



Black and Blue

By Zoe Black

BLACK AND BLUE

(Jamie McCloud Book 3)

Zoe Black

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Chapter One

Walking through Times Square was not one of Jamie's favorite tasks. Her normal walk, wherever she went, was a long, brisk stride that accomplished the dual aims of getting her where she was going as fast as possible, and discouraging strangers from interrupting that journey.

She had discovered the need for that brisk stride when she was just shy of fourteen, and already five feet nine. Looking older than her years, and with an already well-developed body she had found the attentions of boys and men to be uncomfortable and threatening. Once she grew older, and got her black belt, she found them to be merely irritating.

It wasn't that she didn't accept that she was an attractive looking young woman, and not that she wasn't reasonably content with that, but the impact her looks had on men, even in fairly conservative clothing, bemused and often annoyed her, especially when they made their interest known in particularly rude ways.

A brisk stride, especially with earphones on, let her ignore comments about her body, catcalls, and even the more restrained and polite efforts of men who might want to meet her and gain her attention with a smile and witty phrase.

She had enough boys after her attention, ones she knew. She didn't need to deal with strangers.

It wasn't that she was exceptionally beautiful, but that her face was particularly striking in its arrangement of enormous green eyes, unusually thick, soft hair, and smooth, ivory skin over a small snub nose and delicate cheeks and chin.

She'd become something of a tomboy, constantly fighting with her brothers, and her long legs had gotten her involved in track and field, volleyball and basketball at school. Because of this she'd become lithe, toned

and graceful in her movements, and her long strides and challenging stares reminded some of a feral animal, definitely a predator, moving over the plains.

That challenging stare had been known to stop approaching men in their tracks, be they would-be romantics, smirking adolescents, or salesmen. It was an intimidating, heavy lidded warning to not mess with her. Unfortunately, it seemed wholly lost on Asians.

And it was Asians she had come to dread in and around the Times Square district. In particular, Asian tourists, who, she gathered, found a six foot tall woman with flaming red hair to be far more worthy of recording on their ever-present cameras than any of the super heroes and cartoon characters who paraded within their confined spaces eagerly seeking dollars in exchange for poses.

A long, brisk stride was not what was called for in her work here. She was required to blend in and act perfectly normal, draw no attention – or at least, no more than any other six foot tall redhead would, and keep an eye open for pickpockets, frauds, thieves and perverts as part of Manhattan North's anti-crime squad.

She was fairly new in anti-crime, and new to plainclothes work. She'd worked as a uniformed member of the NYPD in Staten Island until a couple of month or so earlier. Rookies were rarely transferred to plainclothes work, unless it was due to a specific need, such as the Vice squad needing attractive young female officers for undercover work.

But she'd gotten the department great publicity when she'd saved several children from a fire one day, and it had been recorded by a neighbor and put on You Tube. Her grandfather, one of the department's Assistant Deputy Commissioners, had used that as a pretext to transfer her to one of the gem jobs for police in New York.

Anti-crime officers didn't have to wear uniforms, nor did they dress in business-wear like detectives. They dressed however they felt like dressing to fit in wherever they went. And if that meant shorts and tank tops, that was what they were authorized to wear. They didn't answer routine calls, such as

for domestic disputes either, either. If they were in cars they answered what calls they felt like answering.

The rest of the time they prowled high-crime or 'sensitive' areas watching for criminals who had no idea they were present, or did surveillance on known repeat offenders trying to put them away again.

The Times Square district was one of the precinct's higher crime areas, though little of it was violent. Still, the city didn't like tourists having a bad time, and getting hustled or having their purse or wallet stolen was bad for business. It was also considered a top target for terrorists. So the area was heavily patrolled by both uniformed and plainclothes police.

Jamie didn't mind the area, though she'd spent very little time there when growing up in Brooklyn. Still, she had the native New York attitude of amused contempt for tourists combined with a casual insouciance about the things those tourists found so exciting.

The streets around Times Square were a bustling mix of tourists and office workers, with hotels, office towers, stores, restaurants, theaters and residential housing all tossed together higgledy—piggedly.

Her job was to notice things the uniformed cops wouldn't because their visibility caused criminals to mind their behavior whenever a blue uniform was around. As such, she had to stroll, rather than stride, and she was raised to be reasonably polite with people.

When Asian men and women eagerly approached her, jabbering in barely comprehensible English wanting to have their pictures taken with her, she had first been taken aback and confused. Now, after more time around the tourist areas she took it with barely concealed annoyance and the smallest of forced smiles.

As long as they were quick about it, anyway. Standing behind Japanese or Chinese tourists whose heads came up to mid-chest made her feel somewhat like a freak of nature being photographed for the family back home, but being rude to tourists wasn't what the city paid her for.

It was a warm day in August. There were few places to conceal a gun or handcuffs when wearing light summer outfits. Especially for women. She had chosen a men's basketball jersey for today, along with a pair of white shorts that would be invisible under it.

Of course, there were women's jerseys, but they tended to be too short for her, and hug the hips too closely. She wanted a jersey that wouldn't show the distinct bulge of a holster underneath. The men's jersey was looser across her back and hips, but tighter across the chest, but she was willing to accept the trade-off.

She'd chosen a New Orleans Pelicans jersey, not because she was a fan of the team, which she thought of as having the stupidest name in basketball, primarily because it would look more touristy to have an out-of-state jersey on, and because purple went well with her red hair.

Unfortunately, strolling around Times Square in a tight basketball jersey left her less able to deter the come-ons of men with a simple hard stare. Which, along with the Asians goggling at her and taking pictures, was doing nothing good for her temper.

The earphones she was wearing – actually hooked into the radio on her hip not an iPod, kept her in touch with her partner, sergeant Mueller, and two other anti-crime cops patrolling the district on foot just then, Geraldo Batista, and Lyle Jeffries.

And it was the radio that gave her the opportunity to take out her temper on someone, when a thief mistook the slight bulge at her side, and her headphones for evidence of something easy to steal and re-sell while she was posing with an Asian couple.

He was a slight, young Hispanic teen and had very light fingers, lifting up the side of her loose jersey and grabbing the narrow miniature radio before she'd even felt his movement. He wasn't light-fingered enough, though, and she spun on him as he turned to run. He yanked the radio hard enough to pull the earplug out but only made it a dozen feet away before her arm grabbed him by the collar and yanked him back.

“Fuck off, beetch!” he snarled, turning and swinging at her.

She shifted her grip to grab the front of his shirt and let her momentum shove him back hard as she jerked her elbows up, lifting him off his feet and body slamming him against the wall behind him before dropping him heavily to the sidewalk.

She dropped atop him, grabbing his arm and yanking it up behind him as she forced her knee into the cursing teen's back and pinned him there despite his struggles. She had a lot higher muscle mass and thus weight than most women, and his struggles accomplished very little.

“Put your hand behind your back, you little shit. You're under arrest,” she snarled.

“Fuck you, puta!” he yelled, continuing to struggle.

He screamed and cursed as she twisted his arm and dug her fingers into the pressure point of his wrist to cause him pain.

“I don't respond well to that word,” she growled, grinding her knee into his spine. “Now put your fucking arms behind your back!”

She would have preferred to get a little more physical, as in reach down between his legs and give his balls a hard squeeze. That usually took the struggle out of most males. But she was mindful that the Japanese tourists weren't the only ones with their cameras out now eagerly videoing what was happening.

Besides, the area around Times Square was one of the most heavily patrolled and had the heaviest security video coverage in the city, and she was reasonably sure she was being watched by one or another of them.

She rode her struggling suspect until she finally jerked back on his long, stringy hair and then yanked his right arm up behind his back far enough to pin with her right knee. She released his hair, letting his face hit the sidewalk and quickly drew her cuffs out and snapped them around his right wrist.

“Give me your other hand.”

He cursed at her instead, but she hadn't expected obedience. Using her right knee to pin his right wrist she forced her left foot down between his right arm and his body, then sank fully down, letting her knee force its way between them so she could grab it and pull it up behind him.

She had just managed to cuff him when a pair of uniforms rushed up, probably directed by the people monitoring the CCTV, she got up, handing him over to them as she retrieved the radio from where it had fallen on the sidewalk.

I hate cell phone cameras, she thought irritably as she let the uniforms frog march her suspect back to the Times Square sub-station. She followed along behind, adjusting her radio and checking to see if it was still working.

She was able to spend some time there doing the paperwork on the computer stations there, then got back to work, and almost immediately ran into another problem, practically under her nose.

“Wow, look at the crowds!” Josh said, staring around them.

Erin shook her head as she pulled him down off the bench he'd been standing and took his hand, winding her way through the crowds to where her mother Kristin was waiting in line before one of the tour buses. Seeing New York had been an incredible experience, but it was also tiring, especially with a complaining mother on one hand and an eager nine year old on the other.

Still, it would be good for Josh to see something of the bigger world which was out there. Watertown was pretty small change comparatively speaking, and the closest real city was Syracuse, an hour away, and it wasn't very big.

He might see images of bigger cities on the internet, but seeing them in person made it real, even if New York City was an hour drive and they had to stay in New Jersey because of the outrageous hotel costs in New York.

Her mother climbed onto the bus, and then, beaming happily, settled into the front seat.

“Can't we go upstairs, mom!” Josh exclaimed, eagerly looking at the stairs.

“The sun is too hot,” her mother said stubbornly.

Erin groaned inwardly. The trip had been like this the whole way, and while she didn't want to split them up she was going to go upstairs with Josh, no matter how sulky her mom got. She prepared to put this diplomatically, when a man jumped onto the front of the bus.

Unlike city buses, the tour bus front seat faced forward, just behind the door, with the large glass windshield only a few feet away. The man had jumped onto the bumper and plastered his body against the windshield!

He was almost naked, but his body was painted blue, and he had long blue dreadlocks, with his lips painted black. He was also wearing a bathing suit with an enormous blue, mercifully flaccid penis attached to the front.

Her mother screamed, and Erin barely halted her own as Josh's eyes bugged out! The man was grinding his pelvis into the glass and licking the windshield! Then a redheaded woman in a purple basketball jersey walked up behind, grabbed him, and yanked him off.

The blue man sprawled on the road temporarily but the woman grabbed his dreadlocks and yanked him up, pulling him off the road and over onto the sidewalk where a gaping crowd snapped pictures.

“Wow!” Josh said, rushing to the window to stare.

“It's my act! It's my act!” the man cried.

“Stay off the road and don't harass the tourists!” Jamie snapped. “You know you have to stay over on the blue zone.”

“But I'm practically invisible!”

She shoved him and then kicked his ass so he went staggering forward a dozen yards.

“Move!”

“Was that a police woman, mom?”

“I’m going upstairs!” her mother said, getting up and hurrying to the stairs. “This city is full of freaks.”

“I think so, dear,” Erin said, leading up after them.

Jamie followed the guy back to the blue zone where 'characters' were confined. She had no idea who the hell he was supposed to be, but then, the naked painted women didn't represent regular characters either.

All of them hung around Times Square trying to entice tourists to pose with them for money. They could be annoying, and sometimes hostile when they weren't tipped. A guy who offered up 'free hugs' had been arrested not long ago for slugging a Canadian tourist who hadn't tipped him.

Others had gotten in trouble for fighting with each other over territory. Now the city had painted part of the pedestrian mall in blue and confined them to it, sort of like cages without bars. The pedestrians could walk by and the characters could call to them, but couldn't cross that line.

She quickened her pace to lose the picture takers, and headed down Broadway for a bit, then took 45th Street, walking past a number of theaters to 8th Avenue, and turned back at 46th to head right back. And there was more trouble – of a sort.

There were a half dozen men in suits in front of the Scientology building handing out flyers. They weren't all bunched together, but were in a row, a staggered row, along the sidewalk, so that to get past them you had to swerve left then right then left then right and again and again.

She stopped and watched for a few minutes. The Scientologists weren't good at taking no for an answer. Just because the first guy made a pitch to a pedestrian and was ignored didn't stop the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh from also standing in their path and talking to them while thrusting flyers and pamphlets at them.

She shook her head and crossed the road, pulling her badge out on its lanyard.

“Good morning, would you like to hear about Sciento –.”

“You guys are obstructing the pedestrian traffic,” she said.

His smile never wavered. “Would you like to take a free stress test?” he asked.

“No. The only thing stressing me is you getting in people's way, so stop doing it.”

“What about a personality test?”

“Do you speak English?”

An older man came out of the building suddenly, graying hair cut short.

“Is there a problem, officer?” he asked smoothly.

“Yes. You guys can't obstruct pedestrian traffic.”

“People are able to walk past.”

“You're purposefully getting in their way. Step back against the wall and you can call to them all you want.”

“Is there a law against –?”

“Disorderly conduct. Article 240, subsection 20, obstructing vehicular or pedestrian traffic,” she said. “Get them back inside or against the wall so people can walk by without interference or I'm arresting all of them.”

He smiled calmly, but nodded, and gestured the other men to move against the front of the building. She nodded and moved on, shaking her head. Some people complained there were too many laws in the city, but if you didn't have a law to stop people acting like jerks then sure as hell someone was going to act like a jerk all day long.

She made her way up Seventh Avenue. She was passing the Disney store when angry voices brought her up short.

Disney wasn't a usual source of trouble, unless it was shoplifting, and even that was rare, but she quickly detoured and went inside. Two men were facing off near a shelf full of stuffed goofies and she hurried over. As she got closer she saw a dark haired woman was also involved in the fray, and keyed her mike.

“Disturbance in the Disney store,” she said. “Anyone near?”

“Be there in a minute,” Batista replied.

One of the men was wearing a short-sleeved white button up collared shirt and jeans, while the other was in a brown suit. The man in the suit was larger, but older, in his late thirties, with a belly on him and balding hair. The one in the shirt looked tanned, with upswept blonde hair and had a body that looked like the product of lot of time at the gym.

The younger guy grabbed the older one and shoved him hard against the shelf of goofies and women screamed and children began to cry. The guy in the suit swung at him but missed, and the women yanked on the wrist of a blonde girl of six or seven to pull her back while yelling at the man in the suit.

“You're out of your league, Billy!” she said, more as a taunt than a warning.

The younger guy, spun 'Billy' around and yanked his suit back over his arms, then gave him a punch in the kidneys that almost dropped him to his knees. He struggled up, though, swinging around wildly, then threw his weight back, ramming into the younger guy, who was forced back,

snowplowing his way through the woman and child behind him until he hit a shelf filled with snow princess dolls.

Jamie moved in between them at that point, just as the younger guy shoved the other one away and drew back for a haymaker.

There was a lot of shouting and screaming going on as she put herself in front of the younger guy.

“Police!” she shouted at the top of her lungs.

She yanked her badge out and grabbed his arm as he froze.

“Turn around! On your knees! Now!”

She quickly turned her head towards the other one, holding up her finger.

“You! Back off!” she shouted.

Batista hurried in at that point and grabbed the guy in the suit as the woman with the blonde rushed in.

“It was his fucking fault!” she shouted at Jamie, pointing at the guy in the suit.

“You watch your mouth and lower your voice!” Jamie snapped. “And take care of your child, for God's sakes!”

“My child is fine, thank you!” the woman snapped back. “It's that asshole ex-husband of mine who's causing all the trouble!”

Batista was already doing a quick pat down of 'Billy' so Jamie did the same for the guy who'd knelt obediently in front of her.

“What's your name?” she demanded.

“Kyle Stoneman,” he replied sullenly. “I wasn't doing nothing!”

“Kyle, you know what a double negative is?” she asked as she finished her pat down.

He stared at her in confusion and she straightened up as Batista pulled the other guy away and started talking to him.

“You should be arresting him!” the woman yelled, pointing at him. “He's the one who shouldn't be here! He's the cock sucker who started everything!”

“If you don't stop screaming I'm going to put you in cuffs,” Jamie warned.

The woman's jaw dropped and she stared at her in outrage, then she snapped her lips closed.

Mueller showed up, then, with Jeffries behind him. He pulled the Kyle Stoneman to his feet and let him off to talk to him, while she dealt with the woman.

“What's your name?” she demanded.

“Tiffany Kirkland,” she replied, glowering at her.

“You want to tell me what this was about, Mrs. Kirkland?”

“It's Miz! And it's about that asshole ex-husband of mine showing up where he's not wanted!”

“That would be that guy?” Jamie asked, pointing.

“That's him, mister big shot because he lives in Manhattan while I have to live in Brooklyn!”

“Why was he here?”

“Because he's an asshole and he likes to cause trouble! I was just here with my boyfriend having a nice time with my daughter, when he comes in and starts making accusations and threats! You need to arrest him and put

him in jail forever!”

She was still clutching the blonde girl, who was crying and looking frightened. Her ignoring the girl except to hang onto her was starting to irritate Jamie

“I take it he's the girl's father?”

“So? You think that gives him permission to do anything he wants?”

“I didn't say that. Look, why don't you take care of your daughter while we deal with this.”

She saw Jeffries beckon her and wandered over to him. He was standing with one of the blue shirted employees, a wide-eyed blonde.

“This is Hannah Spencer. She says the guy in the suit confronted that couple there, that he was angry and he and the woman got into it, just with words. The other guy got into it, then, and started making it physical.”

“What were they arguing about?” Jamie asked.

“From what I heard the man in the suit said that it was his day with the little girl,” she replied. “The woman had called him and told him she was sick and he couldn't pick her up.”

Jamie made a face. She hated domestic disputes, especially those involving children. Not having to answer calls for them was one of the great things about being out of uniform. She went over to stand beside Mueller, with the guy in the suit.

He turned as she approached.

“Looks like a custody dispute,” he said.

He was holding a document in his hand.

“Mister Patelli is supposed to have custody of his daughter every second weekend, which includes this one, and he was planning on taking her here.

His wife called and told him she was sick and not to pick her up but the girl called him this morning and told him they were coming here.”

“Lovely,” she said. “You didn't think coming down here and making a big scene would be traumatic to your daughter, Mister Patelli?” she asked.

He flushed and dropped his eyes. “I didn't expect anything to get physical,” he said.

“But you were still planning on yelling at your wife.”

“I was planning on talking to her and then taking Amber with me. It's my weekend and I have custody of her. She told my daughter that I had called off our weekend because I wanted to play golf! And then she brings that lousy punk with her! He doesn't even have a job! He's leaching off her while my scanky ex buys him clothes and watches with my money!”

She wandered back to Mueller.

“What do you want to do?” he asked.

She looked at him in surprise.

“You were first on scene,” he said.

“What I want to do is take the kid away from them and lock up all the parents.”

“Okay, now what do you want to do that's actually legal?”

“Well, pretty boy took the first violent act, shoving Patelli back into the shelves. Patelli swung at him which could be construed as self-defense, and then pretty boy yanked Patelli's suit down to pin his arms before punching him in the gut, which is kind of slimy.”

“But effective,” Mueller said with a smile.

“What's Stoneman say?”

“He says his girlfriend wanted to buy her daughter a doll and invited him to come along. Patelli got mouthy so he shoved him back. Patelli swung at him so he hit him back.”

“A court isn't going to make much of any of this, is it?”

“Nope. Not a criminal court anyway.”

She noticed that Tiffany Kirkland was still holding tightly to her daughter's wrist, and yanked at it when the girl tried to pull away, bending her head to snap something at her. She walked over to them as the woman started shouting at her ex-husband again.

“You're lucky the cops showed up, Billy, or Kyle would have stomped you!” she taunted.

“Shut up,” Jamie said in annoyance.

The woman glowered at her indignantly.

“We don't need you instigating another fight. And if you do I'm going to make sure you're the first one in handcuffs.”

“I didn't do anything!”

“You know what custodial interference is, Ms. Kirkland?”

“Yeah, and I know it has to be permanent or for a long period of time. So don't try to scare me, lady. I know the law!” Kirkland said with a sneer.

“I want to talk to your daughter alone.”

“No way!” Kirkland snapped, yanking her daughter around so hard the girl almost fell.

“Listen to me,” she said, glaring. “I'm going to interview her as a witness, and I don't need you interfering. If you do I'm going to arrest you for obstruction.”

“You can interview her while I watch!”

“Let go of her arm,” Jamie ordered.

“Go fuck yourself!”

Jamie grabbed the girl's other arm and Kirkland swung at her. She dropped the arm and grabbed Kirkland's arm, feeling a surge of irritation as she spun her around and shoved her up against the wall.

“Let go of me, you fucking whore!” the woman shouted.

The girl ran across to her father as Batista moved in to help Jamie cuff her mother. Kirkland struggled wildly, screaming and cursing, and they had to force her to the floor to get her properly cuffed. Mueller grabbed Stoneman when he tried to interfere, and he and Jeffries cuffed him, too.

“Well, that worked out nicely,” she said, as the blue and white pulled away with them in the rear.

“You can't always count on people you don't like doing something to justify an arrest,” Mueller said. “Even if you do provoke them a little.”

“I wasn't provoking her,” she said defensively. “I was mostly just trying to get her hand off the kid to see if she'd go over to her father. I didn't think it was legal for me to actually force her mother to give her up.”

“You realize our reports are going to wind up being used in a civil action in family court, right?”

“Yup.”

“Make sure you write it up carefully.”

“You mean where I carefully include all the mother's foul language?”

“I mean where you carefully don't show any bias.”

“I'm the most unbiased person in the world,” she said.

“Uh huh.”

Chapter Two

Nobody ever took lunch in the north or east side of the precinct. The prices in the tourist areas were bad enough, but when you got closer to Fifth Avenue, Park Avenue and the like, it just wasn't worth the money compared to the west side, which was more residential – and cheaper.

The diner, which in the absence of any creativity was simply called Diner, was wedged in between a grocery store and a pet shop on Eleventh Avenue, across the street from an auto repair shop. It looked like it had been built sometime in the fifties or early sixties and never renovated.

The booths still had upholstered benches covered in red vinyl facing each other across a laminate table with metallic trim. There were even small jukeboxes set against the walls in each booth.

As a rookie, with little more than five months on the job, Jamie really had no say in where they ate, or when. If Mueller wanted to eat out, they ate out. If he wanted to eat at the station, they did that. He still didn't trust her to drive, so she was basically along for the ride.

When she followed him into the diner she saw there were booths running along the entire length of all four walls, except for the counter that ran along the left side of the wall in front of her. The counter had padded round bar seats on stainless steel support poles along it, and the seats were all full.

They turned to the right, and she felt a small knot of tension as she saw the four uniformed cops in the corner booth. She recognized two of them, at least. It was Anderson, the guy she'd put face first into the hood of his car a couple of weeks earlier, and his partner. They noticed her, quickly enough, too, though nobody said anything.

She, of course, pretended to not have seen them, and was grateful Mueller headed to a booth a couple of aisles over, just to the left of the

counter. There were two guys there in suits, one on either side of the table, and Mueller greeted them and slid into the booth. She passed him by and took the bench against the wall.

“This is Jamie McCloud,” he said almost as an afterthought.

The two men were much more enthusiastic.

“Bruno Quinn,” the bulky guy next to Mueller said with a broad smile, extending his hand across the table.

He was in his mid-forties, with short dark hair with a kind of flat top cut, a rounded face, and jowly neck.

She had seen him around the station, and shook his head.

“Detective Sergeant Quinn,” she said.

It never hurt to be polite.

“Just call me Quinn. Everyone does. This is my partner, Louise DeLuca.”

She turned to her left and shook DeLuca's hand, as well. He was tall and very slim, with a smoothly bald head and somewhat beady eyes. Both men were in gray suits – business attire for detectives being required.

Since she and Mueller were in Anti-crime they just wore street clothes, which for Mueller was whatever he had that seemed reasonably clean, and a baseball cap. He had on a loose checked shirt which hung over his belt enough to hide the gun, while today she had worn a Yankees jersey – black, with the big NY logo across the left upper chest.

