

# The Green Card

Kate Bantam

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## Author's Note:

The following is a work of fiction. In real-life scenarios, consent is essential. Never play without consent, and always have agreed-upon safe-words. Please be safe and be good to one another.

# Chapter One

It was very unusual for Mandy Lessing to be late for anything. Being late gave her anxiety. The morning Mandy was supposed to meet Carly, her mother had promised to drive her, but first she had to finish her make-up, then she had to make a phone call, then she remembered she had to go across town, so it would actually be inconvenient for her to bring Mandy to meet Carly, so Mandy had taken that as her hint to volunteer to walk. So when Mandy finally made it to Crumpet, the café where Carly had told her to meet her, Mandy was not only fifteen minutes late, she was anxious, exhausted, and sweating from the mile-and-a-half walk in the North Carolina humidity.

“You look like hell,” came a voice that instantly caused a smile to spread across Mandy’s sweaty face.

“Carly!” Mandy said, running and wrapping her arms around the taller woman.

“You’re lucky I love you, little sister, otherwise I wouldn’t hug you when you’re so gross.” Carly’s voice was gentle in its teasing, and she stood hugging Mandy tightly for several moments, each soaking in the warmth of the other.

“It’s been too long,” Mandy said.

“Way too long.”

When they finally pulled apart, Carly tucked a piece of Mandy’s hair behind her ear and shook her head. “Please tell me you didn’t walk here.”

Mandy shrugged. “It’s no big deal.”

“Why didn’t you call me? I would have picked you up!”

“It wasn’t worth bothering you. But I’m sorry I’m late,” Mandy said.

Carly waved her hand. “I only just got here. Are you hungry?”

“Starved!”

Carly smiled. “As always. Come on, let’s go in.”

The café was painted in pastels with little accents everywhere, which made it the ideal brunch spot for women who wanted to chat over coffee and whole-grain pancakes they could pretend were healthy, which was just what Mandy and Carly intended to do.

Carly and Mandy were not really sisters, but they considered biology a technicality. Carly was three years older than Mandy. She had been volunteering as a mentor for the church youth program and had been assigned to be Mandy's Big Sister. The two had immediately formed a close bond, and Mandy considered Carly to be truer family than those she actually shared a last name with. As soon as they had been paired at church, Mandy had become Carly's little shadow, cheering her on at track meets, proudly wearing her hand-me-downs, and jumping up and down with her when Carly got accepted to college in New York City. She had cried for days after Carly left for New York, and lived for their regular video calls. She was maid of honor at Carly and David's wedding, even though she had secretly worried about her friend getting married so quickly and so young, but Carly seemed so happy that Mandy kept her mouth shut.

Almost a year had passed since the wedding. Carly was still her sweet and caring self, but her video chats with Mandy had suddenly gone from four times a week to once or twice, and Carly always signed off right at ten pm, no matter what they were discussing. Mandy tried to be understanding of the fact that marriage was hard and Carly had to pay attention to her husband, but Mandy missed her sister. This was Carly's first trip back home since the wedding, and though Mandy was thrilled to have some time together, she was a little concerned Carly was about to tell her she was dying or something, since Carly had been so insistent they have brunch the first morning of Carly's trip.

The moment the waitress walked away, Carly placed her hands on the table. "So," she said, but then paused.

"So?" Mandy said, trying not to let her voice show her anxiety.

"I need to talk to you about something."

"Okay." Mandy braced herself to hear news of some terrible diagnosis, or upcoming move to China, or a realization that she no longer wanted anything to do with Mandy. The seconds it took for Carly to speak again were agonizing, and just when Mandy was about to shake Carly and demand she spill whatever it was she was trying to say, Carly spoke again.

"Do you remember Matthew Arden from the wedding? He was one of the groomsmen."

"Not ringing a bell."

"You met him; he was the only guy there taller than David. He has light brown hair. He was the one who tied David's brother's tie for him."

“Oh, the British guy!” Mandy said, now remembering the English accent scolding David’s younger brother for not being able to tie a tie properly.

