



## The Queen

By *Tiffany Reisz*

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*Once upon a time, Nora and Søren made a fateful deal—if he gave her everything, she would give him forever.*

*The time has finally come to keep their promises.*

Out of money and out of options after her yearlong exile, Eleanor Schreiber agrees to join forces with Kingsley Edge, the king of kink. After her first taste of power as a Dominant, Eleanor buries her old submissive self and transforms into Mistress Nora, the Red Queen. With the help of a mysterious young man with a job even more illicit than her own, Nora squares off against a cunning rival in her quest to become the most respected, the most feared Dominatrix in the Underground.

While new lovers and the sweet taste of freedom intoxicate Nora, she is tempted time and time again by Søren, her only love and the one man who refuses to bow to her. But when Søren accepts a new church assignment in a dangerous country, she must make an agonizing choice—will the queen keep her throne and let her lover go, or trade in her crown for Søren's collar?

**With a shattering final confession, the last link in the chain is forged in *The Original Sinners* saga. It's the closing chapter in a story of salvation, sacrifice and the multitude of scars we collect in the name of ecstasy—and love.**

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"Just when I thought Tiffany Reisz's books couldn't get any better-she released The Prince. Bravo, Ms. Reisz, you've done it again."

-Blogcritics

"Someone will have to pry this book out of your hands.... The Prince truly transcends genres and will leave readers absolutely breathless."

-RT Book Reviews

"I worship at the altar of Tiffany Reisz! Whip smart, sexy as hell-The Original Sinners series knocked me to my knees." -New York Times bestselling author Lorelei James

"She pushes boundaries, a lot of boundaries. Tiffany Reisz really is a master at telling a story and lucky for us, she has more stories to tell."

-Mandi Schreiner, Smexy Books

"I cannot say enough good things about this book without sounding like a madwoman.... [The Mistress] brings out the best in her characters...without sacrificing an ounce of juicy plot."

-RT Book Reviews, TOP PICK, Gold review

#### About the Author

Tiffany Reisz lives in Lexington, Kentucky. She graduated with a B.A. in English from Centre College and is making her parents and her professors proud by writing erotica under her real name. She has five piercings, one tattoo, and has been arrested twice. When not under arrest, Tiffany enjoys Latin Dance, Latin Men, and Latin Verbs. She dropped out of a conservative seminary in order to pursue her dream of becoming a smut peddler. If she couldn't write, she would die.

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*The First Wedding*

#### NOW, THIS WAS A HAPPY ENDING.

It was all Nora had hoped for, all she had prayed for, and she couldn't stop grinning as the music began—Jeremiah Clarke's *Trumpet Voluntary*.

She smiled even wider when two elderly gentlemen in traditional servant's livery opened the great oak double doors with a flourish befitting the exalted occasion.

After one deep breath, Nora stepped through the open doors and did the one thing she'd sworn she would never do—she walked down the aisle of a church in a wedding dress toward Soren, who waited for her at the altar.

He hadn't seen her for hours and this moment was Soren's first look at her in her wedding dress. It had been

twenty years since she'd walked down an aisle toward Soren as a bridesmaid in a wedding he'd performed. Even now, halfway down the aisle, she could see the look in his eyes, a look that said the twenty years had been worth the wait.

As Nora took her place at Soren's right hand, she leaned in close and whispered, "Stop looking at me like that."

"Why?" he asked as the two hundred assembled guests rose to their feet when the groom made his entrance into the Great Hall that had been converted into a church for the wedding.

"You're on duty," she reminded him. *"Father Stearns."*

"Can I look at you like that after the wedding?"

She smiled at him as the two grooms joined hands in front of Soren.

"Today you can do anything you want."

"Watch out. I'll hold you to that promise," he said as the music faded into silence leaving her unable to retort. She swallowed her words, composed her face and tried not to cry when Soren began to speak.

"Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to join this man, Michael Luka Dimir, and this man, Griffin Randolfe Fiske, in holy matrimony. May your love be blessed by the sacrament of marriage and may we all who are gathered as witnesses rejoice together in the beauty of your commitment to each other as we would bask in the warmth of the sun..."

Nora made it three whole minutes into the ceremony before the tears started flowing. Luckily all eyes were on Michael and Griffin as they spoke their vows and made their promises. Once upon a time in a very different setting, Nora and Soren had made promises to each other and she wore those promises around her neck in the form of wedding bands engraved with two words—*Forever* and *Everything*. They weren't wedding vows but they had bound them together nonetheless. What was a sacrament but the outward sign of inner grace? If she and Soren loving each other and staying together despite all they'd been through, all they'd put each other through for twenty-three years, wasn't a miracle, she didn't know what was.

"Therefore," Soren said as the service drew to its conclusion, "now they are not two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

Soren spoke with authority and power, as if the words themselves could bind hearts together.

"I now pronounce you husband...and husband."

Griffin took Michael's face in his hands and kissed him.

And kissed him.

And kissed him.

A kiss of love and of lust and of complete and utter devotion, it went on so long the assembled witnesses started to titter, then giggle, then laugh. They kissed until Soren cleared his throat not once, but twice, louder

the second time than the first. When even that didn't put a stop to their rather protracted display of public affection, Soren uttered a low "For heaven's sake, Griffin, people have places to be. Can't you save the consummation until later?"

Griffin paused long enough to look at Soren and answer, "Nope," before returning to the kiss with gusto.

Nora applauded him. Good man. Don't let anyone tell you to stop kissing for such a silly reason as two hundred people watching. What better place in the world was there to be than here, watching true lovers kiss? One didn't see such a thing every day. When witnessing a miracle, one should never hurry it along, for it'll be gone all too soon and who knows when one will see another miracle in one's lifetime?

Time stopped with that kiss. The image imprinted itself upon Nora's mind like a tintype photograph... She stood at Soren's right as Michael's mistress of honor—no one would have believed her a maid or a matron, so mistress it was—and Kingsley stood to the left of Soren as Griffin's best man. The wedding was held in the Great Hall of the thousand-year-old castle. The vibrant blue walls gleamed like polished azurite in the glow of a dozen brass-and-crystal chandeliers. Candles and flowers stationed on the ebony oak floors encircled the wedding party. Kingsley, Griffin and Soren all wore kilts. Griffin's and Kingsley's were red, white and green, the tartan of his mother's ancestors. Soren's kilt was black and blue, the traditional clergy tartan of Scotland and bruises. Upon request and because she couldn't tell Griffin no when he'd asked so nicely, she'd worn a Scottish wedding dress, tiered white silk and lace peeking out from under a corseted red-and-green tartan overlay. Michael had forgone the kilt—not his style, he said—and chosen a hip Rat Packera tuxedo with a black shirt and black jacket. A better-looking married couple she'd never seen in her life and not because they were so beautiful, although they were, but because their love was true and pure and hard-won. Every act of love was an act of courage, but for Michael and Griffin it was especially so. The world didn't often reward those who loved outside the lines. Nora had learned this lesson the hard way.

The kiss went on so long the guests rose to their feet and applauded.

Griffin turned to the masses and issued an order.

"Less applauding," he yelled at his guests. "More kissing!"

"No one has to tell me twice," Kingsley said, holding out his hand to Juliette, the mother of his daughter with another one on the way, and the most beautiful woman in attendance by far. Laughing, Juliette rose to her feet and put her hand in Kingsley's. He dipped her back and gave her an old Hollywood kiss.

"Shall we?" Soren asked.

"In front of two hundred people?"

"Why not?"

"Is that a rhetorical question or do you really want me to list all eight hundred reasons why not?"

