

ELLORA'S CAVE PRESENTS



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His Submissive

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HIS SUBMISSIVE

Reese Gabriel

Chapter One

The man seated at the quaint café table didn't look like a sex fiend.

Then again, how could one tell in such matters? The darkest intentions could be hidden in the handsomest of packages.

And David Carlisle was one finely wrapped package.

Linzee Kiley frowned.

Could this really be the manipulating sexual dominant who wanted to seduce her little sister?

A wolf in gentleman's guise, silver gray at the temples, a wave of dark hair, strong cleft chin, slight lines beside the eyes to give character. A swimmer's build—lean, muscled as a man should be. And clean-cut, like a businessman on working holiday. Expensive, open-necked shirt rolled up at the cuffs, a pair of charcoal gray trousers, tasseled loafers.

Linzee frowned again.

This was going to be harder than she'd thought.

Carlisle rose to his feet as soon as he saw her. "You must be Linzee."

His eyes were midnight blue, attentive, piercing.

She slipped into the seat across from him, ignoring the outstretched hand—strong and capable. Was it as warm and enveloping as it looked?

"Don't bother to be polite," she said. "This won't last long and I don't intend it to be pleasant."

"I see." He resumed his seat with utter aplomb. "Will this unpleasantness last long enough for you to join me for a cup of coffee?" he inquired.

"Is that supposed to be charming?" Actually, it was but she was not about to let him know that. She meant business, she was here to scare him away from Traycee and that meant talking his language.

Whatever language sex fiends spoke.

"Waitress?" He raised his hand like a man accustomed to getting women to do exactly what he wanted. "Another coffee, please, for the lady?"

"I won't drink it," she informed him. "In fact, I'll be gone before it gets here. I'm here to tell you that I am not going to let you exploit or abuse my sister. In fact, if you so much as come near her or contact her again, I will see to it that a restraining order is placed. I'm a lawyer and I can make that happen. I can also slap a civil suit on you so fast it will make your head spin."

David Carlisle raised a brow, sending instant shivers down Linzee's spine. He showed not the least sign of intimidation, nor did he appear to be insulted. "Is that all?" he asked dryly.

"I think that's enough," she retorted, trying to resist his eyes.

Why did they have to be so blue?

The waitress arrived with the coffee which Linzee was not going to drink.

"Thank you," he said to the young blonde. "You are most efficient and gracious."

The waitress practically blushed in reply as she offered him a refill. "You're welcome, sir."

Linzee stiffened, annoyed. The man might be able to win over some silly little college coed but not her.

She tried not to watch Carlisle's lips as he sipped from a patterned blue china cup, an excellent match to the décor—quaint lace curtains, delicate gold-framed prints from the Impressionist school, a white marble floor rounded out with tasteful lighting.

Ordinarily, Linzee would revel in such details. At the moment, however, they were mere background, with no other purpose, it seemed, than to frame David Carlisle's existence. How could a man make himself the center without even trying?

"Perhaps I'm mistaken," he said, the words measured and balanced. "I was under the impression you came here to learn more about the BDSM lifestyle."

"I don't need to learn," she declared, determined to maintain the offensive. "I am an advocate for women's rights and your so-called lifestyle is thinly disguised misogyny. Traycee is younger, easily fooled. I am not. She thinks you are some knight in shining armor who is going to sweep her off her feet and open the door to this carefree world of sexual submission. But we both know that's a lie, don't we? You're a stalker, plain and simple."

His face remained implacable. "So basically you lied to Traycee when you told her you wanted to meet me and form your own opinions. You've already prejudged...and yet it's my character being called into question."

Linzee clenched her teeth at the direct hit, all the worse for its polite delivery. "Don't you twist things, you...you pervert."

He studied her. It was completely unnerving. "Does BDSM frighten you that much?"

"No," she snapped. "It nauseates me. It makes me laugh. It's a joke, a cruel joke, chaining and whipping women for free sex."

"Very little of BDSM concerns sex," he said.

"I'm so sure." Linzee rolled her eyes. "Look, I'm not wasting any more of my time. You know where things stand. I'll fight to the death for Traycee. I've taken care of her since she was eight and I won't stop now."

"That is admirable but Traycee is not a child anymore," he pointed out. "She's twenty-five years old."

"And how old are *you*?" she shot back. "Forty?"

"I'm forty- five, but thanks for the compliment."

Forty-five...wow, he looked good.

"You're not welcome," she snapped. "You cradle-robbing prick."

He sipped more of his coffee. She squirmed, her insult hanging in the air, unclaimed.

"Do you have any clue what my relationship is with your sister?" he asked presently.

Linzee's lips curled down. Actually, Traycee was keeping her in the dark, as usual. All she knew was that her wild-child sister had found this Alternate Lifestyles Society and was hell-bent on joining it and living out the fantasy of consensual sexual slavery.

As if you could consensually surrender your own freedom and sanity.

"You're supposed to be some kind of mentor," Linzee dismissed. "Which I'm sure is a fancy cover for seducing naïve, pretty young women."

His brows arched simultaneously, suggesting a submerged iceberg of thoughts and feelings. "Traycee is many things but she is not naïve."

Linzee hated that it came out so calmly, so smoothly. Like the coffee, complete with rich, hazelnut aroma.

Damn. She was drinking the stuff.

She put the cup down. "If that's your way of telling me you've been to bed with her, be very careful. I don't just know other lawyers, I know cops too."

"So do I, Linzee," he said mysteriously. "And, no, there is nothing physical between your sister and me, nor will there be. She has asked me to be her mentor and so I will help her explore her nature as a submissive, nothing more."

Linzee snorted. "By doing what? Tying her up and whipping her?"

"Actually, it involves counseling," he rasped, the heat of him like a flame reaching out to her dry soul that fluttered on moth wings. "If she chooses, at the end of our sessions, she can apply for membership in the Alternate Lifestyles Society, through which she can find people with similar interests, either for play experiences or more serious relationships. It will never be with me but you had better reconcile yourself. Traycee might well choose to find someone to whip her and it's my job to help her do it right."

"Well, Traycee doesn't know what's good for her," Linzee lashed out. "And I do."

"Do you now?" Light danced in his eyes—cool, playful, as if he were inviting her into some kind of far from ordinary game. It was a wolf's game and she didn't even know the rules.

"How interesting," he said. "Here I am responding to Traycee's request to learn—on her terms—while you are attempting to dictate her likes and dislikes. So who exactly is the domineering tyrant here, me...or you?"

"Screw you."

Not a muscle twitched, not a hint of discomfiture. "My apologies for that last remark," he said. "I haven't any right to judge your intentions."

The about-face caught her off guard.

"I don't accept your apologies," she replied. "And I don't accept you."

He signaled for more coffee. The golden-haired waitress approached, pot in hand, bright-eyed, attentive, curls hanging forward as she bent, breasts coyly proffered.

Had she put on fresh lipstick?

"Anything else, sir?" she asked, ignoring Linzee.

Linzee's mind took a wicked turn as she imagined the woman opening her top, offering her breasts to the dominant male.

"No, thank you," he said politely, taking no advantage of her obvious interest in him. Was Linzee supposed to be impressed? So the little ditz found him magnetic and he was too much of a gentleman to flirt in front of another woman. A pig was a pig—and a BDSM pig was worse.

"Look, Linzee, we should face the facts—"

"Oh? And what are they? Please enlighten me."

Linzee watched the waitress walk away. What if she were to return on her hands and knees, begging to suck David's cock? He would enjoy that immensely.

"Traycee is going to do what she wishes, that's clear," he said, ignoring her sarcasm. "I will vouch for the healthiness of the alternative lifestyle, if practiced safely, sanely and consensually. But there are bad Dominants out there, just like there are bad lawyers and doctors and policemen. Either we find a way to steer her through this safely, or we turn her over to the sharks."

Linzee's desire to push this man away was overwhelming. On the other hand she kept wondering what it would be like in his arms, his powerful hands stroking her hair, telling her everything would be all right, letting her melt against him...*his*.

"There is no 'we'," she said with enough force to be heard one table over by an elderly couple. She continued more softly, though no less fiercely. "There's me and Traycee versus you and all of your kind. That's just how it is."

"You surprise me," he said.

"Why?" Linzee was taken aback. He sounded almost disappointed.

"You're obviously an intelligent woman, very capable but you're so closed off."

"What? Are you going to analyze me now?" She shook back her loose dark curls. She was wearing her thin gold necklace today and a black top and skirt. It was what she planned to wear to court this afternoon, though a man like this would probably think it was for him, an effort to impress, to appear attractive. As if she cared, as if it mattered to be wanted by a strong, possessive male who seemed so instinctively and disarmingly comfortable with female psychology.

"Is that one of your bullshit dominant tricks—showing me how you can get all up in my head and make me fall at your feet because you're so wise and all-knowing?"

His eyes homed in, the blue depths mystical and beckoning.

"A woman," he said, his voice husky with the air of that faraway land, "does not fall at a man's feet. She places herself there by deliberate will. Submission, my dear Linzee, is neither exploitation nor abuse. It is a gift, a profound giving of power that awes the heart and soul of any Dominant privileged to receive it."

Linzee swallowed. This conversation was not going as planned. So now he was a poet too? On top of being suave and gorgeous and gentlemanly?

"I'm not your *dear*," she said. "And I am fed up to here with your patronizing attitude. You are not going to play your sicko games with my sister and that's final."

"There are no games," he said flatly. "Traycee and I will meet and talk. We'll explore her fantasies, her hopes. I will introduce her to others as I see fit and that's it."

"Stop making yourself into a saint." This man was really getting under her skin. "You whip women. You tie them up."

"I have, yes," he replied without shame. "By mutual consent. There are women who need it and I am the sort who needs to deliver it."

Linzee's heart raced. He shouldn't be saying this—not to her. It was repulsive and strangely...attractive.

"You aren't changing my mind," she said. "And that's final."

David leaned back. His brow furrowed into what she could only guess was dissatisfaction.

Linzee's toes curled inside her patent leather pumps. Something inside her did not want to displease this man. It wasn't fear, as if he was an axe murderer or something, but it did have to do with being brought in line, being put in place...a place of one's own secret desires.

"So you are willing to risk Traycee becoming involved with an unsavory character?" he said.

"As long as it's not you," she replied way too quickly.

His lips thinned. She was inordinately attracted to them, almost mesmerized. Indeed, his expression, his face, was becoming her world. What the fuck was going on?

"You don't mean that, Linzee. You are speaking from a very immature part of yourself. All of us are prone to such regression at times."

"I'm plenty mature." She tried to keep her verbal defenses up. "And capable too."

A smile crossed his face—genuine, warm, a sudden clearing in a darkening storm. Her heart soared inexplicably.

"I don't doubt that you are capable," he said. "Still, you can't be expected to do everything on your own."

Was there no limit to this man's nerve? Why did he keep trying to involve himself in her and Traycee's lives? If he would at least have the decency to behave like a total monster so she could walk out.

"Traycee is my responsibility, not yours."

"She has approached me and that makes her mine too."

Linzee's heart pounded. Could it be he was more than a wolf? If only she had some category for a man who was neither predator nor scavenger. Most men she met were wimps, selfish little boys, barely worth a first date. Michael, her supposed savior, had ended up with feet of clay and a whole body of mud.

"I need time to think," she said.

He shook his head. "There isn't any time, Linzee. Traycee won't give that luxury to you or to me. We either leave this table with a plan, mutually agreeable, which we can present to your sister or..." He paused there for emphasis. "Or we leave with nothing. In that case, Traycee will pursue her destiny alone. Can you live with that?"

Linzee bit at her lower lip, something she did only when under pressure. Months of special coaching had helped her eliminate this and other guilty-looking habits in the courtroom. "How can I agree to anything? I don't know what you are, what you do..."

"You may feel free to call my office for a resume," he said. "I can also furnish references."

"References?" The idea struck her as absurd. "We're talking about you teaching my sister sexual masochism, not piano lessons."

"I can't expect you to understand BDSM overnight. All the more reason to talk to women I have worked with. You'll find they aren't mindless zombies, nor have I sold them off to the white slave trade in Mozambique."

Linzee forced back a smile. The last thing in the world she needed to do was let her guard down.

"Good," she quipped. "Because Traycee burns in the sun and she's terrible about using sunscreen."

"In that case," he said, his fearsome eyes revealing a twinkle. "I'll remember to sell her somewhere cold and cloudy."

Linzee sighed, at a loss. "You know I don't believe any of this, right?"

"Any of what?"

"Women swooning for men, begging to be their sex slaves. I mean, come on, between you and me, it's all propaganda, right?"

"If you say so. Of course if you really want to know what this is about, I would be happy to give a demonstration."

Her pulse raced. The very thought of him having power over her naked body sent hot chills down her spine. It was unthinkable, shameful...and arousing.

"A...demonstration?" she breathed. "Of...BDSM?"

"A counseling session, I mean, to show you what Traycee would be getting into with me."

She flushed. Did he think she had anything else on her mind where he was concerned?

"You can't be serious," she said, putting the correct spin of contempt into her reply. "I wouldn't even be able to keep a straight face."

"I would think you could manage for an hour or so," he said pointedly. "For Traycee's sake."

What could she say to that? Linzee hated that it was a reasonable idea. Especially coming from him.

"No." She shook her head. "We can't even be civil to each other for five minutes. Besides, I am morally opposed to your lifestyle."

Not to mention titillated to a very unsafe degree.

"It's not your place to judge, Linzee, how other human beings express their sexuality with one another. At least talk to your sister if you won't talk to me. Find out what's in her heart, what attracts her to BDSM."

Linzee flushed. "I can't believe you are making me out to be the monster. You're the one sending women off to be whipped."

His gaze narrowed. "You have an obsession with whips, don't you?"

She reacted, struck by verbal lightning. He was stripping her a whole lot deeper than she wanted to go. "What if I do, big man?" she fought back. "You going to beat my ass and show me who is boss?"

David laughed. The sound filled the room like a lion's roar.

Linzee breathed hotly. Her panties dampened.

"No, Linzee," he said. "I will show you who is boss by *not* beating your ass."

He was rising to his feet.

"Where are you going?" she asked.

"I'm done here." He was smiling, beaming. "It's been a great pleasure. Give me a call if you ever want to come to one of our meetings."

Stuck in a roomful of sadists led by David Carlisle...yeah, right...

David took her hand and kissed it, a searing brand against her skin. She melted, nipples peaking, aching, vaginal muscles twitching in anticipation.

"But...what about Traycee? We didn't finish."

"The ball is in your court, Linzee."

"You can't expect me to change who I am," she exclaimed. "There's no wiggle room on my end."

The choice of words made her wince internally.

Wiggle room...end...

"In that case, it is in the hands of fate," he said. "*Que sera, sera.*"

She watched, dumbfounded, as he laid down money. Just like that he was gone. *Now what?*

Priority number one — get back to work.

Priority number two — forget David Carlisle...and avoid Traycee's phone calls for the next week or so.

* * * * *

Linzee awoke to pounding on her door at three in the morning.

It was Traycee.

"Sis," Linzee said groggily, having dragged herself out of bed in her Mighty Girl pajamas. "Do you have any idea what time it is?"

Traycee glared. "I don't even want to talk to you. I am so pissed at you right now."

Linzee rubbed her eyes. "If you don't want to talk," she pointed out logically, "then why would you come here?"

"I don't have to talk to yell at you," Traycee declared, brushing past in her silver miniskirt and blue sequined top. As usual she was dressed for trouble, probably out at some club.

"Can't you yell at me in the morning?" Linzee pleaded. "I have to be up in three hours."

Traycee dramatically flopped down on the couch. "I just hope you're pleased with yourself," she said, ignoring Linzee's plight. "Because you have ruined my life."

Linzee looked at her kid sister—long, shapely legs crossed at the ankles, white stockings and black boots, her sandy brown hair pouring down over her creamy shoulders. How had she grown up so fast? Wasn't she in overalls and sneakers just yesterday, complaining about Jimmy Watson putting a frog in her lunchbox?

"Traycee, how could I possibly have ruined your life?"

"By talking to David, that's how. And now he says he won't be my mentor on account of you. Not until you give permission, he says. Like you're my mother or something."

Linzee pulled her lower lip between her teeth at the mention of the name. She had been dreaming about David earlier tonight. He had come to her room, shirtless, a whip in his hand. It was a small leather one, slim and tantalizing...

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"You know this needs to happen," he said.

She quivered under the sheet, holding the thin material up above her bare breasts. "Please, don't whip me..."

He tapped the riding crop against his thigh, covered by his fashionable trousers. His pectorals and biceps looked so good. Not an ounce of fat on him. "Do I need to tie you, Linzee, because I will."

"Is there anything I can do?" she whispered.

"Yes," he declared, implacable. "You can obey."

"Yes..."

"Obey," he repeated. "And feel. You need the sting, the release, the awakening in your body. Hot red skin, to be seized, possessed."

He told her to lower the sheet, exposing her breasts. She did so, helpless, trembling. They rose and fell with each breath, her pink nipples matching the pink on her cheeks.

If he had rejected her at that moment she would have died.

"Do you want me?" she whispered. "Am I beautiful enough?"

"I want you with all my heart," he replied. "You could not be more beautiful."

And that's when he came to her, crawling onto the bed, the whip firmly in hand...

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Linzee?" Traycee snapped. "Are you even paying attention to me?"

"Yes, of course, I am. David is weaseling out of mentoring you or whatever it is you call it."

Linzee was busy thinking. David was forty-five. She was thirty-five. Was that a ridiculous age difference? And would he find her attractive, in any event? She worked out. She didn't consider herself as pretty as Traycee but she hadn't ever had trouble getting dates. When she wanted them.

"What?" Traycee's face pinched in annoyance. "He isn't weaseling out. He is deferring because of your meeting. How could you? You told me you would just talk to him. I gave you his name and set it all up for you to meet him and you did a hit-and-run."

"Stop exaggerating. It just wasn't meant to happen between you," Linzee said. "*Que sera, sera.*"

Great, now she was borrowing David's lines. Wasn't it bad enough she was twitching all over, imagining him commanding her body, compelling her to explore its secret depths.

You have a fascination with whips, he had told her.

That wasn't true, was it? So she had had one dream in which he had tormented her, made her sting under the leather's kiss, begging mercy until he finally made love to her like he owned her body and soul, fingers twisted in her hair, teeth nibbling at her engorged nipples. That meant nothing. She had never thought about submission before and she would certainly never do such a thing in reality.

"That's easy for you to say, Linzee, you have no life. You're an old maid," Traycee cried. "I'm young, I want to have fun."

Linzee rankled at the insult. "So go date someone at work, sign up for a dating service. Why do you need some dirty old man from a sex club? You know a lot of those BDSM people have serious sexual problems."

"You don't know that. You don't know anything!" Traycee threw up her arms. "Why can't you just stay out of my life?"

"I will, young lady." She gave it right back to her. "When you learn to act like a mature adult. This month it's BDSM, last month you wanted to learn scuba diving because of that cute Brazilian instructor, the month before that you were studying the kama sutra with Kamal."

"You're just jealous," said Traycee, folding her arms over a dusty rose throw pillow, "because the only guys you meet are murderers and bank robbers."

"At least they have normal sex!" Linzee snapped.

Like she had any idea what her clients did in their bedrooms. And who was to say what was normal, anyway. Up until she had had her dream tonight she would never have imagined BDSM as something so very pleasurable.

"Traycee, I have had enough for one night," Linzee said. "We will talk tomorrow."

She went to the door, opening it so Traycee would take the hint.

Traycee ran to her and grabbed her arm, changing tactics. "Lin, please, pretty please, talk to him again and tell him you're cool with things. I really want to try this. I won't get into any trouble. He's really nice and everyone at the Society knows him and if he mentors me I can be a member there and besides he's *sooo* hot...even you have to see that."

"Yes," Linzee grumbled. "Even me, your old maid sister."

Traycee gave her a puppy dog look, flashing green eyes. "I didn't mean that, you know I didn't."

Linzee sighed. Traycee always managed to get her way in the end.

"Just promise me you aren't going to try to date him or anything, Trace."

She made a face. "I said he was hot, Lin, as in it will help my reputation to be seen with him but he's like ancient..."

"Forty-five isn't that old, Traycee."

"Whatever." Traycee shrugged. "You date him. Just get him to mentor me."

"Why would I date him? That's ridiculous," Linzee bristled.

It was ridiculous...wasn't it?

"Okay, I'll call him, Traycee, but no promises. Our meeting really didn't go well. I'm sorry, we were oil and water. I just wanted to look after you and he didn't get it. And if something does work out, he made it clear to me, it would be platonic. You will not be finding out how hot he is, got it?"

"Yes, yes." Traycee hugged her. "Thank you, thank you, thank you and you don't have to apologize to me. I know your heart was in the right place. I don't know where I would be without you."

Was that what Linzee was going to do with David – apologize?

Once again, Traycee was managing to manipulate the situation to suit her. Maybe Traycee should be a dominant, Linzee mused, and not a submissive.

"Please tell me you will be careful," said Linzee. "I still worry about you. How can I not worry?"

"You better worry." Traycee grinned. "It means you still love me. And you can relax about the BDSM. I am going to talk about it, that's it. If I ever decide to try something, I will let you know first, okay? I won't get in over my head."

"Good," said Linzee, greatly relieved, though she wondered if she herself might be in danger of getting in over her head.

Chapter Two

David Carlisle could not concentrate on the board meeting.

That really wasn't good, because this was his company.

The issue was Linzee Kiley.

He couldn't get her out of his mind. She was a natural submissive. Only a sub fighting her identity would argue that much about bondage and domination and so irrationally to boot. BDSM touched hot points in her. It was obvious and he could see it in her eyes.

She was resisting him fiercely. At the same time she was sending off all kinds of capture-me-if-you-can vibes, which only served to inflame his natural dominance.

Linzee's phenomenal beauty and charisma weren't helping the situation any. Those full, ruby lips, sculpted cheekbones, luxurious curls made to be grasped in a man's hands. And that body—like a sculpture come to life—classical and passionate with curves in all the right places.

And the way she challenged him at every turn, keeping him on his toes, not letting him have the benefit of the doubt for a second. How long had it been since a woman had intrigued him so much?

All in all she was a lethal mix and he wanted her...badly.

She would make for a perfect submissive mate, born to yield to the right Master and yet she was no doormat. Like any potentially superior submissive, she had the courage of a lioness and a fierce instinct to protect anyone she perceived as weak and vulnerable.

He could see that behind that façade she was intensely vulnerable, though. An emptiness, a yearning behind her hazel eyes. A restlessness in her soul.

A woman that bold could not hide her emotions well, at least not from a man like him.

David wished he knew more about her. She had been through a lot. From Traycee, he knew there had been an accident years ago. Both parents were lost. There was no other family at the time, so at eighteen Linzee had had to take over guardianship for eight-year-old Traycee, putting herself through college and law school while serving as surrogate parent.

There had also been a broken engagement for Linzee. A man named Michael.

David felt her pain, he could almost visualize the lonely nights, when Linzee must have cried into her pillow. So many tears to shed—for her lost parents, for the burdens of responsibility, for the lack of a special person in her life to lean on and to give over the reins when she needed release.

Sexual or otherwise.

So strong in the world, she needed a man to whom she could submit in the sanctity of the bedroom. He was sure of that. It didn't matter that he had only seen her once. A woman like Linzee was born for leather, born to writhe under the whip, to moan and beg for a man's hardness. His cock between her legs, filling the void of her sex. His fingers pressing her nipples, inducing just the right mix of pain and pleasure.

She was ripe, all right.

And her denial only served to fuel the fire.

When would a man take her in hand, his fingers clutching her hair, bending back her neck for a kiss, for that igniting contact, lip to lip, that would change her forever. Someone was going to be the first.

She would call that man Master. She would obey and disobey and tease and thrive but in all things she would never fail to please.

Yes, someone would possess Linzee but who would it be?

David had an answer, clear as anything that had ever entered his mind.

Him. He wanted it to be him.

He, David Carlisle, wanted to own Linzee Kiley. To have dominion over her heart, utter, sweet control of her body, to be her champion, protector and lord. It was a fact, a reality of his heart, a burning intention and desire.

David wanted to let the world know. He felt like carving it in tree trunks, screaming it from the top of the nearest mountain.

His heart soared. He hadn't felt like that in years. If ever.

If he didn't know better, he'd say he was in love.

Or was it just that old vain idea grasping at him again, that elusive notion of the perfect submissive soul mate, the woman who would be his utter slave, his treasured partner at the same time that she continued to grow in the world as a strong, valuable woman.

So many times he had tried to find that mate but the combination had always eluded him. There were the total slave types who wanted to stay naked in his home, accomplishing nothing, then there were the exhibitionists who just wanted to play the part at the BDSM clubs and parties. And that didn't begin to cover the gold diggers – the bevy of women who pretended to share his interests to get close to his money.

The frustration went on and on. Sure, a man like David Carlisle could get all the sex he wanted and dozens of women would love to live with him but what was the point? It only got him so far and he wasn't getting any younger.

It was all so predictable. Where was the challenge he loved, the surprise of having a woman exceed expectation, confound his preconceptions, even exasperate the hell out of him at times? He needed that, just like he needed air to breathe.

Linzee would be like that. With her, a Master could not afford to sleep at the wheel for a second. She would run all over a man if he did.

He smiled, lost in the possibilities, the imagined chase, the game, the hunt and the inevitable victory which would lead to their exquisite mutual pleasure.

"Sir, did you want to see those quarterly projections?" called a feminine voice, concerned and alert.

David snapped from his reverie. Cute as a button Erin Waverly, twenty-something and one of his most capable assistants, was looking at him expectantly. Had she asked him the question more than once?

"Yes." He cleared his throat.

Business figures battled in his mind, vying for attention over Linzee's far more intriguing one. What if she were waiting at his house naked when he got home tonight? What if it were her home too and she knew that she must be waiting at the front door, naked, collared, on her knees with the whip between her teeth, hot and ready to serve her Master?

She would look exquisite, hair wild and teased out like a savage feminine beast. His. The fantasy took him, completely...

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

He paused at the door, the Master, simply admiring his property. Her back was straight, her eyes bright with anticipation. She knelt back on her heels, her knees wide apart, her hands clasped behind her neck to better reveal her lush breasts. He could smell her arousal, her skin was flushed and her shaved sex was visibly moist. His cock thundered to life in reply. Dinner would have to wait. Smiling, he ran his fingertips over her cheek. She shivered, releasing a small moan. He smiled again and took the whip from her hot mouth.

Very delicately, he ran the thin leather tip over her creamy white shoulders, her collarbone. He watched, pleased, as her breath quickened and her nipples stiffened.

"Your body betrays you, slave."

"Yes, Master," she replied huskily, knowing herself undone.

Her own worst enemy.

Such wonderful targets, the nipples. He touched each with the thin leather, hinting at what else he might do.

She squirmed but did not break position. She was a slave. Her hands must stay clasped behind her neck. She must accept what he gave.

Slaves didn't interfere when the Master played.

A flick of the whip over the swollen buds. What color would they be on Linzee—pink, or more toward red? Large or small? And what kind of areolas?

"Thrust out your chest, girl."

Her eyes were glassy and she was nearly panting.

He whipped each breast, a quick blow, leaving a red streak on each. She writhed in response. His cock strained at the fabric of his clothes. The urge to dominate was overwhelming.

He slapped the leather against her hip. "More," he told her.

She knew what he wanted. Her well-toned thighs separated, straining her muscles for maximum exposure.

He rubbed the whip over her belly. "Are you wet, slave girl?"

"Yes, Master."

She wouldn't dare lie. He would check and the punishment wouldn't be worth it.

"I will make you beg tonight," he declared with absolute and utter certainty. "For pleasure and for pain."

"Yes, Master." She shuddered.

The whip was at her mouth, where he had placed it ever-so gently. She licked fervently, desperate, kissing it.

Before long she would scream for his touch, though he would give it to her only to tease her more. She would ask for the whip, though it would hurt and she would cry. Afterward he would hold her until the shaking stopped. It never ended—the hunger, man to woman, Master to slave.

