



ISABELLA  
SNOW

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THE  
CLAIMING  
OF KITTEN

# THE CLAIMING OF KITTEN

Isabella Snow

LooseId®

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Isabella Snow

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## Dedication

*A very special thank you to my editor, Lorri-Lynne Brown, without whom this publication would never have been possible.*

## Chapter One

The autumn air felt cool as Alexandra Scott wrapped her arms around her tiny frame. Closing the door behind her, she took a deep breath and smiled. Her new life was taking shape, and she loved her new job. If anyone could handle a post as regional director for the Greenwich Grille, she could. Especially if it involved living in Europe.

She'd spent most of her youth dreaming of an opportunity like this. And fully expected to find such an opportunity. Eventually. But this was unprecedented. Offering a senior position to someone fresh out of college was almost unheard of. No, it *was* unheard of. She wasn't questioning her good fortune, mind you. It was just nice to know someone up there was looking out for her.

The Grille had just closed, and she was eager to get home. Wearily, she climbed the steps leading from the bar to the main street. She glanced about the fourteenth-century city square, marveling at the sea of Gothic and Baroque masterpieces. Prague was a veritable art gallery in and of itself.

A gentle breeze crept its way into her blouse, caressing full breasts as she buttoned it to her chin. Scolding herself for having left a perfectly good coat at home in her haste to make it to work, she hoped a brisk pace would keep her warm. She untied her waist-length curls

and let the dark, red locks fall against the curve of her neck. Stylish boots echoed across old cobblestones as shapely legs carried her past the appreciative glances of young men in her path. Born and raised in New York City, the twenty-seven-year-old rarely succumbed to distraction.

As she left the square behind, the centuries-old Astronomical Clock chimed one. It was far later than she'd realized. If she didn't reach the tram shortly, she'd have to walk home. She broke into a run. Digging through her purse, she was in search of her travel pass when she neared the tram stop. Looking up to check for traffic, an orange paper taped to the transit schedule caught her attention. She hurried across the road to get a better view.

"Damn," she mumbled as she studied the small piece of paper.

There would be construction here, starting in the morning. Tram service would detour until further notice. She'd have to find another way home. If she could get there in time, there was another tram that would pass relatively close to her street. That was a very big if, however, considering she was on the wrong side of the river.

Deciding it best to cut across the Charles Bridge, she changed directions immediately. The area wasn't the best lit, but passing through should be tolerable if she maintained her current pace. She jogged across the street to a set of old stone steps that led to the winding street below the bridge. Making her descent, she continued the search for that ever-elusive tram pass.

As she reached the last step, her left heel snagged in a crevice, sending her tumbling to the street below. Colliding with the unforgiving concrete, she felt the wind go out of her lungs. Gulping for air, she pulled herself up to a kneeling position. Thankfully, there hadn't been any traffic in the street before her fall. She shuddered to think what might've happened if there had been. Pressing a small hand to her forehead, she gathered her strength and tried to stand, but collapsed a few seconds later.

*Pull yourself together, she told herself. And stand up!*

Inhaling deeply, she aimed for the railing attached to the large stone wall beside her. Delicate fingers had almost succeeded, when a large hand cut through the darkness and clasped hers tightly. In an instant, powerful arms drew her up and against the very solid chest of a complete stranger. She gasped, effectively stunned by his presence.

*Sweet Jesus, they still make men like this?* Widening eyes took in his 6'3" frame and chiseled features.

She'd stared just a moment too long and found herself blushing at the amused glint in his eyes. He was obviously enjoying the blatant appreciation. She cleared her throat nervously and did her best to present a less interested front.

"Nasty spill you took," he said softly. "How's your head?"

*Spinning, thank you,* Alexandra sighed dreamily to herself. "It's nothing ..." She tried to suppress the butterflies in her stomach.

His hand brushed the hair at her temple aside to examine her, his eyes scanning her for any injury. A handsome face, matched by a very male physique, this man would make any healthy female swoon. *This* was the kind of stranger who inspired novels like the one she was presently reading.

*Abducting Angel* was easily the best capture fantasy she'd ever read. So much so, she'd spent three days searching all of Manhattan for a replacement when hers had gone missing. She'd had it with her the day she'd interviewed for her current employer - and that was the last time she could recall seeing it. Thankfully, it hadn't found its way into the wrong hands. A respectable company would never have hired a woman toting that kind of filth around with her!

*Especially not one who pined for such a thing.*

She grinned wickedly as one of the better scenes flashed through her mind's eye. Girl loses her way in a dark and dingy alley, gorgeous man manifests at the most opportune time ...



*Wonder if he's got any rope or blindfolds with him,* Alexandra giggled to herself.

She was staring again.

"Can you speak, Kitten?" he murmured against the soft tendrils framing her face.

The unusual tone in his voice jolted her back to her senses. Her stomach fluttered as his lips touched her hair, followed by an acute surge of panic when his fingers trailed across her cheek. A steamy encounter with such a man might be everything she'd hoped for, but this was a little fast-paced for real life! She placed her hands against his powerful frame and shoved with all of her might.

"Who do you think you are, talking to me this way?" She glared at him.

The stranger let her back away but did not release her. He watched in silence, a frown pulling at the corners of his mouth.

"I thought I was being rather friendly." He searched her face.

"I have plenty of friends already." She stepped backward, the words escaping her lips before she could stop herself.

He pushed his shoulders back and tilted his head to the side. Blue eyes narrowed slightly, and he appeared to be looking straight through her. His face took on an unusual expression she couldn't quite identify. It was rather unnerving, whatever it was.

"Surely one more wouldn't hurt?" he offered with a grin.

"No, thank you." The hair on the back of her neck was standing on end.

His jaw tightened and he gave her a piercing look. He appeared to be struggling with himself as he calculated his next move. Attempting to show little or no fear, she snorted loudly and turned on her heel to leave. She'd gone about ten paces when he called out from behind her.

"I don't think you fully appreciate the situation." His footsteps moved closer. "We can do this the easy way, or we can do it the hard way. But we *will* do it *my* way. Is that understood?"

She froze, the flush draining away from her cheeks almost as quickly as he'd put it there.

*Oh, my God, did he just quote ...?* She held her breath as trembling fingers clutched her purse. *Men don't read such things ... do they?*

Her mind was already reeling as he took hold of her arms and spun her around. Cornering her against the nearest building, he stretched a handkerchief across her mouth. That last sentence had left her in a daze, the fog of his words still consuming her. The gag wasn't even necessary -- she couldn't have screamed if she'd wanted to. At this point, her primary concern was waking herself up. This was certainly a nightmare, concocted by a shamefully deviant subconscious.

*But, if I'm dreaming, why are my panties so --*

Skilled hands interrupted her thoughts as silk ropes cinched her wrists together. Muscular arms closed around her waist, lifting her from the ground and draping her across his shoulder. The bindings weren't painful, but certainly snug enough to quash any doubts as to her state of consciousness. Reality was beginning to sink in, and Alexandra could feel the panic coming on.

"You have nothing to fear, Kitten." He seemed to have read her mind.

His voice brought it all home for her. Survival mode kicked in, and she began thrashing against his back as forcefully as possible. Which wasn't terribly impressive, given her 5'2" frame. Quickly, he carried her beneath the bridge and removed a set of keys from his trousers pocket. A loud clicking noise followed. From her vantage point, she could only see behind him, but she knew he'd just unlocked a car. This would be her last chance to call for help.

Taking a deep breath through the gag, she prepared to scream as loudly as possible, but the attempt died in her throat as he yanked her down from his shoulder. Her boots hit the pavement, and her focus rapidly switched to remaining upright. She'd just regained her

balance when something black slipped over her eyes. Bound, gagged -- and now blindfolded -- Alexandra nearly choked with fury.

*Careful what you wish for*, an obnoxious voice nagged from within.

He tossed her into the passenger's seat and closed the door. The blindfold was sheer, but far from transparent. Still, it wasn't totally opaque. For which she was thankful. The man climbed in beside her, and the sexy hum of a well-oiled motor was soon reverberating beneath her thighs.

"You're fine, Kitten." His voice was soothing as he leaned over to fasten her seatbelt.

*Sure seems that way*, her mind retorted.

She stiffened against the back of the seat, trying to appear calm and collected. Neither of which was she feeling. A muscular forearm stretched across her abdomen, and she felt a rush of excitement dart through her. She breathed in sharply and found her senses overwhelmed by the rugged scent of him. It was deliciously familiar. A tingling trickled down the back of her neck, and she crossed her legs, hoping to quell the heat radiating between her thighs.

*What kind of woman gets turned on by this kind of thing!* she shrieked at herself.

*You, dear*, a sadistic little voice whispered back.

"Are you sitting comfortably?" She jumped at the feel of his breath against the nape of her neck.

*Don't answer him!* She tried to shake the butterflies, but they were still there, racing around in the pit of her belly.

Her respiration had increased, and her heart was now pounding in her ears. She turned her head away, determined to ignore him. It just wasn't right, her wanton reaction to a total stranger. And one who was going to do God-knows-what to her!

Some twenty minutes had passed before they finally came to a stop. The car idled as something metallic began to scrape across the ground outside. She could hear the faint

turning of mechanical wheels and forced herself to stop imagining the worst. If only she could see something! *Anything!*

He drove the car forward again and slowed it to stop a few moments later. Her heart was still pounding. She could feel his eyes on her as he turned the engine off. Hearing the driver's door open and close, she bit down against the gag between her lips. Where had he taken her? He'd been silent the entire time, and she'd been too stubborn to try speaking. Not that she could have done much more than utter garbled nonsense.

She shifted nervously. Large footsteps fell across the gravel as he approached her door. A cool breeze swept through the car as he pulled it open, once more reminding her of the aroused state of her nipples.

"Are you going to walk, or shall I carry you?" His cheek brushed against hers as his hands slid along the length of her thigh. She shuddered as he unbuckled the seat belt.

*Emporio Armani.* She'd finally identified his cologne. *Excellent taste for a cold, heartless bastard.*

He gripped her waist suddenly. She began to squeal through the gag as he yanked her from the car.