Black wasn't the best color to fight the sun, but she wasn't expecting to be spending a lot of time out in it today, anyway, and the black hid the outline of her pancake holster and the small pouches for handcuffs, radio and ammunition.

“So you're partnered with Mueller, huh? Mister Anti-crime himself.”

“Mister Anti-crime?”

“He won't leave. And believe me, Lieutenant Foster would love to see his ass end out the door,” Quinn said with a laugh.

“Fuck Foster,” Mueller said, looking at a menu.

“Mueller says he has the best job in the department,” DeLuca said. “Wants no part of detective work.”

“Why would I? Boring shit, and lots of pressure,” Mueller said, still reading the menu. “Anti-crime is way better.”

She'd heard the same thing from him before, and wasn't sure he wasn't right. Anti-crime didn't have to wear uniforms and didn't have to answer routine calls like the uniforms did or handle traffic or write tickets.

They also weren't assigned to sectors like the blue and white patrol cars, but went wherever in the precinct the Anti-crime sergeant – which was Mueller – decided they should go. And Mueller sent himself – and now her – wherever he thought would be most interesting.

Mueller, she knew, hadn't had partners before, at least, not for long. That was mostly because as the supervisor of Anti-crime for the Midtown North precinct he could get away with it, and because he was considered hard to work with. He was 'growly', according to Nora Richards; more like a constipated bear, according to Lyle Jeffries, both of whom worked in Anti-Crime.

So far she hadn't experienced much of that, though. She wasn't sure if his reputation was exaggerated, or he was being polite to a girl – as people in his generation often were, or if he had found out she was related to a lot of senior people in the department.

Or it might just be that he'd been expecting the worse when he'd been told he was getting a new female partner, and finding out the partner was six feet tall, not much of a chatterer, and more than physically capable on the street, had made him feel better about things.

For her part, Jamie wasn't about to argue with a guy who'd been on the job longer than she'd been alive, and who was the unit supervisor, to boot. Whatever Mueller wanted, she simply accepted it without comment or protest.

Mostly.

“Didn't you used to be blonde?” Quinn asked.

She made a face.

“I only did that for an undercover assignment.”

“Well, the red fits you. You look good in red,” he said.

“Thanks,” she said with a brief smile.

She understood and had resigned herself to being eye candy, as far as male cops were concerned. When she was younger she'd had the naive thought that if she really proved herself capable, got really good marks, won competitions in track and field and the like, guys would stop assessing her on her looks.

Now, at the ripe old age of going-on-twenty-three, she had come to understand that even if she won a Nobel peace prize and made a billion dollars curing the common cold or something, guys would still be picturing her naked when they saw her. It was genetic, part of their DNA. She didn't even resent it anymore, as long as they were polite about it.

Anderson, who she noted from the corner of her eye, was still occasionally glaring her way, had not been polite when he'd suggested she'd gotten her job because of her 'oral' skills, so she'd put his face into the hood of his car. Now at least, if he wanted to badmouth her, he'd do it where she couldn't hear him.

He wasn't going to dare say anything with Mueller and Quinn there, anyway, so she largely ignored him. Her eyes and mind did start to wander when the conversation turned to golf, though. Golf bored her silly, and she

gave a kind of mental sigh while keeping her face straight.

She turned her head idly, looking at the counter, and that was when she saw the black guy. He was waiting in line to pay at the cash, but his head was turned to his right, and he was glowering. She turned her head a little further in that direction. There was nothing much along his line of site other than the four cops in the corner.

Well, okay, there was a lot of anti-police resentment in the Black community these days. Like the kind which celebrated whenever a cop died. There was almost visceral distrust and dislike of police in parts of New York, and a kind of cultural belief, particularly among younger Blacks, that you didn't cooperate with police, didn't tell them anything, even if you or a member of your family were the victims of a crime.

The black guy paid for his meal and left, but even as he walked along the window she saw him glaring in at the uniformed cops in the corner.

“What?” she asked, turning to Quinn.

“I said what do you think of the Yankees this year,” he said.

“I'm not a huge fan,” she said.

“Why you wearing the jersey then?”

“I like the color. It goes with my hair,” she said with a straight face.

Which was true, but was also a bit of a tease since she was playing on the cliché of girls not knowing anything about sports.

Sure enough, he rolled his eyes.

The waitress arrived and took their orders. Jamie decided to piss off her mother by ordering a burger and fries. She'd have to tell her about it later, too, because her mother always asked.

“Excuse me,” she said, getting up and going to the ladies room.

“Whoa,” Quinn said.

“Your life sure got a lot more interesting, Al,” DeLuca said.

Mueller shrugged.

“You and a girl like that?” Quinn said with a grin.

“What?”

“Just that Foster must have laughed himself sick when he put you two together.”

“I'm surprised you haven't chased her off yet,” DeLuca said.

Mueller sniffed. “Foster was probably hoping I would. I don't give assholes what they want if I can avoid it. Besides, she's not so bad.”

Quinn raised his eyebrows.

“A girl cop barely out of her teens? How old is she anyway?”

“Twenty two.”

DeLuca laughed.

“You must have some interesting conversations.”

“We don't talk a lot. She's not that big a talker, which I like about her.”

“Sure aren't gonna talk about the Yankees,” DeLuca said with a snort.

“She's a big time Rangers fan, though,” Mueller replied.

“Yeah? Never really got into hockey,” Quinn replied.

“I think the Rangers wanted to give her a tryout last month,” he said.

“There was a video of her on the internet body checking this guy she was chasing into a tree.”

Quinn's eyebrows rose.

“It was actually pretty good,” Mueller said with a grin. “She chased this guy, then pulled up alongside him and shouldered him off just before they reached the tree. He ran right fucking into it and almost knocked himself out cold.

“It even made the news, and the Rangers offered box seat tickets for her and twenty other cops to a game.”

“I never heard of that! How come nobody offered any seats to the detectives squad?” DeLuca demanded.

“Because the department said no. They decided it was a gratuity and she wasn't allowed to accept it.

Quinn shook his head. “What bullshit.”

“That's twice she's been on the news, right?” Quinn asked.

“She's... photogenic,” Mueller said dryly.

“You saying people won't whip out their cameras to get pictures and videos of me in action?” Quinn asked.

“Probably not so much.”

“She's pretty hot,” Deluca said. “Even in a baseball jersey. Never mind in a bikini.”

Mueller scowled at him.

“Hey, it's not me passing them around. But I've seen a few.”

“Inspector finds out, those people passing pictures around are going to be in trouble,” Mueller said. “That was from an undercover assignment.”

“You telling me you haven't looked?” Deluca asked with a smirk.

“She's half my age, for Christ's sake,” Mueller said. “And I'm a little old to be salivating over pictures of girls in bikinis.”

“I'll never get that old,” Deluca replied.

“That's because you're a fucking pervert.”

“Yeah, so?”

Quinn started talking about golf, which surprised the other two, except that Jamie returned just then and slipped into the booth.

The waitress brought their food, and they started to eat. Then she saw the black guy again peering through the window. He had been wearing a T-shirt, but now he had a coat on as he walked along the window to the door.

He tweaked her interest immediately, of course. What was he doing back here, and why was he wearing a coat? It was pretty warm outside, too warm for her to wear a jacket, which was why she had the jersey on. Except for those in business suits everyone else was in short sleeves.

The three men were now talking about the good old days, when cops got gratuities all the time, especially free coffee and meals at restaurants. She tuned them out as the black guy went to the doors and came back inside. Her right hand dropped to the bottom of her jersey and pulled it up, then slid in to fold around the butt of the Glock.

She pulled it from her holster and drew it around to her side, barrel carefully pointed down. Her finger automatically slipped off the safety, even while she was telling herself she was being paranoid. But her pulse picked up and adrenaline started to pump into her system as she saw his eyes. There was something wrong with those eyes.

Staten Island was considered a backwater to the rest of New York, but it had a population of almost half a million people, and that included enough drug addicts for her to immediately classify this guy as 'hopped up'.

“Hey,” she said, keeping her voice low.

DeLuca was talking earnestly about a great golf shot some guy had made last week on TV and nobody heard her.

The guy had those scary eyes trained on the cops in the corner, and actually banged into someone as he turned and started that way, apparently not noticing them.

“Hey!” she hissed.

That interrupted DeLuca, and had them all looking at her in confusion, but then she ran out of time. She saw the black guy's body shifting, tensing as he looked down and opened the coat. She stood up as she saw the barrel coming up from the bottom of the coat and was an instant behind him, but he had a long shotgun and her Glock was much smaller, lighter and faster.

She had a brief image of Mueller and Quinn gaping at her, then steadied the gun for a split second on the middle of the black man's torso as he drew his long barreled gun up to the shoulder, the barrel pointed at the corner table.

The two cops on the far side noticed him, and jerked violently, grabbing at their guns as the other two looked around in surprise just in time to see the shotgun barrel aimed at their heads.

The sound of a gun going off, especially indoors, is much, much louder than people think whose sole experience comes from television or the movies. The higher the caliber of gun, the louder the explosion. The Glock went off with three quick blasts that reverberated off her chest and made Mueller and Quinn, who had already started to throw themselves down to the side, yell at the pain to their eardrums.

The sound of the shotgun was a thunderous explosion a half second later, but her bullets had already hit, sending her target staggering sideways, his arms flung up so that the shotgun blast struck the wall halfway up. Ricochet's slammed up into the fluorescent lights along that side of the ceiling, shattering them and sending glass and plastic shards falling to the floor and onto the body of the black man who landed sprawling, gun spilling

out of his hands.

A second after that came the screams, the panicky rushes for the doors, Mueller and Quinn diving off the side of the bench as they grabbed at their own guns, and the cops leaping from their booth, yanking guns from their holsters and looking around wildly, pointing them first at the guy on the floor, then at her, then back at the black guy.

Jamie stayed very, very still while things settled down. It occurred to her that while Anderson and his partner would certainly know she and the others at her table were cops, the other two uniforms might not, but they quickly ignored them and focused on the guy laying on the floor, approaching him carefully, guns pointed down.

“Fucking Christ!” Quinn cursed.

“Holy shit!” DeLuca gasped.

Mueller, as usual, was silent and focused. His eyes tracked the room as the uniforms pushed the shotgun away from the guy, his gun pointed at the ceiling. Jamie had raised hers, as well, as soon as the uniforms had gotten in front of it. Her firearms training made that almost instinctive.

Quinn moved forward to take charge, with DeLuca quickly following him. Mueller slowly safed his weapon and put it back in its holster, then gave her a disapproving look as he rubbed his ears.

“Next time, a little warning?” he growled.

She put the safety on her own gun and started to put it back into its holster, but he held out his hand and she reluctantly passed it to him.

The uniforms were checking on the black guy and radioing it in. Quinn was already moving people back and out of the nearby booths, setting up a perimeter for the investigation which would follow. She stepped out of the booth at last and followed Mueller over to look at the guy.

“I think this time you had better aim,” Mueller said.

She felt a bit of a sinking sensation at that. Because it did indeed look like this time the guy she'd shot was not going to get up again. One of the cops standing over him was cursing repeatedly and emphatically. Anderson was white faced, and looked like he'd just had a near death experience – because he had.

Sirens started to howl, and she looked around, feeling the sudden spike of adrenaline starting to fade.

“I hope this doesn't get on fucking You Tube,” she muttered.

Mueller raised his eyebrows.

“This is liable to get on CNN and FOX, never mind the internet.”

“At least no one is going to be able to pretend he was unarmed.”

“Don't kid yourself. Someone is not only going to say that but that his arms were up when he was shot in the back. Count on it.”

Chapter Three

Jamie was feeling more than a little irritable. She didn't need time off, but the leave was mandatory. It wasn't meant to be a punishment, of course. It was fully paid leave, and meant to allow her to go through interviews, including with psychologists, and handle all the paperwork and after-shooting assessments which would need to decide if it was a good shoot and she was psychologically able to go back to work.

She understood all that on an intellectual level. But it was still irritated her. She didn't think she needed any kind of psychological counseling, and didn't feel particularly upset that she'd killed that guy – who's name was Omar Mohamed, aka Leon Smith, a relatively recent convert to what she was starting to think of (sarcastically) as the religion of peace.

She was also not happy at the way people treated her, at the way some walked around on tiptoes as if she was newly fragile or something. Her only area of self-doubt came from the fact she actually didn't have any nightmares or regrets. Since everyone seemed to think she ought to be all broken up over the shooting she wondered if something was wrong with her.

She'd killed a guy, after all. Even if the purely logical side of her said he was a guy who deserved to be killed. She recognized that, in a way, she wasn't even seeing him as a human being, but just as a violent, crazy 'perp'. And she'd never much cared what happened to such people, before. Nor did she now.

Other cops she knew didn't seem to worry much over her mental state, and even congratulated her. Civilians, on the other hand, were starting to annoy her.

That especially included the ones on the television and internet who seemed to think this was another example of the NYPD shooting first, and asking questions later. And as Mueller had suggested, there were more than a few spouting ridiculous conspiracy theories.

Either the shooting was a 'false flag' operation (which she'd never even heard of until it was explained to her) or Mohamed, aka Smith had been ruthlessly gunned down while kneeling with his hands raised, begging for his life.

Those were few, of course, but they angered her a lot more than anyone else. She thought such people needed to be bitch-slapped, and if she ran into any she was going to have a hard time keeping her hands away from them.

What also angered her was that her name had indeed gotten out there, and she was starting to get some suggestions from fellow cops that she might not be able to work plainclothes any more since everyone would immediately recognize her.

Not the least because of her red hair.

“How many six foot redheaded women do you think there are on the NYPD anyway?” her brother Dale had asked.

Since she'd been informed when the DEA had temporarily recruited her to play a fashion model that only 0.7% of American women were over five feet ten, and redheads were probably no more than a couple of percent of the population she figured the answer was probably 'one'.

That was causing her some stress since she really liked doing plainclothes work. It was exciting and varied, and she sure didn't want to go back into a sector car and answer domestic disturbance calls, direct traffic, and write parking tickets.

Fortunately, while they had her name, they didn't have her picture, and no one in the mass media had thought her hair color was newsworthy enough to add to the story. There had been some attempt by public affairs to have her show up with the Assistant Commissioner of Patrol for a news conference, but someone – possibly her grandfather after she'd put in a phone call to him – had nixed it.

Sometimes being related to one of the department's Assistant Commissioners was useful.

It was her irritability that got the better of her judgment on the subway. She was still on leave, and since Danny Lucas was on some kind of high priority case she hadn't been able to see him in days. She was in Brooklyn, and on her way home from a visit with her friend Allison. It was late, and the subway car was more than half-empty.

She was sitting in the back of the car, going through messages on her iPhone, and not paying much attention to anything else, until a particular kind of raised voice drew her eyes up and forward.

Halfway up the car was a very attractive looking blonde of about twenty in a short black dress, sitting next to a black guy in a suit and tie. The two of them were looking rigidly at nothing in particular. Across from them were four grinning white guys in their mid to late twenties looking at them.

Deon knew he was in trouble. It wasn't that he couldn't handle himself normally, but he had a pretty good idea of what he could do, and taking on four drunken white boys was not going to work. Not a hope, not a chance, not a prayer. He was going to get stomped.

He was five foot eight, which meant his usual attempt at defense was his mouth, trying to talk people down. But talking down drunks who were amusing themselves at their expense probably wasn't going to work either.

All four were bigger than him, including the asshole who was leading the pack, standing up in front of them with a red face and a potbelly, leering at Cheryl beside him. He was locked into this, though. She was his date, shocking him when she'd accepted. She was a pretty hot chick, and blonde, and he had the usual fixation on blondes that all his friends had.

Taking her out was a huge score for him, and anything he got from her would come on top of that. Hey, he'd talked her into going out with him with his quick talking, so maybe he could talk her into more. She had a nice little body!

But sitting here like a chickenshit while this asshole insulted her sure

wasn't gonna do it, nor was getting his head stomped by him and his three friends if he mouthed off. He was between a rock and a hard place!

“Yes, sir, that is one sexy looking dress,” the guy said, in that sort of smirking, overly loud voice which said he was playing to an audience of the whole car. “And really nice legs, too. I bet they look even nicer up under that little skirt.”

“Fuck off,” the Cheryl said.

Deon winced a bit. Easy for her to mouth off. She wasn't the one who was going to have to back it up.

“Now that's just rude,” one of the other guys said, shaking his head in mock dismay.

“You figure that's real blonde?” one of the others said.

“What do you say, baby,” the fat one said. “Does the rug match you're curtains?”

There were snickers from his companions, while the Cheryl glowered at him, then looked away.

“Why don't you just shut up and leave us be?” Deon demanded in as reasonable a voice as he could muster.

“It's a free country, isn't it? I can say whatever I like,” the fat guy said.

“That's right,” one of the others said sagely.

“See, I just don't get why a hot white girl would want to date, no offense, a black guy,” he was saying. “I mean, I can tell you, baby, if you think he's got a big dick, I can prove you wrong.”

His companions snickered and laughed.

“More like a needle dick,” Deon said, mostly to Cheryl.

“What did you say? You say something about needle dicks, asshole?” the guy demanded, coming forward to stand over them. “You want to whip it out so we can compare em?”

“Hey, asshole,” a voice called.

They all looked up the car to where a tall redhead was sitting holding a smart phone and scowling at them.

“Shut the fuck up and sit your fat ass back down,” she said. “You're getting on my nerves.”

“Who asked for your opinion, bitch?” the big guy demanded indignantly, walking towards her.

Deon felt a wave of relief, but also embarrassment. He couldn't let some chick stand up for him! How was that going to look to Cheryl, and never mind Cheryl, but everyone she talked to. Even if he got his ass stomped he was going to have to do something when the big guy came back!

“Oh, isn't it a free country anymore? Don't I get to say whatever I like?” the redhead asked.

Of course, as another girl the redhead didn't have to worry about getting this guy's big fist in her face, he thought resentfully.

“You got a thing for big nigger cocks too?” the guy demanded angrily.

Deon tensed, and glared at the other three, who snickered.

“Well don't we all?” the redhead asked mockingly.

“You know what they used to call me in school? The horse!”

“You sure that wasn't the jackass?” she sniffed.

“You want some big cock, baby,” he growled, standing before her squeezing his crotch. “I got what you want right here!”

Deon was confused. He was grateful for the support, but the woman was facing down this guy like she didn't have a fear in the world, and now he was getting nervous again, because if the guy attacked her he was going to have to jump in, even if it meant getting his ass kicked – which it would.

“Well whip it out then, big boy,” the redhead said. “Let's see your credentials. Maybe I'll get so turned on I'll blow you right here!”

His friends were laughing with delight but hadn't gotten out of their seats.

“Come on, donkey dick. Let's see it,” she said, goading him.

“Show her your dick, Lennie!” one of them yelled.

Lennie glared at her, then shoved his already sagging jeans down, then stumbled and almost fell, so he had to grab the bar. Since he wasn't wearing any underwear his assets were nicely uncovered.

His friends laughed even louder but the redhead suddenly pulled her handcuffs out from somewhere, then grabbed the guy's cock and pulled it a little to the side. She slapped the handcuffs around the base of it just behind the balls and closed them tight before the guy could react, then snapped the other cuff around the subway bar as he yelled and swung at her.

She leaned back and the guy was trapped, locked in place by the handcuffs around him. His eyes bulged, and his friends were laughing so hard one of them fell out of his seat to roll around on the floor of the train.

Deon was just as shocked, and had a hard time not laughing himself. Then Cheryl did laugh in delight, clapping her hands with approval.

“Fucking bitch!” he screamed, swinging at the redhead again.

The woman simply sat back and moved a bit aside, so was out of reach. She smirked as she watched him pulling frantically at the handcuffs.

“Unlock this fucking thing!” he screamed.

“Say pretty please.”

“You fucking whore!”

“How rude,” she said, taunting him.

He continued to jerk at the cuffs with his hands, but since it was locked firmly around him below his testicles he wasn't going anywhere. He turned and snarled at his friends instead.

“Get the fucking key off her!”

Two of them had already gotten up and walked closer, but only so they could get a better look and laugh even harder.

He turned and gave the woman a murderous look. “When I get this fucking thing off I'm going to –!”

He halted, and Deon gaped as the redhead casually pulled her jacket back to show her holstered gun, with a badge on the belt.

“What?” she asked.

The fat guy stared at her uncertainly, swaying a little.

“What exactly are you gonna do, again?” she asked.

The others had stopped laughing and looked more pensive, but Deon felt like clapping along with Cheryl, who was laughing her head off.

“I-I didn't mean anything,” the guy gulped, cupping himself with his hands.

“Uh huh,” she said with profound disbelief.

“I was just... screwing around,” he said a trifle desperately. “You know, I wasn't gonna hurt anyone!”

“I can still arrest you for harassment, intimidation and indecent

exposure. You want a record as a sex offender for the rest of your life?”

“I'm sorry!” he exclaimed. “Honest to God!”

“You have a record?”

He shook his head desperately.

“You have ID?”

He tried to fumble his wallet out of his back pocket, which was in the pants around his ankles. That meant he mooned his friends, who started laughing again. Deon laughed with them, hardly able to believe it.

She snatched the wallet and took out his driver's license and took a picture of it with her phone.

“Okay, Leonard, since I'm not actually on duty, and since I don't want to waste my time calling this in and then going in to the nearest station to fill out a bunch of forms, I'm gonna let you go.”

She pointed her finger at him as he started to babble his thanks.

“But I know who you are, and I can arrest you for this any time I want. If I find out you're causing trouble we're going to revisit this. Clear?”

“Yeah! I won't do anything! I was just drinking a little, is all!”

“If you can't handle the booze without getting on people's cases then do it at home.”

She unlocked the cuffs and dropped them into her jacket pocket.

He yanked his pants up and, red-faced, bowed his way backwards, and went for the doors as the station pulled into a station. His friends, snickering and giggling, got up to follow him.

Deon stared at the redhead. He wanted to say thanks, but she was already looking down at her cell phone again, as if what had happened were

so routine she'd practically forgotten it. Deon breathed a sigh of relief and turned to Cheryl, wondering if she was going to think less of him for not handling those four guys better.

“Wow,” she said, staring at the redhead. “I should be a cop. I'm not tall enough, though.”

Deon shook his head. He wasn't either. Not that he'd ever imagined it for a moment. But then cops were always the ones checking on him and his friends. It was a strange experience having them *protect* him.

“I am not letting you anywhere near me with handcuffs,” Lucas said that evening when she was relaying what had happened.

She'd met Danny Lucas during a stakeout shortly after joining Anti-crime. She'd run him down and arrested him, but he'd turned out to be an undercover federal agent with the DEA. He'd then recruited her to act the part of his model-girlfriend to uncover a drug operation. And recruited her as his girlfriend in real life, as well.

Jamie had never had a guy anything like him. Oh, she'd had big, handsome guys before, but not ones with the same air of physical competence, of being able to take care of himself in all situations. And not one as old as him either, for at thirty he was eight years her senior.

He was the first 'man' she'd dated, she thought, as opposed to 'boys' and 'guys'. And he'd proven to have an eye-opening – at least to her – interest in bondage and kinky games. She'd been dubious, at first, but the results had been too powerful for her to resist further experiments.

“That would be kind of a change in roles, wouldn't it,” she said with a grin.

“Not a change I'm interested in.”

“Some guys like getting tied up,” she teased.

“Pussies,” he said.

“You got something against pussies?” she asked dryly.

“Only when they've got hairy chests. So would you have gotten in trouble for handcuffing his dick?”

She made a face. “Probably.”

“I didn't think that was part of the NYPD operating manual,” he said.

“I was off duty,” she said defensively.

“Like that would make any difference. But you being a hero, you'd get away with it.”

“I'm not a hero!” she exclaimed in annoyance.

“Bet those cops whose asses you saved think differently.”

