

Persephone in Winter

by Night Writer

A marriage shaken by routine and miscommunication sends Elyse on an odyssey of submission with a mysterious stranger.

Prologue

Elyse waited patiently by the open trunk of the car as the boy placed the last bag of groceries inside. She found herself smiling, for no particular reason. The sun was warm on her face, and a slight breeze played with her hair, tickling her cheek, teasing her in and out of her daydream.

The soft knit of the light sweater fell away from the firm swell of her breasts as she reached to close the trunk lid, then settled smoothly over them again as she turned to the boy to tip him. She caught him staring and blushed, almost having forgotten how a boy might be distracted by the slight sway of a woman's bare breasts and nipples beneath the ordinary white turtleneck.

Looking over the boy's shoulder, her smile widened, and she waved. Steven had disappeared at the last minute, and now came bounding across the parking lot clutching a small bouquet of wildflowers.

"For you, my lady," he announced as he bowed, raising the offering as though she was royalty. "You!" she said, giggling.

The boy watched them play. He saw the sparkle of happiness in her eyes, and the kiss that Steven planted on her lips, then turned away to give them their privacy. There would be a day in his future as well, he thought as he walked back to his eight-hour shift, a day when he would see the same sparkle in the eyes of the perfect girl, the girl of his dreams.

They drove with the top down. The immaculately restored Triumph convertible took each turn as if it had just come off the production line, hugging the road with familiar security as they left the highway behind, traveling the winding lane that led them home.

Elyse stretched her arms upward, the fall air rushing through the spaces between spread fingers. Weeks ago the leaves had changed from summer green to blazing yellows and reds. Now a fresh layer of red and brown covered the roadside as the last of the forest harvest fluttered reluctantly to earth.

Steven glanced at her as he drove, smiling at her playful gesture. He could see where the sweater revealed the soft skin of her belly as she stretched, and the shape of her breasts and nipples under the white knit.

"I've never seen you leave the house like that," Steven said, breaking a long silence. Elyse grinned at him with satisfaction and stretched higher, relieved that he had finally noticed.

"I thought you might like it," she said, her face now tilted upward into the wind.

"I'm sure the boy at the market liked it," he answered with a hint of irritation.

"Mmmm, I didn't think about that. I suppose it's harmless enough. I doubt that I've corrupted him for life." She laughed and turned to look at him. As she lowered her arms, a falling leaf met her outstretched hand and tangled itself in her fingers.

He kept his eyes on the road ahead, refusing to return her look. "What I'd really like is that my wife not expose her breasts to every teenager in town."

Suddenly the joy of the crisp air and fall colors was drained from her. She sat next to him, hands in her lap, shocked into silence. "I - I did it for you..." she said quietly. She stared at the leaf, turning it over and over in her lap. It was perfectly shaped, but brittle and brown, without color or life.

Hidden away in the woods at the end of a gravel lane, the sprawling house's presence was surprisingly overwhelming to anyone who might come upon it by chance. A wedding present from Elyse's father, the summer "cabin" as he called it had belonged to his father as well. Though made of large logs taken generations ago from deep within the same forest, its sheer size and modern interior made it anything but the diminutive description her father was so fond of.

"I'm sorry," Steven said as he turned the key and the car's engine died. "I love the way you look; I love everything about you. You know that. It's just that I don't want everyone in town staring at your body. I know you did it for me, but it's a small town. Someone may take it the wrong way. If everyone thinks you're flirting, well, who knows what might happen? It's embarrassing."

Elyse stared at the leaf, now turned to hard branching veins as its petrified flesh crumbled into her lap. "I know," she told him. "It was silly - I just didn't think about the consequences. I'm sorry."

Steven leaned over and kissed her. "Don't be sorry. Besides, you can show me your nipples, at home, any time, in fact, all the time, if you want." He grinned, hoping to get the same response from her.

She did her best to show him the grin he wanted. As she returned his kiss, she felt his hand on her breast, his fingers teasing her nipple beneath the thin knit sweater. She kissed him harder, the sounds of the woods bringing her alive again, making her wet for him then and there. His belt opened easily, and in seconds her hand closed around his erection, stroking it, pulling it free into the wilderness she loved.

"Not here," he said finally. "Let's go inside."

"Here," she moaned, as she lowered her face to his lap, reaching for the hard tip of his sex with her tongue.

"Elyse," he said abruptly. "What's gotten into you today? What if someone should come by?" She took an inch of him, then another, into her mouth. She knew he wouldn't resist; she was sure he couldn't, once she began to move her lips and tongue over him. When he cradled her head in his hands, she melted inside, and closed her mouth even more tightly around him. "Please," she thought, "show me, show me what you want me to do to you, show me how you want me to suck you, how you want to fuck my mouth, oh god, please show me..." But he pulled her face away from his lap, her soft hair tangled in his fingers, her eyes pleading for something he didn't understand.

"Inside," he whispered. They sat, trembling, staring into each other's eyes. Elyse nodded, and, with a smile Steven didn't recognize as one of consolation, felt his hands slip from her hair. The air had taken on a sudden chill as she helped carry the groceries to the house. Winter was coming. If only she had worn her jacket.

That evening Elyse sat curled up in a big overstuffed recliner by the fire, her nose buried in a book. Her robe had worked its way open, revealing a delicious, smooth expanse of thigh, as well as the deep V between her breasts. Steven sat across from her on the sofa, his papers scattered over the wide, rustic coffee table. Now and then she glanced up at him, checking to see whether he noticed each time she shifted positions, letting her robe open another inch.

"Damn it!" he muttered. "Where in the hell - Elyse, have you seen part of my manuscript? A loose page maybe? Something with a lot of calculations on it?" He still hadn't looked at her.

She knew how important his paper was to his future - at least she thought she understood. His explanation was always a little cryptic to her, all that math and those strange symbols. She did understand that a college professor would always be just a college professor if he didn't distinguish himself in his field. Publish or perish. She had heard him say it so many times, as though she might have somehow forgotten the cliché.

"You're tired," she told him, her voice as silky and inviting as she could make it. "Why don't you come to bed? We'll look tomorrow."

"But it was just here!" he insisted. "Maybe I left it in my office." He rose and left the room, never glancing at her open robe. "For Christ sake! Damn it, damn it, damn it!" His curses echoed from the open doorway down the hall.

Elyse sighed, put her book on the floor beside the chair, gathered her robe around her, and went to help. She stood at his office door, listening to him rant and watching him tear through stacks of papers. "It must be here! It has to be!" He still hadn't looked at her.

"I'm going to bed," she told him finally. "You coming?"

"Soon," he told her, finally looking up at her. She had let her robe fall open again. She was naked under it, and smiled when she saw him staring at her body. Steven paused and sighed, as though he was annoyed at being caught ogling her. "I'll be up soon," he said evenly, still shuffling through a chaos of white paper.

An hour had passed before he woke her from a light sleep as he slipped into bed beside her. She felt his hand cup her breast, then move slowly down her belly, finally probing between her legs. Pushing away the numb calm of an hour's sleep, she turned toward him and placed her hand along the side of his face. Another minute, and he would kiss her, then move closer, working his hips forward tentatively, as if asking permission to enter her. She would find his penis and hold him, playing with him lightly, coaxing him nearer, assuring him with her pounding heart and loving touches that she wanted him inside her.

He made love to her with tenderness and precision. She knew every move so well. He would wait hours for her to cum. On the rare occasion when an orgasm eluded her, times when merely enjoying the closeness of being one with him was enough, he seemed relentless. It shamed her to think of the times she had pretended, offering up a quiet sigh of a climax so he could finally enjoy his own release.

She stroked his chest and shoulders as he worked, his erection reliable and tireless, pushing into her with machine-like predictability. He would lean closer to nibble on her neck soon, then find her ear with the tip of his tongue. So loving. So caring. So careful.

Elyse studied his face until his eyes closed. Concentrating, she thought. Trying to please me. Trying to make me cum. As time passed, she stared past Steven, into the darkness of their bedroom. He loves me. He loves me. He loves me. She would make the practiced sigh, tense her body, then give up a crescendo of moans, her sign to him that he had satisfied her, and all was right with the world. Elyse wondered if he counted her moans, analyzed them with the precision of the mathematics that had become his life.

He loves me. He loves me. He loves me.

Chapter 1

It wasn't quite as though she was cheating. He had known for some time. And she knew he knew. She couldn't help crying out a bit louder when she came. She had always been quiet, her small throaty moan rising on those few special occasions when she seemed especially wet.

Now she came with mouth wide open, filling the darkened bedroom with unfamiliar words, telling him over and over how she wanted him, how she loved his cock inside her. When she straddled him and played with her breasts, or rose on her knees offering him entry from behind, he knew another man took her that way. Yet, they went on, week after week, knowing but not admitting, too fearful to let the words pass between them.

She was the first to break the silence.

"I have to tell you about him."

He couldn't look at her. He wouldn't.

She watched him look away, then glanced at the phone.

"I don't love him. I just can't say no to him."

His spine turned to stone at her words. His hands trembled, breath coming in thin packets that racked his chest.

"I want to stop. But when he wants me - "

Steven jumped when the phone rang. His eyes went to it, then to Elyse. She ignored the insistent warble, now pale and oddly neutral as she searched for his reaction.

She was slim and fragile in the cotton sundress. Enough light poured through it from behind her to reveal the outline of her breasts and waist. He guessed she was naked beneath it, then was sure of it as she approached the phone. She pressed it to her ear, listening, motionless, familiar lines of bare thigh revealed through the translucent cotton.

Elyse held the receiver out to him, knowing he would take it.

He listened, still frozen in place, while the voice delivered options and ultimatums.

"She still loves you, you know. She comes to me for something else, a sense of possession, an unresolved sensual necessity. You can choose to allow her this, or flee, freeing yourself of the pain and her love. The decision is yours."

The voice was precise and confident. He could see she knew it well. Her eyes were wide with anticipation and excitement. The voice told him everything, what was, and what was to be. And Steven knew that a part of her already belonged to the voice, but not the part that loved him. Could he share her flesh to keep her shining eyes?

"Your decision is one that's easier to agree to than to live with. But then, agreeing is only the first step, is it not? Can you take the second? Only time will tell. And time is growing short. So, to test your stride, the second step, if you're up to it. Simon says ..."

At sundown, Steven followed his wife into the warm rain of the shower. Elyse offered herself to him, head back, erect nipples waiting for the soap in his hand against them, then down her belly, smooth slippery skin made fresh for her late-night lover. Her thighs tightened at his touch as a soapy river raced over them, swirling into the drain below. She turned her back to him, and he studied the lines and valleys of her shoulders, filled now with frothy white as he passed the soapy cloth over them. Finally, gliding down the deep crevice of her back, his hands now free of everything except the scented soap, he cupped and lifted the soft but firm globes of her ass, circling over them, feeling the weight of them in his hands. Her legs opened. She leaned against the shower wall, her open slit reminding him of his duty.

Simon says...

The soap made her slick and wet between her legs. Had it been that way before he touched her there? Did her back arch a little when his soapy fingers drifted into the space between fleshy cunt-lips?

After a quiet moan, her words - bitter, breathless, agonizing.

"Will you give me to him? Will you clean me, dress me, take me to him? Will you love me after I take another man inside me and cum, screaming under him, knowing I love you more each day?"

His answer was not with words, but with actions. He dried her with the large towel, careful not to dwell where more questions would come.

Chapter 2

The house was one of many hidden behind dense hedges and wide iron gates along the endless avenue. Finding it was painfully slow. The camera's cold, glass eye found them, internal elements shifting with precision, then stared unblinkingly at them through the windshield for what seemed like hours.

At first, they sat in silence in the waiting car - her heart racing with forbidden surrender to another, his with apprehension, and finally terror. She was delicious in the cool evening light. He had never seen her so radiant - the creamy white skin of her neck gracefully arched over a tempting hint of heaving breast revealed at the border of the modest neckline.

