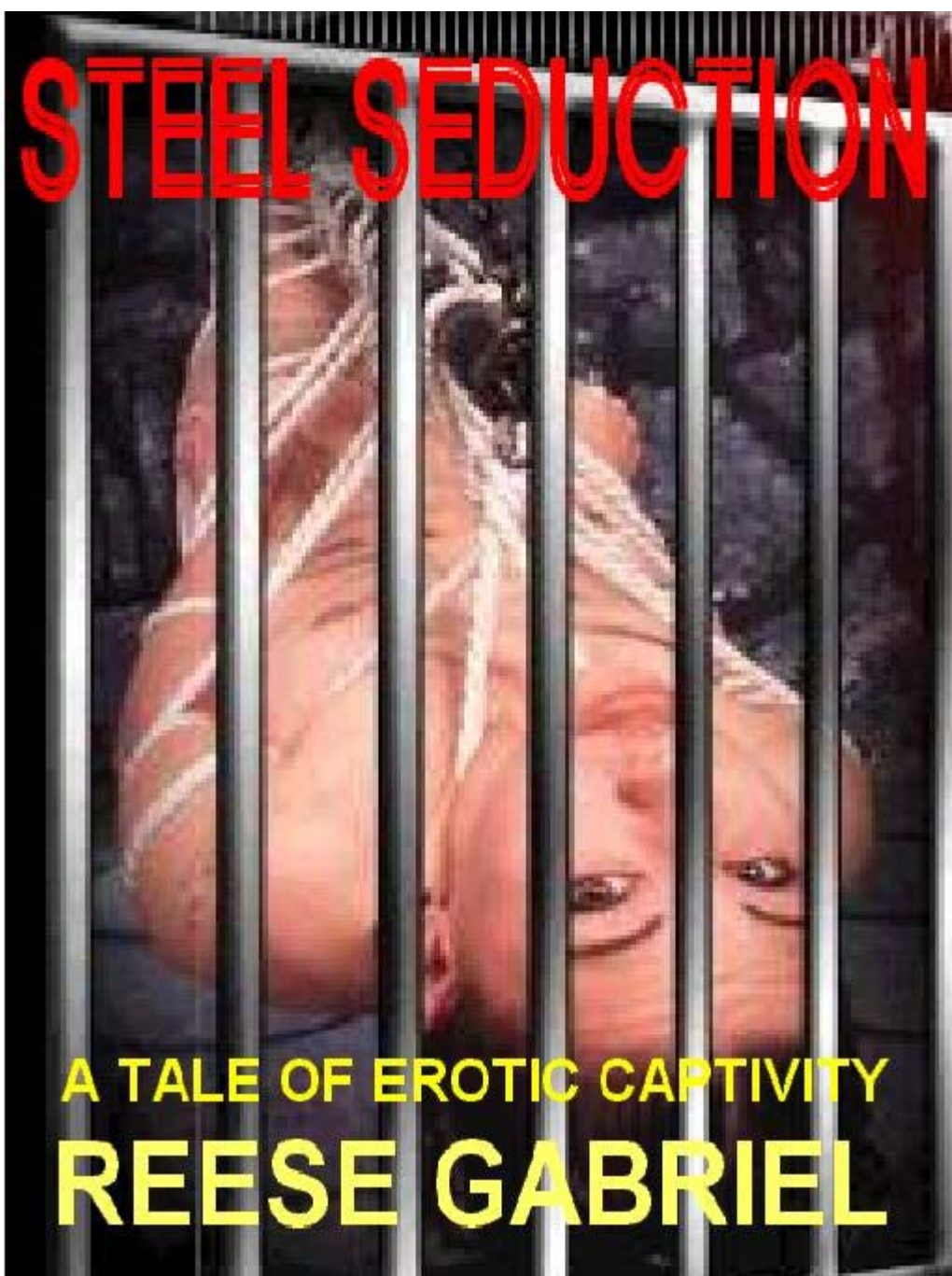




STEEL SEDUCTION
A TALE OF EROTIC CAPTIVITY

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A Sizzler B&D Edition

CHAPTER ONE

Tonight Jessy would end it. No more sneaking around on her husband, no more staying up half the night worrying if she'd covered all her tracks, making sure she'd cleaned her body thoroughly of Caesar's scent, triple checking her cover stories, lining up alibis. Keeping her game face up for Robert at all times, draping properly and prettily on his arm, and, on those rare occasions when he wanted her in bed anymore, pretending passion.

Really it was only Caesar she could think about, with his hard cock, well toned muscles, smoldering eyes and that deep, velvet smooth courtroom voice, which he used so well to get what he wanted from her.

Caesar gave her things too, things Robert would never even try. For her husband, sex consisted of slapping her on the ass, hip, or whatever else he could get to first, and telling her to get ready. She would put herself in whatever position he wanted, praying he wouldn't labor over her long.

But he was her husband and she had to try again. She belonged to him, like it or not, heart, soul and body. She'd always been that way – devoted to her man. Unfortunately, when others came along to stake claims of their own, she'd never been able to say no. She'd hoped a year ago when Robert asked for her hand it would be different, but then Caesar came along, upsetting everything.

A sleazy affair is what this was and tonight she must lay it to rest. Kill it or whatever else one did to bury an improper carnal liaison.

Heart charging in her chest, taking one last look around the dimly lit motel parking lot, Jessy rapped lightly on number seven. Caesar always made love to her in seven because it was his lucky number. Scanning for prying eyes before going in was also habit, one she'd be more than glad to be rid of.

I'll make Robert want me more, she thought. I'll dress for him, like when we were dating. I'll turn him on and suck him for hours the way he used to let me and I'll let make him want to take me in all kinds of kinky ways, doing whatever pleases him.

Caesar, stripped to white dress shirt and boxers, let her in, a frown on his sharp angled, masculine face. "You're late," he locked it behind her, sliding the chain.

The sound of the metal set Jessy's blood racing. Even if only symbolically, he was confining her and soon he would want things from her, dirty things.

"I can't stay," she braced herself, beginning the well rehearsed speech, repeated a dozen times on the way over in the Mercedes.

"The hell you can't," said the city's second most prominent trial lawyer behind her husband. "I've got a hard-on the size of Rhode Island."

His hands were on her nearly bare shoulders drawing her in, making a mockery of her kiss-off performance. Feeling his gym-exercised grip, Jessy regretted now the choice of the spaghetti strap sundress, which she'd hoped would look dignified, standoffish and not sexy.

"Caesar, you're not making this easy."

"Making what easy?" He kissed her just the way he had that night at the City Opera Christmas gala, five minutes after they'd been introduced. His kisses were like brands, white fire, and Jessy had yet to develop an effective strategy against them. The first one had led to her giving herself to him in an upstairs alcove, her cheek and palms pressed to a white marble pillar as he tugged down her panties, lifted her designer dress from behind and slipped himself between her nether lips. She'd just stood there, lightly moaning, her toes curling in her wispy open toed heels as he had his way, bringing her to a quick, very public orgasm.

"We'll be doing that again," he'd said. Not a request or invitation but a directive. Formal notice having been served by an attorney that he was moving into another's territory.

A meek "yes," was all she'd managed, though a firm "no" or a slap to his face would have been much more in order.

"I – I don't want Robert to find out," she said now, breathless as he released her.

"What are you kidding me?" he tore through her argument – a

tattered shred of what she'd originally intended. "Robert's a little prick. I could care less if he does find out."

Jessy didn't try to interfere as he unzipped the dress and pulled it over her head.

"I just can't do this anymore," she lifted her arms for him. "It's not right."

"Right?" he tossed the delicate fabric on the floor. "I'm a lawyer; what the fuck are you telling me, 'right'?"

"I can't sleep at night, Caesar."

"Take a fucking pill." He spun her around, unclasping the tightly binding bra.

Jessy sighed uneasily the way she always did when her breasts spilled free. They'd always been a little large for her frame and having them stick out like this made her feel too damn vulnerable.

"Oh, yea," he licked his lips, making her face him again. "Now we're talking."

Jessy knew she'd lost eye contact for the duration. She was a body now, and nothing more. A pair of knockers, a tight ass, a willing cunt.

That's all men had ever seen in her, except for her husband, who ironically enough, was the one man who should be lusting after her. Was it marriage that killed passion? she wondered. Did men lose interest in something once it was already possessed? Was sex for them all about the chase, the hunt and capture?

She gasped as he took her nipples between his fingers.

"I don't want to hear anymore talk about you leaving me, got it?"

"Yes," she replied, through gritted teeth, her verbal acquiescence signaling the start of their games for the evening.

"Yes, sir," he squeezed them harder, making her eyes water.

"Oh, yes," she threw back her head, the pain waking her up, focusing her like the first morning's cup of coffee. "I'm sorry, sir."

"You're a sorry little cunt, you know that?"

"I know, sir; let me make it up to you."

"For starters, let's find something a little more appropriate for your mouth other than yammering, shall we?"

He brought her down to her knees, tugging the swollen buds.

Using only her teeth, Jessy unsnapped the heavily strained boxers, freeing his erection. Continuing to control her by her helpless tits, he thrust himself deep, finding the back of her throat on the first go.

Now it was the muscular barrister's turn to moan. She pictured his face in ecstasy, the hard edges softened, the veins in his thick neck throbbing, the skin on his smoothly shaven, well tanned head drawn taut toward his ever expressive eyebrows.

Jessy prided herself on her cock sucking. She'd been doing it since her senior year of high school and she was good. Very good according to the many takers she'd had over the years. For a girl like her, oral pleasuring was just the option she needed to offer the various men who were attracted to her. Turning them away empty handed was not in her nature, nor had she been able to afford the risks of pregnancy, especially with the violent temper of her alcoholic, ex-navy father.

Using her mouth as a cunt was the perfect thing when it came to pleasuring the men in her life. No one ever refused her and she herself received thereby the inordinate joy of giving pleasure. The fact that the act was performed most often on her knees was an added bonus given her naturally submissive nature.

"See, baby?" he rasped, letting her nipples go to stroke her sandy brown tresses. "I give you what you need – not that spineless husband of yours. Jeezus, what I wouldn't give to see the look on his face if he knew what his little wifey was up to right now."

Jessy stiffened. Here was the root of Caesar's attraction to her. Competition with his chief rival. It was like this secret the man had, so that whenever he saw Robert Condrum he could smirk just a little and Robert would never even know what it was about. Indeed, as far as her husband was concerned, Jessica was a loyal little bride, the perfect mascot.

Where did that leave her, though? Was she little more than a trophy for the two of them? In a way it excited her, making her feel cheap and used, but she couldn't help thinking there should be more to life. Certainly she hadn't married out of anything other than a genuine desire to devote herself to her spouse and to have him devote himself

back. Submission to one's husband was one thing, but to be cast aside emotionally was quite another.

Robert would never fail to give her things, but more and more, she was coming to wonder if she was just one of those things herself. A rare and unique possession displayed perpetually to its best effect to impress friends and excite jealousy in enemies.

"Whoa, slow down there, hot stuff." Caesar withdrew just in time to avoid spilling himself in the warm opening. "The party's just getting started."

A part of her, the rational side, wished she could just finish him off and be done with it. Another part, the slut side, however, was glad it would go on. All night if possible.

"Let's get you naked," he lifted her by the tresses of her long hair, his hands pulling and twisting like it was some kind of handle.

Jessy winced, hating the fact that such treatment always went straight to her crotch.

"Damn," he muttered, bowing her back. "You know how much I wish I could whip those titties?"

"M-me, too, sir," she croaked.

There were limits to what Caesar could do to her even though she was his acknowledged submissive in all sexual situations. Marks of any kind were out of the question, as were bruises or cuts. Not that he didn't get her off sometimes just talking about what he wanted to do to her and how – if she were his – he would make his ownership of her unmistakably clear on her soft, female flesh.

"I can spank you, though, can't I?" Continuing to control her by her hair, he slid his other hand under the waistband of her panties, lightly massaging her warm ass cheek.

His touch unleashed the floodgates between her legs. "Y-yes, sir."

"Are you wet for me, slut?"

She nodded fiercely.

"On the bed," he pushed her backwards. "Get naked."

Jessy landed on her back on the crisp white sheets. Using both hands, watching mesmerized as he unbuttoned his crisp, tailored shirt to bare his barrel chest, she skinned down the sopping wet silk.

"Let's see how good a girl you are." Caesar took the panties, wadded them up and pushed them between her legs, soaking as much of the juice as he could manage. Satisfied at the saturation level he retrieved them.

"Open."

Jessy gaped her jaws to receive the soiled silk. She took it all, nearly choking on her own fragrance and taste.

"On your belly," he said, giving her no quarter.

Jessy rolled over, presenting her ass. There were various things Caesar could do it without leaving tell tale abrasions. The paddle was one, or his hand, and if he wished, he could also shove his dick up there. Robert was too lazy for anal intercourse, nor had he any interest in verbally and physically dominating his wife this way. She was a convenient receptacle for him, like an ashtray or trashcan and nothing more. Not that he wasn't forever becoming jealous if another man so much as looked at or talked to her, though. For as much as he didn't want to exploit her or enjoy her charms himself, he didn't want anyone else to, either.

It was much the same way with his expensive English roadster or his speedboat, she thought sardonically, both of which sat in the garage collecting dust for months at a time between uses.

Caesar ran his hand over her posterior, making her shiver with anticipation. "You'll never leave me. You need this too much."

'This' was a hard smack, delivered with enough strength to drive her down into the mattress. The pressure chafed her sore nipples and caused her pelvis to burn against the cool polyester. She could feel the liquid seeping out of her onto the sheet. Were he to flip her, he would find the stain, confirming just how much the rough treatment turned her on.

"Get on all fours."

Jessy raised herself painfully. Caesar wasted no time in mounting her, his rigid cock meeting no resistance at the entry to her superheated pussy. She shoved herself back hard against him to receive it, needing the firm, hard push of flesh, the sense of violation and outrage as this man did to her what he pleased without regard to

her feelings or wishes.

"Pity Condrum wastes you out there in the suburbs," he reached round to take her tits in his hands. "A little piece of ass like you should be turning tricks or at the very least shaking it on the stage at some strip joint."

Jessy knew he'd never do such a thing, though there were times she wished he would. Anything to get him to notice her as a female again, a creature with living breathing desires, who wanted to be wanted, to be lusted after by men, willing to pay money to fuck her or just to look at her sweaty, gyrating body.

She closed her eyes, at the brink of orgasm already. This was hardly new ground any of it; they'd been here before, but Jessy never seemed to tire of Caesar's insults, his denigrations, his steadfast refusal to treat her as anything other than an object of his perverted desires.

"Maybe I'll put you out there myself. What do you say?" he kneaded her firm and supple mounds, breasts far too big to belong to a self-respecting career girl. "You ready to earn me a little extra income? Let's say twenty apiece for blow jobs, forty for a straight fuck and fifty for anything fancy. How's that sound?"

Jessy felt so cheap being mauled and used like this. The man never even bothered to use a decent hotel or take her to dinner before screwing her. After their encounter at the opera he'd simply called her the next day giving her the location of a parking lot to meet him mid afternoon.

"Blow me," he'd said as soon as she'd settled herself in the seat of his Jaguar.

And she had, no questions asked, swallowing every drop. She sometimes wondered how he'd read her so well, knowing how she'd respond to being treated like a whore. No, worse than a whore because she performed for free.

"Oh, yea, that's it baby," he rode her like a jockey now, shifting positions slightly so he could swat her noisily on her hips and bottom. "Give it up. Show me what a little slut you are. Show me how bad you want me to put your ass on the street."

Fingers clawing the sheets, sucking wildly at her own underwear, Jessy came for him, giving him gloating rights for another day. Still intact, the one-time amateur boxer pulled out of her still spasming pussy so he could fuck her tits. Lying face up, Jessy held them up and out for him, allowing the man to rub his cock between them to abandon.

Holding out to the last possible second, he finally grabbed his thing in his hand, the veins in his neck popping as he took aim. For a forty year old, he still sported a good, thick load, and he was mighty good shot, ejaculation-wise. By the time his grunting and hissing was over, he'd hosed her down good, landing a well spaced smattering of white gobs in her hair as well as across her face and torso.

"Go get cleaned up," he broke through her feminine afterglow. "You look like shit."

He was gone by the time she was done with her shower. Having gotten his rocks off, he wouldn't need her again for a week or so, less if his stress load picked up. Jessy dressed quickly, avoiding her reflection in the mirror. So much for making a clean break, she thought bitterly, as she pulled shut the door to Number 7 till next time.

Too late she remembered she'd forgotten to dry her hair. Great. How would she explain that little fact to Robert, given that she was supposed to be at her girlfriend Debbie's consoling her after yet another break up?

Maybe she could tell him that Debbie had cried up a storm and gotten her soaking wet, she mused as she fished for her car keys in the dark. Or maybe she'd just flat out tell him she was out fucking his worst enemy, the man who'd single handedly taken more money out of his pocket and put more egg on his face than any other.

The rag-covered hand came over her mouth so fast Jessy never had time to scream. It was attached to an arm, powerful and masculine. A second one was wrapping her waist, trapping her own much smaller arms.

"Don't resist," counseled the stranger. "Just breathe in nice and deep and we'll both come out of this alive."

She shook her head, trying to struggle for all her tiny, female body

was worth. Unfortunately this only caused her to breathe in the chemical on the cloth more deeply, the wet poison settling darkly in her lungs.

For a split second she told herself this was all a game, something Caesar had dreamt up to titillate them both. But it wasn't Caesar, he'd left already, selfish bastard that he was, and now she was alone, caught by this man, this robber, rapist or murderer, whichever he might turn out to be.

Forced to lean back against his lean strong chest, Jessy remembered the panties. Oh, god, she'd shoved them in her purse and now her crotch was bare. If he should pull up her dress and want to rape her, he'd find nothing in his way.

Her half conscious mind wandering, her limbs growing slack, she thought she could hear him speaking to her, telling her to relax. Incredibly, in spite of her terror, she could feel herself responding positively, melting into him, feeling a peace she hadn't known in a long time.

If ever.

* * *

John Steel looked down at the peacefully sleeping girl, her full, pouty lips pursing, her bosom rising and falling in tune to her breathing. She was barefoot now, hair tousled, lying on her side. Her arms were sprawled, one up, one down, palm up. The dress had ridden up her thighs and she had her legs apart, like she was running in her dreams. The toenails were painted and under the thin, flowery dress, he already knew she was naked from the waist down.

All of which added up to one thing. Steel had a hard on. For his god damn hostage, no less. Not that John Steel was a kidnapper, mind you. All he was really doing was trying to get a little justice the only way he knew how. No harm would come to the girl, he'd see to that. An expert in dealing with captivity, he'd minimize the psychological effects and as long as her husband cooperated, she'd be free in a week, two tops.

But an erection. This he didn't need. Having the girl squirm against his crotch, her ass undulating as he reined her in tight, waiting

for the chloroform to take effect was what started it all. Leave it to a woman like her to try and seduce a man during an abduction. Not even married a year and already screwing around. Granted her husband gave new meaning to the word weasel, but still, a woman owed something to her man. He supposed they were all like this, the beautiful girls of the world. Wrapped in pretty, shiny paper on the outside, and inside, pure rottenness.

Just like his ex-wife.

If there was one thing he'd learned from having his heart torn out and stomped on by the luscious blonde Kimberlee – not to mention having his only daughter stolen away from him forever – it was that women were good for only one thing.

But it was this one thing that he could afford least of all to take advantage of with regard to the twenty-something Jessica Condum, who was young enough to be his daughter. Sexy and desirable as she was, Steel was going to have to be all business with her. Abductors did not fuck their hostages. Though he'd never seen a rulebook on the subject, he was pretty sure that this little proviso would be up there in the top ten.

What Steel had seen, in twenty years of military and mercenary service, was some of the worst of humanity. He'd seen lives taken and taken lives himself. He'd also seen the waste, the horrors of even the small wars, the accidental skirmishes. Therefore he knew better than anyone not to take for granted the action he was undertaking. There were risks, very real ones. For himself and the girl.

It was all for his brother, though, and wrong or right, Jimmy's life had to take precedence.

