

The Stable Master

Chapter 4

The arrival of Storm was not as dramatic as his name might have implied. Just as with Butterpiss, Storm had been carried along in a horse-containing trailer thing. The former owner warned me that Storm could be a little 'wild' and to be careful around him, and had wished me luck before leaving.

This new horse was young and strong and, just as I'd wanted, wild. The type of horse that'd buck anyone who tried to climb onto its back. The beast was all black, with mean eyes and an angry temperament. Even getting close to the animal made it snort threateningly.

Perfect, then, for what I had in mind.

Storm was no old, boring Buttershits. And he'd probably be a pain in the ass to look after as Stable Master. But the benefits I'd gain from obtaining the animal? Well worth the extra effort.

As I struggled to lead the beast to the stables – the rope around its neck helped me guide it, but the stupid horse resisting at every opportunity – I glanced around the Penrose grounds. Eyes scanning for either of the delicious daughters.

Alicia, I knew, would not step anywhere near Storm. The girl was too timid to ride *Butterbowl*. Just the *idea* of having to ride Storm would be likely to give the girl a panic attack. But, I wanted her to at least see the new animal. The new member of her 'family'.

It was Roslyn I was more interested in at that moment. The youngest Penrose with the leanest figure and the most modest – yet still ample – bust. The athletic one, who wore revealing, sporty clothes that her conservatively-dressing sister and mother would never be seen dead in.

The girl needed a challenge. An obstacle to overcome.

That challenge would be Storm.

I'd task her with breaking the horse in, becoming its 'master'. And, as she struggled to do just that, I'd sink my teeth into her – fill her mind with thoughts and feelings and ideas that'd make her mine. I was the Stable Master, after all. If anyone knew about mastering horses, it was me. As long as Roslyn believed that, and as long as she had the drive to win and succeed at the challenge I'd present her with, she'd be as good as mine in no time.

Getting Storm into his stall was a pain. The beast didn't seem to like enclosed spaces very much. But, as much as the horse wanted to resist me, the rope around its throat prevented it from doing so too much.

Animals. Too stupid to realise even the most simple of concepts.

If Storm didn't want to obey, if he *truly* desired to resist, he should have kicked me in the chest – put an end to me for good. Instead, he resisted in minor, meaningless ways. Made my job difficult but not impossible. And, in the end, his petty resistance meant nothing – he still ended up where I wanted him to go.

Life was like that. All or nothing. No compromise, no middle-ground.

Either resist with everything you have, and crush those you're resisting. Or give in and obey. Anything else and you'd just be wasting your time – like stupid Storm, in his tiny stall.

The Penrose women would be mine.

All of them, or none of them. No middle-ground. No compromise.

Befriending the other staff of Penrose Manor was not going well.

Mostly, they kept to themselves and did their jobs. None of them wanted to be seen slacking or chatting where Momma Penrose might catch them. Apparently, she expected her employees to work like slaves and to be *grateful* for it.

The few conversations that I *had* managed to have with other Penrose employees

hadn't exactly been enlightening. No-one knew much about Momma Penrose and those that might had no inclination to tell me what they did know.

When the time came, I'd take great pleasure in firing them all.

Penrose Manor, and its women, would be mine.

I just needed to crack that one egg. Felicity Penrose. I needed to break through the barriers she'd set up, somehow convince her or trick her or manipulate her into submitting herself to hypnotic sessions. Once I had those sessions, I'd be in a much better position to make my plans a reality.

So, the question that'd been on my mind for so long now:

How was I going to break such an arrogant, self-important bitch?

Felicity Penrose was, from what I'd seen, the type of woman who basked in her sense of control. Who took pride in the power she wielded over others. She was wealthy, she had people under her direct control. She had sway over their lives by the simple fact of her employment of them. And she *enjoyed* that.

Some of that was guesswork, sure. But it made sense.

When I'd told her Alicia needed to see someone else, someone she trusted and knew, riding horses – in the hopes that Momma Penrose would volunteer herself for the position – she'd send me her other daughter instead. She'd *controlled* her youngest daughter into doing as she willed. She'd exerted her power and influence, even in such a petty and trivial way.

She took pride in the power and control she had over others.

Likely, she *believed* she controlled me. An employee of hers.

How could I use that? How could I twist that information to my advantage? How could I manipulate someone who thought they had control and power over me?

Simple. I let her *think* she's the one in control.

Hypnosis was something everyone knew about, yet few people actually understood or comprehended. To most, it was a parlour trick or a means therapeutic treatment. The information they knew, or believed they knew, came from popular media and generalised hearsay. Rules like not being able to make someone do something they don't want to were, at best, misunderstood by most.

A lot of people, especially those who were arrogant or else considered themselves overly intelligent, believed that they *couldn't* be hypnotised. That only *weak* minds were susceptible.

Felicity Penrose wouldn't submit herself to hypnosis if it was to 'help her'. She didn't think she *needed* help. And she wouldn't agree to let me hypnotise her out of curiosity. I could try tricking her into a trance; have a conversation with her in which I induced a hypnotic state without her knowing I was doing it. But that'd be difficult, with too many unknown variables.