"Maybe next time you'll have the courtesy to answer." He chuckled as he swung her over his shoulder again.

*Courtesy?! She couldn't believe the gall of this man. Courtesy!*

The chill seemed to vanish as he carried her through the night. She'd never felt so feverish as she did at this moment. A door creaked open in the distance, and her mind began to wander. She imagined her handsome abductor tossing her into a bondage den, ravishing her for days on end. Seducing her over and over again until she couldn't take any more.

*What's wrong with you?! Her mind broke the chain of thought almost immediately. You've been kidnapped by a lunatic -- not Clark Gable!*

A light pattering of footsteps grew louder as someone approached them. Someone to help the madman torment her, no doubt! *Stay calm ... stay calm ... let them think you've accepted your fate ...* She'd heard that in a movie somewhere, hadn't she?

"Should I prepare the bedroom?" The madman's assistant was remarkably soft-spoken.

She was unable to place his accent, though he most certainly was not Czech. This observation suddenly led to another -- her abductor was American. It had gone unnoticed in her earlier panic, but his accent was almost identical to her own, if not slightly southern around the edges. She wondered if he wasn't some homicidal maniac, hiding out in Europe to avoid a life behind bars. Or worse.

"If you could retrieve her purse when you park the car and then draw a bath in the master suite, that will be all for tonight," came the reply.

"Right away." The other man excused himself.

"Are you hungry, Kitten?" her captor asked.

She kicked him in response.

"I'll take that as a no," he sighed.

He carried her up some steps and pulled a door open. Stepping over the threshold, she flinched as it slammed shut behind them. Strong arms held her tightly, sliding her off his shoulder and placing her on a very comfortable chair. She squinted as he removed her blindfold. Grand curtains swept from floor to ceiling, covering stained-glass windows of the same height. Sparkling chandeliers hung beautifully over a dining table that could easily accommodate twenty or more guests. Handmade Persian rugs stretched luxuriously across well-polished floors.

"Don't get up." He gave her a look that said he was serious.

Keeping an eye on her, he turned toward an open door at the far end of the hall. Alexandra decided it best to do as he said. For now. She scanned her surroundings in silence, trying to determine the best escape route.

“Elsa!” He started unbuttoning the cuffs on his dress shirt.

An elderly housekeeper entered the foyer, smoothing her white apron as she stood before him. She eyed Alexandra briefly, seemingly unbothered by her presence. Neither the gag, nor tied wrists, appeared to leave an impression on her. Instead, she looked upon the kidnapper with great love and affection. The old woman must be mad. How else could someone observe such a sight and not protest?

“Yes, Lucius?” came the southwestern drawl.

”Cancel my plans for tomorrow,” he said.

“All of them?” She looked surprised.

“All of them.” He rolled the sleeves up slowly, exposing well-developed forearms.

A door opened and closed upstairs, and a small-statured man appeared behind Elsa a few moments later. Alexandra suspected this was same the man Lucius had spoken with earlier.

*There must be another set of stairs somewhere*, Alexandra mused, taking note for escape purposes.

“That will be all for now. Thank you both, and goodnight,” her captor said, loosening his collar.

The pair nodded simultaneously and left the room without a backward glance. Alone with him now, she watched him carefully. He approached her slowly, reaching his arms around her back and untying her wrists. Once released, she jerked the gag down in a fit of rage.

“Why did you bring me here?” she demanded angrily.

“Because you wanted me to.” He leaned against the wall and crossed his arms.

“You’re mad!” She slammed a tiny fist into the chair.

“You don’t want to be here?” Lucius raised an eyebrow.

“No!” She jumped to her feet.

He closed the gap between them quickly, his hands circling her waist as he brought her hips against him. Strong fingers lingered there for a moment, tracing her feminine silhouette slowly. She stiffened noticeably, fighting her body’s reaction to his touch. Seizing a mass of curls, he pulled her head to the side, exposing the graceful line of her neck. He grinned as she shuddered in response, a soft moan escaping her lips.

“I think you’re lying.” He lowered his mouth to the hollow of her throat.

He bit her gently, his skillful tongue running over the rapid pulse he found there. A second moan escaped her. Lucius chuckled softly at his obvious effect on her.

“What’s your name?” His fingers explored the ringlets cascading over his hand.

She turned away, too stubborn to answer.

His hand dove deeper into her hair, drawing her head back again, more forcefully this time. She would have crashed to the floor, had he not placed his other arm at the small of her back.

“Your name, Kitten,” he said in a low voice.

She smirked at his obvious displeasure. *Served him right*, she thought to herself.

Bristling at her audacity, he stole a kiss before she could annoy him further. His lips roamed across her cheek, nipping playfully as his mouth wandered. The sensation was riveting. Her head rolled back on her shoulders, and he held her to his chest possessively. As he drew her against his waist, her breath caught at the feel of his large member, and she was suddenly fearful of what he might do to her. She began to struggle frantically, almost slipping away before his fingers closed around her wrist.

“Enough! Let me go! I don’t want to be here!” she screamed.

He placed a large hand behind her knee and slid her leg over his hip, forcing her to straddle his waist as she stood before him. Alexandra blushed through her rage, cursing him loudly. Lifting her chin, his lips descended upon hers, ravaging them relentlessly. She felt

another fluttering and told herself it was fear, but she knew better, the proof of her desire now dampening her inner thighs. Ashamed of her weakness, she bit down. Hard. He withdrew his head sharply, running a finger across his wounded lip.

“I see you’ve chosen the hard way.” He stared at her icily.

Sensing the immediate danger in his voice, she stopped struggling. She didn’t want to anger him further. Not yet.

“Please, let me go,” she begged.

“I would, if I believed you really wanted me to.” He lifted her easily and began to climb the stairs.

*Now you’ve done it!!* she berated herself mentally.

Her heart beat rapidly within her chest. Should she fight? Should she call for help? It didn’t seem as though anyone would care if she did. He opened the bedroom door and carried her inside. Beautiful tapestries adorned the walls, and mahogany furnishings filled the room. A large four-poster bed lay covered in expensive silks of blue and silver. Matching blue curtains eclipsed the room from the outside world. The master suite was fit for royalty.

Lucius dumped her onto the bed and returned to lock the door. Removing the key, he placed it atop the grandfather clock in the corner. A smug grin on his face, he turned back to his captive. His gaze wandered freely as he unfastened the remaining buttons on his shirt. He smiled as she crawled to a far corner of the mattress and jumped down from the bed.

“Do you have a name?” He moved toward the bed.

“I won’t be here long enough for you to use it!” she snapped.

“Are you sure?” he asked quietly.

The question went unanswered. Her eyes never left the clock as he drew near. She might not be tall enough to reach the crest, but she could surely knock it over! Using herself as bait, she held her ground as he approached. Something easier said than done with every nerve in her body telling her to run.



*Don't move!* she told herself. *Let him think you're an easy target.*

"Kitten." He rounded the foot of the bed.

His voice was like a starter pistol. Faster than she'd thought possible, her body was up and over the mattress. As her feet hit the floor on the opposite side of the bed, she maintained her focus. Heart pounding, she knew this might be her last chance to escape. As she dove for the clock, a smile lit up her face. She'd outsmarted the bastard! Bracing herself for the collision, she gasped as a steely arm circled her waist and jerked her backward.

"Noooo!" she howled, clawing at his arms as he carried her back to the bed. "Let me go!!"

The grin on his face suggested he was enjoying this quite a bit. Tossing her back onto the bed, he wrapped his fingers around her waist and flipped her onto her stomach. Taken by surprise, she felt suddenly vulnerable. She tried to get to her knees, and he allowed it, moving behind her to pull her small frame against his chest. His hand shot through her hair again, forcing her head back until it rested against his shoulder. She fought to suppress another moan, not wanting to give him the satisfaction of hearing it.

"Is there a problem?" His lips teased a tiny earlobe.

"N-no," she stammered.

"No?" He nibbled a sizzling trail down her neck.

She turned away from his voice. It was making her wet. She hated herself for responding to him and prayed he wouldn't discover her weakness.

He cupped her chin and tilted her face toward his.

"Shall I kiss you?" His mouth hovered tantalizingly close to her ear.

She whimpered, shaking her head in earnest.

"I can't hear you." His hand came to rest on her waist. "Shall I kiss you?"

"Oh, God," she rasped. "Please stop -- why are you doing this to me?"

“Because you want me to, remember?” Skilled fingers trailed across her cheek as she writhed beneath him.

“Tell me your name.” His lips brushed against her shoulder.

Even now, she refused him. He reached around her waist and released the clasp to her pants with nimble fingers. She made a feeble attempt to reject his advance, but only succeeded in amusing him.

“Can I touch you, Kitten?” He toyed with the lace trim on her panties.

“No!” she exclaimed.

“Perhaps you would rather touch yourself,” he whispered.

He grabbed her right hand and swept it across her belly and into her panties, guiding her fingers downward until they reached the pink folds of her womanhood.

“Are you wet?” The man’s voice was a heady aphrodisiac.

She tried to withdraw her hand, but it was no use.

“Tell me.” He bit her neck cruelly.

She mewled blissfully and pressed her buttocks against him unconsciously. He inhaled sharply, making her suddenly aware of her behavior. Embarrassed, she tried to pull away.

“Don’t make me ask again.” A powerful arm closed around her waist.

“I don’t know ... I can’t ...” Alexandra pleaded, feeling deliciously humiliated before him.

“But I want to know.” His tone softened as he kissed her shoulder.

Chills washed over her body, and she trembled in his embrace.

“Please, don’t make me,” she cried.

He took her hand in his and removed it from her panties.

“Who’s going to touch you, then?” he murmured.

“No one!” she declared shakily.

“Is that right?” He sounded more amused than surprised.

“Yes!” She tried to free herself from his grasp.

Lucius wrenched her backward, turning her head to the side and biting the nape of her neck. She squealed with pleasure. Reaching around to the front of her blouse, he ripped it open to the waist. She shrieked in protest, clawing at him with her small hands.

“How dare you!” she said hotly.

He laughed softly.

“How dare I, indeed.” His tone was almost dangerous.

