

ELLORA'S CAVE PRESENTS

ELLORA'S CAVE *Quickies*

*Closely Held
Secrets*

Claire Thompson

Closely Held Secrets
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CLOSELY HELD SECRETS

Claire Thompson

Acknowledgement

Poem used from *A Match* by Algernon Charles Swinburne, 1837-1909

Chapter One

The music was tumbling in pulsating, primal rhythm. Trisha imagined she could reach out and grab it, like some tangible thing. The blasting air-conditioning couldn't quite foil the humid stickiness of the Texas summer heat outside.

Trisha held her cold glass to her cheek for a moment, her eyes closed. She took a sip of her margarita and glanced again at the handsome man sitting a few seats down at the bar. For a moment he looked straight at her and she had to catch her breath.

He was tall with thick blond hair and eyes such a perfect blue it was as if he'd stolen a piece of the sky. His face was tan and slightly craggy – the face of a man, not a boy. He was checking her out too, she was almost sure, though now he was looking into his glass, seemingly lost in thought. His body, long and lean in blue jeans and a pale yellow button-down shirt, was angled slightly toward her, his boot-clad feet hooked over the edge of the barstool.

He was drinking a beer, the outside of the glass beaded with moisture. She liked the way his Adam's apple bobbed as he drank. His neck was strong and thick as it disappeared into his open-collared shirt. Trisha checked out his finger – no ring. Not that that meant anything. Easy enough to slip a band of gold into a back pocket.

A woman sat next to him, her purchased breasts defying gravity as she leaned suggestively toward him. Platinum blonde hair swished over his strong forearm and Trisha bristled.

I had him first, she thought irrationally. No she hadn't. She was still sitting three stools away, stealing sidelong glances, while some other woman was making the moves! Trisha wasn't a regular in the dance club scene. What in the world had possessed her to come out alone tonight?

At thirty-three she could still turn heads. She wore her red hair short and sassy and her lips were naturally full and pouty, without the benefit of collagen injections. Tonight they were painted a glossy red, the color of just-ripe cherries. Her almond-shaped green eyes gave her an almost Asiatic look, which she accented with expertly applied eyeliner.

Taking a fortifying sip of her margarita, Trisha stood up and smoothed her skin-tight, royal-blue spandex dress over her lean figure. Her shapely legs were accented by little blue and silver high-heeled sandals out of which peeked perfectly painted pink toenails. Several men appreciatively eyed her voluptuous ass, its curves alluringly outlined in the clingy fabric. She was barely aware of their attentions, her sights now focused firmly on the tall, sexy blond.

Nothing like a little competition to get the juices flowing. Trisha found herself bolder than she would usually be, though the tequila might also be a contributing factor. Miss Fake Tits, as she'd already taken to calling the woman seated at the man's left, was giggling suggestively in a high-pitched little squeal at something he had just said. The stool to his right was occupied by a man whose bottom was two sizes too big for the round, little seat, his flab hanging unattractively over both sides.

Trisha insinuated herself between the fat man and the object of her desire. Staring straight ahead, she said in her low, sultry voice, "Hot night."

"Smokin'," he responded softly. His voice was deep, smooth, just as she had known it would be. Miraculously, the fat man lumbered to his feet and disappeared in the crowd, leaving the stool next the man available.

As Trisha slid onto it, the bartender, a good-looking man in his early twenties, leaned over the bar, holding her drink. His hand brushed hers as he set her glass down and their eyes locked a moment before Trisha turned away. One man at a time!

She smiled slightly and took a sip of tangy lime and tequila. Miss Fake Tits had moved closer to "her" man, no doubt also spurred on by the potential threat of another woman. The music pulsed around them, the beat primal, inviting. Trisha found herself

swaying a little in time to it. Alcohol had loosened her inhibitions. She tossed her head back, eyes closed, as she undulated on her stool like an Indian snake at the mercy of a snake charmer.

“Care to dance?” He spoke softly but clearly, his mouth just above her ear as he leaned over her. She could smell his cologne, something woodsy and fresh. Opening her eyes she looked directly at him, disarmed again by those startlingly blue eyes. She nodded and smiled, slipping off the stool. She resisted glancing over her shoulder at the other woman now left in the dust—she wouldn’t rub it in. She had more class than that.

They pushed through the press of bodies, with him easily cutting a swath through the dancers already on the floor as if they respected his right to be there, acknowledged his innate superiority over them. He was older than most there, as was she, which was a plus in her book. She didn’t have time for “boys”—she wanted a man. A strong man who knew what he wanted and wasn’t afraid to take it.

They moved together for a while, not touching as they swayed and gyrated to the thumping beat, the bass so loud it obscured the song. After a few minutes the music shifted to something slow, and all over the floor people moved together like magnets, clinging to each other as if they could barely stand-up without each other’s assistance.

Trisha looked shyly at the man and, at that moment, as if reading her questioning thought, he leaned down and said, “I’m Will. Will Jacobson.” He grinned, his smile softening the crags, making him look almost boyish as his eyes crinkled into little half-moons.

“Trisha,” she murmured into his ear as he drew her closer, pressing her against his chest as strong arms circled around her. He was holding her as close as a lover might, and yet why not? Everyone around them was doing the same. Some of them were even kissing, either oblivious of those around them or putting on a show—a boy’s hands rubbing suggestively over the denim-clad ass of the girl in his arms, another snaking his tongue into his girl’s open mouth.

It felt so right, nestled against his broad chest as if she'd been held in this embrace a thousand times before. The song ended too soon, abruptly replaced with a loud, pulsing beat that shook the couples from each others' arms, as they again began to gyrate and slither around one another like animals in some kind of mating ritual.

Will jerked his head slightly toward the bar, his face questioning, and Trisha nodded gratefully. They'd had enough dancing for her taste. She was sweating on the closely crowded dance floor, the bright, flashing lights beating down on her head. She followed him to the bar and stood behind him as he ordered two fresh drinks—another beer for himself and a margarita for her. *Observant fellow*, she noted, smiling slightly.

Her “competition” seemed to have disappeared, which was fine with Trisha. Still without speaking, Will led her to a small, high table around which were placed two barstools. A couple had just vacated the table, leaving their empty glasses and tattered napkins. As she and Will sat down a harried-looking waitress in a very low-cut tank top appeared to whisk away the debris.

Will leaned his head toward Trisha and said, “I haven't seen you here before.”

“I haven't been here before,” she answered, controlling a sudden impulse to giggle. Instead she took a long drink from her glass before adding, “I don't usually go to dance clubs. I think I'm getting too old for all this. All the noise and the heat and crush of people.”

“Let's leave then.” He took a swallow of his beer as he waited for her reaction.

Just like that? Two dances, a drink and let's leave together? Before she realized she was speaking Trisha blurted that very thought aloud. “Just like that? When we've just met?”

“Just like that,” Will nodded, his eyes looking darker suddenly—cobalt blue. Putting his hand over Trisha's he leaned forward so he wouldn't have to shout. His voice was deep and fine, its cadence southern and rich. “I know a place, not far from here. They serve a Thai iced coffee that will cool down even this summer heat. You can follow me.”

He looked into her eyes and a slow, sensual smile curved over his lips as his hand slid from hers and moved slowly up her bare arm. Trisha licked her lips and looked down, suddenly shy, though at the same time aroused. He really was impossibly handsome. It had to be her imagination, but her hand felt hot and tingling where he'd touched her, the fire trailing along the path his fingers were drawing up her arm.

And the way he'd held her when they'd slow danced... She wanted to feel that broad, strong chest crushing her breasts again, that hint of erection teasing her hip as they embraced...

Trisha finished her drink, setting her glass down just a little too hard. Slipping off the tall stool she stood up, smoothing her hands down her sides as Will's gaze appreciatively followed. Impulsively she said, "Okay. Fine. Let's go." Reckless, foolish girl! What was she thinking? Yet there was something about this man, something she knew she could trust, knew it instinctively and completely. Trisha had always had an instinct when it came to men and it was rarely wrong—when she chose to listen to it, that is.

Will grinned, looking boyish, even innocent, his face a study in joy. Trisha found herself smiling back broadly. He held out a hand and she took it, shouldering her small pocketbook as they weaved their way out of the tumult and throng of the crowd.

Outside the summer heat still held sway, though the sun had set hours before. They waited quietly as the valets rushed to the nearby lot to retrieve their cars. Will made sure Trisha was in her own car before getting into his. Before she had a chance, he tipped the valets for both of them. A gentleman.