My best chance of hypnotising Momma Penrose, then, would be to use Felicity Penrose's arrogance and false sense of control against her.

Easier said than done, and my slowly forming plan was not without risks. But it was all I could think of.

If I wanted Penrose Manor, and its prizes, this was the only way. I had to play with fire and not get burned.

I watched, doing my best to keep a smirk off my face, as Roslyn Penrose dropped to the ground like a sack of potatoes. There was an audible *thud* as she landed hard on her back. Storm raced off immediately, running as far as the fenced off area of Penrose Manor would allow. If I wasn't careful, that beast might attempt to jump the fence and try to escape.

Roslyn rolled around in the mud for a moment, then climbed to her feet while holding her side. She look hurt, but wasn't crying out or anything – probably just bruised

from the fall.

She was wearing black track pants, now stained with brown dirt, and running shoes. Her white top – a spaghetti strap shirt – was similarly soiled and dishevelled, one of the straps fallen down Roslyn's arm. If that top had been just a little bit more skewed, I'd have gotten a glimpse of the girl's nipple. As it was, she corrected her wardrobe malfunction before I got a chance to see the goodies. A real shame.

Turning her head to scowl at Storm as he pranced away, Roslyn looked anything but *bored*.

She wasn't happy. That was a given. But, as long as she wasn't actively disinterested, I'd take this first encounter as a win. If I had to humiliate Roslyn by having the new horse buck her and drop her fit, toned ass onto the ground, so be it. With any luck, it'd stir the girl's competitive spirit. Her desire to win.

As Roslyn made her way back to where me and her sister were standing, her eyes shifted to Alicia. Roslyn grimaced, blushed.

Alicia, no doubt, was horrified by what she'd just seen.

Her fear of horses, I'd discovered, stemmed from a childhood trauma. She'd loved horses as a child, enjoyed riding them. They'd been her favourite thing in the world. Right up 'til the moment she'd been bucked off one, dropped to the ground and broken an arm and dislocated a kneecap.

She'd been terrified of riding horses ever since. Specifically, her anxiety was for being bucked – or else falling – from the saddle.

Seeing it happen to her sister, right in front of her eyes?

I could imagine the pretty girl's face without even looking. Picture the wide, horrified eyes. Mouth open in shock. Her mismatched irises practically bulging. Quite possibly, she'd even have tears forming at the corners of her eyes, worry over her sister and terror at the same thing potentially happening to her again.

Roslyn's arm – the one cradling her injured side – moved away. She stood straighter, brushed off the pain she must've been feeling with a grin and waved at her sister happily.

She was trying to show her big sister that she was fine, that everything was okay and that there was nothing to be afraid of.

A good sister, Roslyn. She cared about Alicia.

That was something I could use.

Unfortunately, Alicia wasn't convinced. She turned, walked so fast that she was practically sprinting, and headed back in the direction of the manor house. By the time Roslyn reached where I was stood – inches away from her sister had been standing a moment before – Alicia was gone.

From what I knew about trauma and phobias, Alicia was probably heading to her bedroom to have an anxiety attack. Out of sight of her sister and mother, as she wouldn't want to make them worry.

When Roslyn started to follow after her sister, I stopped her.

"Leave her be," I told the youngest Penrose. "She'll be okay. Just needs to breathe. If you go after her, all you'll be doing is suffocating her and boxing her in when she needs time to herself. She'll be alright, don't worry."

It wasn't *exactly* true, but Alicia leaving to go have her panic attack presented me with a rare opportunity.

Roslyn, on her own. Ripe for manipulation.

"Come on," I smiled. "There are some things we need to talk about. Things about your sister and the stables. And what you can do to help her."

"Miss Penrose," I said with a polite smile. "May I come in please?"

I'd never been inside the actual manor before. And, truth be told, I wasn't expecting

Felicity Penrose to let me in just because I'd asked. Still, it couldn't hurt to try. And, if all went well with this conversation, I might very well see the manor's interior before the day was out.

It was, of course, Sunday. And, as with all Sundays, only Momma Penrose and I were on the estate. The other employees all had the day off, and the daughters were attending church services.

What better time to test my hypothesis?

"No," Felicity Penrose stated curtly, "What do you want?"

I bowed my head a little, an act of mild submission.

"Your help," I said, looking down at the ground. If this was going to work, I needed Felicity Penrose to think me meek. "With Alicia and her *little problem*."

I felt more than saw Felicity Penrose's narrowed eyes.

"Yes?" She said.

"She's making a lot of progress, thanks to Roslyn's attendance at the stables. Slowly, she's beginning to get over her hiccups and reservations with horse riding. At the current rate of progress, she'll likely be riding again in just under a year. Which, I must say, is amazing given how deep-seated her trauma-"

"A year?"

