

Mina Black



**Mesmerized
by the
Consultant**

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First Edition

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No one can tell anything is wrong. When I make my way through the office, I nod politely to my employees. I say hello to Janice. I wave to Mike, and I chuckle when he complains about his favorite team's loss from the night before. As far as anyone else is concerned, I'm just the boss, and I'm arriving to work as usual.

I walk past my secretary, and she tells me that I haven't had any calls yet.

Everything seems so normal until I shut the door to my office. Then I begin to unbutton my shirt. Of course, I fight the impulse with every ounce of willpower I possess. My hands tremble for a moment, but after a couple of heartbeats, I surrender to the instinct. How many other times have I tried to defeat this programming?

After every attempt, I failed.

I pull off my shirt. I strip down, discarding one article of clothing after another. I take off my belt and my shoes, my socks and my pants. Soon, I'm only wearing my underwear. Those boxers don't feel like real clothing, especially this early in the morning when the cool air still hangs around.

Then I do something even more degrading. I get down on my knees. I bow my head, and I wait.

I'm supposed to be the boss here. I'm supposed to be the guy who owns a full fifty percent of the company. Everyone here supposed to respect me, everyone except the dam consultant.

Every few seconds, I can't help myself. I surrender to the temptation, and I make another attempt at getting up. If only I could get off of my knees, then I would be able to reclaim some shred of my dignity. More importantly, I would prove that she can't control me.

This is all because of one young woman. This is all her fault.

At the moment, I feel like I'm floating. It's a strange sensation, knowing that I'm down on my knees but that I can't move. I'm a prisoner within my own body, waiting until that girl returns. Then she will give me another seven commands, and I will be equally helpless.

Again and again, I try to lift my arms or flex my toes. I can blink. It's the total sum of control I have over my body.

Absolutely helpless, I wait. I wait for that girl.

Nearly an hour goes by before someone knocks on my office door. One, two, three, four, five knocks happening quick succession. That's the code. That's the key to my programming. "Come in," I call out in a strong voice, like nothing at all is different.

The employees don't know what happened to me. This girl wants to keep up appearances.

Melanie.

She strolls through the door, but she is careful to only open a little bit. She slides into the room, closing the door quietly behind her. I can't see her face, though it's not difficult for me to imagine her leaning down, examining me.

"How are you feeling, Ethan?"

"I feel good, Mistress."

Mistress. I despise that word. Before meeting this girl, I didn't really think about it. I would hear words like mistress, and I would think about some illicit lover. Now, when I think of my Mistress, I think of ownership and subjugation. She owns me. She has trained me. She has programmed me like a computer, teaching me one command after another until I'm helpless before the sound of her voice.

"That's good to hear. You know, today is a very big day. Today, you're going to sign all of those papers. It's all going to become permanent today. Doesn't that sound lovely?"

"Yes, Mistress," I responded. Of course, I don't actually choose those words. She has programmed me to agree with everything she says. I'm worse than a yes man, more pathetic than a sycophant.

"Good. We really should start with some of your practice routines, but I'm actually feeling kind of horny. You know what that means?"

"Yes, Mistress," I answer automatically.

"Come with me, slave."

She walks right by me, going back to my desk. Rather than stand, I begin to crawl. I make my way back across the office. Even though I don't even glance up, I can feel the paradox of my position. This is my office. The shelves are covered in my mementos and souvenirs, trophies of my past accomplishments. My degrees are on the wall, and I should feel powerful here.

Instead, this girl takes off her shoes, and she reaches up her skirt, pulling down her panties. Almost immediately, my shaft begins to stiffen. "Should I put the collar on you?"

"Yes, Mistress," I respond.

At this point, the collar doesn't make much difference. She is so deep inside my head that a simple word from this woman is enough to prompt my obedience. And yet, I assume the position by getting up on my knees and crisscrossing my wrists near the small of my back.

Melanie takes the collar out of her purse, and she slides it around my neck. She clasps it on. Then she makes sure I will not be able to take it off with the click of a small padlock.

"Come on, Ethan," she says. "I want to see what you can do with your mouth again." She takes the seat at my desk, and she rolls back, giving me enough room. I crawl forward, taking my place under the desk. "Last night, were you a good boy? Did you make all the arrangements?"

"Yes, Mistress," I respond.

Again and again, I fight the programming, doing everything I can to reclaim control of my arms or legs. At this point, I would even settle for control over my little toe. My best efforts don't amount to anything. Every command I send to my limbs seems to go dead at some point. It's like my body has forgotten how to listen to me.