The girl was starting to stir. Coolly, dispassionately, he watched from the foot of the brass bed as she turned onto her opposite side, her angelic face scrunching up like he'd sometimes seen his daughter's do. She was a pretty thing, this Jessica, though not perfect. There was a slightest puffiness under the eyes, which would pocket as she got older. And the lips were maybe a trifle too full.

Neither of which defect, however, made him want to fuck her any less.

He'd have to make the decision pretty soon as to whether to let her see his face or not. It'd be best if she didn't, for both their sakes, but he really didn't want to scare the hell out of her right out of the box by wearing some kind of mask. Nor did he want to impose a blindfold on her. When it came right down to it, though, it didn't matter what she saw. They'd never catch him once he'd left the country again, which was his plan. Besides, she'd be pretty dumb to turn in a man who could provide first hand evidence of her infidelity. Which he could easily do, employing the photos he'd taken of her and Caesar entering and leaving the motel room tonight.

Make that last night, Steel corrected, catching the first rays of dawn outside the window of the remote cabin. Finding this little place upstate was the smartest move he'd made. No one would ever trace them up here. And since he didn't need to meet Robert Condram to collect any ransom, it would stay that way. Once everything had been handled, he'd just drop Jessica off somewhere and let her take a bus home.

At which point she'd be none the worse for wear. He'd even furnish her with the name of the storage garage where she could find her car, which he'd driven himself, with her in it, to retrieve his own van. All in all, a foolproof plan, barring unforeseen circumstances.

Unfortunately, unforeseen circumstances were the one thing you could count on in a covert operation.

Steel was surprised she'd stayed out of it this long. The little thing was like Sleeping Beauty. Only he damn well wasn't going to kiss her awake.

Business, that's what this was. Robert Condram had something he needed, or rather his brother, something his brother needed, and the man was going to provide it in exchange for his wife's freedom. A week ago Steel had begged Condram, as one of the city's foremost trial attorneys to take on the case of his little brother Jimmy who'd been framed for murder by some members of a gang he'd once belonged to.

Jimmy had had his problems, but he'd been clean six months, off of the drugs, out of the gang and trying to make a fresh start in a halfway

house. John blamed himself for not being there while the kid was growing up. At age seventeen, having lied about his age John had gone off to join the army, never looking back. His baby brother was left in the care of their unstable mother and hadn't ever had a fighting chance. John had sent money whenever he could and tried to line up social workers, but his work kept him away and he really never was able to face him or his mother again.

For all his commendations under fire Steel considered himself, for this very reason, to be a coward.

So now Jimmy was in the fight of his life and John knew he had to come home. Little did he realize the legal system would turn its back. The really good lawyers, like Condrum wanted a small fortune and the free ones, the public defenders were completely stressed out or clueless.

Robert Condrum had pretty near laughed in his face when Steel asked him to do the work pro bono. "Sorry," he pointed to the donor plaque on the wall with his stubby little finger, the wrist adorned with a gold Rolex. "I already give to The Boy Scouts, my ex-wife and the IRS."

The man didn't care that Jimmy was at home alone studying for his GED the night of that cop shooting or that he might get the death penalty at age nineteen for the murder of a narcotics officer, who by all accounts was crooked, anyway.

"Life sucks," Condrum quoted another plaque, this one in miniature on the top of his polished mahogany desk, the pewter design featuring a gold fish crying for help as it gets pulled down an emptying toilet bowl. "And then you die."

Condrum was a smart ass, and John Steel hated smart asses. Almost as much as he hated lawyers. But sometimes they were a necessary evil, like snakes, to keep down the rodent population. He hadn't had a good enough snake in his divorce case and so he'd lost Savannah to a couple of rats. Now the rats had Jimmy and if anyone could help the kid out, it was this guy, the biggest rattler of them all.

The way Steel had it worked it all out, it was pretty simple. All Condrum had to do was agree to take Jimmy's case. Steel was

especially proud of himself for having researched the law enough to know that once Condrum remanded himself, he was on the case for good. No matter how long it dragged out. That way, if Steel felt the need to let Jessica go before the final verdict, he'd be assured his brother would still be protected.

Damn. He was tired. How many hours had he been up now? Pretty near twenty-four, counting all of yesterday and the full night's drive up here after the abduction. He'd need some sleep and soon. Closing his eyes, Steel gave them a good rub, trying to invigorate himself.

When he opened them again the girl was looking at him.

CHAPTER TWO

It took Jessie a moment to work up to a scream. She'd been having a lovely warm dream about Kyle Hastings, her first love. He was walking with her hand in hand on the beach at sunset. They were laughing and he was telling her how he was so glad they could do everything over again because this time he wasn't going to get her pregnant and run off, he was going to marry her and make her happily ever after and she'd never have been under all that stress and had a miscarriage.

At first she thought this place was a dream, too. The ramshackle cabin walls and this sober looking man. About forty, maybe forty-five, with short, black hair, blue, blue eyes and a square jaw. He had on an olive drab t-shirt and some kind of military tattoo on his left bicep.

It was the tattoo that jogged her memory.

"There isn't anyone to hear you," he waited till she'd shouted herself hoarse. "We are miles from anyone else."

There was that voice again, the odd combination of harsh resolution and reassurance that had been her last contact with the living world at the motel last night. Or had it been a week ago?

"Who are you?" she asked finally, scooting to the head of the bed in an effort to put as much distance between them as possible.

"That's not important," he countered as though she were an errant child. "What we need to talk about are the rules we're going to have to follow while you're here. To begin with—"

"Hold on a fucking minute!" she interrupted through the storm of her throbbing headache. "What do you mean rules? What is this – summer camp for sadists? I asked you a question, you mother fucker and I want an answer."

"There's no need for profanity."

She stared in disbelief at him, standing there so cocky, hands on his fatigue-covered hips. With that solid waist, nice hard stomach and totally devastating blue eyes, he was a tempting, though dangerous package of manhood.

"Profanity?!" She shook back her tangled mess of hair, trying to remove it from in front of her eyes. "How about kidnapping me – don't you think that's a little profane?"

"I'm not a kidnapper," he insisted, his jawline tensing ever so slightly.

"Oh really?" she challenged, adrenaline having kicked in to sideline her terror for the moment. "So you're saying I can leave here right now?"

"Not exactly," he conceded.

"In that case, I've got news for you, genius; you're a kidnapper!"

Steel tried to hold his temper. The girl was really pushing his buttons. And she sure wasn't looking any less fuckable in the process. In fact, he'd like nothing better than to put this adulterous little know-it-all over his knee for a nice long bare assed spanking followed by a leisurely session of hide the revolver.

"The rules," he began again, more firmly.

"Got to hell!" she exclaimed, already on her feet.

He intercepted her at the door.

"Let go of me!" she squealed, having recovered all of last night's fight and then some.

Lifting her off her feet, he carried her, legs and arms flailing, back to the bed. Dropping her unceremoniously onto the mattress, he found himself tormented with a momentary flash of her light brown pubis, the lips pink and tempting.

"You come near me," she scrambled to cover herself, "and I'll bite your dick off."

"I have no interest in your personal charms, Mrs. Condrum. This is strictly business. Now, if you please, the rules."

"My name," she exclaimed. "How do you know my name?"

Steel rubbed his forehead. She was wearing him down. If he didn't get some rest soon he'd be passing out on her.

"What are you doing?" she asked warily as he pulled the plastic bag from the dresser drawer.

"A few things to insure we both get a little time to chill out."

Jessy's pulse raced as her handsome kidnapper emptied the contents

in front of her. Bondage items. He was going to put her in restraint. "You don't scare me," she bluffed.

"Not trying to," he took her wrist, enclosing it in the pink, fur lined steel.

"These are sex toys," she pointed out. "That's what you're planning for me, isn't it?"

He turned her round, back to front, hiding his erection.

"Because if you want to have sex with me," she said over her shoulder. "I'll do that, if it'll keep you from doing other things."

"Other things?"

"You know. Torture. Dismemberment. All the things psychopaths do."

The second handcuff locked into place.

"Watch your head," he cradled her as he lowered her onto her left hip.

She let loose a small, piteous sob. "I don't want to die."

"Oh, for heaven's sake. Who said anything about killing you? Or molesting you for that matter? I just need you to quiet down and stop acting like a wild banshee."

"I will," she promised. "Just let me up and I won't be any more trouble. I swear it."

"You'll forgive me if I'm a bit skeptical," he put her on her stomach and bent her knees up so as to attach the ankle chains.

Jessy felt hurt and scared and excited all at once. He was chaining her like an animal, having rejected her after she'd practically thrown herself at him like a whore. "What's the matter, aren't I good enough?" she blurted. "You used to a higher grade of pussy in whatever sewer it is you crawled up out of?"

Steel drew her ankles tight against her shapely ass, counting down the seconds till he got to the gag. He hadn't wanted it to come to this. She wasn't really going to suffer any, though, except her pride. He'd hoped to do this the nice way, but apparently he needed to let her know who was boss.

"There's no point trying to rile me up," he let her know. "I told you, this is all quite professional."

"Yea, I'm sure you went to school for it. Psychopathology, right?"

That, as it turned out was Jessy's final barb prior to having her lips met by the red, rubber ball attached to the leather straps. Steel found the ball gag to be a most delightful stopper, a guarantee that he'd get a little rest. Jessica complained loudly, though her insults, innuendoes and invectives were now reduced to an entertaining chorus of garbled 'mmphs.'

"I'm going in the next room to get some sleep," he informed her. "I suggest you do the same."

It was probably cruel under the circumstances to leave her. She had to be hungry and thirsty, and she hadn't used the bathroom since he'd captured her. Then again, he was pretty near the point of collapse. Maybe if he just sat on the sofa in the other room for a minute or so, he could recharge his batteries. Damn, he must be getting old. A few years back, he could be up and around for days on end, crawling through jungles, lying face down in mud puddles and dodging bullets with only scattered moments of rest here and there. Forty-three, much as he hated to admit it, was over the hill in the action business.

Oh, well, so much for making the kidnapping thing full time.

Steel stretched himself out; he'd lie here for five minutes tops and then go back and check on her. He had a headache and his dick was still pounding. Restraining the girl had darn near caused him to lose it in his pants like a nineteen year old. Seeing how she struggled and fought, but more importantly how another part of her really liked it. A big part. And that right there could be trouble with a capital 'BDSM' if it turned out Mrs. Jessica Anne Condrum was a natural sexual submissive.

In that case, being that he was a natural dominant himself, all bets would be off.

Closing his eyes, he tried not to think of the consequences. He must have tried too hard because a moment later he was snoring.

* * *

Jessy was trying to hold it in. She hated this man, this place, this situation and most especially the fact that she was aroused, being chained up like this on her stomach, in fur lined cuffs, a foul tasting

ball gag in her mouth. What kind of freak did that make her? Was it something in the man's eyes, that soft brown soulfulness that told her he would never hurt her? But why should she trust a man who'd grabbed her from a parking lot and dragged her off to the woods as his prisoner? Who was he, really? And what did he want from her? He didn't look like a career criminal. Too clean cut, too clear eyed and disciplined. Military most like or ex-military.

Maybe he reminded her of her dad somehow. They all did at some level, all the wrong men she'd chosen in her life. From Kyle all the way down to Caesar. Every one of them taking what they wanted – her body mostly and throwing away the rest.

What did she expect, though, acting the way she did? She'd always been a "girly girl" as her father put it, the sort of woman who can't live without a man – to direct her, tell her what to do. Rein her in, as it were. Without that guidance, that control, she drifted terribly. Robert had promised to be that cowboy, riding in on the white steed to corral her. She'd been his secretary first, fresh out of the business school her father had told her was "practical" and "easy enough" for a girl of her limited abilities. As an administrative assistant, she was a disaster. Robert often joked, in front of his friends at parties, much to her dismay, that the only reason he'd married her was to get her out of the office.

It had all begun the time they both bent down for the same piece of paper, lips meeting on the way up. Jessy always was a pushover for kisses.

"Why don't you lock the door?" he'd murmured, having caressed her nipples to full erection through her blouse. Weak kneed, she'd gone to do his bidding. By the time she came back, he was unzipped. She was a trifle disappointed at first when she realized it wasn't going to be about her body at all except for her mouth, but when she saw how wild he went over the blowjob, the usually staid, uptight barrister swearing under his breath and hyperventilating, she was immediately sold on Robert's plan for her to take daily "dictation". This was another joke of theirs, how he would conduct phone calls, and on occasion in person interviews with her crouched, servile and slurping

on his manhood, her body hidden by his formidable, imported desk.

No man had ever paid so much attention to her on a regular basis. It didn't even matter to her that his love making attempts, generally on his couch or the floor of his office, never yielded orgasms for her. The two of them were together, committed, a couple, that was what counted.

Nowadays she feared he was keeping sluts on the side. Rita, the skinny bitchy blonde who was his current secretary was the top candidate in her mind.

Jessy needed to pee so badly. It was burning inside, and as loud as she was whimpering, her captor was either ignoring her or out of range. She tried turning to her side toward the door, but that didn't help either. Nor did thrashing like a net caught fish to make the metal headboard bang on the wall. This was outrageous! Reduced to drooling out the side of her mouth, unable to urinate when she needed to, chained down and gagged by a madman.

A madman with amber colored eyes that spoke of a lot of pain, a lot of things he wasn't saying. Not an ordinary kidnapper, but a man driven to desperate circumstances. What would push a man over the edge like this? And what did she have to do with anything in his life? She didn't think it was about money. He wasn't the type. He was more like this die-hard soldier – it had to be a point of honor. Or maybe some mission he was on?

Was her husband into something hinky? Was that it? She had her suspicions about all the bank accounts, the large cash flow, the mysterious visitors with Spanish accents, though she tried not to look too closely into the man's affairs. Any inquiries she ever made anymore into his work were met with condescending remarks about how she should be out shopping or joining the gardening club. Well, that wasn't her style. Jessy was too young, too alive. And right now, far too impassioned.

She wanted a man to love her. She wanted to make someone happy. She wanted to go home and take a hot bath. She wanted to sit on a toilet and pee and pee and pee.

It was a very real possibility now that she wouldn't be able to hold

out. Would her captor be very angry with her? She couldn't be expected to keep it in forever. She was only human. It was his fault for not taking her, for chaining her up like this and leaving her. Her cunt was on fire. Her bladder was so swollen. And her tits were burning. It was a little like being pregnant, before she'd lost the baby.

"You can't even do this right can you, you little bitch?" had snarled her drunken father, who hadn't even wanted her to have the baby, who'd told her to have an abortion in the first place.

Teenaged Jessy had just stood there in the doorway to the living room, sobbing, while he went back to watching a ballgame on TV, the beer can so tight in his hand she thought it would explode.

"Should have thought all this before you spread your fucking legs. Just like your fucking mother."

And Kurt, he was just gone. He'd had his fun, played his little games with her in the barn in the summer of her eighteenth year, tying her up with rawhide, doing her over haystacks, the prickly stalks like needles in her ass.

God, it was hurting now. She could hear the old man, still laughing at her from beyond the grave.

Can't even get kidnapped right, can you? Gotta piss your pants on the man's bed.

Jessy sobbed in utter helplessness and futility, fists balled, her cunt spasming as the warmth began to trickle out, rivulets, rising to a flood. So much of it. Looking down in shame and defeat, she saw the yellow stain, expanding, the evidence of what a bad girl she was.

When she was five and still wetting her bed, daddy would beat her. The way he'd beat mommy before she died. But daddy always gave her another chance. Afterwards, when he was tired of smacking her with his belt or hand and would sit at the edge of the bed, she would feel better and it was the only real peace the two of them knew.

"You'll try harder," he would stroke her hair. "You'll be a good girl for me next time, won't you?"

"Yes, daddy," she would say, the warm heat tickling through her insides warm as her punished behind. "I will, sir. I promise."

But she never was better was she? Clearly not or terrible things

like this wouldn't happen to her. Good girls didn't get kidnapped. Only sluts. Girls who sneak off to motels where they are made by their illicit lovers to suck their own sopping panties while they're fucked from behind like animals.

I'm so sorry, daddy. I'm so sorry.

* * *

The buzzing fly woke him up. A big black one, the kind you find upstate in the summer time. The first thing he noticed was his still hard dick. The next thing he saw was the sun. How had it gotten all the way across the sky? Jesus, it was already afternoon. The girl. He'd left her this whole time.

Son of a bitch, how had he managed to be out this long?

He found her sound asleep again. She'd managed to turn on her side. There was a huge drool stain and evidence of a lot of tears. And, aw hell, she'd wet herself. This was all his fault. So much for being the model captor. For the first time in this whole enterprise, he began to wonder if he hadn't made a mistake. Was this really a rational plan or had he been operating out of the heat of the moment, being pissed at Robert Condrum, and maybe the whole system. Could it be he'd spent too many years in the shit, slugging it out in various man-made hells so that now he was no longer fit for civilized society?

Carefully, so as not to startle her, he worked the buckles on the back of the gag. Her jaws would be stiff and sore; he'd take it out slowly and—

Steel's mental meanderings dissolved in a world of pain.

His howl was as loud as that of any wolf. God fucking damn it. The little bitch was biting him. Hard. Using his free hand, he wrenched her jaw open, removing the wounded meat.

More invectives and vituperatives.

He was bleeding; she'd actually taken a chunk out of him. Resisting the urge to take his belt to her on the spot, he staggered from the room in search of the first aid kit. Twenty minutes and two jolts of whisky later he was back, the left hand – not his dominant one, thank God – tightly bandaged.

"You're lucky I stopped the bleeding," he told her. "What would

you do if I dropped dead with you all trussed up like that?"

"Throw the biggest party in the fucking universe."

He suppressed a smirk. The girl had attitude. You had to like that in a situation like this. Hell, it could get pretty hard on both of them without a sense of humor.

Even so, he couldn't let the matter go.

"I'm going to have to punish you, Jessica."

She looked up at him, the green eyes burning like embers. "Beyond having me lay in my own piss for hours on end?"

"That was my mistake," he acknowledged, unhooking the handcuffs from the ankle cuffs. "But two wrongs don't make a right."

"No," she shot back. "It takes at least three or four."

"We're going to get you cleaned up and toileted," he announced, freeing her completely. "I'll get your bed ready and later you can hunker down for the night."

"Oh, goody," she sat up painfully. "Can we toast some marshmallows and tell ghost stories, too? You, know, I hope you're having a jolly good time, because when my husband gets hold of you, he's gonna have your balls hanging from his rear view mirror."

Her husband. Shit. He hadn't even called Condrum yet to tell him his wife had been kidnapped. If he didn't move fast the man would notify the police. What the hell was he thinking? Was he losing his mind or was this little brat of a girl actually managing to rattle his cage the way no terrorist, military dictator or foreign disease ever had before?

"At that point, I'm sure you'll put in a good word for me," he said pointedly. "Unless you want me telling him about your little extracurricular activities with the billiard ball."

"His name's Caesar, and he's a real man. He knows how to treat me."

"And how's that? Like a conniving little slut?"

Jeezus, why was he even engaging her like this? He needed to be on the phone, calling Robert and getting this whole nightmarish situation one step closer to being finished.

"Yes, and we all know what a fine upstanding citizen you are. Now

how about my shower, Mr. Morals of the Year Winner?"

"There isn't any running water," he reported, bracing himself for what he knew would be none too positive of a reaction.

She laughed, though not with any discernible amusement. "Of course there isn't. Why would there be, the way my day is going. So what, pray tell, do you use for a shower?"

"There's a stream nearby."

Jessy made a face, her contempt and disgust eclipsing her fear with every passing minute. Could it be the man's chivalry would yet be his undoing? "Over my dead body," she replied haughtily, throwing down a test gauntlet.

Steel grit his teeth. It had been a long goddamn road thus far and all in all he'd tried his best to be a decent kidnapper. Not perfect, but not the worst either. And what did he have to show for it? A shrew of a captive and a whopping, pounding flesh wound that he was sure as hell hoping wasn't going to develop into gangrene.

"I think it's time we got clear who's in charge around here," he decided. "I'm giving you to the count of ten to stand up and take that dress off."

"Better make sure you can count that high first," she shot back.

He grabbed her by one of her reddened, deeply grooved wrists. "Time's up."

"No, wait," she cried, her bluff called. "I'll do it."

He swallowed hard at the sight of her bare snatch, smooth, sculpted belly and sweetly shaped bosom. "The bra, too," he said softly, though honestly there wasn't any reason to be doing this till she got to the stream.