The dress was delivered earlier that day, a plain black box with a single red rose attached. Steven was curious but quiet upon its arrival. She placed it on the bed unopened, smiled, and put her arms around his waist.

"He always dresses me. Oh, it's not what you think. No garter belts or lingerie, none of that. He puts me in the most tasteful clothes, something different each time. Very chic. Very expensive. Afterward, he takes them from me and destroys them."

"He thinks that little of you?"

She smiled, resting her head on his chest against a bounding heart.

"No - he thinks that much of me. Each time, I'm what he wants me to be. Each time is special. And after, it's gone forever. Me, the place, the time, the dress - it's his creation, unspoiled, and forever unshared by anyone."

Her words still echoed in his head as they waited in the dark car. The dress fit her like a glove, a black, velvet glove. He marveled at how the fabric could be so thin, and yet so opaque. It moved as though it was a part of her, revealing fleeting lines of breast, hip, and thigh with the slightest motion of her body. Down the front, a single row of soft, tiny, black buttons, an inch apart, ran from neckline to ankle. He had watched her button each one, an agonizingly slow process. She had taken her time, smiling up at him after every two or three, as if to say, "Imagine how long it will take him to get to me, to open me up, to peel me like a piece of wet, juicy fruit."

The heavy gates swung inward on smooth, silent hinges. He hesitated, his foot hovering above the pedal, now uncertain whether he could guide the car through the entrance, then along the densely wooded drive that would take her to him. She sensed his reluctance and turned to him. He fought for breath as she leaned closer, her trembling body draped in exquisite ebony. The fine, delicate swirl of her ear bore sparkling clusters of emeralds that flirted with the light between perfectly placed strands of hair. She took his hand. Her smile was weak but genuine.

"Now that we're here, I can't ask you for this. I can't bring myself to utter the words, to sound so selfish, or to hurt you."

Her eyes were liquid and wide with sympathy. But was there a fleeting hint of excitement in the flicker of her dark lashes?

"I can only tell you that it's happened, that it's something I can't escape. Something in me needs this, something so powerful I feel I'll self-destruct if I don't see it through. I don't understand it. I can't answer your questions. But I can love you. Is that enough?"

He flinched when she squeezed his hand lightly, then took the wheel and drove through the open gates without a word. She turned away without apology, looking straight ahead as he drove on. The tear he waited for never came. He knew the road ahead was the only way to keep her.

The gates vanished into darkness behind them as the car crept along a broad curve, lit only by muted lamps hugging the driveway at regular intervals. He heard her small sigh as she settled back into the seat, her eyes now staring miles into the night. Guessing her thoughts tortured him as he peered ahead into the blackness. Was she already with him? Did she know his plan? Was she eager to escape his costume for the night, to be naked and used in a game of their making? Or was it the anticipation of the unknown - something that would push her far past boundaries not yet crossed?

The house rose like a glowing fortress, awash in the blue-white of countless lights spread over the sprawling grounds. The hulking Georgian manor, spacious entry court, and winding drive were carved out of the surrounding dense vegetation that contained the light within it, keeping the property in near-daylight long after sunset. A wide portico supporting six massive ionic columns dropped to the level of the circular driveway through a series of gleaming white marble steps that sparkled under the intense light. He stopped the car in front of them, peering into the rows of tall, arched windows lining the front of the massive two-story structure. Taking his hand again, she looked as though she belonged there - elegant, beautiful, a precious gift to be enjoyed, treasured, possessed.

"Wait for me?"

"I'd rather not. I - I don't think I can..."

"No, my love. I'm not asking. He is."

"But, he never said anything about having to watch you with him. I couldn't take that. Isn't this enough?"

"He doesn't want you to watch us. In fact, he won't allow it. I'm his and his alone when we're together. But you must show that you're willing to share me, to give me to him whenever he wants. Bringing me here to him, and later returning me to our bed is the only gesture he demands. You have to give me willingly. It's sex, not love. I love you. I always will. Please show him you'll wait."

She was out of the car before he could answer, making her way up the rows of steps. As she turned just briefly to glance back at him, he noticed the flush across her face, and her hardened nipples straining against the delicate fabric.

She rang the bell at the door. He watched her as she waited patiently, hands at her sides, the slim curves of her body on display in the finest detail under the intense light. Even so, the black dress clung to her body in ways that would have made her unrecognizable to him from the back, had she not just left her place beside him minutes ago.

The door opened. She took a step forward. His arms encircled her, one at the waist, the other moving up her back until his fingers dug into chestnut curls,

pulling her closer. She lifted her chin and opened her mouth to him. He covered it with his, suddenly pleased that her response was so eager, that she would so savagely invade his mouth while her husband watched. His hand moved lower, palm now gliding over the hard flesh of her ass, naked under the wisp of black cloth. She moved close against him, her legs closing around the muscle of his thigh. Her hips tilted into him, then again, and again, as the kiss became more frenzied.

Steven watched them from the car, the kiss, his caresses, her thighs clutching the stranger's leg, hips grinding against him in heat. And when he thought he could watch no longer, they stopped. Two large hands appeared on her shoulders. He was speaking to her. She was nodding, slowly, mechanically. His hands disappeared again, retreating down the front of her dress, busy, doing what? From the back it was difficult to tell. His hands reappeared on her shoulders, this time pulling the dark material to the sides, then down, over her arms, until her bare back glistened in the floodlights. Elyse stood before him, naked to the waist, her hands now busy below his belt, her actions also hidden from her husband's sight.

She knelt, now on her knees below him, her hands still busy, still hidden from her husband by waves of shining hair. Her small fingers closed around his cock, smoothly running the length of it as the tip grew wet before her eyes. She closed her lips around it, the ball of flesh hard and warm against her tongue. She welcomed the familiar taste of him, and let him know with eager but careful teasing, sucking and licking just as he had taught her. But this time it was different. She was wet, and loved the feel of him in her mouth as she had on each occasion, but now she felt her husband's eyes upon her. Would he allow her this one passion? Was he strong enough to accept her physical need for another and be party to it as well? She loved Steven desperately. He nourished her soul. But Simon fed her cunt, and her mind refused to consider having to choose, should it come to that.

Steven watched them from the car, stomach tied in knots, glancing away each time doubt began to overcome him. Although he saw nothing but his wife on her knees in front of him, her flexing back naked in the night air, agonizing images filled his head - her lips sucking greedily at the stranger's cock, her hands busy, milking, coaxing the semen from his body into her waiting mouth. He fought the temptation to escape, to turn the key and drive away. But he knew her well enough by now to recognize the genuineness of her love for him and her need for this stranger's hold on her.

At that distance, it was difficult to make out the man's features. The skin of deep bronze against the crisp white shirt, shining jet-black hair pulled back, bound into a short tail, all suggested a man of Latin descent. And the voice on the phone; he thought he detected a slight accent beneath the intimidating, articulate voice. His display of total control as Elyse knelt before him, her naked breasts offered to him as Steven imagined her caressing a stranger's cock with her lips and tongue, all against the backdrop of the brilliantly lit mansion presented a surreal and painfully erotic scene that mesmerized him. As much as he needed to look away, he found he could not.

After a minute, maybe two, the man reached for her, pulling her gently to her feet. His hands appeared again, this time lifting the dress back over her shoulders, methodically fastening the open buttons, one by one. The demonstration was brief but effective. Elyse understood the intent all too well, but wondered whether the show of power was excessive, considering the emotions her husband must already be juggling. She also knew that power was everything to Simon, power and control. He would insist on an offering, a sacrifice, from her husband from the start. To witness her submission from behind, with few details, forcing

Steven to imagine her mouth on Simon's cock, to ask himself if her nipples hardened when she touched her lover, to agonize over what Simon saw as he looked down over her bare shoulders and firm, young breasts - all this was what he would demand. Simon took her hand, and as the mansion swallowed them, she warmed inside, knowing she had not heard the engine rev or the car speed away into the night.

Chapter 3

She sat some ten feet away from Simon in the walnut-paneled library. Glasses of brandy rested on identical cherry tables beside each richly upholstered wingback chair. He was unusually quiet this evening, taking time to savor the rich, dark drink, allowing her to nearly finish her own generous portion. She expected he would talk of her husband, and was apprehensive about betraying her love for him, even with unshared thoughts. Instead, he sat and watched her, his fierce eyes drinking in her slim body, harboring clues to her fate later in the night.

"Do you love me?"

His first words startled her, both with their suddenness and their content. She hesitated, trying to guess the answer he wanted from her.

"Simon - I..."

"Do_you_love_me? A simple question - four words - none more than four letters."

His eyes were locked on hers - dark with savage intensity. Her hand trembled as she reached for her brandy, only to find the glass empty.

"I love my husband. I love your cock."

He stiffened suddenly and leaned forward in his chair, dark eyes narrowing.

"Such language from a pretty wife. The day will come when I tire of your hungry, young body. Poor little thing, hanging on my gate, used and discarded."

He had never spoken to her like this. Would he turn her away for giving just one wrong answer? Should she beg? Play indignant, or proud? What did he want from her?

His fierce stare melted into a wide smile.

"But how could I possibly discard such a thirsty young woman who knows so well what she wants, and loves. Oh, I did very much like the sound of that - what was it again?"

Now she trembled for a different reason. She felt the coolness between her legs where her juices pooled, wetting her inner thighs.

"I love your cock, Simon."

His smile faded a bit, his eyebrows arched, then after a few thoughtful seconds, he tilted his head to the side with lips pursed.

"I love your cock, Simon," she purred slowly, letting her heat warm every word.

He poured another drink, then rose and went to her, half-filling her glass as well. She drank it in gulps, not stopping until it was gone. When he reached for her the empty glass slipped from her hand, shattering with a pop on the hardwood floor. Without flinching, he began to open the dress; one button, then two, three, lingering deliberately before going to the next, savoring the trail of tender skin left behind as the front of the dress parted. It seemed to take

forever, and by the time he had undone the last button, she was breathless and limp. She slid lower in the chair over the slick fabric of the open dress, until her hips passed over the edge of the seat, supported only by her splayed legs stretched out on either side of him.

"Are you wet?"

"God yes, Simon. Can't you see?"

The dress had fallen away from her belly and legs. He studied the swelling slit between her legs with a puzzled frown.

"Show me."

She struggled to hold her cunt open to him, her fingers slippery with the fluids that poured from her. She had never felt more naked, more vulnerable. But that's what Simon did. Why did it feel so good? From what dark corner of her imagination had this maddening addiction freed itself? Her husband was just fifty yards away, waiting for her to return to him, knowing that she would give her body to Simon in ways that would forever remain her secret. Was at least a sliver of the excitement from knowing her husband agreed to surrender her, and would likely do so in the future? Was it really his strength, his compromise to keep them together, or some perverted sense of power over him that made her dripping wet so quickly tonight?

"Play with yourself. I want to watch your face as you cum."

"Please Simon, I -"

A sudden ripple of disappointment shot through her. Her first orgasm was always the most intense, and riding it out without his cock in her was something she hadn't expected.

"Well, well. You are a spirited little thing tonight. You've never hesitated for a second at one of my requests - always eager to play the slut so unbecoming a prim and proper wife."

"I - I want you inside me when I cum."

"So. We regress. Remember how we play? Simon says..."

She sank two fingers deep inside, then drew them out slowly, one along each side of the hard, wet button of flesh. Cradling it between them, she eased both fingers along her swollen clit, circling over the sensitive tip every so often with a trembling swirl.

He stood between her outstretched legs and watched with satisfaction, then raised the half-full glass of brandy in the air over her, tilting it slightly just above her upturned face.

"Simon says, 'Open'."