Soren answered by taking her face in his hands and kissing her—a kiss like Communion, like wine on her tongue. She heard a few gasps of shock from the assembly followed by laughter and applause. Apparently this was the first time they'd seen a Catholic priest kissing a woman. It was a first for Nora as well, being kissed by Soren in front of so many people they didn't know. Yes, Kingsley had forced all the staff and the guests to sign non-disclosure agreements, but that was no guarantee word wouldn't leak that a certain well-

respected Jesuit priest passionately kissed a fairly notorious dominatrix at a wedding in Scotland. And not just any wedding—a samesex wedding. Soren could be laicized for performing a samesex marriage. He'd get in less trouble if he were caught by the Pope himself sodomizing her in the Tomb of Saint Peter. Not that she'd ever had that fantasy—not very often anyway. Officiating the service had been Soren's gift to Michael, whom he loved like a son. When Nora had reminded him of the very real danger of excommunication if caught, Soren had replied, *Michael asked me. It's my honor to do it.* Since Soren was a man of honor that had been the end of it. But it wouldn't be the end of it.

Soren was a Jesuit priest who had kissed a woman in front of two hundred people and performed a same-sex wedding. A kiss plus a wedding plus what would happen tonight at nine o'clock added up to one very simple conclusion.

Soren's days as a priest were numbered.

\* \* \*

#### *Nora's Last Confession*

NORA PULLED BACK FROM THE KISS AND SAW A DOZEN or more couples kissing, including Griffin and Michael, who were still kissing.

And. Still.

Kissing.

"Oh, for fuck's sake, Griffin," Nora said, reaching in front of Soren for Kingsley's hand. "You two make out as long as you want. The King and I are going to get a drink."

Nora gave Kingsley the end of the long plaid ribbon she'd tied around her bouquet. As they walked on either side of the happy couple—still kissing, of course—they lifted their hands and passed the sash over their heads like a wedding bower. Behind her she heard Soren speaking to the crowd of guests.

"I'd suggest everyone retreat to the banquet hall," he said in his most authoritarian clergy voice. "It seems the groom and groom might be a while."

Kingsley took her arm in his to escort her down the long aisle to the door.

"I heard we have you to thank for the wedding," Kingsley said, kissing the back of her hand.

Nora winced. "Michael had a little case of cold feet. I beat it out of him."

"Literally?"

"It took a solid hour of flogging followed by an hour of wax-play. Kid came so hard he almost passed out. Two-hour nap, and he was ready to get married. I love saving the day," she said. "I'm so good at it."

They waited in the foyer and soon they were joined by Michael's mother and sister, Griffin's parents and three brothers, and Soren. Juliette, wearing a red gown to match Kingsley's kilt, passed Céleste into his arms. And when Michael and Griffin finally emerged from the Great Hall it was to a hail of applause and a shower

of rice. Céleste was the best rice thrower of them all, Kingsley assured his little girl. Michael's lips appeared swollen from so much passionate kissing and his pale cheeks were flushed, but Nora had to admit, she'd never seen him or Griffin ever look happier. Today was a beautiful day to be in love.

The guests who greeted the couple with hugs and kisses were a hodgepodge of friends and family, or as Kingsley called them, "the freaks and the straights." Mistress Irina, the first dominatrix Kingsley had trained for The 8th Circle, had sat next to Michael's aunt and uncle during the ceremony. Michael's sister Erin had borrowed a tissue from Alfred, Griffin's white-haired butler, who'd had to surreptitiously wipe his own eyes a time or two during the ceremony. Nora'd been a little surprised he'd come all the way to Scotland for Griffin's wedding. When she had asked him why he'd made the long trip from upstate New York, he'd answered, "He's a manchild and a deviant, and he has more money than sense, young lady. So of course I'm here for his wedding to his shamefully younger boy toy. It's the only sensible thing he's ever done in his life." Then he'd stalked off before Nora could hug him or worse, cry in his arms, which would have been an unforgivable affront to his dignity.