She frowned as she relented. "Pig," she declared, handing over the white cotton garment.

"Put your arms down," he heard himself say.

Jessy uncrossed them from over her rosy tits, her cheeks on flame. "I thought you said this wasn't sexual," she threw his own words back at him.

"I'm not the one with the nipple problem."

"Fuck you, okay?"

"I would but there's probably a waiting list."

She flew at him without thinking. As if her tiny fists and nude, stained body would make a difference against this machine of a man, lean and sinewed, probably a third or fourth degree black belt in some obscure but deadly martial art.

Steel immobilized her quickly, being careful to employ only a fraction of his true strength.

"You're hurting me," she complained as he held her arm pinioned high up her back. "Let go."

"Are you going to be a good girl and march your pretty ass down to the stream for me?"

"When pigs like you learn to fly."

"Fine."

Jessy had just earned herself a trip to the stream, her hair employed as a steering mechanism. Like it or not, his temporary prisoner was going to learn some manners. The way he figured, returning Condrum a more respectful, obedient filly was the least he could do for the man's trouble.

CHAPTER THREE

Jessy went on strike, falling onto her bottom at the bank of the stream. "I'm not going in there," she winced, her hair tearing at the roots. "And you can't make me."

"Yes," he lifted her like a rag doll. "I can."

She shrieked as he tossed her into the hip deep water.

"You bastard," she sputtered, her head popping back to the surface. "You complete and utter bastard."

The water was cold and the bottom was slick and muddy, the fine silt squeezing between her toes. She told herself it was just the temperature peaking her nipples like this, but truth be told, the caveman routine was getting her hot, in spite of her very real indignation.

"Save your energy," he tossed her a washcloth, "for cleaning yourself."

"This water's filthy," she exaggerated. "Even an animal deserves better."

"Keep up the bitching, Jessica, and I'll tan your hide that much harder."

Jessy felt a sudden jolt in her pussy. "What did you say?"

He drank in the sight of her, like a drowned rat, her hair lusciously bedraggled, her breasts, so full and round, begging to be touched and squeezed and whipped, her sandy brown pussy half visible under the rippling stream water. His prisoner. Every captive inch of her.

"I told you there'd be punishment. You didn't really think you'd get away with biting me, did you? A lesson has to be taught, to insure you won't do it again."

Jessy felt very weak as she rubbed the cloth over her tingling belly. "What will you do to me?" she asked, eyes riveted on the calm, collected soldier man on the shore.

"After you have cleaned yourself, you will go into the woods and find me a switch with which to beat you. I will then secure you nude to the nearest tree and punish you as you deserve."

I will not beg, thought Jessy. I will not give in to this man's power

trip.

"Will that make you feel like a bigger man?" she taunted. "Beating on a defenseless woman?"

"Guess we'll find out, won't we? While we're at it, you can tell me if getting the discipline you so badly need to your bare ass makes you feel more fulfilled as a woman."

"In your dreams."

"I don't just dream about correcting naughty little girls," he challenged. "I do it."

"I'm not your little girl."

"No," he agreed, reaching for the cell phone on his belt. "You are my naked captive."

A momentary panic went through Jessie as she saw him divert his attention off her in favor of a telephone call. Irrational as it seemed, she couldn't bear the thought right now of being that much alone. Let him do his worst – treat her as an object of scorn, ridicule, lust – she'd handle it all over being forgotten and discarded.

But what to do? Did she dare pique his interest in her? She couldn't be too obvious, but she could use her charms to some effect. He liked her breasts, she was pretty sure, and maybe her legs. Most men did. If she were to trickle the water down her neck, or over her torso in the guise of cleaning herself, might she then stir him a little at least? There was power in those kinds of actions. Women did it all the time, using their bodies to get men wrapped round their fingers so they could turn the tables.

Here goes nothing, she thought.

Steel punched the redial, trying to ignore the suddenly animated girl flesh, wet and slippery. Jeezus, was the little wench doing this deliberately? Did she want to be raped? She had to know what it would do to him, the way those tits jutted, the way she was undulating her belly, wiping that cloth, ever so slowly over her pink, smooth skin, the water trickling, ever downward from her wet and lusty locks, pointing towards the nirvana of her blatantly parted thighs.

"Condrum here. Talk to me."

He'd gotten through on the third try.

"I have your wife, Mr. Condrum."

Dead silence.

"I have her prisoner. She's with me."

The man was breathing. "Interesting," he said at last.

Interesting?! He had the guy's wife and all he could say was interesting?

"She's my hostage," Steel spelled it out. "I have demands."

The laughter was low and very, very dry. "You know, it's kind of ironic," Condrum mused. "I actually thought the cunt had run out on me. Now that I know about her and Caesar Bustamonte."

The billiard ball. Wonderful, his first kidnapping and Steel had walked right into a goddamn lover's triangle. Here it was, he thought with a big fat internal "told you so", the first unforeseen circumstance. He now had a hostage whose husband did not want her back.

Steel's heart tugged a little as he looked at the sexy, exasperating little sprite. Here the poor kid was, expecting to be rescued or ransomed and now it didn't even look like she had a home to go back to. How could he not pity her, just a little? Hell, he pitied himself right now.

"You don't want the girl killed, do you?" He had his back turned, his voice down so she wouldn't hear. This whole thing could get real embarrassing if he said yes.

A deep sigh followed, like this was one too many impositions in a day. "Look, whoever you are, I'm not a heartless man, but you have to understand I'm a little upset right now, to say the least. You know that little bitch has been screwing him behind my back for the past six months? Under my fucking nose. And not just anybody, mind you, no, my little Jessica has to pick that scumbag Caesar, that mother-fucking shyster. You know how many times that guy's fucked me over? Too many to count. So forgive me if I'm not all 'tears in my beer' over little wifey getting herself nabbed. Christ, for all I know you're some shit heel she picked up in a bar. I'll bet you've been banging her, too, haven't you?"

"No," Steel attempted to maintain his temper. "I most certainly have not and I do not intend to, either. My demands are just and they

do not include rape."

"Yea, whatever. So how much is this gonna cost me?"

"I don't want money."

Robert swore a blue streak. "Just what I need, a fucking idealist. What is it, then? Some kind of save the whales and redwoods bullshit?"

The hair on the back of Steel's neck was up. This guy was unbelievable. "I want you to defend my little brother. He's been accused of a murder he didn't commit."

He could hear the wheels turning. "You're that dip shit who came in here to see me, aren't you? Wanting me to work pro bono?"

"I was there, yes," he replied curtly. "Although if I were you, I would be a little more respectful of the man holding a gun to your wife's head."

Condrum snorted. "Pal, in the mood I'm in, I'm halfway tempted to pay you to finish her off for me. All right, tell me the kid's name, I'll see what I can do."

"James Steel. He's due in court Tuesday."

It occurred to Steel now that Condrum could put him over a barrel in a hurry if it really was true that he didn't care what happened to Jessica. For one thing, he could report all this to the court and get Jimmy in worse trouble. For another, he could make John himself a wanted man, pretty much ending his life in the light of day.

"Tuesday? What do you want me to do, pull a rabbit out of a hat? It takes weeks to pull together this kind of defense."

"Just talk to him. He's in lockup; he'll tell you where to find the evidence you need. It was some former friends who did it. They were mixed up with a crooked cop in some drug deal and they pinned the whole thing on Jimmy."

"Don't tell me how to do my fucking job, okay? And let me talk to Jessy."

Steel turned back around to find her gone.

Fuck!

She must have waded over to the opposite shore or maybe swam straight down it. How stupid could he have been to let his guard

down like that?

"I need some good faith first," he bluffed, already halfway across the stream, fully clothed.

"What do you want me to do, say the fucking Boy Scout Oath?"

"Let me hear from Jimmy. I want it from his lips you're on the case."

Steel broke the connection and climbed up on the other side. Either he'd find tracks in the dirt or else he'd know she'd made a swim for it. If she were smart, she'd do the latter because she'd run into civilization a whole lot quicker that way. Not too mention saving her energy.

She wasn't smart. Finding the evidence he needed, the tiny bare footprints and the crazily busted twigs, he set out in a moderately fast run into the woods, pacing himself. If she thought she'd picked a good ground to battle him on, she'd made a big mistake. The outdoors was second nature to a man like John Steel. Plus he was fully clothed and knew the area.

He was hungry, though. How long was it since either of them had eaten?

Jessy would be hungry, too, though she wasn't going to be seeing any supper when he got hold of her.

* * *

Jessy's heart was thudding in her chest. Desperately, she ran, not caring that the branches were scratching her naked flesh; oblivious to the tiny stones cutting her feet. Twice she fell, the dirt and pine needles sticking to her wet body. She had to find help. These woods couldn't go on forever, could they?

She never even saw the tree log, lying across her path, rotten and covered in moss. Face first, she landed in a patch of broad-leafed, green plants. She was spitting a grub out of her mouth when she saw it. A pair of eyes, staring straight at her. Cold and reptilian. She was paralyzed with fear, not caring that her nipples were pressed into moist earth and that there were ants trying to crawl up inside her cunt. Nor did she dare resist the swarming mosquitoes seeing the opportunities inherent in her sweaty, pink flesh.

They were biting at her, nibbling her ass and thighs, drinking their

thrill of her pounding blood.

It wasn't till the green and black snake stuck out its tongue, long and yellow like the eyes, an inch from her face that she let loose.

"Help me, oh my god! It's going to kill me! Please, I don't want to die!"

Steel, having just now come up behind her splayed body, regarded the garter snake. Completely and totally harmless. But the girl didn't know that. "Gotten yourself into quite a predicament, haven't you?" he observed.

"It's you!" Relief flooded Jessy; her desire to escape her captor overcome for the moment by her desire to stay alive. "There's a killer snake, save me please."

"You haven't seemed very interested in being with me up to now," he noted, deciding to drag out her torture just a bit longer. "In fact, if you'll recall, you've already managed to insult me, bite me and run off on me."

"I'm sorry," she wailed. "I didn't mean it."

"You may ask my forgiveness."

The snake lifted its head, very slightly. She could see its body trailing out behind it, coiled, twisted and slimy. "Please, forgive me!"

"You were a naughty girl," he coached.

"I was," she agreed all too ready. "A very naughty girl."

"You may beg for punishment."

Jessy felt renewed stirrings in her ant-ridden crotch. She was in the man's power, totally. He was playing with her, humiliating her, but he wouldn't let the killer snake get her, somehow she knew that as surely as she knew he would impose his will on her, whatever that might be.

"Please, I beg to be punished."

"And to obey."

"Yes, yes, I will obey you."

"You are my captive," he reminded, regarding the mosquito bitten ass, so white and pure, the girl lying so utterly humbled in the dirt at his feet. "You will do as you are told or face the consequences. Today's consequences are going to be high, Jessica. You will be beaten severely."

"Yes, oh yes, sir. I deserve that. Please take me home and beat me."

Steel picked up the garter and threw it a dozen yards into the underbrush. Home. She'd called the little cabin home.

"On your feet," he bent to retrieve her.

Jessy couldn't walk. She was faint, beyond hungry and way too aroused. He flung her over his shoulder and carried her back to the stream. Wading across once more in his already soaked pants he contemplated their future. Robert's finding about Jessy's affair and his subsequent bizarre reaction to it was throwing more than a bit of a monkey wrench in his carefully laid plans. What was he going to do if Condrum double-crossed him? And now that the cat was out of the bag concerning Jessy's affair, what leverage did he have over her to keep the girl from turning him in later to the police?

Steel wasn't about to kill her, that was obvious, but what alternative would he have? Marrying her maybe, like Condrum had, so she could cheat on him, too?

A wave of resentment passed as he considered the tight little cunt even now pressed to his shoulder blade. There was the source of all the trouble. Even for Jimmy. If it hadn't been for Sondra, his so-called girlfriend back three years ago, he never would have joined that pathetic gang in the first place.

The only thing he knew for sure was that Jessica Condram needed to be put in her place. Biting people and running off in the woods all alone were unsafe behaviors that put them both at risk, not to mention any searchers who might have had to go out after her later on. Jessica was a full-grown woman and she needed to be thinking of people besides herself. A brat is what she was now and if she hadn't been quite so blatant in her behaviors, he'd have enjoyed giving her that nice little spanking he'd been imagining.

But it was past that now. Way past.

"Can't we talk about this?" Jessy wanted to know as he put her down on her feet in front of the craggy oak a few feet from the cabin a short time later.

"No," he tossed the rope over the lowest branch, looping one end

and drawing the other end through to form a taut line. "We can't."

"I've never been beaten before."

"First time for everything, isn't there?"

She fought back the tears, the ones she swore would never come. "Is it going to hurt?" she sniffled.

"I won't lie to you ... "

Jessy fell to her knees in the moist earth, the reality of the whole thing, the tree, the rope, the whip-like stick he'd picked out, having caught up to her all at once. "Don't do this to me. Let me please you instead."

His cock throbbed inside the wet clothes. She was offering to blow him, and from the looks of that mouth and the way he knew she operated verbally, it promised to be one hell of a ride.

"Tempting," he admitted, pulling her back up by the wrist. "But you're not my type."

It wasn't completely a lie. The fact was Jessy Condrum wasn't a type to him at all anymore; she was fast becoming a one of a kind model, quirky, exasperating and deeply, deeply fascinating. The sort of a girl that gets under your skin like a tattoo and stays there. Forever.

And that, for the confirmed bachelor and danger junkie might well be the worst news of the day.

Jessy felt the rejection like the switch he was about to whip her with. "You're not mine, either," she informed him as he bound her wrists together tightly in front of her. "I was just feeling sorry for you – on account of what a sorry excuse for a human being you are. I'll bet you couldn't get a woman to have sex with you if you paid."

"Much as it pains me to be deprived of the running commentary," he gave a half smile, "I'm afraid I am going to have to gag you again. We don't want the screaming to carry too far, you understand."

She clamped her jaws shut, eyes narrowed for combat. If he wanted in her mouth, he'd get himself another nice little bite.

Steel's action was impulsive but effective. "Open," he clamped her nipple. "Now."

Jessy whimpered, trying to hold out. He was doing like Caesar,

only he wasn't just planning on a little wham bam thank you ma'am. He intended to dominate her in the most thorough way possible, man to woman.

Her captor was going to beat her, in retribution for her disobedience.

Thinking of the words again made her open hotly against the pain.

Steel avoided the eye contact as he popped in the gag. He didn't like that smoldering look one bit; still less did he like the effect it was having on him. Touching her sexually like that had been a mistake, even if it was meant for disciplinary purposes only. A barrier had been crossed now and it might be hard to get back across. Especially once this woman found out her husband was leaving her, which would leave him as her only rebound.

Note to self, Steel thought, hauling the girl's bound wrists overhead. Don't tell her about the cell phone call.

He put a piece of tarp between Jessy and the tree. Her body was scratched enough and it would get a whole worse if she started thrashing her nude body against the bark.

"This is for your own good, Jessica," he felt obligated to tell her.

The sound of the switch in the air made her cringe. He was just testing it but already she felt like he was hitting her. Sweat poured from her body. She was sticky and hot and mosquito bitten. Filth and dirt clung to her; she may as well have been an animal, exposed and naked before a sadistic keeper.

"One," Steel called out.

The switch exploded on her buttocks, raising an immediate welt. Jessy clamped down hard on her ball gag as the heat, the fire began to radiate outward. She was sobbing after the second blow. Compared to this, Caesar's spanks were love taps. Dear god, she'd do or say anything to make it stop.

"Four," she heard somewhere in the back of her brain, the only indication that time was passing.

With her every fiber, she was screaming for mercy, even as she squirmed and pulled, looking for some escape, any way out.

There would be none forthcoming. Steel intended to whip her into

submission, breaking through the outer crust, at least, of her perpetual resistance to his plans for a reasonable captivity. While he didn't expect the kind of obedience found in the real life slave girls he'd known in the Middle and Far East, he did intend after this little session to have a much better mannered girl than he'd been dealing with so far.

Professionally and non-sexually speaking.

If only her buttocks weren't twitching so enticingly, though. If only he weren't having to fight off so hard the urge to do the natural thing by following up her submission with a masterful act of penetration to her exhausted, well opened body. It wasn't any secret she was craving it herself. He could see the moisture. She was hot. His suspicions, his fears were right. Jessica was among that particular breed of woman for whom sex is inextricably tied to power, such that they can only experience the fullness of bliss in a position of submission.

Right now, he could see himself, grasping those sweet hips, thrusting his iron hard dick into that unprotected opening, his teeth sunk possessively into her neck, his hands mauling her breasts, molding them into the exact shape of their mutual desire, making her come in spite of herself, because of herself.

Bound, naked and in pain.

"Five." He couldn't take anymore. He needed to go and relieve himself, finding the nearest unused tree to lean against, catching his breath, opening his zipper. Jeezus, he was on fire. Had his dick ever been this big before? Stroking himself quickly and efficiently, he tried not to think of Jessy; her pretty mouth, those lips pouting, the eyes moist whenever she pleaded, dry and fiery when she was in the midst of fury. He wanted those lips and eyes for himself, the whole package, actually. But what could he do with feelings this big, this completely out of whack and inappropriate to the situation?

He'd kidnapped her, for god's sake. What was he gonna do, ask her on a date?

Shamelessly, he borrowed the image of Lyla, the slender dark haired prostitute he sometimes visited. She let him play games, with his handcuffs and ropes and while he could never touch her with

anything that left marks, she knew how to get him going, how to pull out his fantasies. She was also the best listener he'd ever known in his life and she knew more about his missions than anyone else on the planet.

He thought of her now in a corona of raven colored hair, a mere wisp of woman, tits like apples, ribcage proffered, her darkly trimmed delta begging entry.

Grunting heavily, he expelled himself, though to his dismay, it was her – Jessica whom he saw in the end, the auburn haired girl having crowded out the other woman to win his mind's eye.

Not good. Not good at all.

"Glad I could provide amusement," she croaked acidly from the back of her throat as soon as he returned a few minutes later to remove the ball gag from her caked mouth. "Guess I'm better to beat off to than an S and M flick, huh?"

It was Steel's turn to flush, something he didn't do often. "I can see you haven't learned your lesson about treating others with respect. Maybe some time out here on your own will help change your attitude."

He hadn't beaten her enough. That was the problem. She needed a dozen more, but right now he had a whopper of a headache and if he didn't get some aspirin fast, his temporal lobe was going to explode.

"You get your ass back here," she demanded. "You're not leaving me out here, do you understand? You owe me. What kind of cad are you anyway, taking me prisoner, making me take off all my clothes, tying and whipping me and then you don't even have the decency to rape me? Aren't I sexy enough for you? Well at least you got your rocks off, didn't you? Never mind if I'm left high and dry."

Downing a packet of headache powder in the kitchen, Steel gave strong consideration to employing his Colf .45 to put himself out of his misery. For background noise to help him weigh the decision, he had her ongoing monologue, delivered, as usual, at full volume. In a nutshell, she was making a recant, wanting to make sure he understood that she found him repulsive and didn't want to actually be raped but was just pointing out how pathetic he was not to even try.

Steel was so out of it now he wasn't even thinking about anyone hearing her. The odds were pretty slim, but not impossible. With any luck, though, some time alone in the twilight would tame her a whole lot better than the whip.

Sure enough, about a half hour later, the sound of her voice shifted from indignation to panic. Through the filmy windowpane, he made out the figure of the bear, sniffing curiously.

It was a brown bear, just a baby. The mother would be along before too long, though, and then he'd have a harder time getting his charge back into the house without. Snagging the shotgun from the corner as a precaution, he traipsed out after her.

Wisely, she opted to remain silent as he gathered her up for what felt like the hundredth time that day. It wasn't exactly a thank you but it was an improvement over hand bites and insults.

He hoped she wouldn't get too tame, though. He was kind of enjoying the battle.

CHAPTER FOUR

They ate in silence, sitting across from each other at the kitchen table. He'd gotten her one of his t-shirts and a pair of shorts for her to wear, with an elastic waistband. Jessy had tied the shirt at her midriff, because she refused to feel or look like anything other than a girl, no matter what her circumstances. He'd given her a deep frown when she'd done it, but hadn't said a word. He already thought she was a slut and he hated her, that much she knew. The contempt and indifference was painfully obvious, as he had supervised her re-cleaning in the stream and her subsequent toileting, as she squatted in the bushes, just out of sight. There'd been a big argument over the peeing thing, because he hadn't trusted her to go on her own. She flat out refused to go if he was watching and said she'd pee all over the house like the dog he was treating her as.

