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GOLDEN ANGEL

DESIRE AND
DISCIPLINE
BOOK ONE

A SEASON FOR BLISS



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For the Ladies who like to give the D.

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Chapter One

Priscilla Her husband was lying to her.

Not that she could prove such a thing. She could not say why she thought so or describe what lies she thought he might be telling her, but Lady Priscilla Stuart, formerly Miss Priscilla Bliss, was utterly sure of one thing—Joseph had a secret.

Which, since they were living in his father's house with both of his brothers and his elder brother's wife, was quite an achievement. Secrets were hard to keep within these walls. Joseph's father was the Spymaster to the Crown of England, after all.

“That was a pleasant evening,” she remarked as Joseph led her up the stairs to their wing of the house. Each son had their own. His father, the Marquess of Camden, had been violently injured not so long ago, and his sons had been loath to be too far from him ever since. Priscilla understood perfectly as she was rather fond of her father-in-law as well, and she and Joseph had been away on their honeymoon when he'd been shot.

There had been quite a few secrets revealed in the wake of that injury, including that the Marquess worked directly for the Crown. At the time, she'd thought everything had been

revealed, but now, weeks later, she was sure she was still missing something.

Something to do with her husband.

“It was a very nice evening,” Joseph replied amiably. Joseph was always amiable. It was one of the things she loved about him. He was calm, cheerful, and soothing company for her, exactly as a husband should be. “I always enjoy a rousing game of charades, especially when Evie and Anthony visit.”

Evie was his cousin, though she was more like a sister to him. Recently married to Captain Anthony Browne, she no longer lived in Camden House but visited regularly. Priscilla was happy to call her a friend, though Evie was not at all amiable, calm, or cheerful. Tonight was their first visit since returning from *their* honeymoon, and it had been good to see them both again.

“Even though your team did not win?” Priscilla teased. The teams had been a little lopsided when they’d separated into the men versus the women. The Marquess, Joseph, his brothers Elijah and Adam, and Anthony had made up one team. Priscilla and Evie had been joined by Josie, Elijah’s wife, and Diana, the Marquess’ nurse. Despite having one less player, the ladies dominated the evening.

Joseph made a little growling noise she found utterly endearing, and she giggled, looking fondly over at her husband. His dark brown hair and eyes were a perfect foil to her lighter coloring, and she knew they made a fetching pair in the ballroom. That had been very important to her mother, though how sweetly Joseph had courted her had been what made Priscilla fall head over heels for him.

Though he was not the first to court her, he was the only one she’d felt anything for. When he’d proposed, it had felt

like all her dreams had come true. This was what she'd been trained her entire life for, after all, and even though he wasn't the heir to the Marquissette, he was still a second son.

After several years on the marriage mart without a proposal, despite the previous courtships, her parents had been happy to make her a respectable match, even if it didn't come with a title. For herself, she would have taken Joseph with no connections at all. That was how much she loved him.

They paused in front of her bedroom door, and Joseph turned to look down at her, his eyes filled with desire.

"Would you care for a visitor this evening, my Lady?" he asked, his voice husky with desire.

"Yes, please, my lord," she replied flirtatiously. Ever since their wedding night, this had become an almost nightly ritual. There were times when she had to regretfully decline, of course, when she was on her menses, but every night he asked that she could say yes, she did.

It was only recently she became aware that separate bedrooms were not *always* the way things were done. His brother and sister-in-law *shared* their bedroom. Something Josie had only recently spoken of in Priscilla's presence. Until then, she had not known.

Come to find out, all of Josie's friends—who had welcomed Priscilla into their circle—shared a bedroom with their husbands as well.

Priscilla and Joseph were the only ones who didn't... yet her parents had never shared one, either. She had thought that was the way. So far, she had not found the courage to broach the subject with Joseph, and she did enjoy their little ritual. Many nights, he stayed in her bed until she fell asleep.

Did it really need to change?

“Then I will see you shortly.” Lowering his mouth to hers, he gave her a brief but clinging kiss, his hands sliding over her hips before he pulled away.

Sighing happily, Priscilla went into her room, where her maid was waiting. Jane hopped up from her seat by the window as soon as Priscilla entered.

“Ma’am.” Jane smiled brightly at her, gesturing at the bed where two of Priscilla’s nightgowns were resting. “I readied these two for you.”

“The blue one, please,” Priscilla said, moving toward the bed. It would match her eyes. “And we’ll take my hair down and braid it for the evening.”

“Yes, ma’am.” Jane hurried to get to work, helping Priscilla out of her clothing and into the nightgown before Priscilla sat down at the vanity. It took much less time for Jane to undo the stylish hairstyle than it had for her to put it up. The weight of it coming down felt good, as did the brush going through it as Jane gently unknotted the tangles that had worked their way in during the day.

Despite the soothing sensations, Priscilla couldn’t help but squirm in anticipation, knowing what was to come. Her wedding night had been a revelation, and every night that followed thereafter continued her education. The marriage bed was far more than her mother had led her to believe.

In fact, it was Evie, Josie, and her other new friends who had informed her that she was far from alone when it came to enjoying a wife’s duty. Now that she’d begun circulating with the other married ladies of the *ton*, she knew her group of friends was the anomaly, and she considered herself very

lucky. Joseph visited her bed regularly, bringing both of them to pleasure, and they were happy.

Though Evie and the others belonged to a secret society that indulged in perversions to accompany the usual marital relations, Priscilla had not gone to any of the gatherings. She'd asked Joseph if there was anything he would like to do that they had not experimented with, thinking of the spankings her friends apparently enjoyed receiving, but he'd shaken his head and pronounced himself more than satisfied with their amorous activities. Then he'd taken her in his arms and proceeded to prove to her how very satisfying they were.

Priscilla enjoyed them immensely, which was why she was now squirming in her seat, waiting for Jane to finish brushing her hair.

A knock on the connecting door between her bedroom and Joseph's made both women jump. Joseph must be impatient as well. Normally, he waited for Jane to leave before knocking.

* * *

Joseph

"Sir." Jane the maid bobbed a curtsy, stepping back from the door she'd opened into his wife's bedroom.

"I'll finish assisting my wife, Jane. You may retire," he told her. Nodding her understanding, Jane swiftly took her exit, but Joseph barely noticed. He only had eyes for his wife.

She was stunning, her long blonde curls trailing over her shoulders and down her back, obscuring some of the silky blue nightrail that skimmed over her curves. It matched her blue eyes perfectly, making her appear almost ethereal in the

flickering candlelight. A perfect goddess, too good and pure for him, yet he craved her all the same.

He was ready to worship at the altar of her pleasure.

The door closed behind Jane.

“My Lady,” he said, moving forward to take Priscilla’s hand and help her to her feet. As soon as he did so, he leaned in to kiss her, shuddering as he felt her body press against his. The thin fabrics of her nightrail and his dressing gown meant he felt far more than he had while they were in their day clothes.

She leaned into him, returning his kiss with interest, opening her mouth and sliding her tongue against his. For all that she’d been a complete innocent on their wedding night, she was always receptive to his touch. Not only receptive but eager, which had surprised him greatly. There was plenty of talk amongst gentlemen about the coldness of their wives, though he knew none of them had been love matches. That was part of the reason he’d wanted to marry for love. Stepping to the side, Priscilla angled herself toward her bed, pulling him along with her, already tugging at the knot on his robe’s belt.

He ran his hands over the silky fabric covering her body, enjoying the feeling of it against his palms, caressing the soft flesh beneath. Priscilla moaned against his lips, breathlessly arching into his touch.

His need for her was growing stronger with every passing moment, along with other needs that he had to ignore... needs he could never let her know about. Desires he would have to fulfill soon, dark cravings he could never subject his pure, innocent wife to. She would be horrified. She might even fall out of love with him. He couldn’t live without her any more than he could live with her disgust or scorn.

Pushing away his maudlin thoughts, he focused on his wife. On the here and now, burying his fear and his darker cravings, giving in to the passion between them. On the sleek curves of her body under the silk, the way she moaned when he moved his lips down her neck.

He dropped his robe on the floor, and they tipped back onto the bed together, his hands full of her breasts while his cock throbbed against her thigh. Rolling toward the center, he pulled her atop him, so she was straddling his waist, the silky material of her nightgown gathered around her hips and spilling over her thighs. One strap on the gown had fallen over her shoulder, slipping down to reveal most of her breast, the barest bit of pink showing above the bit of fabric as it clung to the top of her nipple.

Her blonde hair surrounded her angelic face, the light shimmering off of it like a halo.

Looking down at him, she smiled shyly from her position, wriggling as the length of his cock split her pussy lips, so she was riding its underside.

“Oh...” She shuddered, rocking her hips and rubbing herself against him. “Joseph...”

“Beautiful,” he whispered, reaching up to cup her breasts, rubbing his thumbs over her nipples through the fabric before tugging down the neckline so he had free access to her creamy breasts and the pert, pink nipples. Priscilla moaned again, pulling her arms free of the straps, so she was naked from the waist up. The nightgown was covering her thighs and his belly as she rubbed herself atop him. He ached to be inside her, yet he was enjoying the tease so much, he almost didn't want it to stop.

Priscilla looked down at him again, leaning forward to kiss him. She whimpered as the position meant she was rubbing her most sensitive part against him. Pulling away from the kiss, she met his gaze from only a few inches away.

“Is there... is there anything you want me to do?” she asked hesitantly.

So many things, none of which he could actually ask her for without risking her love. But there was one thing...

“Come up here and straddle my mouth so I might pleasure you with my tongue.” It wouldn’t be the first time he’d done so, but never in that position. Previously, she’d always been on her back while he lay between her thighs, but this request should be innocuous enough.

Her eyes lit up with interest, and he relaxed. He was going to get at least some of what he truly wanted.

Chapter Two

P riscilla Removing her nightrail completely, Priscilla hesitantly moved into position above Joseph's mouth, one knee on either side of his head. She felt awkward and vulnerable in such an intimate position, with all her most private parts displayed so vulgarly, but the expression on his face helped soothe her fears. He appeared overjoyed.

“Grip the headboard,” he suggested when her hands fluttered about because she didn't know what to do with them. Her hands settled on the wood while he moved his up and down the backs of her thighs before cupping her bottom and bringing her forward and down to meet his mouth.

Priscilla gasped as his tongue parted her netherlips, delving between them and sending her passion soaring higher from his touch. Though this was not the first time he'd used his tongue on her in such a manner, the position changed both the sensations and her emotions. She felt oddly... powerful. The awkwardness disappeared, her insecurity fluttering away as she moved her hips against his lips and tongue, moaning while he eagerly feasted on her sensitive flesh.

It was heavenly sin, stoking the fires of her passion as his tongue flicked against the swollen nub of pleasure that made her cry out every time.

She no longer felt like boring Miss Bliss, always watching her tongue, always a vapid smile on her lips, always doing her best to be perfectly pleasant and amiable. No, now she was Priscilla Stuart, a married lady riding her husband's face while she made whatever sounds she wanted, and no one stifled her voice.

“Oh yes... Joseph... more... there... Right there, like that... oh yes...” Her encouragement redoubled his efforts, ecstasy rolling through her with every stroke of his tongue as he touched her exactly how she wanted him to. “Enough!”

Gasping, Priscilla pulled away, pushing her trembling thighs upward. If he finished her now, she wouldn't have the strength to ride him, and that was what she truly wanted to do. To feel him inside her, his body heaving beneath hers, thrusting up into her. It was her favorite position, though she didn't *dislike* any of them. But being astride his face made her want to repeat it on his manhood.

Panting, Joseph looked up at her, his eyes blazing with his arousal.

“What does my Lady need?” he asked, running his hands over her thighs again.

“This,” she answered as she moved down his body, almost back into the position she had been before, except she did not sit on the length of his erection. Instead, she gripped it in her hand, squeezing tightly, and he groaned, closing his eyes, his hips thrusting upward.

This was the other reason she loved this position. Just as she had a moment ago, she always felt more confident, more secure in this position. She hadn't the first time he'd put her atop him. She'd felt on display, nervous about doing something wrong... Now, she knew what she was doing and

loved making him go wild for her, watching his reactions as she did whatever she wanted.

Joseph was the only person in her life who had ever let her do whatever she wanted. And while that allowance was confined behind the closed doors of her bedroom, it was something she cherished about him because not many husbands among the *ton* were so lenient. In fact, her friends all spoke of their husbands spanking them for discipline, and they all claimed to enjoy it. Priscilla was a bit curious, but she far preferred this. She did not want to be punished.

She wanted to bend over Joseph's body, her breasts hanging above his lips, and feel him suckle her nipples. She wanted to move slowly at first, riding him as though he was a horse, beginning with a walk and picking up the pace to a trot while he groaned and writhed beneath her. She wanted to touch every part of his body, exploring him and finding what he liked—and what he didn't.

He liked his nipples touched and played with and her fingers moving through the hair on his chest. He liked her nails digging into his shoulders. He liked it when she seated herself fully atop him and rocked her hips, rubbing herself against his body while he was embedded inside her.

Leaning back, Priscilla did so now, moaning with her pleasure as her pearl rubbed against the hard planes of his body.

“Priss!” Joseph grabbed hold of her hips and shuddered beneath her as his fingers dug into her curves.

“No... grab the headboard,” she said suddenly. He'd given her the idea, but she wanted to see it. There was a pause as he opened his eyes, looking at her with surprise writ clear across his expression. Priscilla blushed. She was about to tell him

never mind when he suddenly released her hips and reached up to grip the headboard.

He truly was letting her do whatever she wanted to him, and the euphoria that rose up inside her nearly brought her to climax with no other stimulation.

But she wasn't ready yet. She didn't want to yet.

Sitting back to keep her swollen pearl from sending her over the edge too quickly, she began to move up and down on him again. A sudden burst of inspiration had her reaching behind herself with one hand, her other resting on his lower stomach, and she found the sensitive sack that hung below his manhood.

He gasped as she wrapped her fingers around it, the wood on the headboard creaking.

“Bloody hell, Priss!”

She'd never made him curse before.

The position made it hard for her to move up and down, but she did the best she could, experimenting with his sack as she did so. She squeezed it, rolling the little balls inside between her fingers while Joseph cried out. When she pulled it, he closed his eyes, his hips surging up to thrust into her from below.

As if he could no longer help himself, Joseph let go of the headboard, grabbing hold of her hips again and rocking her atop him. She released his sack immediately, moaning as she felt him moving inside her. The time for holding back was over. Priscilla leaned forward, grinding down on him, her inner muscles clenching and squeezing the thick shaft as it moved within her.

“Joseph...” She gasped out his name as she convulsed, clamping down on him, ecstasy shuddering through her while he held her in place. The grip of her body set off his own climax, as it often did. He groaned, thrusting up hard and burying himself completely inside her while she rocked through each wave of her pleasure.

Utterly spent, she slumped, her upper body collapsing atop him as the last spurts of his climax splashed inside her. That had been... amazing.

* * *

Joseph

Stroking his wife’s back while she lay on him, her plush breasts pillowed against his chest, Joseph resisted the urge to flee. He wasn’t sure what was driving it. Yes, Priscilla had been far more forward than she normally was, but he’d liked that.

No.

He’d *loved* it.

But there was also a part of him that was extremely uncomfortable with seeing her in such a light.

She was his wife, after all.

A delicate lady from a respectable family, she’d been a complete innocent on their wedding night. And now...

Were his secret perversions changing her? He’d done his best to keep her from them, but he couldn’t help his dark desires.

When he'd moved his hands from the headboard, there had been a part of him that wanted her to immediately chide him, to punish him for his audacity, not to ride him to climax. But that wasn't who Priscilla was. That was something she could never be.

True, when he visited the Society of Sin, the secret club for the kind of dark debauchery he craved, there were ladies of *ton* who participated, but they were all older ladies, not recent debutantes. Ladies whose husbands neglected their needs.

And a few couples.

Very few. His brother and sister-in-law were among them, as were his cousin and her husband, though he tried very hard to avoid Evie and Anthony at those gatherings. And not just because he had no desire to see Evie in any state of undress.

Ever since his cousin and her friends had caught him at a gathering coming out of a room with Lady Cross, they'd been upset with him. Evie had even demanded he tell Priscilla. As if doing so wouldn't hurt her horribly. Wives weren't supposed to know about a husband's activities on the side. They were protected from any such knowledge unless the husband was a total cad.

Discretion was the name of the game.

Besides, it wasn't as though Lady Cross was actually his mistress. She had never even been his lover. When he'd begun courting Priscilla, he'd ended his previous arrangement with Mrs. White out of respect. But he'd had needs, so he'd taken up with Lady Cross, who was perfectly willing to fulfill his cravings without becoming his lover. Not once had their lips or hands touched each other, and he meant to keep it that way. Even though it meant foregoing some of the pleasures he'd

enjoyed prior to his marriage... that was part of being married. He could not have everything.

For a while, he'd been terrified his cousin would tell Priscilla, the way she'd threatened, but she'd been distracted by numerous events—including catching a traitor and her own wedding—and it had never come to fruition. It probably did not hurt that Joseph had not attended a Society of Sin gathering since Evie had caught him.

But he was going to need to soon. He could feel it.