He moved the whip between her thighs and found her clitoris. "Come, slave," he commanded. And so it began...

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Tell me what you need, Erin."

"Sir?"

All eyes were on David. He scowled. His voice had been entirely the wrong tone. Damn it, where was his head? Millions of dollars were riding on his decisions, hundreds of jobs in his import-export business.

Not to mention that he had a responsibility to shepherd Traycee's interest in BDSM to a safe place without allowing himself to be distracted with feelings for Linzee.

That was the real irony here. David didn't think Traycee was particularly submissive at all. She had come to the club one night for an informational meeting and stayed on to talk to some of the members. She was very enthusiastic and open-minded and she certainly needed kinkiness in her life—a man to play with, give and take and endless imagination but subordinating herself to another was not in her nature.

David's mentoring goal, unbeknownst to Traycee or Linzee, was to help Traycee learn that about herself and subsequently never join the Society at all.

Linzee, on the other hand, had the potential to blossom as a terrific submissive. A good mentor would bring it out of her. Not him, though. He could never be objective. He would want her too badly.

"Resource-wise," David said gruffly to Erin. "I mean tell me what you need to get the job done."

"Yes...sir." Erin pushed her glasses up her small nose.

David cleared his throat. He had spoken a little too fervently about needs, it seemed.

So his old dreams of a perfect submissive hadn't died. That eighteen-year-old kid, whom he once was had lain on his dorm room bed, dreaming of a female all his own to love and dress and possess, was still alive. The young man who never quite fit in with the dating scene, the double-talk and games, who had spent so much time dreaming, drawing little collars on pictures of models in magazines and etching tattoos on their thighs—property of DC.

He drew a deep breath, letting the truth ring loud in his head.

I want to own Linzee Kiley...

It screamed in his brain again, like he had never thought the word before. Ownership, his one powerful drive in business and personal life. His very essence but it was all new.

A spring in his step.

A hard-on in his pants at his own meeting.

"We are adjourned," he declared. "We will finish this later."

Everyone looked at each other. He was at the door before anyone could say a word.

* * * * *

Linzee sat at her desk, rehearsing the possible scripts in her mind, the hundred different tones and phraseologies for her upcoming phone call, all of them designed to shield her real emotions.

"Mr. Carlisle, I will bet you didn't expect to hear from me and I don't want you to think I am conceding anything here..."

"Okay, David, it's time we cut through the BS, don't you think?"

"David, we are both adults here and..."

And what?

Or how about this? "Say, David, want to hear about my dream, it was the funniest thing. I was nude and you came in and used a whip on my ass and had your way with me."

It was Traycee who finally gave her the push she needed.

"Linzee, your sister on line two," announced the voice from her intercom.

"Tell her I'll call her back, please," she told Daisy, her assistant.

Linzee sighed, resolved as she punched in the number Traycee had left for David's office. There would be no peace until she got this over with. The really unnerving part

was that she wasn't worried about how David would deal with Traycee. He was a man of honor, she could tell such things. So why did he bother her so much personally?

"David Carlisle Imports," answered a polite, well-trained female voice. "How may I help you?"

Well trained...that took on new meaning in this context, didn't it?

"Yes, may I speak to Mr. Carlisle?"

"And whom may I say is calling, ma'am?"

She swallowed. The pivotal moment. Not too late to hang up or shout "Early April Fool's". "It's Linzee Kiley," she said. "He should remember me."

Would he? A man like David must meet women all the time—some eager, some resistive. He would have his pick.

Certainly Linzee had not forgotten him. Not for a single frigging second. All morning she had been researching BDSM. It wasn't all about the whips and chains. He was right. People wrote poems about it, they talked about committed relationships, they spent whole lifetimes in loving exploration of their desires.

They entered marriages, even. BDSM unions or power exchanges, with one person holding the whip and the other on all fours, or on her back, or however else the dominant wanted her.

But they were far from weak, just as David had said. Many were articulate, strong women in the outside world who seemed to enjoy giving up control in the bedroom and the rest of the house too.

The reading made her hot and wet. There were so many pictures of the various activities. Every man in the pictures was him and every woman was her. She had been powerless to resist being sucked into each new image.

Her very helplessness inflamed her desires as David put her through imaginary paces. Endless possibilities, you name it—chained to the rack, teased with a feather, on all fours, collared on a bed, her pussy and ass filled with dildos, head down, awaiting the pleasure of her Master, on her knees, thighs spread wide, hands behind her head, breasts thrust out, nipples insolently clamped.

Nipple clamps. She had never imagined such a thing.

Linzee was intensely excited and on edge still. She would have to conceal that over the phone.

"Linzee?"

Her body melted at the sound. She went limp in her leather chair as her thighs parted of their own accord. "Yes..."

It came out almost as a sigh.

Damn it.

Nice going, Linzee, why don't you just beg him to fuck you while you're at it?

"Yes, it's me." She snapped to attention, going immediately on the offense. "And if you think I'm impressed that you own your own company, I'm not. Perverts can run businesses as well as anyone else."

"Absolutely we can," crooned the coffee-smooth voice, chillingly deep and seductive. "Kind of gives a whole new meaning to a Master's degree in business administration, don't you think?"

I will not laugh. I will not be amused. I will not let my guard down.

"I'm sure I wouldn't know. I'm calling on behalf of Traycee," she said. "Just so you know. Personally, I was done with you yesterday."

"My loss," he said.

Linzee's heart stopped.

He wasn't interested in her, was he? No freaking way.

"Traycee won't leave me alone where you're concerned." Linzee tried to keep her voice steady. "She wants us to work this out."

What would that mean if David really did like her? Would he pursue her, maybe even try to dominate her?

"She is a persistent young lady," he said. "Strong-willed like her sister."

"We have to work something out." Linzee ignored the compliment. He was making it very difficult to hate him. "She won't be talked out of the BDSM."

"I will be her mentor," he said. "But I insist on your wholehearted endorsement."

Linzee had had enough. "Do you want me to take an ad in the frigging paper? Just do your thing, keep me informed. Send her to no one else without talking to me."

"That isn't good enough."

"Well, it damn well has to be," she shot back. "I'm not a sub, so don't expect to dictate to me."

"You will meet with me again," he said, his voice calm, absolute. "I insist. We will go over the mentoring process I will use with Traycee."

"I would prefer not to see you again," she said.

"You should see me," he said. "You should face your fears."

"Go to hell." She hung up the phone, fingers trembling. Linzee Kiley was scared of nothing. Except maybe her own libido.

Arms folded over her chest, she assessed the damage. He had made her giddy by giving her hope he liked her, even though she was supposed to not like him at all. He had also managed to piss her off again and arouse her too.

A lot of emotions for a short call.

Linzee touched her breast through her sweater, idly playing with her nipple, hard as a bullet against the silk of her bra. His voice had made them erect. His voice had made her pussy pulse. Why did she imagine his hands on her body every time he spoke

to her—possessive, slow, demanding and yet infinitely patient, as if he had all the time in the world to conquer her.

She tried to fight it.

What was wrong with her, daydreaming about David Carlisle, wondering what it would be like to be under his power and control, here and now in her own office?

What would he do with her? Would he push her back in her chair, sweep the curls from her face and take her mouth for a kiss?

Did he even want a kiss? Was he burning for her lips as she was for his?

What would that mouth taste like? Would he kiss her hard and long or soft and teasingly? Would she be left whimpering, softly crying for more or would he steal her very breath, probing with his tongue, exploring, owning her mouth, leaving her unable to speak or resist, too weak to do anything but fall at his feet?

Oh, fuck, this was no way to live.

She called him back. She was going to meet him head-on, once and for all.

“David Carlisle Industries—” the receptionist began her spiel.

“Stop sounding so cheerful,” she interrupted churlishly. “The man is an egomaniacal jerk and we both know it. Just put me through to him.”

Linzee cringed. Where had that come from?

Great. She could hear it now. “Mr. Carlisle, crazy woman for you on line three. Shall I trace the call and send a psychiatrist?”

Linzee would have to apologize to the woman later.

See what a mess David Carlisle was making of her life?

“Linzee, I didn’t expect to hear from you again.” He sounded cautious, understandably so.

“I will meet you under one condition.”

“Yes?”

“I will tell you later.” She didn’t actually have a condition. She just wanted to keep the upper hand.

“That’s fine. Would you like to send it to me in an e-mail?”

“No thank you,” she said, hating him all the more for trying to be so gracious and cooperative. “I will tell you in my own way.”

“How about over dinner?”

Her body went on high alert. Emotions in a blender, a veritable guacamole. “You said this was a meeting, not a date.”

“It is a meeting. Would you prefer a date?”

He did not just say that.

“Don’t flatter yourself,” she said icily. “This is going to be as far from a date as two human beings can possibly get.”

"Oh, good," he said. "Then I can write this off on my taxes."

"Go on, keep being a jerk," she prodded. "See if I care."

"Well, I do have a reputation to keep up. As I understand from Jenny, my receptionist, I would do well to change the name of my business to Jerk Importers."

She flushed red, thankful this was not a video link. "Just tell me where to meet you."

"You will do dinner, then?"

"Yes, just to show you I am not afraid of you."

"I'll send a car for you," he said.

"I'm not helpless, I can find my own way to a restaurant," she defied.

"I am quite sure you can. I was merely being polite."

"It's a little late for that," she said, though honestly, what had he done except awaken things inside her she that would rather not look at?

"Are you familiar with the London Tea Room?" he asked.

Linzee frowned. Everyone knew that place. It was the finest in town. "Quite a place for a meeting," she said.

"I find it works quite well," he declared. "Is eight o'clock convenient for you?"

"Convenient isn't a word I would ever associate with you, Mr. Carlisle, but yes, I can be there at eight."

"Excellent. I do, however, have one condition of my own."

"Oh?" The joviality in his voice cut her to the quick. How could he be so calm about all this?

"And what condition would that be?"

It was almost like the son of a bitch was toying with her.

"My Christian name is David and I wish you would use it," he said.

"Not Sir David or Master David?" she said acidly.

Deflecting the sarcasm, he turned the remark back in her direction, just as he always did. "Very good, Linzee. I see you've been doing research. Did anything strike a chord with you?"

Resisting every impulse, she did not hang up the phone a second time. "Yes," she gave it right back. "I found a boatload of evidence to back up my supposition that Dominants are self-delusional megalomaniacs, compensating for their shortcomings, physical and mental."

"If that's true, then what are submissives?" he asked.

"A fantasy," she said. "Cooked up in the minds of the megalomaniacs."

"I would like to see you in black tonight, Linzee," he said.

His words sliced through her like a hot knife through butter. He was suggesting, almost dictating, her clothing. "Nice try," she said. "I know that's a game between Doms and subs and I won't play. I will wear what I damn well please."

"As you wish. Of course if you don't wear black, that could be interpreted as nothing but a reaction against me, every bit as determined by my will."

She snorted. "As if."

"Eight o'clock," he reiterated. "Do not be late, Linzee."

Another hot knife. She knew from the websites that a big part of BDSM involved punishment and control. It made the submissive wet and horny to be told what to do and there was a complex dynamic, making her want to obey and not obey, both at the same time.

Indeed, she might court punishment. A naughty submissive, a "bad girl" could be ordered to strip and submit to the whip. Or she could simply be hauled over the Dominant's lap for a spanking.

She was her Master's property and her fighting only confirmed what their love meant. A special love with slavery and chains, with magic and fantasy undergirded by a mutual commitment so deep it boggled the mind.

Linzee would not wear black. Any color but. That would show him.

Of course, like he had just said, that was a form of control too, wasn't it—in effect dictating she would not wear black, using her own stubbornness against her.

Fucking prick.

She picked up a folder from her desk and tossed it across the room. It sailed through the air, papers floating to the floor.

For a long time she stared at the mess. And then she went to get it, kneeling down on the carpeting. The position made her keenly aware of her sexual needs. The carpeting tickled her knees. Was she capable of kneeling for a man, for David in particular? It seemed impossible but why was the idea so permeating her mind, like a fine wine, clouding her thoughts, coloring her world with a tinge of red, sharp, pungent, an edge of surrender, letting go.

Dinner at the London Tea Room.

Black or not black, that was the question?

Fate would decide it. *Que sera, sera.*

For some reason, she laughed out loud, more vigorously than she had in quite some time.

* * * * *

David was playing with fire. He got off the phone and could have kicked himself. How in hell was this helping anyone? Taking Linzee to dinner, flirting with her submissive nature by telling her what to wear? This was supposed to be about Traycee.

He should be keeping things objective, working together with Linzee for her sister's sake.

Not acting like a Dominant on the prowl.

But he was on the prowl for Linzee. It was impossible not to be. Everything she did—every action, each word out of her mouth—only served to inflame him. Never had he seen a woman so desperately in need of a Master. She had been downright rude to his secretary, and she had been mouthing off constantly to him for no cause.

Linzee needed the discipline of sexual control and punishment.

It was obvious. There was no way she acted this way in the rest of her life. She was far too capable and mature. She was unwittingly trying to attract him, taunt him into taking her in hand.

She screamed out for a spanking.

And all this talk about whips and how terrible they were. She wanted it bad. Sweet temptress Linzee—insolent, proud, defiant but eerily trusting. That trust awed him. A woman like Linzee didn't push a man, especially a powerful stranger, unless she had some innate sense she was safe. She preached how dangerous BDSM was but if she really thought that she would keep her distance and be a lot more proactive.

For Traycee's sake, if nothing else. Hell, maybe Linzee knew deep down that Traycee would be fine. Maybe David was worrying too much about Traycee.

That was a danger for an unattached Dominant—assuming too much protectiveness over random women who might not need any help at all. An attachment to Linzee would certainly cure that. She was a spitfire and she would challenge him the rest of his life, if she would get close enough to let nature take its course.

Nature...

Was that what they were dealing with? Was he really in control, or was he a creature of instinct, like her? A lot would be learned tonight at the Tea Room.

Would she wear black?

If she didn't it would be a sign of defiance, as much a nod to his influence over her as if she did. Either way, he was pressing on. How she fascinated him. He was obsessed, thinking what she would look like, how beautiful she would be tonight, how she would wear her hair, what jewelry. And what he would do with her if given a chance.

He pictured her perfect ass, swaying, hips undulating, in black satin or some other soft, provocative material. A good girl, an obedient girl, for following directions. But what about the other hues she might don—green, red or white, all of them colors of disobedience? Would she not look just as fetching in her submissive insolence?

Which way would she go? And how would the "meeting" proceed, as if it could possibly stay cool and distant and impersonal where Linzee was concerned.

Fate would decide the outcome.

Unless, that is, he decided to take the law—and her—into his own hands.

* * * * *

Traycee was standing in front of Linzee's walk-in closet, hands on her slender hips, watching her big sister pick out an outfit. "David specifically said he wanted you in black, Lin. Those were your words."

Linzee held up the green dress to her slip-clad body, modeling it in the full-length mirror on the door. "I heard you the first seven hundred times, Traycee."

"Well, if you don't wear black it's going to ruin everything." Traycee pouted. "These Dominants are very particular about things."

Linzee rolled her eyes, working her way down the line. Maybe the green dress with the sequins, or the red would do? It was off the shoulder, short, smart and sexy. "You are so melodramatic. Honestly, he's just another man. He will take what he gets."

A shiver went down Linzee's spine. David was not just another man and they both knew it. As for taking what he got, she was more worried about him taking what he wanted, namely her.

"You promised you would cooperate," Traycee reminded. "You said you would do whatever it took to make it work between me and David."

Linzee laughed. "I don't recall saying all that, Traycee. Next thing you'll be expecting me to sleep with him."

"You want to, don't you?"

Linzee's mouth hung open. Out of the mouths of babes and little sisters. "Traycee Marie Kiley, have you lost your mind? I do not even like the man. I can't stand him. He's annoying, he's smug, he's..."

He's in my head so deep I can't think straight.

"You see," said Traycee. "That's my point. You hate him now but what happens when all that energy turns sexual? The two of you slugging it out, fighting to see who's on top, it will end you up in bed and by tomorrow you will hate each other for real."

"Pigs will fly before I let that man touch me," Linzee vowed. "Hell will freeze over. I will be out of work because no one will commit any crimes anymore. That's how little I care about him."

"So in that case, if you truly don't care, you will wear black, right?" said Traycee.

"For David Carlisle?" She spat her answer, annoyed that Traycee had painted her into a corner. "He can kiss my ass before I will ever follow any preference of his!"

Traycee was frowning heavily. Linzee was showing way too much emotion but how could she help it? Thinking of herself in bed with David, fighting to see who would be on top was just too erotic. She knew she would lose in short order. David would put her beneath him, to his pleasure and she would not mind one little bit. At least her body would not mind.

What would his lovemaking be like? Slow and tender, fierce and possessive? All of the above, no doubt. One thing was certain—it would be a matter of submission. David

would not give quarter. They would go to bed on his terms. For pride's sake she must resist but if he applied any more charm, or if he simply exercised the power of those eyes on her again, she could easily be lost.

This was going to be a long night. Best to get it over with as quickly and painlessly as possible.

"Okay. I'll wear black. Just to show you I *don't* care." She practically ripped the hanger off the rack. "It's just a stupid dinner. I would have picked this one anyway. It's basic black. I bet he knows that too. Seventy-eight percent of women wear black to dinner."

"You're thinking too much, Lin," said Traycee. "You always think too much."

"Shut up and find me some shoes to match," she grumbled.

"I love you too, Lin." Traycee gave her a kiss on the cheek.

"You have no clue how much you owe me," Linzee declared.

Assuming of course Traycee wasn't right about all that hate turning into its opposite. If that happened then all bets were off.

Que sera, sera, indeed.

Chapter Three

Linzee arrived at the restaurant at eight-fifteen. David rose from the table, literally stunned by her beauty. As incredible as she had looked in her work clothes, she looked ten times more splendid in her cocktail dress.

Her black cocktail dress.

His cock stiffened in response as he contemplated the possible meanings of her acquiescence to his color preference. Meanwhile, heads were turning. She was the automatic center of attraction without even trying. To David, that was the true definition of beauty.

It was a good look for her—her hair swept up, classic, with a teasing bit hanging down on either side, just in front of her ears. He wanted to nibble at the lobes, tasting the warm flesh as he whispered to her how pleased he was and what he wished to do with her.

The patent leather heels made an excellent accessory to the outfit, along with the single strand of pearls. David liked a woman to look elegant, not overdone. Not too much makeup, either. As if Linzee needed any at all.

All in all, he could not have fixed her up better himself.

Not that he would have minded having done so, exercising full control over sweet Linzee's appearance, doting over her, brushing out her long hair—a thousand strokes, interspersed with delicate, maddening kisses to her slender neck as he stood behind her.

He would touch her until she sighed.

What would such a sound be worth from a woman like Linzee Kiley? How much of his ninety-one-million-dollar net worth would he give?

The answer was every penny, though he would want to save something for the second sigh and the third after that.

Her eyes were what really blew him away, though. They were even greener than he remembered, if that was possible. It might be the lighting, though he suspected she might just be angrier this time. Indeed, there was a play about those luscious lips, indicating she intended to give him what for.

The sway of her hips said she meant business as she approached. He could smother her all over with kisses, seeing how she was trying so hard not to look sexy and pleasing to him. But please him she did. How could she help it?

Sensing his happiness, she came out swinging.

"This dress has nothing to do with you," she said as he held out her chair for her. "It's my favorite one. I always wear it to dinner. You can ask Traycee."

"It's quite beautiful," said David, affecting a neutral tone as he resumed his own seat. "Regardless of its intention."

"It doesn't have an intention. I told you that. It's just a dress."

"And this is just wine." He held up a bottle. "Would you like some?"

She shrugged, emphasizing her creamy shoulders beneath velvety spaghetti straps. "It doesn't matter to me."

He poured her a glass. "It's a Renier '47. Quite pleasant. I thought it would go nicely with the quail."

Linzee narrowed her gaze. "You ordered for me?"

"I come here quite a lot. I took the liberty, yes," he said.

"Well, you can give that liberty right back," she snapped. "I am not one of your little BDSM slave girls who gets off on having a man pick out her food for her. You can get me a menu and not one of those silly female ones without the prices on it, either, because I intend to pay for my half."

David suppressed a smile. "You really have done your research on BDSM, haven't you? You seem aware of so much of the power dynamics."

Linzee glared. Did she have any idea how absolutely adorable and sensual she was?

"I would research the devil too, if I was having dinner with him."

"You don't seem to see much of a difference between us," he mused.

"Sure I do," she said without skipping a beat. "The devil at least gives you something for your soul. Your kind just steals it outright."

"Indeed." David signaled discreetly for the waiter and asked for a menu for Linzee. "I am afraid I overstepped my authority in selecting the lady's fare," he explained.

"Sir." The man bowed in reply. Being English, he was far too disciplined and well-bred to show any reaction to the change.

He did not fail, however, to steal a quick glance at Linzee.

David could not blame him. She was the loveliest woman there by far. And her stridency only made her more desirable, at least from David's perspective.

If she was hoping to put off his dominant nature with a show of force, she was sorely mistaken. She was only waving red in front of a rather eager bull.

The waiter returned with a thickly bound leather book and handed it to Linzee. He stood by patiently as she decided.

"I'll have the quail," she said at length.

"Yes, ma'am." He bowed again, not a hint of irony in his voice.

David made a note to give the man a hefty tip.

"I picked the quail for my own reasons," she informed him.

"Just like the dress?" He couldn't help drawing the analogy.

Her hazel eyes flashed green as emerald lightning.

"Keep it up," she threatened, "and you will have no one to harass tonight but the servers."

"You forgot the quail," he quipped. "They are quite easy to harass."

Linzee sipped her wine, ignoring him. He followed suit with his own, imagining it spilling over her naked breasts, fully available for him to lick and taste as she writhed in velvet ropes, lying tied to his bed.

"So how exactly did you meet Traycee?" Linzee asked.

"She came to one of our informational meetings. She cornered me afterward, with a million questions."

Linzee smiled knowingly, lighting the room and his world too. "She is like that, enthusiastic as a puppy. You should have seen her when she was a kid, always coming to me with something, always challenging. For a while she wanted to be a zoologist and I was forever finding wildlife in the house. I drew the line at the snake in the sink."

David laughed, picturing the scene. "That must have gone over big with you."

"Scared me half to death, actually but it wasn't until she got older and the boys came along that I really started to worry. As you know, Traycee is flirtatious and quite attractive."

"You must have had them coming in droves, though I suspect some were after you too," said David, who happened to find Linzee even more beautiful than her sister.

"Me?" She raised a brow. "Hardly."

"Do you not recognize your own beauty?" David was mildly, though pleasantly, surprised.

"I don't have time for vanity," she said.

"It isn't vanity if it reflects the truth. If you had a Master, he would release that side of you."

"What would he do?" she quipped. "Whip me all the way to the makeup counter at Star's Department Store?"

"If necessary, yes. But it wouldn't take such extreme measures," he declared. "Your desire to please would be enough. You would want to be beautiful for the man before whom you knelt."

Her eyes flashed, indicating much hidden emotion. This was dangerous ground for her. She was attracted and repulsed at the same time.

"That must be quite a nice fantasy for you Dominants," she said. "A woman on her knees, living to please you."

"It's pleasant, to say the least," he acknowledged. "But a just Master knows that the gift a female gives him must be repaid. If he gains power over her, body and soul, he must exercise it responsibly, guiding and cherishing her."

"And you really think some man can be all that for a woman?"

"Yes. I have seen it with my own eyes. I have lived it."

"Sounds like megalomania to me. Picking on the weak, seeking out women who have insecurities at some level. Traycee grew up without a father so she probably yearns for some male authority figure. I tried to be both parents. It wasn't easy. But I can tell you, I never abused my position."

"I am sure you didn't. As for Traycee, it might surprise you to hear me say she doesn't need a male authority figure at all. She needs a partner in crime, someone who will explore with her. If she plays at BDSM, she is more likely to want to be the Dominant herself, holding the whip over her subordinated, willing lover."

Linzee couldn't hide her surprise. "So why are you going to mentor her?"

"Because she is stubborn and she wants to experience submission. A lot of Dominants start that way. I need to make sure she does so with someone safe, though. She's vulnerable, despite her bravado. I don't want her hurt."

Linzee drank more of her wine, bracing herself. "I didn't expect this."

"I intended to explain it all when we met for coffee the first time."

Linzee shifted. "I didn't give you much of a chance."

"No," he agreed, "you didn't. But it was I who left first, wasn't it?"

"You wanted to be in control." Her smile was small and wry, almost begrudging.

He smiled wryly. "Always."

"I think I am going to try again to talk Traycee out of this BDSM thing," said Linzee. "It's just too complicated."

"You know that won't work."

"I can handle her."

David pursed his lips. "Don't you think it's time to stop handling her and let her live her own life? You obviously did your job, better than anyone else could have. Now you can sit back and enjoy the results."

"You sound just like her. No wonder she wants you for a mentor."

"Does it frighten you?" David wondered. "The fact that your sister might not depend on you anymore? Could it be she is meeting your needs by staying under your influence?"

The remark struck a raw, throbbing nerve, just as David suspected it would. There wasn't any choice, though, not if she was going to move forward in her life.

Her lips tightened. "I know you are this mucky-muck Master but have you ever been a parent or anything close to it?"

"No," he admitted.

"Then it seems like you don't have much room to give opinions, do you?"

"I didn't give an opinion, I asked a question."

"You should be a lawyer like me," she complained. "You thrive on technicalities."

"And why did you choose the law," he asked. "Was it your desire for justice or do you just like the cages?"

She looked at him in fury. "You are way out of line."

"It was just another question," he pressed, determined to break through her shell. "A simple 'yes' or 'no'."

"I have a question for you, then," she said. "Why are you such an insensitive prick?"

"It's part of my dominant nature," he replied. "A weakness, I suppose. Though certain kinds of women are turned on by a man who says what he thinks, who doesn't walk on eggshells around them. Some women want to know their place. When they are desired, they expect to have the clothes torn from their bodies, a hard thrusting cock between their legs. And when they are displeasing, they expect their lover's intimate, punishing hand on their bottoms. They want to be kept, Linzee, jealously guarded...enslaved."

"I don't have to put up with this." Linzee pulled her napkin from her lap and tossed it on the table.

"Is it me you are running from or yourself?" he asked.

She was as good as his. It was only a matter of time.

"I'm not running, you smug son of a bitch. I'm walking out, just like you did to me at the coffee shop."

David hit her hard with the truth. "You are the submissive, Linzee, not your sister. That is why I disturb you so much. Me in particular because I awaken your true passions. You look at me and you see yourself obeying. I put females like you in bondage. I give them discipline and purpose. That's why you fight me so hard because the minute you stop you and I both know what will happen. You will have no choice but to offer yourself and I will take you."

Linzee reached for her glass, predictably, to toss the wine in his face.

He was far ahead of her, like any good Dominant.

"Don't do it," he said.

Her hand retracted from the crystal as though shocked. His anticipation of her action, not to mention her own obedient response seemed to catch her off guard.

David pounced, taking advantage of her momentary disorientation.

"You have been having fantasies," he said, operating on Dominant's intuition. "How long now?"

"Since we met," she whispered.

"That's all? Never before?"

"No," she said. "Never."

Interesting, he thought. Her submission had been lying dormant all this time.

"Have you masturbated while fantasizing?"

"I'm not answering that."

"It's a simple question." He broke it down, beginning her training without her even knowing it. "Did you put your fingers inside yourself, Linzee? Did you deal with your arousal and make yourself come?"

She looked about, eyes darting, excited, embarrassed. "Someone will hear."

He leaned forward, taking her chin between thumb and forefinger. "This is who you are, just focus on my words. Did you stroke your hot pussy?"

"You're a stranger," she rasped, her eyes forcibly locked on his.

"Seeing me at the café excited you." He took a different angle. "What specifically?"

"The waitress," Linzee confessed. "The way you talked to each other."

Now they were getting somewhere. "Excellent. Did you imagine me dominating her? Did you think of her submitting?"