“So how's the drugs and guns business?” she asked as they set the table.

“Both of them are highly profitable, and less dangerous than they ought to be.”

“Crappy enforcement, probably.”

He snorted, then slid his hand around behind her neck, gathering in her loose hair together so he could – as he often did – use it to pull her in against him. He kissed her, nicely, but not hard, then his eyes took on that look she'd come to know.

“What do you have in mind? I thought we were going to have dinner... first?”

“Of course,” he said innocently.

He pulled down on her hair, which forced her head back, and made her gasp slightly, then his other hand rose to cup her breast through her blouse.

“I just thought it would be more interesting if you were naked,” he said.

“How come you always want me naked?” she asked, a bit breathlessly.

He laughed softly. “You should ask why any man would want you to be wearing anything.”

“Not all men are perverts.”

“Yeah, they are,” he said, kissing along the side of her throat.

“You've already put the pork chops on!” she protested.

“It won't take me long to strip you naked.”

And it didn't. But he wasn't finished with that. He insisted on getting out his rope and tying her up!

“How am I supposed to eat?” she demanded.

“Let me worry about that.”

He drew her wrists up and back behind her, and tied them there, then fed the rope around her chest, loop after loop passing across the bottom of her breasts, then circling around her ribs to pin her arms back tighter.

After half a dozen loops he swept the next one across the top of her breasts, as well as those that followed, passing each around her body and over her arms.

Jamie stood passively – more or less – feeling a tightening of her chest that had nothing to do with the ropes going around it.

He fed the rope down her spine and then held it there at the small of her back as he swept several loops around her waist. Then he took two lengths and tied a knot in it before feeding it down between her legs and up between her buttocks, tying it off in back – after giving it a sharp tug which forced the soft rope up between the lips of her sex!

“Oh!” she gasped, then felt a surge of heat as she looked down.

He tied it off behind her, then gathered in her hair on one side, drawing it into a tail and tying it with thin cord. Jamie was mystified as he did the same on the other side of her head. But then he let the pigtails hang down the front of her chest, and took the thin, trailing cords dangling from the ends of each pigtail and tied it around her nipples!

“Ow! Oh! Daniel!” she yelped as the first cord tightened around her nipple.

He ignored her, and tied the second around her other nipple, so that she yelped and danced from foot to foot.

“That hurts!”

“It’ll only hurt for a few seconds,” he said unsympathetically.

“How come I don’t get to tie things to your nipples?”

“Nobody cares about my nipples.”

“I do!”

“Pervert,” he said with a grin.

“Asshole!”

“Now someone is looking for a spanking.”

She bit her tongue, for he was certainly capable of administering a spanking to her!

He left her and went over to the stove, flipping over the pork chops, which hissed as he squeezed them with the spatula.

“How am I supposed to eat like this?” she demanded.

He grinned over his shoulder.

There was a steady pressure in between her legs, not painful but... hard enough not to be able to ignore it. And the knots he'd tied, she noted, were pressing directly against her clitoris.

He came back to her, gripping her arm and pulling down.

“On your knees, slave girl.”

“I'm not your slave girl!” she said grumpily, but felt her chest tighten further as a warm, thrumming heat began to build in her lower belly.

He had her sit back on her heels, and gripped her thighs, pushing her knees wide apart as he grinned at her, then leaned in to kiss her before standing back up again and returning to the counter.

“Do your friends know what a perve you are?” she asked.

“You mean that I like to tie girls up? It hasn't really come up in conversations.”

“Have you ever considered why you like to tie girls up?” she demanded, her nipples still throbbing and aching.

“Because I like to be in control?”

“You're a control freak!”

“Okay.”

He carried a plate of pork chops over to the table and set them down, then came and took her arm, lifting her to her feet and leading her over to the table. He sat down, and pulled her across his lap.

“You're going to feed me?” she asked in some disbelief.

“Why not?”

“Have you considered your behavior to be some kind of suppressed paternal instinct?”

He pulled back on her hair and she yelped, for the pigtails he'd tied to her nipples pulled sharply against them.

“Be a good girl or I'll make you sit in a corner.”

It was, Jamie thought, weird, yet at the same time, there was a strange, swirly sexual excitement to it which was continuous, and had her body thrumming with energy.

He put his left arm around her back, but was still able to reach the table with his hand, then he cut off a piece of pork chop and popped it into his mouth.

“What is that stuff around the pork chops?” she asked dubiously.

“Apple and spinach, and bacon.”

“Bacon?”

“It's delicious.”

She glared at him and looked at the pork chops doubtfully, but then he cut another piece and held the fork up to her mouth. She hesitated, then let him slide the fork into her mouth.

“Good girl,” he said in a voice that drew a glare.

He grinned. “Maybe I'm a suppressed pet owner. Ever think of that?”

She finished chewing and glared at him indignantly. “I am not your pet!”

“Wanna be?”

“No!”

Chapter Four

Danny tugged back on the hair he'd left dangling down her neck and she gasped as her head was forced back, and her nipples tugged sharply.

“No sir,” he said.

She considered it, and the warm, throbbing ache between her legs where the ropes pulled at her, and the breathless sense of excitement gripping her.

“No, sir,” she gasped.

“We'll get you trained as a good slave girl in no time,” he said.

“Good luck with that,” she snorted.

He tugged back on her hair and she gasped as her nipples were tugged sharply again.

“Sir,” he said.

“Good luck with that, sir!” she gasped.

He released her hair and cut another piece, then ate it.

“You're a weird date – sir,” she said.

“You think so?”

He cut her a piece and held it up to her, and she took it off the fork and into her mouth.

“This isn't bad,” she said, after chewing and swallowing.

“It's fabulous.”

He cut another piece for her, then another for him, then another for her as she squirmed a little across his lap and did her best to pretend a total lack of excitement or even interest in anything other than eating. It wasn't easy, though. Especially being naked and tied so tightly, and with that constant pressure against her clitoris.

“How about being my slut, then?” he asked.

“I think I'm already that,” she grumbled.

“Really?” he said with a grin. “Then you wouldn't mind saying it.”

She frowned. “I just did.”

He shook his head and she felt him gripping the hair trailing down her neck again, pulling slowly up and back. She gasped as her nipples were pulled.

“Say I'm your slut sir,” he said.

Again Jamie debated doing it, but her sense of indignation was fighting her.

“Why?” she demanded.

“Because it would please me.”

She bit off a snarky response, for the truth was, she wanted to please him, and it was a little thing, after all. And in keeping with his weird little games, well... not exactly a big deal.”

“I'm your slut, sir,” she said.

Saying it felt... strange, giving her a hot little rush of excitement down low. It felt mildly degrading, but in a darkly thrilling way.

“Again,” he said.

“I'm your slut, sir.”

“Now that's what I like to hear.”

He cut another piece of pork chop, but this time he picked it up in his fingers and held it to her mouth.

Jamie gazed at it a bit breathlessly, then slid her lips over his fingers and took it, feeling another hot little rush of energy as she sucked on his fingers, then pulled her head slowly back to chew on the food.

“Nasty little girl,” he said.

“Not so little,” she replied when she'd swallowed.

“Nasty though,” he said with a grin.

He cut another piece, and this time held it in his open hand, out in front of her mouth. Jamie leaned forward, feeling breathless, and licked it from his hand, chewing as she watched him.

“Got you eating out of the palm of my hand,” she said with a smile.

Jamie considered something caustic to reply, but didn't want to spoil the mood she was feeling, which was a strange, swirly mix of dark heat and almost forbidden, wicked excitement. She'd never really gone in for kinky things before she'd met him, and was finding them a strange, uneasy source of thrills.

He reached down and gripped the taut rope that descended between her legs, gripping it just above the knot, and tugging a little.

Jamie gasped and moaned at the added pressure, and at the way the knots ground against her swollen clitoris. But a moment later he carefully untied the knots on the little cords bound to her nipples, and that completely distracted her. At first she felt a sudden tight, sharp pain, and gasped aloud, clenching her teeth against it. But then it faded slowly away.

She was left with nipples which throbbed and tingled, and when he pulled her head back again to arch her back there was no sting, only the feel of his lips over the center of her breast, his soft sucking, and his warm tongue

caressing her in a way that ached ... wonderfully!

At the same time she felt him forcing his fingers beneath the taut rope down low, rubbing against her clitoris now as he sucked and licked at first one nipple, then the other. The dark heat rushed over her, and she began to gasp aloud, moaning at the sudden pulsing pleasure rising up through her overheated body.

But then he stopped, when she was getting so close to orgasm she was starting to shake. He cut another piece and popped it into his mouth, then cut another for her.

“Fuck the food,” she groaned.

“Not possible, not with this food, anyway. Maybe if you were eating cucumbers.”

“I want to fuck,” she whined.

“Maybe later, after you beg me enough.”

“You're such a bastard!”

“You said that before. It's still untrue.”

“How about asshole!?”

“You forgot to say sir.”

“You're an asshole, sir!”

“Now you're just being impudent.”

“Untie me!”

“Can't do that. I'm pretty sure you'd do something immoral to your body.”

“Well if you can't get it up I guess I'll have to!”

“I can always get it up for you, babe,” he said with a grin. “But it's a matter of whether you deserve to have me fuck you are not.”

“Deserve!?” she exclaimed. “I know men who would crawl down the street naked on their bellies just to see me naked!”

“That would be some kind of pathetic guy,” he said. “I can see why you wouldn't have much interest in them.”

She glowered at him but licked the food out of his hand and chewed, squirming on his lap as she did.

“I think you just can't get it up,” she said. “I know that happens with old guys. I can help you.”

He gave her a reproving look, then stood up, with her in his arms. He set her down on her feet, but then bent her over the table. She felt his fingers at her sex, felt them gripping the two ropes which were pulled up between the lips of her sex, and tugging them out and then apart. Of course, that jerked the rope around her waist down, and also ground the knots against her clitoris.

She didn't care. She stood breathless, gasping as she heard his zipper go down, and then felt him against her, felt him pushing forward, thick as always, felt the delicious pressure against her opening which slowly forced the soft flesh in and back and then spread her open wider and wider.

He pushed in slowly, and she closed her eyes and shuddered as she felt him forcing his way through the tight elastic walls of her sex, stretching them apart and burrowing up deeper into her belly. She groaned as she felt the fabric of his pants against her buttocks, then gasped as he jerked her upright again.

“Sit down, slave girl,” he ordered.

He was sitting back, holding her tightly against him. She sank down on him with a groan, this time facing the table, not sitting astride. His legs were inside hers and he spread them apart to force hers apart as he sat fully and she

impaled herself on his hard erection.

“God!” she moaned softly.

He gripped her thighs, lifting her a bit and settling her more firmly atop him, then reached around her to cut another piece of pork chop. That wasn't what Jamie had in mind, of course, and her feet pushed against the floor to raise herself up.

His hands gripped her thighs, forcing her back down again.

“No, no. Don't move. We're going to finish dinner.”

And they did, with him halting her movements whenever she tried, making her finish eating as she squirmed atop his stiff cock, awash in sexual passion and a hunger which had nothing to do with a desire to eat!

Somehow he stayed erect even though she wasn't moving atop him. She could feel the thick hardness of him deep inside her. Her own heat only rose hotter, though, the longer he forced her to keep still. The pressure against her from the ropes was even more severe, and it ached, but given her mood, even that ache just added to the heat rolling through her.

In between feeding her – and himself – his hands roamed her body, stroking and squeezing and kneading, and sometimes pinching, leaving her feeling flustered and breathless. And such was the desire within her she was much more willing – because it appealed to the outrageous heat, to say whatever he wanted.

“I'm your slut, sir,” she said, because he wanted her to.

And because it turned her on to say it.

“I'm your slave girl, sir,” was even more weirdly thrilling.

But “I'm Danny's sex slave!” was the most exhilarating.

“I like the sound of that,” he said.

“Fucker,” she moaned.

He jerked her hair back and to the side and she groaned as he nibbled his way up the nape of her neck.

“If you keep being insolent I'm going to have to spank your beautiful ass, slave girl,” he said.

“Bastard,” she moaned.

“Slut.”

She groaned again, because it was true!

He let her drink from his cup, as he held it, and rubbed her clitoris intermittently, but not enough to make her come. Though she was getting so hot it was soon not going to take anything at all to push her over the edge.

He had her stand up – slowly, and she groaned as she slid up off his stiff cock. He put himself back into his pants and zipped up, then had her kneel with her legs spread wide and shoulders back as he cleared the table and put things away.

Her body throbbed with heat every time her heart beat, and she was fighting to keep her breathing as steady as possible, her face flushed as she knelt, sitting unsteadily on her heels with her elbows back.

Finally, when her patience had been tried nearly to the breaking point, he helped her stand and led her back into the living room, but again, only to kneel and wait while he left the room.

The wait was worth it this time, though, because he came back naked!

She felt a rush of heat at the sight of him, and he grinned from the doorway.

“And how is my little sex slave feeling?”

“Horny as shit!”

“Not into that, sorry,” he said, coming closer.

Most men didn't look great naked. The weak point of male anatomy, she thought, was usually between the thighs and hips. If he was soft, his cock looked kind of pathetic dangling there. If he was hard, and moved, it bounced in way it was easy to laugh at. And in any event, if he had a belly of any kind, or was either overweight or skinny, the visual appeal was greatly diminished.

Not on Lucas. He had the big, athletic body of an athlete, but not one that looked like it had been toned by gym work so much as actual physical labor. His skin didn't shine like so many of the younger guys she'd seen. And his chest wasn't shaved like Hollywood actors and models.

He wasn't hairy, though, which was good, and his hair was a light brown dusting across his powerful chest, then a thin line trailing down his abdomen. He'd obviously greatly trimmed his pubic hair, but he still had it, and his belly and abdomen were as hard and flat as she'd ever seen, with a ripple of almost seen muscles across his stomach.

His legs were powerful and muscled, again, a little hairy but not too much. His arms were even better, and the place where they joined his shoulders was something that Jamie thought she could look at for a very long time.

He was partially erect. That was, his cock hung between his thighs as though soft, but it was clearly too thick and long for that, even while not hard yet. He moved forward with the grace of a panther until he stood before her.

Jamie cocked her head back a little, her eyes rolling up and down the length of his body.

“So, sex slave, are you ready to please your master?”

“Yes, sir!” she breathed.

“Say yes master.”

“Yes, master!”

She saw his cock hardening, thickening, rising before her, and he reached in and gripped her hair in his fist, pulling her up off her heels forcefully, though forcing her head back so that she gasped. He pulled her face forward then, into his cock, then gripped himself and rubbed himself along her lips as she opened her mouth excitedly.

“Are you ready to service your master, slave girl?”

“Yes, master!”

She licked at his balls, then sucked them into her mouth, feeling waves of heat roll over her at the delicious debauchery of being tied up naked, on her knees, of the pressure of the ropes against her breasts, and around her chest, and most especially against her sex!

She mouthed his balls, sucking them and stroking with her tongue, then licked up his shaft from bottom to top before pursing her lips and pressing them down against the head. She let him slowly force them aside, sliding her lips tightly around him as they pushed down his shaft, and rolled her eyes up at him as his fingers combed through her hair.

She began to bob up and down, up and down, going lower and lower as she took him deeper, then braced herself and gurgled softly, gagging only a little as he entered her throat and slid down, inch by inch. Her lips hovered just above the base, then she forced herself that last bit forward to take every bit of him into her mouth, closing her lips around the base and moaning heatedly.

His big hands went behind her head, holding her firmly in place as their eyes locked together, and she felt her head starting to pound, her chest getting hotter and hotter. Then he eased his grip and she slid slowly back along his slick flesh until it popped out of her head and she gasped and sucked in deep lungfuls of air.

She licked at him as she regained her breath, then slid him into her mouth once more, bobbing up and down, sucking and licking, taking him deeper and deeper until she felt the head pushing into her throat. She slid down smoothly from there, heart pounding with excitement as she

immediately pulled back up halfway, then slid down again to the base.

That wasn't easy, but she was aroused enough that her gag reflex barely protested, and she drew back again, all the way this time, and gulped in air. He jerked her head back further, though, and then his big hand gripped her throat as he let go of her hair.

“Do you know how hard I'm going to fuck you, slave girl?” he growled.

“H-hard!” she moaned.

His hand was big enough to almost completely envelope her neck, and though he gripped her firmly he didn't tighten his hand enough to restrict her breathing as he forced her to her feet. He stared intently into her face, their eyes locked together as he pushed her back hard, shoving her so she tumbled back onto the sofa.

He dropped to his knees instantly, jerking her long legs up and almost painfully apart, his tongue licking hungrily up her inner thigh as she moaned, gripped by a swirling sexual heat.

His fingers undid the rope where it was bound to the ones around her waist, and pulled it aside so that the rough, aching pressure against her sex, and against her clitoris, finally disappeared. A surge of heat and relief made her feel as though she were throbbing there even as he scooped her legs up and shoved her knees back against her chest.

He licked his way up the line of her sex, and Jamie felt her muscles spasming, gasping and moaning as his tongue swept across her clitoris. She cried out, her body jerking repeatedly, and he halted, rising up, dropping her legs over his shoulders as he positioned himself at her entrance and pushed.

“Oh! Oh! Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!” she half sobbed as he forced he drove himself into her.

He forced her legs back further and further, then gripped her legs behind the knees, jamming them back against the padded back of the sofa. His hips began to move, in and out, his thick cock aching deliciously as it moved in

and out of her.

Jamie shuddered, her arms bound tightly behind her, her breasts throbbing and swollen, her nipples tingling as she stared at her own body, her chin on her chest, the back of the sofa pressing her head forward even as he forced her lower body back.

Her feet were high in the air over her head as his hips began to drive the full length of him into her trembling body, and she felt as though her mind were coming apart under a feverish sexual pressure that swept her with waves of passion!

“Oh God!” she gasped.

He started thrusting faster, harder, his hips slapping against her buttocks as he pressed her feet back further, and the orgasm swept through her with a long, howling storm of sensations that bathed her in ecstasy! Her entire body was gripped by the pulsing heat as her nervous system overloaded, and in the center of it all was the hard, aching thrust of his cock and the bruising pounding of his hips against her.

She'd been awash in sexual heat and hunger so long by then that the release like a dam breaking, and she lost control of herself, her inhibitions melting as she cried out again and again, sobbing with pleasure as his powerful body hammered into her again and again, crushing her beneath him!

Even when the orgasm faded, leaving her dazed and shell-shocked, he continued, his steady pistoning cock punching her deep inside, his hips striking her buttocks with a force that sent echoes resonating through her belly. Above her, he was panting, his face red, his eyes filled with hunger and determination as he rode her.

And another orgasm, a small one, swept through her, then another, then the pressure rose again and another intense climax rolled through her mind to send it tumbling and turning in helpless disarray!

She felt feverish and dazed, intoxicated on the sexual heat. Her eyes glazed over and she gurgled and grunted as his body continued to pound

against her.

Then his hand gripped her hair, yanking her head up and back as he bowed forward, kissing her passionately, bruisingly, his mouth devouring her as he ground his pelvis against her.

And then began to thrust again.

Chapter Five

They were cruising the west side next morning, and Jamie was still mulling over just what she'd gotten into with Danny. It was like she'd agreed to date a tiger, or something, without really understanding what that meant. The sex was incredible, of course. There was no doubting that. But the kinkiness of it left her uneasy.

For once, Mueller was letting her drive. It was nice to see he wasn't trying to boss her around – the way Danny did – even though as the Anti-Crime supervising sergeant, he certainly could and did.

The call that came over the radio was a naked, middle-aged white man running down 52nd Street. Jamie smirked when she heard it, but didn't give it any serious thought, even though it wasn't very far away.

“Let's go on this one,” Mueller said.

Jamie looked at him in surprise, but didn't argue. If he wanted to go in on a naked man call it was no skin off her nose. Besides, he was the boss. She accelerated and turned north on Sixth Avenue as he switched on the lights.

“Didn't think naked men were your thing,” she said.

He snorted, but didn't answer at first.

“I take this job seriously,” he said after a half minute.

She looked at him in surprise.

“I know, naked guys aren't exciting. It's probably a guy with mental health issues. But those are exactly the kind of calls supervisors should be going in on since most of you younger cops are too filled with testosterone to de-escalate a situation.”

“Not me.”

He snorted again. “The ones without ovaries. Notice I didn't say with balls? You got plenty of those, but sometimes charging head on ain't the thing to be doing.”

She turned onto West 46th, and two blocks down saw the procession coming up the block.

“This looks like it,” she said, pulling over.

The naked guy was about five foot ten, and middle aged, though in good shape. He had a squarish, tanned face and short brown hair, and he'd picked up some kind of pipe or bar along the way as a half dozen uniformed cops surrounded him, staying back but holding their guns out and yelling at him to drop the pipe and get on the ground.

A crowd on foot was surrounding the cops, who surrounded the naked guy, most of them holding up cell phones. The naked guy was walking down the middle of the block, occasionally swinging a two-foot length of pipe at any of the cops he thought was too close.

Mueller cursed softly as he got out of the car. They were in front of the parade, so he was able to position himself off to the side as the cops in front of the naked guy backed away from him.

“Everyone shut up!” he shouted in the kind of voice only really big men generally have.

Everyone, including the naked guy, stared at him. Naked guy stopped, as well, waving the pipe towards Mueller.

“Put your guns down!” Mueller ordered.

There was a lot of hesitation at that, but everyone knew who he was and it hadn't been a request.

“I said lower your guns!” he repeated in a dangerously impatient voice.

The cops around naked guy lowered their guns, and Jamie, who had been about to draw hers, left it in its holster. She wasn't very worried about a

middle-aged naked guy smaller than her anyway.

“Hey, buddy,” he said to naked guy. “You lost?”

The naked guy stared at him, his face a mask of confusion and anxiety.

“You like a blanket or something?” Mueller asked in a friendly voice.

“You're not here!” the man shouted.

“Not everyone is here, maybe,” Mueller said. “But I'm here.” He turned to Jamie. “Get a blanket from the trunk.”

She nodded and backed up while Muller leaned against the front fender.

“You lost? I can help you get home,” he said.

The man looked around him in confusion.

“Where do you live?”

“I... live... near here,” the man said slowly, tiredly.

Jamie returned with the blanket and started to move towards the man.

“No, give it to me,” Mueller said.

She handed it over and backed up and Mueller held it up.

“Would you like a blanket? Might be getting a sunburn. It's pretty bright out.”

The man put his hands over his head, leaning over, then swung around, swinging the pipe at one of the cops off to the side who had started to creep forward. The cop drew back, raising his gun.

“I said put your weapons down!” Mueller yelled in that drill sergeant voice. “And get the fuck back from him if you're afraid of him.”

He took a step forward and the guy swung around at him, swinging the pipe again.

“I can drive you home if you like, buddy,” he said, holding up the blanket. “My name is Al. What's your name?”

The man shook his head rapidly. “I won't tell you!” he shouted.

“Okay,” Mueller said. “Do you want to tell me where you live? We can take you there.”

“I'm going home!” the man shouted, starting to move forward again.

Mueller backed up, and so did Jamie. One of the uniforms started to raise his gun and Mueller pointed angrily at him. The cop glared back but lowered his hand.

“Everyone holster their weapons,” he called.

About two thirds of the cops – there were a dozen of them by then – put their guns back in their holsters. The others hesitated, but then followed suit, as Mueller and Jamie walked backwards in front of the naked guy.

As they approached Ninth Avenue, Mueller directed two of the cops to run up ahead and block traffic. As it happened, one of the vehicles they stopped was a private ambulance, and Naked guy, when he saw it, rushed forward, screaming, waving the pipe.

He brought it down across the front hood of the ambulance and Mueller moved in behind him, grabbing his arm, and throwing another arm around his chest. Jamie sprinted forward as well, grabbing the guy's other arm as the pipe dropped to the road, swinging him around and putting him down on his belly as other cops ran up.

