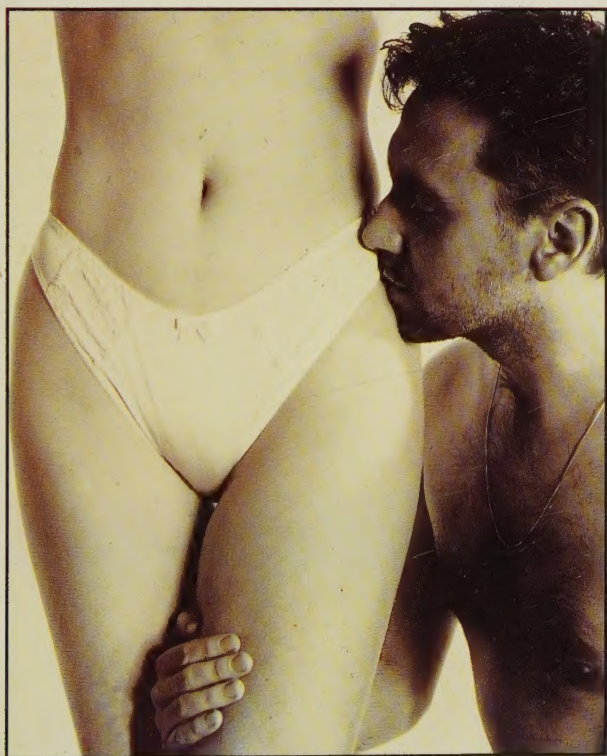


THEY'RE ALL SLAVES TO HER —

NAKED AMBITION



BECKY BELL



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Melanie should have walked away. Instead she stood, peeking around the door like a voyeur. She had never been in any situation where she had seen two people having sex. Now here she was, watching her boss being comprehensively seduced. She wanted to see more.

Rosemary stood over the seated Grant and reached up to unclip her bra. She shucked herself out of the big lacy cups and replaced them with her own hands. She massaged and kneaded her fleshy tits, then fed one up to her mouth until its nipple, large and swollen, was sucked between her lips. Then she released both breasts and shook her shoulders violently from side to side so her tits bounced against each other, the sound of flesh slapping against flesh echoing around the small office.

Melanie was rooted to the spot . . .

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Naked Ambition

Becky Bell



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Naked Ambition

Chapter One

She lay naked under the single white sheet. Something had woken her. She knew immediately what it was. The door of the bedroom opening, then closing again.

He pulled the sheet away from her naked body and looked down at her for a long time, his eyes studying the details as though trying to memorise the way she looked. Slowly, deliberately he lay down beside her, his body naked too.

She felt the hardness of his muscles and her body seemed to melt over him. He took her into his arms, winding around her, pulling her into him, turning her on her side and hugging her tightly as his lips found her mouth and he kissed her, his tongue plunging deep into her mouth, gagging her moan of pleasure.

His erection thrust against her belly, hot and hard as a bone. She pushed against it, wanting to feel it pressing into her. She felt it throb in response, his balls crushed into her thick pubic hair.

He rolled on top of her without breaking the kiss. She spread her legs for him, opened herself for him, wanting him inside her. She knew she was wet, she could feel her juices running out of her sex, over her swollen labia, down between her buttocks, a river of passion running out of a deep dark lake of need.

'Please . . .' she said, arching her body up into his, the word muffled by his lips.

He moved his mouth down to her neck, nipping and kissing and sucking at the well-defined tendons stretched taut by the position of her head. His cock, pressed into her belly, was so hot she thought it might burn her. His mouth felt as hot as his cock. She moaned again. With no impediment this time the sound was clear, a noise like an animal, throaty, breathy, coming from deep inside her, exhaled rather than pronounced.

He was kissing the hollow at the base of her throat, his hand feeling for her breast, and, finding its objective, cupping and kneading it as though trying to squeeze another moan from her. He trailed his lips down until his mouth hovered over her erect nipple, ruby red and corrugated by her excitement, his body curled above her. He took it gently between his teeth then nipped it hard. He got his moan. She arched her back involuntarily this time, pushing against him.

She wanted him so badly. She wanted to feel that cock nudging down between her thighs, then up, up into her streaming wet sex.

‘Please . . .’ she gasped. ‘Please . . .’

But he wanted to make her wait for it. He moved his mouth to the other nipple, his hand cupping the breast, squeezing first as before, then sinking his teeth into the tender flesh. He pinched it, nipped it, sucked it, feeling her body shudder under him. Then he raised himself on his arms and looked down at her. He smiled. It was almost a cruel smile, a smile that said he knew how much she wanted him, how badly she needed him. Watching her eyes he moved his hips back until his cock slipped down between her open legs, nestling in her labia. Then he stopped, letting her feel the helmet of his cock radiating its heat.

She tried to wriggle her body down on him, to impale herself on his erection, but he was too strong for her. He held her down

NAKED AMBITION

with the weight of his body, his thighs unyielding, his hips locked.

'Please . . .' it seemed to be the only word in her vocabulary.

He was still looking into her eyes, an intense searching stare, as though trying to find something there, some secret meaning that only he could recognise. For what, to her at least, seemed to be hours but was only seconds, he held himself against her like this, his back bowed, his cock at the portals of her sex. She felt as though she had stopped breathing, as though time had stopped, as though she were suspended in a world where there was only her overwhelming need for him.

Suddenly, explosively, he bucked his hips and in one smooth, powerful movement drove his cock up into her soaking wet cunt. She almost screamed. He did not pull it back again but pushed on further and further, deeper and deeper, until his cock was buried in her, until she could feel his pubic bone crushing her clitoris at the front, and his balls, loose and heavy, up against her anus at the back. He ground forward, moving from side to side against her clitoris.

She was coming. She could not stop herself. His cock was pulsing inside her just as her clitoris was pulsing against him. He lowered the top half of his body down on to her chest and she gratefully wrapped her arms around him, hugging him to her, clinging to him like a drowning man to a piece of flotsam. She was drowning, drowning in her juices, drowning in the feelings he had released, drowning in her orgasm as it broke over his cock and she felt herself sinking into a bottomless pit.

He had not come. His cock still pressed into her as hard as a bone. Now it was his turn.

They rolled over without uncoupling until he lay on his back and she sat up on him. She drew her knees up so she squatted

over him, his cock embedded inside her. With one hand she reached behind her back, down between her legs to find his balls. Her fingers wrapped around them, pulling them, playing with them. She felt his cock react, kicking the walls of her sex.

She looked down at him. His eyes were closed. She began to ride him, riding his cock up and down, establishing a rhythm, the juices from her body running down his long hard shaft. He was coming. She could feel his spunk pumping into his cock. She knew she would come again too, that the heat and wetness of his spunk spitting out into the dark cavern of her cunt would bring her off. It always did. It was always the same.

Without breaking her rhythm she looked up into the mirror. She always did. And, as always, what she saw was a shock. It was not her body rising and falling on the long hard sword of his cock. It was different. Firm round breasts, a waspie waist, an iron flat belly, long contoured thighs. The body in the mirror was perfect. It was the same with her face. Her jowly, porky cheeks and big bulbous nose were replaced by high, bony cheekbones and a fine-chiselled nose. Only her eyes were the same, the same big blue eyes, staring back at her in surprise and puzzlement.

She felt his cock spasm. She looked down at her new body, down between her high breasts, over her perfectly flat belly, to the apex of her slim thighs. She felt her body respond, as it always did, her orgasm swelling inside her, taking her over.

The orgasm woke her. It always did. The dream was always the same. Sometimes the man was different, of course, someone she had noticed in the street, or in the office, sometimes an actor she'd seen on television, or the star of a film she'd just seen. She'd had many stars in her bed. Tonight it has been Robert d'Angelo. She'd been to see his latest film so it wasn't surprising.

NAKED AMBITION

She always woke at the same point, with her orgasm heaving through her body, though it was not a real orgasm, just a figment of her imagination. She wasn't sure she'd ever had a real orgasm.

She always woke and opened her eyes and immediately looked into the mirror opposite the bed, looking at her face and body just in case the dream had come true.

It had been a long day. It was hard enough without having to do Rosemary Harris's work too but, for the second time that week, Rosemary had been in with Grant Andrews all afternoon and Melanie had had to answer her phone and do all her typing and even deal with the stationery requisition which was supposed to be nothing to do with her. As well as all her own work.

It was seven now and Rosemary was still ensconced in Grant's office. Melanie could see them. The offices were open plan except for the executives who had their own rooms constructed of wood and glass partitioning, wood to just above waist level, then glass to the ceiling. Melanie could see Rosemary sitting in front of Grant's desk, her body language telling him how absolutely fascinating she found every word he said, while Grant had his feet up on his desk, his leather-covered swivel chair rocked back, his hands gesticulating energetically as he emphasised the nuances of his story. He was a rather plump man, once a rugby player but rapidly going to seed through too many heavy business lunches, after-work cocktails, and lack of exercise.

Rosemary laughed in all the appropriate places. She even applauded, clapping her hands together and bouncing enthusiastically in her chair, giving, Melanie thought, a fair impression of a performing seal.

At six Grant had broken open the little cocktail cabinet he

had installed and tumblers of whisky sat on the desk in front of them together with a bottle of Chivas Regal.

Melanie tore her eyes away from the dumb show at the other side of the room. She was the last girl left in the office, and decided to call it a day too despite the fact that she had four more pages to type on her research report. If it hadn't been for Rosemary she could have had everything finished today. Taking one final angry glance into Grant's office – he was standing up pouring more Scotch into Rosemary's glass as she gazed up at him as though he were accomplishing some death-defying feat – Melanie trudged out into the corridor and waited for the lift.

Rosemary Harris was everything Melanie Chambers was not. They were both tall, admittedly, but while Rosemary was slim with a round ample bosom and long elegant legs, Melanie was overweight, with a sagging bust, a thick almost non-existent waist and lumpy fat legs. Rosemary had long blonde hair, a delicate small-featured face and large blue eyes, while Melanie's face was podgy, round and dominated by her over-large nose. Melanie did have nice eyes, but no one ever got to notice her eyes: men stared at Rosemary, they only glanced at Melanie. Rosemary was the natural source of masculine attention in the office, attracting men to her desk as surely as a magnet attracts iron filings. Melanie, on the other hand, when it came to men, simply did not seem to exist. They talked to her when they had to, for the purposes of work, but even then did not look at her, not bothering to focus, just staring in the general direction of her voice. With Rosemary they made up little excuses, ridiculous questions, meaningless queries, anything to have a reason to spend five minutes sitting perched on the edge of her desk, gazing into her eyes. Not that she could ever solve any of these elaborate charades, or do anything else, for that matter. She

NAKED AMBITION

knew nothing and cared less. She was about as useful in the office as a bowl of roses, with the same IQ. But that had not stopped her being given the job. Nor, despite numerous complaints from most of the females in the department, had Grant ever given her even the shadow of a reprimand.

Well, there was one consolation, Melanie thought as the lift arrived. She had applied for the job of production assistant in Pyramid TV's drama department. Not only was it a promotion and more money but it would get her away from Rosemary Harris and her endless string of drawling male sycophants. Melanie had worked for PTV for three years. She knew everything and everybody. She knew she was due for promotion. She knew she deserved promotion and she could think of no reason she shouldn't get it. She couldn't wait. Let Grant see how he would get on with Rosemary without Melanie to clear up after her.

Melanie walked out of the lift on the ground floor and passed the reception desk. It was only as she strode out of the building towards her car that she realised, in her anger and preoccupation, that she had left her bag on the floor by her desk.

'Blast,' she said aloud, turning back.

The lift re-deposited her on the fifth floor. She pushed through the double doors into the general office and trudged over to her desk. As she approached, something, she had no idea what, made her slow down, then tiptoe. She glanced over to Grant's office. The whole floor was gloomy now, the light from the large windows fading. The lamp on Grant's desk had been switched on and its bright glow seemed to shine across the room like a beacon. For a moment it looked as though Grant and Rosemary had disappeared.

Melanie retrieved her bag and slung it over her shoulder.

She should have walked straight out again, hurried home, but curiosity got the better of her. On tiptoe again she crept up to the door of Grant's office. Unlike the walls it was solid wood and hid her from view. She heard the noise before she saw where it was coming from. It was Grant's voice. He was moaning rhythmically.

'Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh . . . ' over and over again.

Melanie risked a peek around the frame of the door and through the glass partitioning. Grant was sitting on the small black leather sofa sited against the back wall of his office. It was low to the floor which is why Melanie had not been able to see him at first. The cause of his almost continuous caterwauling was Rosemary Harris's mouth. Rosemary was kneeling between Grant's legs on the carpet, her head bobbing up and down on his cock, which poked up from his open trousers and the fly of his Y-fronts.

'Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh . . . ' he continued, each sound timed to her downward plunge.

Melanie had the urge to turn and run. She was repelled and disgusted. At the same time she was totally fascinated. She had never seen sex before, never watched, never had the opportunity. She knew she should go, that it was wrong to watch like some dreadful Peeping Tom. She stayed where she was.

Rosemary pulled her mouth away and rocked back on her haunches. 'You're a big boy, aren't you?' she said, circling Grant's cock with her fingers. It glistened with saliva.

'You bet,' he said proudly.

'What do you want, Grant? What shall I do to you?'

'Anything.'

'Has everyone gone home?'

'Long gone.'

NAKED AMBITION

‘Good.’

She got to her feet. As was usual for her in the office she was wearing a dress more appropriate to an evening picking up men in a wine bar. It was a tight red jersey that clung to her figure displaying the heaviness of her breasts and the roundness of her full buttocks as well as the outline of her bra and panties. She looked briefly out into the general office. Melanie ducked behind the door, apparently quickly enough not to be spotted, as Rosemary reached down to the hem of the dress and begun pulling it up over her head, wriggling her body out of it as she did so. Melanie watched with amazement as the dress revealed first the tops of flesh-coloured stockings – she couldn’t remember the last time she’d worn stockings – then the delicate white suspenders stretched taut over her thighs, then the tiny triangle of silky white panties that covered the pert globe of her arse, and finally the strap of her bra.

‘Well?’ She was asking for a compliment as she tossed her head to untangle her long blonde hair. It bounced back into a perfect shape as if by magic.

‘Stockings . . .’ he mumbled, staring at her thighs.

‘I always wear stockings. So much sexier than tights. More feminine . . .’

‘God, yes . . .’

Grant’s cock quivered in agreement.

Rosemary had hooked her thumbs into the sides of her panties. She drew them down her long slim legs until they got to her knees where they dropped to the floor of their own accord. She stepped out of them, picked them up and threw them at Grant. They hooked around his cock like a ring at a hoop-la stall.

Dropping to her knees again Rosemary’s hand massaged his cock with the silky panties.

'Oh . . .' he moaned.

'Do you want to fuck me, Grant?' she asked, her voice lowered an octave.

'Yes, yes . . .'

'Good. 'Cause I want that very much. You know that, don't you? You excite me. My little pussy's hot for you. Really hot.'

She jerked at the waistband of his trousers and underpants. He bucked his hips off the sofa so she could pull them out from underneath him. She slipped off his shoes then pulled the trousers and pants off over his ankles. She didn't bother to take his socks off. His cock stood at right angles to his body, freed of its constrictions.

Melanie was fascinated. Now she knew what Rosemary was capable of. No wonder men clustered around her. How many other male executives at PTV had been treated to this special private programme with Rosemary Harris in the starring role? No wonder she had never been criticised for her numerous mistakes.

Melanie should have walked away. Instead she stood, peeking around the door like a voyeur. And, just like a voyeur, if she was honest with herself, the reason she stayed was no longer a desire to see what Rosemary Harris was capable of, but an entirely different reason. Melanie was excited. Her pulse was racing and her heart thumping. It was exciting.

She had never been in any situation where she had seen two people having sex. Now here she was, watching her boss being comprehensively seduced by – she had to admit – an extraordinarily beautiful and attractive woman. She had never done what Rosemary was doing. What would have been the point? Men would have run in the opposite direction, if she'd peeled her dress off in front of them. But it was

NAKED AMBITION

exciting to watch. She wanted to see more.

'Oh Grant, you've made me so wet.' Rosemary stood up again. Her hands reached up to the clip of her bra and freed it. Immediately she shucked herself out of the big lacy cups and replaced them with her own hands. She massaged and kneaded her fleshy tits then fed one up to her mouth until its nipple, large and swollen, was sucked in between her lips. She moaned with pleasure, then repeated the process with the other breast. She moaned again, her hips swaying slightly. Now she released both tits and shook her shoulders violently from side to side so her tits bounced against each other, the sound of flesh slapping against flesh echoing around the office.

'You like my titties,' she said in a little girl's voice.

'Oh yes.' Grant had not taken his eyes off them since the performance began.

'Do you want to fuck them?'

'Yes, yes, anything . . .' His erection looked as though it were going to burst.

Rosemary lent over him until his face was buried in the middle of her breasts, then she swayed her body from side to side, so they slapped across his cheeks. He tried to catch a nipple in his mouth but she evaded his attempts. On her knees again she nestled his cock into her cleavage, pressing the sides of her breasts to bury it completely.

'Feels so hot,' she said.

He bucked his hips and the tip of his cock rose from between the fleshy mounds, pointing at her throat.

'Are you going to tit fuck me Grant?' she asked.

'Yes.'

'Or do you want my juicy little pussy?'

'Yes,' he said with equal weight. In truth he did not know

what he wanted except he knew his spunk was bubbling up inside his cock and sooner rather than later he would have to come. He was so close. No woman had ever behaved like this, stripped for him, whored for him. It was too much.

Rosemary moved up to kneel either side of his thighs on the sofa. Her pubic hair was sparse, hiding nothing. She pressed it down against his cock.

'Fuck me then, Grant,' she said, hooking her arms around his neck and smothering his face in her big spongy breasts at the same time as she raised her cunt and dropped it down on to his cock.

From where she was watching, Melanie had a perfect view. She could see Grant's cock plunging home, slick with Rosemary's juices, see Rosemary's buttocks rising and falling on it, her labia sucking it in like a mouth, as her body wriggled and ground down on it.

'Oh Grant, you're so big. So big. You're making me come, Grant . . . You're so big . . .'

It was quite a performance Melanie thought. She couldn't possibly be coming so quickly, he had only been inside her for a few seconds, but she made it sound as though she were.

'Oh Grant, oh darling . . .' she screamed.

With a tremendous effort Grant bucked up into her. That was all he could do. As he felt her cunt engulfing him, silk and wet and hot, his cock exploded, spasming out of control, his hands on her stockinged thighs, his face in her tits, his mind full of images of her. It went on and on and on, spasm after spasm, until, finally, his cock was still.

'Darling, darling . . . That was so good . . . Could you feel me come? Oh so good.' She took his face in her hands and covered it with little tiny kisses. She hadn't come, of course.

But that was not the purpose of the exercise. She had got what she wanted. Grant was hers now, putty in her hands.

Before they disentangled themselves, before Grant's cock had slipped from the voracious mouth of Rosemary's sex, Melanie tiptoed away. Opening and closing the double swing doors with infinite care she got into the waiting lift. She felt hot and uncomfortable and weak. Her excitement had dissipated, leaving her with a feeling of guilt. She shouldn't have watched, she shouldn't have allowed herself to watch. It was degrading.

Down in the car park, as she unlocked her car, she realised her hands were trembling. She drove slowly through the security gate, barely acknowledging the cheery wave of the security guard as he swung open the barrier. It took her twenty minutes to drive home and she couldn't remember one minute of the journey. Her mind was completely preoccupied, visions of what she had seen blocking out everything else. If she'd run over a pedestrian she doubted she would have remembered it.

As soon as she got in she poured herself a large gin and tonic and drunk it so quickly the alcohol went straight to her knees. But she didn't sit down. Instead she re-filled her glass and walked through into her bedroom. In the four years since leaving university Melanie had spent her time concentrating on her career. Her bedroom was clean, functional, but she had paid little attention to the decor. It was not worth it. As soon as her career blossomed she would be moving. That's what she always told herself.

The large old wardrobe she had bought at a furniture warehouse for £25 had a full-length mirror on its door opposite the bed. Melanie, glass in hand, posed in front of it, staring at her reflection. Her hair, permed some days ago, looked ragged and lifeless, its mousy colour dull in comparison to the iridescent

quality of Rosemary's bouncing tresses. Melanie's face too, her eyes painted with the merest scraping of make-up, seemed sallow in comparison to the brightness of Rosemary.

Putting her glass down Melanie pulled off the cream blouse she was wearing and unzipped the knee-length herring-bone tweed skirt. She thought of the way Rosemary had looked as her dress had been peeled away. There was no comparison. Instead of the tight-fitting silky lingerie that clung seductively to Rosemary's rich curves, Melanie's practical cotton bra, white once but faded grey with washing, had lost the battle to support her large shapeless breasts which hung lifelessly on her chest. Her tan-coloured tights covering cotton knickers corralled her equally amorphous mass of waist, hips and belly. She prodded the subcutaneous fat where her waist should have been and tried to flatten her stomach by breathing in. It made little difference. The roundness of her defied the feeble efforts of her untrained muscles to control it.

She tried to wriggle her body as Rosemary had done. Unclipping her bra she shook her shoulders to make her breasts slap together but they sagged like two wet fish. She gathered them in her hands and pulled them up to her mouth, aping what she had seen. But her nipples remained flaccid and unresponsive. Her mind was not excited by her display. It was unimpressed and refused to co-operate.

As she ran herself a bath, and despite the fact that chocolate and gin were not the ideal combination, Melanie found a packet of chocolate digestive biscuits in the kitchen and consumed the entire packet.

Rosemary Harris was beautiful. Having seen her naked Melanie found it difficult not to imagine how she looked under the

NAKED AMBITION

seemingly endless series of short, tight-fitting outfits she wore to work, always displaying her body to the best advantage.

Strangely, her attitude to Rosemary had changed in the week since she'd seen her seducing Grant in his office. She found herself looking at her admiringly, gazing across the few feet that separated their desks, watching her: the way her body moved, the way the muscles of her long legs flexed under the sheer hosiery she always wore, the way her breasts were crushed when she held something to her chest, the way her lips pouted as she tried to think. Everything she did seemed to have an undertone of sexual innuendo. Melanie's previous resentments and anger were replaced by an almost unhealthy fascination.

It was almost as though she were living vicariously through her. When Paul Stanley, the head of personnel, came to perch on her desk, his eyes were rivetted in her lap where the white skirt she wore veiled no more than two inches of thigh (no stockings today), chatting to her inconsequentially about anything as long as it provided an excuse to be with her, it was as though Melanie could feel what it was like to be the centre of attention, what it would be like to have a body like that, to be attractive, open, sexy. No one had ever looked at Melanie the way Paul Stanley looked at Rosemary, the way Grant Andrews had looked at her that night as she'd pulled her dress over her head. For the first time Melanie could imagine what it would be like.

Melanie was not a virgin. She had had several men. At university. At work. She'd gone out regularly with a clapper loader who wanted to be a cameraman. He was big and beefy and had fucked her enthusiastically but with little finesse and absolutely no concern as to what she would get out of the experience. Occasionally, she thought, she had experienced an

orgasm, or at least what she took to be an orgasm, though more through luck than judgement, but these occasions had been so rare that finally she had ended it. He had seemed unconcerned, his need for her no more than the urge to scratch a recurring itch.

Since then she had not been too bothered by men or sex. The experience of sexual fulfilment had hardly been worth the trouble. Of course no man had ever courted her, romanced her, wanted her past all caring. No man had ever made love to her in the way, and with the enthusiasm she suspected they made love to the beauty of Rosemary Harris.

In truth, for the last three years, sex had not been on Melanie's agenda. She had concentrated on her career at PTV. But the sudden voyeuristic experience had had a profound effect on her. For the last week she had felt her body stirring, like the first rumblings of a dormant volcano. It had, much to her astonishment, demanded her attention. She had masturbated twice, the image of Rosemary's sex sinking itself down on to Grant's cock burnt into her mind's eye, as she manipulated her clitoris. The intensity of the image did nothing to overcome her lack of technique, however. The results of her self-gratification were far from satisfactory. She could not seem to wring much pleasure out of her body. It responded, of course, but like an out-of-tune piano, it could only play a simple tune, and had no capacity for the resonances and harmonies that she needed to spin her on to another plane.

She had thought a great deal about Rosemary's body, what it must feel like to have a body like that, a body that could entice and ensnare men. That, she supposed, was the reason she found it so difficult to tear her eyes away from it.

Paul Stanley had finally run out of reasons to continue to sit

NAKED AMBITION

on the edge of Rosemary's desk and took his leave. Melanie thought, though it might be her rather fevered imagination, that there was a bulge in the front of his flies as he walked across to the lift.

'He seems very interested in you,' Melanie said.

'Oh, he's a sweetie,' Rosemary replied. 'He's been a real friend to me.'

After what Melanie had seen with Grant no doubt Rosemary would describe him as a real friend too.

'Really?'

'Oh yes. He's married, though.'

Melanie wasn't quite sure what that meant. Grant was married too.

'Does that make a difference?'

'Not really. But he couldn't afford to leave his wife.'

'I think I've missed something.'

'Oh you know surely . . .'

'Know what?'

'What it's like.'

'I wish I did.'

'What does he earn here? Forty grand? Nice house in the suburbs. But split that with his wife. What's he worth then?'

'No idea.'

'Not enough.' She grinned broadly.

'Enough for what?'

Rosemary's eyes sparkled. As though confiding a little secret, she leant forward, the grin still on her lips, her tongue poised between them. 'Enough for me to be comfortable.'

'I don't . . .'

'Darling, I'm not very bright but I know what I want . . .'

For a moment it was as though she was going to say more. But

she stopped herself. 'I've got to take the programme budgets to accounts . . .'

'Do you want me to do it?'

'No. It's OK. I'm leaving early tonight. I'll do it on my way out.'

When did Rosemary not leave early, Melanie thought, except on the nights she was entertained or entertaining in Grant's, and now she was sure, Paul Stanley's offices.

'See you tomorrow then . . .'

'I . . . ah . . .' Again it was as though Rosemary was about to say something and changed her mind.

'What?' Melanie prompted.

'Oh nothing. See you tomorrow, then.' She got to her feet pulling the short skirt down an inch or so over her thighs.

Melanie watched as Rosemary picked her way between the desks, and men's eyes swivelled on to her like radar locking on to a target. The conversation they had had was probably the longest she'd ever had with Rosemary and it puzzled her, more for what she hadn't said than for what she had. It also left her with a distinct feeling of unease.

The following morning Melanie's unease continued. Rosemary's desk was empty. It was common for her to be late in the mornings but by eleven-thirty, with her desk still unoccupied, Melanie had a sudden curious feeling of foreboding. She went over to the desk and noticed several of Rosemary's personal items – a family picture, a little pot she used for hairpins – had gone.

'Mel . . .' Grant stood at his office door. He saw her examining Rosemary's desk. 'Can you come in a minute?'

Melanie walked towards him. If Grant wanted her to do

NAKED AMBITION

something he usually came over to her. Invitations to his office were rare. This was not going to be good news.

As she walked through his door Grant produced an unctuous smile.

'Sit, sit . . .' he said, waving at the chair in front of his desk.

'What is it?' Melanie had never really liked Grant Andrews. She had the feeling he'd never really liked her either. Grant preferred women to look and behave like Rosemary, to be attractive and decorative and basically dumb. He was uncomfortable with women whose physical appearance was less prepossessing. Fortunately Melanie's work had never given him any cause for complaint.

Grant's smile creased his podgy face into a pattern of wrinkles. 'You know you're highly valued here, Mel. Highly valued. We all think you're quite exceptional.'

There was a tone in his voice that lead inevitably to 'but' so Melanie saved him the trouble. 'But?'

'But nothing. I just wanted you to know, that's all. How much we appreciate your commitment to the company, how hard you work to keep the ship on a steady course. No one underestimates the job you do for us . . .'

'But . . .' Melanie repeated, wishing she had the courage to tell him to cut the bullshit.

'It's just that on this occasion, on this one occasion we felt that the production assistant vacancy has to go to another candidate . . .'

'What!'

'Just on this occasion . . .'

'I deserve that promotion. I've worked for it.'

'You do, you do. And I promise you on the next occasion you will get it. But this time I'm afraid we've decided . . .'

Suddenly it was all clear to Melanie, like the sun coming out of the clouds on a grey day, everything instantly bathed in light. Paul Stanley was the head of personnel. It was his job to recommend who got promoted to what job. But only recommend. In the end it was Grant's decision. Rosemary Harris had secured Paul's recommendation by having an affair with him and one week ago – and probably a few times since – had made sure of Grant's endorsement by the same means. She'd covered all the bases.

'Rosemary Harris.'

'What?'

'That's who's got the job, isn't it? That's why her desk is empty today. You've given her the job, haven't you?'

'Well, we thought . . .'

'She can't stick a stamp on a letter unless someone tells her which side to lick.'

'I think you're under-estimating her capabilities.'

'Oh, I know exactly what her capabilities are.'

The smile disappeared from Grant's face. 'What exactly does that mean?'

'You know what it means.'

'Listen, Melanie. Let's not get unpleasant. I can assure you the next opportunity we have will be yours. Definitely. Guaranteed. Don't get all sour about this. Don't let it spoil your record.'

Melanie was just about to tell him that he could stuff his job, that if they had promoted Rosemary over her she didn't want anything to do with them, when she stopped herself. What was the point in throwing up everything she'd worked so hard for? On the other hand what was the point in working for an organisation run by men who could be so easily swayed, whose

NAKED AMBITION

judgement was affected not by endeavour and hard work but by tits and bums and long, long legs.

'Look,' Grant said, sensing her mood, 'why don't you take some holiday? You're entitled. You've been working flat out for months. Take some time off. Go and lie in the sun on a beach somewhere. It'll make you feel better. Then come back and I can assure you the next promotion will be yours.'

Melanie said nothing. She knew her mouth was pouting in a childlike sulk.

'We don't want to lose you, Melanie. We really don't.' For once Grant sounded sincere.

At that moment, sitting in Grant Andrews' office looking into his flabby face, Melanie Chambers made a decision. She decided that Grant was right, absolutely right. She would take a holiday, she would take all the leave due to her, and what is more she would guarantee that the next promotion would be hers. Definitely.

'Thank you,' she said, her voice betraying no emotion. 'I will take a holiday.'

'Great, great,' Grant said, looking relieved. He got up from behind his desk and extended his hand to shake hers. His hand was sweaty. 'That's the right decision, Mel.'

'Yes it is,' she said and returned to her desk.

She sat down, her mind racing. Being passed over in preference to Rosemary Harris was the last straw, the straw that broke the camel's back. Now it was time to fight back. In the words of the old cliché, she thought, if she couldn't beat them, then she was going to join them. She smiled to herself, a strange, eerie, crooked smile. Enough was enough. Anything Rosemary Harris can do, I can definitely do better, she thought. Anything.

Melanie reached over to the shelf by her desk and extracted the Yellow Pages. Her jaw set, her teeth grinding in determination, she began to make a list of telephone numbers.

'Tea, dear . . .' The tea-lady put Melanie's usual tea and biscuits on her desk as she trundled her trolley past. Knowing she had a sweet tooth she always gave her a more than generous ration of biscuits. The tea was sweet too, at least three heaped spoonfuls of sugar in the large cup.

Melanie stopped what she was doing and looked at the cup and saucer and the plate of biscuits. With considerable deliberation she picked up the biscuits and emptied them into her waste basket. Taking the tea she headed for the ladies' cloakroom on the far side of the room and emptied it down the sink. Half dissolved sugar clung to the bottom of the cup. Melanie rinsed it out, filled it with water and took it back to her desk. The Yellow Pages lay open at the long list of Private Medical Clinics . . .

Chapter Two

‘It’ll cost £1,750.’

Melanie swallowed hard.

‘That, naturally, includes everything. Anaesthetist, hospital stay, food . . .’

The little doctor peered over his desk at her radiating enthusiasm. Not only was he of diminutive stature, his face and hands seemed to be tiny too, his features scaled down to match his height. His fingers were almost obscenely small, like the fingers of a demented doll. But he seemed to be possessed of a genuine missionary zeal for his profession.

‘It’s a lot of money,’ Melanie said.

‘That is perfectly true.’ He spoke with a lilting Welsh accent. He got up from his chair and came round to sit on the edge of his desk in front of her. He wore a tweed suit with a waistcoat, despite the fact it was summer, and a fob for a pocket watch hung from the waistcoat pocket. His feet were as small as his hands, neatly packed into what seemed like children’s size shoes. ‘May I be frank with you, my dear?’

‘Of course.’

‘In my profession I see a great number of women. I see beautiful women who think they are ugly. I see ugly women who yearn to be beautiful. My skills are very limited. I cannot make an ugly woman beautiful. Oh, I can reconstruct their face, I can redraw their chin, remake their nose. But unless they have

the basic structure, unless there is a blueprint, if you like, my efforts will be in vain. Do you understand?’

‘I think so.’

‘So let me tell you, Ms Chambers. I see something in you. A structure, a blueprint. You I can make beautiful. I rarely say that to a patient, believe me. You I can do something for.’ If Dr Evans was pitching for a sale, he was the best salesman Melanie had ever heard. He was looking at her intently, his eyes moving over her face like a carpenter over a piece of wood, judging its planes and angles.

‘And real beauty comes from inside. That is why women whom all the world imagine simply gorgeous come to me too. They don’t feel beautiful, you see. They are not beautiful inside.’

‘And you think I am?’

‘I think you are. Let me do it for you, my dear. I promise you it is something you will never regret.’

Melanie made her decision. ‘Yes, OK.’

A spark lit in the doctor’s eyes, like a match flaring in the dark.

‘I promise you’ll never regret it,’ he repeated solemnly. ‘Now let’s see . . .’ He returned to his desk and opened a large red leather-bound diary. ‘Next Tuesday.’

‘How long will I be in?’

‘Oh, no more than six days. We’ll monitor until the bruising is all but gone. Then you’re away. The body is a remarkable healer. I can assure you, Ms Chambers, you will not be disappointed. The contours are there, you see. It’s just a question of following the blueprint, enhancing what nature has already put there.’

‘Fine.’ She didn’t know what else to say.

‘Here’s the address of the clinic.’ He scribbled a note on a

NAKED AMBITION

sheet of paper and handed it across the desk to her. 'Report Monday night. We operate Tuesday morning first thing.' His voice was full of glee at the prospect.

Melanie got up. He showed her to the door and then extended his tiny hand to be shaken.

'You are a beautiful woman, Ms Chambers,' he said with absolute sincerity.

'No one has ever said that to me before.'

'I will prove it to you.'

He squeezed her hand affectionately before he let it go.

Taking a taxi back to work Melanie felt a little light-headed. Dr Evans' words echoed in her ears. His response was not something she had expected. As soon as she got back to the PTV building she went to the loo where she stared long and hard into the mirror trying to see what the doctor had evidently seen, trying to imagine what she would look like. But she could only see the podgy jowls and cheeks and the ugly disproportionately large nose that dominated her face. She smiled and tapped a finger against her nostril. Your days are numbered, she thought.

In the ten days since she had decided that she was going to do something about herself life had been hell, a minefield of temptation. But not once had she strayed. Coffee and tea without sugar, especially the amount she was used to, tasted like milky washing-up water but she persisted. She had thrown every last ounce of the pounds of chocolate she had stashed in her kitchen, guilty emergency hordes of it, into a large black plastic sack together with packets of biscuits, rolls of fruit pastilles, and all the packets of sweetened milk drinks she would have last thing at night, and taken it to the local charity shop. For ten days she

had eaten raw vegetables, grilled chicken, fish and fruit. The tea lady's biscuits had been left uneaten, the enticements of the pastry shop on the way home, where she frequently stopped to buy a cake or two, ignored.

Melanie had done her research. She had bought several books on losing weight and they all agreed. Eating less was not enough. In order to burn away the large quantities of surplus calories she carried around on her body in layers of formless, spongy fat, she needed to exercise and exercise hard.

Other than walking upstairs in the PTV building when the lift was out of order, Melanie hadn't taken any exercise since leaving school. But with her new-found determination she had enrolled in an aerobics class at the local health club, which also had a swimming pool. For the last eight days she had subjected herself to an hour's aerobics followed by half-an-hour's swimming. After the third day she could hardly move, every muscle in her body as stiff as a board. She could hardly bend over or sit down. But it didn't stop her. With the greatest of difficulty she broke the pain barrier and continued. The fourth day had been just as painful but on the fifth she felt her muscles getting looser and by the sixth most of the stiffness had eased. Last night, in fact, for the first time, she had started to enjoy the class, feeling her blood pumping vigorously through her body, her heart beating, her muscles moving freely and with increasing co-ordination. It was a definite high. She had felt alive, certainly more alive than she had for the last few years. She seemed to have more energy too, her mind more alert, her body less tired.

But the results of her new regime were tangible too. On the bathroom scales she had bought – all the books insisted on regular weight checks – she had already lost seven pounds. Seven pounds in ten days! She needed to lose another twenty-

five. That was her goal. So far she could see little difference in her appearance though her skirt did feel a little looser around the waist.

On Monday she would begin her four-week holiday. The first two would be spent recuperating from Dr Evans' surgery. For the second two she had booked into a health and fitness spa where she intended to achieve the rest of her weight loss.

Good old Auntie Beatie. She would have approved, Melanie was sure. Her Auntie Beatie had died two years ago and left her a little legacy. £3,000. Melanie had kept it, not wanting to use it until something special came along. She'd always thought she'd buy herself a lovely piece of furniture or an exotic holiday. Well, this was even more important. Auntie Beatie had once been a beautiful woman, courted and desired. She would understand.

So that was her plan. It was a means to an end, of course. That was the lesson Rosemary Harris had taught her. It was no good just being the best at your job, not in a man's world. She had to offer other inducements, other reasons to be thought of as exceptional. And from what she had seen with her own eyes this was an area in which she also had to undertake extensive research before she entered herself in competition.

Melanie, if she were honest with herself, knew nothing about sex. She knew the basic biological functions, the various geometrical variations in combinations of the human body and very little else. She had had little experience, after all. Unlike Rosemary, who had clearly received a master's degree in technique, she had no idea how to turn a man on, how to provoke and beguile, how to make a man feel what Rosemary had clearly got Grant Andrews to feel.

But Melanie's university education had taught her that all knowledge can be acquired by research. Just as she had

addressed herself to the question of weight loss she now was determined to be equally thorough on the subject of sexual expertise. Fortunately she had a friend who she was sure could help her not only to find the right reading material but with more practical information.

‘Darling . . . come in, come in . . .’ Arabella Brown kissed Melanie enthusiastically on both cheeks looking genuinely pleased to see her. She was, Melanie thought, even more beautiful than the last time she had seen her. Arabella and Melanie had been at university together and had been good friends. It was the attraction of opposites, the flaming red hair and sparkling green eyes of Arabella in contrast to the stodgy homely Melanie. Arabella’s life had been a series of gorgeous men, one affair after another, or, to be accurate, one affair simultaneous to many, many others. Wall-to-wall men.

After taking their degrees – Arabella’s life-style reflected in her third-class rating – they had drifted apart, an occasional telephone call, a Christmas card, until Melanie had bumped into Arabella in Bond Street, her hands full of Yves St Laurent red and orange carrier-bags, her spectacular body sheathed in a Lowe green suede dress, its skirt slit to her thigh. Over coffee Arabella, who Melanie knew was not from a wealthy family, gave no clues as to her new-found affluence. She had given Melanie her new address and begged her to come around as soon as she could.

