

GOLD CAN BLIND, LIES CAN BIND

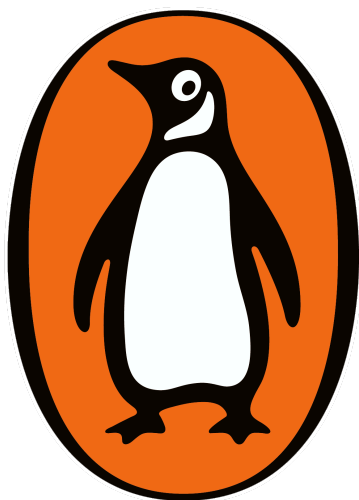


# GILN

THE PLATED PRISONER SERIES

RAVEN KENNEDY

THE TIK TOK SENSATION THAT HAS SOLD HALF A MILLION COPIES



# GILNT

RAVEN KENNEDY





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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

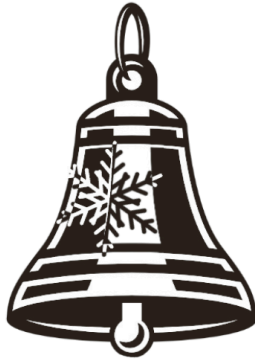
Raven Kennedy is a California girl born and raised, whose love for books pushed her into creating her own worlds. The Plated Prisoner Series, a dark fantasy romance, has already sold in over a dozen countries and is a #1 international bestseller with over 1 million copies sold to date. It was inspired 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)

*Dedicated to those who see no bars but still feel  
caged.  
Fly.*







# CHAPTER 1

## QUEEN MALINA

*Gold, as far as the eye can see.*

Every inch of Highbell Castle carries the telltale shine. In the past decade, people have traveled far and wide across all of Orea just to look upon it. It is heralded for its magnificence, the people always impressed with its overwhelming splendor.

But I remember how it used to be. I remember the slate of the parapets and the iron doors of the gate. I remember when I had gowns in every color and the dishes on the tables were white to match the Colier hair. I remember when the bell in the tower was copper, its chime light and clear.

Things that were once feather-light now take several men to pick up. Parts that once carried the colors of age and history now glisten as if new. Even the roses in the atrium have been gold-touched, never again to sprout a new bud or fill the air with their perfume.

I grew up in Highbell Castle. I knew every rough rock and speckled stairway. I knew the dark grains of wood on the window frames. I can still recall the way my father's throne felt, melded together with stone and diamonds cut from the mountains to the east.

Sometimes, I wake in the middle of the night, trapped in the tangles of my golden sheets, and I can't tell where I am. I don't recognize this place at all, not anymore.

Most days, I don't even recognize myself.

The dignitaries who visit revel in the gloss and glamour. They stand awed by the precision of every surface's change and celebrate Midas's power.

But I miss the way Highbell used to look.

Every gray nook, every raw chair, even the ugly blue tapestries that used to hang in my old bedroom. It's surprising, the things you come to miss once they're stripped away from you.

I knew I was going to pine over the loss of control over Sixth Kingdom when I agreed to marry. I knew I'd mourn my father when he died. I even knew that I'd miss being addressed by my old name and title, Princess Malina Colier.

But I never anticipated that I'd feel the loss of the palace itself. It wasn't something I could've predicted would happen. Yet room by room, item by item, everything was changed before my eyes, down to each pillow and wine glass.

It was exciting at first, I can't deny that. A gold castle in the frozen mountains was something out of a fairy tale, and I had a king to make me a queen. I had a marriage that would ensure I could stay here, in my home, to carry on my royal bloodline.

But here I sit, in my gilded drawing room, my naivety long since ripped away. I have no heirs, no family, no magic, no partnership with my husband, and no recognition of the very place I grew up in.

I'm surrounded by wealth that holds no value to me.

This castle, the place where my mother birthed me, where my father and grandfather ruled, where all of my fondest memories reside, has become foreign. It holds no comfort, no excitement, and certainly no fairy tale.

People are dazzled by it, whereas my eyes see every single scratch in the golden surfaces of the floors and walls. I notice every inch where the soft metal has worn down, distorting the shapes. I catch the corners where the servants haven't polished, I note each fragment that's gone dull.

Gold may gleam, but it doesn't stand the test of time. It wears down, loses its luster, becomes nothing but a needy, malleable surface with no durability.

I loathe it. Just as I've come to loathe *him*.

My renowned husband. The people fall to their knees for him instead of me. I might not have magic, but resentment is a powerful thing.

Tyndall will be sorry. For every time he pushed me aside, for always underestimating me, for taking away my kingdom.

I'll make him pay for all of it—just not with gold.

“Would you like me to sing for you, Your Majesty?”

My gaze cuts over to the courtier sitting across from me. He's young, probably only around twenty, pretty on the eyes and easy on the ears. Traits that *all* my courtiers have.

I loathe them as well.

They buzz like pests, consuming pretty dishes of food, taking up air with their mindless chatter. No matter how many times I try to swat them away, they always swarm around me again.

“Do you *want* to sing?” I retort, though it's honestly a moot point, because ...

His smile broadens. “I want to do whatever will please my queen.”

A fake answer from a fake companion.

That's all these courtiers are. Pretenders. Gossipers. Sent to my side to distract and entertain me. As if I'm a simpering, foolish female in need of mindless recreation all hours of the day.

But Tyndall is gone—swept off to Fifth Kingdom where the people will no doubt bow at the Golden King's feet. Midas will like that immensely, and that's just fine with me.

Because while he's there, I'm *here*. For the first time, I'm in Highbell without his flashy presence.

It's as if it's a sign from the great Divine. No husband to defer to. No king to bow to. No golden puppet at his side, greed incarnate, glossing over the ugliness of lies.

It's my chance.

With Tyndall away, distracted by putting Fifth Kingdom beneath his thumb, I have an opportunity, and I won't squander it.

I may not recognize the walls of this castle anymore, but it's still *mine*.

I still have the same ambition I did when I was a little girl, before it became clear that I have no magic, before my father gave me to Tyndall, blinded by the gleam of his gold.

The gold doesn't dazzle me, though. Not anymore.

Because my dream, my role, my *due*, it was always to rule Highbell.

No submitting to a husband, no being shoved aside or treated like a coddled pushover. Tyndall Midas has put his hands on everything, glazing over my entire life.

And I let him. My father let him. This whole damn kingdom let him.  
But I'm done.

I'm done sitting in a cushioned chair, embroidering silly handkerchiefs, eating sickly sweet cakes while the courtiers talk about which dress so-and-so wore, simply because they like hearing the sound of their own voices.

I'm done being the silent cold queen frozen in place.

Tyndall is gone, and for the first time since I've become queen, I can actually *be* a queen.

And I intend to.

I've worn a crown my entire life, but I'm finally going to wield it.