“Right, the British guy! You remember him, right?”

“Yeah, I met him when we were taking the pictures, but I only said, like, five words to him. Why?”

“Well, you know, he’s from England.”

“Yeah, I figured, since he has a British accent,” Mandy said, with a laugh in her voice.

“So, he’s not American.”

“Funny how that works, huh?” Mandy said, getting frustrated that it was taking so long to get to the point. “Carly, what is going on?”

Carly sighed. “Look, Matthew’s been living in America for, like, ten years. He came here for school, then stayed for grad school, and then he was working here. And it’s always been fine, only now, it’s not. And he’s been told he needs to leave the country in, like, a month, unless he can find a reason to stay. “

“A reason like a wife?”

“A wife who is a US citizen, yeah. And who would be willing to get married, and move to New York. Soon.”

“And you thought of me?”

“Well, yeah! You’re my best friend; Matthew is David’s best friend. It’s perfect!”

Mandy went over this in her mind. “You’re trying to set me up as some kind of mail-order-bride and the best explanation you can offer is that I’m your best friend?”

Carly bit her bottom lip, which Mandy knew well meant she was nervous. “Well, there are certain elements of my marriage to David that Matthew wants in his own marriage, so he’s looking for a girl who would be open to that, and that’s really why I thought of you.”

“What kind of elements?”

“It’s rather traditional, let’s put it that way. Old fashioned.” Carly spoke slowly, as though hand picking each word.

“What does that mean?” Mandy asked incredulously.

“It just means he wears the pants. It’s not that I don’t have a say, but at the end of the day, he’s the head of the family, and I accept that. He makes certain rules and if I break them, I get—” She paused for a second before continuing. “Punished.”

Mandy gave Carly a confused look as the waitress set plates of beautifully decorated pancakes in front of each of them. Once she was gone, Mandy's eyebrows shot back up.

"Punished?"

"Yeah. I mean, it's not like he beats the crap out of me or anything," Carly said, as she cut her food.

"So what does it mean?"

Carly sighed, and lowered her voice. "He spanks me."

Mandy gave her head a slight shake. "Excuse me?"

"He spanks me."

"You mean, like, one little smack on the ass?"

Carly took a breath. "I mean he pulls me over his lap and he spanks me."

"And you let him?" Mandy asked, trying to match Carly's hushed tone, which was difficult, given her surprise.

Carly nodded. "I do. I like it. I mean, I hate it, in the moment, but ultimately, I like it."

"Is it, like, a sex thing?"

Carly let out a short laugh at this. "No. It's not. It's intimate, but it's not about sex. It's a punishment, and I definitely don't feel sexy when I'm over his lap being spanked for breaking a rule or something."

Mandy furrowed her eyebrows. "So why do you put up with it?"

"Because ultimately, I love it. I signed on for this and I know this is what I want. I know our marriage is stronger for it. I know I'm a better person for it. I feel so secure with David. We don't fight. No one threatens to leave. Issues don't simmer. No one throws tantrums or freezes the other out. When something comes up, we deal with it. We are accountable to each other, we are open and honest, and we communicate all the damn time," she said, laughing as she spoke the last sentence. "It's annoying how much he insists on communication! But no matter what comes up, we talk it out. There's no running from each other, no storming out, just talking, dealing with stuff, and yes, some spanking."

"But doesn't it hurt?"

"It doesn't tickle!" Carly laughed, which made Mandy smile in response. "Yeah, it hurts. But it's also so comforting to know that I can push him and he won't cave or let me do



something to hurt me or him or our relationship. And it's sexy as hell to know that he is protecting our marriage like that."

"Do you spank him?" Mandy asked, trying to make sense of it all.

Carly laughed. "Oh, definitely not. Have you seen my husband? He's huge." Mandy laughed at the mental image of her petite friend trying to hold the six-two David over her lap. "But he holds himself to a higher standard because he's head of the household, and he doesn't take that lightly. When he screws up, he owns it, and he does what he can to make it right."

