

KALLYSTEN

Carte
Blanche



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By Kallysten

Chapter 3

All Grace had wanted, when coming to Carte Blanche, had been to investigate Dorothy's MacAlair's death, get a feel for the kind of person she had been to invite vampires in her home, and see if she could identify which vampires they had been.

She had not wanted, or even expected, that a submissive—a switch according to the card hanging from his belt, but the blue side was up and submissive was what he wanted her to see in him—would push her into playing a scene with him. She could say no, of course. No rule demanded that she punish him for being insolent in his words and actions. No rule, and yet...

She watched him, kneeling at her feet with his head bowed. She had been in his place often enough to recognize that his posture was perfect, and if she was honest with herself, she could admit that the sight of him had her heart beating just a little faster than she would have wished. She couldn't help squeezing her thighs together as she shifted on her seat to pick up her drink again. A mirror above the bar reflected the room behind her—or rather, the series of rooms. First was a sitting area where the man now kneeling in front of her had been talking with two girls when Grace had first entered the club. The girls still sat there and were peering at her curiously. Behind them, a second space

set apart by a large archway and different floor coverings hosted a few couples seated or kneeling around tables. She saw more than a few heads turned toward her in that room as well. Beyond another archway, she could see people dancing—and there, too, looks were being thrown her way.

If she hoped to talk to any of these people and have them answer her, she needed their respect. She needed them to accept her as one of them, as a legitimate bearer of the red card hanging from her dress. They would not see her as such unless she acted the part. She turned back toward the insolent man who had put her in this situation, and unwittingly offered her the opportunity she needed. It was a shame she wouldn't be able to thank him.

“Stand,” she demanded, and waited for him to obey.

He rose with elegant moves and no trace of hesitation. Even if he now stood taller than she was while sitting, his demeanor remained submissive. She realized, at that moment, that he must have known exactly what he was doing when he had provoked her. It only gave her another reason to punish him. She almost regretted having asked him to stand now, but she supposed there would be time to get him back on his knees soon.

She reached for the card hanging from his belt, and, without pulling it free, she rubbed her thumb hard over the center of the card. All that appeared was a star.

Admitting her ignorance grated, but if the star had an important meaning and she ignored it, the consequences might be serious.

“What does the star signify?” she asked, using a tone that implied she knew the answer and was merely testing him.

He kept his eyes downcast and spoke quietly. “Nothing.”

She almost snapped at him before realizing what he meant. He wasn’t being cheeky or eluding her question. The star, literally, meant nothing as it stood in the place where his limits should have been. He was open to anything and everything. The realization left Grace both heady and incredulous. Everybody had limits. What this star signified, in truth, was that the man in front of her hadn’t found his yet.

“Lead the way to the private rooms,” she demanded. “And behave yourself. There are few things I dislike more than being manipulated.”

He gave her a quick glance as he turned, so fast that she might have overlooked it, but after warning him to behave, she couldn’t afford to miss anything. She made a mental note of that look and of the half-smile that accompanied it—amused, happy, insolent yet again. She had her work cut out for her.

Her steps slow but assured, she followed him through the sitting areas and dancing floor toward the very back of the club, keeping a close watch on him the entire way and at the same time aware of the curious looks they attracted. Even though he was preceding her, there could be no mistake as to which of them was in charge, and somehow it seemed to surprise quite a few people, Dominants and submissives alike. Noticing this, Grace grew more and more intrigued.

She was almost certain that, when she had first walked to the bar, the man had worn his card with the red side upward. If it had been the case, then he had switched colors before coming toward her—before pushing her into playing a scene with him. It wasn't the fact that he was a switch that troubled her; rather, it was his willingness to move from one role to the next in mere moments. She didn't know how anyone could get into a different frame of mind so fast. It had always taken her hours to prepare.

They had arrived at the very back of the club, just beyond the dancing floor. An employee of the club, recognizable from her black livery and the white card hanging on her chest from a lanyard, got up from her seat at a desk beside an open door.

"Good evening, Ma'am," she said with a smile, addressing Grace and completely ignoring her companion. "Would you like an open room or a private one?"

Unsure what the difference was, Grace hesitated. At once, the girl apologized.

"I'm sorry, Ma'am. I should have asked if you've ever used our play rooms."

"No, I have not."

The girl nodded. "Open rooms have a bay window."

She indicated something to the side, and Grace turned to look. She could hardly believe she hadn't noticed until now that the far wall, running through the different areas of the club, was made entirely out of glass. Behind it, she could distinguish rooms, maybe a dozen of them.