“That was lovely,” Priscilla sighed, bringing him back to the moment at hand.

“It was,” he agreed. Lovely and somehow disturbing. Perhaps only because it had brought disturbing fantasies within himself.

He could never ask Priscilla to treat him as Lady Cross did. Certainly not as Mrs. White had. Proper wives would do no such things, and Priscilla was always proper. Thinking of them while Priscilla lay atop him felt like a betrayal and he did his best to force his thoughts away, but this interlude with Priscilla had only increased his cravings.

The desires coursing through him had nothing to do with sex or love, but they were closely connected and becoming impossible to ignore. The urge to get away from Priscilla grew along with his guilt because it felt so wrong to be thinking of what he needed from Lady Cross while he was still with his wife.

He pressed a kiss to Priscilla's forehead, moving so she rolled off him. Sighing happily, she snuggled up next to him, resting her head on his chest. It made his skin itch. Not because he didn't want to be curled up with her, but because

he couldn't stop the guilt that welled up as he thought about the needs he couldn't fulfill with her.

But he made himself stay put. That was his punishment, his cross to bear, and he did not want to hurt her by leaving her bed too soon. He remained there, stroking her hair, holding her against him until she drifted off to sleep.

Only then did he get up, collect his dressing gown, blow out the candles, and return to his own room. There was another Society of Sin event coming up. He would need to attend it. Then he would be able to satisfy his desires and return to Priscilla's bed without the depraved fantasies, without the urges she could not fulfill, and be a proper husband to her again.

At least for a while.

Chapter Three

P *riscilla*

“I believe Joseph is hiding something from me.”

Sitting at tea with Josie and Evie, Priscilla found herself so frustrated with her husband, she stated the problem baldly rather than trying to hedge around it.

Her sister-in-law and cousin-in-law exchanged glances, Evie frowning as she set her teacup back in its saucer. They were like night and day to look at, both stunningly beautiful— Josie, with her bright blonde hair and sparkling blue eyes, had been dubbed a Diamond of the First Water upon her debut, and Evie’s dark hair and green eyes made her the perfect foil to Josie’s fair looks. Next to them made Priscilla feel as dull as dishwater, though they were always very complimentary toward her.

She knew she was pretty in the English rose type of way, but that was not the same as their flashy beauty. Sometimes, she could not help a bit of envy.

When neither of them said anything immediately, she continued.

“I have felt that he has been hiding something from me for a while, but it has gotten far worse lately.” She shook her head. “Whenever I try to bring up the subject, he tells me that I have

nothing to worry about, but I cannot help it. Sometimes, I think he is not very happy with me as his wife.”

“Well, if he is unhappy with you as his wife, that is a personal failing on his part,” Evie said tartly. “You are perfect for him, and he should be falling to his knees thanking his lucky stars you tolerate him.”

Josie snorted. Despite her fragile beauty, she was often very unladylike. Priscilla had even seen her sneaking back into the house wearing breeches once, clearly having come home from a horse ride. Elijah had caught her and turned her up over his shoulder while she protested, then he’d strode off down the hall with her. Priscilla did not know what happened after that—though she could guess, since Josie sat with a cushion beneath her for the next day.

“What makes you think he is hiding something? Do you think he has a mistress?” Josie asked, picking up one of the biscuits from the tray in front of her.

“No, he would not have time for a mistress. He is in my bed almost every night, and he does not often go out on the nights when he is not. He is going to his club tonight with some friends, but I hardly think that’s cause for concern since it has been weeks since he’s done so.” Priscilla sighed. “I cannot think what he could be hiding, yet I know he is hiding something.”

“He’s going to his club tonight?” Josie asked, an odd note in her voice.

Priscilla frowned, looking at her sister-in-law with suspicion. There had been many times when she’d thought her friends were keeping things from her, and they had been. Eventually, they’d involved her in their hunt for a traitor, and

she'd helped to bring him down, but she didn't doubt they still had their secrets.

“Yes. Is that... bad?”

Before Josie could answer, the door to the drawing room opened, and Stims, the butler, entered and stepped to the side.

“The Marchioness of Hartford and the Countess of Talbot,” he announced in sonorous tones as the two ladies came through the door.

Completely ignoring propriety, as she often did, the Countess of Talbot stepped through the door before the Marchioness of Hartford. Lady Mary, the marchioness, did not appear insulted by having a countess precede her into the room, following in behind her friend with an absentminded expression. Although he should be used to it by now, Stims' eyes bulged, and he pressed his lips together in stringent disapproval. He was a newer butler to the home and still struggled with the lack of ‘proper decorum’ from its residents and their guests.

Lily, the countess, and Mary were as opposite in looks as Josie and Evie were. Mary's blonde hair was similar to Josie's, though with a distinct reddish tint, while Lily's hair was nearly as dark as Evie's and her eyes were nearly black. Dressed in a stylish blue and green day gown to set off her looks, Mary smiled as she found a seat beside Josie on one of the chairs while Lily, wearing her signature purple, joined Evie and Priscilla on the couch.

The four of them had been friends since childhood, but they had opened their circle to Priscilla and welcomed her in after she'd married Joseph, for which she was grateful. Though she had many acquaintances among the ladies of the

ton, she'd never had true-blue friends like them. These ladies would literally die for each other, and they'd proven it.

"Tea?" Evie asked, leaning forward to pick up the pot and some cups.

In the doorway, Stims made a strangled noise.

As the highest-ranking lady in the room who actually lived in the house, it should be Josie's position to serve tea, but with their closest friends, they were hardly going to stand on ceremony.

As if he couldn't bear to see any more, the butler made an abrupt about-face and shut the door firmly behind him, the solid sound a pronouncement of judgment. Grinning widely, they all waited a long moment before bursting into giggles.

"You need to stop tormenting that poor man," Mary said, although she was laughing as much as any of them.

"If he could give up the poker he has rammed up his—"

"Evie!" Lily scolded, cutting her off before she could finish the vulgarity.

Priscilla had learned a great deal about Evie's past since she'd returned to the family fold, including the fact that she'd been on the streets for some time between her parents' death and Joseph's father finding her again. Though she could play the part of a proper lady, she was far more relaxed around her friends.

Too relaxed sometimes. It both delighted and appalled Priscilla in equal measure—and often Lily, too.

"She has a point. You do not have to live with him." Josie snorted. "Mrs. Murdoch is sick of him as well." It was true. The housekeeper and the butler had been at odds almost since

the first day of his employment. Something was going to have to give, eventually, but the Marquess was trying to give the man a chance to settle in and become accustomed to the way their household operated.

“You could try to make it a little easier for him,” Lily replied, exasperated.

“Says the woman who walked ahead of a marchioness,” Josie retorted, snickering as she popped another biscuit in her mouth.

“I forgot.” Lily appeared sheepish, shrugging.

“Because we should be comfortable in our own homes and in each other’s.” Josie nodded her head with relish, clearly feeling she’d proven her point. “We shouldn’t have to stand on ceremony or walk in the proper order among friends, and we certainly shouldn’t have to put up with a judgmental butler if we decide not to.”

“He will either adjust or he will not,” Evie said. Finished pouring the tea for Mary and Lily, she lifted the cups and saucers and passed them over. “Mary, you and Rex are having an... event tonight, are you not?” The diffident tone of her voice made it seem as though she did not care about the answer, but an awareness prickled along Priscilla’s skin. Evie never did anything without reason, and she was hardly the type to make idle conversation—especially about an event Mary and her husband were hosting that the household had not received an invitation to.

Rex, the Marquis of Hartford, led a secret group known as the Society of Sin. Thanks to her friends, Priscilla had heard about some of their activities, but she had not gone on her own, though they’d seemed willing to take her. She couldn’t think of how to bring up such a subject to Joseph, and she felt

as though it would be rather odd to go without him. The ladies did say he'd been a member in the past, but he certainly had never said anything about doing the kinds of activities the Society indulged in with her.

She could only conclude that he was past such debauchery and no longer had an interest in partaking.

“We are,” Mary said, tilting her head curiously at her friend. “Did you and Anthony want to attend? I believe Elijah and Josie are going to be there.”

“We are,” Josie said immediately. She scowled at Evie. “It is our turn.”

“We would stay out of your way. I was thinking this might be a good opportunity to introduce Priscilla to the Society, to see if it's something she might enjoy.” Evie turned her head to meet Priscilla's gaze steadily. There was something in her expression, as though this was important to her for some reason. Maybe because their group of friends were all involved, and she did not want Priscilla to feel on the outside, or perhaps because she wanted Priscilla to be able to understand better when they talked of such things. “If Joseph is going to be at his club tonight, this would be a good opportunity for you to see what the Society has to offer on your own.”

“Oh... *oh*.” Josie blinked, sitting up straight. “Yes. I think that's a capital idea.”

“I do not know...” Priscilla's voice trailed off. The myriad of stories she'd heard about the Society flittered through her mind—the spankings, the whippings, the nudity, the unlocked doors as people cavorted behind them. “It seems like something I should attend *with* him if I were going to go. I would not want to do such things with anyone else.”

“Yes, it does seem that way, does it not?” Josie muttered.

Lily scooted closer to Priscilla, putting a supportive arm around her before she could ask Josie what she meant. Had Elijah attended without Josie? She had a hard time believing that. For all their constant clashes, Elijah doted on Josie. Priscilla tended to think that their outrageous arguments were part and parcel of their bed play. Not that she should be thinking about such things, but sometimes, she could not stop her mind from going to scandalous places.

“This would give you an opportunity to see the Society without his opinions influencing you,” Lily said. “You may find you have no interest, or even an abhorrence, to what you see, or you may discover a hidden desire. But if Joseph is there with you, you might be too busy watching his reactions to truly parse out what you want for yourself.”

“That does make sense,” Priscilla said slowly as Lily gave her a squeeze and let her arm drop.

While she was curious about the activities her friends had described, if Joseph was there, she would likely not react as naturally as she would without him. She would be too concerned with what he thought of her, of his possible disapproval.

“Anthony and I could act as your sponsors, and we would not leave your side the whole time,” Evie offered. “Which would ease Elijah’s mind.” She shot a look at Josie, rolling her eyes as she did so.

“Do not look at me like that. I do not care what you do, only that it derails my evening when Elijah falls apart because he saw something he did not want to.” Josie wrinkled her nose.

Oh... Priscilla wondered if the reason Joseph had stopped going to the Society was because his cousin had joined. Maybe he was like Elijah, and he'd stopped attending because he did not want to see her. Perhaps he had not wanted other people to see Priscilla.

Perhaps she should go, if only to see what it was about. If there were things Joseph was interested in, at least she would have a better idea of what to expect. And her friends thought she should go. They wanted her to go. If she went, she'd fully be a part of their group, and she would understand better what they spoke of when they talked about discipline, spankings, and things.

"Alright," she said, sitting up straight. "I'll go tonight. But... let me be the one to tell Joseph, if I decide to do so."

"He will not hear it from us, that I promise you," Evie reassured her with a smile.

Chapter Four

Joseph Guilt dogged Joseph's conscience all day, to the point where he was nearly unable to return home to face his wife once he'd left the house. He spent the morning at White's, the afternoon at Gentleman Jack's trying to work off some of his emotions through boxing, and finally snuck back in through the rear entrance of the house, hoping not to be spotted. As the household should be busy with supper, he thought he had a chance.

It almost worked.

"Joseph? What are you doing back here? Everyone is in the dining room." Diana, his father's nurse, frowned as she came down the servants' stairs he was going up. The informal greeting was one he'd become used to. Diana had been instrumental in nursing his father back to health and taking down the traitor who had injured him. During the investigations, permission to use each other's Christian names had been given by all parties involved. There was no point in standing on ceremony while hunting a traitor.

The casual demeanor had continued beyond the investigation, and now Diana was as much a friend as she was an employee.

“Ah... I came in the back way,” he said, waving his hand over his shoulder. Which was a kind of explanation, though a very incomplete one.

“I see.” There was something in the way she looked at him that made him feel like a naughty child, which was ridiculous because she was only a few years older than him.

“How is my father doing today?” Asking after the Marquis always distracted Diana. If Joseph did not know any better, he would have thought there was something growing between them beyond the bounds of her profession, but that was ridiculous. Diana was a nurse, after all, regardless of any informalities, and his father had never taken a mistress that Joseph knew of. He’d remained faithful to the memory of his marchioness all these long years.

“Very well. We took a walk around the garden, and I do not believe he needs his cane as much as he currently relies on it. He has been moving very well lately.” Diana pressed her lips together, not sounding as happy as she might have. “I believe he will soon have no need of my services, though I am going to mention hiring another valet for him to assist with his daily activities. I am sure he will resist the suggestion, so I wanted to let you and your brothers know so you might lend weight to it.”

“Of course, whatever you say, Elijah, Adam, and I will all back you, and so will the others” Tendre for his father or not, Diana was extremely competent in what she did. She was also very good at managing his father, but she was correct in thinking that he would resist additional help. That his father allowed her to assist him as much as she did was a minor miracle and likely due to the fact she was even more stubborn than Evie.

“Thank you, Joseph.” Her smile was much more genuine now.

“No, thank you.” He smiled broadly back at her and quickly picked up his pace to move beyond her before she could question him further, which was a smart decision. He heard the pause behind him before she continued down the stairs, as if she’d been contemplating calling after him.

Would she tell the others she’d seen him sneaking in the back way?

He hoped not. If she did, he would have to come up with some excuse. Perhaps just that he did not want to interrupt their meal when he was leaving again immediately.

Thankfully, he did not meet anyone else as he quickly ran up the stairs to his room. He changed into suitable attire for the evening as fast as he could, then went back down the back staircase. This time, there was no one on it. As he darted out the back door, he breathed a sigh of relief.

There was enough time to find his own supper at the club before he made his way to Hartford House. He would need to be sneaky there as well. He knew his family did not approve of his matter of handling things, but they were not him. It was all well and good for Elijah to preach about honesty with his wife when he could not keep his own wife honest and under control.

Joseph had almost been trapped into marriage with Josie, and the idea made him shudder. He adored her, as she was almost like a sister to him, but the idea of being married to her was enough to give him hives. She constantly led Elijah on a merry chase, both verbally and physically. She also submitted to him, as a proper wife should, when it was time.

That was the opposite of Joseph's cravings.

Though he found acceptance within the Society, he was still a man with desires more properly attributed to a woman. There were those in the Society who preferred to live as the gender opposite to what they'd been born to, but that was not him, either. He was a man, enjoyed being a man, but... he liked to be spanked by a woman. He liked it when a woman had sexual power over him.

Priscilla did have the latter, in some measure, but if she knew about the former, she would never look at him the same way again. He would not be her stalwart husband, her protector. It would change the very nature of the roles in their marriage.

Which was why such activities were better kept outside of it.

Something that none of his family could understand because, even in their perversions, they kept to their prescribed roles.

Hopefully, he would be able to avoid them all this evening. They were supposed to hold to the code of the Society, which was not to speak of such things to outsiders. The liaisons conducted within the Society were utterly secret. But Joseph did not think Evie had made an idle threat. Likely only his absence since he'd been caught with Lady Cross had kept her or one of the others from speaking to Priscilla.

That was why, after supper, he idled on the corner where Hartford House was located, waiting until quite a few carriages had arrived before slipping in with a larger group who entered at the same time. No one paid him a bit of attention, and some of his tension eased as he walked through the rooms.

He had not seen any of his family members arrive, which helped. With any luck, he would be able to find either Lady Cross or another lady willing to fulfill his needs and be gone before they appeared. Perhaps he should consider a man as well. He supposed it did not need to be a lady helping him purge the guilt and dark cravings that dogged his body, even though he did find it far more satisfying to have a lady do the deed.

He was in rather desperate straits at the moment, and Lady Cross was nowhere to be seen. Neither were any of the other ladies known to indulge gentlemen such as himself.

Waiting in the shadows for a quarter of an hour, he'd nearly given up on waiting any longer and was about to approach Lord Morton when he spotted Lady Cross coming down the hall. Removing her gloves from her hands, she'd obviously just walked in.

Letting out a sigh of relief, Joseph hurried down the hall to meet her.

“Lady Cross,” he said, giving her a respectful bow as soon as he was within reach of her. Older than him, she was a stately woman, a widow who had no interest in ever marrying again, but who thoroughly enjoyed disciplining men who desired it. She raised her eyebrows at him.

“Joseph.” There was an odd quality to her voice, almost as though she'd turned his name into a question.

“Are you free this evening?” he asked, doing his best to hold still rather than bouncing on the balls of his feet the way he wanted to as his anxiety took hold. He felt jittery, the guilt warring with nerves, and the urge to hide was growing stronger. The sooner they could be behind a closed door

somewhere, the better. This was far too out in the open, where Rex or Elijah or anyone might walk by and see them.

“I am. Are you?” She raised an eyebrow at him. When Evie and the others had caught him with her previously, she’d been greatly displeased by the interruption and with him.

“I am,” he said firmly. The details were his own business. “Though we should lock the door this time.”

Her lips pursed, and she looked him up and down, crossing her arms over her chest, as though she was thinking.

