



Adrianna Dane

THE EXILE:
A Seductive Tale

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By

ADRIANNA DANE

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by Adrianna Dane

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The Exile: A Seductive Tale
by Adrianna Dane

CHAPTER 1

Linus watched the young waiter as he dashed around the dining room. He'd already noted the indigo blue double-pearl earring intricately webbed in sterling silver. He knew the pearls weren't real—most likely manufactured here on the mainland in the company factory—but the earring identified the young man as a disciple of the Midnight Pearl Brotherhood.

He fingered his own lobe, which was adorned with the real thing—the priceless almost-black pearls that he had retrieved himself as a youth—one of the rites that had led to his becoming a man of authority on the isle of Mannos. It was a dangerous dive. After climbing the razor-sharp rock face of the rugged volcanic plug and then diving into the deep, pristine, aquamarine pool, he'd swum to the sandy bottom, his lungs almost bursting inside his chest, his body needy for the pull of oxygen. It was a ceremony meant to prove not only his manhood, but courage and stamina as well.

It was a long time ago—longer than the span of a mortal life. Mortal. Something he was not. After he had scooped up the pearls from the sandy depths, he had pushed to the surface and, gasping for breath, finally crawled to land thankful to be alive. He had been helped to his feet and taken to the waterfall of immortality deep in the lush jungle of the isle. There he had been handed the golden goblet filled with the water of eternal life. More than one cup and it would lead to madness and death. He had drunk reverently and been

The Exile: A Seductive Tale
by Adrianna Dane

granted immortality. Nothing had ever tasted as pure as that one cup of water.

His gaze followed the youth around the dining room, full of the energy of his age—probably no more than twenty. A mere boy in comparison to Linus's centuries of existence.

He remembered that time of innocence vaguely. Twenty was the average age of acceptance for transfer from the mainland to Mannos. He had been so full of enthusiastic naïveté and with hopeful stars in his eyes, eager to be accepted in a place where manhood was revered. At that time to even be considered gay in any respect on the mainland could have ended in his death. The Brotherhood of the Midnight Pearl had been a deeply underground fellowship only whispered of in his time.

It was still a very select society, but membership no longer involved the dangers of imprisonment or execution. It had been a shock to him when he arrived back on the mainland after centuries sequestered on the isle to discover a changed world. It had taken quite a bit of time to become reacquainted with the customs and protocols of the current civilized community. Unlike on Mannos, where his authority was obvious, and safety among the brotherhood was assured for the most part, he had to take great care here—there was no assumed respect by initiates and newbloods as there was on the isle. On Mannos a barter system was employed, where on the mainland currency was the mainstay of exchange. On the isle it was obvious who held the authority and who served. It was another world—a paradise out of time. Yet still protected in its fullest measure.

The Exile: A Seductive Tale
by Adrianna Dane

He'd chosen to return to the mainland, renouncing his position as Artmaster. He'd thought long and hard about his decision, but something not quite defined in his mind drew him back here. He needed answers, but wasn't quite sure what he would do with them if he found them. How would knowing the reasons change his life? Yet, he must know.

Why had Alonzo been so fearful of accepting his service to the Ancient one? To have been so honored as to have been chosen by Phyneas, one of the original founders of the isle, and thrown it all away, still amazed Linus. The betrayal was something none of them understood.

It was Alonzo's exile that had shaken the core of the hierarchy of Mannos. The Isle of Men, a paradise, thought by many to be only a myth. But Linus knew better. He had been there. Lived the life. Dedicated his existence and found pleasure and acceptance beyond his wildest dreams among brethren who believe in the same tenants he did. Alonzo, a young initiate, had been meant for paradise, yet he was now an exiled brother, serving somewhere on the mainland, hopeful that Phyneas, the Ancient he had betrayed, would one day forgive him and allow him to return.

Linus had turned his back on that secular world when he rejoined civilization years ago. At first he had made inquiries, attempting to locate the young rebel. All to no avail. Phyneas, and a few who served him, were the only ones who knew his location and no one was talking. It was as though he had disappeared into thin air. He had not thought about Alonzo for a long time. Something about the young man he now watched had opened a door allowing the memories to

The Exile: A Seductive Tale
by Adrianna Dane

resurface. Alonzo was the dream, the fantasy of what might have been, given other circumstances, but this young man—he was real, and very tempting.

Maybe that's why Linus was drawn to the young waiter. He reminded him a bit of that beautiful, dark-haired young receiver of so long ago. A sense of dangerous, dark beauty surrounded him. Gone, but not forgotten. It was forbidden for Alonzo's name to be uttered on the isle, but many whispered of the favored one, now banished. He had been desired by many, including one of the Ancient Island Lords, one of those who had first settled Mannos, and someone who had elevated Alonzo above all others, offering him the coveted role of companion. There was such a pain of loss surrounding the whole incident. Linus had waited, but in the end he'd had to leave. Alonzo's spirit seemed to hover everywhere—in the golden city, at the waterfall, in the artist's colony. Even dripping from the ancient golden towers poised on the cliffs above the city. No one had ever betrayed the brotherhood in the manner Alonzo had.

"More coffee, sir?"

Linus looked up, surprised to see the young waiter hovering near his table. He studied his respectful expression as he gazed down at Linus, waiting. Mannos and Alonzo were behind him, but this young man—

He felt his cock rise in response to the attractive youth, mesmerized by the sensual, full lips, and aquamarine eyes that so reminded him of home. His elegant fingers gripped the coffee carafe and Linus found him imagining those long fingers wrapped around something else—something hot and

The Exile: A Seductive Tale
by Adrianna Dane

alive, seething with need. It had been a long time since he'd been so quickly aroused by a potential lover. There were few in the past fifty years he had actually considered inviting home with him, instead choosing quick encounters in dark alleys and bathhouses and then returning home, always alone.

But this one. He had visions of making slow, passionate love to him, wanting to savor his body in his bed. See all of him, feel his beautiful lips sucking his prick.

"More coffee would be appreciated."

His hair resembled shimmering midnight ocean waves, highlighted by the full moon at night. He envisioned a stallion's mane flying in the wind as he galloped across the landscape. Strong muscle, lean body, fluid grace. His hair was long, although contained neatly at the nape of his neck. Most likely a requirement of the establishment, because the look in his eyes told Linus there was an element of wildness that fought at the bridle of control. Linus yearned to touch him, to break him out of the civilized confines of the restaurant. To bring him beneath the bite of a master's control. To possess him.

Yet centuries of self-control had taught him the value of patience. On the isle, there really was no need for rushed interludes unless one wished it to heighten a particular experience—one had all the time in the world. And if one had risen to the level of authoritarian, as he had, the choices were many ... and varied.

The Exile: A Seductive Tale
by Adrianna Dane

Linus reached out to stay the young waiter from leaving. He looked down at him, a question in his simmering blue eyes. "Something else, sir?"

"The earring you wear. Does it have meaning for you?"

Linus saw the boy's gaze turn to his own lobe, and understanding and recognition flashed across his expression. He nodded. "Yes, it does. I see you wear a similar one."

"Similar, yes," Linus acknowledged. "Priceless, to be sure."

"You have been there?" the waiter asked, his hushed tone speaking of a reverence for the possibility.

"Perhaps. What is your name?"

He knew he had the full attention of the young man. His body spoke of a taut eagerness, ready to spring, excitement building.

"My name is Sam, sir."

Linus leaned back in his chair, studying him. Yes, he definitely liked what he saw. After so many choice possibilities on the isle, he had become very particular about his selection of a bed partner here on the mainland. Abstinence was difficult, but he had become accustomed to doing without rather than settling for an unsatisfactory relationship. "Well, Sam, is this what you do for a living? Or are you moonlighting?"

"I'm a student. I attend the university and do this for some extra money to help me get by."

"What are you majoring in?"

"Art history and business administration. The business for practicality, but art is my real love."

The Exile: A Seductive Tale
by Adrianna Dane

Something burst open inside him at Sam's words. He knew the boy had been worth pursuing. "Excellent." He leaned forward and trailed his gaze leisurely over the well-built waiter. His appreciation very obvious. "What time do you get off, Sam? Maybe we could get to know each other a little better. I'm an artist myself. I've a feeling we have quite a bit in common and I'd love to show you my studio."

He saw the boy's eyes widen and then darken as a sexy, intimate sensuality flooded his expression. It had been a long time since Linus had encountered quite this combination of intelligent, sensual lust in a man.

Linus, although immortal, still bore the physique of a man in his mid-thirties—still attractive to a wide variety of potential lovers, allowing him to have his pick of eligible bed partners. And right now, he chose this one.

"I get off at eleven."

"Would you like to ... spend some time with me tonight?" He reach out to offer his hand. "My name is Linus. Linus Masterson."