It has a new owner now, a new Mistress.

"We are going to sign all of those lovely little papers, and then you're not going to have to worry about this company anymore, are you?"

"No, Mistress," I reply, waiting for the command.

"And every day, you're just going to be my good little servant boy,

aren't you? You're going to be my employee. You're always going to do what I say. From fetching coffee to servicing me, you're going to be a good assistant, aren't you?"

"Yes, Mistress."

"You may begin," she says. This time, she doesn't put her hand on the back of my head, nor does she grab my hair. Instead, she waits as I slide my head forward, right between her thighs. And I start licking, sliding my tongue over her opening because I don't have any choice. I experience every sensation, yet I can't control my body. I'm just a passenger because she is in control.

It wasn't always this way.

In fact, I know the exact moment when everything started to go wrong. I was having lunch with my partner, Clarissa.

"I'm just saying, this is a numbers game. If we are interested in making more money, the best way to do that is to make some modifications to the retirement plans."

"Anything that helps us is going to hurt the employees," Clarissa said. She took a bite of her salad.

"I've run the numbers. Please, Clarissa, I know that we are in equal partnership, but I need you to trust me here. If we want to increase revenues as well as our bottom line, the best way to do that is to restructure."

She shook her head. "I believe you, Ethan. But I'm just not sure that would be best for the company."

"What can I say to convince you?" I wanted this. I wanted it so badly. Frankly, Clarissa worked as the creative force behind our enterprise. When it came to the designs, she was a genius. I handled the corporate elements, all of the paperwork that made her eyes water even back in college.

This was the thing. Despite her brilliance, I didn't think that Clarissa really understood what business was all about. Back in college, I had professors who insisted that business was all about making the world a better place. Profits and advancing society didn't have to exist in conflict with one another.

But they were wrong. Business is a numbers game. It has a specific score, and I wanted to win. If that meant a few of my employees had to suffer, then fine. They should've gone into management. They should have been smarter or worked harder.

Was this brutal? Sure. Was I going to change my mind? No way.

"You can agree to hiring a consultant." She held up her hands, certain that I would object. "Look, I know you don't like spending the money on outsiders, but I really do believe that a second opinion would be a good idea. Our company is still really young, and we aren't entirely sure how everything will play out. Let's just get a second opinion. We don't even have to listen to them. I just need more information."

I tapped my fork against one of my napkins, contemplating what to do. I hated consultants with a special kind of passion. And yet, this was a joint decision Clarissa and I had to make together. "If I allow a consultant to come in here and look at our books and offer some advice, you will seriously consider letting me make these changes?"

"Yes," she said.

"Do you want to find this *consultant* or shall I?" Despite our agreement, I couldn't help but use the title with a note of derision.

"I already have someone in mind."

"Ethan Graham?" asked an unfamiliar voice.

Before I even turned around, I knew two things about her. She sounded young. And cute. I was right on both accounts. She had sandy brown hair, blue eyes, and a straight, button-nose. Little freckles dusted her cheeks, and she must've been shorter than me by several inches at least.

"I'm Melanie. I'm the consultant that your partner hired."

"Oh, nice to meet you," I said, letting some of the enthusiasm drain from my voice. Okay, so she was pretty. Somehow, I knew she was still going to be a pain in the ass.

We shook hands. "There's something I actually want to discuss with you in particular, Ethan. There is a special kind of counseling technique I would like to use with your employees. Your partner said that you might be a bit reluctant."

"What kind of technique?" It took all of my self-control not to sigh.

"It's actually a mild form of hypnosis. You see, I would like to help you all relax. It's in this state that we can get the best kind of information, and I would like to start with you."

"Thank you, but I think I'll pass," I told her, heading back toward my office.

She was persistent. I had to give her that because she rushed up to my

side. It felt a little bit like having an elf scurry to keep up with me.

"This is actually very important. You should think about the example you're setting for the rest of your employees. If they know that one of the bosses isn't going to participate, then they will be much more reluctant."

"That would be a shame."

Her hand shot out, and she grabbed me by my bicep. "Ethan, I understand what kind of reputation consultants have. We aren't very popular, especially with management. But I really do want to help you. I need your help. I need your cooperation."

I was truly tempted to politely decline once again. Instead, I looked into her eyes. There was something there, something about her expression. She seemed so earnest, so dedicated.

"Meet me in my office in an hour," I told her, having no idea that this was the last decision I was going to get to make.

She arrived promptly one hour later.

When she knocked on the door, I glanced up, having forgotten about our meeting. I was very tempted to blow her off. I could have provided some generic excuse about how something came up.

