you, M-master Weks."

Finally, he put her down, but he maintained a tight—if not painful—hold on one wrist as he surprised the three people in the room by bowing low in front of her parents.

At least, his hold probably wasn't meant to hurt her, but she was tugging at it so sharply while she squirmed about at the very end of her tether—her arm—like a kite, although a kite whose clothing was still around her ankles. So determined was she to reach her parents, she thought she was going to separate her shoulder.

"Mother! Father! Arrest this man!" she screeched at them. "He has abused me in the worst fashion, and I will see him swing for it!"

"Silence," she heard him say in that annoyingly consistent, quiet tone of his. She was beginning to hate that word with a passion.

And this time, certain that she would be protected from the consequences he had previously wrought, she ignored it completely. "Papa! Mama! He pursued me and beat me and made me ride here from the forest half naked! Everyone saw me—"

One sharp yank on her arm landed her almost violently over his lap as he sat down gracefully in one of the comfortable chairs, and she immediately began to receive yet another unbearable punishment—this time, in front of her parents.

Fialah was in too much misery to hear her father take a few tentative steps closer to them. "My poor, dear daughter—"

But that was the extent of the sympathy her parents dared avow. One look from the man who was disciplining their daughter sent the king back to stand next to his wife.

And she was so consumed by how yet another layer of agony was being laid down over the others that she forgot the magic phrase he'd given her for much longer than she should have.

"I've learned my lesson. Please, would you stop spanking me, Master Weks?"

Although she felt he was reluctant to do so, he did stop almost immediately, and to her horror, he kept her right there, damp tendrils of hair sticking to her face, tears still dripping down her cheeks, her very sore bottom continuing to throb and sting as she was held prisoner.

"Your Majesties, as you know, I am here as an emissary from my king to complete the princess's education prior to her marriage."

Education?

Marriage?

This was the first time she was hearing of either of those things! Fialah opened her mouth to protest but wisely clamped it shut again, not that that stopped her from writhing furiously, trying to get out of his hold.

"Be still."

Her cheeks flushed at the fact that her body responded to his casual command immediately. It, apparently, was smarter than its mistress.

"Uh, Master Weks," her father began, "would you mind if we had some time alone with the Princess Fialah? There are things we must discuss with her, as I'm sure you understand."

"Actually, Your Majesties, I do mind. Fialah is in my charge, as per our king, but I shall withdraw myself to the other side of the room."

As if that was an end to the discussion, he did exactly as he said he would, withdrawing to a point well away from the family. The room wasn't that big, though, and he was quite a large presence in it, especially for her.

Her parents practically scurried to her side—even her mother—but Fialah's first priority was to reach for the clothing that still lived at her ankles.

"Leave it," came the sharp, succinct command from the corner.

She was as slow as she dared to be in releasing her grip, even though her tunic provided modesty enough, she supposed. And it wasn't as if she was being given a choice.

"Mother! Father!" She fell into their arms, wanting to spend the rest of the day there, where she'd always been safe. But she needed answers first, succor later, so she forced herself to pull away. "What is going on? What did he mean by my education and my *marriage*?" She pronounced the last word as if it were a curse. "The man is obviously mentally deranged. And I know you've seen..." Her tirade softened, then, but only because of her embarrassment at what it was that they had seen. "You've seen how badly the despicable bastard manhandled me! Why, I have never been so humiliated—"

"Daughter!"

Her father had never taken that tone with her before, and she hoped he never did again. It sounded alarmingly like the one she'd been receiving from the peasant in the corner. He tried to soften it by patting her arm, but it didn't work.

Fialah shrugged his hand off. "Why is this man not being dragged to the dungeon as we speak? Why are we standing here? Why did the Guard not assist me when I told them to?"

She had a terrible feeling that she wasn't going to like the answers to her questions, but she wanted to hear their reasons, at least, and then she'd know what she was dealing with. And the look on her father's face—the fact that she could see tears in his eyes—confirmed her deepest worries.

"It is done, Fialah. Try not to struggle against your fate," her mother encouraged in the warmest, most tender voice she could ever remember her using.

Stiffening, she took several short, hindered steps away from her parents. "My fate? My fate is to be queen of this realm one day—a long, long time from now. Why would I struggle against that?"

King Saeban, her father, sighed heavily. "Because your fate has altered quite considerably in the past day or so."

"How? Tell me! No one said anything to me!"

His next words struck fear into her heart more so than almost anything else could have. "Fialah, Master Weks is from Vylera." The

last word was uttered in a hushed tone, as if merely saying it would bring havoc down on the kingdom.

Fialah stiffened. She knew now why everyone was so terrified of him, not that she considered that to be an excuse for someone not to have at least made an attempt to help her.

If what her parents were saying was true—and they had never lied to her—then her parents were right.

There would be no escape for her.