The meeting had, at the time, depressed Melanie. The vision of elegance and beauty Arabella represented, the incredibly expensive clothes, were, Melanie told herself, not a cause for envy. That was not what she wanted. She had a career, a worthwhile and valuable job and prospects: the acquisition of

designer clothes was not high on her list of priorities. But however much she had lectured herself she had found it impossible to get Arabella out of her mind. Strangely the musky perfume Arabella had been wearing seemed to cling to Melanie for days after their meeting.

So, in the event, Arabella had seemed the logical person to turn to for advice and guidance in an area where her knowledge and experience were probably second to none.

Arabella stood aside and ushered Melanie into the vast apartment. It was the whole top floor, a penthouse in a building in Cadogan Square. She was wearing a salmon pink silk lounging suit, loose culottes covering her long legs, a blouse tied in a knot just above her navel, its plunging neckline revealing glimpses of Arabella's large and unbrassiered breasts, her feet pushed into little pink high-heeled mules.

'It's really nice to see you again Mel . . . come through . . .'

She lead the way down the marble-tiled hall, its walls lined with silk and hung with limited edition lithographs (a Matisse, two Chagalls, a Hockney; all signed). The huge living room overlooked Sloane Street and the private gardens of the square.

'This is beautiful . . .' Melanie exclaimed.

'It is rather nice, isn't it? Champagne I think, don't you? A little celebration at meeting up again. How long is it? Three months?'

'Since Bond St? Yes.'

Arabella went to a black lacquered cabinet and opened its double doors. A light illuminated its interior, racked with glasses and bottles. Set inside the cabinet was a small fridge. Arabella extracted a bottle of champagne – Louis Roederer Cristal – and expertly de-corked it. She poured the sparkling liquid into two tall modern champagne flutes and handed one to Melanie.

'Cheers,' she said.

'Cheers, Bella.' They clinked glasses. Arabella sank down on to an enormous Chesterfield-style sofa in a subtle pattern of tiny flowers. The overall colour was a light green. The colour was picked up in the heavily ruched curtains and the thick Wilton carpet. Melanie roamed the room, examining the various *objets d'art*.

'This is all beautiful,' she said.

'All my own work.'

'Really?'

'So to what do I owe the pleasure of this visit, Mel?' Arabella asked.

Melanie turned to look at her. She came over and sat at the other end of the sofa.

'Does there have to be a reason?'

'Knowing you, yes.'

Melanie laughed. 'You're right.'

'So . . .'

'I need your help, Bella.'

'What sort of help?'

'Well, I've made a decision, a major decision . . .' Melanie talked for the next fifteen minutes almost without pause. She had always been able to talk to Bella. She told her everything, everything that had happened to her, about Rosemary, about being passed over for promotion, about how she felt about men and how they felt about her, and finally about what she had decided to do about it. She even told her about the diminutive Dr Evans.

'Well,' Bella said, smiling broadly, 'you've certainly taken the bull by the horns.'

'Do you think I can do it?'

'Of course. Of course you can. You can do anything you set your mind to, Mel. And I think you're right. Why let the bastards grind you down? So where do I come in?'

Melanie looked distinctly sheepish. 'I thought . . .'

'Come on, don't be shy.' Bella reached forward to pick up her champagne. Her big breasts strained against the silk of her top.

'Well, you had all those men at university. You've obviously had a lot of experience. I've had none, well almost none . . .'

'Sex, you mean?'

'Yes. You know I'm not a virgin but I might as well be for all I know.'

'So you want a crash course in sexual technique?'

'Something like that.'

Bella sipped the champagne. 'Well, this should be fun. Where do you want me to start?'

'I have no idea.'

Bella got up off the sofa and re-filled their glasses before sitting down close to her friend. 'Are you easily shocked, Mel? You didn't used to be, I remember.'

'I don't think I've changed . . .'

'Good. So how do you get your orgasms?'

'Like everyone else, I suppose.'

'How precisely? Listen, there's no point beating about the bush. If we're going to talk about this we have to talk turkey.'

'That's what I want.'

'So.' Bella looked at her intensely. 'Do you wank?'

'Yes.' Melanie felt herself blushing. 'But not very successfully.'

'With a dildo?'

'A what?'

'A dildo, vibrator. A phallus, a rod of something in your vagina . . .'

'Oh yes, I mean no. I tried the end of a hairbrush once. I just don't think I'm very good at it. To tell you the truth I'm not sure I've ever had a proper orgasm with or without a man. I mean I've had nice feelings but the earth's never moved.'

'Right. Well I tell you one thing, Mel. The first place you've got to start is finding out about your own body. You cannot begin to enjoy sex until you know what you're capable of. Its like having a really fast car, you never know what pleasure it can be unless you get into top gear.'

'I don't think I've ever got out of first. Second once, maybe.'

'Exactly. And unless you know how to enjoy yourself you can't expect anyone else to enjoy it either.'

'Sounds sensible.'

'So, that's a good place to start. Come on . . .'

Arabella got up. She picked up the bottle of champagne and her glass.

'Where are we going?'

'The bedroom. To start your education. Bring your glass.'

'Bella, I didn't . . .'

Melanie felt like a patient who needed an urgent operation and had been told the operating theatre was free immediately. As great as the need was she was suddenly filled with fear and trepidation.

Bella saw her hesitation. 'Free choice,' she said, standing in the doorway. 'But if you want to know I have to show you. Remember Henry James?' They had both read English at university.

'Showing is better than telling . . .'

They said it in unison, then laughed. The laughter broke the ice of Melanie's resistance. She had come here for Bella's advice. It seemed churlish to refuse it now, when it was being offered so freely.

NAKED AMBITION

The night was beginning to draw in and across the square lights were twinkling, beacons against the gloom, in the flats around the square and in the large hotel to their right. Melanie got to her feet, glass in hand. She followed Bella down the corridor.

The bedroom was as large as the living room and also overlooked the square. Arabella drew the heavy cream curtains. The whole room was a symphony of off-whites and creams, and beige oatmeals. The carpet was a thick shag-pile and the huge double bed was covered in a cream counterpane. Apart from the bedside tables and their lamps there was no other furniture in the room. Behind the bed, as wide as the bed itself, was a mirror stretching from floor to ceiling. An array of cushions was propped against the mirror at the head of the bed. Arabella turned on the bedside lamps and dimmed them to a pleasant glow.

Finish your champagne,' she said, putting her glass and the bottle on one of the bedside tables. 'Then take your clothes off and come over here.' She stripped the counterpane off the bed and opened the white sheets.

Melanie drank the champagne. She needed it. She didn't know what she had been expecting but it certainly wasn't this. Her heart was beating so strongly she could hear the blood pumping in her ears. Very slowly she unbuttoned the navy blue blouse she was wearing

Arabella unknotted the silk of her blouse and pulled it from her shoulders to reveal her large round breasts. They sat high on her chest and despite their weight sagged not at all. She slipped her fingers into the elasticated waistband of the culottes and pulled them over her hips. They fell to the floor. Underneath she wore a pair of tiny high-cut knickers in the palest of pinks.

The material clung to the bony curve of her pubis so tightly that Melanie could see the outline of her sex.

In contrast Melanie revealed her dowdy white cotton bra, faded by too many washes. As she stepped out of her skirt, her cotton knickers, once a pale blue but now an uneven grey, were wrinkled and crushed under her tan-coloured tights.

‘Well, you’re going to need some new underwear, Mel,’ Bella said, sitting on the bed.

‘That I knew. And clothes.’ Melanie kicked off her shoes and peeled down her tights. The severe trepidation she had felt as she entered the bedroom was being replaced by another emotion which at first she found hard to identify. It had started when Bella had stripped off her clothes, and now, as she looked at her beautifully svelte body – in such contrast to the image of herself that she saw in the large mirror behind the bed – she realised that what she was feeling was excitement. At the moment she did not care to analyse precisely what was the fundamental cause of this feeling.

Taking a literal, as well as a metaphorical, deep breath Melanie unclipped her bra and pulled it off. She quickly discarded her knickers.

‘Voila!’ she said, trying to sound confident.

Arabella said nothing. She patted the bed beside her, indicating that Melanie should sit there. She could see Melanie’s body language, the combination of excitement and fear. As Melanie sat down she kissed her lightly on the shoulder.

‘You’re really determined, aren’t you?’

‘Yes,’ Melanie replied seriously.

‘Good. Lesson one. Lie back here . . .’

‘What are you going to do?’

‘I’m going to give you an orgasm. A real one.’

NAKED AMBITION

'How?'

'With a vibrator . . .'

'Oh, Bella.' It was all Melanie could manage to say. She felt a shock wave overtake her. But it was also a wave of pleasure. She felt herself melting inside. 'Bella, should we be doing . . .'

'What do the Americans say? You've got to get in touch with yourself. Literally, in this case.'

'Do you really want to do this?'

'It's not the first time, Mel.' Bella looked into her friend's eyes, letting that information sink in.

'Isn't it?' Why had Bella's statement made Melanie's heart leap? Why did her sex suddenly feel completely alert and alive? This was no longer an academic exercise. Her mind filled with questions but her body wanted them ignored.

'Lie back here,' Bella said softly. 'Just think of England.'

Melanie moved into the centre of the bed and lay on her back. She still had her legs firmly closed. She had passed the point where she could think. She could only feel. She could feel her heart racing, her breathing shallow. She knew she was wet. Her nipples were as hard as pebbles.

Arabella opened the drawer of the bedside table. There were two vibrators inside. She took out the smaller of the two.

'Close your eyes. Just relax, Mel,' she said soothingly.

'I'm trying.' Melanie closed her eyes willingly. In the blackness she could hear her heart pounding away. She felt Arabella kneeling on the bed next to her, her knee just touching her hip. The first touch of Arabella's hand on her navel made her start.

'Relax. I'm not going to hurt you.'

Arabella ran her hand in circles over the roundness of Melanie's belly. For a half a second Melanie thought to flee,

to get up and run out. But she was committed. Now it wasn't only her curiosity that was aroused. Her body was alive. Something in the back of her mind wanted to ask Bella how many times she had done this, had women stretched out on her bed, waiting for her touch. But she said nothing. Whatever Bella was going to do to her, her body wanted it and wanted it badly.

She felt Bella's fingers ease into her thick pubic hair, teasing it out, combing it into shape. Then a finger slipped into the runnel of Melanie's sex: for the first time she was being touched by a woman. Was this right? Should they be doing this? Her body answered for her. She could feel her wetness on Bella's finger as it searched out her clitoris.

'Oh . . .' Melanie breathed as the finger encountered the little button of nerves.

'Is that sensitive?' Bella asked, like a doctor asking a patient where it hurt. She moved the tip of her finger up and down on Melanie's clit.

'Very,' Melanie gasped, hardly able to believe just how tender it was. What had happened to make it feel like this?

'Like this . . .' Bella circled the tiny swollen bud. Involuntarily Melanie moaned, her legs opening slightly. 'And this . . .' Bella's finger changed the movement, now pressing the clitoris from side to side.

'Oh yes.' It was impossible to say which was better.

Bella held the dildo in her other hand. She pushed it between Melanie's thighs.

'Bella we shouldn't be doing this . . .'

Bella laughed softly. 'Why on earth not?'

'It's not right, is it? I mean it's . . .'

As she struggled to find the right words a wave of delicious sensation from the

ministrations of Bella's finger made her whole body tremble, wiping away moral qualms.

'Don't worry about it, Mel . . .' Bella whispered.

'But . . .'

'Sh. Just enjoy.'

'Oh yes . . .'

'See.' Bella pushed the head of the dildo up further. Without being asked Melanie opened her thighs wider. Her body was doing her thinking now. Bella's artful fingers were playing her like an instrument, creating chords and harmonies in her body that ran through every nerve. She had never felt like this with a man. No man had ever stroked her like this, pleased her like this. My God, she thought suddenly, perhaps all these years I've been a lesbian and never realised it.

'See how sensitive you are? I can feel it,' Bella said.

'I am with you,' Melanie replied seriously.

The vibrator was prying between Melanie's thick labia. Bella manipulated it down to the opening of Melanie's sex. Slowly she thrust it home.

It took Melanie's breath away. She had never felt anything like this. The vibrator was big and hard. She could feel every inch of its steady progress up the wet walls of her cunt. She was so open, so ready to receive. Bella's finger had not stopped the rhythm it had established on her clitoris. It was remorseless, relentless and perfect. The perfect pace, on the perfect place at the perfect pressure, nudging against what now seemed to be the whole centre of her being.

The vibrator was all the way home now, deep, deep inside her, filling her.

'Bella . . .' It was all Melanie could say. For the first time since Bella had started to touch her she opened her eyes. Her

friend was kneeling by her side, her big breasts quivering slightly with the movement of her hands, her eyes locked on Melanie's sex, her face set in an expression of concentration, listening for the echoes of feelings in Melanie's body.

'Sh . . .' Bella mouthed.

'Oh Bella . . .'

Melanie didn't know where she was. She was lost in a sea of emotion, in an ocean of exquisite pleasure. Bella had started to move the vibrator up and down in her body, using it like a cock, fucking her with it. Melanie had to close her eyes. The pleasure demanded it.

'Now you can feel it,' Bella's voice was soft. Without losing her rhythm she bent her head forward and flicked at Melanie's nipple with her tongue.

'Oh . . .' Melanie's response was instant.

Subtly Bella increased the pace. She worked the clitoris faster, pressing harder, she drove the vibrator in and out more quickly.

Melanie crossed an invisible line drawn in her emotions. On one side she was in control, enjoying the sensations but able to reach out her hand, should she want to, and take Bella's wrist to stop her manipulations, her mind still working, worrying away at the idea that what was exciting her so much was not the wonderful expert touch of her friend's fingers but the fact that she was a woman. But over the line, on the other side, there was no control and no thought. Only feeling. She felt herself falling. Falling like plunging down the face of a cliff, plunging into a black abyss where there was only exquisite sensation. Her body heaved, her muscles locked, her nerves sending a co-ordinated scream of pleasure to every sense, overloading them with the sheer weight of feeling. She felt her eyes roll back in

NAKED AMBITION

their sockets and her whole body stretched out rigid as a board.

It was a long time before the orgasm freed her, before her muscles relaxed, before her body sunk back into the softness of the bed, before a wonderful warmth flooded through her and she knew, with total certainty, that, up until that moment, she had never experienced a real orgasm before.

Bella let her be. She didn't pull the vibrator out but let Melanie's body expel it of its own accord. Its final escape produced an aftershock in Melanie's nerves, a miniature of what had gone before. It woke Melanie from the world of utter bliss she was wallowing in. She opened her eyes to see Bella looking down into her face.

'Oh Bella. What did you do to me?'

Bella smiled. 'I felt it too.'

'Did you?'

'Your first lesson.' She spoke quietly, not wanting to break the mood.

Melanie looked deep into her friend's eyes, trying to see what was lurking there. 'I've never felt that with a man.'

Bella laughed. 'Then I know what you're thinking.'

'What?'

'That it makes you a lesbian.' She was grinning broadly.

Melanie could not grin back. 'Does it?'

'Of course not.'

'Are you?'

'Oh Mel, I know it's difficult . . .'

'But you said you've been with other women . . .'

'Let me try to explain. To me sex is sex. I love it. I always have. I've had wonderful experiences with men and with women. They're different, that's all. I'm no more lesbian than you are. I just wanted to show you what your body's capable

of, what it can do given half a chance. You'd have felt the same if it had been a man. It's just a question of taking the trouble, of caring. You've just not had the right man yet.'

Melanie looked down at her body. She was surprised to find it looked as shapeless and lumpy as before. It felt completely different. She looked at the rich curves of her friend, the way her plump round breasts jutted from her chest proudly, the way her waist cinched itself into a tight circle, the way the muscles of her thighs formed strong contours as she knelt, and, like the jolt of an electric shock, she experienced a sudden surge of sensation. It was desire; hot, heart-wrenching desire.

Without thinking, without letting anything come between her and her sexual emotion (perhaps that's what the first lesson had taught her) Melanie sat up, reached behind Bella's flaming red-hair and pulled her forward until their mouths met. She was not at all tentative. She kissed Bella hard, her tongue ploughing into her mouth. At the same time, with equal lack of deliberation Melanie's hand gripped Bella's big breast, squeezing it tightly before she pinched the nipple. The kiss was long, deep, passionate, washing away inhibition, hesitation, concern. She had never felt a woman's lips before. They were soft, moist, giving.

'Oh Mel . . .' Bella said, their mouths still joined. Melanie took her lower lip and sucked it in between hers.

'Let me . . .' she said, releasing the lip. There was no need to ask what. 'Let me. I want to so badly.'

For a moment they looked into each other's eyes, their faces inches apart. Bella brought her hand up to Melanie's cheek. She could see only passion in her friend's eyes. That was all she cared about. She didn't want her to have regrets later.

Bella slipped down on to her back. Immediately Melanie

NAKED AMBITION

raised herself to her knees using both her hands to caress and knead her friend's breasts. Somewhere in the back of her mind questions flashed in illuminated lights across her consciousness: what was she doing, what did all this mean, had she gone mad? But she ignored them. They meant nothing in comparison to what she was feeling, how alive she was. All that mattered was the extraordinary feelings that were coursing through her body, feelings she had to satisfy.

Her hands left Bella's breasts. She snaked them down her waist, following the deep inward curve until they found the top of her tight silky panties. She pulled them down. Bella raised her buttocks off the bed so she could shimmy them over her hips, unveiling the triangle of her pubis. Her pubic hair was the same colour as the hair on her head – flame red. The hair was curly but neatly trimmed into a perfect geometric shape.

Melanie pulled the panties over Bella's ankles, moving herself further down the bed. Then she lent forward and kissed the top of Bella's foot, then her ankles, both ankles one after another, then both calves, and both knees. She worked her mouth higher. Bella's legs were open. Melanie could see her labia. Whereas the hair on her belly was quite thick Bella's sex had almost no hair veiling it. Melanie could see every detail, the thick oval outer lips, the pink inner ring, the creases of flesh hiding her clitoris. Again she felt a jolt of sexual desire. She had never seen a woman like this, open like this. Her mouth had worked up to Bella's thigh, licking and sucking and nipping. Bella's skin was smooth, incredibly smooth, like marble, except animated and warm.

'You don't have to . . .' Bella murmured quietly, though the last thing she hoped Melanie would do was stop.

It was Melanie's turn to say, 'Sh . . .' Her mouth was inches

from Bella's sex. She could smell it, the musky aroma of sex. She could see it. It was wet, glistening in the subdued light. Melanie wanted it more than anything she had ever wanted. She felt her heart beating as fast as it had when she was the one lying on her back. Bella's labia seemed to be smiling at her, a vertical smile.

Melanie moved up so that her lips brushed Bella's labia. She pushed her tongue into the hot wet crease and pushed it on to the apex of flesh where the clitoris lay. She had no idea what to do, but she followed her instincts and tried to remember what Bella had just done to her. Her tongue circled the little pink bud and she heard Bella moan. With the very tip of her tongue she scaled the tiny peak, then descended again, working up and down. Bella moaned again. She worked two fingers, then three into Bella's sex and felt, for the first time, the extraordinary sensation of silky wet cunt folding around her. The sensation produced a thrill of pleasure in her body.

She established a pattern, just as Bella had on her, her fingers mimicking the action of a cock, reaming into Bella's cunt, while her tongue played delicately with Bella's clit.

'Oh yes, yes . . .' Bella cried.

Melanie marvelled at how accurately she could feel her friend's emotions. She knew she was beginning to come. She could feel her whole body responding to the inexpert but effective treatment she was giving it. She could feel it quivering, tensing, readying itself.

'Don't stop . . .' Bella begged, running her fingers into Melanie's hair.

Melanie didn't. Her tongue circled, her fingers probed. She concentrated on the rhythm but it was hard. Her own excitement was as great as Bella's. This was all so new, so difficult to cope

NAKED AMBITION

with. She had never even dreamt of doing this, not in all her most explicit dreams, and never imagined it either. She would never have believed it would be like this, feel like this. The feelings boiling up in Bella's body were so transparent, so easily read Melanie felt as though they were her own.

'You're making me come . . .' Bella whispered unnecessarily.

Almost before the words were out Bella's body arched up off the bed, her muscles rigid. Melanie pushed her fingers deep, as deep as they would go, knowing instinctively that's what was required. Her tongue took two or three circuits of Bella's clitoris then, hot and wet, planted itself firmly on its very centre, pressing hard, pushing it down against the pubic bone. Bella's body shuddered. She uttered a cry that seemed to come from the bottom of her lungs and held Melanie's head fiercely against her sex as her orgasm crashed through her body, like a clap of thunder. Like thunder too, it echoed and reverberated for a long time before it was gone.

'Oh God . . .' Bella said, finally easing her body back on to the bed, releasing her grip on Melanie's hair. 'Where did you learn that?'

'You taught me,' Melanie replied.

'You're a natural then. I can't believe it.'

'I wanted it so much, that's why.'

Melanie lent over and kissed Bella lightly on the mouth, her lips wet with Bella's juices. Bella could not resist the temptation to tongue some of it into her mouth.

'Tastes good.'

'Thank you,' Melanie said earnestly.

Bella laughed. 'Entirely my pleasure.'

'God, it's a good job we didn't do this at university. I'd never have got any work done.'

* * *

Bella sat up and passed them both a glass of champagne. Without a word they clinked glasses, a silent toast to what had gone before.

'I knew you were the right person to ask.'

'That was only the first lesson.'

'Oh good. What next?' Melanie looked enthusiastic.

'Haven't you ever wondered how I went from being an impoverished student with six T-shirts to my name to all this?'

'I didn't like to ask.'

'Well that's the second lesson. But not now. You've had enough excitement for one day.'

'Spoil sport.'

'Come round next week.'

'Can't.'

'Why not?'

'Dr Evans is operating.'

'Oh. Right. That's next week . . .'

'Then I'm off to the fat farm . . .'

'You're really going to do it, aren't you?'

'Now I'm even more certain. New look, new body, new attitude.'

'And don't forget. New knickers.'

'Definitely.'

'So give me a ring when you get back.'

'The first day back, don't worry . . .'

Melanie looked at the naked body of her friend and then at her own body in the mirror. The contrast was extreme. A shapeless lump in comparison to an almost perfect representation of the female form. Well, that was going to change. It might be her imagination but she could already see the slightest curve of

NAKED AMBITION

a nascent waist, the tiniest flattening of the belly, the smallest suggestion of a shape to her thigh.

They finished the champagne and lay down besides each other on the bed chatting occasionally, but often silent, enjoying the feeling of total relaxation they had created in each other. Bella's hand rested on Melanie's thigh.

'God, I almost forgot,' Bella said suddenly, sitting up.

'What?'

'I can't keep him waiting any longer.'

'Who?'

'Work.'

'Work?'

'You'll find out next time.'

'Very mysterious.'

Bella climbed off the bed. Along one side of the bedroom wall there were two doors. Melanie opened one to reveal a bathroom.

'If you want to shower . . .'

'Thanks.'

'Just help yourself . . . I'll be back soon.' She walked out of the bedroom, closing the door behind her.

The bathroom was as luxurious as the rest of the apartment, white marble walls and floor with a big shower stall and a powerful multi-jet shower. Melanie let the water play over her body. By the time she had finished, dried herself and climbed back into her dowdy clothes Bella had still not reappeared. Out of curiosity Melanie opened the second door in the room. It was a dressing room lined with racks of clothes. But something caught Melanie's eye. Along with the various gowns and dresses, skirts and blouses, hanging from rails along one wall were a whole section of much more bizarre clothing, clothes

made from black leather, and even more extraordinary, what looked like very thin rubber. Melanie examined the clothes, fingering the material. She noticed too, in a porcelain umbrella stand to one side of the door, a selection of different types of riding crops. The wall opposite the rails was fitted with drawers. Melanie was just about to open them to find out what they might contain when she heard a noise in the bedroom. She walked out to find Bella standing by the bed.

'I was looking for you . . .'

'Sorry. Just had to do my duty.' Bella was wearing a black satin robe wrapped firmly around her body. Below the knee Melanie could see she was wearing sheer black fully fashioned stockings with a seam, and very high black patent leather high heels. What she had on under the robe Melanie could not imagine but she guessed, from the way Bella's cleavage was pushed up and from a general outline under the satin, that she had put on some sort of basque. Melanie was intrigued.

'Duty?'

'I told you, wait till next time.'

She showed Melanie along the corridor to the front door.

'Do you go riding?' Melanie asked, remembering the riding crops.

'Only in a manner of speaking.' Bella said, grinning from ear to ear. 'Here . . .'

 She picked up a plastic bag full of books.

'What's this?'

'Read them. You've passed the practical, now you've got to catch up on the theory.'

'What theory?'

'Just read them. Read and inwardly digest.'

'Sounds intriguing.'

'Ring me as soon as you're back.'

NAKED AMBITION

'Can't wait.'

'Actually, Mel, I have to tell you after what just happened, neither can I.'

They kissed on both cheeks but not on the lips and Melanie walked over to the lift as Bella waved goodbye and closed her front door. The mysteries of Arabella Brown had only been partly revealed.

Chapter Three

'Count down from ten . . .' The young anaesthetist was looking down at Melanie as she lay on the gurney in the operating theatre's anteroom. He was quite attractive, she thought, thick black curly hair.

'Ten, nine, eight, seven, six . . .' she counted, her voice echoing slightly in the white-tiled room. She thought she counted on right down to one but that was only a dream.

In what seemed to her to be no more than five or six minutes later, but was in fact some hours, she woke up again back in her small private room at the Montgomery Clinic in St John's Wood. Much to her surprise, since it had been only twelve o'clock when she'd gone down to the operating theatre, it was dark outside. Though she could only see it at the periphery of her vision she could feel that her face was swathed in white bandages.

A nurse was standing by the bed. 'Everything's fine,' she said immediately she saw Melanie was awake. 'Dr Evans is delighted.'

'Good,' Melanie tried to say, but the bandages made it sound like 'gd'.

'Don't try to talk. I'll get the doctor.'

A few minutes later Dr Evans burst through the door, his tiny face beaming with pleasure.

'Well, well, you have got a treat in store, my dear,' he said, hopping from one foot to another in his excitement. 'It was a

complete success. I did a little bit more than your nose, actually, tidied up here and there. I promise you you'll be delighted. No extra charge. Well, a thing of beauty, that's what I thought, a thing of beauty is a joy forever. Why spoil the ship for a ha'po'rth of tar? That's what I thought. Now nurse is going to give you something for the pain. Bandages off day after tomorrow. You won't be allowed a mirror until the worst of the bruising is gone. That's one of my little rules. But then I promise you you'll believe in miracles . . .'

He patted her hand like an indulgent father and left as the nurse gave her two pills to swallow and checked her pulse and blood pressure.

There was some pain but it was not intolerable. The pills coped with it effectively and she was given more whenever they started to wear off. The bandages made it difficult to chew so her diet consisted mostly of purées and soups. That suited her, however. Unable to take any exercise she wanted to make sure her calorie intake was reduced.

On the third day after the operation Dr Evans bounced into the room with a nurse wheeling a tray of instruments.

'Well, how are we feeling?' he asked jauntily.

'Fine,' It came out as 'fn'.

'Good, good. Now it's time to take the bandages off. Don't worry, you wouldn't feel a thing . . .'

The doctor picked up a pair of scissors, their blades set at a curious angle to the handles, and inserted them delicately into the bandages under her chin. Slowly he sliced away at the complex structure that held Melanie's face, the nurse pulling strands of bandage away as they were freed. Finally the job was done.

'Can I see?' Melanie said the words more easily now her jaw was free.

‘Oh no . . .’

‘Please doctor, I really want to see. I know it’ll look horrendous, but it’s important.’

Dr Evans nodded to the nurse who left the room and came back moments later with a mirror, the sort barbers use to allow the customer to see the back of the head.

‘Just one quick look, then we take it away.’

‘Thank you,’

‘Brace yourself,’ he said, then handed her the mirror.

Melanie held the glass up to her face. The image that greeted her was horrific. Bruises of every colour decorated her face. There was red and yellow and purple and puce, and seven shades of blue. There was a great deal of puffy swelling too. But Melanie’s reaction was not one of horror. She felt a surge of excitement. Whatever had happened, however disfigured her face was now, her old face, her big lumpy nose, her wide disproportionate cheekbones, had gone forever. And good riddance.

‘OK, that’s enough.’ Evans took the mirror away. ‘Now no more mirrors, and no cheating. The bruising goes away very quickly but a watched kettle never boils, that’s what I say. So we take our little mirror away and bring it back in three days. By that time you’ll be ready to leave.’

‘Thank you, doctor,’ Melanie said.

‘Thank me in three days. Then you’ll see. If it’s not a work of art you can have your money back. No, I mean it. I’ve never been so confident. Natural contours, you see. All there under the surface. Just need excavating a bit. Bloody marvellous really, bloody marvellous . . .’

With that he skipped out of the room leaving the nurse to wheel the instrument trolley and the mirror away too.

There was little to do but wait. There was no more need for analgesics, the pain had subsided to a dull ache and soon went altogether. Melanie, having asked the nurse's permission, started a series of exercises on her legs, arms and stomach, and spent the rest of the time reading and trying not to think about food. Gradually her face, which had been stiff and numb to begin with, began to regain its feeling. She tried to resist the temptation to touch and feel it all the time but it was difficult. Several times she crossed her eyes in an attempt to see her new nose. She even tried polishing a metal spoon to form a mirror but with little success.

By the middle of the sixth day Melanie felt terrific. According to the bathroom scales her weight had fallen eight pounds – a whole half stone – during her stay at the clinic and now she knew it was not her imagination when she looked down at her body. It was definitely thinner and more shapely. Certainly her muscles were harder and more defined. She longed for a full-length mirror, not even her private bathroom had one.

At twelve o'clock Dr Evans skipped into the room. As soon as he saw her he stopped dead in his tracks.

'Well now . . .' he said, staring at her face the way an artist examines a recently painted canvas. He turned his head this way and that to get different angles. Then his tiny face broke into a happy grin. 'Forgive me, my dear. How rude . . .'

He handed her the barber's mirror he held in his hand. She took it, holding it face downwards for a moment almost not wanting to look. Her hands were trembling. It was scary. But the expression on Dr Evans' face gave her confidence. She turned the mirror round and held it up. For a second she was mystified. A complete stranger stared back at her in the reflection, a beautiful stranger with some residual bruising

around the face but a stranger nevertheless, until she raised her hand to touch her cheek and saw the mirror image do the same and it hit her like a physical shock that the face in the mirror was her: *her* thin, immaculately straight nose, *her* high cheek bones and firm strong jaw-line with no hint of jowls, *her* big blue eyes staring back at her like diamonds suddenly brought to life by a new setting. Her. Melanie Chambers.

‘Oh doctor,’ she said. She started to cry. She watched in the mirror as tears spilled down her cheeks, her new beautiful high-boned cheeks, for the first time. ‘You’re a genius.’

‘I told you you wouldn’t be disappointed.’

‘Dr Evans, I love you,’ she said. And at that precise moment it was true.

It was fortunate that the Barclay Health and Fitness Spa provided tracksuits for its guests. By the time Melanie arrived none of her clothes fitted. She had already lost over a stone in weight. But not only did her clothes hang off her like they belonged to someone else – the person she’d left in the Montgomery Clinic – but their style and colour and general appearance no longer matched her slim elegant face. She should know. She couldn’t stop looking at it. Several times she had walked past a shop window or one of the mirrors in her house and had the uncanny experience of not recognising herself. Then she had had to stop and stare, realising it was her, that the subtle beauty Dr Evans had bestowed on her, was *hers*. This is what she looked like now. It was going to take a lot of getting used to.

In the three days since she had left the clinic the bruising had all but disappeared. Dr Evans’ tiny hands had performed miracles on her face. There were no discernible scars, nothing to suggest she had not always looked like this.

The Barclay Health and Fitness Spa was a large country house set in its own grounds twenty miles north of London. The gardens had been landscaped when the house was originally built by Capability Brown and provided acres of rolling lawns, mature cedars, oaks and conifers, as well as great banks of shrubs and more formal extensively planted flower beds. The house had been expensively refitted to turn bedrooms into luxurious suites all with their own bathrooms and to accommodate, tastefully, a large indoor swimming pool and gym. There was every facility for sport. Tennis and badminton courts had been skilfully hidden behind banks of foliage and there was an archery range as well as a nine-hole golf course. In the gym there was all the latest equipment for toning up the body; Stairmasters, rowing machines, and exercise bikes as well as a full Nautilus for pumping iron. Equally important, a large staff were on hand to instruct as well as monitor pulse, blood pressure and heart rates at regular intervals.

The level of luxury was well above Melanie's normal means but she felt no regret. So far her aunt's money had brought her a new face. Now it was her body's turn.

Melanie had been shown to her room overlooking the extensive gardens at the back of the house. As soon as she'd changed into her tracksuit – a spotless white – she had been given a tour of all the facilities. A list of different classes, jazz dance, aerobics, step aerobics, was given to her. None were compulsory but a fitness assessment was, before she was allowed to do anything and Melanie found herself in a cubicle alongside the gym where all her physical parameters were measured and noted down. It was, the young fitness instructor told her, not only a precaution against over-exertion but a guide to how much progress she made during her exercise regimen.

NAKED AMBITION

Assessments would be repeated every other day.

It was time then to be introduced to her personal trainer for the whole of her stay. Each guest was allotted a trainer who would design a fitness programme to meet their individual requirements, monitor their efforts, and give them constant instruction and encouragement and generally see that their time at the spa was well spent.

Steve Banks caught up with Melanie as she was being shown the pool and the jacuzzis. He wore a navy blue tracksuit top over matching shorts; a clipboard was tucked under his arm.

'You're Melanie Chambers, right?' he asked.

'That's right.'

'Steve. Your trainer. I'll take her round, Paula,' he said to the girl who had so far escorted Melanie on the tour.

'Have a nice stay,' Paula said before leaving them alone.

'Pleased to meet you.'

'Let's sit down and talk. I need to ask you some questions.'

He indicated a table by the poolside and they sat. 'Would you like some tea or something?'

'Tea would be great.'

'Back in a minute,' he said, leaving his clipboard on the table.

He got up and walked over to a small bar at the other end of the large conservatory-type structure that enclosed the pool. Melanie watched him go. His bare legs were muscled and powerful and covered in thick curly hair. She felt her heart skip a beat.

He returned with a tray of tea for two. She watched him as he walked towards her. His hair was blond and very straight. The features of his face were large, a firm strong chin, big very oval blue eyes and a long, finely chiselled nose. He was, Melanie decided, an extremely attractive man.

Setting the tray down he picked up the clipboard and started reading off questions.

'Now,' he asked as she poured the tea for both of them, 'what would you say is the main purpose of your stay here?'

'What do you mean?' She dropped a slice of lemon into her tea, eschewing the milk. Milk in tea was another sixty calories.

'Well, do you want to tone up, lose a few pounds, have a good time, relax and escape the grind . . . ? There's lots of different reasons for people coming here.'

'I want to lose another stone in weight. I want to get fit. As fit as I possibly can.'

'Really?' He looked pleased.

'Yes really. I've started aerobics already. I hadn't done anything since school. Now I want to really work, shape my body.'

'Great. So many people come here just to potter about. We don't get many with your attitude.'

'I want to leave here with a new body.'

'No problem.'

'So when do we start?'

'I'll go and work out a programme for you. I have to look at your fitness assessment first. Meet me back here about two, if that's all right.'

'Fine.'

'And don't eat much for lunch.'

At exactly two Steve took her into the gym. He gave her a series of warm-up exercises then showed her how each of the machines worked and what each did for the body. A chart showed her how long she should work on each. After the gym she was to swim for half an hour, then have a sauna and jacuzzi and a rest.

NAKED AMBITION

Nothing else was planned for the first day.

On the second day there were two sessions in the gym and pool morning and afternoon followed by tennis in the early evening. The third day Steve increased the time she spent on all the machines, doubled her time in the pool, and added a step aerobics class to her programme.

At night, alone in her room, Melanie took a long bath, examined her body for improvements, then fell asleep lying reading on her bed. It was not a sleep of exhaustion but one of total relaxation. She had never felt so unstressed in her life. Her body felt different, it felt alive, like some strange machine left unused and un-oiled for years, now brought back to life. She seemed to be filled with a sense of well-being. Her body seemed responsive, sensitive, as though the exercise was invigorating her nerves too.

She relished the fact that she could do things she had never been able to do before. She could touch her toes with ease, she could lift her weight off the floor in press ups and do straight-arm lifts. But what she relished most was the noticeable change in her physique. Her belly was getting flat. Her breasts, before always sagging hopelessly on her chest, were rising daily as her pectorals developed. Her formless, lumpy thighs were developing long, sinewy muscles, carving hollows and contours where none had been before.

The slim elegance of her face was rapidly being matched by a finely honed and equally slim body.

Lying in bed at night, listening to the calls of the peacocks that roamed the grounds, Melanie had thought of her experience with Arabella. It worried her, of course. It worried her because, though she was prepared to believe what Bella had said, that just because she had enjoyed what was basically her first orgasm

with a woman it did not mean she would never have one with a man, there was a difference between believing it and *knowing* it. What she had felt with Bella, the exquisite sensations that still sent a shudder through her body when she thought about them, the crunching orgasm that had gripped her every nerve, she had never even come near to with a man. Before Bella she had thought that was just her, how she was made, that she probably wasn't a very sexy person, that her body had a low sex drive or that she just didn't like sex very much. Now she had a sneaking feeling, despite what Bella had said, that it was not what Bella had done to her that had made her explode so unexpectedly but the fact that it had been a woman – a beautiful naked woman at that – who had done it. That had been the secret ingredient in the cocktail of her sexual appetites and the ingredient that, until now, had been missing.

She hoped she was wrong. She had enjoyed herself hugely with Bella and she could imagine wanting to repeat the experience, with her and other women, perhaps. But she yearned for the attention of men. Her new face and emerging body were aimed at men. It would be the ultimate irony if she discovered, after all this, that her sexuality was given to different proclivities.

There was, of course, one way to find out. With most of her fat sweated off, with her muscles beginning to tone and shape themselves, with her new face, its high cheekbones and patrician nose accentuating her large blue eyes, it was possible that she could test the water, see if all her hard work would produce results, the sort of results she had in mind at least. The thought scared her as much as it excited her. What if it didn't work? As much as she and Dr Evans were delighted with her new image, what if no one else was, no man was? Having a new face didn't necessarily mean she was any more attractive than she had been

before, nor did her slim-line figure. Beauty and attractiveness were two different things.

It was the end of her first week at the spa and, for the first time, Melanie slept fitfully, tossing and turning, unable to rid herself of the negative thoughts she had conjured up.

By the morning, in the sunlight that streamed into her room, she felt distinctly better. There was no point in hesitating. She had made her mind up. She showered and changed into fresh work-out gear purchased in the spa shop. She had never been able to wear leggings before but they suited her slim long legs. She noticed with pride too, how her breasts jutted firmly from her leotard.

Her quarry was waiting for her in the gym. She had seen no one else at the spa who better suited her particular requirements.

'Steve, can I ask you something?' she said disingenuously.

'Of course.'

'Do you think I've changed? My body, I mean?'

'God, yes.'

'Really?'