Then I remembered what she said about morale, and I couldn't allow Clarissa to accuse me of dragging my feet. "Come in," I called out.

Melanie strolled into my office, holding her hands behind her back. Actually, she appeared to be rather demure. It was kind of sweet. Right there, I toyed with the idea of asking her out once this was all over. Perhaps I would even humor her and use some of her sessions.

"Have you ever been hypnotized before?"

"No," I replied. "Of course not." Hypnotism sounded like a joke to me.

"Yes, I know. Hypnotism has a very bad reputation. People hear the term, and they automatically assume that we are talking about something silly, something you might find at a circus or carnival."

"That is something we can agree on," I told her.

Melanie took a seat across from my desk. "Our session shouldn't take long, but I will have to ask for your indulgence. I need you to do more than simply be here. I need you to maintain an open mind. Can you do that for me, Ethan? Can you keep an open mind?"

"Yeah, I guess I can," I told her, again suppressing the urge to sigh.

Instead, I concentrated on something good about this situation. I reminded myself that she was a pretty girl. Besides, once we finished, I would be able to get those retirement cuts I wanted.

"Good," she replied, reaching down into her bag.

Emily pulled out two items: her phone and a coin strung on a silver chain.

"The phone will be used as a timer. It will help you relax. The coin," she said, "will act as a focal point. You will have something that you can concentrate on."

"Okay," I told her. I was obviously reluctant, but that didn't seem to deter her in the slightest.

"Now, this won't work if we have a desk between us. That's why I need you to come back over here and kneel in front of me."

"You have to be kidding me."

"I'm really not. I know this sounds funny. I'm sure you are the kind of guy who likes to maintain control at every juncture, but this really will be good for you. It'll help you relax, it'll improve your efficiency, and when we are done, you will feel so much better."

"I don't have any problems. I'm not the kind of guy who needs help dealing with stress."

"There's always room for improvement," she told me.

Even though I couldn't explain exactly why I was doing this, I got up, and I came over in front of her. This woman was cute and petite. Truthfully, I couldn't explain why I was following her instructions.

"Ethan, focus on the coin and the sounds you hear. Focus and allow all of your other worries and preconceptions to fade away."

Part of me was tempted to tell her that I thought this was all some silly joke. I wanted to believe that she couldn't really be serious. Even if she was just a hack, I had to admit that I would be at least partly impressed. If nothing else, she managed to put together a consultancy career with a bunch of gibberish about self-actualization.

But that deserved some kind of respect, didn't it?

And yet, I was kneeling in front of this young woman who is smaller than me and younger than me and poorer than me. I watched the coin slide back and forth, hanging from that silver chain. The light reflected along the metal links, a steady rhythm.

"Focus on your breathing. Focus on everything you see and

everything you hear. Allow the sound to wash over you. Allow the sound of my voice and the ticking to permeate your thoughts. You don't have to worry about anything else. Everything else is fading away." She spoke with a simple, mechanistic rhythm.

A moment later, she tapped her phone's screen and a different sound began to pulse on the air. Clink. Clink. Clink. Clink.

It reminded me of those metal balls swinging back and forth, striking one another.

"Ethan, focus on the sound of my voice. As I speak, everything else is fading away. As you listen to the sound of my voice, you can feel the rest of the world fade away. Everything is becoming gray and hazy outside of this room. Don't think about your car or your apartment or your bills. Don't think about anything but the sound of my voice."

Clink. Clink. Clink. Clink.

She kept talking to me just like this, and I could feel it actually beginning to work.

"Ethan, you can feel yourself opening up to me. You know that when I speak, you want to listen to me. You know that when you hear my voice, there will be something important. You need to listen to me. You need to do what I say."

If I'd been completely conscious, then I would have smirked at those words. But I wasn't. On the contrary, I could feel myself drifting. I was floating, lost within the sounds of her voice and the little specks of light hitting my eyes.

"Ethan, you can feel your body getting heavier and heavier. You don't need to lift your arms or your legs. You don't need to move at all. Allow this to happen. Allow everything to happen. You don't need to be in control. You just need to listen to the sound of my voice. You know that you are safe. You know that you are secure."

Clink. Clink. Clink. Clink.

"There is just the sound of my voice. There is just the warm weight pressing down on your arms and your legs. You can feel it in your hands and your fingers. You can feel it in your toes into your feet. Your legs are so heavy now, but that's okay. You know that you feel most right, here, kneeling in front of me."