“You have been a very naughty boy, and I am going to punish you very harshly if you go with me,” she warned him. There was a sternness to her that had not been there before. Every fiber of his being ached at the words because that was exactly what he wanted. More, it was what he now deserved. He needed the harsh punishment more than ever, needed the pain to wash away the guilt that plagued him.

He was not sure if he was imagining the judgmental glint in her eye. It was hardly unusual for a husband and wife to seek separate desires at the Society for Sin or for only one individual to be part of the Society. That was why it had been created—to cater to those who could not have their needs fulfilled elsewhere.

There was not supposed to be any judgment, but... Lady Cross had seen Evie, Josie, and the others and how upset they’d been at Joseph for being there with her. It might influence how she felt about him.

Though, apparently, it would not keep her from helping him. Possibly because she knew how much he needed it, and he was grateful for that.

“Yes, ma’am,” he said.

He'd explained to her that he could not call her 'my Lady' because that was what he called his wife as an intimate endearment, and she had accepted the explanation. Lady Cross was unbothered by her title when it came to such matters.

Pursing her lips, she looked him up and down again, as if wondering whether it was a good idea. He clenched his hands into fists. Perhaps it was not, but it was what he needed, and he was becoming desperate to have those needs fulfilled. He did not know that he would be able to think of anything else until he did.

"Very well. Follow me." Crooking her finger, she swept past him, going deeper into the house. Joseph followed obediently behind.

Chapter Five

P *riscilla* From the moment the carriage arrived, the difference between this event and any other she'd attended before was stark.

There were no carriages proudly bearing their owners' emblems with coachmen in livery. Instead, every carriage that arrived—including the one she was in—was plain black or had fabric hanging over any distinguishing features, and the coachmen were dressed plainly. The occupants of the carriages exited with hooded cloaks obscuring their features and clothing, sweeping up to the doorway where the door opened immediately to allow entrance. Rather than light spilling out from the interior, the entrance was dimly lit, so she could not see if those before them removed their hoods immediately or not.

The curtains were tightly drawn, making the house appear rather empty.

“This feels very...” She could not find the word for it.

“Secretive?” Evie suggested, sounding amused as her husband Anthony opened the door to the carriage and stepped down ahead of them before pausing on the ground to assist them in disembarking. “It is. One of the worst-kept secrets in

the *ton*. The best kept secret is the names of the members and when and where they meet. Though most who know about the Society also know that Rex leads it. Whether or not Mary is a member or if she is unaware of her husband's proclivities is a matter of much debate in certain gossipy circles."

Anthony's lips quirked, almost as though he was about to smile at his wife. His expression was rarely friendly, but Evie did bring out a different side of him.

"Ladies." He offered an arm to each of them. Evie took it with alacrity, Priscilla with more hesitation. She almost felt as she had the first day of her debut, stepping into the unknown. It was both exciting and frightening. She wished Joseph was there with her, but at the same time, she knew his presence would have made her anxious in a different way.

At least now, she would have a glimpse of what the Society had to offer without feeling the pressure of reacting one way or another. None of her friends would care what she was and was not interested in the way her husband would.

Elijah was stepping out of the other carriage, turning to help Josie down, as he flashed a frown at Evie. Putting her nose in the air, she pretended to ignore him, which was quite a feat as Anthony was not moving forward, clearly waiting for the others to join their party.

Nathan and Lily followed Josie out of the carriage, and both ladies took their husbands' arms. At the front of the house, the front door had already closed behind the previous party.

"Are you ready?" Josie asked Priscilla as she and Elijah approached ahead of Lily and Nathan. Her blonde curls covered by a deep hood, it was difficult to see her expression

in the shadows within, but she sounded excited. Priscilla squared her shoulders.

She'd said she was going to do this, and she was. She wanted to see this side of her friends' lives. Wanted to see this side of Joseph's past. Wanted to know if it was for her as well.

Even if it was not, at least she would have a better understanding of it.

It could not possibly be any more frightening than being presented to the Queen of England, and she'd already done that.

"Yes," she said firmly. "Let's go in."

That was what the rest of them were waiting for. Evie began tugging on Anthony's arm to get him moving while he admonished her. They went up to the front door amid giggles from the ladies and sounds of affectionate exasperation from the gentlemen as they responded to their wives' teasing.

"Just remember," Elijah growled at Evie right before they reached the door. "You and Anthony are showing Priscilla around tonight. Nothing else."

Priscilla did not need to see Evie's face to know her cousin-in-law had rolled her eyes in response to the admonishment.

"We are hardly going to abandon her to seek our own pleasures. Really, Elijah." Evie sniffed. "The fact that such a thought would even cross your mind is telling. Is that what you would do?"

"Of course not!" The dig had gotten under Elijah's skin just as Evie intended, and he practically roared the denial, which sent all the ladies except Evie into another fit of giggles. Anthony sighed, shaking his head at his wife's antics.

“Well, the thought had to spring from somewhere.” Evie sniffed again and smiled as the door opened. A rather stern looking man with brown hair streaked with some grey stood there, looking them over. His expression did not change as Evie greeted him. “Hello Cormack.”

“My Lady.” He stepped back out of the way to allow them entrance. “Please, come in.”

The entire party entered, sweeping their hoods off their heads as they did so, and Priscilla followed suit.

Though the front entrance was dimly lit and the doors to the rooms on either side of the foyer were closed, she could see down the hallway to other rooms along the first floor of the house which were open. Light spilled out into the hallway from them, illuminating a pathway where soft sounds she could not quite make out trickled through the hall.

Cormack took their cloaks, revealing their various styles of dress. Priscilla’s was certainly the most modest. Evie was wearing a bright, scarlet red that would have garnered her horrified looks in a ballroom, especially with how low cut the neckline was. Her breasts appeared ready to spill out at any moment.

Josie’s pink gown and Lily’s violet were slightly more modest, though not by much. Unlike Evie, they did not appear to be in danger of exposure with every breath, just if they bent over.

Gulping, Priscilla tried to tamp down on her nerves, which had surged again. Would everyone be so exposed? She felt positively prudish, whereas when she’d chosen the dress she’d thought she was rather daring. No one looked at her askance, though.

“Ladies.” Anthony offered Evie and Priscilla his arms again. She was surprised when Elijah, Josie, Lily, and Nathan did not dart off to their own entertainments. Especially since Elijah had been very vocal about wanting to enjoy his evening with his wife without distraction from his cousin.

“The two front rooms are for resting after... after,” Lily said when she saw Priscilla peering curiously at the closed doors. “They have refreshments and plenty of places to sit within.”

“After you are done with your debauchery is what she means,” Evie filled in the blanks helpfully. Lily scowled at her as her husband began to turn her down the hall.

“She knew what I meant.”

“You hoped she knew what you meant, so you did not have to say it outright, is what you mean,” Evie countered.

“Come on, Lily, we did not come here so you and Evie could bicker,” Nathan said, drawing his wife in with his arm about her waist. She sighed but went willingly.

“Stop it, minx,” Anthony said in a low voice when Evie opened her mouth to say something back. She huffed, but subsided, which was rather impressive. Her husband seemed to be the only person to be able to keep Evie under control on a regular basis, but she did not always listen to him, either. “Lily can be as discreet as she likes.”

Evie grumbled something under her breath, but Priscilla could not quite hear her.

Nathan and Lily were already leading the way down the hall, heading for the first room. When Anthony stepped forward, Priscilla moved as well, her heart pounding in her chest.

As they approached the first open doorway, she could hear moans coming from inside and an odd thudding sound she did not recognize. When they reached the doorway, her mouth dropped open. A woman was standing in the center of the room, completely naked, with her hands on a large, wooden square frame around her body. A man stood behind her, using a multi-strand whip with very thick leather strands on her shoulders and bottom, which were both already dark pink.

“Oh, my...” Priscilla could not stop the words from falling from her lips as she took in the scene. Her feet ground to a halt, digging in her heels. Thankfully, Anthony stopped immediately, not pulling her forward, so she could watch from the hall.

The sight made her insides twist in an unsettling way.

“That’s a leather flogger,” Anthony murmured quietly. Lily and Nathan had already moved past to peek into another room, as if the events in this room did not particularly interest them. As Priscilla stared, Elijah and Josie slipped in through the door, moving to the side and out of sight. That was when she noticed how many spectators there were around the room, just watching. “The wide strands on it and the knots on the end of them mean it does not sting so much as...” He paused, floundering for the correct descriptive word.

“Thud. It feels like thudding on your back.” Evie leaned forward to address Priscilla, peering around her husband’s chest. “Like someone patting you very firmly, or tapping their fingers with intention... but it feels good. Relaxing.”

“Oh,” Priscilla replied because she did not know what else to say. The rise and fall of the many strands was fascinating. She wanted to go in, to reach forward and touch the pinkened

skin, to feel how hot it was... to ask the woman if it hurt. And she wanted the answer to be yes.

Her reaction frightened her far more than the sight itself.

Was this how she was supposed to feel? A sick fascination and the desire to know that the woman was in pain? How could that be? It was so wrong, yet she could not deny the impulses or her thoughts.

Then again, that was what the Society was supposed to be for, was it not? She was hardly the only person watching with rapt fascination. Priscilla relaxed again, though she felt wound more tightly than she had before. She glanced at Anthony and Evie, who were focused on the scene in the room, though neither seemed inclined to move forward at the moment.

Priscilla returned her attention to the couple inside.

The man let the flogger fall, the long strands hanging by his leg. Now she could see the knots Anthony mentioned better than before since they were no longer in motion.

“Anthony.” Evie said her husband’s name with an urgency that had Priscilla turning to look as well. Evie was looking off at the end of the hall. The light was dim, but when Priscilla blinked, she could make out Mary standing there. The blonde waved her hand at them, beckoning them onward, before disappearing to the right.

Anthony muttered a curse under his breath. Strange foreboding took up residence under Priscilla’s breast, as if something terrible was bearing down on them. What was Mary calling them toward? Why was she acting so oddly? Why did Evie sound so strange?

“What is it?” she asked as Anthony turned them to the hall, beginning to walk again.

“I am sorry, Priscilla,” Evie said, her voice heavy with regret. “You see, we did have some ulterior motives in bringing you here tonight, beyond those we expressed. One of the rules of the Society is that we are not supposed to talk about the other members, ever. The secrets of the Society are sacrosanct, and breaking that rule is cause for immediate expulsion. However, there are no rules against showing someone the secrets or bringing a guest who might recognize the other members.”

“Which would not be a problem if certain people weren’t so bloody foolish,” Anthony growled. He came to a sudden halt just before the corner, his eyes blazing in the dim light as he looked down at Priscilla. “No matter what, no matter what you see, just know that you have done nothing wrong.”

There was a thought trying to make its way to the forefront of her mind, pushing against the haze that had suddenly descended upon her. What Evie and Anthony were saying made no sense, none at all...

Unless...

Chapter Six

Joseph “There are no locked doors,” Rex said firmly, his arms crossed over his chest as he glared at Joseph.

“But I am agreeing to a locked door,” he argued, just as obstinate. He knew the rule, but he’d suggested the lock to Lady Cross, anyway, and unfortunately, Rex and Mary had overheard. The last thing he needed was someone other than Rex seeing him and Lady Cross in a room together. Closed doors were supposed to indicate that the couple within did not wish to be intruded upon, but there were always accidents. “I am not at all in fear for my safety, and if something terrible should happen to me behind a locked door, I will have no one to blame but myself.”

He understood the reason behind the rule, as there had been incidents in the past, but he was not concerned for his safety. It was hardly his first time with Lady Cross.

“The rules are for everyone. No exceptions because then everyone will want an exception.” Rex had a particularly obstinate gleam in his eye, and Joseph was not sure if it was because he was that dedicated to the rule or because he disapproved of Joseph’s presence here.

Well, if he could not get his needs met here, he would have to go elsewhere, though the brothels did not generally appeal to him.

Mary, Rex's marchioness, glided up to his side, sliding her arm through her husband's and leveling a cool look at Joseph. Despite her diminutive height and submissive nature, she managed to appear even more intimidating than Lady Cross. Perhaps it was his guilty conscience or his anxiety that she might say something indiscreet to his wife that made her appear so much more than she was.

"I think you have bigger things to worry about than whether or not you can lock the door behind you," she said, her tone tart and unfriendly. Which hurt. Mary had grown up next door to him and they'd always been friends. But then, she did not understand his dilemma any more than his cousin and his brothers had.

His frustration was growing to the point where he could hardly think about what she was saying. The situation and the judgment being heaped on him felt patently unfair when all he was trying to do was protect Priscilla's feelings *and* get what he needed. It was not as if he'd taken a mistress, and plenty of gentlemen did *that* without the approbation he was currently facing. But he had to be part of a family where no one else was and no one understood.

Which perhaps was why Mary's actual words did not sink in until he heard the impossible—his wife's voice saying his name.

"Joseph?"

The entire world seemed to still, time moving slowly around him as he turned, as though the air had turned to thick

jam. He could not breathe. His heart felt as if it was about to burst out of his chest, it was thudding so hard.

“No.” He whispered the word, but it dropped like a shout in the silence. Mary and Rex were already backing away against the wall, leaving the view completely clear.

Priscilla was standing there, staring at him with the same amount of shock he felt, her complexion stark white, clutching Anthony’s arm as though she was about to fall over. On Anthony’s other side, Evie stood, glaring daggers down the hall. If looks could kill...

“No,” he whispered again. This was not supposed to happen. This could not be happening. Priscilla was far too pure for this place, too good for the depravities that were practiced here... and if she knew what particular perversion called to him, she would never look at him the same again. She would never respect him.

How much did she already know?

Fear and panic chilled him from the inside out.

“She cannot be here. You cannot be here.” He should be moving toward her, but his feet would not go. All he could do was stare.

“Here? Here where you are?” Unlike him, she had no problem moving, sliding her arm from Anthony’s and stalking forward with her hands clenched into fists at her side. As she did so, Mary and Rex shifted further away from Joseph, moving to stand behind her in support, the way Evie and Anthony were, leaving him abandoned. “I should not be here where my husband is, rather than at the club with his friends where you said you would be?”

This was a side of Priscilla he had never seen before. There was nothing amiable or accepting about her demeanor, nothing placid or accepting about her expression, and by the time she reached the end of her questions, she was shouting at him. Joseph took a step back, shocked even more by her reaction than her appearance.

Of course, he'd never wanted to hurt her, of course, he did not want her to know, but any time he had imagined her reaction to him being with another woman, this was not it. If she ever found out, he expected the usual wifely reaction—the quiet hurt, the wounded stoicism, the pretense that she knew no such thing. The way most proper English wives reacted to their husband's affairs or mistresses when they were indiscreet.

He certainly did not expect her to bear down on him like a vengeful fury, questioning him.

“What are you doing here?” he asked blankly, unable to think of anything else to say, even as his brain screamed at him that it was the exact wrong reply.

“I was invited by friends. I am here to discover this side of their lives and because I wanted to know if it was something I might enjoy. I am here because my husband went out for the night to be with his friends, and I thought nothing of doing the same. Now, *sirrah*, what are *you* doing here?” The paleness of her cheeks had given way to red fury, her bosom heaving with emotion as she confronted him, and there was a stern glint to her eye that reached into his body and did things to his insides he could not explain.

Priscilla had never, not once, looked at him like this before. She was a goddess, and the urge to fall to his knees and beg forgiveness was nearly overwhelming... but he had to

make her understand. He had to make sure she knew it did not change any of his feelings for her. Then he was going to have strong words with his cousin about putting Priscilla in a position to be so egregiously hurt with knowledge she should have been protected from.

“I... you are not supposed to be here.”

Rather than backing down or even looking at him, Priscilla looked past him.

“What was he here to do with you?” It was not a question; it was a demand, and she was addressing Lady Cross.

“Not what you think,” he said, stepping between them, blocking Lady Cross from Priscilla’s view. But his demure, proper wife pushed him aside, and he was so surprised that he stumbled away, leaving her and Lady Cross facing each other.

Lady Cross looked Priscilla up and down consideringly, and Priscilla stared back at her.

“What is your arrangement with my husband? Since he seems incapable of answering my questions, woman to woman, I am asking you. Please, tell me.” Her voice only softened slightly to a request.

Joseph was about to step forward again when Lady Cross flung her hand up at him, palm facing him, and he ground to a halt. His jaw clenched. His entire life was about to collapse, and... he knew exactly who to blame. He glared at his cousin. She crossed her arms over her chest and glared back, mouthing the words, ‘I told you to tell her.’

As if that would have helped.

It hardly mattered now, though, did it?

“Your husband and I have never shared a bed,” Lady Cross said, and something inside Joseph unclenched. Maybe there was still hope... then she dashed any prayer he had of keeping his statue in his wife’s eyes. “He requires me to punish him.”

Priscilla’s lips parted in surprise, and she looked at him, then back at Lady Cross so quickly, he could not even catch her eye. His shoulders slumped. She did not even want to look at him. This was exactly why he’d never wanted her to know. How could she respect him as a man, as a husband, knowing of his perversions? If he’d wanted to spank her, it would be bad enough, but he could have reassured her that he would never inflict such depravity upon her, that—

“Punish him... with a flogger?” Priscilla asked.

Wait, what?

Why was she asking such a question?