Linzee was silent. He took it as a yes.

"Tell me one thing you imagined between us."

"Do you really want to know?" Her voice had an otherworldly character. She was slipping into that inner erotic world known as sub space. "I imagined that she opened her top for you. She offered her breasts. They were full and very pretty. You told her they were nice."

"And then what?"

"You touched her nipples, you made them hard. They were pink as coral and she let out a little moan when you rubbed your fingertips over her."

David sat back against the seat, releasing her for the moment. "You touched your own nipples at the same time?"

Linzee lowered her eyes to the table.

He called her name, sharply. She jolted, looking at him.

"I asked you a question, girl."

Gone was her anger. "Yes," she said, caught up in the spell of his dominance. "I touched my nipples."

"Do so now, show me," he said.

"You're mad," she exclaimed.

"No one will see. Put your fingertip to each nipple through your dress," he coaxed. "You want to, you need to."

Linzee swallowed. Trancelike she raised her hand. Licking her lips, eyes darting, she tapped her left breast, dead center.

She gasped.

David's cock strained against the material of his clothing. Never had he taken so much pleasure in the act of control. "The other one," he prompted.

Linzee obliged, shuddering. How much farther would she go? How much did he want to push her their first time?

First time...did he intend to have her more than once?

"Tell me more of your fantasy, Linzee."

"The waitress got down on her knees," Linzee replied. "She begged to suck you."

"And did I allow her to?"

"Y-yes," she said, her voice catching. "You...you made her crawl under the table on her hands and knees to service you."

"Did you imagine me coming in her mouth?"

Linzee's cheeks flushed. "Yes," she said.

"She served me as a slave girl," David supplied. "She submitted completely."

"It was just a fantasy," Linzee said, trying to distance herself from her incriminating words.

"Yes, it is," he said. "Though fantasies speak to what we want sexually, do they not?"

She shrugged.

"You did well," he told her. "Responding as I asked."

David intended his words to reinforce her slavery. A few well placed words would do more than a week in a man's chains.

She did not reply. On the other hand, she did not offer a snappy comeback either.

A big step had been taken.

"Are you ready for the original question now, Linzee? Did you pleasure yourself while fantasizing about me?"

She took her wine and drank half of the glass. He drank some of his own. Something had happened between them, intense and powerful. They were in uncharted territory. There was fight left in her but how long until she found her sea legs again?

He refilled her wineglass. The work would continue inside her. They would speak of normal things even as the reality of what she had just done began to sink in.

She had just submitted, revealing her deepest intimacies.

It was more profound than if he had touched her body, though he would have that too, and soon.

Linzee could barely touch the quail. Her body was hot, squirmy, confused. Her pussy was dripping wet, though her mind screamed with indignation. Why was she still here, putting up with this man and his arrogant, inappropriate ways?

It was like David had glued her ass to the seat somehow. She had been on the verge of leaving earlier and he had roped her back in.

*Roped...*bad choice of words.

Her body felt confined enough as it was, hotly held, by his way of speaking, the power of his presence. He had dared to call her submissive and she had been too

fascinated to resist. The door instantly opened to a dark, mysterious, perhaps bottomless world.

She had yet to regain her footing.

David Carlisle knew that she was sexually aroused by him and now he had a window into a fantasy of him with another woman.

That gave him power.

And she had...nothing.

Why had she opened herself up? She had to know what this would mean, giving him the control? Questions filled her mind.

Did he like her? Did he care? Was he just doing his mentoring thing? Or was he taunting her, getting even with her for being such a bitch to him.

Linzee Kiley was at a man's mercy.

She was furious, outraged...and so very, desperately aroused.

He could take her to bed and she wouldn't resist. He could order her there. He could snap his fingers and she would crawl beneath the covers, ready for anything.

It seemed like he was interested, would he make her wait?

Linzee hoped he would not make her beg.

"How long have you been a lawyer?" David asked, refilling her glass yet again.

"Ten years," she answered, trying not to think too much about his hard cock thrusting between her legs, filling the void he himself had created.

Questions...

Would she have to take a whipping before sex? Would he tie her down or put her in chains? Would he make her tell more of her fantasies?

"Is it very rewarding?"

"What?" Linzee asked.

"Being a lawyer." He brought her back to the conversation. "Do you enjoy it?"

"It has its moments."

Linzee thought about rewards and punishments too, both crucial in BDSM. David had made her reveal her secrets tonight. He had tricked her into obedience. Would he give her a reward?

What a strange feeling. It was like he now owned that part of her that liked to be good, dreamed of being naughty too. But how big a part was it and how much of the rest of her would it devour if unleashed?

"I admire defense attorneys for their discipline," David remarked. "It must not be easy, advocating for persons you suspect are guilty?"

Discipline.

Slaves had rules, Masters enforced them. What rules did David have for his submissives and how did he keep them in line? Blast it, why was he insisting on talking all around the central issue between them? What was his game?

"I'm not all that disciplined," she demurred. "I just try not to get too bogged down in all the corruption."

"How do you relax?" he asked.

"Relax?"

A loaded question...

Not by dining with sexy-as-hell Dominants who have me on the edge of my seat with sexual frustration, that was for sure.

"Yes, relax," he teased. "It's a five-letter word somewhere between relegate and relay in the dictionary. Or is it a four-letter word for you?"

"I do crossword puzzles. I go to a movie with Traycee, sometimes."

He was studying her, his expression both bemused and intrigued, as if he had plans for her.

"What?" she demanded.

"Who was Michael?" he asked, quite out of the blue.

The question was a two-by-four aimed at her already teetering defenses. "We don't need to go there," she said flatly.

"Fine," he said.

She arched a brow. "You mean you aren't going to argue with me?"

"I never argue with you," he said.

She frowned. Was that true? Was it all on her side, the frantic resistance and pushing?

She took a couple of bites. Her throat was dry. The quail was good but it felt wrong, too silent between them. Was he offended somehow? She really shouldn't care but it was hard not to, damn it.

"You must have things you keep to yourself, right?" she said.

He smiled. "Linzee, you don't need to apologize for what you do or don't tell me. I have no hold over you."

When he spoke the word hold, a hot chill went down her spine. Her body responded, nipples throbbing. Did she want him to have a hold?

"Of course you don't," she said defiantly. "And I wasn't apologizing, for your information."

"What would you call it, then? You want to please me, obviously, and you are uncertain if I am displeased because you refused to answer my question. Rest assured, though, I am not the sort of man to leave things in doubt or play games. If your behavior is unsatisfactory, I will let you know in no uncertain terms."

The blood pounded in her ears. She felt the bonds constricting, invisible ropes all over, between her legs, binding her breasts, enforcing her nudity and absolute vulnerability. "You do that," she scoffed. "And you will find out just how much I don't care."

He didn't bother to reply. She fumed, wanting him to keep fighting with her. It felt safer, somehow.

What was it he had said about her being afraid to stop fighting with him, for fear of the submission to follow?

According to him there were certain kinds of women who were turned on by a man who said what he thought, who didn't walk on eggshells. David certainly said what he thought and he didn't give a damn who he offended. His words burned in her brain.

Some women want to know their place. When they are desired, they expect to have the clothes torn from their bodies, a hard thrusting cock between their legs. And when they are displeasing, they expect their lover's intimate, punishing hand on their bottoms. They want to be kept, Linzee, jealously guarded...enslaved.

Ridiculous. Absurd. How had he found out about Michael in the first place? He had a lot of nerve. Traycee must have told him. Darn that girl and her mouth, she never could keep family business private the way it should be.

"Is the quail satisfactory?" he inquired.

"What do you care?" she hissed. "I'm submissive, my opinion doesn't matter."

Linzee took a breath. She was losing her cool. That could only play into his hands.

"To the right Dominant it most certainly would matter," he said. "The right Dominant would put you at the center of his universe. Your needs, your passion and growth would consume his every waking moment."

Linzee's heart melted in reply. Why did he have to put things so poetically?

"Sounds peachy." She hid her feelings with sarcasm. "If they ever need a BDSM greeting card writer, you should sign up."

"They should have cards. BDSM is about love, Linzee, haven't you grasped that? It is the highest expression of love between two people. It requires a level of trust, a spirit of openness and play no ordinary relationship could handle."

"All that and whips and chains too," she quipped.

The intensity of his eyes—calming and deep—combined with the heat of his voice, robbed her limbs of their remaining strength.

At this point he spoke the magic words, the unsaid implication hovering between them. "If you want to experience the physical side of all this, Linzee, I can be the one."

She attempted to laugh it off. "What are you talking about?"

"I am talking about your growth, Linzee. You are curious and I am a safe place to experience things."

Her breath quickened. She tried not to pant. "I will not let you dominate me, are you insane? All that talk of owning and possessing, it's...it's..."

The words escaped her.

"It will be a sensual experience," he said. "I promise, no more than you can handle. You will have a safe word. If at any point it becomes too much, you can stop me. Otherwise you will be free to express yourself. I will bind you safely, you can struggle, plead, run every gamut of emotion. Curse me, beg me."

Linzee bit at her lower lip. She wanted it, oh, how she craved it. "This wasn't in the cards. You were supposed to be showing me how you mentor a woman."

"I think you're ready to skip ahead to something else, don't you?"

"I don't know what to think."

"What does your body tell you? If your panties are dry, if you're thinking about getting home in time to catch the late-night talk shows, then this isn't for you. On the other hand..." He trailed off, taunting.

"If on the other hand, I'm wet, it's all for you, right?" she supplied. "You and your sadistic little desires?"

"They are big desires and a woman is never aroused for another, she is aroused for herself. This isn't real slavery, Linzee. I have no power you don't give me and I can't force a damn thing. But if you want to crawl to a man, if you want to be with someone as turned on to own you as you are to feel what it's like to be owned, then look no further."

"I'll have to think about it," she said.

"No."

Linzee was taken aback. "What do you mean no? You just said this is all my decision, my power."

"Of course it is but I am not required to be subject to your whims. In fact, as a Dominant, I refuse to be. Come with me tonight, explore your limits, or leave me be."

"Leave you be?" she exclaimed. "But I didn't start anything."

"Regardless, at this point you have one and only one chance to be with me. Take it or leave it."

"Well, that is hardly fair," she said. "You have sprung so much on me. Surely you can give me a day or two to consider?"

David's will was iron, his features unmoved. It made her want him all the more. "That is not acceptable. You will kneel to me tonight," he declared. "Or not at all."

The waiter came for their plates. David ordered espresso for them both.

Linzee didn't even pretend to be able to make any choices on her own. Her heart slammed in her chest until she couldn't breathe, until she couldn't hear anything else.

"I will give it a try," she said at last, desperate to end this tension. "I can always use the safe word. Anyway, what I learn will help me better know what Traycee's going to be up to."

David said nothing.

"Did you hear me?" she said.

His expression made her squirm. "Should I be impressed, Linzee? Should I fall down on my knees in gratitude that you are deigning to 'try' a little kinkiness with me?"

Her lower lip trembled. "You can be a really cruel man, you know that?"

"I'm a Dominant, Linzee."

"Same thing."

He went back to brooding, or whatever he was doing. What did he want from her? Wasn't she playing by his rules? Why did it seem like he was changing them midstream?

"If you expect me to beg for it, I am not going to," she said.

"What I expect," he said, "is for you to show the proper reverence. BDSM might seem like a lark to you but it is my way of life. If you come with me tonight it's because you take it seriously. If you can't do that, then don't waste our time."

"Good. I won't," she declared.

Arrogant, touchy bastard.

"Very well," he said.

"So I guess this proves you wrong, huh?"

"What proves me wrong?"

"I resisted you, so that means I must be dominant, not submissive."

"Sorry to disillusion, you," he told her. "But you're not behaving like a Dominant. You are behaving like a brat."

"Excuse me?" She had to hear this.

"When a sub is overwrought, unable either to express her needs or acquiesce properly to dominant authority she screams out for help, acting out, begging correction."

"Oh, what a lot of horseshit," Linzee said. "You're the one being a brat, pouting because I'm not groveling or whatever."

"I do not appreciate that kind of language in a submissive," he said. "If you choose to come with me tonight, you can count on punishment."

"Well, there's some incentive," she said.

"You will take a spanking, bare-assed over my knee."

"Would have taken one," she corrected. "If I had not already chosen not to go with you, remember?"

Her ass was already tingling. The way he was talking made her wonder if she was as good as in his hands and just didn't know it?

"I really don't want to discuss this anymore," he said. "I am not going to provide further titillation by allowing you to fantasize about what might or might not happen. I am not here for your amusement. You now have two revised options. Either terminate our relationship here and now or else submit yourself to the spanking I feel you deserve."

Everything disappeared from her mind but the image of his hot hand crashing down, palm first, again and again as he held her firmly, wet and wriggling, moaning and maybe even crying.

"I have never been spanked. Not even as a child."

"This isn't for children, Linzee. It's extremely adult. You will want sex afterward. You will be in a place of surrender you can scarcely imagine. You will ache for slavery, complete subordination to male will. It will be a short-lived sensation probably but it will be more intense than anything you have ever felt erotically."

"You can't know that," she said.

And yet he had seemed to guess so much else...

"I wouldn't take you, though," he said, ignoring her. "I would force you to wait until a time and place of my choosing. That's the only way you would truly know I am Master. It would be hard on you, Linzee. I might not take you at all. It would depend on your performance."

"Performance? What are you talking about?"

His smile was cold. She hated that it heated her up all the more. "Your performance during punishment. I like hot, eager girls over my knee. I like them very, very responsive."

"I'm a woman, not a girl. The only response I would have would be to call you names and yell ouch," she said.

"Oh, you would be surprised." The smile turned to a leer, still hard as ice. "Submissives get pretty turned on by beatings. As for you being a woman, I know that, trust me. But I also know you yearn to be someone's girl, totally loved and controlled."

She sucked at her lower lip. He was like a magnet drawing her. "I ought to let you do it to me just to prove it won't have any effect."

Oh, that's a brilliant idea, Linzee! Why don't you just throw yourself at him, bottom first.

"I like experiments." His eyes gleamed.

"I bet you do. Fortunately, there's nowhere to do it around here and I have no intention of getting you anywhere near a bedroom."

"There is another possibility," he said mysteriously. "Did you bring your own car here?"

"I took a taxi," she said. "It's too hard to park around here at night. What are you getting at?"

He smiled, accentuating his dimples. Why did he keep getting more and more handsome the more dangerous he became?

"Just an idea I had," he said. "A way we can attend to matters while I drive you home. Do you live close by?"

"About a half-hour."

He nodded. "That will do. I have a limo."

She swallowed. A half-hour of subjection to the hand of David Carlisle in the back of a dark, moving limousine. It might as well be an eternity.

"What about the driver?"

"What about him?" he asked. "Do you intend to scream very loud?"

"Depends how hard you smack me," she replied, hardly believing she was in the middle of such a conversation. "Seriously, does there have to be an audience?"

"There is a barrier between the front and rear seats. The vehicle has internal soundproofing."

"But he will suspect something."

"He is entirely discreet and sympathetic to the lifestyle."

"In that case, we can let him spank me," she said.

He arched a brow. Was there a tinge of jealousy behind those deep blue eyes? "I think I can manage."

"I wouldn't want to trouble you. That's what servants are for."

"If I didn't know better," he declared, "I would say you are baiting me."

"Just looking for ways to avoid you."

"Too late for that," he said, his voice sinking to that low timbre that made her toes curl.

"Thanks for the warning. Shall we get the check?"

"All in good time. Finish your espresso first."

"Was that an order?"

"You want it to be?" He continued the banter.

"Hardly." She raised the cup to trembling lips. The drink was hot and strong. It awoke her nerves, aroused the fibers of her being.

For the first time she was allowing herself to go down a road whose destination she did not know. This was supposed to be a clinical experiment but anything involving a woman bare-assed and a man's hand was liable to go anywhere.

A spanking.

Could it be as bad as all that?

Probably.

The worst part would be afterward.

What if she wanted more? Touch, pleasure...

The choice, the power was not hers.

For having given it to him, it would henceforth be used against her.

He had already said he wouldn't take her tonight. No sex, not until – or when – he decided he wanted it. What if it were days, weeks later?

She would say no, whenever he called, just to spite him.

"We need a safe word," he said as they left the restaurant. There was a slight chill in the air. She leaned against him.

"How about quail?" she suggested.

He laughed, the sound strangely soothing her soul as it reverberated in the night air. "Perfect."

"So where is this mobile torture chamber of yours?" she asked.

David pointed to a long black car across the street, a suited driver holding the door open. "Right there. I keep the burning coals in the trunk for added convenience."

Her knees nearly gave way. She stopped in her tracks for a second. It was a little too real all of a sudden.

"Problem, Linzee?"

She was looking at the driver, the one who was "sympathetic to the lifestyle" of BDSM. The man was tall, lean, with a thin mustache. She could picture him in a leather vest, a panting female at his feet. "I am too embarrassed, I think. How can I face that man, knowing that he knows?"

David stroked her arms. "If you're embarrassed, Linzee, use it to arouse yourself. Then overcome it and grow from it."

"I-I don't know."

He raised her chin with his finger. "Do you wish to use your safe word?"

"I would feel like a wimp," she declared. "And wouldn't that totally end things between us if I backed out?"

"No. It would be my responsibility to try it a different way before we gave up."

"I can go forward like this," she decided. "But I need a push."

"Very well." His hand caressed her hip. "It is my desire, Linzee, that you take your punishment as prescribed."

His arms opened for a hug. She fell against him.

"Thanks," she breathed, focusing for the moment, on his will, indomitable, unshakable. "That was what I needed...exactly."

"You are welcome."

For a few moments he held her tightly, caressing her hair. Then he took her hand in readiness to guide her across the street. "Enough talking," he growled, his voice thick. "I need you over my lap...now."

She swooned from his admission of desire. Could it be he wanted her for more than a spanking? It scared her that it should matter but it did.

Very, very much.

Chapter Four

Linzee Kiley was his, at least for this short while in the backseat of his limousine. It was real. All his fantasies were turned to flesh. She was sitting next to him as Max, the chauffeur, pulled the car out into traffic.

He could sense her excitement, her arousal, her apprehension.

"What should I do first?" she asked, breathless.

He held her hand. He wanted their time to last. "Let's just wait a few minutes for our food to digest."

She laughed, the sound delightful as music despite her nervousness. "What? Is this like swimming? You have to wait an hour first?"

"Yes and we are going to wear life preservers too," he said.

Never had David been able to joke with a submissive like this. It was so much fun, but soon enough the edge would come, the pleasure and the sting of erotic pain.

He had told her he wouldn't take her. How was he going to resist once he saw that glorious bottom? Caressed it and spanked it? He was a strong man but no one was that strong.

Already he was showing the strain. Why had he reacted so strongly to her original offer to experiment with BDSM? Did it bother him that much that she might see it as only a game, something she could engage in dispassionately and walk away from?

A Master shouldn't have his heart on his sleeve. That was his power, always being less needy than his slave. He ought to be aloof, easily worshipped. But David didn't want to be above Linzee, he wanted to be with her, he wanted to touch her and feel her skin, limbs interlocked and bodies pulsing against each other.

The sensation was distinctly non-BDSM, remarkably vanilla.

Fascinating.

Max drove them onto the main highway, around the edge of the city. The lights of the skyscrapers were only faintly visible through the tinted window glass. Privacy was crucial for David's games. He liked the element of public play but he had no wish to subject himself or any submissive to undue scrutiny.

Mariella, his last female companion, had delighted in playing in the car. She liked things fast and wild. He should have kept closer tabs. She had gotten access to too much of his money, using it for all the wrong things.

"Have you been a Dominant long, David?" Linzee asked.

He was conscious of her thigh brushing his. "My whole adult life," he replied. "BDSM has been in me as long as I have been aware of myself as a sexual being."

"Wow," she marveled. "So, did you tie up your prom dates?"

He laughed. "Hardly. It wasn't proper where I grew up, still isn't. I dated in the so-called normal way, went for normal sex in college but in my mind I was playing the Master, imagining them as slaves."

"How sad you had to pretend," she said.

"Yes." David had shared this many times with many people but never had anyone seemed to understand like Linzee. It was as if she wanted to be there, living with his pain, healing him.

"But later you found outlets?" she asked.

"I was able to choose and control my environment," he acknowledged. "I obtained the power to pursue my interests."

"Like spanking female bottoms?" Her smile was almost shy. How capable she was of the full range of human emotions, he marveled.

"Precisely."

"Have you had many submissives in your life?"

He met her eyes. "To different degrees. I used to want to find my soul mate, now I wonder if such a thing is possible."

"You don't think there's one right sub for every Dom?"

"Perhaps. I don't know that nature is so perfectly arranged. And if it is, mankind has done quite a lot to upset the balance." David patted his lap, indicating it was time. "Come on, we've both put this off long enough."

Linzee hesitated. "I'm a little afraid of pain," she admitted.

He moved into tender, Dominant mode. "I will build gradually. It won't be such a shock. And you have the safe word."

"Will this be...over my clothes?" she asked.

His pulse raced. "I'm open to negotiations."

"It's not a negotiation," she said quickly. "You spank me through my dress or not at all."

"But you already asked my intentions," he pointed out logically.

She frowned. "You know what I mean, I was just being polite."

David felt the thrill of power. Her submission hung in the air. He toyed with it like a cat. "I will consider spanking you through your panties but the dress will be raised."

Her eyes widened. "You aren't seeing my underwear."

"To keep your panties you will be required to ask me nicely," he continued, ignoring her protests.

"I will not ask to keep my own underwear on," she huffed.

"It could always be ripped from your cringing body," he said.

She slid away from him on the seat. "You wouldn't dare."

"I don't say things I don't mean, Linzee. You may either ask me to let you keep your panties or I will take them away from you."

"You are not a nice man," she said.

David moved in. He intended to pin her to the back of the seat but she slid down. He ended up on top of her.

"Get off me," she cried.

It would be a disaster to back down. On the other hand, how was he going to keep this from turning sexual? His cock was already pressing hard to her pelvis, craving nude contact and penetration. "Your only relief is the safe word, Linzee, those are the rules. Otherwise I do with you as I please."

Her pupils were dilated, her hair was wild and her lips were full and ripe. He had no doubt he would find her panties more than a little damp. "I'm not backing down, you bastard."

"Then you will submit." His knee went between her thighs. He pulled up her dress and took hold of her panties by the waistband. "Beg me to let you keep them."

"You said I had to ask, not beg."

"I changed my mind."

"Motherfucker."

"That's it," he growled. "No more playing."

"Wait," she exclaimed. "Please, don't take them."

"Are you begging me?"

"Yes."

"Say it."

"I beg you," she said, her eyes burning like lasers. "Don't take my panties off."

"Good girl." He released the waistband and patted her pussy.

"Fuck you," she said, bucking underneath him.

He found her nipple, pinching it through the material of her dress and bra. "I wouldn't do that if I were you."

"Ow," she cried. "That hurts."

"And it will keep hurting until you obey."

Linzee stopped resisting. Her acquiescence nearly drove him over the edge. He didn't know how much longer he would be able to hold out. "Pucker your lips," he ordered.

"Why?"

"You know why, girl. I'm going to kiss you."

"What the hell does that have to do with spanking?"

"A whole lot if you keep sassing me. And if the spanking doesn't work, I can arrange for you to get up close and personal with my belt."

"You have no right," she protested.

"I have every right." He pushed her underwear aside, fingering her sopping pussy, each stroke only driving her farther over the edge. "Your body's already surrendered. I can own you, Linzee, if I want."

"Nooo..."

"Come," he commanded. "Come for me."

"You can't make me!" She thrashed her head but he had found her clitoris with the tip of his finger. Her pleasure center was firmly under his control. She pulsed against him. He could feel her desperation, her passion about to explode.

"It wasn't a request, Linzee."

Her body quaked from deep inside, his dominant words providing the extra stimulation. She laid her hands back over her head on the seat, letting go as the orgasm overcame her. She was incredible, her body sweetly writhing.

"That's it, girl, fuck my hand."

Gritting her teeth, she moved against him, maximizing her pleasure. He took her breast in his hand, molding, possessing. More than anything he wanted his cock inside her but he told himself that was a line he must not cross. Not yet, at least.

She continued to drip over his hand, her fluids copious, fragrant and inviting. He wanted to taste her but that too would have to wait. There were procedures to follow with a sub.

As if he could claim to be doing any of this by the book.

Linzee moaned for him, rewarding his hard work. She would be incredible in bed, properly collared. Her pussy would clench a man's cock, so hot and wet and receptive. Not now, he repeated in his brain.

The waves passed through her. He continued to massage her breast, stimulating the tiny bud of her nipple. He wanted it in his mouth so he could make her cry out, even scream under the varying pressures, from passionate suckling to mild bites of his eager teeth. She would give him everything, the pleasure of her every response. Oh, yes, he would find out what this luxurious body was truly capable of. Not yet...

He continued to press her swollen, blood-engorged clitoris. At first she sighed and went limp but very quickly she roused for more. This time he would deny her.

"Across my lap, sweetheart," he said. "It's time."

He had called her sweetheart.

"David," she murmured, her voice bedroom soft. "Do I still have to be spanked?"

"Yes." His will must be iron. No turning back on his word, no letting her seduce him with her pretty ways and phenomenal body. "Now, more than ever."

He helped her into position. Her pelvis was hot as sin against him. His cock surged in response. It took every fiber of his will to raise his hand. If he did not show her discipline at this exact moment, he never would.

The hard smack of David's palm against her ass awoke Linzee from her state of post-orgasmic bliss.

"Ouch!" she cried out. "That hurt!"

"During discipline you will address me as 'Sir'," he informed her.

She tried to get off his lap. His cock was pressing so hard against her they were practically copulating. "I am not playing your little ego games. Let me up, you prick."

The second spank was much harder. She gasped in shock, collapsing.

He was really doing it, disciplining her behind. Even through her skirt and panties, the intensity was overwhelming. Her heart thundered. "I'm serious," she said more cautiously, breathing through the throbbing heat of his blow. "That's a little too much."

"You are doing just fine," he said.

Twice more his hand descended, palm cupped, hard and punishing. She tried not to squirm. There was the obvious pain but there was something else too. It was like he was pulling at cords to her pussy, finding a new and fresh way to arouse her without even touching her sex.

"How many times do you intend to do this?" she asked.

"As many as I feel like," he said. "And the total grows by one every time you fail to call me Sir."

Linzee winced. "Do you want me to beg...Sir?"

"No, I want you to suffer."

"You can't mean that...Sir."

He laughed, the sound darkly stimulating. Oh god, she wanted him to fuck her. This man was so incredibly raw and intense. What would it be like to be made love to by such a man? It would be exactly as he wanted, she would hold nothing back. He would teach her what it felt like to have her body used as an instrument of pleasure.

"Can't I?"

She moaned as he pinched the rounded flesh of her ass. She was so sore already. "Please, Sir," she whined.

"Take it, Linzee."

"Y-yes, Sir." Her pussy overflowed. He was dominating her utterly.

"Pleasure and pain, Linzee. A Dominant gives both."

She began to writhe on his lap, pushing down on his cock. "I-I can't control myself, Sir."

"No, you can't," he agreed. "But I can."

She cried out as he inserted two fingers deep into her sex, claiming her.

Efficiently, he began to stimulate her, moving his fingers like a cock, in and out, rhythmically. "You are denied permission to come this time," he said casually.

Linzee clenched her fists. "Oh, David, no."

"You didn't call me, Sir."

Damn his rules and damn him too.

"Why can't we just have sex?" she exclaimed. "We both want it."

"I'm not having sex with you, Linzee, ever."

Her heart clenched. She had not realized until that moment how much it meant to her. Somewhere in the back of her mind she had been counting on it, fervently. "Why in hell not?"

"I can't have sex with you because you are sex," he explained. "You're a force of nature requiring taming."

Linzee resisted the unusual compliment. "If you're gay or something, just say so."

The statement was a ridiculous one, given the hard-on in his pants. Was she really that anxious to egg him on? Was she the brat he said she was, craving domination?