In the end the compromise was the bushes, whereby he could see her head and not the rest of her. What a big sport he was. Jessy stirred uncomfortably now on the cushion he'd given her, her striped buttocks still throbbing like mad despite the ointment he'd given her to apply. He'd offered to do the job himself, but there was no way she was giving him another free look, let alone a grope.

All in all, it had been a mixed day. The man had made her suffer in ways she'd never even imagined, imposing on her almost medieval cruelties. And yet at the same time he'd saved her twice, first from the poisonous, killer snake and later from a ravaging killer bear. Watching him shoo the big, brown monster off like a puppy dog had overwhelmed her to the core, though she'd never dare admit it.

So had being held in his strong arms afterwards, protected and cared for and ...

Jessy stopped herself just in the nick of time; she'd been about to say loved. As if a man like John Steel could love anything other than his gun or his whisky bottles.

"I suppose he's paying quite a lot for me," she said, trying to make conversation.

"Hmm?"

He'd been lost in thought like this ever since they sat down. It was like being with Robert all over again.

"I said," she repeated a bit more crisply. "That Robert must be wanting to give you a hefty amount of ransom."

Steel speared a bit of the cut, canned sausage. "I told you, I'm not a kidnapper. I'm not after money."

"But he must have offered it. A million? Two? He has it, you know. He's the most successful lawyer in the city."

"Bully for him."

Jessy put down her fork. "Look, I'm trying to be nice here. I thought you were the one who said we needed to be civil about this."

"Sorry if I'm a little short on decorum at the moment," he addressed his plate of sausage, powdered eggs and beef jerky. "It's been a long day. Now if you wouldn't mind, I'd like a little peace and quiet."

She turned up her nose and went back to her food. After another thirty seconds of scraping forks, unable to restrain herself, she blurted, "I didn't even want to be here, you know, so don't go taking this out on me."

He regarded her sternly, the jaw setting and brow furrowing in that way she found irresistible. "Don't push it, young lady."

"All right," she threw her up her hands. "This is me; being quiet."

She wouldn't stay that way and they both knew it. The tension was too thick in the air, not to mention the sexual charge. He hadn't taken her while she was bound to the tree, though both their bodies had screamed for it. And now they were sorting out why and what next.

He could hear her picking at her food. Sulking. Such a child she was. He just wasn't in the mood for it. If she could just manage not to push any more buttons, even for an hour, he'd be all right.

"All I can say," she muttered, "is that if I were kidnapping someone, I would tell him or her what was going on. I would be a big enough person not to have to bully my hostages around."

"And if the hostages were anything like you," he retorted. "I'd wish you a lot of luck."

"That's another thing," she put down her fork. "Why must you be so sarcastic?"

He proceeded to ignore her. How she hated him, sitting there so smugly, squeaky clean in his olive drab tank top and fresh khaki pants, munching away on this sorry excuse for a dinner.

"Is that all you ever wear is army clothes?"

Steel cleared his throat and took a swallow of black coffee. Was there no end to this woman's non-sequiters?

"I'd never have offered to have sex with you in the real world, Steel. I wouldn't even give you the time of day. The way you dress, your attitude. It's ridiculous. I can't wait till Robert and I go out on the town some night and you're there to park our car at some restaurant or bus our table. Oh, wait, I forgot, you'll be in jail."

She watched him walk over to the counter and pour himself another cup from the pot, his body lean and sinewy, like a tiger's.

"You're not so special physically, either," she greeted his return with another dig. "Caesar was a boxer."

He was midway through his pie when she gave it one last shot. "You know what I think this is all about?"

"No. But I'm sure you'll tell me."

"You can't stand how much my husband loves me. I'll bet you're one of those stalkers. You've been tracking me for months, admiring me from afar, and this is the only way you can have me."

"Actually, I'm trying to save my brother's life, if you must know. He's on trial for a murder he never committed and I need your husband to help him. This," he extended his arms, indicating the entire situation, "seems to be the only way I can convince the man to do something for a fellow human being in need."

Jessy felt a hot tinge of shame for misjudging his motives. "Don't you talk about Robert that way," she deflected. "He's a very kind and generous man."

"He must treat you pretty well; the way you hop into everyone else's bed at the drop of a hat."

Her lip was trembling. "Caesar is not 'everyone else'. He's ... he's a man who gives me something I need."

"You're pathetic," Steel snorted, seeing Kimberlee all over in her watering eyes. "Rationalizing your whoring. Robert Condram may

be a snake in the grass shyster but at least he doesn't betray the people he loves best."

"I don't know what you're talking about," she fought back the hot tears. "I love my husband. I'm trying my best. I swear it. I broke up with Caesar, last night, just before you grabbed me."

The blubbering was more than he could stand. He'd take a rematch with any of his worse enemies, a do-over of any number of nasty firefights ahead of this. "Spare me the crocodile tears, Jessica. As for your nice, neat little marriage, it's already over, so you can dump the remorseful wife routine."

"Over? What do you mean?"

Steel was on his feet. It was time for the girl to go to bed. Time for him to get drunk and pass out. "Robert knows all about you and Caesar, sweet heart. You're ancient history as far as he's concerned. Once you're out of here, my advice would be to make your first stop one helluva good divorce lawyer."

Jessy put up no resistance as he locked the fur covered handcuff on her wrist, using the other to drag her barefoot to the bedroom. "You're lying," she told him, though it came out more of a question than a statement.

He brought her to the bed, freshly stripped and cleaned. "This is for the protection of both of us," he attached the cuff to the center rod of the brass headboard.

"Do I need to gag you?"

She shook her head.

"Want a blanket."

Another no.

"Just get some sleep," he counseled. "All right?"

Steel went out to the front porch and settled into an old wooden rocker with a fresh bottle. It was after ten by now and the sky was pitch black. You could really see the stars out here, not like in the city. It must have looked like this in ancient times, he guessed, when the natives ruled this part of the world. They were a mere shadow now of their former greatness. The Mohicans. The five tribes of the Iroquois nation.

Did they have the same kinds of troubles back then, he wondered behind the closed doors of their longhouses, man to woman? Did they have to kidnap beautiful women to win justice from their lawyer husbands who didn't want them back? Did they end up stuck with hostages they didn't know what to do only to find themselves way too attracted to them for their own good? Love was a war, life was a war; here's to war, he toasted the crisp night air, and here's to love.

Sooner or later as he always did, Steel found himself thinking about her. Nothing on the battlefield had ever compared with the intimate wounds he'd received at the hands of his own ex-wife. He'd been thirty-eight when he met Kimberlee, just five years ago. She was slightly more than half his age, a flight attendant on a first class berth back from Sydney where he'd been doing some consulting work with the Australian military. It was lust at first sight. They hadn't even made it as far as the hotel room, having consummated their mile high banter and in flight heat with a quickie in an airport restroom.

Kimberlee liked her sex rough and she liked to be talked to dirty as well. Their first round of foreplay consisted of his commanding her to her knees in a cramped stall so she could take his more than ready cock between her lovely red lips. He told her what a good little cocksucker she was and how he couldn't wait to get her to bed so he could fuck her brains out.

"Why wait?" she panted, pulling him out of the stall and hopping onto the counter. The little minx had already managed to remove her panties and when she took his hand and put it in place under her uniform skirt, he was treated to a warm, wet muff, more than ready for penetration.

"You're a real slut you know that?" he'd growled, slamming his cock home.

"I'm a nasty little cunt," she agreed, with that half Aussie accent that had come from spending her formative years in tow with her California born engineer father. "I deserve to be fucked hard and nasty."

"You need a spanking, too," he threw in.

The girl's eyes had lit up and a new dimension was suddenly

opened between them. Turned out corporal punishment was a fantasy of hers but no one had ever enacted it. Except for her disciplinarian father when she was a little girl. They spent the whole of Kimberlee's layover in bed, with brief respites as far as the door for room service. Over the next six months they enjoyed a whirlwind courtship, creatively consummated in various locales, all of which saw them enacting various high charged games of domination and submission leading up to hot, over the knee action.

Kimberlee was physically one of the most beautiful women he'd ever seen and it may have been a mistake to have become so infatuated with her golden, flesh, so youthful and seemingly malleable. It isn't only women who marry to change their lovers. Men do, too, especially older men attracted to younger women. What Steel had hoped for was his fiancée's gradual conversion into harder core S and M. So far his mentions of going farther, into chains, whips or any of the other trappings of master and slave had left her cold. She was far too much of a free spirit.

And where he couldn't change her, he was sure he could change himself. He'd never wanted to hurt her and in time he convinced himself being a dominant wasn't crucial to his sexuality. Never mind that the women he had had in the past decade were almost exclusively of the submissive variety, whores, if not outright slaves. Once the initial thrill with Kimberlee passed, about a month past the honeymoon, he found himself having to imagine other women, other things to keep hard. Erections are no small matter when a man approaches forty. He could only be glad his wife never knew that the bliss on his face when he was with her was for others – for females like the little Asian girl he'd picked out of a roomful of property sluts hanging from cages in a back alley slave brothel in Bangkok back in '87. She'd worn an actual brand and her thin, pale body was covered with whip marks. She'd sucked him like her life depended on it and probably it did.

At any rate, his sperm was ignorant of his mental infidelity and Kimberlee quickly became pregnant with their daughter Savannah. It wasn't a planned pregnancy and Kim had wanted an abortion. Steel

wouldn't have it, virtually forcing her to carry to term. It was something she'd never forgive him for and he was quite certain it had a lot to do with her later actions against him. Savannah was a beautiful baby, quite even-tempered and easy to manage. Kimberlee quickly discovered all the attention she got as a new mother and threw herself into the job with abandon.

Quitting her job with the airline, she stayed home to be with the baby. The isolation and long hours of childcare, however, were not a good thing for Kimberlee. She wasn't equipped, quite frankly for that kind of selfless responsibility. She became listless and depressed, and at times given to fits of jealous rage and anger. Sensing how John was pulling away from her, she browbeat him into confessing his interest in what was euphemistically called the "alternative lifestyle" of BDSM.

Steel dated the beginnings of her infidelity to that fateful conversation. Though she pretended to be sympathetic and even agreed to read some literature on the phenomenon, she was in reality planning his terrible demise. The first one she fucked was the diaper delivery man and after that the man who came to fix the cable. Baby Savannah went into day care, against his express wishes, though he was in Germany at the time and couldn't do much to stop it. Kimberlee took a job as a cocktail waitress, where she could attract and pick up all the men she liked.

For his part, he did little to help the situation. Most of his nights in town were spent with Natalya, a Russian immigrant sex worker who was working off her passage to America on her back under the direction of an enterprising pimp named Nikolai. With his flashy American suits and thick Russian accent, Nikolai was the perfect foil for the submissive little Natalya, who would quite literally let the customers do anything to her. She would show John the wounds and then they'd make love. Sometimes it would be cigarette burns on her breasts, other times vicious deep green bruises on her ass. Once a man bit her tit and it became infected. John drew the line there, making sure she received proper medical attention. He himself always attended to the wounds when he whipped or caned her.

Savannah was four when Kimberlee met Corwin Dane, the heir to a large chain of drug stores. He'd spotted her at the club where she worked, so impressed that he'd hung around in the alley out back till her shift was over so he could ask her out. They'd done it right there, Kim up against the wall, her legs wrapped around the guy's bony, rich ass.

"You know I'm married," she'd told him as he was zipping up.

"You don't act like it," he replied.

The next thing Steel knew, he was being served with divorce papers. He didn't give a damn about the property, what little of it there was, but he sure as hell cared about Savannah. His two hundred dollar an hour lawyer had insisted he'd end up with joint custody, but in a surprise move, Kimberlee's attorney came in looking for one hundred percent custody for her and a restraining order.

For evidence he produced everything John had ever told Kim about sado-masochism, including all the books he'd shared with her and a lot of bullshit testimony about the adverse psychological effect of so-called perversions on children thrown in for good measure. The judge was a conservative hard ass who bought the argument hook, line and sinker. Dane's money and prestige probably hadn't hurt any, either.

So there he was, walking out of the courtroom with no wife and no child. He'd have fought it to the bitter end had it not been for that one final conversation with Savannah herself. He'd intercepted them in the parking lot and right away Kim had wanted to fetch the police. But Steel prevailed for just a minute to talk to his little girl and that's when she told him.

"I don't want to go with you, daddy."

What could he say? It was clear she'd been put up to it; you could see the torture and confusion in her eyes. Why add to it with a long drawn out legal fight?

"It's okay, pumpkin," he summoned a smile. "You just go with mommy and Mr. Dane. You'll be fine."

He only prayed Kimberlee would be a better mother without him, without their endless fighting, and under the influence of her new husband. Certainly his daughter wouldn't lack for anything in the rich

man's care. And one day, when she was grown, maybe he'd see her again and maybe by some miracle she'd even remember him a little. Some scrap of memory, a fragment, like a torn photograph she'd cling to in her heart all the way through her life.

Steel thrust the bottle to his lips and sucked down a healthy swallow.

There was no telling the hand you'd be dealt in life. And one person's misery sure enough begets another. Jessica Condrum certainly hadn't asked to be kidnapped and didn't deserve it, for all her cheating ways. Bracing himself with another swig of the whisky, he decided to go in and check on her.

She was sobbing.

"Come on, kid. It's not that bad." It was a shitty rallying cry, but that was about all he had in him right now.

"I don't even know your name," she said, her voice so soft he barely heard it.

He stood over her in the dark, the rays of moonlight shining on her body, tiny and balled up. She'd crawled to the head of the bed, to ease the pressure on the handcuff.

"It's Steel," he answered, feeling he owed her that much.

"Hold me, Steel."

The request, so seemingly simple on one level and yet heart wrenchingly complex on another hit him like a blow to the gut. "I don't think that's a very good idea, do you?"

"I don't care if it is or not. Just for a minute, please?"

He lay down beside her, allowing her to snuggle against him, her back and buttocks against his front. "Does that hurt?" he wondered about the after effects of her whipping.

"No," she wrapped his arm round her middle. "It's good."

It was more than good, actually. Steel couldn't remember when he'd just lain with a woman like this without sex, body to body, softly breathing, a mutual conspiracy against the darkness of the night; that age-old recognition that human beings aren't meant to go it alone.

The fact that they were at best strangers and at worse abuser and victim didn't matter. Or at least it was eclipsed by this overwhelming,

primal need.

Damn, he wanted her, though. The smell of her, the way she nuzzled her sweet neck up against his face, the way she purred as he splayed his fingers over her bare stomach below the line of the tied up t-shirt. The way her sleek, feminine ass instinctively conformed to the outline of his crotch.

Christ, he was going to be making love to her before long.

"Steel?"

She sounded like a little girl in the dark.

"Yea."

"What's wrong with me?"

Not a goddamn thing from where he was laying.

"What do you mean?"

"Why can't I keep a man? Every relationship I've ever had has ended in disaster."

"Maybe you haven't found the right kind of man."

"I've only ever just wanted to love somebody and be loved back. Is that so much to ask for?"

"You and everybody else in the world. Trouble is, there are way too many assholes out there."

Jessy listened to his breathing. Strong and steady, like the man himself. Even when he flew off the handle and didn't get things right, there was something consistent about him she really liked. Something steady. Something a girl could trust.

Aside from the whole abducting people against their will thing.

"Did my husband really say he didn't want me back?"

"I wouldn't be looking for a Christmas present from him this year, let me put it that way."

She laughed, which was one of the really peculiar things about this whole situation. Bizarre as it was, the man made her feel comfortable enough to let her hair down, to be silly, bratty, angry, whatever she felt in the moment. No man before, not even her own husband had ever made her feel like he cared that she might be anything, or than physically available for display or sex.

It did puzzle her, though, why he hadn't made a pass at her.

"You don't have a ring on, Steel. Are you involved with anyone?"

His heart quickened a little. Was she interested in him?

"Not since my ex-wife. Basically, I swore off relationships after she got done with me."

"That bad, huh?"

He felt an old familiar lump in his throat. Jeezus, it had been months since he'd cried about it, and certainly never in front of another human being. "We have a daughter," he managed. "I don't see her anymore."

Instinctively, Jessy knew not to press too hard. "I'm sorry." Then a few moments later, "She must be very beautiful."

"She's gonna be five. Her name's Savannah. I have a picture I can show you. Later."

"I'd like that."

Steel shifted back a little so as not to appear to be trying to fuck her from behind with her clothes on. "What about you?" he covered the movement. "You ever been married before?"

"Robert's the first, lucky man that he is. I had a fiance once. Well, I thought that's what he was. But it was a different story after I got pregnant."

He felt with renewed wonder the warm flesh of her belly. At one point, there'd been a human life in there. For some reason the idea made him feel even more protective of the small, complicated woman in his grasp.

"Steel, could you take this handcuff off me? I mean it's not like I'm going anywhere ... with you right here."

He felt her pushing him to stay, and he really needed to say no, just get up and walk out now. This wasn't going anywhere good; it had disaster written all over it. A mess that under the circumstances could get someone killed.

"I can unchain your wrist," he compromised, "and run something through an ankle cuff to the foot of the bed instead. It's nothing personal, you understand."

He had to get up to find the key and the leg irons. By the time he returned with them, she was on her back, looking seductive as hell.

What was it about a girl, a pretty one, in men's clothes that had such appeal? The way his shorts clung to her much smaller waist, the way she'd modified the shirt for her smaller, shapelier chest, tenting the material in a way that made him surge with desire.

There was no mistaking this vixen knew it, too. She wasn't lying there to no purpose, barefoot, her legs apart just enough to create ideas, one knee drawn up, so as to show off her calf muscle to best effect, back arched, ever so slightly inviting him, subliminally, to take hold of her breasts.

All that and she was chained. In bed, at his mercy.

Turn right back around, said the voice of reason. Go and drink your nice bottle on the porch, pass out and start fresh in the morning, a nice hangover to kill any leftover passion.

There was no trusting a female in this sort of situation, anyway. She was doing this to her own advantage, to finagle her release or maybe to trick him into letting her escape again.

"Aren't you going to uncuff me?" she reminded, her voice a little on the husky side.

Steel nodded, unmoving.

Jessy loved the look of him like this, so goddamned sexy, that macho body, lean but not overly muscled at the ready, but more important than that, his face, ruggedly handsome and boyishly clueless at the same time. He was so easy to read. You could see the conflict, the contradictions. He wanted her, but he was holding back. It wasn't fear, because he wasn't that kind of man, but something else. Again she sensed that code of honor, which more than anything she wanted to understand. It was very male in origin, but none of the other men she'd ever met, not even her lawyer husband or her staunch, patriotic father had ever displayed it to her.

There was also deep pain in those brown eyes, which he might be able to hide from the world, but not from her.

"Just to change over to the ankle cuff," he confirmed.

She waited till he was bent over her, inserting the tiny key in the lock. As soon as the infinitesimal metal gears gave way, she made her move. Both hands free, she grabbed the sides of his face, planting a

kiss on his lips the way Caesar did to her. At first he seemed to be willing, but then he seized her wrists and threw her down to the bed pinning her.

There was menace in his eyes. The threat of another beating.

"Make love to me," she begged. "As your captive."

He was on top of her, his hip to the side of hers, but still way too goddamn close for his own comfort. "You wouldn't like it, Jessy, trust me."

Her pussy was sopping wet, soaking the man's shorts. Her breasts, swollen and needful, strained at the cotton shirt. "But I need it, Steel, more than you know."

There was only so long a man could hold back and still be a man. "It won't be lovemaking, Jessy, we're past that point."

"Please," she whimpered, trying to reach him with her little, constrained body. "Take me."

"Don't say I didn't warn you," he growled, releasing her long enough to swipe down the shorts in one furious motion.

Jessy gave a little moan at his forcefulness, her hands on either side of her head palm up.

"Spread your legs," he commanded.

Steel barely waited to begin his assault. Thrusting his own bared sex on top of hers, he buried himself to the hilt in warm girl flesh.