"Yes," I said, glancing up at the queen bitch's face. She was glaring, eyes hot. Likely, she thought her daughter's troubles could be solved in just a few weeks or months. And, honestly, she wasn't all that wrong. "That's what I came here to speak to you about, Ma'am. You see, there may be a way to speed things up. Make it so that Alicia conquers her anxiety much sooner."

There was the bait and hook. Time to see if Momma Penrose would go for a nibble.

"Well?" Felicity Penrose said, voice filled to the brim with annoyance. "Spit it out. I don't have all day."

I paused. Allowed my theatrical side out for a moment.

Didn't want to seem too eager, after all.

"Hypnosis," I stated, meeting Felicity's eyes. "I think, using hypnosis to root out some subconscious hold-ups Alicia has, I can cure her of her anxiety problems much sooner. But, given how shy and anxious your daughter is, Ma'am, I believe she'll have difficulty allowing her mind to relax sufficiently to allow for a hypnotic trance."

The sharp glare Felicity Penrose gave me was uncomfortable, filled with danger. One misstep here, and I'd be fucked.

"I believe that, just as with witnessing her sister riding Butterbowl has helped Alicia overcome some of her problems, witnessing someone else – a close family member – being hypnotised in front of her will give Alicia the confidence and assuredness she needs to allow herself to be hypnotised too."

I didn't know what Momma Penrose's thoughts on hypnosis where. There was a good chance she'd reject my 'idea' outright, refuse to allow me to hypnotise her daughter at all. It was a gamble, one among many. But this was, I knew, my best chance.

"Very well," Felicity Penrose sighed dismissively. "I'll have Roslyn visit the stables with Alicia tomorrow, you can-"

"Unfortunately," I said, cutting in before she could finish her sentence, "that won't do. I've already discussed this with Roslyn. Yesterday, in fact. And she agreed to let me hypnotise her. Only, I'm disappointed to admit, it didn't work. For whatever reason, hypnosis does not work on Roslyn. No matter how much I tried... Well, it happens. Some people's minds are incompatible with the thought-processes that hypnosis requires."

Risky, risky, risky. Lots of lies and untruths, any one of which could be my undoing. I wasn't just playing with fire, I had my hands in an inferno.

"The only person who can do this, I'm afraid, is you."

Felicity Penrose didn't say anything. Didn't speak a word. She just stared at me, my

face. No doubt trying to read me, searching for any hint of deception – any reason at all to deny me.

I held my poker-face, met her piercing gaze with an innocent mask.

"Again," I said quickly, disarming. "Hypnosis is not necessary to helping Alicia. With time and guidance, she'll overcome her trauma and anxiety. A year at most, I'd say. Hypnosis would simply be a way of reaching that same end, only sooner. It is in no way necessary for Alicia's-"

"If it didn't work on *Roslyn*," Momma Penrose said sharply, apparently it was her turn to cut me off now, "what in the world make you think it would work on *me*?"

Pride. Silly, foolish, moronic pride. It was a weakness too many people overlooked.

"To be honest with you," I spoke softly, earnestly – despite the fact I was bullshitting like I'd never bullshitted before, "I don't. Usually, the more confident and strong-willed a person is, the less likely it is that they can be hypnotised. It's not always the case, though. And, if it *does* work, it'll save Alicia *months* of unnecessary stress and anxiety. Worst case scenario, I waste half an hour of your time. That, I think, is a small price to pay for the potential of seeing Alicia riding again..."

Pride and arrogance would make her believe she was immune, removing potential worries she might have. Love for her daughter would – hopefully – inspire her to at least try my proposition.

This really was my best bet.

I could see unreadable thoughts flickering in Felicity's irises. She was considering, thinking it over.

A good sign – she wasn't outright dismissive.

Finally, she pursed her lips, looked me up and down.

"Half an hour?" She asked, voice slightly less harsh and cold than it'd been before.

I nodded my head, suppressed a smile.

"Fine," she said, looking down her nose at me. "Just know that this is a waste of time, and I'll be docking your pay for the hour. Follow me and do *not* touch anything."

She stepped away from the doorway, allowed me to walk inside.

Finally, after working at Penrose Manor for weeks, I was about to set foot inside the actual building.

Some might've considered that slow progress. But, in my eyes, it was a milestone achieved. A hurdle overcome. I followed after Felicity Penrose as she led me to a small, comfortable office room – my eyes roaming the walls and shelves and paintings so elegantly and pretentiously displayed.

Honestly, the building's interior was underwhelming. Everything inside seemed so ugly and *old*. Out-dated. Grandfather clocks and rugs and vases. It was like visiting an elderly grandmother's home, filled with the timeless shit and useless ornaments and generations-old aesthetics.

When I owned the manor, I'd definitely have to renovate the place.

But, for now, I allowed myself to bask in my victory.

Getting inside the manor building was the lesser of my victories today. My real prize was the woman who sat down at her desk, folded her arms and waited for me to seat myself opposite her.

Finally, my golden opportunity had arrived.

It was time to hypnotise Momma Penrose herself.

And, with her under my control, Penrose Manor and all the pussy that lived under its roof were as good as mine.

All I had to do was make this first, most vital session count.