He struggled wildly, but Mueller had little difficulty with him, and when the uniforms piled on Jamie extricated herself from the pile and went back to pick up the blanket Mueller had dropped. By the time she got back he'd stopped struggling and was crying instead, as Mueller cuffed him.

She handed him the blanket and he wrapped it around the guy as he hauled him to his feet, then led him back out of the street.

“Call for a bus,” he told Jamie.

She nodded and took her radio out of her pocket as traffic continued on. The city didn't use private ambulances except in emergencies. That was what they paid the Fire Department for, after all.

He sat the guy down on the sidewalk, where he sobbed quietly, and stood up with a sigh.

“Probably schizophrenic,” he said. “When you're hearing voices yelling at you in your head you don't need a whole bunch of other people yelling at you in real life. That tends to get even more upsetting.”

“You take a course or something?” she asked curiously.

“No, my nephew is schizophrenic.”

“You want us to transport him, sergeant?” one of the uniforms asked.

Mueller shook his head. “No, we'll let the fire department take him to Bellevue.”

He shrugged and turned away.

“How much hand to hand training you get in the academy?” he asked Jamie.

“Uhm, not a lot,” she said.

“Your average cop gets very little, and none in disarming people with edged weapons or in this case pipes or baseball bats and shit. And there's no ongoing training. So cops grab for their guns.”

“Maybe they should change that.”

Mueller shook his head. “They wanted me to go teach at the academy. I

said I'd do it if I could redesign the physical training to give people a lot more hand to hand."

"Don't you have a Taser? I mean, I thought supervisors all have them."

"I don't trust the damn things."

"What's not to trust? I wish I had one."

"Fine. You can have mine."

She raised her eyebrows.

"All you gotta do is get Tasered first," he said. "It's part of the training."

"I was already Tasered. We had training at college."

"Fine. Mine is in the trunk."

"I coulda used one instead of running down that guy in the jewelry store robbery."

"You coulda, yeah. But you didn't need to."

"I didn't need to sweat like a pig, either. And he might have gotten away."

"From you? I don't think so cheetah girl."

She snorted.

A FD ambulance showed up and they helped the fire department EMTs strap the guy onto a gurney, then followed them to Bellevue.

From there they cruised up Fourth Avenue, then came back down Eleventh.

Jamie considered how intelligent – if unromantic the city's street names were. All the north south roads were high volume avenues, and all the east

west were streets. Anything west of Central Park, which was in the middle of the borough, got a 'w' slapped onto it, and anything east got an 'e'.

No one ever had to get lost wondering where they were. If you were on East 33rd Street and 2nd Avenue and needed to get to West 89th at 10th Avenue you had a pretty darn good idea of how far you were and where it was without even using a map. Roughly 56 blocks north and eight blocks west.

Roughly. There were a few things that got in the way of simplicity, a few avenues, like Park and Madison, which inexplicably had names, and Broadway, the only road of any length which cut diagonally from southeast to northwest. But those were minor quibbles.

And as much as people complained about New York traffic, the truth was you could move pretty far in a short period of time on the avenues, unless, of course, something blocked traffic.

Eleventh Avenue was blocked at 44th by the smoking mess of a white Explorer which had T-boned a Ford F100. Fortunately, though there were pieces of car strewn across the road, nobody in the two big vehicles had been seriously hurt.

They pushed people back and saw to the passengers, but as soon as the uniforms showed up they were able to drive off. They were headed towards 42nd street, until Mueller got a phone call on his cell.

“That so?” he said. “When? How sure are you of this?”

There was a pause. “Yeah, there's a hundred in it for you if it happens.”

He hung up and turned to her. “Go 5th and 47th,” he said.

“What's going on there?”

“Maybe shoplifting.”

She raised her eyebrows.

“Got a question, rookie?”

“Not me,” she said, “Want to go lights and siren?”

“Don't get snotty.”

“I was born that way.”

He took out his cell phone and called someone.

“Who's around the house?” he asked.

There was a pause. “Okay, get a half dozen riot shields, then you guys grab a van and meet me at deAngelos on Fifth Avenue. We might have another of those swarming things happening this afternoon.”

Jamie looked at him in surprise. Riot shields?

He hung up, and looked placidly forward. Jamie wondered if he was actually *trying* to annoy her. She continued to drive, deciding he had to know she wanted more information and was just waiting for her to ask. If she failed to ask, well, he'd have to tell her eventually. She was patient, and in her experience, the older you got the less patience you had – maybe because you had less time.

He had her park up the block, and then got out. She followed him to a clothing store which seemed to specialize in leather. Expensive leather. She looked at a price tag and shook her head. *Very* expensive leather. The jacket she got a glimpse of was selling for four thousand dollars.

Mueller asked for the manager and an effete looking blonde man in a sharp purple shirt and black leather vest came over.

“May I help you, sir?” he asked in what she had long come to think of as a 'gay accent'.

He showed her his badge.

“An informant, who may or may not be reliable, has told us that a

swarm shoplifting is being planned for this location this afternoon,” he said, much to the man's distress.

“Oh my God!” the man gasped. “What should we do? Should I close up?”

“If you close up then they'll just come back tomorrow or the next day, or next week, when we're not here,” Mueller said. “The only way to discourage these things is to make them... unprofitable, and that means catching the people doing it. I and some of my colleagues will be hanging around, and if the event occurs we'll do our best to apprehend the people involved.”

“But the last time there must have been a hundred of them!” the man exclaimed.

“From the video it was more like forty, and most were non-violent. If they show up, just move back and ignore them. Don't try to get in their way and they'll probably leave you alone. Once we show up they'll have nothing on their minds but running anyway. Is there a back way out?”

“No, this is it!” he said, pointing at the doorway.

Mueller smiled. “Good. They're going to find it blocked by cops if they try to leave.”

He turned to Jamie.

“I bet you look good in leather, Officer McCloud,” he said.

She raised her eyebrows as he turned to the manager.

“Do you think we could disguise Officer McCloud as a shopper?” he asked.

“Oh easily,” the man said. “Especially since these people will have no real regard for quality other than grabbing whatever has the highest price tags.”

He eyed her closely. “Let me get a jacket for you,” he said.

“When are they supposed to show up?” she asked Mueller as the man left.

“Around noon. They figure all the rich folks will be eating in fancy restaurants so the shop will be empty. And while I told him they were mostly non-violent, they aren't always. There's strength in numbers and sometimes these groups love slapping and punching people – especially rich white people – just for fun. Don't reveal who you are until we get to the doorway, then join us.”

She nodded and he went outside to wait for whoever he'd called at the station.

The phenomenon of 'flash mobs' swarming stores and even shopping centers was not new, but it had been getting more organized of late. Instead of just hitting convenience stores or local shopping malls some of them were taking the subway to where the pickings were a lot richer, and Harlem was only a short subway ride from Fifth Avenue shops.

Why steal some chips and chocolate bars when you can make off with an expensive leather jacket or athletic shoes instead? A mall in Staten Island had been hit by a flash mob of over a hundred last year, she recalled. And she'd heard of one in Kansas which had been hundreds strong, but they'd mostly been aimed at slapping around white people going to the state fair.

It didn't really enter her mind that the shoplifters would be anything other than young and black. Flash mob robberies were largely a black thing, especially with the kind of numbers Mueller was talking about. The N.Y.P.D.'s stats said over sixty percent of robberies in New York were committed by Blacks, and about thirty percent by Hispanics. That was just the way it was. She didn't bother to worry about whatever socioeconomic or cultural reasons were behind it all. That was above her pay grade anyway.

“I think this would look excellent on you, Officer,” the manager said as he returned holding a leather jacket.

Jamie looked at it doubtfully but shrugged and pulled off the jean jacket she'd been wearing.

“I really don't think these people are likely to spot me as a cop,” she said.

“You certainly don't look like one,” he replied. “But if the sergeant is right I'd like to get them all arrested and maybe people will go and bother someone else next time.”

She slid the jacket up her arms and he smiled contentedly. “I've always been an excellent judge of size,” he said.

“I hope this isn't too expensive.”

He shrugged. “No, and it was returned by a customer as being too long.”

He shook his head. “I told her that a six long would not be suitable with her arm length. It's not like you can roll up the sleeves, for heaven's sakes!”

Jamie wandered slowly around the shop, gazing at leather jackets which seemed to look the same to her, but which varied in price from \$600-\$5000. The purses were even more wildly priced, and there was a whole wall of leather shoes, including leather walking shoes, running shoes and athletic shoes. There was a very nice leather skirt she would have liked to try on, but didn't consider it given the price tag.

There were two ways in which flash mobs robbed stores. The first was to come in twos and threes, as if not together, shop, pick up what you wanted, and then all run out together. The second was to all run in together and grab whatever you could find. So she found herself profiling the shoppers as they came in, looking for those who didn't belong.

That didn't necessarily mean black. Lots of Blacks in New York had the money to shop at a store like this. But they would be shopping at similar stores for the rest of their clothes so what they were wearing would tend to be fairly high end.

The three Black girls who came through the door together were about eighteen to twenty years old, wearing jeans – and not designer jeans either. Two were wearing sweatshirts while the third had a hoody, and looked

around nervously.

The three whispered together and moved towards the shoe section, looking things over. A minute or so later, three more came in, two guys and a girl, all in their late teens to early twenties. They were very obviously casual as they looked around, but they didn't look like they belonged either.

A minute later two more came in, both young men, and both went straight to the leather jackets and started trying them on. More began arriving over the following ten minutes, all trying on jackets and coats, shoes and examining purses. No one was trying anything which required going to a dressing room, she noted.

She wondered how Mueller was going to run things. Until they bolted they hadn't broken any laws, but the first sign they were running would be them running, and she didn't see how he could get to the front door in time to block them.

She looked around and then considered the metal display rack to the side of the door. It was about five feet tall and four feet wide, and consisted of individual little shelves that held leather chokers, wristbands, hair ties, shoe and bootlaces, and leather polish.

She moved over to it, as if to examine the contents, and reluctantly decided there was really no way to block the door until at least the lead elements had escaped. Doing it before that would let too many indignantly claim they hadn't had any intention of running for it.

She saw a plain gray van pull in to the curb just outside the door, in front of a fire hydrant, and figured that had to be the van Mueller had spoken of. The store now had several dozen shoppers in it, which was highly unusual for a weekday at noon, she thought. That almost all of them were young and Black would be even more unlikely.

Even an idiot would be smelling a rat by now, so they had to figure the staff would be calling the police soon. Sure enough, at some signal she didn't get, first a few, then everyone – almost everyone, ran for the door clutching jackets, bags and shoes.

Not everyone was running for the door, though. She saw a teenage girl sucker punch an older, gray haired woman and yank at her purse, while two guys ran behind the counter. She stepped back from the door and then pulled the rack over across it.

That didn't mean people couldn't get out, but they would be bunching up at the door even without the rack. Now they'd be bunching up as they moved through a wiry obstacle course.

She quickly scanned the store, noting the only people not trying to run out with something in their hands. Two men in the far corner, one of whom was grappling with a black teenager, the gray haired woman trying to hold onto her purse, and a very short, stout woman in the shoe section.

The mob bunched up, and some began to stumble and fall as they tried to pick their way through the wire display rack. Moving it would require everyone move aside and that just wasn't happening since the holes between the wires were plenty big enough for people to get their feet through.

The first half dozen stumbled through the door, the second half dozen cursing and picking their way through the rack. The rest bunched up inside. One fat girl had either seen what Jamie had done or just decided to take out whatever anger she had on her and swung a fist at her head.

Jamie swayed back and punched the girl in the face. That knocked her back against others as she fell, knocking down two more people. Another girl swung a box at her and she blocked with her left arm and kicked the girl in the shin, which sent her hopping and cursing and dropping her box.

She could hear shouting outside the door, but the bunch inside were all making a lot of noise so it was hard to pick it out. Another girl grabbed at her and she twisted her arm up behind her back and flung her forward into the mass trying to pick their way through the rack, sending several more falling over. She moved further away from the door and saw two guys behind the counter trying to work the cash register.

One grabbed the store employee there by the scruff of the neck and shoved her hard against the wall, then yanked her towards the register as

Jamie ran over. She side-kicked the first guy in the back of the knees as she yanked him back and he went down heavily, hitting his head against the wall behind him.

“On the floor! You're under arrest!” Jamie shouted at the second one.

“Fuck you, bitch!” he shouted, running out the other side and racing through a doorway marked 'employees only'.

The second guy picked himself up and she grabbed his wrist and twisted it sharply up and back, forcing him back to his knees. There was a kind of jostling outside the door, as the last of the shoplifters got through it.

They didn't seem to be going anywhere fast, and then were being shoved back against the windows and forced to their knees as the cops surrounding them pushed inward. There was a lot of shouting and cursing going on, and then a couple of uniformed cops picked up the rack and shoved it out of the way as they came through the door.

“One of them ran into the back,” she said, cuffing the guy she was kneeling on.

They ran through the now largely empty store and into the back, yelling “Police!”

Jamie dragged her sullen, now-cuffed prisoner outside to see the rest of the group were being searched and cuffed. There were six anti-crime guys there, as well as a dozen uniformed cops who must have been summoned by Mueller once he saw what was happening.

The prisoners almost all seemed fairly sullen and resentful, rather than being particularly scared. She pulled the wallet from the one she'd arrested to get his name. He and the other one who'd been behind the counter would get more serious charges than the shoplifters.

She looked up as the two uniforms brought the last guy out.

“That one gets assault and robbery charges,” she told them, pointing at

the guy.

It was a fairly chaotic scene outside, with a large crowd of bystanders and gawkers gathered around, and the street blocked by police vehicles. There were riot shields laying on the sidewalks on either side, which the police had apparently used to hem in the first rush of shoplifters. Several prisoner transport vans were among the police vehicles, and prisoners were already being led towards them.

She moved along the line of prisoners and grabbed one girl, who glared up at her as Jamie pulled her head back. She was the one who had sucker punched the old lady.

“This one gets assault and robbery,” she said to the uniform near her.

Taking care of details on site, and doing interviews with staff took another hour, then they headed back to the house for reports.

“I guess your guy earned his hundred bucks,” she said.

“Yeah, this'll look good on the precinct stats. Twenty-nine grand larcenies and two robberies, all solved same day. The Inspector will be happy,” Mueller said.

Chapter Six

“You look good in a suit,” she said.

“Thank you,” Danny said. “But you should call me sir.”

Jamie looked at him doubtfully.

“You look good naked,” he said.

“Thank you, sir.”

She said the word sarcastically, but it still gave her a strange, hot little twinge. Maybe his kinky games were getting to her.

He'd picked her up in an Audi today, after work, and he'd been wearing a dark gray three-piece suit with dark blue tie. It was fine, expensive, form fitting suit, and while he looked very sexy in it, she still wanted to get it off him and run her fingers over his chest.

She couldn't do that, of course, because while he was sitting back in a high-backed wing chair sipping from a rum and coke, she was kneeling on a padded ottoman with her wrists tied together above her head and tied to a hook set in the ceiling. Rope circled her legs just below the knees, as well, tying them in place at the corners of the ottoman.

Naturally, she was naked, and her knees were well apart.

“You just going to look at me all evening... sir?” she said.

His lips curved up gently.

“Oh I think you can count on me doing more than just looking,” he said. “But looking is very nice.”

“I wouldn't mind looking at you naked while you were looking at me

naked.”

“Maybe if you're a good girl, I'll let you.”

She snorted.

He reached down beneath the chair, then stood up with something in his hands. She dropped her eyes but only got a quick glimpse of something like a strap or belt before he slipped it around her neck, then moved behind her, drawing the sides in to buckle it together.

“What's this?” she gulped.

The belt was tight, but not tight enough to restrict her breathing. He came back around in front of her and sat down again.

“Excellent,” he said.

She scowled and looked down, but of course, could see nothing. When she looked up he was holding his cell phone and she only had a moment to open her mouth to protest before he snapped a picture.

“Hey!”

He grinned and then looked at it before holding it up to her to see.

She gulped, feeling another rush of heat. It was a collar, one of those bondage things with studs along the middle and a big ring in the front. But of course, the picture wasn't just of her collar. It showed all of her, and she was uncomfortably reminded of the incident that day with Haines and that bikini picture.

“As my bitch, you should have a collar,” he said.

“I'm not your bitch,” she said, glaring.

“You called me master.”

“A girl will say a lot of things at... certain times.”

He raised the phone again.

“Push your chest out.”

“No!”

“Would you rather there be a naked picture of you that made you look ugly, or one that made you look hot?”

“Neither! I don't want any naked pictures of me!”

“One or the other. Three, two, one.”

She pushed her chest out, though not so much to make sure the picture looked hot as in playing his kinky, thrilling little game. She was still anxious, though, about the pictures.

“You have excellent breasts.”

“I know. If these pictures get out, Lucas...”

“Give me a little credit, slave girl. I'm not an idiot.”

“Yeah, and you're not a guy? You're not gonna send anything to your buddies?”

“Absolutely not. I might show them on my phone, but never send them.”

She glowered at him and jerked her arms against the rope.

“Just kidding, officer slave girl. I won't show anyone.”

“If you do you'll live to regret it!” she growled.

He grinned. “That's a poor attitude for a slave girl to have.”

“I'm not your slave girl, pervert.”

“With a body like that you should be someone's slave girl, why not

mine?”

“Maybe my body is so great I'm too good for you.”

“Not possible. I have an amazing body, too.”

“And do I get to take naked pictures of it?”

“No one wants to see naked pictures of a guy except gay guys.”

She stared at him. “Are you kidding?”

“Did I mention your fantastic breasts?”

“Yes.”

“And excellent abs, too. You must work out.”

She sniffed derisively, then gasped a bit as he leaned in and let his fingers stroke up and down against her torso from abdomen to lower chest.

He stood up, then, and moved behind her, and took another picture, then another.

“Danny!” she protested. “I don't want naked pictures of me around!”

“You have an excellent back, too. That little gay guy was right. Great ass, too.”

“And what do you got?” she demanded.

She gasped as he gathered her hair up behind her neck in his fist and jerked it sharply back and down.

“I got *you*, slave girl.”

“N-Not your slave girl!” she gasped.

The camera flashed and then he released her hair and sat down again,

examining his pictures.

“I'm deleting those as soon as you untie me,” she warned.

“You're very impertinent for a girl who is naked and tied up and helpless.”

“You don't scare me, *sir!*” she said, glowering.

“Hmm, maybe I've been too lax. Maybe I need to discipline you more strenuously.”

He reached down beneath the chair again and picked up a long handled... thing.

“What's that?” she asked warily.

“What's that, sir,” he said.

“What's that, sir?”

He grinned.

“This, slave girl, is a riding crop.”

The thing in his hand consisted of a eight inch long, leather wrapped handle, a thin shaft wrapped in leather, and a small flat piece of doubled up leather the size of a large postage stamp.

“Don't you dare!”

“Don't I dare what, slave girl?” he said, sitting forward and bringing the leather tip up under her left breast.

“Danny!” she exclaimed.

“That's sir, slave girl.”

He let the flat leather tip rub up and down against her erect nipple, and

Jamie felt a rush of heat and anxiety roll through her as she licked her lips. He shifted the crop to her other breast, and again let the flat tip rub back and forth over her nipple, making it crackle with heat.

“Bad girls need to be punished, you know,” he said softly.

“I'm not ... “

“Are you a good girl?” he asked, raising his eyebrows.

She didn't answer that one.

“Arch your back. Push those gorgeous breasts out a little more.”

She gulped, but obeyed as her chest tightened with a new rush of heat.

He drew the flat tip back a little, then slapped it down lightly against her nipple.

Jamie gasped but the sting was mild. He slapped it again, and she winced a bit, for the sting was greater, but still nothing to really complain about.

Of course, the idea that he would use something to slap at her breast was so ... outrageous that it sent a wave of darkly perverse excitement and anticipation through her mind.

He slapped her nipple again, and again, his elbow not really moving, using just his wrist to flick the flat little leather head of the crop down lightly against her tender skin. It stung – a little, but it was still outrageous. And the more he swung, the more sensitive the center of her breast felt as it began to warm!

He switched to her other breast, flicking the crop down repeatedly, as she gasped and gulped and felt the sexual electricity rolling through her to make her nerve endings flare with heat. Her nipples began to grow warm and even more sensitive as he flicked the crop down repeatedly.

“Do your nipples hurt, slave girl?”

“No!” she gulped.

“No, master,” he corrected.

He swung the crop a little harder and she gasped.

“Ow! Danny!”

“No, master,” he said calmly.

“No, asshole.”

He flicked the crop down with rapid little strokes that made her gasp and wince and try to twist her chest aside, but the way she was tied made it impossible to avoid the little crop.

“Ow! Stop it!”

“I thought you were a tough girl,” he said with a smirk.

She glared at him, then gasped as he let the thin leather trace its way down her taut lower chest and belly, zig zagging its way down to her sex, where he rubbed it against her clitoris.

“Just think, we used to discipline little boys and girls – though mostly boys, with the cane. Smacked their little hands and bottoms – quite hard, too. Now here you are a tough New York cop and you're afraid of having your nipples warmed a little.”

“I'm not afraid of you!” she said defiantly, if a little breathlessly.

He smirked, the leather flap sliding up and down against her clitoris. It slid back up her body again, though, which was something of a relief to Jamie, but then slapped down lightly and repeatedly against the center of her left breast, then her right, before sliding back down her body to rub against her clitoris once more.

He leaned forward further, easing the crop between her legs, then up, letting the shaft sink between the lips of her sex as he stroked it slowly in and

out. He smirked at her, then leaned back and took a drink, eyeing her over the rim of the glass.

He leaned forward once more, and then struck the center of each breast with rapid little blows which made her clench her teeth at the rising heat and pain.

He slid off the chair, then, to kneel in front of her. His hands sliding up the side of her chest, then he leaned forward and licked across her right nipple.

“Oh! Fuck!” she gasped!

His tongue was icy cold!

He chuckled, and licked again, then opened his mouth and took the center of her breast into it. She squealed again, trying to pull away, for his mouth was icy cold – because she could feel an ice cube inside it!

“Just trying to warm your overheated nipples, slave girl,” he said.

He took the middle of her right breast into his mouth and did the same, then, amused as she tried to pull away, popped the ice cube out into his hand, then took it in his fingers and put one arm behind her to pull her chest forward before letting the small cube slowly circle around and around her left nipple.

“Bastard!” she gasped.

“I believe you meant to call me sir.”

“Sir bastard!” she moaned.

He rolled the cube back and forth over her stiff nipple, then held it there a bit, as the warmth of her flesh melted it and small, cold droplets began to trickle slowly down the underside of her breast.

“Danny!” she squealed.

He shifted the cube to her other nipple, rolling it around and around, letting her flesh melt it and produce small droplets which trickled down her flushed, overheated skin.

Then he popped the remnants of the cube into his mouth and swallowed before dropping lower and licking his way slowly down her lower chest and belly.

Jamie squealed and writhed against him and his cold tongue and mouth, but at least by the time he'd reached her abdomen both were warming. She gasped as the cool tongue licked up across her clitoris, then did it again – and again.

“Hmmm, tasty,” he said.

His hands slid around her to knead her buttocks and pull her forward into his mouth as he licked harder, his tongue warming even further as she shuddered and felt the heat within her intensify. His warming tongue made her insides flare with sensation, and her hips trembled and jerked even as he pulled them forward against him.

His tongue moved lower, sliding up and down against the line of her sex, then he drew his right hand around, his fingers caressing her, then pushing slowly up inside. His tongue returned to licking at her clitoris, harder and faster now as her breathing became more ragged.

His fingers stroked up and down inside her, pulling back against the front wall of her sex as he did so, while his tongue licked a complicated pattern across her swollen clitoris. Jamie felt the rising pressure of sexual heat and excitement beginning to make her nerve endings spasm uncontrollably as that her body trembled.