Sam shifted the coffee carafe to his other hand and accepted the token of friendship. Linus increased his grip, a subtle hint of what was to be expected—who was in charge. The boy's grip slackened, but he didn't attempt to remove his hand, an indication of acceptance of the position he would assume tonight. Linus was the one to end the connection as he slid his hand from Sam's grip.

His gaze locked with Sam's. "I'll wait in the bar. When your shift is over, you can meet me there."

The Exile: A Seductive Tale
by Adrianna Dane

Sam nodded, as though unable to voice an answer, apparently overcome by the powerful presence of the other man. Linus had cultivated that aura over the centuries and it had stood him well during his time back on the mainland.

"I'll see you later," Sam said as he backed away from the table to finish his shift.

"Later," Linus affirmed.

He watched Sam, that possessive thrill racing through him—one he had not felt for a very long time. It was the thrill of the hunt. On the isle there were penetrators and receivers—he had risen to become a man of authority on the isle, making him a penetrator. He looked forward to having Sam beneath him, possessing him in the ways of an authoritarian, as he had once been. And he sensed the boy's willingness to be his receiver.

There was a hierarchy on the island similar to that used on the mainland of the dominant-submissive relationship. It was more formalized on the isle—almost a political structure in fact, yet allowing for a receiver to become a man of authority, thus becoming a penetrator. It wasn't that a receiver did not obtain pleasure; simply that the choice for the act of penetration belonged to the authoritarian—a man who had once been a receiver himself and thus was responsible for the receiver who served him, obtaining pleasure in many ways. Of course, one could choose to remain a receiver, as a companion to an authoritarian, if one wished.

Sam would make a very pleasurable receiver if he chose to accept that position. And Linus was a very skilled penetrator. He finished his coffee, and rose from the table after paying

The Exile: A Seductive Tale
by Adrianna Dane

the check and leaving a generous tip. He sauntered off to the bar to await his newest mortal conquest.

CHAPTER 2

When Sam walked into the bar, Linus had all he could do to contain himself. He was gorgeous, dressing in tight blue jeans that gloved his strong, young muscles, and a black T-shirt that molded his broad chest and clung to sharply defined biceps. Narrow hips and tight, rounded buns that Linus couldn't wait to delve between.

The bulge behind his zipper indicated to Linus that he was a well-hung, young stallion, primed and ready for Linus's mastery.

They didn't linger long in the smoky atmosphere of the bar; Linus wanted to get the young stud somewhere private as quickly as possible. He saw the covetous, predatory glances of the other patrons and he was in no mood to share. Not tonight. He couldn't remember when he'd been this hot to break in a new lover. It was like the feeling of acquiring something priceless after a long, fruitless search. Finally obtaining that possession he'd been ravenous for, and he wanted to be someplace less public so he could fully appreciate the discovery.

If he'd been back on the isle, there wouldn't have been all these clothes of convention separating them. He might have taken him right where he stood with no concern for embarrassment whatsoever. Everyone knew the boundaries on Mannos. If he'd claimed someone like Sam on the isle, no one would have questioned his authority or right to do so. On Mannos, there was respect. Everyone knew the rules. Not so

here in what they called civilization. An element of respect was absent. It was one of the things he missed about Mannos. Yet, it wasn't enough to make him want to return. There was some element about the challenge on the mainland that kept him here. Maybe things had come too easily on Mannos and he had grown unsatisfied with the easy acceptance. He needed a different challenge.

On the isle there was pride in manhood, it was exhibited and revered like nowhere else on earth. And male sexuality was to be honored. There was no embarrassment at the display of a firm cock and a tight ass. In fact, beautiful displays of masculinity were rewarded and encouraged. Nudity was an everyday occurrence and the celebration of manhood a daily tribute.

But here on the mainland it was a different story. Politically correct seemed to be the operative phrase and male identity suffocated into non-gender status. Yet, on nights like this, he knew why he'd chosen to return. Raw passion, unschooled, untutored. Primal in some ways. When he discovered a pleasing morsel such as Sam, he knew why he was here.

They exited the restaurant into the darkness and the cold night air encompassed them. As they were about to pass by a dark alley, Linus knew he couldn't wait any longer. Fuck patience. He had anticipated this moment for hours and his cock was heavy with arousal. He hooked an arm around Sam's waist and yanked him into the shadows. Shoving him back against the brick wall, he swooped forward and staked a passionate claim on his mouth, shoved his tongue deep into

the moist cavern. Ah, sweet, so sweet, he consumed ravenously. Sam offered no resistance and in fact, seemed to yield to Linus's dominance, wrapping his arms around his broad shoulders and clinging to the masterful demands of his new lover.

Linus ground his hips against Sam's and hard cocks pressed together through the friction of the thick fabric separating them. Linus couldn't wait to get him home.

"Suck me," Linus growled as he tore his mouth from Sam's. "Right now. I can't wait any longer."

With alacrity, Sam dropped to his knees and dragged the zipper down, reaching for Linus's thick, hungry shaft through the opening. Linus gripped his head, dragged the band from his hair and wound his fingers into the thick, glossy locks as Sam's eager mouth and wet tongue quickly sucked him inside the hot, greedy haven, drawing on him deeply. The raw hunger ripped from inside him, out through the tip of his penis, and he welcomed the pleasurable weakness that began to consume him.

Linus felt the suction pull on him and his balls tightened, drawing up, at the luxurious sensation of an expert sucking. He cupped Sam's head, his fingers kneading the silky mane as he thrust in and out. He heard the muffled sounds of people walking by the shadowy alley, but was long past caring if they were seen by any of them. He was in paradise.

Sam's tongue swirled over the thick, bulging head, delving into the slit, as Linus shoved his hips forward, driving his cock deeper, to the entrance of Sam's throat. He pulled back. Sam inhaled and then Linus saw stars as Sam consumed him more

thoroughly than anyone before and he slipped down into the opening of Sam's throat.

"Fuck. You're a damn great cocksucker, Sam. Keep it up. Take me deeper. I'm going to come hard and you're going to swallow all of it before you're done."

The searing heat of lust filled his senses as he pushed himself deeper, pulled back and sank inward again. He felt his climax rising as Sam suctioned his burgeoning prick. Sam's firm grip on his hips bound them, fingers pressing into his flesh. Damn, but he wanted to strip him right now, to feel his skin, hard, yet supple, to explore his gorgeous body.

And then he exploded, holding on to Sam for dear life as wave after wave of delicious energy poured from his body into the ardent mouth eagerly sucking at him. Sam swallowed. An appreciative murmur erupted from deep inside him as he licked and sucked at Linus's exploding prick, until finally Linus slipped his softening penis from his young lover's pleasurable, hot recesses.

"That was wonderful, Sam."

Sam wiped his mouth and Linus leaned down to kiss him, tasting his own cum on his lips, and the arousal began to boil to the surface yet again. He cupped Sam's hard-on beneath his jeans. "We're going to get you taken care of as well, lover. Just you wait." Then he helped Sam rise to his feet.

His fledgling paramour gazed up at him with a puppyish adoration in his eyes. "I know the rules of the brotherhood. You haven't said anything, but I know, if you've been there, like I think you have, you're an immortal. I'd do anything to be with you tonight. Anything you want, Linus."

The Exile: A Seductive Tale
by Adrianna Dane

Linus hadn't felt the power of his immortality like this in eons. The authoritarian energy surged inside him. He whirled the boy around and slung a possessive arm over his shoulder, drawing him close as they emerged from the alley and headed toward his apartment in the warehouse district. This was definitely going to be a night to remember.

"You're a good man, Sam. You show a lot of promise and I'm glad I met you tonight. How come I've never seen you before? I dine at this restaurant all the time."

"I just started working there tonight. It kind of feels like this was meant to be, don't you think?"

"You could be right. How long have you been a member of the Brotherhood?"

"I met up with someone who was involved with them about a year ago and he introduced me."

"What sort of initiation do they have these days to warrant the earring?"

"I'm sure it's nothing compared to what they do on the isle. Will you tell me about it?" He stopped walking and turned toward Linus. "Is it real? There honestly is an Isle of Men? As far as I know, no one from our sect has ever been there, or knows of anyone who has been. There are just the stories. You're the first. *I'm* the first to meet someone who's actually lived there. Is it as beautiful as they say it is?"

Linus swung his arm back over Sam's shoulders possessively, anchoring him to his side. He really needed to get him back to his apartment for a long night of fucking. He had a feeling this boy had great potential and stamina, and he meant to take advantage of it.

The Exile: A Seductive Tale
by Adrianna Dane

"It's real, kid. More real than you can know. And it truly is paradise."