Her mouth fell open just in time to catch the ribbon of burgundy that fell from the rim of his glass. He smiled down at her as he kept it coming, soon filling her mouth faster than she could swallow it. As it overflowed across her chin he followed with the glass, pouring a thin, steady stream over her breasts and belly, until it funneled between her legs, mixing with her own sticky nectar, finally trickling into a building puddle on the floor below.

"Decisions, decisions. What should I do with such an anxious young lady? Should I grant her her wish and stick my cock in her? Although, I haven't really heard her beg convincingly for it this evening.

Perhaps I should bring her husband inside. We could watch her face together, her body twitching as she fingers herself to orgasm in my library."

He turned his back to her and walked slowly toward the door. Would he do it - even after he had promised not to push her husband hard enough to endanger their marriage? He was going too far - she couldn't allow it - but she was so wet, now suddenly much closer to the brink, still without his prick filling her.

"Simon, please! I can't - can't hold out - much - much - longer. I need you, Simon. I need - your - cock in me. I - need - your - cock - I need - your - cock - I -"

He wore a pleased grin as he turned to face her.

"Ahh, you have such a way with words - convincing words indeed."

His chair was only a few steps away. He went to it, sat, unzipped the front of his pants, and pulled his erection through the opening. Her eyes were glued to it - so hard and thick, like a bar of bronze sculpted into a warm likeness of the perfect cock.

"Simon says, 'Over here.'"

She slid over the edge of the chair until her knees touched the floor, allowed the dress to fall from her shoulders, then crawled to him on hands and knees, slowly, with her head down, the way she knew he would want her. Stopping between his parted legs, she waited for the sound of his voice. He withheld it until he could see her shiver, knowing that her need to be filled grew with each agonizing second. He watched in silence as the small of her long, smooth back arched, her ass rising and falling almost imperceptibly in a futile effort to bring relief to the ache between her shaking thighs. 'How long would she wait?' he wondered. Hours? - Days? This fragile, loving wife, cowering, naked on the floor below, silently begging to be taken by a stranger...

She watched her breasts hanging and quivering, engorged nipples straining toward the floor, and through the space between them the small tuft of hair matted and dripping with her juices. In time she closed her eyes, knowing that the sight of her body's response to him would only excite her more. Soon her eyes were clenched tight as she struggled to concentrate, to become whatever he wanted that night, at whatever cost.

Her body shook in rhythmic spasms. Ridges of muscle rose between her shoulder blades, and her inner thighs flexed and relaxed in an uncontrollable cadence. He waited for a sign - something new, something not easily surrendered. When her tears fell from within the tangle of hair that covered her face, landing with tiny splats between his feet, he spoke.

"Look at me."

Elyse raised her head slowly. Thick waves of hair parted to reveal her tear-streaked face.

"Interesting. What brings tears to the eyes of a wife as she sluts for another man? Is it shame, an overpowering disgrace born from the incapacity to control her own desires? Or is it simply pure lust, her body's final desperate mechanism for dealing with extended deprivation, fired by a ravenous carnal appetite? Of course, a true slut could never feel shame. A true slut would abandon everything for a good hard fucking, never stopping to think twice about her future, or the future of those she loves. So which is it? Tell me, are these the tears of a slut or sinner?"

She searched his eyes for some small hint that this was just a game, hoping that he would break into a sympathetic laugh, scoop her up in his arms, and take her to his bed. Soon she understood her answer was required, a necessary part of their evening together. But which answer?

"Both. I'm both, Simon."

Her voice cracked and wavered. She could taste the salt of her own tears.

"I-I'm your slut-your slut, Simon. And-and sinner-and worse, in my husband's eyes."

Leaning forward, he ran his fingers lightly over her face, then cradled it in his strong hands. She welcomed the gentle pressure as he drew her closer, stopping just inches from his towering erection.

"You may be many things in his eyes, but *you've* made this a refuge from such things, a refuge from all things proper and respectable. You've asked him to bring you here, and beyond that, to wait in the wings as I use his wife's body in ways that must test the limits of his imagination."

He paused, his fingers working their way under her hair, circling the small, delicate contours of her ears, then trailing lower, caressing cool bare skin at the back of her neck.

"I'm not interested in the sinner. The world is full of sinners. So don't waste my time with words. Actions speak with much more conviction."

She sat up, rested her hands on his thighs, and took the solid, golden head of his cock into her mouth. Closing her lips tightly just over the jutting ridge of the glans, she attacked the meat of it with the tip of her tongue. She could feel the beat of his pulse as she tested the hard ball of flesh, pushing hard against it, swirling around the edges, then gently probing the eye at its center. Each precious droplet teased from him arrived warm and sweet against the back of her throat.

"I don't think I've ever seen you suck me with such abandon, or for that matter, any wife so willing to take another man's cock in her mouth. Are you as eager to take your husband's in the same way?"

She stopped and looked up at him.

"We don't - I mean, not like this. It's different with him."

"I see."

He sighed, showing his frustration with her evasive answer.

"Please, don't..."

"Come now. Whining doesn't become you, my dear. Tell me. I insist. Just how different is this husband of yours?"

She lowered her eyes. Her nipples seemed to reach out to him, embarrassingly hard.

"It's more - more, comfortable with him, I guess. It's safe, calm, warm, wrapped around each other in our bed. I could never - I mean, it's just not the same. He'd think - "

"You may be surprised what he thinks. Must a wife who does her whorish best by night forsake the lady she's become by day? You think nothing of offering your body to me for whatever amusement I might invent. In fact, you flaunt your lust, so desperately, so ravenously, for what you could easily have at home."

"I don't understand it, Simon. It's not as simple as you make it. I'm not proud of this - I know I'm hurting him deeply. Do you think I enjoy that?"

"Do you? There is a certain exhilaration in exercising one's power over another, even if it's someone close to your heart. The liberation from feelings of powerlessness can be a stimulating awakening. And, as horrifying as you might find it on the surface, the pain you deliver with a newfound weapon can be both empowering and arousing."

A sudden chill shook her, causing her hands to tremble as she moved them along his thighs. When her hands found his erection she closed them gently around the firm shaft. She could feel the heat it radiated before touching him, and imagined it flowing into her fingers, along her bare arms, then into the core of her body, finally chasing the chill back from where his words had summoned it.

She found herself crying again - suddenly, unexpectedly sobbing, despite the comforting warmth that poured into her.

"Please stop, Simon. Why can't you leave him out of this? Why won't you just fuck me? I'm begging, Simon - oh God, I'm begging you..."

He rose and went to a desk at the far side of the room. From the wide center drawer, he retrieved a coil of thick, heavy cord. Her heart raced when she saw it, partly from fear, partly from excitement. He ran a portion of it through his fingers, now careful not to look at her. It was woven of black silk, thick as his finger, but hollow at its center. Looping it loosely around his hand several times, he tightened it slowly, feeling it collapse slightly as its suppleness conformed to the contours of his knuckles and palm.

She was on her knees by his chair when he returned. He reached for her hand, she gave it, and he helped her to her feet. Gently but firmly, he brought her wrists together, circled them three times with the cord, then once more, passing it between them, finally tying the knot between her palms. He again looped the remaining length about his hand and headed for the wide, open stairs that led to his bedroom. She followed, two short steps behind, as much as the rope would allow, her cunt open, red, and flowing with juices from an hour's torment.

Chapter 4

"If only others could see you as I do."

He paced slowly as he spoke, eyes feasting on white flesh against the crimson sheets under her. The bed, a heavy four-poster with a canopy frame, was positioned at the very center of the room. At first sight, it was an imposing structure, a fusion of dark carved woods and burnished metal in an old-world Mediterranean style. As he circled it, he studied her from every angle. Her thin wrists were stretched above her head, bound by two feet of cord secured to a grille of metal bars at the headboard. A tangle of brown hair framed her face, one eye hidden behind sweat-soaked strands that clung to her forehead and cheek. Her open lips waited, red and full, poised, ready at the next instant to beg him to finish her.

'Such wanton elegance,' he mused. 'Delicate shoulders carved from the purest alabaster...white breasts firm enough to mimic stone, yet soft enough to allow cherry-red nipples to quiver with each breath...the flat belly, showing a hint of muscle beneath it, as though carved by a master sculptor to compliment the sleek lines of her long waist...legs, white as glistening ivory, chiseled and slim, a thin layer of satin drawn tightly over stone cut and polished by hands of passion and grace.'

He could almost understand how a husband might prefer sharing such a treasure to losing her.

Small lamps mounted on the inside of each corner of the canopy bathed her body in blue-white light. The rest of the room was dark, and the bright light blinded her to his progress and exact position. Only during the few moments when he passed the foot of the bed could she be sure he remained in the room with her, his crisp, white shirt and golden cock emerging from the shadows just long enough to rewet her appetite for him.

Minutes later, he appeared beside her at the edge of the bed. He was naked, and the sudden sight of him sent a shudder of expectation through her. He held a small silver vial, just slightly taller than a thimble. Within it rested a thin needle topped with a single black pearl that seemed to hover above the lip of the container in the brilliant light. As he withdrew it, a drop of clear liquid fell from the sharp tip back into the waiting pool at the bottom of the miniature reservoir.

She shifted away from him as he brought the needle closer.

"Are you afraid?"

Her eyes told him before she could speak. "Yes," she whispered.

"I could untie you, set you free. Your husband is waiting."

She shook her head without hesitation, as if to chase away any chance of retreat. "No!" - another whisper, but one more forceful.

The tip of the needle arrived at her breast, stopping at the edge of the bright pink areola. With a quick stabbing motion, he tapped the point repeatedly over the sensitive skin. She gasped, then began to moan quietly as the needle danced

over the engorged button of flesh. The pressure was never enough to draw blood, but sufficient to deliver minute quantities of the drug just below the surface of the tender nipple. He returned the needle to the shining vial, wetting the tip again and again, until both nipples lay wet and glistening in the harsh light.

He stopped, watching the circles surrounding her nipples darken to an angry red. She gasped as the tickle of the needle turned to burning twinges, finally subsiding to a constant, mild irritation that made her squirm and pull against her bonds.

And then he was gone. The darkness surrounding the bed simply swallowed him. She called out to him, begging him to return, to extinguish the fire that had started at her breasts and now crawled methodically through her, seizing her cunt with raging urgency. Her cries echoed through the room, unanswered. She cried out louder, slim legs now shifting to one side, then the other in a futile attempt at relief or freedom. The cord around her wrists tightened and held. Helpless and alone under the intense light, she felt as though she might suffocate in its heat, a heat that suddenly seemed to melt her womb, sending it flowing between her legs like a river of molten lead.

Suddenly, he was there, kneeling on the bed, naked, between her restless thighs. He watched her with piercing eyes, his golden chest shining, his erection thicker and harder than she had ever remembered it. Multicolored spikes of light surrounded him, flickering and wavering as they stretched from his bronzed skin into the shadows of the darkened room. His voice seemed distant and out of sync with the words that formed on his lips.

"My, my. Where has she gone? Mommy and Daddy's good little girl - a husband's faithful and loving wife - the proud day-virgin and reluctant concubine. What would they say if they could see your hungry little cunt yawning for my cock? What words could you possibly use to make them understand?"

"Please, Simon...I'm begging you..."

"Your answer is the price for my company tonight - and ultimately, the price for coaxing my cock inside you."

"Simon...I don't care...none of it matters...none of it..."

Her slim hips rose off the bed as she spoke, pumping uncontrollably in a futile attempt to somehow capture the swollen purple head that jutted and bobbed, still impossibly far away.

"Ahh, finally, the truth. None of it matters - it's empty baggage, a burden you needn't bear. Here, to be free of it is a simple choice - your choice - no one else's.