He tore the straps from her brassiere, her glorious breasts spilling into his eagerly awaiting hands. Rose-colored nipples hardened quickly beneath his expert touch. Mortified, she cursed her body’s blatant approval of this man.

“Don’t touch me!” she screamed.

He spun her toward him, massaging a creamy mound before taking a taut peak into his mouth and sucking hard. The shock of his warm lips was too much for her. She arched her back, running her fingers through his black hair. She lost herself, finally giving in to the fire spreading throughout her body.

He looked up.

“Do you like that?” he asked quietly.

Alexandra tried to bring herself back from the brink, to uncloud her senses. He knew she wanted him. Now he wanted to hear her say it.

“Tell me to touch you,” he commanded.

She tried to break free of his hold.

“Say it.” He jerked her against his chest.

“Touch me,” she whispered.

She lowered her head in shame. Was she really asking this stranger to touch her? He turned her back around and reached into the front of her panties, his fingers blazing a trail to the core of her arousal.

“You’re quite wet,” he observed, almost accusingly.

She blushed furiously, and her nipples hardened further.

“Are you ready to tell me your name?” he asked.

“No!” she said.

He grabbed a tender breast and pinched the tiny peak. She cried out in pain/pleasure.

“You will tell me your name,” he growled.

“I will not!” she spat.

He drew his teeth across her neck roughly. Her moans grew louder with every passing second. His free hand separated the swollen lips of her already throbbing pussy, and he slipped a finger inside of her. She gasped at his boldness.

“Stop!” she demanded.

Lucius covered her mouth with his left hand, silencing her as the other continued its mission. He dipped his finger into her wetness again and ran it over her clit, causing her to jolt against him.

“Liked that, did you?” He smiled.

She shook her head vehemently.

He repeated the motion, and she jolted again, this time writhing against him uncontrollably. He uncovered her mouth. “I want to hear you moan while I touch you,” he said huskily.

His thumb gliding back and forth against the sensitive jewel, his arms held her still as he penetrated her.

“Oh, God, please ...” She pressed herself against his hand.

“What is it, love?” His voice was soft.

“*Please.*” She wasn’t sure if she was begging him to stop, or continue.

“Your name.” He pushed further into her wetness.

“No,” she whimpered. “Why are you doing this to me?”

“I’ve already told you,” he said.

His lips went to her shoulder, devouring the softness as she began to writhe again. He placed his fingers against her lips and gently forced them into her mouth. She sucked on them instinctively, tasting the sweet nectar he’d created with his masterful touch. He withdrew them slowly, returning to her panties to let them brush lightly against her flesh. She shuddered violently. He stroked the tiny pearl until she was thrashing about like a whore.

“Shall I end this torture for you?” His voice reverberated through her body.

She threw her head back in approval.

“Your name,” he drawled. “Or I will leave you like this.”

She opened her mouth to protest.

“Or I will leave you like this.” He said each syllable slowly.

“*Bastard!*” she hissed. “My name is Alexandra!”

“Very good, Kitten.” His fingers caressed her cheek.

She slumped against his chest. He gave her a moment before pushing her forward and then onto her back, unnerving her with a bold stare.

“Are you frightened?” His voice was controlled.

“No.” Her chin jutted out defiantly.

“Pity.” He grinned devilishly.

He'd removed her boots before she even knew it was happening. Alexandra grimaced as they hit the floor with a thud. She should've kicked him where it counted while she'd had the chance. Skilled hands began to remove her pants, and she sat up to object.

"Lie down, or regret it," he said darkly.

Fear coursed through her, and she did as he said. He lifted her hips and peeled her pants off easily. She now lay naked before him, save for her panties. He got down from the bed to remove his own clothing. It was waist high on him. Truly, the largest bed she'd ever seen. He stripped himself of his jeans and shirt and returned to her side.

"Would you care to assist me?" His eyes twinkled as he indicated his boxer briefs.

"Cad!" Her cheeks burned with embarrassment.

"Let's not be unfriendly," he chided.

He leaned forward and let the boxers fall away from broad, strapping thighs, exposing his thick member for the first time. It was already quite large and looked to be in desperate need of relief.

She swallowed nervously.

"Alexandra ..." he said quietly.

She focused on the ceiling as he spoke.

"I'm going to make you scream my name."

Her eyes widened as his meaning became clear.

Lucius slid between her legs, tearing her panties from her body. Suddenly exposed, she tried to close her legs before he could slip between them. Strong fingers wrapped around her thighs as he forced her legs apart and dragged her toward him. The move sent her flat on her back beneath him, and she moaned with pleasure.

"I'm going to enjoy this," he said.

Slowly, his mouth discovered her wetness, lightly outlining the sensitive folds with his tongue. Fire shot through every nerve in her body as it flicked softly against her glistening treasure. She twisted wildly beneath him, unaware of her wanton display.

“How does that feel?” he asked roguishly.

She thrashed her head from side to side, lifting her hips toward his mouth and the source of her ecstasy. She didn’t care if it was wrong or right. She wanted him to ravage her. Her fingers slipped into his hair as he guided his tongue back to her clit, devouring it greedily.

“*Ohhhh!*” she cried out.

Her hands roamed across her body as his mouth roamed across her pussy. She tugged at her nipples as his tongue worked the tiny jewel into a frenzy.

“Say my name,” said Lucius.

Alexandra ignored him, focusing only on the intense fire burning within. She was raising her hips now, offering everything she had.

“Say my name, Kitten,” he repeated softly.

“I don’t want to!” She pouted stubbornly.

“You *will*.” His voice was full of authority.

He spread her legs further apart and plunged his tongue inside of her. She gasped, her hips thrusting in time with its movements. Withdrawing it slowly, he let it return to the hardened peak of her womanhood. He teased it for a few moments before his lips closed over it completely. She quivered as his mouth consumed her.

“Say it.” He bit the inside of her thigh.

“*No ...*” She arched her back, secretly wanting him to bend her to his will.

He ceased his attentions and tipped his head back slowly. Alexandra began to wriggle beneath him uncomfortably.

“Something wrong?” he asked innocently.

She moaned softly, unable to speak.

“Say my name, and I will continue.” His lips inched closer to her silky depths.

Clutching the bed sheets tightly, she squirmed as he tortured her mercilessly.

“Now.” His tongue returned to her softness, relentless in its advance.

“*Lucius*,” she cried out, hating herself for being so weak.

He took the sensitive peak into his mouth, and she yielded, at last, to his skillful touch. His tongue manipulated the tiny pearl, while his fingers stimulated the very core of her being. Holding her hips tightly to ensure contact, he increased his tempo. She was screaming now, and she didn’t care who heard her.

“Again,” he said.

His tone gave her chills.

“*Lucius!*” The sensation was unlike anything she’d ever experienced.

His lips closed over the tiny bead, and he began to suckle it. Gingerly, at first, more earnestly as her arousal intensified. Her body tensed beneath him, and she sat bolt upright with a loud gasp. Trembling with desire, she willingly called his name now, repeating it several times in rhythm with her orgasm.

Her eyelids fluttered for a moment, and she collapsed onto the silk sheets.



## Chapter Two

Lucius crawled over her body and lay beside her, gathering her limp frame against him protectively. She was unconscious, having expended every ounce of energy during her climax. He wanted her. Badly. However, he wanted her conscious when he took her. Wanted her to pleasure him first. He was a patient man. He'd waited more than six months for this night. A few more hours wouldn't hurt.

He studied the red-haired beauty lying beside him. She was deep in slumber, curled peacefully against his chest. Willingly nestled beside the man who'd captured her in the dark of night and carried her back to his bed. Sweeping a lock of thick, black hair from his forehead, he relaxed against the pillow as he recalled the first day he'd seen her.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Darr, it's my decision, now that my father's passed the reins over to me," Lucius said determinedly. "While he prepared for retirement last year, I spent most of it over there, scoping out the best location to set up shop. It's brilliant, really. The tourists alone will be enough to keep us alive."

Darrin Sinclair eyed him wearily.

“Look, Lucius. I’m not one to argue with you. I know better. I just want to be sure that you’ve thought about this. Former Soviet Bloc countries can be tricky, bureaucratically speaking. Even with something as benign as the family’s bar and grille. We’re already well established in Western Europe. Why the need to go East?” he asked.

“How many people can say their family escaped Communism? My grandfather’s home was seized and declared state property. Now that democracy has been restored, I’ve been able to negotiate its return. Since I’ll be over there anyway, why not make the most of it and expand the business?” Lucius replied.

“You have property there?” Darrin was surprised. “I guess I hadn’t realized you were that serious about the whole thing.”

“I’m not a child anymore. I’m aware of what I’m getting myself into.” Lucius smiled patiently.

“I know, I know. I guess sometimes I have trouble separating Lucius the nephew from Lucius my new business partner. Even if he has the slightly larger share.” He laughed good-naturedly.

Lucius grinned.

“And don’t you forget it! Listen, if it makes you feel better, I’ve already contacted Danilo, and he’s agreed to manage the property for me. I’m also taking Elsa,” he said.

“Elsa? Calling her out of retirement?” Darrin beamed.

“What can I say? It’s hard to pass up a good nanny.” The younger man laughed. “And I suspect she’s lonely now that John’s passed away. She’s offered to clean and cook for me. Keep me from starving over there.”

“Okay, fine.” Darrin sighed. “You’ve obviously thought this through. Can you at least humor your business partner and grant me one request?”

“Maybe,” Lucius said cautiously.

“Transfer someone from corporate over there to work with the Czechs. Stick them in the bar for a few months. Let them get a feel for what’s going on, so they can problem-solve without being at a disadvantage,” Darrin suggested.

Lucius’s hand ran over the knots at the nape of his neck. He leaned forward, trying to alleviate the pressure.

“It sounds reasonable, but for two small problems.” He flinched slightly as his fingers worked a muscle.

“Which are?”

“One: Where am I going to find someone willing to traipse halfway round the world to a former Soviet Bloc country they’ve possibly never heard of? And two: Where am I going to find someone with a university degree, willing to hustle it in a bar for a few months?” Lucius asked.

Darrin paused for a few moments.