CHAPTER 3

Linus watched Sam admiringly as he ambled around the huge apartment located in an old, abandoned warehouse. It was one of the buildings owned by a Brotherhood subsidiary corporation going by the name of Paradise Ventures. Linus had joined the board upon his arrival on the mainland. Any of the immortals who chose to return were provided a satisfactory income to sustain them as well as providing housing of their choice. In return they served the Brotherhood in whatever capacity might be needed. On a regular basis Linus provided artwork to the local Brotherhood auction houses to help supplement the monetary needs of the isle.

There were times when the members were called upon for more difficult tasks. Usually the riskier ones were handed down to the exiled acquirers, such as Alonzo. It was not such a bad life. One did require diversions once in a while though. Like tonight.

Linus planned to continue his artistic endeavors and the warehouse suited his needs, offering privacy as well as room to work. He liked the expansive space, allowing him not to feel so confined by civilization.

"This is a cool place." Sam swung around to look at him. "Really awesome. And it's yours?"

Linus nodded, smiling indulgently. "Yes, it is. Would you like a drink?"

Sam had turned away again to study the artifacts contained in a glass display at the other end of the room.

"Sure. Got a beer? Are these things real?"

Linus reached down to the refrigerator located on the floor below the bar and pulled out a bottle. He uncapped it and walked to where Sam stood, apparently mesmerized by the objects in the case.

"Here." He handed the sweating bottle to Sam, who accepted it, tilted his head back and gulped it down.

Linus was fascinated as he watched him. Such eager youth. So beautiful; so intoxicating. He reached out to stroke his neck, unable to help himself.

Sam finished the beer, then wiped a hand across his wet lips. "I needed that. First night on the job is always exhausting."

Linus took the empty from him and leaned forward to plant a kiss on his full, wet lips. He tasted of beer and Linus licked his lips, then thrust his tongue inside his mouth, savoring his taste. Sam eagerly returned the kiss, sucking on Linus's tongue. For long moments they tasted each other, exploring and building the passion between them.

Linus finally lifted away breathlessly. "Why don't you get a little more comfortable?" He reached behind him and set the empty bottle on a table.

"More comfortable?"

Linus rubbed his hands across Sam's broad, defined T-shirt covered pecs. "Mmmm, delicious. Yes, more comfortable." He leaned over to kiss Sam, tasting fierce, young male stud.

"Take your clothes off," he whispered against his lips. "I want

to see this hot bod of yours. I've been watching you all night, imagining what you looked like."

With alacrity, Sam crossed his arms and pulled his shirt over his head. Linus watched him stretch, gazed admiringly as the bronzed muscles contracted, cut and exquisite, a ripple of washboard tight abs glimmered enticingly, making him hungry to taste the bronzed, gleaming flesh. He reached up to clamp a hand over his bicep. Smooth, young, resistant muscle greeted him.

Sam unsnapped his jeans, but then Linus halted him. "Let me." Sam's hands fell away. His chest rose and fell like a man on a long distance run.

Gazing down, Linus slowly pulled down the zipper of his fly, relishing the moment when he would get the first view of his young lover's burgeoning prick. The anticipation was almost more than he could bear.

The jeans separated like the brilliant blue sea, revealing the foam of pristine white Jockeys beneath. He liked that, not the usual loose, casual boxers he found most of his lovers on the mainland wore. A nice, hard package imprisoned there for his pleasure, waiting to burst free.

He slid his hands beneath the elastic waistband and then looked into Sam's eyes, saw the desire in his dilated gaze. "Do it. I want you to see me," Sam said. "I want you to touch me."

"Are you sure, lover? Do you really know what I want from you?"

Sam gasped as Linus slowly pushed the material down, but then stopped. Sam looked at him pleadingly. "I've read the

stories. Looking at the stuff in the cabinet, I know you're for real. You're what they call a man of authority, aren't you? Are you an Ancient?"

Linus shook his head. "No, but you're right, I was one of the masters." He pushed the jeans down a little farther. Now there was a pelting vee of dark, springy curls visible. Good, he wasn't shaved. The ones that shaved seemed so ... domesticated. This one was like Alonzo—he was going to be wild, like a young, untamed lion. Linus liked that type best. He reached around and cupped Sam's tight buttocks. "Nice and firm, just the way I like it. Do you have a lover, Sam?"

Sam was breathing hard, stuttering to gain control. "No one steady. Oh, God, touch me. I can't stand it any more."

"Sure you can. I'll give you what you want in my own good time." Oh, he was such a pleasure, so very needy. His cock, when it was revealed, was going to be so hot to climax, it would practically be bursting.

Slow, he wanted to take this slow. It's why he brought him back here, so he could enjoy and savor every inch of his newfound lover. It's why he'd had him suck him in the alley, so there'd be no rush when they got back here, taking the edge off his own desire.

On the isle, and for immortals residing elsewhere, there was no disease, allowing for a very special kind of sexual freedom and pleasure not afforded to ordinary mortals.

Back on the isle there were joyboys, the ones who chose sex and pleasure alone for their position of service. They were beautiful and glamorous, made up to enhance their endowments. They worked in the houses of pleasure—the

The Exile: A Seductive Tale
by Adrianna Dane

joyhouses run by the Joymaster. Linus knew Cassius had spent a lot of time trying to convince Alonzo to become one of his joyboys. But Alonzo had been meant for greater things than serving one of the lesser masters. Each of the masters had tried to seduce Alonzo into choosing them to serve. But from the beginning, Alonzo had been meant to attend an Ancient and in some way they all knew it. Though it had not stopped them from coveting him for themselves. He had been a point of discussion on many occasions among the authoritarians.

Linus pushed Sam's jeans lower. Sam would make a stunning joyboy. Truly stunning, cut to perfection. Then the jeans were over his buttocks and down to his thighs. And there he was in all his beauty, cock jutting proudly toward the ceiling, tempting Linus. And what a temptation it was. A tall stalk of a temple eager to be worshipped. This was a man built to exhibit pride in his assets. What a companion he would have made on the isle, worthy of display by many a master there.

"Take off your shoes so we can get these jeans off you. You're much too handsome to be shut away under all this material. Let's get you freed up."

Sam toed off his tan leather loafers, and Linus pushed the jeans and underwear down. The first delicious scents of manly arousal scented the air. It was only the beginning. Sam stepped out of the clothing and Linus could then see exactly how stunning this stud was, like a young David, innocent and beautiful. He salivated at the thought of penetrating him and

reaching out, he grasped him possessively, drawing him close.

"Do you like feeling a cock up your ass, Sam? Or do you prefer doing the fucking?"

Sam's eyes were at aroused half-mast as Linus stroked his thickening shaft. He would need to let him climax before they went any further. There was a look of anticipated bliss on his face already. So pretty. His cock a long stiff, tower of steel, pulsating, the veiny head engorged, the color of a succulent plum, overly ripe and filled to the brim with sweet juice, slitted and ready to burst, needing release, pre-cum seeping along the slit.

"I-I, God, don't stop."

Linus stroked him expertly, spreading Sam's pre-cum over the broad tip. Delicious, to be sure, more than ready for the orgasm he sensed ready to burst free. "I'm not going to stop. But tell me, do you like getting it or giving it?"

Sam thrust his hips forward, driving his rigid cock deeper into Linus's embrace. Yes, he was definitely going to be fun to play with tonight. Linus hadn't looked forward to an evening like this in some time. He gripped him with a firm, experienced hand. "Answer me, boy."

"Giving, I guess. I like being the man."

"Really?" He began stroking him again, more earnestly, with fingers that knew how to elicit the passionate response he sought. "Well, tonight you're mine. Do you know what that means?"

He thrust his hips harder. "Yes, I know. You'll be fucking me. But I want to do it to you, too."

The Exile: A Seductive Tale
by Adrianna Dane

"Not tonight. I'm going to own you tonight, boy. And you'll see what it means to be mastered. To be possessed. To follow the orders and give everything you've got to an isle immortal."

Suddenly, he came, pulsing fast and hard, crying out with his climax, spewing thick cream into Linus's hand. He dropped to his knees, bowing his head, leaning against Linus's hip.

Linus stroked his hair. "Just like that, my dear. Just like that." He tilted Sam's head back, leaned down and claimed him passionately, pulling at his lips, punctuating his claim. Slowly, he straightened back up and Sam leaned his head against Linus's clothed groin once again, wrapping his arms around him.

"I'll be what you want, master. Anything you want. Any way you want it. God, that felt so good. I don't think I've ever come so hard before or wanted it so badly."

Linus smiled and lifted the boy from the floor, leading him toward the bed. "And I can tell you're going to be quite a pleasure tonight. We've only just started."

CHAPTER 4

Linus helped him to lie on the bed. He then washed his softened prick and threw the washcloth off to the side. Sam's cock now lay dormant and content against his body. Perfect. "I'll be right back," he said as he slid off the bed.

