

A GILDED CAGE IS STILL A PRISON



THE PLATED PRISONER SERIES

RAVEN KENNEDY

THE TIK TOK SENSATION THAT HAS SOLD HALF A MILLION COPIES



GILD

RAVEN KENNEDY



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GOLDEN GOLD VINE

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS





## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Raven Kennedy is a California girl born and raised, whose love for books pushed her into creating her own worlds. The Plated Prisoner Series, a dark fantasy romance, has already sold in over a dozen countries and is a #1 international bestseller with over 1 million copies sold to date. It was inspired by the myth of King Midas and a woman's journey with finding her own strength. Her debut series was a romcom fantasy about a cupid looking for love of her own. She has since gone on to write in a range of genres. Whether she makes you laugh or cry, or whether the series is about a cupid or a gold-touched woman living in King Midas's gilded castle, she hopes to create characters that readers can root for. The Plated Prisoner series is being adapted for series by Peter Guber's Mandalay Television.

You can connect with Raven on her social media sites, and visit [www.ravenkennedybooks.com](http://www.ravenkennedybooks.com)

*To the ones who try, but can't see the stars.  
Keep looking up.*







# CHAPTER 1

*I lift the gold goblet to my lips as I watch the show of naked flesh through the space between my bars.*

The lighting is low, deliberate. Just a crackle of flame over promiscuous shapes that move in warm tandem. Seven bodies working all to one sole release, while I'm here, apart, like a spectator for a sport.

The king called me in here a couple of hours ago when he started getting hot and heavy with his revolving harem of concubines—also known as his royal saddles. He decided to have his pleasure in the atrium tonight, probably because of the acoustics in here. To his credit, the moans really do echo nicely.

“Yes, my king! Yes! Yes!”

The skin around my eyes tightens, and I quickly gulp more wine down and force myself to look away and take in the night sky instead. The atrium is huge, and all of the walls and the domed ceiling are made entirely of

glass windows, so it's the best view in the palace. That is ... when it stops snowing long enough to see anything.

Right now, there's a snowstorm like usual. White flakes fall from the sky, a promise to cover the panes by morning. But for now, I can see a faint hint of a single star high above, peeking out from between the oppressive clouds and looming white. Always, the puffy, frozen vapor stands sentinel over the sky like a miser, stealing the view from me and hoarding it to itself. But I have a glimpse, and I'm thankful for that.

I wonder if at one point, past monarchs from forgotten times built this atrium so they could chart the stars and decipher the stories that the gods left for us in the sky. But then nature thwarted them, those sentry clouds mocking their effort and blocking truths from us.

Or perhaps the long-dead royals just built this room to see the glass frosted over and blizzards whipping around while they could stand in here, untouched by the vast, white cold. Olean royals are arrogant enough to do something like that. Case in point ... my eyes flicker over to the king who's currently balls-deep in his saddle while the others flaunt and play for his pleasure.

Maybe I'm wrong though. Maybe this space wasn't built for the purpose of us looking up, but for the gods to look down. Maybe those old royals brought *their* saddles up here too, as a visual offering for the heavens to enjoy the debauchery. Based on some of the stories I've read, the gods are a horny bunch, so I honestly wouldn't put it past them. I don't judge them, though. The royal saddles are very talented.

Despite the fact that I'm being forced to watch and listen to the lewd acts right now, and despite the fact that the top of the dome is usually blocked with snow, I still like coming in here. It's the closest I ever get to being outside, or feeling the wind on my face, or having my lungs expand with fresh air.

Bright side? At least I never have to worry about my skin getting chapped from the wind or shivering from the snow. The snowstorm *does* look cold, after all.

I try to keep a positive outlook on life, even if I am in my own personalized birdcage. A pretty jail for a pretty relic.

"Oh, Divine!" one of the saddles—Rissa, I think—cries out in bliss, pulling me from my thoughts. She has a husky voice and blonde hair, beauty effortlessly held on her face.

I redirect my gaze to the scene in front of me, unable to help myself. There are six saddles doing their best to impress. Six is the king's lucky number—since he's the ruler of the Sixth Kingdom of Orea. He's a bit obsessive about it, really. At any given time, I see the number surrounding him. Like the six buttons on every shirt that his tailors make for him. Or the six spires in his gold crown. The six saddles he's fucking tonight.

Right now, five women and one man are catering to his carnal needs. The servants brought up a bed so that he could be comfortable while he's getting his thrill. It seems like a big hassle for them to take apart the enormous bed, walk up three flights of stairs, and then put it back together again, only to have to remove it again later. But what do I know? I'm just the king's *favorite saddle*.