'Yes. I can see a difference every day. You really work at it. It's great. I really admire your attitude.'

'Do you?'

'Yes. You've set your mind on something and you've gone ahead and got it. I think that's fantastic.'

'I just wondered . . .'

'What?'

'Well, I know I'm not suppose to ask . . . I just wondered if maybe we could have dinner tonight.'

'Oh . . .' The smile left his face like the sun going in behind a cloud. She saw at once she had said the wrong thing.

'Sorry, I shouldn't have asked.'

‘No . . . I . . . It’s just that it’s strictly against the rules. We’re just not allowed to go out with the guests . . .’

‘Of course, stupid of me.’

‘I would really . . .’

‘No.’ She cut him short. She didn’t want to hear excuses. ‘I understand.’

And she did. She understood perfectly. Her worst fears were confirmed. She did a quick warm up, then mounted the Stairmaster. She increased her climb rate to fifteen floors per minute and set the timer for double the usual period. After five minutes sweat was pouring off her but she did not relent. She used her anger, pounding her body, punishing herself for believing that all this money she had spent was going to make the slightest difference to her success with men or anything else. Despite the face that stared back at her in the mirror, despite all the work Dr Evans had done, it had not changed what she felt like inside. She still felt plain. Plain Jane. Plain Melanie. The girl no one wanted to see. Now she was seriously depressed.

She went through the rest of her exercise programme with little enthusiasm once her anger had been replaced by a feeling of futility. What was the point? What was the point in all this hard work and deprivation if she still got rejected? Since she had started her diet she had never felt the urge to binge on chocolate more strongly. If the spa had sold such things she would have bought the biggest bar of milk chocolate or a huge box of cream centres, and stuffed herself all night. But they didn’t.

Tomorrow she would drive into the village. She would buy a whole shelf of chocolate goodies.

Back in her room after eating the largest dinner available – which at the spa hardly amounted to much – Melanie pulled off

her gear, showered and climbed into bed. She curled into a foetal position and tried to sleep. Surprisingly and to her great relief sleep came at once.

Something started her awake. She listened, her heart pounding. For a moment she had no idea what had woken her. Then there was another knock on the bedroom door. She sat up in bed. The knock was repeated. 'Who is it?'

'Steve.' He was trying to whisper.

Melanie slipped out of bed and pulled on the white towelling robe that hung behind the door, her heart-beat returning to normal. Almost before she had opened the door more than a crack Steve stole inside, checking behind him to see if anyone was in the corridor, and closing the door quickly behind him. He carried a large nylon holdall.

'What are you doing here?' Melanie asked, blinking the sleep out of her eyes.

'If anyone sees me I'll be fired.'

'Fired?'

'I told you, we're not supposed to do this.'

'Do what?'

'Fraternise with the guests. Here . . . ' From the bag Steve pulled a bottle of champagne, a plate of smoked salmon wrapped in cling film and a basket of brown bread and butter protected by foil. He put them down on the chest of drawers by the bed. 'Best I could do at short notice . . . '

'I thought you . . . '

'What?' He opened the champagne and pulled two plastic beakers from his bag. 'Sorry about these.'

Melanie sat on the edge of the bed. She felt tears welling in her eyes.

'Thought what?' he repeated, handing her a beaker filled

with champagne and sitting down besides her.

'I just . . .' She couldn't think of the words.

'Look, I have to be careful, that's all. I can't afford to lose this job. God, you didn't think I didn't want to, did you? You can't have thought that. You're the most stunning woman in this place.'

'What did you say?'

'I said you're the most attractive woman . . . oh come on, every man you ever meet must tell you that.'

'Just indulge me. Say it.'

'What, that you're beautiful?'

'Yes.'

'Melanie, you're beautiful. Absolutely stunning. You know that.'

Melanie felt fresh tears pricking at her eyes.

'Cheers,' he said, raising his beaker.

'Oh Steve . . .' She touched her beaker against his and sipped the wine. She didn't need it to make her high. 'I don't need champagne,' she said decisively as another emotion overtook the sudden flood of joy she had felt at realising she had been completely wrong.

'What do you need?' He looked into her eyes.

By way of reply she took his handsome face in both her hands. A lock of blond hair had fallen down into his eyes and she threaded it back into the main body of his hair. She could see the look in his eyes. No one had ever looked at her like this before. No man had ever told her she was stunning and beautiful (with the exception of Dr Evans, of course). No man had been surprised at her lack of confidence in herself.

'What I need,' she said simply, 'is for you to fuck me, Steve.' She used the word 'fuck' deliberately. It was how she felt.

‘You’re very direct.’

She did not reply. Instead she kissed him on the mouth, her pulse racing, her body churning. Immediately he pushed his tongue between her lips and, without breaking the kiss, raised himself up on to his knees as he pushed her back on to the bed. There was no subtlety, no gentleness. His hands were everywhere. He found the knot on the belt of the robe and pulled it open while his mouth and tongue squirmed against her lips. His hand found her breast. Her nipples were puckered and erect. He played with one and then the other, pinching them, stroking them, then kneading the whole fleshy mound.

‘Beautiful,’ he breathed, as his mouth left hers to descend to her neck. It was the magic word for her. She felt her sex pulse.

As he moved his mouth down her neck, down to suck at her breasts hungrily, his hand was smoothing its way over her belly. Melanie felt another pulse of pleasure. Her body felt so different under his hands. Her breasts were firm and high, her waist a definite cinched curve, her stomach iron flat. She looked down to see him working on her, the first time a man had used her new body. It thrilled her. She could feel her cunt running with juice.

His fingers reached her thick pubic hair and combed through it until he found the channel of her sex. It was not difficult to find her clitoris. It seemed like a thing apart from her, swollen, wet and alive. He was not gentle with it. He took the whole thing, the almond-shaped bud of it, between his finger and thumb, rubbing it up and down, almost like rolling a tiny cigar. At the same time his mouth was locked on her breast. He seemed to be sucking her whole breast in, up into his mouth, her nipple pressed against his hot tongue.

Melanie knew she was coming. At a stroke, in minutes, Steve

had wiped clean her slate of anxieties. His obeisance to her body, and what he made her feel, freed her mind. Her body was trembling with as much passion as it had with Bella. More. She could feel more. Her new body, its newly energised muscles, its invigorated nerves and blood supply and health, was giving her feelings she had never had before. It was as if this was what all the training had been for, to sensitise her, to enlarge her capacity to feel.

'Oh, oh . . .' she moaned loudly, her body, still half in the robe, stretching itself out as his fingers moved relentlessly against her clitoris. 'You're making me come,' she said, wanting him to know but also to hear the words herself.

'I can feel it,' he said, the words muffled by her breast.

She could feel the first wave of orgasm swell in her body. He got down from his knees and lay beside her so she could feel his erection pressing against her side. This was just the beginning. She tried to keep her eyes open, to look down at her lean, fit body but it was impossible. A second wave was gathering behind the first, then a third. They demanded all her attention. There was no room for anything else, for the luxury of sight. Her eyes closed but her mind didn't. It was filled with images and words. As the pressure of the waves built up in her body, as it all became too much to resist, as finally her orgasm seized her nerves, as the dam finally broke, spectacularly, and exquisite sensation flooded through her, it was the look in his eyes, the look that contained his desire for her, that had been the last thing she held in her mind.

He stopped as her body relaxed. Without a word he pulled off the top of the tracksuit he was wearing then stood up and stripped off the bottoms, as well as the small black briefs he had on.

NAKED AMBITION

Melanie opened her eyes as she heard the rustle of clothing. She stared at his body. It was hard and strong, every muscle well defined, not an ounce of fat anywhere, his chest covered with the same mat of fine blond hair she had seen on his legs. At the apex of his thighs his cock stuck out in front of him at right angles to his body, a large sword of flesh. It was circumcised and very smooth, almost as though it had been polished. At the little slit of his urethra a tear of fluid had formed.

Steve wrapped his fist around his cock and began to wank it, his whole fist forming a channel for it to fuck.

Melanie tugged the robe off and threw it to the floor. She pushed aside the tangle of sheets so the bed was clear, then lay back. Her hand, emulating his, found her own sex. She was astonished at its heat; it was on fire. It was soaking wet too, dripping wet, running down over the little rosebud of her anus and the cheeks of her arse. The first touch of her finger against her clitoris made her shudder, provoking the orgasm that still lingered in her body to remind her of what it had been like, a sharp shock of sensation coursing through her nerves.

She watched the rise and fall of Steve's fist, watched as the tip of his cock disappeared into his hand then reappeared again, like an eye winking out between his thumb and forefinger. She matched his rhythm to hers, nudging her clitoris from side to side in the same tempo. Watching him, and his eyes on her as she wanked herself, was almost making her come. She looked down at her own hand. The sight of her body took her by surprise. Inside she still thought of herself as shapeless and lumpy. But outside she was neither. Even lying flat her breasts were high and firm, her stomach flat, her long legs, bent as they were at the knee, slim and contoured. Her mind experienced a jolt of pleasure as it realised this body was hers.

She could easily have brought herself off. But she didn't want that.

'Fuck me, Steve,' she said earnestly, opening her legs wider and taking her hand away from her sex. 'Fuck me.'

In a movement so fast and fluid she would not be able to remember how it was accomplished, Steve seemed to leap on her like a wild cat jumping on its prey from a tree. One moment she was lying alone on the bed, the next she was covered with him and he was embedded up to the hilt inside her, his mouth on her neck, his chest crushing her breasts, his balls against her arse, the base of his cock grinding against her clitoris. One moment she was empty and the next she was full. For a long time, at least so it seemed, he did not move, other than an almost imperceptible rotation of his pubic bone against hers. His cock was buried deep, very deep, deeper than any man had ever been in her. It seemed to be right up against the neck of her womb and she was experiencing another new sensation. It was as though her womb was a little mouth and it was kissing his cock, sucking it, drawing it in. She was like a flower, opening herself for him. He was rigid inside her but without actually moving she felt herself allowing him deeper, opening up around him, melting over him.

He started to fuck her then, his buttocks rising and falling, his cock sliding effortlessly almost all the way out then back in, back up, all the way up, each time seemingly further and higher and deeper. It was slow at first. A long slow withdrawal, a deep long forward stroke. Back and forth. His arm was around her neck holding her tightly to him, his hard muscles feeling wonderful against her body. Every stroke became faster. Gradually the piston of his cock increased its tempo, sliding into the river of her juices, up and down, with greater urgency.

NAKED AMBITION

Soon there was nothing but urgency. Soon the desire, the absolute need to spunk, to come inside her, took over from everything else. His action became almost a blur, a constant unbelievably fast flow of motion.

He was coming. Melanie could feel it. She could feel his spunk flooding into his prick, swelling it even more. But she would come first. She had already. She'd come when he'd entered her, she'd come when he started to fuck her slowly and she was coming again now as he pounded into her with incredible power. She was screaming, she thought, but not words. Her hands wrapped round his back and felt all the muscles there. She was open for him, her orgasm opening her more and more and more until he was so deep inside her he must have been in her womb. That's what it felt like.

She had no control, no mind, only feeling, only the thousand shattering explosions of orgasm, raking every nerve, taking her so high she felt she was not there any more on the bed with him, but somewhere up above, high like on some wonder drug.

She felt him slow. She knew he was ready to spunk.

'Do it. Do it,' she managed to scream.

And he did. With one final effort he bucked up into her cunt and literally spat his spunk out into her, great gobs of white spunk, seemingly endless, shaking his body and his mind.

They clung to each other like two survivors of a shipwreck to some passing flotsam, their nerves so strung out it took forever before their bodies would respond to even the simplest of commands.

'Oh Steve,' Melanie said finally. She felt the tears in her eyes.

'God, you're great,' he said. He had rolled on to his side and

was propped on one elbow looking down at her. 'Such a great body. Such a beautiful face.'

'Nobody's ever said that to me before.'

He laughed. 'Melanie, everyone you've ever known has said that to you before. You know they have. You're so sexy.'

'As a matter of fact they haven't,' she replied but she didn't tell him why.

Melanie's second week at the Barclay Health and Fitness Spa was, she supposed, the nearest she had been to pure heaven in her entire life. During the day she worked out in the gym, played tennis, and swam, all with Steve's constant advice and encouragement. Her body was getting stronger and harder, more co-ordinated and responsive, her reflexes sharper, her overall physical performance transformed out of all recognition. During the evenings, however, the demands on her body were even more excessive. As soon as Steve was able to sneak, unseen, into her room, Melanie would use him – and 'use' was definitely the right word – to work out her sexual technique. Fortunately Steve was a willing and eager accomplice. Night after night Melanie felt her body being driven to new heights of sexual pleasure. She had never dreamed that sex could be this good.

Needless to say her fears, foolish in retrospect, that what she had experienced with Bella indicated a preference for members of the same sex, had simply vanished. Bella had been right. Now she understood what she had meant. It was all sex. Now when Melanie thought of the experience with Bella and provoked a frisson of excitement she felt no unease. Indeed she was eager for a repeat performance with her new, responsive, sensitised body. She was looking forward to Bella's reaction to her transformation.

Meantime, she contented herself with Steve. Over her remaining nights she made up for the years of pitifully inadequate orgasms by coming heartily and mammothly time after time. She came over his cock, over his fingers, over his mouth. She came as he wanked for her, his spunk spattering her breasts. She came as she wanked for him, sitting on his chest as she friggged her clitoris. The capability of her body to experience sexual fulfilment seemed to be, suddenly, infinite.

Steve was a wonderful lover. His strength and musculature seemed to be matched by his sexual prowess. At any other time in her life Melanie would have fallen hopelessly in love with him, confusing sexual desire with emotional need. But Melanie was not going to make that mistake. Not now. She had seen the way Steve looked at her, at her face, and her body. She'd seen the way other men looked at her too, specially as she lay by the pool in her high-cut black swimsuit. She had seen the way they looked at her long legs, waspie waist and firm swelling breasts. She had every intention of enjoying what she had seen so many women enjoy over the years, what Bella enjoyed and Rosemary. Men throwing themselves at her feet, squirming and scraping, prepared to do anything for a chance to get into her knickers. The thought alone made her body buzz with excitement. Her knickers. Men wanting her. Fancying her. This was what all those beautiful women felt. It was like a strange magnetic power. *It was power.*

There were two more important facilities Melanie had to take advantage of before leaving the spa, the in-house hairdresser and the specialist make-up consultant. First she was going to go blonde. Second she was going to get specialist advice on what make-up to use to match her colouring and accentuate her new face. Melanie had never paid much attention to her make-

up before. Not like Bella. Not like Rosemary. Well, anything they can do she was certainly going to do better, or at the very least, just as well.

It was the final full day at the spa when, after her first workout in the gym, she spent two hours in the hairdresser. Having her hair cut into a short, bouncy, layered style and dyed a soft shiny blonde suited her new looks perfectly. It looked right. It felt right. The face that stared back at her in the mirror when the hair was finally revealed bore no resemblance to what she had seen for years in the mirror every morning; what she had seen and hated. She was simply a different person. And Melanie was determined that the difference in her exterior appearance was going to be matched by a difference inside too. She was going to change her attitudes as much as her face.

The make-up consultant, an elegant woman with long thin bejewelled fingers and a rather pinched small-featured face, seemed to be astonished at Melanie's lack of expertise when it came to even the basics of cosmetics. But she was patient and together they not only experimented with colour, to co-ordinate with Melanie's hair, but practised the techniques in the application of blusher, eye-shadow, and lipstick, painted on with a brush, not, as Melanie had done very occasionally, smoothed on with a stick. She showed her how to highlight her cheeks and emphasise her blue eyes, though constantly looking askance that Melanie appeared to know none of this herself.

At ten o'clock that night, her last at the spa, Melanie stood naked in front of the mirror in the bathroom. Her short hair revealed her long and now sinewy neck. Her round plump breasts sat high on her chest. Her waist was cinched in tight before the natural curves of her body developed into the richness of her hips and buttocks. Her thick curly pubic hair, trimmed to

NAKED AMBITION

fit into the tiny panties she was going to wear from now on, decorated the apex of her thighs under her flat belly. Her long legs, their strong muscles giving them fine contours, looked as though they had been sculpted. Even her ankles, once thick and fat, had slimmed so that the tendons at the back of the heel looked as though they had been pinched.

It had cost almost all of Auntie Beatie's inheritance. Melanie looked at herself long and hard in the mirror, her hands reaching around her body to cup her breasts in her hands. It had been worth every penny.

'Beautiful,' she said, as though talking about someone else.

'Beautiful,' Steve echoed. He had slipped into the bathroom behind her and was gazing at her reflection in the mirror, his hands reaching around her body to replace hers on her breasts.

'It is, isn't it?' she said.

'You know it is.'

She turned around and looked into his eyes. She could see herself reflected there too. He kissed her, hard and powerfully, pressing his body against her, his erection immediately growing between them. It certainly had been worth every penny.

She lay naked under a single white sheet. Something had woken her. She knew immediately what it was. The door of the bedroom opening, then closing again.

She could not see who it was. She felt eyes looking down at her body under the sheet. Not just one person but two. She did not seem to be able to move.

She felt a hand cupping her breast under the white sheet, and saw the fingers of the hand were beringed, sparkling diamonds and rubies and sapphires on every finger. A woman's hand. And a man's too. A hard, rough, hairy hand groping for

her other breast, touching her arm and shoulder and neck all under the whiteness of the sheet.

There were hands all over her, and lips, touching, sucking, kissing. The woman's hand drove down between her legs, pulling the sheet with it, pushing her fingers up between her legs, up into Melanie's sex, dragging the sheet up, rucking it as it was forced into her body. The fingers went deep, higher and deeper than any fingers could go, right up into her until she could feel the sheet-covered fingers at the neck of her womb. The man was stooping over her, folding the sheet over her face then kissing her through it, pushing his tongue and the sheet into her mouth just as the woman had pushed it into her cunt.

She wanted to move but couldn't. She wanted to scream but couldn't. She wanted to come but couldn't. She knew they wouldn't let her.

Suddenly she saw the woman. It was Bella. She was lying on the bed beside her, naked, her legs open. The man was on top of her, pushing his cock into Bella's red-haired cunt. She could hear Bella moan. She wanted to help, wanted to feel Bella come, wanted to push the man away and replace his cock with her mouth. She could move now. She pulled the sheet out of her mouth and out of her cunt. She pulled the sheet off her body and looked down at herself, looked down at her lumpy, shapeless body, her sagging amorphous tits. She looked in the mirror and saw her face, her jowls and wide fat cheeks, her terrible bulbous nose. She heard the woman beginning to laugh . . .

'What!' Steve started awake. Melanie had sobbed so loudly it had woken him.

'Sorry. Nightmare.' Her heart was pounding like she'd just seen a ghost. That was precisely what she had seen, the ghost of Melanie Chambers Past.

NAKED AMBITION

'You all right?' He hugged her.

'Fine now,'

He felt wonderful. She kissed his neck and his chest, her hand working down to his cock. She cupped it in her palm and felt it begin to grow.

'Oh, this is all an excuse, is it?' he laughed.

'Well, since we're both awake . . .'

She slipped out of his arms and down the bed until she could feed his cock into her mouth. It grew there, encouraged by her tongue until he was fully erect. It seemed only fair to give him a treat since she'd woken him up. She sucked on his cock, then began to bob her head up and down on it, imitating the action of her cunt.

'Mel . . .' he sighed.

Her hand cupped his balls. She delved between his buttocks for the bud of his anus. With one finger she pushed past the little puckered gate and felt him shudder. She wanted to taste his spunk. She wanted that very much. And these days she got what she wanted.

Chapter Four

Melanie had taken Bella at her word. The practical research she had done with her and with Steve had been invaluable but Melanie was nothing if not thorough. With the intention of using her body to the best possible advantage it was obviously important for her to undertake theoretical research too. She knew very little about sex, after all, however rapidly she might be catching up. As her own sex life had been so limited, as she had never had a man who had asked for anything other than absolutely conventional sex, she had never had any occasion to explore the highways, and, more importantly, the byways of sexual activity.

She wasn't naive. It wasn't that she didn't know that there was more to sex than what she had experienced. It was just that it had never interested her much. Until now.

Now that had changed. Now sex fascinated her and she was determined to find out all there was to know about it. Everything. And the books that Bella had thrust into her hand were a very good beginning.

She had read in the clinic and at the spa. She had read at home on the weekend before she was due to return to work, interspersed with a shopping expedition to buy new clothes and new lingerie. She didn't have to make notes. There was no need. The contents of most of the books Bella had lent her she was hardly likely to forget. By the end of the weekend her eyes had

been well and truly opened to a world that she barely knew existed. She had acquired a new vocabulary: troilism, sado-masochism, domination, urology, submission, bondage, transsexual and transvestite.

What surprised her most was her own reaction. Two months ago not only would she have not read these books at all, she would, had she come across one accidentally, have dismissed it as rubbish. Now she found them engrossing. She had read several passages over and over again. Not in disbelief but because they affected her. Of course some of the more outré practices revolted her, she could not imagine wanting to pee on anyone, for instance, but the stories of domination and submission, of cross-dressing and bizarre costumes and even of spanking, affected her in a way she would never have dreamt possible.

What intrigued her most was the idea that, behind closed doors, hundreds and thousands of men and women were indulging their proclivities for sexual practices she had, until now, never even imagined. Ordinary people, people she might well know. There was no question of her being fascinated by what she read. It was more difficult to admit to herself that there were certain passages that had also distinctly turned her on.

Somewhere in all this there was, she knew, a key to what she wanted to unlock. The mainspring of sexual endeavour, it appeared, was not always as straight-forward as it seemed. It surprised her that she was not immune to some of the images. Perhaps she should not have been surprised. Only a few days before she had been prepared to believe that she was a lesbian. Wasn't the truth about her sexuality and everyone else's for that matter, that it was defined by what turned it on, however

bizarre. 'It's all sex,' Bella had said. 'All' seemed to encompass more than Melanie would ever have believed possible or even likely.

Melanie got to work early. Fortunately the security guard on the main gate did not ask to check her security pass: the photograph embossed on her plastic identity tag now bore not the slightest resemblance to her face.

At her desk before anyone else in the open-plan office arrived, she busied herself with catching up on developments while she'd been away. Then, as people began filtering in, a little ritual took place: her friends' and colleagues' reaction to the new vision that greeted them was almost always the same – disbelief, followed by astonishment, followed by disbelief again.

'Melanie?' Sandra Paine's reaction was typical of the women. She was Melanie's immediate superior in research. 'Melanie!'

'It is me.'

'What have you done?'

'Everything.'

'I can see that. You look wonderful. I'd never have believed it. It is you, isn't it?'

'It's me. Really.'

'I don't believe it. You look completely different.'

'I know. That was the idea.'

'Oh, we must get together. I want to hear every detail. You just look wonderful . . .'

Among the men, though the surprise and disbelief were the same Melanie was delighted to discover that their reaction was also more visceral. None of the three who worked within ten feet of her desk seemed to be able to tear their eyes away from her. Of course, she had chosen her clothes carefully. Over the

weekend she had spent the rest of her aunt's inheritance on clothes and lingerie. This morning she was wearing a skirt that did little to conceal the wonder of her long slim legs which were sheathed in the sheerest nylon. Nor was it an accident that the neckline of the blouse she wore gave glimpses of her now firm and high cleavage.

But it was Grant Andrews who Melanie most wanted to see. In a sense he had been responsible for her new body; without him, without being passed over for promotion by him, it would probably never have occurred to her to go out and do something about herself.

It was eleven by the time he came into the office and strode over to her.

'Is Melanie not back yet?'

'Yes,' she said, looking at him levelly.

It took seconds for the penny to drop. 'Melanie!'

'Yes.'

'My God, what have you done?' His mouth was literally wide-open.

'I thought it was time I did something about myself.'

'I don't believe it . . . I mean your nose, your face, your . . .'

He was just about to say 'tits' but stopped himself before he could be accused of sexual harassment. ' . . . body.'

'I started to work out.'

'I can see that. And your hair.'

'You like it?'

'Looks so natural. It really suits you.' He looked as though he meant it.

'Thank you, Grant.'

'Listen, we need to talk. Come and see me about five, will you?'

NAKED AMBITION

'Fine. I should have caught up on everything by then.' She beamed a smile at him as he walked over to his office.

She had imagined this encounter over the last four weeks. Grant was an obstacle, the first hurdle she had to overcome, and the first test of her ability to use her body for the purposes she intended. From the look in his eyes, a look she had seen before as he'd sat on the edge of Rosemary Harris's desk looking down the front of her dress, she had successfully aroused his lust. This afternoon she would make sure it stayed aroused.

Fortunately perhaps, Melanie had little time, during the day, to dwell on what was going to happen later. After four weeks away there was a great deal to catch up on and she had no time to allow her mind to wander, though occasionally, when she caught sight of one of the men staring surreptitiously at her legs, or bust, she did allow herself to be temporarily transported into a little dream of delight. She could not imagine ever getting used to the way men looked at her now. Before they had hardly noticed her, they'd looked through her as though she didn't exist. Now they stared. It was not difficult to see their minds working behind the stare, working out what she would be like, how it would be to spread her legs and . . .

By five o'clock she had almost forgotten about Grant Andrews' invitation. Not quite, though. When he appeared at his office door, looking rather anxious, she thought, and beckoned her over with a crooked finger, she signed to him that she would be there in a minute. She wanted to keep him waiting. In no hurry, she cleared her desk and finished off all the things she had to do. It was five-thirty before she checked her make-up in the mirror in her handbag and swung her long legs off her swivel chair.

She smiled to herself as she walked across to his office door.

She knew exactly what she was going to do. She didn't knock.

'Sit down, sit down . . .' he said as she strode into his office.

'Thanks, Grant.'

She sat where Rosemary Harris had sat when she'd seen them together. She crossed her legs very deliberately and saw Grant's eyes flick down to her thighs, hoping, no doubt, to catch a glimpse beneath her skirt.

'Well, you look just great Mel. Can't believe it. Just not the same girl.'

'Thank you, Grant,' she said very formally. 'I hope it won't affect our relationship,' she lied.

'Oh, I'm sure it won't.' His eyes roamed her body.

'So why did you want to see me?' As if she didn't know.

'Oh . . . well . . .' He was trying to think of some plausible reason. 'Well I just thought it was important to get off on the right foot again. After, well, after what happened. Would you like a drink? It's late enough now, don't you think?'

What time had Rosemary been offered her first drink, Melanie wondered? 'Yes thanks.'

He got up to go to the cocktail cabinet set in a bookshelf in the corner of the room. Its doors folded down to form a flat surface.

'Whisky, gin, vodka.'

Rosemary had drunk whisky. 'Is there any wine?' She had never been offered a drink before.

'Only red.'

'Red's fine.'

He opened a bottle and poured her a large glass, giving himself a whisky. He set the glass down on the desk in front of her, his smile apparently fixed on his face.

'I told you I valued the contribution you make here, Mel . . .'

NAKED AMBITION

Through the glass Melanie could see the general office emptying of people. 'Goodbyes' and 'good nights' were exchanged, computer terminals turned off.

'You did,' she said, sipping the wine.

He sat behind the desk again. Melanie noticed he was sweating, a little film of perspiration covering his forehead and his upper lip. He was wearing a shirt and slacks, the bottom of the shirt struggling bravely to contain the thick ring of fat that surrounded his body above the belt of his trousers, its buttons stretched almost to breaking point.

'Well, I feel it's important to say these things. I'm delighted you've used your leave in such a . . .' he searched for the word, 'constructive way. You look terrific, terrific.'

'All your doing,' she allowed her voice to soften slightly.

'My doing?' he brightened at this news.

'Well, if you hadn't suggested I took a break . . .'

'Oh yes, of course . . .'

'So I feel I owe it all to you.' She was teasing him, playing with him, but he did not seem to be aware of it at all. He gazed at her with what could only be described as longing.

'I suppose you do. Very gratifying if that is the case.'

'It is.' She allowed him to see an excitement in her eyes, the same sort of look Rosemary had given him.

'And you know I'm going to make sure you get the very next opportunity?'

'Really?' she tried to sound naively grateful.

'Oh yes.'

'When do you think that will be?' She sipped her red wine, then ran her tongue around the rim of the glass nearest to her mouth. It was something the old Melanie would never have done.

'Soon, I'm sure . . .'

'I hope so . . . Well, I suppose I'd better be going. Everyone else seems to have gone home.' She indicated the outer office.

'Are you dashing off somewhere?'

'No. Not really.'

'Stay then. More wine?'

'Why not?'

He got up. This time on his way to the cocktail cabinet he brushed the back of her chair with his trouser leg. He poured more wine into her glass then set the bottle down on the desk next to it.

'Thank you.'

'My pleasure.' He poured another whisky for himself but did not go back round to his desk chair. Instead he sat on the small leather sofa on which he had fucked Rosemary. Or was it Rosemary who'd fucked him?

'I like your hair,' he said, sipping his whisky then setting it down on a side table next to the sofa.

'Grant, could you tell me something?'

'Of course.'

'You know I'm keen to get on. I just wondered what qualities Rosemary Harris had that I didn't. I mean, I'm not bitter or anything. I understand, I really do.' She had pulled her chair round to face him and uncrossed her legs. As the level of the sofa was a great deal lower than the level of her chair she imagined he had a good view under her skirt. She re-crossed her legs.

'I can't think of one,' he said earnestly.

'Oh there must have been . . .'

'Not now,' he said without thinking, as he stared at the underside of her thighs.

NAKED AMBITION

'What do you mean?' Melanie tried to keep the sharpness out of her voice.

'Oh . . . I . . . I mean I think now you're definitely ready.'

'You know Grant . . .' Melanie used her body language to reinforce her message, aiming her body at him like a weapon. ' . . . I have always found you a very attractive man. I don't suppose you ever have sexual fantasies . . .' She'd rehearsed this speech, said it out loud, refined it. ' . . . do you? Do you know what I mean by that? Like daydreams. You know, if there weren't any sexual inhibitions, any taboos. If we could just do what we felt like doing. I've often thought how I'd like to have come in here after everyone had left, come in here to see if I could seduce you. You wouldn't have wanted me. And I don't blame you.'

'Of course I would . . .' he lied.

'You wouldn't, Grant. I looked ghastly. All that fat. My nose, my hair, like a drowned rat. But I think it was you who really made me want to do something about myself.'

'Oh I'm sure . . .' he was smiling.

'Yes it was.' She got up and stood in front of him so he had to look up her long legs. 'I'm very grateful.'

'Are you?'

'Yes.'

'Would you like me to show you how grateful?'

'God, yes.'

Melanie remembered how Rosemary had knelt on either side of his thighs. She pulled her skirt up. He gazed at her shiny sheer tights and the tiny triangle of black lace panties underneath them.

'Oh Grant, I've always wanted to do this.'

She sunk down on top of him, her knees on the sofa, her

crotch pressed against his lap, her mouth clamping on to his. He kissed her energetically, his penis unfurling between their bodies. Melanie moved her mouth down to his neck, kissing her way up to his ear. She pushed her hot tongue into its tight whorls and heard him moan involuntarily, his erection complete.

'We shouldn't be doing this, should we?' she whispered.

'Why not?'

'It's wrong.'

'Nobody will ever find out.'

'Promise?'

'Promise.'

It was so easy. So easy to manipulate him. So easy to lead him by his cock. So easy now she had this new body and hair and face. So easy.

'Fuck me then, Grant. For Christ's sake fuck me. I need it so badly.' Melanie had started her seduction as a performance, as a deliberate attempt to compromise Grant, but her performance had created a real physical need in her. She needed to be fucked.

'Lock the door,' he said.

Slowly Melanie got up from her knees and turned the deadlock on the office door. Had he asked Rosemary to do the same, she wondered? In her mind's eye she could see Rosemary stripping off her clothes, wriggling out of that tight red dress. Standing in front of Grant again she pulled her skirt down from her waist, unzipped it and let it fall to the floor. She stepped out of it. She stripped off her blouse to reveal her lacy black underwired bra that pushed her breasts into a dramatic cleavage. With her eyes locked on Grant she slipped off her high heels and shimmied her tights and tiny black panties down her legs.

She stood up straight, naked except for her bra. With her

NAKED AMBITION

fingers she combed out her thick pubic hair crushed by her clothes.

Grant stared. His eyes told her what he thought, that and the bulge pulsing in his trousers.

Melanie dropped to her knees. She reached for the zip of his trousers and pulled it down. The material parted like an opening mouth. She fished inside. His cock had escaped from the fly of his Y-fronts. It was wet from its own secretions.

'Amm . . .' she moaned, as she sunk her mouth down on to it.

'Oh Mel . . .' he gasped.

She bobbed her blonde head up and down on it, pulling back his foreskin with her hand so she could tongue the sensitive rim of his glans.

'Oh Mel . . .' was the reaction this treatment produced.

Now Melanie sucked. She sucked hard and long. Grant groaned. Melanie sunk her mouth down on to the whole of his cock, embedding him in her until she could feel it at the back of her throat. Then she pulled back, right back so her lips were poised at the very tip of his glans and her tongue could play with his urethra. She sensed if she continued he could come and pulled away. She realised that her whole body was throbbing. This was another new experience for her. She had seduced Grant. She was in control. She had the power.

She pulled back, sliding his cock out of her mouth looking straight into his eyes. She licked her lips then reached behind her back to unsnap her bra. Her big proud breasts made their first public appearance. (Well, Steve didn't count, Steve was a rehearsal, this was the real thing.)

'Beautiful . . .' Grant mumbled.

Taking them in her hands she pushed them against his cock

just as Rosemary had done, making a channel for him to fuck, using them to massage his cock. She looked down as he thrust his hips forward. The head of his cock appeared between her breasts. But this was only a prelude.

She got up and stood in front of him. She dipped a finger down between her labia, extracted it, then brought it up to her mouth.

‘Tastes good . . .’

‘I bet it does.’

Turning her back on him she walked the two steps to his desk and lent over it, resting her elbows on the leather top, pushing his papers aside, sticking her bum up in the air, her legs apart. He would be able to see every detail of her sex, her thick puffy labia, the bud of her anus.

‘Fuck me, Grant, fuck me hard. I need it.’ That was absolutely true. Her body ached with excitement, her sex crying out to be filled. She had succeeded in turning herself on quite as much as she had Grant.

He got up off the sofa. Standing behind her he ran his hand down the cleft of her buttocks and into her labia. But she was in no mood to be petted.

‘Fuck me,’ she insisted, pushing her arse out against him.

He pulled his trousers and underpants down to his knees. Instantly his cock nosed between her thighs, his hands grabbing her hips on either side. It nudged into her labia. She bent her knees slightly and felt his cock settle at the entrance to her cunt. He pushed forward and slid into her, right up into her. She was already coming, the whole experience turning her on. To be desired, to be able to entice and seduce, to demand sex, command sex, that was the turn on she knew. As Grant’s cock reamed into her, as his balls banged into her arse, as her juices

NAKED AMBITION

flooded over him, almost as though she'd spunked on him, her body shuddered and a sharp, almost painful orgasm ripped through her.

But that wasn't enough. 'Harder,' she said immediately.

He started pumping in and out of her.

'Harder, damn you.' The words echoed in the office. They turned her on as much as his cock did. Commanding her desires. Making him do what she wanted. Power. The power her body, her new body, gave her.

He was pummelling into and out of her and groaning, his over-weight belly slapping against her buttocks.

'What does it feel like, Grant? Does it feel good? Does my cunt feel good?' She had always been a silent lover before, never said a word. Now she wanted to be vocal, want to hear herself using words like 'fuck' and 'cunt'.

'Yes, yes . . .' he managed to mumble between thrusts. He was coming, his spunk filling his cock, his whole body on the brink of orgasm. How could he hold back after what he'd seen, what Melanie had done. She'd behaved like a whore.

She seemed to sense his crisis. 'Give it to me, give me your spunk,' she demanded.

And he did. He bucked his hips forward one more time, finding a tight crevice in her sex, then stopped. He didn't need to move again. His cock began to spasm of its own accord, kicking inside her, kicking against the silky wet walls of her tight clinging cunt, as his spunk exploded into her, burying itself in the depths of her body.

Neither moved until Grant's cock was expelled from her cunt, his erection wilted away. He sunk back on to the sofa, his trousers still around his knees.

'My God . . .'

Is that what he'd said after he'd fucked Rosemary?

Melanie turned round. Already in the folds of her vagina she could feel his spunk running down to her labia. She lent against the edge of the desk. She felt coquettish, in the mood to experiment, not satisfied to leave it there, despite Grant's obvious exhaustion.

'I've been reading a lot of books recently.'

'What sort of books?' He didn't sound very interested.

'Pornography. Very graphic. Very explicit. All sorts of things I hardly knew about.'

'What sort of things?' His interest increased.

'Do you have fantasies, Grant? I mean not just straight sex, but fantasies . . . what you'd really like a woman to do if you only had the courage to ask?'

'Everyone does.'

'Do they?'

'I think so.'

'And what is yours?'

'I can't tell you that.'

'Why not?'

'I've never told anyone.'

'Really? Why? Because you don't want the fantasy to come true or because you're too embarrassed?'

'Too personal.'

'I had a dream last night,' she lied. 'It was very graphic.'

'About sex?'

'Yes, like a wet dream. I didn't know women had wet dreams until recently.'

'What happened?'

'I dreamt I had three men.'

'Three . . .'

NAKED AMBITION

'They had to be punished.'

'Punished . . .' There was something slightly strangulated in the way he said the word.

'Whipped.' Melanie had no idea why she had conjured this image up but she saw Grant's flaccid cock twitch at the word 'whipped'.

'Yes. Across the arse.'

'Really? What did you do?' His cock was beginning to swell, curling up from his thighs, like a sleeping dog that had suddenly smelt food.

'Oh, I couldn't possibly tell you that Grant.' It appeared she had struck lucky with her first suggestion. Perhaps she had sensed something in him.

'Why not?' His voice croaked out the words.

'Too personal,' she mocked.

'Please . . .'

'Please what?' she teased.

'Tell me what you did.'

'In the dream?'

'Yes.'

His cock was erect as it had been a few minutes ago. It did not take an enormous intellectual effort to guess why.

'Oh, I had this little riding crop . . .' As she said the words she suddenly remembered the riding crops in Bella's dressing room and the odd answer she'd given when asked if she went riding. She put the thought aside.

'Yes . . .' Grant's hand had curled around his cock.

'And I made then all bend over.' Melanie was feeling her way, making up what she thought he wanted to hear, trying to remember what she had read. 'Bend over so their big white arses were at my mercy. I found that very exciting.'

'Did you?' He was wanking now.

'Oh yes, I like to be in control.' That was certainly true. 'Did I give you permission to do that?' she snapped.

'I thought . . .'

'Take your hand away at once. How dare you.'

'I just . . .'

'Stand up. Now.' She was proud of her voice. It sounded as cold as steel. There was no way it could be disobeyed. Grant sprung to his feet, his cock bobbing in front of him. It was harder and bigger than it had been before. 'I'm going to have to teach you a lesson, aren't I?'

'No,' he said, meaning precisely the opposite.

'Like I did in my dream. Whip your big white arse. Get over this desk.'

Melanie could see the look in his eye. It was beyond excitement, almost as though he wasn't there at all. He obeyed immediately.

'Right over. Get your head down.'