As predicted, she'd been ready. Red hot and wet to receive him. The fact only confirmed to her what she was; a slut, needing the hard, punishing touch of a man, one with no regard for her own feelings or sexual needs. And yet, paradoxically, this was precisely what turned her on most.

For his own pleasure, Steel pinned her wrists down once again, wanting the sensation of fucking a bound woman, one who was his in a very demonstrable, undeniable way. She was so small beneath him, he feared at first he might crush her, but she proved she was more than ready to take all he had to dish out. Wrapping her legs round his buttocks, she signaled her complicity, the totality of her surrender.

They were one now, melded flesh, captor and captive, the one beginning where the other left off, the stresses, the tensions, all of it

between them being played out on this, their new battlefield.

"Oh, god," she hissed. "You're gonna make me come ... you fucking bastard."

Steel slammed himself home, releasing himself in time with her own cataclysm. His ejaculation was a flood, white hot and pumping, like he was thirty or even twenty again.

Deprived of her hands, deprived of her very freedom, Jessy bit hard into his shoulder, this time not to cause pain, but to bring them closer together, to mark him ... and her.

The orgasm seemed to last forever. His cock kept spasming and throbbing and he was grunting, letting it all out, the fever and frustration of years of battle and betrayal.

"Kimberlee," he exhaled, but she didn't mind; it wasn't a wish to be with another, just an acknowledgement of something very deep. A scar.

"I know," Jessy whispered, though there was no reason on earth she should have a clue.

Finished with her now, Steel rolled heavily onto his back. He was ready for sleep, but the girl was only just getting warmed up. Employing little girlish kisses, she began to tease at him, to arouse him all over.

"Witch," he grumbled, though he was hard pressed to object staunchly to her oral ministrations.

Jessy tended to him, licking clean her own fluids and his. All things were possible under cover of night, she thought, even an impossible coming together like this. She was pleased to see how quickly he was responding. In no time she had him hard again.

Discerning no reason not to, she put him back inside her, mounting his erection like it had been made just for her.

"Come here," he reached for her. "Let me see your breasts."

Eagerly, she pulled off the t-shirt. Flipping back her hair, she cradled them for him, in that way she knew men loved so well.

Taking them in his hands, kneading the lovely mounds, he began to buck from underneath, encouraging her to ride him. "That's it, baby," he cooed.

"Squeeze them harder," she demanded. "Make it hurt."

He obliged, bringing a mask of pain to her beautiful face. "You liked being whipped, didn't you?"

"Yes," she gasped, as if against her will. "You were so masterful with me. I was a bad little girl and you took it out on my hide."

"I won't hesitate to do it again."

"I know."

"Get on all fours," he commanded her.

Jessy obeyed, putting herself into mounting position. "This is how you've wanted me all along, isn't it?"

"Since the moment I saw you." Steel's pulse was racing. The girl was still pushing at him, over a brink he hadn't been in some time. At least not with a free woman.

"I wanted you, too," she confessed. "As soon as you grabbed me at the motel, I knew you were the one man to handle me."

"You don't know the meaning of the word, sweetheart."

"Teach me."

"Ever been taken anally?"

Jessy's knees and elbows buckled. "No," she answered, voice soft as velvet, and thick with female need. "Is it very painful?"

"Spread your ass cheeks and find out," he challenged.

Jessy moaned as she put her face to the bed. Reaching behind her, ass in the air, she opened herself, giving him all the access he needed. "Have you done this to a lot of girls?"

"Some whores. Some free women. Mostly slaves, though."

She shuddered at the mention of slaves. "You don't mean that in the literal sense?"

He slathered a healthy handful of pussy juice round her anal opening. "Actually, yes. In the sense of being owned, of being property."

Jessy tried to imagine being a piece of property. "A woman would hate such a thing," she exclaimed, a renewed tide of heat rising already in her pummeled body as she thought of what it would mean if a man could do anything he wanted to her or with her, if he could use her as he willed, dress or undress her according to his whims.

"Some, I suppose. Others seem to thrive on it."

Jessy's ass contracted, involuntarily under the pressure of his finger.

"You're going to have to loosen up," he chastened.

"Will you beat me?" she teased. "If I don't?"

"If you were my slave I would."

"You'd like a slave, wouldn't you?" she wiggled her posterior coquettishly. "A big strong man like you with a helpless little female, dependant on you for everything."

Steel answered with his cock, thrusting it the first inch or so down her narrow chute. "The idea seems to have its appeal to you, as well."

"Never. I would never want to be like that." Unless it was with the right man, she thought, preferring to keep that part to herself. "Oh, Steel, you're so ... big this way. Tell me how it feels. Is it good for you?"

He described the tightness, the sweet pressure. That was good enough for Jessy. "I think I'm going like anal sex," she decided.

"Why's that," he took another two inches for himself.

"Because you like it."

The answer caught him off guard. It was so sweet, and devoted, and it made him want to go at her that much harder.

"If you were mine," he breached another inch. "You wouldn't be out running around. You'd stay home and make me happy."

"Would you discipline me?"

"Certainly. I wouldn't hesitate to use the whip on your pretty ass or put you in chains. I might even have a cage on hand."

"A c-cage?"

He knew she'd like that. "Cages are appropriate for naughty girls. Would you like to spend a night in a dog cage, Jessy?"

"You couldn't make me."

"But how would you stop me?" He was more than half of the way in now; the girl had been remarkably receptive for a virgin.

"I-I couldn't," she realized. "I'd be helpless. You could do anything you wanted to me."

"I would ... slave."

"Yes," she replied. "Master."

They were trying the words on for size, even as they were negotiating the sex between them, determining the limits of what she'd do and how much she could take.

"Say, 'I'm being fucked in the ass by my master.'"

Jessy bit her lip. This was worse – or better – than the sex. "I'm being fucked," she said, "in the ass ... by my master."

"You may thank me," he grunted. "Slave girl."

"Yes, master, oh yes. Thank you."

It wasn't that great a stretch. She was his prisoner already, subject to naked discipline, her every waking and sleeping moment controlled by his whims.

"Take it," he demanded, caught up in his role. "Take it, you little slut."

"Yes," she moaned. "Fuck me harder, please, master."

Steel reached for her breasts, compelling her to lift herself onto her palms. Helplessly, on all fours like an animal, she let him have his way, giving free range over her torso, fingers contorting, clutching and even slapping her dependant tits – so big and swollen, the signs of her femininity, her frivolous, bauble-like nature.

Was it really such a stretch to imagine herself as property? A possession, honestly chained and commanded instead of subject to the half-measures imposed by Robert, the cruel neglect combined with constant assaults to her character? How much better to be nude, commanded like an honest beast, giving and receiving pleasure, than to be a fancily made up doll on someone's shelf.

"Am I good, master?" she panted, her abandoned loins dripping openly onto the sheet. "Do I please you?"

"Yes, slave. You're a good lay for your master."

"My ass is good, master?"

"Yes. Very good."

"May I touch myself, master?"

"No, you may not."

Jessy's cunt burned. She needed relief so badly, but he wasn't giving it. "Sir, what must I do to be able to masturbate?"

"Tell me what a little slut you are. Tell me you can't keep your

hands out of your crotch. Tell me how you can't keep your legs together, how you spread it for any man who sniffs you out."

"It's true, master. I am a slut. I try to be faithful, I swear it, but when a strong man comes along, I melt, like a puddle at his feet." The words were coming fast now, pouring over each other to get out. "I can't help but try to please a man, to make him want me, to get him to want to take control of me. I'm so bad, master. I've cheated on my husband. I've ruined my marriage. I deserve to be punished."

Steel withdrew his cock, deciding to delay his gratification. "You're out of control, aren't you Jessy?" He wagged a finger up into her cunt. "Your body responds whether you want it to or not."

"Y-yes," she shivered, on the brink of orgasm. "Master."

He wangled her clitoris, holding her cruelly at the brink. "You'd come right now on my hand if I let you. Even though I'm the man who kidnapped you. Hell, you tried to seduce me tonight, just because you didn't want to sleep alone. Isn't that true?"

She tried to fight off the truth. It sounded so damning. And yet at the same time it was so, so stimulating. "Yes, master," she breathed at last. "It's true."

"And did you succeed in manipulating me, girl?"

"I-I don't know," she answered truthfully.

He gave the finger a delicate twist, sending her through the ceiling, though not allowing her to get off. "The correct answer is 'no', slave. You have not now nor will you ever succeed in controlling me."

Though at points, Steel himself was having his doubts.

"You may beg for an orgasm, slave girl."

"Please, master, let me come on your hand."

"Punishment first. For being such a naughty slut."

She felt the heat of his hand on her ass, over her already inflamed cheeks. She needed it, in spite of, or because of the welts; needed the focus, the loving attention. "Have I been a very bad girl, master?" she asked shyly.

"You were fucking that Caesar character, weren't you? Is he your husband?"

"No, master."

He smacked her hard, reddening both globes at once.

"Does your cunt belong to him?"

"No, sir."

Another blow, harder than the first.

"You don't deserve your freedom, girl. You should be chained up all day, naked and ready for your master's pleasure, a chastity belt round your loins which only he has the key to."

Jessy rubbed her thighs. The thought of a man locking up her privates, putting them under his exclusive guard and control was nearly enough to climax her without being touched.

"Not yet," he hit her hard. "Not without permission."

"Yes, master."

"You're a disobedient little thing."

"Yes," she absorbed two more swats, the heat pooling in her crotch, radiating to the whole of her body. "Master."

He took her cunt, driving himself into her with a decisive thrust. "Do you have any idea how fucking far up in you I'm going to shoot my load?"

"N-no, master."

"Enough for you to be seeing everything in white," he grunted, rearing back for the payoff.

Jessy was already spasming, feeling the first waves of the earthquake. Throwing back her head, she cried out, swearing at him, begging him, wanting it to stop, wanting it to never end. On and on they rode the crest, the earthquake, and earth wave crest till they were both exhausted beyond measure.

This time there was no resurrecting either of them. His arm draped over her prone body, both of them face down they fell into a deep, coma-like sleep.

CHAPTER FIVE

Jessy awoke up alone to the sound of jingling. It was her ankle, chained to the foot of the bed. Had it all been a dream or had she and Steel really made love all night long? It had to be real, because she knew his name. And there was no denying her nudity or the dried sex fluids between her legs.

They'd fucked like animals. And they'd talked dirty, too. Too spent afterwards to leave, he'd stayed with her. So where was he now?

"Mm – Steel?" she called out, just catching herself before calling him master. "Where are you?"

She needed to see his face, to talk to him and make it all right. His shackling her like this wasn't a good sign. It was a step backward. But what did forward look like, exactly, under the circumstances? She shouldn't worry, of course, if he was okay. It was enough for her to be worrying about Robert and what he thought. Why was she concerned for the well being of her rapist, anyway?

If you could call it rape when a woman begs to be taken.

"I've fixed you some breakfast," Steel announced, entering the room with a tray. "I think it's best we leave you in here for now. Do you need to toilet yourself right off or can that wait?"

He was standing there, looking like Jeeves the butler, in jeans, a t-shirt and boots. Was this the same man who had used her last night in every orifice and called her his naughty little slave slut?

"I was hoping you'd be here when I woke up," she said.

He pinched his face in mild annoyance, wishing she would stay on task. Didn't she realize they couldn't look back on what had happened; that it was a fluke, and a dangerous one at that? "I hope you like oatmeal. I made an omelet with the powdered eggs, too."

She watched him set the tray down on the nightstand, carefully pouring the orange juice made from concentrate. "Ignoring what happened won't make it go away, you know."

"What's that, Jessica?"

She pushed the glass of juice back in his face. "You and me. Last

night."

He shook his head. "There's nothing to talk about. I was drunk and you were experiencing a shock reaction from your abduction. My judgment was impaired as was yours. I've been in captivity myself, I understand these things."

Jessy fought the sudden onslaught of tears. "Is that all it was – is that all I am – a spot of bad judgment?"

Steel presented the glass to her yet again. "You were an available receptacle, Jessica," he made it sound as cold as possible. "I hadn't had sex with a woman in quite some time."

"Here's what you can do with your fucking juice!"

The plastic glass ricocheted off the wall, the contents splattering the floor.

"You will clean that up, Jessica."

"Go fuck yourself." Her eyes were lit with fury. The pain in that pretty sweet face was enough to break his heart. But he had to be tough, for her sake and his.

Flipping her over, he spanked her bare ass until she relented.

"I'll clean it up! Please, stop hitting me!"

He released her from her shackle and handed her a bucket and sponge to work with. She looked good on hands and knees, naked, her ass freshly punished, doing his bidding. A man could get used to that sort of thing, having a woman at his beck and call. But not this woman and not now. Despite the intensity of their connection at the moment, they must prepare soon to be strangers again, worlds apart.

In a little while, Condrum would be calling for him to talk to Jimmy and then he'd be patching the lawyer through to his angry, bedraggled wife. From there it would be only a matter of time till the wheels were set in motion and Jimmy was found not guilty. For much as Robert Condrum might want to divorce his wife, he would never put her life in danger – despite his bluster of the day before.

At least that was Steel's hope.

The fact that he hadn't heard back from the man so far, after leaving several messages was not a good sign. With each passing minute, in fact, he was getting more concerned. All the more reason to maintain

strict discipline with the girl, he thought, as he continued to watch her backside, deliciously twitching as she slaved over the orange juice stain.

For the briefest moment he entertained the notion that she was really his. In that case, right about now he would quite happily present himself at her front end for some attentions to his rapidly stiffening cock. Upon waking up with her in bed this morning, he had been sorely tempted to apply that sullen mouth or else to make use of one of her other two already well plowed orifices. He'd lied when he told her it was all about being drunk. In the light of day, he'd wanted her more than ever. Still did.

And the longer they remained together, he feared, the worse it would get. He'd have to get her in clothes again, that was the first thing. Preferably a snowsuit with mittens, gloves and a hood.

"That's enough," he barked, noting the hostility of her motions. "You'll wear a hole in the floor. Let's get you cleaned up and fed."

"It didn't mean anything to me, either," she told him as he led her back out to the infamous stream.

"The sex," she persisted when he failed to take the nibble. "It was just my bad judgment, too."

"Just drop it, okay?" he tied the cord to her wrist, keeping the other end in his hand as a precaution before letting her wade out into the water.

"My pleasure," she snubbed him, giving him a saucy display of her ass as she sauntered into the gurgling waters.

Right on cue, the cell phone rang. It was Condram, with his usual bizarre sense of timing.

"We've got a problem," the lawyer said by way of introduction.

Steel tensed, eyes glued to the wet nymph currently cleaning her luxurious nude body under his supervision. "What kind of problem, Condram?"

"Seems my time is getting spread pretty thin."

"So is my patience, Condram," he snapped. "And what exactly do you mean by keeping me waiting? I want to talk to my brother, and I mean now."

"Like I said, buddy, my time's at a premium. Especially now that I have to go through a messy divorce. Of course, if my dear Jessica were to sign a nice, simple agreement like the one I've already drafted, I'd have a lot more time to work on your brother's case. What was his name, Tommy?"

"It's Jimmy, you son of a bitch," he whispered fiercely, back turned again so she wouldn't overhear him. "And you better start remembering things if you ever want to see Jessica alive again!"

"Ah, but there's the rub. I slept on the whole thing and I've decided I don't really give a rat's ass what happens to her. Here's a little lesson for you, my friend. When you kidnap a girl, make sure it's someone people will pay to get back. It's all supply and demand, trust me," he gloated. "But don't despair. I'm feeling generous today so I'm prepared to make you a deal."

"I'm all ears."

"Is that sarcasm, I detect, or desperation? Actually, this is very simple. All you need to do is finish the job, kill my wife for me, and in exchange I'll see to it your brother comes out so squeaky clean they'll make him head of the Mother Teresa Memorial Fund. And I'll set you up to the tune of a half a million dollars in the bargain."

Steel's blood went cold as he looked at the lovely Jessica scrubbing herself down at the end of his rope. "You can't be serious."

"As a heart attack, amigo. And just in case you're feeling a little squeamish, let me fill you in on the flip side. If you don't do what I say, I'll use my influence to see it to it baby brother gets the chair and I'll also make it my personal business to hunt you down like the dog you are and that no good slut, too."

Fuck. Fuck and double fuck.

"I need time to think, Condram."

"Don't think, pal. Act," the lawyer broke the connection.

"That was my husband, wasn't it?" Jessica wanted to know. "He wants to pay a lot of money, doesn't he? How does it feel to be wrong, huh, master?"

She was clueless. The pretty girl with the round, soft breasts and lovely wet hair was clueless. But while she might not deserve her

freedom, she certainly did not deserve to die. Nor did Jimmy. Which meant he would have to find a way to play both sides against the middle.

He hit redial. "I'll do it."

"Wise choice. I want to talk to her first, though. I never really did have a chance to say goodbye when she left."

"You're a sick fuck, Condrum."

"Hey, everybody's gotta be good at something, right?"

Steel tugged on the line, pulling the indignant girl onto dry land.

"I wasn't done yet, asshole. What am I, a dog now?"

He handed her the cell and positioned himself just behind her. For the plan to work he couldn't forewarn her of what he was about to do. As far as she was concerned, and Robert, too, it would be a genuine murder.

"Good morning, Sunshine."

Jessy's fluid, majestic river of anger froze solid at the sound of her husband's voice. She'd forgotten how this man could frighten her and make her feel small. "Robert, I can explain everything."

"What's to explain, sweetheart? You spread your legs for Caesar Bustamonte. I imagine you sucked him, too, is that right?"

"Baby, don't do this," her voice quivered. "Let me make it all up to you."

"Make it up to me? Don't be absurd. There's nothing to make up for. You were just doing what comes natural to you; being a little bitch in heat who couldn't keep her legs together if her life depended on it. How many others were there, Jessica? Who else did you fuck? Randalls? Cranston? The fucking pool boy? Maybe some bums down at the mission? Did you suck them off, too and give them your pretty pussy to play with and screw?"

"Robert," she sobbed. "I love you. I'm so, so sorry."

"Not sorry enough, cunt, cause guess why? I'm gonna see to it you're nice kidnapper friend puts your lights out permanently. In fact, he's itching to do it."

"T-that's not true," Jessy croaked, all too aware of Steel's looming presence.

"Ask him, bitch, he'll tell you. He's gonna pay you back for what you took from me, and save me a whole lot of alimony in the process."

Steel was ready with the rag. He'd had it stuffed in his pocket already, soaked with chloroform as a precaution in case she got away again and he needed to immobilize her in a hurry.

He let her scream and struggle a little, for the benefit of Condrum, eagerly listening, no doubt, on his end. The coughing and sputtering was perfect and as she went limp he took the cell phone from her hand, making sure to hold it in place so her husband could enjoy the last few seconds of her "death" throes.

"Death by asphyxiation," he announced simply. "Now will you help Jimmy?"

"I want to see the body."

Of course he did, the psychopath.

"I'm nowhere near the city. It'll take time."

"I'll fly out there by chopper."

Damn, he was afraid of that.

"I'll give you directions so you can find the body, but I want you on Jimmy's case first."

"Why should I, now that I have what I want?"

"To avoid being charged as an accessory to murder. I taped the phone call," he bluffed.

"Doubtful," he said evenly. "Anyway, it would be conspiracy to commit murder, not accessory to it."

"Whatever you call it, yours is next if you cross me. Remember, you're not the only one who can have people hunted down like dogs, asshole. And unlike you, I take care of my own dirty work."

"I'll make the phone calls."

"Good." Steel proceeded to direct him fifty miles north into the deeper woods. That should keep him busy. Meanwhile, he and Jessy would be long gone. The only weak point in the whole plan was what Condrum would do once he discovered he'd been deceived. Steel's hope was to be able to leverage him by using the threat of Jessy's turning him in for her attempted murder.

Which in turn would lead to his arrest as well.

All in all, Steel mused, hoisting the girl into that now familiar place over his left shoulder, it was going to be another interesting day.

* * *

Jessy came to on the waterbed. Looking up, she saw herself in the mirror on the ceiling, wearing her dress, barefoot, her limbs laid haphazardly over the shimmying, tiger skin coated surface. There were more mirrors, she noted on the blood red walls along with pictures of couples making love.

She sat up painfully, rubbing her head.

Where the hell was she now?

For a split second she thought maybe it was hell. Had she been killed by that psycho Steel? Where was the stream, anyway? And hadn't she been talking to Robert on the phone?