The little café was not much more than a hole in the wall nestled between a dry cleaners and a video store in a strip mall. But as they stepped into the place, it was like entering another world. The walls were completely covered with brightly dyed cotton batik tapestries depicting scantily clad Thai women in artful poses, with peacocks, flowing waterfalls and mountains as a backdrop. The room reeked of incense and cinnamon and was almost entirely lit by a myriad of little candles in glass cups placed

on every available surface. The place was small and only held four tables, none of which were occupied at the moment. Will led Trisha to a table as a small woman appeared, bowing toward them, her smile shy but inviting.

Will ordered two Thai iced coffees and a plate of almond cookies. Trisha asked, "Where did you find this place? It's like we're in another country!"

"Isn't it great? I like to hunt down the exotic. Make it my own." The double meaning, as his fingers again grazed her arm, was not lost on Trisha.

After the hostess delivered their coffee she retired discreetly behind the counter. Will leaned over the table and said, "Tell me your secrets."

Trisha was sipping the coffee, which was very strong and very sweet, but quite delicious. She still felt a little drunk from the tequila, but her head was clearing. "Excuse me?"

"Let's skip all the small talk. Who our parents are, what we want to be when we grow up. Let's skip all of it. Let's go right to the heart of the matter. There's something between us. We knew it the minute we saw each other. Our connection is already forged, Trisha. All we have to do now is seize it. I want you. I know you want me."

Trisha started to deny it. To behave as if affronted. To protest she was not "that kind of girl", whatever that meant. Even as she opened her mouth to pretend her innocence, something in his eyes stopped her.

His eyes, like clear blue topaz wrapped around black onyx, stopped her. The intensity of his gaze fairly took her breath away. It was as if he could see right into her mind, her heart. God, yes, she did want him! Trisha felt her nipples standing at attention as his eyes raked over her. She felt the swelling heat in her sex and shifted in her chair slightly, crossing her legs as if he too were aware, as if he could see past her little dress to her secret desires.

Will leaned back in his chair, stroking his chin thoughtfully. "Shall I tell you about yourself, Trisha? The things I see, the things I deduce from the way you hold yourself?

From the way our bodies seemed to meld when we danced? From the sweet blush on your cheeks when I told you I knew you wanted me?"

The man was too much! His easy confidence, his obvious certainty of his own charms bordered on the arrogant. Yet Trisha, despite an effort to deny the effect he was having on her, found herself spellbound. Yes, she wanted to hear about herself from this man. It was as if he were going to reveal things to her about herself she had never dared acknowledge—even in dreams.

Will was watching her and Trisha forced herself to look away from his magnetic stare. She ducked her head, busying herself for a moment with the napkin in her lap. She could feel those blue eyes on her and knew he was waiting for a reaction, a response.

Slowly she looked up. She would meet this man head-on. Whatever game he was playing, she knew she was hooked. She wanted to shout, "Yes, tell me! Tell me who I am!" Instead, she held herself carefully aloof, exerting all her self-control as she said softly, "Go ahead. Tell me what you think you know."

Will's mouth broadened into a wide smile. Again, she was taken with the joy that seemed to shine on his face when he grinned. All the potential danger of that craggy, serious demeanor evaporated when he smiled. She felt herself smile back, unable to resist the little flood of happiness released inside of her.

Will touched her hand lightly with his own. Trisha sat very still so he wouldn't remove it. Leaning close over the little table he said, "I see a woman who has held herself apart. A woman who keeps quiet about what really moves her. A strong woman who knows her own mind but is careful. Perhaps too careful when it comes to her feelings. When it comes to what she craves. What she longs for."

Trisha lifted her chin slightly in defiance, yet she could not deny his words. He continued. "You need someone strong. Someone who can appreciate your strength, your courage, yet not be afraid to exploit your vulnerabilities. I mean that in the most romantic sense. My impression of you, lovely lady, is that you have closely held secrets.

Dark secrets, secrets you've never shared because you didn't have the right person to share them with."

His face was serious as his own vulnerability was suddenly revealed. "I know this may sound crazy, but I think I can be that man for you, Trisha. A man who knows what you need, even if you might not think you're ready to accept it yet. A man who will guide you in the exploration of your true nature."

Trisha merely stared at him. A part of her felt he was speaking a foreign language or even speaking in tongues. Yet another part, the more honest part, understood his words on a gut level that made her heart begin to pound and her blood quicken.

"Your secrets," he whispered. "Say them aloud, Trisha. Share them at last with another person. The secrets you tell no one. The dark, little fantasies you keep locked in your heart in the lonely night, the ones that push you over the edge of a sweet release. The ones you daren't tell your lover because he might judge you, find you perverse..."

How did he know this? The secrets she held were indeed, in her own estimation, perverse. To be held down, to be ravaged, to be taken by force by a strong, dominant man who knew what he wanted and wouldn't hesitate to take it. To—what had he said?—"seize it".

As if reading her mind, he said repeated softly, "You need a strong man, Trisha. Someone who understands your true nature. Someone willing to take you past your own unnecessary inhibitions. Someone who appreciates the beauty of erotic suffering, who understands your body's craving for more than mere pleasure."

She stared at him, stunned as he honed in precisely on her deepest secret—her submissive longings. He began to recite a poem softly, his voice rich and soft as it wove a kind of spell over her. She listened, riveted.

"If you were queen of pleasure,
And I were king of pain,
We'd hunt down love together,

Pluck out his flying-feather,
And teach his feet a measure,
And find his mouth a rein;
If you were queen of pleasure,
And I were king of pain."

"Will..." she breathed. Her heart was beating too hard – was it the strong coffee or this enigmatic, possibly dangerous man?

He sat back and smiled. The sensual intensity in his voice while reciting the poem had eased back into something closer to a conversational tone. Perhaps he had sensed – and rightly – that he was pushing her too far, too fast. Lightly he said, "I love that poem. To me it pays homage to the potential of erotic submission. The power of that kind of love, which can be harnessed and controlled, but never tamed."

He'd said it aloud finally. Submission. Her secret dream, held close over a lifetime. To submit to a man, a man like Will Jacobson. To give herself over completely to another person, for his pleasure, for hers. "Tell me," he said softly.

"Tell you...?"

"Say it aloud, Trisha. Tell me what you want. What you need." His eyes compelled her, burning with intensity, though his lips curved in a gentle smile.

"I..." she began haltingly, "I want..."

"Go on. You're safe with me – I know you know that. You have permission, if that's what you need, permission to share without fear of judgment or criticism. I already know it anyway, sweetheart. I knew it the moment I saw you. You are marked with it. Now I want the words from you. This will be your first gesture to me. Your first offering."

He was speaking in code, but she understood the code as if she had been born with an innate knowledge of it. Indeed, she had. It was the code of D/s, of dominance and sexual submission she'd been longing to find the courage to explore for most of her

adult life. Now this man sat before her, fiercely compelling, impossibly beautiful, waiting for her to speak. To admit her desires – to confess her deep-seated longings.

“I want to submit,” she finally whispered, knowing as she spoke it wasn’t enough. Will nodded, his expression encouraging.

“Yes,” he said, “you do. You want to and you need to. Go on. That’s a wonderful beginning. Tell me the secrets. The ones you never thought you’d share.”

A part of her wanted to protest. Who was he to demand she reveal her most private thoughts over coffee in some dive? How dare he ask such intimate things of her when they’d only just met?

Yet she knew in her heart, even as she silently balked, they hadn’t only just met. They knew each other instinctively, intrinsically. They were bound as lovers even before a kiss had been exchanged. She knew it, and she knew he knew it. She could deny, she could refuse, she could run away, but their connection would remain true, if unrequited.

“It’s okay,” he whispered gently, as if he were privy to her thoughts and knew her fears. “It’s okay. Take your time, love.”

Take your time, but you’re not off the hook. Trisha smiled a little, glancing at him. Was it really so difficult? They were adults after all, and her secret feelings weren’t crimes, just feelings.

“I want to submit,” she repeated.

Will smiled and nodded. “Not so hard, huh? No thunderbolts hurled from on high to punish you for secret, dirty thoughts. You know, the words have more power when you keep them locked up.” Gently, he laid a hand over hers on the table. “Tell me more. You say you want to submit? What does that mean to you?”

“I want to submit...” she paused and finally blurted, “sexually.” Trisha could feel the heat of her embarrassment flaming in her face but was now determined to continue. “I want a strong man who knows what he wants and isn’t afraid to take it. I want to kneel – naked – at someone’s feet and feel the kiss of his whip, the sting of his lash, the

heat of his hand, the soft kiss of his lips." Trisha sat with a stunned look on her face, as if she were waiting for the world to come crashing and tumbling down at her feet.