"We could settle that question by putting you on your knees," he said, invoking a delicious image of her sucking and licking his hard cock. "I won't do that, though you most certainly belong there. As it is, much remains to be seen."

"What are you talking about?" she said, having long since forgotten to call him "Sir". He patted her bottom. "On how good a girl you are. If you are obedient and prove worthy, I might choose to make use of you."

Linzee's lust surged, along with a wave of rebellion. It was one thing to imagine herself an object of pleasure but it was quite another to have a man say it aloud. "No one uses me. I'm not a plaything."

She tried to rise but he pushed her back down, his hand at her back. "Sure you are, Linzee. Nature created you for male pleasure. The way you look, talk, act, even how you think, is designed to attract a male who will conquer you. And you won't be happy until one has."

"I am very happy alone," she insisted.

David raised his hand and smacked her seven times in succession. "That was for each of the seven times you didn't call me Sir."

"No more, Sir, no more," she pleaded.

"Are you begging to get off my lap?"

"Yes," she spat, hating herself for her acquiescence. "I beg you, Sir, let me up."

Why wasn't she using the safe word and telling him where to get off?

"Are you going to be a good girl?"

She tried not to respond as he ran his finger over the edge of her pussy lips. "Y-yes," she moaned. "Sir."

He removed his well-lubricated finger and pushed it up against her anal opening. "How good?"

"Oh god," she groaned as he invaded her.

"I asked you a question, Linzee."

She felt the pressure as he claimed her virgin hole. Something in her gave way. "V-very good, Sir."

He was inside her up to his knuckle. "Still feel like denying you were made for male pleasure?"

She thrashed her head. "I don't know, Sir."

"You know. You just won't admit it."

He put another finger against her clitoris.

Linzee broke out in a cold sweat, hot chills running up and down her spine.

"I wanted you the moment I saw you," he confessed. "The harder you fought, the more I was determined."

Linzee was on the verge of confessing things of her own—passions, dreams. This she could not afford. She had to be strong for Traycee if not for herself. As much as she wanted to see what lay on the other side of the next surrender, she had to resist.

It broke her heart.

"Quail," she said, voice cracking.

David released her instantly, true to his word. He sat back in the seat, silent, reflective. Was he very unhappy with her?

Her eyes watered up. "I hope you understand I'm just not ready for this sort of thing. To be honest, I don't think Traycee is either."

"You will tell her about your spanking?" he asked.

Linzee reacted in fury, rebellion...and a lust so deep and hot it would melt the pits of hell. "I will tell her nothing of the sort. And it wasn't *my* spanking. You came up with the whole thing."

"It was administered to your ass," he pointed out.

"Yeah, well, I would like to see you take some smacks to your bare behind," she snapped. "See how you like it."

Why was she so angry? This was just an experiment, a game between them, they had both agreed and now it was over.

"You are welcome to try," he said.

Like that wouldn't be the mismatch of the century.

"Trust me," she said. "I won't get close enough to you again."

"If you say so," said David.

She frowned. His cockiness was making her want him even more and that was not a good thing. "I do say so."

"In that case, it's a closed discussion."

"Good." She waited for the other shoe to drop and presently it did.

"Incidentally," he said, his eyes revealing the heat of his need. "You are officially under consideration."

"Under consideration for what? What are you talking about?" she demanded.

"To be under consideration means that you are officially being courted by a Dom who is deciding if he will have you or not."

A moment of shock preceded her inevitable reaction. "Of all the delusional, egotistical statements. Do you think I have the least interest in being your submissive—assuming such a thing even exists?"

"Submission does exist. For women like you. And you are interested, Linzee. You'll fight it but you'll come when I call." He seized her by the shoulders and drew her in close. Her gasps of protest dissolved in a fresh kiss. This one felt familiar, disturbingly so, as if he had been making prey of her for years.

He took his time, like a lazy jungle cat, plundering her mouth unapologetically. Her yielding was deep, spontaneous and real. He bruised her lips, forced her tongue into submission. And still she moaned for more, opening herself, pressing her body to his.

Fuck. David was right, he could take what he wanted and they both knew it.

He took her hand and put it on his crotch. She drew a tight breath, feeling his large, powerful erection—pure and masculine. "Feel that," he said. "I'm a dominant man. I give women rules and I expect them to be obeyed. While you're under consideration, no one touches you. You're mine if I want you. Otherwise you wait for release, unsatisfied."

She could feel him all right and right at this instant she wanted to be tasting him too, breathing him in. Better still, succumbing to the sensations of penetration as he rammed himself home inside her aching empty sex.

"You can't control me," she said, voice trembling, barely audible. She had nothing to back her argument, no strength left and no will.

David, on the other hand, seemed just to be getting started. "I already do. If I choose you, you will be my slave, Linzee. For now, no one else touches you. And you won't touch yourself either. Say it. Say the words."

She ground her teeth, determined to hold out.

His fingers slipped inside her panties, between her thighs to her damp center, finding her ultimate weak spot. "Say the words," he repeated, this time employing the tone of voice that made her limbs weak as butter. "And spread your legs."

She felt them open obediently, immediately moving against his hand. "No one touches me," she sighed. "And...and I won't touch myself."

"You orgasm for me alone," he confirmed. "I will know if you try to cheat. I will know it when I look in your eyes."

He brought her to the brink and left her there, his finger barely grazing her clitoris, sending seismic waves up and down her spine, turning her belly inside out. She

whimpered piteously as he removed his fingers from inside her panties and raised them to her lips.

She cleaned them, sucking off the pungent liquids of her own pussy.

The car stopped a few moments later. They were at her apartment building.

"That's all for now, Linzee." He dismissed her, administering another kiss to her lips – light brushing, almost chaste, though the heat of it set her dry insides to burning.

"When will I see you again?" she asked, aghast at the sudden flood of dependency and neediness.

"Just focus on being a good girl, Linzee." He touched her cheek with his fingertips. "Obedience is your best friend right now."

In a blur, Linzee stepped from the limousine. Something was terribly off-kilter, upside down. She should be completely and thoroughly enraged by what had happened. Instead she felt like a young woman home from a first date, lightheaded, almost giddy.

It made no sense.

After all, a strange man had just spanked her in his car, putting her over his knee, invading her pussy, making her come, making her beg and lick his fingers before finally announcing her candidacy as his own personal slave.

A sex slave, to be precise. There was an honor she would be thrilled to never win. The last thing on earth she wanted was to be owned and controlled by a man like him – haughty, uncompromising...sexy as hell.

Linzee barely acknowledged the doorman. She just wanted to get upstairs to her apartment, crawl under the covers and never come out.

Maybe she would take a warm bath instead, soothe her body, let the bubbles carry her away. She could close her eyes, slip into a place of pleasant fantasy and never come back.

Linzee frowned. She had just been thinking about masturbation but David had told her not to touch herself. The prick! He was truly deluded. She would play with herself just to show him up.

Her cell phone rang just as she got in the elevator. It was Traycee.

"You are officially fired as my sister," Traycee announced.

"What happened to hello?" Linzee quipped.

"Hello?" Traycee shot back. "I'll give you hello. You just couldn't help yourself could you? You had to ruin things with David."

Linzee's stomach wrenched. "He...he called you already? What did he say?"

"He said he cannot be my mentor."

"Did he give a reason?" Linzee winced in anticipation of the reply.

"He said he has taken on the training of a new slave girl, so he doesn't have time for mentoring."

The elevator nearly dropped from underneath her. She was under consideration he'd said. Had he decided to possess her already? He had only dropped her off a couple of minutes ago.

"That's a lie," said Linzee. "He has no slave girl to train."

"Of course it's a lie," said Traycee. "He's letting me down easy. What I want to know is what did you say to him? He will barely give me the time of day."

"I didn't say much of anything."

That much was true. Between the spanking, finger-fucking and general submitting she hadn't had much time for idle conversation.

Traycee was silent a few moments, obviously enraged. "You better fix this, Lin. I don't care if you have to beg, borrow or steal, you make him mentor me."

"David Carlisle isn't the kind of man you force to do anything," said Linzee.

She tried to imagine having to look him in the eye again. He had given himself *carte blanche*, the complete right to consider her at his leisure and claim her if he wished.

"Find a way, Lin. I mean it."

"Yes, Traycee." Linzee hated the submission in her voice. David had shown himself capable of homing in on it. She didn't stand a ghost of a chance.

Unless she found a way to fight back.

If she could make David mentor Traycee, maybe he would have to abandon his pursuit of her, for ethical conflict reasons or whatever.

"Consider it done," said Linzee, expressing a confidence that was altogether unwarranted and very, very premature. "The man won't know what hit him by the time I am done with him."

Assuming she could hold herself together long enough to make her request. Could she do this by phone? No, that would never do. It had to be face-to-face. She would go to him tomorrow morning, before she lost her nerve.

Like she had any now, she lamented.

She only hoped it wasn't too late, for both her and David.

Chapter Five

"Sir, there is a woman here to see you," Jenny announced over the intercom.

David snapped back to reality. He had been putting a certain chestnut-haired beauty through her paces. In his fantasy, Linzee wore a thin leather collar and wrist and ankle cuffs with sewn in metal loops for chains and nothing else. Not a stitch of clothing to protect her body from his predations. She was his, open to every manner of delicious teasing, pain and pleasure. Feathers and whips, blindfolds, there was no end to the things he could do to her.

The last thing he needed in the world right now was a slave, though.

He had no time, especially not for a woman as special as Linzee. She was new, she was an angel, a pearl with so much inside her. A man would have to treasure and protect her, even as he trained her to fulfill her own passions and desires.

He would try to find that man for her, though it killed him to think of another possessing her. Fortunately, he had dealt with Traycee already, telling her there was another female, a slave. Traycee had no clue it was her own sister he was talking about.

"Tell her to please make an appointment," David said, his concentration way too short for interruption.

Undoubtedly it was some insurance representative or salesperson. He wasn't in the mood. Besides, he was supposed to be working on ideas for his company's new venture, a retail import shop to be opened in London.

Jenny cleared her throat. "Sir, she says it's important. She said to tell you that she is under consideration for something."

David stiffened.

It was Linzee, come to him the very morning after their incredible scene in the limousine. He had not slept a wink as he had run the scene through his mind, every precious second of her helplessness as he taught the rudiments of domination. Could it be she had been as overwhelmed and obsessed as he was?

"Send her in, please," David said.

He rose from behind his desk in anticipation of her entrance. Once again she took his breath away, like a blow to the solar plexus. Today she was wearing black heels, a black skirt and a matching pinstripe suit jacket. She had her hair back, tied with a dark ribbon. Her lipstick was wine-colored. Her eyes were shiny and businesslike, though that hardly stopped him from wanting her in a most personal way.

"Linzee," he rasped. "This is a surprise."

Whether good or bad depended on his reactions and hers. They made a volatile combination, that much was certain.

"I am here on Traycee's behalf," she responded, laying out the rules of engagement. "We will talk about her only."

"As you wish." He extended a hand. "Please be seated."

"Thank you." She settled into one of the pair of wingbacks facing his desk, her proportioned body perfectly filling the red leather space. He sat down, noting the seductive cross of her legs. Was it intentional?

"I want you to know I think it's duplicitous and not very honorable to go back on your agreement with Traycee," she began.

He pursed his lips. Surely she did not expect to get off so easily? "Tell me what option I have, Linzee, given that I have an intimate relationship with a member of her immediate family."

Her body stiffened defensively. "If you mean me, we have nothing between us."

"That's not true and you know it. You and I barely avoided consummating a Master-slave relationship last night."

Linzee squirmed. "It meant nothing. I just wanted you to be her mentor, so I let you spank me."

David's jaw set hard. His beautiful would-be sub was crossing a line. Intentionally or not, it would not go unpunished. "Your lie dishonors us both, Linzee. What happened between us was honest and real and had nothing to do with Traycee. You have my word that I will find her a mentor, one better suited to her age and temperament than me. Having said that I do not want her name brought up in this context again."

Her lower lip trembled. "In that case..." She rose to her feet. "We have no further business."

"Yes, Linzee, we do."

"I don't like your tone," she said.

"Go and lock the door," he said. "Remove all of your clothing and stand at attention before me."

"Never," she vowed.

"I have made my decision," he said, his cock throbbing in his pants. "I am going to take you on. I am going to train you to be my slave."

"I will never be a slave to a man," she defied proudly.

The defiance only inflamed him further. "You were born to submit, Linzee. I have never seen a more natural submissive. Look past your assertiveness, your capability and talent. You are more than capable of meeting the world head-on but what is it you want from a man, really?"

"From you? I want nothing."

"You're lying again, Linzee. You'll be punished for it."

"Fuck you."

"Do you think profanity is going to impress me, or scare me, or do anything else but firm up my resolve to put you in your place?"

"I will never be in any place you put me," she hissed. "Except maybe on top of you, lording it over you, spanking you!"

"As I said, you are welcome to try. Otherwise, be a good slave and do as you're told."

Her eyes radiated pure hatred. She turned on her heel to storm out.

"One question first, Linzee."

"What is it?"

"Did you masturbate after I dropped you off? Did you make yourself come?"

"None of your fucking business!"

"You didn't," he interpreted her anger. "Why not?"

"I didn't feel like it, that's why."

"You were obeying me, Linzee. You could not touch your pussy because I didn't give permission."

"That's what you say."

David could picture her, wrestling with the impulse, writhing naked in her bed, fighting off the urge again and again only to have it return stronger than before. She was like a wild tiger, screaming to be tamed.

"You may well walk out today but you will pay a price. My demands will be much higher next time."

"Why are you doing this?" she demanded. "I don't see anything honorable in this."

"I'm treating you as the slave you are, the submissive you long to be. I am not going to be your boyfriend, Linzee. I am going to be your Master."

"I don't want a Master."

"You need one."

"I can prove I'm strong. I can resist."

"Then lock the door," he challenged. "Disarm me with your charms, if you can."

"Maybe I will. You think I'm afraid to strip naked in your office? You think I can't put on a show to bring you to your knees?"

"I am going to bend you over my desk," he said, letting his intentions slither across the room, stinging, paralyzing like a beautiful and powerful snake. "You will be cheek down on my blotter, your gorgeous breasts pressed flat. You'll taste my leather belt on your sexy ass, just enough to make you eager and cooperative. Then you will be taken. I'll withdraw my cock from your pussy just before I come and I will spray my cum on your whipped bottom, denying you relief in the process. Then you'll clean up quickly and get dressed again. You will leave here horny, aroused out of your mind. You will try to resist but you will begin calling me right away, praying I answer, hoping against

all hope I will let you come back to me for more sex. You won't even care how you have to take it, the more animalistic, the more exhibitionistic, the better."

She licked her lips. He saw the burning desire, the heat of her own dark dreams made all the more scrumptious by her attempts to appear ladylike. "Is this how you win the respect of your women, David? By intimidation?"

"I am not intimidating you, I am training you."

"I'm not a dog," she shot back.

"I never said you were," he replied, hands on his belt. "Now go and lock the door, slave girl. I have put off your full conquest long enough."

Linzee paused, wrestling for several long, agonizing moments. Her eventual footsteps to the door were unsteady. Would she make a run for it, postponing the inevitable?

At the last second, hand poised at the knob, she clicked the lock into place.

He held the belt, doubled over in his fist. She leaned against the door, back braced.

"Yes," he answered her unasked question. "It will hurt...and you will endure it."

She regarded him, enraptured, captive to his eyes, his whims.

A single snap of his fingers set her in motion. "Here." He pointed to a spot in front of him. "You will come here and obey me."

Another moment of truth – fierceness in her expression, emotions washing over her. He allowed his lips to turn down into a faint scowl, indicating her time was up.

Just like that, she was his.

Linzee Kiley was drunk with David's power over her. She tried to let the reality sink in. She had just locked herself in his office having heard his calmly announced intention to use and punish her naked body. He was going to put her over his desk, beat her with his belt and then plunge inside her from behind, fucking her at will, denying her release in the process.

And she was being promised nothing for her trouble but red stripes and a coating of the man's semen over her skin.

The fact that he had told her all this in advance, that he could be so casual about his plans, so sure that she would not run away, spoke volumes about his power as a Master. The fact that she was still there said even more about her submissiveness.

Did it really have to be that way?

Why wasn't he being tender? Why not woo and seduce her? He would get his way with her easily. She couldn't deny his authority any more than she could manage to keep away from him.

Soft seduction wasn't what she needed, though, was it? Wooing kisses and pleading on his part would win nothing but her annoyance. He was correct. It was his order that

had kept her from masturbating. Her body no longer felt like her own. She was hollow, alone, empty without his voice.

All she had was his final order.

I'm a dominant man. I give women rules and I expect them to be obeyed. While you're under consideration, no one touches you. You're mine if I want you. Otherwise you wait for release, unsatisfied.

There was a fulfillment in the waiting, a comfort in the burning, deep in the night. Hard as it was to go forward she could not imagine going back.

How had he seemed to know this about her, better than she had known it herself? She had not come here for Traycee but for herself.

Standing in front of him, swooning before his towering presence, she made one final appeal—laughable, really. “Can we talk about this?”

“Anything you have to say to me, you can say naked.”

His resolve secretly thrilled her. He was strong enough for them both, thank god. She slipped her feet from her pumps, allowing her stocking-clad feet to touch the floor. It was like a dream, like one of the countless fantasies she had been having about him overnight. She had not slept a wink. Unable to rest, unable to relieve the unbearable tension in her sex, she had been reduced to tossing and turning, bathed in her own sweat, her sheets soaked in her own fluids.

At one point she had nearly bitten a hole in her own pillow. Desperate, crying into the fabric, she had humped the bed.

But she could not allow herself release.

What strange power did he have and why did it keep growing?

Linzee held her tongue as she undid her skirt and let it slip to the floor. Being denied speech was very frustrating but strangely exciting too. David was remaining clothed, the power difference between them growing by the second. The fact did not escape her. Stepping from the skirt, she unbuttoned her jacket, revealing her bra underneath.

It was lacy and red, like her panties. Traycee had bought them for her one year but she had never worn them.

“Very nice,” he commented as she slipped the jacket from her shoulders. “You wore those for me, didn’t you? You were secretly hoping I would see them and want to fuck you.”

Linzee flushed. That couldn’t be true, could it? She’d had no expectation of disrobing. She had been excited, yes but that was her own private affair.

“Turn around slowly,” he ordered. “Hands over your head. Interest me.”

Her knees went weak. “David, don’t make me. I really only came to talk about Traycee.”

He moved quickly, frowning, his hand on her arm, turning her sideways.

The belt landed on her ass, propelling her forward.

She cried out, fire ripping through her.

"Are you naked, Linzee?"

"N-no," she replied.

He lashed her again, this time across her upper thighs. "No, what?"

"No, Sir," she moaned. "I'm not naked."

"Should you be speaking, then?"

She shook her head fiercely.

Her panties were rapidly soaking through. She felt like a slave girl. Certainly he was treating her as one.

"I will now repeat my order," he said. "You have just learned firsthand how much I hate doing that. Turn around, interest me in your body, make me want to fuck you."

"Y-yes, Sir." She turned, timidly, sore and throbbing.

"I said make me want to fuck you," he said, unimpressed with her efforts. "On tiptoes, arch your back, push out your breasts."

The posture made her think of his hands on her, caressing, taking.

She felt so very vulnerable, so keenly aware of her body's movements, its possibilities. He observed her—implacable. She wished he would say something, compliment her on her looks, even if it wasn't true.

"Come here, girl," he ordered at last.

Linzee went to him, hands still in the air. He took her arms, pulling them down to her sides. He wanted under her bra.

He took his time, pulling the cups of her bra down, exposing each breast. "You have submitted to me in your fantasies, have you not? I give you permission to speak when spoken to."

"Yes, Sir, I have." What was the point of lying now?

"You have imagined pleasuring my cock?"

"Y-yes, Sir." A woman should never give such power to a man, confessing her deepest, most sordid dreams.

"Did it taste good?"

Her cheeks burned.

David seized her hair in his fist, bending her head back. "I asked you a question, slave girl."

"Yes," she hissed. "It tasted good."

"What tasted good?" he asked.

"Your...your cock tasted good."

He smiled, a cruel twist of lust. "If I give you my cock you will do a good job sucking it, won't you?"

"Yes...Sir." Her voice was barely audible.

"Of course you will, or you will be punished." He slapped her hip firmly, possessively. "Open your legs."

Her pussy pulsed as she obeyed.

David touched her crotch, for a single agonizing second. "You are wet. Tell me why."

She bit her lower lip. She did not dare answer. But how could she hold back?

He took hold of her nipples and squeezed. She shifted, helpless, his fingers administering an equal measure of pleasure and pain.

"Do you think you're a match for me?"

Careful, Linzee, how you answer.

"No, Sir."

"I'll ask again, why are you wet?"

"I...I'm not sure, Sir."

"An honest answer." He released her breasts and stroked her hair. "Master is pleased."

Her eyes watered. His touch was calming and maddening at the same time.

"Don't you want to please me?" he asked.

She nodded, mesmerized. She did, more than anything.

He tugged her panties down over the swell of her ass. With one hand he gripped her left cheek. He pressed the other to her silk-clad crotch. He had the belt wrapped in his fist. At some point he had put it down on the desk but now he had it again.

The leather was hard, unyielding. "Show me," he said.

Linzee knew what she must do, pushing her pelvis against the belt, simulating intercourse.

"Good girl," he whispered fiercely, biting at her neck. "Good slave."

She moaned, her body responding to the name. It was a little frightening but oddly liberating too.

The orgasm was close, very close.

Would he push her over the edge, just so he could punish her for it?

Her eyes pleaded. She whimpered.

David smiled. The look on his face was worth a thousand words. If he wasn't enjoying himself, enjoying her, he was the world's greatest actor.

He put his fingers to her lips. She cleaned them obediently.

"Good job," he approved.

Training, he called it, making her respond according to his desires, in pleasing sexual ways for which she was to be rewarded. Disobedience, conversely, would mean punishment.

"Take off your bra," he ordered.

She reached behind her, the gesture rendering her exquisitely helpless. He did not touch her but his eyes upon her burned though they were cool and evaluating. She could not read his thoughts. She wished she could stay ahead of him the way a woman usually could with a man.

She undid the clasp and let the cups fall forward, her breasts spilling out. For a moment she clung to her modesty and then she let go.

The bra fell to the carpet, the alien floor of David's office. Had other woman been subjected to this kind of treatment in these confines or was she the first? She wished she had the guts to ask.

He reached for her ever-so slowly. She held her breath, bracing herself as his fingertips trailed along her flat belly. "You keep fit, Linzee. I'm pleased."

She had not done it for him, she wanted to scream but nothing seemed clear, her whole existence was an orbit, captured in his gravity.

"The panties," he said. "Remove them."

She shivered. They were her final covering, skimpy though they might be. Linzee's thumbs slid under the waistband as she obeyed, the echo of his command having its profound effect on her soon to be revealed pussy.

Linzee glowed with heat and lust as her fluids oozed from her sex as she pulled off her stockings and stepped from her wet panties.

She could barely stand.

He took her in his arms. "You are naked," he said. "You may speak freely. You are hereby absolved of the requirement to call me Sir, unless you want to. It's time to see what's in your heart."

She clung to him, feeling the fabric of his suit against her bare skin. "I'm scared," she said.

"Focus on my voice." He hypnotized her with his eyes—deep blue oceans, sapphire seas far away and magical. "Center yourself on my will. Do you recall what I said would happen next?"

Forget? His agenda of domination was burned into her like a brand, the audacity of it and the fact that he was telling, not asking, dictating as though her will was nothing.

"You are going to whip me," she said, her voice adding to the conspiracy against her own freedom. "And then fuck me over your desk. Then you will come...on my ass."

She imagined the rest, having to get dressed afterward, still hot and bothered, no doubt, knowing she was to be sent away with no prospects, no hope but to call him and await his pleasure.

He caressed her earlobe, sending slow-motion whips of electricity down her spine. It was a new kind of seduction, a dark taking of the highest order. "Kneel," he said, his relishing of the power as plain as his boundless control. "Take my cock into your mouth."

Linzee fell, panting. Her fingers worked his zipper. He let the belt he was holding trail down her back as she tugged his hard cock free. The leather tickled her spine. Soon she would feel it on her buttocks...and his semen too.

But first she must please him. This was a surprise. He had not mentioned it earlier. Was it in deference to her revealed fantasy?

She doubted the man would give in to her needs so easily.

Oh god, his shaft was beautiful. It sprang forth fully erect, pointing upward, long and stiff, hard as steel. She breathed his scent, taking it deep in her lungs. She smelled testosterone and musk and behind it strength and willpower, the natural center of lust and adoration.

Eyes closed, she kissed his cock head. She could taste a tiny drop of pre-cum on the tip of her tongue – salty, sweet. There would be much more of it soon, erupting onto her bottom. Her soon-to-be whipped bottom.

Linzee licked the shaft until it was glistening wet. She wanted it in her mouth, between her legs, in her...ruling over her.

He stroked her hair, allowing her to express herself, her need for surrender and slavery, saying with her actions what she could not reveal in words.

At last he nudged her, signaling it was time to open. She parted her lips in readiness. His cock slid into her mouth, smooth as velvet. David's fingers moved to the sides of her head. He moaned, pleased.

Linzee transcended, reveling. She took him all the way to the back of her throat, amazed at her ability to refrain from gagging. In and out his cock slid as he fucked her mouth. Faster and faster. Oh yes, god, yes.

Abruptly he stopped. He must have been close to climax.

It was not his intention to come down her throat.

Pulling her to her feet by her nipples, making her sex quiver, he ordered her over the desk.

"Press your belly very tightly against the edge," he said brusquely. "Palms down on either side of your head, legs wide or I will whip them apart."

Linzee had no memory of how she got herself over the desk. Carried by his hard commands, most likely, the sudden threat, admirably appropriate.

Tense seconds passed as she breathed, breasts flattened, cheek down.

And then the belt struck without warning, a slash to her upper thigh.

"I said open your legs wide, Linzee."

She parted her thighs farther, straining her muscles, the throbbing of the belt sting matched by the wound of his displeasure.

"I'm sorry," she said.

"Don't be sorry. Be obedient."

Linzee cried out as he landed a blow to the middle of her buttocks, right across the softness of her flesh.

The fire burned deep and agonizingly in her body, though it was not all pain.

"This is the truth about you," he said, shoving a finger inside her — crude, invading. "Roses will never send you over the top, not without a complement of thorns."

Linzee moaned, uncontrollably stimulated, ass wriggling.

David laughed, whipping her again. It was a cruel blow, angled across her pussy lips.

She tried to rise. His hand went to her back.

"Where do you think you're going?"

"Away from you," she exclaimed.

"You will stay where I put you," he said. "You will take your whipping and fucking like a good girl."

"Do you have to be so crude all the time?"

The belt seared her behind, the hardest blow of all. She barely suppressed a screech.

"As a matter of fact, yes," he said. "It turns me on."

"It's all about you, isn't it?"

He laughed, as if they both didn't know the answer to that one.

She cried out as he shoved his cock hard inside her, filling her aching, empty cavity. "Tell me you don't need this, Linzee. Tell me to walk away and be polite, calling you for dates and nipping at your heels like a Chihuahua. Go on, tell me."

Linzee groaned as he thrust in and out, decisive, hell-bent on breaking her gentility, on conquering her independence.

"I can't, damn you, I can't."

"That's right, you can't, because you need to be told what to do. You need it rough. You need BDSM," he said.

Linzee tried to deny it, fighting his words and the potent reaction of her own body. "No, it's not true. I'm just horny," she breathed.

He pinched her hard, holding the flesh of her ass between thumb and forefinger. "Maybe I should bring in my staff to witness and confirm how being a slave gets you off?" he teased.

Her toes curled. "You wouldn't dare."

"I will dare to do whatever I want," he said. "I will push you hard like the toy you are and I won't stop until we have both been driven out of our minds with passion. Unless you want to use the safe word."

"I won't give you the satisfaction," she vowed.

He smacked her ass, continuing to fuck her. "You had better tell me if you're close to coming so I can hold you back."