Mandy thought it over for a few seconds. She had to admit it sounded really nice—not so much the getting spanked part, but the rest of it. And she couldn't truthfully say she hadn't indulged in her own fantasies and Internet perusals of similar subjects. "And Matthew wants this, too?"

Carly nodded. "He does."

"So why did you think of me?"

"Because I know you," Carly said. "You're my sister, and I know that you want to be taken care of. I know you need someone to protect you. And I really think this would be good for you."

Mandy nodded as she tried to digest everything. "Oh," was all she could say, and she busied herself with drowning her pancakes in syrup.

"He's coming for dinner tomorrow night. If you say no, it's fine. The boys will just have a shoptalk dinner, and I'll pretend to be interested. But if you're open to it, you'll come, too." Carly said. "Dinner is at seven. You have until then to decide."

Mandy shook her head. "I don't need until then."

"Oh," Carly said, looking down at her food and picking her fork and knife back up. "Okay, I get it. Don't worry about it. I really don't know what—"

Mandy put her hand on top of Carly's to stop her. "I'm in."

\*\*\*

It had been a long time since Carly had last gotten to play Beauty Parlor with Mandy, but as soon as she picked Mandy up the next day, she seemed determined to make up for lost time. She instantly dismissed the clothes Mandy had brought as "rejects from the Wal-Mart Geriatric Collection of 1972" and threatened to burn them. She drove them to a nearby department store and told Mandy she was not interested in her opinions, and since she was buying, Mandy had no

say.

To anyone else, the bossiness might have seemed harsh, but it made Mandy smile from ear to ear. This was Carly showing love; she was taking charge, helping Mandy, and giving Mandy her undivided attention. She wouldn't let Mandy argue her way out of a certain dress, because she knew Mandy would only point out every flaw she imagined herself having. Carly saw her with Big Sister eyes, and was determined to bring out the strong, beautiful woman lying dormant beneath the layers of stress, exhaustion, and loneliness.

At six-fifteen they heard the door to the hotel room open, just as Carly was trying to decide which earrings Mandy should wear.

"Babe, is that you?" Carly called.

"Excuse me?" came the reply of a man's voice.

"Oh, crap," Carly said, and she quickly handed Mandy the three earrings she had been holding as she deliberated. "Try the green and the pink, and I'll come check. Stay here!"

She was gone from the room before Mandy could ask what was going on. Mandy laughed as she put one of each earring set on each earlobe, and tried to eavesdrop, as was a best friend's duty.

She definitely heard Carly saying *hi* and was pretty sure she recognized David's voice. But then she thought she heard a whimper, and what she was almost certain was the sound of a smack, but not on flesh—on clothing, maybe? And then another whimper. And then some muffled talking she couldn't quite make out.

Mandy was tempted to poke her head out, but she heard footsteps, and then Carly saying, "Five minutes! Ten, tops!" as she came back into the bedroom.

"What's going on?" Mandy asked, as soon as Carly had closed the door.

"Dave's back. I told him I was dressing you, but we have to hurry."

"Lady, I have been ready for the last hour. You're the one who keeps changing her mind about my accessories!" Mandy said with a pointed look.

Carly laughed. "Fine. The green ones bring out your eyes. Now I have to change." She had been doing her makeup while Mandy blew out her hair, so all that was left was for Carly to put on her own dress. "Do you like the red long one or the blue short one?" She held both up for Mandy to see.

"The blue."

“I think I should revisit the purple.” She tossed both dresses she had been holding on the bed and went back to the closet.

“Carly!”

“I have to look my best!” Carly said, as she hurriedly slipped out of the jeans and top she’d been wearing while doing Mandy’s make-over.

“What for? You’re already married,” Mandy said, as she reapplied her own lipstick.

“Yeah, but I may need to bribe my way out of a spanking later. Patience isn’t my husband’s strong suit,” she said with a smile.

As if on cue, David’s voice came through the door. “Carly Jane, this is your two-minute warning.”