"There's leftover Chinese on the table. Help yourself."

Steel was sitting next to the window, eyes half trained on the slit in the black and Purple Heart decorated curtains. Warily, she noted the half empty liquor bottle on the table beside him and the pistol, black as the night sky outside.

"Where are we, Steel?"

"Somewhere between here and there," he said sardonically, hoisting the bottle. He didn't sound drunk, then again he hadn't seemed that way last night either, though she'd smelled it on his breath and known it, even as she invited him to make love to her.

Maybe Robert was right in everything he said. Maybe she was the lowest kind of slut, the sort who didn't deserve to live. What other kind of woman has sex with a kidnapper and calls him master and begs him to fuck her in the ass like a lowly bitch?

"I gather there's been a change in plans?" She was on her feet, warily, shakily.

"Yep."

Okay, so he was back to playing the strong and silent type.

"Is there some significance to the decor?" she decided to ask.

"Camouflage."

As usual, the man was clear as mud. Should she be worried about

all this? The liquor, the gun, the surprise change of scenery.

"Mind if I go to the little girls room?"

"Knock yourself out. You can forget the window, though. It's locked tight."

He was right, it was. Looking at herself close up in the mirror, Jessy was none too pleased with what she saw. Her hair was six ways from Sunday, she had dark circles under her eyes and her lips were cracked and dry.

Then again, she was in the middle of a kidnapping. So much so that she was taking it in stride, her captivity suddenly having been taken for a road trip. Maybe a nice warm shower would help. Taking the dress off, she realized she had no underwear left. Interesting oversight in dressing her.

A little tingle went down her spine as she imagined what he might have done with her when she was unconscious. Had he taken care of her helpless body, molesting her or even penetrating her easy orifices? Running her fingers over her mound, she felt for the evidence. Other than her own freshly kindled juices, nothing seemed amiss.

Too bad, she leaned against the sink rubbing her nipple. Steel would no doubt have used her well, taking his pleasure as he saw fit, posing her like a doll, legs apart, arms up over her head and out of the way so he could have at her, plunging into her sleeping cunt, wakening it with his hardness. Like a perverted Sleeping Beauty orgasming in her slumber.

And when he was done having her, he would have put her in the back of his van, like a sack of potatoes and driven her here, wherever this was.

Jessy turned on the shower, making the water steamy hot. She needed relief and she was determined to give it to herself tonight. No more begging, she promised herself. No more making myself the man's slave.

No matter how good it feels. Or how right.

* * *

Steel swallowed his pale brown whiskey in disgust. How long was she gonna be in there? Did she have any idea how crazy this was

driving him, knowing she was on the other side of that wall, wet and naked and available? Christ, it was a sex motel. How could he not think of having it with her? If it hadn't been such a clever spot to hide the fact that he was carrying the girl in asleep in his arms he never would have come here.

As it was, he was having a hell of a time focusing. There were even sex toys in the dresser. A vibrator and a flogger. Jeezus, he was in over his head this time. On the lamb with another man's wife, trying to save her life and his, not to mention his brother's, when, really, to the police, he was nothing but a criminal himself. He'd have done better to gone with his original plan and gotten some of his old buddies together to bust Jimmy out of jail. He might have to call on them yet if he got nabbed himself. The thing was, he couldn't let Jessy Condrum die. He was responsible for getting her into this mess. As a point of honor, he couldn't let Robert snuff her on his watch.

It wasn't personal. He had no feelings for her other than lust. And who wouldn't want another go at a girl like that? Those soulful brown eyes, that little girl face that could affect such haunted looks. The vulnerable little lines on the outside of her mouth when she was angry or sad. And all those sighs. How many had he catalogued so far?

Steel grimaced internally, reviewing his list. Eyes, face, sighs. He was composing a love sonnet, not attributes for a mindless fuck. He checked the safety on the Colt for the dozenth time. He was losing it, he really was.

"I need clothes," Jessy announced her presence, wrapped in a towel, her hair squeaky clean, her body smelling of a spring rain storm with blooming flowers whose names he didn't even know.

"There's more t-shirts and boxers in my back pack," he thumbed brusquely over his shoulder, though he already knew from the tone of her voice and the slight angle to her hip that he wasn't going to get away that easy, not by a long shot.

"Those are men's clothes, Steel. I'm a girl, in case it's escaped your attention. And I suppose it was too much trouble for you to bring along my underclothes?"

"I was a bit for crunched for time."

"Mmm. How convenient."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"What do you think it means? You had me at your mercy, to play dress up with or hide the salami or whatever else it is you wanted to."

"You're unbelievable," he snorted. "You think men have no other purpose in this world other than to get in your pants?"

"From what I've seen," she tossed back her soggy curls. "No."

Steel palmed the pseudo-wood table, once again pushed past reason by the exasperating little female. "For your information, Miss High and Mighty, I was endeavoring to save your life."

She cocked her head and he knew he was in trouble.

"Saving my life from what?"

Wonderful. Now he was going to have to make her cry again.

"Maybe you better sit down," he indicated the second black leatherette chair across the gun and whisky loaded table.

"I don't want to sit down, Steel. I want you to start giving me some straight answers. Something you should have done from the beginning."

"He wants you dead," Steel decided to deliver the harshest pill first. "He's turned the whole fucking thing around and now he's blackmailing me to kill you so he doesn't have to dish out any alimony."

Jessy shook her head. "This isn't happening. None of this is happening. You're lying to me. You've been lying all along. Robert wants me back and you're keeping me from him."

She was on her way to the telephone.

"Don't bother, I already disconnected it."

Jessy flung the device at him, narrowly missing his head. "You're the one he wants to kill! And I do, too. Do you hear me, Steel?"

"Makes no difference to me," he shrugged. "There's already a waiting list a mile long for that privilege."

For want of a better word, the girl was now flinging herself, headlong across the room, a look of mayhem in her eyes. He should have figured that would come, once the shock of it all wore off.

"Easy, Jessica, this won't get us anywhere." Steel rose to intercept,

quickly immobilizing her arms. She was trying to flail and bite. Not in the mood for any more infectious wounds, he pinioned her arm and laid her face down, between the whisky bottle and the Colt.

"Go on and do it, big man," she taunted. "Shoot me. Put me out of my misery."

Steel stripped the towel down her back, baring her curvaceous, still welted ass. Her cunt was mocking him, glistening wet. He was inside her before either of them could draw another breath.

"I hate you," she moaned, tits flat on the table, nipples throbbing. "I fucking hate you."

But she didn't hate the sex any and as he started in his pumping at her she was right there to receive him. It was deep and animalistic, grunting replacing words. He came quickly, filling her body as he would any receptacle. He was under the impression she came, too, but he really didn't give a shit at the moment.

"Go to bed," he growled, collapsing back into his seat and reaching for the whisky bottle.

She ran for the bathroom instead and locked herself inside. He could still hear her crying as he stumbled to the bed to pass out some time later.

* * *

Jessy awoke on the tile floor, her body rolled into a ball. She could hear Steel snoring on the other side of the door. Cautiously, she peeked out, hoping he'd be as sound asleep as he sounded. Sure enough, he was face down, the whisky bottle clutched in his hand, empty.

The bastard had drunk himself into a stupor. Disgusting pig. Raping her and then sleeping like a baby. She felt between her legs. He was there. His dried emission. His scent. His mark on her and in her. Briefly, she shuddered, the tinglings of renewed arousal.

No way in hell would she go down that road, she snatched away the hand. This man did not own her body. He had no right to just stick himself in her whenever he wanted to get himself. She wasn't his whore or slave. She answered to no one as pimp or master. What she had was a husband and it was time to get home to him and straighten

things out. He'd forgive her, once she explained about Caesar seducing her. Robert was always saying himself what a snake in the grass the man was.

Quietly as possible, she slipped on her dress and made a desperate search for her shoes. Never mind, she'd have to chance it like this. Hell, for that matter, she didn't need clothes at all – she was a hostage a rape victim, all she had to do was open the door and scream for help and the cops would come running.

For some reason the bizarre image filled her mind of blue uniformed policemen, guns drawn, surrounding the motel, the senior man on the bull phone telling her to stop in her tracks.

"Did you orgasm for him?" He'd want to know. And she'd have to say yes, that she was wet and ready when he stuffed his cock in her hole and that she went into orbit almost before him.

"That's not rape, sorry sweetheart. That's being a horny little slut."

And then they all drive off.

Jessy slid the chain in slow motion, so close to freedom she could taste it.

"Why don't you take the van keys? You'll get a lot further."

Her heart was slamming in her chest. Without tipping her hand she peered left to where the gun was still lying on the table. He'd never be able to beat her to it, would he?

"Don't move!" She screamed, having snatched the thing up and aimed it across the room at his head.

He regarded her, arms and hands trembling. She was more likely to shoot him by accident than by intent. "Give me the gun, Jessica," he began to move slowly, steadily towards her.

She took a step back, putting herself against the wall. "Stay away from me, or I'll shoot. I swear it!"

He shook his head, his eyes never faltering from hers. "You don't have it in you. The killer instinct. Think about it, you pull that trigger and I go down. I bleed on the floor right in front of your eyes. You say you hate me, but can you handle watching me die?"

"It would be my pleasure. Now get down on the fucking floor. You're my prisoner now. How does it feel – me having the power for

a change? What should I do with you, Steel? Make you take off your clothes? Whip your ass, maybe rape you with a nice big dildo?"

Steel held out his hand, palm up. He was less than a foot from her now. "Give me the gun, Jessica, before one of us gets hurt."

"No," she tried to keep her voice from cracking. "You're my slave. I command you to get on your knees and kiss my feet. Beg my forgiveness for being such a lousy human being."

He snatched the Colt from her hands and flicked on the safety.

Proudly, impudently, she lifted the hem of her dress to her waist, revealing her bare and most tempting crotch. "You win. How do you want me ... master?"

"I don't want you at all," he tucked the pistol into the waistband. "In fact I think your little escape plan is a splendid one. How about we amend it and I leave you tied up here long enough to get a nice running head start to Mexico?"

Jessy felt a surge of panic. As much as she despised Steel, she did not want to be alone right now. "Aren't you worried about me telling the police who you are?" she prodded.

"I'll be in Mexico. It'll be a moot point."

"They might get you before you reach the border. I can tell them everything so they can catch you. I can even describe the van."

He arched an eyebrow, smelling a rat. It was almost as if she wanted him to keep her all of a sudden. "Really? And what's the license plate number?"

Damn it. She'd never thought to look.

"How about me? Do I have any moles, distinguishing characteristics?"

She put her hands over her ears. "Stop it, you're mixing me all up. I don't even know what I'm saying anymore."

"Let's just get you tied up," he escorted her to the bed, somewhat sympathetically. "So I can be on my way."

He had her trussed up and was about to gag her when she produced a salient point. "If Robert's really trying to kill me what if he sends someone here before the police?"

Steel paused, ball gag in hand, his prisoner looking up hopefully at

him, flat on her belly, hog tied. Most likely Condrum hadn't discovered his ruse yet, and was still trying to locate the body. Then again, he hadn't attempted to call Steel back to clarify directions. Could he be on the hunt already?

More importantly, why hadn't he thought of that himself?

"I'll take you along just till I get this thing figured out."

"But not as your prisoner, anymore."

"What the hell would you call it?"

"I don't know. But you were willing to let me go so it's different now. And I'm going along because I want to, and I'm laying out the boundaries. There won't be any sex, of course, but we can be courteous, at least, like equals."

Fucking great, he grumbled to himself releasing her bonds. Now she was trying to turn the thing into a relationship. Could they be far from an appearance on one of those inane daytime talk shows? He could see it now: "I'm in love with my kidnapper, but my husband wants him to kill me."

"I'll need some clothes," he heard her saying now. "We can stop on the road somewhere. Nothing fancy, just an outfit or two for traveling."

He was sorely tempted to hand back the gun and tell her aim between the eyes. "I need a shower," he pushed her words back outside the painful veil of his hangover. "And a cold beer."

"That's another thing," she frowned disapprovingly. "I think you're drinking too much."

She was still talking at him as he closed the bathroom door on her. One fucking night, he thought to himself, and he'd gone from being the one in control to the one hiding out in the bathroom. At this rate, Jessica Condrum was going to make his ex-wife look like a picnic.

Assuming they both lived long enough to find out, that is.

CHAPTER SIX

They'd traded in the van for a convertible. Riding across the late afternoon desert with the top down, Jessy reveled in the feel of the hot, dry wind in her hair. It was almost like being a little girl again, riding with her father. She could almost escape back there, if it weren't for the press of very grownup problems on her mind, just outside the periphery of her conscious thoughts.

Steel's presence beside her, hard and masculine, was a constant reminder that she was not, at the moment, steering her own ship. She wasn't really even sure she had a ship left. Robert, at very minimum, no longer wanted her as his wife. This much she'd heard out of the man's mouth. Beyond this, it was becoming increasingly likely that he didn't even want her in the land of the living. Given his position as a lawyer and her own infidelity, she doubted she could count on much alimony. And then there was her inexplicable, utterly foolish decision to stay with Steel even after he'd offered to let her go.

Why was she trusting him over the authorities? Over her own husband, even? What had he done except abduct, restrain, humiliate and molest her?

He'd made her feel like a woman again, for the first time in years, that's what.

But still, what basis was that to make important life decisions? And what kind of view of womanhood involved the kind of things she'd been through in the past seventy-two hours?

He'd let her pick out cute clothes, anyway. Not that there was a whole lot of variety at the cut-rate department store they'd run across. She was feeling particularly naughty in a short denim skirt and peasant blouse crop top. She'd gotten some new panties, and a nice little push up bra, the sort of thing she'd never felt comfortable wearing back home. The platform sandals were a nice addition, she thought.

Steel didn't say if he liked any of it or not, he just had the oddest look on his face as she was trying things on. She wasn't sure if he was trying to distance himself, like maybe he still intended to dump her off

or even kill her, or if he was just trying to hide some other feelings he had for her.

The man was so damned tight lipped. He had to care about her, or he wouldn't be going through all this. All her attempts to draw him out, pushing and probing and even flirting, were yielding no results whatsoever. And as her insecurity about his affections for her mounted, so did her desperate need to please him.

He had to know the bind she was in. At this moment, he was her man. Whether or not she still had a husband or not back home, he was it for right now. Her only shoulder to lean on. Her only ear to chew off ... her only love making partner.

Not that anything would happen between them, though. Prior lightning strikes between them aside, there would be no more fireworks in the night, no passion, no submission or violent exchange. He was her platonic companion now and nothing more. The outfit she'd picked out meant nothing. Except maybe to show him what he'd missed out on being such a jerk.

Steel was certainly not giving her cause to think he was interested, anyway. Sitting there so stoically behind the wheel with his mirrored shades, face expressionless as it had been for hours. But wasn't that something there in his lap? A man could conceal emotions, but not erections. He wanted her again, that was obvious.

"It's getting dark," she noted sardonically. "Shouldn't you be looking for another love nest for tonight?"

"The only thing I'm looking for," he grumbled, "is how to be rid of you."

The sudden barb cut Jessy like a knife. "Sorry I'm such an imposition to you. Some men might relish the prospect of being stuck with me."

"You know," he looked across with those intimidating glasses, not to mention his countenance. "For a woman who claims not to want things between us to have anything do with sex, you sure talk about it a lot."

"I'm not the one sitting here with a hard on," she pouted.

"And who's forcing you to look?"

She flushed red. "Well it's just a little hard to miss when the thing is flaunted in your face."

"Let's just drop it, shall we?"

"Fine."

"Good."

Jessy retreated into a deafening silence, arms folded over her bosom. She leaned away from him as far as possible towards the door. He was impossible – the most frustrating man she'd ever dealt with in her life.

And the worst, most damnable part of all, she thought as she nodded off to sleep, was that she was falling in love with him.

* * *

Steel concentrated on the unfolding ribbon of moonlit highway, his mind settling on the straightforward task of staying between the lines. Why couldn't the rest of life be this simple? A man works hard, he pays for his mistakes, he should have something to show for it. Instead, Jimmy was a hair's breath from the electric chair, his only hope a psychopathic lawyer who'd as soon kill his own wife as split up his assets. And he himself was stuck in a rented Mustang with the lawyer's wife, trying like hell not to look at her long bare legs, her flat belly and full tits, right there waiting to be handled. The way that seat belt cinched her middle and divided her lightly rising and falling, sleep softened breasts, was like a written invitation to put her into bondage and have his way with her.

She was attracted to him; that much was obvious to Steel. As boorish and drunk as he'd been last night, she was still warm and wet to receive him. It was as if her body was made to accommodate him, in all his moods. She took a switching, a spanking, a screwing like nobody's business. And she was still able to give him hell afterwards, keeping him in his place.

Steel decided he liked that in a woman. He'd had his share of bitches for hire as well as mindless slaves. He'd also known the truly self-centered breed of females like Kimberlee, but Jessy was somewhere in between. Smart, funny, tough as nails one minute, completely vulnerable the next. He'd never felt more a man than

when she called him master, but he also liked her feistiness. Though he'd never admit it, a part of him even liked having her around and wished it could be for longer. But that would be crazy for both of them. The sooner they split up and got into safe places the better.

If only he knew more of what Condrum was up to right now. He ought to just drop Jessy off at the nearest police station. Short of going in with her, though, he couldn't guarantee she wouldn't just run off and try to contact him again. And Steel was not about to hold her hand and walk into the lion's den, where he'd face swift arrest for her abduction.

Which left a stalemate. Driving around the desert for the next fifty years, hiding out in Mexico. Or finding Wolf.

Wolf was one of his running buddies. Together the two of them seen more shit than most armies. If anyone could think of a way out of this mess, it was the Wolf. The trouble was finding him. Last he'd heard, Wolf was hanging with a biker gang outside of Tucson. He had the name of a bar, which seemed as good a place as any to start looking.

They pulled into the parking lot of the Raiser's Edge about half past ten. The joint was already hopping, the dirt lot filled with choppers, Harleys and an odd Indian here and there. What you didn't see was anything English or Japanese made. Riding in to this place on a foreign bike would be like jumping into a lion's cage buck-naked wrapped in sirloin steaks.

Jessy had had her head on his shoulder the last fifty miles, quietly dreaming away. The simple act of trust and affection, unconscious though it was, gave Steel this kind of warm feeling in his gut. That protectiveness thing again, only stronger. It occurred to him now that in order to save her life he would kill, or even die himself.

She was a heavy sleeper, and it took a bit of coaxing to wake her.

Jessy looked around, her sleepy eyes widening in obvious alarm. "I'll wait in the car," she mumbled.

"I'm not leaving you out here," he shook his head. "No way."

He led her through the front door, his hand on her arm. Jessy felt her senses assaulted immediately. The place was hazy with smoke.

Neon signs of various designs decorated the smudged over windows. The scent of stale beer filled the air.

A few words were exchanged with the bartender and then Steel was telling her he had to go in back for a few moments and she need to stay put at the bar.

Unbelievable. Now he was dumping her off with a roomful of axe murderers and leather wearing psychos.

"Relax," he counseled. "I'll be right back. I just need to check of an old friend. Have a beer while I'm gone."

Jessy was furious. The nerve of the man. Leaving her with all these sharks. Didn't he care if she was raped or assaulted? Apparently not. Already a bearded man in a captain's hat was grinning at her from the other end of the bar, along with a younger fellow next to him in a black vest and t-shirt. Both of them had jeans and leather chaps, along with dust covered boots.

"Hey, little honey," called the black and silver bearded man. "Your old man leave you high and dry?"

She nodded, the pout coming naturally to her lips.

"How about a whisky to go with that beer?"

"Yes, thank you," she heard herself say. "That would be nice."

Screw Steel. She'd show him. If he wasn't going to pay her any attention, maybe someone else would.

"Whisky for the little girl," the bearded man said to the bartender.

The bartender put the shot glass in front of the stranger. She'd have to go down there to drink it.

"Come on, honey, we won't bite," the younger one crooned, smiling slantedly.

Jessy's heart was pounding wildly. She knew what they wanted, and from the way she was dressed in this skirt and top it was pretty clear they expected her to deliver. There's no way she wanted anything to happen, though she wasn't sure how she would stop them if they wanted to touch her or even take her into some dark corner for sexual activity.