“A flogger, a paddle, a whip, whatever implement I am in the mood for that evening,” Lady Cross replied serenely. “He requires nothing more than the discipline from me. Though there is much more that could be done if he was willing, I believe he sought me out specifically to keep his marriage vows, and so that is the sum of our encounters.”

“That’s something,” Evie muttered, loud enough to be heard by everyone.

Priscilla turned partially around, leveling a stern look at his cousin.

“Evie, thank you for the invitation tonight. I love you dearly, and I appreciate that you had my best interests at heart, but I think for the remainder of the evening, it is best if you and Anthony no longer serve as my guides.” Priscilla glanced at Mary and Rex, then back at Lady Cross. “My Lady, if you

are amenable, would you serve as my guide for the evening and also instruct me on how to punish my husband?"

If Joseph was not so flabbergasted, he would have enjoyed the expression on his cousin's face, but he was reeling with too much shock himself to appreciate anyone else's. Anthony's mouth had dropped open, along with Evie's. Whatever his cousin had expected to happen, that was not it.

"Of course, I would be happy to," Lady Cross replied.

The world seemed to whirl around Joseph, spinning like a top and flipping upside down, leaving him floundering.

"Then we will be on our way," Anthony said, stepping back and pulling a still-stunned Evie with him. "Priscilla, we will be in the front room when you are done if you would like to ride home with us."

"Thank you."

It was the offer to take Priscilla home, without extending the invitation to him, that made Joseph finally shake off his stunned shock as Anthony dragged his cousin back down the hall, disappearing around the corner. Mary and Rex followed without looking back.

"I—"

"No." Priscilla snapped out the word, finally looking at him fully, the heat of her anger blazing in her gaze. He was so taken aback, he actually stepped back from her in surprise.

"What?"

"No. Unless you wish for me to leave right now, in which case you will no longer be welcome in my bedroom upon your return, no to whatever argument you are going to make. You are my husband. You have betrayed me. And if you have a

liking for punishment, well... good because right now, I am ready to do so.”

Joseph’s mouth snapped shut.

He did not know who this was. She was Priscilla; she was his wife, but it was not her. It was as though stepping into the Society of Sin and discovering his transgressions had turned her into an entirely different person.

Worse, his cock stirred at her threat rather than withering.

He might be shocked by her turnabout, he might be horrified that she knew his secret, but one part of him liked this new Priscilla very much.

Chapter Seven

P riscilla So many emotions were rushing through her, one after another, she could not say what she felt.

Betrayal.

Anger.

Relief.

Jealousy.

Curiosity.

Hurt.

They collided against each other and rolled around in a tumult, knocking about inside of her until she wanted to fall to her knees and scream. But a lady did not do such things. Certainly not where she could be observed. And not in front of her husband's... paramour was not the correct word, apparently, which was the reason for her relief.

For some reason, Joseph had felt the need to keep this side of himself apart from her, which hurt. And she was very angry at both him and Evie, as well as her friends. The betrayal she felt was not only due to Joseph but also toward those who had clearly known.

While she understood there was some rule keeping them from revealing the truth to her, her emotions did not care about logic, and she was furious. Though mostly at Joseph. Far more than her friends. After all, they had all been his friends for longer, and she'd seen the expression of betrayal on his face when he'd realized what his cousin had done.

She knew she would forgive her friends, but that was a matter for later. Right now, she did not want any of them there to further interfere with matters between herself and Joseph. She needed to focus on her husband and could not do that with them there.

Thankfully, it seemed the lady was willing to serve as her guide for the evening, though in a far greater capacity than Evie or Anthony would have. Priscilla was no longer going to be watching—she was going to be participating.

Learning.

And her fingers itched to do it.

To hurt him the way he'd hurt her.

“I am Lady Cross.” Tall and stately, she did not seem particularly disturbed despite everything. She held herself with a confident bearing that Priscilla yearned to emulate. “You may call me Catherine.”

“Mrs. Priscilla Stuart,” she replied, suddenly feeling much more unsure now that her friends were no longer at her back, and she was faced with the woman her husband had snuck out to meet. “Please call me Priscilla.”

“This way,” Catherine said, gesturing at the open door just behind her. She looked past Priscilla. “I assume there will be no further need to argue about the lock?”

“No, ma’am,” Joseph said in a low voice that Priscilla had never heard before. Her heart constricted. His head was hanging down, so she could not see his expression, but he looked like a kicked dog.

Part of her—a vengeful, petty part of her—was glad. That was how she felt, too, underneath her fury. At the same time, she was relieved he did not have a lover in Catherine. It seemed he only went to her to have very specific needs fulfilled and saved his loving for Priscilla.

She was glad about that. Relieved. But still hurt he’d felt it necessary to keep this secret from her. And she did not understand why he had not told her. The fact that he did not seem to want her there at all had been what hurt the most.

Even now, he did not look at her as he came into the room. Instead, he stood silently staring at the floor, fists clenching and unclenching as he shifted his weight back and forth. Priscilla pressed her lips together and looked at Catherine, who was studying them both with a critical eye. Squaring her shoulders, she met the older lady’s gaze evenly.

She did not know what Catherine was looking for, but if there was anything Priscilla had experience with, it was being judged by the most intimidating ladies of the *ton*. It had taken her three Seasons to find a husband, including two where her most promising suitors had ended up engaged to other debutantes. She was very used to being looked over with a critical eye, as her own mother’s had become more so with every Season she’d ended without securing a proper proposal.

“What do you know about the Society?” Catherine asked after a long moment.

“Not very much,” Priscilla admitted. “This is my first visit. I have spoken with my friends about their experiences and was

curious. When they told me Joseph had been a member in the past, they invited me to come, and I thought perhaps it was something I should see. To understand both them and him better.”

“Laudable. What do you think so far?”

“It is not what I expected.” Priscilla could not help the short, sharp, bitter laugh that escaped from her. She cut it off abruptly, realizing how harsh and unlike herself it sounded as it grated over her ears. Joseph flinched. Taking a deep breath, she tamped down her unruly emotions. “From what my friends have said, the draw for them is being on the receiving end. I must admit, I cannot imagine enjoying such a thing. However, when you said that you punish Joseph...”

It seemed an awful thing that she wanted to punish her husband, despite how deserved it was. Ladies were not supposed to want such things. They were supposed to turn a blind eye to their husband’s indiscretions and pretend they knew of no such thing.

But Priscilla had seen marriages built upon very different foundations among Joseph’s friends and family. They all belonged to the Society of Sin together. They had worked together to bring down a traitor to the Crown. She could not imagine Evie, Josie, Mary, or even quiet Lily tolerating a husband with a wandering eye.

That was the kind of marriage Priscilla wanted.

It was the kind of marriage she’d thought she had... right up until this evening.

Apparently, if she was going to get what she wanted, she would need to punish her husband. Fortunately, that was exactly what she wanted to do. Imagining Joseph in a position

to be flogged, imagining herself being the one to bring the whip down on his back and buttocks... a hot flush of excitement went through her body.

What was wrong with her?

“One thing to know is that we should never punish out of anger,” Catherine said sternly. “Though you have every right to be so, you should only lift an implement—or your hand—when you are fully in control of yourself.” She looked Priscilla up and down, lifting an eyebrow. “As a lady of the *ton*, I assume you have plenty of experience in controlling your emotions.”

“A bit.” Priscilla took a deep breath because Catherine was correct. She’d had three Seasons as a debutante holding in every emotion, every fear, every annoyance, every frustration, and becoming a married lady had only loosened those chains a bit, not freed them. Even with her friends, even with Joseph, she had never been able to fully relax, though she had become much more so than with anyone else.

“Good.” Catherine nodded approvingly. “Now, is there any reason other than your anger that you would like to dominate him?”

Dominate him.

The words reverberated through her, touching something deep inside of her that she had not known existed. That, before this moment, she would have never been able to admit was a part of her. Priscilla licked her lips.

“Yes,” she whispered.

Joseph’s head jerked up, and he was finally looking at her, staring at her aghast as if he’d never seen her before. She did her best to ignore him. After his behavior, he did not get to set

judgment on hers. She would not let him stifle her. Especially not when Catherine was nodding approvingly for her to continue.

“Yes,” she said more strongly, though the words came faster and faster as she continued, as though she was afraid she would not be able to get them all out otherwise. “When we first arrived this evening, we stopped to view a scene in one of the rooms. It was a man flogging a woman. It was... I could not look away. But I was not picturing myself in the woman’s place. I was picturing myself in the man’s. I wanted to touch her skin and see what it felt like. I wanted it to have hurt her. And I do not know if I know her. I did not see her face. But... it called to me on a level I found disturbing.”

By the time she finished speaking, her heart was pounding inside her chest, and she felt as though she’d just run down the length of Hyde Park in a race. However, she felt such relief releasing the words out into the world, admitting the thoughts one should never say aloud.

Joseph was still staring at her, and the heat that had suffused her cheeks now felt like it was creeping down her neck to her chest. It was not exactly embarrassment; at least, she did not want it to be.

She had nothing to be embarrassed about. That was what she told herself. After all, what she was describing was exactly what he was receiving from a woman who was *not* his wife.

* * *

Joseph

This was not the Priscilla he knew.

He was having trouble equating the woman he'd married with the one who stood before him now.

He did not know how he felt about her.

Well, his cock did. His cock had grown harder and harder with every word out of her beautiful mouth. The dark part of his psyche was yearning for what she was describing, eager to test these convictions with her.

Then there was the other part of him.

The part that had been terrified that his amiable, pleasant wife would find out about his depraved desires was now horrified that she shared them. That's not what a wife was supposed to do. Wives were supposed to be... something else.

Except that was not right, either.

Lady Cross had been married at one point. So had his previous mistress, who had actually been his lover. Though he did not know if either of them had had this kind of relationship with their husbands. He had never asked. Never thought to. He'd assumed their husbands would never have agreed to such a thing... but now, he could not find a true reason why he would make such an assumption.

"Joseph." Lady Cross' stern tone jerked his attention away from Priscilla, who he'd been staring at rather blankly. He blinked, refocusing on the lady. "Would you like to tell your wife your preferences, or should I?"

"I..." He looked back and forth between them. "I do not know if I can do this."

"Why not?" Priscilla asked, frowning as she crossed her arms over her chest. His cock jerked again, even as his chest clenched. "You had no problem doing... this... with Lady Cross."

“Exactly. She’s not... she’s not my wife.” The words came out before he could consider how they sounded, and Priscilla jerked as if he’d slapped her. *Bloody hell.* “Priscilla, that’s not what I meant. I meant, you’re my *wife*. I’m supposed to respect you, protect you, not bring you into my perversions... and how are you supposed to respect me after... after...”

Lady Cross closed her eyes, pinching the bridge of her nose, but before she could say anything, Priscilla was already shaking her head. With her hands on her hips, she glared at him, as if he was a nincompoop. And maybe he was.

“Do you think that Anthony respects Evie any less after disciplining her? Do you think Elijah respects Josie less?”

“Well, no, but that’s because Evie and Josie are not men. They are... they are supposed to be...”

Groaning, Lady Cross let her arm fall.

“You care too much what other people think, Joseph. You always have.” She sent a sympathetic glance toward Priscilla, who did not see it because she was too busy glaring at Joseph, struggling to find the words to respond to him. “Have I ever given you any indication that I hold you in less esteem because you are on the receiving end of discipline?”

“Well, no, but...”

“Has anyone in this house ever made you feel that way?”

“No, but...”

“Priscilla, did you lose any respect for your husband because he enjoys being punished?”

“No,” she said coldly. “But I did lose some for him when I realized he has so little for me.”

It felt like an accusation, and it hurt, especially when he had been behaving with nothing but respect for her.

“What are you talking about?” The words burst out of him, finally allowing him to complete a sentence. “I have done nothing but show respect for you! I have not only been more than discreet, but from the beginning of our courtship, I released my lover and have never taken another! That is more than most gentlemen would do!”

“And far less than most of the men in your family have done,” Priscilla snapped back, taking him by surprise. She crossed her arms over her chest, radiating hurt, anger, and a strong desire not to be touched, though he now ached to reach out and hold her.

Despite his best intentions, he *had* hurt her. Despite his best intentions, she clearly did not feel respected. And she was not wrong.

“They share everything with their wives. Their desires, their ambitions, and their nights at the Society. You... you have been keeping things from me.”

“And you have not from me?” While she might be correct, he was certainly not the only one who had been keeping secrets. “I had no idea you knew about the Society. You never mentioned wanting to explore any such... things. I did not know you were aware of... anything. You could have told me, just as much as I could have told you.”

Priscilla’s mouth opened. Closed. She blinked, then frowned fiercely at him.

“You are correct. I could have, and I should have. I apologize. I was afraid to bring it up when the others said you had been a member in the past, but you said nothing to me. I

did not want to bring it up when I did not know how I felt about everything myself, especially when I was not sure I did not want to try it.” She might be frowning, her tone almost tart, but it was also clear she was sincere in her explanation.

Joseph suddenly felt even smaller than before. Rather than arguing with him, Priscilla had apologized immediately. The exact opposite of how he had responded. Though some men would take it as their due, he was aware of his own hypocrisy.

“I apologize as well,” he said in a low voice, no longer able to meet her gaze. “I did not share this part of my life with you, and I never intended to. I was afraid it would make you think less of me. I also apologize for my reaction to your presence and for making more assumptions on your behalf.”

“Good.” Lady Cross clapped her hands together, startling both of them. To Joseph’s surprise, she was smiling. “Now that we have gotten that out of the way, I believe we can begin.”

Chapter Eight

Priscilla Joseph looked so contrite, Priscilla would have felt sorry for him if she did not still have some lingering anger. She knew he was correct in that most members of the *ton* would have found his actions very respectful. In fact, they would think *her* disrespectful for pushing herself into an arena where wives did not often go.

She was aware of the many marriages where the husband kept a mistress or a lover—and often the wife did as well. It was not only an accepted practice, it was encouraged. Now that she was a wife, she'd heard all sorts of conversations she had not before and was aware not all ladies enjoyed the marital bed the way she did. Privately, she thought that must be the fault of their husbands, but the ladies seemed perfectly happy sending their husbands to other women for pleasure.

Priscilla was not.

Neither were any of her friends.

She knew what most of the *ton* would think, what her mother would think. Her mother *would* be horrified at the idea of Priscilla doing anything so gauche as punishing her husband. Her mother's idea of a proper wedding night

discussion had been to tell her to lie back and think of England and it would be over quickly enough.

Joseph had made their wedding night, and every other night they shared a bed, glorious. She still felt lucky he was her husband. She still loved him. While she was hurt and frustrated, she was not unaware that most husbands of their station would not only have expected her to turn a blind eye, they would never have apologized for any of their actions.

He'd kept a secret. She understood the reasons for it, even if she did not like it.

“The most important part of engaging in this kind of play is communication,” Catherine said serenely, as if Joseph was not standing there, hangdog and unhappy. “Something you will both need to work on. If you are hiding your desires from each other, you will both be unhappy. Having an interest or desire for something does not mean your partner must indulge, but from what I have seen, partnerships work best when you are honest with each other about what you want. You may find yourselves even more compatible than you ever imagined.”

She raised her eyebrow as she looked back and forth between Priscilla and Joseph, and they both nodded their understanding, Priscilla meeting Catherine's gaze while Joseph continued to stare at the floor.

“Now, Joseph, with the understanding that Priscilla does not think any less of you, do you agree that she will be your disciplinarian this evening?”

“Yes,” Joseph replied in a low voice, still not looking at either of them.

Apprehension and excitement flittered through Priscilla. She had the feeling this night would either make or break their

marriage, and she was terrified it might be the latter... but if she walked out of the room now, she doubted she would ever find the courage to walk back in.

“Priscilla, are you able to let go of your anger in order to pay proper attention to Joseph as you discipline him?” Catherine asked.

“Yes,” she answered firmly. The hard edge of her anger was long gone, and the rest was already dissipating. His sincere apology had even soothed some of her hurt.

“Good. Joseph, strip.” Catherine looked at Priscilla, who had startled at the order, as Joseph began to untie his cravat. “He does not strip all the way with me, just down to his small clothes. Most of the implements we use work best skin to skin, but Joseph has never been open to stripping fully with me. Instead, he strips down to his small clothes and, when needed, he will uncover his buttocks and only his buttocks.”

The reassurance was kindly meant and another relief to hear. Even though Joseph had been keeping secrets from her, it did sound as though he had done his best to be respectful of their marriage, far more so than many would have. From now on, though, she wanted more.

She would demand more.

The sense of power that rushed through her at the thought made her shiver.

She did not even mind Joseph stripping down almost bare in front of another woman. There was a flash of jealousy, but Catherine did not seem interested in him. She was studying Priscilla. And Joseph was not looking at Catherine. He was still hanging his head... though another jolt of jealousy hit her when she saw he was erect.

Was that because of Catherine?

Moving over beside Priscilla, Catherine murmured in her ear.

“You will take the lead this evening. I will be the voice in your ear, assisting and guiding you, but this will be a passing of the reins. I can see much potential in you, and I do not think you will need me for long... but as I am more experienced in this venue, I am at your service.”