He moved closer, finally edging the head of his cock just inside her. He waited until her cunt tightened around it, then went deeper, filling her slowly with inch after inch of rigid flesh. Each time with him was as if she was taken by a new lover; the unyielding girth of his sex stretching her, then the solid presence filling her belly, possessing her more completely than any man ever had, or quite possibly ever would. It took an entire minute for him to bury himself in her. She wound her legs around his waist, her torso drawn tight between bound wrists and the small of his arched back. He sank the last inch into her and stopped, pinning her to the bed. Her eyes fluttered and closed. Her lips formed a small, satisfied smile. She had taken all of him - from the hard, blunt tip

nestled snugly against her cervix, to the thick, flaring root that ground against her as his hips pressed into her in small, firm circles under his body's weight.

She whimpered when he pulled out suddenly, surprised by the emptiness in her belly. She opened her eyes again, squinting in the bright light. He knelt between her legs, his lean stomach and broad chest gleaming with sweat. The aura that surrounded him burned with shifting color, now pulsing violently with vibrant reds and glowing violets. His penis seemed immense as it jutted in the air over her, growing longer and thicker as though reflected in a funhouse mirror. The room was spinning. She closed her eyes. The bed seemed to fall away, leaving her floating above it, weightless and calm.

He was turning her, rolling her onto her belly. His hands were cool, his grasp firm against her naked thighs. She drew her knees under her, offering her ass to him. What she needed came quickly - his strong hands spreading her, then the hot, blunt presence against the entrance, pressing forward slowly, boring into her, deep enough to awaken flesh untouched by any other. The sensation of the cord about her wrists, the cool sheet against her face, the sting of the fullness invading her, all melted into the single essence of what she had become. No longer wife, nor woman, nor even flesh - only need and desire,

desperate to be possessed, to be taken by hands that would reduce her to nothing, a zero, dissolving her demons in a sudden rush of Simon's scalding sperm as it bathed her bowels.

The skillful caress of his fingers between her legs sent her into a welcome abyss, falling and floating at the same time through explosions of warmth and color, her own cries echoing in the distance as though they were the urgent calls of some primitive wild animal. Then the darkness arrived, a luscious cradle that closed in around her, sucking away her flesh with a delicious, persistent embrace that slowly consumed her until only the lush fullness deep in her belly remained. Finally it too faded, the encroaching blackness stealing even the nothingness she had become, until it swallowed everything that remained.

The car had become a prison for him. An hour passed, then two, and finally a third. He should do something - go in after her, confront the man that took her inside, insist she return with him to their own home, to their own bed. Why had he allowed this in the first place? What kind of man gives his wife to a stranger, and then waits for him to finish with her? Her face haunted him, so childlike when they met, and even now, years later, it still cheated the passage of time. She remained an innocent Lolita with the body of a mature, ripe woman. He knew men desired her. He saw them look, listened to their suggestive banter at parties, cloaked in the feeblest attempts at platonic intent. But she had never given them the slightest satisfaction of a knowing reply. She would simply take his hand, or pull his arm closer around her slim waist, as if to let him know she was his and his alone.

The temptation to go to her was overwhelming, so much so that twice he left the car. The first time he was able to do little more than circle the car, then stand by the open door, his eyes searching the tall windows for any trace of movement. The second time he could go no farther than halfway to the marble steps before retreating, all the while remembering her soft pleading just before she went

inside. Now he sat staring at his hands on the wheel, weary from questions he couldn't answer, needing her next to him more than he ever had.

Then she was running toward him, her body glowing in the light that still bathed the house. The simple white nightshirt rose over her thighs as she ran. Bare legs and feet flashed, gracefully carrying her forward, like an angel gliding through the night. She snuggled next to him in the car, an arm around his neck, a hand placed peacefully on his chest. She nuzzled his neck, her damp hair cool and fragrant against his skin.

"Mmmmm - take me home?"

She was asleep within minutes. He carried her from the car to their bed. She moved close to him, pressing her body against his, a contented smile now fixed to her innocent face. After letting some time pass, he placed a hand on her breast, moving a finger over her hardening nipple. She sighed, uttered something soft and unintelligible in her sleep, then turned from him and sighed again one last time. He lay beside her as the hours passed, never sleeping, her gentle breathing filling him with both fear and desire until dawn.

Chapter 5

He woke slowly, first to the constant hiss and sizzle, then to the familiar smell of bacon, teasing him from his sleep with a hint of a perfect breakfast made just as she knew he would want it. Sleep had finally come to him sometime early in the morning, but the lack of it hung about him as he lifted his legs over the side of the bed and stood to face the day. She had drawn the blinds so he could sleep late, and waited until mid-morning to start his breakfast. He would shower first, buying some time to think about what he might say to her, and what she may or may not want to share about the night before.

To his surprise, she greeted him with her dazzling smile and a kiss as she brought him his food. He chose to eat, saving any words till later, waiting for her to offer up excuses or an apology. None came, so he picked at his breakfast in silence as she hummed quietly to herself while busily cleaning the kitchen.

Later that afternoon as he dozed in front of the television, she snuggled next to him, her small hand stroking his inner thigh. He opened his eyes to find her staring at him with a mischievous grin.

"Take me to bed and fuck me?"

They were words he had never heard her use, but words that caused his cock to stir in spite of the questions she had still not answered. "So, it's over - you won't go to him again?"

She slid her hand under his belt, gently closing her fingers around his erection.

"I want *you*. I want your cock inside me. I want you to fuck me till I scream."

Who was this woman? As uncertain as he was, he found it impossible not to play along, impossible not to kiss her deeply when she moved onto his lap, impossible not to fuck her like a wild animal in their bed, and finally, impossible not to wonder what went through her mind as she found her second orgasm under him, thrashing and screaming just as she had promised.

Afterwards she lay pressed against him, slowly running her fingers over his chest and nipples. She looked so satisfied, no, contented was more accurate. He had no choice but to try to make some sense of it.

"Why do you do it?" he asked, as he stared at the ceiling.

"You mean go to him, don't you?"

"You make it sound like a friendly visit when you put it that way. Go to him? Why don't you just say it? You have sex with him - you go to let him fuck you."

"Do you want me to say that, to tell you in those words?"

"I want you to tell me why! Why can't you tell me what you need instead of going to another man? What does he do for you that I can't? Just tell me what you want - I'll do it - anything, anything at all!"

She sighed, then trailed her fingertips over his belly, finding his spent erection and working it gently between her fingers.

"Are you sure you want to know? I could say things that would hurt you terribly, and you'd regret asking."

"I regret asking in the first place. But what am I supposed to do? Sit quietly by while you have sex with this man, and never question why? If you still love me, if you want a future together, what could you say that would hurt me?"

Her eyes peered into his, searching for a sign that he meant what he said, for just a brief hint of inner strength, or possibly arousal. How might he react if she led him along such a tenuous path? The risk was enormous - how could she tell her husband such things? And why did the anticipation of his response make her so wet, her belly so desperate to be filled?

"I could say I go because he's handsome, and incredibly sexy. I could say he's very wealthy and spares no expense to please me. I may even tell you how he satisfies me in bed, that he's a wonderful lover, that he drives me to the brink of my senses when he makes me cum."

She paused, still playing with his cock under the damp sheet, finally finding it growing hard again in her hand. She smiled at him, now knowing he accepted at least some small part of her obsession, that he loved her enough to find some pleasure in giving her such an unlikely gift. And then he turned away from her, shuddered, and drew a sudden, halting breath. Moving close to him, Elyse stroked his hair lightly as he lay staring silently into the darkness. She wanted his reaction, and now she had it.

"None of those things are why I go. I may never be able to convince you, but it's true," she told him, almost in a whisper.

"True? You've done a pretty good job of convincing me otherwise."

She pressed closer, throwing a bare leg over him, then turned him toward her again and eased on top of him, her small firm breasts pushed high up on his heaving chest.

"I can't tell you why I go. I don't know myself. It's not you. It's not him. It's me. Something in me - something terrifying and exciting at the same time. I love my life with you. But - I don't know - something happens there, something that renews a part of me that I never knew was empty. And after, I love you even more, so deeply, so fully, as though I have so much more to give you than I've ever been able to share before. I love being with you; just your touch makes me warm and safe. I crave your body constantly. I fantasize about your cock inside me, and how wonderful it feels. No other man could make me feel the way I do when I cum with you inside me. It's true. Whether you believe me or not, I live for you and you alone."

She was so beautiful, so convincing. He struggled wildly with jealousy, love, and his best attempt at understanding. But if she couldn't understand her obsession, how could he, even at his best?

In the weeks that followed, he found it impossible to doubt her. She found it impossible not to relish her new freedom, and every minute of every day showed her love to him in everything she did. Each touch proved her sincerity.

Their lovemaking became a series of adventures, each spontaneous and more daring than the last. She stripped for him at night after dinner as slow earthy jazz oozed from the stereo and the dimmed blue light she bought only that afternoon

silhouetted her body as she twisted hungrily before him. She spoke to him graphically, breathlessly, as they returned from a Saturday visit to the museum, telling him how the lines and mass of a certain sculpture made her think of how wonderful his own body looked to her, how it made her hot and wet, so much so she couldn't wait to have him - so she took him there in the car as he drove, eagerly swallowing his semen as though it was hot tea and honey. She arrived at his office late one Friday afternoon flaunting a new coat, one of luxuriously thick silver and white fur. She felt the stares of his colleagues, from bare calf to the upper curves of her breasts left enticingly exposed. Their attention warmed her a little, but she went to her husband without a smile or glance at the others. In the seclusion of his office, she opened the coat and let it slide off her shoulders, finally naked before him with a hunger in her eyes that by now, he knew all too well. They made love on the carpet in front of his desk, door unlocked, all the while sensing the danger of being seen by an intruder, overwhelmed by their passion for each other.

After a month, Steven had forgiven everything. 'A small price,' he told himself. Memory of the mansion and the dark man in it went to the place where memories go that are not forgotten, but only return with the most deliberate provocation. Now, not even the moans of her loudest orgasm set them free.

Chapter 6

It arrived a month later, delivered by a tuxedoed messenger who smiled briefly, then returned to the limo waiting at the curb. The package was large and black, its length and width secured tightly by a gleaming silver cable of ribbon. A single red rose was tied at the center with a shining knot nestled between clusters of menacing thorns. Steven stood behind the closed door for a full minute, not able to take a step, staring at his own reflection in the glossy surface.

"What is it? What's wrong?"

Elyse had come up behind him in her bare feet, and her voice startled him. He turned, holding the package carefully out in front of him as though it might be radioactive.

"Oh. That."

He lifted his eyes from the box. Elyse stood there in her robe, her expression at first calm, then apologetic. She seemed to be waiting for him to speak.

"Please don't go."

His voice sounded so small, as though he barely had the air to make the words come. He wanted her to move closer, to take the box and hurl it into the trash and assure him she could never go to him again. Instead, she looked down at the box as though sizing its dimensions. Steven shivered as he imagined she was guessing its contents.

"You don't have to go. He can't force you."

She began to go to him, then stopped after several steps, lowering her head as she spoke. Her robe was undone, and parted a few extra inches in the front as she walked. His eyes wandered down over the trail of exposed flesh, the inner curves of her breasts, her flat belly, to the naked slit between her legs, now freshly shaved and parted slightly to reveal a deep red, pulsing core.

"You don't understand. He only sees me when I ask. I thought you knew that. It's me. I have to go."

"You don't have to go, damn it! I love you, but even I have limits! Just how much more do you expect me to take?"

Her expression changed to one of disappointment. Her eyes were filled with more sadness than he had ever seen.

"I know you have limits. I suppose I knew you would reach them eventually, that in the end you would leave. I need this, and I need you. I knew that I couldn't have both for long - or at least I feared it."

"I never said I was leaving - I don't know if I could," Steven said.

"Then please stay with me, please indulge me, for at least a while longer. You won't be sorry. I promise."

Her last words were delivered with sultry assurance. She smiled, and her eyes brightened. Unable to think, he extended the box, offering it to her. She moved to his side and slid the robe off her shoulders, holding it open, offering her body to him.