His fat buttocks stuck up in the air. Melanie looked around for something to whip them with. Her eyes lighted on a long metal ruler on his desk. She had not the slightest idea of what she was doing but whatever it was seemed to be working. Grant's proclivities were absolutely clear. Without a further thought she whacked the ruler hard down on to his protruding buttocks.

'Count.' That was what the woman in one of the books had demanded ('count every stroke, worm' to be precise).

'One,' he moaned, his voice pitched high with excitement.

The ruler struck again. Two red welts cut across his arse.

'Two,' he moaned.

'You're getting nine for daring to wank without permission.' Her performance, despite making the script up as she went along,

NAKED AMBITION

was perfect. Her voice was steady, commanding, dominant. It seemed natural too, as though it were something she had done all her life. She was surprised to find it was also thrilling her. Control and power again.

The ruler thwacked his flesh again. Another big red mark appeared on his white rear.

‘Three.’ So obedient.

He knew he would never make it to nine. He probably wouldn’t make it to six. His cock throbbed. This was his fantasy. No one knew. His fantasy since schooldays when he’d come in his pants being beaten with a slipper by the matron. He could see her now, a big busty woman, pulling his trousers down, her cool hand feeling his arse after every stroke.

‘Four,’ he intoned as the ruler thwacked down again harder than before, sending a wave of pain through his arse, pain that turned instantly to pleasure, hot uncontrollable pleasure. His penis was pressed against the leather desk top. He could feel the matron’s hand smoothing over his buttocks. He swore she reached down to his balls . . . He fought for control but it was useless. His cock spasmed. His mind was alive. At the exact moment the fifth stroke landed his cock jerked against his belly and spunk shot out across the leather top. His whole body shook like a beached whale as spunk jetted out and his mind was plunged into a trembling world of absolute pleasure.

‘Well, Mr Andrews . . .’ Melanie could not keep the note of triumph out of her voice.

‘Oh Mel . . .’

Melanie was smiling. It was true. It was all true. What she had read, her detailed research. Behind closed doors. This is what went on. Fantasies and phantasmagoria could produce startling results. She had tripped, not exactly accidentally but

certainly by chance, over Grant Andrews' secret agenda.

And he knew it.

'You won't . . . I mean . . . This can be our little secret, can't it, Mel? Just between us?' The intensity of his pleasure was in direct proportion to the acuteness of his anxiety. He was using a handkerchief to clean up his desk. He pulled his trousers and pants up around his waist.

'Of course, Grant. What two adults do in private is no one else's business, is it?'

'It's just a . . .'

'I know. I know what it is. I enjoyed it as much as you did.'

'Our little secret, then?'

'Exactly.' There was no need to say any more. There was no point in spelling out what would happen if the next promotion that came along did not go to her. Grant was an intelligent man used to being manipulated by women.

Melanie picked up her clothes from the floor. She pulled her bra around her breasts and climbed back into her blouse and skirt. Grant had slumped back on the sofa. He looked drained. She didn't bother to put her tights back on but stepped into the tiny black panties and pulled them up under her skirt. The tights were laddered anyway. She dropped them on to his lap, neatly covering his flaccid cock.

'Souvenir,' she said.

It was an evening he would never be able to forget. Melanie would make sure of that.

Chapter Five

'Hi,'

'Mel, how are you?' Bella recognised her voice immediately.

'A new woman. Literally.'

'I bet. I can't wait to see you.'

'That's why I'm ringing.'

'How about tomorrow night?'

'Great.'

'About eight?'

'Can't wait.'

Melanie put the phone down after an exchange of goodbyes. She had called as soon as she'd got home. Not only was she anxious to see Bella again but the sudden thought that had struck her in Grant's office had further aroused her curiosity. She could see the riding crops in her mind's eye and, as she came to think of it, remembered the way Bella had been dressed as she'd shown her out. Behind the closed doors of Bella's apartment, too, Melanie suspected she would discover more intriguing secrets, apart from those she had already been privy to. Bella had promised to reveal all. Judging from the reading material Bella had lent her, 'all' promised to be beyond Melanie's wildest imaginings.

Peeling off her clothes for the second time that evening Melanie decided on a bath and an early night. As she stooped to run her bath she caught a glimpse of a strange naked woman

in the bathroom mirror. Would she ever get used to the idea that this stranger, this beautiful stranger was, in fact, her?

There were three men. The long gallery was vaulted in brick like a medieval dungeon, its walls and floors in huge blocks of stone. The three men were naked, their hands chained together above their heads in the centre of the room, and pulled up until they were stretched almost on tiptoe. It looked as though their bodies had been oiled. Their muscles, strained and taut by virtue of their pose, were hard and strong. But not strong enough to escape.

She could not see their faces. Their heads were shrouded in tight-fitting black leather hoods, laced at the back. The leather followed every contour of their faces, their cheeks, their eyes, their jaws. There were small holes for the eyes and nose but none for the mouth. It was quite clear they had been whipped. Their buttocks were criss-crossed with red welts.

She walked over to them, her high heels clacking on the stone floor. She was wearing a scarlet satin full length strapless evening dress that fitted her body as though it had been painted on. Underneath the dress she was naked.

She stood by the first of the men. She extended her hand to touch his reddened buttocks. She was surprised at how much heat they generated. By contrast to his tanned oiled skin her hand seemed very white. The man winced as her cool hand touched his tender flesh, the noise muffled by the hood. Instantly she saw his cock stir. She went to the second man. She ran her hand the whole length of one of the welts. He moaned behind the hood. His cock too was provoked to instant erection.

The third man made no sound when she touched his arse but like the other two his cock unfurled rapidly. Their eyes were all

NAKED AMBITION

looking at her, silently begging her. They knew why she was there.

Still standing by the third man she ran her hand up his back and around to his throat. Her body tingled with excitement. She knew these men belonged to her. She looked down at the third man's cock. Her fingers trailed over his flesh, down to his armpits where they were stretched taut, over his pectorals, down to his nipple. Using the fingernail of her thumb and forefinger she pinched his nipple and watched his cock jerk involuntarily in response. She pinched three times. Each time his cock spasmed. A tear of fluid appeared at its tip.

'Him,' she said aloud, having made her choice.

Immediately there was a rattle of chains and the man's arms were released. He collapsed to the floor in a heap, his hands still bound together.

She took the leather hood in her hands and pressed it against her navel. She was trembling with excitement. She knew why, she knew what she was going to do. She had been given the power, she had been given control. These men belonged to her. She could use them, abuse them. She had the power over them. Her body and her mind.

She found the laces at the back of the hood and began to free them. She felt the eyes of the other two men watching her, begging her for release too. Their cocks strained upward, excited by her curves, by the satin of her dress, by her heady, musky perfume, by her beauty; even, she knew, by her cruelty.

Another woman appeared. She came up behind her and pulled the long zip of the red satin dress right down until her hands could move over Melanie's shoulders and peel the dress away like the skin of a snake. The dress seemed to disappear. The woman was turning her round so they were face to face. Even

though she was inches away her face was shrouded. Something was wrong. What was she doing here?

'Kiss me,' the woman said.

She recognised the voice. It was Bella. Bella's hands were holding her cheeks, pulling her mouth into a kiss. Now it was clear. It was Bella who had arranged everything. Bella whose tongue probed her mouth, whose hand stroked her pubic hair.

'No,' Melanie said firmly. 'I want him.'

She pulled away and tugged the leather hood off the man's head. The man looked up at her, tossing his head to flick his long blond hair out of his eyes. It was Steve. He did not smile at her.

'Take him then,' Bella was saying. 'Take them all. That's what they're here for.'

Melanie grabbed Steve's hair and pulled his head down between her thighs. Bella came to embrace her again, trapping Steve between their bodies, kissing Melanie's neck, tonguing the whorls of her ear, making her moan as she felt her other mouth being parted by Steve's tongue. She stared at the two men still hanging from their chains.

'I want them all,' she shouted, the words echoing in waves off the stone walls, just like the waves that engulfed her body in infinite pleasure, and woke her from the dream.

'My God . . .' Bella said, opening the front door of her apartment. 'Look at you. Come into the light. Let me look at you.'

She lead Melanie through into the front room.

'I can't believe it, Mel,' Bella stared and stared, turning Melanie around, touching her as if to reassure herself it wasn't some dream. She touched her face, her cheeks, she ran her hands

down to feel her waist. 'I can't believe it. Just look at you. A completely different woman. You're gorgeous. That doctor must be a genius. Your face looks like it's always been like that, no scars, no sign of anything . . .'

'He said he was just following the natural contours.'

'I believe it. But look at your figure.' Melanie was wearing one of the new dresses, its tight bosom and pencil skirt showing off her figure.

'That's all my own work. Diet and exercise,' she said proudly.

'I'd never have believed it possible. Not in four weeks.'

'Living proof . . .'

'This calls for champagne.' But Bella didn't go to the cocktail cabinet this time. 'Janet . . .'

she shouted as she guided Melanie over to sit on the sofa.

A rather tubby woman appeared from the kitchen. She was dressed in a tight black satin skirt, a frilly white lace blouse, and a white apron tied in a big bow at the back. Her surprisingly shapely legs were clad in black fishnet stockings (the clips of the suspenders were outlined under the tight skirt) and she wore surprisingly high-heeled black patent leather shoes.

'Champagne,' Bella ordered. 'This is my maid Janet,' Bella said, offering no further explanation. There was a look in her eyes that Melanie didn't understand.

The maid went to the cocktail cabinet, took out a bottle of champagne and opened it. She poured the wine into two flutes, put the flutes on a silver tray, the bottle in a silver cooler and set the tray down on the table in front of the two women.

Melanie watched her closely. There was something odd about the woman but she could not put her finger on exactly what. Her hair was very black and probably a wig. Her face was caked with old-fashioned pancake make-up and rouge. She was

wearing false eyelashes and, rather impractically for a maid, long false fingernails. Melanie could see a rather full lacy bra under the frills of the blouse.

'Will that be all, madam?' Janet asked in a rather falsetto voice.

'Have you done the washing?'

'It's in the dryer now, madam.'

'You may go.' Bella said, her voice imperious.

'Thank you madam.' Janet walked back into the kitchen tottering rather in the heels.

'So here's to the new you.' Bella handed her the champagne and they clinked glasses. 'Congratulations. You were always the same Mel. Once you've determined to do something you do it, don't you?'

'Do I?'

'Look how you worked at university.'

'I've been thinking a lot about you . . . about us.'

'Have you?' Bella looked amused.

'A lot has happened since. And you were right. I was frightened. I mean about what you made me feel.'

'And?'

'And you were right. I got as much pleasure from a man.'

'You have!' Bella looked delighted.

'It was like you opened me up, made me receptive.'

'I told you.'

'But it may sound crazy . . . this new body seems to respond differently. Be more sensitive . . .'

'It's probably all in the mind. You're just starting to have a different attitude to sex.'

'Definitely. I read those books too.'

'All of them?'

NAKED AMBITION

'Cover to cover. Some several times. I think I must have gone around with my eyes closed. I didn't know half of what went on. Or perhaps I just chose to ignore it.'

'And now?'

'I'm learning.'

'Do you want to learn more?'

'Bella, I told you why I started all this. It was a means to an end. Well, I'm enjoying the means so much I'm not sure I care about the end. No, that's not true. I do. I'm going to get my promotion. And a lot more. But I never thought I'd get so much pure pleasure along the way.'

Bella was smiling, genuinely pleased for her friend.

'Well, I'm really delighted for you. You deserve it.'

'And you knew just what to do to get me started. I'm so glad I came to you.'

'Do you want a repeat performance?' Bella looked straight into her eyes. Melanie felt her heart leap, a sudden jolt of desire taking her breath away.

'Oh yes, yes . . .'

Bella took her hand. She brought it up to her lips, pressing her mouth into Melanie's palm and then up her outstretched fingers. She leant forward until they were kissing, Melanie's fingers trapped between two sets of lips.

Melanie had thought about what had happened between them in this apartment so many times in the last weeks. It had been the beginning, the first time. Her body had been different then, flabby, fat, insensitive. She wanted so badly to experience the same sensations again with her new-found capacity for pleasure.

'One thing first,' Bella said, sipping her champagne.

'You were going to explain about . . .'

'You may be shocked.'

'Four weeks ago maybe . . .'

'Well . . .' Bella still hesitated.

'Why have you got four riding crops in your dressing room if you don't go riding?'

Bella laughed. 'Mel, when I left university I was out of work. I didn't have a good degree like you. I did have a good body. I met this guy. He was very keen on me. He wanted me to do certain things to him. Rather unusual things. I agreed. After a while, so he could see more of me, he set me up in this apartment, gave me money. All I had to do in return was agree to his rather unusual requirements, sexual requirements. He introduced me to two of his friends. They had similar needs. But they needed absolute discretion. At first I was a bit hesitant. But I got used to it. I even started to enjoy it. I had the apartment put in my name. It's a very satisfactory arrangement.'

'I bet.'

'All I have to do is put up with the minor eccentricities of three English public schoolboys with more money than sense. They've formed a sort of consortium to share the costs, very businesslike.'

Melanie put her champagne down. 'And?'

'And what?'

'What do you have to do?'

'Perhaps I should demonstrate. Let's go into the bedroom. Janet . . .' She shouted into the kitchen. 'Bring the champagne.'

Bella got to her feet and led Melanie out into the corridor. She heard Janet putting the glasses back on the tray and following them. They arrived in the bedroom with the mirrored bed. Janet put the tray down on the bedside table.

'Unzip me.' The command was addressed to Janet not Melanie.

NAKED AMBITION

Bella was wearing a dark green dress, very loose and flowing, its knee-length skirt only showing off her calves. The maid unclipped the hook at the top of the zip, then pulled the long zip down to the small of Bella's slim back. Bella pulled the dress off her shoulders and stepped out of it.

'Especially for you,' she said. Under the dress she was wearing a strapless underwired bra that pushed her breasts upward and inward. It was made of black lace trimmed with satin and matched the suspender belt that was strapped tightly around her waist. The suspender belt was wide, a delicate panel of lace extending half-way down her stomach, its edges scalloped downwards to accommodate the suspenders which were made from ruched black satin. High on Bella's thigh they held the welts of sheer black stockings taut, chevrons of black nylon wound around her creamy thighs. The nylon of the stockings was woven with Lycra to give them a glossy, shimmery appearance almost as though they were wet.

Bella wore no panties. The neatly trimmed triangle of her pubic hair, curly and red, was framed by the suspender belt at the top, the suspenders at the side and the welts of the stockings at the bottom.

'You look so sexy,' Melanie said.

Bella came up behind her friend and reached for her zip. But Melanie stopped her.

'I want us to be alone,' she whispered.

Bella smiled and kissed her neck. She ran her hands round her body and cupped her breasts under the material of the dress. 'I thought you wanted to know my secrets, Mel,' she said, her fingers finding Melanie's nipples and pinching them quite hard.

'I do but . . .'

'Do you think my friend is beautiful, Janet?'

'Yes, madam,' Janet replied, the falsetto of her voice wavering.

Melanie knew there was something wrong. She should insist that they be left alone, but Bella's hand was already moving down her belly and over her pubis to drag the material of the dress up between her legs. Did she really care? Did she care about anything other than her own pleasure?

'Janet likes to watch,' Bella whispered, kissing Melanie's ear, blowing hot air into it.

'I'd rather we . . .'

'I like her to watch, Mel. It excites me.'

The zip of Melanie's dress sung as Bella pulled it down. In seconds the dress was on the floor and Bella was unclipping her pretty white bra. She saw the maid's eyes eagerly awaiting the revelation of her tits. The eyes excited her. They were small beady eyes. Melanie wanted them to see her. She shuckled herself out of the bra, her firm breasts trembling at their freedom.

'God Mel, what a difference. Your tits, your waist . . .'

'And all my own work.'

'So beautiful . . .'

Bella was leading her over to the bed. Its counterpane had been stripped off and the top sheet pulled back. Despite the presence of the maid Melanie felt no hesitation now. If her friend wanted to watch what was wrong in that? Another new experience. Add exhibitionism to her new sexual vocabulary.

She couldn't say the idea wasn't beginning to excite her too. There was something about the maid, about her face, that thick make-up, her odd figure, that she didn't understand, that didn't fit, something that nagged at the back of her mind, but Bella was pressing her back on the bed, and her lips were sucking at her hard nipples and it was impossible to concentrate on anything

but the delicious sensations her body was producing.

Bella's mouth alternated, moving from one nipple to the other, licking and sucking them while her hand snaked down into Melanie's white panties and into her labia, teasing out her clitoris. It was no surprise to Melanie that she was wet. She had been wet, she was sure, since she'd walked into the apartment. Wet in anticipation.

'Oh Bella . . .' Bella's finger was caressing her clitoris, up and down, with just the perfect amount of pressure, not too hard, not too soft.

'Let me do it to you . . .' Bella said.

'Yes, yes . . .'

Melanie arched her hips off the bed so Bella could pull the panties away. As Bella tugged them down Melanie looked for the maid. She was standing at the foot of the bed, her eyes looking at Melanie's crotch as her labia and sex were revealed. They would be glistening, Melanie thought, glistening with her juices.

Immediately the panties were discarded Bella's mouth locked on to Melanie's sex. It was like a giant limpit, sucking it up, clinging to it, Hoovering up her juices. Melanie moaned and closed her eyes. This is not how she'd imagined it would be but it was just as exciting. She had never felt so open. She felt exposed, and knew that thought was thrilling her. Her whole body was quivering under the ministrations of Bella's tongue. She remembered the first time. She remembered Steve. She remembered Grant. Her body was alive with feeling and her mind teeming with sexual images. She was coming, her nerves singing, her muscles stretched taut, climbing a rock-face of sensation hand over hand, then, at the summit, throwing herself down the precipice on the other side, down and

down into the total darkness of absolute pleasure.

She felt Bella's mouth leave her sex. In seconds it was at her mouth, kissing her. She kissed back eagerly, hungrily lapping her own juices from Bella's lips. Suddenly she felt the bed give. Her legs were still open and in an instant she felt a body between them, moving down on her. Before she had realised what was happening she felt a cock, hot and hard, pressing between her labia, searching for the gateway to her cunt. In less than a second it had found what it was looking for and plunged home.

Melanie gasped. The cock was big. It filled her. It went right up her, its balls banging at her arse. She struggled to say something but Bella's tongue was buried deep in her mouth and gagged her, just as Bella's head blocked her view. She wrestled her mouth away from her friend and looked down the bed. There, lying on top of her, was the maid. The black satin skirt was pulled up to the waist and white knickers pulled down to the thighs, but otherwise 'she' was still fully dressed. Melanie could see the tops of the fishnet stockings attached to white suspenders. 'She' was still wearing the black high heels. The maid was a man, a man in very elaborate drag.

Bella was gazing down at her as if for reassurance that what she had planned for her friend was acceptable. But Melanie needed to say nothing. Her body said it all. She wormed herself down on the big cock and pulled the maid down on to her, wrapping her arms around his back, feeling the padding that filled the white bra press into her real tits.

'Fuck me,' she moaned and meant it.

Bella got off the bed. She watched as Janet's buttocks rose and fell, furiously hammering into Melanie's body. She had left a riding crop at the side of the bed. She stood over the writhing couple, whip in hand.

NAKED AMBITION

‘Such a lucky boy,’ she said. The whip cracked down on his buttocks between the satin skirt and the panties, a neat target. Melanie watched over his shoulder. She felt his cock driven into her as if by a power hammer. The whip fell again. And then the man was coming, his cock swelling further, his tempo manic now, slamming into her as his cock spasmed too.

And as he exploded, as spunk shot into her body, Melanie felt herself suddenly go rigid, and another orgasm – unexpected, with no build-up, no warning – shoot through her nerves like a massive electric shock. She heard herself scream, loud and hard, scream with pleasure, and her body arched up off the bed, arched between her heels and her shoulders, right up off the sheets, despite the weight of the man on top of her.

‘He’s one of the three.’

‘That much I guessed.’

They were back in the living room wrapped in fluffy towelling robes and drinking a very good cognac from big balloon brandy glasses.

‘Does all my washing, cleans the kitchen, tidies everything up.’

‘All dressed as a maid?’

‘Sometimes in a normal dress. He comes in and gets changed and spends the whole day with me. I help him with his make-up. Sometimes we go out shopping together.’

‘Dressed as a woman?’

‘Of course. I help him buy clothes. There’s special shops that cater for bigger sizes. Shoes are a problem.’

‘Then what?’

‘What do you mean?’

‘What do you do . . . sexually. I mean you don’t always have

co-operative girlfriends around, do you?’

‘No, that was a very special treat. I doubt he’ll ever forget it.’

‘I certainly won’t. So what do you usually do?’

‘Oh, it varies. Sometimes I pretend to catch him masturbating. Sometimes I strap on a dildo and fuck him.’

‘What! Really?’

‘Yes. But that’s only if he’s been very good. To tell you the truth he’s much more into wearing the clothes and being treated as a woman. That’s his turn on. He’s really not that bothered about anything else.’

Melanie sipped at the brandy. Her body hadn’t really come down from the high she had reached and she could still feel it humming. Her hands, she noticed as she brought the glass to her lips, were still a little shaky.

‘And what about the other two? What do they want?’

‘Hadn’t you better take it bit by bit!’

‘No, I want the whole story.’

‘OK. Have it your way. Follow me.’

Bella got up off the sofa and led the way out into the corridor and down towards the bedroom. But instead of going into the bedroom she stood in front of a door a little further down.

‘You’re sure now?’ she said, smiling mischievously.

‘Is there anyone in there?’ Melanie asked.

‘No, there’s a very strict rota. One at a time. It’s a rule.’

There was a key in the door. Bella turned it. The door opened outwards. She led the way, closing the door behind them. Melanie found herself in a small, almost square room. Its walls, ceiling and floor were all lined with the same charcoal grey carpet; even the inside of the door was covered with it. In one corner of the room there was a metal cage, about the size of a

NAKED AMBITION

telephone box but only three feet tall. Chains were attached to each of its four corners which ran up to a metal ring that hung from a nylon rope over a pulley set in the ceiling. The other end of the rope was threaded through a ratchet. By means of turning the handle on the ratchet the cage could be raised or lowered.

But this was by no means the only strange device in the room. Screwed securely to one wall were four metal rings attached to a metal plate. Fixed to each ring was a padded leather cuff. It was not difficult to imagine, by the position of the rings, that they were intended to spread-eagle a victim against the wall, stretched out and helpless. Another, smaller ring was set in the middle of this arrangement. Hanging from this was a much smaller leather strap.

‘Well,’ Bella said. ‘What do you think? Teddy, he’s the original guy, the one I met first. He likes to go in the cage. I hoist it up to the ceiling and he stays there until I’m good and ready. Charley, he likes to be strapped to the wall. I had Charley in here that first day you came, remember?’

‘My God, yes . . .’ Melanie remembered. It explained the remarks Bella had made. ‘And this turns them on?’

‘And how. Sometimes they get so randy they come of their own accord. When I let Teddy out of the cage he’s desperate, desperate . . . And this is the *prie-dieu*.’

Melanie stood by a sturdy frame that was no more than a rectangular box turned on its end with a step attached to one side about a foot from the ground. The step and the top of the box were padded in black leather. Straps on the opposite side from the step were obviously intended to keep the victim tied down.

‘They all spend some time on here, even Janet. Praying I’ll stop . . .’ She laughed.

Melanie had found it difficult to believe some of the things she'd read in the books, the seemingly endless variety of sexual images, urges and pleasures. In the last days she had begun to see it for herself.

'I had no idea about all this, Bella, I thought those books you gave me were pure fantasy . . .'

'Neither did I in the beginning. When Teddy first told me what he was into I thought he was crazy. Apparently it's common . . .'

'Apparently people are keen to turn fantasy into reality.'

'Exactly. Anyway, now you know. I suppose basically it's like being a prostitute. But nobody gets hurt. There's no risk. It suits everyone . . .'

'Can I ask you something?'

'Of course.'

'Can I come again? I mean when one of the others is here.' Melanie felt her heart miss a beat as she said the words.

'They'd love that.'

'I think I would too.' Her imagination was working overtime. She could see a man stretched out in the leather cuffs against the wall, his cock secured in the smallest of the straps. She shivered involuntarily.

Bella led the way out of the room and locked the door after them. She headed down towards the living room but Melanie caught her hand as they passed the bedroom door.

'Has Janet gone?'

'Yes.'

'So now I've had my second lesson how 'bout a repeat of the first? You wouldn't want me to forget everything you've taught me, would you?'

'And you were worried you were turning into a lesbian.'

NAKED AMBITION

'That was before Steve.'

Melanie seized the lapels of Bella's robe and pulled her forward, kissing her mouth voraciously, her mind full of images, her body churning with sexual need. As she kissed she opened the robe, just as Bella opened hers and their breasts squashed together, their nipples the only hardness in a sea of soft spongy flesh. The robes were discarded. They stood in the doorway for a long time, their bodies intertwined, Melanie's leg between Bella's before the kiss ended and they walked, hand in hand, into the bedroom.

Chapter Six

It was exactly four weeks later that Melanie Chambers left her desk in the research department to take up her new job as production assistant. Grant Andrews had been as good as his word. As soon as the vacancy had occurred he'd summoned Melanie into his office and told her, in his long-winded and most pompous manner, that he was going to recommend her wholeheartedly as he had promised. Effectively, of course, he had no choice. Melanie would make a point of picking up the metal ruler on his desk whenever she was in his office. The gesture always seemed to make Grant obsequious to the point of absurdity. It had also conclusively curbed his efforts to renew their physical relationship.

For the last two years PTV had produced the top-rated drama series in the UK. *The Investigator* was immensely popular with the public and so was its star, Adam Powell. It was to this production that Melanie was assigned.

Its producer, and her new boss, was a very different character from Grant Andrews. Gordon Davies looked like a doctor of literature at a redbrick university. He was tall and lanky with a thick but well-trimmed beard. He invariably wore a sports jacket with leather patches at the elbows, corduroy trousers that had bagged at the knee and laced suede crepe-soled shoes. He was extremely good at his job. It was he who had conceived the idea of having Adam Powell in the leading role. It had been a

long and protracted business persuading Powell that he should abandon his ambitions to become a movie star and move on to television. Davies had convinced him that he was wasting his talent in small insignificant film roles, and should expose himself to the wider television audiences where he would be fully appreciated. Powell finally agreed, after being guaranteed the biggest salary in British television history, and told his friends he was doing it so his adoring public would see more of him.

Powell's opinion of himself, of his talent and ability and charm in every field of endeavour, was second to none. It was confirmed by the huge critical and commercial success of the first series of *The Investigator*. Unfortunately for everyone who worked on the series, and most of all for Gordon Davies, the success made Powell's already inflated ego swell to mammoth proportions. In Hollywood Powell had seen how stars were treated and demanded similar treatment and perks, despite the fact that this was a television production, not a major feature film.

He wanted chauffeur-driven cars day and night. He wanted his own private Winnibago on location. He wanted meals brought in from London restaurants. On location he demanded huge hotel suites and left the production accountant to pay the room service bill including the vintage champagne that Powell consumed by the crate-load.

Recently, and more disruptively, he had started to demand instant re-writes of the script and had refused to work with two directors who had had to be replaced.

The more successful *The Investigator* was the more intransigent and unco-operative Adam Powell became, though he was careful none of his tantrums leaked to the press. He wanted, above all else, to preserve his public image of a carefree

man of the people, an I'll-muck-in-with-everyone sort of guy with appearances for charity to emphasise his integrity.

Melanie Chambers' introduction to the recalcitrant star was in the first hour of her new job. She had, of course, heard all the rumours about his behaviour. Indeed whenever she'd seen Gordon Davies in PTV's building she had seen the effect Powell was having on him. Gordon recently seemed to have aged, his face drawn with lines, the bags under his eyes reaching further and further down his cheeks.

The production was on location in a small village outside Oxford. Unfortunately Adam Powell had demanded a re-write of the scene they were to shoot the morning of Melanie's arrival and Davies had categorically refused. The script was how he, the producer, wanted it. Powell's reaction was simply to sulk in his Winnibago and refuse to come out to play.

It was officially the production assistant's job to call an actor on to the set, so, after thirty minutes, Melanie was given this as the first task in her new job. It was difficult for her not to wish she had stayed in research.

Tentatively Melanie knocked on the ribbed steel door of the Winnibago.

'Mr Powell,' she said firmly.

There was no reply.

'Mr Powell,' she repeated, knocking again harder.

'Who is it?'

'Melanie Chambers.'

'Who's Melanie Chambers?'

'I'm the new p.a.'

'Go away.'

'Can I just talk to you?'

'No.'

'Please . . .'

There was a silence. What made him open the door Melanie did not know but suddenly it was flung open. Powell's eyes were looking straight into hers. They were the colour of burnished brandy. If anything he appeared more handsome than on the screen, his square jaw and symmetrical features under his thick curly black hair suggesting a strong masculinity.

'You'd better come in.' The annoyance had gone from his voice.

Melanie mounted the two steps that led into the huge mobile caravan's interior. It felt like entering the lion's den.

'So you're the new p.a.' He was looking her up and down. 'And Gordon's no doubt told you all about me. What an ogre I am, how I'm an arrogant s.o.b. . . . like that.' In the series Powell affected a sort of West Country burr but in reality his voice had a hint of an American accent, picked up from his many years in Los Angeles.

'That's right, he has,' Melanie said frankly.

'And you agreed with him?'

'Of course. There's a full cast and crew out there doing nothing. Waiting on you.'

Her forthrightness seemed to appeal to Powell. He grinned rather sheepishly and sat down in the chair in front of his make-up mirror.

'You're very direct.'

'You asked my opinion.'

'I did. And you gave it without fear or favour. I suppose everyone you've ever met has told you that you are beautiful?'

The remark caught Melanie by surprise. 'No, actually . . .'

'Well you are. Take it from me. I'm an expert.'

'Thank you,' was all she could think to say.

NAKED AMBITION

'Are you married, engaged, affianced, occupied . . . what's that ghastly term they use now . . . a live-in-lover?'

'None of those.'

'You didn't, I notice, tell me it was none of my damn business.' He was looking at her in the mirror, his face smiling broadly.

'I didn't, did I?'

'Why is that?'

'Must be because I don't mind you knowing.'

'Why is that?'

'Mr Powell, you know you are an attractive man. Half the women in this country would give up their homes to be in the same room as you. Let's not play games.'

Powell laughed loudly. He rocked back on his chair and clapped as he laughed.

'OK Ms Chambers,' he emphasised the 'ms'. 'Tell Gordon the Goofer that I'll make a deal with him. I'll come and do his blasted scene on condition his new p.a. has dinner with me tonight.'

'I'd love to have dinner with you tonight,' Melanie said calmly, though she wasn't feeling in the least calm.

'Then Gordon's got a deal. Why don't we keep it our little secret?'

'Whatever you want.'

'I'll pick you up at seven.'

'No. I'll come to your hotel. We'll eat there.'

'Well, you certainly know what you want. Are you always this decisive?'

'Always.'

He smiled at her sweetly in the mirror. She did not smile back, but turned on her heels and left.

Gordon Davies literally jumped into the air when she told him the news.

'How did you do it?' he asked.

She didn't tell him.

The Ambassador's Hotel was small and very exclusive. It was situated in a quiet rural location in the Oxfordshire countryside. No expense had been spared to see that its guests were cosseted in luxury, style and elegance. Adam Powell insisted on staying there whenever location work brought them to the area.

Melanie parked her car in the small car park tucked away at the rear of the premises. She had dressed carefully. Nothing too obvious. A simple white silk blouse and a black skirt, its hem just above the knee, a big gold brooch pinned above her breast. Her shoes were less understated, very high-heeled black leather, the toes trimmed with shining chrome metal.

She had been thinking quite a lot about Adam Powell since their first meeting this morning. She thought him rude, arrogant and insufferable: he was also one of the most attractive men she had ever seen. Strangely she had never really been attracted to him on the screen but in person it appeared it was a different matter. Those burnished brown eyes had seemed to see right into her, making her feel vulnerable and exposed.

Of course, she knew if she had been the old Melanie, the lumpy body and jowly face, he would not have seen her at all. He would have looked through her not into her. So it was just as well he hadn't. Just as well because Melanie was attracted to him and just as well for the production, for her new job and, it had to be said, for her future career. She was quite aware that making a friend of Adam Powell would do no harm at all to her

prospects of taking another step up the television executives' ladder.

At reception she asked the way to Mr Powell's suite and was directed up the stairs to the first floor. She mounted the thickly carpeted solid oak staircase and along the corridor, its ceiling vaulted in a complex arrangement of red brocade, its walls hung with an eccentric collection of eighteenth-century portraits. None of the rooms in the hotel were numbered. Instead they were named after various prominent personages in the ballet world. Appropriately enough Powell was installed in the Diaghilev Suite.

Melanie knocked twice on the panelled double oak doors.

'Come . . .' an imperious and thunderous voice called, an actor's training being shown off in the way the word vibrated through the door.

Melanie opened the door.

'Come in, come in . . .' Powell said.

He was sitting on one of the two vast sofas that were the main furniture of the living room of the suite. The room itself was on the corner of the building so from two large windows there were magnificent views of the Oxfordshire countryside, to one side a field of sheep, to the other a meadow in which two horses grazed. Powell was wearing a red and black silk robe. It was extremely short and very loosely belted at the waist. His body was a thick mat of hair as dark as the hair on his head. In front of him on the long coffee table between the two sofas was a nineteenth-century silver wine cooler in which was sitting a half empty bottle of 1964 Krug Champagne. Two crystal champagne flutes sat on the table next to it, one with an inch of wine inside.

'Good evening,' Melanie said formally.

'Well, you're a pretty sight. Champagne?'

'Thank you.'

As he poured the wine Melanie sat on the sofa opposite him. The folds of the robe parted to reveal his cock. Equally covered in hair as the rest of his body it looked bulbous and thick though quite flaccid, a long foreskin covering the tip, like the open end of a balloon. He handed Melanie a glass fully aware that he was on display.

'Cheers,' he said.

'Cheers,' she repeated. They were too far apart to attempt to clink their glasses together but raised them in the air instead. The wine was delicious, its age reflected in the lack of bubbles and its rich golden colour. What would be appearing on the room service bill for PTV to pay was another matter.

Powell lent back on the sofa. He did not bother to adjust his robe. It was a sort of test, Melanie knew, to see what her reaction would be. He probably did it with all the women he met, like a rite of passage. If they ran out in tears and shock it would no doubt save him a lot of trouble. Melanie had no intention of running anywhere.

'Wonderful champagne,' she said.

'Yes, they have one case left. It's difficult to get now. That's why I always stay here.' He sipped from his glass. 'Excuse my robe by the way. After a day in front of the cameras I like to come back and get straight under the shower . . . I didn't have time to . . .'

'Don't apologise. I'm enjoying the view.' Melanie let him see that her eyes were focused on his cock. Immediately she saw it quiver and begin to unfurl. 'Well, it obviously likes attention.'

He looked down at it. 'It likes you.'

NAKED AMBITION

She stood up and put the crystal flute down on the table. 'And here was I thinking you wanted to spend the evening talking about the difficulties you were having with PTV's production executives . . .'

'I do, I do . . .' he said smiling.

Melanie was standing over him now, looking down into his lap. His cock was more than half erect, the foreskin pushed back enough for her to be able to see the slit of his urethra.

'I think you should cover yourself up then. Because if you expect me to talk business with that thing pointing at me you're going to be very disappointed.'

'Oh dear, how did that happen.'

She sat next to him, and took hold of the bow that knotted the belt of the robe. She pulled it open, then let her hand move the three inches down to his cock. As soon as her hand touched it she felt it swell. The distance between half-erect and fully was covered in milliseconds.

'You're very direct.'

'You're very erect. Would you rather we chatted inconsequentially for half-an-hour before you screwed me?' Her hand pulled back his foreskin with a jerk. He moaned.

'No.'

'That makes two of us.'

She lent forward so her mouth was poised above his now rampant organ and put out her tongue, its tip flicking at the pink newly-exposed glans. Then she tried to cram it down the little oval slit. Giving up on this impossible task she licked the whole shaft as though it were some giant ice-cream cone. Finally she sunk her mouth down on him, taking as much of his cock as she could, jamming it into the back of her throat, her lips tickled by the curly black hair at the base of his shaft. She bobbed her

head back up, sucking his glans almost viciously at the top of the stroke, then falling on him again, down and down until he was buried in her mouth. She tried to make her mouth like a cunt, a big wet tight hungry cunt.

Powell was moaning, a rhythmic moan corresponding to the tempo of her mouth. She felt his cock swell and thought he was going to spunk. Not that she would have minded. As long as he had a good time, as long as he remembered her, as long as Melanie Chambers was something special to him from now on, she wouldn't have minded at all. But he managed to regain his control.

Melanie sat up, looking into his eyes.

'Don't you want to come in my mouth?' she asked.

He wrapped his arm around her neck and pulled her into a kiss. She could still taste his cock as his tongue probed between her lips and she met it with her own, fencing with it, pushing it to and fro.

She freed herself from his mouth and stood up. He looked at her quizzically, wanting to know what she was going to do.

Slowly, looking at him all the time, she unbuttoned her blouse, pulling the material from out of the skirt. As soon as the cuffs were unbuttoned she cast it aside. Her bra was a creamy beige, under-wired and three-quarter cup, her breasts spilling over its satin scalloped edges. She unzipped her skirt at the back using both her hands. The movement pushed her breasts out against their constraints. The skirt dropped to the floor. She saw Powell's eyes on her body, on the thin beige suspender belt that held up her stockings, on the tiny triangle of beige silk, puffed out by the pubic hair that veiled her sex almost as though inflated.

Melanie laced her fingers together behind her neck so he

could look at her. A tear of fluid appeared at the tip of his cock. He lent forward until his nose was an inch from the apex of her thighs and she could feel his breath on the silk of the panties.

'Beautiful,' he said as his fingers found the thin elasticated waistband of the panties. He pulled it down, down to her knees. They dropped to the floor. He buried his face in her thighs using his nose to burrow down between them. Her labia were wet. She suddenly felt his tongue probing upward, parting her lips to find her clitoris.

She ran her fingers into his thick black hair and held herself against him, grinding her pubic bone into his face. She suddenly felt immensely excited. It was not only what his tongue was doing to her clitoris but the situation. She had been so busy performing for him, making him want her, that she had barely thought of her own needs. Now, as his tongue stroked her clitoris and pleasure flooded through her body in waves, she was freed of everything but her own enjoyment. She had him now.

Lacing her fingers into his hair she jerked his head back from her body and stared into his eyes. She bent over to kiss him, his mouth wet with her juices.

'I want your cock,' she said, releasing his hair and pushing him back on to the sofa, lowering herself on to his thighs to trap him at the same time. The tops of her stockings rested on his legs. He lay back watching as she worked her way on to his cock, until his balls were against her thick pubic hair. Then she raised herself on her haunches, took his cock in her hand and guided it between her labia. As soon as she felt it at the wet opening of her cunt she dropped herself on to it, not slowly and gradually, but hard and fast, immediately beginning to ride it, rocking up and down on it just as her mouth had minutes before. But much faster. Faster and faster in fact, her copious juices

making the effort frictionless, his cock hard and strong and big inside her.

Her tits bounced up and down too, slapping against her chest. He reached up to catch them. One by one he imprisoned them in his hands, kneading them first then rolling her nipples between his fingers.