Will looked back her, his expression bemused, his eyes dancing. "That's beautiful," he said softly. "Very romantic."

She grinned gratefully at him, though with something like defiance still on her face. Will laughed and she laughed too, relieved the mood had lightened. He seemed so in tune with her, as if he understood her reservations, her hesitations, so completely. She felt something ease inside of her. Will didn't seem horrified by her confession. No, obviously, he shared her D/s feelings, only his were the flip side of the coin.

"Try one," he offered, holding up a fat, oval shortbread cookie, crumbling with butter and almonds. It was delicious and Trisha ate three. The underlying sexual tension remained, but for a while they spoke of lighter things—of their work, of their families.

"You're beautiful," Will said suddenly, and Trisha ducked her head, a little embarrassed but also terribly pleased. "I've been waiting, you know. For someone like you. Someone who understands the potential romance of it all. You see, I also want what you speak of. The other side of it. I want a submissive woman, a strong, sexy woman like you, who has the courage and grace to give herself completely to another."

They stared at one another silently for a moment. The Thai woman appeared, bobbing politely as she asked if she could bring them anything else. "No, thanks, we're good," Will answered, flashing his bright smile at her. "I'll take the check, thanks."

Trisha licked her lips. She felt a little clutch in her stomach. What now? They would leave this café and what next? Nervously she tore and twisted a bit of paper napkin into a narrow little point before wadding it up and hiding it behind her coffee glass. Just as she was wondering whether it would seem too forward to invite him back to her place, Will asked softly, "Are you ready, Trisha? Ready to take it a step further? To explore this submissive streak? At last?"

Chapter Two

Trisha took a deep breath and unconsciously ran her fingers through her short, sassy red hair. Will sat quietly, waiting. She knew if she said no, she wasn't ready, that would be that. He would not press her. She didn't feel he was offering an ultimatum or demanding anything of her. He really was only asking.

"I'm not sure," she finally said, being as honest as she could. "I've always wanted it, to experience the things I described before, but I'm afraid. Afraid I might mess it up. Act stupid. Or that it would be unnatural or staged. Until now, I've always been afraid to share it. Afraid I was sick or weird or something."

"But you want it," Will interjected. "Ignoring for the moment your fears about what might actually happen, about your role in it, or if it would seem like a game instead of something real, ignoring all that, you want it? The idea of it? The idea of submitting to your lover, of granting the sensual exchange of power that leaves you at the mercy of another person, with the loss of control that entails—you want that?"

Mutely Trisha nodded. She did want that, more than he could possibly know. Yet she had never had the courage to act upon it. To confess these strange longings to another. And here was this man, this Will Jacobson, seeming to offer her her dreams, neatly packaged and ready to deliver.

Two couples had entered the café, laughing and talking loudly. Their hostess's attentions were now with her new customers. Will placed money over the check and stood up. "You ready, Trish? Let's go." She nodded.

As they drove the few miles toward her house, his car following hers, Trisha kept glancing back in her rearview mirror, trying to see his face in the shadows and stripes of light on the road. She pulled into her driveway, pressing the remote on her sun visor to open the garage door. He parked behind her on the asphalt and walked into the garage,

pushing a button on the wall as he did so that caused the door to lower, trapping them inside together.

Trisha felt her pulse speed as he moved toward her, his eyes glittering in the dim light of the single bulb overhead. She turned toward the door leading into the house, fumbling at the knob, suddenly nervous. With a single hand to her shoulder Will spun her back toward him and in a moment she found herself wrapped in his strong embrace.

She breathed in his delicious, almost intoxicating, scent, even as her heart was pounding, not exactly with fear, but with something close to it. Leaning down, he took her head in his hands, his eyes burning into hers. She knew he meant to kiss her and, while she wanted it, something made her turn her head away at the last moment.

He gripped her head harder, forcing it back so he could reach those soft, cherry lips with his own. "Don't play coy, my love," he whispered. "It's only a kiss. You've been waiting all night for this kiss."

Trisha bridled, again pulling away from him, but this time Will was ready, his strong hands holding her still as he took his kiss, his tongue moving past her lips, which parted readily even as she smarted from his assured assumption she had been waiting for that kiss. She had, oh yes, she had.

As Will kissed her, he pressed her against the door, his strong, hard body pinning her against it. Trisha felt herself melting against his heat and his strength. As he kissed her, his hands slid down over her body, lightly touching the sides of her breasts, her waist, her hips. She was powerless against him and instead of being terrified, she found herself electrified with passion. If he'd pulled the clothes off her and thrown her to the concrete floor to take her then and there, she would have permitted it. More than permitted it – she would have reveled in it.

Instead he pulled away, standing back as she remained pressed against the door, her eyes closed, her lips still parted. Her body moved forward instinctively as his moved away, as if they were tethered by some invisible string – she the puppet, he the

master. Will laughed softly and said, "You're hungry, Trish. You're hungry for me. For what I can give you."

She opened her eyes, feeling at once the flush of her desire and her embarrassment at acting so wantonly with this man. But she saw he was hungry too, eager to do more than just kiss her. Her eyes dropped to his denim-clad crotch, where his obviously erect cock pressed against its fabric prison.

"Going to invite me in, darlin'?" he drawled, grinning now. The tension of the moment eased a little and Trisha straightened up, taking a deep breath.

"Where are my manners," she laughed lightly, turning to open the door with her key. She flicked on the light as they entered and said, "I've got some white wine in the fridge. Want some?"

"Just the thing," Will answered, moving easily toward the wine glasses that hung upside down from a rack suspended from the ceiling in a corner of the room. "Very nice," Will said appreciatively as he looked around the kitchen. Trisha smiled, the pride evident in her expression as she, too, surveyed the room. It reminded her of her grandmother's kitchen, with the white enamel cabinets, the rectangular tile backsplash, and the vintage stove. Indeed, she'd designed the room herself based on memories of that warm old room, delighting when she'd found a 1940s table with tubular chrome legs almost exactly like the one where her grandmother had taught her to bake bread, kneading the dough just so before letting it rise in its little loaf pan. The room had a cozy lived-in look, with custom-made seat cushions to match the curtains and vintage dishtowels. The one nod to modernity was the dishwasher, a top-of-the-line new model, perfect for a busy woman who hated to do dishes.

"It's elegant and sophisticated, yet warm and accessible," Will commented as Trisha took the wine glasses from him and poured them each a glass. "Like you," he said grinning and Trisha ducked her head.

As they sipped their wine he said, "You know, we don't have to do the usual preamble. The fumbling and guessing and wondering about each other. We already know, don't we, Trisha? We already know what we want."

"Oh, do we?" Trisha retorted, trying to keep her voice light, playful. Her hand trembled slightly as she held her wine glass and she set it down on the counter, hoping he hadn't noticed.

Will moved in closer, lowering his head so he could whisper, "I knew it the moment I saw you. The tilt of your head, the look in your eye. It's quite simple really. If you choose to accept it. You were born to belong to me. You were born with my name under your tongue."

Bending her back over the counter, Will kissed her, his mouth claiming hers, his lips and tongue taking their due as his hands roamed over her body, electrifying her with need. He pulled her up, his mouth still locked on hers as his hands found the zipper on the back of her dress. He dragged the zipper down, releasing the tight spandex, which clung so alluringly to Trisha's lithe form.

Standing back, he pulled at the sleeves, sliding the dress from her body so it hung at her waist, exposing her breasts, high and round in creamy, dark pink satin and lace. Trish started to cover her torso as Will's gaze spilled over her.

"No," he said simply. "Arms are your side. This is the beginning, Trisha. You are going to give yourself to me. Completely. You will hold nothing back. Let me look at you. Now." His voice wasn't loud or pushy. Simply certain—a command.

She obeyed, dropping her arms, her large green eyes wide as she stared up at him. "Perfection," he murmured, as his hands cupped the breasts. "Take off the bra," he said. Trisha felt as if she were in a dream. Was this really happening at last? Were the fantasies of a lifetime being realized here in her kitchen with a man named Will Jacobson? Again she obeyed, reaching back to release the little hooks, letting the satin slide off her arms.

There she stood, half-naked in front of a man to whom she'd just confessed her most secret intimate fantasies. Fantasies he had said he would make come true. Lord, was she ready for this? Could one ever be ready?