“Thank you,” Priscilla murmured, resolving at that moment *not* to cause a fuss about the bulge at the front of Joseph’s smalls.

“Tell him to get into the position you want him. I recommend bent over the couch if you would like to spank him or standing braced against the wall if you would like to use the flogger.”

Although her fingers twitched at the mention of the flogger, which she was very interested in, Priscilla did not feel ready to jump immediately to such an implement when she’d never held one, much less swung one. But she needed to do something. Say something. And Joseph was standing there waiting.

She cleared her throat.

“Joseph, I want you to place yourself over the couch... for... and prepare yourself to be disciplined.” She was amazed her voice did not squeak but hated the way she sounded so uncertain.

“Yes, my Lady,” he said, turning to move toward the couch.

The feeling of power, of control, that filled her made her entire body throb as she watched in surprise.

“He has always refused to call me ‘my Lady,’” Catherine murmured in her ear. “And he has never begun one of our sessions aroused. In case you were wondering.”

Priscilla had been. The thrill that went through her at Catherine’s words was one of pure excitement.

* * *

Joseph

He could not hear what Lady Cross was whispering in Priscilla’s ear, no matter how he strained his. It felt as if his heart was pounding in his chest so hard, he could feel the beating against his skin.

While the guilt of his secret no longer dogged him, shame still did. Not shame from his desires, though there was some of that mixed in, but shame because Priscilla had been utterly correct in all of her statements, as had Lady Cross. Joseph did not like to think himself the kind of man who could be easily swayed by the opinions of others, but he had to face the fact he had been swayed by his assumptions of their opinions, which was even more embarrassing.

Yes, many men would consider his desires unnatural... but those closest to him had never given him any indication they looked down upon the other men in the Society who had the same desires. He’d kept his secrets out of fear rather than giving any of them, including Priscilla, the chance to accept him.

Some of that fear lingered, as did his aversion to the idea of Priscilla being part of these endeavors, but he also was honest enough to recognize how unreasonable that was. Especially since she had specifically stated her interests.

Wives are not supposed to...

But then, husbands were not supposed to want what he wanted, either. Now that the hypocrisy had been pointed out to him, he would not stand for it. He would find some way to work through it—for her sake and also for his.

Part of him liked Priscilla's involvement very much, despite how his mind struggled. His cock was achingly hard, rubbing against the soft fabric still restricting it, aching for her touch. He had never had this kind of reaction to Lady Cross. He'd never even been this eager for Mrs. White when they'd been lovers.

Perhaps it was because he'd never seen Priscilla like this before. Perhaps it was because this side of her was so different from what he knew of her. It did not really matter why. All he knew was the effect it had on him was shocking.

As he bent over the couch, his backside facing the two women, his stiff erection rubbed against the arm, and he bit back a groan. Bracing his forearms on the seat of the couch, he took a deep breath for courage. He was not sure whether it helped or hindered that he could no longer see the two women.

"Very good," Priscilla said, her voice a little higher than normal, a little uncertain, yet excited. It did not matter that she did not have the same confidence as Lady Cross; he still felt a large flush of warmth at her praise. His anticipation heightened, though he tried to push some of it back.

This was her first time. Even with Lady Cross guiding her, he should not expect too much from her. Yet that did nothing to dampen his rising excitement that it was Priscilla behind him. Now that he was mentally accepting her in that position, his reactions were growing in leaps and bounds.

There was a soft murmur of sound, then Priscilla cleared her throat.

“Bare your backside for me.” This time, her voice was not as high, though she still did not have the confidence of Lady Cross. His cock jerked against the arm of the couch. Reaching back with one hand, he bared his arse, wondering what she was thinking... how she was reacting.

Not being able to see her expressions was a blessing and a curse.

“We are going to start with a spanking.” A soft husk had entered her tone, one he’d heard often in the bedroom when she was aroused, which of course made his own arousal surge. She also sounded more confident now, surer of herself.

The soft shush of her skirts against the carpet approached, the fabric brushing against his legs as she came to stand beside him. He turned his head, trying to see more of her, but in this position, he could not see much more than her face unless he twisted fully around.

A soft hand came to rest on his buttocks, stroking them, and he let his head drop back down with a sigh at her touch. She rubbed her palm across his skin before lifting it again.

The sharp crack with which she brought it down made him jerk in surprise.

“You should have talked to me.”

Though there was heat in her words, it was carefully controlled, making it clear that she had spanked him with deliberate intention. The spot stung deliciously, and his dick throbbed in response. Her hand came down again on his other cheek, matching the spot.

“You should have trusted me.”

Yes.

Another stinging swat, right next to where the first hand landed.

“I do not want a marriage full of secrets and lies.”

“I’m sorry, my Lady. I will not do it again.” He could not hold back the response, even though he was not sure if she wanted to hear it from him.

“No, you will not.” This time her low, confident tone reached right through the center of him, and he shuddered at the hot need that curled within, his hips moving to rub his cock against the chair.

Her hand came down again and again, stinging his skin, heating it with every slap of her palm against his flesh. The heat was growing inside and out, tightening his balls and heightening his senses. Knowing it was Priscilla applying the discipline made it all the more intense for him.

My wife is punishing me.

It felt wrong. Taboo. And so very good.

When she stopped, he whimpered, but then he heard Lady Cross approaching him.

“Here, dear, try it with this,” Lady Cross said in an approving tone. “It will save your hand the trouble.”

“Thank you,” Priscilla replied primly, as if Lady Cross had just handed her a cup of tea.

Joseph might not be able to see it, but he knew that whatever the Lady had just given his wife, it was hardly as innocuous as Priscilla made it sound.

A moment later, when hard wood crashed against his already sensitive flesh, he groaned at the bite of the paddle.

Chapter Nine

P riscilla

The wooden paddle was not light, but it was very effective, and it did help with the stinging of her hand. She had not thought about the ramifications of using her own palm. It had been very satisfying at first, but the enjoyment had faded as the discomfort in her palm grew.

Still, she had liked seeing her handprints on Joseph, knowing he would be feeling the same sting. His soft groans had sent ripples of arousal through her, making her feel achy and swollen between her legs.

The paddle was heavier, the sound a meaty thwack rather than a sharp slap, and it was able to cover far more area. Priscilla watched, fascinated, as creamy skin turned pink, and pink skin brightened after the very first blow. She was going to have to work on her strength to be able to keep up more than a few with the paddle.

Using two hands helped, though she also worried about hitting Joseph too hard until she saw the way he moved his hips, rubbing the front of his groin against the arm of the couch. With his eyes closed, his lips parted to emit low groans, it was impossible to ignore that he was enjoying his punishment.

Which hardly seemed the point.

It was both arousing and frustrating.

Pressing her lips together, Priscilla let the paddle drop by her side. His buttocks were now pink all over. Fascinated, she reached out with her free hand to touch. Joseph groaned as she stroked the warm skin, a shiver that she could actually see going up his spine. Her fingers were not enough. She placed her whole hand over his hot flesh and squeezed.

He groaned, moving his hips again.

“Hold still.” The order came naturally, a firm command, and he froze in place.

Now, it was her turn to shiver. That had never happened before. Not with anyone. And she did not *like* it—she loved it. Loved giving her husband an order and seeing him *obey*. Not because she was forcing him to, but because he wanted to.

That was as much a pull for her as the pain, she realized.

There had been nothing holding him in place for the spanking and paddle other than his own desire.

Catherine came up beside her, nodding approval.

“Good job,” she said, her gaze traveling over Joseph’s backside. There was nothing desirous or covetous in her expression. It was decidedly clinical, which eased Priscilla even more. She was judging Priscilla’s handiwork, not Joseph’s buttock, and she did not appear to have any desire to touch the way Priscilla did. “Call on me this week for tea, and we can discuss things further.” It was clear that direction was for Priscilla alone. Then Catherine leaned in, speaking low enough that only Priscilla would be able to hear. “Remember, not all punishment need be administered by hand... keep him waiting.”

Oh...

Oh.

Priscilla pressed her thighs together as what Catherine was suggesting hit her. While it was clear Joseph and Catherine's... relations had been chaste, Priscilla had no such need.

Watching Priscilla's expression change, Catherine nodded in satisfaction, her tone returning to normal.

"Tea. This week. Do not forget."

"I will not." Priscilla had a multitude of questions she would like answered. While she knew her friends would attempt to do so, none of them were in her particular position. All of them enjoyed being spanked by their husbands, not the other way around.

She certainly could not imagine asking Elijah or Anthony for advice. Perhaps Nathan or Rex... but no. None of the men. She had grown comfortable enough with the way the other ladies talked to each other, but she could not imagine opening up to their husbands. She doubted Joseph would thank her for it, either.

Catherine was her best resource, even though it might be awkward at first.

"I will see you then." As Catherine swished away to the door, Priscilla finally remembered her manners.

"Thank you," she called after the other lady, who waved her hand over her shoulder before exiting the room. The door closed behind her with finality, leaving Priscilla with her husband, still bent over the arm of the couch, his reddened buttocks displayed toward her.

Right.

What now?

Taking a deep breath, Priscilla turned to look at him. It all depended on what she wanted, did it not?

“Stand up, Joseph,” she commanded firmly. Every time she issued an order, it felt less strange and more natural, especially when he obeyed with alacrity. Of course, she had not been thinking about the fact he had bared his buttocks, which meant the very little remaining clothing he was wearing fell to the floor when he stood.

His eyes were full of conflicted hunger, but his cock was pointing directly at her, hard and red and eager.

Keep him waiting.

A non-corporeal punishment.

But that did not mean that *she* needed to be kept waiting.

Taking a deep breath, Priscilla swept past him to the couch, hiking up the front of her skirts before sitting down and spreading her legs. Leaning against the back, she tilted her hips forward. When she looked up at Joseph, his eyes were wide and focused on the dewy curls at the apex of her thighs.

“Come here and pleasure me,” she ordered. “With your mouth.”

Making the demand made her insides flutter, muscles clenching in anticipation. Before this moment, she would have never dared to make such a demand, especially without offering some kind of reciprocation. Yet Joseph did not hesitate, which heightened her arousal even more as he eagerly moved in front of her and dropped to his knees.

She did not have to say another word as he wrapped his arms around her thighs and curved over them, pulling her forward and burying his head between them.

“Oh!” she gasped aloud as his tongue delved between her swollen folds, lapping up the cream already gathered there. It felt heavenly... and she felt utterly, decadently depraved, sitting on a chaise with her skirts around her waist, her husband kneeling between her thighs and pleasuring her at her command.

It was sinfully delicious.

Moaning, she leaned back, enjoying it. Reaching up to cup her aching breasts, she squeezed them, adding to the sensations coursing through her.

“Oh, yes...”

Joseph’s tongue had found exactly the right spot, and her thighs tightened around his head. His fingers pressed into the soft flesh, holding her open as his tongue lashed her with eagerness. Her hips lifted to meet the blissful sensations, her head falling back, and she squeezed her breasts tighter, her fingers pinching her nipples through the fabric of her gown.

“Oh... yes... Joseph...”

The combination of her power over him, his submission to her demands, and the sheer pleasure of his tongue laving over her most sensitive spots sent her soaring. The intensity of her orgasm had her writhing against his mouth, crying out as ecstasy billowed over her and crashed through her.

When he lifted his head again, she was limp and satiated... yet still not done disciplining him for keeping such monumental secrets from him. It might not be fair, as she had

also kept some secrets from him, but that was how she felt. And Lady Catherine's advice was still echoing in her ears.

Make him wait.

* * *

Joseph

His wife was a revelation.

Not only inclined to the same desires as him, but naturally good at indulging them. He knew Lady Cross had been providing some guidance, but he could tell she had not needed to do much. Once Priscilla knew she could take control, she had. Immediately, efficiently, and seductively.

The idea of what a proper wife was supposed to be, how she was supposed to act, was pushed back farther and farther in his mind under the fact he was far happier with his wife behaving decidedly improperly. He could still taste her on his lips as she led him through the house, stopping to watch the scenes in some of the rooms. She only hesitated once or twice, and he smiled reassuringly when she glanced back at him, as if ascertaining she was not doing anything wrong.

This was a new dynamic for both of them. It was only natural she would have some hesitations, though she had taken to most of it like a duck to water. None of that diminished the awe he now felt for her nor his overwhelming arousal as his cock throbbed within his pants.

He'd been both frustrated and impressed when she'd lowered her skirts after her climax and breathlessly ordered him to get dressed. He had a feeling he knew where that impulse had come from, yet he could not fault Lady Cross for

passing the idea along. It made his arousal, his desire, even sharper as he waited for Priscilla to be ready for him.

It was a far better punishment than the spanking and paddling, both of which had been hard enough to bite but not enough to make him feel regret. Right now, his thoughts were consumed by Priscilla—by her wants and needs, by her presence at his side, by his desire for her. It was everything she deserved and utter torment for him... which was everything he deserved.

Priscilla led him into a room where Lady Greywood was preparing her latest... victim. It was hard to think of them as her lovers when she only engaged in exhibitions before the lover part. Joseph actually had no idea whether or not her partners were allowed coitus with her afterward. She always kept that part of their relationships private, and none of the men she partnered with ever revealed the truth.

He had never been curious enough to engage with her in order to find out. While he might like some pain, he valued his balls in their current condition.

“Oh, my...” Priscilla breathed the words, her eyes widening as she watched what the lady was doing, wrapping a long strand of leather around Lord St. Vincent’s balls. The man groaned, his arms folded behind his back, hips thrust forward to give Lady Greywood access as she tortured him. His cock was stiffly erect and leaking fluid. Priscilla glanced at Joseph, and he avoided her gaze.

He was not opposed to the current position Lord St. Vincent was in, but he also knew Lady Greywood had hardly begun her torture. Perhaps he should try to encourage Priscilla to exit, so she did not get too many ideas...

“Lady Greywood is very good at what she does, but she often goes beyond what I would enjoy,” he murmured in her ear, by way of hinting that perhaps this was not the best place for them to stop, though he would abide by her wishes. At the very least, now she knew that Lady Greywood’s particular brand of erotic torment was past what he would desire.

Priscilla nodded in acknowledgment, but she did not move, her gaze riveted to the scene. Joseph sighed inwardly and prepared himself for what he knew was coming. Lord St. Vincent was a complete masochist while Lady Greywood was an equally intent sadist. It was a pairing that always guaranteed a good show, even though he had no interest in experiencing most of it personally.

They watched with the rest of the room as Lady Greywood pinched and twisted poor St. Vincent’s nipples between tugging on the long leather strand hanging from his balls. The heavy sack was slowly darkening in color, from pink to red, when she decided to apply a tawse to it.

St. Vincent’s cries echoed around the room and down the hall as she punished his sack and cock, occasionally returning to his nipples for more painful stimulation. At the end of it, he was a sweaty, teary mess on the floor, licking her dainty toes in appreciation, and Priscilla’s eyes were as wide as Joseph had ever seen them. Apprehension was gripping him in a way that he’d never expected.

His wife was getting quite an education this evening, and he had no idea what that meant for him now that she’d taken control of their sexual relationship.

Chapter Ten

Priscilla She returned home with her husband rather than with his cousin. Evie had been graciously understanding when Priscilla and Joseph came to the front rooms to inform them they'd make their own way home. She had glared at Joseph, then told Priscilla she was happy to talk any time, hinting that she would be by the next day for tea. Which was hardly unusual, but usually, at teatime, Priscilla was the quiet one. She had no doubt tomorrow would be very different as all the ladies were likely to have a myriad of questions.

The carriage ride was quiet.

Aware of how Joseph shifted uneasily in his seat beside her, the front of his pants was still bulging. There was a part of her that wanted to reassure him, to lean over and give him the relief he clearly wanted, yet another part of her that received joy from watching him stew and wait.

She also could not stop thinking about the scene they'd watched of Lady Greywood and Lord St. Vincent.

It had far exceeded what her own interests were, and Joseph had stated that it had exceeded his as well, but there had been more than a few things that held her attention. The

first, of course, being the fact that no one seemed to change their view of Lord St. Vincent, despite his proclivities, which reassured her that Joseph's concerns over other's opinions was more in his own mind than in based in reality.

Not that she was unsympathetic. She had her own fears. Such as being seen as unfeminine and unladylike. However, Lady Greywood was one of the *haute ton*, one of the so-called dragons of the *ton*, whose close friends included Lady Jersey and Lady Cowper.

If Lady Greywood could put a man on his knees and have him lick her toes after crushing his sack beneath them, surely no one would blink at Priscilla's much tamer desires. At least, no one within the Society of Sin. Not Joseph's brothers, his cousin, nor their friends, and they were the only ones who would know.

Considering how fervently Elijah and Evie avoided each other at such gatherings, Priscilla fully expected they would also rather not witness her and Joseph.

"We're home," Joseph said suddenly, shifting in the seat beside her. There was an urgency to his tone and a question lying beneath it.

How much longer was she going to make him wait?

Not much, but she did not think he would expect what she had planned for the rest of their evening. Watching Lady Greywood had given her some ideas... and although she was less upset with him than before, she was not ready to lay with him as man and wife.

"Thank you," she murmured as he helped her out of the carriage. The front of the house was mostly dark. Elijah and Josie were still at Hartford House. If Adam was home, he was

in his wing, and it looked as though the Marquess and Diane must be already abed.