"Put it on the bed, then shower with me. I want to be close to you before we go, both of us naked and warm and wet..."

She offered herself to him under the pulsing jets of water, eyes closed, mouth open and panting as Steven ran the soap over her body. When his hand trailed between her legs, she reached up and kissed him, their bodies pressed together, skin made slick and sensitive by the thin film of soapy water between them. When she felt his erection grow against her, she went to her knees and played with him, running soapy fingers of one hand along the hardening shaft, cupping and pulling gently at his balls with the other. Elyse knew the signs of her husband's orgasm, and just as he began to thrust his hips, she stopped, rising to whisper in his ear.

"I love your hard cock in my hands, but I can't make you cum tonight. He won't allow it. But I can stay here with you, help you enjoy it, if you do it yourself. Please - I'd love to see you make yourself cum. Please my love, for me?"

Her tongue was in his ear, then licking his neck, traveling down to suck at his nipples - and she was moaning, groaning, like an animal in heat. Steven's head was swimming with lust and confusion. He'd said he would do whatever she wanted - to hell with the man in the mansion - he needed her here and now.

He came after just a few strokes, thrusting and moaning as Elyse nibbled at his belly. She looked down just as his semen erupted from the end of his cock, his hand stroking furiously as his hips pumped back and forth. She fought her own impending orgasm, gained control, then suddenly lost it again as the warmth rushed over her. She stiffened, still on her knees, thighs pressed tightly together, trying to shake the involuntary spasms that traveled in waves from belly to neck. It was the first time she had disobeyed Simon - he forbade her to cum the day of their meeting. She hadn't touched herself - another first for her. Why had this happened? Why had she asked her husband to masturbate just hours before giving her to another man? And why had she cum when he gave in so easily to her suggestion? She went cold as Simon's words echoed in her head.

"There is a certain exhilaration in exercising one's power over another, even if it's someone close to your heart. As horrifying as you might find it on the surface, the pain you deliver with a newfound weapon can be both empowering and arousing."

Chapter 7

His attempts to find the mansion were frustrated at every turn. The neighborhood's streets formed a maze of circles and cul-de-sacs hidden from one another by dense but impeccably groomed landscaping. Each time he made a wrong turn and she showed him the way, he wondered how often she had found it on her own. In the dark, each private entrance looked alike, until they came face to face with the twisted bars of his imposing iron gate and the familiar glass eye of the camera, peering down at them like a mechanical cyclops atop the towering stone pilaster.

As they waited, he turned to her, only to find her staring once again through the ominous gate into the night on the other side. She wore her hair up in a more formal style, revealing tantalizing glimpses of supple neck and glittering diamonds decorating each ear. She was a vision, but not one of his own making.

He remembered her gasp when she opened package, and how its contents overflowed its edges, as though it had suddenly taken its own deep breath, increasing its volume to double the box's capacity. The material was black as night, and reflected the light as though it was partly metallic. When she lifted it from the box and held it up in front of her, it unfolded slowly, its weight surprisingly light in her small hands. She dressed herself in private, and he was more than satisfied to let her do it. It was his turn to gasp when she appeared from their bedroom, wrapped in the elegant gift from her enigmatic lover.

The material fit her midsection as tightly as a corset, softening to cup her breasts in two delicate pouches that barely covered the tops her nipples. Four gold catches secured the middle about her like a second skin. From hips to floor, the dress expanded in a series of large horizontal scalloped pleats that trailed slightly behind her as she walked. It opened down the front in an inverted V, gathered just below her belly, widening two feet or more by the time it reached the floor. When she walked, the cascades of pleats opened wider to reveal her legs, from black heels to the very tops of her bare thighs. The contrast of one slender ivory leg after another, slim thighs flexing, thrust through the opening as she took step after step framed by the dark flowing fabric, was startling, even to her husband of so many years.

'My God - she could have any man.'

And then, just at that moment, she had smiled at him, as though she could read his every thought.

Now they sat in silence as the gate opened once again and the car slipped through it, winding forward into the night. She sat taller in her seat as they approached the house, her shoulders squared, breasts thrust forward, heaving against the dress with each slow, deep breath. She leaned forward slightly as though she was drawn to their destination by the same powerful force that equally repelled her husband.

When the engine died she looked at him with love and pity.

"The things you must be thinking about me...and yet you bring me here, again. You must love me more than I ever imagined."

She leaned toward him, circling him with her bare, slender arms, and kissed him deeply. Pressing closer, she dropped a hand to his lap, exploring between his legs as the kiss became more frenzied. And then, just as she felt his erection begin to grow, she stopped and pulled away, looking lovingly into his eyes once again as she straightened a few strands of hair that had come undone.

"You'll wait for me?"

He tried to answer. Trust and jealousy, love and anger, pride and humiliation, all sliced his insides to pieces, then tore the ragged wounds in all directions. He trembled from her lust for him, and from the frustration of watching that same lust willingly surrendered to a man waiting to use it for his own amusement. He just stared back at her, an elegant vision, alive with fresh, tempting beauty and innocent, smoldering heat. How could he say yes, agreeing to let this man use her eager body a second time while he waited for him to satisfy her? How could he say no, and risk losing her to this maddening obsession? In the end, he couldn't say anything at all.

She smiled confidently at him one last time. Her bare legs seemed to glow in the light that spilled into the car from the house behind them. The dress had opened wider when she moved away from him, and now revealed the pale skin of her lower belly and the pouting lips nestled between the tops of her thighs. He couldn't take his eyes from it, and she let him look, knowing he saw her ripening cunt, juicy and wet, ready for what waited for her across the white pavement beyond the marble steps.

Watching her approach the house brought back bitter memories. A different dress, a different night, but the way she moved toward her destination, almost strutting with anxious determination, was painfully familiar.

He appeared at the door just as she arrived and stepped outside to meet her. A stray lock of hair hung free at the side of her face, still undone from her husband's touch. He tucked it back in place, then turned her, moving against her from behind. She tried her best to contain a brief moan when his lips found her neck, but she failed, suddenly afraid that the soft sounds she made might escape into the night air to reach the open car window. A lean, bronzed forearm and palm circled her waist, drawing her closer to him, while another hand freed her breasts from the front of the dress. Her nipples hardened at once and throbbed under his fingertips. She leaned back against him, eyes closed, lips trembling as she tried to contain a second moan. He feasted on her bare neck and shoulder, and she cried out again, louder, a guttural noise that rose from deep inside her. This time she was certain it had reached her husband, but was already beyond caring. Simon was pleased that she so quickly shed her inhibitions before her waiting husband, and let her know with a whisper as his teeth grazed her ear.

"Slut."

The word sent a ripple through her belly, and she pushed harder against him, until she could feel the hardened length of his cock against the small of her back. From the car, her husband watched as she melted against the man, her nipples swelling so easily as he cupped her breasts, her hips grinding into him as her bare legs parted and swayed through the open front of the dress. With her third moan, he raised the car window and looked away. He had never heard the sound come from her before, nor had he ever seen her surrender to lust so immediately. When he finally summoned the courage to look toward the house again, they had vanished, leaving him alone with his imagination and pain.

Chapter 8

They sat facing each other in a room unfamiliar to her. He had led her past the library to the back of the house where bright lights no longer spilled through the towering windows. It was a room of secrets, dark and quiet, lit only by shrinking tongues of flame and dying embers sputtering in a nearby hearth. She thought it smelled of man-smells, of leather, tobacco, and the charred wood of a campfire.

For a brief minute, just after he took her hand, led her through the door, and then closed it, she felt as though she was transported back in time - she in her elegant gown, he in his perfectly tailored jacket, standing together, awash in flickering sienna. Now she felt so small, barely able to reach the armrests of the wide leather chair. Sitting forced the open front of the dress higher, nearly to her navel, exposing everything below it - the soft pillow of her lower belly, her naked thighs pressing into the leather of the seat cushion, and the pouting, freshly shaved cleft between them, glistening at its center with a hint of expectation. She knew by his smile that he approved.

He moved forward in his chair, edging closer to a small, round table that stood between them. Lifting an oddly square bottle, he turned the peeling label toward the fire to read its faded letters. She watched quietly as he poured an inch of emerald liquor into each of two heavy crystal goblets. The liquid seemed to glow and sparkle through the many angled facets of glass. She grew more curious when he balanced a long, slotted spoon across the top of one of the glasses, then lifted a single cube of sugar from a small porcelain bowl, centering it on the spoon. After preparing the second glass in exactly the same way, he placed it beneath the narrow spigot of a silver tureen which stood atop a tiny but steady flame, warming its contents to just above body temperature.

"And the third angel sounded, and a great star, burning like a lamp, fell from Heaven, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers and fountains of water; and the name of the star is called Absinthe."

He hadn't looked up from his work, and his voice, suddenly so loud and at the same time somber, startled her. Not knowing whether he expected an answer from her, she sat without a word, eyes now wide and glassy in the firelight.

He stopped and looked up across the table at her, pausing a second between her legs before meeting her nervous stare.

"La Fe Verte. The green fairy. Such a contradiction - once so prized, then so despised - how can such a simple thing be weighed in such extremes of human desire and aversion? It's only a drink, after all. Have you tried it? Absinthe?"

She had heard the word, but knew little of it.

"No," she replied, just louder than a whisper.

As he eased the spigot open, warm droplets of water fell, one by one, onto the cube of sugar, then after wetting it to the core, dripped steadily into the waiting glass. Like some sort of strange alchemy, the green liquid changed slowly to a murky, opaline yellow before her eyes.

"Aside from 'visions borne of the loins of angels', it's said that the ritual of preparation is much of the seduction of absinthe. I believe you know something of the seduction of ritual, don't you my dear?"

"I - I never thought of this as a ritual, Simon."

"But of course it is - a ritual to be played out, then dismissed until whatever brings you back to me laps at your little cunt once again."

"So, I'm nothing more than a slave to this 'ritual', as you put it? My only true existence is here with you, bridged by week after empty week of waiting anxiously for your cock inside me again? I'm much more than that, Simon. As sure as you are of me, you've dismissed my strengths - my capacity to love my husband, and much of what I am."

She expected some sort of retaliation - a scathing look, or words laced with enough sarcasm to put her in her place. Instead, he concentrated quietly on his work, waiting patiently until a second cube of sugar completely dissolved into the remaining glass. Then, with a slight flourish, he added an equal amount of cognac to each goblet, topped off with a bit more warm water, and extended a glass toward her. She edged forward to take it, the heat from the fire on her bare thighs reminding her to keep them open for him as he moved closer.

"A toast - to a young wife's strengths - and to the green fairy, with strengths of her own."

The drink burned her throat, leaving behind a slightly bitter aftertaste. She struggled to keep pace with his own progress, emptying half her glass in just minutes. As it warmed her from the inside out, she opened her legs wider and moved forward in her chair, a gesture made to assure him that her naked cunt was completely, shamelessly, his, and to show how eager she was to have him use her body in some new, perverse way.

"So, shall we talk a bit about the strengths you seem so proud of tonight?"

His voice hinted at mischief instead of the sarcasm she had expected, his smile as warm and genuine as her husband's might have been. She felt her defenses melt away and a sudden gush flow from between her legs.

"Tell me, what do you tell your husband when he asks what we do here? Where is this inner strength each time he asks why you return, so desperate to be fucked by another man? How does this infinite capacity to love your husband serve you when he looks deep into the eyes of his sweet wife as another man's semen leaks slowly from the depths of her belly? Does he see it, this strength of yours? Or is it regret, pity, or even depraved lust that looks back at him?"

"I've told you before, Simon. I tell him as little as possible. There's no need to make him suffer, no need to punish him more than I must each time I ask him to bring me here."