Then he stopped and stood up. He grinned down at her, gripping her hair and jerking her head back sharply.

“Nasty girl,” he said in a purring voice.

The tip of the little crop slapped sharply and repeatedly against her

burning nipples, and Jamie cried out in helpless pleasure/pain, the sensations twisting and twining together through her overloaded nervous system.

He unzipped himself, drawing his cock out, hard and thick, and drawing her head forward by the hair as he rubbed himself back and forth across her face.

“You know you want it, slave girl. You want my cock inside you.”

He pushed it into her open mouth as she gasped for breath, and Jamie moaned around it, closing her lips and sucking instinctively, rolling her eyes up at him as he pumped his hips slowly in and out. He pumped deeper, lengthening his strokes, and then pushed himself deep into her throat as she gurgled powerlessly.

The wonder, to her, was how smoothly, how easily, his long, thick cock pushed down her throat, and how easily she was handling it! Yes, it ached, but not like it once had, for she was getting used to deep throating. And that meant while there was an urge to gag, to choke, the urges were much smaller than they had once been.

Of course, the level of her arousal was playing a part in that. Her body thrummed with sexual heat and excitement, and the sensations coming from her throat were, just like everything else, being sucked into the whirling vortex of passion and lust enveloping her mind.

He buried himself in her throat, his hands forcing her face tight against him and holding it there for long seconds. Then he drew back, pulling inch after glistening inch free of her throat, sliding it across her tongue and over her lips, and pulling it free until she could cough and gasp and gulp in air.

“Do you love my cock, slave girl?”

“S-Sometimes!” she gasped.

“Hmm.”

He pushed himself back into her mouth, then, just the head, and she had

a moment to see his cell phone being held just to one side as he slowly pushed into her while pulling her forward. His cock slid into her smoothly, the head causing her to gag very briefly as it entered her throat, then the shaft sliding forward until her lips were wrapped firmly around the base.

He pulled slowly out and then examined his phone, turning and showing it to her as he replayed the video. It was... obscene! But despite her anxiety about it she felt a hot churning rush of heat as she watched it.

He dropped low and started licking at her sex again. She moaned as she felt his finger pushing into her, sliding slowly up, wriggling and turning and twisting as it pumped in and out and he licked at her clitoris. A second finger pushed into her, and they were large, thick fingers!

His tongue was licking harder, and he was resting it against his lower lip to add pressure as she felt steady, repeated surges of seething pleasure rolling up her body!

Then he picked up something from under the ottoman, something... purple. She sucked in a quick gulp of air.

“What is that?”

“A toy.”

It was rounded at the top, and curved slightly, fairly thick, widening in the middle. He pushed it slowly up into her and Jamie moaned low in her throat, loving the feel of being penetrated, as she always did, loving how thick it was and how high it was moving into her.

When it got almost all the way up inside her, he shifted his hand from the base, and she saw that it seemed to break in two branches there. The thicker, longer one was inside her. The thinner, shorter one was curved in and back against that main branch.

As he slid the main branch deeper, the shorter one pushed up across the top of her sex, pressing firmly against the front of her body.

And then he turned it on, and for the second time in her life Jamie felt the buzzing of a vibrator against her!

“You are such a pervert!” she moaned.

He sat back, looking smug.

“I like to watch you come.”

The longer, thicker part of the sex toy seemed to throb deep inside her overheated belly, while the shorter one vibrated powerfully against her already swollen clitoris! Jamie's breath was becoming more and more ragged as Lucas sat back, casually crossed his leg, and observed her.

The scene was ridiculous, and outrageous, and she felt a sense of unreality, of disbelief, to find herself within it, but the wild thrill was growing. She moaned again, the muscles in her thighs jerking spastically against the ropes holding them wide as her body sought to squeeze them tightly around the thing inside her!

Instead, all her body could do, given the tight restrictions on her movement, was grinding herself helplessly back and forward in short, sharp, desperate bucking of her hips! She stared down at the thing, gulping in air, and then looked up to find Lucas holding up his damn cell phone again!

She felt a flare of anger, and anxiety, and then it was all swept away by a wild rush of sensation that overwhelmed her senses! She cried out, twisting and writhing, back arching as she ground herself even more frantically against the thing, her body flaring again and again with the intensity of the pleasure rippling through her nervous system!

Chapter Seven

Despite how justified the department felt her shooting had been, it was still making waves on social media and among activist groups. The ongoing theme was that Osgood Laylor, the man she'd killed, was executed by racist police without even being given an order to surrender.

There was even a protest by Black Lives Matter at the diner, where they blocked the entrance and scuffled with police.

When she was called into the Inspector's office the next morning, though, it was to see a lieutenant from Intelligence there.

“Officer McCloud,” Inspector Tuttle said, “I want to reiterate the department's finding of a solid justification for the shooting which took place two weeks ago.”

“Thanks,” she said warily.

“This is Lieutenant Benning from Intelligence.”

“Officer McCloud, we've been developing information from electronic assets that you may be in some danger,” Benning said.

“What? What kind of danger?”

“Some members of the radical Islamic community, while they haven't made any plans, are speaking openly on the need to punish the N.Y.P.D. For the death of Osgood Laylor, who, as you know, was a recent convert to Islam. And they feel the best way to do that would be to target the officer who killed him.”

She stared at him with a measure of disbelief.

“Now, these people don't have any sort of real intelligence ability,” he said. “And we think it's mostly just talk. But we wanted to warn you to be on

guard anyway.”

“How do you get to work, officer?” Tuttle asked.

“Ahm, I take the subway. Well, I take the subway to the nearest station and walk.”

The two men looked at each other.

“The only issue I have with that is when you go home in the evening,” Benning said. “It's relatively easy to know when shifts change, and to watch for a tall redheaded woman walking away from the station.”

“Well, I don't have a car,” she pointed out.

She wasn't going to mention that Lucas often picked her up.

“I think we can arrange to have the sector car drop you off at the station,” Tuttle said.

“Better if it was a different station every day,” Benning said. “Tell the cars involved it's to avoid media attention. Cops gossip and otherwise the threat will get out there and reach the media.”

“Good idea.”

“So these people aren't really much of a threat?”

Benning shook his head. “We're just being extremely careful. It's better to err on the side of caution than just disregard it. The downside is much lower.”

“I'll also have a word with Sergeant Mueller,” Tuttle said, “To ensure you aren't assigned anywhere without close backup.”

“So what do you think?” she asked Mueller later in the car.

“I think they're covering their asses,” he said with a grunt.

She nodded slowly.

“I've never heard of a case where a cop who shot anyone ever got any direct retaliation, ever. That would take too much planning and effort. The most loser groups ever do is just shoot at a cop, any cop will do. We're all pretty much faceless oppressors to these people so it doesn't make any difference who they target. But I doubt anything will happen. It was a justified shoot and they know it.”

“Some of them don't exactly have their heads screwed on all the way,” she said.

He shrugged. “They're still lazy and stupid. If they plan to do anything but bitch and whine Intelligence will probably hear about it long before they actually make a move. And like I said, even then it would probably just be the nearest available cop.”

They headed for 10th Avenue because Mueller wanted to keep an eye on a drug dealer who had been released from prison the previous week.

Stephen Ford was his name. According to his sheet he targeted higher end high schools where teenagers had more money, found one or two people there to sell for him, and kept himself discretely hidden.

“His MO has never changed,” Mueller said. “He's found something that works, and he doesn't give a shit whose lives he ruins as long as it's profitable.”

She raised her eyebrows.

They pulled over to the side and looked up at the high rise.

“Isn't there a high school around here?” she asked.

“Right next door on West 50th.”

“And because he's not on parole he doesn't have to meet any conditions about where he can reside,” she asked.

He nodded.

“Still, seems a little dangerous to live in the neighborhood if he's going to commit a crime right there.”

“There is that. But he's not the guy who's going to be selling. He'll find one or two people at the high school to do that, then stand back, and probably go look at another nearby high school. Some of these kids have a lot of cash, and they consider themselves jaded and sophisticated. So they're open to trying meth or heroin or coke.”

“Why would any of them get involved with selling it, though?”

“There's always some in the school who don't have a lot of money and resent it, and are desperate to have more so they can compete with the richer ones.”

They got out of the car and walked up to the building.

“Want to bet his apartment is in the back and overlooks the school?”

She didn't answer.

They talked to the doorman, and sure enough, Ford was renting a studio on the sixth floor in the back. The doorman didn't know much about him because he hadn't lived there long. Besides, it was a forty-story building. They got the floor plan and then went outside and drove around the corner to high school, where Mueller took a pair of binoculars from the car.

They walked into the school's small rear yard and he looked up at the building, following the windows along the sixth floor, and then grunted and handed them to her. Jamie took them and gazed up along the row of windows to find Ford's.

“Nice looking telescope,” she said. “Looks expensive. And it's got a camera mount.”

She lowered the binoculars.

“But it's not illegal to look at people out your window, even using a telescope,” she pointed out. “Even if you're looking into people's windows.”

“You might make a case under the surveillance law,” Mueller said.

“Yeah? Good look with that. Mostly the courts just say to close your blind if you're doing something you don't want the neighbors to see. Besides, it requires you be in a place with a reasonable expectation of privacy. A school yard isn't a place with a reasonable expectation of privacy.”

He grunted again.

“And the courts are doubly careful when it's someone in their own home just looking out the window.”

“With a telescope and camera,” he said sarcastically.

“Still his view into a public place.”

They went inside and talked to the school's principal, who photocopied William's picture.

Their biggest problem was persuading the woman not to chase him off if she saw him.

“We need to know who he befriends and catch him in the act. If you chase him away he'll just lay back and keep trying until he finds one, approaching them on the sidewalk, say, or in a nearby restaurant.”

They returned to the car and headed further north up 10th Avenue, and Jamie idly checked license plates of interesting looking cars on the computer.

“You should watch the sidewalks, not play on that thing,” Mueller said.

She rolled her eyes briefly across to him.

“I can multi-task,” she said.

When a call came over the radio about a disturbance on West 57th Street they were only a couple of blocks away, and Mueller headed over there without accepting it.

“The sector car will roll on it anyway,” he said. “We'll just swing by and see what it is.”

What it turned out to be was a dump truck which had dumped its load in front of the CBS Broadcast Center. In fact, it was just finishing and starting to pull away when they arrived.

“That smells like –.”

“Manure,” Mueller said.

“Okay.”

A security guard and the dump truck driver were yelling at each other when they pulled up, with the screaming driver halfway out his window and he shook his fist.

Mueller angled the car directly in front of the truck, which Jamie doubted would stop the driver if he felt like pulling away, so she hastily got out. That big truck would roll right over their car. And when he noticed Mueller approaching that was exactly what it looked like the driver was going to try and do.

He quickly pulled back into his truck and shifted gears, and Jamie ran up to the driver's side and jumped up to thrust the stun gun through the open window.

“Don't even think about it!” she snapped. “Put it in park and turn it off!”

He glowered at her, then shifted gears again, and then shut down the engine, and she drew back, pulling the door open wide as she jumped down, but holding the Taser on him in case he changed his mind.

“Down.”

The man was on the far side of middle aged, balding down the middle but with thick dark hair on the sides. He had a round, red face and was tight lipped. He climbed sullenly down and Mueller looked at the heap of manure, then at the guy.

“Well?”

“Well their news is full of shit so I thought I'd show them what I thought about it!” he exclaimed angrily.

“An unhappy customer, huh? License and registration,” Mueller said.

“You know the sidewalk is city property?” Jamie asked.

He glowered at her but didn't reply as he pulled out his wallet.

The sector car pulled up, then. She recognized the cops who got out and heaved a mental sigh. Calvin Brown was all right, but Paul Haines seemed to think he was a real player, and had set his sights on Jamie the instant he'd first seen her.

“The guy was making a statement on the quality of the news,” she said as Jones walked up.

“He ain't completely wrong there,” Brown said.

Brown was a large, paunchy black man with twenty years on the job. Haines, by contrast, was in his mid-twenties, short and slender, wearing a uniform that looked tailored, with brown haircut short and tight.

“Hey, Jamie,” he said enthusiastically. “Don't see enough of you!”

She scowled at the words, wondering what he meant by that given he was her prime suspect for who might have gotten hold of some of the bikini pictures she'd had taken of her during her undercover modeling assignment on Madison Avenue a month back.

She'd been wearing a thong bikini and handcuffed at the time he and Brown showed up, and he'd been far too publicly enthusiastic at the station about what he'd seen.

"I've been busy," she said, turning her face away from him.

"I heard! Not only the city's sexiest cop but a dead-eyed killer to boot!" he exclaimed with a grin.

"You know what, I don't like either of those descriptions," she snapped, poking her finger into his chest.

Brown shook his head and wandered over to stand beside Mueller, and Jamie followed, just to move further away from Haines, who, unfortunately, followed along.

"You know," he said in a lowered voice, "the sight of you in that bikini is one of my best memories of the job so far. You looked *fine!*"

"It was a bathing suit, Haines. Get over it," she said.

"I'm not talking about the suit, babe, but what it showed off! Like that great ass of yours!"

She ignored him, and moved further away, but a minute later he was beside her again, and holding his cell phone.

"This is a fucking work of art!" he said, showing her a picture she recognized as one of the ones from her modeling stint. It was taken from the rear, and the only thing she'd been wearing was a small thong bikini."

With a flare of anger, she grabbed his cell phone and then threw it, spinning sideways into the pile of manure, where it was all-but buried.

"Fuck!" he shouted, drawing the attention of Mueller, Brown, the truck driver, and the security guard from CBS as he ran over to the manure pile.

The pile was about ten feet wide, and four or five feet high at the top. The corner of the cell phone was sticking out near the center, which meant

Haines was going to have to step knee deep in the manure in order to lean forward and grab it.

Instead he turned on her, face red and angry, and grabbed her by the scruff of the neck.

“You're going to fucking get it back, bitch!” he snarled.

Jamie's response was almost instantaneous, and before he'd finished speaking she'd twisted his arm down and around, spinning outside his grip, and then shoving him forward so that he fell – face first – into the pile of manure.

“Fuck!” he screamed, scrambling frantically up and back.

Jamie drew her stun gun in the meantime, and raised it, eyes narrowing, but Mueller came back and snatched it out of her hand.

“You have to file a report every time you discharge these, you know,” he said, yanking her back before confronting Haines.

“Haines, you stupid fuck,” he growled. “I knew you were too dumb to tie your own shoes without written instructions but I thought you at least had the brains not to piss off the house redhead!”

The what, Jamie thought, startled.

“She fucking threw my cell phone into the shit!”

“Why?” Mueller demanded.

Haines stared at him, mouth open, apparently his mind starting to function well enough to understand it wouldn't be a great idea to tell a sergeant that he had a picture of Jamie in a bikini and had shown it to her.

Jamie folded her arms across her chest and glowered at him while Haines' partner sighed and shook his head. He and Mueller looked at each other, and both seemed to roll their eyes simultaneously, then Mueller, who had been holding her arm, moved further back.

“You guys can handle this now that you're here,” he said to Brown.

“I guess so,” Brown said unhappily.

“Fucking cunt!” Haines shouted.

“Shut your mouth before I stuff you into that head first!” Mueller snapped, jabbing a finger at him.

He didn't let go of Jamie's arm, though, until he'd yanked open the passenger door to the car and pushed her into it, then he closed it behind her.

“Stay!” he snapped, jabbing his finger at her in turn.

He got in and started the engine, and they pulled away from the curb.

“That was not highly professional,” he said.

“Haines is an asshole.”

“Lots of cops are assholes. There are even people who think I'm an asshole.”

“Well, sometimes you are!”

“Sometimes we all are! That's the fucking point!”

“I'm sure that bastard is the one behind pictures of me in my modeling assignment getting out and being passed around!”

“Is that what he showed you on his phone?”

She jerked her head up and down tightly and he sighed.

“What a fucking moron,” he said.

“So he got what he deserved.”

He rolled his eyes at her. “You have to remember that young guys are all

horny bastards. Okay?”

“You think I don't know that?” she demanded.

“My point is that you're not going to change the world. Young guys are always going to be horny bastards, every one of them. And they're all going to love the sight of beautiful girls in bikinis, even more if they know them and they're... unobtainable.”

“Unobtainable?”

“You know what I mean.”

“I don't care if they all have dirty fantasies about me, Mueller, but I'm not going to let them act out in my face.”

“Nobody says you have to.”

“I also don't want to file a complaint with the department.”

“There are other ways of handling things.”

“Like?”

“Like complain to your immediate supervisor who will have a quiet word with the individual concerned, or with their immediate supervisor, who will kick their ass so you don't have to. Nobody wants things to go official, least of all the bosses, but that doesn't mean we can allow cops to settle things among themselves like a bunch of Harlem gangbangers.”

“It's not like I'm beating up cops all the time,” she said sullenly.

“You've only been here what, ten weeks, and this is the second time.”

They both put hands on me!”

“Granted. Though this one was a little more provoked than the last one.”

“He's lucky I didn't throw his fucking phone on the pavement and stomp

on it. I probably should have.”

“This was funnier.”

She snorted.

“Funny means most of the other cops will just laugh if they hear about it. So I doubt Haines is going to be doing much complaining. Brown will probably keep his mouth shut too.”

“I'm not the one who did anything wrong!” she exclaimed.

“You don't need any more reputation, is what I'm saying.”

“Like the house redhead?” she asked sarcastically.

“Well... “

“You beat up one guy and you get a reputation for a bad temper?”

“It's not just him. You've been involved in two separate shootings, and a few of the people you've arrested have been more than a little marked up. Don't worry. Guys like that about you.”

She stared at him in consternation.

“You have to face facts, McCloud. You're six feet tall and the best-looking woman in the house. You're not going to be anonymous. Guys are gonna talk about you. That's gonna be the same wherever you go.”

“Well, they can keep it zipped around me if they can't speak and act respectfully or they're going to be in deep shit – one way or another.”

Chapter Eight

When she got to work the next morning she discovered she had been 'voluntold' to go to the police academy in Queens for a professional development course.

“Don't look at me,” Mueller said, holding his hands up. “Wasn't my idea.”

“Is this because of that asshole Haines?”

“I wouldn't make any direct connections if I was you.”

“What kind of professional development course is this?” she demanded.

“Officer safety.”

She stared at him in confusion. “Why? I took that in the academy and I've only been out a few months.”

“I actually don't know, McCloud. Usually you don't get these things until you've been out of the department a lot longer than that. It's like a reminder course for cops who haven't set foot in the academy in years.”

“That's what I thought!”

“Go and ask Lieutenant Foster, though I think it came from higher up.”

She wandered over to the lieutenant's office and knocked. He looked up and gestured, and she opened the door.

“Lieutenant? About this uhm, professional development thing at the academy...?”

“It was a request that came through Training Command, Officer McCloud,” he said.

“A request? For me? I mean, It's only been a few months since I got out of the academy. It's seems kind of early for a reminder course.”

“You're not taking a course, you're going to help them give it.”

“Me?”

“They needed female cops for a role playing class. That's all I know. Someone thought of you. Sign out a car and get there for nine forty five.”

She shrugged and backed out, then went back to tell Mueller what she'd discovered. It seemed odd to her, though she'd had to go through a number of role playing classes herself, of course, as a student. Most of the people in them had been local actors and actresses. She had no idea why they'd need a cop for one.

Academy students wore the old blue and gray uniform the NYPD had abandoned for the current dark blue, but had no badges, and wore fore and aft caps instead of the brimmed police hats given on graduation. The department didn't want them being mistaken for actual cops until and unless they'd passed.

It was the first time she'd been back since she'd worn the same thing, and she tried to avoid feeling a little smug as she walked among them. She remembered the stress, uncertainty and anxiety all too well given how short a distance in time it had been. Being free of all that was – nice.

Room two fourteen was a tiny office which held a slender sergeant in uniform blouse and shorts.

“Foster,” he said, standing to shake her hand.

“Sergeant. I'm a little confused about why I'm here,” she confessed.

“We do role playing, as you know. We try to make it realistic.”

“I remember.”

“We're doing a threat appreciation class and we'd like to make it a little more realistic.”

“It wasn't already realistic?” she asked a bit sourly.

“Have a bad experience?” he asked with a broad smile.

“The actress in one threw up on my blouse.”

He laughed. “I like that one. It's not real vomit, you know.”

“I know but that didn't make it pleasant.”

“But it taught you not move in too close to people who were acting sick.”

She made a face.

“What we put out word for was a woman with strong skills in the area of physical combat.”

She raised her eyebrows.

“Your record says you're a black belt in Jiu Jitsu.”

“Yeah, so?”

He looked her up and down. “You're a bit taller than I'd prefer for this, but you're young, and we have a lot of macho guys, so it should still work. What we do is find harmless looking people for our candidates to arrest. They're not the normal actors and actresses, though. We want them to... teach our cadets a lesson in deceptive appearances.”

“Meaning?”

“Meaning young Black and Hispanic men with snotty attitudes and ghetto dress are not the only people who can be dangerous to them.”

“Well, there's Arabs too,” she said.

He snorted. "I heard about that. Good shoot, by the way. Both of them."

She looked at him in surprise.

"You think I have a cop here I don't check their folder, McCloud?"

"I suppose."

"You know it's unusual for a cop to be involved in even one shooting, let alone two."

"I guess I'm just lucky."

"More like unlucky, but you handled yourself excellently both times. It's cops like you that make me think we've done our job here well."

He held out his hand and she blushed, but shook it.

"Uhm, what am I supposed to do, Sergeant?"

"Pop some egos. But don't hurt anyone. Are you good enough to do that? I don't want anyone with more than bruises."

"I think I can manage it."

The college had a number of mocked up locations, including houses, shops and cars, and a subway station complete with subway car. Her job was to sit in a subway car and surprise the cadets who walked through on patrol.

"What they've been told," Forrest said, "Is there is someone on the car who is dangerous and wanted by police. They haven't been given anything else. There'll be ten other people on the car, most of them actors and actresses."

He led her down to the stage, one she remembered herself, though she hadn't gone through the same exact exercise. It was set up as a small subway station, including turnstiles. There was a small platform, and then a subway car.

Forrest led her into it and she looked up and down at the actors there. One of them was a hostile looking black guy, large, wearing a grungy hoodie, slouched on a subway seat with his legs out. His face unscrunched suddenly and he grinned at her.

“Do I look dangerous?” he asked.

“I'd shoot you,” she said.

“Excellent! Well, I mean, in this context.”

She sat down almost across from him. There were other young men in the car, a girl dressed like a prostitute, and a man in a weird old-fashioned suit, including hat. He looked like a runaway from the nineteen fifties. Another guy was dressed as a middle-aged drunk, and smelled it.

She had removed her gun and holster, of course, along with all the other gear she usually carried. She was dressed in a light jacket and blouse along with jeans and sneakers.

“I bet they hone in on you,” she said to the Black guy.

“You think so? I hope so!” he said enthusiastically.

“Me too. I want them to turn their backs on me.”

He looked at her in surprise.

“Officer McCloud is a ringer,” Forrest said, “Not an actress.”

He turned and frowned at her. “Don't get too enthusiastic,” he said.

“I'll try not to hurt them,” she said.

The first pair of cadets came in nervously, pausing at the far end to look up and down the car. They were both white guys with short hair under their fore and aft caps. For the purpose of the exercise they had been given full equipment belts including fake guns.

Forrest hadn't given her explicit instructions on what to do since it was a kind of situation where you jumped on whatever opportunities arose. But what he had said was he wanted to teach them about keeping their awareness open and not zoning in on people who 'looked' dangerous while ignoring those who didn't.

Obviously she was one who didn't. Especially compared to the Black guy across from her.