"Good ceremony, Father," she said, smiling up at Soren. "I loved the homily."

"Thank you. The Lord gives me good material to work with. I suppose He deserves most of the credit." Leave it to a Jesuit to be simultaneously pious and smug.

"Oops, picture time," she said. "I should go."

The photographer was already attempting to corral the wedding party back into the Great Hall. Soren started back into the hall with her.

"You can't be in the pictures," she reminded him.

"Michael expects me to be in at least one of the photographs for him and Griffin."

"Soren...this is not a good idea."

"Michael's like a son to me," he said. "When you have a child, you make sacrifices for them."

"All right. Pictures it is. In for a penny, in for a pounding, right?" She took his hand in hers. His fingers trembled, and she met his eyes with a question.

"I'm fine," he said before she had the chance to ask.

"It's fine if you aren't fine."

"I am fine."

"Your hand is shaking."

"This kilt *is....breezy.*"

"It's like a hundred feet of wool."

"This castle has an updraft. I'm not used to inclement weather in that region."

"It's your own fault for going regimental."

"Kingsley was. And when in Rome."

"How do you know Kingsley's going full Scotsman?" She narrowed her eyes at him. "Did you actually go running this morning or did you two play a game of hide the claymore?"

"I ran," he said. "Before."

"I knew it." She took both of his hands in hers now and interlocked their fingers.

Soren glanced at a grandfather clock and back at her. "Five thirty," he said. "Three and a half more hours."

"It'll go fast," she said, smiling a hopeful smile. "Won't it?"

"It will be the longest three and a half hours of my life." For Nora, too.

"They won't need me at the reception which isn't a reception. I can wait with you," she said.

"Thank you." He kissed her on the forehead. "What would I ever do without my Little One?"

Nora swallowed an unexpected lump in her throat.

"I promise, you won't ever have to find out."

Reluctantly she let go of Soren's hands as the photographer led her and Kingsley toward Michael and Griffin. The first pictures were of the groom and groom, best man and mistress of honor.

Kingsley held out his arm for her and she took it, grateful for his company in the secret they shared. "How is he?" Kingsley asked. "He is exactly how you think he is," she said. "Never so scared in his life?"

"White-knuckle petrified."

Kingsley kissed her cheek. "I know how he feels."

Pictures took half an hour. Kingsley promised to make her and Soren's excuses to anyone who asked where they were. Michael and Griffin could be told the truth, of course. They would understand. Michael had agreed to a big wedding with one stipulation—no official wedding reception. A party? Sure. Fine. Michael, young artist that he was, found manufactured moments like the ceremonial cake-cutting offensive. The reception was only for people to eat and drink and dance. Once the wedding was over, the wedding party was free to get up to whatever depraved shenanigans they wanted to. And as she and Kingsley were the wedding party, depraved shenanigans were a given.

Nora went looking for Soren and wasn't the least surprised to find him in the castle's small stone-and-wood chapel. She stepped inside and strode toward him.

The sun streamed through an octagonal window and cast eight-sided light onto Soren, turning his blond hair into gold in a moment of pure alchemy. In a breath, in an instant, she was fifteen years old again, and he twenty-nine, and he looked exactly like he did the first time she'd laid eyes on him. The sunlight melted the

years between then and now. Her hand trembled so it was a miracle she didn't drop her glass of red wine.

Her footsteps on the stone floor alerted Soren to her presence. He lifted his head and turned back to her. The mask of composure had fallen, and she saw anguish in his eyes. She set her glass of wine on the altar and went to him, gathering him in her arms, holding him to her heart and resting her chin on the top of his head.

"How are you, my sir?"

"I don't know," he admitted, looking up at her. "There have been days in my life where I've woken up not knowing that later on that very day, my entire life would change. The day I met Kingsley, the day I met you. Usually you don't know the day or the hour. Today I do."

"Remember that story I wrote about Queen Esther when I was in high school?"

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