“I get it; we’re coming!” Carly called back, and she took hold of her hair, and walked over to Mandy. “Quick, zip me up!”

“That won’t be necessary,” said David, as he came into the room. “Hello, Mandy. It’s lovely to see you again.”

“Hi, David,” Mandy said, smiling up at him.

She had always liked David. He was kind and spoke to her like an adult. And though Mandy still resented him for taking her best friend away from her, she had to admit that David had been good for Carly. She’d never seen Carly with such a sparkle in her eye.

“Mandy, I hate to ask, but could you excuse us for a minute?” David asked in a gentle but firm tone. “We need to have a quick discussion, but we’ll be right out,”

“Oh, of course. Should I wait in the living room?”

“Please,” David said, giving her a small nod. “And do me a favor and turn on the news. I want to know if we should bring an umbrella tonight, and I don’t trust my weather app.”

Mandy suspected she knew what was about to happen, and she wanted to stay and protect Carly, but David Sampson had a certain air about him that made one just know not to argue with him. Mandy went out to wait in the living room, but caught sight of herself in the mirror on the back of the front door to the suite. She was not a vain person, but she hadn’t had a chance to get a good look at Carly’s finished product, so she couldn’t help herself as she went to gaze at her own reflection.

She was actually a bit mesmerized. The black dress Carly had picked out fit her perfectly, accentuating her slim waist and hitting just at the knee. It was modest and sweet, but still form-

fitting and flattering. The heels showed off legs that were strong from years of walking everywhere, and Mandy noticed that Carly had been right—the green earrings brought out the flecks of green in her eyes. She looked and felt beautiful for the first time in a long while.

She was pulled out of her reverie by the sound of a hard smack falling. It was unmistakable this time. She heard Carly cry out, and Mandy gasped. Before she had even exhaled, she heard the sound again and again. Mandy stood, torn between wanting to run and push David away from her big sister, and—though she would never admit it—wanting to poke her head in to get a better look. She couldn't explain it, but some part of her desperately craved that kind of connection, and Mandy felt equal parts pain and envy for her sister.

But soon the sounds of flesh meeting flesh and crying stopped, and were replaced by sounds of kisses and muffled soft words. Mandy stood at the door, not knowing what to do, until she heard footsteps from the other side coming closer.

“Crap!” She whispered, and ran over to the couch, but her high heel snagged on the carpet and she found herself landing face down on the floor with a loud thud.

“Are you all right?” David asked, standing over her.

“I, um, yeah, I'm fine,” Mandy stammered out.

David stooped down. “Are you sure? Here, let me help you up.” With a hand on her back, he eased her up to sit. “Don't stand yet. Let me have a look at you. Shoot, I think your elbow's scratched.”

“Oh, shit. I think I smacked it on the edge of the coffee table.”

David gave her a stern look. “Don't swear.”

“Sorry.”

“It's all right. Let's get you cleaned up.” David eased her onto her feet and led her to the couch. “I'm going to get you some ice,” he said, heading over to the bathroom and running the tap.

Mandy cursed her klutziness and rubbed her sore elbow. She was lucky the dress wasn't torn. Carly would have killed her if it had been.

“So what's the forecast?” David asked, walking back over to her.

Mandy's eyes went wide. She had no idea.

David smiled as he sat beside her on the couch and applied the damp cloth to her arm. “Cloudy with a chance of eavesdropping?”

“I wasn’t—” Mandy began, but David raised his eyebrows.

“Please do not insult my intelligence by lying.” His voice wasn’t angry, just matter-of-fact. “It’s probably for the best, anyway. I’m sure you’re curious, after what Carly told you.” David released Mandy’s arm, the small bit of blood now wiped away, and the memory of his grip confirming that he was not a man to be messed with. It was intimidating, but alluring. David stood, and went to the bedroom door. “Sweetheart, are you about ready?”