Unsurprisingly, the two zoned in on the dangerous looking guy and didn't even look at her.

They took up a position on either side of him.

“Sir, do you have identification?” one of them asked.

“Fuck off,” the black guy growled. “I don't gotta show you no ID. I ain't driving a car, bitch!”

He sat back, glaring at both of them in turn. Both the cadets had their hands on their fake guns, and the one on the left was right in front of her. When the Black guy reached a hand towards his pocket both of them drew their handguns and pointed them at him.

“Put your hands in the air!” one of them shouted.

Martial arts was all about leverage. And sometimes it wasn't even very complicated. She reached up and jammed the sole of her right foot into the cop's leg right behind the knee hard enough that he stumbled backwards even as she stood up.

She didn't try to take his gun from him, but he was holding it in a regulation fashion, with his finger along the barrel, away from the trigger assembly, and he was off balance. She put her hand over his, her finger going into the trigger guard and onto the trigger, then pointed it at the second cop who was just starting to turn around and fired.

The guns didn't have any ammo, of course. It just clicked loudly several

times as the cadet gaped at her. The cop she was pressed against tried to twist free but she used her hold on his gun hand to wrench him around, and since he was trying desperately to pull the gun inward she went with him, letting the gun turn quickly around and point at his stomach.

Click click click.

Both of the cadets were chagrined but they'd probably gotten the message.

She handled the next pair almost identically, except the one closest to her was a short black woman, and her reaction time was even slower and more confused than the first guy had been. She was angrier afterward, too, glowering at Jamie.

The next two were another pair of white guys. Jamie decided she didn't want to simply kick every guy in the back of the leg so went a different route. When they'd squared off against the Black guy, whose name, she'd now learned was Silvain, she rose behind the closest guy.

“Why are you picking on him?” she demanded in a loud voice. “It's because he's black, isn't it?”

She was practically shouting in the cop's ear as she spoke, and it startled him. He yelped and pulled his gun out, whirling around and almost stumbling as he recalled he now had the dangerous black guy behind him. That made him back hurriedly to the side swinging his gun back and forth between us. The second cop drew his gun because the first had, though from the confusion on his face he wasn't sure why.

“Don't shoot!” she said, holding her hands up.

“Stupid cops always pulling guns on innocent people!” Sylvain growled.

“Get down on the floor!” the cop she'd startled shouted at her.

“Why? What have I done?”

“You're under arrest!”

“For what?” she demanded.

“For interfering with a police officer!”

“There's no such law,” she said. “I'm a law student and I know!”

“Obstructing public administration!” the other one exclaimed.

Sylvain took that moment to rise up, and both cadets turned their guns on them. Jamie grabbed the first cop's wrist and swung him into the second one, so that both of them tumbled back against the subway seat and fell sprawling across it. She managed to pull the gun free of his hand at the same time, and shot the two of them several times.

“Damn cops. Always oppressing people,” she said with a grin.

For the next pair she sat next to Sylvain, and after a hurried planning session, she became his 'hostage' when the cops moved in. He stood up with her clutched against them as the cops pointed their guns at him, then shoved her forward. She 'fell' against one of the cops, knocking him back onto the far seat, and managing to twist his gun out at the same time, then shoot the two of them.

“You're enjoying this too much,” Forrest said when he came in after that one.

“Just trying to be inventive, sergeant,” she said.

Jamie was surprised, but she thought, shouldn't have been, when they were finished with the training exercises and she looked up to see her grandfather had arrived. He was, after all the Deputy Commissioner for Training, and had an office in the building.

“Grandpa,” she said, giving him a hug.

“Good day to you, Officer McCloud,” he said, eyes twinkling.

He was a tall, slender man with graying hair and a square jaw. Today he had on a pinstriped black suit with a blue tie.

“I thought I might be able to buy you lunch. Or if you refused, order you to have lunch with me.”

“No ordering necessary,” she said with a smile.

“Good. I'm a big shot around here, you know.”

“I heard that somewhere.”

He led her up the hall, through waves of gray clad cadets streaming by.

“When you were actually a cadet here I kind of had to keep my distance at work. Can't be seen to be showing influence, you know.”

“Because you would never use your influence on your grand-kids behalf,” she said slightly mockingly.

“There's a certain tradition to how influence is exercised, Jamie, and discretion is a department watchword.”

He glanced at her. “So back to the red, eh? But not the same red.”

“I couldn't get my usual red in a bottle,” she said defensively.

“This looks nice too,” he replied with a grin.

“Well, it's not rust colored, but at least it's red.”

They went up to his office, rather than the cafeteria. Rank had its privileges, after all, and the seats there were a lot more comfortable.

“Fried chicken?” she asked in surprise. “If mom finds out you're eating fried chicken for lunch she's gonna be pissed.”

“So we won't tell her,” he said confidently.

“Did you have anything to do with my getting pulled for this assignment?” she asked suspiciously.

“Me? Whatever gave you that idea?”

“There's thousands of females on the job they could have had come here instead of me.”

“So there are. I might have made a suggestion.”

“Grandpa,” she said, scowling.

“It's not preferential treatment. But it got you over here so we could have lunch. So it was an efficient use of resources.”

“You could have just asked.”

“It's a little hard to drive here on your usual lunch break. This was better. Eat. You're too skinny.”

“I'm not. You're going to talk about those Arabs, aren't you?”

“I was informed of the threat.”

“From what I was told it wasn't really much of a threat. They were just being careful.”

“That's what I've been told, as well. Still, I wonder if it might not be wiser to move you around a little.”

“I like it where I am!” she exclaimed.

“You like what you're doing?”

“Very much! It's varied, and interesting! Well, the surveillance is boring, I admit, but you can't get by without that sometimes. I like not going in on domestics, though.”

“Yes, I thought you'd like it. I also thought things would be quieter in

midtown.”

“I guess I was just lucky,” she said.

He snorted. “But you're noticeable. I mean, these people know which precinct you work at and know where the precinct is located.”

“I'm hardly ever there.”

“You have to arrive and leave there at shift change. On the other hand, these people have little chance of finding you if you were moved elsewhere, say lower Manhattan.”

“I'm just getting to know Midtown North!” she protested.

“So? You'd get to know, say, the First precinct quickly too.”

“Because terrorism never happens in the First Precinct,” she said sarcastically. “Wait, isn't that where the World Trade Center used to be?”

“Don't be snotty with me, kid. I'm a boss.”

She snorted.

He sighed. “You're kind of screwed when you're a parent or grandparent. I mean, if you make a decision and something bad comes of it you beat yourself up, but if you decide the other way and something bad comes of it you still beat yourself up.”

“First has no lower a crime rate than Midtown North,” she said. “And I doubt these clowns are going to come looking for me. Besides, I get a ride to the subway now.”

“You were already getting a ride to the subway most of the time,” he said, eyes narrowing.

“How do you know that?” she demanded.

“I have my sources. When are you going to introduce this young man

you've been seen with to your family?"

"Never! I mean, well, things aren't that serious yet."

"You've been seeing him how long?"

"Five or six weeks," she said rebelliously.

"That's longer than usual with you. I understand he's a fed."

She sighed and rolled her eyes. "Yes, he's with the DEA. That doesn't make him necessarily a scumbag, grandpa."

"Not necessarily," he said with a shrug, "Even if he looks like it sometimes."

"How do you know what he looks like?"

"Because you were reported to Internal Affairs for being seen in the company of a known criminal," he said.

"What?"

"Someone at Midtown North dropped a dime on you and said you were dating a sleazy drug dealer."

"Who?"

"Someone who obviously didn't know he was a federal agent. IA looked into it – briefly. They saw you picked up, took pictures, took down the car's license plate – nice car, by the way, and ran it through the system. That's how they got a call from the FBI wondering why they were checking."

"I don't believe this! IA put me under surveillance!"

"Briefly. They just watched you leave the precinct house and took note of who it was with. The investigation, such as it is, has been dropped. You should know cops gossip like old women, Jamie. You get picked up by some hotshot in different sports cars on a continuing basis people are gonna

wonder who he is.”

“He is not sleazy looking,” she said indignantly.

“It's part of his job to look sleazy sometimes, right? Just like someone in Vice.”

She shrugged in irritation.

“That's one of the reasons I wanted you in Anti-crime,” he said.

She raised her eyebrows.

“Anti-crime is a good transition assignment for bright young officers into higher ranks. So is Vice, but for obvious reasons I didn't want you near that.”

“Anti-crime deals with drug dealers too, you know.”

“It doesn't dress up its female officers like prostitutes to lure johns.”

She shook her head. “You're so old fashioned. Anyway, I no sooner got assigned there and I had to dress up in tiny bikinis!”

“I know, I know. Don't think I didn't realize it. Murphy's little joke on me. But at least wearing a bikini in a Madison Avenue modeling studio isn't as sleazy as dressing as a hooker in the Bronx and discussing prices with clients. Don't get me wrong. We need young women to do that and I have the greatest of respect for them. I'd just prefer my granddaughter not be one of them.”

“Well, I doubt that will come up often at Midtown North.”

“It'd come up even less often in the First.”

She glared at him. “I do not want to move to another precinct.”

He held up his hands in surrender. “Fine. As long as these Arab clowns don't do anything more than talk. If they actually look like they're trying

something, though, you'll have to be moved. The department would do it whether I requested it or not. It's simple common sense.”

Chapter Nine

Lucas picked her up after work again. This time he was driving a gleaming black classic corvette. His hair was slicked back and he was wearing aviator style sunglasses, and an open necked shirt.

“What is this, the eighties revisited?” she demanded.

He grinned broadly. “You like?”

She slipped into the car and the tires screeched a little as he accelerated rapidly.

“Do you know I was reported to Internal Affairs for dating a sleazy drug dealer?”

He laughed, then did a double take. “Really?”

“Yes, really! They even took pictures of you and your car!”

He laughed again.

“It's not funny!”

“It's funny to me.”

“What's with the car and retro look anyway?”

“I'm pretending to be a sleazy drug dealer. No, I'm not kidding.”

“Couldn't you like... change or something before picking me up?”

“I could, but I didn't know it was an issue.”

“I didn't realize it was. But as I've been reminded, cops gossip like old ladies.”

“Especially about hot chicks like you.”

“Don't you start,” she sighed.

“Start what?”

“Telling me how all the guys in the precinct are keeping an eye on me.”

“Well, it's kind of hard to blame them.”

She snorted. “I almost forgot who I was talking to.”

“Never forget that, babe,” he said with a grin.

She told him about the warning from Intelligence, and he stopped being amused.

“The NYPD has a pretty damn good Intelligence unit,” he said. “But maybe you should lie low for a while.”

“Where? Under my bed?”

“Maybe move to another precinct.”

“Not you too! I don't want to move to another precinct!”

They went to an Italian restaurant, where he didn't really look very out of place and where, he informed her, a lot of Mafia guys hung out. She wasn't sure if he was just making that up or not.

“So what's on for tonight? We going to go to a concert? A movie? Sit quietly together cuddling while we watch TV?”

He smiled softly.

“We could do any of those things you know. Lots of couples do them.”

“But you wouldn't have multiple orgasms doing those things.”

“Multiple orgasms aren't all they're cracked up to be. They get very tiring.”

He raised his eyebrow.

“I don't suppose you want, like, ordinary sex this time?”

“Why should sex with me be merely ordinary?”

She snorted.

“Besides, I got some new toys.”

“Oh boy,” she said suspiciously.

“Actually, I already had the toys, but I did buy you something.”

“Uh huh. A vibrator? A new gag?”

He smiled that little smile again. “Wait and see.”

“You know, I get the idea sometime that you're like a boy playing with dolls, and you like dressing them up and undressing them.”

“I used to have GI Joe action figures,” he said.

“I'm supposed to walk in these?”

“Not far.”

She snorted in agreement.

When they'd gotten back to his place he'd presented her with a box, a boot box. Inside it were a pair of thigh high black leather boots with five-inch stiletto heels.

“You have got to be kidding.”

“I never kid about important things,” he said.

She shook her head as she ran her fingers along one of the heels.

“I could kill someone with this thing.”

“Not when it's on the floor.”

“Is it likely to stay on the floor?”

He smiled softly.

She sat down and started to pull on the first boot but he stopped her.

“Might as well take off your pants first.”

She gave him a look, then shook her head and gave in to the inevitable. She stood up and pulled down her pants, then sat down.

“Underwear first.”

She ignored him and slipped her right foot into the right boot, then pulled it up, straightening out her leg as she pulled the zipper up, up, up all the way to the thigh. Then she did the same to the other one.

“Help me up.”

He did and she swayed a bit before getting her balance. She had, after all, practiced with stiletto heels during her undercover work as a fashion model.

She started to walk when he gripped her sweater from behind and peeled it up and over her head.

“I'm a sex toy to you, aren't I?”

“That and so much more,” he said with a grin.

He undid her bra and removed it, then turned her around, slipping his

big hands around her throat, though not squeezing tightly, drawing her in against him to kiss her passionately. She put her hands on his shoulders as she felt her chest tighten and a hot thrumming begin between her legs.

The kiss got hotter and more demanding, and then he abruptly swung her around and shoved her against the wall. She felt his hand dart down to grip her thong and then abruptly tore it off her!

She let out a cry of surprise, then, but his other hand was still around her throat, and an instant later he gripped her wrists and roughly raised them up to shove them back hard against the wall above her head. His eyes bored into her as he ground his fully clothed body against her naked skin.

“I-I told you to stop tearing my underwear!” she gulped.

“Masters don't take orders from slaves,” he growled.

What happened after that was so fast and wild and frenzied she barely had time to get a word in, or even catch her breath! His body pressed her more firmly against the wall as he kissed her more and more hungrily! Then he pinned her wrists together with one hand and reached down to unzip.

He forced her legs apart with a curse, then she felt his erection against her. She moaned as he pushed in hard, hurting her a little, but she was already pulsing with heat and he dropped her wrists, gripped her buttocks and thighs, and jerked her into the air as he thrust into her!

She cried out, grabbing at his shoulders to help support herself! This wasn't the first time he'd taken her up against a wall, but it was just as wild and thrilling the second time around! She wrapped her thighs around him, kissing him back just as hungrily, as she rode up and down with his hands on her ass!

This time, though, he swung her around and carried her through the apartment into his bedroom, then let her down, turning her around and shoving her into the bed.

“Get in bed, kneel on the edge, legs apart,” he said, his voice gravelly

with hunger.

Gulping, she obeyed, flushed and overheated as she felt his hands caressing her buttocks, then sliding in between her leg. One slid up her spine and into her hair and she gasped as he jerked it roughly up and back! She instinctively grabbed at it and he shoved her face first into the bed.

“Face down, ass up,” he growled, slapping her bottom sharply.

His hands slid down to her hips, along her waist and then jerked sharply back, pulling her belly in tighter against her thighs.

“Hands behind your back!”

Panting, Jamie obeyed, and there was a delay while she supposed he was getting some rope. But it wasn't rope she felt going around her right wrist, but some kind of soft leather strap. It tightened around her wrist, but wasn't attached to the other, which puzzled her, at first.

Then she felt another leather strap being wrapped around her other wrist, and tightened. When she tried to move them she found that her wrists were bound together somehow. She gasped as he pulled on her hair, forcing her head up and back, then swept the collar around it. He released her hair, letting her face drop back to the mattress, then buckled the collar behind her back.

A moment later she felt him forcing her wrist upward along her spine, until her elbows were bent at a near ninety-degree angle. Then something clipped them there, something attached to the back of the collar, something metallic, like a chain!

There was another pause, then he pulled her head up and back by the hair again.

“Ow! Danny!”

“Know what this is?”

The thing he held out before her looked like latex or silicon. It was roughly shaped like an egg, with a pencil thin base and a round stand at the

bottom.

“No!”

He grinned, and released her hair. A moment later she felt his finger rubbing her clitoris, then sliding up the line of her sex and pressing against her wrinkled back passage.

“Oh! Danny!” she whined.

Crack! His hand slapped her bottom sharply.

“What kind of a sex slave doesn't get fucked in the ass?” he demanded.

“I'm not a sex slave!”

Crack!

“What kind of a man would have a girlfriend with a gorgeous ass like yours, and not want to slide himself deep inside?”

“A man who isn't a perve!”

Crack!

His finger was slippery with something as he pushed it in and pulled it back, pumping it in and out. Jamie's hands pulled fitfully against the leather straps as she felt her heart beating faster. She was not a fan of anal sex, and normally refused. But she was hot and aroused and despite her many misgivings, his kinky sex was a dark, seductive thrill.

He pulled it out and she felt something larger and cooler pressing against her, knowing it was that egg thing he'd shown her. She moaned as he pressed harder, and turned it from side to side, sinking it slowly into her body.

“Have to get you used to it,” he said. “In fact, you should wear a butt-plug from now on, all the time, so I can have this gorgeous ass whenever I want it.”

She only gasped in response as the thing pushed deeper, aching. But a sharp slap to her bottom stung a lot more, and seemed to distract her sphincter muscle as the thing slid smoothly up inside her and she closed around the thin stem, the base pressing firmly against the outside of her body.

Then his hands were on her buttocks again, and his tongue was at her sex, stroking softly, with long, languid strokes, at first, but then licking harder and faster against her clitoris as his fingers pushed into her!

The phone rang, her cell phone. The ring tone on it was a chimpanzee, loud and excitable. Lucas kept licking for about ten seconds, then stopped.

“Jesus fuck, that's annoying!”

“It's supposed to catch my attention,” she said breathlessly.

He started licking again, then stopped. “That's fucking annoying!”

He went back and got her cell phone, then brought it over to her and set it to speaker before putting it in front of her face.

“Are you fucking kidding –.” she started. “H-hello?”

“Jamie?”

“Uhm, yeah, mom.”

He snickered and dropped down low, starting to lick again.

“Are you coming home tonight?”

“Yes, mom!”

“How late?”

“Uhm, I'm not sure.”

His fingers pushed into her, more than one this time, curving in and down in search of her G-spot.

“You woke your father up when you came in late the other day.”

“I'm sorry. I'll try to be quieter.”

“Are you with that young man?”

“What young man?”

“The one you haven't introduced to us yet.”

“There's lots of young men I haven't introduced to you.”

“Don't be smart with me, Jamie. You know who I mean. Your grandfather said he was a federal agent.”

She groaned low in her throat.

“It's a good thing my father keeps me informed since you don't!”

“Mom, can we talk about this another time?” she asked a little desperately.

“You should bring him home with you and introduce him.”

“It's usually late by the time we're in Brooklyn,” she said.

“Well then he can pick you up here next time.”

“That makes no sense if we're already in Manhattan!”

“Then find something to do in Brooklyn.”

She heard Lucas snickering softly behind her, even as he continued his licking.

“There are movie theaters in Brooklyn, you know!”

“Mom, he's a jerk, really, you don't want to meet him. He's a weirdo and a control freak and probably sleeps with dolls.”

“He's there now, isn't he?”

Lucas snickered again.

“Yes, and we were just watching TV,” she said.

“Well we have TV's here too. Your father and I would like to meet him. You've been spending a lot of time with him the last month.”

“Okay, okay! I'll figure something out!” she said.

“Good. Now don't stay out too late. You have work tomorrow morning.”

“Okay, ma!”

“Good bye, dear.”

“Good bye!”

Lucas stood up, grabbed the phone and hung up.

“Weirdo? Control freak?”

“Oh please! I was being kind,” she said, turning to look over her shoulder.

“Sleeps with dolls?”

“You probably would if you had a sex doll!”

“I've got one right here,” he said, his fingers pumping in and out of her.

He dropped low again and started licking, and then picked up the pace, licking harder and faster as she moaned low in her throat. He was a talented man in terms of oral sex, by far the best she'd ever slept with. Certainly he put more time and effort into it, but then he seemed to think giving her orgasms was a challenging hobby!

One rumbled up through her body as he lapped at her clitoris and

pumped his fingers into her with hard, steady thrusts, and she shuddered and cried out, grinding her hips back against his tongue and fingers as the pleasure rolled over her body and mind.

“That's one,” he said.

He did something with her ankle and she rolled her head up and back again to see him strapping, no, buckling some kind of strap around it. He did the same to her other ankle, then tied ropes to the rings set into the two restraints and pulled them wide to tie to the head and foot-post of the bed.

“Why are you tying my ankles open?” she gasped weakly. “It's not like I'm going to try to get away!”

He smiled. “It accentuates the feeling of helplessness, sex slave.”

She moaned as he moved directly behind her again, sinking low. His fingers pushed into her sodden depths, then pulled out, and something thicker pushed into her, something long and smooth and thick enough to almost but not quite be his erection.

She groaned, trying to see over her shoulder, but couldn't. Then she felt the neat little side branch and recognized the vibrator he'd used on her the other day. She groaned low in her throat as he pumped the thing slowly in and out of her, then turned on the vibrator and pushed the thing in deep, so the side branch slid up across her clitoris.

“You're trying to drive me crazy,” she groaned.

“No, just trying to turn you into a raging nymphomaniac.”

“Like you?”

“Yep.”

The bindings around her ankles did indeed accentuate her feeling of being helpless, as he skillfully used the vibrator to set her hips bucking and jerking through several more orgasms. He paused after the third, stripped naked, then climbed onto the bed in front of her.

He swung around to face her, grinning, and wrapping her hair around his fist as he used it to lift her chin off the bed. He sat on his heels, legs apart, working himself forward, his erection a thick red spear pointing at her lips.

The head pushed into her mouth and she closed her lips on it, sucking and licking, and wincing as he jerked up on her hair to force her head higher. He raised her shoulders off the mattress and his other hand pushed in beneath her to roughly fondle her breast as he shoved his cock deeper into her mouth.

“I can do anything I want to you, sex slave,” he said. “You're all tied up and helpless. I could invite a whole football team to come in and line up behind you and gang bang you, one after the other after the other. What would you think of that?”

“P-Pervert!” she gasped, as he drew himself out a bit.

“Ha,” he said, thrusting into her mouth. He reached up and back and turned on the vibrator, which he'd left buried inside her, then his hand returned to her breast as he began to pump in and out.

With her head forced so far back her mouth gave a straight line down her throat, and he made use of it, sliding his glistening shaft all the way into her until her lips were wrapped tightly around the base.

“Hot, hungry little slut,” he growled, slapping her bottom.

He pumped in and out slowly, using long strokes, then pulled entirely free, leaving her gasping and panting as he released her hair. He climbed out of bed and moved behind her, then yanked the vibrator out of her and thrust himself in with a hard, hungry thrust that made her cry out in both pleasure and pain.

There was very little subtlety to what followed, as he yanked back on her hair, slapped her bottom, and rode her like a wild bull, his hips pounding bruisingly into her upraised buttocks as he drove himself into her with savage gusto!

The vibrator had already set her body to thrumming with hunger again, and now his violent carnal attack drove her over the edge into another orgasm even as he yanked back on her hair and rammed himself into her with unrestrained force!

He half collapsed atop her as he came himself, gasping and releasing her hair, then bending forward over her to more gently comb her hair back so his lips and tongue could find the side of her throat. He softened and slid out of her, and he pulled back, then picked up the vibrator and shoved that back inside as he climbed into the bed again.

This time he pulled her hair sharply enough to lift her chest up and back off the bed. He kissed her just as hungrily as he had earlier, his hands racing through her hair and over her breasts as he knelt before her. He dropped her suddenly, leaving her gasping again as he undid the ties on her ankles.

Then he twisted her around and sideways, throwing her down on her back as he fell atop her. She gasped as much of his weight jammed her down into the bed, but felt a dark surge of heat at how aggressive he was being, at how rough and hungry he looked and acted as his lips crushed hers and his hands raced over her body.

There was little she could do with her hands locked together beneath her but writhe and moan as his hungry mouth moved downward over her breasts, repeatedly biting hard enough to slightly cross that fiery line between pleasure and pain, leaving her gasping and breathless as he moved lower and lower until he was between her legs.