“Yeah, I see your point.” He sighed again.

“It’s a good idea. Just a bit difficult to execute.” Lucius placed a comforting hand on his uncle’s shoulder.

Darrin removed his glasses and cleaned the lenses with the hem of his shirt.

“Okay, Lucius. Guess we’ll pass on that one. Let’s go downstairs and get some lunch.” He locked his filing cabinet and started organizing the papers on his desktop.

“Give me a minute to let Ms. Taylor know I’m leaving for the day.” Lucius headed for the receptionist’s desk.

He asked her to forward any important calls, and she was happy to oblige. They exchanged the usual pleasantries for the briefest of moments, and then Lucius bade her good day. As he made his way back to Darrin, the woman called out to stop him.

“Mr. Sinclair?” She raised a hand as if to flag him down.

He paused and turned around.

"I almost forgot ..." She held up a medium-sized plastic bag. "Someone left this behind -- what shall I do with it?"

"Any idea to whom it belongs?" He glanced at his watch.

"Well, um, no." She was blushing uncontrollably.

Lucius eyed her strangely. What could make a middle-aged woman so visibly embarrassed? Curiosity piqued, he crossed the room and took the bag from her. As he began pulling the handles apart, she motioned for him to stop.

"Please, sir, if you don't mind ..." She was beet red.

He stared at her for a moment. What had gotten into her? He gave her a quick nod and retraced his steps to Darrin's office. He could hardly contain himself by the time he passed through the door.

"What's in the bag?" Darrin asked as he shut his computer down.

"*That* --" Lucius looked down at the plastic in his hand "-- is an excellent question."

Taking note of the playful tone in his nephew's voice, the older man looked on with great interest.

"Well?" He craned his neck, trying to get a better view from where he was sitting.

Lucius reached in and pulled out a small notebook. Nothing on the inside cover, he thumbed through it until he found some writing.

- 1. Cancel subscription to Tied.com*
- 2. Donate rope collection to local BDSM club*
- 3. Pack silk scarves away*
- 4. Consider joining a convent -- you're never going to find a man brave enough to toss you over his shoulder and whisk you away.*

He raised a brow as he turned the page. What manner of kinky women were lurking about his office? His uncle cleared his throat impatiently, and Lucius skimmed the next memo.

“Mr. Sinclair, ten o’clock Wednesday morning. Bring references and diploma,” he read aloud.

Darrin nodded.

“The girl I interviewed this morning,” he said. “She must have set it down out there while she was waiting. Give it here; I’ll post it back to her.”

The younger man slipped the notebook back into the bag and tossed it across the room to his uncle. It turned upside down as it sailed over the coffee table, sending a paperback crashing to the floor.

“I’ll get it,” Lucius said.

Long legs carried him to the far side of the room where he knelt down beside the book. Snagging it from the carpet with nimble fingers, he reached toward the desk as he stood. Then stopped abruptly.

“*Holy Mary, Mother of Jesus,*” he mumbled as he brought the book closer.

Darrin looked up. “What is it?”

Lucius hadn’t heard him. He was too busy staring at the naked woman on the cover. She was bound, gagged, and blindfolded -- with what could only be described as sheer pleasure etched across her face. A remarkable sight. No wonder Ms. Taylor had been so flustered.

“Lucius?” His uncle tried again.

Fantastically oblivious, the younger man was already skimming through the book. He could hardly believe what he was reading. What kind of woman would buy such a raunchy thing? Someone debauched, surely. With strange piercings and stranger tattoos. No one he’d be interested in.

Still, the book was fascinating. Quite well written, in fact. He had to admit the idea of snatching a gorgeous woman off the street and having his way with her was far from being a

turn-off. In fact, he thought it best to put it away for now, lest his appreciation become obvious.

"I'll just hang on to it for a while, if that's all right. If she comes for it, it'll be easy enough to return." He shoved the novel into his back pocket.

Darrin sighed and shook his head. He looked too tired to argue about it. "Lunchtime." He grabbed his briefcase and headed for the door.

To an outside observer, the two men passing through the corridor might have appeared close in age, give or take a few years. The elder of the two was still dangerously handsome and shared many of the same rugged features his nephew possessed. He looked much closer to Lucius's thirty-three years than his own forty-eight. They took the stairs down two flights and entered the cafeteria from the side.

"I'm not terribly hungry right now, Darr. Maybe I'll just find us a table." Lucius glanced around the room.

"Get something over there in the back, would you?" Darrin suggested. "Less noisy."

"All right," he agreed.

Heading for a table against the far wall, he'd almost reached it when a loud crash sounded out behind him. He spun around to find a small figure kneeling beside an overturned tray, cleaning up whatever had just splattered across the floor. He couldn't see much more than that with the surrounding tables blocking his line of sight. A few men stood to offer their assistance, but a delicate hand waved them back to their seats. Lucius continued on to his table and sat down. He'd just spotted Darrin making his way through the line, when the same figure stood up and obstructed his view.

He inhaled sharply.

She wore a black, fitted blouse, the neckline supplying a view that would draw any red-blooded male's attention. A long, fiery braid trailed down her back, accentuating the

snug, floor-length skirt caressing her rounded bottom. She took a deep breath, the swell of her large breasts making him aware of a sudden pressure in his groin.

“Sure you don’t want anything?” Darrin’s voice cut through his thoughts.

“What?” Lucius murmured distractedly.

Darrin followed his nephew’s gaze.

“She’s a looker, ain’t she?” He chuckled as he sat down.

Lucius grunted his agreement.

“Now’s your chance to return her book,” Darrin said.

Lucius’s head snapped toward his uncle. “Say again?”

“That girl.” He nodded toward the redhead. “Alexis, or something like that. The one I interviewed this morning. Shame she was overqualified.”

The younger man couldn’t believe it. *That* girl was reading that book? She looked so *innocent*. So pure. So beautiful. She could have any man she wanted. Yet she yearned for someone to whisk her away in the dark of night.

Despite the dangerous ground it broached, the idea was making him hard. The odds of finding a woman like that had to be millions to one. He wasn’t about to let this opportunity slip through his fingers. Lucius Sinclair was a man who made things happen.

“Overqualified how?” he asked.

“Has a master’s in corporate management from Brown. Minored in lit. Artsy type. Was thumbing through some Kafka novel when I walked in to interview her.” He peeled the plastic away from his hero sandwich.

Lucius was slightly relieved to hear she was able to appreciate other genres of literature as well.

“Who has her now?” he asked, still drinking in the sight of her.

“No one. She’s pretty much fresh out of college, trying to find something to support herself until something better comes along.” Darrin opened his soda.

Lucius watched as she tidied up the area around her. She pushed the chair beneath the table, looking around for somewhere to leave the tray. The girl was spectacular, her effect on the men surrounding her obvious. Something he suspected she wasn’t even aware of. She collected her belongings and headed for the door.

“You still have her application, Darr?” He frowned as she disappeared through the exit.

“Yeah ... why?” Darrin said hesitantly.

“Offer her something in corporate management. In the Prague office.” He could already see it in his mind.

“But that office doesn’t exist yet! And she’s quite green for something of that caliber, Lucius,” Darrin protested.

“She’ll be trained there, starting with basic corporate procedure. Once the restaurant’s been operational for a month or two, she’ll split her time between the office and bar. After six months of hands-on training, she’ll be left in charge,” he said.

“Lucius,” Darrin began.

“It was your idea.” Lucius slapped him on the back.

Darrin shot him a look. “A lot of trouble for a one-night stand, isn’t it?” he said disapprovingly.

“It’s going to be more than one night.” Lucius tried to ignore the aching in his groin.

Erotic images of his tongue in her pussy flashed through his mind. Which inspired visions of her mouth wrapped around his cock, sucking him until he couldn’t take it any longer. He shifted positions in his chair.

“All right, Lucius. I’ll do it before I leave work today,” he promised.

“Good.” Lucius pushed his chair back and stood up.



“One more thing.” Darrin held a hand up.

“What’s that?” Lucius asked.

“What if she doesn’t want to go halfway round the world?” Darrin folded his arms across his chest.

“She’ll go,” Lucius said confidently.

“Yeah,” Darrin said doubtfully. “So if she says yes, when do you want to meet her?”

“Don’t mention me.” He slid his chair under the table. “She’ll meet me in due course.”

“I hope you know what you’re doing.” Darrin shook his head.

“Me, too.” Lucius winked.

### Chapter Three

A soft moan drew Lucius back to the present. The morning was flying by. She'd just snuggled closer to him, the scent of her hair conjuring childhood memories of cotton candy. Still sleeping, she appeared to be dreaming. She rolled onto her back, and the silk sheet fell away from her creamy breasts. He eyed them hungrily. The image of her tongue on his member returned, and he tried to calm himself. She mouthed something inaudible, her head tossing from side to side. What was she dreaming about, he wondered.

"Lucius ..." she called out softly.

His cock went rigid at the sound of her voice, and he lowered his hand to stroke it gently. She was dreaming of him. It was almost too much. Her hands went to her breasts, toying with rose-colored nipples as they hardened beneath her touch. He longed to take them into his mouth.

"Touch me," she called again, still dreaming.

He groaned. That was it. He straddled her slight form and placed her arms above the pillow, carefully, so as not to awaken her. He dipped his head quickly, suckling one taut peak and then the other. She pressed herself against him, her body surrendering to the man her

mind would not accept. He left her breasts in search of her lips, eager to sample the fullness of her mouth.

He placed two fingers against her sultry pout, slowly pushing them into her mouth. She ran her tongue over them, moistening them for his next conquest. He slid them out, placing them at the entrance of her womanhood.

Wet fingers brushed against her clit, and she shivered. Her pulse was already racing. He looked for signs of her awakening, but she was still deep in slumber. His fingers continued, and she began to undulate wildly. They entered her, slowly, and she sighed quietly. He very nearly lost control, bracing himself while he continued to explore her wetness.

She was rocking back and forth beneath him now, keeping time with his hand. He fucked her with his fingers, longing to replace them with his shaft. It took everything he had, to keep from driving his aching hardness into her depths. He drove a second finger into her soaked pussy and brought his lips to her ear.