I wrinkle my nose at that term. I prefer it when people call me the king's favored. It has a much nicer ring to it, though it still means the same thing.

I'm his.

I kick my feet up on the bars in front of my cage, settling back on the cushions beneath me. I watch the king's ass flex as he plunges in and out of one of the girls beneath him, while two more women kneel on the bed on both sides of him so that he has full access to their bare breasts, which he's currently kneading, two-handed.

The king is a breast man.

I look down at my own chest, which is currently wrapped in gold silk. It looks more like a toga than a dress, the strip of fabric clasped together at each shoulder and then cascading down, belted with gold loops at the waist. Gold is all I wear or touch or see.

Every single plant in this atrium that used to be fertile and green is now lifeless and metallic. The entire room, other than the clear glass of the windows, is gold. Just like the golden bedding the king is fucking on right now, gold flakes peppered into the wood grain of the bed frame. The gold marble of the floor, darker veins burnished into it like frozen, silty streams. Gold doorknobs, gleaming vines creeping up gilded walls, metallic columns holding up all the wealth as they reach for the archways.

Gold is a big theme here in King Midas's Highbell Castle.

Gold floors. Gold window frames. Rugs, paintings, tapestries, cushions, clothing, dishes, knights' armor, hell, even the pet bird is frozen in lifeless shine. As far as the eye can see, everything is gold, gold, gold, including the entire infrastructure of the palace itself. Every stone and rung and pillar.

The exterior of the castle must be glaring when the sun hits it. Luckily for everyone who lives outside of the palace, I don't think the sun has actually ever come out to shine on it. If it's not snowing, it's sleeting, and if it's not doing either, there's usually a blizzard on the way.

The bell here always tolls with a warning when there's a blizzard coming, warning people to stay indoors. And that enormous bell in the tower that sits at the highest point of the castle? Yep, that's solid gold too. And damn, is it *loud*.

I hate it. Its peals are noisier than a hail storm on a glass ceiling, but with a name like Highbell Castle, I guess *not* having an annoying bell would be blasphemy.

I've heard that people can hear it ringing from miles and miles away. So with the loud bell and the dazzling gold, Highbell Castle is a bit garish from its spot perched on the side of this snow-covered, rocky mountain. King Midas doesn't believe in subtlety. He flaunts his renowned power, and the people either bow in wonder or hunger in envy of it.

I walk over to the edge of my cage to pour myself more wine, only to find that the pitcher is empty. I frown down at it as I try to ignore the squeals and male grunts going on behind me. A different saddle—Polly—is getting ridden by the king now, her sex noises grating on me like an aching tooth scraped over ice, while jealousy cringes inside my chest.

I *really* wish I had more wine.

Instead, I snatch up the grapes on my cheese and fruit platter and stuff them in my mouth. Maybe they'll ferment in my stomach, and I can get a little quasi-drunk from it? A girl can hope.

Stuffing in another mouthful for good luck, I walk back to the corner and settle down on the plush gold pillows on the floor. With one ankle crossed over the other, I watch the writhing bodies as they put on their lovely performance for the king.

Three of the saddles are new, so I don't know their names yet. The new male is standing up on the mattress, totally naked, and great Divine, he is pretty. His body is molded to perfection. I can see why the king chose him, because with those chiseled abs and effeminate face, he's *very* nice to look at. It's clear that when he isn't servicing Midas, he's working out to sculpt his each and every muscle.

Right now, he has his forearms braced on the top beam of the four poster bed frame, and a female saddle is perched on it like a squirrel on a branch,

her legs spread wide as he eats her out. Their balance and showmanship can't be ignored.

The third newbie is on her knees in front of the male, sucking his length like poison from a snake bite. And ... wow, she's *really* good at that. Now I know why she was chosen. I tilt my head, taking mental notes. You never know when something like this can come in handy.

"Your cunt is boring me," Midas suddenly says, making Polly quickly get out from under him. He spans the boob girl in front of him. "You're up. I want your ass."

"Of course, my king," she purrs before spinning around and dropping onto her knees, her ass high in the air. He plunges into her with the slick juices of Polly still on his cock, and the woman gives off a moan.

"Faker," I mumble under my breath. No way that felt good.

Not that I would know firsthand. I've never been breached *down there*, thank Divine.

The sounds in the room intensify when a couple of the saddles orgasm—either faking it or real—and the king slams harshly into his female before finally spilling his seed with a grunt.

Hopefully, he'll be well and truly done this time, because I'm tired and I'm out of wine.

No sooner does the woman collapse beneath him than he smacks her on the ass again, this time in dismissal. "All of you can go back to the harem wing. I'm done with you for the night."