He rose up, gripping her legs and flipped her onto her belly as if she weighed nothing, then yanked her hips up, slapping her bottom sharply, stingingly.

“Assume the position, slut!” he growled, in what she had come to recognize as his mock 'master' voice.

Crack! His hand slapped her bottom again to encourage instant obedience and she scrambled to position herself with her bottom high and her belly tucked in tightly against her thighs. It was a vulnerable and even

obscene position, but laden with the kind of sexual submissiveness he liked and which was starting to make her mind thrum excitedly too!

Neither bondage nor the whole submissive thing had ever really done much for her before. But then again, every time she did it now she experienced incredible orgasms, so there was bound to be a link to her likings and dislikings there! No doubt if she had an orgasm every time she drank beer she'd become an alcoholic in no time!

“Tell me you're my slut, baby!”

“I-I'm your slut!” she gasped.

Crack! His hand slapped her bottom again.

“Tell me you're my bitch!”

“I'm your bitch!” she yelled.

Crack!

'Say I'm Danny's bitch!’

“I'm Danny's bitch!” she gasped.

Crack!

“Louder!”

“I'm Danny's bitch!” she cried.

He dropped to his knees behind her, licking her even as he gripped the vibrator thing and pumped it in and out, grinding the little branch against her clitoris when he wasn't licking and sucking on it. Jamie felt her breath becoming more and more ragged again, and her hips rolled helplessly as the sexual heat swept up through her body and into her mind.

He rose and she felt the thing he'd put in her ass being pulled slowly out. She moaned low in her throat, feeling emotionally uncomfortable with this,

but too committed to interfere as he pulled it free. He must have gotten hard again quickly, she thought, at first, as something thick slid into her.

She quickly realized it wasn't him, though. It wasn't quite thick enough and it didn't feel – real, warm. She twisted her head around, gasping, trying to see, and saw him holding something red that looked like a pencil stuck through a series of golf balls.

She moaned as the first ball pushed into her, and her opening closed behind it. Then the second ball slid in, then the third, and the fourth. Meanwhile, the vibrator was still jammed fully into her sex with the little buzzing branch pressing against her clitoris.

“Tell me you're my slave girl,” he said, slapping her bottom.

“I'm Danny's slave girl!” she moaned, her body trembling with a growing sexual pressure.

Crack!

“Tell me you're my sex slave!”

“I'm Danny's sex slave!” she cried.

Crack!

“Louder, slut!”

“I'm Danny's sex slave!” she cried.

Just saying the words was degrading and embarrassing and... incredibly hot!

She was on the edge of orgasm from it all as he pumped the balls in and out of her. Then he pulled them free, leaving her feeling – open, and a moment later she had no doubt what was pushing into her was him! It had the feel of it, the warm, soft, fleshy feel, and she didn't need to turn her head as it stretched her out and yet pushed slowly, firmly, deeply into her ass!

She groaned, then gasped as he slapped her bottom again.

“Nasty little sex slave,” he growled.

He wound her hair around his fist and yanked it up and back, and she cried out at the sharp stinging pain to her scalp! Then he slapped her ass, his cock pumping in and out now, pushing deeper with every stroke.

“Ow! Oh! Slowly!” she moaned.

Crack!

“I'll use your body however I want, slave girl. It belongs to me,” he said.

Crack!

She gasped as he slapped her bottom, then roughly squeezed her breast, then slapped her bottom again even as he yanked her head up and back even harder, bowing her torso back!

She couldn't believe the dark rush of sensual excitement at the feel of him pushing up inside her! He was warm and full and thick and hard, and the pain she had feared failed to materialize. Instead she felt deliciously full and ... used!

He pumped in and out using longer strokes, making her gasp and moan and groan as he pushed himself still deeper. When he finally was able to press his hips against her bottom the head was lodged so high inside her she felt cramps!

But it didn't stop a tremendous orgasm from spilling through her senses even as he started to pump harder! It was all such a wild, tumultuous rush of sensations and heat and wild, carnal abandon! Her body flared white-hot with surging releases of pleasure and crackling sexual electricity as he thrust harder, his hips setting her entire body to shaking from the powerful impact!

At the same time he yanked on her hair like it was the reins to a wild, bucking horse, slapped her aching bottom, and fisted her breasts as he used her roughly and ruthlessly, finally jamming her face into the bed as he

hammered his hips relentlessly against her upturned buttocks!

Chapter Ten

Maybe it was profiling to a certain extent. After all, the black population of Midtown North was very low. Then again, the people who lived there all had one thing in common aside from skin color, and that was that they had a lot of money. And this guy didn't look like he belonged.

They were close by so had rolled on a call about a burglary in progress at a high-rise on 49th street, and had been buzzed in by the neighbor who had made the call. As they walked into the hall a man approached them, a black man in his early thirties, wearing scruffy athletic shoes, loose, low slung brown jeans with several inches of red underwear showing, and a black T-shirt.

He was carrying a heavy black plastic garbage bag in one hand, and it didn't look like it had his laundry in it.

His eyes seemed half closed, as if he hadn't even seen her. She and Mueller split to walk around him. There wasn't any chance to say anything to him so she turned as soon as the guy passed and grabbed his arm. Mueller had done the same on the other side.

“Hey! What the fuck?” he demanded.

“Good morning, sir,” said Mueller. “I'm with the New York Police Department. Could we ask what's in the bag?”

It occurred to Jamie that if he was actually a tenant he was going to be awfully indignant, and with reason, but he dropped the bag, and struggled wildly to pull free of them. Since he was shorter and thinner than both of them that was a futile effort and they quickly took him to the floor next to a water wall which tinkled and splashed calmly beside them.

He struggled violently but Mueller easily bent his arm back and cuffed it, then pinned it with his knee as he helped Jamie force his other arm back

behind him and lock the cuffs in place. Once that was done the man stopped struggling, and while Mueller searched him Jamie opened the garbage bag.

“Got a camera, jewelry, a laptop... IPOD.... a toaster?”

“I needed a fucking toaster! Something wrong with that?” the man snarled.

“Now you don't need one,” she said.

The sector car showed up, and Mueller left them to interview the neighbor, check the apartment, and bring their suspect in, something which seemed to irk one of the uniforms.

“Screw em,” Mueller said when she mentioned it in the car. “There's lots more uniforms out there than us, and besides, I outrank him.”

They were headed west when he got a phone call from the school, and quickly turned and headed that way.

The principal's name was Mrs. Goring, but Jamie relabeled her in her mind as Mrs. Grundy. She reminded her of the gray haired teacher with a bun who had been featured in Archie comic books.

“He already left!” she said indignantly, as they were shown into her office.

“That's okay. We just need to know who he was talking to.”

She nodded tightly and sat back down behind her desk.

“Jonas Caldwell,” she said. “He's a junior, 17 years old. He's in our arts program.”

“Let me guess,” Mueller said, “He's a transferee from outside your area.”

Goring pursed her lips. “Transfer outside school zones is permitted if a particular type of course is unavailable in the student's own zone.”

Mueller nodded. "But would it be fair to say he comes from a less... economically advantaged neighborhood?"

"He lives in the Bronx," she said flatly.

He nodded again. "So he'd feel pressure at being unable to compete with his peers here. Williams can always find em."

"We don't know that Jonas has done anything wrong," Goring said. "All we know is he and a man who looks very much like this Williams were huddled together behind the gym speaking. When the teacher on duty approached, the man departed."

"And the teacher says it was Williams?"

"He says he certainly looked like the man in the picture."

Mueller looked thoughtful. "Let's get this young man in and have a discussion."

"I should call his parents."

"No, he's over sixteen. And we're not going to arrest him anyway. In fact, the last thing we intend to do is arrest any of your students."

Goring nodded and picked up her phone, then asked for the boy to be brought to the office.

"We could just put the place under surveillance," Jamie said.

Mueller shook his head. "For low level drug dealing in a school yard? We don't have the manpower."

The principal let them have the office, though not without some persuasion. Only Mueller's promising they weren't going to arrest Jonas and that they only wanted the guy who was dealing with him convinced her to leave them alone.

The boy was shown in. He was about five foot ten, slender, with curly

brown hair and an anxious look on his thin face. He wore a checked red shirt over a t-shirt and jeans.

Jonas had felt wary since he'd been called to the office. He'd been sent to the principal, instead of the vice principal, made things doubly serious, and he racked his brain to try to figure out what he'd done. Then the door opened and he saw the two strangers there, one of them really big, and who had a badge hanging from a chain around his neck.

Jonas felt an icy shock hit him as the big guy came over and closed the door behind him

“Sir down, kid,” he said, pushing on Jonas' back.

“Uh, I uhm, don't understand,” Jonas gulped.

The big guy pushed him into a chair and leaned over him.

“I'm Sergeant Mueller,” he said in a deep growling voice.

The other person in the room was a tall redhead he would in other circumstances have spent a lot of time resting his eyes on, but the big scary guy was right in his face. “Know what I want?”

Jonas shook his head frantically, his mind working at breakneck speed. He had drugs in his locker! They could search it and then he was fucked!

“You can't think of why the cops would be interested in you, kid?” the guy growled.

“I don't know,” he replied.

Mueller pulled out a paper flier and held it in front of his head, and his heart sank as any doubts about what they were doing here disappeared.

“You and him. Pals forever, right?”

Jonas stared at the picture, then jerked his eyes away.

“I don't know anyone like that!”

“You were with him this afternoon, kid.”

“I wasn't!”

“Are you lying to me?” Mueller growled even more menacingly.

He stabbed his large finger into the Jonas' chest several times, making him wince.

“I hate people who lie to me!” he snapped, raising his voice.

“I'm not lying!” Jonas gulped, feeling the hair rise on the back of his neck as he pressed himself further back against the seat.

Mueller grabbed him by the scruff of the neck and yanked him to his feet, then lifted him up so that he was barely standing on his toes, and jammed his face in against him.

“Do you want to make me angry, boy?” he growled. “Because you won't like me when I'm angry!”

“I-I didn't do anything!” Jonas cried, eyes wide, heart pounding.

Mueller dropped him then threw him into the chair.

“Do we have something I can hit him with that won't leave too many marks?” he asked the woman.

Jonas felt a jolt of fear.

“Uhm, not sure,” the woman said. “I mean, you'll have to ask the office staff, I guess.”

“Fine!” the man snapped.

He glared at Jonas then opened the door and stormed out, and after a moment the woman moved over to him.

“He's kind of angry. You might want to tell him what he wants,” she said.

“I don't know anything,” the Jonas gulped.

The redhead knelt on one knee in front of the chair. She was, Jonas thought, incredibly cute, and a lot younger than the guy had been. She was older than him, of course, but still hot. His eyes flicked almost unconsciously down because she was wearing a tight black tank top under her jacket, and when she leaned in he could see the soft pale flesh of substantial breasts!

“See, Jonas, this guy Williams has a long criminal record,” she said in a much softer voice than Mueller had used. “He likes to use drugs to entice young teenage boys in to help him sell drugs, and also gets them hooked on drugs so he can use them for sexual purposes.”

Jonas jerked his eyes up at her, showing shock.

“He's not... I mean... uh...”

“He pretends to be straight, at first, but that's because what he really likes is boys who have never had sex with another guy before. Have you ever had sex with a guy before?”

“No!” Jonas all-but shouted. “I'm not queer!”

It was very important to him that this hot chick knew that!

“But if he gets you all drugged up there's no telling what you might have to do,” she said sympathetically.

“I'm not... he's not... all he wants is for me to – .”

“Sell drugs for him. That's how he starts,” she said.

Jonas gulped and looked around. “He's connected,” he said, lowering his

voice. "I can't say anything about him or he'll kill me!"

"He's not connected," she assured him. "I've read his entire criminal history. He's a lone wolf kind of operator. That's why he keeps getting busted. He thinks he's smarter than he is."

She turned and looked at the door, then back at him.

"Another guy who thinks he's smarter than he is, is that Sergeant Mueller they assigned me to," she said with resentment in her voice. "See, I just graduated from the academy a few months back and they assigned me to him. Boy I'd like to show him up!"

Jonas felt a good deal of sympathy at the thought of her having to work with such a big, angry jerk. This hot chick shouldn't be stuck with a shitty job like that!

She gave Jonas a soft smile. "I bet you and me can arrange a little deal, Jonas."

His eyes flicked down to her very inviting cleavage again.

"Wh-what kind of deal?" he gulped.

"No criminal record for you. No jail. No nothing."

"Uh..."

"All you have to do is tell us about Williams and the deal you guys have."

Jonas licked his lips uncertainly, then looked at the door again.

"Okay, but just you, not him!"

"Deal," she said.

They took a couple of dozen small glass packets of grass and coke, and some ecstasy pills from his locker, and took him to the station to fill out the forms. A few hours later he was back at school while Williams was in custody.

“That worked as well as I’d hoped,” Mueller said happily.

“Bad cop, good cop?”

“Bad ugly, scary cop, good cutie cop.”

She snorted.

“In my experience, teenage boys usually want to be nice with attractive young women.”

“Not always,” she said, making a face.

They headed west and south while he checked in with other anti-crime units to see what, if anything, was happening. Most were doing surveillance on a pair of high-end drug dealers. Mueller preferred not to do surveillance, for which she was grateful, and as supervisor of Anti-crime usually managed to avoid it.

There was a call for a disturbance at Park Avenue and East 53rd, but he ignored it, even though they were practically around the corner. Another of the prerogatives of anti-crime was to ignore most radio calls. It was assigned to the sector car but a minute later he was rolling to a stop in front of the building and having a look.

“I don't see anything,” she said.

The building which occupied the entire block was a glass and steel skyscraper with a courtyard that had fountains and walkways. There were a lot of people sitting on the stairs and around the fountains, most of them nattily dressed.

“See the guy at the near fountain, with bare feet and his pants rolled

up?”

“No, where?”

She strained to look past him and saw a balding, middle-aged man in a checked shirt sitting on the edge of the fountain with his feet in the water.

“Doesn't look like a stock broker, does he?”

“Not so much. Is that what they do there?”

He turned and raised his eyebrows.

“What? I'm supposed to know every building in the precinct?”

“That's the Seagram building.”

“So they make liquor?”

He shook his head. “Naw, it's owned by some holding company now. They're all hedge fund managers and stock brokers.”

“So a good place to get investment advice.”

“More like a good place to get fleeced.”

“Anyone ever tell you, you were a cynic.”

“Like you aren't.”

The guy stood up and walked slowly through the knee-deep water, drawing a lot of stares. He bent over and put his hands in the water, then straightened, shaking them out then running his fingers through his hair before going back to sit down.

“You think he's plucking coins from the fountains.”

“Get real. You think those greedy bastards would throw money into a fountain? More likely they just don't like this guy's presence.”

“Well, you aren't supposed to be walking in the fountain, are you?”

“There a law against it?”

“Who owns the fountain? The plaza would be private property, wouldn't it?”

“Yeah, but I bet it isn't owned by whoever complained.”

A minute later the sector car rolled up and two cops strolled onto the plaza to look around. One of the men sitting on the stairs waved his arm and gestured at them. The uniforms noticed and walked over to him. The man stood up and gestured towards the guy sitting on the edge of the fountain.

“Thought so,” Mueller said. To Jamie's surprise he got out of the car and started walking towards them. She shrugged and followed.

Ahead of them, the banker, or broker, or whatever he was, was arguing with the two uniforms. He was a large man, almost as tall as Mueller, but wearing an extremely expensive suit, and holding out the jacket repeatedly as if to show it to them. Jamie wondered if he thought there was a badge on it.

She didn't know the two uniforms, but they were younger ones she'd seen around the station on occasion. She thought one was named Danby, but wasn't sure. There were hundreds of cops at Midtown North and she hadn't met them all yet.

Of course, like everyone there, they knew Mueller, and apparently, her. They took their eyes off the complainant as they saw them arriving, and she thought they looked relieved.

“What you got?” Mueller asked them.

“This guy wants us to arrest the guy over there for splashing water on him.”

Mueller raised his eyebrows at the guy, who glared at the cop indignantly.

“Are you their supervisor?” he demanded.

“I'm a supervisor.”

“My name is Benedict Jacobs! I work at the Carlyne Group.”

He gestured angrily behind him at the Seagram building.

He was wearing a gray suit in a sharkskin pattern, and his face was red and angry.

“As I've already explained to these two,” he said, glaring at them contemptuously. “This is a Kilton K-50. Do you I know anything at all about suits?” he demanded, looking at Mueller's rumpled outfit with disdain.

“What does that have to do with your complaint, sir?”

“This is a fifty thousand dollar suit! Do you understand that? It's made of a blend of the world's rarest fabrics and was designed by Enzo D'orsi! Forty-five tailors worked on it! D'orsi only makes fifty of them a year!”

Jamie exchanged raised eyebrows with one of the cops, wondering what kind of a man would pay fifty thousand dollars for a suit. A rich one, she supposed, and probably a very vain one who wanted everyone to know how rich he was.

“I'm happy for you,” Mueller said. “So?”

“That... that... person,” he snarled, pointing his finger towards the fountain, “Is walking illegally in the fountain! And when he kicked water at me! Do you know what chlorine does to fine fabrics?”

“Not especially.”

“We were asking him if maybe the guy hadn't kicked water at him accidentally like,” one of the cops said, in a thick Bronx accent.

“Of course it wasn't accidental, you simpleton!” Jacob snapped.

“Your suit looks dry,” Mueller observed.

“Because the fabric has absorbed the water and chlorine!”

“So what do you want us to do?”

“Arrest him!” Jacob demanded.

“For what?”

Jacob glowered at him. “Are you telling me assault isn't illegal any more in this city?”

Mueller shrugged. “Assault requires physical injury, sir. So you weren't assaulted.”

Jamie walked over to the fountain while they were arguing. There were a number of people sitting around it but no one had elected to sit near the man in the checked shirt. He was in his late thirties, skinny, with black hair and dark eyes.

“Hey,” she said. “What's your name?”

“Who wants to know?” he demanded, looking up at her challengingly.

She showed him her badge.

“A man can't cool his feet off in a fountain anymore?” he demanded sullenly.

“Didn't say that. Asked your name.”

“Allan Roberts.”

“What are you doing here, Mister Roberts?”

“I was looking for work.”

He snorted at her expression.

“Not here,” he said. “At stores on 7th Avenue. I started on Twenty First and I been working my way north. I've had about all I can today, and I was headed for the subway on Lexington when I stopped here. My feet are burning up from all the walking so I decided to cool them off.”

“Mister Roberts, did you kick water at that guy back there on the stairs?”

Roberts looked past her at Jacobs, who was talking animatedly with the uniformed cops.

“Shit,” he said. “All I did was step out of the fountain and shake my feet to get the water off. He was passing by and jumped like I was pissing on him.”

“Okay. You know this plaza is private property, right?”

He made a face.

“The big guy wants you arrested.”

He looked at her incredulously.

“For what? For dirtying up his fountain?”

“For splashing water on his expensive suit.”

The man gave her a look of disbelief. “Fuck him!”

“I'd rather not, but you would probably be better off to put your shoes back on and head to the subway.”

“How about I go over there and bust him in the face instead?”

“Then we'd have to arrest you.”

He started to put his shoes on and she wandered back to where Mueller, using a tone of voice she thought must be intended to infuriate Jacob – slow, drawling, and sounding like the big dumb flatfoot Jacob probably assumed he

was anyway, was asking for evidence the suit was damaged.

“I will show you the damage estimate from the specialized cleaning service I will have to employ to clean the suit!” Jacob exclaimed.

“Do you have it on you?”

“I haven't had the suit examined yet!” Jacob shouted in frustration.

“If you can provide us with proof of damage to your property, sir, we can consider laying charges against the individual, presuming evidence of deliberate intent emerges,” Mueller said in his slow, plodding voice.

“Look! He's getting away!” Jacob shouted, thrusting his arm out to point as Roberts started walking off the plaza.

He lunged in his direction but Jamie grabbed his arm and shoved him back.

“We wouldn't want to arrest you for assault, sir,” she said.

“Assault? Are you out of your tiny mind?” he cried.

Then his eyes narrowed as he looked around at them all.

“Oh, I get it now. It's screw the rich, is that it? You don't give a shit about what happens to me because you're so jealous I make more in a day than you make in your entire shitty month of work?!”

“Your shitty attitude might have something to do with it, too,” Jamie said.

Mueller glared at her as Jacob's face turned even redder and he thrust his finger at her.

“You can be sure city hall will hear about this!” he shouted.

She held her arm up and gave him a little wave and he snarled, turned and stormed towards the building.

“What an asshole,” one of the uniforms said.

“Just make sure you write it up properly,” Mueller said. “An asshole like him probably will know someone at city hall, someone he gives money to, so the department will probably get a call from some councilor or other.”

He turned and glared at Jamie as the uniforms headed for their car.

“Why did you open your mouth?”

“Why not?”

He shook his head, cursed under his breath, and headed back to their car.

“The main reason I went over there was to keep two young cops from being the subject of that asshole's inevitable complaint. I'm not worried about me and I know how to talk so the guy has nothing to complain about, like telling him he has a shitty attitude.”

“He does have a shitty attitude.”

“He gets to use obscenities. You don't!”

“I'm not worried.”

“You should be! It doesn't take much influence to have you reassigned to the night shift in the Bronx. A guy like him probably donates money to his city councilor and politicians only care about pleasing people like that.”

“Politicians can't have me reassigned for telling dick like him he has a shitty attitude.”

“No, but the politician can call the commissioner's office and ask for a favor!”

“I suppose,” she said dubiously, “but I don't think the commissioner's office will have me reassigned for something like this. It would look really bad if it got into the press. I was transferred here for getting a medal, remember. It would look pretty bad if I got transferred out for something like

this.”

“What makes you think the press would give a damn?”

“Are you kidding, Mueller? The press would love a story like that. Big shot gets city to transfer poor little hero girl because she was rude to him? The Post would eat that up.”

In truth, she wasn't worried, not because of the press but because she was certain her grandfather's interest was attached to the original transfer in some way. It was slightly possible some big boss in the department might transfer a cop to please a city councilor, but not at the risk of incurring her grandfather's wrath.

“You better hope you're right,” he growled.

She was, but she decided she'd put in a call to her grandfather tonight anyway, just in case.

They arrested a guy trying to use a stolen credit card, then another guy who groped a woman at a park before checking with one of Mueller's informants about a truck theft ring, then headed back to the station.

Like most stations in New York it was built decades earlier, and there were few allowances made for parking even the precinct's own vehicles, never mind employee cars. Usually that didn't matter since Mueller made sure they got back well before shift change to make sure he could park easily. Today, though, they were late.

On the plus side, since he didn't trust her to properly wedge the car into tiny spaces, he sent her off while he did the parking. She was able to get to her desk, quickly do up a small report, and then head downstairs in time to be picked up by Danny.

She headed down the stairs and out into the lobby, and passed Armando Lopez and his partner, Tom Galen.

“Hey, McCloud, we driving you to the subway or is your boyfriend

taking you off?" he asked.

"In his shiny sports car," his Galen said with a smirk.

"I got a ride, thanks," she said.

"I bet," Galen said, smirking.

She smirked back. "And he knows how to use his handcuffs," she said, taunting them.

"Yeah, I'll bet!"

"I'll show you how to use handcuffs, baby!"

She waved them off and kept going, out the door, and over to Danny's car.

"Hey, you look almost respectable today," she said with a grin as she got in.

She leaned over to kiss him, and then suddenly he was grabbing her head and shoving it down into his lap! She was too shocked to quickly react, and the first thing which came to mind was that the idiot was actually trying his master slave sex stuff right here in front of the precinct house!

Then she heard three quick explosions just above her head which she quickly recognized! He let go of her and leapt out of the car and she jerked her head up and whirled, looking around wildly but seeing nothing as she reached back for her gun!