For just a second, I attempted to speak, to move my lips. Maybe she saw what was going to happen. "Ethan, you need to close your mouth and

you need to close your eyes. Your eyelids are getting just as heavy. You are so relaxed. You only need to concentrate on the sound of my voice."

Yes, I only need to concentrate on the sound of your voice, I thought to myself.

I should have immediately reacted, thinking that those words were silly. How could I allow this girl to make me feel like this? And yet, I had always believed that hypnotism and brainwashing were jokes. Instead, I found myself kneeling in front of this girl.

"Ethan, we are going to discuss some very important commands. When I clap my hands, you're going to become even more relaxed. When I clap my hands, you're going to know that it's time for you to open up to me. And when I tap my finger against your forehead, you're going to wake up again."

Sometime later, she poked me right above the ridge of my nose. Fluttering my eyes, I stumbled back, losing my balance. My thighs buzzed with stiffness. What just happened?

"Did you, did you do it?" I asked her.

"Let's find out."

"This is a joke, right? You didn't really hypnotize me. What, did Clarissa put something in my drink?"

"Why would you think that?" Melanie asked, leaning forward. I grabbed onto the edge of my desk and pulled myself back to my feet. Even though I was standing above her now, I didn't feel better about my status.

"Because I feel hazy, like something important just happened, but I can't remember. What did we talk about?"

"We talked about how you need to be more open to advice, suggestions, and commands."

I swallowed audibly, my brows crinkled with confusion. She had to be kidding.

"Ethan, let's perform a little experiment to see if it worked. I want you to go fetch me a cup of coffee. Two sugars, one cream."

"You want me to go get you coffee? No. I'm not your assistant."

"No..." she agreed, dragging out that syllable. "You think you're better than an assistant, don't you? You think that you have the right to order everyone around. You don't really care about any of the people who work for you."

"Look, I don't know where Clarissa found you, but I think it's time for you to go."

"Ethan, be a good boy. Go get me coffee. Ethan, be a good boy. Don't tell anyone that something strange is going on."

All of a sudden, I could no longer control my body. It was the strangest sensation I had ever experienced in my entire life. My arms dropped to my sides, and I started walking. I made my way back out of my office, past my secretary's desk, and to the break room. With every step, I tried to stop. At first, I thought I was going to turn around. I figured I would be able to somehow regain control of my body.

Instead, I kept going. I grabbed one of the mugs from the cabinets, I poured some coffee, and I added two packets of sugar and one of cream. I stirred it all together, and I went right back to my office. There, I saw that girl with sandy brown hair sitting back at my desk, her feet up.

"Good boy. Now, let's try something more difficult."

"How did you get me to do that? What are you doing?"

"Ethan, be a good boy. Take off your shirt."

Again, I kept thinking that if I just concentrated hard enough, then I would be able to stop. This was my body, after all. This girl couldn't actually order me around. I hired her! I was the boss!

And yet, she watched with perfect confidence as I began to unbutton my shirt. One inch at a time, I moved my hand down the length of my chest. I shrugged off my dress shirt, and then I pulled off the T-shirt I wore underneath.

"Very nice," she said.

This was my chance. As I finished stripping off my shirt, I realized that I had regained control over my body. So I turned around, and I headed toward the door. Before I could grab the handle, she stopped me. "Ethan, be a good boy and don't move. Ethan, be a good boy and don't call out for help."

Now that she gave me the idea, I actually tried it. Maybe that was silly, but it seemed like it would be worth the effort. I inhaled, and I was ready to shout out to my secretary. I would have ordered her to call building security. They could easily escort this woman out of my office and out of my life.

Yes, I filled my lungs, but then my body froze. Each and every time I attempted to formulate another order, my lungs simply refused to push the air past my lips and tongue.

"What's wrong? Can't talk?"

"What did you do to me?" I growled at her.

My nostrils flared, and I inhaled as the aggression surged through me. Throughout my career, I've always been hostile. I've always been able to negotiate and intimidate my competitors. But here, that surge didn't help me.

"Ethan, be a good boy and drop down onto your knees."

"How are you doing this?" Even as I spoke, I fell down on my knees.

"Ethan, be a good boy and crawl over to me."

I moved along on my hands and knees, crawling like an animal. I moved toward her feet.

"Ethan, be a good boy and kiss my shoes."

Gritting my teeth, I struggled to find the willpower to somehow overcome her influence. But as hard as I fought, I just couldn't win. My head slid down, and I pressed my lips to her boots.

"Lovely," she said. "Ethan, be a good boy and stand up again."