She pounded the desk with her fists. He was so relentless. "Can't you stop with the domination and submission for one minute?"

"No, Linzee, I can't." He pulled her hair, just hard enough to tug at her nerve endings.

The mild pain was effective, bringing her down to a place of acceptance and calm peace, the eye of a hurricane around which raged a storm of lust.

"And neither can you," he added.

With that he withdrew his cock, leaving her gaping, raw, delirious.

"No," she cried. "Don't stop now."

"Sorry, love, you're too damn hot. I would come inside you if I stayed a second longer," David declared. "And that would be breaking my word."

Yes, he had made it clear, told her he would come all over her ass.

She heard his breathing. She wanted to see the look on his face, the lust he was expressing but her cheek and breasts and belly were down on the blotter, the semi-rough paper material rubbing against her nipples.

Oh god, it made her want to be suckled and fondled and pinched.

David groaned, a deep, satisfied male sound that made her heart swell and her pussy spasm, squeezing at the empty air.

What did he look like masturbating, stroking his long cock, holding it tightly, his fingers playing over the hot flesh—velvet wrapped over steel?

"Tell me," she moaned softly. "Tell me when you're going to come."

"Now," he hissed. "I'm going to come now. I'm going to brand your hot, sexy ass."

"Please, yes," she begged.

One more grunt and it happened.

Oh god, he was doing it, releasing himself. She felt the sudden warm, thick spray across her posterior. The semen fell like rain onto the fiery surface of her skin. It clung to her skin. It was real, he was using her body for his pleasure.

As a slave girl. The reality was profound, pervasive, kinky.

A man she hardly knew had masturbated on her for his pleasure.

But what next? He had told her she would be allowed to clean up and then she would leave frustrated, horny. Would he really be that cruel?

"Stay where you are," he ordered.

"David?" She raised her head.

He smacked her hard on her sticky, sore ass. "Keep your head down and keep quiet."

Linzee was forced to wait. She thought she heard him by the door.

Oh god, he was unlocking it. Linzee whimpered, forbidden to speak. He wouldn't invite anyone else, would he?

Silence filled the room. She jolted, hearing him a few minutes later at another door. Water was running from a sink. He must have a bathroom adjoining the office. He returned with warm washcloths.

First he wiped the cum off her ass, swathing very gently.

"This is my mark, girl," he said, teasing her exposed clitoris with the cloth. "My semen branded you. In your heart, you will always know what you are. You will crave to obey. You will never be able to have sex without domination again. If you are very, very good, if I decide it, I will keep you myself."

Linzee writhed, unable to stop herself. She would do anything, say anything for an orgasm. It didn't matter that the door was unlocked, in fact it only made her feel more helpless and under his power.

He grasped her hair in his fist once more and pulled her upright, facing him. Holding her firmly he let his hand roam her body, just as he pleased. Light but decisive touches.

"Puh...please." She shuddered.

He showed no mercy, flicking her nipples, running his hand over her rib cage. At length he kissed her, not to reassure or satisfy her but to remind her of her status.

Her body dissolved.

When he released her and gave her the order to get on her knees she did so gratefully, with a naturalness that frightened her.

She thought he wanted her to suck him but he only wanted her to clean the fluids from his glistening shaft. She closed her eyes and began to lick, tending him like a god. As she ran her tongue over the surface, it began to harden again. The man was insatiable.

She kissed the tip when she was done lapping away the salty sweetness, hoping he would let her have more of him.

"That will be all," David said, stepping back.

Linzee sucked in her lower lip, deprived.

Showing iron will, he tucked his underwear, zipped his pants and went to sit behind his desk to resume working.

Linzee rose to her feet, disoriented, uncertain. Her pussy burned with need, just as he had predicted. He was being true to his word but after what they had just shared, she hoped for something more.

"So what happens now?" she dared to ask.

He glanced up at her. "You will call me. I will make you wait."

Her lip trembled. He was not going to make her cry no matter what.

"You are every bit the son of a bitch I thought you would be," she said dryly. "Congratulations."

"Don't push your luck, Linzee."

"Push my luck?" She laughed scornfully. "Look at me. Look at what you did to me. My luck ran out and then some."

His eyes were steady, noncommittal. "You will get my standard recording when you call. Do so as often as you like. My voice will help center you. It's not much but it's all you have."

She glared in utter shock. She had no idea he would carry things this far.

"Unbelievable," she said. "Are there no bounds to your ego?"

"It's not about my ego," he said. "You're a slave now, Linzee. You had better get used to waiting on men."

Men plural. So he really didn't want her for himself.

"I will wait on no man," she declared. "Least of all you."

"Use the bathroom behind that door," he ignored her, indicating a pristine white bathroom, decorated by two minimalist paintings in turquoise and black stripes. "You may dress there."

"Why? Are you that sick of looking at me?"

He paid no attention to her, returning to a file on his desk. He signed the papers inside, one by one, with a flourish. Linzee scooped up her clothes.

"Fuck you," she said on her way to the bathroom.

She intended for them to be the last words she would ever speak to him, though she knew in her heart they wouldn't be. Not by a long shot.

Chapter Six

David frowned. He had just signed the same document twice. He was paying no attention to what he was doing. Linzee had dressed and left a few minutes ago. His cell phone was on the desk. He could barely breathe waiting for the call he knew would come.

He nearly leapt from his skin when it began to ring. He resisted answering, using all his willpower. He knew it. She had not made it out of the lobby without calling him. Heart pounding, he pounced on the device, listening to the voice mail she had left.

Her voice made his cock throb. She was hot and cold, angry and sexy and desperately in need of his loving control.

"Just so you know," she declared. "I am going to make trouble for you. Beginning with that little kinky sex society of yours. I can't wait to see how it stands up to a police investigation. Remember the cop friends I told you about? I am calling them now."

David smiled grimly. He had no concerns from police. His practices were legal, safe, sane and consensual. Some of the members of his organization were judges and police themselves. Linzee would find that out if she pursued matters. But David did not think she was serious about investigating him. She was playing the part of spurned lover, even as she wrestled with the deeper feelings of her slavery.

David had shown her domination for the first time in her life and she had responded, passionately, promptly, with utter slavish eagerness.

Linzee Kiley was submissive, all right. That was confirmed. Moreover, she was submissive to him.

He had pushed her hard, denied her pleasure, made her take pain and compelled her to obey him. They had gone far, very far in such a short time.

David was breaking his own rules in the process. She had received no mentorship. No preparation. She had never even been to a meeting of the Society. He was borderline taking advantage of a very yielding spirit.

But his wants were too strong. He was following impulse and somehow Linzee's own strength was guiding him, telling him it was all right to proceed by implementing his wicked, dominant imagination.

The next part of the game plan called for teasing. He was not supposed to answer her calls. That was going to be hard, making her wait when he could hardly bear it himself.

He knew Linzee was suffering erotic pain, anguish that she was too proud to admit. She had wanted to climax but she'd held out, not doing so without permission. She had taken his belt on her ass, allowing herself to revel in the experience and then she had

taken his cum on her ass. She had had her nipples pinched and hair pulled too, and on command she had dropped to her knees and performed fellatio.

He had not comforted her or pleased her in return.

He had treated her like a slave.

Ordinarily that wouldn't bother him. But with Linzee, exciting as it was, it was hard too. There were feelings mixed in. He didn't just want to play sex games, he wanted to tend to her heart. Damn it, was she all right? He needed to know.

The fact that she had called, that she was angry and ready to fight was a good sign. She was keeping engaged, going toe to toe.

David put the cell phone back on his desk.

Palms sweating, he told himself he wasn't desperate for it to ring.

It was a lie.

A strange thought came to him now. Between the two of them, which was more vulnerable right this second? Who was really Master and who was slave?

Falling in love with one's submissive was a dangerous thing. A Dominant could lose his way quickly.

Love...was that what he was heading toward?

Certainly he felt nauseous enough. And giddy.

And confused. Now there was a novelty. In all his dealings, personal and professional, he had never felt that way.

How could one woman, a feisty brunette with green eyes, barely five four, cause so much trouble?

He tensed as the phone rang again. It was her.

Did he dare answer it?

Did he dare *not* answer it?

* * * * *

Linzee trembled behind the wheel of her car. She was in the parking garage, keys in the ignition, engine still off. She could not think straight. She had already had to cancel her upcoming deposition in the Miller case and push back a conference call with a client in Texas. This wasn't good but she could not afford to go to work with her brain—not to mention her body—so completely scattered.

What the hell had just happened up there in David Carlisle's office?

David had used her, with her full consent. He had been rough and inconsiderate and he had treated her like a possession. Then again, he was tender too, his touch was never mean, never cold. He held her at the key moments, knew when to kiss, when to talk and assure her...and when to devastate her.

It was beyond scandalous to be ordered to suck cock, to kneel at a man's feet, to open one's lips and take him in, no expectation of pleasure in return. To have one's mouth plundered and then one's pussy, only to have him explode in pleasure on one's naked, freshly punished bottom.

Her ass was still burning.

He had whipped her with a belt.

The truth of it continued to sink in, deeper and deeper. Her pussy was on fire. She wanted sex, masturbatory relief, a vibrator, a dildo, anything.

He had no right to stop her, to control anything.

She picked up the phone to call him again. What stupid excuse would she give this time? Why did she want so badly to keep fighting with him?

My voice will comfort you.

Linzee hated that he was right. It was better, just a little, hearing the deep tones, the coffee richness, the soothing lilt.

Calling him the first time was a mistake, this second time was going to be disaster. Five rings and it went to voice mail.

"This is David. I am not available. Please leave me a detailed message so I will be able to return your call..."

"Yes. It's me, Linzee." She cleared her throat. "Just want you to know that I'm serious about going after you." The blood pounded in her head. She moved her hand up her thigh. She was dripping wet all over again. She had not been able to put her panties back on, they were soaked through.

A devilish idea zinged through her mind, a little taste of revenge. Two could play at this game of sexual torment.

"You should also know that I am playing with myself and there's not a fucking thing you can do," she blurted before she could change her mind.

There. Let him stew on that all day.

The phone rang as soon as she disconnected. She jolted as though it were electrified. It was him. Now what?

Impulsively, she picked up. "You didn't hold out long, did you?" She faked her way through the bravado. "Guess I don't have to beg for it after all."

"I am calling to terminate our relationship, Linzee."

Her heart skipped a beat. The world blinked off for a second.

Had she heard him right?

"Are you there, Linzee, I said I am terminating our —"

"I heard you," she cut him off. "You could have saved the minutes on your plan. We don't have a relationship."

"I can introduce you to another Dominant."

"I will pass, thank you."

I will not cry. I will not break down.

The real question was why did she even care?

"May I ask what led you to come to your senses?" she asked, continuing to hide any emotions. "I doubt my threats had much to do with it."

She had not ever intended to call any policemen and he probably knew that. A man like him could surely defend himself anyway. She was the one without protection at the moment. He had her at his mercy and now he was casting her off.

Was this where the begging was supposed to come in? But why? She could live without this man, couldn't she?

"There's an emotional dynamic between us," he explained. "I am wrestling with certain feelings. That is not good for a Dominant."

She bit her lower lip. "Feelings?"

"I am not going to spell it out." He came across curt, almost irritated. "It would be pointless."

"Right. So I guess this is it," she said.

"Yes. I will mentor your sister if she still wants."

Linzee didn't want him anywhere near Traycee, or any other woman for that matter. "I think it's best we all go our separate ways."

"I enjoyed getting to know you, Linzee."

"Really?" She couldn't resist sarcasm. "And what part did you enjoy most? Coming on my ass? Beating me?"

"I enjoyed all of it."

Unapologetic to the end, she thought. Why did that turn her on so much, to have a man thoroughly unafraid to be a man?

"I'm thrilled for you, David. You have a nice life, okay?"

"I do hope you will pursue your inner need for submission, Linzee. You won't be happy until you can belong to a man, one who will champion you by day and chain you by night."

Her back arched quite against her will. Her thighs fell apart. Her body wanted that and it wanted it from him. *Come downstairs, she wanted to tell him, come and get me. Make this all right, just for a little while. We will play Master and slave for a day or two and then separate.*

"That isn't possible, Davie, except in fantasy."

"We both know it is, Linzee."

"Well, it sure as shit isn't possible with you," she said hotly. "You are hardly a champion of my freedom during the day."

"That's why I am excusing myself from your training," he acknowledged. "I want to own you, Linzee, without compromise. I would have a very, very hard time letting you leave the bedroom if you were my property."

Linzee's finger found her clitoris. She couldn't help herself. Her breath came in short stabs. The thought of being owned by this man, of having him want her that much did things to her body that she could not control.

She couldn't wait, she had to climax.

"What's wrong, Linzee?" he asked, his voice alert with protectiveness.

"It's...nothing."

"It damn well is something. Where are you?" he demanded.

"I'm downstairs in the parking garage. I'm...I'm playing with myself."

"You're what?" His sexy voice was hard as iron. "That is entirely unsafe. Do you want to get caught?"

"I can't stop myself. Can you...can you come down and get me?"

The images he was evoking, the power of his conviction was too much to bear. She did not think it possible for a man to want a woman that much, to be willing to give her up lest he take from her every scrap of her freedom.

And what about her? Would it break her heart to be chained by such a man—to be a perpetual slave in his bedroom, subject to his sharp-edged, delicious will, the pleasure and pain of his whims?

Hardly.

"This is not a game, Linzee. You need to stop at once."

"I-I'm not playing a game, I swear." She stroked her pussy, lifting her body off the seat. "Come and get me, please."

"Hold on," he said without hesitation. "I will be there in a minute."

"Yes, David. Thank you David."

He clicked off. Maybe she was thanking him too soon. He sounded displeased. Was he going to give her the comfort she needed or was he going to punish her?

The scary thing was, maybe it was the punishment she needed most of all.

Linzee shuddered, moaning. She couldn't come on her own. She thrashed her head, her body rebelling against her own feminine touch. Was it already so much under David's command? A man walked past, several rows away. He wasn't looking. She didn't stop. The exposure excited her. She was being a bad slave girl, very bad.

Relief coursed through her veins as she saw the familiar figure emerge from the garage elevator. David saw where she was parked and marched toward her, decisive, his body a solid vee, sleeves rolled up, no tie. He had his belt back on. Every ounce of her yearned to submit, to turn over the reins.

But David was not a tame man, not predictable. She might be letting herself in for much more than she could handle.

Be careful what you wish for, as the saying goes.

Submission means taking bad with good, pain with pleasure.

Hence the pins and needles she was feeling at his approach, mixed in with the feelings of peace and joy.

Linzee yanked her hand away from her crotch, chastised by his eyes.

He came up to the driver's side, signaling for her to roll the window down.

"Move over," he commanded.

She let him slide behind the driver's wheel, her mouth dry as a desert, heart slamming in her chest.

"What other obligations do you have this afternoon?" he asked her.

"I'm free," she managed to reply, finding irony in the words.

He nodded. "We're going for a ride."

Her pussy pulsed. "I don't want to inconvenience you."

The statement sounded absurd to her own ears, like the kind of thing one said in a dream.

David started the car. He was in his own mode, a space, a plan that had little if anything to do with what she might say or do from this point on.

"Where are we going?" she asked timidly.

David palmed the wheel, maneuvering them out of the garage past the rows of cars. Most of them were his employees. She tried not to look at his hand at the bottom of the steering wheel. He had a single gold ring with a small dragon's head. She hadn't noticed it before. She wondered if it had anything to do with the Society. He must have just put it on.

"I'm taking you to meet another Dominant," he said.

Linzee's resistance surged—deep, irrepressible. She wanted to be alone with him and no one else. "You aren't taking me to anyone else, do you hear me?"

"It is for your own good," he said.

The sun was shining outside, such a stark contrast to the mysterious, shadowy passions within her.

"No, it's not," she declared. "Quail, do you hear me? I am putting the brakes on for real."

He frowned at her use of the safe word. "Linzee, you need to be reasonable."

"No, I don't." She reached for his crotch. "Sex isn't reasonable and I want some. I'm entitled after all I went through."

"Entitled?" He took her hand away by the wrist. "The only thing you're entitled to is a spanking."

"So give it to me. Be a man."

"Don't try to goad me," he warned. "It won't work. A Dominant doesn't lose control."

"No? So what's your plan, then? You have to go back to the drawing board because I just used my safe word. No pawning me off on someone else."

David put her hand back on his crotch. His cock was hard. "Fine. You want to play with fire, girl? I have half a mind to let you get burned."

"I'm not a girl."

"Rub it," he commanded. "*Woman.*"

She obeyed, feeling the thickness. Her mouth watered for the taste of it, her pussy ached to be filled once more.

"It's going inside you again," he said. "This time you will be tied down, at my mercy."

"I would like that," she whispered.

David's face remained hard. "Have you ever practiced bondage?"

"No," she said, squirming at the thought. "But I have imagined it."

"That is hardly the same. In your mind the male does just as you wish. I will do as I wish."

"But I have the word," she reminded.

"You do, Linzee, but that doesn't mean I can't torture you with pleasure. I will teach you a lesson."

She trembled with anticipation. "What is the lesson?"

He glanced aside, his eyes flames of blue. She felt herself immediately appraised, classified, put in her place. "Pull up your skirt," he ordered. "Spread your legs as wide as you can."

"There is traffic," she said. "You said it wasn't safe to show myself."

She could scarcely breathe, she was so aroused.

David reached across and slapped her thigh. The sting was momentary but real enough. "Do as you are told," he said. "Or I will make you strip naked."

Linzee whimpered. Raising her bottom she lifted her skirt. "You are not going to make me play with myself in traffic, are you?"

"No but you deserve it." He pulled a small, round object from his pocket. "Insert this where it will do the most damage, cover up and close your legs."

Linzee swooned at the sight of the small vibrator. "You have got to be kidding."

"Have you known me to kid so far?"

"No."

"Then why would I start now?"

"Do you carry that with you all the time?" she asked.

"I grabbed it from my desk on the way down," he explained. "I was expecting trouble from you."

Linzee took the small device in her sweaty palm.

"Put it on low," he ordered.

She touched the button. It started whirring. She squirmed, placing it against her clit. "F-fuck," she stammered.

"Feel free to come," he said magnanimously.

Linzee groaned, pressing her thighs together. The first orgasm was already overtaking her. "Y-you bastard," she groaned.

"Guilty as charged," he grinned.

She moaned, throwing her head back. "What's happening to me?" she asked.

He chuckled. "I believe it's called a climax."

"No," she declared. "There's more, you know there is."

"You are finding your submissive self."

Linzee spiked, a sharp stab of pleasure followed by pinpricks. There was no relief, however, as the whirring little vibrator continued its work. She was going to be coming again, and quickly.

"If I was submissive," she tried to cling to some scrap of reason. "I would have known, wouldn't I?"

"Not necessarily. Some women only discover it later. I'll wager you didn't fit in well with the dating scene, though. You felt out of place, right?"

"I didn't seem to get what my girlfriends did from sex," she agreed.

"That's because your needs weren't being met."

"And you can meet them?"

"You are meeting them yourself," he said paradoxically. "I am the catalyst."

"Oh god." She writhed.

"Touch your breasts," he said.

She did, through her blouse, not caring at the moment who was watching.

"Good girl," he praised, his voice sending hot chills down her spine. "Now come for me again, show me how tame you can be."

Linzee exploded, her hands cupping her breasts, wantonly squeezing, massaging, the tiny buzzing vibrator working her nerve endings, causing a fresh wave of convulsions. At last she fell limp against the seat.

Still, the vibrator kept on working. She was its prisoner. His prisoner.

And she had never been happier in her life.

Chapter Seven

David took her to his penthouse. Linzee was allowed to take the vibrator out of her pussy as they pulled up to the front of the building. A smiling doorman helped her out of the car. She was unsteady on her feet. The man did not act surprised. What was he thinking?

Just another dizzy slave girl Mr. Carlisle was bringing home or was David more subtle about his liaisons? She suspected the latter.

Blinking a few times to get her bearings, she reflected on her surroundings. The building was quite luxurious, red sandstone on the outside with ornate Victorian furniture in the lobby. The carpet was deep red, like the doorman's uniform.

The elevators shone like gold bricks.

As the door hummed closed behind them David said, "Come here, girl."

She moved to close the distance between them. "Yes..."

His hand circled her waist. "I want to make sure we are clear, Linzee. Us being here now is not the result of your attempt to manipulate me back at my office."

"But I didn't try to manipulate you," she protested.

He lifted the back of her skirt, cupping her ass, thrusting her pelvis against his erection. "Sure you did. You thought you would get me to come down to the parking garage and rescue you from yourself. Then I would be so turned on I would fall at your feet. Well, it's you who will be at my feet. I will give orders and you will follow them. Make me repeat myself and I will punish you like the brat you are."

"You can try," she squirmed.

"I'll do more than try."

She yelped as he inserted a finger into her anus—wild, invading, exciting.

"I want to hear what a good girl you're going to be, Linzee."

He had her full attention. "I-I'll be a good girl."

His eyes gave no quarter as he studied and dissected her. "Untrained as you are, I am holding you to a slave's standard. You *will* be good, or you will go home extremely sore."

She shuddered as he moved his finger in and out, making her feel it, making her need it. "Oh god."

He grinned. "You move like a slave, Linzee. You get turned on like one. I can't believe no one saw this before. You are so ripe for the picking."

"Mmmm..." She sighed.

David chuckled. "Turn around, grab the railing and bend over."

Linzee found her tongue in a hurry. "But someone could get on and see."

David took hold of her hair. "So much for your promise to be good. Shall I have you disrobe and we can do it that way?"

"No, Sir," she replied, hoarse.

Linzee assumed the position, grasping the brass, the metal cold and smooth against her fingers and palms.

"Bottom out," he commanded.

Inching backward, she thrust out her ass. She was so excited and scared she thought she might explode. The elevator continued to rise. So far it had not stopped along the way.

But it could.

"Spread." He smacked her ass.

Linzee spread her thighs.

David flipped up her skirt, baring her pussy.

"You liked exposing yourself in the parking garage," he said. "Here's your chance. By the way, if anyone gets on, they will have the right to fuck you."

"David!"

He smacked her again, this time on her naked flesh. "Stop stalling. Any more trouble from you and you will be on your hands and knees. I'm sure that will go over big."

Linzee was shaking like a leaf. What if the elevator really did stop? Would he let another man have her?

"I won't give myself to another man," she swore.

"You will if I say so." He grazed her sex with his fingertip, teasing.

She groaned. She had never needed a man so much in her whole life. "Please, Sir, fuck me, fuck me."

"Why would I want to do that?"

"I need it. I need you," she said.

"But what's in it for me?"

"I-I'll be good, I swear."

"You will be good for the other passengers too," he reminded. "If we have any."

The elevator trip lasted forever. At last they reached the top.

"Thank god," she whispered. "We didn't stop."

"Oh, we weren't going to stop," he informed her now. "This is my private elevator."

It took a moment to sink in. When it did she was livid. "You tricked me!"

"But it was good," he said. "You were on the edge, the way we both need it. Admit it, you felt helpless and aroused."

She slapped him hard. "There's your edge, asshole."

He did not react. The elevator doors opened into a two-story living room with skylight. Seven-foot trees—plumes on top of spindly trunks—dotted the background. Greek statues adorned the foreground. A full-size fountain bubbled away in the middle.

"Perhaps you should leave," said David, his face slightly red.

"That would make it easy, wouldn't it?" She had had enough. "For a man who claims to hate games, you sure play enough of them."

"What are you talking about?"

"This hot and cold stuff. You hug me one minute, you mess with me the next. You want to see me, you don't."

"You read too much into things," he said. "It is what it is."

"Somebody must have hurt you very badly," she reasoned, "for you to act so freaky."

"Don't try to analyze me," he warned. "You barely know yourself, much less me."

"I know enough to figure you have some gaping wound in you, just like me."

"I didn't lose my parents, if that's what you mean."

"So it was a woman, then?"

David snapped his fingers and pointed to the floor. "You want a conversation? You'll have it on your knees."

"Is that how you keep superior? Putting slaves down?"

"Kneel, Linzee."

She did as she was told. "Yes, Master," she spat.

"Your mouth drips sarcasm but the words are real. You have accepted me as Master," he declared.

"In your fantasies."

"Soon enough you will know my fantasies," he declared. "You will rise when I tell you. You will precede me to the bedroom. You are here to please me, bear that in mind. Once in the bedroom, take everything off, including shoes and climb into the bed. You are not going there to sleep. You will be punished and fucked, Linzee. And you will be in bondage. Think about that too, as you walk through my house, over my floor, on the way to my bed, my whip, knowing you are my wench."

Fury wrestled with desire. His very insolence undid her, working inside her, secretly melting her. She yearned to comply but she needed to push him farther, just as he needed to push her.

"No, David. You can't have your way with everything."

"Maybe not with everything." His smile was sly, deviant, seductive as hell. "But I can with you."

She screeched as he scooped her up off the floor. "Put me down!"

"I think we will make a detour on the way to bed," he said.

With that he slung her over his shoulder, carrying her through the museum-sized living room that was furnished with minimalist furniture – white and black and silver – fabulously expensive-looking.

Mostly she saw the soft white rug. They went down a corridor. He stopped in front of one of the doors and opened it.

He set her down on the floor in the dark. She expected it to be a hard surface but it was rubber and quite resilient. Her initial relief turned to panic, however, as he turned on the light and she was able to get a load of what was in the room.

The place looked like a reproduction of a medieval torture chamber, complete with an X-shaped cross, a pillory, a rack and chains and cuffs hanging from the ceiling.

There was also a rack of whips and paddles on the wall.

She ran to the door. David had already closed it. "Going somewhere?"

"Yes, home!"

"I don't think so."

"Well, I do."

He folded his arms, a human wall in front of her. "Take your clothes off, Linzee."

"What if I don't?"

"Then I will rip them from your cringing body."

He had never looked more serious.

She attempted to bargain. "If we go right to bed, I promise to be good."

"I'm sure you will. But this will make you better."

Her hands were numb and shaking. On autopilot, she went to work, divesting herself of shoes and skirt and blouse. The last thing to go was the bra.

David removed his own shirt and T-shirt. She drew a sharp breath at the sight of his muscular chest, totally lean, smoothly muscled, like a statue made of flesh. He was so gorgeous.

"It is my intention," he served notice, "to have you grovel before me and beg forgiveness. You may do so now, or if you wish to salvage your pride, you may wait until after you have been disciplined."

She took a step back, wary. "That makes no sense. If I apologize now, why discipline me?"

"Because it will be pleasant for me to see you in both situations, whimpering at my feet and writhing under the whip."

She fell to her knees, this time in supplication. "I yield to you, David. You don't have to break me."

"Stand in the center of the room," he ordered. "Hands over your head."

"Yes," she said glumly. "Master."

David attached cuffs to each wrist. He drew the chains tight, raising her to tiptoes. Helpless, Linzee endured a kiss. He probed her mouth at will, burning her lips with his, stealing the very air from her lungs.

He did not release her until she was panting. "Please, may we go to bed, Master?"

"Patience, little one." His voice was not unkind, even as he went to fetch a riding crop from the rack on the wall.

She began to struggle at the sight of it. It was a close approximation of the whip from her dream. She knew it could hurt her but, at the same time, it could bring pleasure.

"Master, no."

He placed a finger over her lips. "Hush, don't fight, sweet Linzee. The whip will have its way with you. You will give in to it, like the slave you are."

She moaned, arching her back as he flicked the tip of it across both nipples. "Oh god."

David ran the thin leather over her belly – tapping, tapping. He pressed it teasingly against her clitoris. "Would you like an orgasm?"

"Yes, Sir, please."

"To come, you must feel the whip. You must yield to it. When you are properly marked, you will be allowed your pitiful little slave climax."

She shuddered. He flicked her nipples, one by one, then her pussy and then her left hip.

Her teeth chattered as he went back to work on her clit, raising her and holding her.

"Would you like to be whipped, my sweet little slave girl?"

"Y-yes," she moaned. "Whip your slave."

