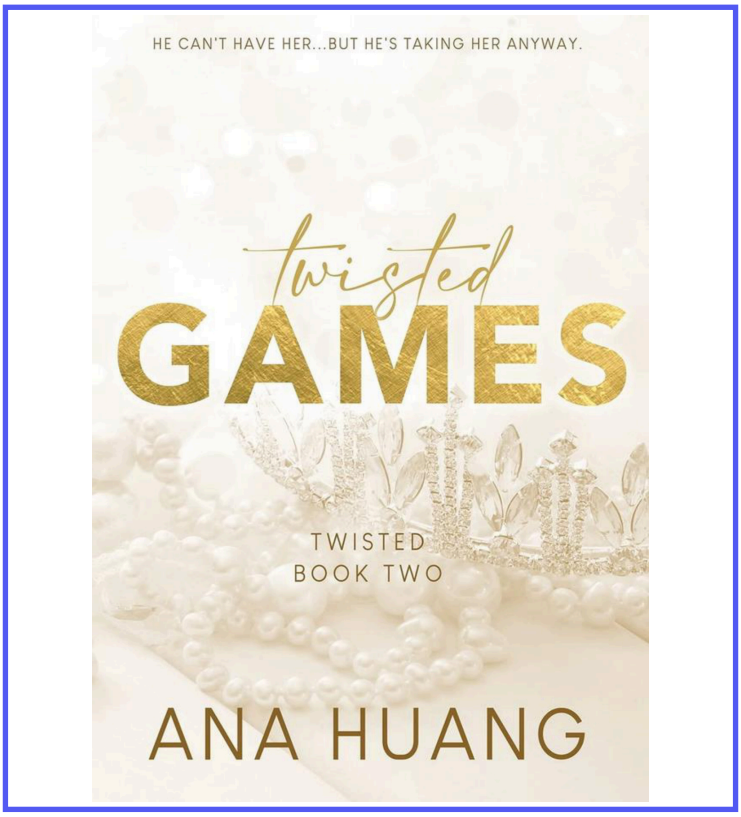


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or scan the QR code to access the digital study portal.

To all the girls who said fuck Prince Charming,
give me a scarred knight.

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“Queen”—Loren Gray

“Castle”—Halsey

“Arcade”—Duncan Laurence

“You Should See Me in a Crown”—Billie Eilish

”Telepatía”—Kali Uchis**

“Stay”—Rihanna

“Uncover”—Zara Larsson

“Secret Love Song”—Little Mix

“They Don’t Know About Us”—One Direction

“Minefields”—Faouzia & John Legend

“Wildest Dreams”—Taylor Swift

“Princesses Don’t Cry”—Aviva

“Fairytale” (Slowed Version)—Alexander Rybak

“I Guess I’m in Love”—Clinton Kane

***For the Chapter 18 vibes more than the lyrics*

She can never be his…but he's taking her anyway.

Stoic, broody, and arrogant, elite bodyguard Rhys Larsen has two rules: 1) Protect his clients at all costs 2) Do not become emotionally involved. Ever.

He has never once been tempted to break those rules…
until *her*.

Bridget von Ascheberg. A princess with a stubborn streak that matches his own and a hidden fire that reduces his rules to ash. She's nothing he expected and everything he never knew he needed.

Day by day, inch by inch, she breaks down his defenses until he's faced with a truth he can no longer deny: he swore an oath to protect her, but all he wants is to ruin her. Take her.

Because she's his.

His princess.

His forbidden fruit.

His every depraved fantasy.

***

Regal, strong-willed, and bound by the chains of duty, Princess Bridget dreams of the freedom to live and love as she chooses.

But when her brother abdicates, she's suddenly faced with the prospect of a loveless, politically expedient marriage and a throne she never wanted.

And as she navigates the intricacies—and treacheries—of her new role, she must also hide her desire for a man she can't have.

Her bodyguard.

Her protector.

Her ultimate ruin.

Unexpected and forbidden, theirs is a love that could destroy a kingdom…and doom them both.

NOTE TO READERS:

This story takes place over four years and includes several time jumps, especially in Part I, in order to bring us to the present. It has overlapping timelines with the preceding book, *Twisted Love*.

Part I takes place through the epilogue of *Twisted Love* (the past)*;* Part II takes place after (the present).

It is recommended but not necessary to read *Twisted Love* first in order to understand what happens.

PART I

1

BRIDGET

"SPANK ME! MASTER, SPANK ME!"

I stifled a laugh at my bodyguard Booth's face as Leather the parrot squawked in his cage. The parrot's name said all you needed to know about its previous owner's sex life, and while some found him amusing, Booth did not. He hated birds. He said they reminded him of giant flying rats.

"One day, he and Leather are going to get into it." Emma, the director of Wags & Whiskers, clucked her tongue. "Poor Booth."

I held back another laugh even as I felt a small pang in my heart. "Probably not. Booth's leaving soon."

I tried not to think about it. Booth had been with me for four years, but he was leaving for paternity leave next week and staying in Eldorra after to be closer to his wife and newborn. I was happy for him, but I would miss him. He was not only my bodyguard but a friend, and I could only hope his replacement and I had the same rapport.

"Ah, yes, I forgot." Emma's face softened. She was in her early sixties, with short, gray-streaked hair and warm brown eyes. "Lots of changes for you in a short time, my dear."

She knew how much I hated goodbyes.

I'd been volunteering at Wags & Whiskers, a local pet rescue shelter, since my sophomore year of college, and Emma had become a close friend and mentor. Unfortunately, she, too, was leaving. She'd still be in Hazelburg, but she was retiring

as the shelter director, which meant I would no longer see her every week.

"One of them doesn't *have* to happen," I said, only half-joking. "You could stay."

She shook her head. "I've run the shelter for almost a decade, and it's time for new blood. Someone who can clean the cages *without* her back and hips acting up."

"That's what volunteers are for." I gestured toward myself. I was belaboring the point, but I couldn't help it. Between Emma, Booth, and my impending graduation from Thayer University, where I was majoring in international relations—as expected of a princess—I had enough goodbyes to last me for the next five years.

"You are a sweetheart. Don't tell the others, but…" She lowered her voice to a conspiratorial whisper. "You're my favorite volunteer. It's rare to find someone of your stature who does charity because she wants to, not because she's putting on a show for the cameras."

My cheeks tinted pink at the compliment. "It's my pleasure. I adore animals." I took after my mother in that regard. It was one of the few pieces of her I had left.

In another life, I would've been a veterinarian, but in this life? My path had been laid out for me since before I was born.

"You would make a great queen." Emma stepped aside to allow a staff member with a wriggling puppy in his arms to pass. "Truly."

I laughed at the thought. "Thank you, but I have no interest in being queen. Even if I did, the chances of me wearing the crown are slim."

As the princess of Eldorra, a small European kingdom, I came closer to ruling than most people. My parents died when I was a kid—my mother at childbirth, my father in a car accident a few years later—so I was second in line to the throne. My brother Nikolai, who was four years my senior, had been training to take over for our grandfather King Edvard since he was old enough to walk. Once Nikolai had children, I