He divested himself of his clothing, then walked over to a handpainted chest and lifted the lid. It had been years since he had used anything contained in it. None of the men he'd been with since arriving on the mainland had been as worthy as this young man. He studied the contents, found what he was looking for, and scooped it up. Over the years he had come to have an expert eye when it came to determining size. He returned to the bed.

Sam looked up at him with a lazy, sated expression on his face, which turned to curiosity when he saw Linus held something in his hand. "What is that?"

Linus held it up for him to see. "Have you never worn a cock ring before?"

Sam blushed. "Well, no. I've heard of them, but I've never used one myself. I had a lover once who did. But what's the other part?"

Linus climbed onto the bed, spreading Sam's legs wide. He stroked a hand over his hips, making Sam shudder. Clasp his penis, he proceeded to bring him back to full erection. Leaning forward, he clasped the engraved pliant silvery ring at the base of the stiff stalk and then fitted his balls tightly into the filigreed delicate silver sack, imprisoning them within

the net. They were items that had been made on the isle by the crafters who were skilled in creating these special isle toys.

"Oh, God," Sam moaned, as his cock pulsed, engorging more fully with blood.

Linus leaned over him and stroked the imprisoned member lovingly and Sam shuddered beneath the feathery caress.

"When I finally allow you to come again, it will be an explosion more powerful than you have ever experienced before. And you will have done it at my hand, something you will never forget."

They both watched as Sam's cock grew larger and larger, the bluish veins rising thickly from his stiff marooned length, and the band sealed him tightly, locking in the blood flow to his engorged tool. Sam leaned back on his elbows, his eyes at half-mast, pumping his hips against Linus's hand. "I feel like I'm going to burst right out of my skin." He opened his eyes to look at Linus with a heavy, dilated gaze. "I think I'm going to die if you don't let me come soon." He moaned and Linus watched as pre-cum oozed enticingly from his slit.

Linus gripped Sam's stiff cock possessively. "My initials are engraved on it. It means you belong to me. The ring was made to my personal specifications and I'm the only one who can release it. How does that make you feel? Knowing I'm the only one that can give you the ease that you desire?"

An odd expression crossed Sam's face. "I don't know."

"Does it make you angry?"

"No," he said slowly. He sprung up on his knees, close to Linus. "It makes me feel sexy. I know, it's weird, but it does."

"You won't be able to climax until I let you."

"I know. I should be angry, shouldn't I, that you have that control. But I'm not. In fact ... I like the idea. What now?"

"You want more?"

Sam reached over, cupped Linus's face and planted a passionate kiss on his lips. "I want to be yours. Somehow I think I was fated to be here with you. That I was supposed to meet you at that restaurant."

Linus stroked his cock, watching it grow impossibly harder, pressing the ring tighter. "You could be right."

"Oh, God, I need to come," Sam gasped, thrusting his hips forward, rubbing his fierce erection against Linus's hard cock. It felt delightful, so damn hot, and Linus removed his hand, thrusting his own hips against Sam.

"Yes, it feels good doesn't it, achingly good."

"Yes. Exactly."

"Lie on your stomach, Sam. I'm going to get you ready for me. I'll take it nice and slow this time."

Sam quickly moved into position. He hissed as his cock pressed into the cool blankets. "How much longer?"

Linus reached over, opening a drawer, and pulled out a tube of modern lubricant. He squirted a good deal in Sam's crack and on his fingers. He took a moment to savor the look of Sam's smooth, tight butt. What a pleasure it was going to be to penetrate him.

Slowly he separated Sam's ass cheeks to reveal his small rosebud opening, felt him stiffen as he did so. "Relax, Sam. It will go easier for you if you do. Get up on your knees, arch

your back, face and shoulders to the bed—I'll make it good for you."

Sam quickly did as he requested. Linus smoothed slow circles over the fleshy contours of his ass and easily moved to swirl a finger over his puckered anus opening. It was a pretty, tight ring of muscle and he was eager to penetrate his snug passage. First the tip of one finger entered him, massaging his opening thoroughly, felt him tighten his ass, then as Linus massaged him, he eased, opening to him.

"That's it, Sam, relax for me. Just enjoy the sensations. Am I hurting you?" He added a second finger to the first. Yes, he was loosening nicely. Soon he'd be ready to take his cock. He wanted to fuck him right this second, but he would take his time with this one and prepare him well for his possession.

"Linus?" Sam mumbled into the blankets, thrusting his ass against Linus's fingers.

"Yes, Sam?"

He wiggled his ass. "I think I'm ready. I want you to fuck me now. Right now. God, I need it."

Those were the words he'd been waiting to hear. He pulled his fingers from the slick, readied passage and positioned himself to penetrate the well-lubed hole he had prepared. He added more lubricant, then slowly pressed inward, the tight muscle ring giving easily beneath the pressure. He felt himself gloved by Sam's colon. Ah, sweet pleasure.

"Oh, yeah," Sam said on a long, drawn out sigh, lifting his ass higher.

"Is this what you like, darling?" Linus asked as he eased more of his thick cock inside Sam's tight channel.

"Yes. It's never been like this before. I've never enjoyed it this way. My cock is bursting, I can feel the blood pumping into it. I'm right at the edge, Linus. Please."

Linus smiled. This young man was going to experience sensations like he'd never felt before. This night was going to open him up to vast new horizons.

Finally, Linus was completely rooted into Sam's prostate. "I'm all the way in, Sam. How does it feel?"

"Like you own my ass, Linus. Tell me what you want me to do and I'll do it. The sensations are amazing."

Sam was right. Tonight Linus owned him. He reached around to grasp Sam's stiff, throbbing prick, which felt like it was close to bursting. When he let him come later, he was going to realize just how much Linus's domination had affected him.

Slowly, he began tunneling in and out, as he stroked Sam's prick. The searing friction sent him spiraling, but he didn't want it to end too quickly. He wanted Sam begging, like he had never begged for anything in his life.

First, short and demanding thrusts, then slow and undulating, cranking the heat higher and higher. Finally, he heard Sam whimpering beneath him, shuddering with need, penetrating his ass, looking for surcease. It was time. He drove hard and deep, coming swiftly inside Sam's colon. His own triumphant shouts were coupled with Sam's cries of need.

He pulled from Sam's ass, his softening cock glistening with his release mixed with the lubricant. He pushed Sam to his back, saw the tears wetting his cheeks. Quickly he released the cock ring and silver webbing, and tossed it aside. Using the lubricant he gripped Sam's more than ready cock, driving him high and fast. Sam arched up, the plumed head spewing semen high, spurt after spurt as he arched up into Linus's hand, screaming with pleasure at the explosive climax that seemed to be unending.

"I love you, Linus. I love you." He dropped back onto the bed, panting with exhaustion, trembling with reaction. "Shit, that was good. So damn good."

Linus crawled up next to him and pulled his limp form into his arms. "I take it you liked it." He wiped the tears from Sam's cheeks and bent down and kissed him tenderly. Sam kissed him back with dedicated enthusiasm.

"I can tell why they gave you the title master." He shuddered once more. "It wasn't just words in the throes of passion, Linus. I meant them."

Linus leaned back against the pillows with Sam curled up against his chest, one leg nudged between his. He stroked his hair. "I know you did."

He leaned his cheek against the top of Sam's head. Alonzo had always said those words in the heat of passion. He also meant them every time he said them, to each master who possessed him. The last time just before he had betrayed them.

CHAPTER 5

A long time later, he lay back against the pillows, sipping from a glass of golden cognac, watching as Sam wandered around the apartment. He lifted one of the stained drop cloths covering Linus's paintings and peered beneath.

"Damn, who is that? Is he one of the masters? He's hot."

Linus knew who he was looking at. It was a painting he had brought with him when he left Mannos. He set the glass aside and rose from the bed, padding over to where Sam stood, gazing down at the man sensually exhibited in the painting.

"That's Alonzo. No, he's not a master. He was a receiver. And a companion."

Sam turned to gaze at him curiously. "A receiver? You say he was, past tense?"

Linus felt the bite of remembered pain. "He was exiled for betrayal. He wanders somewhere on the mainland. I assume he still lives. I haven't heard otherwise."

"Then he's immortal, even though he's not a man of authority?"

"Yes, immortality is received as a part of the rite of passage. It alone does not mean one becomes a man of authority on the isle. It is part of the road to knowledge and choice. There are many positions available. It is a journey one travels and where to stop is all individual choice. No one is forced to do anything they do not want to do."

"Oh." He turned back to gaze at the painting, peering closer. "What's he got on his cock?"

Linus smiled. "It's called a cock sleeve meant to emphasize the beauty of manhood."

"It looks like it's almost a part of his flesh. Damn, he's sure got a nice one, unless this painting is a magnification of his assets."

Linus laughed, leaned over and kissed Sam, grasping his cock, which had begun to harden again. "No, Alonzo was very well endowed, there was no need to embellish."