Melanie was coming. She was making herself come. Her clitoris was hitting the hard bone at the base of his shaft, her cunt filled to the brim with cock. She felt herself on the edge ready to be driven over it. She stopped pummelling down on him, leaving him buried deep inside her. She squirmed and writhed on him instead, using every muscle in her cunt to squeeze the rod of flesh inside her, squeeze it as hard as she could, squeeze not for him but for her, to make her feel him that much more intensely. It was enough. She felt the first pulse of orgasm wash through her body. She looked down at him, looked at her tits in his hands and a second hot pulse took her up and over the edge, rolled her eyes back, flooded every nerve with sensation, locked her muscles and started her whole body rocking helplessly back and forth. It seemed to go on forever. Just as she thought it was ebbing another wave would hit her, breaking over the helmet of his cock deep inside her cunt.

Eventually it was over.

'I think you needed that,' he said quietly.

She climbed off him. His cock was still rampant, sticking up from his loins at right angles, glistening now with the wetness from her body.

'I did,' she said. 'Now tell me what you need.'

Without a word he stood up and took her hand. He led her through to the bedroom, his cock bobbing out in front of him. The curtains in the bedroom were drawn and the room was in

semi-darkness. The chambermaid had already turned down the bed.

'Will you give me what I want?' he asked.

'Yes.'

'Anything?'

'Yes.'

He kissed her full on the mouth, his erection squeezed between their navels. She wrapped her arms around him under the robe. His tongue explored her mouth. It felt as hot and big as his cock had been. She pulled the robe from his shoulders and it fell to the floor. Then he was pushing her back on to the bed, his mouth still locked on hers.

As soon as she was down he lay on top of her. She wrapped her stocking-clad legs around his back. The smooth silky nylon felt slippery. His cock nudged down between her legs but did not enter her. She could feel it throbbing against her thick labia.

Rather to her surprise he rolled off her, breaking the kiss and coming up on to his knees. He was pulling her over on to her stomach. She allowed herself to be turned. She rested her face against the sheets. They were linen and smelt fresh and clean. Her arse stuck up from the long curve of her back, her new arse, neat and trim and plump through daily exercise. Before her buttocks had extended down her thighs practically to the back of her knees, a seamless rump of fat. Now the bottom of her arse was marked by a distinct inward curve, a crescent-shaped crease of flesh. It was this crescent that Powell was caressing.

'Great arse,' he said, almost to himself.

She did not reply, merely pushing it, almost subconsciously, further up into the air. His hand moved to the deep cleft of its cheeks. He ran his hand down until it was at the little puckered

barnacle of her anus. It was wet from the juices that had run out of her sex. He pushed his finger into it experimentally as he swung his leg over her so he knelt between her open thighs. His finger went in without resistance. He took it out immediately and lowered himself on to her, his chest against her back. His cock buried itself between her labia, but she felt him pull it back and up, up to the entrance his finger had explored.

Suddenly Melanie realised what he was going to do. He was going to bugger her. She had never been buggered. Never. A thrill quivered through her body, a strange combination of fear and anticipation. She'd heard that it hurt, could hurt badly and Powell had a big cock. But her excitement was too great to stop him. She wanted it, whatever the cost. As Powell nosed his cock forward she moaned, wanting him to know it was all right, wanting him to know she wanted it too.

He needed no further encouragement. His cock, wet from the juices on her labia, thrust through the little portal. For the first time in her life she felt the size and heat of a man's cock invading her arse. Her heart leapt, her pulse racing.

'Oh . . .' she exclaimed.

It wasn't very deep. He pushed it deeper.

'Oh . . .' she couldn't help herself. She was wriggling back on him wanting more. He gave it to her. Now most of his cock was inside her. It filled her completely in a way she had never been filled before. His hand had gone under her hips and up between her legs. He found her cunt and pushed two fingers deep into the cavity there. She suddenly felt them moving inside her, moving up alongside his cock, separated only by the thin wall of her body.

He started a rhythm, thrusting in and out of her. He thrust his cock forward as he withdrew his fingers in her vagina. Her

sex was soaking wet. As he pulled his cock back he thrust his fingers forward. In and out, out and in.

Melanie had never felt anything like it in her life. Her whole sex was on fire. She had never felt so open, split open, every inch of her body exploding with feeling. It was like having two cunts, two gaping hungry openings pumping out unbelievable sensations. She thought she might die of pleasure. She was coming not in waves building to one big orgasm but in a succession of sharp, strong peaks, each one an orgasm in itself, an explosion but joined, linked, united to the next, and each longer, harder and deeper than the first. She had no control. She was sobbing, moaning, gasping for breath.

She felt him coming. His cock began to swell. She thought the extra size would split her in two. His fingers left her cunt. Instead he moved to her clitoris. With no subtlety – she wanted none – he began to rub at the engorged bud of nerves, rubbing sideways as though his finger were an eraser trying to remove a stubborn mark from a piece of paper. He rubbed faster and faster, grinding his fingers against her.

Melanie didn't think she could come again but she did. Her body was on fire, completely swamped, every nerve protesting, trying desperately to cope with something it had never experienced before. She felt his spunk rising. He did not stop. He thrust forward with his cock plunging into her arse as his hand fringed her for all he was worth.

Then he gave one last thrust and she felt his cock jerking inside her tight rear, spitting out pearls of spunk. Almost at the same moment, provoked one last time, an orgasm exploded in her, the culmination of all those that had gone before, taking her body and her mind and all her senses into a world where there was only ecstasy. It was almost as though she passed out.

It was a long time before the deep velvety darkness disappeared and her body regained its grip on normality.

Chapter Seven

It was, according to the people who had been at PTV since the company won the franchise, the swiftest promotion in the history of the company. Two weeks after being promoted from researcher to production assistant, Melanie Chambers was promoted again and given the exalted title of Associate Producer.

For the senior executives of PTV it was a simple equation. In the two weeks since Melanie Chambers had been assigned to the production Adam Powell had been on time, on cue and available whenever was deemed necessary. Conservatively speaking that had saved the company at least £60,000. So when Mr Powell suggested to Gordon Davies that in order to foster this new spirit of co-operation and enlightenment that it would be a good idea if Melanie Chambers co-ordinated all his requests for re-writes and other objections in terms of the production, and conveyed them to the company, Gordon was only too happy to agree. Clearly, Powell had added, such a responsible job would have to carry an equally responsible title and indeed a commensurate salary. Davies had seen no option but to agree. *The Investigator* had two months left to run. A promotion and pay rise for Melanie was a small price to pay for a happy and co-operative star.

The cause of Powell's sudden interest in Melanie's career was only too obvious. But it caused Melanie no difficulties with the rest of the crew. Production assistants and stars had had

affairs before and no doubt would again. Most of the crew and cast were only too happy that the temper tantrums of their star appeared to have been surmounted by love or lust. A few muttered darkly that it was bound not to last, but generally speaking the consensus of opinion was amazement at what Melanie had done in calming and taming the Powell ego.

But their amazement was only matched by her own. Since their first night together Powell had seemed to be besotted with her. He was like a young puppy, always wanting to be at her side, willing to obey her every whim. Since during the day this involved getting him on set on time, with his lines learnt, the arrangement was beneficial for everyone.

Whether Melanie had gone to bed with Adam Powell as part of her grand design, her master plan to succeed in life, she could not honestly say. When she had gone to his hotel room that first night she had had every intention of sleeping with him: that much she knew. But had she done it because he was a powerful and successful actor or because, quite simply, he was an enormously attractive man? In a way, because she would have liked to have thought of herself as single-minded, she preferred to think it was because she knew it would inevitably help her career. On the other hand she could not deny the pure animal attraction she had felt from the first moment she had set foot in his Winnibago.

Not that it really mattered. The result was the same. Melanie Chambers, Associate Producer. Name on her office door. Name on the credits of *The Investigator*. Another step up the executive ladder.

In fact the idea to have Melanie promoted had come from Powell himself and not from her. In their first week together he seemed genuinely pleased with the suggestions she had made

NAKED AMBITION

on the script and the way she had conveyed the ideas to Davies. Davies was equally pleased not to have stand up fights with Powell and to have advance warning of script changes. They both got what they wanted. Powell got the re-writes to match the strong positive character he wanted to play, and Davies got a shooting schedule not prone to last-minute hitches. If going to bed with Powell had been a career move, it was him, not her, who had initiated the first step.

In any event Melanie intended to sit back and enjoy her good fortune. Not only did she have the promotion she knew she deserved after three years of watching less gifted people climb over her by fair means or foul, she was living a luxurious and rich life. True, after the initial burst of sexual enthusiasm for her body and his obsession with her rear passage, Powell's ardour had cooled considerably and rather rapidly. But that did not concern Melanie too much. She did not imagine that he was the great love of her life, nor she his. It wouldn't last. Powell was too used to getting his own way, too used to having women throwing themselves at him, to be satisfied with one for long. Her strategy was to make herself so indispensable to him in areas of work that when the next woman came along he might discard her from his bed but not from his life.

So Melanie worked hard. Fortunately for her Gordon Davies had become so tired of his constant battles with Powell that, when he found he could delegate power to her with the minimum of worry and the maximum of effect, he spent most of the day in the studio bar, or on location in the hotel, letting her run the production. In consultation with Powell she brought in new directors for the later episodes and managed to hire new writers – people she had carefully taken note of in her early years at the company. Powell was pleased. Davies was pleased. The crew

and cast were happy and senior executives of PTV delighted. Their top-rated series was set for another record breaking season. Advertisers would pay handsomely for a slot in the middle of *The Investigator*.

Melanie spent her nights in London at Powell's flat in Holland Park. On location, while she was officially booked a room in the hotel where the rest of the crew stayed, she kept all her things in the Diaghilev Suite at the Ambassador's Hotel.

It was in the third week of this arrangement that she was introduced to one of Powell's less conventional friends. Powell had been given the afternoon off as he was not required on one particular location and had gone back to the hotel early. It was seven-thirty by the time Melanie let herself into the suite with her key. The living room, where Powell usually lay with his feet up on the sofa watching television, was deserted.

'Adam,' she shouted. Pulling off the jacket of her black suit she walked to the bedroom door and opened it. She was not prepared for what she saw. Adam Powell was lying in the middle of the big double bed naked, his cock, fully erect, in his hand. Sitting on the edge of the bed, but not touching him, was a woman in her mid-thirties. She had long thick dark hair brushed out so it flowed over her shoulders like a black waterfall, and a rather angular small-featured face that seemed to emphasise her big brown eyes. She was smoking a black Sobranie cigarette, its gold tip stained with the flame-red lipstick she wore, lipstick that matched her varnished fingernails.

The big brown eyes turned from watching Powell's cock to Melanie. There was no surprise in them, nor dismay, only mild curiosity. Nor did Powell react with any alarm. He continued to wank his penis with a slow even movement.

'Hi, darling,' he said as if he were sitting in an armchair

NAKED AMBITION

with a book in his hand. 'Can I introduce Lydia Holbeck. Lydia, this is Melanie.'

Melanie had seen Lydia before in the PTV building. She was an executive producer in the drama department. They had never had occasion to exchange so much as a word before. Now Melanie had to react quickly. The casualness with which the two were treating the interruption of their triste gave her the clue. There was no point raging against Powell, telling him he was a two-timing bastard and slamming out. He clearly regarded his behaviour as quite acceptable and so did Lydia Holbeck. And though Melanie was shocked, she could hardly pretend a moral outrage that she did not feel.

Lydia got to her feet. She was wearing a white wild silk sleeveless blouse and tight black trousers. Through the blouse Melanie could see her small breasts unencumbered by a bra. She took Melanie's hand then kissed her very delicately on both cheeks, holding her hand tight. Melanie felt Lydia's mouth, her rather cool lips, even her tongue, each time.

'Powell has told me so much about you,' Lydia said, standing back, still holding her hand. The big brown eyes were looking Melanie up and down like someone appraising a horse to see how fast it would run.

'Don't I get a kiss?' Powell said from the bed.

It was too late now; like a fly drawn into a web, Melanie was trapped. Lydia released her hand and Melanie walked over to the bed, looking down at Powell's naked body. His cock twitched, obviously excited by the situation. Melanie felt a momentary temptation to do the conventional thing, to slap his face and run out but it passed.

'Where exactly do you want me to kiss you?' she said in a

steady measured tone, trying to sound as if all this was as normal as a stroll in the country.

Lydia had stubbed out her cigarette and come up behind her. If the kisses on the cheek had been ambiguous Lydia's next gesture was not. Her hand stroked the tight curve of Melanie's arse.

'Kiss his cock,' Lydia prompted.

'What a good idea,' Melanie agreed, Lydia's touch having ignited her body like the blue touchpaper of a firework. Her hesitation and surprise disappeared. All she could feel now was excitement and passion. She lent forward, pulled Powell's hand away from his erection and sunk her mouth over it instead. Powell moaned. Lydia's hand immediately pushed the material of Melanie's loose pleated skirt up between her legs, using it to caress her sex.

'She's beautiful, Powell,' Lydia said, her voice husky with passion.

Melanie felt Lydia's other hand groping for her breast. It unfastened two of her buttons and delved inside her bra until long cool fingers reached a nipple. Lydia pinched it quite hard. Melanie felt a charge, like electricity, shoot through her body. Powell had set this up quite deliberately. Lydia was the spider and she was the fly. Lydia was here for her, not Powell, she could feel it instinctively. The idea excited her. It thrilled her. Lydia was going to get a very pleasant surprise.

She pulled her mouth away from Powell's cock and turned round. She took Lydia's face in both her hands and pulled it hard into a kiss, her tongue vying for position as their lips met and they both tried to invade each other's mouth. At the same time, Lydia's hand found the zip at the back of Melanie's skirt, pulled it down and plunged inside. She gathered the silky nylon

NAKED AMBITION

of Melanie's knickers until it was bunched in her hand then pulled it up hard, forcing the crotch tight into Melanie's labia and against her clitoris.

Melanie moaned. She allowed Lydia's tongue into her mouth. She released her face and ran her hands down to her back, over her small neat arse, down to the cleft of her buttocks.

Powell had got to his knees on the bed. Lydia moved her mouth down to Melanie's neck and began to lick and suck the strong cords of muscle. Powell came up behind Melanie, where her knees were pressed into the mattress, and started to undo the rest of the buttons of the blouse as Lydia pulled her skirt away. As soon as the blouse was off her shoulders Powell unclipped the bra and pulled it clear.

'Look at those,' he said, as though revealing a treasured possession.

Lydia sunk her face into them instantly, kissing the channel between them, moulding the flesh with her hands at the sides so the breasts pressed into each side of her cheeks. Then she licked and sucked at the nipples, each in turn.

Melanie's excitement was intense; the more intense, she knew, because this was all so unexpected. Powell was pressing into her back, his cock hot and hard in the small of her back. She was the filling in a human sandwich. Two mouths, two tongues, hands and fingers everywhere. Lydia dropped to her knees, pulling Melanie's white French knickers down with her as Powell's hand snaked round to replaced Lydia's mouth on her breasts, the nipples throbbing with pleasure. As soon as she was naked Lydia's mouth locked on to Melanie's thick thatch of pubic hair, her tongue probing out for the runnel of her sex.

Swooning with pleasure Melanie's mind was finding it hard to keep track of all the sexual images it was being presented

with. This was another experience, another adventure to add to the list. Thank you, Dr Evans, thank you Auntie Beatie.

Powell was pulling her back on to the bed. She did not resist. She let herself go completely, gave herself to them. They could have her, take her, do what they wanted with her.

She lay with her back on the linen sheets but with her buttocks still on the edge of the mattress and her feet on the floor. Not for long. Lydia, still kneeling, moved forward, parted Melanie's knees and lifted one leg at a time on to her shoulders so Melanie's sex lay spread open in front of her.

'Beautiful,' she said.

Slowly she moved her mouth to kiss Melanie's thick pouting labia. Powell had moved to one side, half-lying, half-sitting on the bed next to Melanie, his left hand caressing her neck and her breasts, kneading them, occasionally pinching at her nipples. His eyes watched Lydia's hungry passion, and Melanie's languid compliance. His cock quivered, knowing its turn would come.

Melanie felt Lydia's hot lips on her sex. A second later Lydia's fingers were on her labia too. From both sides they stretched them apart, revealing the pale, pale pink of her clitoris. It was an easy target, wet and swollen. Lydia's tongue, the very tip of her tongue, found it unerringly and flicked it from side to side. Melanie moaned, her body shuddered.

'Yes,' Powell said.

Melanie crossed her ankles behind Lydia's back, digging her heels in to force Lydia's mouth down harder on her sex. But Lydia resisted. She was not ready for full contact yet. Her tongue teased and flirted. It dipped down, down between the wet outer labia to the inner, around the portal of Melanie's cunt. It delved there, making a little circuit of the tender flesh, lapping

at her juices then probing inside as far as the tendon of her tongue would allow.

Powell watched. He wanked himself slowly, letting Melanie see what he was doing, letting her know that Lydia was just the prelude to the main event.

Melanie was coming. She could have come on the tip of Lydia's tongue, she could have come on anything, on the slightest touch, so excited was she by the situation. But she held herself back, knowing that the longer she waited, the bigger the pressure behind the dam of her feelings, the greater her orgasm would be. Then Lydia plunged her mouth on to Melanie's open sex, kissing it as though it were a mouth, tonguing it hard and strong, pressing on her clitoris, sucking on it, licking it, squirming her lips against its wetness, forcing Melanie to react, destroying her control, sending her over the edge, down into the deep warm waters of total pleasure where all she could do was wallow, helplessly like a piece of deadwood caught in the ebbing tide.

She felt Lydia's mouth give her sex a parting kiss, a temporary adieu, as she rocked back on her knees and unwound Melanie's legs from around her neck. They were a dead weight. Melanie was for the moment incapable of movement. Her limbs were leaden, her body drained, her mind wiped clean by sensation. She felt herself being pulled back into the middle of the bed until her legs were up on the sheets too. She felt them being opened and Powell climbing between them but it was not until his cock was poised between her soaking wet labia that she had the energy to open her eyes and look up at him.

'Fuck me then,' she said.

He did. He pushed forward. She had never felt him so hard, or hot or big. He went into her so deeply she could feel him at

the neck of her womb. He held himself there without moving, pressing up into her, his pubic bone crushing into her clitoris, his big full balls at her arse. She could feel his cock throbbing almost as though it were connected to some machine, throbbing like an engine, a continuous pulse of excitement.

'You're making me come,' he said.

'Do you want to bugger me, Powell?' she said to provoke him. Her body had recovered. As he lay rigid inside her she slithered and squirmed underneath him, pushing her cunt down on him further, squeezing it on to him, making her cunt cling to him, using her muscles to milk him. She felt him beginning to react, felt him try to push up further still, then pull back slightly. He was too far gone to extract himself and aim for her arse.

'I want it. Give me your spunk. Give it to me,' she insisted. Then she relaxed, taking all the tension from her body, so it felt like she was melting over him, all heat and wetness, so his cock had room to jerk and spit inside her.

'Mel . . .' he moaned. And she felt his cock kicking out and his spunk spurting from the little slit in his glans. She could see it in her mind's eye, trails of white spunk shooting out into the dark cave of her cunt. Normally this would have brought her off too but the situation was far from normal. Her orgasm on Lydia's mouth had been so intense her body had not yet recovered.

As she felt Powell's cock softening she looked around for Lydia. She didn't have to look far. She was standing at the foot of the bed drawing deeply on another black Sobranie cigarette. She had stripped off her blouse and trousers and was standing naked but for a pair of tanga-cut black panties, as she drew deeply on the cigarette, her eyes rooted to the spectacle on the bed. She was as slim as her clothes suggested, her breasts no

NAKED AMBITION

more than a slight incline on her chest, her stomach so flat it was almost concave, her hip bones on either side of her pelvis as predominant as projections of rock.

Powell's cock slipped from Melanie's body and he rolled off her. Seeing this Lydia took one more draw on the cigarette, blew the smoke out in a long straight line, stubbed it out in an ashtray and shimmied herself out of her panties. As they fell to her ankles she stood up, her legs slightly apart, looking at Melanie's reaction to the fact that the triangle of her belly was totally hairless, shaven clean, the upper folds and creases of her sex like the pleats of a curtain.

'I like to see Powell fucking,' Lydia said. 'It turns me on.' As if to confirm a point she ran her finger down into the fleshy channel of her hairless sex and withdrew it, glistening with her juices. She knelt up on the bed, holding the finger for Melanie to see. Melanie grasped her wrist and pulled the finger down to her mouth, sucking on it eagerly, tasting Lydia for the first time and immediately feeling her body starting to churn again, the engine of her passion refuelled and ready.

Lydia's hand stroked its way up Melanie's leg, as softly as the touch of a butterfly, until her fingers were trailing into her thick pubic hair. It was damp and pressed flat where Powell had lain on it. Lydia used her fingers to comb it up again.

'I won't want to do it, of course,' Lydia said as she combed. 'I only like women.'

Melanie slid her mouth from the finger to the palm of Lydia's hand, then to her wrist. Raising herself from the bed she kissed and licked all the way up Lydia's arm, up to her shoulder, then down again, to the tiny slope of her breast. Though her breasts were small her nipples, by contrast, were huge, big swollen knobs of puckered flesh, their colour a deep almost ruby red.

Melanie sucked on the nearest and heard Lydia moan. Gradually, like some silent ballet, the two women changed positions, Melanie coming up on to her knees, while Lydia sunk back on to the bed.

Melanie's mouth moved to the other nipple. She left saliva on the first and used her fingers on it, the saliva making it slippery, while her mouth circled the other, sucking and licking and biting it between her teeth.

Lydia opened her legs and bent her knees, raising her hips off the bed as if to attract Melanie's attention to her need. She was moaning too, almost managing to form the word 'yes' but not quite. Melanie continued to torture her nipples but sent her free hand down the slim body to the folds of the hairless sex. Lydia's labia were perfectly smooth. They felt like they had been oiled, like they were made of some strange new satin, wet and unctuous. Melanie found her clitoris. Like her nipples it was disproportionately large, not hidden under the folds of the labia but almost poking through them. Her mouth left Lydia's breast. As her fingers began a stroking rhythm on the button of Lydia's sex, her mouth left a wet trail as it licked and sucked its way down to join them.

She thought suddenly of Bella, of the first time, not so very long ago, that she had done this. Her body was humming with excitement again. When she had set out on her adventure, when she'd made her life-changing decision, she'd never imagined it would be like this, that she could feel and experience so much. Everything had changed for her. Everything.

She wanted to make Lydia come. Her mouth reached her thighs. She kissed down to Lydia's knee on both sides then came back up again, pausing, teasing before she centred her mouth on Lydia's clitoris and sunk her lips over it. Lydia

moaned. Melanie sucked the clitoris up into her mouth as if it were a tiny cock. Lydia moaned harder and louder and continuously. Melanie's hand slipped lower, slipped down until her fingers were at the entrance to Lydia's cunt.

'Yes . . .' Lydia managed to say.

Melanie pushed two fingers home, then three. Lydia's cunt felt like her shaven labia, the same strange wet satin. She writhed on Melanie's fingers, rolling her head from side to side, her whole body squirming against the sheets. Melanie's tongue tapped out a tattoo on her clit. Melanie was more experienced than she had been with Bella, she knew better what to do. She knew what drove her wild now, and tried to repeat it on Lydia. Apparently it worked. She felt Lydia's body tense, felt her muscles go rigid and then, over her fingers and mouth, felt her contractions as her orgasm crashed through her body.

Almost before the last pulse of orgasm died, Lydia was twisting around. For a second Melanie didn't realise what she was trying to do, then it was clear. Lydia was trying to get her head between Melanie's knees and up under her sex. Melanie wanted that too and swung her thigh over Lydia's face.

'Don't stop,' Lydia breathed as Melanie's fingers were about to leave her cunt. Melanie replaced them and her mouth immediately. She'd thought Lydia would want a break. Clearly she did not.

They were wrapped in a tight ball. Lydia's arm circled Melanie's buttocks pulling herself up to Melanie's sex. She went to work quickly, wanting to get Melanie to catch up with her excitement, to get her to the same pitch. Using the whole breadth of her tongue she licked in great long strokes all the way along Melanie's sex. Melanie, on the other hand, tongued only Lydia's

clitoris, while her fingers plunged in and out of her cunt.

They were both coming. Melanie needed little encouragement. She could feel Powell's spunk inside her, feel it being licked away, feel Lydia's hard nipples at her navel and her sex eager for her ministrations. It was all too exciting, all too much. Suddenly she felt Lydia's body tense again, felt her explode helplessly, felt a rush of hot breath from her mouth and the convulsions of her sex. That was enough. Her body stretched out as though on some invisible rack, her mind, full of a thousand images of sex – Bella, Powell, Steve, cock and cunt in an incredible melange – toppled into orgasm and once again a black blanket of sensation was thrown over her like a net, trapping her in a pit of absolute pleasure.

It was a long time before either woman wanted to move. Gradually as reality returned, they disentangled themselves, limb from limb.

Melanie looked round for Powell. He had propped himself up at the end of the bed against the pillows and was watching intently.

Lydia got up and went to the bathroom.

'You had a good time, didn't you?' Powell said.

'So did you, evidently.'

'Lydia's an old friend. I thought it would be fun to introduce you. She's not into men.'

'I rather gathered that.'

'Don't tell me you minded . . .'

Melanie could have lied, could have told him a lot of things about feelings and emotions and how women like to be treated or should be treated but in the end it was simpler to give him the honest answer.

'No,' she said.

NAKED AMBITION

'You've done it before.' It was Lydia's voice. She had wrapped her slim figure in a white bath towel. What she said was not a question.

'Yes, but not often.'

'Then you must have a natural talent. You're wonderful . . . Get us a drink darling,' she said, patting Powell lightly on the cheek.

Powell obediently got up and walked through into the living room.

'Powell told me all about you,' Lydia said, taking his place on the bed. .

'Like what?'

'That you've sorted out all his problems on the show.'

'Well, not all . . .'

'Not what I've heard. Gordon's a friend too. I wouldn't just take Powell's word.'

'Why all the interest?'

'Not because I wanted to fuck you, I assure you.'

'I wouldn't have minded if it was.'

'I'm developing a new show for PTV. We've got an American co-production. One-hour drama like *The Investigator* but with bigger budgets because of the American money. Powell's going to play the lead. We want to end *The Investigator* while it's at the top, then replace it with something even better . . .'

'Sounds great. So?'

'You know Powell's an absolute pain in the arse to deal with. I mean, I love him dearly but he's not like other children.'

'What's that?' Powell said coming back, still naked, with one of the last bottles of the hotel's supply of 1964 Krug and three glasses.

'That you're a bloody pain in the arse.'

'Oh, right.' He put the glasses down and opened the bottle.

'So what do you say?' Lydia said to Melanie.

'About what?'

'Producing my show.'

'Producing it. Why?'

'Because you seem to be able to control this monster.'

Melanie was dumbfounded. 'What about Gordon?'

'Gordon's dead on his feet, darling.' Powell said.

'Associate producer?'

'No, producer. We don't need an associate.' Lydia said.

'It'll be fun, Mel . . .' Powell smiled broadly.

'When does it start?' Melanie was beginning to feel like this whole evening was an elaborate dream.

'Immediately *The Investigator* finishes. Two months. The Americans want the series for their winter season.'

'My God . . .' was all Melanie could say.

'Is that a yes?'

'Do you really think I can . . .'

'My darling,' Powell said indulgently, 'there are a great many less talented people producing a great number of more expensive productions. You've got real talent.' He slapped her buttocks lightly.

'And what happens when you get fed up with me and want a new model?'

'Then, my darling, we continue our working relationship as before and you learn not to be jealous.' He started to laugh.

'Unless of course we share her between us . . .'

Melanie did not say anything for about ten seconds. What Powell said made sense. Sex had come first in their relationship but it was not only based on sex. He knew she was doing a good job for him. Presumably that was what he'd told Lydia.

'OK. I'll do it.'

Powell handed out the champagne. They clinked glasses.

'So here's to the new show,' Lydia said. They all sipped at the wine. 'The first priority is the script for the pilot. It's a mess. Powell says you've brought in some good new writers. I want you to get them to take a look at what we've got. And quickly. Come up to London tomorrow. Can you get them to a meeting?'

'I don't see why not.'

'Good. You'll have to get Keating's approval but that's just a formality . . .'

Keating was the Head of Drama at PTV and a member of the board. Lydia saw Melanie's face fall.

'Don't worry about that. Keating's not going to object.'

'If you say so . . .'

'I do,' Lydia said firmly.

Neither Powell nor Melanie had made any effort to get dressed. Despite her mind whirling around the sudden prospects that had been presented to her, Melanie felt, somewhere deep in her body, like the engines of an ocean liner way below decks, the faintest of buzzes. It was buried deep but that did not mean it would not hum insistently, and eventually, before the night was out, need attention. What Powell and Lydia had created was not yet satisfied.

Chapter Eight

His office on the seventh floor had a magnificent view of the Thames and its environs. It was a corner office, reserved for board members, and he could see the Houses of Parliament from one window and St Paul's and the City from the other.

Charles Keating was a tall man, well over six-foot-four. But he was big too; as well as his height he carried a great deal of weight. The mountain of his belly started in the middle of his chest and rose in a massive mound of flesh that overhung the belt of his trousers, straining against the buttons of his shirt, the material stretched to the limit by his blubber. The hair on his head had almost gone. It had receded to a horseshoe around his head, from ear to ear. What there was of it was long, unkempt and grey. The bald pate of his head was shiny. Set in his large featured face – a big nose, a square jaw, a loose fleshy mouth, a wide prominent forehead – his eyes seemed, in comparison, small, very round and almost pig-like.

He had been the Head of Drama at PTV for seven years and on the board of the company, as a reward for his sterling services in delivering consistently highly-rated drama series, for the last two. *The Investigator* had been the last jewel in his crown. The idea had been his. He had appointed Gordon Davies who had thought of and persuaded Adam Powell to star so Keating could bask in its success. Of course he was perfectly aware of the difficulties that Gordon had experienced in the last months and

the budget overruns and equally aware that the trend had been reversed by the addition of a new associate producer to the show. When Lydia Holbeck had announced that the same woman was to produce the new series Keating had obviously thought it a good idea. But he was determined to judge for himself before he gave his final approval.

Consequently Melanie Chambers sat in front of his desk now, gazing alternately at the panoramic view and Keating's distended paunch. With her new salary, and the days she had been in London for meetings with the writers on the pilot script, she had been able to buy more clothes to suit her new figure as well as a considerable investment in lingerie. She had chosen the outfit for the Keating interview carefully. It was a soft black suede suit, a tight jacket clinging to her bust but with a little peplum over the hips and a short tight skirt that finished in mid-thigh. She wore gun-metal grey tights, of Lycra nylon, which gave her long legs a slippery shiny appearance. She knew Keating was tall so she had not hesitated to wear high heeled black suede shoes.

'Well, Ms Chambers . . .'

'Melanie or Mel, please.' She knew Keating, of course. She had seen him in the corridors many times. He would never have seen her. Her old lumpy body and dumpy face were invisible to men.

'Melanie, what a nice name.'

It was difficult for him not to look at her legs. She sat facing him with her knees together. Her thighs were beautifully contoured, he thought.

'Thank you.'

'Lydia has told me she wants you to produce the new Adam Powell series.'

'That's right.'

'You're very young for such an important job.'

'I don't really see how my age is relevant. You've seen what I've done on *The Investigator*.'

'Most certainly. Very impressive and we are very grateful, believe me. It does rather depend on the continuation of your personal relationship with Adam, doesn't it?'

Lydia had said this interview was a formality, that Keating would rubber stamp her decision, that she had nothing to worry about. From Keating's tone the reality seemed to be entirely different.

'Yes. The point is, may I be frank . . .'

'Most certainly . . .'

'Our intimate relationship is hardly passionate. Powell appears to be a man with a very low, how can I put it, sex drive. Do you understand what I mean? Sex isn't really what it is about. He's just found someone who understands what he wants in creative terms . . .'

'Really?' Keating was leaning forward, his mouth open slightly.

'Bearing that in mind I don't think it would make much difference if he found another woman or not. What he wants from me is not sex but my ability to get the scripts right so he can look good on screen.'

'Really?' Keating hung on her every word.

'Powell is like a child, his attention span is not very long.'

Keating laughed. 'Well, I appreciate you being so frank.'

'If I didn't believe I could control him outside a relationship as well as in it I wouldn't want the job. I've seen what he's done to Gordon Davies.'

'You're a very determined woman.'

Determined, Melanie thought, was exactly the right word for her. 'Yes I am.'

'Grant Andrews has written you a glowing reference. You've been here three years. I don't remember seeing you before.'

'I went on a very extensive diet recently.'

'Diet? But you're not fat.'

'Not now.'

'It's hard to believe you were ever over-weight. You're so . . .' he tried to think of a word with no sexual connotations, ' . . . trim.'

'Oh I was, but thank you for the compliment.'

'I know we are not supposed to say these things any more but I have to tell you I think you are a most attractive woman.' It slipped out before he really knew what he'd said.

Melanie timed her response, letting him wait before she said, 'And if you want the truth, Mr Keating, I find you a very attractive man. I've always liked big men. You are a big man, aren't you?'

Melanie felt a jolt of excitement as she saw Keating's reaction to what she had said, his face beaming back at her. The power she had over men now, how they wanted her, her approval, her smile, never failed to amaze and excite her. She could, it appeared, twist them around her little finger, if they thought there was even the slightest chance of getting into, or even getting near, her knickers.

'Some women don't like that,' he was saying.

'I do.' She crossed her legs, letting him hear the rasp of nylon on nylon, as his eyes watched greedily for a glimpse of what lay under the skirt. 'So since we have this happy coincidence of attraction, what do you suppose we should do about it?'

He looked at his watch. It was six o'clock. 'I don't suppose you would like to have dinner with me ? Early dinner.'

'You mean go now?' She tried to sound shocked, teasing him that the shock might be at this suggestion not the time.

'Oh well I . . .' he stuttered.

'I'd love to,' she said, putting him out of his misery.

His face broke out into a grin. 'Great. We could go over to the Savoy Grill. I mean, you look perfectly wonderful, no need to change.'

'Sounds ideal.'

'I could certainly use a drink.'

'Let's go then,' Melanie said, standing up. She was not entirely sure that what she was doing was necessary but, in terms of her grand plan, her career, her future, it was surely not a bad thing to have Charles Keating firmly in her pocket. And anyway it was fun.

They got a cab across Waterloo Bridge and strolled into the Savoy. Charles took her arm and they walked up the stairs to the American Bar. He ordered vodka martinis very dry and they came in triangular glasses misted with condensation from having been kept in the fridge. He looked deep into her big blue eyes as they clinked their glasses together.

'To the new series,' he said. 'I think it will be a great success.'

'So I get your approval?'

'Oh, we'll have to see about that.'

'Mr Keating, I hope you're not suggesting I should try to influence your decision by other than reasoned arguments.'

'Certainly not.'

'Oh,' she looked crestfallen. 'What a pity. I was rather looking forward to trying.'

'Were you?'

'I told you . . .' She looked at him earnestly, 'I find you a very attractive man.'

He ordered another round of martinis. Melanie sipped at hers and found the alcohol had gone to her head. Or perhaps it wasn't the alcohol. She had a delicious feeling of being high. She was high on the idea that this powerful, successful man, this man who had the ability to determine her future, was almost literally eating out of her hand. Talking of which, she smiled to herself, she picked up a plate of fish-shaped nibbles on the table in front of them and popped one into Keating's mouth. He pursed his lips by way of begging for another.

They decided to eat in the restaurant not the grill. Keating tipped the head waiter to give them a riverside table and they sat watching the river-boats plying up and down on the full tide as they ordered their meal. Melanie chose smoked salmon pate and a fillet steak, Keating, eggs Benedict and sirloin steak. He ordered a Chablis to go with the first course and a claret for the meat. Both wines were enormously expensive.

'Tell me about Lydia Holbeck,' Melanie said as the waiter took their menus away.

'What do you want to know?'

'What she's like to work with.'

'Hard but fair. You know she's a dyke?'

Melanie tried to look surprised. 'Really?'

'Oh yes. She'll undoubtedly try to have a go at you.'

'I'm only into men,' Melanie lied.

'That's never stopped her before. You might like it.'

'Do you think so?'

'You never know till you've tried.' The idea clearly excited him. His little piggy eyes were sparkling.

'Is that your fantasy?'

'What?'

'Watching two women going at each other?'

'It's exciting but I wouldn't say it's my . . .' He couldn't think of the word.

'Masturbation rite.'

'You're very direct.'

She put her leg out under the table until her calf was rubbing against his trouser leg. 'I want to know about you.'

'You know I'm married?'

'Yes.'

'Well, separated actually. Getting divorced.'

'That's not the sort of thing I need to know.'

'Need?'

'If I'm going to please you.'

'Is that what you're going to do?'

'Oh, Mr Keating. It certainly is. We both knew that, didn't we, since the moment you asked me out to dinner. Or was it before that? When you were so keen to see what I had under my skirt?'

'You can't blame me for that. Your legs are wonderful.'

'Thank you.'

'I can't get over why I've never seen you around the building before . . .'

'I told you . . .'

'I know, I know, you had a weight problem. Even so . . .'

The food arrived. Keating eat voraciously, consuming huge quantities of bread, smeared with great dollops of butter, and wiping his plate clean. He drank fast too, swilling back the Premier Cru Chablis as if it were water. With the main course he had ordered plates of vegetables and insisted the waiter shovel everything that came in the serving dishes on to their plates,

piling them perilously high with food. The height was soon demolished, the food ferried to Keating's mouth with alarming speed. As soon as Melanie decided she'd had enough he descended on her plate too, finishing everything she had left. He insisted on Stilton before the dessert and even though he had drunk most of the Chablis and the Chateau Haut Brion, ordered a Warre's 1958 port to go with the cheese. Again he finished his own very large portion and all the leftovers on Melanie's plate, together with numerous cheese biscuits, butter, celery and grapes.

He was as enthusiastic over the dessert trolley. Melanie had become progressively less hungry as she watched his conspicuous consumption and contented herself with a small portion of fruit salad. Keating on the other hand demanded that the waiter give him a gigantic slice of the Black Forest Gateau and a second plate of riz d'Imperiale.

'You didn't answer my question,' Melanie said when the meal was finally over and the dessert plates were cleared away to be replaced by coffee cups and a little silver tiered tray of petit fours.

'Which question was that?' Keating said, stuffing a candied grape into his mouth.

'What your fantasy is. Your sexual fantasy.'

'Ah, that would be telling.'

'Is it something I might like?'

'I have no way of knowing.'

'May I make a suggestion?'

'Of course . . .'

'Why don't you get them to bring us a telephone.'

'And what then?'

'I can ring reception and ask them if they've got a double

room available with a large double bed and preferably a view of the river so we can gaze out at it over breakfast.'

'What a good idea . . .' Keating's little round eyes were sparkling again, like a little boy on Christmas Day.

'Then you can tell me exactly what you like.' She reached over the table and cupped his large hand in both of hers and stared straight into his eyes. In a way he was looking a little dazed as though Father Christmas had brought him too many presents.

Fifteen minutes later they were standing at the window of a riverside bedroom on the fourth floor staring at the view of the river and the ebbing tide. The PTV building, and even Keating's office, were part of the panorama.

Keating had ordered a bottle of champagne from room service. As soon as it had been delivered by a smart white linen jacketed waiter who departed with a five-pound note crushed into his hand, Melanie sat on the edge of the bed.