“I...” He started to say something, but the words trailed off into the darkness around them. Or perhaps he realized the coachman was still within earshot.

“Let’s go inside.” Priscilla waited for his arm, but she had made the decision. She was still the one in control.

They made their way to their rooms in silence as she continued to muse over exactly what she wanted to do. When Joseph hesitated in front of her door, she shook her head, then paused to open it and dismiss Jane for the evening. Then she allowed Joseph to lead her to his room.

With the door firmly closed behind them, she took a deep breath. Would he still follow her direction here in his own domain?

“I want you unclothed,” she said, trying to keep the firm authority in her tone she’d managed to find at the Society. Whether or not she’d succeeded, Joseph obeyed with alacrity. There was a hot light in his eyes as he watched her while he disrobed. Once he was fully naked, his cock—she’d heard that word used at the Society tonight and decided she liked it—standing straight and proud in front of him, she gestured. “Help me with my gown.”

She had already decided not to undress completely, but she did want to be more comfortable. There was something decidedly powerful about being clothed while he was naked, emphasizing the dichotomy between them, and she liked it.

Letting him undress her down to her chemise, she noticed that his backside no longer bore even the slightest trace of pink marks from his discipline. That was disappointing. She’d

wanted to look at them some more. Perhaps even trace her fingers over them.

Maybe Catherine would have some suggestions when they met for tea this week.

“Now what, my Lady?” Joseph asked, drawing her attention back to him. His dark eyes met hers, filled with desire.

“On the bed,” she replied. “On your back.”

He quickly got on the bed, though some curiosity entered his expression when she climbed onto the bed without taking off her chemise. He seemed to have expected she would climb atop him and ride him the way he often liked her to do.

It only now occurred to her that his preference for her to be atop him might be connected to the other desires she’d found out about tonight. She would have to think on that later.

Rather than straddling his hips, she knelt to the side of him and wrapped one hand around his shaft, the other cradling his sack. Joseph tensed when he felt the fingers on the delicate sack, but he relaxed again when she did not crush them the way Lady Greywood had.

“I do like a bit of pain, but not nearly as much as St. Vincent,” Joseph warned her, his voice hoarse as she rolled the balls within his sack between her fingers. His hips lifted, thrusting his cock through her other hand.

“Then it would be a good punishment, would it not?” she asked, squeezing hard enough that he groaned, but he still flexed his hips, moving his cock within her grip.

* * *

Joseph

Whether or not Priscilla meant to truly hurt him, he was not sure. She was not squeezing nearly as tightly as she could, and he was so aroused, he could not tell if it was pain or pleasure that shot up his spine.

“Bloody hell...” The curse escaped his lips before he could stop it, coming out on a groan of pained pleasure.

“Hands down.”

His hands dropped to the bed, gripping the sheets. He had not realized he’d raised them until Priscilla’s order.

“My Lady...” He groaned as she stroked his shaft, her thumb rubbing over the sensitive head, his balls rolling between her fingers. When she tugged on his sack, pulling it away from his body, it hurt so good.

She was not moving quickly. She was exploring him, which was a torment all its own as she tugged, stroked, and squeezed, eliciting a myriad of reactions from him with the cascade of sensations. Joseph clenched, thrusting upward, his whole lower body aching from the need for release, yet it was not forthcoming because she was taking her time.

When he opened his eyes to look at her, she did not meet his gaze. She was too busy studying his cock, watching her hands move on his sensitive flesh. When she squeezed the tip, fluid leaked, and he shuddered, closing his eyes again as he adjusted to the overwhelming sensations.

“Please... my Lady... ride me,” he begged.

“No.” The answer came swiftly and tartly, but he did not have a chance to do more than whimper in disappointment before she began to move the hand on his shaft faster and harder. Groaning, he thrust upward, his fingers gripping the

bedsheets harder, giving her full control of his body, his pleasure, as he careened toward ecstasy.

His climax hit him with force, and he gave a strangled shout, his body bowing as hot fluid spurted and splashed over his stomach. Thick, ropey jets of cum pulsed along with his pleasure, decorating his skin until he was breathless and limp, his cock shrinking against his wife's palm.

“Bloody hell,” he said again, his voice hoarse.

That had been... wildly erotic. Slightly shaming. And absolutely a punishment despite how pleasurable it had been. He had not wanted to cum in her hand. He'd wanted to cum inside her.

Fascinated, Priscilla stroked her fingers through the seed now cooling on his stomach and lifted her hand to inspect it more closely. Joseph watched, just as fascinated, as the tip of her pink tongue came out to lick it. He could not help but chuckle when she made a face. While he would have liked to finish in her mouth at some point, he was not surprised by her reaction to the flavor.

Catching him watching her, she blushed.

“It is not that bad,” she reassured him hastily. “Just...”

“Not very good either,” he teased, relaxing a little. This was very like them, despite the evening they'd just had. He found comfort in the familiar bantering.

Though there was no denying the new and the strange. Such as being in his bed rather than hers.

“We should clean you up.” Shifting on the bed, her filmy chemise moved with her, giving him hints of the pink nipples beneath it. She slipped off to fetch a cloth and dampen it in his water basin before returning to wipe his stomach clean of his

seed. Joseph lay there, bemused, uncertain of what his role should be. Since she seemed intent on being the one to clean him, he did not try to take over from her.

“Now what?” he asked when she was done, leaving his stomach damp. He was not sure where they went from here. In some ways, nothing had changed... in others, everything had.

Priscilla blew out the candles on his nightstand and climbed back into bed with him, yawning. He shifted so they could pull the covers down, then she snuggled into him, the way she often did at the end of a normal night.

“Now we sleep,” she murmured, yawning again.

Turning so he could wrap his arms around her, Joseph held her tightly against him. Though she was still here, still with him, he could not help the niggle of fear that said she could change her mind. She could wake up tomorrow and regret everything. She could talk to her friends and wish she had a husband more like theirs, more commanding, more masculine...

All his life, he'd wanted to be like his big brother, but that had been one path he'd never been able to follow Elijah down.

Feeling her breathing turn slow and steady, Joseph knew that Priscilla had fallen asleep in his arms, as she always did, but they were in his room now. Would she awaken in the middle of the night and slip away as he did to her?

Suddenly, he wished he had never done such a thing. Wondering if she might leave his bed while he slept had no appeal. Was this how she felt every night? Did she ever wish he would stay till the morning?

If he was given the chance again, Joseph silently vowed he would do so.

The one thing he was certain of—that he had always been certain of—was that he did not want to lose his wife.

Chapter Eleven

Joseph Waking to his wife beside him was much nicer than waking to a bed without her. He inwardly scolded himself for having denied them both such enjoyment in the past. *Married couples do not share a room.* It had been another idea of how things ‘should’ be that he’d tried to follow. Perhaps because he knew that his darker desires were not what gentlemen were supposed to want.

They were not even the usual perversions of gentlemen of his stature.

Had he been trying to make up for that by rigidly adhering to other customs, even if they were not truly what he wanted?

The thought was lowering, yet it rang true. Even knowing his own brother and their friends shared rooms had not deterred him because he saw them as different from him. They did not want the same things he did. If the *ton* discovered their proclivities there would be much gossip but no scorn. If they discovered what Joseph enjoyed... ‘unmanly’ was the least of the attributes they would assign to him.

It was not as though they could see where he was sleeping any more than they could witness his indulgences. And if his

perversions were discovered, it was not as though sleeping in a separate room from his wife would save his reputation.

Unfortunately, he was only truly thinking this through now.

Priscilla stirred beside him, squirming in place, then stretching and yawning. His cock was already hard, as it often was when he first woke, and it throbbed in response to her movements. The use of her hand last night had not been nearly enough to satiate him... it was like having a craving but only having a lesser substitute at hand. It helped, but it did not satisfy.

“Good morning,” he murmured, a little hesitantly, wondering what else might have changed between them overnight. What she might think in the light of day.

Her gaze met his and brightened with happiness at seeing him, sending another pang of regret through him for always leaving her bed. If he had stayed previously, would he have seen her look at him this way then?

“Good morning.” She blinked. Looked around. Realized they were in his room rather than hers. *Remembered*. He could see it in her expression, the moment she shuttered her emotions away, the open joy disappearing in the blink of an eye. It made his chest ache.

“I am sorry.” He had already said it, but it bore repeating. Especially with the new revelations he’d had this morning. He was sorry for even more than he had been the prior evening. Sorry for lying to her. Sorry for denying them the pleasure of sleeping through the night together because of a desire to cling to social strictures as if to make up for his defiance of others. “I never wanted to hurt you. Everything I did was to keep from hurting you.”

“I understand that, but...” Priscilla rolled onto her back, away from him, though still within his arms. She stared up at the ceiling for a long moment before letting her head loll back, so she could meet his gaze again. “I would rather be hurt by something you tell me than something you do not.”

“I apologize. Again. I will not make the same mistake twice.”

He meant it. Seeing her hurt last night had been like a knife to the chest... and he would have rather had the knife. It was an easy promise to make since he had no more secrets to hide. He'd been completely open with her about every other aspect of his life.

She studied his expression for a moment, as though she was trying to decide whether or not he was sincere, then nodded her head.

“I believe you. Thank you.” Her lips curved in a small, rueful smile. “I also need to apologize... I should have asked you about your experiences with the Society and what you did there.”

“I probably would not have told you,” he admitted.

“Yes, but then you would have been completely culpable, and I would have been entirely in the right,” she teased.

The ache in his chest eased some more, then loosened entirely as she rolled back toward him, not stopping when she reached his side but pushing him onto his back and straddling his groin. His eyebrows rose along with his hands as they fell to her waist, holding her in position atop his cock, which had gone from half-hard to fully erect.

He wanted to point out that, as the husband, it was his role to take the lead, which made him completely culpable

already... but that was not their way. Besides, as already evidenced, he'd done a terrible job of taking the lead. From now on, they would walk as equals outside the bedroom, like their friends and family, and within it, he would follow her direction.

Reaching down to grab the hem of her nightrail, Priscilla pulled it over her head, and dropped the silky garment off to the side.

“Touch me,” she demanded, leaning forward and squirming atop his cock. The underside of it pressed against her wet folds, making him groan and thrust, sliding through the length of her folds. It felt so good and not just physically.

After last night, he craved the intimate connection, the feeling of being inside her, of being connected to her. Feeling her rocking atop him was so close to what he truly wanted.

His hands slid up to cup her breasts, squeezing the soft mounds, his thumbs rubbing over her nipples. Moaning, she leaned forward, seemingly as eager as he was to reestablish their rapport. Their lips met, her body shifting atop his to press his cock to the opening of her pussy, then she sank down on him with an almost desperate urgency.

Groaning against her mouth, he canted his hips upward, thrusting into her as best he could from beneath, thankful that this time, she was allowing him to touch her as much as he wished. He massaged her breasts, caressing and stroking, teasing her nipples, as she began to move up and down atop him, riding him as his hips thrust his cock up into her.

* * *

Priscilla

Pressing her hands to her husband's chest as she rode him, she arched her back to give him better access to her breasts as she pulled away from their kiss. This was the first time they'd ever awoken in the same bed, and his presence at her side had gone a long way to assuage the lingering hurt from the night before. Especially because he had not pulled away this morning... if anything, he'd clearly wanted to hold her closer.

She'd wanted him closer as well.

As close as she could get him.

Which was how she'd ended up taking charge and taking what she wanted from him.

"Oh, yes," she moaned, leaning back to fully seat herself upon his cock, her inner muscles quivering as she clenched around him. It felt good. Right. She rocked, rubbing her sensitive lips and pearl against his hard body, shuddering as his fingers pinched her nipples in exactly the way she liked.

"Priscilla..." He groaned her name in the way he did when he was getting close to culmination.

Thankfully, she was not far off. Rather than slowing down, as she sometimes did when they were making love, she began to rise and fall upon his cock harder and faster. He let out a strangled gasp, his hands closing around her breasts to squeeze with delicious fervor before falling to her hips, where he could dig his fingers in and try to control some of her movements.

Priscilla was not going to be denied. Her own climax was buzzing in her center, the heat and need tightening like a winding spool until it exploded like fireworks inside her. She cried out, throwing her head back and giving over to the sensations with abandon. Rubbing her sensitive bits against him, she clenched and spasmed around his cock.

Beneath her, Joseph writhed with his own passion, thrusting up hard, his fingers digging into her hips as he attempted to hold her still atop him. His cry of ecstasy joined hers as he began to throb inside her, shuddering beneath her with erotic rapture. She ground down on him, rubbing until they were both left gasping and quivering, then she slumped down.

Every part of her felt deliciously sensitive, pulsing, even as he shrank inside her. His fingers stroked up and down her back as their racing hearts and rapid breathing slowed, returning to normal. She could hear his heartbeat where her ear was pressed against his chest, the warmth of his body against hers a soft balm against the doubts that still niggled at her.

A knock at the door reminded them the outside world still existed.

“Do not come in!” Joseph’s shout was half-strangled as the door began to open, and Priscilla started giggling as he yanked the sheets up. There was a surprised exclamation from his valet, who swiftly shut the door with a loud bang.

The poor man. He was going to need to get used to a new way of doing things because Priscilla did not intend to sleep apart from her husband again.

Unless, perhaps, she was very mad at him.

Joseph slumped beneath her again, his arms wrapped around her waist, holding her tightly.

“You will have to tell Carver that he must wait for approval before entering in the mornings from now on,” she said, laughing. She was unbothered. At most, the man might have gotten a glimpse of her bottom, but from the disgruntled

expression on Joseph's face, he was less than pleased. "It is our own fault."

Huffing a sigh, her husband relaxed his hold on her.

"I will speak to him this morning." He looked up at her a bit hesitantly. "Ah... what are your plans for the day?"

"Tea with Lady Cross, of course." She was bursting with questions, and she had been invited. Hopefully, the lady would be at-home, but if not, Priscilla would leave her card.

Consternation flickered in Joseph's eyes.

"Are you sure..." He stumbled over his words, hesitating.

"I want to speak with her," Priscilla said firmly. "I have questions that I believe only a woman of her caliber can answer."

Questions. Doubts. Concerns. Last night had gone swimmingly, but what about next time? Catherine had hinted at punishments that went beyond the physical, and Priscilla had figured some out on her own, but there must be more. There was so much she did not know.

She did not want to accidentally harm Joseph. Nor did she want to leave him unfulfilled. Or herself unsatisfied. Lady Greywood's demonstration had shown her quite a bit, including things she was not personally interested in, but it had become very clear that there were many pleasures—and punishments—one could indulge in that she would never have imagined on her own. What else was there that she might not know? That she might miss without some sort of guide?

Despite her conflicted feelings about Catherine, the lady had been very helpful last night, as well as reassuring. Yes, there were still some small feelings of jealousy niggling at Priscilla, but she could overcome those for the sake of

knowledge. Also, hopefully, the more she knew about what they had done together, the less jealous she would feel.

What Catherine had revealed last night had eased most of that particular emotion. Perhaps knowing more would clear out the last of it.

“I see. I certainly will not stop you. I just want you to know that she never meant anything to me beyond a friendly acquaintance I could rely on to help me through... things.” Joseph faltered again at the end, but Priscilla understood. Especially as she’d already been reassured that their relationship had never included bedding.

Joseph, despite everything, had done his best to remain faithful to his marriage, which quite a few of the members of the Society clearly did not. Not just within the Society of Sin, either. For too many in their social set, keeping a faithful marriage was rare.

It was their friends and family who had been the exceptions. Priscilla had thought they were part of that—and in the main, they were. Now, they would fully be. Once she learned what she needed to in order to fulfill Joseph’s desires... and her own.

Chapter Twelve

Joseph Unfortunately, when Priscilla left for the day to make her calls, Joseph had nothing to do. On any other day, he might have accompanied her, but she did not want him to because her first call was to Lady Cross. Considering the lady had specifically told her to stop by, even if she was not officially at-home, Joseph thought it likely Priscilla would still be admitted to the house for tea.

After taking his morning ride, he found himself back at home, pacing and waiting for Priscilla's return. Of course, she would likely not be back until the evening when it would be time to get ready for the Haversham ball, yet he could not stay away. Just in case she returned early.

Unfortunately, rather than Priscilla, he found Josie and Evie having tea in the drawing room. Two of the last people he wanted to see. He tried to stride quickly by the doorway, but his cousin called after him, obviously having spotted him passing.

Taking a deep breath, he stood up straight, tugged on his jacket, and went to face her. While it had turned out right in the end, he was still furious with her. They might as well have it out now.

“Joseph.” Evie smiled at him from the couch, but the smile did not reach her green eyes. Those were hard as emeralds, which piqued his temper even more. “How do you fare today?”

“Fine, no thanks to you.” He scowled at her, leaning on the door frame rather than fully entering the room.

She and Josie were seated across from each other, one on the couch, the other on a chair, with the tea tray between them. Wearing a green and ivory striped day gown, her hair pulled back into an elaborate coiffure, his cousin looked every inch the lady. No one seeing her would ever guess that she could outbox, outshoot, and outride nearly every man of her acquaintance or that she and her husband were currently the acting Spymasters to the Crown. A position they’d recently taken over from Joseph’s father.