Sam leaned into his ministrations. "Was he one of your lovers?" He groaned as his member grew harder beneath Linus's perusal.

Linus nodded. "Of course. He was an initiate and a receiver. He served any man of authority who wished to spend time with him. It is part of the journey. Alonzo was very desired."

"I think I'm jealous of him."

"There is no need to be. He is in the past. Come."

Linus led him back to the bed and climbed on with him. They sat facing each other and Linus continued to fondle Sam's cock. Sam reached out tentatively to touch Linus's prick.

Linus nodded. "Yes. Touch me. Just like I'm touching you. Match my strokes."

Sam did as he asked and Linus sighed at the erotic touch. It didn't take long for the mutual masturbation to achieve pleasurable results. Sam's delicious eruption triggered his own as they climaxed together, then fell back onto the bed in

each other's arms. Linus pulled him close to his body, the stickiness melding them together. There were certainly advantages to being an immortal. Not only the resistance to disease, but stamina. Oh, yes, lots of stamina.

Sam kissed his neck as Linus stroked along the column of his spine, smoothing circles over his beautiful, tight cheeks. Linus felt Sam's tongue trace his throat, sucked at his jaw, moving to rim his full lips. Linus pressed his chest tightly to Sam's, rubbing nipple to nipple. The erotic undulations felt so good, so perfect. He pressed a demanding leg between Sam's, pressing his thigh upward to wedge tightly against Sam's balls.

"Oh, God," Sam moaned. "You make me so hot. How the hell I can get any more hard-ons tonight, I have no idea. Who the hell needs a little blue pill when you turn me on more than any chemical possibly could."

Linus chuckled as he claimed his lover's mouth once more, pressing him back into the pillows. He savored the taste and feel of him, pushing him down, topping him, every body part touching as he stretched out over him. He tangled his fingers in his hair, forcing him to look into his eyes.

Linus felt his searing, moist breaths against his face. "You like this, don't you? My mastery of you?"

"Yes," he hissed out, circling his hips. Linus could feel his cock again rising to the occasion. "You're like some damned exotic aphrodisiac I can't get enough of."

Linus smiled down at him. He wanted this boy for his own, not for just one night of pleasurable fucking. He wanted to teach him all the sensual arts, to show him what it truly

The Exile: A Seductive Tale
by Adrianna Dane

meant to be a part of the Brotherhood. Already he had taken to the hint of training he had begun tonight. He leaned forward to possess his lips once more, driving his tongue deep inside, and Sam whimpered with sensual need.

He raised his head and Sam tried to follow, obviously needy for more of the drugging kisses. Linus yanked his head back, anchoring him to the pillows.

Sam looked up at him questioningly. "What did I do wrong?"

Linus saw a tinge of confusion in his eyes. All the better. "Nothing. You did nothing wrong."

He rolled away and dropped back onto the bed. To make this boy his lover was a huge step for him to take. He needed to tread carefully. It wasn't like on Mannos; the lines weren't as clearly drawn.

Sam leaned up on his side, a hand resting on his angled arm. "Then what is it? What's troubling you?"

Linus turned to look at him. "It's not that simple."

"What isn't? I want to be with you. I think you want me here." He reached out to trace a finger over Linus's chest, circle a nipple. Linus hissed and arched.

"There are a lot of things to consider. I'm not the same as your other lovers, Sam. And I'll want something from you the others haven't asked of you."

"Do you think I don't know that? You're a Brotherhood immortal for chrissake. I do know what that means. I've been a member of the Brotherhood long enough to know what that is."

The Exile: A Seductive Tale
by Adrianna Dane

Linus rose up to face Sam. "Do you? Tonight has been ... special. I've enjoyed you more than I have anyone in a very long time." He pressed Sam back against the bed once again. "I want you to serve me. I want your submission. But you're an innocent, not like the newbloods and initiates on Mannos who give themselves knowing what to expect."

"How am I not like them? I would give everything up to serve you. Everything, don't you know that after the time I've spent here with you? I love you, Linus. Okay, it was love at first sight and it doesn't happen often. And my body responds to you like no one I've ever known. And maybe it is just about the fucking awesome sex we had tonight. It's a beginning. And I want to be here with you. Please."

"You're saying you want to submit to me. You want to be my receiver. Do you have any idea what that means? What you would be committing yourself to? I would expect no less from you than I would any initiate on the isle. This is not simply a civilized, mainland lover relationship; this is a Brotherhood commitment you are asking for. They require far different levels of devotion and responsibility."

"I know that," Sam insisted. "Give me a chance. Please. I want to learn everything you have to teach me."

"What about your family? No newbloods are accepted unless there are no ties to the mainland to inhibit their dedication, their solitude, their chosen path."

Sam nodded. "My parents are dead. They died when I was nine and my grandparents raised me. They're both dead now as well. I don't have any brothers or sisters, no aunts or uncles."

The Exile: A Seductive Tale
by Adrianna Dane

Linus's heart began to pound in his chest. Sam was too good to be true. He couldn't trust his own desires on this.

"I don't know—"

"Please, Linus, give me a chance. I've already filled out the paperwork to transfer to Mannos. It takes forever for them to approve transfers, and you know I couldn't have applied if I had family ties here on the mainland."

"You'll go to the isle if you're approved?"

"I don't know. I had every intention of going, but now—I just don't know. Right now that doesn't matter, in the meantime, let me be yours. Teach me what I need to know if I should go there. But I love you already, and I'm not sure I'll be able to leave if I am called."

It was too much for Linus to absorb. He'd been without a steady lover for quite some time. In fact, he'd formed no lasting liaisons since leaving the isle. Did he want to assume the responsibility as teacher once more? Could he risk it?

Sam reached up to cup his jaw. "You've been alone. There's no need for you to continue that way. That Alonzo guy did something to you, didn't he? There's something about that painting. You said he was exiled, so he must have done something bad. Do you think I might be like him? Is that what's troubling you?"

Linus didn't know how to answer him. He'd never really examined his feelings that closely. Had been afraid to do so. Sam seemed to see past the barrier. He had glimpsed in the painting the passion Linus had tried to suffocate all this time. The love he'd known for Alonzo, which he had denied. And the betrayal he had no right to feel. Alonzo had not truly been

his. Maybe it was time to face what he had felt. Maybe he needed Sam in his life if for nothing else than to help him heal the past. Yes, Sam was like Alonzo in many ways, and maybe that's what drew Linus to him in the first place. If he wanted to discover if that was the total fascination with him, maybe an alliance for a time would not be a bad thing, allowing him to wash away once and for all the memories that seem to chain him.

"I'll need time to check out what you've told me. I can't take the chance on some problem down the road occurring because you weren't truthful. We need to take this slow."

He felt Sam stiffen beneath him. "I don't lie, Linus. And I don't want to take it slow."

"There are rules."

"I know that."

"Hard and demanding rules that I'll expect you to follow without question. Breaking the rules is not tolerated. You have to understand that and be very certain this is a journey you want to begin."

Sam nodded. "Tell me."

Linus laughed. "I can't explain it all in one night."

"Then fuck me again."

Linus's eyes widened.

Sam obviously wasn't going to back down. "And we'll talk later. I don't want to waste any more time with you. Can't you feel my dick? It's hard as rock. Again."

Linus couldn't help but shake his head. He lifted up, reached over for the lubricant, and spread Sam's legs wide. "You're sure."

"Hell, yes. I think I'm addicted to your cock already."

Linus lifted Sam's hips, greased his hole thoroughly and plunged inside, Sam's muscles gripping him tightly as he buried himself deeply. This time it was fast and furious, deep and hard as he hammered into his opened ass. Sam thrust his hips, pushing firmly against him, his own hand wrapped around his stiff hard-on, another hand tugging at his puckered brown nipple.

Linus's fingers pressed into his hips as they drove each other spiraling into the stratosphere, both coming hard and fast once again. Linus pulled out and dropped next to Sam. Damn, he was good, so fucking good. And he wanted to keep him.

He felt his young lover rise from the bed. He returned with a wet washrag and proceeded to clean them both. After he was done, he climbed onto the bed and curled up next to Linus, his head trustingly nestled on Linus's chest.

It was going to be hard to resist him, to turn him away. Did he really want to? Hazily, he drifted into a replete sleep.

CHAPTER 6

He felt a soft touch feather across his skin and opened his eyes to gaze into the liquid blue gaze of his newest lover. The first rays of a gray dawn were beginning to drift through the wall of windows on the other side of the apartment.

"It's almost dawn, Linus. I have to go. I have an early morning class."

Linus nodded and rose from his prone position and rubbed the sleep from his eyes. They couldn't have been asleep for more than a couple of hours. He saw the shadows of sleeplessness from a hard, lustful night impressed upon Sam's face.