“What are you dreaming of, Kitten?” he asked.

“Mmmm, Lucius ...” She was still talking in her sleep, grinding herself against his palm.

“Can you feel me inside of you?” He bit her shoulder, a bit more forcibly than he’d intended.

She was suddenly awake. Not yet cognizant, she took a moment to study her surroundings. Blue eyes came into focus, and she was instantly alert. She gasped again.

“Beast!” she howled. “Let me go!”

“Maybe later.” He grinned.

His mouth covered hers, and he bit her lip. Not as hard as she’d done earlier, but enough to repay the debt. She smacked him. He interrupted the kiss and gave her a dark look.

“Unwise,” he warned. “Don’t do that again, unless you’re prepared for the consequences.”

She looked furious. “Is there something worse than kidnapping?” she shrieked.

“You are welcome to test me.” His voice was low.

Eyes narrowing, she aimed a small hand at his face. He seized it in midair, and she panicked, twisting and trying to pull away. The wench actually called his bluff! Leaning forward, he brought his blue eyes closer to hers. She looked terrified. She *should* be! What was she thinking? He enjoyed a little rough play, but this is where he drew the line. No violence. If the girl would just relax and let him fulfill her damned fantasy, this whole thing would go much more smoothly.

“Time for a new game, Kitten.” He pressed her back down on the bed. “I hope you’re a fast learner.”

Lucius reached across her body and slid an arm toward the post behind her head. She was barely breathing, yet so very, *very* wet. The power of his barely contained fury made her tingle with lust, and she chastised herself for being so horribly twisted. His other hand grabbed her wrist, and she felt something soft close over it. She heard a muffled click and strained to see what he’d just done. He moved to repeat the procedure on the other wrist, and her stomach dropped.

He’d secured both arms in leather restraints and clinched the small rings together with a metal clasp. She was stunned. Never, not once, had she ever been tied to a bed. Or anything else, for that matter. Alexandra felt a warm sensation spread from her belly to the essence of her being. She told herself it was just a bad case of nerves. Something so barbaric couldn’t possibly arouse her this much.

When he’d finished binding her wrists, he straddled her, his manhood in front of her as he knelt over her. It was the first real glimpse she’d had of it, and she blushed, turning her head away.

“Look at me.” His fingers snaked through her long tresses.

“No!” she shouted angrily.

“Look at me, or I’ll tie your legs as well.” He sounded sincere.

She blanched at the thought. “You’re despicable!” she spat.

“Your body seems to think otherwise.” He appraised her hardened nipples.

“Liar!” she panted.

“The only liar here is you, love,” he said softly.

He swooped down upon her, forcing his tongue between her closed lips. She considered biting him again, but thought better of it. He thrust his tongue into her mouth, nibbling at her lips. Laying himself across her body, he took care to keep his weight from her. He raked his teeth along her jaw, and she cried out in pleasure.

“But what’s this? Do you like that?”

She pressed her throbbing mound against him, allowing the head of his member to breach the walls of her slick passage. Once again, she was losing control. She wrestled against the restraints and thrashed about wildly, half wanting her freedom, half wanting to be fucked.

“Untie me,” she begged.

“No.” His voice was firm. “When you misbehave, you will be punished.”

“Lucius!” She was pleading now.

He took her hands into his own and squeezed them gently.

“I want to feel your mouth on me, Alexandra.” His lips caressed her cheek.

“No ...” Her voice was shaky, her head in a daze.

“I want to feel your tongue run over my shaft.”

Her breathing was erratic now.

“I want you to suck me like a whore, Kitten.” He bit her neck.

She writhed beneath his muscular frame, wild with lust.

"If I untie your hands, do you promise to be a good girl?" His lips grazed her cheek.

"Yes ..." She barely recognized her own voice.

Reaching over her head, he opened the clasps on both restraints simultaneously. As he tore them from her wrists, he jerked her down the bed and sat her upright before him. He bent his head to kiss her, and she put her hands out to stop him. He shot her a menacing look, and she froze, whimpering slightly.

"You will do what's expected of you," he warned, his hand weaving through her hair.

She blushed under his gaze. He wrenched her backward, exposing her throat to him. His tongue forged a trail from her neck to her mouth, searing her lips with a savage kiss as she thrust her breasts against his chest.

Swinging his long legs over the side of the bed, he sat up and dragged her across his lap. She squawked indignantly, pounding his large, muscular legs with her fists. He yanked her forward again, his hand exploring the smooth curves of her bottom. As he moved between her thighs, she cried out, fully exposed and dripping with arousal. His fingers found her quickly, and she jolted in his lap.

"Do you like the way my fingers fuck your pussy?" He spoke the words slowly.

His voice was overwhelming. She threw her head back and moaned her approval. Stretched across his lap like this, her pink folds vulnerable and exposed, was like nothing she could have imagined.

"Can your mouth do the same for me?" He ran his fingers through her hair and forced her head back.

"Oh, God, yes!" she exclaimed as another finger slipped inside of her.

Lucius groaned and lifted her into his arms, carrying her to the top of the bed. Positioning himself between the bedposts, he got to his knees and let her slide down his chest to the mattress. His fingers slipped into her hair as he bent down to whisper in her ear.

“Are you ready, Kitten?” he asked softly.

The man’s voice was irresistible.

Driven by a blinding desire, she lowered her mouth to his silky manhood, eager to answer his question. Her lips closed around the tip, sucking gently as her tongue traced the outline. She opened her mouth to accommodate the rest of him, sucking greedily now, licking along his length as though he were a piece of candy. Circling his thickness with her hand, she began to mimic the motion of her lips.

Lucius pulled her curls away from her face and held them tightly in his hand. He guided her down the length of him, slowly, agonizingly, and back to the tip once more. He was controlling her speed, her movement, her mouth, and she was reveling in every second of it. Her teeth brushed gently against his flesh, and he groaned, the sound giving her a sense of power for the first time since her abduction.

His fingers withdrew from her depths, and he pulled her mouth away suddenly. Initially disappointed, she quickly recovered her wits, embarrassment creeping into her cheeks. They stared at each other for several moments before his hand slid down to his erection. Unable to stop herself, Alexandra’s gaze returned to his incredible member.

There was something very erotic about watching this man touch himself, knowing he was hard because of her. Nipples taut with need, she tried to distract herself with thoughts of freedom. A wicked smile touched his lips as he bent forward, dark blue eyes piercing her very soul.

”I’m going to fuck you now, Alexandra,” he whispered.

## Chapter Four

“Sir, please wake up.” The flight attendant shook Darrin gently. “We’ll be arriving in ten minutes.”

He sat up and looked around the plane. Passengers were preparing for landing, returning seats to their upright positions and placing belongings in the overhead compartments. Stifling a yawn, he grabbed his glasses from the empty seat beside him, returning them to their natural habitat atop his aquiline nose. The flight had been smooth, but he was still impatient to land. He tucked his belongings away, directing his attention to the window as they continued their descent. Peering through the glass oval, he tried to imagine which tiny speck was the newest Greenwich Grille.

Darrin had to hand it to his nephew; the restaurant was really taking off. The grand opening had been a huge success, and they were already getting the bulk of their main competitor’s patronage. The flowcharts over the last three months had been outstanding, and there was every indication it would continue in the same vein.

His Prague liaison had arranged a number of tours for him tomorrow, and he was looking forward to it. Five years was too long for anyone to go without a holiday, but tonight he just wanted to sleep.



Tomorrow evening he'd pop into the restaurant and see how it was coming along. Covertly, of course. Something easily accomplished, considering most of the employees had yet to meet him. Then on Monday, he'd surprise Lucius at the office and follow up on how Alexandra was settling in. His nephew had been somewhat mysterious when last questioned about her, and his curiosity was now piqued.

\* \* \* \* \*

Fear flashed across Alexandra's face as she slid backward on the bed, her captor's brazen words looming heavily in the air between them. She could still feel his mouth on her tender nipples, her sex dripping with want for the feel of him. Frantically, she tried to cover her breasts with one hand, the partially exposed jewel between her thighs with the other.

Tilting his head to the side slightly, a slow, deliberate grin spread across his striking features.

"Going somewhere?" he asked quietly.

She withdrew further in response to his inquiry.

Lucius's right hand was still moving up and down his length. A chill ran up her spine. He was sizing her up, the way a tiger might his prey. She felt a light fluttering in her belly, accompanied by a surge of wetness between the soft folds she so desperately wanted to conceal.

Alexandra tried to suppress the unthinkable urge to watch this gorgeous man touch himself again, but she was unable to. Slowly, her gaze ventured downward, lingering just a little too long after reaching its destination. Filled with trepidation, she veered toward the opposite side of the bed, hoping to thwart his plan. He lunged forward and wrapped a hand around her upper thigh, holding her still.

"You have no right to keep me here!" Her voice was full of panic.

He grabbed her other thigh and jerked her forward. She lost her balance and landed on her belly. He slapped her bottom soundly.

“You’ll regret that!” she vowed angrily.

His arm encircled her waist and lifted her to a kneeling position, her back molded to his chest as he slid off the mattress and stood next to the massive bed. He ran a hand through her locks and pulled her close.

“Remember this?” He bit her neck softly.

Alexandra’s legs quavered. Her nipples were so taut, she almost cried out in pain. His hand found her throbbing center and pushed two large fingers inside. She arched her back against him, purring with unexpected pleasure.

“Stop ...” she begged.

“Or what?” he whispered.

She’d almost replied, when she realized he was needling her. Mocking her. Suddenly furious, she summoned all of her strength and slammed an elbow into the soft flesh just above his groin. While the blow wasn’t damaging in the slightest, it was enough to take him by surprise for the few seconds needed to free herself. She flew off the bed, collecting her white blouse from the floor as she raced toward the large, wooden door. A door he’d already locked.

*Damn it!* She cringed with the realization she wasn’t going anywhere.

Yet.

Alexandra turned around. He was moving closer. Slowly. Grinning from ear to ear, the smug bastard! She faced the grandfather clock and paused as something else drew her attention. A glass vase shimmered from its perch on the shelf beside it. It looked expensive. Without thinking, she snatched it up and held away from her body, letting it dangle precariously.