Well that was Steel's problem, wasn't it? He'd gotten her into this mess and he'd have to rescue her. She was quite sure he could take

these two on. The whole bar if he wanted.

She reached for the tiny glass. The bearded man snatched it off the counter at the last minute.

"Kiss me, first," he held it up in the air, grinning.

The younger one grabbed her ass. "You heard Spike, give him a little kiss."

Jessy gasped. The man's hands were hot and possessive. Things were going too fast, not at all according to plan.

"I-I made a mistake, I should go back."

"Not till I get my kiss."

She didn't want to kiss him. He wasn't all that attractive, and he had this scar on his face. But his eyes were so hard and demanding, black as coal. And the other one wasn't fighting fair, softening her up like this.

"Please let me go."

"Kiss me," he said again.

Jessy licked her lips, eyes closed she moved to receive him, on tiptoes, lost between the two men, lost in the sensations of the moment, dissolving into the atmosphere of the rank bar with its tattooed oversexed people, chain wearing girls and leather wearing men.

Just one little kiss, she told herself, and then she'd go back over and wait for him like she was supposed to.

"Excuse me, gentlemen," she heard Steel's voice, cool and calm as always. "I wonder if you realize this girl is with me."

"And I wonder if you realize we don't give a fuck," laughed Snake, pushing the shot glass to Jessy's lips. "Drink up, slut, it'll warm your hole up for sucking my dick later."

"Yea, get lost, asshole," concurred the younger one, working the back of Jessy's skirt up to her waist. "The little cunt is ours now. Aren't you, baby cakes?"

Steel moved quickly and efficiently, employing precisely honed martial arts skills. He had no intention of maiming the pair. Basically, what he wanted was their attention. And respect. So he'd be in a position to deal with Jessy's obvious lack of good judgment on

a level playing field.

The younger one went down with a blow to the kidney, followed up with a two-fingered jab to the throat of the bigger one. Jessy was left standing between him and the bar, her expression one of utter amazement.

And guilt.

"I-I'm sorry," she stammered, seeing his obvious anger. "I didn't think to—"

"When little girls play with fire, Jessica, they get burned. My apologies, gentlemen," he helped the stunned bikers to their feet, having established his dominance. "Clearly the woman led you on. Can I make it up to you? She's yours for the night if you want her."

"Looks like spoiled meat to me," the younger one spit at her feet, still clutching his throbbing side.

"Yea, she needs a good flogging if you ask me," the bigger one sputtered, catching his breath.

"That can be arranged," Steel had her arm.

"Steel, no," she squirmed, "don't make me—"

He had her by the back of the hair. "Don't make it worse on yourself, bitch." Mostly he was play-acting, though he really was pissed off at the girl for playing games. Especially in a place like this, where one wrong move, one sign of weakness could cost a man his life.

"You're hurting me!"

"It'll get a whole lot worse if you don't start entertaining our new friends."

Others were gathering round. Steel knew he had to resolve the situation fast. From his end, he'd satisfied matters man to man, but the girl owed them and if she didn't deliver, they were both dead. Hopefully, they'd be satisfied at the offer and wouldn't actually want to fuck her, but that was always a possibility. Particularly since Wolf was, as he had just discovered, no longer on friendly terms with the owners of this establishment.

Leaving her had been a mistake, he could see that now, but taking her in back for the big shots to get a look at while he went looking for

Wolf would have been worse.

"Show them your tits, Jessica," he prodded.

Jessy whimpered, his hand pushing her forward at the small of her back. She was angry and scared but a part of her wanted this, too, wanted to be an object of lust, a piece of meat on display for degenerate bikers. Leather jacketed criminals to whom her captor was offering use of her body. For the whole night if they wished it.

The whole bar was silent now, all eyes focused on her tiny hands, her small moist lips trembling as she lifted the crop top up and over her bra covered bosom.

"Let's see them melons," someone hollered. There was snickering. She'd never felt more vulnerable in her life. Reaching behind her back, she undid the clasp, allowing her woefully full tits to spill forward.

"Hold 'em up so everybody can see," called out a raspy voiced girl.

Jessy cradled her bosoms, humiliated.

"Damn, I could lose my pecker real good in those babies," a man said.

"Blade, you could lose your toothpick pecker in a fucking set of dolly boobs," another guffawed.

Jessy's knees were like rubber. Was she really going to have to service this roomful of tough and tumble men? Would they make her take off the rest of her clothes, lay her down on the floor and fuck her like a slab of beef till break of day? She'd die if that happened. Especially if they made her come, forcing her to take degraded pleasure as their slut, their slave for the night. The worst part would be the women watching, judging gloating.

But what if they wanted to participate, too? What if they were lesbians and they wanted a share of her mouth and tits and cunt for themselves, for their own perverted games? And what if she humiliated herself by showing she enjoyed that, too? God, she just wished Steel would come to her rescue. Why was he doing this to her? She didn't deserve it. She'd only wanted to make him a little jealous, to get some attention focused on herself.

"What'll it be, friends? There's plenty to go around."

"Ah, fuck it," the bearded man said disgustedly. "Hammer's right, she's spoiled meat. Get her the fuck out of here, that's what I say."

"Yea, the both of you, get out, and don't show your faces again," agreed the bartender.

Steel gathered Jessy and pulled her back toward the door. He didn't need to be asked twice. "Thanks for the hospitality, gentlemen."

Jessy was back sitting in the Mustang seat, bra in hand, top up to her neck before she found her voice. "You just tried to get a bar full of bikers to fuck me. Are you fucking crazy!"

Steel floored it, plastering her lithe body into the back of the seat. "Me? I'm not the one who threw myself at them in the first place."

"They attacked me. I couldn't help it!"

"No, you never can help it, can you?"

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"Just look at yourself, Jessy and you tell me."

That was all she needed to hear. She came at him fists flying, so hard he nearly lost control of the car. "Crazy bitch!" he cried, managing to pull to the side of the road. "You want to get us killed?!"

"It's your job, isn't it? Maybe my husband will give you a bonus!"

"Calm down, Jessy, fer crissakes!"

"Make me, you macho shit head!"

"All right, sweet heart," he jumped out. "I will."

He slammed his door with enough force to rattle her teeth.

"Over the hood," he told her, "panties down, skirt up."

"Gonna fuck me, big shot?"

"Nope." He was already drawing the belt from the loops of his pants.

Jessy went pale under the moonlight. She'd felt his hand, even the switch, but never a leather belt. "Steel, this isn't fair. I didn't do anything wrong."

"The hell you didn't," he helped her into position. "Do you have any idea how dangerous that little stunt was you pulled back there? Those are bikers, Jessy. You go sauntering up to the likes of them and you're as much as asking them to put a collar on you."

"A c-collar?" She tried to keep the morbid fascination from her

voice. "What do you mean?"

"Jeezus, Jessy," he thrust her over the warm metal. "It's not something you even want to know about. Just trust me, you get with the likes of those guys and you're a warm body for degraded sex acts. Period."

She tried to picture that; having no choice but to go through with all those disgusting things she knew those men – and women – wanted to do to her. Removing all her clothes, getting on her knees, lying on her back, taking on cock after cock after cock.

"This is going to hurt you more than it will me. Hands on the hood."

The Mustang hood was smooth and warm on her palms and cheeks. Offering no resistance, she allowed Steel to bare her ass for his belt.

"One," he called, the leather sailing through the air.

It was a sight John Steel never grew tired of; pretty pink cheeks twitching, their innocence lost all over again under the blows. Was there any act more intimate between male and female, any more indicative of power and trust and connection? Not even the sex act compared, in his opinion.

"Two."

Jessy moaned passionately, her yet uncovered breasts hotly violated by her position. The nipples were thick and throbbing. She was ready for love again, the way she always was when she was near this man.

"Tell me," she demanded. "Tell me what it's like to be a biker's slave."

He hit her a third time, punishing her for being such a slut, a whore – a naturally randy and curious woman. "You're meat, Jessy, passed from hand to hand and if you don't satisfy them, they'll beat you, chain you up, whatever they please. They'll keep you in a pen with the others, or maybe shackled to somebody's bed. You wear no clothes unless they want to take you out somewhere. They like tattoos, as well."

"W-what kind?"

He sliced her welted ass another time. "Anything goes. Maybe the gang name, or an individual member's on her ass or tit. Maybe some

designs up and down her thighs."

Jessy thought of having such marks on her body, of being so much in the control of a man that he could literally label her for life. What would it feel like, to be so fully possessed, to be so completely and totally wanted by someone?"

"I need your cock, Steel."

"And I need a few minutes break from your mouth. I have just the solution."

Steel maneuvered her down into the dirt on her knees, her ass ablaze, her jaws agape and ready to receive him. Thrusting two fingers in her pussy, she took him whole, reveling in the feel of his strong hands on the back of her head, putting her where he wanted.

She had him halfway in when the tractor-trailer passed, sounding its diesel horn at the spectacle. Anyone who passed could see her like this, and that only made it hotter and more kinky. What a scene she must make, a half naked girl servicing a man with a folded belt in his hand. Would they think she was his naughty wife or submissive girlfriend? Or would they just assume she was a prostitute? A few, an educated few, might surmise she belonged to him, the way girls belonged to bikers.

Oh, god, she was coming, even before he was. Like a little slut. Mouth fucked on the side of a godforsaken desert highway.

Steel felt her convulsions, sensed her bearing down on his swollen, come filled organ. How badly he'd needed to stuff himself in this hole. He wanted her other holes, too. He wanted everything about Jessy Condrum, trouble and all. Right now he wanted his sperm up and inside her, but not like this.

Pulling her mouth off of him with a satisfying pop, he bid her climb up onto the hood. He was afraid the metal would hurt her ass, but the only sound she made as he thrust her back and parted her legs was a deep groan of desire.

In one thrust he sank himself, taking instant command of her cunt. She moaned heavily as he grabbed her ankles, wish boning them, putting her in a state of complete subjugation.

The beautiful little hands flopped over her head, which was turned

sideways, the eyes half shut with the heaviness of desire. He'd never seen a woman look so fucking beautiful in his life. So totally gorgeous and fuckable. Like an angel, but wicked as the devil inside. Enticing, completely aware of her every move and yet oblivious to even the most obvious things around her.

A child woman.

The woman he was guarding with his life. The one he was letting get inside of him, to places he'd vowed no one would ever go again. Best to finish this, he thought, riding her fast and hard. Time to cut his losses and keep it physical and meaningless, while he still could.

"Steel, oh, baby," she was crying out to him.

Steel arched his back, clenching his teeth at the moon. He couldn't look at her anymore, pink flesh bathed in the glow of moonlight, her pretty pink nipples, the way she bucked up to meet him in her captivity, the way those thighs just splayed for him, like nature had intended this – them – all along.

Jessy was shivering with cold and heat. She wanted to come but knew she had to wait for him. Her body was, at this moment, not her own, but she was his in ways too difficult to define. It wasn't marriage, or a relationship and they weren't bikers. So what was it? Fate, anger, injustice had brought them together – his brother's plight, and in some weird way her own infidelity were responsible. And now they must pick up those pieces, make sense of the meltdown.

Here under the moon, where things made so much more sense than in the sunlight.

"Steel," she whispered again.

He shifted his hands to scoop her punished ass. He wanted deeper, wanted to make sense of this thing tactilely, like if he could penetrate even another half inch, it would all come out right. She locked her legs behind him in response, not caring about another set of passing headlights, the whoops and hollers of some drunken cowboys.

She was with her man. Her man of the hour. And the only one in her life who had ever cared enough to try and save her from a killer. The only one who'd ever cared enough to tan her ass when he thought she needed it.

"Now," he hissed, knowing she was waiting for him.

They screamed into the moonlight like wolves, werewolves transformed out of the ordinariness of flesh and blood. It was a grunting, animalistic climax, an ascent, tooth and nail, claw for claw up an impossible cliff, sheer and sharp and black and afterwards a plunging into the ravine, over and over, their bodies locked together, fur covered animal bodies, teeth in each other's necks, claws clutching at haunches, growls melded into a single life sound, the treachery of birth, the conspiratorial slide into creation.

They crawled together afterwards to the back seat, putting her under the blanket, so that, as the sun rose over the dusty, dried tongue of a landscape they were huddled against desert cold, two peas in a pod in the Mustang.

Jessy cradled him on her breast, her mighty wolf, her lion protector, stroking his hair, listening to the sounds of his sleep.

She'd never felt more at peace in her life.

CHAPTER SEVEN

"It's the only way," said Jessie two days later in a seedy Texas border town. "You know I'm right."

Steel, leaning shirtless against the battered doorway of the latest in a string of run down motel rooms, took a last desperate drag off the cheap cigarette – another bad habit he'd picked up since meeting Jessica Condrum. "No, way, Jessica, he tossed it out onto cracked concrete. "I'm not going to let you prostitute yourself."

Needless to say, he'd yet to find an effective way to free himself of the shapely brunette. As near as he knew from some friends on the job in law enforcement agencies, Robert Condrum had not reported his wife kidnapped. But he had been putting out feelers for PI's, bounty hunters, anyone in the southwest willing to hunt them down. More and more, Mexico was seeming like the only option. But that took cash, enough dollars to do more than scrape by in some shit hole barrio.

Using plastic or ATM's would be like sending up a signal flare, which meant they had to raise capital. As far as he was concerned, he could bus tables for the rest of his life. Because if Jimmy didn't get off, and it wasn't looking like he would, nothing else mattered.

Jessy closed in on him in her cut offs and a halter-top. "It's the only way to make enough money," she wrapped her hands round his waist, kissing at his back. "Besides, I want you to watch me with another man. Knowing you've sold my body to him and I have to deliver the goods or you'll punish me."

Jessy was like this now, night and day. Into her games and scenarios, wanting him to act the part of alpha male, her own personal cave man with a thousand faces. Except she was still having this problem distinguishing fantasy from reality.

"Pretty please?" she purred, an impish hand slipping into the waistband of his jeans, under which he wore no underwear.

Steel was hard to the touch. That was another thing. With Jessie around, he was always wanting to make love. One look at her – or one touch from her was all it would take to get him going.

"Now you're asking for it, wench."

She giggled as he slammed the door and grabbed her ass. "You haven't a clue," he told her, "what whoring is really like."

"Neither do you," she pointed out, pressing herself against him provocatively.

"You want that smart ass of yours tanned?" he cupped both cheeks.

Jessy put her hands on his shoulders and attached herself, long, lean legs wrapped round his waist. "Uh huh," she cooed.

He half walked, half fell forward, tumbling them both onto the bed. "There's no fucking way," he undressed her prone body. "That you are turning tricks."

"Yes," she breathed, parting her legs. "Master."

* * *

Jessie eyed the tall cowboy in the ten-gallon hat, pleated pants and silk shirt. The boots were pearl gray, smooth as silk leather, to match the shirt. The hat and pants were black, like some kind of Western version of Armani. The guy had money – that much was clear.

He was also looking for a date. And not in the wholesome girl next-door sense, either. This particular hotel lounge was known to be a sort of matching service for prostitutes and Johns, which made it a natural place for Jessy to work. It was her first try, and as she scanned the far corners of the dimly lit establishment, she spied a none-too-happy John Steel watching her surreptitiously, his nose half buried sulkily but alertly in a glass of beer.

She was thrilled he'd trusted her with his first name as well as his last. Also that he'd agreed to her little plan. Really, she didn't think he could refuse her anything and that was kind of cute, especially since she liked him to be so totally ruthless in bed, tying her down, abusing her and otherwise treating her like a biker slut.

It was something she knew, just like she knew this particular cowboy was after some love for hire. It was all in the eyes. This rich cowboy was going to make them some money, she could just tell. And they were going to have fun making it. John Steel, the divorced, retired mercenary was going to watch her getting fucked by this man and he was going to collect money for it. Just like she was really his

whore, his bitch, with a hole for rent.

Maybe they'd make so much off this one guy they could go right to Mexico and start their new life. Okay, she was probably stretching it. Men didn't pay that much for whores, and John Steel wasn't exactly promising to stay with her forever. Though he had stopped talking about getting rid of her.

"Hi, baby," said Jessy to the cowboy, subsuming herself with delicious abandon into the role of sex slut for hire. "You here alone?"

The cowboy had his foot on the railing of the bar. He was maybe fifty with a neatly trimmed mustache and a well-kept body. "For now."

His voice was a playful drawl, emanating from half-cocked lips.

"Me, too."

The man was looking at her probingly. She thought she would pass inspection in the low cut dress, pale blue with a flourishing hem. It wasn't anything much, but then it was what was underneath that counted.

It was funny, but every day now, in the presence of John Steel, Jessy was feeling more confident of herself. Even though she might play a whore for him or a slave, she also knew she was beautiful to him.

"Well, that's a right shame," he tipped his hat. "Ma'am."

"A shame for both of us, I say."

"Let's remedy that." He signaled the bar keep like a man used to wielding power. "Whatever the little lady wants, if you please."

Jessy went for a gin and tonic, something to steel her nerves and set the pace. She was really glad they weren't doing this out on the street, where hookers stand by lampposts and cars drive by checking them out.

He toasted her. "To a fruitful association."

She liked his choice of words, liked his style and liked him. They spent good half hour talking, mostly about his family, his business and the various associated problems that came with it. As she suspected, he was well off, with a large cattle operation and several oil wells to his name. With money came a lot of troubles, though, and she was

treated to long accounts of ungrateful children, scheming business partners and a wife who just couldn't understand he was still a vital man, fifty-six on the outside, but on the inside still thirty or even twenty five.

Jessy wouldn't peg Cal Rivers as a complainer, though. There was a steady note of self-effacing humor and a recognition of the general folly of mankind in everything he was saying.

"And what about you?" he asked. "I'm no psychologist, but I'm guessing you haven't been a practitioner of the world's oldest profession for very long."

"Is it that obvious?"

"Probably not to most," he shrugged, hoisting his shot of bourbon.

"You're being kind. I'm greener than a salad and I must stick out like a sore thumb."

He smiled warmly. "You're a beautiful young woman, Jessy. You have something I need and I, obviously, have something you need. It's really that simple. So name your price, and we can get down to enjoying each other's company more fully."

Leaning over to his ear, she cautiously whispered a number, hoping it wasn't too terribly high.

He scowled.

"I knew it," she reacted in horror. "It's too much isn't it?"

"Too much? Why, you're letting me get away with highway robbery. What do you say we triple it for beginners and take it from there?"

Jessy's jaw dropped. This was even easier than she thought.

"I have a room upstairs."

Now for the hard part. "There is one more thing. I-I'm not alone."

"Got a girlfriend?" he winked.

"A man. My – the man I'm traveling with."

"He likes to watch, does he?"

"Actually we've never actually done this sort of thing before," she felt her face redden another shade. "It really wasn't his idea."

Cal Rivers reached over and brushed a strand of auburn hair from her face, a fly away piece from her upswept hairdo. "What's your

fantasy, Jessy. What is it you want to happen, tonight?"

She eyed him in disbelief. "You're the one paying all the money. Isn't it supposed to be about what you want?"

He kissed her hand. "Maybe I enjoy making young women happy."

His lips made her tingle. It was a new kind of feeling, very manly, but seasoned somehow, with a measure of experience not even Steel possessed. "I want to feel what it's like to be a whore," she said softly, enraptured by the way he held her fingers, the way he looked so patiently into her eyes. "To be wanted just as a sex object, with a price tag. And I want my – I want John to take the money like I belong to him and he has the right to sell me."

"That turns you on – to be bought or sold?"

"Sometimes I dream," she answered without evasion, "of being a slave."

"That's quite a wicked little notion, young lady." He had a twinkle in his eye and there was not the slightest bit of judgment in his tone. "So tell me, is he here now, this man of yours?"

"Back there," she indicated with her eyes.

Cal nodded. "Okay, I tell you what. I'll act like the heartless exploiter of flesh, you can be the blushing Scarlett forced to sell herself to save Tara and he can be Rhett Butler or whatever other role you'd like him to manage."

He brought a smile to her face, all but dissolving any lingering tension.

* * *

Steel looked the high roller up and down. "There are gonna be ground rules," he told him. "I don't care how much you're paying."

"As you wish," Cal inclined his head. "She must call me lord, though. It's an oriental thing. I spent time there many years ago."