'Come over here, Mr Keating,' she said, beckoning him with a crooked finger.

'You could call me Chas . . . everyone does.' He sat on the bed beside her. She could see the alcohol had taken its toll on his energy level. 'I think I prefer Mr Keating.'

'You're an extraordinary woman, I don't think I've ever met anyone like you.'

'I should hope not. Why don't you let me loosen some of this tight clothing?' He had already taken his jacket off. She started unbuttoning his shirt. His spectacular paunch came into view, like a rucksack of fat worn at the front. Melanie pushed him back on the bed and started on his trousers. She undid his belt and unzipped his fly. Standing up she pulled at the waistband. He pushed his hips off the bed and the trousers and his

Y-fronted underpants came down to his knees. His circumcised penis was flaccid. Melanie eased off his shoes and socks then stripped the trousers and pants the rest of the way down his legs so he was naked. Apart from his pubic hair and a little patch in the middle of his chest, his body was completely hairless.

'Watch me,' she said. It was up to her now. If Keating had shown sexual interest in her over dinner it seemed to have evaporated with the alcohol. His greatest desire now seemed to be to sleep.

He pulled himself up the bed and propped his head against the headboard with two pillows. 'Sorry,' he said, apologising in advance, 'shouldn't have had so much to drink.'

Melanie unbuttoned her suede jacket and folded it over a chair. She wore a tight white body stocking under it with no bra. The body stocking was transparent. It moulded her breasts into big rounds of flesh tight against her chest, her dark red nipples straining against the material. She unzipped the suede skirt and stepped out of it.

The sheer shiny Lycra clung to her long, contoured thighs. She had not let a day go by without exercising her body ruthlessly and it continued to pay dividends. Her waist was more cinched, her breasts higher, her legs more shapely, her belly flatter, her buttocks rounded and tighter. She was proud of her body, proud of what she had created. And proud of what it was capable of feeling.

Keating was staring at her, his eyes roaming from her breasts to the apex of her thighs. She reached between her legs and snapped open the three fasteners that held the body stocking in place.

She pulled it over her head. Her breasts, freed of their constriction, quivered. She cupped them in her hands to still

them. Keating stared at her pubic hair crushed under the shimmery nylon.

'Beautiful,' he whispered. 'Very thick . . .'

She wriggled out of the tights, pulling them down over her buttocks and thighs. She wished she'd worn stockings but she'd had no idea that she was going to end up in bed with Keating. She saw his penis rise slightly as she stripped the tights from her ankles.

She knelt beside him on the bed.

'Tell me what you want,' she said quietly, her hand resting on his chest, his nipple under her palm.

'Too much to drink,' he said, looking down at his cock.

She wrapped a hand around it and squeezed it gently. There was very little response.

'Tell me . . .' she repeated.

'Tell you what?'

'We're so inhibited, aren't we? So afraid. About sex, I mean. All the taboos . . . Worried that we'll say the wrong thing, do the wrong thing, cause offence. But with me you don't need to worry. I don't have any inhibitions. I don't believe in taboos. What happens between two people behind closed doors is private, secret. Whatever it is . . .'

'I just want to fuck you.'

'No, Mr Keating. You are a more complex man than that. I've got a instinct about these things.'

'Am I?'

'Oh yes.'

Melanie rocked forward, took Keating's left nipple in her mouth then pinched it between her teeth. He moaned. She repeated the process with the right. His cock twitched in her hand.

'Are you going to make me guess?'

'I think I've had too much to drink.'

Melanie had seen the look in Keating's eye when she'd first brought up the subject. She knew Keating's sexuality held a secret and as he was not prepared to tell her, it was obviously something outré that turned him on. Melanie was in no mood to take no for an answer. She tried to remember her reading, make a list of all the variations. 'Do you like to be spanked?' She held his cock in her hand, hoping to provoke an involuntary twitch. 'Come on, what is it? You want to watch me with another woman? Or a man? Do you want me to get a dildo and fuck you with it?' None of these provoked the slightest interest. His cock remained flaccid.

'It's just too much to drink . . .' he protested.

But Melanie wasn't prepared to give up so easily. She had stumbled on to Grant Andrews' penchant and now she was sure Keating had a skeleton in the cupboard too. What else was there?

'Or perhaps you'd like to wear my panties?'

'Look, I think we should . . .'

'Or be tied to the bed?' As she said the words she felt a faint pulse quiver through his cock. It might be nothing to do with what she'd said, but, on the other hand . . . 'I could spread-eagle you. Tie your hands up over your head, stretch your legs open, stretch you out so you were at my mercy.' Keating's cock had started to swell noticeably. Melanie wanked it slowly. She lay down beside him so she could whisper in his ear. She had found the key. 'Would you like that? Tied very tight, unable to move. You would, wouldn't you?'

'Yes . . .' he breathed almost inaudibly, his cock almost fully erect.

NAKED AMBITION

'I'd like it too. I like being in control. I like having men in my power.'

'Do you?' he croaked.

'Oh yes. I think it's very exciting. I want control. To have you helpless so I could do anything I wanted to you, completely dominate you.'

His cock was rock hard now. Still holding it firmly in one hand she swung herself over his huge belly, settling herself on his lap, as she guided the head of his cock between her labia.

'Oh I'd give you such a hard time. I'd tease you endlessly . . .' she was still whispering into his ear, her mouth hard up against it, her hot breath giving him tiny thrills as it blew into the inner whorls. 'Wank you till you were on the point of coming, then stop, make you beg me to go on.' She held herself at the tip of his cock, feeling his erection throbbing against her. 'Would you like that?'

'Oh . . .' he moaned, trying to buck his hips to get inside her but failing.

'I didn't give you permission to do that. I tell you when you're allowed to come inside me, don't I?'

'Yes . . .'

She was remembering one of the stories she had read. It was one she had read several times. What had its heroine said?

'You need discipline, don't you?'

'Yes.'

'Yes what, you worm?'

'Yes, mistress.'

The use of the word thrilled Melanie. A strange thing was happening to her. What had started as a clinical exercise – cynical even – to see if she could get Keating excited and erect despite his huge intake of food and booze, had suddenly turned

into something else. Melanie could feel her sex throbbing against his cock, a slick of wetness spreading out from her loins. What she was saying was exciting her just as much as it was evidently exciting him. Her pulse had increased, blood coursing around her body like electricity charging up all her senses.

She sat poised above his cock, daring him to push forward. Her fingers moved over the mountain of his belly to his nipples. Using the fingernails of her thumb and forefinger on both hands she pinched his nipples quite hard. He moaned. She felt his cock jerk against her.

'Oh, you like that, do you?'

'Yes.'

She pinched again. Again his cock jerked. 'Such a sensitive little thing. Well you wait till I've got you tied to my bed. I'm going to give these' – She pinched them again to leave no doubt as to what she meant – 'some real treatment. I can't wait. Get you strapped down . . .'

'Leather . . .' he breathed.

'Of course leather, thick black leather. Strap you so tight you wouldn't be able to do anything but beg, beg me to wank you, beg me to fuck you. Then I'll make you watch me undress. Slowly, very slowly. Taking my dress off. My bra. Make you watch me play with my tits.' She took her hands away from his nipples and cupped her own breasts, squeezing them between her fingers. She pinched her own nipples just as she had pinched his and felt a jolt of pleasure. She held her breasts out and up by the nipples until they were stretched into pyramids of flesh above his face. 'Black stockings, I think, with long black suspenders, and little tiny black panties. Make you watch me inching them down my thighs. Then perhaps I'd sit on your face . . . Make you lick me.' Melanie wasn't sure who was more affected by

NAKED AMBITION

this monologue, her or him. She felt as if each word racked up the gears of her excitement.

'Yes, yes . . .' he said loudly. She could feel his whole body was rigid underneath her, stretched taut, desperate to get his cock inside the depths of the molten heat he could feel above it.

'Do you want to be allowed to fuck me?'

'Yes, yes . . .'

'Yes what?' She slapped her hand down hard across his belly.

'Yes mistress . . .'

'Beg me, then.' Her whole body shuddered as she said the words. She wished she could put him into bondage, she wished she could do everything she'd told him she wanted to do. It would be exciting. It would be very exciting. That realisation came as a surprise to her but not a shock. Nothing about her sexuality shocked her now, not after all the experiences she had had. What she had done to Grant Andrews. What had happened with Bella and with Bella's 'maid'. She had discovered a great ocean of sexual delight and she kept coming across new undiscovered islands of pleasure where she could land and quickly, so it appeared, find her way around.

'Please, please . . .' Keating begged.

'Please what?' Her voice was cold and hard. Her control thrilled her.

'Please, mistress, let me fuck you . . .' He sounded pathetic, desperate.

'Again.'

'Please, please, please . . .'

As he said the last word she let her body sink down on to his cock. He gasped in ecstasy as he felt the creamy wetness sliding over his shaft. Melanie began to ride him, bouncing up and down on his cock, grinding her clitoris against his body then

pulling up until she could feel the glans almost at her labia again.

What had the woman in the story said, what had she demanded of her slave?

‘You know you’re not allowed to come?’

‘Oh no, please, please . . .’

‘I can see you are going to have to be taken in hand. You’re no good to me. You need training. Proper training. Don’t you?’

‘Yes, mistress . . .’

She felt his cock throbbing. Everything she said was driving him mad with lust. She knew his secret now. ‘I have to get you into bondage. I want you helpless.’ His cock jerked again. ‘I warned you not to come.’ But contradicting her words she slid her fingers on to his nipples again and pinched them hard knowing this would provoke him further. Leaving one hand to alternate between both nipples she put the other hand behind her back and down between her legs to feel for his balls. She reeled them in until she had them in the palm of her hand. She pulled them down, away from his cock, and that was the last straw for his already feverishly over-excited body. As she slammed down on him he broke the invisible bonds that had held his limbs motionless on the bed and reached up to her hips to hold her down on him. At the same time his cock spasmed inside her and she felt his spunk jetting out, spasm after spasm, as his hands held her in place.

‘Sorry . . . sorry . . .’ he said, when his body finally finished its involuntary contractions.

‘You’re going to have to be punished . . .’ she said.

But then the game was over. By silent and mutual consent the spectre of fantasy, the mistress and the slave, slunk away into the mist. Gone but not forgotten. Definitely not forgotten.

NAKED AMBITION

* * *

Lydia Holbeck was sitting in her office at PTV. The view was almost as good as from Charles Keating's office one floor above but not quite. Melanie was shown in by a rather unprepossessing secretary.

'Hi,' Lydia said, getting up and kissing her on both cheeks in exactly the same manner she had used the first time they had met. She indicated that Melanie should sit in the chair in front of her desk, then slid back into her high-backed leather swivel chair. Her long black hair was pinned into a tight chignon on the back of her head which had the effect of making her look much more severe and older than the last time Melanie had seen her, the black hair draped across the sheets of Adam Powell's bed. It also seemed to emphasise the slightness of her body. Her neck was as thin as the rest of her. She was wearing a black trouser suit with a short Chanel style jacket and gold jewellery – brooch, ear-rings, necklace and bracelet all bearing the same motif.

'Congratulations are in order,' she said.

'Are they?'

'Keating's approved your appointment. I told you it was a formality.'

'Great,' Melanie said. If it wasn't a formality before it certainly was after last night.

'So there you are. A meteoric rise to the top.'

'Hardly the top.'

'No, but at your age . . .'

'So now all I have to do is keep Adam Powell in line.'

'Not a task I envy you, my dear. I've known him for ten years and we're supposed to be friends . . .'

'I noticed . . .'

'It still wouldn't stop him stabbing me in the back if I gave him half a chance.'

'Don't worry. I know what he's capable of.'

'Good.'

'He's bound to turn on me sooner or later. But while I can keep him relatively happy I'm getting valuable experience, aren't I?'

'Very pragmatic.'

'Anyway, I've got my own plans.'

'What plans?'

'I'll tell you later. It's just an idea . . .'

'Sounds interesting.'

'You'll be the first to hear.'

Lydia rocked back in her chair. 'I like you Mel. I like you very much. You're ambitious, aren't you?'

'Is there anything wrong with that?'

'No. I like it. You're also very beautiful. You don't mind me saying that do you?'

'No. Why should I? I'm very attracted to you too.'

'Good, because I would like it very much if every so often we could renew our . . .' She tried to think of the right word, 'acquaintanceship. Without Powell. Would you mind that?'

'I would like it very much as long as . . .'

'As long as what?'

'It didn't get in the way of our working relationship.'

Lydia laughed. 'Quite right.'

'So when I get back from Oxford next week let's have dinner.'

'Perfect.' Lydia got up and came round her desk. With the back of her hand she stroked Melanie's cheek, just once. Her hands felt very cold. 'Perfect,' she repeated.

NAKED AMBITION

Melanie realised her heart was beating faster.

'I've got to get back,' she said, wishing that she didn't.

'I know. Give my love to Adam.'

'Of course. And we'll meet next week.'

'Under less formal circumstances. Though I have to tell you the temptation to throw you to the floor is almost irresistible . . .'

Lydia smiled. Her thin lips showed her very regular capped teeth and between them Melanie could see just the very tip of her tongue.

Chapter Nine

Melanie turned the key in the lock of the Diaghilev Suite more than half expecting to find Powell wrapped in the arms of some nubile young actress. The shooting schedule for the week she had been away in London meeting Keating and the writers was set in a sixth-form college for women and lots of attractive ladies had been recruited and shipped down to Oxford to play the roles. It would hardly have been difficult for Powell to proposition one of the no doubt adoring company.

But the living room was empty. There were voices coming from the bedroom but Melanie soon realised they were from the television.

Powell was lying propped up on the double bed watching an American mini-series on the box. Jane Seymour in a flimsy negligee was being embraced by John Hurt who looked as though he had just lost a street fight, his face bruised and smeared with blood.

'Hi darling,' she said cheerfully.

'I should have played that part,' Powell grumbled.

'You want some company or shall I go away?'

'Come to bed,' he said. 'Look at him, he's about as romantic as the hind leg of a cow.'

Melanie went into the bathroom still surprised to find him alone. She stripped off her clothes, showered, then dabbed her

body with perfume before walking back into the room quite naked.

Jane Seymour and John Hurt were still entwined but were now lying on a big four-poster bed, the camera carefully framing no lower than her shoulders, the negligee having been discarded. Melanie slipped under the single sheet that covered Powell and hugged herself to him.

'Hard day?' she asked.

'No. Boring.'

He watched the scene for a little longer and then reached for the remote control. 'Can't take any more of that.'

'Not very good.'

'Bloody man, I should have played that part.'

'You weren't available.'

'They could have waited.'

'I thought I'd find you in bed with one of the sixth-form girls.'

'What?'

'All those lovely young, admiring actresses . . .'

'Hh . . .' His tone of voice told her that she had not been that wrong.

'Oh, you found one, did you? So what happened? Where is she?'

'Are you disappointed, darling?'

'Certainly I am.' It was partly true. Driving back from London she had contemplated what she would do if Powell was in bed with another woman. The idea of a *ménage à trois* had been appealing. 'Come on, tell me all . . .'

'Do you really want to know? Aren't you jealous?'

Melanie laughed. 'What would be the point of me being jealous of you? We don't have that sort of relationship, do we?'

NAKED AMBITION

A union of mutual interests . . . with sex as a bonus.'

It was his turn to laugh. 'Very pragmatic.'

'So what went wrong?'

'She had a very limited idea of what you should and shouldn't do in bed.'

'Oh, how coy. You mean she wouldn't let you bugger her?'

Powell laughed again. 'Got it in one.'

'Poor darling, that must have been really frustrating for you.'

'It was. I feel deprived.' He used his best little boy voice.

It was her cue to snake her hand down under the covers and wrap it around his cock.

'Would you like to bugger me, darling?' She felt herself go instantly molten as she said it. Before he could answer she pulled the covers back and sank her mouth down on to his still flaccid cock. She pulled his foreskin back and sucked on his glans using her tongue to circle the sensitive escarpment that jutted from its edge where it joined the main shaft. She felt it swell immediately. She clamped her lips over the whole of his cock, wanting to feel it grow in her mouth. In seconds it was nudging against the back of her throat.

Powell's body tensed. She worked her mouth back and forth, sucking his cock between her lips, coating it with her saliva. She cupped his balls in her hand, and gently pulled them away from the base of his cock. He moaned. She pulled again, massaging the balls tenderly.

'You'll make me come if you do that,' he whispered.

'Come then,' she said, on the top of her stroke before plunging back down on him. It was easy to feel how excited he was. For some reason the need she had created in him had rapidly become an urgent need.

Leaving his balls she slid her hand lower, down between his

legs until she found the bud of his anus. She pushed a finger straight into it, as far up as it would go, until its tendons were straining against her knuckle.

'Christ . . .' Powell moaned.

She used her finger like a cock, fucking him with it as her head bobbed up and down on his shaft. She felt her own body melting with excitement. She ground her thighs together catching her clitoris between them so strongly that she moaned. The moan was gagged by his cock.

She was in control. She could feel him totally. She knew precisely when he would pass the point of no return. She had no intention of letting him come in her mouth. But she was going to take him right up to the wire. On the downward stroke his cock reared into her throat, on the upward, she sucked hard on the glans while her finger drove into his anus. He was moaning continuously.

On the next upward stroke she pulled her mouth away completely and withdrew her finger. She knelt up on the bed looking into Powell's face.

'You really want to come in my mouth?'

'No.'

She smiled at him, a knowing smile, then turned her back so she was facing the foot of the bed, and supported herself on all fours. Spreading her knees apart she gave Powell an explicit view of her sex, slicked with the leakage from her body. He could see every fold, every crease, every crevice. Her exercise programme had not changed the shape of her labia. They were thick and puffy, big cushions of flesh, two elongated triangles back to back, their centre open and black, the bud of her anus on the top like the inverted crater of a volcano.

Melanie smoothed her hand over her belly, enjoying the

NAKED AMBITION

feeling of her strong stomach muscles. Her fingers reached into her pubic hair, combing through it until she reached her clitoris. Her body throbbed. With two fingers she parted the labia, pulling aside the little hood that hid the bud of nerves, wanting him to see the tiny pink clit. She wanked it gently and could not suppress a moan of pleasure. Then she sent her fingers lower, pulling the meaty fleshy part of her labia aside so he could see the portal of her cunt, wet and dark, open and exposed. Slowly she inserted a finger into her cunt, then two. She pushed them in and out, wanting him to see them moistened by the flood of her juices.

Using the wetness she moved a finger up to her anus. She penetrated it without hesitation and sawed her finger in and out letting him watch the puckered flesh closing around the intruder, sucking it in.

She looked over her shoulder at him. His eyes were locked on her sex, the veins on his cock standing out like the veins on a weightlifter's arm.

'Feels good,' she said, wriggling her finger in her arse, should he be in any doubt about what she was referring to.

He got up on to his knees. His eyes were almost glazed, blinded with passion. As he came up behind her she extracted her finger and groped for his cock pulling it down to the passage she had already opened. His cock was still wet with her saliva. It felt incredibly hot.

'Bugger me,' she said, feeling a wave of pleasure as she said the words in anticipation of the special mixture of pain and intense pleasure she knew his cock would bring.

He pushed forward into her. His size took her breath away but she pushed back until he was deep inside her, but not quite all the way. She moaned. He pushed again and she felt him

slide in the rest of the way, until she could feel his balls up against her labia. She felt filled, split open, exposed in a way she never felt when he was in her cunt. He made no attempt to finger her clitoris or use his fingers in her cunt. He was too far gone for anything like subtlety. He just slammed into her, the sight of her on all fours, pointing herself at him, provoking him, wanking herself, exposing herself, so wantonly, burnt into his mind.

Melanie suddenly saw a vision of Lydia, her long neck, her thin body, her black hair cascading over the sheets in this very bed. She saw Keating too, saw his cock swelling under his big belly. Her body was flooded with sensation. She could feel Powell's need. She knew he was going to come and she wanted to come too. Using her fingers she started frigging her own clitoris. She attacked it violently, her hand a blur of movement. She had to catch up with Powell. His cock was ready to burst. Then she felt it, the first pulse of her feeling, the first sign of orgasm. She had crossed the line. She stopped abusing her clit and instead pushed two fingers deep into her own cunt, pushing Powell's balls to one side. She could feel the heat and power of Powell's erection in her other channel. It was throbbing. She used her fingers on it, wanking him through the thin wall of her own body.

She felt his cock jerk, jerk against her arse and against her fingers. She could actually feel his spunk jetting out of his cock, feel it against the tips of her fingers. Then, inexorably, she came, came over his cock and her own fingers, both her orifices filled with flesh. With the last conscious effort she could make she pushed back on him, burying his sputtering cock deeper inside her arse, as she lost control and fell into the soft clouds of infinite pleasure.

* * *

Melanie was up early. She had room service bring Powell his usual coffee and orange juice and two newspapers while he lay in bed and ordered a car to take her to Oxford station where she was due to meet Bella at ten. She could have driven herself, of course, but she thought the unit car, a Jaguar saloon, would be more impressive.

She had kept Bella informed of the many developments in her life and Bella had appeared genuinely delighted at everything that had happened to her. She had, after all, been in at the beginning of the transformation, indeed had been responsible for it and felt a proprietorial interest. She was most excited by the news about Powell and had demanded every detail, however intimate. He was an actor, she told Melanie, she had always fantasised about and desired. So when Melanie suggested she came down to watch a day's filming she had jumped at the chance.

Melanie dressed carefully. She wanted to look her best for Bella. She clipped her breasts into the cut-away cups of an underwired bra in white lace and silk and pulled matching panties over her hips. She chose neutral coloured tights, so sheer in some lights it looked as though her legs were bare, and a short tight red dress. She wore more make-up than usual too, high-lighting her eyes and accentuating her now high cheekbones and thin straight nose.

The train was exactly on time and Melanie soon spotted Arabella on the platform. It appeared she had dressed with just as much care. Nothing too obvious, of course. Only a leopard print Lycra catsuit that looked as though it had been sprayed on to her body so closely did it follow the contours of her breasts and waist and hips, let alone the folds of her sex. Her high-

heeled boots in black suede came up to the knee where they folded back in the style of a swashbuckler. Her flaming red hair was combed into soft waves, her make-up emphasising her sparkling green eyes.

'You look fantastic,' Melanie said, kissing her on both cheeks.

'Thanks. I thought I should make an effort.'

'Powell will be impressed.'

'That was the idea.'

They got into the car and were driven to the location. By the time they got there Melanie had filled Bella in on all the latest developments in her blossoming career, the plans for her new series and her role in it. She dare not tell her about her experience with Keating, not with the unit driver listening in the front seat. That would have to wait until they were alone together.

'That's fantastic,' Bella said.

'And I owe it all to you, Bella.'

'No you don't. I just gave you a helping hand.'

'Hand being the operative word,' Melanie said laughing. She saw the driver's eyes in the rearview mirror, his face trying to work out the joke.

'And will again, I hope,' Bella added, putting her hand on Melanie's knee.

Being in such close proximity to her friend was making Melanie feel distinctly aroused. Bella's long legs in the clinging Lycra, her ripe bust moulded into two perfect spheres by the tight material, and the delicious musky perfume she was wearing all made Melanie's body throb. It brought back the memories of that first night with Bella. She had opened her, like opening an unread book, given her the confidence and courage and desire to explore further. Thinking about it

made her shudder involuntarily. Bella felt it too.

‘You all right?’

‘Just remembering . . .’

‘What?’

‘What you did to me . . .’

The driver’s eyes flicked up to the rearview mirror again, looking from one woman to the other. He would have loved to angle the mirror down to look at their legs, but dare not, Melanie knew. She squeezed Bella’s knee affectionately and Bella reciprocated. There was no need to say any more.

By the time they arrived on location – a large granite-faced stately home in the Oxfordshire hills with a spectacular view down a long valley – filming was well under way and Powell was in the middle of a scene set in the house’s Victorian conservatory kept at eighty-five degrees Fahrenheit to nurture the many different varieties of orchid the owner had collected. Camera crew and actors emerged wringing with sweat and there was little room for visitors so Melanie took Bella to Powell’s Winnibago where they drank coffee from his machine and waited for a break in the filming.

Half-an-hour later Powell burst through the trailer door.

‘By God it’s hot in there. Those extra lights have got it up to a hundred at least. Couldn’t we turn the heating down?’

‘And pay compensation for all the dead orchids . . .’

‘Have you had those re-writes? I told you I needed them by today.’

‘This afternoon. Definite.’

It was then that Powell noticed Arabella.

‘Adam, this is my friend Arabella.’

Bella uncurled herself from the bench seat where she had been sitting with her legs tucked up under her, and advanced

towards Powell, her long lithe body moving like the cat printed on the material she was wearing.

'Everyone calls me Bella. I'm a great fan of yours.' She extended her hand.

'Well, you're a sight for sore eyes.' Powell took her hand and used it to pull Bella towards him to be kissed on both cheeks. 'Excuse the sweat,' he said.

'I like sweat.'

'Very subtle,' Melanie said.

'Must shower.' Powell unbuttoned his shirt and pulled it off. Bella's eyes admired his chest as he walked into the shower cubicle of the trailer and closed the door. 'Could you check how long the next set-up's going to take, Mel?'

'Great body,' Bella whispered as Melanie picked up the phone and dialled the production office.

'You've seen it all on TV,' Melanie said, then speaking into the phone, 'Is Dora there?'

'Oh, he's even more attractive in the flesh. Don't you think so?'

'Definitely. Oh Dora, how long before you need Powell again?'

Powell stepped from the shower. Melanie knew he had chosen the minuscule towel he had wrapped around his navel deliberately. There were lots of bath towels. This one barely covered his loins.

He was drying his hair with another towel in his hand.

'So have you ever been on location before?'

'You've got ten minutes,' Melanie told him, putting the phone down. 'And there's a costume change.'

'Oh, I hoped I'd have a chance to chat to your charming friend.'

'I'm sure there'll be time later.'

'You are joining us for dinner, I hope? The Ambassador's has the best restaurant outside London, so they say.'

Powell rubbed his hair aggressively. The action loosened the knot that held the small towel around his waist and it fell to the floor. Powell made no attempt to pick it up.

'I'd love to, if Mel doesn't mind,' Bella said, looking at his cock and making sure Powell could see that was precisely what she was doing. It stirred slightly under her gaze.

'That's settled then. Will you book a table, Mel?'

'Already done. I try to anticipate your every need.' Melanie let the innuendø hang in the air. It was not lost on Powell.

'How very interesting.'

He stepped back into the rear section of the Winnibago and pulled on a clean pair of briefs. A knock on the door was followed by the entrance of the wardrobe girl carrying Powell's suit and shirt for the next scene. As he was helped into it another knock ushered in Dora, the p.a. She looked flustered, her blouse stained with sweat under the arms and between the breasts, her face covered with a thin film of sweat.

'Five minutes, Mr Powell,' she said.

'What's the next scene number?' Powell snapped as the wardrobe girl knotted a silk tie around the collar of the light blue shirt.

'Oh . . .' Dora consulted her clipboard. It appeared not to have the information required. 'I'll call the . . .'

'For Christ's sake, woman, you must know what the next bloody scene is. It doesn't take a genius to work it out.'

'I thought you'd know.'

'I know because you're supposed to tell me. That's your job. Go and find out. Now.'

'Yes, Mr Powell.'

Dora retreated rapidly, almost running out of the trailer.

'Did you have to talk to her like that?' Melanie said.

'Yes, she's bloody incompetent. And where are those re-writes? I've got to learn the bloody lines you know.'

'They'll be here.'

'Surrounded by bloody incompetents...' Powell mumbled.

'I hope that doesn't include me.' Melanie said.

'That last scene wasn't right.'

'What do you mean?'

'You told me we were going to change it around.'

'It was changed...'

'No it bloody well wasn't. If I don't find the damn jewel it makes me look like a clown. I told you that.'

'How can you find it? It turns the whole plot around.'

'Well I think we should re-shoot...'

'Powell, don't start that.'

Whether this display of petulance was brought on by Bella's presence Melanie did not know. But it was the first time that Powell had criticised her publicly and she didn't like his tone one bit.

The wardrobe girl scurried away, no doubt to tell the rest of the crew of this latest development.

'Come and watch the next scene,' Powell said, turning to Bella, all sweetness and light again. 'Sorry about all this, but we're all under pressure...'

'There's no room, is there...'

'Oh no, we're on the front lawn for this one.'

'I thought you didn't know what the next scene was?'

'Of course I do. I just like to make the silly woman suffer.'

Powell said, smiling angelically. 'Come on, I'll show you the way.'

Bella took his arm and they walked off across the gardens to where a semi-circle of brutes, the big lamps used to provide extra light, were being set up. Melanie sat down and poured herself a cup of coffee, brooding about what this sudden burst of hostility had meant. Her relationship with Powell – and to a lesser extent with Lydia Holbeck – had given her the opportunity of a lifetime but she was not naive. For all his protestations she knew Powell would discard her, would start to find her irritating and abuse her, would question her decisions and judgements just as easily as he had done Gordon Davies'. She had no illusions. It was simply the man's nature. It gave him pleasure to be perverse. It was remarkable that his good behaviour had lasted so long.

But whatever he might do he was not going to make her life a misery as he had Gordon Davies'. She had made contingency plans. If Powell played the game, respected her, stood by her decisions then her plans for the future would include him. But if he wanted to start playing by his own rules, then he would rapidly discover that he was surplus to requirements in Melanie Chambers' grand plan. It would be his loss, she thought, smiling to herself, not hers.

The restaurant of the Ambassador's Hotel was lavish. An elegant Regency room restored to pristine condition, carefully replastered and redecorated in the Regency style, its circular tables were draped with long white linen tablecloths, on which highly polished glasses and sparkling silver cutlery were set. Each table was provided with a small display of flowers, their colour picked to complement the overall colour scheme of the room, a mixture

of light pinks and claret red. Overhead the ceiling was decorated with an intricate pattern of plaster particularly around the central rose where a large crystal chandelier hung, glistening in the light of the flicking candles, also prominent on every table. At one end of the room a marble fireplace held an enormous arrangement of flowers: it was too warm as yet for the log fire it would hold later in the year.

Bella had changed into a shimmering evening dress. In fact it was merely a long tight tube of material in the darkest of greens, her favourite colour, that fitted tightly from her bust to her ankles. It was shot through with a silver thread that caught the light. Strapless, it revealed the soft pillows of her breasts, forcing them together into a dark chasm of cleavage. It curved into her waist and clung to the apple-shaped contours of her buttocks. Not to be outdone Melanie had found time, late in the afternoon, to drive into Oxford and buy a stunningly simple black satin dress, its spaghetti straps supporting a very tight and corseted bodice, almost like a basque worn on the outside, to show off her breasts, its skirt long enough, just, to allow her to wear sheer black stockings.

Powell had apparently completely forgotten the morning's outburst. He had ordered a bottle of the 1964 Krug and they sat in the dining room while he regaled Bella with an endless array of theatrical anecdotes. In due course they ordered an elaborate dinner, another bill, Melanie thought, for PTV's accountant to deal with.

Melanie said little. Despite her anger and the way he had behaved she could not suppress her excitement. She watched Powell dividing his attention between the two of them, his eyes flitting from one cleavage to another, from one face to another. It was exciting because under all the banter and badinage she

knew the truth was that all three of them would end the evening in bed together. She felt the now-familiar hum in her body, the engines idling way below decks, waiting for their time to come, waiting to take precedence over other emotions and feelings. The anticipation was delicious, the knowledge, the certainty of what was going to happen, of what she would do and what, in turn, would be done to her, almost as tangible as the event itself.

Melanie had created her new body as a means to an end. But the means had taken over. She hadn't forgotten her goals, nor would she, but she would never have imagined, not in her wildest dreams, that the means of achieving them would be so incredibly exciting. She had discovered so much about herself that she did not know. She had discovered the sensual pleasure of other women's bodies, she had discovered the extraordinary exhilaration of being in control, of having the power to entice and seduce. What Grant Andrews and Charles Keating had wanted was only an extension of that power. Much to her surprise – no, surprise was the wrong word, because she could only be surprised if she had had expectations and she had none. Much to her interest, her interest in her own sexuality, she had found that her body and mind were happy to play the role the two men had cast for her, the mistress to their slaves. In fact she was eager to explore it in greater depth.

What was a genuine surprise to her was that the confidence she now felt sexually seemed to have leaked into the other areas of her life. Powell's outburst this morning had not phased her. She was ready to cope with anything he did, though she knew he would do nothing to spoil the night ahead.

Melanie looked across at Bella and felt a jolt of desire. Her green eyes sparkled in the candlelight, her big firm breasts constrained by the tight dress. Melanie had the knowledge and

confidence now to take Bella and use her; use her to fulfil her own fantasies. Tonight was an exploration, to test the waters again to see if, as she suspected, the more sensuality her body was exposed to the higher the heights it was capable of taking her to. She had mapped the lower ground of her new-found island, now it was time to see how high its mountains were.

Though the food was delicious they ate sparingly and when it came to dessert all three, with no prior arrangement, waved the menus away. The offer of coffee was similarly declined. There was a silence at the table after Powell had signed the bill, a silence filled with implication.

They climbed the stairs to the suite, Powell and Bella hand-in-hand leading the way. As they got to the double doors at the end of the corridor Powell took Bella in his arms and kissed her on the mouth. She responded by wrapping her arms around his neck and pushing her thigh up into his crotch. Melanie felt no jealousy. Bella would kiss her like that too and so would Powell. No one would be left out. She unlocked the door to the suite.

Disentangling himself Powell strolled over to the tray of drinks on the sideboard. Without asking he poured three large measures of Hine Antique into crystal brandy balloons.

'Well, here's to your beautiful friend, Mel,' he said, handing the glasses round.

'Here's to us,' Bella corrected.

They clinked glasses and drank. Powell immediately took Bella's glass from her hand and put it down on the occasional table. He laced his arms through hers and kissed her full on the mouth again. Melanie abandoned her glass too. Coming up behind her friend she pressed herself into her back until her breasts were squashed into Bella's shoulder blades. She lowered her mouth on to Bella's neck, kissing and nibbling at her flesh

on one side and then the other, lifting her hair at the back so she could kiss the top of her spine. She kissed her along her bare shoulders too, right along to the top of her arms. Bella moaned, her voice gagged by Powell's mouth. Between the two of them they pressed Bella from either side, Powell's erection swelling against her navel, Melanie's hard pubic bone thrust against her pouting arse.

Powell was the first to release her. He stepped back, picked up his brandy glass and walked into the bedroom.

'You're so beautiful,' Melanie said, still standing behind Bella, her hands now free to roam over the front of her dress.

'So are you, Mel. I'd never have believed it but you look better and better.'

She turned round in Melanie's arms and kissed her on the mouth, her tongue pushing between her lips.

'I want you,' she breathed into Melanie's mouth without losing contact.

'Oh yes,' Melanie gasped in the same manner, 'I want everything.'

They kissed passionately, their lips squirming against each other, their tongues vying for position, their arms hugging their bodies tightly or moving over each other's backs and buttocks, caressing, squeezing and teasing. Their breasts were squashed together by the embrace.

Melanie did what she had been wanting to do all evening. Taking the top of the shimmering dress in her hands she pulled it down over Bella's breasts, freeing them from their prison. She pulled her mouth away from the kiss so she could look down at them, big solid spheres of flesh, their nipples hard as pebbles, their aureola at least two inches in diameter and a dark, dark brown. Melanie felt her body pulse with excitement for

the hundredth time that evening. She pulled the dress the rest of the way down until Bella could step out of it. Apart from her high heels Bella was naked. Her flame-red pubic hair looked as though it had recently been clipped into its perfect triangular shape. There was absolutely no hair on Bella's labia. It had all been shaved away.

Melanie had followed the dress down and now knelt at Bella's feet. On impulse she bent forward and kissed the arch of her foot, pressing her lips against the leather of the shoes, then moving up to the skin. She kissed both feet meticulously, covering every inch.

'Like one of my slaves,' Bella said. 'I make them kiss my feet.'

Melanie's mouth licked and nibbled up to her knee, then started again on the other leg. As soon as she ventured up above the knee Bella felt her body weaken. She sank down on to the edge of the chair behind her, a George III mahogany armchair, its wooden arms only upholstered on their upper surface, its seat relatively hard and inflexible. There were no time to look for anything more comfortable. Immediately, as Bella scissored her legs apart, Melanie's mouth advanced along the inside of her thigh. She would have liked to be controlled, to reach the outskirts of Bella's sex and then return, teasingly, down the other thigh. But her own need was too great. It had been too long a wait over dinner, too much anticipation, too much visual delight. So her mouth locked on to the soft labia kissing them, squirming against them while her tongue darted out to find Bella's clitoris. Bella's sex was wet, slick with the sap from her body, a sweet musky taste that Melanie recognised from before. She had no trouble finding her clit. It was hard and swollen. Moving her mouth up she sucked the whole of her labia in,

then used her tongue to tease out the bud of nerves between the soft lips. She heard Bella moan. With her fingers she probed the entrance to her cunt then penetrated it. Two fingers slid into the sticky depths as her mouth released the imprisoned labia.

Melanie's body was trembling with excitement. She could feel the pulses and rhythms of her friend's body so accurately it was almost as if they were her own. She could feel the effect she was having on her. It was almost like masturbating. What she did to Bella's body she felt in her own. She could feel Bella coming and even though she was not being touched, even though she was still fully dressed, Melanie knew she would come too. Her tongue stroked Bella's clitoris, her fingers ploughed the furrow of her cunt, up and down the tight wet passage. Bella was making little gasping sobbing sounds, expelling snorts of air from her mouth almost continuously. Melanie felt her body tense, just as her own body crossed the line between being in control and out of it. She worked faster, tried to push deeper, pushing until her fingers felt as though they would be pulled from their sockets. She felt Bella's sex contract and, at the same time felt her own, nestling in silk knickers under her dress, spasming too. As the involuntary contractions of Bella's orgasm sucked at her fingers Melanie's body lurched into its own climax, fuelled not by physical stimulus but entirely by the power of her mind. Her eyes rolled back and in the blackness she could feel only the incredible softness of Bella's sex, still quivering against her mouth.

'That was quite a performance.' Powell's voice made Melanie open her eyes. How long had he been watching?

'Especially for you,' Bella said.

Melanie pulled away from her friend but Bella did not move. She sat in the chair with her legs open letting Powell look at her

glistening labia, wet with her own juices and Melanie's saliva.

Powell was naked, his cock erect. He held it in his right hand.

'Hadn't we better do something with that? It looks uncomfortable.' Bella said.

'It is. Very.'

'Come on then. I'm sure I can make it feel better.'

Strangely Melanie had not quite recovered from the impact of her orgasm and still floated only vaguely in touch with reality. Bella had come down more quickly. As Bella got to her feet and led Powell back into the bedroom Melanie found it an effort to get to her feet. Pausing, she took a large swig of brandy before she followed them.

Bella kicked off her shoes and threw herself on to the large double bed. Powell stood by the side of it, his cock jutting out in front of him. Melanie had recovered sufficiently to come up behind him and wrap her arms around his body. One hand circled his cock and the other went to his nipple. She squeezed the cock and pinched the nipple simultaneously. Immediately Bella snaked over the bed and latched her mouth over his erection. Melanie didn't take her hand away. She felt Bella's lips against the side of her fingers as she drove down on to his cock. Powell moaned. Melanie moved her hand down to his balls letting Bella's mouth slide further down the shaft. She cupped them gently in her palm and jiggled them in her fingers as she pinched his other nipple. Bella's mouth bobbed up and down leaving a trail of saliva on his engorged flesh.