In the empty ones, the lights were dimmed. When people were visible behind the glass, the light was brighter, allowing those in the club proper to see what was going on, if they cared to. One of the rooms was obscured by blinds, but even so shadows were still visible behind them.

"Private rooms don't," the girl continued on a matter of fact tone. "They all have the same equipment. Whatever you use, place it in the metal box by the door when you're done so that it can be cleaned. The room fee is applied directly to the account of the card used to enter the room."

Grace nodded slowly to show that she understood. Remembering the star on the man's card, she realized that he probably didn't mind being put on display. She certainly had no problem with that, especially if it helped her establish her credentials.

"An open room, tonight," she finally answered the girl.

"Certainly. If you will please come with me."

She led the way past the door she was guarding and into a hallway. Grace followed without bothering to check if the man would come as well. She knew he would. They passed in front of four doors before stopping in front of the fifth one. Above the handle, a slot waited for a card, two small green lights next to it. The lights on the doors they had passed had been red.

After excusing herself, the attendant left them in front of the door, giving them privacy, Grace realized, as to who would pay for the room. The way she saw it, it wasn't even a question.

“Well?” she said, turning an impatient look to her companion.

The thinnest smile pulled at his lips, but he didn't look up to her. Unhooking his card from his belt, he dropped to one knee before offering it to her in the palm of his hand.

“That's better.”

She picked up the card and used it to unlock the door. To her own surprise, her hand did not tremble in the slightest when she pushed on the handle.

Until that moment, each of her words, each of her actions, had been the deliberate product of a single thought. If she believed it hard enough, if she shoved her doubts, fears, and hesitations into the farthest corner of her mind, if she pushed away years of convincing herself otherwise, she would be able to do this. If she acted as though she were ready, she would be.

As she opened the door, however, she realized she wasn't pretending anymore. She was ready. Not only was she ready—she was looking forward to this.

* * * *

When Ray had approached the new Dominant at the bar, his mind had still been caught in what he had been doing moments before, trying to decide which of the two ladies he wanted to play with first. It had helped him make sure she would have no choice about playing with him. Her scent, for just a few moments, had reflected

hesitation, and he had wondered whether he had made a mistake by kneeling at her feet.

Both their states of mind had changed when they walked to the playrooms. She had grown more confident with each step, leaving whatever doubts she had had behind. At the same time, Ray had slipped fully into the part of the submissive. It had been a while since Keller had last played with him, truly played rather than simple mind games. Whatever scenes Ray had played since, in his Sire's presence or not, had done nothing more than exacerbated his need. It was an itch, somewhere between his shoulder blades: unreachable, unrelenting, maddening. With Keller refusing to say where he was or when he would return, all Ray could hope was that he had chosen well.

He chanced a glance at her face when he entered the playroom. Her features tightened instantly. He knew that look; he had seen it on Keller's face. She had noticed, and she was adding this offense to the list of things he needed to be punished for. His cock stirred, and he held back a smile. Maybe he would go back home later and at last be able to sleep through the day.

"Strip."

He obeyed that simple word before being completely aware of the order. His shirt fell first, without his usual teasing slowness; he wasn't trying to seduce her. His ankle boots took a little longer, and he wanted to curse himself for tying up the laces too tight all the way to the top. Socks next and finally jeans, all of it piled up at his feet as he stood, naked, in front of his Mistress and waited for further instructions.

"I should have mentioned—wait. I don't even know what your name is."

"Ray. May I ask what I should call you?"

She hesitated at his question, to the point that Ray wondered if he'd spoken out of turn. He didn't think he had. A name, and he wasn't silly enough to expect her real name, and a closer look at her card would have been customary for him to request before playing with her if he hadn't skewed the scene from the start.

"Mistress Red will do fine," she said at last. "As I was saying, Ray, I should have mentioned I really dislike messes."

After a beat, Ray understood what she meant. Kneeling down, he folded his clothes and set them and the shoes near the door in a neat pile. A small part of him, at the very back of his mind, was amused that Mistress Red was even more similar to Keller than he had first thought. The rest of him calmly accepted that he had earned himself another punishment, although this one not on purpose.

He stayed on his knees, when he was done, eyes trained on the floor, legs parted just enough to display his semi-hard cock, left hand clasping his right wrist at the small of his back.

"I am sorry, Mistress Red."

She didn't respond. Unable to see more than the bit of floor in front of him, Ray focused his attention on the sounds she made, filtering out the muted music coming in through the double layer of glass on his left. Metal clicked softly; he had heard that sound as she walked,

when her bracelets had moved against each other. She must have taken them off. The soft sound that followed had to be her purse being dropped somewhere. She stepped around the room, her high-heels clicking softly on the floor. Her heartbeat remained calm, but every now and then, it would jump, and along with it a burst of lust would sweeten her scent. He could hear a soft whisper, every few seconds, and it took him a little while to realize what it was. She was running her fingers on the toys displayed around the room, no doubt taking inventory of what was there, maybe choosing what she would use for his punishment. The thought had his cock hardening a little more and bobbing up and down between his thighs.