No, she looked like a delicate, proper lady of the ton, just like Josie. Josie was also a hellion, nearly a match for Evie, and her smile was just as viperish.

Though he appreciated how protective they were of Priscilla, he did not forgive them for meddling in his affairs. Especially with how they’d circumvented the rules of the Society.

“I would say you are fine, thanks to her,” Josie replied tartly. “Otherwise, Priscilla would still be going about none the wiser, and the eventuality of her discovery would have been that much more painful. The longer this nonsense went on, the worse it would be.”

“And I did warn you.” Evie did not look the least bit sorry as she lifted her teacup to her lips, blowing on it before taking a small sip. “You had the opportunity to tell Priscilla yourself. Instead, you chose to do nothing of the sort and pretend the

problem would go away. Indeed, if you had not chosen to go to the Society last night, I would not have invited her to join us.” She pinned him with a hard look. “Do not blame the consequences of your own actions on others. It is not becoming.”

“It is also not becoming to betray your cousin and push him into admitting something before he is ready. It was my life and my wife. My mistake to make.”

“Priscilla is my friend, and you involved us in your lies by participating at the Society,” Evie retorted, glaring back at him just as hard as he was at her. “You might have had no problem lying to her, but I did.”

“Of course, I had a problem with it.” He threw his hands up in the air as he straightened, too frustrated to continue leaning, no longer able to keep up an air of nonchalance. “But it was still *my* decision that you took away from me.”

“It was not *my* decision to have to lie to my friend. My cousin, now that you’ve married her. You attempted to take away my choice when you demanded that of me. And it *was* your decision to go back to the Society, even after you’d been caught and after I told you to tell her.” Evie sniffed disdainfully. “If you had not done so, you would have never been caught. I still do not understand why you could not just *tell* her what you wanted.”

“You do not understand because you are a woman. It is all well and good for you and the others to say I should have told her. No one would blink an eye at a wife submitting to her husband, but the other way round...” He shook his head, pressing his lips together. “There is a reason men like myself are drawn to the Society.”

Josie rolled her eyes at him, increasing his consternation. She'd never acted like that around him before. If anything, she'd always been very agreeable with him. Marrying his brother had wrought a change in her that Joseph did not like. Thank goodness Elijah had stepped in to marry her and save her reputation, so Joseph could marry Priscilla instead. He could not imagine being married to Josie if this was what she was like as a wife.

“Oh, yes, as women, we have no idea what it's like to be judged by our gender and society's expectations. That is certainly something we are not at all familiar with. Yet, somehow, we have not let any of that stop us.” She raised her eyebrows at him.

“Because you never cared what society thinks of you, you were content to live out in the country,” he retorted.

“And you care too much... especially when broader society would never know.” Evie's disdain dripped from her words as she set down her teacup, her voice rising along with his.

“I could not know how Priscilla would react!”

“So, it was better to not allow her to react at all? To lie to her?”

He was opening his mouth to respond when his father's voice cut him off.

“Joseph, I need to speak with you.”

Turning, he looked down the hall to where the Marquess of Camden, his father, Oliver Stuart, was standing, leaning slightly on his cane. He looked just like Joseph imagined Elijah eventually would, still strong and tall, with wings of grey at his temples contrasting against his black hair. Dressed

for the day in a grey coat and green vest that brought out the green in his eyes, he cut a striking figure. The cane did nothing to diminish his stature. He wielded it like an accessory, not a necessity.

In truth, Joseph had long suspected that his father did not need the cane anymore, but continued to use it as an excuse to keep Diana employed as his nurse and in their household.

He glanced at Josie and Evie, who were now sipping tea as if they had not just been near shouting at him. Josie picked up a cookie.

Rather than getting their attention again, he stalked away to see what his father wanted.

* * *

Priscilla

“Mrs. Joseph Stuart to see Lady Cross,” she said, handing her card to the stern butler guarding the door. Like Joseph’s family, Lady Cross lived in the heart of Mayfair, though her house was smaller than the Marquess’.

“Lady Cross is expecting you,” the butler said, moving aside to allow her entrance.

Bracing her courage, Priscilla stepped inside. She brushed her hands over her skirts, removing imaginary dirt. Though she’d chosen her favorite day gown of blue and cream, she still felt as unsure as a green girl at her first introduction to the *ton*. As much as she did not want it to matter what Catherine thought of her, it did.

“This way, please.” The butler led her through the hall to a sitting room at the back of the house. The home might be

smaller than the Marquess', but it was no less lavish and tastefully decorated with a true designer's eye. She wondered if Catherine had done it all herself.

Entering the sitting room, she could not help but feel pleased when she realized she inadvertently complemented the colors within. Decorated in navy, ivory, and pale yellow, the room was warm and welcoming, and set off her lighter blue and cream dress almost as if it was designed to do so. Seated on a couch with a book in her hand, Catherine was wearing a striped grey and yellow dress that also complemented the colors in the room without matching it.

"Good morning, Priscilla. Please, come and sit down." Catherine smiled warmly, glancing over Priscilla's shoulder. "Laurens, bring us some tea, please."

"Yes, my Lady." The butler disappeared as Priscilla made her way to the chair Catherine had gestured to as the lady put her book aside.

"Good morning," Priscilla said as she sat down, smoothing her hands across her skirts to make sure they lay perfectly. "I hope I am not calling too early."

"No, no." Catherine waved her hand airily. "Truthfully, I would have been disappointed had you not shown up so quickly. And now that you are here, Laurens knows I am not at-home to anyone else, so our discussion will remain private."

"Thank you. I must admit, I have many questions, none of which feel comfortable being spoken aloud." Priscilla started to frown before smoothing out her expression. She did not want Catherine to think she was being unfriendly, but the older woman appeared unbothered.

“As you get older, you will find that it becomes easier to speak of whatever you wish.” Catherine chuckled. “Though we must always have a care to toe the line of propriety, you will find that the line is much farther out there than you think it is, especially with a woman of your connections. Beauty, money, and power always create more tolerance. Trust me, you will grow into your confidence.”

Priscilla certainly hoped so. She could not help but regard the other woman with more than a bit of envy for her easy self-assurance.

They both fell silent as a knock at the door announced the arrival of the tea tray. It was not Laurens but a maid who brought it in, and they reverted to meaningless social chatter as she laid out the tray for them, waiting until she was gone to speak of anything indiscreet.

Priscilla was relieved to see that Catherine was circumspect in front of her maids. Even before she'd married the son of the Crown's spymaster, she'd noticed how many of her set spoke in front of their servants as if they were not people and did not have ears. The gossip below stairs was often ahead of and more complete than that above.

Something that became even more starkly clear after marrying Joseph and seeing his family gather information.

While Joseph was not particularly interested in being a spy, he did still help, especially as his father worked on passing the reins to Evie and her husband, Anthony. Priscilla had become one of Evie's informants as well, as she overheard a good deal of gossip while making the social rounds. So far, there had been no nefarious plots uncovered, but Priscilla did enjoy feeling useful.

Once the maid was gone and the tea poured, Catherine smiled at Priscilla.

“So. What would you like to know?”

“Everything.”

Catherine laughed at the prompt reply, and Priscilla smiled, though it had not been a joke. Fortunately, Catherine seemed to realize that and had only been laughing at Priscilla’s eagerness.

“Well, it is certainly difficult to go over everything in one sitting, but I will give it my best try.” Sipping her tea, Catherine appeared thoughtful. “Last night was a good start, certainly. It might take some time for Joseph to fully accept your lead, though. Not because of anything you have done. He is fighting against himself and his own perceptions of how things ought to be, rather than how things actually are.”

That certainly aligned with what Priscilla had noticed as well.

“He seems to think there is something wrong with his wife taking him in hand,” she said. “It was not easy for me to make the mental leap, either. It was certainly not how I was raised to be, but... it felt very good. Both unnatural, yet entirely natural simultaneously, which sounds silly, but...”

“No, it sounds exactly right,” Catherine reassured her. “It certainly seemed natural to you, but, as you said, that was not how you were raised. So, both you and Joseph will be fighting for your instincts and against what you have been taught to do.”

“Is that what you had to do?” She felt as though she already knew the answer, but she wanted to hear it, so she did not feel so alone. Though her friends would be supportive, she

knew they would, they could not join her in this journey. They had already gone down their own paths, which were very different from the one she was stepping onto.

Though she did believe that Evie especially would know something about fighting against society's expectations, in this, she would not have the same experience as Priscilla since it was her husband who had taken her in hand, not the other way around.

“It is. And I am here to help you every step along the way.” Catherine smiled. “Let us start with talking about your mindset. Would you like a biscuit?”

“Yes, please.” Priscilla picked one from the plate Catherine offered to her. It was likely to be a long afternoon, and she needed sustenance for the lessons ahead.

Chapter Thirteen

Joseph Following his father into his study brought back all sorts of memories from Joseph's childhood. It was hardly the first time, and he still vaguely felt the little bit of apprehension that he had gotten himself into trouble. Though he could not think of why... if his father was annoyed at the shouting, he would not have singled Joseph out. He would have scolded Evie and Josie as well.

Yet Joseph could not shake the feeling he had done something wrong.

Moving around his desk, not using his cane at all, the Marquess leaned it against the heavy wood and sat down in his chair. Behind the closed door, he was moving much more easily than he did when he was walking through the house, confirming Joseph's suspicions.

Taking the seat across from his father, Joseph did his best not to fidget. He had sat in this chair many times, just like this, while his father explained the facts of life—and often the error of his ways—to him. Of course, there had been plenty of other conversations had in these exact same seats, but those were the ones standing out in his memories right now.

Since he had no idea what his father wanted to talk to him about, he sat down and waited. His father also sat and leaned back in his chair, meeting Joseph's gaze thoughtfully, though he did not speak.

The silence stretched.

Not squirming in his seat was becoming more difficult. He could not say why he felt like a naughty schoolboy at this moment, only that he did.

Finally, just when he was about to cave and ask what his father wanted, his father broke the silence.

"Priscilla was at the Society of Sin last night." It was not a question, but Joseph nodded anyway. "And you and Lady Cross have parted ways."

That was not a question either.

"How did you know?"

The look his father gave him was almost scornful. It did not matter that he had handed over the reins of day-to-day business to Anthony and Evie, clearly he was still keeping his fingers in the spying game. Joseph could still remember how lowering it was every time his father revealed that he knew what Joseph had been up to all through his school years and even after he went to Oxford.

His father always knew.

"I could not help but overhear what you were saying to Evie and Josie, which is why I wanted to talk to you."

Joseph winced. His father could not help but overhear because they'd been shouting at each other.

"I am sorry you had to hear that." Though he did not understand why he'd been called away while Evie and Josie

remained apart. Unless his father did not want to embarrass Joseph by giving him a dressing down in front of the ladies. After all, one did not raise one's voice at ladies, even if they were family and particularly vexing family at that.

His father waved the apology away.

“That is not what I wanted to talk to you about. I wanted to talk to you about yourself and Priscilla and your relationship.” His father leveled him a stern look, and the dread that had mostly dissipated over the past day slammed into his chest.

Here it was. The reckoning he'd been waiting for. The disgust, the disillusionment, the scorn, and judgment he'd known was coming.

The Marquess cleared his throat, his gaze skating away as he stared at a point over Joseph's shoulder.

“I think it's time I shared with you the truth of mine and your mother's relationship.”

Wait, what?

Joseph blinked, sure that he had misheard.

The silence hung between them, his father still not meeting his eyes.

“What?” he finally asked, still not sure he'd heard his father correctly.

The Marquess cleared his throat again, his gaze dropping to his desk.

“My relationship with your mother. Our... marital relationship.”

Oh, bloody hell.

Joseph did not want to hear this.

“I do not need to hear about that,” he replied immediately, horrified.

“No, you do. I will not go into detail, but suffice to say, your relationship with Priscilla is... similar.” His father finally met his eyes as the words came out in a rush, his gaze holding Joseph’s and keeping him from clapping his hands over his ears the way he wanted to.

It took a long moment for his father’s words to penetrate his horror and make sense.

When they did, it rapidly reordered his entire worldview.

Was his father—his confident, self-assured, in-control, respected father—saying he had been like *Joseph* in the marriage bed? That he had submitted to Joseph’s mother?

That he had been punished by her?

“Similar to mine and Priscilla’s?” he repeated. Even saying the words aloud felt unbelievable.

His father nodded in confirmation.

“Your mother liked to take turns with who took the lead. Sometimes she did, sometimes I did, but I only did it for her. My own preference was to follow hers.”

It did not matter that his father was couching his confession in euphemism, Joseph knew exactly what he meant. Appreciated the weight of the revelation. Relief flooded through him.

Because if his father could have been in such a relationship and still be the man he was today, that meant Joseph...

“There is nothing wrong with not wanting to take the lead,” his father said gently. “You and Evie were both right, and you were both wrong. She should not have interfered with

your relationship, but you should not have chosen to put society's expectations over your own relationship. It put Evie in a very hard position, just as it did you."

A well of emotions pummeled at Joseph's insides, making his eyes water, and he pressed his lips against the roiling relief, happiness, and apprehension. Because now he feared his father might disapprove of him for another reason entirely.

"I did not betray my marriage vows." Not really. He might have toed the very line, but he had not gone over it.

"That is not my business. Even if you had, that is between you and Priscilla." His father gave him a wry smile. "That is one of the ways in which you are right. What happens between you and your wife is none of our business... unless you make it ours."

Joseph had a feeling his father would qualify meeting Lady Cross at an event hosted by one of Priscilla's friends, where his cousin, brother, and friends were members, to be making it their business. Equally, shouting about it when he was standing partly in the hallway, so everyone could hear him.

At least he knew the servants of their household were discreet. His father knew the value of a good gossip servant and also the value of keeping those within his own home very happy.

"The important thing is to know that your preferences for marital activities have nothing to do with what kind of man you are. They are not the measure of your worth. What matters is how you treat others, that you strive to make the world better, and help those in need." His father raised his eyebrow. That last line had been oft repeated throughout Joseph's life. Those were the tenants his father upheld. He had certainly

never said anything about being the dominant force in marital relations or anything like that.

And he was just like his father. If Joseph had guessed anything about his parents' relationship, he would have assumed his father took the lead—that Elijah was the one following in his father's footsteps. But no... Joseph was.

The revelation was both humbling and reassuring.

* * *

Priscilla

Coming home from Catherine's house, Priscilla felt as though her head was overstuffed with new knowledge and ideas. Things she wanted to do. All the advice Catherine had given her on navigating this new reality. What she might expect as she and Joseph explored these new desires. Things to try for both punishment and pleasure.

There were voices coming from the drawing room, which drew her in without thinking. Josie and Evie were clearly enjoying an afternoon together, with only each other for company. Priscilla's lips quirked as she entered the room and saw them there.

Evie was sprawled out on the couch, shoes on the floor, feet on a cushion, her head propped up on one hand as she popped a biscuit into her mouth. Going by the crumbs on the tea tray, there had been quite a few, though they were down to the last couple. Across from her, Josie had also taken off her shoes and was curled up on the chair, feet tucked up beneath her, slumped against the back of the chair.

Both of them startled as she came through the door, then relaxed again, back into their positions. Priscilla could only shake her head. Though they were both adept at putting on the appearance of being proper ladies, it was certainly not their first instinct.

Which, after her conversation with Catherine, made her wonder what she might be like if she went by instinct rather than the manners that had been drilled into her. But she was comfortable with those manners, and thinking of sitting as Evie or Josie currently were made her feel uncomfortable, so that was an answer on its own.

She did not have to change everything at once, and she was her own person. She might never be as relaxed as they were outside of company, and that was perfectly fine as well.

“Priscilla! There you are.” Evie sat up, her knees bending and making space on the couch, which she gestured to so Priscilla could sit. “We were wondering where you had got to.”

“I went to visit Lady Cross,” Priscilla replied as she sat down, spreading her skirts neatly about her so they wouldn’t wrinkle. Both Evie and Josie’s skirts were already a lost cause, she noted with amusement. They would not venture out of the house in their current attire, and the butler had already informed her that Lady Josie had decided she was not at-home to visitors, so it was doubtful they cared about the state of their skirts.

“You did?” Josie’s mouth dropped open in surprise. “Why?”

“She invited me. She is going to... mentor me. In the ways of the Society.”

To Priscilla's surprise, Josie scowled.

"We could do that," Josie protested.

"You could mentor me in disciplining a man?" Priscilla asked, tilting her head. Perhaps she had misunderstood some of the previous conversations among her friends—or perhaps some things had been left out.

Josie hesitated.

"Well... no. But we can still help." Josie pouted.

Priscilla could not help but laugh. It seemed her friend was feeling possessive of her, which was very sweet.

"I am sure you will help, but I think it will also be helpful for me to have someone whose... interests match mine so closely."

"Is she going to tell you how to punish Joseph?" Evie asked in a bloodthirsty tone. From the edge to her voice, she still felt some anger at her cousin. Priscilla gave her a hard look.