It took me a while, but I finally figured everything out. Every time she used that phrase, I had to obey.

Without hesitation, I climbed back up onto my feet. "This is very tasty coffee," she commented. "It really is very nice to see a business owner like you addressing the needs of his staff."

In inhaling and exhaling, I didn't know how to answer, nor did I know what to do or what to say. Hot frustration flooded through my system. I could feel it along my cheeks, over my shoulders, and down my naked back.

"Today, we're going to play a couple of games," she said to me. "First, I want you to come over here and sit on my lap."

"Why?" I demanded. For whatever reason, I could speak again. While that may have felt like good news, I also started walking toward my desk. I took my spot on her lap, and she put her arms around my waist.

It was absurd, but I felt small and helpless right there.

"Log in."

The keyboard was sitting right there. I clicked the mouse, I typed in my username and password. I did it all without thinking. Those were basically muscle memories.

"It's time for you to write an e-mail to all of your employees. Tell them that you appreciate them. Tell them that you understand that they work very, very hard."

"No," I shot back at her.

"Ethan, be a good boy and write the e-mail," Melanie said after just a momentary sigh of disdain.

My hands started moving, my fingers dancing along the keyboard. I typed one word after another, telling everyone that I was the luckiest boss in the world. I was so grateful that I had these employees who would push themselves.

"They are workers. They get paid. That's why they're here. I don't really care how they feel about their jobs."

"And that's why you are in this position. You know, Clarissa has been very concerned about how you treat staff. You've been a very bad boy, haven't you?"

"What are you talking about?"

"Did you have an affair with your secretary?"

The color drained away from my cheeks. It took less than a second. At the same time, something clenched within my chest. "How did you know about that?" I asked. "What did she tell you? What did she say?"

Melanie chuckled. "Oh, you silly boy, automatically assuming that the girl must've blabbed. No, Ethan, she didn't say a word. On the contrary, you did. You told me all about your fling with her. You also told me that you paid her so that she wouldn't go to your HR department to complain."

This time, I didn't respond. There was nothing for me to say.

Silence may have well have been an admission of guilt.

Or maybe Melanie actually told the truth and I really had confessed everything. I still couldn't remember what she had done while I was in that trance state. Like it or not, I had to consider the very real possibility that this girl had hypnotic talents.

"Silly boy," she said again, raising her fingertips and stroking my cheek. I could feel the tips of her fingernails slide along my skin.

"What are you going to do?"

"Why were you so worried? Couldn't you have just fired her? I'm sure a sexual harassment claim would've been easy enough to bury under a pile of lawyers. You have the money. Your company is not hurting."

Whether or not she knew the truth didn't matter. I felt compelled to explain. "I was worried about Clarissa, what she would say."

"Yes, your partner. You have a lot of respect for her, don't you?"

"Yes," I told her.

"Write another e-mail. Write an e-mail to Clarissa. Tell her how

grateful you are for her. Tell her how much you appreciate her contributions."

Clenching my jaw, I didn't want to do that. Back in business school, I learned about dealing with partners. An important part of every relationship with an idea that both sides mattered. If Clarissa ever figured out how replaceable I was, then I might be in real trouble.

And yet, I started typing, only to remember that she hadn't used the command phrase. Maybe I should have kept going and encouraged this girl to think that I would obey her no matter what. But I couldn't help myself. My ego prompted me to cross my arms over my chest.

"No. I'm not going to do it."

"Ethan, be a good boy and write the e-mail."

She was chiding me. Her tone was mocking, but I still had to obey. My arms seemed to move on their own. My fingers pressed down against the keyboard.

"That's very sweet of you, talking about how she's indispensable," Melanie said. "When you're done, I want you to be a good boy and go open up one of your bank accounts."

"Why?"

"Because you decided that I need a bonus."

With every second, I struggled against my body, searching for some way to regain control. I kept thinking that there has to be some kind of escape, some hole in her programming. I didn't know a lot about computers or neurology, but I figured every system has a flaw.

A minute or two later, I found myself logging into one of my smaller bank accounts. She saw the number on the screen, and she whistled. "You really have done very well for yourself, haven't you, Ethan? I guess that's what happens when you don't mind being a bastard."

"I'm successful, and I work hard."

"Don't lie. We both know the truth. You got very lucky. You met a brilliant young woman who had a real skill, and you've been riding her coattails this entire time."

"No, that's not true."

"Ethan, be a good boy and get down on your knees. Bow your head. Be a good boy and tell me the truth. Tell me the whole truth."