"I shouldn't have pushed you so hard."

Lightness broke across Sam's expression and he laughed. "You're joking. It was awesome—the best night I've ever spent with anyone." He leaned forward to kiss Linus passionately. "I don't want to leave, but I have commitments. Will you let me come back?"

"Are you certain that you want to?"

"You have no idea. I'm afraid this is all a fantasy and that you're not real."

"Oh, I'm real enough." In a fluid movement he rose to his feet. "Do you have time for a quick shower before you leave?"

Sam reached out to grab his hand. "Hell, yes. I'll make time."

Linus led him into the large, luxurious bathroom and turned on the shower spray. "Get in," he directed.

The Exile: A Seductive Tale
by Adrianna Dane

Sam stepped inside first, followed by Linus, who closed the glass door. The water was just the right temperature. He reached up for the sponge and vial of fragrant soap and began to wash Sam's chest and broad shoulders, again marveling at what a fine specimen he was.

Suddenly, Sam whirled him around, pressing him to the wall.

"What are you doing?" Linus allowed him the moment of domination, enjoying the feel of soapy, determined hands circling over his back and down over his ass cheeks.

"Initiates can't penetrate, can they?" Sam asked as his fingers slipped down between the crack of Linus's ass.

"No," Linus hissed. The lad was strong, showing a fierce sense of suppressed dominance hidden beneath his layer of the previous night's submission. He felt Sam's fingers press against his puckered hole and he felt his desire rise. No one had dared to touch him in that way for a very long time. Oh, he had used dildoes to gain some personal pleasure, but no mortal or immortal had dared to attempt penetration of a man of authority. Not unless given permission.

"What if I did it to you right now, Linus?" His fingertip penetrated the tight ring and Linus inhaled sharply. It felt delicious. "This isn't Mannos, is it? I told you last night I wanted to fuck you. I've taken no oaths and until you accept me, I can do what I want, can't I? Right now, we're equals and I can fuck you if I want. I want you to forget that Alonzo guy and remember me. Just me. He never fucked you, did he?"

The Exile: A Seductive Tale
by Adrianna Dane

Linus felt his cock thicken with anticipation at this unexpected action. Something like this was unheard of on the isle. Even here, with the transient young men he'd taken, he'd been the one doing the fucking. Sam's finger penetrated him deeply and Linus found to his amazement he had no desire to stop him. His breaths grew more rapid. He wanted this young stallion to fuck him for all he was worth.

"No," he gasped. "I never gave him permission to penetrate."

He felt Sam position his cock at his narrow opening. "I didn't think so. I'm going to be more to you than he ever was. I'm going to make you forget him. Do you want me to do it to you, Linus? You have to tell me, if you want it. Do you want to forget?"

Centuries had passed since he'd been penetrated by anyone. Centuries of denial, acceptance of his dominant role as a man of authority on Mannos. But, gods, he wanted this young stud to shove his hard prick into him. He wanted him to blot out all memory of Alonzo. And he knew he could do it. He knew now why he had brought him here, allowed him into his private domain as he had never allowed another.

"Do it," he bit out.

He felt the wide tip open him and pass through the tight muscle. "Are you sure, Linus? Tell me, you want me to fuck you."

Linus thrust back, warm water sluicing over and down his body. "Fuck me, damn you. Do it now."

Suddenly, Sam drove deep, spearing and filling Linus's ass and he hissed out at the searing possession by this

The Exile: A Seductive Tale
by Adrianna Dane

passionate, young lover. Something inside Linus broke open at the penetration. Tears spilled down his face, mingling with the water, hands pressed against the cool tile, nails digging into the grout.

"Oh, gods."

And then Sam began the exquisite rhythm of fucking him thoroughly, tunneling deep, receding, thrusting in again and again with all the primal exuberance of his young years, erasing all the memories of the isle, of the others who Linus had been with, cleansing him beneath the spray of water, filling him with nothing but the present and the man reaming him so thoroughly with his solid, seductive poker of blazing heat.

Linus met his demanding movements, pumping back, wanting him deep, as deep as it was possible for him to go, without restraint. Now he understood one of the reasons he had come to the mainland. He had been looking for a lover, a special lover—like the man possessing him so completely right now. He had seen this in him last night, had sensed something different about him. He was a chameleon and would be whatever he needed to be, whenever Linus should need it. An initiate worth any price.

Suddenly, Linus felt Sam explode inside him, powerful emissions filling his cavity with his potent seed. Sam came to rest against his back, his arms winding around to grip Linus's cock, working him with his soapy hands, driving him upward to the pinnacle of a powerful release. It didn't take long before he exploded into Sam's firm grip, collapsing against

the tile wall. Only then did Sam pull his softened prick from inside Linus's asshole.

Linus had a hard time regaining his composure. He shuddered with the aftereffects of his spent passion. He felt Sam's lips against his wet skin, kissing him, down along his spine he could feel his cool lips, felt him kneel and felt his teeth and mouth on his ass, his tongue swirling over the surface and between the crease, rimming his hole deliciously. He loved the feel of his mouth, the attention of a supplicant worshipping at his shrine of pleasure. Linus finally shifted around, but Sam didn't rise to his feet. Instead, he gazed up at Linus, his hands gripping his hips and he sucked his softened cock into his mouth, his cheeks hollowing. One of his hands reached over to cup Linus's balls. Was this an act of contrition? Did he look for absolution for breaking the code of the Brotherhood?

Yet, he had been right in so many ways. And it took a special man to understand the needs of his master. No oaths had passed between them. Not yet. And in a sense he was almost thankful for that fact. But he also knew he could not let him go.

Linus leaned back against the wall, enjoying the soft, undemanding nuzzling of Sam's mouth. His ass burned from the fierce penetration, but it was an erotically charged searing sensation. He reached over to turn off the water taps, having decided they were probably squeaky clean by now. More cleansed than he could admit even to himself.

Sam seemed to reluctantly release his cock before rising to stand in front of him. His expression was guarded as he

The Exile: A Seductive Tale
by Adrianna Dane

opened the door, releasing the steam, and reached for a fluffy towel. Shaking it out, he then proceeded to dry Linus off.

Linus stopped him. Sam wouldn't look at him and dropped his hands to his sides. "Have I ruined everything?" he whispered.

Linus cupped his face, angling it, and pressed his lips to Sam's, thrusting his tongue deep inside, then pulling away. "You've ruined nothing. You were right, no oaths have been exchanged. You had every right to penetrate me."

Sam looked up at him a bit shyly. "Did you enjoy it?"

Linus's lips curved into a smile. "It was fucking great." He felt the tension ease from Sam. "Come on, you need to get to class. I don't want you failing any of your courses because of me." Sam followed him out of the bathroom.

Once dressed, he turned to look at Linus. "Can I come back? Will you think about letting me serve you? I really do love you, Linus. I just wanted to make you feel as good as you made me feel." He looked down at his feet. "And I have to admit, for a minute I was jealous of that other guy."

Was this the type of love that Alonzo had been so afraid of giving to the Ancient? It was the passing of one's soul into the care of another. To give one's self completely and totally into the care of that person. To trust totally. Had he been afraid of losing a sense of himself before he had found out who he was? Was he afraid he would never become a man of authority because he wanted to belong to Phyneas so completely?

No one had ever come to that point before. But then, Alonzo had been the favorite—not just of the Ancient, but of

them all. They had all loved him in their own way. Sam had the same potential of Alonzo. Maybe even more so. There was a specialness untapped, a naïveté unappreciated. And an animal magnetism untamed. Could Linus tame him? Or would Sam be the one to change Linus? Was he willing to find out?

He leaned over to kiss Sam. "Come back tonight and we'll talk about it. Okay?"

"You'll be here?" he asked anxiously. "You won't disappear?"

"Of course not. You know the rules and just because you got away with an ... infraction ... this morning, doesn't mean I won't expect obedience once you agree to the terms. Do you understand?"

Sam nodded. "Yes, I understand." He angled a look up at Linus and a crooked grin cracked his expression. "But it was good, wasn't it?"

Linus smacked his hand across Sam's tight ass. "Stop digging for compliments and get your ass to school. I'll see you later." Damn, but he couldn't get enough of him. He really loved that edge of disobedience about him. He'd have to consider some good alternative discipline for him.

"I love you, Linus, and I *will* be back."

Once Sam had left, Linus walked over to the window, gazing out at the dawning day. For the first time in a very long time, he was eager for it to begin.

He worried though. Had Sam's love come too easily? Linus so wanted to believe in his protestations. He missed the camaraderie of his brethren on the isle, even though he didn't want to admit it. Had he in some way come to the mainland

The Exile: A Seductive Tale
by Adrianna Dane

hoping to find Alonzo? To know that untamed passion that had been lost? To break the taboo and make him his once again? It was a frightening thought that it had been his underlying motive in severing his ties with Mannos. Was Sam a substitute for Alonzo, the exile? The untouchable fantasy?