"Joseph and I have already worked things out between ourselves, and I will not be discussing that aspect with you. I doubt you would want Anthony speaking of such things to Joseph or Elijah," she said repressively. It was best to nip that in the bud right away. While there were certainly still things she wanted to share with her friends, she would not embarrass her husband by speaking of any of his punishments.

"I am fairly certain Elijah does not want that, either," Josie mumbled.

Priscilla pressed her lips together to keep from smiling because Evie was still staring at her as though she expected Priscilla to break.

After a long moment, Evie sighed.

“That is a very good look,” she told Priscilla, before turning her head to Josie. “It is a good look, is it not?”

“Very intimidating.” Josie nodded approval. “Just as good as Elijah’s.”

Priscilla would ask why it did not have much of an effect, but she already knew—none of the ladies ever appeared intimidated by anyone other than their own husbands. Oh well, it had been worth a try.

“You two are incorrigible.” Priscilla shook her head.

“We are. We are also concerned friends. If you need any help dealing with Joseph...” Evie let her voice trail off, her eyes flashing with emotion. Priscilla reached out to take her friend’s hand, touched by the defense and that Evie had chosen her over her own cousin.

Though she had no doubt, if Priscilla had been the one to cross Joseph, Evie’s reaction would have been even more fierce.

“Thank you. I do appreciate it, but I believe Joseph and I can take it from here. We need to work out our problems for ourselves, though I do thank you for bringing it to my attention.”

“I do not yet, but I may in the future.” Joseph’s voice made all of them start. He was standing in the doorway, having approached so quietly, none of them had heard him. Priscilla could only wonder how long he’d been standing there for. He smiled at her before his lips turned back down as he regarded his cousin and sister-in-law. “I apologize for shouting earlier. I do understand why you were upset, though I assert that I had the right to be upset as well.”

Evie and Josie both made derisive sounds in their throats, but then they sighed.

“I apologize as well.”

“Me, too. Even if I was upset... your and Priscilla’s relationship is between you two. I know I would not appreciate you inserting yourself into mine and Anthony’s.” Evie pinned Joseph with a hard look. “Please do not make it necessary in the future.”

Joseph snorted. “Trust me, I do not intend to.” Then he held out his hand toward Priscilla. “Father and Diana are taking his constitutional around the garden. Would you like to take one with me?”

“Yes.” She beamed at him, then glanced at her friends.

“Go on, abandon us,” Josie said with a shooing motion that ended with her picking up the last two biscuits. “We will see you at supper.”

Laughing, Priscilla got to her feet and went to meet her husband. Behind her, Evie and Josie were now already bickering about whether or not Josie should give Evie one of the biscuits. Joseph shook his head, his dark eyes dancing with amusement as he led her away, her hand wrapped around his arm and his free hand atop hers.

“How was your morning, my Lady?” he asked. There was some concern there, but he sounded more interested than anything else.

Priscilla studied him. Something ineffable had changed during the time she’d been with Catherine. He seemed... more secure. More grounded.

Happier.

“Lady Cross is a very pleasant companion.” Priscilla hesitated before plowing ahead. He might have already heard her say it, anyway. “She has offered to be a mentor to me. If you do not think that will be too awkward.”

He looked down at her as they moved, his affection and love shining clear in his expression.

“Whatever you wish, my Lady, that is what you shall have.” He paused at the door to the conservatory, which led to the back garden. “I love you, Priscilla.”

“And I love you.” She reached up with both hands, going up on her toes at the same time, to take his face between her palms and bring him down for a kiss. Their relationship had literally changed overnight, but she already felt it would be for the better, bringing them closer together than before.

Their happy ending might not look like their friends’, but it was theirs.

Chapter Fourteen

3 MONTHS LATER

Joseph Knees on the trunk at the foot of his bed, elbows braced against the bed itself, Joseph groaned as the hard rubber of the dilator moved back and forth inside him. The initial sting gave way to pleasure as he was stretched open, his erect cock bobbing beneath him, the sensitive tip rubbing against the mattress and sending waves of arousal flaring through him.

It was not the first time Priscilla had used the dilators on him. She'd been working both of them up to this moment for weeks now. Every time it felt like an invasion, a perverse decadence, something so wrong he could not help but respond with shocking arousal.

The last time she'd done this, she'd had him lie on his back and mounted him facing away from him, so she could hold the dilator in place within him while she rode him. His culmination had been explosive.

Now, she had an entirely different finish in mind, and he was both excited and apprehensive.

“Good boy,” she murmured, one hand on his lower back and the other pushing the dilator in deeper and twisting. The special oil they’d ordered from the Earl of Spencer kept the hard rubber slick so she could easily move it inside him. His muscles spasmed around the intruder as he shuddered with growing need. “I think you’re ready for the next one.”

The second to largest one. There were four, but the fourth was as thick and long as the dildo currently connected to Priscilla’s hips by a complex system of straps. She had already told him she wanted him to feel the leather cock stretching him rather than the dilator. Even the thought made him quiver and pant, especially as she moved the dilator even more firmly inside him, pushing it in and out like a small cock.

When she eased it away and replaced it with the next size up, Joseph groaned. It stung as it pushed inside him, stretching his tight ring wider, going deeper than the previous dilator, and it felt so good, too. He was no longer hesitant about embracing what his wife did to him. He loved every moment of it.

Well, except for the times she disciplined him, and he loved that in a manner, too, just not in the same way.

“Oh God... Priscilla...” He groaned as the thick dilator pushed in deep, giving him the most delicious feeling of fullness. “That feels...” He did not have the words to describe it. Then he cried out again as she pumped the dilator harder, spinning it round inside him and igniting a thousand pleasures. His balls tightened, and he panted as it brushed up against a spot deep within him that sent an electric current running through his veins.

It made him feel weak and vulnerable and so damn good, he thought he might come right then and there... As if sensing his thoughts, Priscilla’s hand slid away from the top of his

back and moved beneath him to squeeze his balls. Joseph groaned as his orgasm slipped away. It hurt so damn good, but not in the right way—her firm grip and tug, the little twist, all made his dick throb, but it also pulled him away from his climax.

“Bloody hell.” He could barely catch his breath as the sensations coursed through him, assaulting him from every side. The dilator moved within him as Priscilla pulled on his sack again, and if he wasn’t already braced against the bed, he would have fallen over. His muscles trembled, even with the support.

“Are you ready?” she asked, working the dilator firmly in and out of him, sending shuddering sensations up his spine.

“Yes, my Lady. Please.” The plea was heartfelt and ragged, his body throbbing from the sensations.

He’d never let any previous lover do this to him. Would have never been secure enough in himself to allow them, but over the past few months, he and Priscilla had explored and pushed at his boundaries. Once he’d truly accepted himself, he’d been able to let go and enjoy every moment of it.

And this was something she wanted to do.

It was something he could give her, akin to what she gave him on their wedding night.

The dilator slid away from him, and Joseph groaned at the sensation—the sudden feeling of emptiness, the apprehension of what was to come. He did not have long to wait. The oiled tip of the leather dildo pressed against his opening, stretching him wide as it began to push in. He cried out, panting for breath as the empty space was filled.

The tight ring of his entrance stung, burning with the sensation as it was forced wider than ever before, his body struggling to adjust despite the preparation.

“Oh, my...” Priscilla whispered behind him, and his body throbbed.

The sheer admiration and enjoyment in her voice made him even hotter. Made it easier to bear the slight cramp as she slid deeper into his bowels.

When she began to pull back, he could feel his channel spasming from the strange sensation, then she pushed back in, deeper this time, and he cried out again. It hurt. It delighted. It was a chaotic symphony of pleasure and pain, exquisite agony rasping against his senses and leaving him shuddering.

The intensity of it deflated his cock slightly but not for long. As Priscilla rubbed up against him, the leather harness pressing against his buttocks. The dildo hit that spot deep inside him, and Joseph groaned again as his cock returned to full mast. He was throbbing inside and out, his need pulsing through him along with the rising ecstasy.

“My Lady... bloody hell...” He could not find the words.

Her soft gasps and moans as she began to work the dildo in and out of him increased his ardor, every thrust of the fake cock sending him higher.

* * *

Priscilla

This was more than wicked... there was not a word for it.

Priscilla had been fascinated by the harnesses she witnessed being used at the Society. The idea of taking Joseph

with one, of entering him the same way he entered her, had become an obsession. Now, it was no longer fantasy—it was reality.

The thick brown leather was stuffed to firmness, jutting out in front of her just like a cock. The ring of Joseph's entrance was stretched so tightly around it, the normally crinkled skin was smooth and whiter than the skin around it. Every gasp, every moan, every cry from his mouth made her pussy clench around the toy that was inside *her*.

The harness had been designed for both their pleasure. She was filled as well, her swollen pearl rubbing against a bit of leather that stimulated her with every thrust into her husband's body. The power she felt as she moved, as she pulled guttural noises from his lips, as he came apart in front of her, was inexpressible.

Her breasts swayed as she kept one hand on his back to brace herself, the other coming up to pinch her already hard nipples, giving the aching buds what they craved. Priscilla moaned as well, from physical pleasure as well as the sheer fascination with watching her 'cock' slickly moving in and out of Joseph's rear entrance.

His back arched, his body moving back toward her, impaling himself even as she thrust forward, and he cried out again, this time in sheer pleasure. Slick wetness dripped over the leather of the harness, coating it with her arousal, and she knew she was as close to culmination as he was.

Letting her hand drop to hold on to his hips, mimicking the way he did when he rode her from behind, she curved her fingers around him and began thrusting harder and faster. Her muscles burned, but so did her pussy and her clit as her need rose higher and higher, accompanied by Joseph's gasps and

cries as she forcefully thrust into him over and over. His upper body dropped, his head now resting on his hands in front of him, as if he could not hold himself up any longer.

Priscilla's muscles clenched and shuddered around the faux cock within her, leaving her gasping as she rubbed herself against the harness, burying the dildo in Joseph.

“Priscilla!” He choked out her name on a hoarse cry, and she felt him quivering beneath her. Leaning forward, her own body buzzing with ecstasy, she moved her hand to his cock, wrapping her fingers around it. Feeling him pulsing in her hand as he began to come, her clit rubbed against the harness, sending her over the edge as she gasped and gripped him through their mutual rapture.

The experience left both of them breathless and satiated, and clean up took much longer than normal, but it was well worth the effort.

Afterward, curled around each other in their bed—as they now shared what had previously been Joseph's domain, Priscilla had not slept in her own bed since the first night she'd joined him in his—Priscilla stroked the wiry hair on his chest while he toyed with one of her curls.

“I love you,” she whispered into the darkness, snuggling up closer to him.

He shifted, moving his leg over hers and curling it around them, pulling her firmly against him.

“I love you, my Lady. Forever and always.”

Her lips curved in a smile as her eyelashes fluttered. She could never have anticipated this was where they would be when she accepted his proposal of marriage nor on their

wedding night. When she'd married him, she'd known it was the right choice; she just had not known *how* right.

For the first time in her life, she felt completely and utterly fulfilled. She was no longer the boring and somewhat pitiable Miss Bliss. She was finally who she was meant to be.

Epilogue

O liver Stuart, Marquess of Camden

It had been several years since Oliver had darkened the doorstep of a Society of Sin event. He'd occasionally visited, always with a care to attend on nights when his progeny would not be. But it had been a long, long time.

Seeing Joseph and Priscilla coming into their own had engendered an unexpected yearning within him, desires he'd thought he'd buried long ago. Or maybe it was the combination of their happiness and... *her*.

Because of *her*, he yearned for things he had not wanted in years. Things he could not have. She was too young. Too... well, he was not sure if innocent was the word or not, but he presumed. After all, she had never been married. She'd taken up an occupation instead. She was from a good family, so he assumed...

Stop thinking about her.

Stepping into Hartford House, Oliver adjusted his mask. The masquerade this evening was the main reason he'd decided to finally step out of his own house and attend. That and none of his family was home. Elijah and Josie had gone to the country after they'd realized she was with child, and

Joseph and Priscilla had gone with them. His first grandchild. The mind boggled. But it also brought home the fact that *she* was far too young for him. He was going to be a grandfather soon. Never mind what the other men of his station did. That was not his way. And most of them did so when they needed an heir, while he had three sons.

He had no excuse for lusting after her the way he did.

Adam and Lucas were on the continent, visiting Paris where their preferences were more accepted. Oliver missed his youngest, but Adam wrote frequently, and both young men had proved adept at information gathering.

While Evie and Anthony were in London currently, they had an important meeting tonight with the Crown. Which meant they certainly would not be attending the Society's masquerade, despite it being hosted by one of Evie's best friends. Oliver did feel odd being there while Mary was present—she'd made him into an honorary uncle when she was growing up—but he would just avoid her as best he could. He'd informed her husband Rex that he would be attending and trusted the man to keep her away.

There were some things he did not need to witness, even if he knew they were happening.

Making his way down the hall, everything was as he remembered. Laughter, murmurs, and cries of pain and pleasure spilled out into the hallway from the rooms. Muffled moans could be heard from behind closed doors. Here, there was true freedom to be whoever one wanted to be.

The difference between tonight and other events was that most of the sound was coming from the ballroom at the end of the hall. Both doors were open, admitting whoever had

arrived. Music was playing and as he approached, he could see the whirling figures on the dance floor.

Everyone was wearing masks, and some were wearing dominos as well to cover most of their clothing. Oliver had opted to wear a plain grey suit with a black vest, negating the need for a domino. Even with it, many of his companions were easy to identify if they'd chosen to wear a distinctive outfit. Some had done very little to conceal their identities, while others were completely unidentifiable thanks to their large masks and wigs.

Pausing at the entrance, Oliver scanned the room, automatically assessing it for threats the way he always did. Rex and Mary were on the dance floor, waltzing in a decidedly improper manner that would have scandalized most of the *ton*. Oliver's gaze skidded away, looking for anyone else he might know. It was entirely possible his other honorary niece, Lily Talbot, and her husband might be present, but if they were, they were well hidden among the throng.

Or perhaps they were in one of the rooms he'd passed to get here.

As long as he did not see them engaging in... anything, he would be satisfied.

Now, he just needed to find what he wanted for the evening.

A partner.

A distraction.

A substitute for who I really want.

It was the best he could do.

A woman across the floor caught his eye. Possibly because she was standing among a crowd of men who he knew to have preferences like his, but also maybe because there was something familiar about her. She was wearing a wig and a mask, but the way she moved her hands, the way the corner of her lip quirked up when she smiled, the way...

No.

It could not be.

It cannot be her.

He started across the floor toward her, unseeing all else. If it was her... well, he did not know what he was going to do.

* * *

Oliver and Diana's story will continue in A Season for Desire!

About the Author

Golden Angel is a USA Today best-selling author of heart and bottom warming romance.

She is happily married, old enough to know better but still too young to care, and a big fan of happily-ever-afters, strong heroes and heroines, and sizzling chemistry.

When she's not writing, she can often be found on the couch reading, in front of her sewing machine making a new cosplay, hanging out with her friends, or wandering the Maryland Renaissance Fair.

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[A Season for Spies](#)

Desire and Discipline

[A Season for Bliss](#)

A Season for Desire
A Season for Christmas

Bridgewater Brides

[Their Harlot Bride](#)

Standalone

[Marriage Training](#)

[The Duke's Pursuit](#)

[Rogue Booty](#)

CONTEMPORARY BDSM ROMANCE

Venus Rising Series (MFM Romance)

[The Venus School](#)

[Venus Aspiring](#)

[Venus Desiring](#)

[Venus Transcendent](#)

[Venus Wedding](#)

[Venus Rising Box Set](#)

Stronghold Doms Series

[The Sassy Submissive](#)

[Taming the Tease](#)

[Mastering Lexie](#)

[Pieces of Stronghold](#)

[Breaking the Chain](#)

[Bound to the Past](#)

[Stripping the Sub](#)

[Tempting the Domme](#)

[Hardcore Vanilla](#)

[Steamy Stocking Stuffers](#)

[A Sassy Christmas](#)

[Entering Stronghold Box Set](#)

[Nights at Stronghold Box Set](#)

[Stronghold: Closing Time Box Set](#)

Masters of Marquis Series

[Bondage Buddies](#)

[Master Chef](#)

[Law & Disorder](#)

[Switch Play](#)

[Legally Bound](#)

[Shallow Submission](#)

[Hidden Away](#)

Giant Tamer

Third Wheel

Dungeons & Doms Series

[Dungeon Master](#)

[Dungeon Daddy](#)

[Dungeon Showdown](#)

Daddies Everywhere

[Chef Daddy](#)

[Foosball Daddies](#)

[Taco Daddy](#)

[Little Villain](#)

SCI-FI ROMANCE

Tsenturion Masters Series with Lee Savino

[Alien Captive](#)

[Alien Tribute](#)

[Alien Abduction](#)

Standalone

[Mated on Hades](#)

SHIFTER ROMANCE

Big Bad Bunnies Series

[Chasing His Bunny](#)

[Chasing His Squirrel](#)

[Chasing His Puma](#)

[Chasing His Polar Bear](#)

[Chasing His Honey Badger](#)

[Chasing Her Lion](#)

[Night of the Wild Stags](#)

[Chasing Tail Box Set](#)

[Chasing Tail... Again Box Set](#)