David caressed her belly with the whip. "That's more like it. That's the attitude I expect."

She shivered at the sudden light touch of leather, like a lover between her legs. Just as quickly it was gone. She heard the whistling in the air, instinctively tensing.

The riding crop sliced at her belly. Linzee had not expected that. She shuddered, the pain a hot blade across her midsection.

"You mark well," he said, rewarding her by caressing her breasts with his hand. "You will have some healthy welts."

She shook her head, crazed.

David lashed at her hip, making her writhe and contort.

"I enjoy whipping a new girl," he told her. "Of course you won't be new after this."

Tears came to her eyes. Did he have to be so cruel? Why should she care, though? He could whip a thousand girls, as long as it wasn't her again.

"I hate you," she said.

"Do you?" He tapped her ass. "But I give you what you need."

"You don't know what I need."

The whip slashed the air—once, twice, three times—each time burning the firm, naked globes of her ass. She clenched and unclenched her cheeks. Embarrassed, she felt the heat between her thighs, as if he was there too, having his way.

"You need the whip." He was at her pussy, masturbating her, his fingers deep in her helpless opening, the liquids dripping down her inner thighs. "You need to be pleased and forced to come in while in chains."

"I...oh, no." She twisted in her bonds, unable to hold herself in one place.

"Climax for me, slave girl. Climax now."

She exploded on command, his order serving as the trigger to release the pent-up energies. Like a rag doll, she shook in her chains, the waves overcoming her, drowning her in a sweet sea of lust.

David encircled her waist with a single arm, drawing her close, holding her up, keeping her together. They experienced her orgasm together, his flesh, heartbeat and muscles so intimately connected to her own as to make them inseparable.

Incredible.

David continued to hold her, settling her down, kissing her cheeks and nibbling at her earlobes. "It's time," he said at last. He undid the cuffs and she slithered downward, down his wondrous torso, over the material of his trousers, all the way to his feet.

Linzee did not know exactly how to grovel.

She was in a dream.

"Master, forgive me." She pressed her cheek to his thigh.

She felt so many things—intoxicated, delicate and soft and pleasingly naked, freshly whipped, a slave girl at Master's feet.

"Forgive me, Master," she repeated, wanting to advance to the next step.

He would take her to bed when he was ready. She would go with him obediently and she would submit. She would not resist as he tied her exactly as he wanted her, for sex, for penetration and domination by his penis.

She wanted it. She didn't know what it would be like but she could not live without the experience.

Linzee hugged him, wrapping her arms about his body.

The feelings of surrender balled like a hot knot in her stomach. The desire pooled, moving her toward a second orgasm.

He reached down, touching her head, stroking her hair. "That is enough, girl. It's time for bed."

His words struck her. The need was mutual. It was a nice reminder that this was for their pleasure, that her lust and his intertwined perfectly. What it meant for the rest of their lives she had no clue.

"Sweet Linzee," he murmured.

David lifted her up, this time cradling her in his arms.

Linzee pressed her body tightly to his, relishing his strength as he carried her. He smelled strong and solid, simple – of pine and musk. She could kiss and lick his skin all over. Would she learn more about him that way? Would she unlock the mysteries of his soul?

If only they had not connected through BDSM, she thought, then maybe they could have enjoyed a normal date and gotten to know each other in a different way. As it was, they were intensely intimate, though they were barely acquainted with each other.

She couldn't help but smile at the irony.

"What's so funny?" he asked, crossing the threshold into his palatial bedroom, complete with Doric columns and a sunken marble tub worthy of a Roman senator.

"Nothing," she said. "I was just wondering if the card companies have greetings for these kinds of relationships."

David shook his head at the quirkiness of her thought patterns. "You are very lucky I am not a cookie-cutter Master," he said, setting her down on the seashell bed, covered in an aquamarine velvet spread. "Because you are certainly not a cookie-cutter slave."

"Amen to that," she said. Feeling mischievous, she began to scuttle backward away from him over the mattress.

"And just where do you think you're going?" he asked, eyebrow raised.

"Crazy, want to come?"

"Yes." He grabbed her ankle, dragging her back. "I do."

Linzee grinned as he pulled her back into range.

"What's so funny?" he asked.

"I'm wondering how you're going to hold me in place and get undressed at the same time," she said.

"It's all in the eyes," he rasped, unbuckling his belt.

Linzee bit her lower lip. "I would say it's located a bit lower than that at the moment."

"Maybe so, but you'll do as I say because you're mine," he said, unzipping his pants.

She gasped at the sight of his cock poking through his underwear. Never had she been so eager, so hungry for a man.

He made her squirm with impatience as he slowly, deliberately removed his pants and socks and shoes. At last he took off his underwear.

Finally.

"Yes," she whispered as he climbed on top of her. They embraced quickly, his cock poised to sink inside her warm opening, the bondage forgotten...at least for the moment.

Chapter Eight

David delayed penetration for as long as he could, just reveling in the sensation of having this incredible woman in his arms, so warm and vibrant and completely female. She was perfect in her looks and in her spirit. He got a hard-on just thinking of her. And when it came to BDSM, no one had ever stimulated him this much.

"Linzee," he whispered her name.

She smiled, melting his heart. He didn't make her beg, not this time.

Slowly, decisively, he slid his cock inside her willing opening, all the way to the hilt. She was hot and wet and yielding, though she clutched at him as he advanced, inch by inch.

Damn, that felt good. His cock could breathe inside Linzee. It fit, it felt like home. Why would he want another woman after her? Who could hold a candle? Greedily, he took a taste of her nipple.

She stirred beneath him, pinned, the tiny nub a succulent morsel in his mouth. He worked the flesh, hard. Then he moved to the other, leaving the first glistening wet, throbbing and needy.

Her belly trembled, her flesh was hot to the touch.

"May I come?" she sighed softly.

"No," he denied her.

If she came, then he would come and he did not wish to end this. Not now. Not yet.

"Lie still," he commanded.

She made little noises of protest, quintessentially feminine and slave-like. "David...Master, how can I keep still when you keep playing with my breasts?"

"That is your problem. These breasts are here for me to enjoy and I am doing so."

She sighed again, a heavy pout. He nibbled at her nipple, enjoying the torture of his naked slave.

"I thought you were going to put me in bondage," she complained.

"Do you think you are free now?" he mused.

She caressed his shoulders with her fingertips. "You know what I mean."

"You are bonded by my will."

To prove his point he ordered her to place her hands on either side of her head, palms up. "You may not move them again without permission. Is that bondage enough?"

Eyes wide, she assumed the position.

She begged with her lips for a kiss, letting him know the effect his domination had on her.

He gave it to her, conquering, fierce and possessive, yet still with an amazing touch of tenderness. It was complex, the chemistry he had with Linzee. They reacted on so many levels. Would they ever stabilize, run out of steam between them? He wondered how many more explosions they would have to get through to reach some kind of eventual equilibrium.

And what would that post-coital peace look like, without the tension, the lover's stress? Would they be snug as bugs in a rug, or totally indifferent to one another?

"Would you like to come, slave, truly?"

"Yes, Master."

"Beg for it."

"Please, may your slave girl come?"

He arched his back. "Kiss and lick my nipples."

Her tongue darted out, hot and stinging, compliant and enthusiastic.

He reveled in the sensation, the hot flesh of her tongue, like a tiny whip, zapping his nerve endings, stimulating each one to perfection. She knew how to pleasure him as if she had been doing it for years. All part of this uncanny physical connection they had.

In the same way he could touch and kiss her and drive her crazy without even trying.

"You may orgasm," he told her.

She shuddered beneath him, clutching at his cock with her sex. He did not respond to the flood, the hot rush of female liquids bathing his cock. He was her Master and he did not come unless he wanted to. Her orgasm was her submission. His restraint was his power.

She closed her eyes.

He ordered her to open them again. He would see her and know the movements of her soul within. "You are mine," he said.

She maintained eye contact, her face filled with awe. She would rebel against all of this later tonight, when she was home again, when she had had time to think. What would make her the angriest, he predicted, would be how much she enjoyed it, combined with the rather terrifying idea that she might need it again.

"You are climaxing like a slave," he told her. "Hot and helpless and owned."

She arched her neck and emitted one final groan. It was precisely the sort of remark to make a woman blush and rage and dissolve all at once.

At least if that female happened to be submissive.

David kissed her forehead—gentle, appreciative, nurturing. "You're a good girl, Linzee. A very good girl."

She couldn't help but respond, eyes lighting, as if touched. That too, was something no vanilla woman would give two cents about—pleasing a dominant man, intimately, earning his praise for her obedience, her docility.

Her breathing was short. Her eyes flashed. She was aware that she had betrayed the free and defiant part of herself.

David smiled. He liked her resistance, it was a challenge, a form of play between them. "Have you ever been taken in your narrow channel?" he asked.

"You mean have I had anal sex?" she replied.

"Don't change my words," he said, wanting to keep things gritty and graphic. "It's a simple question, with a simple answer. Yes or no. Has a man used you in the ass before?"

"No," she said, flushed.

"Then say so."

"No man has used me in the ass," she said softly.

His cock throbbed. The verbal element was crucial. He was about to take her down and bring her to a new level of submission. "I'm going to come inside you that way, Linzee. I am going to take you in the ass."

She bit her lip.

"Have you something to say, slave girl?"

"I...I'm not sure about it, that's all."

"There isn't anything to be sure of," he said with deliberate firmness. "I will put cream on my cock, I will put cream inside you and then I will take you, as deeply as I wish, for as long as I wish."

"Will it hurt?" she wanted to know.

David frowned. "I intend to conquer you, girl, not cause you misery."

David lifted himself, pulling out his cock and then burying it again. "I want to hear from you. Tell me what is going to happen. Tell me what you will do for me."

She released a sigh, much softer than before. "I will give you my ass," she said. "For as long as you wish."

"And what is it going in your ass, girl?"

"Your cock Master." She whispered the words—fierce, forbidden, clearly arousing her. "I have to take your cock inside my ass."

"You will beg for it."

She began to buck underneath him, trying to fill her pussy with his throbbing shaft. "Please, Master, use your slave girl's ass. Show her she is your property to do with as you please."

David extracted himself. "Quickly, on all fours, face away from me."

"Yes Master." She responded, eager and hot.

Oh, how he longed to bury his shaft. He longed to erupt inside her, filling her canal with his hot semen.

"Wait here," he said.

She lowered her head, forced to remain in place as he went to get the lubricant from the nightstand. There was a paddle in the same drawer and a small vibrator. He took both.

The blow from the paddle drove her forward.

She never saw it coming.

"First time or not," he informed her. "I expect you to show discipline."

"Yes, Master." She grimaced.

He slapped at her hips with the paddle then reached under to get her breasts. "Do you think I am fooling?"

"No, Master." She shook her head in vigorous agreement.

"You will respond as ordered."

"I will try, Master."

He slammed the paddle home, leaving the mother of all red marks. "What did you say?"

"I will respond as ordered," she moaned. "I will."

Impulsively, he bent and kissed the hot skin. She writhed from the contact—phenomenal, totally phenomenal.

"You did well," he said. "You answered well." David dabbed some of the cool gel on his fingertips. She startled as he touched her.

"Relax," he soothed. "Open up, it will go in better that way. Think about your submission. You are a slave. You have had your ass tenderized, now you take a cock. It's simple, very simple. Don't think about failure, your Master is pleased, no matter what, just because you are you. That's all it takes."

"Yes, Master."

Her body surrendered to his fingers. He penetrated with surprising ease, pushing up one finger and then two, to the knuckle. Filled with the cold gel, she was ready.

"How does that feel, Linzee?"

"Strange," she said. "Exciting."

"My cock will be in you. Think about that. You will have opened your third and final hole to me. You will belong to me in a whole new way."

"Yes," she breathed. "Yes..."

She pushed her perfect, round posterior out in anticipation, her spine slightly arched, her breasts hanging down, full and pendulant. She was perfect. He positioned himself with one hand on her back as he applied the gel to his cock.

"Are you putting it on yourself now?" she asked eagerly, looking over her shoulder.

"Yes, I am."

"Mmm, I wish I could do that for you."

"You already have a job to do. Face the wall, get ready."

"I am ready, Master."

"Don't be so sure." David pressed the tip of his cock against her opening. "This is totally different than the sex you are used to."

"Just give it to me," she said, her tone bordering on impatience. "Please, Master," she remembered to add.

Definitely not a cookie-cutter submissive, he thought.

He thrust himself in an inch or so. She cried out, clenching at the bedspread with her fingers.

"Too much?" he asked, not wanting to overwhelm her.

"No. More," she called out. "I want more."

He gave her another inch. She writhed, accepting, gasping.

David's finger found her clitoris. She yelped, impaling herself.

"F-fuck me, fuck my ass, Sir."

He placed his hands on her waist to steady himself. Another thrust, another gasp followed and with it another small moan. Surrender hung in the air, the scent of her femininity. She was so tight and smooth. He wouldn't be able to hold out long. He needed the release. He craved the explosion of his semen deep inside a conquered woman. One intelligent and sensitive enough to fully understand the intricacies of dominance and submission.

"Yes, Linzee, that's it. I knew it could be like this," he exclaimed, letting her know he had never had it this good before.

Watch out, David, don't slip too deep, he told himself. Don't reveal those dreams of yours and that tender heart. The Master becomes the slave in a heartbeat when he lets his vulnerability show.

Deep in her ass, yes, but nothing intimate.

"David, David," she cried, dispensing with the titles. "Please, come inside me."

How could he resist that sweet voice, so pliant and respectful? What a change. Was this the same woman who had fought him so hard earlier? Of course, it was. They were the sides of a coin.

He pushed deeper and then began to move in and out, a primal rhythm designed for quick satisfaction. A few thrusts was all it took.

David groaned, ready to release himself. His finger moved to Linzee's sex, to her clitoris, giving her the stimulation she needed. She was right there on the edge, ready to explode with him. They came together, an utterly silent mystery.

Wave after wave—a melding of souls, momentary union and sheer white light. The complete expenditure of their energies, followed by a slow-motion winding down, their bodies collapsing on one another, his form shielding and covering hers, their fingers intertwined, his lips at the nape of her neck, kissing, murmuring, assuring.

They hovered for a moment at the edge of sleep, preparing to slip away into a land unknown to both of them. Peace for two restless spirits, boundless hearts. The waking would be awkward, uncharted. Their courage would have to see them through.

His last conscious thoughts were of Linzee's wellbeing. She might be overwhelmed later by the intensity of what had happened between them. And he might too. What were the implications? Was it a mere flash in the pan or could he truly become her Master?

The idea did not repulse him. In fact it attracted him more than anything had ever attracted him in his life.

With the exception of his attraction to Linzee herself.

He held her close as he rolled to his back, allowing her to rest her head on his chest. She smiled sweetly, miles from fighting or screwing. How innocent and incredibly dependent she was.

She looked happy but he was sure she was going to rebel against this. She was too proud. She would feel used, perhaps, and angry with herself. If he didn't care about her, it wouldn't be such a loss to see her walk or run away.

As it was, he was going to be lost, torn apart.

It came into his mind that there was one person who might be able to help and that was Traycee. He barely knew her but perhaps she could give some insight, help him keep the lines of communication open.

The idea pleased him. Satisfied with a day's work, not to mention all its pleasures, he allowed himself to fall asleep.

He dreamed of forever. Forever with Linzee Kiley.

Chapter Nine

Linzee could not focus at all the next day. Things had been a blur ever since leaving David's penthouse. She had woken up disoriented, in the middle of the night. Too much had happened too fast. She needed time to recover and regroup. She had insisted on driving herself home, despite his protests.

"I'm not your slave!" she had exploded at him. "I'll do what I want!"

Making it clear she wanted nothing to do with him ever again, she stormed out. Luckily they had driven her car and not his.

Back home she had tossed and turned until dawn. She had wanted to cry at various points and wasn't even sure why.

It pissed her off royally that she was still thinking about him, maybe even missed him. As far as she was concerned the man had tricked her and taken advantage of her.

So her body was vulnerable to dominance and submission games. Did that give him any right to manipulate her senses, flooding her with desire, twisting her all up inside with needs, confusing her, making her say and do things against her better judgment?

She was furious with the man.

And truth be told, she was embarrassed at getting so carried away with herself. She had done the right thing by getting away from him.

The sooner this was all forgotten the better.

Trouble was she kept fantasizing about him and when she wasn't seeing his face she was secretly feeling his touch, unexpected fingers brushing her arm, lips over the skin of her neck, or worse still, a hand cupping her ass or breast.

What the heck was wrong with her? How could she be reacting that way, her body still tingling and alive from what he had done to her? But it couldn't mean anything, could it?

She hardly knew this man, for Pete's sake. How could he be affecting her so much? Okay, so it was the best sex of her life—intimacy and passion and pleasure in a combination that had raised the bar past a point any man was likely to reach again. So what? That only proved sexual relationships were ephemeral, not to mention unhealthy.

Imagine if she were this weak and distracted all the time? A slave girl stuck with a Master! Please. The thought was laughable. Irresponsible. Crazy.

And sexy as hell.

Having David's attention, his lust so completely tuned on her as an object, as a possession, was unlike anything she had ever known. Unfortunately, the cat was out of

the bag. He had already fucked her as a slave, already had her, handled her and awakened the passions within her. He knew they were there. He held the keys to her secret.

And for that she could never forgive him.

She had not wanted to learn the truth about herself, much less have it revealed to a strong, handsome and domineering man with the capability of using it against her.

I will forget, she vowed, walking into City Court for her first afternoon case. I will overcome David Carlisle and one day I will laugh in his face.

Well, maybe not directly into his face but from afar.

Because I am never going to see him again.

And I will be happy, she told herself. Alone and happy.

Love, surrender, giving your heart, whatever you called it, it was a cruel joke. She had loved her parents and look what had happened to them. Crying for them hadn't brought them back, either. As it was, she had barely held it together for Traycee.

And then there had been the fiasco with Michael. Where to begin with him? Michael and his perfect, raven locks, body of a god, poet's soul. Everything she thought she wanted.

A dream waiting to be born now turned into nightmare.

Alone. Alone. Alone.

Let it be her mantra, drowning the name of David Carlisle and every other unpleasant memory. The little submissive slave girl inside her was foolish and she couldn't come out again to play, ever.

It was no big deal. People denied themselves every day. Linzee was no different.

If she could afford the time she would cry herself a river.

Like that would solve anything.

Goodbye, David Carlisle, she whispered to herself as she sat down at the defense table. Goodbye unpredictable, dangerous happiness.

The judge looked at her, solemn and glum in black robes.

He was judging her.

But what was her crime?

What, really, had she done to be in this place in her life, this mess?

No one to rescue her, no one strong enough.

Should she have given David the chance?

For what? Just to watch him fall flat on his face.

The judge was asking for the plea, the defendant's plea.

"Not guilty," Linzee said with defiance.

And she would prove it too.

To the court and to the world.

Alone.

* * * * *

"Thank you for agreeing to meet me," said David, rising to his feet to welcome Traycee.

"Are you kidding? How could I pass up an opportunity to talk about my big sister behind her back?" she teased, sitting across from him at the table, the very same table in the very same café where David had met Linzee.

"I hope you don't think I would ever use you in any way," said David. "It has never been my intent, nor will I let that happen now. Unfortunately, events developed on their own, Linzee and I ended up involved, against our better judgment."

Traycee grinned. She was in some ways a younger, more boisterous version of her sister. In place of Linzee's subdued lipstick shade, she had on bright pink. Instead of small, delicate earrings, she had a pair of dangling stars. Her chestnut hair was teased, tied back. She wore a green tank top and a white skirt, short and clingy.

Linzee must have had a devil of a time with her as a teenager, David thought.

"Honestly, I'm not surprised at all." Traycee rummaged in her bag. "Can we smoke in here?"

"No, I'm afraid not. Why aren't you surprised?" he asked.

"I don't know." Traycee shrugged. "She was just so pissed off at you from the get-go. I told her she was concealing feelings for you."

"Interesting," said David. "But let me ask you first about my mentoring you. I hope you have no hard feelings. I simply can't fill that role for you given my involvement with your sister. It wouldn't feel ethical to me."

She laughed. "Don't sweat it. I have decided to pursue a different direction. There's this guy down at the department store where I am working, right? Mind you. I won't be there long since I am just waiting for something better, right? I might even go back to school for commercial art or accounting, but anyway, he works in the warehouse and he is *sooo* cool. He's been to India, he climbs mountains and takes pictures and he is into yoga, right?"

"Right." David's head swam, trying to follow. He suppressed a smile. Linzee had done well with her but again he marveled at how much energy Traycee must have taken up. As if trying to corral a cyclone.

It made sense. Linzee understood how to nurture and guide. Power dynamics were natural to her. That was the heart of BDSM. Now she just needed to find a personal relationship for herself in which to let the rest of her personality unfold.

"So what exactly is going on with you two?" Traycee asked. "You said Lin and you have made a kinky hookup?"

David signaled for the waitress. Traycee asked for a flavored iced tea, he got more coffee for himself. It was the same waitress whose deference to him had so impressed and aroused Linzee.

"I am not sure I would call it a kinky hookup," he said. "But, yes, we have been intimate and there has been BDSM involved."

Traycee smiled mischievously, the little sister getting one up on the big sister, finally. "So is Lin your little slave girl now? Like, can you get her to do stuff for me? Maybe stop bugging me so much and let me use her car whenever I want?"

David cleared his throat. "Master-slave relationships don't exactly work that way, though it's a unique angle you have there. Actually, your sister and I have no arrangement. That's the problem. I need, that is to say..."

"Lin has put you off, right?"

David nodded. "This isn't the first time, I gather?"

"She backs off from relationships. Always says it has to do with me, which pisses me off. I didn't ever ask her to put her life on hold, you know? And I sure don't like it being held over my head."

"That's understandable. Can you tell me about Michael?" he asked. "And, please, if anything is none of my business, tell me. I won't be offended."

"Don't worry," she laughed. "I'm not like Linzee. I won't blow up on you. As far as Michael goes, he was the one man she ever really loved."

David raised a brow.

Traycee took a deep breath. "I am not even sure I should tell you this."

"Then don't," said David. "I can't ask you to violate your trust with Linzee. All I can tell you, and I don't expect you to believe me, is that I care for your sister very much. I have never felt this way about anyone else. She has told me not to contact her and I won't disrespect her and violate her wishes. But I feel quite empty without her. It is a strange thing for me, I assure you. I am used to being in charge of things, including myself. I have had submissive relationships but none of them has had a hold on me. I have to understand better what is going on. I have to confront Linzee, not in anger but in the openness of my heart."

Traycee blinked. "You guys are so alike." She shook her head.

"We are?"

She looked at him like he was dense. "Um, yeah."

"How so?"

"You are both way too stubborn for your own good and you talk like we're back in King Arthur's time or something, all this honor and justice stuff. That's why she is into law. And the lectures I used to get from her, sheesh." She rolled her eyes.

David laughed. It was the first relief he had felt since Linzee had left him. Being here with Traycee gave him hope. It was a connection. He had to follow it through.

"You know her better than anyone, Traycee. Is there any way she will open up to me and let me in?"

Traycee drummed her bubble gum-colored nails on the tabletop. "So if I helped, I would be like your fairy godmother or something, huh?"

"In a way." David laughed again. Traycee was a breath of fresh air and he liked her better every time he met her.

She bit her lower lip, thinking. "First I need to ask you a couple of questions. Then I need to tell you about Michael."

"Fire away," he said.

"The first is about this Master and slave thing. Does it go outside the bedroom?"

"Yes and no. It's different, of course, for each couple. In some cases, there is a love and intimacy that comes from the Master's control over every detail—what his slave wears, what she does with her time. A lot of it has to be kept secret."

"Because people don't accept it, right?"

"Correct, though some people just want their intimate life kept private for reasons of their own. They prefer to communicate with glances, mere touches conveying the truth of their relationship. Mind you, in other relationships, there might not be any dominance beyond the sex. It's all a matter of what works for them."

"My sister won't submit in her regular life," Traycee said. "You know that."

"Oh, I am quite aware, yes. What she needs is a man who recognizes the boundary between the BDSM and the rest of life. She needs her control as much as her surrender. I don't know of many people who could walk that line, as tight as she draws it."

"That has to do with Michael, probably."

David felt himself tense. The more he heard about this man the less he liked him. "Tell me, Traycee, what did he do to her?"

"Oh, he never abused her, or anything," she said, reading his anger. "He was just immature. He came on like this super-romantic poet and musician who was going to open this creative world to Linzee and allow her to let go of everything. She had not ever felt that before. She was pretty happy for a while. She was twenty-four, thinking about marriage. Enter yours truly, Traycee at fourteen, watch out world."

"A frightening prospect," he teased.

Traycee laughed. "You know it. Anyway, I got in some trouble. Some friends of mine started drinking, I did too. Linzee blamed herself for not paying enough attention, for spending too much time with Michael. But I made my own choices and I have to live with them. I ended up in the hospital one night. They had to pump my stomach. This kid we knew had some pills from his mom's medicine cabinet, so we took them with a bottle of wine."

"Stupid, I know. Linzee was by my side all the way through and she expected Michael's support. He had a different idea of relationships, though and started backing off. When she pushed him on his responsibilities he picked one whopper of a fight,

pretty much tearing it all down in one go-round. Told her he had been lying to her all along, that she wasn't anything special, he had just been using her. Maybe he was, I don't know. I think he was just scared, immature, like I said."

David's hands clenched into fists as he listened. "Whatever he is, he's damn lucky he is not in this room right now."

Traycee smiled broadly. "Wow, you really are in love, aren't you? I can picture you, like one of those knights in armor, fighting for his lady."

"Except my lady doesn't want a champion," he said.

Although he was beginning to better understand why. In Linzee's mind, falling in love meant falling short on her responsibilities. And submissive surrender, that was a thousand times worse. If another Michael were to literally tie her down and leave her then what would become of Traycee and all the people who depended on her now, as a lawyer?

"Linzee's vulnerable, don't let her kid you," said Traycee. "That's why she puts up such a front."

"If I were her, I doubt I would ever let my guard down," he said.

"Oh, she will," said Traycee, speaking with twenty-something enthusiasm, heavily colored by naiveté.

He smiled, a little sadly. "Sometimes people don't change, Traycee."

"You did, or you wouldn't be here."

He was surprised. "What makes you think I have changed?"

"You're different than when I met you at the club. You're more animated or something. Don't get me wrong, you were still sexy as hell but you were a little stiff, wooden."

He pursed his lips. "Linzee has brought something out in me. I suppose you are right."

"She has that ability."

"I wish I knew exactly what it meant," he lamented.

"It means you're in love, David. I shouldn't have to tell you that," she replied.

"That's a big conclusion to jump to," he said, though it made his pulse race.

"She makes you laugh, right? She drives you crazy?" Traycee was holding up her fingers one by one. "You can't stop thinking of her? You can hardly remember before you met her?"

"Something like that," he grumbled.

She nodded. "That is love."

"Maybe I am in love with her," he said, trying the words on for size.

"She loves you too," said Traycee.

"That remains to be seen."

Traycee winked. "Leave it to me. I will have her running back to you. Or should I say crawling?"

He shifted in his seat. "If she finds out we talked about this stuff behind her back, I don't think it will help my case much."

"It's okay, she will get mad at me, I will draw off some of the anger and then she will have to deal with what she really feels for you."

David was impressed. "You are pretty advanced for someone your age, you know."

"I've been around," she said.

He smiled. It occurred to him that if Linzee and he did manage to form a union, that would give him a formal relationship with this young firebrand. "Think you could ever deal with me as a stepfather?"

She eyed him. "Sure. Just keep out of my way, let me borrow your car and distract my sister a lot and we'll get along just fine."

He laughed, deeply and warmly. "So does this mean I have your blessing?"

"For now," she declared. "But I intend to keep you on your toes."

"I am not above bribery," he mused.

"Oh?" Her interest piqued.

"Get me another meeting with Linzee and maybe we'll get you a new car all your own."

Her eyes brightened. "A sports car? A red one? Please?"