He studied her expression as she spoke, examining the smallest of gestures, searching for truth in the arch of a brow, or the corners of her mouth where full lips met to reveal fleeting glimpses of those things she tried hardest to conceal. Now no longer comforted by his sympathetic smile, she clung in vain to her strength as it slowly slipped away, her resistance broken, her pride violated by his knowing grin.

"You speak of your husband's punishment. What of yours?"

"Mine? Mine is seeing the pain in his eyes when I return to him. Mine is knowing what he thinks of me, and knowing no matter how I try to prove my love for him, that he questions it when I take him inside me, even as I whisper his name over and over when I cum. As painful as it is, at times I feel I deserve much worse."

"And what might the proper punishment be for a wife that cheats not just once, but openly and regularly sluts before her loving husband's eyes?"

She sipped the remainder of her drink slowly, using the time to think, knowing a certain answer was expected of her. The taste of the warm liquid seemed less bitter now, and she scarcely noticed as much of what she was began to slip easily away into Simon's confident grasp.

He knew her answer would not come easily, and he took pleasure in watching her labor to invent a suitable punishment that was sure to please him. He went to work creating a second set of drinks, pretending to be absorbed completely in repeating the ritual, one much like the one she fought to deny.

But still she sat quietly, afraid any punishment she might devise would be impossible to bear, yet not severe enough to satisfy him. So she waited, with cuntlips pulsing and wet, until she took the second glass from his hand and drank. He sipped his glass, while she drained hers in long, deliberate portions, all the while feeling his eyes on her, watching him devour her body from mouth to cunt as a predator studies its prey before feasting. Suddenly, all defenses, pride, modesty, and shame melted away in a single swift rush. The need to offer herself totally, to become nothing more than an object used for the carnal whims of anyone who might want her, became so overwhelming, that she trembled as though balanced on the brink of a terrifying abyss. Her nipples hardened urgently against the fabric of the dress, and her hands found the insides of her spread thighs, stroking the smooth flesh as near to her naked cunt as she dare go without his permission.

He rose and went to her, cupped her chin in his large hand, and tilted her face up to meet his gaze. He waited a full minute, savoring each tremor of her body, each second of lust and indecision helplessly revealed in her wide eyes. When she didn't answer, he answered for her.

"Might I offer a deserving punishment, one guaranteed not to leave you wanting?"

His words seemed so distant, his hand so hot - almost electric - against her face. Whatever punishment he offered was something she would gladly take from him, fearlessly, even greedily, if it was to become the key that would unlock his every expectation.

And then, somehow, she was on her feet, walking beside him, her hand wrapped in his, the urgency to give herself to him never fading. As he led her into the darkness at the back of the room, a soft amber light began to glow overhead, revealing the framework of an imposing structure, until then hidden in obscurity behind her chair. The scaffold was made of polished mahogany beams, a foot thick from floor to ceiling. They rose from a large matching base, raised a foot off the floor, with a short step in front. As they climbed the single step together, she struggled to make some sense of their destination's purpose. The precise fit of the intricately carved trim and the flawless sheen of its finish brought a surprising image to her mind - that of a pulpit, where a clergyman might go about the task of unburdening those with impure thoughts and deeds. She shivered, ashamed of the bizarre association, but within seconds the absinthe shuttled her

thoughts elsewhere and the image was lost, forgotten in less time than it had taken to form.

She offered up each arm, one at a time, as he fastened her wrists in heavy loops of cloth attached to the inside of each vertical beam. Her heart pounded as hidden ratchets within the beams stretched her upward until only the balls of her feet touched the smooth mahogany floor. He stood before her, a foot away, admiring her body, letting her know with words graphic enough to make her twist slightly, impatiently, against her bonds. As he spoke, he unfastened each of the four catches down the front of her dress, letting it fall to the floor after the last was opened. She knew what he saw would excite him - her body hanging naked before him, the light from the fire flickering over her satin skin. She opened her legs shamelessly, unconsciously setting her hips forward, writhing with lust for him, but completely helpless to find relief until he wished to give it.

After disappearing into the shadows, he appeared before her again stripped to the waist, his bronze chest gleaming high and firm above the sinews of his flat, chiseled stomach. In his hand he carried short length of bamboo, no thicker than a pencil, a yard from end to end. Careful not to brandish it as a weapon, he held it low against the side of his thigh as he approached, allowing her to feast her eyes on his bare torso, then, as he knew she would, lower her eyes to the swollen rope of flesh straining at the front of his slacks.

She gasped when he brought the end of the stick close to her breast, then again, repeatedly, as he moved it slowly back and forth over the puckering nipple. A short, sudden tap across her breast made her cry out in surprise - a second more forceful strike brought a louder squeal of pain.

"Please Simon - not this - you're scaring me!" she pleaded. He responded with repeated blows, each slightly more forceful than the last, each making the darkened room ring with her shrill response. The bamboo fell across her breasts again and again until they were fiery with heat and pain, until finally tears swelled along the lower lids of her eyes, then spilled over both cheeks.

Just when she began to sob openly, he stopped. Then his hands were on her, cool lotion beneath them soothing the nagging burning, caressing the tender nipples back to life with expert care. He fondled her lovingly, cupping the firm meat of her breasts with hands both strong and forgiving, until the fire in her belly began to grow again, her cunt again seeping with desire. She had been terrified, but she had taken his punishment, and now, puzzling as it seemed, she welcomed it. In some small way, she had paid a price for what she had become, and at the same time shed a burden that followed her here. And now his hands were welcome and comforting as he stroked her so intimately - those beautiful, strong hands that took her in ways no other man could.

"I love you, Simon," she uttered in her smallest voice.

In an instant, he backed away, scowling as though she had intentionally hurled the most obscene of insults at him. Seconds later the bamboo slashed across her stomach, sending a searing bolt of pain through her body. She screamed and pulled back from him as far as the bonds would allow, her mind a slurry of absinthe and agony. Again and again the slim crop whipped across her belly, doubling her over as she shrieked in pain.

"How can you love me?" he snarled as she hung limply from the scaffold. "You love your husband, remember? Or do you? Where are those strengths now that you're so proud of, so sure of? Gone! So quickly! So easily! So confident that you know yourself, that you understand what you are! The faithful wife, the perfect lady,

always so certain they're more a part of you than the drooling harlot inside, screaming to escape. You deny it, lie about it, every minute of every day, totally convinced you're in complete control. And when you discover that the control is an illusion, and that the illusion can't possibly be sustained, what do you do? What? You seek out a phantom to host your demons - a phantom with cock big enough and hard enough to chase your demons into the shadows until they come clawing at you again!"

He paced before her as he ranted, spitting the words at her as she hid behind a curtain of tears.

"Look at me! Don't look away! Look at me!!!"

He took two long steps toward her and took her chin in his hand, turning her face roughly to meet his piercing stare.

"You're a whore in a pretty wrapper - just like everyone else. It's time you admit it! It's time to confess - to me, to your husband, and to yourself!"

He waited, staring into her bloodshot eyes, his torso now etched with lines of tensioned muscle glistening in the soft light as rivulets of sweat trickled over him.

Suddenly, she could see herself as though she was watching from across the room. The curves of her body glowed with the color of firelight - breasts, thighs, belly, all smoldered with a lust that demanded, then raged for its existence outside the prison she had built for it. It no longer made sense to contain it, to block its escape with more guilt and pain.

"W-whore..." she whispered. "Yes - whore. A pretty whore..."

He took her face gently in both hands and beamed at her.

"Yes, a very pretty whore," he answered.

He moved closer, between her legs, and she opened them for him eagerly. When she looked down, she found he was naked, but only wondered for a second when and how. Then, as he held her in his arms, she felt the warm fullness of his cock slide inside her, not pausing for an instant at her slick, gaping entrance. He fucked her slowly, just as she liked it, never retreating far enough to empty her, but always filling her completely with each precise, powerful stroke. When she closed her eyes, images of men formed in front of her - men from her past, and men she didn't yet know. They waited impatiently in line, erections jutting forward, swollen and throbbing, driven to near frenzy by her promise to service each and every one. Then his lips touched her neck, opened, and sucked, while the line of men behind Simon looked on restlessly, stretching endlessly back into the darkness.

Chapter 9

Waiting in the chilly car was no easier this time than the last. Consumed with agonizing images of his wife with the dark stranger, he sat unmoving behind the wheel, staring into the darkness, hoping to find an answer there, but finding only more anxiety and pain with each passing minute. "What kind of man allows this?" he argued silently to himself. "What kind of wife does this to someone she loves?" He should leave her - start the car and speed away from this revolting house that held her. A simple act, and the pain would be gone - but only to be replaced with the pain of losing her. "Allow her this, and keep her," his rational side argued back. "One night of physical pleasure, now and then - something that makes her alive, exciting, and loving when she returns to me."

And so the battle raged, silently, in the darkened car - for an hour, perhaps more, until running in circles exhausted him. With each blink, his eyes became more difficult to open again, until finally, he couldn't open them at all.

He sat beside her, ten rows back from the stage in the cavernous opera house. The lights were still up, and the audience murmured with anticipation of the first act. She was as radiant as he had ever seen her - hair swept up as if magically held in complex patterns of shining swirls, each strand perfectly in place. The neckline of the simple black dress exposed much of the rounded globes of her firm breasts in a daring display of flesh. She held her program in one hand while gently stroking his thigh with the other. Finally, she looked up from the small print and smiled.

"Thank you for tonight, darling. You know how much I've wanted this."

Her hand moved to his lap. She ran her fingers slowly over the front of his pants until she felt the beginnings of his erection, then gave it a light squeeze.

"Ladies' room," she whispered as she lifted herself out of her seat.

She made her way along the row as three couples stood to let her by. Then, just as she reached the end of the row, he watched in horror as her fingers trailed lightly along the obvious erection of the young man standing in front of the last seat. She looked back over her bare shoulder and winked, then quickly disappeared toward the rear of the theater. At first, the others seemed not to notice her perverse teasing. Then, still standing, they slowly turned to look at him, faces frozen in blank stares as though waiting for his response.

He stood and worked his way past them. Each of them, one by one, watched him with a blank stare until he reached the wide aisle. As he passed the young man on the end of the row, he brushed against his enormous erection and flinched, quickly pressing into the seat in the next row to escape further contact. But the man kept the same expressionless stare as the others, his bulging cock the only evidence of his wife's playful seduction.

The lights began to dim as he reached the back of the theater. The four sets of double doors that led to the lobby were now closed and he fumbled in the dark to find an exit. Once found, the door opened easily in his hand, almost as if it had

been expecting him. The lobby was deserted. Scarlet padded benches lined its perimeter, only a short while ago laden with guests in all their finery. Now they were empty. A large chandelier burned brightly overhead, each of the hundreds of pieces of sparkling crystal hanging silently as though frozen in time. To the left and right, two wide curving stairways led to the balcony and restrooms.

He climbed the stairs on the right, eager to find his wife, but fearing what may lie ahead. The carpet accepted each footstep, collapsing just enough under his weight, then rebounding, as if impatient to send him on his way. At the top of the stairs, an empty foyer greeted him, silent as a tomb. After pacing in front of the ladies' room, he entered cautiously, glanced quickly left and right, only to find it empty. After a hasty retreat, he crossed to the men's room and entered.

"Good evening, sir."

The tuxedoed man standing a mere two feet to his right stood straight and still as a statue. His face was pale and as translucent as tissue paper, and as Steven met his stare, he recognized the same blank, unblinking eyes as the guests downstairs.

"I - uh - I'm looking for my wife."

"In the men's room, sir?"

"No - I mean - well, she left her seat twenty minutes ago, to go to the ladies' room."

"Ah, the ladies' room is outside, to the right, sir. I suggest you wait for her there."

"But, I have, and she's - well, she's not there."

The man's eyes narrowed, as though trying to peer through Steven.

"Is your wife prone to straying, if I may be so bold, sir?"