Mandy heard a muffled reply, and then Carly emerged in the purple dress. Her eyes were a bit red and shiny, but her make-up was still flawless, and Mandy realized she needed to stop rolling her eyes when Carly made a big deal about only using waterproof make-up. Clearly, it was working.

David took Carly’s hand and led her to the couch where he sat and guided his wife to sit on his lap. He kept an arm wrapped around her waist, and she leaned against him.

“So, Miss Mandy, I’m sure you’ve got questions. Let’s hear them,” David said, giving her a gentle smile.

Mandy stared at them both. They were clearly so at peace with one another, but Mandy couldn’t forget the sounds of smacks and cries she had heard only moments before. She had many questions, but none of them seemed to be able to find their way to her lips.

Finally, she looked at Carly and asked, “Are you okay?”

Carly nodded. “I’m all right. I may not enjoy sitting at dinner, but I’m okay.”

David lifted his head to place a soft kiss on Carly’s cheek, then looked back at Mandy. “Do you understand what just happened?”

“I guess so. You spanked her, right?” Mandy asked.

David nodded. “I did. Carly has a problem with time management and with her attitude when she is rushing.”

Mandy couldn’t help smiling at this. She had learned long ago to tell Carly things were scheduled at least fifteen minutes before they actually were, in hopes Carly would then have a chance of being close to on time.

David smiled, as well, as though reading Mandy’s thoughts, but then continued. “She was told to be ready by six-fifteen this evening. She was not. I gave her a warning. She continued to dawdle, and she was snippy with me. She went over my knee. She is not seriously injured, she just has a nice red bottom to sit on through dinner to remind her to respect others and their time

and do as she is told. Isn't that right, Carly Jane?" he asked, rubbing Carly's back.

"Yes sir." Carly said quietly.

"And tonight, Carly will be getting another spanking for her tardiness, as I already promised her, because this is a repeat issue, and thus deserving of a harsher consequence." Carly let out a small whine as David spoke, but he simply patted her thigh and went on. "She won't be happy, but she will be all right, and she will sleep soundly in my arms." David spoke as though explaining the simplest way to drive to the restaurant, seemingly oblivious to Carly's bright red face, or Mandy's bewildered facial expression. "Now, I'm sure you ladies would like to speak, so I'm going to change. We leave at six-thirty sharp!" He patted Carly's thigh again and helped her to sit on the couch, and then walked back into the bedroom.

As soon as he was gone, Mandy turned to Carly and spoke in a worried, rushed whisper. "Oh Carly, I'm so sorry, you poor thing!" She wrapped her arms tight around the taller woman's neck.

Carly returned the hug, but shook her head.

"I'm all right, Manda, I really am."

Mandy pulled back and looked her sister squarely in the face. "But how can you possibly be all right? He hit you!"

"No, he didn't." Carly smiled sweetly. "He spanked me. But I knew I had it coming and we agreed a long time ago that I needed to work on being on time and not dawdling. If I had really thought it was unfair, I would have said so, and it would have stopped. We both agree to this."

"But—but why? I know you've been crying, and that sounded awful," Mandy said. Carly didn't cry easily, so it scared Mandy to see this in her eyes.

"I'm crying because he spanks really hard, and it hurts! And because I'm embarrassed because this is admittedly weird. I don't love having a spanking overheard by my best friend. And in the moment, no; I don't want it and I'm not happy about being spanked. But I know this is what I want. Like I said before, this is good for us. We have a rock-solid marriage, because we communicate and we're accountable to each other. We make each other better and we are as close as can be." Carly spoke with joy evident in her voice, and Mandy had to admit she genuinely seemed happy. "It's not for everyone, Mandy, and if it's not for you, that's okay. If you want to back out, I understand," she said, giving Mandy her patent big-sister smile.

Mandy glanced at the clock. Six forty-two. She looked back at Carly and saw the sparkle in her eye, the smile on her face, and the peaceful glow that was so apparent in her countenance and hadn't been there before David came into the picture. Mandy held out her hand to her sister, took a breath and said, "Let's do this."