Again, I fought with everything I possessed. While Melanie started typing again, probably inputting her own account number to set up a transfer, I did as she wished. I got down on my knees, I bowed my head, and I started

talking.

"You're right," I began.

"I know that I am just an administrator. I'm not even a very good one. I know how to look important, and I'm okay at dealing with some of our suppliers, but this company wouldn't exist without Clarissa. She is the one who comes up with the ideas. She is the one who creates every product we sell. Without her, I would be nothing. I would be a cubicle monkey somewhere."

"So, tell me, do you deserve to keep half of the company?"

For once, my desperation kept me from speaking. My lips trembled, and I would've done anything, including biting down into my own lip if it meant remaining silent.

"Ethan, be a good boy and tell me the truth. Do you deserve half of the company?" Her hypnotic command pounded into me, activating those triggers she implanted inside of my head.

"No," I finally growled back, unable to stop myself.

"No," she agreed, shaking her head. "You don't deserve to have all of this money. That's why you're going to be a good boy for me. That's why I'm going to train you and teach you how to behave yourself. And when I'm done, you are going to sign some very special papers."

That night, I didn't go home.

Instead, I followed Melanie out of my office, down the hall, and to the elevators. As I trailed behind her, I couldn't help but feel like a prisoner. My hands weren't bound, but her programming trapped me more completely than any chains could.

"Tonight, I want you to understand what it means to be a slave. I want you to understand what it means to be completely powerless. You see, Clarissa told me all about how you like making your employees' lives harder and harder. You take away their days off. You make sure that the company pays as little as possible for healthcare and their retirements. It's rather shameful. You know, deep down, that those people work really hard, but you don't care. You just want to squeeze out as much productivity as possible."

"What's wrong with that?" I demanded, refusing to back down.

"It doesn't work."

"Look at the numbers. We are doing better."

"Your employees stay because of Clarissa. They like her. They trust

her, they respect her, and they want to please her. You, on the other hand, are a hindrance to this company. But that ends now."

She took the keys to my car, she got into the driver seat, and she waited for me to get into the passenger's side.

She didn't ask me where I lived. She took me right back to her place.

"I want you naked once we get through that door. You understand?"

"I'm not going to do it," I shot back at her. I didn't want this girl to think that she really couldn't control me...even if she could.

"Ethan, be a good boy and strip once you get past the front door."

Because she used those words, I couldn't stop myself. Compelled, I marched mechanically right up the steps of the porch to the front door. She unlocked the door and let me in.

My efforts didn't matter. My strength of character didn't make the slightest difference. I got closer and closer to my destination. And once I was past the threshold, I pulled off my shirt, my pants, my shoes, my socks, even my underwear.

Then I was standing there, naked, in a stranger's house.

"Follow me on your hands and knees," she ordered.

Melanie started to walk away. I still didn't obey. I was tempted to grab my clothing and try to make a break for it. Maybe if I could get far enough away, I wouldn't be able to hear her voice, which would mean that I would be effectively freed from her control.

Yeah, that was a nice idea, but it didn't work. After just a few steps, Melanie turned her head and glanced back at me. "Ethan, be a good boy and follow me on your hands and knees." She clapped, like I was a dog who needed the extra encouragement.

Down on all fours, I crawled after her. It was awkward and clumsy, but we soon entered another room. It was large and mostly empty except for a bed, several dressers, and an X-shaped piece of furniture in the corner.

"You know what this is?" Melanie asked me, pointing to the fixture in the corner.

"No. What is it?" I didn't really care, but I told myself that every little piece of information could be useful at one point or another.

"This, Ethan, is a St. Andrew's cross. This is also where I'm going to finish your training. After tonight, you're not going to have to worry about pesky little concepts like free will."

"What are you going to do to me?"

"I'm going to solidify your programming. After tonight, no one will be able to remove it."

Someone could have removed it? Granted, that information couldn't have helped me, not when Melanie had refused to leave me alone. From the moment she walked into my office to help me with those "relaxation" exercises to this point, she had been close.

"Ethan, be a good boy and get up on the cross. Spread your arms and legs."

Heart pounding, I searched for some way to stop myself. And yet, with every second, I got closer and closer to that captivity. I spread my arms on the cold wood. I spread my legs. Naked, I was spread out and vulnerable. She took advantage, strapping me down. She started with my feet and finished with my wrists. And when she was done, Melanie stepped back.

"Ethan, be a good boy and struggle. Show me that you can't get off of there."