"I don't care what you call her. But there will be no pain, no anal, no golden showers and I will be here for the whole thing."

Jessy, sitting demurely on the edge of the bed, trembled with desire. She was dripping wet, waiting patiently for the negotiations to be complete. Negotiations for her sexual favors, to be dispensed to a total stranger.

"Agreed."

"Jessica," Steel snapped his fingers, the bargain struck. "Strip for the man."

Jessy rose to her feet, her every breath, her every little sensation electric. This was the moment she'd waited for. High heels impacting the plush carpet as she took up her place directly in front of the devilish, smirking Rivers.

The dress had a zipper, which she lowered.

"Eyes on mine."

"Yes, my lord." Caught in Cal's gaze, she slid the dress from her shoulders and stepped from it, ankle by ankle.

"Do you like being a whore?" he wanted to know.

"Yes, my lord," she unclasped her bra, allowing him to see the fire in her eyes, the complex light and almost bottomless need.

"And how many hands have mauled those spheres?"

"I – I've lost count," she glanced quickly to her left where Steel was tensely observing.

"You looked away girl. Do you require punishment?"

"As my lord wills," she replied, bare breasted and nearly breathless.

"That's not in the deal, Mr. Rivers."

"I'll pay extra," he reached for her nipple. "Five hundred to administer a spanking. These are natural?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Better still," he burned her with his gaze. "I think I should like to flog the breasts. One thousand dollars, Mr. Steel, for the chance to turn these milky delights cherry red."

"Jessica's never endured that kind of thing," Steel shook his head. "It's out of the question."

Cal pinched her nipple hard, inducing a sexually pregnant moan. "She may be more ready than you realize. Tell us, Jessica, would you like your tits flogged?"

She was past resistance, past wanting or being anything but what this man commanded. "Yes, my lord. I beg you, whip them as you see fit."

"The flogger is in the nightstand. You may retrieve it. On hands

and knees."

Jessy went down, all the way to the floor, nude and aroused before these two men, one her dominant lover, the other about to become so. The carpet tickled her bare flesh and as she shuffled she felt the buildup of static electricity. Reaching up, she opened the drawer, felt for and retrieved the flogger. It was long and thin and leather, with a sort of tab on the end. She was no expert, but she assumed it could sting quite nicely, especially the sensitive flesh of one's bosom.

"You will return on hands and knees as well. Put the flogger between your teeth and deliver it to my feet."

Jessy bit down on the device, which very soon would be causing her pain. Crawling obediently, she returned it, setting it gently beside the pearl gray leather boots.

"Now get up here and take down my pants."

He wanted her on her knees, where she could reverently unbuckle and unfasten him. Lifting his feet one at a time he had her pull off the boots then remove his socks. At last he was nude from the waist down.

"Kiss my prick and hand me the flogger."

The coarseness of the command drove her wild. She was more than ready to cut to the chase but she sensed Cal was just warming up.

"Hold your breasts up to me," he said when she'd given him the device.

Jessy, still kneeling, cupped the tingling mounds, much as she had for the bikers, only this time there was going to be more than gawking.

"No flinching," he warned.

The flogger struck across both nipples, bringing with it a hot, sharp sting. It wasn't like the switch or belt, but then her tits weren't as well insulated as her ass.

"Don't look away or I'll keep going longer."

She kept her eyes glued to his, reading the genuine lust, the pure enjoyment. Cal Rivers was anything but faking this scene. As she'd suspected, it was very, very real to him.

Jessy could feel her tits, hotly glowing in her hands. They must

surely be red now or close to it. Still he kept going, his long, erect shaft leaping at every blow. She looked at it hungrily, wanting to serve it, to submit to its pleasures.

For her breach of eye contact she received a harder blow, more intense than anything so far. Returning her gaze to his, she saw the power, the lust.

"This is what you want, isn't it, girl? To be used and abused. Treated like a whore. A slave of strong and impudent men," Rivers inquired.

"Yes," she paused in her ministrations. "My lord."

"You will lay face down," he instructed. "On the floor."

Jessy put herself to her belly. The man's feet were all she saw of him now. A few feet to the right, she saw Steel's boots. Was he as turned on by this as she was? Would he want as much to fuck her as Cal obviously did? Maybe they could do her at once.

"What is your value?" asked Cal, a million miles above her.

"I don't know, my lord."

"In some parts of the world, a woman may be purchased for less than the price of a pair of shoes. Did you know that?"

"No, my lord."

"The majority of women worldwide, in fact, suffer under the yoke of slavery in one form or other. A prostitute, such as yourself, is really quite fortunate. Perhaps you'd like to join us, Mr. Steel?"

"Sorry, not my cup of tea."

Jessy dared to address John for the first time. "Please?"

He relented, as she knew he would.

They put her on all fours, Steel in front, Rivers behind. She took the familiar cock lovingly between her lips even as her hips eased and her thighs parted to welcome the new one. The two men took their time with her and she gave them as much bliss as humanly possible, opening her soul and heart. She imagined that John Steel was her owner and that he'd ordered her to do this.

Steel glommed onto her hair, greedily pulling her mouth as close as he could get it. There was no way he'd ever get enough of this woman, which was going to be a problem because he'd no intention of

ever being dependant on a female again for anything. Kimberlee had made him dependant and then destroyed his unprotected heart. Now he had a child he'd never know and a love never to be fulfilled.

Lust was all a man could know safely with a woman, and even then it was wise to keep her in chains, on her knees, weak and begging like this one. Sure, the sex was great and when they got to Mexico he'd keep her a while, till things blew over, till he figured a way to get her home safe. But that was it.

The two men filled her with come simultaneously. It might not be love or even kindness, but sometimes lust itself is enough. She collapsed afterwards on the bedspread, her red-hot breasts throbbing, a tummy full of jism and another load up inside her womb.

"Goodnight, my dear," Rivers kissed the top of her head. "It was a pleasure."

She mumbled her approval, unable to rise to bid him goodbye. After that she vaguely remembered Steel lifting her up and tucking her into bed. She sighed deeply as he crawled in next to her, his front to her back, thinking this was the most beautiful night of her entire life.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Jessy stirred, feeling the hand creeping up her back. Strong and firm, intent on capture. She smiled, thinking it was Steel, wanting to play with her first thing in the morning.

As the man turned her over, however, his palm clamped tight on her mouth she saw it wasn't him at all but a beady eyed man in a ski mask, bulky and wearing a windbreaker and jeans.

"One wrong move, bitch, and you get it good. Understand?"

The pistol was pointed at her naked belly, the metal cold and hard. Desperately, Jessy nodded.

There was a grin behind the mouth opening in the mask, pure evil. "Your husband requests your company, sweet heart. ASAP. Seems he's been missing you. Hey, where's lover boy at?" the man called over his shoulder to a second hooded, armed man at the window.

"Still in the fucking office getting coffee. Dumb shit won't even know what happened."

The first man yanked Jessy out of bed, pulling her by her hair. "We better hustle. Sure would like to try her out, though," he lamented, getting an eyeful of her cringing, naked body. "Christ, what a piece of ass."

"Right, but if she blabs to the boss and it's our asses on the line."

"Yea, you're right. Stupid cunt," he slapped Jessy hard. "It's all your fault."

"P-please don't ... hurt me," she gasped, finding her voice.

"Puh-puh please," mocked the second man, pulling the first of several strips of duct tape off a long roll."

They bound her, arms behind her back, and sealed her mouth shut for good measure. As predicted, they had her hustled out the door and into their panel before Steel had left the motel lobby with his coffee, white, two sugars and more than likely one for her, black, one sugar.

"Damn," complained the second man, sitting opposite over her, his back to the corrugated sidewall, booted feet right by her head. "It's gonna suck wearing these masks all the way back."

"Just put the mask on her like a blindfold, backwards, dip shit," said the first, who was driving. "That way she won't see our faces."

"Good thinking."

Jessy was rolled to her back, her body sore and aching on the ridged metal.

"Lights out," said the man, pulling the wool down over her face, plunging her into hot darkness.

She thrashed for a bit, the sensory deprivation in the speeding vehicle being too much for her. They'd left her legs untaped and after a while, her frantic hip movements must have aroused him past the point of no return.

"You breathe one word about this," he thrust the blade to her throat, laying his body on top of hers for penetration and I'll slit you open like a melon."

He ran the blade down over her belly to her crotch. "Spread 'em. Wide."

Jessy parted her thighs, giving access to her abductor.

"Little cunt's wet," he called out gleefully to the other.

"Yea, well just save me some," he grumbled. "Seeing as how you already opened the package."

"Plenty to go around," he sank himself to the hilt, clamping her breasts for leverage.

Jessy hated herself for being aroused. Hated that she was wet and horny for these disgusting criminals and that she would be equally wet for Robert when she got back home to him. She loved him and he would have to love her; surely he did or he wouldn't be going through this kind of trouble to retrieve her. These men, their hands and coarse words, their cocks were extensions of him, she reasoned, and she would give them pleasure in his name.

As for Steel, he was better off without her. He was free now to help his brother, to go to Mexico or do whatever else it was he wanted. Those tears in her eyes meant nothing. She was glad for him, really.

"Oh yea," she heard him above her, laboring and slobbering. "I'm there. I'm fucking there."

Arms taped behind her back, nude on the metal floor, Jessy had no choice but to receive the man's sperm, along with a line of drool from his mouth onto her heaving tits.

"She any good?" the driver wanted to know.

He was collapsed on top of her, his cock still half hard inside her.

"Not half bad. For a little whore. Surprisingly tight for all the cocks she's supposedly had."

"Yea, well mine's going on the fucking list as soon as we switch. You get a load of that ass? The bitch has been beaten. Titties, too."

"She must like it. She'll be in heaven where the boss is sending her."

They both enjoyed a good laugh, and as the truck pulled over so the other man could stick his cock inside her Jessy fell to wondering what sort of place Robert had in mind to send her to.

"Feel that?" the man put the gun to her head. "That's incentive. I want you moving for me. Make it hot."

Jessy rose to meet him, obediently writhing. The truth is she needed no gun, no threat of violence, only her own increasingly uncontrollable desires. Where those desires, fueled by Robert's passion for vengeance would lead was anybody's guess.

* * *

Steel had been a fucking moron. Leaving Jessy unattended for even a minute was tantamount to throwing her to the wolves. There was no doubt who had taken her. The break-in was amateurish, but effective. And in the end, the girl was gone. In the clutches of whatever goons her husband had hired. The thought made him sick with rage. Thinking what they might do to her, how they would touch her and use her, taking full advantage of her captivity like the lowest kind of scum. Then again he'd done the same things to her himself.

And ended up falling in love.

Why it had taken losing her to find this out he didn't know. The realization had come in that first moment when he saw the jimmyed door, when he drew the Colt from under his shirt and thrust his way into the empty room, and then, when he'd just stood there. At that moment, he knew.

The emptiness of her absence wasn't just the physical space, it was a hole in his heart. Not even with Kim had there been this kind of sorrow. And helpless fury.

Naturally, he'd taken off after them, but without a vehicle ID it was pretty damned difficult. He was on the verge of calling the cops and turning himself in just to get her some help when he got the call he'd been waiting for on the cell phone.

It was the resurfaced Wolf, who'd been making some calls. Seemed this wasn't the only time Robert Condum, Esquire had walked the wrong side of the law. There were money laundering allegations and a possible conspiracy to commit fraud in a federal banking scheme.

Wolf even had information on a secret warehouse in Dallas used by Condum's organization. He'd lay any odds that was where Jessy was being taken. The police might be able to handle it, but it was the type of operation he'd much rather handle on his own. Wolf was more than happy to help line up a few of their old friends along with the necessary firepower.

Feeling strangely elated, Steel put the pedal to the metal for Dallas. They were going to rescue Jessy, put Condum away for good and after that maybe they'd go and bust Jimmy out like he'd been wanting to all along.

* * *

"Again," said Robert Condum, disgusted with what this mildewed, dank cooler was doing to the creases in his pants.

His wife Jessica cried out, her protest of pain lost in translation as she moaned into the dowel strapped between her pretty white teeth, a number of which he'd paid to cap in the past year.

"We can keep this up all night," he informed the nude, shivering woman, taped to the heavy wooden chair in front of him, the electric wires clamped to both breasts and also to each of her pussy lips. "Give me the nod and we'll stop."

Jessy summoned the strength to shake her head. No. She would not sign the agreement. She would not agree to the divorce. It was not the terms she cared about. It wasn't his material things she wanted. It was the man himself. She wanted to be loved by him, to

be kept and treasured. All the things before that had seemed not enough, now she craved them, knowing this was her lot in life, to be the property of some man.

Condrum sighed. "Take off the gag," he ordered Slim, one of the two imbeciles he'd hired to bring her back.

Simon, the other even more stupid one was operating the electrocution machine. They were in his holding facility, where the money was kept in transit on its way to New York from the Mexican mountain stronghold of Ernesto Tedillo, the narcotic trafficker with whom he dealt.

As far as Condrum was concerned, tidying up the drug dealer's accounts like he did was a public service. His investments in the US stimulated the economy and who was he to stand in the way of the man's providing a product people obviously wanted and were willing to pay a premium for?

"Jessica, why do you insist upon being difficult? If this place convinces you of nothing," he extended his arms, "it should tell you that I no longer consider you my wife. At best, you are chattel, at worst, a dangerous inconvenience."

"But I still love you, Robert. I want to serve you. I know it can't be like before. I violated your trust and you're very angry. You can keep me at home, punish me however you like. I'll wear a collar, chains, whatever you say. I'll be your slave, Robert – master – I'll do whatever you command. I'll fuck whomever you say; I already fucked them," she indicated the two henchmen. "I let them do what they wanted, I even sucked them off as long as they wanted. I did it just to prove to you my devotion – because they are your men."

Condrum cast a disapproving glance at the pair, indicating this was a discussion they would have later. Neither was particularly anxious to make eye contact. "It's a tempting offer, but I seriously doubt you have it in you to be true to one man. Even under lock and key. Look at you, Jessica. You're creaming under torture. Your nipples are hard. You're a natural born slave, face it. The only place you'll be happy is somewhere you can take on an endless parade of cocks, cringing and begging for whatever comes, the whip, the cane, nothing too vile or

degenerate for my Jessica."

Jessy lifted her hips, desperate, pathetic. "I'm your slave, master. Only yours, I swear it."

Condrum nodded his head, treating her to another dose of electroshock. Her screams filled the cold metal room. He massaged his cock watching her thrash, helpless and in pain, her tits flailing, full and round her hips undulating, straining against the belt at her waist. He'd fuck her right now if he could, but that would have to wait. After she'd signed the agreement, then he would use her. As a kind of post-marriage celebration. Not to mention a sendoff for her to the slave brothel in Mexico.

He signaled for the electricity to stop. Jessy was limp this time, sweat covered and obviously highly aroused. Deciding to use her own weapon against her, he approached her, putting his hand under her downcast chin. "Am I your master?"

"Yes, master," she breathed.

"You will obey me in all things?" he stroked her cheek.

Jessy rubbed her skin against him needing his touch. "Yes, master."

"Very well, slave girl," he ran his finger round the edge of her half open lips. "I give you your first command. Sign the papers."

She looked at him wide eyed, knowing herself tricked. He took the tape off her right wrist personally, providing her with a hard surface on which to write. Her hand shook, but she completed the task, knowing as she did that she was signing her life away, committing the ultimate act of enslavement.

"Congratulations, Jessy," he refolded the carefully devised legal documents and putting them in the inside pocket of his tailored suit jacket. "You are now a free woman. Or should I say," he added with irony, "you are about to get the deepest wish of your heart."

"Please don't sell me," she pleaded. "Keep me, master, for yourself."

"Sell you?" he scorned. "That assumes you have any value. The only thing worth less in this world than a deceiving, treacherous wife is an untrained slave girl. No, my dear, I am afraid I shall be giving

you away. Call it a tax write off."

Robert removed the tape from her other wrist and ankle, too. "After a goodbye present, of course."

She took him into her mouth, on her knees on the floor of the cooler, her body half frozen, her teeth chattering miserably, breasts and cunt still burning from the electricity. He showed no finesse, looking for the back of her throat with every thrust.

"I want you to think of me, Jessica, each time you are poked and prodded and used down in Mexico. Think about how good you had it and how you fucked it all up because you couldn't keep your legs together. From this point forward, you'll have the opposite problem – no matter how badly you may want to, you'll never be able to shut them again. Do you have any idea how they go for fresh gringa meat like yours at the brothel? They'll be lined up, day and night. And not just for straight sex. They'll want it all. And I've made it expressly clear what a kinky little bitch you are. Everything turns you on, no matter how degrading. Isn't that right," he patted her head like a dog. "My fine little slut?"

She mumbled her response, not wanting this to end, not wanting to leave him. Jessy hadn't meant to cause so much trouble and she'd give anything to take it all back now. Where had she gone wrong? Had all this really come from that one night at the gala, shepherded into that dark corner with Caesar Bustamonte – one little kiss of poison to infect her entire life.

And how could she help it all – was she not a mere female, following her biology? Robert grunted, expelling himself down her throat. She drank it as elixir, praying for some miracle, something to heal the rift and re-bond them even now.

"She's all yours," Robert pulled her suctioned mouth from his flagging organ. "Just don't break anything."

She was screaming after him, the two thugs pushing her down to the floor. Robert made it as far as the cooler doorway before being intercepted by the intruders. There were six of them, heavily armed. One, a lean, desperate looking man practically ran him over to get to Jessy while two others pointed guns straight at his head.

"I assume that blur was Mr. Steel," Robert said dryly, a trio of machine guns pointed to his head.

"Ding, ding," grinned a large bearded man with the name "Wolf" stitched on his army style fatigue jacket. "We have a winner."

John Steel didn't stop to ask questions. Without a word, he lifted the bigger of the two men bodily off of Jessica. Surging with adrenalin, he heaved the worthless motherfucker into the wall. The man landed with a sickening thud, quickly followed by the smaller man whom he sent headfirst.

"Hi," said Jessica weakly, cradled safely in his arms.

"Hi yourself," he murmured.

"If you're here to kidnap me again," she grinned. "I'm afraid I'm all booked up for today."

"Actually," he deadpanned, his lips slightly askew. "I'm here to marry you."

At last, she thought to herself, the world spinning delightfully out of control. Something to faint over.

* * *

"That one, I think," pointed Jessy to the blonde in the tuxedo over by the roulette wheel.

"No," countered Steel, in a tuxedo of his own. "Too young. What about that guy?"

She looked the tough guy up and down. "Lord, Steel," she tickled his ribs playfully. "You want me to walk crooked for a week?"

He laughed, slipping an arm round the slender waist of his wife, who was looking gorgeous in her black sequined dress. They could afford plenty of nice things like this now that her divorce settlement had come through. Robert had been more than anxious to settle on good terms, especially with the threat of jail hanging over his head.

"You two are whacked in the head if you ask me," commented a very dashing Jimmy Steel in his white tuxedo jacket and black cummerbund. "Here you are legally hitched and you're looking to fuck around with other people."

"Not other people – Johns," she corrected. "Your brother's my pimp, remember?"

The scruffy haired kid, recently exonerated of all charges thanks to a very vigorous, pull out all the stops defense by Condrum's law firm, rolled his eyes. Yea, yea."

"And your master, too," he grabbed the delectable ass, still tender from last night's whipping.

Jessy winced with pleasure, recalling the scene. She'd had it coming, of course, for smart mouthing him all night. One might even say she'd goaded him into it. Ten strokes, with an honest to goodness riding crop – a horsewhip – on her bare ass. She'd creamed at the sight of it and when he told her to strip and bend over, hands clasped to ankles she'd nearly lost it then and there.

The whip was like a cock, burning inside and out. The pain drove her out of her mind, putting her in a place neither here nor there, neither living nor dead, but somewhere inbetween, like a drug with no side effects. She'd sucked him so hard afterwards he thought his cock would end up down her throat. There was no doubt the effect on them both. She was truly his whipped woman now. And that was just one of their games. Looking for Johns in this high-class casino was another. And who knows, tomorrow or the next day they might play the kidnap game again. He still had that cabin in the woods. And there were always plenty of switches to cut in the woods.

"I love you," he whispered in her ear. "Captive."

"I love you, too," she whispered back. "Captor."

THE END

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