His words interrupt the rest of the saddles, cutting short their own releases. The male is still rocking his erection, but none of them complain or pout or ignore his command. To do so would be pure stupidity.

They all quickly disentangle themselves from each other and walk out naked in a single file line, some thighs still wet and sticky. It's been a long night.

I wonder if the saddles will finish things off themselves in the harem wing. I wouldn't know, because I'm not allowed in there, so I don't know their dynamic when the king isn't around. I'm not allowed to go *anywhere* unless I'm in my cages or in the presence of the king. As his favored, I'm kept locked away and safe. A pet to be protected and kept.

I watch Midas carefully while he pulls on his golden robe as the last saddle walks out. Just the sight of him standing there, barely dressed and satisfied from his sensual pleasures makes my stomach tighten.

He's beautiful.

He's not muscled, because he has a very plush life, but he's naturally slim and broad shouldered. Young for a ruling king, Midas is only in his thirties, the edge of youth still softening his face. He has tanned skin, despite the fact that all it ever does is snow and rain here, and his hair is blond with reddish honey tones, the scarlet hue more pronounced in the candlelight. His eyes are a deep brown, and there's a presence about him—a charm. It's his charm that always gets me.

My gaze travels further down, over a tapered waist and the outline of his softening length that I can still see beneath the silky fabric.

“Getting an eyeful, Auren?”

At the sound of my name, I jerk my attention away from his crotch and up to his smirking face. My cheeks go warm, though I play off my embarrassment. “Well, it *is* a nice view,” I tell him with a lift of my shoulder and a wry curve of my lips.

He chuckles and then begins strutting over to the bars of my cage at the back of the atrium. I love when he smiles. It gives me the crawling caterpillars in my stomach—not butterflies. I'm jealous of those free-flying bitches.

His eyes run over me from my bare feet all the way to my chest. I'm careful not to move from where I'm seated, even though I want to fidget under his scrutiny, my head tilted up in expectation. I've learned to stay still because that's what he likes.

His gaze runs over my body in a slow stroke. “Mmm. You look good enough to eat tonight.”

I get to my feet fluidly until the fabric of my dress cascades down to skim over the tops of my toes, and then walk over to the bars in front of him. One hand curls around one of the delicate bars that separates us. “You could let me out of this cage and have a taste.” I'm careful to keep my tone playful and my expression sultry, though my gut burns with want.

*Let me out. Touch me. Want me.*

My king is a complicated man. I know he cares for me, but lately, I've just been wanting ... more. I know that's my fault. I shouldn't want more. I should be happy with what I have, but I can't help it.

I wish Midas would look at me the way I look at him. I wish his chest would beat with yearning as mine does. But even if he could never give me that, I wish he'd simply spend more time with me.



I know that's an impractical thing to want. He's a king. Constantly being pulled in a thousand directions. He has duties that I can't even fathom. The fact that I get any attention at all should be something I celebrate.

Which is why I bury the want, a shovelful of snow covering the craving with numbing weight to hide in my depths. I distract myself. I flounder. I fill up my hours with whatever I can. But no matter how many people I see every day, I still wake up lonely and go to sleep the same way.

It's not Midas's fault, and it's pointless to pout about it. That would get me nowhere—and I live in a cage, so going nowhere is my expertise.

Midas's smirk widens into a grin at my cheeky words. He's playful tonight, a mood I don't often get to see, but love when I do. It reminds me of how we were when we first became friends. When I was just a lost girl and he swept in to show me a different life, the way he smiled at me and reminded me how to curve my own lips.

Midas takes another sweeping look over my figure, my skin warming in flattery at his pleased attention. I'm shaped like an hourglass, with a generous chest, hips, and butt, yet that's not what people notice when they first look at me. I'm not even sure *he* notices it either.

When people look at me, it's not to appreciate the curve of my shape or to decipher the thoughts in my eyes. No, they're only preoccupied with one thing, and that's the luster of my skin.

Because it's *gold*.

Not *golden*. Not tan. Not painted or dipped or dyed. My skin is real, shimmering, satiny, gilded gold.

I look just like everything else in this palace. Even my hair and irises glimmer with a metallic sheen. I'm a walking gold statue, everywhere except for my gleaming white teeth, the whites of my eyes, and cheeky pink tongue.

I'm an oddity, a commodity, a rumor. I'm the king's favored. His prized saddle. The one he gold-touched and keeps in a cage at the top of his castle, my body bearing the mark of his ownership and favoritism.

The gilded pet.

I'm the darling of King Midas, ruler of Highbell and the Sixth Kingdom of Orea. People flock to see me just as much as they come to look upon his gleaming castle worth more than all the riches in the entire realm.

I'm the gold-plated prisoner.

But what a pretty prison it is.