'Heaven,' he said.

But Melanie knew Powell well enough to know he wouldn't come like that however much provocation they provided. He needed something else and she knew exactly what. While Bella continued to work on his cock Melanie came round to the foot

of the bed where he could see her. She slipped the spaghetti straps off her shoulders and unzipped the dress from the side under her arm. It fell away. A black lacy strapless bra held her breasts, a matching suspender belt her sheer black stockings and a tiny triangle of lacy silk the thick thatch of her pubic hair. She skimmed the panties off her legs and slipped out of her shoes and got up on to the bed next to Bella. They had planned it, what they would do with him.

Melanie caressed her friend's naked thigh.

'Mmm . . .' Bella mumbled, her mouth full of cock.

'Come on Bella,' Melanie said. 'Don't forget about me.'

'Oh poor darling,' Bella said, pulling her mouth away from Powell. His cock was so hard it looked almost angry. She flicked at it one more time with her tongue, then, with a certain amount of reluctance at having to leave it, she crawled into the middle of the bed. She got up on her knees, facing away from Powell and opened her legs wide. Melanie lay on her back on the bed and slithered her face down between Bella's thighs. As soon as that was accomplished Bella dipped her head forward to Melanie's sex as she in turn opened her legs. A perfect sixty-nine.

Melanie's hand rounded Bella's thighs to hold her buttocks. She levered herself up against Bella's sex and felt those soft wet labia all over again, just as she felt Bella's mouth coming to rest on hers. For a moment both women wallowed in sensation, each feeling the pleasures of the other's sex, an intimate circle of two. But that was not all they had planned.

Bella looked up at Powell who had been standing fascinated by the spectacle. 'Aren't you going to join us?' she said.

He knelt up on the bed. Melanie could see his cock inches from her face, inches from Bella's open sex. He crawled forward

on his knees until his cock was nudging at the cheeks of Bella's arse.

'Bugger me, for Christ's sake,' Bella cried, 'don't keep me waiting for it.'

'She told you . . .'

'Of course she told me. Now get on with it. Can't you feel how much I want it?'

He needed no further encouragement. Instantly his cock was at her anus, wet from her saliva. He pushed forward with no subtlety but Bella liked that. There was something primitive and unsophisticated about buggery that Bella had always liked. It had always made her come.

Powell thrust into her. She groaned, but he had not gone deep. He thrust again. She groaned louder, the same sobbing sound she had made earlier but this time only once. One more thrust and he was in her, all the way in her, buried to the hilt in her arse.

'You bastard,' she cried, 'Do it, you bastard.'

Melanie lifted her head and tongued Bella's clitoris, then delved up to the opening of her cunt, pushing in alongside his cock, straining to get it as far in as it would go.

'Oh . . .'

that sobbing sound again as Melanie strained forward feeling Bella's juices spraying from her sex.

Powell could feel the proximity of Melanie's mouth. He could feel her hot breath on his balls. But Bella was Melanie's priority. Alternately she divided her tongue between her clitoris and her cunt. Then, as Powell started thrusting relentlessly into Bella's rear she concentrated on her clitoris.

This double assault cranked up Bella's already protesting senses. The delicious orgasm Melanie had given her in the living room was still lurking in her body. It began to blossom again,

like a flower in the sun, at least that's how she felt, waves of pleasure echoing in her body, the old pleasure joining the new. Powell powered in, each thrust opening her, pushing deeper, making her feel as if she would be split open. She was being used. That was the idea that excited her. She felt completely filled, filled with cock. She could feel nothing else, nothing, that is, but the tiny exquisite strokes of Melanie's tongue coaxing her closer and closer to climax. And then it was on her, flooding through her, drowning her in pure unadulterated ecstasy, her eyes closed, her body open, tossed in the uncontrollable waves of sexual pleasure.

Melanie moved her attention to Powell. He had stopped as he felt Bella trembling to orgasm. Slowly Melanie reached up with her mouth to suck gently on his balls, closing her lips around them, pulling them away from the shaft of his cock. Once they were inside her mouth she used her tongue to nudge and provoke them. She could sense Powell's reaction, feel his spunk pumping instantly into his cock. She knew that feeling Bella's convulsions had brought him right to the edge of his tolerance, his ability to hold back, and now it was time to take him plunging over it.

Gently she began sucking his balls rhythmically. She dared not do it too hard but what she was doing was quite enough. She felt him tense. There was no need for him to thrust anymore. He was deep inside Bella's arse. He could feel it clinging to his cock as though sucking it. He had his place, and now he was content to let Melanie milk his spunk out of him, suck it out, suck it into the hot tight depths all around him.

'Oh yes, yes, yes . . .' he moaned. He tried to keep his eyes open, taking in the sight of these two beautiful women pressed together on the bed in front of him, of Melanie's long legs, her

thighs bisected by the black welts of her stockings, the suspender at the side tight and stretched while the one on top was loose, of Bella's red hair bobbing as she licked at Melanie's sex too. But it was impossible. As he felt his cock throb, as it kicked for the first time against the tight confines of Bella's body, as the first gob of spunk seemed to rocket out of the whole length of his erection as though jet propelled, his eyes rolled back into their sockets and he abandoned himself to blackness and the image, in his mind's eye, of the tight puckered anus wrapped around the breadth of his rigid erection.

Bella screamed. The size of his cock as it spat spunk out into her was almost more than she could take. But the pain turned to pleasure so quickly it tipped her body into another orgasm, a sharp, hard, intense orgasm driven by the feeling of being completely filled with cock.

They collapsed in a tangled heap of bodies, a chaos of limbs. Melanie was the first to extract herself. She was, after all, feeling neglected. The noisy engine of her body was still humming relentlessly. What she had seen and done had only made the hum louder, her whole body seeming to quiver with need. She had had an orgasm in her mind. Now she wanted one in her body.

She moved across the bed on her side until her face was level with Bella's. She reached out to caress her cheek. Bella opened her eyes.

'Are you all right?'

But Bella knew that wasn't the question. She knew immediately what Melanie wanted. Her hand cupped Melanie's breast, fingering her nipple.

'Poor darling . . .' she said.

'Yes . . .' Melanie pouted. 'Nobody wants to play with me.'

'Oh, I do,' Bella said.

Her hand moved across Melanie's flat belly into the thatch of pubic hair. Melanie rolled onto her back and opened her legs, bending the one furthest from Bella at the knee, keeping the other one down. Bella's hand followed the thin black suspender along Melanie's thigh. When it reached the taut welt of the stocking it caressed the black nylon, then slipped inside the sleeve of material to feel Melanie's warm flesh beneath. Bella repeated the process with the other leg. She could feel the pent up energy that coursed through Melanie's body.

Slowly, teasingly, Bella extracted her hand from the stocking and smoothed it up to Melanie's belly and back to the thick pubic hair.

'Do it to me, Bella,' Melanie said, wanting to hear the words. They excited her, thrilled her, saying that to a woman. But not as much as Bella's artful fingers. She was delving in the runnel of Melanie's sex, and soon found the object of the search. Melanie's clitoris was swollen and throbbing. It had already thrust itself out from under the hood of the labia. It demanded attention.

Bella used only her middle finger. First she ran it the whole length of Melanie's sex and felt the sticky wetness oozing like sap from her body. Then, with just the very tip of her finger, she concentrated on Melanie's clit. With the most delicate of movements, as she looked straight into Melanie's big blue eyes, she rolled the convex surface of her fingertip around the tiny hillock of nerves.

Melanie moaned. This was all she wanted. Bella's finger hardly pressed at all, a touch so light it was almost not there. But it was perfect and remorseless, drawing imaginary circles around the very centre of Melanie's sex, the apex of her nerves,

sending out waves of sensations, like radio waves radiating from an antenna.

Bella's eyes never left her. They watched her expression change from pleasure through delight to the beginnings of ecstasy. Melanie's eyelids became heavy, the effort to hold them open almost impossible to bear, as she felt her body respond to Bella's incredibly sensitive touch. But she fought against them closing. She wanted to see. Seeing was part of the turn on, seeing Bella's beautiful body, her big fleshy tits and hard nipples, her long legs, the flame red triangle of pubic hair and beyond, on the other side of her, Powell, lying back against the headboard, watching too, watching Bella's delicate finger bringing her off.

Powell lent forward to get a better view. Still not satisfied, he got up off the bed and walked round until he sat at the foot of the bed at Melanie's side. He stared down into her sex watching Bella's finger move.

'She's beautiful, isn't she?' Bella said.

'Such a dyke.' Powell said. 'Look at her, she loves it . . .'

'She loves sex, that's what she loves. Cock, cunt, anything she can get . . .'

'You're making her come.'

'Are you coming, Mel?'

Melanie couldn't reply. As the tip of Bella's finger skated over her clitoris, the only contact between their bodies, Melanie felt her orgasm beginning to gel. The loud humming was replaced by a different frequency, waves of longer duration, gathering momentum, each higher, harder, heavier than the one before. As she lost the battle to keep her eyes open she saw Bella smile, a smile of triumph. She knew she had achieved what she had set out to achieve. As the finger rotated, pressing just a little harder, Melanie's eyes rolled back and her orgasm

NAKED AMBITION

seized her. She started to shudder, shaking uncontrollably her body jerking as her nerves reacted to the shocks of sensation that jolted through her body in rapid succession.

'Bella,' she cried, 'Bella, Bella.' The words seemed to hang in the air for a long, long time.

Chapter Ten

It was a beautiful morning. Powell's car came to pick him up to take him to the location at nine but Melanie did not need to get to the set until later so she ordered breakfast on the terrace of the hotel overlooking the immaculately kept gardens and very old cedar trees that had been so carefully sited in the lawns. She had got up early to swim and workout in the hotel gym, as she had done every day, leaving Powell and Bella in bed together.

When her coffee and croissants arrived she discovered she was ravenously hungry and devoured two croissants, smeared with butter and strawberry jam, in minutes.

'Good morning,' Bella said as she arrived at the table. She looked stunning in white leotard over white leggings, her red hair catching the sun. Sitting with her back to the light she took off her sunglasses and poured herself a coffee before the waiter could rush over to assist.

'You look marvellous,' Melanie said honestly.

'Sin suits me,' she said, smiling. 'What happened to you this morning?'

'Exercise. I have to keep it up. No falling back into my old ways. I'm never going to be lumpy again.'

'I'm sure you won't be.'

'I will if I don't work at it.'

'Very dedicated.'

'It's not difficult. Look at my life before. Look at what I've got now. It's a pretty strong motivation to keep it up, isn't it?'

'I should say so.'

'Anyway, apart from all that I feel so much better. About myself. And I feel more; I'm so much more sensitive than I was . . .'

'Really?'

'God yes. Look at last night . . .'

'Perhaps I'd better take it up then . . .'

'You've got a perfect figure . . .'

'If it's going to improve my sex life . . .'

'I don't think you need to, Bella, do you? I did. I didn't have a sex life . . .'

'I could do with something to tone me up. When we're back in town let's go to aerobics together.'

'That'll be great.'

The waiter arrived with orange juice and another basket of croissants and brioche which both women pounced on eagerly.

'So how did you get on this morning?' Melanie asked.

'Oh, no repeat performance. I tried but he didn't seem very interested.'

'No, he's strictly a once-a-day man. Then it's once a week. Then not at all unless there's something special in the offing.'

'Really?'

'Afraid so. Disappointing, isn't it?'

'And I have a feeling my days may already be numbered. You saw how he behaved yesterday over the script.'

'Yes?'

'Powell likes to throw his weight around. In Hollywood apparently he was a small fish in a very big pond. Back here it's the other way around. He can throw his tantrums and get

away with it. So far I've given him what he wants, and I don't mean just in bed. He likes the scripts to present this really strong character, honest, full of integrity. Well, the writers had got fed up with it. They'd started changing it around, making the Investigator more corrupt, more vulnerable . . . more like a normal mortal. Powell kept throwing fits. Anyway, I've got them to re-write. Go back to the basics. The writers don't like it but Powell does and, judging from the ratings, so do the public.'

'So what's the problem now?'

'I don't know. Powell's got a lot of resentment. He's got a big chip on his shoulder that he didn't make it in Hollywood. If there isn't a problem he'll invent one. In fact I think he already has.'

'He still wants to sleep with you . . .'

'I don't think that's very important . . .'

'Come on. After last night. Where's he going to find another woman to give him that? And didn't you say you had a scene with that other producer?'

'Lydia, yes, but . . .'

'Come on, Mel. You're under-estimating yourself.'

'Am I?'

'Listen. I'm available. Any time. And I've got one or two friends who feel exactly the same. They'd be happy to share a bed with Adam Powell. Between us we can keep him so jazzed up he won't have time to think of anything else.'

Melanie smiled at her friend and patted her hand. 'I just have this feeling that the chip on his shoulder is bigger than his sex drive. He needs to be nasty. He's kept the lid on it for quite a while, for him. It's like a volcano, it's time for an eruption.'

'Well you know him better than I do . . .'

Melanie sipped at her coffee and looked across the lawns. A

squirrel had skipped from one of the trees and was running across to the terrace where one of the other guests had dropped bread to feed it.

'Don't worry. I've got my own plans. Do you realise in three months I've gone from researcher to producer? I have no intention of leaving it at that. I'm on a roll. If Powell plays his cards right he can come along with me. If he doesn't, it isn't me who'll be regretting it. And that was the next thing I wanted to talk to you about.'

'Go on,' Bella smiled benignly. So much about her friend was new to her, her face, her body, her sexuality and, perhaps most noticeable of all, her determination. She could see a hard glint in her eye, a glint of steel. In all the years she had known Melanie she had never seen it before.

'It's just that . . .' Melanie hesitated, not quite knowing what Bella's reaction would be.

'Go on . . .'

'It's that room you showed me, the special room in your flat . . .'

'The second time this morning . . .'

'Sorry?'

'I was telling Powell all about it. Actually, I was hoping it might turn him on.'

'It didn't?'

'I told you. Not a twitch.'

'Well, what I was going to ask you was . . .'

Melanie knew there was something wrong as soon as she got to the location, having said goodbye to Bella and arranged a car to take her to the station. It was no more than a feeling, an intuition really, but everyone on the crew was treating her so kindly and

NAKED AMBITION

with a sort of gentle sympathy that she had the distinct impression that they knew something she didn't. Powell was in the middle of two scenes being filmed back-to-back so Melanie went to her office. They had decided the new series would need a two-hour, film-length pilot to show to the American co-producers and the script, which she had re-worked with the new writer in London, was sitting on her desk. Ignoring everything else she sat down to read it.

It was good, very good. The ideas she had developed had all been incorporated by the writers and the script was now better than even she had imagined. It fitted her plans perfectly.

She was anxious to see Powell but missed him again at lunch. Just as she was about to set off for the catering truck and the marquee set up next door to cope with the vagaries of the British weather and accommodate the nearly eighty people of the cast and crew, Melanie had to take a call from Lydia Holbeck, who had also read the new script and was equally delighted. By the time the call was over Powell had eaten his lunch and was not in his Winnibago, though his next scene was not for an hour. Melanie concluded that he was definitely avoiding her though she could not think of one reason why he should. The script changes he demanded so unpleasantly yesterday had been delivered to his trailer first thing this morning, Melanie had checked that as soon as she came in.

At the end of his last scene Melanie walked over to Powell's Winnibago determined to catch up with him. As she did she saw his unit car, with Powell sitting in the back, pulling out of the car park. She waved to catch his attention. The driver certainly saw her and slowed the car and she was sure Powell had too, but after a moment's hesitation the car accelerated away.

Powell was not smiling. He had obviously told the driver to ignore her.

Collecting her own car she drove to the hotel. In the Diaghilev Suite Powell was sitting in the living room, a large Scotch and soda in his hand. He was reading the scenes for tomorrow's shoot. He didn't look up or smile or greet Melanie.

'You could have stopped for me,' she said.

'You had your own car.'

'OK. What's all this about, then?'

'I'm trying to concentrate on my bloody script.'

'Do you want to have dinner up here or shall we eat downstairs?'

'I'm going out for dinner.' He said it in such a way as to indicate she was not included.

'Who with?'

'Lydia.'

'Lydia. I spoke to her at lunchtime. She didn't say she was coming down.'

'I asked her this afternoon.'

'Why do I get the impression that the subject of conversation will be me?'

'I need to talk to her.'

'Adam, what the hell's the matter with you?'

'Just leave it, will you.'

'I think I'm entitled, don't you?'

Powell put the script down. He sipped his drink and looked at Melanie with eyes that were full of contempt.

'You really had me going, didn't you?'

'What does that mean?'

'I mean I was like a lamb to the slaughter and I really didn't see it.'

NAKED AMBITION

'Adam . . .'

'Who was she? Where did you find her? Did you trawl the streets of Soho or is it Mayfair?'

'Who?'

'You know who. Perhaps you've worked together before. I won't put that past you.'

Clearly he meant Bella. 'What are you talking about?'

He jumped to his feet and came over to where she was standing, his face reddening with anger. 'Do you have any idea? Do you have any idea what it could do to me if it got into the papers? Me. Me. You bloody well know the public identify stars with their parts. That's how they see me, Adam Powell, honest, clean-cut, full of integrity. Look at what happened to Frank Bough . . .'

'Please, Adam . . .'

'If she goes to the papers. Did she have it on tape? I bet you didn't bloody check?'

'She's a friend of mine. An old friend. We were at university together.'

He laughed. 'University of the streets.'

'I thought you enjoyed it. No one forced you . . .'

'Like a lamb to the slaughter. Letting my cock do my thinking. You know and I know she's a whore. You hired her, didn't you? What was it, afraid you were losing you're hold over me?'

'No, no . . .' Melanie felt tears pricking at her eyes.

'It was all too neat, all too pat. Had you been rehearsing? You even told her what I liked.'

'Adam, she's a friend . . .'

'Don't lie to me. She told me this morning. She told me the truth.'

'What did she say?'

'She was pumping me. Trying to find out what I liked. She told me she had special equipment, a special room . . .'

Melanie laughed, though she knew she had nothing to laugh about. 'That's what this is all about.'

'So you know about it?'

For the first time Melanie was speechless. There was no way she could explain away Bella's special room. In a sense, of course, Powell was right. Bella was a sort of whore though she was not one who could be hired.

Powell was pouring himself another Scotch. 'Do you have any idea what would happen to my career if it got into the papers? The Investigator in Hotel Sex Orgy. If she told them what I did . . . Christ, I can see it now. She probably got the whole thing on tape. And it's your bloody fault, you stupid cow.'

'She's my friend . . .'

'So you have whores for friends. Is that going to stop her going to the press. Do you know how much they'd pay? Thousands. To get something like that on me. Three in a bed. Christ, it could be the end of me . . .'

He sat on the sofa with his head between his hands. For a moment Melanie thought he was going to cry.

'I thought there was no such thing as bad publicity.'

'Well, that shows how much you know. I should have bloody well known. I should have known right from the beginning about you. The way you came in here the first time. All over me. All willing to do whatever I wanted. I should have known it was too bloody good to be true.'

Melanie could think of nothing else to say. There was clearly no point standing around waiting to be insulted further so she

picked up her handbag and went to the door.

'There will be no story in the papers,' she said absolutely calmly, her voice level and controlled. She looked at him icily with cold blue eyes. 'Your reputation will be unblemished. Bella genuinely found you attractive. After what happened with Lydia it seemed a perfectly natural thing to do. Now if you'd like to apologise . . .'

'Apologise . . .' he snorted like a bull.

'Fine. Then I know just where I am, don't I?'

Before he could say anything else Melanie walked out of the suite, closing, not slamming, the door after her. She felt icy calm. She smiled to herself, not broadly, but a tight-lipped controlled sort of smile. She had truly been hoist with her own petard. But as she had always imagined something of this sort was eventually going to happen, though not quite so dramatically, she had made her plans. Melanie had no intention of being fired as easily as she had been hired. Now it was quite clear her plans would not include Adam Powell. That was his loss, not hers.

As the Associate Producer of *The Investigator* Melanie had been allocated a mobile phone. It was sitting on the passenger seat of her car and rang every five minutes as she drove to London the next morning, until she got fed up with it and turned the power off. A night's restless sleep had not changed her determination. It was simple. Adam Powell had gone too far this time. The rest of the television industry might be prepared to accept his behaviour but she was not. It was time Adam Powell learnt that no one, no one in the world, was indispensable.

The phone was ringing to fire her, she knew. It would be Lydia Holbeck. She would be apologetic, abject even. She'd

tell her how Powell was such a difficult man and there was no point going into a new series with him in an obstreperous mood, so it would be better if they got in someone else.

Well, Melanie was working on a surprise for Lydia Holbeck. Melanie was not the one who was going to be replaced.

She had taken a great deal of trouble over her appearance. She was wearing her most elegant business suit, a black two-piece with a tight, short jacket and a knee-length skirt. She wore classic court shoes and neutral-coloured tights. She had made up carefully too, wanting to give the impression of efficiency and authority, combined with a sort of casual understated beauty. As far as she was concerned, she had succeeded. She felt good and that, after all, was everything.

The doorman at the Park Lane Curzon Hotel was about to tell her she could not park her car in front of the hotel. A twenty-pound note palmed into his hand quickly stifled his protests.

'Won't be long,' she said, smiling sweetly, and swinging her legs out of the car as he held the door open for her.

Melanie carried a black leather briefcase. She strode into the hotel and over to the reception desk. 'Mr d'Angelo, please.'

'Certainly Ms,' the young, fresh-faced boy behind the reception desk said. 'May I have your name?'

'Melanie Chambers. I just need the room number.'

'Oh I'm sorry, but we can't . . .'

Melanie placed a neatly-folded fifty-pound note on the counter. The boy looked around to see if anyone was watching and when he was sure there was not covered the note with his hand very much in the way a magician does when making a playing card disappear. Sure enough when he removed his hand the note had vanished. He took a small pamphlet from a stack in a little display case and wrote a number on top of it.

'I think this will give you the information, madam,' he said, handing her the pamphlet.

'That's very kind, isn't it.'

The number 710 was scrawled on the top of the paper. She walked to the lift, and was soon in the corridor of the seventh floor. She followed the signs directing her to 710. It occurred to her that there might be some sort of guard at the door, some security considering who Robert d'Angelo was, but as she approached the end of the corridor and the door marked 710 there was nobody. They might be inside, of course.

She rapped on the door twice, not really knowing what to expect. She knew d'Angelo wasn't working. She had checked with a friend who had worked for PTV before branching out into films. As it happened she was working on d'Angelo's latest film. Which is also how Melanie had found out where he was staying. But that didn't mean he was in his suite, or that she'd manage to get past whoever answered the door and get to see him.

Melanie waited patiently. She was just about to knock again when the door swung open.

'Yes?' what she definitely hadn't expected was Robert d'Angelo in person. She stared. He was better looking in real life than on the screen. He wasn't tall but his wavy blond hair and crystal blue eyes gave him the air of an American high school athlete. As he was only wearing a bath towel wrapped around his waist it was easy to see that his athleticism was not an illusion. The muscles of his arms and chest were well developed and defined. The chest was hairless and tanned. From the droplets of water clinging to his shoulders it looked as though d'Angelo had come straight from a shower.

'Melanie Chambers,' Melanie said, trying to sound cool and confident.

'Do I know who you are?' His American accent was light and lilting. It had the softness associated with the East Coast. He was looking at her quizzically with a hint of amusement in his eyes.

'No,' she said. There was no point in lying. She had decided to say nothing, not to ask for a minute of his time, or pretend she was something she was not. She hoped her appearance would be enough.

The pause before he spoke seemed to go on forever. 'You'd better come in.'

She breathed an inaudible sigh of relief. She was over the first hurdle.

He stepped aside and she walked into the suite. The living room was large with double aspect windows, one overlooking the length of Park Lane and the other the greenery of Hyde Park. One of the windows was open and underneath it a table was laid for breakfast. There was a jug of orange juice and a pot of coffee.

'I'm afraid the coffee is cold but help yourself to juice while I get some clothes on . . .'

He disappeared into the bedroom, closing the door. Ignoring the orange juice Melanie sat on a large sofa and put her briefcase down beside her. She could feel her heart pounding against her chest. She tried to maintain an appearance of being perfectly cool and calm, as though walking into the suite of perhaps the biggest box office star in America was something she did every day.

It was a good five minutes before Robert d'Angelo re-emerged from the bedroom. He was dressed in faded blue jeans

NAKED AMBITION

and a white T-shirt. He wore a brown leather belt the exact same colour as the Gucci sneakers on his feet. He looked twenty-five though he was in fact ten years older than that. Sitting in an armchair directly opposite Melanie he turned his crystal blue eyes full on her. It was the equivalent of being lit up by a car's headlights on full-beam late at night: dazzling.

'So what can I do for you?' His voice was full of good humour without a hint of irritation.

Melanie took the script from out of her briefcase. 'Just read this.'

She put it down on the coffee table in front of him. He reached forward and picked it up, reading the cover.

'This is television. I don't do television.'

'It was television. If you like it we'll make it as a film.' Exactly who 'we' were had yet to be determined but there was no point telling d'Angelo that.

'Is it good?'

'It's a good script and it's perfect for you.'

'How do you know?'

'I don't. But if what I read about you is true . . . that you're fed up with playing lightweight romantic leads. You want something serious. Moral. A character with integrity . . .'

'Sounds good.'

'It is. We were going to make it as a pilot for a television series. It suddenly occurred to me that was a waste of a great script . . .'

'You're very enthusiastic . . .'

'If you read it you'll see why.'

'I'm very expensive.'

'You and I both know that's not a problem. If you agree I can raise the money on your name.'

'True.'

'So . . .'

'So I'll read it.'

'My telephone number's on the top of the page.'

'I see it.'

Melanie stood up and extended her hand. 'Thank you for your time.'

'Thank you.'

Without another word Melanie crossed the room and let herself out of the suite. She had rehearsed what she was going to do. Throwing herself at Robert d'Angelo was not the right approach, she had decided. He needed to be intrigued, not seduced. She had seen the way he looked at her. She had done enough. At least she had done as much as she could. Now it was up to him.

She strode out of the hotel. The doorman had seen her coming and brought her car around to the front entrance, standing by the driver's door and saluting as she got in, his eyes admiring her long legs as she swung them into the car. Twenty pounds still bought, it appeared, a lot of service.

At exactly six o'clock Melanie took the lift in the PTV building and went up to the sixth floor. She had waited at home for d'Angelo's call. She told herself that there was only the absolute outside chance that he would read the script at all, let alone today. He would get literally scores of scripts every week and to expect him to treat hers more seriously than the others was actually expecting a miracle, a miracle solely dependent on the sort of impact she had made on him. At four o'clock she had nearly dropped the phone when she heard his voice. She was right, he told her. He loved the

script. It was just what he was looking for. He was going to call his agent immediately and she would have to come over next day for lunch so a deal could be worked out but in principle he was in, categorically in, and she could certainly use his name to raise the finance.

The first person to hear this news was Lydia Holbeck. The lift arrived on the sixth floor with its customary 'ping' and Melanie strolled along to Lydia's office. Her secretary had already gone home so there was no one manning the desk outside Lydia's office door. Melanie knocked once and went in without waiting for a summons.

'Melanie . . . where the hell have you been? I've been trying your mobile phone all day.' Lydia sat behind her desk in yet another trouser suit, this time in cream with a high collar buttoned at the throat.

'Have you really?' Melanie said with a mocking tone. 'I've been working.'

'Not on the set, you weren't.'

'No, that's true.' Melanie sat down and crossed her legs. 'I know why you've been trying to get me.'

'Do you?'

'To fire me. Isn't that right. Powell told you I was surplus to requirements.'

'Look, Melanie . . .'

'Have you finished here?' Melanie interrupted.

'Why?'

'I booked a table at Gerrard's.'

'What for?'

'I'm taking you out to dinner. I have a lot to tell you.'

'Like what? Look, Melanie, this is serious. I can't let you produce the new show if Powell doesn't want you.'

'I know, I know.' Melanie got to her feet again. 'Meet me at Gerrard's at seven.'

Without waiting for a reply she walked out of the office. The lift doors were still open and she strode straight in and stabbed the button for the ground floor. She smiled. She had rehearsed precisely what she was going to say to Lydia and the meeting had gone exactly to plan.

At seven she was seated at a quiet table in the under-stated simplicity of the French restaurant most often patronised by employees of PTV and other members of the broadcasting fraternity. She ordered mineral water, not wanting anything to get in the way of what she had to say. Lydia was ten minutes late. A waiter escorted her to the table and before she said anything she ordered a large vodka martini straight-up with a twist. She needed a drink. Rather to Melanie's surprise she had changed out of her suit and was wearing a simple yellow silk shift. She had combed her long black hair out too, so it flowed neatly down the middle of her back. It was the first time Melanie had seen her in a dress. It made her look somehow very feminine, almost doll-like. Despite the fact that her small breasts needed no support Melanie could see the outline of a bra under the dress.

'So I'm listening,' she said, looking into Melanie's eyes for the first time.

'The script for the pilot of the new series, the new script.'

'Yes? It's very good.'

'I think it's too good for television. I think it'll make a film. And a very commercial film.'

'Maybe. But films cost ten times what it takes to make a television. But that's academic anyway. Powell won't have you anywhere near it.'

'Let me finish. All TV companies want to get into films, right? Diversify in case they lose their franchise. I think PTV should do this as their first feature.'

'And how do we raise the finance? We can't do it out of profits. It's much too much money.'

'How are films usually financed?'

'On the back of box office stars. But Powell isn't . . .'

'Forget about Powell. I've got Robert d'Angelo.'

'What?'

'You heard.'

The martini had arrived. Lydia gulped at it. 'How?'

'I went to see him.'

'You had no right to do that.'

'Why not? I'm still the producer until you fire me officially.'

'And he wants to do it? Definite?'

'Definite.'

'Jesus. We can get all the money on his name alone.'

'Exactly.'

Lydia's eyes looked like the dials on a fruit machine, spinning round, calculating costs, timings, consequences, and profit. For a while she said nothing. Then her thin lips broke into a wide smile.

'You bitch,' she said without rancour, 'you've done this to get rid of Powell.'

'It was a consideration. He deserves it, doesn't he?'

'Undoubtedly. My dear, I know several hundred television executives who will raise a cheer when they hear the news.'

'So we're on, then?'

'Of course, of course. You'll need Keating's approval . . .'

'Naturally . . .'

'And mine.' Lydia's smile had gone. It was easy to read her

expression. 'And mine will depend on your agreeing to certain rather unusual requirements.'

'Like what?'

'That you come home with me tonight.'

'I thought you'd never ask.' Melanie felt a sudden jolt of excitement course through her body like an electric shock.

'And allow me to take control.' Lydia's voice had changed tone: it sounded husky and strained.

'What does that mean?'

'You'll see.' Lydia smiled. It was a slightly crooked smile, one side of her mouth turned up more than the other. Her eyes looked strangely cold.

As Lydia led the way through her front door Melanie could not suppress an involuntary shudder, as though she had crossed the threshold of a temple of forbidden necromancy. There was nothing in the way the house was decorated to provoke such a reaction. It was a small, pretty detached house, its basic structure Victorian with a later back addition. It had been renovated and restored in character with its original design and everything was in impeccably good taste.

Perhaps it was something in Lydia's manner that gave Melanie cause for apprehension. Over the meal they had discussed her plans fully. The idea to convert the pilot into a film had occurred to Melanie from the first moment she'd read the script and she had deliberately guided the re-writes in that direction. When the time was right she was going to suggest to Powell that she took the project off to Hollywood and tried to raise the money there. He would have jumped at the opportunity to revive his film career but Melanie knew it would be a difficult proposition selling the film on his name. So in fact, Powell had

played right into her hands. Not only would she not have his tantrums to worry about but she would end up as the producer of PTV's first film. Lydia had been excited by the idea too, knowing her association with it would do her no harm either. But by the end of the meal Lydia's excitement seemed to have devolved on to matters closer to hand and by the time they got in to a taxi it was obvious that Lydia's sexual temperature had risen considerably.

'I've been wanting to bring you here,' she said as she led the way into the living room furnished with a mixture of very modern furniture and good antiques. The combination worked well. A stripped oak floor was dotted with rugs.

'You only had to ask,' Melanie said.

'I have very vivid memories of you . . .'

'Do you?'

'You must have been with a woman before.'

'Only one.'

'That's remarkable.'

Lydia went to a modern glass drinks cabinet. She poured them both a brandy and took a small white capsule from a little silver box. She set the glass and the pill down in front of Melanie, who had sat down on a black leather sofa.

'What's that?' Melanie asked.

'I thought you'd like to try it.'

'What is it?'

'You excite me, Mel. There's a lot of things I want to do to you. That will relax you. Open you . . .'

'That's what you meant by unusual?'

'Yes.'

'And if I don't want to try it?'

'Oh, then we can be very ordinary. We can go to my bedroom

and make love like we did before.' Lydia sat opposite her in a small boudoir chair. Her face gave nothing away. She looked Melanie straight in the eyes. Melanie knew perfectly well she was free to get up and walk out. She was not here because Lydia was likely to withdraw her approval for the project. The project was important for Lydia's career too; she had soon realised that. Melanie was here, they both knew, because she wanted to be. But the strangeness she had felt when she entered the house, like a premonition, she saw now in Lydia's steady brown eyes. There was no warmth there, only a cold, calculating mind. There was excitement there too, but it was an excitement that glistened like the light reflected from bright metal.

Melanie shivered again. Her new body had brought her many adventures and experiences. She regretted none of them. She remembered what Lydia had said in the restaurant ('allow me to take control'), and reached forward without the slightest hesitation, picked up the white pill and popped it into her mouth, washing it down with a swig of brandy.

Lydia stood up and came to sit on the sofa beside her. She wrapped her arm around Melanie's neck and pulled her into a kiss. Melanie was not that used to kissing a woman. It still came as a slight shock. She kept her eyes open so she could see Lydia's face and her thick black flowing hair, as her lips moved delicately against her own. It was still odd to see a woman's face, the make-up on her eyes and eyebrows so close, to feel a woman's soft body pressing against hers rather than the usual sharp angles of a man.

Melanie moved her hand to Lydia's breast under the silk of the yellow dress. She could feel her bulbous nipple already erect. She ran her hand down the length of Lydia's stomach into her lap, so she could feel her panties, her smoothness not spoiled by

the roughness of pubic hair. Lydia kissed harder as Melanie's hand tried to crawl up between her legs. The way was firmly barred. Lydia kept her legs closed.

The pill seemed to be having no effect. Melanie felt as she had before except perhaps she was a little unsure of where the edges of her body were. She seemed to be looking down on herself, seeing herself in Lydia's arms, experiencing it almost at second hand. Except she wasn't. The excitement in her body was first hand, her blood pumping around at double the usual rate.

Lydia got to her feet and extended her hand to help Melanie up. There was no problem. Melanie got to her feet perfectly. She walked perfectly too. The only strange thing was that the living room had disappeared. She was in another room altogether now and couldn't remember how she'd got there. She had a feeling they'd walked down some steps but was not at all sure. She was sure this room was strange. It seemed to be covered with all sorts of weird symbols and hieroglyphics. She had been right, a temple of necromancy. In front of her was what looked like an altar and on it several odd-shaped objects, including the horns of some beast – goat, deer, cow. The room was dark, lit only by candles flickering in wrought iron candlesticks, one in each corner of the room.

On the floor were more hieroglyphics and a large circle divided into various sections by what looked like a pentangle. In the centre of the circle was a single mattress laid on the floor and covered with a black satin sheet. At the head and foot of the mattress were fat white candles their wicks producing long yellow flames. She felt Lydia's hands on her upper arms guiding her over to the bed. Much to her surprise when she looked down at herself she was naked except for the lacy black panties she

had worn under the black suit that morning. Her tights and bra had gone. She looked around for her clothes but couldn't see them. Had she taken them off upstairs?

'What are you going to do to me?' she asked, at least that's what she wanted to say. What she actually heard coming from her mouth was a jumble of sounds that bore no relation to the words she had in mind. Lydia appeared unconcerned. She knelt at her side and pulled the panties down her legs.

Things kept happening to her. One minute she was standing by the bed, the next she was lying on her back on it, and Lydia had gone. She couldn't remember getting down on to the mattress.

She looked around for Lydia but felt no panic that she'd disappeared. In fact, she felt only a sensation of complete well being and ease. The mattress was the most comfortable thing she had ever lain on, its slippery satin so sensual and silky against her body she wriggled against it. She looked down at herself. Her breasts, her new firm shapely breasts, sat proudly on her chest. Below she could see the strong muscles of her stomach, and below that, the thick triangle of her pubic hair. She found herself giggling. Her pubic hair was mousy, anyone who saw it would know she wasn't a natural blonde. Coyly she put her hands over her pubic hair.

'Do you want to hide it from me?' It was Lydia's voice.

'Not blonde,' Melanie tried to say.

'It's beautiful. I've seen it before, remember?'

Lydia was standing at the side of the mattress. She had another black satin sheet in her hands. She flipped it up in the air so it floated down over Melanie's body. It seemed to descend in slow motion. It enveloped her completely, her face, her body, even her feet. Wherever it touched her it seemed to set her on

fire. It touched her face, then spanned her neck to touch her nipples. It lay against her belly and the curly pubic hair.

Melanie felt Lydia kneel beside her. She felt her hand, the palm of her hand, caressing her body under the sheet. Melanie was already trembling. The first touch on her nipples sent her, faster than she could ever remember, crashing towards orgasm. As Lydia's hand moved over her, her belly, her thighs, right down to her toes and the soles of her feet, then back up to her face, Melanie felt herself arch up off the bed, her muscles locked, her sex churning out waves of sensation. In the blackness under the sheet it seemed as though a thousand hands were caressing her, touching her. She felt Lydia's hand pressing the sheet up between her legs, until the sheet was inside her cunt, sucked up into her body, pulling against her clitoris. That was when her body exploded, her orgasm freed, her juices poured out of her, running out of her cunt and into the sheet, as though a dam had been breached inside her body.

She did not know how long it was before her senses returned. She thought it was a long time but she could not trust her sense of time. She opened her eyes to discover the sheet being pulled down over her body. It left her face, her shoulders, her breasts. She watched it rippling off her belly and felt it pulled from out of her cunt, down her long legs. It felt like the touch of a butterfly as it drifted away. She shuddered, a little aftershock of orgasm taking her by surprise.

Lydia stood at her feet. She stood with her legs open, the thick white candle between her feet. That couldn't be right, of course. Melanie knew that. The candle would have burnt her. It just looked as though it was. Just as it looked as though she had a big erect cock arching up from her loins. Lydia didn't have a cock.

'Turn on to your back.' Lydia's voice sounded thin and cold.

Melanie rolled over. It was an effort to co-ordinate her movements, nothing worked in the way she thought it would.

'Are you going to fuck me?' she said, and started to laugh. She thought that was an enormously funny idea. Lydia fucking her. Lydia fucking her with Lydia's cock. Wasn't that funny?