Will's hands caressed her bared breasts and Trisha could feel her nipples pointing up into his palms. Though her heart was pounding and a part of her wanted to run away, she leaned forward, loving the feel of him against her. She tried to bring her arms up around him, to draw him close to her again, but he admonished, "Hands at your sides." To make his point he took her hands in his and forced her into position.

She flushed and started to cross her arms over her chest, but his expression stopped her as he said, "Trisha. This isn't a game. Not anymore. We've crossed the line now. This is what you've always wanted. Trust me. You must obey me now. Do as I say. Let me take you where you long to go. Keep your arms at your sides and let me look at you."

Trisha did obey, dropping her arms, her eyes closing. Why did she feel so shy? She knew she had good breasts, high and firm with round cherry nipples now erect and inviting. She felt his gaze even with her eyes closed. She felt his fingers as he took each side of the dress now hanging at her waist. Slowly he pulled it down her legs, touching her ankle lightly to indicate she should step out of it. Kneeling, he slipped her sandals off her feet and set them to the side.

She stood in just her thong panties—a little triangle of dark-pink satin that barely covered her neatly trimmed mons, bands of lace curving over slender hips. Will's large hand entirely covered the little patch of satin as he whispered, "You're doing so well, Trisha. Go with your instincts. You were born for this."

He spun her gently around so she was facing the counter. She felt his hands moving up her ass, the ass she had always thought was too big, but which men found intoxicatingly irresistible. "Made for whipping," Will murmured, and Trisha shivered, controlling her impulse to cover her behind and turn away from him.

He caressed and kneaded the flesh for a moment before suddenly smacking one cheek with a cupped palm. Trisha jerked and gasped a little, her eyes flying open. "Will!"

"Yes, Trisha?"

"You hit me!"

Will laughed. "And your point is...?" He turned her back toward him and said, "Angel, this is the beginning. Yes, I smacked your perfect ass. I am going to do a lot more than that before the night is over. Don't you understand? You've crossed the threshold now. There's no going back. Tonight you are finally going to experience, to begin to experience, the potential of erotic submission.

"You may not have the courage to go there by yourself, but you don't have to. I'll be there, every step of the way. I won't take you further than you can go. Trust me." Gently he took her head in his hands.

"Do you trust me, Trisha? Can you give me that yet? Do we need to slow down?"

Trisha looked up into his face, a face it seemed she had known forever, with his slightly crooked nose, the thick fringe of blond hair falling over his forehead into one eye, the laugh lines crinkled and etched into his face, the eyes sparkling blue, the yearning in them as intense as her own.

She wrapped her arms around him and this time he didn't stop her. As they held one another he whispered into her hair, "It's time now. Take me to the bedroom."

Silently she led him down the hall. The queen-size bed was set in a black iron bedstead with high posts at each corner. A gauzy netting with tiny silver stars sewn into it made a canopy that draped over the sides, creating a warm, sensual space Trisha loved.

Will wasn't interested in the décor, his eyes were sweeping her body as if he would devour her. While still staring at her, he stripped off his shirt, revealing his strong, broad chest, the sternum covered in thick, dark-blond curls that tapered down his belly into his jeans. Trisha was standing uncertainly by the bed in just her little panties. Her

dark red hair was tousled around her face as she gazed at Will's masculine perfection. He didn't take off his jeans, for which was she was at once grateful and a little let down. He did kick off his boots and pull off the socks beneath them, neatly placing a sock in each boot before setting them by a chair.

Will sat on the edge of the bed, patting it as he said, "Come here."

Shyly she approached him. Will took her in his arms and pulled her to his lap so she was straddling his legs, their faces close. She could feel his erection like iron through his jeans. She could feel his heat and her own. Now they would make love and it would be wonderful. This felt so right, so right... Trisha leaned down to kiss him, her eyes closed in blissful anticipation, her lips parted.

Will pulled back. "No. No kisses. Not now. You will have to earn your kiss."

"Oh, Will, come on, this has been fun but —"

Will stood abruptly and Trisha fell from his lap, losing her balance as she tumbled ungracefully to the floor.

"Hey!" she shouted, chagrined. She started to admonish Will for letting her fall but his voice cut through hers like a scalpel, cold and razor-sharp.

"You disappoint me. Where is the girl who a moment ago was ready to submit to me? Is this as far as you go? Taking off your dress for me? This is your submissive act?" He fairly spat the words.

Startled, Trisha said, "Well, I-I don't know, I mean...I...um..." She stammered to a halt, confused as she rubbed her bottom where she'd hit the ground. Did she want more?

More gently, Will added, "Trisha, this is your chance. Take it. Take it with me. Please." Trisha looked at him. Could it really be he wanted this as much as she? Not just a chance to fuck her, but this whole lofty idea of romantic submission?

Slowly she nodded, feeling something change in herself. The nervous twittering in her brain stilled and she felt a sort of calm descend over her, like a mantle woven at

once of fire and sensual languor. It must have been reflected in her face because Will smiled slowly and sat back on the bed. Holding out his hand to her he said, "That's better. Shall we try again?"

She again sat, this time with her legs over one side of his lap. As Will lightly stroked her bare back he said, "I'm going to lay out a few rules for you, to help you as we go. From this moment forward you will not speak unless you are answering a direct question or unless you feel your safety is at stake. You will ask for permission to speak before you do so. The reason for this is to remind you of what you are and who you belong to."

Already disobeying, Trisha opened her mouth to protest, but Will brought two fingers over her lips as he shook his head. "No, no, you may not speak. Not now. Listen, just for tonight, just for this next hour, you belong to me. Completely. If you then decide this is wrong, this is not for you, we will go from there. Nothing is written in stone. I'll be feeling my way along with you, darling. But you have to trust me and let us go at my pace, not yours. Only then will you be free to truly experience the potential rapture of submission."

Trisha wanted to interject. To laugh at him for being so lofty and poetic, but at the same time, she felt more serious and determined than she ever had. The laughter would only have served as a foil for her true feelings. She wanted what he offered—desperately.

"First, to help ease you into your submissive state, I am going to spank that perfectly delectable ass of yours." As Trisha squirmed a little on his lap, Will's hands spanned her narrow waist. "Don't worry, I'll be gentle—at first. I'll gauge what you can take and I won't rush you. We have all the time in the world."

Trisha considered protesting. Backing out. Saying it had been a fun experiment, even a cathartic experience to say out loud what had lain hidden in her heart for so long, but now she really did need to get to bed... She considered it. But a moment after this silent consideration the truer part of her knew she would not protest. Her ass was

tingling in anticipation already, wanting to feel a repeat of the little slap he'd given her earlier in the kitchen.

"Good girl," he whispered, rightly interpreting her silence as acquiescence. "Now just lay yourself over my knees, ass in the air. Get comfortable because you're going to be here for a while."

It was awkward for a moment as Trisha maneuvered herself over the man's strong legs. *I can't believe I'm doing this*, she thought as she exposed her barely clad bottom to his view.

"Grip my legs if you need to. But don't move out of position. Don't roll off me and don't try to cover your ass with your hands. I don't mind a bit if you squeal or squirm. But don't tell me to stop, not unless you want the whole evening to stop. I will decide how much you can take and when you've had enough. Understood?"

Trisha didn't answer, though she heard every word still echoing in her mind. Will pulled her head up by the hair and hissed in her ear, "I said, understood? A direct question, Trish. You answer it and you will address me as 'Sir'."

He dropped her head and Trisha felt the fire of anger mingle with shame. How dare he correct her like that! He made her feel like a misbehaving schoolgirl! "We'll try again," he went on implacably. "Understood?"

Trisha found she had to force the words out. It wasn't in her nature, at least not the overt nature she had spent a lifetime cultivating, to call someone sir and to say she understood his orders as if she were an army cadet. Yet at the same time, the heat in her face was matched by a fiercer, more potent heat in her gut. Whatever he was doing, it was reaching her. Reaching some secret, dangerous place inside of her with the potential to rip her safe little world apart.

And she knew she wanted it, more than anything in the world.

"Yes, Sir," she whispered, and found the words rolled easily from her tongue.

“Better,” Will answered shortly. He massaged her ass for a few moments, his strong, hard hands gliding smoothly over her rounded cheeks. “You have an incredible ass, did you know that?”

Trisha assumed the question was rhetorical and thus didn’t respond. She was used to men appreciating her behind, but she was pleased nonetheless by his remark. Lightly he smacked one cheek then the other. “I love the way your flesh moves when I strike it,” he said, and gave her a more decided swat.