He angled his lips. "I was thinking something a little more practical."

Traycee rolled her eyes. "Yeah, you're perfect for my sister. I will get you another date but I will probably regret it once you two start ganging up on me."

David beamed, raising his hand. "More coffee, please."

"And a blueberry muffin," said Traycee, indicating she was more than comfortable with her potential new stepfather. "I need strength for scheming."

Scheming, indeed. David had no doubt she would hold up her end. The question was whether David could seal the deal, the biggest and most important one of his entire life.

Chapter Ten

"You did what?" Linzee demanded, hands on her slender hips, still holding the sponge she had been using to clean the floor.

"I talked to David about you," Traycee repeated the salient information, her head in the refrigerator. "Are you going to eat this?" She held up a blueberry yogurt.

"No," snapped Linzee. "I put it in there to look at every now and again. Eventually I will have it bronzed. Of course I am going to eat it. Now stop stalling and tell me what could possibly have possessed you to talk to the man I hate second most on this Earth, about me, behind my back?"

Traycee held up the container. "It's going to expire tomorrow. You should let me have it so you don't have to throw it away. And chill out about David, will you? If you must know, it was his idea to meet, not mine."

Linzee felt the freshly scrubbed kitchen floor drop out from underneath her. "He wanted to talk?"

I don't care, I don't care, I don't care, she repeated silently. I am alone, alone, alone.

"Uh-huh." Traycee waltzed over, in her too-tight top and too-short skirt, to the silverware drawer, yogurt in hand. As usual she was showing zero respect for Linzee's property. "David is really a pretty cool guy, for someone that old."

"He isn't old, Traycee."

"Whatever. He's certainly into you, though, that's for sure."

Linzee curled her bare toes on the linoleum. You could eat off the floors and any other surface as much as she had been cleaning since she got home today. "Why do you say that?"

"Because." Traycee plopped down at the kitchen table with a spoon, tearing into the yogurt.

"Elbows off the table," Linzee said.

Traycee ignored her, stirring the contents. "You sure you should be ordering people around without your Master's permission?"

Linzee snatched the container from Traycee's hands, sending blueberry yogurt flying onto the side of the refrigerator.

Oh, well, at least she would have more cleaning to divert her frustrations.

"What are you talking about, 'my Master's permission'? What in blazes did David tell you?"

"He didn't have to tell me anything, Sis. I know he's a Dominant and he is head over heels for you."

Linzee's heart slammed in her chest. Why hadn't it dawned on her that David might really care for her? She had assumed his attentions were only efforts to get some more hot sex.

Not that there was anything wrong with hot sex.

What if David were for real?

No, that wasn't possible. He was a game player, they all were.

"Define head over heels," said Linzee.

"He wanted to know how he could get through to you, how he could get you to open up to him. He was ready to do anything—*anything*—for a chance to talk to you again. He darn near promised me a Ferrari if I would set it up."

"Traycee Marie Kiley, you did not attempt to finagle a car from that man, did you?"

She smiled innocently. "Maybe a little. But he said no. He thought I should have something more practical to drive. Sound familiar?"

Linzee frowned. It did sound like something she would say but this was not the time for empathizing with the enemy.

"He had no right to go behind my back," Linzee declared. "He violated my trust. I will never forgive him."

Traycee snorted. "You weren't going to forgive him anyway."

"That's not the point," Linzee insisted.

"What *is* the point, Lin?" Traycee challenged. "The guy bends over backward to show you a good time, he doesn't do a thing wrong and you won't even talk to him anymore? I hate to say this, Sis, but you did the guy wrong."

Linzee tossed the yogurt into the sink. "You have no right to judge me. You have no idea—"

"No idea about what?" Traycee shot back, cutting her off. "How tough you had it, what a little brat I was to raise? What?"

Linzee was stunned into silence. She had never seen Traycee that angry...or had she just never stopped to see before? She might have a point.

Was Linzee that much of a broken record?

"I wasn't going to say that," Linzee declared.

"What were you going to say, then?"

"That my life is my business, that's what."

"Yeah, sucks to have people meddle in it, doesn't it?" Traycee said pointedly.

Linzee peeled off her rubber gloves. "I don't know what anybody wants from me. I try to be a good person. I try to do my job. Why won't everyone leave me alone?"

"Maybe it's because people love you, Lin. Ever think of that? They want you to be happy."

Linzee felt a stinging behind her eyes. She had never cried in front of Traycee and she wasn't going to start now. "Oh, grow up, Traycee. Happiness exists in the stories I used to read you, not in real life."

Traycee rose to her feet. Linzee regretted her harsh remark immediately.

"Maybe I am still a child," said Traycee. "But at least I have dreams. I know you think everything I do is stupid but you know what? I would rather make mistakes and fall flat on my face than not even try. I'll see you around, okay?"

Linzee reached for her arm as she passed by. "Wait, Traycee. I know you love me. I know you mean well and I'm sorry."

"Intentions don't matter," Traycee replied. "Actions do. You taught me that. And I'm not the one you should apologize to. There is someone else who loves you and he needs you right now more than me."

Linzee wiped her eyes. "When did you get more grown up than me?"

Traycee gave her a goofy grin. "It must be from eating up all your food and swallowing all your lectures."

Linzee hugged her, laughing through the tears. "Traycee, I will never be more proud of anyone in my life than you. The greatest honor I ever had was getting to watch you grow up."

"Thanks, Sis," said Traycee. "But now it's time to take care of yourself, huh?"

Linzee stood on the precipice, looking down. "I'm not sure. Some people aren't meant for relationships, don't you think?"

"I don't know. But maybe it won't seem so scary if you just think of it as talking to a friend, just hanging out and chilling with David – not being in a relationship."

Linzee couldn't help but chuckle over that one. "I don't mean to laugh at you, Traycee but I just can't picture David hanging out or chilling."

Hanging me out for a whipping maybe, or chilling my ass for a paddling.

"Call it what you want, Lin, but call him, okay?"

"I have no clue what I would say. I wasn't very nice to him last night."

"So what? That will give him something to punish you for."

Linzee narrowed her gaze. "That will be enough, young lady."

Traycee giggled. "Seriously, just go with whatever emotion you feel and call him, it will sort itself out."

Linzee considered. "I am still pretty upset about him talking about our relationship with you."

"There you go. Call him up and give him hell, ask to meet him so you can chew him a new one."

"It might work," said Linzee.

Traycee rolled her eyes. "I am so glad I am not going into this BDSM stuff. It is way too complicated for me."

"Too complicated for you, Miss Tantric Sex? That's saying something."

"Speaking of which, Ricardo is waiting for me. We're going extreme clubbing."

Linzee's parental alarm bells went off. "You're going to do what with whom?"

Traycee put her finger to her lips. "Shh, Sis, you're off duty, permanently. Time to call your Master, remember?"

Linzee felt a surge of heat through her body. "I do not have a Master."

What if she did have one, though? And what if he was waiting for her right now, a phone call away?

"Whatever," said Traycee, flipping back her curly hair, streaked with pink for her rendezvous with Ricardo. "Just don't be out too late. I am going to call and check up on you."

"Out." Linzee pointed to the door. "Give me some peace."

"Okay," said Traycee, sighing dramatically. "My work is done here anyway."

"I'll give you work!" Linzee grumbled good-naturedly.

Traycee was still giggling as Linzee closed the door behind her.

Traycee's departure left a silence in its wake and emptiness too. Standing there, Linzee wondered why she had never fully felt this before. Traycee had been on her own for years. But Linzee hadn't really let go of her, had she?

Maybe Linzee was afraid to be alone.

Could that be it?

Was there a frightened person behind her curtain of bluster, like the Wizard in *The Wizard of Oz*? Linzee felt the tears well up. That had been one of Traycee's favorites as a child.

Linzee made it as far as the pillow. Pulling her knees up to her chest, wrapping her arms about her legs, she gave in to the weeping—deep and soulful. She didn't even know why it was there, except one thing was clear.

If she was mad at David Carlisle it was for not being here with her now.

But whose fault was that?

Whose indeed?

* * * * *

Linzee was calling him. He recognized the number. He tried to keep his emotions in check, not to get his hopes up. She might well be calling just to yell at him for talking to Traycee.

According to Traycee, who had called him a few minutes ago, things had gone "pretty good", which David took to mean positively awful.

"Hello?" He tried to sound casual, properly dominant.

"You know it's me," she said. "You don't have to pretend you don't."

"Linzee," he said, acknowledging her darker persona, the one which had no use for him or for a relationship.

"You sound thrilled to hear from me. Is this what I should expect in communicating with you further? Total lack of enthusiasm?"

David knew better than to react. She was testing him, as she had all along. Would he hurt her, would he run off? The answer was no, he had nowhere to go.

"I know you have talked to Traycee," he said. "I think you are aware of my feelings. I am anything but unenthusiastic over you."

"Oh, that's right." She dripped sarcasm. "I'm the new girl you broke in last night. Wow, that's endearing."

"Linzee, don't take our sexual play out of context."

"I'll take it how I want to take it, *Master*. Thanks, by the way, for telling Traycee all about our 'sexual play'. Nothing like being humiliated in front of your baby sister."

Where to start? David thought.

"Traycee isn't a baby and I revealed no details of our Master-slave relationship. I wanted her advice, that's all, as to how to talk to you."

"We don't have a Master-slave relationship," she stormed. "And if I were to be someone's slave I wouldn't pick a man who is too much of a wimp to confront a woman by himself without using her little sister."

David's blood pounded through his veins. It was not anger but an unspeakably intense desire to set the record straight. "Call our relationship what you want," he said. "But do not, for a moment, think I am unable or unwilling to confront you. I attempted to show respect by going to the one person who knows you best. I am not a steamroller, nor am I a tyrant."

"If you want to respect me, David Carlisle, leave me the fuck alone," she shouted.

"I am not the one who called," he offered calmly. "You are."

He heard heavy breathing. "Always have to have the last word, don't you? And I suppose now you want to see me again?"

David resisted the impulse to jump at the invitation, to accept the scraps from her table of resentment. "No, girl, I do not wish to see you."

This silence was longer, more labored.

"Not until you have taken a mentor," he said. "You are not yet prepared to be the woman I need, or to accept me as the man I can be, for you. I believe there is no limit to what we might have with each other, Linzee but you need to grow emotionally."

"I never!" she sputtered. "Just when I thought you had gone as low as you could go, you pull this. Well, you can go fuck yourself, you hear me? I won't change a damn thing for you. I am just fine, way more mature than you'll ever be."

"Your anger only points out how right I am, Linzee. I'm sorry."

“And your self-righteousness only points out that you are insecure and have to use a whip to lord it over women in order to feel like a man.”

“I do feel like a man, Linzee, with or without my whip. When you are ready to feel like a woman, you give me a call. For now, take care.”

David terminated the conversation.

Were he a different sort of man he might get drunk, pick a fight or drive too fast. As it was, he stuck precisely to his routine, carefully honed and fought for, a soldier in his own cause. If Linzee thought she knew him, she had another think coming. She had no idea what he had overcome, what it had taken to get to college and succeed.

He might not have lost parents but at least she had the memory of some.

And she had her sister. He was alone. Always would be.

Dominants were meant to be that way. Many more women would cross his path. Never again would he make the mistake of opening his heart to one. It would stay shut, chained closed like the tightest bind on the most beautiful slave girl.

Just let her be all right, he thought. Nothing else mattered. She need not ever contact him but let Linzee be happy. She didn't deserve the torment. Not Linzee.

He hoped he had not added to it.

He did not think so. The greatest gift to give a human being is the challenge to grow.

It was also the most terrifying. Tonight he had set Linzee free. What she did with that freedom was up to her.

Chapter Eleven

Traycee shook her head, looking singularly perplexed. "I just don't get you, Sis."

"What's not to get?" said Linzee proudly, sipping her café coffee. "I ended up being right about David and I found out before I got hurt. It's all good."

Traycee did not seem convinced. She stirred artificial sweetener into her raspberry tea. "What's so good about driving off a man who cares about you?"

"I didn't drive him off." Linzee tried to keep her temper. "He wasn't up to a relationship. He wimped out."

"I don't know. That doesn't sound like the David Carlisle I talked to," she said.

"That proves my point, Traycee. He was two-faced."

Traycee drank her tea a while. "So what's next on the agenda? Another ten years hiding under a rock?"

Linzee smiled. "The old me would have gotten upset by a remark like that but not the new me."

Traycee arched a brow. "The new you?"

"Uh-huh. The new and improved Linzee Kiley. Believe it or not, I have a date tonight."

Traycee's eyes widened. "You...made a date? On your own?"

"Yep. This Friday night. And he's cute as hell. He's a partner at Landstreet and Welch, the youngest in the firm's history. He is into sailing, karaoke and kick boxing."

"I don't like him already," said Traycee.

"Thanks for the support," Linzee said.

"You are just running away from David," said Traycee. "You are afraid of your feelings for him."

"His name is Matt," she ignored. "He clerked for a Supreme Court justice and he was state champ in kick boxing two years running."

"You don't even know what kick boxing is," said Traycee.

"Sure I do. You kick and you punch, simple as can be."

"Simple and boring," said Traycee.

Linzee put her coffee mug down noisily. "That's what I get for expecting a little sisterly support."

"Sorry, Lin, I am not going to humor you when you do stupid things."

"Why not," Linzee snapped. "I have done it for you often enough."

"Ha, ha," said Traycee. "Just for that I am going to tell David about your little date."

Linzee's heart skipped a beat. "You wouldn't dare."

Traycee smirked. "What do you care? You hate him, remember? I would think you'd enjoy rubbing his nose in it that you are courting Mr. Perfect."

"I just think it's best to move on with my life," Linzee said.

Traycee's eyebrow cocked a little higher. Linzee hated it when she got that look. "Or could it be you don't want him finding out because he won't be happy with you?"

Linzee shifted, pressing her thighs together. David would not be happy, it was true. He had told her that he wanted her, completely and totally. What would he do if he knew another man might touch her?

The thought made her heart race. It also made her panties moist.

"Tell him," said Linzee. "See if I care."

Tracee continued her Cheshire Cat impersonation. "Oh, don't worry," she purred. "I will."

"Good," said Linzee, though it wasn't good at all.

Stirring a sleeping, spurned tiger was definitely a bad idea, especially if one was on the top of its list of prey.

"I think I will call him now, actually," Traycee declared, pulling out her phone.

"Be my guest," Linzee said, praying he would not answer.

"Bummer," said Traycee. "He's not answering."

"Oh, well."

Thank you, god.

"That's okay, Lin. I will leave a message."

"Oh..."

"David," she said, looking right at Linzee. "Call me back when you can, I have some very interesting news I think you will want to hear."

Fuck me, thought Linzee. Fuck me very hard.

* * * * *

David's blood pressure continued to rise the whole way over to Linzee's apartment. Traycee had given him her address right after telling him of her sister's intention to date a lawyer, a man she barely knew.

David realized the odds of this Matt character being an axe murderer were pretty slim but it was the principle of the thing.

He could not risk Linzee's life.

Worse still, suppose she enjoyed herself? Suppose she liked this other man touching her, talking to her? No, that would never do. He had made a mistake. Linzee Kiley could not be trusted to mature on her own. She would make mistakes. She would get

hurt without him there to help her through. How was he supposed to live with that? How was he supposed to live without her?

It really hadn't occurred to him that Traycee was manipulating things. By giving him the information she had, she had pretty much guaranteed he would go right to Linzee's apartment after work, where they could have it out. Supposedly she and this lawyer weren't having their first date until Friday but Traycee had hinted at all the damage that might happen over the Internet in the meantime.

Basically, Traycee had waved a red flag under his nose and he had responded like a bull.

Another man was moving into his territory.

Going for his woman.

Let him try. This Matt character was a kick boxer, like that made any difference. David knew ki-rhon, the deadliest martial art in the world. He had learned it from a Master in Hong Kong. That idiot lawyer wouldn't last ten seconds against him.

Matt was a loser. He wouldn't be able to please Linzee in bed either.

And he better not even try.

What if he was in her apartment now? Suppose he wasn't even waiting until Friday? The son of a bitch.

"Where is he?" David demanded as Linzee opened the door.

"Where is who?" she asked. "And what are you doing here? You aren't welcome."

David looked behind her for signs of the half-naked sleaze. "You know very well who I mean. He had better come out here and fight like a man. I'll even kick box him if he likes—straight into the next zip code."

She gave an astonished look. "You mean Matt?"

"Yes, Matt." He couldn't stand her even saying the name. "Where is *Matt*?"

"How in blazes should I know? He could be anywhere." She shook out her hair, long and loose. She wore cutoff shorts, no shoes and a halter top. His cock ached for her. His whole body ached.

"Strange attitude to take for your new boyfriend," he accused.

"*Boyfriend*? Have you lost your mind?"

"No more than you."

Linzee Kiley needed to be over his knee. No more leaving her be, no more letting her make her own mistakes.

"Just go home, David. You're not making any sense," she declared.

"What doesn't make sense, Linzee, is dating strangers, people you have no common interests with, just to make another person jealous."

"And who would I want to make jealous? You? There's a joke."

He shut the door behind him. "The only joke is you, trying to run your own love life."

"Don't you close me in here with you!" She reached for the knob and ended up in his arms.

He held her tightly, his hand at her back. "I am closing the door on your hell-bent attempts to spoil your own happiness."

"You don't know a fucking thing about my happiness!"

Her squirming only added to his already profound arousal. "I would advise you to stop that, woman, unless you want to find yourself immediately bent over the arm of your couch, pierced by this cock you insist on teasing."

"I'm not teasing," she insisted. "And I am sure as hell not responsible for your juvenile erections."

"You are responsible, Linzee," he declared, unzipping her shorts. "From now on you will meet my sexual needs. All of them. And you will not be dating, so you can wipe that silly idea from your head."

"Let go of me!" she protested as he pulled her shorts down over her hips.

He scowled at the sight of her tiny blue thong. "Did you wear that for him, Linzee?"

"I didn't wear it for anyone," she cried.

He gave her ass a punishing smack. "This is what you need, girl, not kick boxing nonsense."

"David, please..."

"Please, what?" His hand slipped under the waistband of her underwear. He found her sex wet and waiting for him. "This is mine and I don't appreciate sharing."

"You don't have the right," she gasped, even as she eased her legs apart for easier access.

David pushed his fingers between her oozing, swollen lips, into her nether canal. "I have all the right in the world. It is my touch you are hot for, the look in my eyes. Matt is nothing to you. I am everything. I forbid you to take another lover, Linzee."

Linzee whimpered, falling against him. "I...I need to take this slowly."

"No," said David. "The time for slow is done. You are my natural sex slave, your body declares it and I am claiming you. By my hand, by my cock, now and forever."

She groaned, pushing herself against his hand. It would be so easy to bring her off, send her body into spectacular orgasm. But Mastery was about self-control, delayed gratification and the reassurance of discipline.

"I'm going to come," she breathed.

"No," he declared. "You are not."

She whined, frustrated, a slave girl under orders of her Master. "Are we going to bed to play?" she asked.

"You are going to be punished right now, Linzee," he said gently. "That's what you need to focus on."

"No, David," she wheedled. "Please?"

He moved against her clitoris, grazing it cruelly, lifting her but not releasing her. "When we are alone together for no one else to hear, you will call me what I am to you."

"My Master..." she breathed, completing the thought. "You are my Master."

"And you are my slave," he replied.

Her lips sought his, properly, submissively. She was rewarded.

The kiss was a raw taking, bruising, seizing. She moaned, giving him entry to her mouth. He plundered with his tongue, claiming, marking every corner of her mouth, using it like it was a cock, randy and hard and outrageous.

David pulled the halter top over her head. Linzee raised her arms to help. He molded her breasts with absolute ease, as if he had been holding them forever, as if his hands had been made for them.

And indeed they had.

Massaging, caressing, controlling, he told her what to do. "Take off your shorts and underwear, go to the kitchen and bring me an implement to spank you with."

"Yes, Master."

He did not release her, not yet. "Go on your hands and knees, slave, and fetch it in your teeth."

She writhed as he manipulated her nipples. "Oh, Master." She pulled frantically at her shorts and thong, trying to strip. He was still holding her, keeping her upright, preventing her from bending over.

"You are not stripping," he said.

Her shorts hung at her thighs. "I c-can't, Master."

"Because I am not letting you."

"Yes."

"And yet I will still punish you for disobedience."

She shuddered, ensnared. "What can I do, Master?"

He relished her utter helplessness, the quandary of his owning her. "If I were you, I would beg," he said.

"Please, Master," she said, her voice soft and sweet and pliant but edged nonetheless with submissive passion. "Let me strip for you, let me crawl naked, let me obey you..."

"You wish to be beaten?" He squeezed her breasts, making her wince.

"Yes, Master."

"Why?"

"It is what you want, Master."

"But what do you want, slave?"

"To...to please you."

"Will you be dating Matt?"

"No, Master," she said emphatically.

"He is not your Master."

"No, Master, you are."

David gave her pain, a small dose, administered with a pinch of his fingers to her nipple. Her eyes widened, enlightened. "Your kind doesn't date," he observed. "Your kind is taken by the one who loves her."

She bit at her lower lip, squirming. He had her on tiptoes. "Master, do you love me?"

"Insolent girl." He smiled. "Cheeky girl."

She breathed heavily.

"Yes, slave, I love you. Is that so hard to believe?"

"We barely know each other," she observed.

He released her nipple from the digging pressure of his fingers, only to replace it with something worse, the light, feathery caress of his thumb. They were luscious, erect, slave hot.

She stamped her feet. "Please, you are driving me crazy!"

He laughed. "That's the general idea."

She attempted to press her body to his. "Can't we just go to bed? I will please you, you know I will."

"I thought you wanted to crawl," he reminded her. "And fetch an implement to beat you with."

"I can't think straight," she complained.

He grabbed her by the hair, twisting her silky locks in his fist. "Will you be dating Matt?" he asked again, bending back her head.

"No, Master." Her eyes watered.

"Matt has no clue what you need, does he?"

"No."

"You need to be owned, possessed and cherished. You need to be burned into a man's brain forever. Do you think I could ever think of another woman after I have been with you?"

"I...I don't know."

"The answer is no, I could not. I want only to own, possess and cherish you."

"Yes, Master."

"Your body is mine."

"Yes."

"You serve only my pleasure. I serve only yours."

"Yes." She gasped as he pinched her nipple with his free hand. "I love you, Master!"

He released enough slack on her hair to allow her to bend. "Strip, slave."

She hastened to take off the shorts and thong, stepping from them, his hand still in her hair.

"Kneel." He helped her into position, naked, on her own floor.

David took out his cock now, hard and thick and throbbing. "Kiss it," he ordered.

She applied her mouth, delicate, gentle but eager. She was learning.

"My cock is to be worshipped."

She licked her lips. "Yes, Master."

"You will be taught to please me."

"Yes, Master."

"You will show me what your body needs and you will get it. If you are a good girl."

She looked up at him in adoration.

"Will you be dating Matt?" he asked a third and final time.

"No, Master." She could scarcely form the words.

"You are not a woman to date. You're a sex slave."

"Yes, Master," she croaked.

"I am going to beat your ass," he reminded.

"Yes, Master."

"It's what you want."

"Yes."

"What you need."

"Yes."

He extended his hand. In a trance, she pressed her lips to his flesh, kissing, lingering, slow.

"I don't want to run your life, Linzee. I just want this. You will be stronger than ever, I'll insist on it. But alone with me, when we play, you will be abject, you'll be chained, you'll be punished. You'll be a slave."

Linzee began to lick at the back of his hand.

"I own you," he said, relishing the words.

She did not stop licking. It was her answer, the only one he needed from her at the moment.

* * * * *

Linzee moved like a cat crawling across the kitchen tile. In a fog, a delicious, electric sexual haze and yet her every sensation was heightened to razor sharpness. The way her palms impacted on the shiny, polished surface, the way the refrigerator hummed, the cool air circulating from the fan above, hitting bare, sweat-covered, mottled, superheated skin.

She was a slave.

David Carlisle had come to claim her. He could have locked chains on her, wrapped her in a thousand yards of steel and she would be no less captured, held.

The date with Matt was not going to happen.

That much was quite clear.

Another thing was clear. She must find a utensil so he could spank her with it. She would take it to him clenched between her teeth and offer it up to him along with her ass. Taking a beating from his belt, suffering smacks from his hand was terrifying in its way but this was a million times more deviant.

These were her cooking tools, for crying out loud.

She rose and stood at the counter, opening the drawer. It made a tiny creaking sound. *What was he doing while he waited for her?* she wondered. He was so calm and secure and smug.

No, not smug and not altogether calm. She smiled, thinking how he had been upon his arrival. Blustering, almost irrational, thinking Matt was there and wanting to kick box with him. It made her giggle. Matt was nothing, he couldn't hold a candle to David. And maybe David was right. Maybe she did want him to be jealous on some level.

It had certainly turned her on, seeing him at the door, ready to fight for her. She had been moist, wet to his touch, she had moaned, pressing her body to his, surrendering. He had said that she was his natural sex slave.

Were such things true in this world?

She considered the contents of the drawer, fingering spatulas and spoons and oversized forks, wondering how each would feel on her body. Her ass tingled. She did not have to do this. She could tell him to get lost. But she didn't want to.

Her pussy was dripping. It was all really happening...

She had been crawling. She had taken off her clothes on command.

She wanted him to fuck her so bad. The things he was doing to her were so scandalously titillating and politically incorrect.

Matt would never grab her hair like that, or push her down, unabashedly ordering her to crawl.

Like a slave girl.

She took out a metal spatula, timidly, tentatively trying it on herself—just a light tap to the backside. She sucked in her breath at the feel of the metal—smooth, intrusive and demanding. Just one little tap and her knees went weak.

The sound, the touch of metal shifted her mood.

Rebellion rose.

I won't be beaten. Not like this.

He came here to win me over? Let him bring flowers and woo me, let him get on his knees and beg me.

But his eyes told the whole story. David Carlisle would never kneel, never bend. He had walked away from her once and told her to grow up. And now he was back, no apologies, just demands. All of them for her own good. Wasn't that what all tyrants said?

Linzee had begged. He had taken her pride, stripping it as easily as her clothes.

No, she had done that herself. She had the safe word and he wouldn't have forced a damn thing. David Carlisle was a man of honor.

He was not another Michael.

They were night and day.

But she could live without any man and it was better if she tried.

Heart pounding, she slammed the drawer closed. She would not do this.

Now what? Here she was, trapped in her own kitchen.

Should she hide, run out screaming?

Too much to think about, too much weight on her shoulders. Who was this guy Traycee was with now? Richard? Ricardo? What were they going to be doing? Something extreme, she knew that much. Extreme wasn't good.

What about work? She barely remembered being in court today.

Her limbs began to shake. David had made her too weak. He had broken her down. She didn't know how to resist. Maybe it was okay if she didn't fight him, though, maybe she should she just give in?

She opened the drawer. *Get an implement...*

She wanted to obey. But tears were falling.

Linzee leaned over the edge of the drawer, shaking.

"Extreme clubbing," she was saying over and over, thinking of Traycee. "Can't be good."

David rushed in, finding her. Immediately, he scooped her up in his arms. "Linzee," he called her name. "Linzee, it's all right, you're okay."

She shook her head, no, it wasn't okay. Nothing was okay. It would never be okay. She had messed up everything.

Hysterical breakdowns are not a pretty thing. Especially not when they are many years overdue.

Chapter Twelve

David cursed himself for being so stupid, for pushing Linzee so fast. She should have had a mentor, she should have had months, not days, to adjust to her submissive self. He had been so greedy. He had wanted it all at lightning speed. Who knew how much damage he had done?

He needed to back off, for now if not for good.

But the impulse to stay, to care for her was overwhelming.

He put her to bed, tucking her in, a cold compress on her head, the covers up to her chin.

"Linzee, listen to me." He was sitting beside her on the edge of her frilly, feminine bed. He couldn't help but smile. Though this was hardly the room he would have, with all its lace and frills but it was her, the hidden side, beneath the tough and sleek exterior. He knew that about her and he had planned to cherish, cultivate it.