"Straying? I - no, no she isn't."

"Well, many women are. My own wife was a prime example. So unpredictable, so strong-willed, such - unquenchable desires."

The man's expression relaxed, his eyes now those of a knowing confidant.

"Look, have you seen her?" Steven asked finally. "Black dress, brown hair, very pretty..."

"Ahh, yes. I do believe I have. But she couldn't be your wife, sir. She was..."

He stopped in mid-sentence, his eyes now drifting upward as he seemed to savor the memory.

"Why? Why couldn't she? What do you mean?" Steven asked in near panic.

"I had a wife once, a very pretty one, much like yours, if I may say so, sir. She had tastes, for, well, certain things I couldn't provide. I returned to our home one day to find her enjoying a ride on a rather well-endowed young man in our own bed."

The man stopped, looking at him expectantly.

Steven, suddenly feeling the urgent need to relieve himself, turned away and stepped up to the nearest of the gleaming white urinals lining the long wall of deep scarlet.

"She wouldn't admit it, at least not at first. They seldom do. But, to be very candid sir, men of size and savagery are what they dream of."

As Steven emptied himself into the white porcelain, he shivered when he noticed the attendant sneak a glance at his exposed penis.

"Men like us sir, civilized men, men born without the, well, sufficient 'equipment' that such women desire, must often stand aside when a lady finds that our sensitive devotion is no match for a good fucking. I'm sure you would understand that, sir."

"Look, have you seen my wife or not?" Steven shot back, now unnerved by the attendant's suggestive banter. The man seemed suddenly older. A mixture of arrogance and amusement filled his eyes, but his face looked tired, aging years in the few minutes they had spoken.

"I'm sorry sir. I must have been mistaken," he answered, with a knowing smile.

Steven pushed by him and fled into the hallway. The warm glow of the wall sconces was now extinguished, leaving him in darkness. Behind him the attendant's laughter spilled from the men's room, booming louder and louder between each gasping breath. A light flickered in the distance where the stairs met the darkened hall. He moved toward it, then quickened his pace, running, running, the plush carpet sucking at the soles of his shoes, his heart pounding, head throbbing, propelled forward only by his terror and the hideous laughing behind him - running, running, his eyes slowly adjusting to the flickering light ahead, until finally he reached it and stopped, panting, dizzy, and swimming in sweat.

Below him, hidden by the bend in the winding stairway, music was playing, but not the lush music of an opera. It was thin and nasal, as if made by an old Victrola. He took the first few steps cautiously, then, driven by curiosity, descended until he could see into the lobby below. The chandelier was gone, the dim light now coming from a few flickering gas lamps clinging to the far wall. The room was filled with Victorian furnishings - satin armchairs, sofas and loveseats trimmed here and there with fringe and lace, all arranged atop an intricately decorated oriental carpet that stretched away into the darkness.

"Ahh, there you are. I've been waiting for you. You're very late."

A woman stood at the base of the stairway. She looked up at him with a slim, bare arm outstretched, her fingers beckoning. Suddenly the room was filled with women, as though their flesh was precipitated from thin air during a blink of his eyes.

"Come, come, mon amour - I won't bite. Unless you want me to."

Her voice seemed to penetrate him, her words made all the more intoxicating by an elegant French accent. A sheer black camisole barely contained her lush, heavy breasts, and covered her slender curves only to just above the navel, leaving the slightly parted lips of her sex completely exposed. He was drawn to her, slowly, a step at a time, until he stood before her, close enough to inhale the light scent of perfume carried by the heat of her body. She moved closer, her arms

around his waist, her hips thrust firmly against him. Her face was oddly familiar; sparkling green eyes set above a perfect, delicate nose, full red lips with a hint of mischief at the corners of her wide mouth, and flowing loose brown curls dancing over her bare shoulders.

"What do you want from me?" she asked. "There's nothing I won't do for you - anything you can imagine, anything you've ever wanted, but were afraid to ask for. Anything."

As he stared at her, he was unable to stop the images that flooded his mind - she, on her knees, hungrily deep-throating him, her mouth like a velvet glove around his cock as she looked adoringly into his eyes - he, easing his cock into her ass, her hips hunched into the air as she begged him for all of it at once, faster, harder, grunting with each brutal thrust.

"Mmmm, such an evil man," she said, grinning as though she could read his mind. "Come."

Taking him by the hand, she led him through the crowd of scantily-clad sirens, pausing for a few moments when one of the women approached, gliding to a stop in front of him. A tall blonde, tanned to perfection, wearing only a tiny red G-string and matching six-inch heels, unbuttoned his shirt and ran her hands longingly over his chest and belly. A petite Asian girl, nude except for a white lace choker and white thigh-high stockings, opened his pants, pulled his erection into the flickering orange light, knelt before him, and licked him once, a long, slow caress from balls to the head of his cock, planting a soft kiss on the sensitive tip before wandering away. Some just came to look, some to fondle his throbbing erection, smiling with satisfaction when they heard him moan or gasp uncontrollably.

In a dark corner, lit only by the slightest traces of shifting light, she turned to face him, then gracefully lowered herself to a long divan against the wall. Spreading her legs, she used both hands to open the plump lips of her sex, offering him a view of her clitoris, now hard and wet with arousal. He stared openly, standing over her, his exposed erection jutting forward, swollen so large that it seemed as if it was not his own. She gazed at him adoringly as her fingers teased the slippery bud of flesh, spreading her juices over the length of it until it glistened.

"Please, mon amour - don't make me wait," she purred. "I'm everything you want, everything you've ever wanted. There's nothing I won't do for you - nothing, nothing my love, nothing at all..."

Taking her by the shoulders, he pushed her down into the soft, velvet cushions, then, dropping quickly onto her, he shoved his cock deeply into her in a single thrust. A sudden warmth rushed over him, a welcome and delicious blanket that enveloped them both, a cocoon that held them so closely that her soft pale skin found, then caressed him everywhere.

She sighed, closed her eyes, then opened them again and looked at him expectantly. Oh, yes, mon amour, yesss, fuck me, fuck me Steven, fuck your little whore."

He plunged into her wildly, battering her with his cock, the images returning to his head, images of so many acts of perversion yet untried.

"Oh God, yesss - this is what I want - this is the way I like it Steven - oh Steven, oh Steven I love you so much..."

The change in her voice took him by surprise. Gone was the sultry French accent, in a split second replaced by an all too familiar voice, a voice that for years had uttered a soft goodnight from the pillow beside him.

He stared in horror as the face beneath him became his wife's, hidden beneath a thick layer of black eyeliner and garish blood-red lipstick. Drained of all color, her complexion faded to a blue-white mask, a grotesque blend of clown and corpse. The warm blanket surrounding them turned cold, shaking him with violent chills.

"What's wrong, Steven? Why won't you finish me? Fuck me with your big, hard cock until you make me cum for you, Steven! Empty your balls into your little whore! Don't you know it's what I need? I like it Steven! Oh God, I love it hard and nasty, Steven! I love it - I love it - I love it - I love it..."

He panicked, fighting desperately to free himself from her, her legs now tightly grasping him, pulling him roughly into her with frantic, rhythmic spasms. With a sudden lurch, he broke free, rolled away from her, and landed on the floor. When he stood, she was laughing, her wide, painted mouth now almost unrecognizable, the dark eyeliner now running in long streaks over her face.

"That's just like you!" she jeered. "Be a man, Steven. For once in your life, be a real man, not a god-damned pussy!"

He backed away from her as the other women began to gather around them. She continued to berate him, her eyes full of venom, her legs still spread wide, flaunting the gaping, red slit that still dripped with her juices.

"If you can't do me, Steven, I know someone who can! In fact, I know lots of men who can! Lots of men, Steven! Lots of men!"

The echoes of her threats chased him as he turned and fled, made worse by the growing laughter of the other women. Her words formed a cadence that matched the throbbing in his head - 'lots of men, lots of men, lots of men, lots of men'.

Running and stumbling in the dim light, he finally found the set of wide double doors leading back into the theater. He grabbed the handle in a panic, afraid of the worst, that it might not open. When it opened easily, he rushed through it, relieved when it silenced the horror that chased him.

Now dark and empty, the cavernous theatre's musty smells and deathly silence surrounded him, the refuge mocking him with an ominous foreboding. Heavy curtains hung across the stage, the glowing footlights throwing deep shadows up along the regular folds that ran from stage to ceiling.

As he felt his way forward down the incline of the aisle, unintelligible whispers broke the silence behind him, fragments of conversation dissolving so quickly that no more than a single word survived. Each time he turned to look back into the darkness, hoping, or hoping not to find the ghostly presence that spoke to him, row after row of empty seats waited as though their last audience was centuries in the past.

A low railing surrounded the orchestra pit, now a deep, wide, empty hollow in the floor ahead. Stopping just in front of it, he could hear a faint, regular rustling from the stage, hidden behind the towering scarlet curtain. Then, between the even 'whish - whish - whish' came the hushed, staccato, soprano

counterpoint - brief little cries that soon turned to familiar cries of passion, then to frenzied grunts and moans.

He made his way closer, easily scaling the iron railing and dropping into the pit. Then came the baritone response, a clean, deep harmony, sometimes matching, sometimes alternating the beats of her hurried rhythm, then falling suddenly into a growling crescendo.

The lip of the stage was within reach, only a foot above his head. Placing his fingers over the polished rounded edge, he began to pull himself up, until first an elbow, then a second arm made it over the edge. Straining to lift his weight, he clung to the stage, both arms stretched out into the darkness, hands grasping desperately for a way to hoist him higher.

The curtain startled him as it parted and moved aside. He lost ground, sliding backward until he forced both palms down onto the glassy surface of the stage floor, stopping his fall just before he tumbled back into the pit. There, center-stage, displayed upon a raised bed-like dais, a thickly muscled, copper-skinned giant fucked her in slow-motion. His impossibly immense penis entered her eager body, then retreated, its pulsing surface dripping and glistening with her juices, her flat belly distended with each slow, deliberate thrust. Elyse's slim legs pulled at him, unable to encircle his monstrous thighs. Her body seemed so small, so yielding beneath him.

Then, as though she knew he watched, she turned her face away from her lover, letting her head roll to one side, staring into the void of the empty theater, then into her husband's eyes as he hung precariously from the edge of the stage. He read so many things in her - on the surface, pleasure and desire, and deeper, a sadness that penetrated him, that seemed almost to beg, not for his forgiveness, but for something more primal.

Unnerved by all that he saw in her, he relaxed his hold on the stage, brushing his arm against the scalding backshield of one of the footlights. As the searing heat quickly melted its way into his flesh, he lost his grip, slid suddenly over the edge, and fell backward into blackness.

Chapter 10

The shock that woke him was as though he had been dropped into the car seat from a great height. When he opened his eyes, he found himself strangely energized, in spite of the lucid details of his dream. Why had he let this man have his wife, over and over? Few husbands would have been so accommodating, so weak in the face of a wife's professed sexual encounters. How could he have brought her here a second time? Suddenly he knew what had to be done.

Neither the manicured lawn nor the marble steps under his feet weakened his resolve. He would storm this castle, confront its master, and take his wife from this place once and for all. No longer would he wait for the spoils of another man like a timid peasant resigned to gathering table scraps for sustenance.

It was more anger and desperation than epiphany that drove him through the heavy front door that opened easily against his weight. Once inside, the opulence of the house's interior was lost on him as he blindly invaded room after room, ready to claim his wife at the instant he caught sight of her. Pausing at the sweeping stairs leading to the second story, he looked up into the darkness, listening for the slightest whisper, a single footstep, any clue that might lead him to his first and final stand against this devil, this puppet-master whose strings held his wife in an endless dance of submission.

Silence. The eerie emptiness of the house began to eat away at the confidence that had taken so long to muster, as though his wife's lover may even possess the power to take her from this world for a time, or make her invisible to anyone who might intrude.