Trisha’s sudden impulse to cover herself was overridden by her desire to obey him and an intense curiosity about the spanking to come. Would it hurt? Would it just tickle? Would she be able to take it? Would he stop if she told him to? She didn’t have to wait long for the answers. His hand came down again—harder—the sound of flesh on flesh resounding in the air. Trisha gasped a little at the unexpected force of the blow.

She felt a heat emanate from where he had struck. It didn’t hurt exactly. In fact, it felt good. Sexy. Hot. She was getting a spanking and it was hot! Pleased with herself, she moved her face a little against Will’s shin, feeling the soft denim, wishing it was his bare leg.

“Oh!” The next series of swats were much harder, falling in rapid succession on each cheek. “Ouch!” Trisha yelled. This was suddenly less fun. Now he was really hurting her! Ignoring her cries, Will continued a relentless tattoo of hard palm against tender flesh.

His voice was low with lust as he said, “Jesus, you look so hot, Trisha. Your ass is turning a lovely shade of pink.” He struck her again and Trisha squealed, her hands involuntarily coming up to cover herself.

Will easily locked both slender wrists in one hand, maneuvering them comfortably out over her head, parallel to the ground. “Now, now, you can do better than that. Why, we’ve just started. I plan to continue until your bottom is a lovely shade of red. Cherry red, like those perfect lips.”

Trisha was breathing hard. Her ass stung and she couldn't help but squirm against him. When he'd grabbed her wrists, something had exploded inside of her, sending a gush of desire through her body, stopping squarely at her pussy. Captive! Though she knew he wouldn't hold her against her will, it was deeply exciting to be held down like this, unable to get away, even if it was only an illusion.

It was only illusion, wasn't it? She could get away if she really wanted to, surely. Testing him, Trisha tried to wrest free, twisting her wrists in his grasp as she shifted herself against him. Will grasped her wrists harder, wrenching her arms out straight. His other hand pressed against the small of her back.

"Stop it, silly girl," he said, his voice amused. He had immobilized her so easily, and now as she tried to wriggle out from under his hand he leaned over her. "Listen, girl. You can't get away. You're mine. You'll get up when I'm ready for you to get up. Not a moment sooner. I told you it's okay to squirm, even to cry. But you will not be released until I say so." He punctuated the last three words with three very hard swats to her ass.

His voice was hard, but his cock was even harder, pressing against her thigh like iron. He held her still a moment longer. Her heart was racing and zinging in her chest so furiously she thought she might pass out. Yet through it all, she hadn't said stop. She hadn't protested it was too much, or say she didn't like what was happening.

Because she did. Oh, she did. Like was a silly word, a flimsy word, to describe what she was feeling. This was where she wanted to be, where she needed to be. Where she was born to be.

Chapter Three

Slowly Will began to smack her ass again, his palm firm against her. His tight grip on her wrists eased but she was no longer struggling. Perversely she arched up for each blow, reveling in the delicious pain that seemed to transmute to pleasure an instant after contact.

Though her wriggling had ceased, her whimpers and gasps were a steady little accompaniment to the staccato sound of his palm against her now very tender bottom. Her gasps had become interspersed with little moans that sounded very much like those of a woman caught in the delicious throes of sex. Wantonly, Trisha had positioned herself so each blow pressed and ground her clit against Will's thigh or cock, creating a lovely friction.

When he stopped the spanking, his hands moving in slow, feathery-soft motions over her heated flesh, Trisha whimpered again, this time in frustration. Though her ass was burning, she wanted more! He had been right — she was born for this.

Gently Will lifted the woman from his lap, laying her on her belly on the bed. "Oh, my poor angel," he crooned as his hands continued to stroke her tender bottom, as if he himself hadn't been the one to have done this to her.

She rolled over onto her back, feeling the cool sheets against her tender, hot ass. She was still breathing hard, her breasts rising and falling prettily under Will's intense gaze. She didn't cover herself. She found she didn't feel at all shy. She felt beautiful. Ridiculously beautiful and absurdly happy.

Will stood up from the bed, smiling widely at the girl. "You were stunning, Trish. Amazing. So brave for a first time! A natural, no question about it!" As he spoke, Will casually stripped off his jeans, kicking them aside. As he stood for a moment in only his underwear, Trisha admired Will's long, well-muscled legs. Her eye was drawn to the

sizable package revealing itself rather clearly through the silk of his boxers. He didn't seem at all self-conscious as he moved back toward her.

Will stretched out next to Trisha, taking her in his arms. She snuggled her face into his neck, a little embarrassed by his compliments but also terribly proud. He was right! She had taken a spanking—a real spanking! And it had been so hot and so sexy! She could feel her clit throbbing steadily, the lips around it swollen with desire, her entrance slick with need.

Slowly Will's lips found hers and they kissed deeply, as if for the first time or the thousandth. The kiss of lovers inextricably bound to each other by passion. Trisha felt herself melting into the kiss, wanting to somehow fuse into Will, to become a part of him, to take him into her in every possible sense.

"Please," she whispered, not quite able to articulate what she was asking, hoping he would know. She wanted him inside of her. She needed to feel the silky, hard thrust of his manhood inside of her.

As he kissed her mouth again, she reached down, her fingers seeking his cock as they slipped past the elastic of his boxers. Soft, supple skin covered the rock-hard shaft. Curling her cool fingers around its heat, she wrested a moan from his lips and suddenly felt her own power.

As much as he might hold her down, spank her, claim her with his body, she had the power to arouse him, to delight him, to refuse him. Whatever she gave him, now that they had begun this exhilarating journey of erotic submission together, would be because she wanted to, because she longed to.

"Please," she whispered again, and Will moaned against her hair, succumbing to the sweet pressure of her fingers milking and massaging his cock. He pulled his underwear down and tossed it aside. Looming suddenly over her, he pressed her legs roughly apart.

"I have to fuck you. Now!" His voice was urgent with need. Not waiting to see if she was ready, he pressed his cock hard against her delicate entrance. Trisha gasped, expecting for a split second he would hurt her with his sudden invasion.

Yet his cock slid easily into her wet and eager passage, drawing a moan of pleasure involuntarily from her lips. The moan changed to a grunt as he thrust hard into her, pulling her up against him with strong hands on her narrow hips. Her bottom was sore and hot to the touch, but his rough hands felt good, gripping her as he used her body for both their pleasure.

Trisha felt her climax mounting and knew she would come in a moment, a lovely, hot moment. Just as she felt herself sinking into the bed, melting into a pool of pleasure, Will changed his cadence, easing the tempo, interrupting her ascent.

Still breathing heavily, Trisha opened her eyes, their expression eloquent with longing. "Please," she managed to moan. "Don't stop. Don't stop." She tried to pull him back into her, to take him as deeply as she could as she wrapped her strong, slender legs around him. Too aroused for modesty, she shimmied against him, rubbing her wet clit against his pubic bone.

Will laughed a sweet, low laugh as he pulled away, partially withdrawing. Trisha let out a tiny cry of petulant dismay. Covering her face with tiny kisses, Will murmured, "Slow down, angel. My girl is on fire. Your flame is too bright and will burn out before I'm ready. I want to use you longer, sweet slave. I want to savor this moment and make it last." As he spoke the poetic words, he continued to move and sway inside of her, the rhythm slowly edging up again, matched by the increase of blood pounding through her heart and limbs.

Their bodies became slick with sweat as Will alternated between fierce pummeling and tender teasing, drawing Trisha over and over again to the edge of climax, but denying her that pleasure at the last moment.

Finally, he could no longer control his own desire as their bodies rode each other to a fever pitch of pleasure. "You're mine, mine." Will's voice was hoarse with passion.

"This is only the beginning, Trisha. The beginning of your submission to me. I will claim you in ways you never dreamed of. I will own you completely. And, darling," he whispered, as their bodies shuddered and melted together, "darling girl, so too shall you own me."

As they fell apart neither spoke for some minutes, content merely to lie in one another's arms, their legs still tangled together, their heads lightly touching, blond against red. The air-conditioning had kept the room cool despite the heat of their passion and as their sweat evaporated Will pulled a rumpled sheet up over their naked bodies.

The phone rang, jangling them both out of their reverie. "Let it ring," Will said lazily. He pulled Trisha closer, inhaling her sweet, familiar scent, drifting on the edge of a dream.

"You know we can't," Trisha admonished. "It's probably mom, ready for us to come get the kids."