Again, my body demonstrated that it was more interested in listening to her than me. Muscles straining, I clenched as I jerked and tugged, thrashing about. I could wiggle my hips from left to right and back again. I could raise my buttocks away from the solid wood. That was all.

"Perfect," she said.

"Look, if you let me go right now, I can pay you. I make a lot of money. And I'm going to continue making a lot of money. Just let me go. Please, Melanie. You don't need to keep me like this. Please, please!"

It was shameful. It was nothing less than pathetic begging, but I couldn't stop myself. This time, she didn't compel me, but a different kind of fear forced me to plead with her.

"Oh, I do enjoy hearing you beg. You're going to work on some more."

She moved toward one of those dressers. Feeling my skin prickle, I knew that I was probably sweating in front of her. The tension gripped my body, and yet, I still didn't know what to do.

"Ethan, if I brought your partner in right now, what would you do?"

"I would ask for her help," I told Melanie.

"I'm sure you would. You think she's a good person, but you don't really respect her, do you?"

Because this girl could force me to tell the truth, I decided not to make another sound. I wouldn't say a word.

Melanie strolled right up to me. She smirked, clearly enjoying my helpless frustration. Then she moved her hand along my inner thigh. "Tonight, I'm going to break you. Tonight, you are going to learn to worship me. Sometimes, you'll be able to remember what you've done. At other points, you'll completely forget. Doesn't that sound good?"

"You don't have to do this," I said to her.

Melanie threw her head back and laughed. "I know I don't have to do this. I want to do this."

She grabbed my shaft, and she squeezed gently, working her palm down and up the length of my erection. Of course, I fought with everything I had. I didn't want her to be able to manipulate my body, but I was just a man. This was a beautiful girl, and she was touching me, stroking me. It was impossible for me to resist. My body answered her touch.

"Good boy," she said. "Ethan, you want to be a good boy for me."

Then she pulled back, releasing my shaft. She slapped her hand across my face. Sure, it stung, and my eyes watered with shame, but it wasn't like I started crying. I was better than that!

"Ethan, what should your title be at work?"

"CEO," I shot back at her.

"No, you should be an assistant. You should be at the bottom of the totem pole. In fact, you should thank me."

"Why would I ever thank you?"

"Because I'm not going to make you be an intern. You're still going to get paid, you lucky boy." This time, when she brought her hand up toward my face, I flinched. She giggled, enjoying that helpless expression etched into my features.

Melanie took out her phone, and the sound began again.

Clink. Clink. Clink. Clink.

"You're helpless, Ethan. That's why you need to relax. That's why you need to let go of your frustrations. Your anger isn't going to help you here, Ethan." Her voice sounded so soothing. Second by second, I could feel myself beginning to melt under her gentle tones. "You're helpless, Ethan, and that's why you want to obey me. That's why you want to give up all control. You don't need to worry about being a CEO. You want to be an assistant, a subordinate. You want to do as you're told. You want to have a powerful woman in front of you who will guide you. Whether she makes you wear a collar and a leash or if she dresses you in an adorable bow tie, you will just

know that you have a place."

"No," I tried to say, my voice straining, yet it was like my lips wouldn't obey me. I barely mumbled.

Clink. Clink. Clink. Clink.

Those sounds beat against my mental defenses, cracking every bulwark I built inside of my head.

"Ethan, be a good boy and relax. Be a good boy and give yourself up."

My eyelids got heavy.

"Ethan, you are going to remember this next part. I'm going to let you up. You're going to walk over to that bed, you're going to bend over it. We have a very special guest here, someone who wants to spank you for your bad behavior."

Someone else? Someone was going to see me?

That meant I could ask for help!

And yet, those mental shackles kept me helpless. True to her word, Melanie let me down from the St. Andrew's cross. That wasn't good enough because I stood there, just as helpless as before.

"Ethan, be a good boy and go to the bed. Bend go over and spread your legs."

I waited there. For some reason, it felt right across my hands behind my back. With every breath, I could smell the little particles of dust in the comforter.

"Ethan, this is going to be good for you. Every time this young woman spanks you, I want you to forget about your ambitions. You're going to feel them fade away. The pain is going to clean out your mind. It's going to help you understand where you really belong."

The door to this bedroom opened again, and I could hear the footsteps.

"Is that really him?" asked a tentative voice.

I recognized it right away. It was my secretary!

"That's right. Go ahead. Spank him. He can't move. Even if he could, he wouldn't disobey me."

My secretary.

I couldn't believe it. I pictured her blonde hair, her blue eyes, and her white blouse. I always loved the way she dressed for work. It was always on the verge of inappropriate without quite crossing the line.