He pressed forward, past the thickly carpeted stairs, then under the open balcony twenty feet over his head. The door before him was different than the others. Wider, made of solid hand-rubbed walnut, its very character carried a warning of what may lie inside. Imagining the overwhelming strength necessary to force it open, he placed his hand on the cold, black, iron latch, pressed downward, and felt the door swing silently inward.

Elyse hung from the scaffold, her body drenched with sweat, her legs and belly still convulsing as Simon suddenly robbed her of her orgasm. She felt his cock leave her, withdrawing as quickly as it had entered her, and she struggled to capture it again, thrusting her narrow hips at him in a futile effort to trap the hard, golden rod of flesh between her legs, to somehow will the plump cockhead back inside her hungry cunt.

In her mind's eye, the line of men before her advanced, each of them ready to take her, each somehow promising her a release of equal intensity. She saw them as bare-chested satyrs, erections wagging eagerly in the air, wet with a layer of glistening pre-cum from the long wait. The shifting shadows of the flickering fire obscured their faces, but displayed every muscle and sinew of their bodies, each slightly different, but perfect in every physical way a man's body could be imagined.

She moaned quietly as her vision became more real to her, now narrated by her own inner voice. 'All those men - all those perfect men - all of them for me. So many of them - big, hard, throbbing - so much sex - all for me - for me - all for me...'

Her body burned for them. Every nerve screamed for their touch. If only the bonds about her wrists would pull tighter, raise her off the floor, suspend her before them, her legs helplessly open, inviting invasion. She would let every last one of them have her to find what she needed, to be fucked brutally by the largest and most powerful of them, taking her body relentlessly, without feeling, fueled only by instinct-driven lust.

Now and then, part of a face would appear - an eye, a nose, full lips, a square jaw - but just as it began to resemble a man who was known to her, it vanished again in shadow, teasing her with its familiarity, promising her nothing but sex, the jutting cock always in full view.

Then, for an instant, she saw Steven's face, first in shadow, then in the shifting ambers and golds of the firelight. She blinked, trying to focus, at first sure that his face was a vision like all the others. But the others were gone now, chased away by returning reality, shrinking and fading into the darkness.

Steven stood just inside the heavy door, eyes adjusting to the dim light, staring in disbelief at the wooden scaffold where Elyse hung by her wrists, her naked body gleaming with sweat, writhing and moaning beside her master. Simon stood close to her, his lean, muscular torso ablaze with light against the black depths of the room. He was naked as well, his cock still brutally hard, jutting proudly upward, glistening with her juices.

Elyse cried out, suddenly limp against her restraints, shrinking back in horror, now certain that it was truly Steven's eyes that were fixed on her. Simon turned toward Steven in a flash, his eyes red burning embers, piercing Steven with lances of anger that paralyzed him. Steven froze, overwhelmed by the impossible scene upon the darkened stage. Like some bizarre Faustian nightmare played out before him, Elyse and Simon looked down at him, her Persephone shamed by his presence, his Mephistopheles enraged by it. Until that moment, Steven had never pictured them together; his mind wouldn't allow it. In the past it had been off-limits, a place where he refused to let his imagination wander. The reality of it robbed him of every trace of confidence and resolve. Steven broke free of Simon's stare, turned away, and fled.

The walls of the hallway, the grand stairway and balcony overhead, the very substance of the mansion melted away as Steven made his escape. He ran blindly, allowing instinct to guide him through the wide doors and over the brilliantly lit portico, until he closed his hand around the handle of the car door, opened it and dropped into the seat. The engine started instantly, and before he could regain his senses, the car was speeding along the winding drive, through the open black gate, and into the night.

Steven drove recklessly through the quiet neighborhood, following landmarks that had led them to the house, his mind now more machine than mortal. It had mapped a maze, and was now un-mapping it, meticulously calculating distances and turns, mathematically guiding him home, away from his horrors. But at the same time, before his eyes, he saw them, frozen in time, looking down at him from their stage, their expressions unmistakable. Now, in his mind, their looks were accusing, looks one gave a trespasser, an interloper into one's private domain. Elyse's words echoed in his head, an anguished wail that repeated, over and over. "Oh God, Steven - No! No, Steven, No! No! Noooo!" He had thought the meaning all too clear, but they were still her words, his Elyse, his love.

As Steven turned from the maze of cul-de-sacs onto the main highway, his cell phone came alive with its persistent, no-nonsense warble. He retrieved it and glanced at the caller's name. It was Elyse.

Chapter 11

"She does love you. Perhaps too much."

Simon's voice still carried the same self-confidence that Steven remembered from the only other time he had heard it. His thumb hovered over the "End" button, an instant away from silencing him. Instead, he pulled the car to the side of the road, unable to look away from Elyse's name staring back at him from the tiny glowing screen.

"How did you get her cell?" Steven asked, after a moment's pause. He was determined not to let the defeat show in his own voice, but doubted that Simon would be fooled.

"There's no shame in fleeing from a blow to your very heart, a blow that may keep one from returning to fight another day."

"Arrogant fuck!" Steven shouted into the tiny phone. His hand closed around it, now so tightly it dug into his palm like a weapon sent not to kill, but to merely torture him.

"Arrogant, Steven? Do you see this as arrogance? Is asking a husband to rescue his loving wife arrogance? Is warning her husband that her very life may depend on his actions arrogant?"

"What have you done to her?" Steven shouted again, now shaking violently with both anger and fear.

"Have you ever taken her for granted, ever disappointed her, Steven? Think about those times, every one of them, however frivolous or short-lived. No doubt at least a few of those times were taken to heart more deeply than you imagined. But you know that, don't you, Steven? Inside, you're afraid to own them, afraid to count them, afraid they might justify her surrender to another man. Don't disappoint her this time, Steven. It may be your last chance."

The phone went silent. Elyse's name vanished from the screen, the connection severed. At that instant, Steven felt the delicate thread connecting them stretched to near breaking. Would he hold tight while Elyse dangled from the opposite end, or release her, letting her fall helplessly, even perhaps willingly, into Simon's hands?

A light rain pelted the windshield, and the darkened streets became slick, black mirrors, each abstract reflection suggesting the existence of some unseen world beneath the black asphalt. A sudden gust of wind heaved an overhanging branch toward him, then away, its leaves waving the way to his new destination. Steven turned the car around and drove back into the night.

Steven retraced the route to Simon's estate not by effort of memory as before, but by sheer determination, as if guided by the programmed instructions of a hidden subroutine triggered by something he chose not to understand or question. The mist on his windshield became a wall of water bursting from the night sky. Flickers of lightning in the distance now found him, the stabbing electric explosions of light and thunder following him as he drove. There was a time when he might have thought of the weather as a horrific monster, some bizarre

extension of Simon, intentionally impeding his way to save his wife. But Steven drove on, unaffected, untouched by demons he had feared for so long.

He found the entrance easily, turning sharply into the wide space in the dark hedges that hid the property from sight. The drive swept to the left, still lined by ten-foot hedges, concealing any trace of the inner grounds from the street. Steven stopped the car before the huge iron gate, the headlights suddenly revealing his worst fears.

Elyse hung from the gate, her arms outspread, her wrists tied to the heavy bars. She was naked, her alabaster skin glowing against the black night. Her head hung forward, her dark hair a solid, drenched curtain that hid her face from him. Steven stared, fixed to the steering wheel,

searching desperately for a hint of life, one breath that might give him the strength to escape the suffocating fear that had again become an unwelcome passenger within the car. A sudden blue-white burst of light turned the night to day for a split second, accompanied by an immediate deafening crash of thunder. Steven's hand rose to shield his eyes to the blinding light, shuddering as the thunder rocked the car. Then, focusing once more on Elyse's glistening ivory body, he noticed an almost imperceptible rise and fall of her breasts, a shallow breath that became a ray of hope as the raindrops fell, one by one, from her small red nipples.

Steven bolted from the car and ran to her. He lifted her head and found her eyes open, staring back at him, as wide and full of life as he had ever remembered. "Steven," she whispered. "Steven..." She smiled at him - not the weak, trembling smile he might have expected, but a full, luscious one, with open lips and dazzling teeth. Startled for a second, he moved away an inch, then went to work untying the bonds that held her to the gate. To his surprise, they were made of soft, hollow, velvet cord, and came undone easily.

Elyse fell into his arms, her soaked body melting into him, wetting his clothes until he felt naked against her. She reached up and pulled his mouth to hers, kissing him fiercely, ravaging his mouth with her tongue. Steven felt her hand snake past his belt, fighting to find his cock, her body now writhing against him. She began to moan into his mouth as they kissed, crushing her body against his, desperate in her sudden heat. Atop the tall pilaster beside the gate, the tiny red light of the camera winked on and the glass eye rotated silently toward them.

Suddenly, Steven broke their kiss and held her at arm's length.

"What is this, Elyse? Some kind of trick? What is it with you? Do you need him that much? That you pretend I'm him, even after he throws you out? What's wrong with you? What do you want, Elyse? You have to tell me! You have to decide! You have to tell me what you fucking want, Elyse!!!"

As Steven spat the words at her, he pushed her away and she fell backward, landing in the soft wet grass beside the gate. Rising up on her elbows, she pulled her knees up, spread her legs, and grinned at Steven with the same wanton confidence Simon had shown her during their first meeting.

Steven stared, no longer able to cope rationally with the invading threads Simon had woven into their marriage, into Elyse, and even into himself. He wanted to unravel everything, to return their life to the past, to the ordinary, to make Elyse the wife she was before Simon's meddling. Anger welled up inside him. 'Damn him! Damn her! Damn me!'

"So, is this what you want?" He raged at her, stripping of his wet clothes, tearing at them as though he was tearing at his own skin. "To be fucked? Like an animal? Like a fucking whore?"

Elyse spread her legs wider, still grinning, quietly inviting his threats. Steven went to her, hitting the ground hard with both knees, landing between her legs. He took her wrists and pulled them roughly over her head, waiting for her to come to her senses, to beg him to stop. Elyse closed her eyes and moaned.

"If you want to be fucked like a whore, I'll fuck you like whore! Is that how he does it? Is this how he fucks you, Elyse?"

Steven plunged into her, forcing her to take the entire length of him at once. Her body shook as he slammed into her again and again, taking her as roughly as he could, imagining how Simon might have poisoned her against him. But with each stroke of fury came satisfaction, and then excitement. All fear and uncertainty came boiling out of him, and with it, filling the space they occupied, came a feral sexual appetite fired by a bewildering new strength.

Then, as their eyes met once more, Steven slowed his pace, moving inside her as he once did in the comfort and safety of their own bed. Her grin faded, and he recognized the familiar soft features of the woman who loved him.

"This is what I want, Steven. I want this, with you, not with him. It's what you want too, isn't it?"

Steven kissed her, softly at first, then harder, biting her lip, feasting on her neck, as his pace returned to its former fury. Elyse laid her head back on the wet grass and closed her eyes, feeling the slowing raindrops dance against her face. She spared him nothing. Each moan and whimper was only for Steven now, and she knew he understood that.

"Yes - Steven. This - is what - I want. It's - what I've - always - wanted."

High above them the camera turned slowly and silently away, the tiny red light winked out, and the glass eye went still, its watch given up not with discretion or modesty, but with a sense of satisfying completion. Its master drank his brandy from a richly upholstered wingback chair in a walnut-paneled library. At times he'd contemplated whether his talents were God-given, or bestowed by a darker power. It really only mattered that they helped him hit the target, in this case, dead center. He had been alone for so long - countless weeks, months, and years - the emptiness filled by gifts from others, unaware that what he gave, what they took, sustained him. But it was enough. For now.

And below the lifeless eye, just outside the gate that spit them from its master's grasp, two new lives were born in the first rain of spring.

*** End ***