Will sighed and sat up on one elbow. "You're probably right." He grabbed the receiver and said, "Hello?" He grinned ruefully at Trisha, holding the phone away from his ear so she could hear the over-loud voice of her slightly deaf mother giving a detailed account of Sophie's adventure with macaroni and Tommy's astounding ability to write his alphabet. As Will finally hung up he said, "As you obviously heard, they're sleeping soundly, despite near brushes with death and rubber duckies. We've got the whole night with no little ones to wake us at the crack of dawn."

Trisha had sat up against the headboard while Will continued talking and thanking her mother and making the assuring clucking sounds he was so good at to cut off grandma's sometimes overly detailed stories of the babies. She wrapped her arms around her bare torso, a slight shadow sliding across her features.

Reading her thoughts on her face, Trisha's husband stroked back the tousled hair from her wide, smooth forehead and said soothingly, "Don't worry, darling, they're fine. She said they've been asleep for hours. She only stayed up so late herself to watch

an old movie and then remembered we'd probably be thinking we had to come get them. You know your mom dotes on the kids. We'll take them for pancakes in the morning."

Trisha nodded, settling back against Will. He wrapped his strong arms around her again, sighing happily as he realized the woman he cherished most in the world was with him and there was no place he'd rather be.

The night had been amazing, beyond his wildest expectations. But how had it been for her? How had it really been? Not just the fun, crazy adventure they had created for themselves, but the deeper aspect of it, their fledgling toe-touch in the deep waters of romantic submission?

They were lying front to back now, Trisha's gorgeous ass pressed against his crotch, Will's arms wrapped just under her luscious breasts. Trying to keep his voice light, Will said, "So tell me, honestly. Was it what you were expecting? Is this something for us, do you think?"

Trisha didn't answer right away and Will felt a sudden clutch in his gut as he realized her response mattered. Up until now in their seven-year marriage they had had a fulfilling but "vanilla" sex life. Will's own natural inclination to dominate his lover sexually had always been carefully controlled by his own deep respect and love for his wife, and uncertainty about how she would react if he tried any caveman-type tactics like "taking her by force".

They might have continued forever with their hot but "safe" sex if Will hadn't made a delightful discovery while vacuuming under the bed, something he very rarely did. Hidden back against the wall and obscured by a scarf, he had found a little pile of paperback novels. Usually he and Trisha went together to the bookstore and showed each other what they had selected, often swapping novels that interested them both.

But he had never seen these—of that he was certain. The titles caught his eye and caused a little sharp intake of breath. *Slave for a Day*, *Bound and Gagged for Love*, *School of Submission* were among the titles. Trisha had been out with the kids at the park so Will

had sat cross-legged on the floor, flipping through what were obviously already much-thumbed pages, his eyes widening in disbelief.

Trisha Jacobson, loving wife, devoted mother of small children, journalist for a national magazine and...sub? Were these her secret fantasies? Some of the stories were dark, nonconsensual fantasies of forced submission, abduction and punishment. Others detailed romantic heroines' explorations of D/s with a loving and willing partner. The stories were all about women who were coming to terms with their own submissive yearnings and desires. Fantasies that so beautifully dovetailed with his own closely held dreams.

Thoughtfully Will had pushed the books back under the bed, hiding them again with the scarf his brother had given Trisha for a birthday not long ago. He was torn between confronting Trisha about her secret stash of erotica and with respecting her right to her own private dreams. For a while, he had kept quiet but, as a week passed, he found himself obsessed with the idea of a new potential relationship between them.

When he had a moment alone in the bedroom, he would retrieve and read passages from the books, trying to understand what motivated the secret dreams he now knew his quiet wife to have. Finally, when the weekend had come, he could keep silent no longer. With the babies long asleep and the two of them showered and kissing sweetly in precoital tradition, he had whispered, "Trish, I want to claim you."

"Hmm?" she had answered, her voice thick with pleasure as his fingers stroked her breasts, the fingers finding and rolling round, hard nipples.

He had squeezed a nipple, hard enough so she squealed slightly, and had said, "I want to claim you. I want to explore your submissive streak, to unlock that secret treasure of masochistic yearning you've kept hidden from your husband all these years."

"Will!" Trisha had sat bolt upright, pulling away from him, her reddening face a confirmation he had definitely hit a nerve.

"It's all right, beautiful girl. It's me, darling. The man who loves you beyond all reason and scope. It's your Will. I found those books you keep under the bed and I—"

"You did! Oh, my God, I swear, someone just gave them to me, I never even looked at them! I'm not some sicko doormat wanting you to dominate me like some he-man! I'm a liberated woman, for God's sake! Those are just stories. They're just make-believe nonsense, please you have to believe me—"

Will had stopped his wife's jabbering with a kiss, his mouth covering hers as he took her into his arms. As he pulled away, he had replaced his lips with a gentle hand over her mouth. Speaking in a soft voice he had said, "Hush, stop it right now, Trisha. Stop it. I'm not accusing you of any of those ridiculous things. I don't care where you got the books. You can read whatever you want, and you don't have to ever hide anything from me. What I'm trying to say, angel, is I'm really excited and glad to find you reading that stuff! And it has nothing to do with being a 'doormat' or a 'he-man', trust me. Erotic submission isn't about liberation or repression or any of that! It isn't a social issue, sweetheart, it's a sensual one. It's a connection between two people who happen to be hardwired a certain a way."

He had kissed her again and laid next to her, staring at the ceiling instead of her face so hopefully she could process what he was saying without feeling put on the spot. "When I found those books, Trisha, something leaped inside of my heart. I've had the same feelings, you see! My own secret fantasies have been fueled by the same D/s fires, though on the flip side. The thought of pinning you down, of claiming you for my own, is a powerful aphrodisiac. The image of your lovely ass raised invitingly to feel the smack of my hard palm as I turn it cherry red—"

"Will!" Trisha had interjected, her voice pitched high with shocked surprise.

"I know. I've been as remiss as you, never sharing these secrets because I—I don't know—I guess I thought you'd never go for it. It didn't occur to me it was something we could ever really explore together. It's not that I need it to be fulfilled—we have a wonderful sex life as it is. It's just, I guess it's been the secret fire to my fantasies."

“Oh, Will,” Trisha had breathed. “I had no idea. It’s true, Marianne did give me the first novel, but I bought the rest online. They thrill me! I didn’t even know I had these submissive and masochistic feelings until I read them. They turn me to liquid fire, Will. They hit some kind of nerve in me. I don’t know to explain it.”

“You don’t have to explain it. We are two sides of the same bright coin. Let’s find out together. Let’s learn together.”

At first Trisha had balked. She couldn’t seem to reconcile the old, comfortable, sexy but safe Will with this new idea of a “Dom” who would control every aspect of her sexuality, from his first whispered command she submit to him, to her final orgasmic release at his hands. As they began a few halting experiments, she had tried, but she would giggle at an inopportune time, or push him away and seem to shut down if things became too intense.

It had been Will’s idea to meet at a club, to pretend they didn’t know one another. He had hoped this would free Trisha up to literally rewrite herself, become someone new, someone Will was longing to know.

It had succeeded beyond his wildest expectations. Seeing her in the club had given him a fresh view of his beautiful wife. Used to seeing her with a baby on her hip or bent over her computer typing, he had almost forgotten how incredibly hot she could be.

When she came up to the bar alone, her curves outlined so enchantingly in bright blue, her red hair and green eyes that glittered like perfectly cut emeralds, Will had felt almost faint from desire. His erection was no doubt matched by most of the men in the room. Watching the other guys salivating around her with their wolfish grins, he had been delighted to know she was already his, waiting there for him and him alone to claim her.

It had been strange, too, to have other women glancing appreciatively at him. While aware he was considered good-looking, Will was very much a one-woman man, and rarely noticed the looks or hinted innuendo offered by women not daunted by a

wedding band. Without the ring, he had been fair game, just another guy on the prowl as far as women like the platinum blonde with the over-inflated breasts was concerned.

Sometimes he had wondered to himself what he would do if faced with a situation where he could have another woman, with no repercussion, no one the wiser. That night in the bar only confirmed his awareness that no woman could arouse him like his wife. He wanted no one else.

This opportunity to try something new, something slightly dangerous, something that pushed the boundaries for both of them, had been wildly exciting for him. When they'd finally made love, his cock had been so hard he thought he could have hammered nails with it. The heat of her gorgeous ass, the ass he has just spanked in real life, in just the way he'd dreamt of for years, deliciously hot against his hands as he had used her body to push himself deeper into her velvet clutch...