But between last night and this morning something had changed. And Sam had made it happen.

He remembered that last time with Alonzo. He walked over to the painting and lifted the cloth to gaze at the well-remembered image. He really needed to exorcise that ghost from the past. One last memory of paradise before giving himself over to his future on the mainland. It was something he only realized now he had done—his mind had remained in paradise, his heart gripped by a fantasy. But he had a feeling it was all about to change. If he let it. If he could let the past die as it should.

CHAPTER 7

Linus had been the Artmaster, had risen to become the head of the artist colony on Mannos. It had been up to him to procure the services of the initiates for the artisans in the community. That last morning, before Alonzo had been irrevocably claimed by Phyneas as companion, he had arranged for him to serve his morning apprentice duties working in the colony. He would sit for the artists and then the potters had requested some time to create several molds of Alonzo's scrumptious body parts for private sale to the collectors on the mainland. He had tried to appease everyone with some of Alonzo's time. It was his job to do so.

He, like many of the other men of authority, had tried to convince Alonzo to choose the colony when it came time to decide on where his service would lie when his period of initiation, or apprenticeship, should conclude. He remembered that morning well. Alonzo had been in rare form, difficult to resist.

As usual, he accompanied him to the shed where he had watched Alonzo remove his clothing, consisting of flesh-colored tights molded to his hard legs, the caramel colored leather vest held together by lengths of gold chains, and his leather sandals. The portraits created by the artists and coveted by the collectors were usually nudes of the beautiful young men, posed in sensual and seductive ways for proud, erotic displays of male pride.

The Exile: A Seductive Tale
by Adrianna Dane

That particular morning, Alonzo wore a cock sleeve of intriguing design, embracing and enhancing the length and breadth of his extremely impressive prick. The sleeve was made of a soft, pounded crimson-dyed leather, adorned with a swirling design etched in gold and black, bits of blushing, delectable flesh peaking through small punched holes in the material, with a sparkling gold tassel dangling from the end, drawing one's eyes to the worthy staff. And Alonzo certainly had that, without embellishments. He had a way of making anyone who passed him yearn to unsheathe his manhood and fuck him right there on the street. It was that untamed manner about him making one want to dominate all that primitive beauty. There was not an authoritarian on the island who had not wanted to possess the young stud for himself. And that morning he had been more of a temptation than usual. Maybe in some way it was a recognition that time was short and that he would soon be claimed by one of them. That morning there was an urgency that had not been present before. It was in the air.

All of the initiates were fitted for an array of special sleeves to sheath their pricks as well as the assortment of toys they carried in their personal pouches. That day some quirk made Linus ask him to keep the sleeve on. It provided a look of naughtiness he wanted in this particular sitting, to create a desire in the eye of the beholder as to what lay beneath the intriguing fitted sleeve. A need to know, yet to never be able to discover the truth of the veiled member. That and the white beaded collar labeling him an initiate were the only things he wore for this particular sitting.

Gods, when he saw him strutting toward him across the lawn in all his primal splendor he had wanted to spirit him away, to make passionate love to him on the banks of the river for the remainder of the morning. But he was a man of authority and as such had responsibilities, a duty to his brethren who resided in the colony. And so he had done his duty. More or less.

"Gentlemen, Alonzo will be our model today. I know how much you enjoy his attendance." He heard the murmurs of pleasure as Alonzo joined him in front of the fountain. Several of the others quickly moved away from their easels to crowd around him.

As he stood back and watched, the others examined him, their hands on his shoulders, moving over his biceps, another hand clasping his sheathed cock, seeming to memorize every facet of his body. He swore he saw Alonzo's penis expand at the attention, hints of tantalizing moisture sheening his body, glittering beneath the morning sun. He wondered how much of Alonzo's self-control would hold as the artist stroked over the leather sensuously, then cupped his balls. Would he be able to hold back the orgasm that he saw burgeoning in his expression? He also witnessed the powerful determination flaring in his eyes as he stared at the artist who tempted him. No, Alonzo wouldn't lose control. Not in front of all these authoritarians who held sway over him. It was his barrier, that little power he still held for himself. Is that what the Ancient finally took from him? Is that why he'd run scared and ended up betraying everything he had worked for? Had

he not been able to maintain that element of self beneath the onslaught of the persuasive Phyneas?

Linus had finally put a stop to the pleasure torture Alonzo stoically endured. "Enough. Let me position him and we will begin." He waved the others away as he turned to the sensual model of the morning. He looked down at his cock and smiled. "You enjoyed their attentions. Your prick has grown in just these last few moments." He couldn't help himself and he stroked over Alonzo's biceps. "You have a beautiful physique, Alonzo." He trailed his fingers through the silky thatch of curling bush surrounding Alonzo's penis.

Alonzo, like all the men, attended the barber's establishment on a regular basis. Some of the men waxed and shaved all the hair from their bodies. Alonzo apparently only requested a trim and some shaping. Linus loved his rugged, untamed beauty. Alonzo's cock throbbed at the attentions, bursting and ready to explode. It was one of the things he enjoyed about Sam's body, that same primitive allure.

"You are a stallion, Alonzo. You need to run. What a joy it would be to draw you, watching you run with a herd. You should request time at the island stable. Maybe join in the races."

He felt Alonzo stiffen beneath his hands. "It would not be so bad, my dear. You have already won over the rest of us. Why not the stablemaster? Why not train for the races?"

Linus plucked at his nipples, drawing them more erect. He then pulled the rawhide tie from his hair and fluffed the locks around his face.

"Gods, you are indeed a wild beauty, aren't you? No wonder you are in such demand." Unable to help himself, he moved closer. "One day, Alonzo, when you have reached the level of consent, I wouldn't mind allowing you penetration rights. Oh, to be fucked by such a primal animal as you would be a wild ride." He stroked Alonzo's cheek. "Yes, indeed, one day, my fine young stallion."

Yet, he had never felt Alonzo's cock inside his body. But he had felt Sam's. And it had been utter bliss to feel him pounding inside him, to feel him burst and bathe his colon with his potent seed. Would it have been the same with Alonzo if he had allowed him penetration rights? He would never know the answer to that question. And now Sam had indelibly imprinted himself into Linus's life with that passionate possession.

He had stepped back and surveyed Alonzo. "Shoulders back, head down. Ah, yes, just like that. What a warrior you are. Perfect. One of these paintings done today will end up with a fine collector on the mainland. Excellent." He had turned and strode to his own easel. How could he have known it would be the last session he would have with this vibrant initiate? Had there been some of his desperation to possess Alonzo present in the painting? Is that what Sam saw and was determined to wipe from Linus's memory?

As much as Linus hadn't wanted the morning to end, he had finally called a halt to the session after several hours. After all, the potters awaited. "Enough for today." He ended the session and strode over to Alonzo. "You have done well

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and I am pleased with your performance. I shall send a note to the head of your house commending your service today."

Alonzo stretched like a large cat rising from a nap, in an effort to ease his aching muscles. "We are done?"

"The painters are finished," Linus amended. "The potters have requested a bit of your time. They have new molds to make and wish your presence. I have promised them a bit of your time. Go into the shed and remove your sleeve, then we shall proceed to the potter's shed."

That had been the last time he had spent intimate time with the favored one. The last he had seen of him was when he left him at the door of the potter's shed. How he wished he had taken some time, even a mere twenty minutes, to fuck him the way he had wanted. But mornings were for work, afternoons for pleasure, and he had responsibilities. Yet he had regretted not giving in to the moment. Alonzo's presence echoed through his life, a ghostly figure that haunted all of them. In the end, the favored initiate had owned a piece of all their souls rather than the other way around.

His thoughts turned back to Sam, so very like the wild Alonzo. Would the same thing happen with him? Was that why he held back from accepting his professions of love at face value? Already he had claimed liberties no initiate would ever dream of taking. And Linus had to admit, he'd loved it. Did he dare take a chance with this young man?

For long moments last night, he had not thought of the young stallion who had betrayed them all. Sam was the one to fill his senses, his thoughts. If he allowed the relationship to continue, would the ghost of Alonzo finally be laid to rest?

The Exile: A Seductive Tale
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He remembered the feel of Sam driving his hard cock into his body. As he had said, it was an awesome feeling to be possessed by him. He couldn't ever remember being fucked so extremely well, so wildly. And he wanted to feel that again. And again. And again. Sam made him feel alive, eager for a new day to begin. Expectant of the passions of the night that would follow.

It was time for him to put to rest the memories of a man who was never truly his to begin with. He needed to move on.