Lydia knelt on the mattress. She reached for Melanie's ankles and spread her legs apart not at all gently, and crawled between them. She looked down at Melanie's body, her long curved spine, and her pert, pouting arse, the cleft between its cheeks so dark, the folds of her sex a dark ruby red in contrast to the pink that lay between them. This is what she loved. Her whole body sang with excitement. In her room, on her black satin sheets, in front of her altar to what she was, to the religion of Sappho, to women. Women were strong, women could use cocks just like a man. Women deserved to have cocks. She caressed hers lovingly. It was strapped tightly against her sex, oiled and ready, its balls filled with a sticky cream so she could even spunk like a man when she came. So few women let her do this to them, let her take them fully, let her ream and fuck them. But Melanie was different. Melanie was open. Melanie wanted. Wanted her, wanted it, would take what she was given.

'You want it, don't you?' she asked, knowing what the answer would be. She watched as Melanie's buttocks rose, moving slightly from side to side, searching for her, and that was answer enough.

She lowered herself on to Melanie's back, her long black hair enveloping them both like a shroud, her hands on Melanie's hips. This is what she loved. She nosed the head of the phallus down between Melanie's legs, up into her thick labia. There was no resistance. Melanie moaned. Lydia pushed forward, hard,

thrusting deep. The phallus was big, bigger than a cock. It filled her, went right up her, stretched her by its length and its breadth.

'Oh, oh, oh . . .' Melanie gasped, her voice urgent. She was coming again. The phallus ploughed into her, so big, so hard. At its base it rubbed her clitoris, little serrations designed for that purpose, sawing against her delicate button, making it impossible for her to do anything but come. Melanie was not sure any more where she was or what was happening to her. But there was no mistaking the first wave of an orgasm as it broke over the top of the huge phallus buried in her cunt and flooded down to join the waves her clitoris was creating. Joining up they pitched up into a foaming sea of pleasure, its waters churned up by the remorseless thrashing of Lydia's hips.

Lydia did not pause as she felt Melanie's body tense in climax. She had her own goal. The back of the dildo was strapped against her own sex, perfectly positioned over her clitoris. As she drove it forward the hard plastic shell rubbed against it. This is what she loved. She drove harder, fucking Melanie and herself at the same time. She raised herself slightly off Melanie's back so she could look down and see the phallus plunging in and out. The sight turned her on as much as the physical sensations from her battered clitoris.

Her orgasm seemed to start in her eyes, behind her eyes, and in her sex at the same time. She felt her nipples, hard like stone, demanding attention. Lowering herself back down she ground them into Melanie's back, swinging the phallus from side to side so the little ledge on its inner surface rubbed against her clitoris in a new direction. That was enough. Her body couldn't take any more. She gasped, ground her whole body down, squirming violently against Melanie, trying to gain as much contact, flesh on flesh, as she could, then, as her hand snaked

between her legs and squeezed the bulb of the balls under the dildo, and spurted sticky oily cream into the depths of Melanie's sex, she came, wholly, completely, the connection between the nerves behind her eyes, in her nipples, in her cunt and at her clitoris forming an arc of electricity through her body, so she fell, out of control, into a darkness lit by the pyrogenics of her mind, blue flames of light produced by every pulse of ultimate feeling as they coursed, unobstructed, through every nerve. This is what she loved.

When Melanie woke up she was lying in a cool, clean bed, a white sheet pulled up to her neck, the morning sun filtering through cream coloured curtains in a small neat bedroom. She had absolutely no idea how she'd got there. As she stretched her body out she felt an odd sensual warmth, the residue of her orgasms, multiple orgasms, still lurking in the corners of her nerves. It was a delicious sensation.

Rolling her head to one side she saw Lydia lying in the bed next to her, her long black hair strewn over the white pillowcase, her eyes still closed. Whatever Lydia had given her, Melanie thought as she sat up, it appeared to have left no after-effects. She felt perfectly normal. She also felt a huge and urgent need, a need a few months ago she would never have dreamt she would ever feel.

Moving her hand under the sheet she found the triangle of Lydia's belly. Like a man's chin in the morning, it felt stubbly, in need of a shave. She reached down further until she felt the hairless labia. They were smooth, unstubbed, and wet. Lydia opened her eyes as Melanie's finger moved up against her clitoris.

'You're wet.'

'You don't have to do that . . .'

'Sh . . . I want to. Please let me . . .'

Lydia opened her legs wider and pulled the sheet back. Melanie's finger moved faster. She knew what to do now, how to provoke, how to master. It didn't take much, tiny movements, little proddings, nudges, circles, but regular, a tattoo beaten out on the taut drum of Lydia's clit. The assault was so unexpected, and so delightful, Lydia's defences were down. In seconds she found herself on the brink of orgasm, in a minute, no more, plunging over it, gasping for breath, her body trembling, her mind full of images of what she had done last night.

Melanie didn't stop until she felt Lydia's body go limp. She eased her finger away, and couldn't resist the temptation to suck it between her lips.

'Oh Mel . . .' Lydia said, as the feelings ebbed out of her body.

'Well.' Melanie sat up and smiled broadly. 'Do I take it you're not going to make any objections to my film . . .'

Lydia smiled too. 'Oh, I don't know about that. I could take a lot more convincing.'

'Shall I start now?' Melanie's hand cupped Lydia's small breast.

'No . . .' She grabbed Melanie's wrist. 'OK, OK, you've got my approval . . .'

'So what's the next step?'

'Well, first I'm going to make some coffee. You want orange juice or toast or something?'

'No, just coffee.'

Melanie watched as Lydia climbed out of bed and wrapped her thin body into a peachy cotton robe. In five minutes she was back with a tray of coffee in white china with orange juice, croissants, jam and butter, and little bright blue napkins.

'I just thought you might want something . . .' she said. 'I do.'

'So what do we do next?'

Lydia buttered a croissant and handed Melanie coffee. 'Well, we have to go and see Keating. He has to approve, obviously. Then he'll have to recommend it to the main board. As long as he's prepared to recommend it that shouldn't be a problem.' There was a distinct reservation in Lydia's tone.

'But? Keating's not going to be a problem, is he?'

'Well . . .'

'You think he'll make difficulties?'

'He might.'

'Why?'

'It wasn't his idea. You know what men are like. If he'd thought of it himself . . .'

'But he can claim the credit. I work for him, it's the same thing.'

'It's not just that.'

'What then?'

'Keating was always sounding off about television companies going into films. He gave interviews about it when Midland TV brought that American film company, don't you remember? There was a big spread in *Broadcast*. Television should stick to television, not try and hang on the shirt tails of Hollywood . . .'

'I'd forgotten.'

'So he's going to have to be persuaded to change his mind.' Melanie was smiling. The smile soon became a grin.

'Well, don't look so happy about it.' Lydia said.

'Can I use your phone?'

'Of course. What are you going to do?'

'Contingency planning. Essential in all television productions. I'm obviously going to need Plan B.'

'What's Plan B?'

'Lydia, you don't want to know, believe me.'

Melanie smiled enigmatically and punched Bella's number into the telephone on Lydia Holbeck's bedside table.

Chapter Eleven

The envelope lay in the middle of his blotter. It was grey and thick, obviously expensive stationery. His name was neatly typed in the centre. No address and no stamp so it had clearly not come in the post. Typed in capitals in one corner was the word PRIVATE and, on the other side, the word PERSONAL. He dialled his secretary on the intercom.

'Frances, this letter . . . did someone bring it in?'

'Don't know Mr Keating. It was on my desk when I got in this morning. Is anything wrong?'

'Oh no. No. Thank you.'

He picked the envelope up and put the blade of his paperknife – its handle emblazoned with the Gucci emblem – into the flap at the back. Slitting it open he extracted a single sheet of matching grey stationery, folded once. He flattened it out. Neatly typed in capitals it read:

YOU REMEMBER WHAT YOU NEED. THAT IS
WHAT YOU LIVE FOR. OBEY ME. 8.0 P.M.
PENTHOUSE FLAT, 25 CADOGAN SQUARE.
TONIGHT. YOU ONLY HAVE ONE CHANCE. IF
YOU'RE LATE YOU WILL BE PUNISHED.

As he read he felt a jolt run through his body as though his heart had stopped. His cock pulsed. He read it again. He sniffed

the paper. It smelt of a heady, musky perfume that he recognised but could not place. His cock twitched. Was this a joke? Was it an elaborate practical joke? He realised at once that it couldn't be. No one knew. No one.

He folded the paper away quickly and put it in the inside pocket of his jacket as his secretary brought in his morning coffee.

'Am I supposed to be going to that screening tonight, Frances?'

'Yes. Seven-thirty at BAFTA.'

'How long will it last?'

'Two hours maximum.'

'Have you told them I'm coming?'

'No. I just said you'd come if you could possibly spare the time.'

'Excellent.'

'Are you going?'

'I don't know yet.'

Of course he knew he was not going to go to BAFTA that evening but all day he played with the idea that he would ignore the note, that he had free will, that he could do what he pleased, that he wasn't going to 'obey'. The truth was that the note in his jacket pocket seemed to be burning into him. He took it out several times and reread it until he knew it by heart. It thrilled him each time. OBEY ME. He heard the words echoing in his head. It was what he'd wanted, had always wanted.

How many times had he paid to obey, to crawl on his knees to some corseted harridan who'd made him lick her shoes and kiss her feet? How many times had he spunked into a condom as he'd laid on his stomach on a single divan in a dimly lit room as some uninterested, overweight, over-used woman beat his

buttocks unenthusiastically to earn her hundred pounds?

He chose not to think rationally, not to go into who could have written the note, who knew his secret, the secret buried deep in his sexual psyche. He did not want to think about anything but the sheer thrill of it. IF YOU'RE LATE YOU WILL BE PUNISHED. He thought about that. He thought about punishment. Punishment and submission, the two horns of his dilemma. The words reverberated like the incantations of some strange religion.

He tried to concentrate on his work but found it difficult to think of anything but the note. 8.00 P.M. CADOGAN SQUARE. That certainly wasn't sleazy. It had occurred to him that one of the ladies he'd visited had somehow got a look at his wallet and guessed where he worked. But none of them had ever been anywhere near Cadogan Square. It seemed the likeliest of explanations, though. They knew what he wanted. He hoped desperately it was not the case.

The day dragged by. He looked at his watch a hundred times every hour. His heart seemed to be beating permanently faster, his palms continually wet with sweat.

Charles Keating left his office early and went home to change. By seven-thirty he was sitting outside 25 Cadogan Square in his Ford Scorpio waiting for the thirty minutes to pass, his excitement already at fever pitch. The next half hour was the slowest of his life. The minutes crawled by, the digital clock changing from thirty to fifty-nine with agonising slowness, each new number appearing after what seemed like an hour.

As soon as the glowing green numbers moved to 07.59 Keating got out of his car, crossed to the porticoed entrance of No. 25 and rang the bell for the penthouse flat, his hand trembling very slightly as he did so. There were no names on

the bell, no clue there. Neither was there a voice on the entry phone, just the immediate buzzing of the front door lock to allow him in.

Inside Keating found a small old-fashioned lift rising through the central stair well. Pulling back the double grills with a clang he got inside, replaced both grills and pressed the button for the top floor. The lift rose slowly, clanking and groaning as it did so, the counterweight passing the cage as it ascended.

On the top floor Keating opened the double grills again. There was only one door in the corridor outside the lift. He hesitated. His heart was beating like a steam hammer in his chest. He felt almost weak with excitement, almost forgetting to breathe. His hand was shaking as he reached for the bell-push set into the frame of the door. The loud noise of the bell made him jump.

He listened for movement inside but could hear nothing. He waited. Another few seconds that seemed like hours.

The door opened. Inside the apartment was dark. He could see nothing.

'Get on your knees now,' the woman's voice ordered. It was not a voice he'd ever heard before, he was sure. He hesitated, not sure if she meant to come in first. 'On your knees,' the voice snapped.

Keating dropped his big body on to his knees in the corridor. A silk sleeping mask landed on the floor in front of him.

'Put it on,' the voice commanded.

He obeyed at once, tucking the elastic around his ears, settling the padded material over his eyes and the top of his nose. He welcomed the anonymity of darkness. This was already more exciting than anything he had imagined. His cock began to swell.

'Get in here . . .' the voice said, full of irritation.

He crawled forward on his knees. He felt the floor change from carpet to cold marble. He heard the door being closed behind him. He smelt the musky perfume, the perfume of the letter, the perfume he vaguely recognised.

'Forward,' the voice ordered. He obeyed, crawling on all fours having no idea where he was going. Suddenly he heard the familiar sound of a whip whistling through the air. It smacked down on his buttock.

'Faster.'

The whip lashed out again. His cock swelled more, nudging against his enormous stomach, coming to erection faster and harder than he could ever remember. Was it the whip or the tone of the woman's voice, so demanding, so strong, so dominant?

'Stop,' it commanded. 'Left.'

He felt carpet as he crossed the threshold of a doorway.

'Stop.'

He heard a door being closed behind him again. He sensed there was someone else in the room. It was a woman. She wore the same perfume but it smelt slightly different on her. He knew he had smelt that precise aroma before but had no idea where.

'Stand up.' A slash of the whip caught him on the upper arm as he struggled to his feet. 'You're here to obey, do you understand that?'

'Yes . . .'

'Yes what?' The whip flicked across his chest.

'Yes, mistress . . .' he said at once. Saying the word excited him. 'Yes, mistress,' he repeated for his own sake.

'Take off your clothes. All of them.'

He heard the rasp of nylon against nylon, the door opening, then closing again. He was sure one woman had gone but wasn't

sure about the other. Quickly he pulled off his clothes. It was an enormous temptation to take off the blindfold too but he dare not. If one of the women was still in the room he would be punished and he didn't know what his punishment would be. Later perhaps he would disobey deliberately so they would punish him but this was all too new as yet.

He refused to think about what was happening to him or why or who the women were. He didn't care. It didn't matter. All that mattered was throbbing excitement, his fantasy. This was his fantasy.

He stood stock still where they had left him as though that was his obligation too, part of his orders. He wanted to play the game. He yearned for the game. He waited. Waiting was part of it.

It was only then he realised there definitely was someone else in the room but not one of the women. He could hear breathing, rather heavy awkward breathing. He tried to estimate where in the room it was coming from. He was tempted to say something but couldn't think of anything to say. His cock throbbed.

'Well, isn't he a pretty sight.' The same voice. Hard and cold and mocking. It thrilled him. He heard the other woman come in behind her, she had left the room. He felt a hand pushing him in the chest, pushing him back against a wall. His hands were lifted above his head, his ankles spread, spread-eagled, bound to the wall. A strap was fastened under his balls around his cock.

'Open your mouth,' the voice ordered as a big leather gag was forced past his lips and secured around his head. He felt almost faint with excitement. His cock felt as though it were made of steel, as if it were not part of him, not part of his blubbery

NAKED AMBITION

soft body. It was throbbing continuously, twitching up against his belly, and he knew it was dripping fluid.

A cool woman's hand touched his cheek, caressing it almost tenderly, then squeezing it tightly, forcing his mouth to pucker around the gag. He could feel something smooth and silky brushing his cock as she stood in front of him. The hand released his cheek and moved up to the blindfold. First it pressed the material against his eyelids. Then it pulled it off, the elastic snapping painfully against his ears.

It took him a second for his eyes to adjust to the light. The room was dimly lit. The two women stood at either side of him. They were identically dressed and both stunning-looking women. One was a flaming redhead, tall and slim, the well-defined curves of her body shoe-horned into a tight black lace and satin basque, its half-cup bra pushing her magnificent breasts into a cleavage so firm and deep a man could drown in it. Her long legs were sheathed in sheer black stockings, clipped into the suspenders of the basque, their black welts pulled into peaks of nylon on her milky thighs. The other woman was blonde. About the same height as the redhead, her body was equally impressive, the tight basque following the sloping curves of her breasts and waist, but not the dramatic flare of her hips. Her legs too were sheathed in the same sheer stockings. Both women wore black spiky high-heels. Both women wore black G-strings.

Keating could not see their faces. They both wore masks, a thin light shell covering their faces from their eyebrows to the upper lip, its form moulded into exaggeratedly high cheekbones.

But the appearance of the two women was not the most bizarre aspect of the room. Hanging from a chain, rope and pulley in the corner of the room was a square metal cage. It was about four feet off the ground. Inside Keating could see a man.

As far as he could tell in the dim light the man's arms were cuffed behind his back. He was doubled over in the cage with one leg poking out through the bars. His head was covered by a black hood, made of some sort of material, but apart from that he was naked.

'Yes,' the redhead said, following his gaze. 'That's our punishment box. Do you want to try it?'

Keating shook his head vigorously.

'Then you'd better behave, hadn't you? Personally I'd put you in there for being overweight. You're a slob, aren't you?'

Keating nodded vigorously, again.

The blonde carried a riding crop in her hand. She used the looped leather tip of it to brush against his cock.

'He's in a terrible state,' the blonde said. 'Look at him.'

'He'd better not come.'

There was something about the blonde's voice he recognised and about her hair but he couldn't place it. He tried to look into her eyes through the slots in the mask. They were big and very blue. They sparkled with life and energy. And with excitement. But he couldn't remember her. One thing was sure. Neither of these women were like any of the whores he hired. They were tired and lethargic, fat and squalid. These women were not only beautiful, they wanted it, wanted his submission. His cock spasmed at the idea.

'Now, Mr Keating.' The redhead moved close to him so he could feel the lace-covered satin of her basque pressing into his chest. She raised her thigh and used it to rub against his leg. He could feel the welt of the stocking sliding up and down. 'Now, Mr Keating, we are going to come to an arrangement with you. And you are going to be co-operative aren't you?'

He nodded. The top of her thigh bumped into his cock. The

impact of the collision was out of all proportion to its duration. Keating's nerves jerked his body against its bonds.

'I need obedience.'

He nodded again.

'I have the means to make you a very happy man. Don't I? Happier than you've ever dreamt possible. Beyond your wildest dreams. But everything in life has a price, doesn't it, Mr Keating? Everything.'

Her thigh continued to move up and down his leg. He thought he could feel the little nub of suspender. Every time it nudged the underside of his penis, he jerked in shock.

'Doesn't it, Mr Keating?'

He nodded. He had not noticed that the hood on the man in the cage had a narrow slit for his eyes. Suddenly he realised the man was watching, his eyes greedily following the movement of the woman's thigh.

The blonde moved in on the other side of him, pressing herself into his chest, raising her fingers to his nipple, taking it between the nails of her thumb and forefinger, and pinching hard, leaving an impression of two half moons on the puckered flesh. He gasped through the gag. His cock was so swollen he thought it might burst. Every vein, every blood-vessel was pumped up, pulsing, wanting release from the tight band of leather into which it was strapped. He breathed in deeply, inhaling the rich aroma of the two women's perfume. He wondered if it were possible to die of pleasure.

'Of course we're not talking about money.' This from the blonde, the woman he thought he recognised but could not place. She whispered in his ear, then blew into it, then inserted her hot wet tongue in it, licking the ever-decreasing whorls until her tongue seemed to be right inside his head.

‘We’re talking attitudes . . .’ the redhead continued. ‘You have to change your attitudes.’

He had no idea what they were talking about nor did he care. Didn’t they know he would do anything, anything to continue this experience, to be able to repeat it? Anything. If they took the gag out he would tell them. Beg them. Give them whatever they wanted.

‘Is that clearly understood?’

He nodded as vigorously as he possibly could, trying to tell them with his eyes too.

The blonde cracked the whip across his stomach inches from his cock. ‘Clearly understood?’

He nodded again.

‘I think he understands.’

The two women left his body at the same moment. They turned to each other and in an exaggerated ballet in front of his eyes they embraced, hugging each other tightly, caressing, kissing, their breasts squashed together, their pubic bones grinding as their hips rotated, their tongues licking and sucking out of their mouths like two fat snakes in some mating ritual. Their hands were everywhere, smoothing against the identical basques, pinching, kneading, arse and arms and thigh, following the crease of the buttock, pulling at the thong of the tiny panties, pulling it into the cleft of their sex.

Keating watched avidly. The man in the cage watched too.

Bella and Melanie were enjoying their performance. It was a wonderful game. It had excited them as much as it had clearly excited Keating. Melanie’s hand delved between Bella’s thighs. She felt her wetness.

They had planned what they would do. It was Teddy’s turn in the apartment but that wasn’t a problem, Bella explained.

They would put him in his cage and he would be made to watch. He would love it. He would be in heaven. Especially, if later Melanie and Bella together went to work on him. After they'd finished with Keating.

Keating had behaved exactly as Melanie had guessed he would after their night at the Savoy. She knew what he wanted, knew his secret need. All she had to do was use that knowledge to get what she wanted from him. Keating was pliable, malleable, a piece of plasticene in their hands to be moulded into shape. The power excited her, as she had noticed it had done before. Keating was hers, hers from the moment he slit open the grey envelope. Hers.

Bella broke out of their embrace. She went to the far end of room and pulled on a leather strap hanging down from the wall. A double bed, cleverly built into a concealed panel, swung down to the floor. It was covered with a white sheet. Bella, looking straight at Keating, wriggled out of her G-string. She saw his eyes on her flame-red pubic hair. She stroked her own sex, teasing out her labia. She could not suppress a moan as her hand tapped her clitoris.

Bella lay on the bed. On her back she spread her legs wide open and bent her knees, arching her hips off the bed so one hand could get under her buttocks to penetrate between her labia and into her cunt, while the other slid over her belly and down to her clit. She looked around. She saw Teddy hanging helplessly in the cage, staring down at her. And Keating staring too. And Melanie. She started to frig her clit as she pushed three fingers as deeply as they would go, right up to the knuckle. It was enough to make her come, hard and strong, her juices running down her fingers, her body trembling, a gasp of ecstasy wrung from her lips.

Melanie knelt between her legs. She gently pulled Bella's hands away, her fingers leaving her cunt with an audible 'plop' and replaced them with her mouth. Eagerly Melanie lapped up her juices, using the whole width of her tongue, harsh against the smoothness of Bella's moist tender flesh. Within seconds Bella was coming again, her trembling resumed, her new climax joining the remnants of the old, producing a resonance in her body like an echo. She gasped louder, longer.

Raising her head, her lips and chin soaked with Bella's juice, the mask giving her a peculiar doll-like expression, Melanie smiled triumphantly. She got up off the bed and came over to Keating.

'How much can you take?' she said. She lowered her face to his chest letting her wet lips move across his skin, leaving a trail like a slug. She reached his nipple and took it between her teeth, biting it quite hard. He groaned from behind the gag. She knew better than to touch his cock. With the state he was in the slightest touch would bring him off. She unbuckled the leather gag and pulled it from his mouth, replacing it immediately with her tongue, writhing her body against him as she kissed.

'Answer me,' she demanded when she took her lips away.

'Not much . . .' He murmured, his voice hoarse and croaky.

'Not much, what?' She seized the riding crop again and slashed it against his thigh. He squealed like a pig.

'Mistress, mistress . . .' he said quickly before another stroke could fall. He looked straight into her blue eyes. He knew he recognised her, but couldn't remember from where. He couldn't concentrate on that anyway. He couldn't think. He could only feel. He looked down at the redhead. She was still lying with her legs open. Her hand was stroking her sex gently, stroking it like it was an animal needing comfort.

NAKED AMBITION

'Do you want to be allowed to come?' Melanie asked, feeling the thrill of power again.

'Please, mistress.'

'You haven't suffered enough.'

'I have, mistress . . .'

'What are you going to do in return for this privilege?'

'Ah . . .' He'd forgotten.

'Come on . . .' The crop slashed down again. For the second time it narrowly missed his cock. It left a red weal across the top of his thigh. The heat of the weal only increased his need.

'Change . . .' Yes, that's what they'd said. 'Change my attitudes . . .'

'Exactly. You're going to do what you're told. If you don't you will never see this place again. You do want to come here again, don't you?'

'Oh yes, yes . . .'

'Yes what?' Another stroke of the whip. Another hot weal throbbing across his thigh powering up his excitement. His cock felt so hard now it was heavy, like a rod of iron sticking out in front of him. He was astonished it didn't spunk of its own accord. If they didn't do something soon it would.

'Mistress . . .' he moaned. He looked her straight in the eye, hoping to convince her of his sincerity, having no idea what he was promising to do but meaning it more than anything he'd ever said in his whole life.

Melanie released his ankles. She stretched up, the basque rubbing against his naked body, and released his wrists. His arms, almost numb from their constriction, fell to his sides.

'Stay where you are,' she ordered.

Her hand released the cock-strap. He looked down at the redhead. She had taken her hand away from her sex and he

could see every detail of it. Her cunt was actually open, a dark irregular oval opening. He could see the way the suspenders strained at the stockings, the way the basque cinched in her waist . . .

Melanie pulled him forward until he was at the foot of the bed. Then she let go of him. He could smell the musky odour of sex. He had never felt so excited in his life. This was perfect. Perfect. Everything he'd ever wanted. Everything. He would see the labia glistening. His cock was throbbing so much he thought he was going to come.

The redhead looked up at him. 'What are you waiting for?'

Before the last word was out, something snapped in him, all control, all discipline vanished. He literally fell on her, his cock plunging into her.

'You're not to come . . .' she cried, pulling his head back by his hair, knowing full well nothing would be able to stop him.

There was no question of being able to do anything else as he felt the almost burning heat inside her and the silky wet walls of her vagina closing around him. After two or three strokes his spunk, so long held at bay, so sorely provoked, jetted from his cock, pumping out in great gobs, as strongly as he'd ever felt it spurt before. As his cock spasmed he felt a cool hand reach down between his legs to cup his balls, squeezing them, milking even more spunk from him, so his orgasm went on and on forever. The hand was insistent, milked every last drop, his body stretched taut, every one of his soft unused muscles locked into arching his cock up into the exquisite sensations of her body.

He was completely gone, nothing working, so high it was as though he had been given some drug. They rolled him to one side on the bed. It was no trouble handcuffing his hands behind his back. They hadn't finished with him yet. He had disobeyed

and he would have to be punished. It would be a long night for Charles Keating and one he would never forget. Or be allowed to forget.

Meantime, while he recovered, Bella got up off the bed. She kissed Melanie affectionately but lightly on the mouth, then began to turn the handle of the ratchet that wound the cage down to the floor.

Teddy's eyes sparkled through the slit in his hood. Now it was his turn . . .

Chapter Twelve

It was a bright sunny morning and the surface of the Thames was very still. The sun reflecting off the water made it look like burnished gold. A hydrofoil, slowing to come into the jetty and sinking down into the water from its huge supporting blades, destroyed the image, churning a vast wake through the calm.

They walked into his office together with the usual exchange of pleasantries. Lydia and Melanie sat in the two chairs in front of Charles Keating's desk, Lydia in her usual trouser suit, this one in a black and white check, Melanie in a tight-fitting red leotard over which she wore a very short white skirt. Keating tried not to look at her long legs as she crossed them but it was impossible. The noise her light tan-coloured tights made as she settled one thigh on to the other seemed to be somehow amplified.

Keating felt distinctly delicate. His nerves appeared still not to have come down from the excesses of last night; they tingled still, not properly returned to normal functioning after being taken to new highs. It was like a sort of hang-over, and Melanie's legs, so contoured and shapely, were having the same effect on him as a loud noise after an alcoholic binge. He tried desperately to concentrate, and put the events of last night to one side.

He listened quietly to what they had to say, Lydia speaking first and then Melanie. She reported on her lunch with Robert d'Angelo and his agent where he had repeated his commitment

to the script. His agent had even volunteered to put her in touch with a source of finance for the film, a man who would back any film d'Angelo wanted to make.

Keating heard them out in silence.

'Well, ladies,' he said when they had finished, 'it's certainly an interesting idea. But I don't think you'll be surprised to hear that I'm against it. You know I've made my attitude clear in the past. All these television executives chasing after jobs in Hollywood when they should be making programmes for television . . .'

'This is a one-off situation. No one's chasing after Hollywood. To have d'Angelo's interest is an extraordinary coup. He's the hottest property in the film world. He's de Niro and Hoffman and Tom Cruise rolled into one. You must understand that,' Lydia said.

'I understand our remit is to make programmes for British television. Not quasi-Hollywood films . . .'

'And what about profits?' Lydia sounded angry.

'This company is the most profitable in the network, thanks to my drama policy. There is no guarantee this film will make any money.'

'With Robert d'Angelo in the lead . . .'

'That is not a guarantee. I'm sorry, but that is my position.'

'Then release the rights to us. We'll do it alone.'

'No, and may I remind you that any attempt to do this alone will be a breach of contract. Not only that, but we would be entitled to claim the proceeds of any profit from any venture you initiated while under a service contract to us.'

'That's outrageous.' Lydia stood up.

'I'm sorry, Lydia, but that's how I feel. It's a matter of principle.'

'I think I have a way out of this,' Melanie said quietly. 'If you just leave us alone for a moment, Lydia . . .'

'Oh no you don't,' Keating reacted immediately. 'If you think what happened between us is going to make any difference to my decision you're wrong, young lady. I'm not ashamed to admit I had a fling with you. You're a very attractive woman. But you can't expect that to affect my judgement!'

Lydia looked at Melanie with astonishment. Melanie ignored her, concentrating on Keating.

'I think you've missed the point,' she said calmly.

'I've made my decision.'

'It's a question of attitude, isn't it, Mr Keating,' she said slowly and deliberately. 'A question of changing your attitude.'

She saw his eyes narrow and a thin line of sweat break out on his forehead. It was as though he had been struck by lightning. In the same instant he recognised her voice, her blonde hair, her long legs, her big blue expressive eyes. He had the answer to the question that had occupied his mind since the note in the grey envelope had appeared on his desk – how did they know?

'Could you leave us a moment, Lydia?'

Lydia looked quizzically from Keating to Melanie, as if she had missed something, but neither returned her gaze. Shrugging her shoulders she left the room, closing the door firmly behind her.

Melanie opened her black leather briefcase. She took out a white mask and tossed it on to Keating's desk.

'As I said, Mr Keating, it's a question of changing your attitudes, isn't it? Deciding what's most important to you in life. This film can bring PTV a great deal of kudos and, I happen to believe, a lot of money. But, of course, it's your decision.'

She stood up. His eyes automatically swooped to her crotch

as she uncrossed her legs. They were rewarded with a glimpse of silky white knickers nestling under her tights, covering the sex that barely hours ago, he had willingly worshipped as an icon in the complex rituals he had performed.

Melanie smoothed her skirt over her hips and left Keating staring at her long legs as they walked out of his office door.

‘What!’ he screamed. The whole floor could hear. ‘What! You’re doing what?’ He jumped to his feet.

Melanie remained calm. She sat behind her desk in her new office. It was on the same floor as Lydia’s, the sixth, but was slightly bigger. After the PTV board had unanimously – and, it was reported, excitedly – approved her plans for the company’s first feature film, a plan sponsored by the Head of Drama, Charles Keating, it was felt proper that she should have a decent office. In fact, it was immediately underneath Keating’s office, on the corner of the building and therefore had the same double aspect of the Thames.

‘We’re terminating your contract,’ she repeated calmly.

‘You can’t do that.’

‘I think you’ll find I can. *The Investigator* is over. We had an option for a new series. Well, we have decided not to take it up. It’s purely a business decision. We’re not going to make a new drama series at the moment because of the market conditions. Absolutely nothing to do with you. Hopefully we’ll work together in the future.’ Melanie hoped that the tone with which she delivered the last platitude would tell Adam Powell that working with him in the future would be the last thing she would ever want to do.

‘I’ll sue,’ Powell said, his face literally red with anger.

‘For what?’

'Damage to my reputation . . .'

'How have we damaged your reputation?'

'Everyone knew I was going to be in this new series. It looks like I've been fired. You're a bitch. You first class bitch.' For a moment Melanie actually thought he was going to hit her.

'Actually Adam, if you're coming to call me names then I might change my mind too.'

'What are you talking about?'

'Bella. I'm sure you remember Bella. The friend of mine who you thought was a whore. Well, I might change my mind about introducing her to a tabloid journalist friend of mine. Very nice chap.'

'You wouldn't.'

'So let's just be a good boy and calm down.'

'Why aren't you doing the series?'

'If you must know we've decided to do the pilot as a film instead.'

Powell had been pacing the office like a caged tiger. This stopped him dead in his tracks.

'A film.' Suddenly his whole face lightened. 'Why didn't you tell me that in the first place?'

'You didn't ask.'

'A film, of course, it's much better. It's perfect for a film. This was your idea, wasn't it Mel? You're brilliant. I always knew you were. I mean, that's really good news.'

'A few minutes ago I was a first class bitch.'

'No, I mean that was just in the heat of the moment. Now I understand. Of course you have to cancel my contract. There'll have to be a whole new deal for a film . . .' Melanie could see his mind working behind his eyes, calculating advantages, seeing himself again as a film star, back in the limelight of Hollywood.

'Adam, the point is we need to have a star name to raise the money . . .'

'Exactly. I did all those films in the States. I've always preferred film to TV.'

'But you're not a big enough star.'

'Oh sure, I'm realistic, but people still think of me as a film star . . .'

'But not like Robert d'Angelo.'

'No, but it would only take one hit. And this could be it.'

Melanie smiled to herself. He still hadn't got it. His ego wouldn't let him hear what she was saying. 'No, Adam, I think you've missed the point. Robert d'Angelo is doing the film. He's playing the part. That's how we raised the money.'

The penny seemed to have dropped at last. Powell looked as though he had been slapped in the face.

'What?'

'You heard.'

'D'Angelo?'

'Yes.'

He laughed. 'You took his word. He does that all the time. He says he'll do something then reneges at the last minute.'

'The contract's signed.'

Powell slumped into the chair in front of her executive desk. 'You can't do this to me,' he said pathetically.

'Adam,' she replied, not feeling one iota of sympathy for him, 'It's done.'

'It's really nice of you to come,' he said in his soft American accent.

'Believe me,' she said, 'the pleasure is all mine.'

'I just thought that since we're going to be working together

so closely, it would be a good idea to get acquainted.'

'It's been a perfect evening.'

It had. The chauffeur-driven Rolls Royce had picked her up at four o'clock. It had driven her to Heathrow where Robert d'Angelo had greeted her on the tarmac. He had hired a private Learjet. In minutes they were in the air drinking champagne and eating little Beluga caviare canapes that had been supplied by Fortnum and Mason. At Charles de Gaulle airport a huge black Citroën limousine had met them at the steps of the plane and taken them straight to the Tour d'Argent for dinner overlooking the Seine and the Ile de France.

They had eaten Rouen duck, the speciality of the house, with Chateau Petrus. A pear soufflé had been accompanied by an ice-cold glass of Poire William eau-de-vie.

'The plane is on call all evening,' he had said over the coffee, 'but . . .'

'But what?' Melanie had asked.

'I don't really want to take you back to London,' he said almost shyly. It may have been an act but d'Angelo had a way of making her feel she was the only woman he had ever looked at in his entire life.

'What then?'

'I have an apartment on the Avenue Montaigne. I always loved Paris . . .'

'Can we go there?'

'I didn't want to suggest . . .' That shy diffident look again.

He had signed the bill and the black Citroën had driven them to an impressive mansion block. His apartment was on the top floor with magnificent views over the famous rooftops of the city.

'You're a very beautiful woman,' he said as they gazed out

of the big windows standing side by side.

She would never get used to hearing it. 'Thank you.'

She had bought the dress specially for the trip, a simple black silk, its plunging neckline revealing a great deal of cleavage, its tight waist and skirt amply displaying the taut curves of her round pert arse.

He came up behind her, wrapped his arms around her waist and kissed her neck very softly. She turned in his arms and kissed him on the mouth, a hard but not a lingering kiss.

'You haven't shown me the bedroom.'

He led the way. The room was large, furnished with traditional French furniture, an elaborate walnut headboard on a king-sized double bed. There was a large mirror on the wall opposite. He dimmed the lights to a pleasant glow but did not draw the curtains. The apartment was so high they were not overlooked.

She got him to help her with the zip of her dress and then let it float to the floor. Underneath she wore a black lacy teddy, with a plunging neckline to match the dress, and sides cut so high they almost reached her waist. It made her legs look even longer. The black hold-ups she was wearing were Lycra, sheer and shiny, their tops edged in a band of lace.

His jacket had been abandoned in the living room. He pulled off his tie and shirt. She had seen his athletic chest before. He sat on the bed and kicked off his shoes, stripped off his socks, then stood to pull off his trousers and pants together. His cock had already started to rise.

'You're beautiful,' she said.

'Look who's talking.'

She reached between her legs and snapped the three fasteners that held the teddy in place. Her sex was hot. She pulled the

NAKED AMBITION

teddy over her head, then combed through her hair with the fingers of both hands, making her firm breasts tremble.

'Take the stockings off,' he said. 'I want you naked.'

Obediently she sat on the bed and rolled the black nylon off each leg in turn, doing it slowly, watching him watching her. When she had finished he went to the bathroom. She got on to the bed and covered herself with a single white sheet.

He came back. He pulled the sheet away from her naked body and looked down at her for a long time, his eyes studying the details as though trying to memorise the way she looked.

He lay down beside her, took her in his arms, kissed her. He rolled on top of her, his erection hot and hard against her belly. She spread her legs, wanting him immediately to be inside her.

'Please . . .' she said, arching her body up into his.

He kissed her face, and her throat, his hand cupping her breasts and pinching her nipples, soon replaced by his mouth. She arched her back involuntarily this time.

'Please . . .' she gasped. She wanted him so badly.

He slid his cock down between her legs until it nestled in her thick puffy labia, but no further. He smiled down into her face, almost a cruel smile.

She tried to wriggle her body down on him, impale her cunt on his erection but he was too strong for her.

'Please . . .' it seemed to be the only word in her vocabulary.

Suddenly, explosively, he bucked his hips and was in her, powering into her, reaming his cock deep into her wet tight cunt, his pubic bone crushing against her clitoris.

She was coming, instantly, sharply, her whole body stretched out on a rack of total passion, her control gone, her mind falling backward in ecstasy so suddenly it was as though he had touched every nerve in her body simultaneously.

He had not come. His cock still pressed into her as hard as a bone. They rolled over without uncoupling. She sat on him, squatted over him, his cock embedded in her. She rode him, reaching behind her back and down between her legs to capture his balls in her hand.

Without breaking her rhythm she looked up into the mirror. She always did. And, as always, it was a shock. It was not her body, her fat, lumpy, shapeless body riding him but a slim, toned, elegant body. Firm round breasts, a waspie waist, an iron flat belly, long contoured thighs. The body in the mirror was perfect. It was the same as her face. Her jowly porky cheeks and big bulbous nose had gone, replaced by high cheekbones and a fine chiselled nose. Only her eyes were the same, the same big blue eyes, staring back at her in surprise and puzzlement.

It was all a dream.

She felt his cock spasm. She looked down at her new body, down between her high breasts, over her perfectly flat belly, to the apex of her slim thighs. She felt her body respond, as it always did, her orgasm swelling inside her, taking her over.

The orgasm would wake her. It always did. She would wake up to reality. But as she felt his cock moving inside her, as she squeezed on it with every muscle in her cunt, milking it of its load of spunk, as she felt his cock cross the line of control and spasm inside her, as she felt his white hot spunk jetting into her and causing her body to cross the line too, and plunge down into a blackness of infinite sensation, she did not wake up.

The truth was she was already awake.

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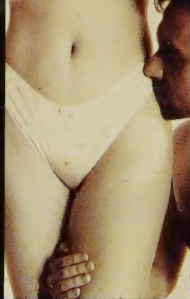
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