At last, she returned to him, slow steps that told him she was taking her time, maybe to observe him and find fault with his posture. He felt the urge to move, maybe kneel a little straighter, but he silenced it. His position was perfect. Moving now would be breaking out of it.

She approached close enough that her feet entered his field of vision. The leather of her shoes shone bright; it had the familiar smell of new shoes that were still being broken in, but she showed no sign of discomfort. She stood still for a second, then took a step to the side so that she was now facing the glass wall.

Five minutes at least had passed since they had entered the room. As a human, Ray had never been very patient; becoming a vampire had not changed him in that regard. He couldn't help but wonder why she was taking so much time to start—and just as the question reached his conscious mind, he understood. The waiting was part of the scene; part of his punishment. She must have guessed how impatient he would be. He had given her a big enough hint, he supposed, when approaching

her just moments after she had entered the club and pushing her into playing with him.

A knot at the back of Ray's neck that he hadn't been aware of suddenly loosened. Every time he started doubting her, he realized she was a step ahead of him. It was time to stop questioning her every move and just let go. She would catch him. She hadn't touched him yet, but he now knew she would.

* * * *

Grace was sure that, somewhere in the world, someone had a playroom better furnished than this one. She was also sure that she would never see it. She couldn't wait to take her pick amongst the floggers; they had always been her favorite toys. She couldn't wait, and yet she had to. She was the one setting the pace of the scene, not Ray, and she had a feeling if he had been in charge, things would have been much further along already.

"We have an audience, it seems," she commented as she looked at the bay window.

She could see dancers in the back, but closer to the window, two people had sat in armchairs that faced the room. She recognized the owner of the club, and her feeling that she would be judged on what happened in this room only intensified.

"You will behave better in here than you did outside, won't you, Ray? It would be a pity to disappoint them. And me."

She turned back toward him as she spoke, and she looked very carefully for a reaction. Other than his words —“Yes, Mistress Red”—pronounced in a perfectly obedient tone, he didn’t show any. No telltale flinch or shiver, no furtive look toward the window, not even a twitch of his cock. He wasn’t an exhibitionist, then, nor did he seem to have problems in exposing himself. He just didn’t seem to care. In a normal situation, she would have asked before beginning a scene with him, but he had forced her hand.

She realized she was stroking the length of the riding crop she had picked up on the wall earlier, and made herself stop.

“Before we start, what is your word?”

“I don’t need—” Ray started, but she didn’t let him finish.

“What is your word?” she repeated, letting her voice pick up an edge of irritation.

She could see him grind his teeth, certainly biting back whatever boastful explanation he was used to giving about not needing a safe word. She wouldn’t play with him if he didn’t give her one, and no Dominant she knew would either.

“Sunshine.”

The word was a sullen breath, and although his face remained the perfect image of submission, she had no trouble imagining he was giving her an eye roll as he said it.

Sunshine. Ray. As soon as she made the connection, she knew he hadn't chosen that word. Someone had picked it for him. Someone who, presumably, hadn't taken no for an answer any more than she had.

She circled around him, allowing herself to truly see his body for the first time under the pretext of observing the faultless form of his position. He was really quite lovely, slender but well toned. She couldn't wait to watch the pale complexion of his skin pink up beneath her ministrations, or the muscles of his entire body tense in the moment of expectation just before a touch. As for his cock... Well, she wasn't planning on doing anything with it, but she could already see herself regretting her decision. It wasn't fully hard yet, and already of a beautiful size in a nest of very closely trimmed blondish hair. He was a natural blonde, then.

"Good position," she commented as she finished her inspection. "Someone must have taken quite some time teaching you."

He didn't reply, but then, she hadn't asked him a question. Another proof if need be that, despite his poor behavior at the bar, he had been well trained. It only reinforced her feeling that he had been insolent on purpose.

Stopping in front of him, she slid the tip of the riding crop beneath his chin. He obediently tilted his head back and looked at her through clear hazel eyes.

"What Masters have you served?"

She might as well start gathering information now, with him. Other Dominants might have known MacAlair and

with whom she played. They might also know the names of submissive vampires in town.

“The only Master I serve is my Sire.”

Then again, Grace realized with a pang of shock, she might just have met her first suspect.

Continued in Carte Blanche by Kallysten

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