He stopped abruptly, and she smiled. Something he valued, no doubt. "Back up." Her confidence was returning now.

His eyes darkened as he took a step backward. She could hardly contain her elation! She was finally in control! Keeping her eye on him, she dragged an armchair away from the wall and pushed it against the clock. Still dangling the vase, she climbed onto the chair, feeling above the clock until her fingers touched the key. Freedom was finally in sight!

She jumped down from the armchair, carefully inching her way to the door behind her. He hadn't moved. His expression was cold, his emotions well hidden from view as she placed the key in the lock. Flinging the door open, she took the vase in both hands and shot him a dirty look.

"I can see myself out," she said with a smirk.

He took half a step in her direction, and she raised the vase above her head. His eyes narrowed as a catlike grin spread across her face.

"Catch!" She hurled it away from him, forcing him to dive across the room in order to save it.

By the time he did, she was already in the hallway. The stairs were to the right. He'd be expecting her to take them down to the foyer and wouldn't be far behind. Which meant she risked capture before she could get through the front door. Better to let him think she'd gone that way, but hide instead. She could slip out the front door once he'd given up his search.

She faced left and ran as fast as she could for the end of the hall. The bedroom door crashed against the wall behind her, and she knew she had only moments to disappear. A second door stood slightly ajar, and she dove through it, taking care to close it silently behind her. She stood motionless in the dark room, trying to will herself invisible. He was out there, waiting for her to give herself away.

Pressing her ear to the door, she listened carefully, wondering if he knew where she was. She flinched to think what he might do to her, if he got his hands on her again. A draft caressed her exposed nipples, and she shivered. Unfolding her blouse, she draped it across her shoulders, wishing her captor hadn't destroyed the buttons. The white shirt didn't hide much. Her bottom was slightly visible, and so was the rest of her! But her breasts were covered, and that was better than nothing.

At least ten minutes had passed, and there was no sign of him. He must be downstairs, she thought. Fearful he might return any minute, she needed to be quick about locating a new hiding place. She reached for the doorknob and quickly froze as something metallic scraped against the other side. A loud clicking noise followed. Swallowing nervously, she turned the doorknob and pulled it toward her. It wouldn't budge. She tried again.

Terror washed over the redhead as her situation dawned on her. He knew where she was. He'd locked her in. She strained to make out the objects in the room, but it was pitch black, the curtains drawn completely. Running a hand across the wall, she searched for a light switch. Nothing.

A faint glow drew her attention from across the room, and she tiptoed ahead cautiously. It was very low to the ground, spilling into the room from beneath a second door. She knelt down and tried to peer beneath it, hoping to get a glimpse of the other side. Her efforts were useless.

*Maybe it locked automatically, she told herself. Surely, if he knew where I was, he'd have taken me back to the bedroom by now ...*

She'd had a longstanding fear of the dark since childhood. At this point, she wanted nothing more than to leave this blackened room behind for the one next door. No matter what lay in wait for her there. She told herself he wouldn't have the patience to wait this long -- he must not know her whereabouts. Therefore, the other room must be safe.

The logic was flawed, but her desire to leave the darkened quarters behind was intense. Twirling the brass handle slowly, she pushed the door open, fully prepared to snatch it back at the first sign of danger. Her shoulders slumped in relief. No sign of her captor. Thank God!

Alexandra recognized this room as the master bath she'd seen when he'd first carried her into his bedroom. That familiar torture chamber sat just beyond the black marble floors covering this extravagant room. Pale yellow candles of various shapes and sizes were scattered about the perimeter, forming a loose circle around the oversized bathtub located in the center of the room. A vast mirror, trimmed with silver filigree, covered the wall between Lucius's bedroom and the room she had just left. Spanning from floor to ceiling, its size was no less than astounding.

In its reflection, she noticed a pair of large washbasins fastened to the wall behind her. Hand carved soaps of lavender and rose lay stacked upon handsome dishes of silver. Bath salts of various colors sat neatly in tiny glass containers. Bottles of expensive cologne lined the marbled wall. Beautifully hand stitched towels lay smartly folded upon the countertop.

*Who would've thought such a boorish man could decorate so elegantly?* she thought to herself.

Her gaze wandered to the left of the washbasins, where two large objects hung from the wall. At first glance, they appeared to be towels, but they were too large. As she moved closer, she realized they were bathrobes. "His" and "Hers," to be more precise. She froze in her tracks, jealousy suddenly consuming her.

*It would seem he's had some help!* Her eyes narrowed at the thought.

She couldn't believe it! This man had a woman. One who possibly lived in this house! Anger replacing her earlier fear, tiny feet stomped across the cool tiles. Seething by the time she reached his bedroom door, she grasped the knob and twisted it furiously.

Locked! "Bastard!" Her fist pounded against the door.

"Impolite to speak ill of your host," a deep voice chided her from behind.

She resisted the urge to faint as the blood drained from her limbs. Steadying herself against the door, she turned to face him. He'd been standing behind the other door the entire time, waiting patiently for her to corner herself.

"That door is locked," he said. "You won't be able to open it."

The young beauty stared in silence. He must be furious with her. Distancing himself from the door, Lucius let it close behind him. Standing shirtless before her, he'd donned a pair of loose-fitting pajama trousers since she'd last seen him. He placed the small key above the mahogany doorframe, well beyond her reach.

"You'll not be opening this one, either." His tone was piercing.

Flattening her back against the door, she found herself wishing for a pair of ruby slippers. She scanned his face for any clue of what was to become of her, but his features were expressionless and she couldn't read him. Looking the room over, she searched for something she might use to defend herself. She succeeded only in rediscovering the bathrobes that had infuriated her earlier.

They had the same effect this time. "Isn't one female enough for you?" she spat, her fear evaporating quickly.

His eyebrows rose slightly. "How many do I have?"

"Where's the woman who owns that robe?" She pointed a condemning finger at the matching garments.

"If you find its presence disturbing, I can have Elsa bring you a replacement."

"I won't be needing one!" She wanted to scratch his eyes out.

"I agree." He grinned.

Alexandra blushed furiously at the innuendo. This man was incorrigible! She ran to the washbasins and snatched a soap dish from the counter. Her lips curled into a snarl as she hurled it across the room at his head. Her aim was quite bad, but she took great pride in the

horrible echo that sounded as it crashed into the mirror. Pity neither it, nor he, appeared damaged!

His gaze remained locked on her the entire time. He hadn't flinched -- and he wasn't amused. Suddenly, and with lightning speed, he rounded the bathtub, closing the distance between them in seconds. She gasped as his hand wrapped around her arm. Without thinking, she bit him as hard as she could. His grip loosened slightly, and she managed to free herself, scowling at him with all her might.

She hurried to the other side of the bathtub, placing herself opposite her abductor. He began circling it slowly, calculatingly, forcing her to keep moving. Waiting for her to falter. The panic rose steadily within her. The trap was inescapable. For just a split second, she looked down at her footing, and he grabbed her wrist from across the water, bringing a stunned expression to her face.

"Problem?" He smirked.

"No." She tried to sound calm.

"Perhaps you'd like the robe, after all?" he asked mischievously.

"I would *not*!" she growled.

"Suit yourself." He yanked her forward into the water.

It was still warm, thanks to a large heating plate that lay under the bath. Nevertheless, it was still a shock to her system. She flounced about in a right tizzy, trying to stabilize herself enough to stand up. Clutching the edge of the tub, she leaned against it, hoisting herself out of the water in a fit of rage.

"How dare you!" she screeched. "How *dare* you!"

Alexandra clawed at his face, but he stepped gracefully aside. Dark, red locks enveloped her body, the white blouse clinging to her full breasts. Hardened, pink nipples were now visible through the thin material. He took one large stride and reached for her, crushing her form against his bare chest.

Even standing in the bath, she was nearly six inches shorter than he was. He bent forward, swiftly covering her mouth and kissing her with a savage need. She fought like a wildcat, trying to liberate her mouth from his. He placed his hands on either side of her waist and turned her around, her back now pressed against his chest. She challenged him loudly and then, very suddenly, went silent.

They were facing the magnificent mirror she'd been admiring earlier. She took in the sight before her and was all at once transfixed. Pert nipples shone through a blouse which barely covered her breasts, wet hair trailing gently across her shoulders. She looked like an island wench waiting to be plundered by pirates. Behind her, the half-naked form of the most sexually potent male she'd ever encountered.

Hypnotized by the erotic reflection, she watched his hands slide across her shoulders, pulling her blouse away from them. He ran his tongue over the skin at the nape of her neck, and she arched slightly against his lips, still focused on their reflection. He tugged at his pajama strings and let the pants fall to his ankles, stepping out of them as they hit the floor. His arms went around her narrow waist and hauled her out of the water, placing her next to the tub.

"Would you like to watch me fuck you, Kitten?" His words penetrated her fascination with the mirror.

She trembled against his chest, her pussy wet with need. She squeezed her eyelids shut and shook her head slowly. "No ..." she said weakly.

"Open your eyes, Alexandra." He cupped a large breast possessively, tugging gently at her nipple.

She did, once again spellbound by the scene before her. The effect was powerful. Placing his lips against her neck, he bit her sharply. She yelped in pain/pleasure, her attention locked on the reflection. He turned his head and looked at her image in the mirror. She wanted to look away, break the spell, but was powerless to do so. He held her gaze while



his hand swept across her waist, slowly descending until it reached the silky lips between her thighs. She closed them instinctively.

“You know better.” He bit her shoulder, hard.

She cried out, trying to knock him off balance by thrusting herself against him. Using both hands, he forced her legs apart. His right palm slid over her clit, and she jumped. His left hand clasped one wrist and then the other, immobilizing her arms behind her back.

“There will be no more struggling, Alexandra,” he informed her.

His words sent an electric shock through her entire body, and she groaned. She felt vulnerable in his presence, yet somehow excited in ways she never thought possible. Her very helplessness made her wet with a woman’s need. She was only just beginning to understand the power this man could wield over her body. Her mind reeled as he prepared to take her.