He sighed now, images of the perfect night replaying themselves in his mind as he waited for his darling to deliver her decree. Could it possibly have lived up to her expectations, whatever they were? Or had she found it nothing more than an amusing game, a new bit of fun to add to their sexual repertoire?

Will realized he wasn't breathing as he waited for her answer. Slowly, he again said, trying desperately to keep his voice light and neutral, to give her an out if she needed one, "Do you think this new relationship between us is something we could really explore together? Would you have me as your Master, along with being your lover?"

Slowly Trisha turned to face him. Her pupils were large, rimmed with clear green, her very soul seeming to shine from them. "Will," she whispered. "I would have that, yes. Oh, please, yes."

"Oh, Trish," Will's voice cracked as he reached for her.

Leaning into him Trisha giggled, stroking his thick hair from his forehead. "You're such a romantic, Will! I've always loved that about you. I'm so grateful you found those

books. I don't think I would have ever had the courage to tell you outright about my fantasies.

"I like what you said before. That it's a sensual issue, not a social one. I think I've been confused about that all my life. I didn't understand my own submissive desires when I've always felt like such a strong, independent person. It took your insight to help me see erotic submission is just another facet of what and who I am."

Will answered excitedly, "This is just the beginning. We'll feel our way together. We can take it as slow or as fast as we like." He ran his hand over her ass, loving the feel and heft of it. "Man, Trish, when I felt your ass quiver and heat up under my palm, I thought I was going to explode. It took all my self-control not to take you then and there."

He kissed her mouth for a moment, but then pulled away, unable to contain his excitement. "You know, we can try all sorts of fun things now that we know for sure this is something we want to learn more about. I can get some cool whips online, we can get some supplies at the home improvement store—"

Trisha laughed. "Slow down, baby! Don't forget usually we have little ones crawling around who might wonder what those sounds are coming from mommy and daddy's room!"

Will sobered a minute, but then grinned. "Hey, that's what grandmas are for, right? Your mom's always bugging us to drop the kids off. Maybe we'll just take her up on it a little more often."

"Oh, Will, I don't—" Her words were smothered with Will's kiss. He felt her resist a little at first, but then soften, her lips parting, her slim arms circling around him. This time when they made love, it was pure romance, soft and sweet. As they slowly arced together into a searing climax, Trisha's little mewls of pleasure made Will's heart almost burst with passion and love.

Chapter Four

As they returned to their workaday lives, their babies and their jobs, Trisha wondered if that would be it—a fun night of submissive adventure and nothing more. For several days this seemed to be the case as Will had two late nights in a row at the office where he was partner in a small marketing firm and one of the children had managed to catch a cold.

Trisha found herself reliving that perfect night over and over again, getting aroused at the most inopportune moments—while in a business meeting or listening to her mother’s latest lament about her annoying neighbors.

Finally on Wednesday night—the children asleep at last—Will turned toward Trisha, his finger drawing a slow line down her cheek. They had just finished cleaning the kitchen and stood together for a moment looking out at the rising moon through the window over the sink.

“Are you ready, sweet girl? Ready to continue where we left off?”

Trisha swallowed and took a sharp breath. She knew at once what he meant. His finger left a trail of heat on her face and she let her head fall back a little, her lips parting for a kiss.

“I’ll take that as a ‘yes’,” Will laughed, but his kiss was hard, passionate, commanding. When finally he released her, she was flushed, her eyes shining. “Go to the bathroom. Strip. Get the shower ready for us and wait on the bath rug kneeling, your head to the floor.”

Trisha stared at Will a moment longer. He was still the same beloved husband, but there was a gleam in his eye, something slightly dangerous, which thrilled her. The man she had met at the club was back. Would she still be the submissive woman he had helped to uncover?

Emerald green eyes locked with brilliant blue. Trisha was the first to drop her gaze. With a little nod, she turned and disappeared down the hall toward their bathroom. As she stripped she eyed herself in the mirror, pleased she was still slim and strong, secure in the knowledge that Will found her beautiful.

It felt strange but exciting to kneel in her own bathroom, waiting for her man like some kind of sex slave. What was he doing, anyway? Where was he? She had to grin at herself even as these thoughts flitted through her mind. She could almost hear Will admonishing her to be patient—a virtue she had not yet cultivated.

Trisha could not see him, as her head was obediently touching the rug, but she heard the delicate clink of glass against ceramic tile and wondered what he had brought for them.

She felt Will's hand on her head, his fingers grabbing a handful of her hair, pulling her up. Trisha gasped as his grip tightened, forcing her to rise. When she was standing, he pulled her roughly to him, her body naked and lithe against his still clothed one. He kissed her again, his mouth eager against hers, his tongue slipping past her parted lips, his hand still entwined in her hair.

When he released her, she was breathing hard, almost panting. Her nipples were aching erect. Steam swirled in the room, the effect exotic as Will handed Trisha a flute of cold champagne, her favorite. She drank the entire glass, savoring its tart sweetness as Will drank his.

"Undress me," he commanded softly. Trisha moved toward her lover, long, slender fingers reaching for the buttons on his shirt. He was still wearing the fine-cotton shirt he'd worn with his suit that day, though he'd taken off his tie and removed his cuff links, rolling the sleeves up strong forearms when they had washed the dishes earlier that evening.

Trisha pulled the shirt back from his broad shoulders and let it fall then focused on his belt. She knelt before him, looking up at him with adoring eyes. He nodded slightly, almost imperiously, indicating she should continue.

Her fingers fumbled against the clasp and she laughed a little, embarrassed at her own girlish eagerness. As she pulled the zipper down over Will's already hard cock, she sighed happily, smoothing the erect shaft still hidden in black cotton, cupping the heavy balls beneath it. Will stepped out of his dark-blue suit pants, his feet already bare. Trisha stood and carefully laid the pants over a towel rack before kneeling again to her task.

As she pulled his underwear down she leaned over, lips parted, her intentions obvious. Strong fingers again grabbed a handful of hair, jerking her back. "Greedy girl," Will admonished. "Not without permission. From this moment forward, for the rest of this evening, you do nothing without my express order or my direct command. You do not speak, you do not resist, you do not protest. You belong to me, utterly and completely. Do you understand?"

Trisha sat back on her haunches, her eyes wide as she stared up at the "Master" standing beautifully naked in front of her. Her heart was pounding as she forced herself to take a deep breath to stop the staccato of nervous, short gasps she could barely control. Slowly she nodded, feeling an erotic languor settle deliciously over the heated desire pounding through her veins. She knew her pussy was soaking wet and she could feel the swollen folds between her thighs.

"Stand up and step into the shower. You will wash my body." Trisha stepped past the curtain and Will followed her. Dutifully she soaped his body, stopping overlong on his cock and balls, pulling and elongating his member with delicate hands as Will sighed and closed his eyes, his head falling back under the stream of hot water spraying them both.

Finally, he pushed her away, telling her in a gruff voice heavy with desire to finish her job, to focus on her task. Trisha hid her own little smile as she obeyed, soaping and rinsing each strong leg. Though he might be the one in control, she knew her power was as real as his.

Satisfied at last, Will pulled Trisha up and began to wash her body in turn, his hands cupping and caressing her breasts, swirling down her belly, fingers pressing into her hot, tight pussy as she sighed and leaned against him.

He wrapped his arms around her and lifted her, holding her hips so she naturally wrapped her legs around his waist. Moving carefully forward, he stopped when Trisha's back was against the tiled back wall of the shower. Holding her easily, Will shifted until his erect cock was pressing against her forcibly spread pussy.

"I'm going to fuck you now, you beautiful, hot girl," he whispered. Slowly he pressed into her, her moisture granting him easy entrance as he sank in, pushing far into her, almost too far, as she grunted and tried to shift in his arms.

"Too deep," she whispered.

"Take it, my little slave," Will whispered back, but he moved nonetheless, easing the pressure inside of her. Slowly he began to gyrate, using her like a sex toy for his own pleasure.

Trisha felt the delicious sensation mounting inside of her as he touched some central core of need, making her moan and bite his neck as he thrust harder and harder into her, the water splashing his back and her head. He came quickly, slamming her into the wall as he spurted inside of her. Trisha shuddered, the sudden intensity of his movements sending her over the edge as well.

He held her a few moments, still wrapped in his strong arms, his cock still buried inside of her, his heart pounding sweetly against her breasts. Standing back, he slowly pulled her from his body and set her on her feet. They embraced silently for a moment. Then Will reached for the soap and lovingly lathered his wife's body. She did the same for him. Again they stood in one another's arm under the hot spray of water, Trisha leaning her head against his strong chest. Finally Will turned off the water, climbed out of the shower and ordered, "Dry me."