When she stood behind me, I could practically feel the heat radiate from her body. She moved her fingers along the curves of my ass. "You know, he liked to spank me when we were fooling around. I think it's good that he'll get a taste of his own medicine."

Again and again and again, I worked to open my mouth, to speak. I kept telling myself that there had to be some way for me to resist these compulsions.

There wasn't.

"You deserve this," she said to me.

Helpless, I stayed right there on the edge of the bed, my ass out and ready for her. She put her hand to my buttock, squeezing. "Oh, you always did have nice buns." The two girls giggled.

"Don't you dare, don't you dare do this!" I stuttered, but it was too late.

If anything, the sounds of my voice only galvanized this girl. She slapped my backside hard, making me slip forward. I grabbed onto the mattress, but I knew that I couldn't actually stop her.

Again and again, she brought her hand down.

To make matters worse, Melanie started talking again. And of course, there were those other sounds hanging on the air.

Clink. Clink. Clink. Clink.

"Ethan, be a good boy. Stop thinking about your ambitions. Stop thinking about money. You don't need to be rich. You don't need to be powerful. You don't need to be important. You need someone to tell you what to do. You crave someone to make you obey. You crave a strong hand, a woman's hand. You want someone who will make sure you always do as you're told. You want someone who will show you how to be a good boy. Let your ambitions go. Let your ambitions go. Let your ambitions go."

I should have been overwhelmed by the sounds of her phone, her voice, and my secretary's palm clapping down against my unprotected skin.

Instead, I drifted away.

Let my ambitions go...

...Yes...

Let my ambitions go...

...It would be so easy, so simple...

Let my ambitions go...

That thought was so easy. And I did it.

I stopped thinking about all of my goals. In fact, I couldn't even remember them. What were they again?

"Ethan, be a good boy. It's time for you to relax again," she said.

Now I'm back in front of my office door, waiting.

Melanie comes right through when I call out permission. My secretary knows what's going on, but everyone else thinks that I just turned over a new leaf.

"Here you go," Melanie says, dropping the papers down onto the floor. "There is no reason for you to get up. You can stay right where you are."

"Yes, Mistress. Thank you, Mistress." Using her title just feels right.

"Don't bother to read those documents. All they say is that you are giving up your share of the company."

"To whom?" I ask. But when Melanie drops a pen right in front of me, I don't hesitate. It's in my hand, and I'm signing my name on one line after another.

"It doesn't matter," she tells me, laughing. "All you need to know is that when you sign those documents, you are going to be an obedient slave boy."

"Who's going to own me?"

Melanie grins again. "We are going to have shared custody, of course."

"No. Please, don't make me do this." Even as I continue to beg, my hand moves from one line to the next. I just can't help myself. I'm a good slave, and I'm surrendering myself to her in every way possible. She already has my mind and my body. Now, she's going to have my company as well.

"Just think about it. Every day, you're going to come to work, you're going to make me coffee, you will answer the phones, and you will get a nice place at the front. All of your former employees will walk by. They will probably say nice things to you. And you will always know your place. Here, everyone is going to outrank you. Everyone is going to have more money than you. You know why?"

"Why?"

"Because you have already given me everything you own. I have all of your accounts. And once you sign those documents, you will forfeit the ability to own any property whatsoever. From this point forward, you will be

dependent on me for anything and everything. Doesn't that sound lovely?"

"No!" I call out, but it doesn't matter. My hand is done. I just signed the last of these documents.

Melanie gets back up, and she saunters over to my old desk—her new desk. She takes a seat. She spoke back. "Of course, I forgot to tell you about your oral servitude. Whenever I want, you're going to pleasure me. Doesn't that sound nice. It's going to be difficult running a company like this, so I'm going to need you to help me."

As I crawl toward my former desk, I think about everything I've lost. More importantly, I search for some genuine anger. I want to believe that I'm going to be able to fight with everything I possess, then I'm going to be able to search out some weakness in her plan. And yet, I'm now under her desk, and I wait for her to roll back into position.

She does it. More importantly, I see that she isn't wearing her panties. When she spreads her legs, her pussy is right there.

She puts her hand on the back of my head, and she pulls me forward, making me embrace my surrender because she took away my will to fight. As hard as I search, I don't get angry. In fact, when I start to like it when I hear her moan, I'm satisfied with my position. She's right. I'm going to enjoy being her assistant because she modified who I am all the way to the deepest corners of my psyche.

Like it or not, I can't get mad at this woman, not when she owns me.

The End