“Look at me,” he demanded.

Tentatively, her gaze met his in the mirror, unable to refuse his command.

“Tell me, how does this feel?” he asked huskily.

He drove two fingers into her wetness, his thumb covering the tiny pearl. Her heightened state of arousal made it difficult to concentrate, and Alexandra’s head fell backward.

“You will watch me touch you.” His grip on her wrists tightened.

Reluctantly, she complied. It was no easy task. A soft protest escaped her lips as he withdrew his fingers and released her.

“Don’t move,” he warned.

Knowing she couldn’t escape, she did as he instructed. She followed his reflection in the mirror as he knelt beside the bath and opened a small box, removing a plastic bottle from it. She shifted nervously, wondering what it contained.

“Curious?” he asked her reflection.

Brassily, she turned away. His left arm shot out and hooked around her waist. He dipped his head and bit the nape of her neck. Her moan was ragged.

“You were told to look at me, Alexandra,” he said slowly.

Her reflection revealed both fear and desire. He looked incredible, towering behind her that way. This shameless domination would absolutely infuriate her were she not presently so turned on by it. His right hand covered the soft swell of her breast as he toyed with a nipple, drawing small, deliberate circles around it.

Almost immediately, an unfamiliar sensation tickled her skin as his fingers blazed a trail across her breasts. As they left one in search of the other, she could feel a tingling where his hand had just been. It felt exquisite, whatever it was. She was grinding against him, eager to share the experience with her other nipple.

His hand swept over her mouth, two fingers slinking between her lips. Impulsively, she ran her tongue over them, surprised to find them covered with a strawberry-flavored syrup. She took his fingers deeper into her mouth, their length disappearing easily as she tilted her head back. She was losing herself in the act.

Lucius withdrew his fingers and let his hand fall to his side. He walked around to face her, his back to the mirror now. Observing her steadily, he laid the bottle against the curve of her neck and turned it upside down. The glittering syrup trickled down her breasts and over her belly. As he poured the contents with one hand, the other massaged it into her creamy skin.

He leaned forward, kissing her savagely. She closed her eyes and surrendered her mouth to him. He devoured her hungrily, moving her hair aside to run his tongue along the trail he'd created. Following the path to her breasts, he took a firm peak into his mouth, suckling greedily. He dropped to his knees suddenly, powerful fingers closing over the soft curve of her bottom. She worked her hands through his black hair while his mouth explored

her skin. Alexandra opened her eyes slowly. His mouth followed the light pink trail down her belly, nipping her gently along the way.

She was wet beyond imagination, and he inhaled deeply. Eyes closed, he thrust his tongue inside, sighing contentedly against her soft mound. She was fixated on the image of him between her thighs. It was almost pornographic, watching her own seduction take place.

His tongue caressed the tiny bead, relentless in its raid on her senses. She drew his head closer and matched his rhythm, thrusting her hips against him, her senses heightened by witnessing her own performance. His tongue returned to the heart of her womanhood, piercing her with its warmth.

Panting uncontrollably, she thrashed above his shoulders, delirious from his touch. She was close. He replaced his tongue with his fingers and raised himself to a standing position. His eyes searched hers for a moment, and she shuddered, savoring the feel of him as he moved behind her.

“Are you ready for me?” He wrenched her hips backward, letting her feel his cock against her bottom.

Her lips parted slightly as the fluttering returned to her stomach.

“I can’t hear you.” He leaned forward and placed his lips close to her ear.

His fingers plunged deeper, and she whimpered, nodding her weak reply. His free hand went to her hair, placing her head against his shoulder.

“Answer me,” he said firmly.

She stuck her bottom lip out, her stubbornness beginning to resurface.

Lucius stepped back toward the bath, sat down on the edge of the tub and pulled her onto his lap. He thrust a knee between her legs and spread them apart without warning. Mouth agape, she was suddenly very aware of his member nestled between her soft folds. Her eyes widened, and he probed her wetness gently, testing her readiness for him.

His hand drifted downward in search of his prize, claiming it possessively with his fingers. The tiny pearl hardened beneath his touch, his shaft teasing her pussy erotically. She ached for him, needed him, for reasons she couldn't begin to understand. He slid further inside, and she gasped.

"Do you like that?" he whispered, his fingers still toying with her clit.

He increased his speed, and she began to grind her sex against the palm of his large hand. She was nearing the brink, murmurs of pleasure escaping her lips. Her hands clung to his thighs, and she pressed her back against his chest, granting him full access to her treasures. His lips brushed against her shoulder, his teeth sinking into her flesh as she clawed at his thighs. He ran his tongue along the curve of her neck, ruthless in his conquest.

"God, yes ..." she cried.

"Shall I fuck you now, Kitten?"

Alexandra squeezed her thighs together seductively, the soft, inner walls tightening around his manhood. He placed his hands on her hips, and she bucked wildly against him, striving to lower herself onto his perfect male organ. She began to writhe impatiently, her need obvious.

"Lucius." Her eyes pleaded with him.

"Yes, love?" He nipped playfully at her ear.

"Don't make me beg," she whispered.

"For what?" He grinned at the mirror.

She moved her hips in a circle, trying to entice him further. He gripped them tightly and held her still while his hand returned to the delicate bead, lightly caressing it with the tips of his fingers. She squealed with delight. He increased the tempo until she was once more on the edge of climax. Then stopped abruptly.

Alexandra shrieked with frustration.

"Something wrong?" Lucius asked casually.

“I want to feel you inside of me ...” She was becoming quite the little tart.

His breath caught in the back of his throat, much as it did the first time he’d seen her. He penetrated her quickly, filling every inch of her. He closed his eyes tightly. Good God, she was deliciously tight. He leaned over her shoulder and drank in the sight before him. Her eyelids were half-closed as he took her. Taut, pink nipples stood proud against pale breasts as they heaved up and down. She seemed lost in another state of consciousness. Soft mewls escaped her lips with each thrust, slender legs stretched across his lap, her hands pinching her nipples gently.

He took her wrists and pinned them against the curve of her hips.

“You will not touch yourself unless I tell you to.”

She started to object, but fell silent as his arousal invaded her. Her mewls grew louder with each thrust, and he groaned. Releasing her wrists, he lifted her carefully, spinning her around in his lap. He drove into her with a newfound vigor, red hair spilling across her face as her head fell forward. He cupped her chin, smiling as her lips parted freely. An invitation he quickly accepted.

Alexandra ran her fingers through his hair, his kiss deepening as she returned it. Laying her hands on his chest, she flattened her palms against his pecs, sighing in obvious admiration. Lucius smiled at her unabashed response. So innocent, yet so very wanton. Her potential was limitless, and he would take his time helping her achieve it. He let her touch him for a few moments before his hand dove into her fiery tresses and bent her backward. His tongue caressed the hollow of her throat, as he licked and nipped at her playfully. Alexandra clutched at his shoulders, her nails scraping his back as he filled every inch of her. His hands went around her waist and grasped her tightly.

“Still wish I hadn’t found you?” he whispered.

Her moan was instantaneous. She began to thrash about wildly, her vaginal muscles contracting as he plunged deeper and deeper. He was battling for self-control. She was

already tight to begin with, but this was almost too much to bear. He bit his lip and tried to steady himself, but she continued, overwhelmed with sexual frenzy.

He reached around and slapped her across the ass, hoping to distract her long enough to stop her breathtaking assault on his member. Instead, the feel of his hand across her buttocks only seemed to intensify her crazed state. She thrust her hands into his hair as he ravished her, drawing his lips to hers. Her tongue explored his mouth as her hands wound around his neck. He returned the kiss, tickled by her sudden change in personality. She turned his head to the side and bit his neck. He felt a quiver in his stomach and fought the urge to pin her to his chest and fuck her like the harlot she was pretending to be.

“Do you like my pussy, Lucius?” she asked saucily.

His eyes darkened, and he did not trust himself to respond. She was undulating now, letting him penetrate her from every angle. He could only stare as she made the transformation from innocent girl to passionate woman. The girl was a natural vixen.

“Are you going to make me come?” She ran her tongue across her lips.

He clenched his teeth, determined to maintain his composure. He rose to his feet, his erection still sheathed by her glistening thighs. He carried her to the marble countertop and sat her down gently.

“Yes, Kitten, I am.”

Her nails raked over his shoulders, and she bit him sharply. He took her wrists into one hand and anchored them to the counter behind her, bringing her hips forward and immobilizing them. She looked stunned, gasping in response to his forceful reaction. He drew two fingers into his mouth and then swept them across her clit. Her hips lifted automatically, and she tightened her vaginal muscles against his hardness.

“Minx ...” he growled accusingly.

“Fuck me,” she begged shamelessly, her head rolling from side to side.

He slammed into her with all of his might. She screamed aloud, waves of orgasm crashing over her.

“Yes!” she exclaimed. “Fuck me!”

Alexandra tried to free her wrists, but he held them still against the counter. She squirmed excitedly before him, virtually electrified by his display of strength. She met his next thrust eagerly, wrapping her slender legs around his waist. Eyes closed, body melded against him, she was no longer herself. She wanted to drown in the pleasure this stranger was creating, regardless of how she’d ended up here. Rocking back and forth, she whispered incoherently, coming closer to a second orgasm with every passing second.

“Do you like the way my cock feels inside of you?” He nibbled at her jaw line.

The power in his voice made her shiver. She was oblivious now, consumed by her desire for this man.

“*Lucius!*” Her hips swayed back and forth.

His fingers were now entwined in her hair. He pulled her head to the side roughly. Thighs trembling as her second orgasm began; his masterful handling was driving her over the edge. He leaned forward and bit her shoulder, orgasm suddenly upon them both.

“LUCIUS!” She called his name as he held her against him.

A low groan escaped him, and he kissed her violently. Her body went rigid as she came, just as his own orgasm reached its pinnacle. She fell against his chest, and he held her there for several moments, kissing her forehead before brushing the damp, red curls from her face.

Lucius gathered her into his arms and carried her to the bedroom door. Cradling her securely against his chest, he grabbed the key and pushed it into the lock, nudging the door open slowly. He carried her to the bed and laid her gently across the mattress, draping the

covers across her small frame. As he slipped in beside her, his arms closed around her possessively.