The room was steamy and hot, but still Trisha felt a chill as she knelt wet and naked in front of her lover, carefully drying his body before attending to her own. It was just like a scene in one of those BDSM romances she still kept hidden beneath her bed.

In one of the books, a pure fantasy set in ancient times, the slave girl was required to attend first to her master in all things—feeding him before she herself ate, washing and drying him, soothing him to sleep. She was rarely permitted sexual release, and then only for the amusement of her master. He might stop her just before orgasm, simply for the sadistic pleasure of denying her. Though Trisha knew this was only fantasy, and not a lifestyle she would actually want to live, the simple act of drying her man while she herself shivered naked and wet before him was thrillingly erotic to her.

Will pulled her up after a moment and wrapped a fresh, warm towel around her. “Are you ready, my love? Ready to explore your fantasies more fully tonight?”

“Oh, Will,” Trisha breathed, not sure if she was ready or not, but so aroused she knew she would do whatever he wanted. Will led her into the bedroom and to the bed.

“Lie down on your belly. You are going to experience your first whipping.”

Trisha, who had been docilely obeying his command, sat bolt upright and demanded, “What? What are you talking about? A whipping! Don’t you mean a spanking?”

“Oh, dear,” Will said, “Oh, my, my, my. The little slave girl is protesting already. The very girl who said she wanted to submit. Who promised to do whatever I asked. Perhaps you only want to dabble after all? To playact but not truly discover your nature, is that it?” His voice was light, his expression playful, but his eyes were intense, the desire behind them fierce.

“Show me,” Trisha whispered. “Show it to me.” She was afraid, but also wildly curious. From what she’d read, a whip could be easier to take than a spanking as the soft suede tresses kissed the flesh, easier to bear than the hard slap of a cupped palm. And she’d already experienced that! Experienced it and loved it! She could do this! In a louder voice she said, “Show me the whip.”

"Yes, mistress." Will laughed, and Trisha blushed slightly, turning her head. He went to the closet and returned with a heavy flogger from which dangled many strands of soft suede, dyed a dark purple, each about an inch wide.

"Wow," Trisha breathed, impressed Will had procured it without her knowledge. "Where did you get that? Is it real?"

"Oh yes, it's very real. It's sexy, isn't it? I had it specially delivered overnight. I've been thinking about it all day—how I was going to whip you with it, to introduce you to its potential, to teach you of its pleasure and its erotic pain."

"But how do you know what to do?"

"Sweet girl. You tell me. You tell me with your body and your reactions if I'm doing it right." Will smiled gently, though his eyes were blazing hot as they raked her body. "Now, are you ready at last, you willful girl, to obey me? I'm going to have to punish you for defying me just now, you do realize that? You sat up after I told you to lie down."

"Oh, Will," Trisha began, but Will cut her off.

"No, no. Not another word. Remember, you are still my slave girl for the evening. Not a sound, except your whimpers and cries. Now lie down on your belly, as I told you, and offer up that delicious ass for its punishment."

Trisha swallowed and pushed back her hair in a characteristic nervous gesture. Will suppressed a smile as he stood over her, waiting for her to obey. Slowly Trisha lay down on the bed, cradling her head in her arms.

The first kiss of the lash made her jump, though it was very gentle, just a sliding of leather across skin. Will's hand soothed the area, moving in broad strokes over Trisha's tense back until the muscles relaxed a little—just a little. Again leather met flesh and this time the contact was more serious.

It stung but much less than his spanking had a few nights before. Will began to whip her ass and thighs in a steady rhythm, slowly increasing the intensity. Trisha felt the heat rising, not only on her skin but in her loins. She was panting and wriggling

with each blow, sweet whimpers and cries escaping her lips, but she did not cry, “stop” and she did not try to move away.

No, she found herself in a kind of erotic trance, feeling the sting, feeling the pain, but also the pleasure, the heat and intensity of feeling that defied any experience she’d had before this. She found herself not wishing that he would stop, but fervently wishing that he would not.

She tried to still herself, to hold herself in check so he would continue, so he wouldn’t worry he was hurting her too much. She didn’t realize she was holding her breath or clenching her fists until she heard her lover say, “Trisha. Breathe. Breathe, darling. Take deep breaths. And unclench your hands. Let the energy flow through you. Let it take you, let it consume you and free you.”

As he spoke Trisha tried to obey, taking deep, shuddering breaths as the whip rained its stinging tresses down against now tender, heated flesh. With an act of will, she forced her fingers to unfurl, trying to flow with the erotic pain now mixed with wet desire.

“Yes,” Will breathed, “Yes, my beautiful girl, that’s it. Let it take you over. Go with it. Don’t fight it. Give in to it—it’s what you were born for.” He continued to whip her and, for a moment, Trisha’s hands again fisted, her breathing labored but, somehow, she moved past this, again entering a zone of something that could only be called peace.

Pure and utter peace seemed to settle over her, obscuring even her sexual need. He was still whipping her, but it was almost from a distance, like part of a beautiful, bright dream. She felt her breathing slow and deepen of its own accord. Her body seemed to melt into the soft sheets and she felt completely powerless to move, but also had no desire to do so.

This must be a bit of heaven, she thought dreamily before all thoughts were obscured in pure sensation. Her eyes fluttered shut as her lips parted, her face a study in bliss.

It was a few moments before she realized the whip had been replaced with Will's strong but gentle fingers. Lightly he smoothed and eased the flesh he himself had just used so tortuously. His lips followed his hands, lightly kissing the heated flesh.

It felt lovely and Trisha wanted to tell him—to thank him, to kiss him, to try to express the astounding experience he had just created for her. But when she tried to speak, she found she could not. Her lips parted but the words would not issue from her throat.

Will leaned up, pulling himself next to her, taking her gently in his arms. "Hush, sweet girl," he murmured. "Don't try to speak. Just stay here with me. Let me hold you and love you as you come down from the wonderful, mysterious place you've been."

She lay back, deeply grateful that somehow he understood—though new to this himself, he seemed to have an innate understanding of the submissive psyche and of the powerful experience she'd just had under his skillful hand. As she rested in his arms, Trisha became slowly aware of her pussy, pulsing sweetly between her legs. Sighing sensually, she turned toward Will, straddling his thigh so her hot, wet sex was pressed against him.

"What? Again?" Will laughed. "You want more! What a greedy girl!" As he pulled her up onto his stomach, she felt his cock rising up against her ass.

"Yes, again! I want it again and again and again!" Trisha laughed and bent down, showering Will's face with tiny kisses. After a moment, he took her face in his hands, holding her still for one long, deep kiss.

Trisha lifted her hips, allowing Will's cock to move under her so when she slowly settled back down, his shaft was properly placed just where she wanted it. "Oh," she couldn't help but moan, as she eased herself onto his thick, hard cock.

Will guided her slowly, his strong hands on either hip. Their mouths found each other as their bodies began the heated, primal dance shared by lovers since time began. Trisha found the tender heat still emanating from well-whipped ass and thighs actually heightened the experience, making her more sensitive to Will's movements and thrusts.

Grabbing his shoulders, any hint of submission completely subsumed in her now relentless pursuit of pleasure, Trisha rode her man like a wild stallion, claiming him as surely as he would ever claim her. She cried out her passion, her nails raking his skin as she arched in delicious pleasure against him.

"I'm not done with you," Will murmured throatily as he flipped her over, intent now on his own pleasure.

They fell apart at last and Will listened to Trisha's breathing, slowing so he thought she might be asleep. But out of the darkness he heard her soft, sultry voice, "If I were the queen of pleasure..."

Whispering in answer, Will murmured, "And I were king of pain..."

"We'd hunt down love together..."

Pluck out his flying-feather...

Teach his feet a measure...

And find his mouth a rein."

About the Author

Claire Thompson has written numerous novels and short stories, all exploring aspects of Dominance & submission. Ms. Thompson's gentler novels seek not only to tell a story, but to come to grips with, and ultimately exalt in the true beauty and spirituality of a loving exchange of power. Her darker works press the envelope of what is erotic and what can be a sometimes dangerous slide into the world of sadomasochism. She writes about the timeless themes of sexuality and romance, with twists and curves to examine the 'darker' side of the human psyche. Ultimately Claire's work deals with the human condition, and our constant search for love and intensity of experience.

Claire welcomes mail from readers. You can write to her c/o Ellora's Cave Publishing at 1056 Home Ave., Akron OH 44310.

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