He took her hand, limp in his. She was looking at the ceiling.

"I don't ever want you to do anything you don't want to do. I don't want to force a thing. Say it, Linzee. Say the word and I'll go. If Matt is right for you, if you aren't submissive..." He choked on the words. "I will not hold you back."

Her glassy eyes moved in his direction. She had ceased her crying some time ago, after long minutes in his arms in the kitchen. That was when she had moved into this quiet space, which frankly scared him a little.

He had considered calling his doctor for her.

Her hand squeezed his, just a little.

A sign of life. His heart leapt.

"Please, come to bed? Just lie beside me?"

He lifted the covers to climb in.

"No." She shook his head as he attempted to crawl in beside her fully clothed. "Naked."

He shed his clothing. He was a little concerned about troubling her with his erection but there was not much he could do when just being in her presence made him hard.

She turned to her side. "My back is cold," she whispered.

He spooned her, pressing his chest along her spine to warm her up.

She did not shy away from the thick shaft as it pressed against her soft thigh.

"Yes," she sighed. "Just hold me."

His arm wrapped around her, giving her all the protection and security first. She snuggled, tucking herself completely. Only when she was fully enveloped, her female body fully tucked into his did she begin to speak. It had the feel of confession mixed with pillow talk. It struck him that, in a vanilla relationship, this might be the sort of conversation to be had over dinner or while strolling under moonlight in the park.

"Sometimes it still feels like it all happened yesterday. Who expects to lose their parents that young, anyway?" said Linzee. She paused at this point, perhaps to give him a moment to adjust to the time and place she was taking him to, not just historically but inside herself.

"No one would," he confirmed. "I can't imagine it."

"My parents were human rights activists," she began to tell the story. "As little kids, we went all over with them. To Africa and Central America. They worked for the UN and later for a nonprofit watch group. Traycee was always the center of attention, people loved her everywhere. My parents were lax with her. They let her do her own thing. I stepped in a lot. She doesn't really remember what the work was. I was there for a lot of meetings, town halls and villages. I saw the outside of a prison once. It was pretty bad. That was in Central Africa.

"It was cool when I was young but by the time I got to high school, it wasn't so great missing out on everything normal teenagers did. I asked to be left home, at our place in the States. Traycee wanted to be with me, like always. She was that kind of sister, following me constantly. I didn't mind. She was a funny kid, so full of energy.

"Mom wasn't happy but Dad agreed to let us stay with some friends who were willing to keep us. He changed their schedule, arranged for more Stateside work so they could visit us. I was pretty responsible, so it worked out. When I turned eighteen, I was ready to go off to college. Mom and Dad were in Vladikastan, a former Soviet republic, when it happened. I was filling out an application, I remember, for a scholarship when I got the news. I'll never forget it.

"Traycee was upstairs with her friend, singing her little heart out to some CD. Two men from the organization came to the door, kind of like they do with deaths in the military. They had this look on their faces. First thing I thought was, get them into the study, Traycee can't hear this.

"I told them to give it to me without any sugarcoating. I shouldn't have been surprised by what I heard. It had to happen sooner or later, didn't it? You don't spend your life fighting evil unless it's bound to hit back. The good ones get taken from us. We need saints, right? I just kept thinking about how to spin it, what to tell Traycee. She couldn't know the whole truth, about the bomb in our parents' car. I mean, how can you tell an eight-year-old that people hated Mommy and Daddy so much they blew them into a million pieces all over the cobblestones?

"I decided to tell her it was an accident. They swerved to avoid hitting a child wandering on a road, a mountain road, so the car went over the guardrail. They died fast, painlessly and they were helping a little kid to survive.

“‘If you tell Traycee otherwise,’ I told the two of them, ‘I will never forgive you.’ Traycee believed me, she had to, she was eight. Maybe she’s figured it out by now. I don’t know. We don’t talk about it.”

“You did the right thing.”

“Thank you,” Linzee said softly.

He got a lump in his throat. His opinion mattered to her. “I should thank you,” he said. “For the first time in my life I have something really important to be passionate about. From now on, I promise, I will support human rights.”

She laughed. “You were pretty passionate when you got here.”

His fingers splayed possessively over her belly. “I was, wasn’t I?”

David had surprised himself. It wasn’t just lust, though he had never wanted a woman as much as Linzee. There was the BDSM too—a very definite realization that she needed it and he was the best one to teach her. Knowing her background only served to further convince him. She was a beautiful strong soul and her submission was a sacred thing, a gift he would never abuse. Her yielding would define him as much as his own domination. They were in this together.

“Did you mean it all? Do you really desire me that much?”

“Yes,” he said without hesitation. “I have never felt like this before. I have never been surer of anything. If I was given to caution, I would think about it a few weeks, months, years but you don’t get what you want in life that way.”

“I really don’t know why you want me. I’m a mess. Hot and cold, aloof one minute, a total basket case the next.”

“I like that about you, though. It makes you fun, challenging.”

She played with the hair on his arm, idly tracing lines. “You said before that you didn’t have parents?”

“I was put up for adoption when I was four,” he confirmed. “My mother was a heroin addict. Never knew my father. They bounced me around a lot from foster home to foster home. I wasn’t your poster boy for adoption. I asked questions, got into trouble.”

“I bet you tied up all the little girls too, didn’t you?”

“When I could find the rope,” he chuckled.

“Too bad I don’t have any,” she teased, taking his hand and putting it on her breast. “So tell me again why I won’t be dating Matt.”

“Actually, now that you mention it,” he teased right back, “I was thinking of loaning you to him for a while.”

“But I thought I was yours exclusively,” she pointed out.

“Sometimes a slave needs to be reminded of her place,” he said. “I can do as I wish with you.”

"You would be too jealous," she said. "Another man touching me, enjoying me like that, making me respond to him."

"But you wouldn't respond," he said.

"Oh." She laughed. "And how do you know that?"

He rolled to his back, hands behind his head. "I would forbid it."

She followed him over, delivering small kisses to his chest, letting her hair tease his skin. "But I am only a poor slave girl, I wouldn't be able to help myself. And Matt is very macho, you know, what with all that kick boxing and such."

His hand found her ass, administering a crisp, satisfying smack. The skin glowed red beneath. She responded like a submissive, with a deep groan, back arched.

"I see you are ready to get back to where we left off," he said.

"And where was that?" She was practically panting.

His finger hooked inside her pussy, claiming her hot opening. "You tell me, slave."

"P-punishment, Master," she stammered.

"And what is the punishment for?"

She suppressed a smirk. "The list must be long by now, Master."

"Indeed." He smacked her again, harder. "I am still waiting for my utensil."

"Yes, Master." She quickly slid from the bed.

He enjoyed the sight of her mightily, hips swaying as she walked out of the bedroom, her luscious ass bright red, wriggling invitingly. He would enjoy the sight of her return still more.

Smiling, crossing his ankles for the moment, he speculated as to what she would bring him to use. Her choice would say a lot.

Likely she would pick something she didn't think would hurt so much but she had no clue what a Master could do.

She was screwed no matter what.

And that was just how they both wanted it.

Linzee picked a plastic spatula. The metal one looked way too much like a medieval torture device. She might have picked a spoon but what if he thought she was trying to get off too easy? That could backfire in a hurry.

Anyway, the plastic spatula had a nice flat handle and it was easy to carry clenched between her teeth.

Like a good little slave, she headed right back for the bedroom. Truly, though, the choice was hers. David was giving her the space she needed and, lo and behold, when he got too far away, she found she missed him. BDSM was quite interesting, indeed.

She was not being held hostage, this was sexual and she wanted it. She was her own master in a way and they were making this up together. She was grasping it, the

fantasy element. There was a lot more to figure out but this was the man to do it with. And this was the time. He was right, she couldn't wait, she had been treading water long enough and another boat might not come along.

His voice stopped her in the hallway.

"You may come into the room on your hands and knees," he declared.

Her heart rate increased.

Linzee lowered herself as ordered. It felt right, it felt fun.

Her stomach did a hot flip as she reached the doorway, knowing he was on her bed, knowing her status and that he was waiting...to do things to her.

As sexy as it had been to play in his fabulous penthouse, it was more erotic, more intimate here in her apartment. This place was her heart and soul. She was totally open here. And he was twisting everything, deviously making this the hotbed of her wicked surrender. Her innocent utensil was going to be used for punishment and her dainty bed would be the altar of her sacrifice to the dark god of his lust.

"You may crawl onto the bed, girl," he announced upon seeing her.

She shivered. He had just given her permission to get into her own bed.

Linzee climbed gingerly onto the mattress alongside him. With a whimper, the utensil in her mouth, she awaited instructions.

"A plastic spatula." He took it from her mouth. "Out of curiosity, did you have metal ones?"

Oh, shit. "Yes, Master," she said, trying to keep her tone neutral.

"And for my further edification, why didn't you choose a metal spatula?"

She licked her lips, eyes down. "I thought it would hurt more," she mumbled.

"Speak up, girl." He placed the spatula under her chin, forcing her to make eye contact.

"I thought the metal would hurt more, Master."

He smiled. "I appreciate your honesty. Nevertheless, your punishment is hereby doubled."

Her eyes widened. "But —"

"Care to have it tripled?" he interrupted.

"No, Master."

David flicked the edge of the spatula idly over her breasts, which were quite unprotected. "It's just as well. With the plastic I have more options."

Linzee did not like the sound of that one bit. Was he going to use it on her tits too?

She moaned softly as he caressed her nipple, the cool plastic sliding seductively, dangerously.

"Can't help yourself, can you, girl?"

"No, Master."

She wanted more and she didn't care how she got it.

"You said you didn't have rope. What about scarves?" he inquired.

Her mouth went dry. "Yes," she whispered.

"How many?"

A drawer full of them, actually.

"A dozen, maybe two."

It was kind of a fetish, her one luxury, going off to buy bits of pretty patterned silk to brighten her mood. Traycee teased her endlessly about it. Now Linzee wondered if there had been a subconscious reason for her quirky purchases.

"Good," he said, confirming her worst fears and darkest hopes of the moment. "Welcome to the world of bondage. You may fetch them. Quickly."

The way he said quickly made her heart slam in her chest. It also made her move her ass.

She took the whole drawer out and dumped the contents on the end of the bed.

"Good girl, Linzee," he said approvingly. "As a reward, I am going to tie you, beat you and fuck you. I hope you appreciate that."

"Yes, Master. Thank you, Master."

"The black scarf," he instructed, pointing. "Bring it to me."

She did so, allowing him to tie it around her eyes, blindfolding her.

The silk was smooth as a lover's touch, the darkness exciting, pregnant with possibilities. She was so dependent on him, so vulnerable.

It was incredible. She was about to be tied, beaten and fucked...and she couldn't be happier. Her pussy dripped, slicking her thighs.

He took her arm. She was standing beside the bed, near the head. He sat up. The spatula brushed her hip and she tensed but not in time to fully brace herself as he turned her sideways.

Ten times, fast, he hit her, pasting her ass with blows. She was hot, inflamed, twitching by the time he was done. She burned to have him touch her sex, her breasts, her lips.

"That was to put you in the right frame of mind. It's a taste of what I can do to you when you don't obey in bed. You are new to this, Linzee, but I won't go easy on you. You have to be broken in right."

"Yes, Master." She moaned as he caressed her breast. It was available to him, at his mercy, like the rest of her. If only she knew what was coming next.

Another blow followed from the spatula to her ass. This one was considerably harder. She yelped in reply.

"That one was to let you know plastic punishes as well as metal."

Linzee winced from the pain. The son of a bitch!

"You know what you do to me," he said, his voice mystical and gentle as he caressed her breast again, molding, squeezing. "I have never enjoyed myself so much."

"Me too, Master," she said, surrendering to the heady mix of pain and pleasure.

"You think about what I'm doing now," he said, running the spatula obscenely over her belly, ass and hips, light touches across her skin that made her jump. "Next time you fry up some eggs with this spatula."

"It will be pretty hard not to, Master," she mused. Indeed, she would tingle and feel the heat just looking at the spatula, remembering what David had done with it, what he had done to her, awakening and claiming her secret self.

He swatted lightly at her breasts, one after the other. "Is that how you spread your legs before Master?"

She widened her stance immediately, reflexively.

Linzee wished she could read his expressions, to know if he was smiling, teasing, playing or pushing to something deeper.

Obey, she thought, I have to obey.

"You are a slave," he reminded.

One smack each to her left and right hip, systematic, as if he was following some formula. The idea of being so trained, broken, like a million other girls made her all the more abject, responsive.

How could the degradation be arousing? It had something to do with the dance of control, the way she held and did not hold the reins. This wasn't one way, this BDSM, it was a flow...an exchange.

He took her wrist now and tied a scarf to it.

"I won't hold back," he said. "I'll do whatever I want. It's up to you to use the word."

"Yes, Master." She understood. It gave her the freedom to go as far as she wanted, as close to the lion's mouth as she dared, knowing she was protected. He would never let anything happen to her, she knew that.

That was the real bondage—him holding her back from the brink of total destruction.

He fixed a scarf to her other arm. "Is this why you bought these? So you could be tied up like a little wench to your own bed?"

"I think so, Master." She smiled, radiant. She had not thought about it at the time but it made sense, it was right and admitting it was right too. "Yes," she confirmed. "I do think so."

He kissed her cheek. "Good girl."

With that he lifted her by the waist, pivoted her and tossed her down onto the mattress. His body fell quickly on top of hers.

"Spread 'em," he growled, putting his knee between her legs. "Wide."

She parted her legs as far as they would go. His hand seized her immediately, fingers moving to the apex of her thighs to clutch at her pulsing, wet sex. She throbbed in response.

"This is mine. I own it," he declared.

"Yes, Master." She could not agree with him more.

"I own you."

She shuddered, needing release. "Please..."

He bit lightly on her earlobe, just enough to arouse her, put her in her place. "You'll come with my cock in you, not before."

She quaked and rocked, she writhed but she did not come. "Yes, Master. Thank you, Master."

He took a moment to tease her nipples with his teeth and tongue, rolling the tight, hard nubs back and forth. It was close to pain, the pleasure was so intense.

"Time to make you a little less comfortable."

With that he tied her ankles to the bottom posts of the bed and her wrists to the top posts.

"Is this why you got this bed?" he taunted. "Just like you got the scarves?"

Likely it was so. So much had been repressed for so long. As a young woman she had not allowed herself the time to think of her sexuality. She was too busy being a mother and father to Traycee. Was she working it all out now in a safe environment, finally, with the right man?

"'I need a Master to fuck me.' Say it." He had read her thoughts.

"I need a Master to fuck me," she repeated.

"'I need to be punished. I need to perform. I need to be tied down.'"

"I need to be punished," she recited, feeling the reality bubble up. "I need to perform. I need to be tied down."

It was true, every word of it.

"I'm going to use you, Linzee. I'm going to fuck you and come inside you. You'll move underneath me and you'll make it good for both of us. You will please me well or I will punish your ass some more."

"Yes, Master."

"Turns you on when I talk like that, doesn't it?"

"Yes, Master."

How could she deny it?

"Beg for it, Linzee."

"Please, Master," she spat out the words, quick as a whip. "Use me, fuck me, let me be good for you."

"You're my toy, Linzee," he impressed on her. "If you don't please me, I'll beat your ass. I'll whip your tits. Maybe I will even leave you tied up a few hours."

"Yes, Master, I'll be good," she promised.

She could not see him. Her world was darkness, her world was the silk bonds on her limbs, the covering over her eyes, the bed beneath her, legs splayed, cunt open, vulnerable, breasts, and all the rest of her at his mercy.

A finger tickled her foot. She nearly screamed. "Show me," he said. "Show me how good you'll be."

She clenched her teeth, arching her back, displaying, advertising. Her body flooded with heat. "I'll be very, very good, Master."

"Lift your ass," he commanded.

Linzee raised her pussy in the air for him.

The spatula descended on her thigh.

She whimpered. He had struck her lightly but her body was so raw.

"Is there a problem, slave?"

"N-no, Master." She moaned as he caressed the hot skin, no doubt red and inflamed.

She did not intend to use the word. She did not need to.

"Your thigh is pleasant to beat, slave. All of you is pleasant to beat. You may beg me to strike you again."

She fought every impulse to disobey. To ask to be subjected to more pain was unthinkable but not following his words was even more unthinkable.

"Please, Master, strike me again."

"Good girl, good pet." He rewarded her with a caress.

She cried out uncontrollably as he played with her clitoris.

"No coming." He slapped her breast with the spatula.

She smelled him, smelled his heat, the testosterone, the sweat, the power. She pulled at her bonds. He had tied her well. Her entire body strained, tensing, releasing, over and over.

"Fuck me, oh god, fuck me," she cried.

He arched a brow. "Is that how you beg, slave?"

"What do you want me to say?" she cried.

"Say 'fuck me, pretty please, most wonderful Master'."

She clenched her teeth. "You have no mercy in you, do you?"

"Do you want mercy?" he asked.

"No, damn you," she sputtered, overcome by her own passion. "I want this. I want you how you are."

He laughed, roughly kissing her. "It will take a lifetime to tame you, lover, and I welcome the opportunity."

"If I keep you around that long," she teased. "Master."

"If?" His body pushed down on hers, claiming the surfaces of her flesh, skin to skin. "I think it's a done deal already."

She held her breath as the tip of his shaft parted her swollen labia. Slowly, very slowly he descended, filling her aching emptiness, centering her. He sank his cock to the hilt, pelvis to pelvis.

He stayed very still, making it clear she was conquered. Linzee could scarcely breathe for her arousal. All that muscle inflaming her, the sheer dominance of his will combusting her female heart. She couldn't take the delay.

"Please..." she sighed.

"You know what you need to say," he reminded.

She shook her head. "No, you can't make me."

Linzee's defiance was token. It would be obliterated in a heartbeat and they both knew it.

"Know how long I can stay inside you like this?" He kissed at her earlobe, his light touch driving her wild. "An hour probably and then if I like, I could withdraw and go to sleep with this same erection."

"You said you would come inside me!"

"And you said you would be good."

"I am good," she insisted.

"We'll see." David bit her neck, suckling. Then he went for her breast. First one and then the other, leaving marks, the bites alternating with the motions of his tongue, agonizingly soft and teasing over her rock-hard nipples. She moaned and thrashed. It went on and on. She had to take it, she was tied down, she was helpless, subject to his mouth, his teeth branding her. Was she being punished, taught another lesson or was this merely another form of foreplay?

Did it even matter?

"You are going to have some great hickeys," he said. "I should make you wear a low-cut top tomorrow to show them off."

She tensed. "You said this was private, between us."

He chuckled, his cock thickening inside her. "It is. But I like thinking about it nonetheless."

Linzee decided to give him a dose of his own medicine. "I have a sudden headache," she announced. "Kindly cease and desist all activities."

He chewed at her lips with his teeth. "Just say the word, honey, and I'll roll over and go to sleep."

He was calling her bluff.

"Aren't you going to talk me out of it?"

"Nope."

"So we have an impasse," she said.

"Not really." He began to move inside her, up and down, his steady, decisive rhythm demolishing her resistance.

In seconds she was writhing, reaching for him with her body, arching her back, trying to get him as deep as possible. He was everywhere at once, filling her and yet leaving her terribly empty, craving his lips, his muscles, his fingers...his cock.

Oh, fuck, she would never hold up.

"Your headache," he said innocently. "We should stop."

"No, it's better," she gasped.

"I don't want to take chances."

"It's all right," she snapped. "Take the chance."

He kissed her lips, light as a feather. "That's so kind of you to sacrifice for me but I will be just fine."

"Damn you," she growled. "You know I need this."

"Do you?"

"Yes!"

"You don't sound like it."

"Well, I do." She tried to keep the irritation from her voice.

"I only fuck obedient slaves," he said. "Not naughty ones who refuse to properly ask their Masters for what they need."

The jig was up. He wanted the words. His cock was halfway in, halfway out. He was in complete control as always.

"All right, I give up. Pretty please, most wonderful Master, fuck your slave."

"I will think about it."

"You prick!"

"Guilty as charged," he chuckled.

She bit his shoulder. It didn't faze him in the least. He was so much stronger than she. "Pretty please," she repeated. "Pretty please."

"Very well. But you are denied permission to orgasm."

"Master, you can't be serious! I can't hold back now!"

"I will come inside you. I will use you for my pleasure only."

"But...but that's too cruel," she exclaimed.

"Thank you, I thought so too," he concurred, proud of himself.

The bastard was gloating over his own sadism. She bit her lip as he thrust to the hilt again, this time intent on his own climax.

She would never hold out.

He grunted, raising himself. Another downthrust, his shaft pulsing in readiness. She gasped breathless, a fucked slave girl, in more ways than one – bound and helpless.

Forbidden to orgasm.

“Master,” she whined, “I need to come.”

“I am aware of that need. And I am ignoring it.”

She whimpered, his domination wrenching her from within. It was so complicated, this feeling of penetration, of utter male predation upon her being. She was a doll, a play toy but at the same time she had never felt so fully in loving hands.

What a rush. The man was doing exactly what he wanted.

And she was letting him.

That had to be some pretty incredible trust both ways, didn't it?

Fascinated, like a moth to flame, she felt it unfold, sweat dripping on sweat, a woman captivated and a man in his element – hard muscle on soft flesh, limbs bound, the perfect encounter, the perfect fantasy come true.

He was going to come.

He groaned, releasing a roar deep in his throat, not at all tame, not like anything Michael had ever come up with. She doubted any man could, not like David, the consummate Master with his chosen slave.

I belong to him. I am meant for him, she thought. The revelation set her soul ablaze and her mind racing. So many implications but for now there was only the one.

She was forbidden to climax.

Impossible. She clenched her teeth, clenched her fists, fighting the tide, the roaring wall of orgasmic ocean within her. She was nothing against it, her poor body was straw, to be ripped apart.

She was going to come, she was going to fail. He had to know that.

She cried out in defeat and need and...fulfillment.

The orgasm was indescribable. Explosions deep within, rearranging molecules, erupting along every nerve ending. She would have risen to the ceiling if not for the bonds holding her in place.

The best climax of her life, not allowed, prohibited but at the same time stolen from her body by a greater power, ripped away, out of her control. David had conquered her, tricked her into disobedience.

A no-win situation. Then again, it was a no-lose situation too.

It went on and on, a thrashing of bodies, a lifetime of unleashed lust in the space of moments. Linzee screamed and bit at his shoulder as he pumped inside her, his cum spurting, filling her. Her pussy could not help but clench and unclench and clench again, accepting his erupting semen. It was all reflex now. She was a tunnel, meant for

him, a cavern to hold the roaring wind of his will. At the same time, she could no more forbid her own orgasm than keep the breath from moving through her lungs.

There was a lesson here and it came to her in the throes of orgasm. Sex wasn't hers to take, give, control. It was something her Master did to her. He directed and focused and released it.

She, in turn, was the epicenter of his pleasure, his lust.

She was a pleasure slave, sex personified, born to be exploited, plucked by the right man. By this man.

"You came," he said, announcing her crime.

"Yes, Master."

The world was settling, dropping back to its foundation. What would be left standing after such a cataclysm?

"I failed you, Master."

"You can't fail." He kissed her. "Love can't fail."

Linzee wept. They were pure, fresh spring tears.

The blindfold was soaked. She couldn't help going back in her mind, maybe it was the safety and the new awakening she felt with David.

"I miss them, so much."

Had she said that aloud?

"I know you do, Linzee." He comforted her, kissing her cheeks. "Your parents loved you. They are proud of you. Never forget that."

She shook her head, the guilt, the suppressed emotions, surfacing, at last. "No, you don't understand. I pushed them to split the family. It would all have been different if we had stayed together."

"You don't know that."

"You don't either," she accused.

David untied her wrists and ankles. She sat up and buried her head against his chest, the blindfold still covering her eyes. There was no holding it back. "We would have been with them," she sobbed. "We would have died with them. We shouldn't have lived. I...I shouldn't have lived."

"You can't believe that, Linzee." He stroked her back, soothing. "The world needed you. I needed you. And what about Traycee? Can you imagine the world without her?"

Linzee laughed through her grief. "No," she admitted. "The world would be far too sane without Traycee."

"I am going to take off the blindfold," he said. "Watch out for the light, it will be bright at first."

She blinked as he slipped the silk over her head. Linzee looked at him, her lips curled in admiration and awe. "I want you to be the first thing I see every time," she declared.

"Every time what?" he asked.

"Every time I am reborn."

"You think that will happen a lot?" He smiled, his lips angling sharply, eyes dancing.

"Yes," she declared. "I do. Each time you look at me and I look at you. Each time you touch me and make me feel."

"That will happen a lot," he agreed, fingertips light on her cheek.

"Again," she said throatily. "Take me again."

He chuckled. "I need a little refraction time, woman."

"That's what my mouth is for," she said wickedly.

"Ah, I nearly forgot."

She shook her head. "Do I have to teach you everything about using a slave girl?"

He tickled her mercilessly, fingers at her ribs. "And you will be applying your vast experience on the subject, I presume?"

She wriggled, in jubilant hysterics, squealing for him to stop. "You're just jealous," she exclaimed. "Because I am better at practicing BDSM than you are."

"Is that right?" He pushed her back down, gently but decisively. She felt him against her thigh. He was hard again.

"What about recovery time?"

"Apparently it isn't necessary with a wench like you."

"I am not a wench," she said haughtily.

"You are for me. And a slave girl and anything else I want."

She arched her back. There was no fighting it. And even if she could, this was not a battle she wanted to win.

Linzee was happy, at home at long last.

It wasn't about being a submissive.

It was about being *his* submissive.

"If you insist, Master."

"I do," he said. "I do."

"I love you, Master," she declared, abandoning herself to the moment, to the surrender, the fulfillment in letting go.

"I love you too, slave."

"Always?"

"Always," he replied, covering her face with a fresh layer of kisses, soft on the surface but shattering from within. "And forever."

She smiled, absorbing, moistening, born again.

The rain had come at long last to the desert.

David did not move immediately to claim Linzee once more with his cock. Instead he slid down and took her with his tongue. He used it expertly, licking across her pulsing labia, coaxing the fluids out. They were honey sweet and tangy. It was a taste he would definitely never tire of. Nor would he weary of Linzee's moans as he teased her clitoris to life. He was tempted to tie her down again but she was already bound by her own passion, as enslaved as a woman could be.

Not by force but by love. David inserted his tongue deep, winning sultry moans from Linzee's throat. She was orgasming in seconds, her clitoris pulsing against his lip. Twice more he lifted her to full bliss before coming up for air.

He slid his body up along hers until they were mouth to mouth. She tasted her own fluids, cleaning his mouth and tongue. Her hand was on his cock, greedy, ready.

"Please," she begged.

"Yes," he said, rolling onto his back. Linzee followed him over, taking him between her lips. She began by rolling her tongue over the tip of his cock head but quickly she moved to take more.

Soft as silk she slipped him deep, to the back of her throat.

"Linzee, baby," he croaked, his hand on her head, softly stroking. He barely got the words out when he felt the eruption. There was no holding back. He filled her mouth, allowing her to swallow him down. It was heaven. She continued to gulp every drop of his semen until there was nothing left but an inner peace, a quiet satisfaction, one that he craved to share with Linzee. He pulled her close. They listened to each other's heartbeats.

"My Master," she whispered.

"My submissive," he replied.

The sweetest words ever to pass his lips.

About the Author

Reese Gabriel is a born romantic with a taste for the edgier side of love. Having traveled the world and sampled many of the finer things, Reese now enjoys the greater simplicities; barefoot walks by the ocean, kisses under moonlight and whispers of passion in the darkness with that one special person.

Preferring to remain behind the scenes, cherished by a precious few, Reese hopes to awaken in the lives of many the possibilities of true love through stories of far off places and enchanted lives.

For the sake of love and hope and imagination, these stories are told. May they be enjoyed as much in the reading of them as in the writing.

Reese welcomes comments from readers. You can find Reese's website and email address on the author bio page at www.ellorascave.com.

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