He whipped away from the window and reached for the phone, having come to a decision. He punched in the number of the auction house, and then dialed one of the artisans that often did secret work for the Brotherhood of the Midnight Pearl.

CHAPTER 8

Eleven o'clock came and went. Linus listened as the clock chimed midnight. He fingered the ebony beaded collar dangling from his fingers. He should have known Sam wouldn't come back. He had asked too much. Had moved too quickly. He could go to him, but he knew that wasn't an option. He had made the offer, now it was up to Sam to accept or reject it.

One o'clock rolled around and he flung the collar across the room. He was about to pick up his leather duster, meaning to troll the streets for some quick relief, when he heard the insistent ringing of the bell requesting that the freight elevator be sent down. His heart pumped in his chest.

He punched the button and the elevator descended. The seconds ticked by and he pivoted around searching frantically for where the damned collar had landed. Locating it, he dashed across the room, scooped it up, and rammed it into the pocket of his trousers. He then turned and waited as the elevator slowly began its creaking ascent. His heart was firmly lodged in his throat.

He needed to get control. After all, he was the authoritarian, he was in charge, whatever happened. He tried to pull himself together. It was a hard admission to make that he wanted this so badly.

He heard the echo as the door creaked open and silently breathed a sigh of relief. The expression on Sam's face was one of pure panic.

"I'm sorry," he said, sounding like he was out of breath from running. "There was a problem at the restaurant and I had to stay to help clean up. A couple of guys got into a fight and made a real mess. And I had to make a statement to the police. And the time—"

Linus held up a hand. "It's all right. You don't need to explain yourself. Just tell me why you're here."

Sam's expression grew perplexed. "Why I'm here? You know why I'm here. I want to be with you. I was so afraid what with being late and you thinking I might not come, that you would disappear. Or at the least be really angry with me and not see me." He stepped forward tentatively. "Was I wrong?"

"Did you tell anyone about me? About what I am?"

"God, no. No one would believe me if I did. I did tell a couple of friends that I'd met someone special." He colored slightly. "I had to give my roommate some excuse for not returning to the dorm last night." He hesitated. "And possibly tonight."

Linus studied him closely, noting his discomfort. "Strip."

Sam's head shot up. "What?"

"You heard me. I'll only make a request once. I expect to be obeyed instantly. Unless, of course, you hadn't planned on staying."

Sam quickly threw off his clothing and then stood there waiting, seemingly unsure what to do next. He was just as beautiful as Linus remembered. Maybe more so now that he had come to terms with the ghost of his past.

He walked over to Sam and stroked his penis to full erection. "That's better. When you are here with me, this is how I want you to be."

"You'll let me stay with you?"

"Do you think you can follow the rules? My rules as set down by the Brotherhood?"

His cock was hot in Linus's hand, throbbing to come, slick with pre-cum. His young hips thrust forward. "Whatever you want, Linus."

"First rule. You penetrate no one unless I give permission." He stroked his hand down to the root of Sam's cock and gripped tighter. Sam inhaled sharply. "Do you understand? That means no one. You fuck no one, allow no one to fuck you, unless I have agreed to it." He pulled him forward by the root of his cock, until they were almost touching.

"Yes, I understand. I'll abide by your rules."

Linus waited a long moment before nodding his head. "Very well then." He shoved a hand into his pocket and pulled out the black beaded collar. "You will wear this as a sign of your new status. The local sect of the Midnight Pearl has been notified of your altered situation. You might also know that your name has moved up the list for transfer to the isle. When the next available opening occurs, you will receive the invitation."

"I don't understand." His eyes were glued to the collar. "If I become your initiate, why would I want to go to Mannos?"

Linus dropped his hand, releasing Sam's cock. "They can provide you much more than I ever can from here. You will learn a great deal more on the isle. But until then, I will train

you—an altered form of training to adapt to the mainland environment, but I will still expect your obedience as though we were on Mannos. Here, in this apartment, you will abide by the rules I set down."

"Will you go with me, if I transfer?"

Linus shook his head. "No, I have made my choice, but you have much to experience yet. Maybe your time with me will assist you in preparation. In learning to obey."

"But I want to stay with you. I don't want to be with anyone else."

Linus sighed. "Eternity is a very long time. Many new choices will come your way, especially if you should choose immortality in the end. There will be many responsibilities to consider. The doors will now open to you with unending opportunities. Use them wisely. In the meantime—" He reached out to fasten the collar around Sam's neck. It was slightly loose as he had guessed at the dimension. "It will do for the time being."

Sam reached up to finger it, then looked into Linus's eyes. "Where do we go from here?"

"You may move in here with me, if you wish. But I won't force that on you. I expect you to keep up with your classes. And to continue in your job, if you want to. I will agree to cover your living expenses if you choose to give up the job. But that also represents a loss of freedom for you. And I'm not sure you're ready for that just yet. As I said, we will adapt to mainland needs."

Sam nodded. "I do want to move in with you. But maybe I'll hold onto my job for a while and we'll see how that goes."

"Good choice. Do you have any other questions right now?"

He saw Sam glance past him toward the easel. His eyes widened and he looked back at Linus. "It's gone."

Linus nodded. "So it is. It should bring a good price at auction. Some fine collector will acquire it for his enjoyment."

"Because of me?"

"Because I chose to. Do not forget who is the authority in this relationship." It wouldn't be a good thing if Sam thought he had the upper hand.

He saw a flash of the rebel assert itself in his expression. "Do I get to fuck you again tonight?"

Linus's cock rose quickly at the temptation. His arm snapped out and he wound a hand into his long hair, yanking Sam's head back, exposing the collared column of his throat. "You're going to be a challenge, aren't you, my little studboy." Sam glared heatedly back at him, not giving an inch.

Linus smiled. He liked the fire of his defiance, loved the look of rebellion about his new lover. Unable to resist, he leaned down and claimed his lips, thrusting his tongue deep inside, branding him with his passionate domination. Lifting his head, he locked his gaze with Sam's dilated eyes.

"We'll see, darling boy, we'll see." He whirled around and pushed him toward the large bed. But first he planned to fuck the hell out of that nice, tight ass of his. He looked forward to the moans of his initiate's submission, with mounting pleasure that he had long denied himself. It was a long time until dawn. He smiled as he strode toward the bed. And he had

The Exile: A Seductive Tale
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lots of toys in his little playbox that he hadn't used in a very long time.

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Adrianna Dane

Theresa Gallup uses the pen names of Tess Maynard and Adrianna Dane. Theresa has been writing since the age of 10. A legal secretary for 30 years, she is currently working on another erotic romance, as well as a full-length romantic mystery/suspense. She has been married for 30 years and has three grown children (a daughter and twin sons), and is a new grandmother.

Writing as Tess Maynard, her first published short story appeared in the ezine, *The Whispering Forest*, in January of 2004. Writing as Adrianna Dane, where adding sensual heat to romance is her motto, *Esmerelda's Secret* was her first foray into the erotic romance genre.

Having traveled and lived from the East Coast to the West Coast, Theresa receives inspiration for her stories from a variety of sources, including music and poetry, and her tastes are eclectic.

For more information about current projects, visit Theresa's web sites at www.tessmaynard.com or www.adriannadane.com

* * * *

Don't miss Mariposa Soul, by Adrianna Dane,

available at AmberHeat.com!

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Investigative journalist Andre Cordaire spends the majority of his time globetrotting around the world and flitting from bed to bed, never tempted to stay in any of them. Always searching. It's a lonely existence, but he has never been able to find that special woman with whom to share his life. Soul-mates, however, can turn up in the most unusual places at unexpected times...

An encounter in a bar, a hiking trip up a mountain, and discovering a soul-mate in the person he never would have expected, who makes him want to share the love trapped inside him, was the last thing Andre was ready for. Finally, here is someone who understands more about him than he did himself. Once revealed, can he acknowledge what his heart and soul cries for? Or will he keep running, denying his need for the one person he knows could make him happy? Even if that person is a man?

* * * *

Don't miss Cup Of Fate, by Cassandra Curtis,

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Can one woman find true love in tea leaves? Or is it a tempest in a teacup?

Bryn Tuttle lost everything due to her bad taste in men. Now she's starting over fresh. In the misty bluegrass hills of Kentucky, she finds a new job, apartment and friends. When a co-worker invites her yard-sale shopping one weekend, she

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by Adrianna Dane

decides to tag along, never realizing fate has something else in store.

They discover a rare item—a mysterious, antique, fortune-telling teacup. Bryn never suspects that a single sip from the Cup of Fate will change her life, that her future is actually linked to the tea leaves that cling inside. But when she drinks from the cup and next awakens, she soon comprehends that nothing will ever be the same...

* * * *

Don't miss The Streets of Florence, by Pepper Espinoza,

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* * * *

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anything will involve when they come together for what is supposed to be a simple job ... or how distracting that anything will be.

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