She shoved the door open, or tried to, and that was when she saw the man laying on the pavement next to the car, bleeding heavily from the chest, a gun next to his hand. She had to jump over him to get out even as the door to the station burst open and a half dozen cops ran out, guns drawn.

"We need an ambulance!" she called to get their attention on her instead of Lucas.

They would all recognize her, but not him, and she wanted them knowing he was with her before someone made a mistake.

“Looks like Intelligence was wrong about how serious they were,” he said as he crouched next to the man and felt for a pulse.

“Holy shit!” she said, looking around wildly.

She felt more shocked here than she had back at the diner, or at any other time since she'd become a cop, as she realized the man lying there had tried to kill her!

Mueller came running up as bosses – the white caps – started coming out of the station.

“I can't leave you alone for ten minutes,” he growled.

He looked suspiciously at Danny.

“Uh, Sergeant Mueller, my ... boyfriend, Danny Lucas.”

Danny looked at her, smirked for a moment, then nodded at Mueller.

“The fed,” Mueller said, holding out his hand.

“Fraid so,” Lucas said, shaking hands.

“He dead?”

“Fraid so.”

Well good!” Jamie exclaimed.

They both looked at her.

“He tried to kill me?” she demanded of Danny.

He nodded.

“Then fuck him!”

“She's very practical,” he said to Mueller, who nodded.

Chapter Eleven

The 1st precinct was on Erickson Place, at the southern tip of Manhattan. It was a small precinct, with a lot of narrow, crowded streets, but it covered the Financial District so it tended to be very high rent, both for businesses and anyone trying to live there.

“What we're looking for, mainly, are ambitious punks,” Sergeant Lynch said.

Lynch was the opposite of Mueller, twenty-eight, short and slender, with a shaved head, and eyes that never stopped moving. He seemed hyper to her as he drove them around.

The southern tip of Manhattan defied the street naming convention of the rest of the Island, for the streets predated it. They also were not quite as neatly laid out as the general north-south grid, making it more difficult to find your way around.

“The general run of the mill scumbag we run into is from outside the district, most often Brooklyn, and come across on the Subway. They come here because they figure anyone they see in the Financial District is rich, so if they can steal a wallet or a purse, or snatch someone's gold watch, they can make a big score, then zip back across the river and home.”

“Aren't they? Rich, I mean?”

“I ain't rich. How about you? There are stores and shops here, pharmacies: their employees aren't rich. There are all kinds of ordinary people working here, delivery guys, doormen, repairmen, city workers, you name it. Even at the big banks you got more secretaries, clerks and cafeteria workers than millionaire stock traders. Of course, if you actually live here, you're rich enough. But we don't have a big residential population. The Tribeca area is one.”

He turned the corner.

“Not a lot of Arabs here, though,” he said.

“I'm not afraid of Arabs. Anyway, my understanding is this group is Somali.”

“So Blacks? Not a lot of Black guys here either.”

“Whatever they are, they're not likely to know you're down here. You could be anywhere among a hundred precincts, districts and housing areas, or stuck in an office at One Police Plaza, or somewhere else entirely. Me, I'd put you in the academy. It's got tight access control and a fenced in parking lot.

“I've already been through the Academy,” she said dryly.

“Lots of things for cops to do there. You're too inexperienced for an instructor but you could help out, learn some, or just write up reports or grade papers.”

“For how long?” she demanded.

“I doubt a group screwy enough to try and shoot a cop outside a precinct house is going to be around for very long. That's not exactly the mark of careful, patient planners.”

“Maybe I should go into Intelligence and show them how to do their job,” she said, glowering.

“Maybe. Just don't complain too much or you could wind up at headquarters watching CCTV monitors for a few weeks or months.”

She grunted but didn't answer. There were thousands of cameras in Manhattan now that the NYPD could monitor. Doing so required a lot of people, mostly cops, who, for one reason or another, like physical impairment, couldn't go out onto the streets anymore. The idea of spending her days in a chair viewing mostly unremarkable scenes on TV with cops putting in their time before retirement did not fill her with excitement.

“Who's complaining? I like anti-crime.”

“Good, then you've got a whole new precinct to learn like the back of your hand. And you look just right.”

She turned in surprise.

“You look... classy,” he said.

She made a face. She'd worn her Armani jacket this morning out of a sense of defiance. She'd worn it with black jeans so no one got the idea she was trying to be too snooty, but she liked how she looked in the jacket, and was feeling defensive.

“You won't look out of place in certain areas. Me, I gotta pretend I'm like a delivery guy or something. Nobody'd buy me for a rich banker.”

He laughed in amusement.

“I'm not the banker type either.”

“No, but you'll blend in. Nobody's going to think you're a cop.”

Which wasn't something she found particularly flattering.

Still, Intelligence had assured her this was a small group of radicals and they now had them all under surveillance, and expected to have enough to arrest them within days. In the meantime, she would get to explore south Manhattan, like Lynch said, and see how different police work might be there from further north in Midtown.

At least it hadn't been her doing the shooting this time, so she didn't have to face mandatory time off, or go through things with the shooting team or the departmental psychologist. So she could just relax here in the First Precinct, meet a few people, and after a few weeks, or maybe a month or two, she'd go back to Midtown North again.

“So what's your new place like?” Danny asked as they left the restaurant that night.

“Like Midtown North, really. Fewer tourists, maybe, though we have a lot of those too. I think my lieutenant is hot for me, though.”

“Isn't everyone?”

“Well, everyone should be hot for me.”

“Including women.”

“Don't think there aren't a lot who are. It's not like the NYPD has a problem attracting lesbians.”

“Do tell?”

“Now you're thinking about me and another woman, aren't you?”

“It's not an unpleasant thought.”

“Don't hold your breath.”

“Maybe a nice ménage a trois.”

“You're not the first guy to come up with that as a fantasy, you know.”

“No? So that means it's not really that perverted, right?”

“To have that fantasy? No. Thinking I'm gonna go along with it is wishful thinking, though.”

“Come on, be a sport,” he said with a grin.

She snorted. “Do I get to have sex with another guy in this ménage?”

“I was thinking of another girl.”

“Surprise, surprise. Would she be blonde, by any chance?”

“Now that you mention it...”

“Uh huh.

Rain started to hit the car windows and she peered around, wondering where they were going.

“We're not going to the Bronx?”

“Maybe eventually.”

She looked at him curiously and he winked.

“What kind of smutty, perverted games did you have in mind for tonight?” she asked warily.

He grinned broadly but just shook his head. “Let's say it involves lots of toys.”

She felt a hot little rush of heat down low. His introduction to toys the other evening had been more than slightly intense. She sometimes felt as if she and her body were a toy for him, and he was prone to exploring different ways of enjoying it.

“We could just have, like, normal missionary style sex,” she said.

“You mean tie you spreadeagled to the bed?”

“The word 'normal' doesn't mean a lot to you, does it?”

“Not so much. But I thought we might go to a concert in Central Park.”

“It's starting to rain,” she said, indicating the drops falling on the car windshield.

“That should keep the crowds down.”

“What kind of concert?”

He made a sudden sharp turn instead of answering, and then stopped before a closed garage door. It opened at the push of a button and he drove the car inside.

“Where are we?”

“Just a garage. We're not going inside, but you can change here.”

“Change? Change into what?”

“Your raincoat, of course,” he said guilelessly.

“I don't have a raincoat. What do you have in mind, you perve?” she demanded suspiciously.

He smirked, and climbed out of the car, then came around to the passenger side and helped her out. Then he opened the trunk and took out a sack, carrying it over to put on the hood of the car. He drew a long mass of white rope from the bag, and Jamie's chest started to tighten as her lower belly pulsed with interest.

“Is this going to be dangerous?” she asked anxiously.

“Trust me.”

She looked around at the garage, and the door at the end.

“No one is here. It's the empty building under construction where we came before.”

He insisted she strip completely, other than the thigh high stiletto boots he'd bought for her the other day, and which he helped her done. With those zipped up high on her thighs he went to work with the rope. It was that soft bondage rope stuff he'd used on her before, and he bound her in a not too different way than she'd experienced before.

He wrapped the rope around her breasts, as he'd done before, to make them swell out and throb, then around her arms behind her, though this time instead of drawing her wrists up and back between her shoulder blades he left

her arms going straight down.

He did draw them tightly back together, though, so that her shoulders began to ache. He bent her over the low hood of his car and kicked her legs apart, and Jamie moaned as her bound breasts pressed heavily against the warm metal.

“What a gorgeous sight,” he said, his fingers kneading her buttocks and then sliding lower to finger her sex.

“Are we ever going to have sex where I'm not tied up?” she moaned.

“As long as you scream in ecstasy, does it matter?”

“I do not scream in ecstasy! You are such an egotistical man!”

“Have I ever mentioned what a gorgeous ass you have?”

“Yes!”

“Good.”

He showed her something that looked like a black egg on a narrow stand with a flat round base.

“Wh-what is that?”

“A toy,” he said with a grin.

He dropped low behind her and she gasped as she felt his tongue slide up the length of her sex, then his lips on her clitoris. This was as bizarre a place as any he'd taken her to have sex, in an industrial garage with the sounds of traffic outside. But the feel of his lips on her, of his tongue dipping into her, produced a rush of heat which she found herself unable to resist.

His fingers pushed into her, slowly, then with more confidence, pumping in and out as his tongue lapped at her clitoris. Then there was a pause. A moment later she felt his finger against her back opening, felt it pushing, prodding, and dipping into her back there! She moaned as it slid in,

slick with some kind of coating, pumping in and out as he sucked on her clitoris.

There was another breathless pause, and then she felt something much thicker pressing against her wrinkled little back opening. She moaned in denial and heat as it pushed harder, as she felt her sphincter giving way, as the slick, round egg thing slowly pushed up into her body, getting wider as it neared its middle, then narrowing again until her sphincter had closed behind it.

There was still that flat base pressing against her from the outside, and a sense of fullness there, but Jamie couldn't even find cause to protest given the way he was sucking and licking at her clitoris!

He rose behind her, then, gripped her hair and used it as a handle to lift her up and back onto her feet, ignoring her gasp of pain. Then he tied her wrists together and fed the rope between her thighs and up to circle around her waist before pulling it taut. That sank the ropes between the lips of her sex and also put them across her clitoris – with strategically placed little knots.

Which meant if she pulled with her wrists she would tighten or loosen the pull of the rope across her sex. It also meant any little movements of her arms would be transmitted there. And with that done he threw a rain poncho over her head. It fell down around her waist and hips, then dropped down to her knees.

“Now you look entirely respectable,” he said.

He produced a long dark raincoat for himself, took out an umbrella, and led a breathless Jamie outside onto the street!

“You are fucking crazy!” she exclaimed, nervously looking around.

“No, just intriguing.”

“Is that what you call it?”

He hooked his arm in hers and popped the umbrella up as he led her up the sidewalk. There weren't a lot of pedestrians, but the traffic was still heavy, and it felt incredibly strange to be walking among it all with her arms tied back so tightly, and naked under the short poncho!

They walked into Central Park with the rain pattering softly off the umbrella, and Jamie intensely aware of just how mortifying it would be if anyone discovered what was under the thin plastic. Not only was she tied up, like some kind of pervert, and naked, but of course, there was the butt-plug – which implied all kinds of things which made her wrinkle her face in dismay!

But the heat was bubbling away inside her as they walked along, her breasts throbbing, nipples tingling, and the ropes grinding away against her in a way which was both arousing and aching.

The rain was soft, sometimes diminishing to light sprinkles, easily handled by the umbrella as he led her down the path through Central Park to one of the stages. The light was dying fast outside, making the bright lights of the stage even more noticeable as they got closer.

The crowd grew greater, too, almost all with umbrellas. It looked and sounded like the New York Pops were giving a concert at Rumsey playfield. The big stage was packed with musicians, and people were sitting in lawn chairs and standing around thousands strong.

“I don't think we've even talked much about your musical tastes yet,” she gulped.

“They're eclectic,” he replied.

He put her before him as the musicians started to play, holding the umbrella up above them. It wasn't long, however, before his other hand found its way into a slit in the right side of the poncho, and down between her legs.

It was dark enough, and crowded enough no one was likely to notice, but it still made her extremely nervous. The backs of the people in front of her were all turned to them as they watched the stage. Their own bodies presumably hid what he was doing from those behind, whose eyes would also

be on the stage.

But it was still shockingly perverted to have him fingering her like his in the middle of a crowd! And her breasts throbbled within the constricted ropes circling them. Then he put down the umbrella as the rain faded. That let his other hand find its way in through a slit in the other side of the poncho to caress and fondle her bare breasts as his lips nuzzled the nape of her neck.

Her mind and body were filled with a pulsing sexual energy and heat as she stood there, legs apart, head back against him, and fought to keep any sign of her reaction from showing to him or anyone else. Her eyes were constantly rolling aside, though, anxiously searching for any sign anyone had noticed.

There was a couple standing a dozen paces away to their left. Here in the back of the crowd, people weren't pressed tightly together, and while there was a trio of older women standing together closer to them, the couple could look past them and see – if they could see in the dim light – that Lucas had his hand up under her poncho!

The couple appeared to be in their late twenties, and looked very hip and fashionable, probably from the upper east or upper west side which bordered the park. The woman was short and slender, with shoulder length blonde hair. The man beside her was much taller, with a thin beard and short dark hair.

They weren't exactly staring, but they weren't exactly avoiding looking at them either, with a look of amusement or fascination in their eyes as Jamie jerked her face away, stricken.

“Someone is watching us!” she gasped.

“Let them,” he said, unconcerned.

“Are you crazy?” she moaned.

“Possibly.”

Knowing they were watching made her mind squirm and her face

redden, but at least they couldn't really see much in the dark. They might *know* pretty much what was happening but not see it.

Except that Lucas pulled his hand out of the slit in the side of her poncho and instead put his other hand around her and down between her legs, too, caressing her thigh and then letting his hand stroke slowly upward, inch by inch, as Jamie's heart pounded more and more wildly!

His hand rose higher, caressing her sex, then higher still, sliding up along her abdomen, his forearm raising the bottom of the poncho up over her hips to completely expose her below the waist!

“Danny!” she gasped, horrified.

Now they could simply see his fingers openly stroking her clitoris! They could also see the rope climbing up her abdomen and no doubt wonder at it! Her stomach churned and her arms jerked helplessly against the ropes binding them behind her! She turned her head slowly, rolling her eyes to the left, trying to see if they were still there or if Danny was just taunting her.

She didn't have to turn her head as far as she had thought, for the couple were approaching! She felt a jolt of mortified shock and jerked her head away.

“Lovely night,” she heard the man say.

“Yes, isn't it,” Lucas replied, not shifting his hands one inch!

“My name is Jeff. This is my girlfriend Cynthia.”

“Dan. This is my slave girl, Jamie.”

Jamie's face was already burning bright, but she felt a hot flush as he calmly named her. She felt flabbergasted by how casual they were all being, but at the same time didn't dare make a fuss lest a lot more people turn to look at them!

And, too, there was a seething dark storm of heat and arousal raging through her body so that her mind was swimming in hunger and excitement.

“She seems to be very responsive,” the man said.

“Oh you have no idea. I have to be careful or she'll scream.”

The couple chuckled softly while Jamie continued to stare in the opposite direction, overwhelmed by the psychic shock of embarrassment!

“I have to gag Cynthia sometimes to keep her screams from bothering the neighbors,” Jeff said.

“I have a number of gags at home but they're a little hard to hide in public,” Lucas replied.

“Don't those ropes get in the way?” Cynthia asked, clearly looking down between Jamie's legs.

“No, and they can help because they're tied to her arms so whenever she moves them she feels that tightness there.”

“Oh, can we see?”

Jamie was filled with disbelief at how calmly they were talking! But it was about to get worse, because she felt Lucas raising his hands, pulling the poncho higher and higher until it was up around her neck! Then he simply pulled it off completely!

The symphony was playing a jazz tune, and a male singer whose name she didn't know was singing along to it. None of them were turning to look at what was happening behind them! With her head rolled to the right Jamie saw trees blocking the view of those in that direction. The couple themselves blocked the view of anyone on their left.

“She has lovely breasts,” the woman said.

And another jolt hit Jamie's shocked mind as her small hand rose and began to caress her left breast.

“I've noticed that myself,” Lucas said.

And then the woman knelt before her, her hands caressing Jamie's hips as she began to tongue her clitoris!

Her sexual experiences with women were limited to occasional mock kisses to tease the boys, but her body had been thrumming with sexual heat and excitement for long, long minutes, and Jamie moaned helplessly at the dark shock of having this strange man watch her even as a woman she didn't even know licked her sex!

Lucas was still behind her, his hands caressing her breasts as the woman's tongue licked her with strong, rapid motions, and he pulled back on her hair to force her back to arch and her hips to push out instinctively as he chewed lightly on her neck.

“Spread your legs,” he growled.

Dazed, Jamie complied, and the woman's tongue licked harder as her mind began to swirl and pulse with light and heat. Her legs trembled amid the intensity of the sensations raging within her, and then Lucas shifted his hand from her hair, curving it around her face to cup her mouth as her hips began to buck wildly, frantically against the woman's licking tongue!

The orgasm tore her mind to shattered pieces and left her crying out helplessly into the palm of his hand, hips bucking violently into the woman's hot hungry mouth! It went on and on, hot crackling rolls of sexual electricity ripping through her body. And they didn't ease down as she caught the man watching her, his eyes hungry.

It was all so shocking, so overwhelming, and so darkly, horribly thrilling! It was also degrading, of course, and humiliating, but in the storm of sexual heat gripping her even those emotions were twisted and turned to something darkly sexual!

Sex slave! As if! And yet, here this evening in the darkness with strangers, she could almost act the part, almost without trying, caught up in a dark game of daring lust that left her shuddering in mind-blasted emotional exhaustion!

“How often does she come?” the man asked.

“Oh sometimes a half dozen times during a session,” Lucas said, just as casually.

“Beautiful body, toned and graceful at the same time. I'm hard just watching her.”

“She has very soft skin. Give a feel.”

Jamie cried out dazedly as the man's hand rose and casually caressed her left breast, his fingers stroking and then fingering her nipple as she felt the woman's fingers starting to push up inside her! She felt a sense of outrage, even anger, an urge to shove them both back and storm off, and yet the raw wild carnal heat gripping her only grew more intense!

She felt a sense of wild, desperate denial as the heat burned hotter and swept up through her, a desperation not to expose her weakness again. But she failed, and her hips bucked frantically again as a second orgasm tore through her mind and body!

And still, the wild, pulsing heat gripped her body and thrilled her mind.

“Now I'm really getting hot,” Jeff said.

“Maybe my slave girl can take care of that for you.”

His hand came off her mouth and instead caught at her hair, tugging sharply. Dazed, Jamie stumbled back a step, then fell to her knees, moaning weakly. Jeff stepped forward, unzipping his trousers, and pulled his erection out, and she stared at it with a sense of disbelief even as it pushed into her open mouth.

It was instinct, then, that closed her lips around it, and she rolled her eyes up at him, blushing hotly, even as he pushed forward. Moaning around it, she started to suck, her tongue licking at the underside of the head, feeling another rush of shocked dark heat swirling through her as people applauded in front of her and the orchestra started another song.

Jeff didn't touch her, but stayed still, other than his hips pumping slowly in and out. Lucas had hold of her hair, though, and pushed her forward, suddenly, so that the man's thick shaft slid through the tight ring of her lips, and across her tongue. The head pushed into her throat, and she gurgled weakly, watching the rest of the man's shaft disappear until her mouth and face was pressed firmly into his groin!

“Hardly any gagging. She's very talented,” the man said, starting to sound kind of breathy.

“Oh she is. She's a remarkable girl, and getting more skillful by the day.”

Jamie's heart pounded and her head throbbed and she began to see black dots dance before her eyes as her chest began to burn. Then she felt the pull back on her hair, and the long length of the man's cock slid up her throat and out to allow her to gasp for breath.

The other woman, she noticed, had knelt to the side, and now she felt her fingers at her clitoris, rubbing her, as her boyfriend pumped harder, and Lucas shoved her mouth forward again and again to force her to swallow every inch of him.

It took only minutes, and very few of them, before the man erupted in her throat, gasping in pleasure and pumping frantically against her. He groaned as he stepped back, and his girlfriend then mouthed his softening cock hungrily as Jamie swayed back, light-headed.

She hardly noticed the two of them fading back, dazed, as Lucas pulled her to her feet. She did notice that he'd eased her backwards so that a bush was between her and the trio of elderly women on her left. Now he turned her and marched her further away, into the darkness, amid the trees, gripping her bare arm as she stumbled along with wide eyes.

Had that actually happened? Had she actually done that?

Chapter Twelve

Danny put the poncho on her and led her out of the park. She was dazed, her mind blown by what had happened. It was outrageous and degrading that he would do something like that without her consent, but on the other hand, her sexual self-image these days was filled with a seething sense of heat and excitement and daring, and the orgasms she'd had in the park clouded her thinking still further.

She could hardly speak on their way back to the garage, but as soon as they got inside and the door was closed Danny whipped off the poncho and put her back onto her knees. Fortunately, the high leather boots protected them from the rough stone, but she still cried out as he roughly yanked on her hair.

Then his stiff cock was in her mouth as he jerked hungrily on her hair, and that hunger in his eyes and on his face was contagious, despite the sense of shocked outrage she was still feeling. She moaned helplessly as she sucked, as he drove himself deeper, feeling awash in that dark sense of kinky heat at the idea of playing his 'slave girl'!

He pushed himself deep into her throat several times, before pulling out, bending her over so that her swollen breasts were pillowed out against the cold concrete, then pulled the butt-plug out of her and sheathed his long, thick, glistening cock in her ass!

He yanked on her hair, slapped her bottom, groped her breast, and cursed her, riding her like a savage animal, his hips slamming against her upraised buttocks again and again! It was raw, violent and animalistic, and yet Jamie couldn't stop herself from sobbing in pleasure as another massive orgasm tore through her!

Then he untied her, helped her dazedly dress, and announced they were going to her place to meet her family.

Jamie looked at him with a sense of disbelief.

“You ... you do this and then want to go and meet my parents?”

He grinned. “What did I do? I exposed you, no pun intended, to new kind of sexual experience, helping to melt away your inhibitions in the face of the sexual heat inside you.”

“And it was incredibly disrespectful!”

“On the contrary, it was very respectful. I have an amazing level of respect for you on all levels. And I'm proud to own you.”

“You don't fucking own me!”

He shrugged and smiled. “I will.”

She stared at him and shook her head slowly, filled with disbelief.

“If you think we're going to make your little sexual role playing game real, you're in for a disappointment, Mister Lucas!”

“You could never disappointment me, beautiful girl. And if this was easy it wouldn't be worth the effort,” he said with a grin.

“You're impossible!”

“No, just improbable. If you prefer we can go back to my place. I bought an Arab robe and headdress. You can play my white slave girl.”

She realized she had no idea if he was kidding or not and shook her head again.

“One thing you can count on with me, Jamie, is life will never be dull,” he said.

“No? No, I suppose not,” she half whispered.

She was still too shocked to really fight him, and besides, she needed the

ride home. She didn't even fight him over his insistence she keep the butt-plug inside her! So they met her parents, with her wearing it, and he acted as smooth and ordinary and – 'un-perverted' as any guy she had ever known.

Her parents found him very reassuring, which just showed how good his acting skills were. What Jamie couldn't help wondering was if he was so good at role-playing, where was the real Danny Lucas, and what was he like?

It was going to be fun, if dangerous, to find out. But she was confident she'd get there eventually.

THE END

By the author:

Out of Uniform (Jamie McCloud Book 1)

Learning the Ropes (Jamie McCloud Book 2)

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