“You were magnificent, Kitten,” he said softly.

She curled up against him, smiling peacefully as sleep overtook her.



## Chapter Five

Lucius yawned and glanced around the bedroom. A soft, orange glow filled the room as sunset filtered through parted curtains. It was almost six o'clock, and he was starving. He stretched for a moment and sat up.

"Kitten." He smoothed her silky locks with the palm of his hand.

She moved slightly, but didn't awaken fully. He smiled, remembering what had exhausted her so thoroughly.

"Are you hungry, love?" he whispered against her cheek.

Murmuring softly, she squinted dramatically, peering at him through lowered lashes.

"What would you like for dinner?" he asked.

"I don't want to wake up yet," she pouted, turning away from him.

He reached over and turned her toward him, yanking the covers from her bare skin with one swift movement. "You need to eat." His voice was firm.

"I don't *need* to do anything!" She shot him a dirty look as she grabbed for the sheets. Her eyes narrowed into tiny slits as his grip on them tightened. "Give me the covers back!" she demanded.

"Careful." He tilted his head to the side and gave her a warning look.

“Or what?” she huffed. “You’ll let me freeze to death?”

“Or *this*.” He yanked her forward, sending her crashing into his lap. Sitting astride him now, her look of pure outrage was enough to make him chuckle. “Lovely fit, wouldn’t you say?” Blue eyes twinkled shamelessly.

She could feel the heat spread through her cheeks as she tried to slide away from his lap. The warmth of their naked bodies pressing against each other was difficult to ignore. “You’re depraved,” she declared, trying to disentangle herself from his grasp.

He gave her a wounded look. “It pains me to hear you say that.”

“If only it were that easy,” she mumbled, crawling out of his lap to lie back down on the bed.

A tapping sound drew his attention away from her before he could reply.

“Yes?”

“Will you be taking supper upstairs this evening?” Danilo called from the other side.

“Excellent idea, Danilo.”

“I’ll just leave the tray here.” The sound of clinking glass drifted through the door as he placed it on the floor. “Will that be all?”

Lucius smiled at how well the Portuguese man knew him. “Yes, Danilo,” he replied. “Thank you.”

He crossed the room in the direction of his armoire. Alexandra couldn’t help but stare as he walked. The man moved like a large cat -- slow, confident, sexy. The muscles in his body rippled beneath golden skin. And what a magnificent body it was.

“Hungry yet?” he called over his shoulder as he selected a pair of pajama trousers.

“No,” she lied.

He donned the pajama bottoms and turned to face her, a look of concern on his face.

“You’re not one of those women who never eats, are you?” He raised a brow.

Alexandra blushed. She was hardly thin enough to warrant asking such a question. The man was clearly being derisive. She clutched the sheets and pulled them around herself more tightly.

"It's quite obvious I am *not*." She glared angrily.

"Good." He nodded. "I have no use for a skinny woman."

Alexandra's mouth fell open. Was he calling her fat? "How fortunate for you, then!" She was seething now. "You must have been ecstatic when a big fat cow wandered into your path last night!"

Lucius furrowed his brow. "If you believe I think you fat ..."

"Please don't bother qualifying the statement," she said hotly. "I'm not an idiot."

His frown deepened. "Contrary to popular belief, stick-figured women are not attractive."

She snorted in disbelief.

"Do you really think you'd be here now if I didn't find you -- and your figure -- irresistible?"

"I don't presume to understand the mind of a lunatic."

"I think you *do* understand I have nothing to gain by lying." He sighed. "You're already here."

It was a good point. He didn't need to coax her back to his place. He'd simply stolen her off the street and locked her away! Lucius opened the bedroom door and brought the tray in from the hallway. Elsa had put together a platter of vegetable soup, salad, meats, and cheeses. Light fare, but one that would certainly hold them over until morning.

"How do you take your tea?" he asked, setting the tray on top of the armoire.

"In my own kitchen," she sneered, her eyes narrowing as he struggled to suppress a grin.

"Your choice." He shrugged. "Sulk long enough and your only option will be 'cold.'"

Alexandra gritted her teeth. She'd never met a man so skilled at turning her own wit against her. Something she found infuriating -- but equally intriguing.

"Five sugars, no milk," she grumbled.

Lucius's head whipped around toward the redhead. "You can't be serious."

She rolled her eyes. What was wrong with five sugars?

"You may have *three*." He dropped the tiny cubes into her teacup.

Alexandra bit her tongue angrily. What arrogance! "*Five* will do nicely, thank you." She tried to control her temper.

He ignored her as he carried the saucer to the night table and set it beside her. She looked at him incredulously. He was serious. "What kind of man dictates someone's sugar allowance?" she snapped.

"The kind who won't see his investments badly managed." He crossed the room and pulled the drapes open.

"*Investment?*" she howled. "What are you, some kind of flesh peddler?"

Lucius shot her a piercing look. "I am not." His tone was sharp. "What kind of man do you take me for?"

Alexandra swallowed. She hadn't expected so strong a response. "Excuse me," she muttered. "How was I to know you draw the line *somewhere?*"

He seemed to ignore the barb as he retrieved the tray from the armoire. Carrying it back to her, he laid it down at the foot of the bed. "Help yourself," he said as he walked toward a large cabinet opposite the bed.

Her stomach growled loudly, unwilling to aide in her pretense of not being hungry. Grudgingly, she selected a soup bowl and dipped a spoon into it. *Not bad*, she thought herself. It was too good to be store bought. The housekeeper must have made it herself.

“Anything in particular you’d like to watch?” Lucius indicated a tower of DVDs.

Alexandra glanced up to find a massive television staring her in the face.

“Oh.” The word escaped in her surprise. She couldn’t believe something that large had gone unnoticed.

“No.” She selected a piece of bread from the tray. “I rarely watch television.”

“Perhaps tomorrow, then.” He closed the cabinet doors.

There was an amused tone in his voice, and she wondered what he’d meant by that. It was almost as though he knew something she didn’t. He sat down on the bed beside her and served himself from the tray.

“How long are you going to keep me here?” She eyed him warily.

“I haven’t decided.”

“What kind of answer is that?” She stared at him in disbelief.

“The only one you’re going to get.” He sipped his soup slowly.

Her jaw tightened. “The police will come looking for me,” she replied smugly.

He cocked his head to the side. “Will I be punished for pleasuring you?”

She blushed. Damn him for that! “You’re uncouth.” She turned away from him.

“Didn’t prevent you from screaming my name,” he noted slyly.

Utterly embarrassed now, she jumped to her feet and put some distance between them. She’d taken the sheet with her to retain some degree of modesty.

“Thank you for dinner.” She was visibly flustered now. “I’d like a bath now.”

Lucius bowed his head as she backed away from him. “You may go.” He paused dramatically before looking up. “For the time being.”

Alexandra’s temper flared at the very idea of needing permission to bathe herself, but she remained silent. An outburst now could jeopardize her chance for some much needed

peace and quiet. Biting her tongue, she slipped into the bathroom and closed her eyes as the door clicked shut behind her.

“Investment,” she muttered under her breath, still furious he’d referred to her as such.

She stopped in front of the large basin and turned the faucet on. Spotting the bath salts, she dumped a handful into the tub and sighed as the scent of lavender began to fill the room. Between the steam and the bubbles, she was almost able to pretend she was somewhere else.

Closing her eyes, she let the sheet fall to the floor as she dipped a small foot into the water. Perfect. She climbed into the tub, sighing as the warm water closed over her body. Still a bit sleepy, she laid her head back, closing her eyes for just a moment. This was as close to heaven as she was going to get. In fact, the only thing missing was the Brahms CD she often listened to while bathing. She was just about to begin humming a favorite concerto when the door swung open. Water splashed onto the floor as she sat upright.

“Can’t I have even a *moment* to myself?” she hissed.

“Afraid I’ll seduce you?” Blue eyes captured her gaze.

The thought was making her nipples hard. “I’m not afraid of you,” she said bravely.

“You’re not,” he agreed. “Do you know why?”

Alexandra hesitated. Was that a trick question? Surely, he *wanted* her afraid? Wasn’t that how this kind of criminal got off? She decided not to answer him.

“Lost for words?” He approached the bath slowly.

She sank further down in the tub, trying to conceal herself beneath the bubbles. The man might not frighten her, but he surely got the butterflies moving. Lucius held her gaze as he grabbed a small bar of soap lying adjacent to the sink. He walked around the back of the tub and knelt down behind her, pressing his chest against her back.

“Shall I tell you, then?” His cheek grazed hers as he reached down into the water.

Alexandra stiffened.

“Relax, Kitten,” he whispered softly.

Closing her eyes, she tried to pretend he wasn't there. Behind her. Against her. Strong arms on either side of her.

*He's just a man*, she told herself. *Nothing special.*

Except he wasn't. He was extraordinary. Sexually magnetic and most definitely impossible to ignore.

"I've fulfilled a need." His tone was soft, but serious. "And I suspect I'm the first to have done so."

The fluttering in her belly was intensifying. This was wrong. This kind of conversation wasn't meant for couples who found themselves in this kind of situation. Namely, one in which the man was a lecherous kidnapper and the woman an unwilling participant.

*But are you truly unwilling?* a voice asked from within.

*Of course I am, damn it!* she snapped back.

Wasn't she?

"Which need would that be?" Her question was both curt and sarcastic. "The longing for sexual slavery?"

"Slavery?" He sounded bemused. "Do slaves demand pleasure from their masters?"

"I've demanded nothing more than freedom!" She sat up angrily, her breasts heaving against the water.

Lucius slipped a hand through her dampened locks and pulled her head against his shoulder.

"Funny, I don't recall much fuss over your lack of freedom." His other arm slid around her waist and drew her back against the basin's porcelain frame. The feel of his arm around her narrow hips was scintillating. It was his way of showing her who was in control. And he certainly was.

"Perhaps your memory fails as often as your conscience does," she spat.

Lucius released her and began to lather the bar of soap between his capable fingers. Alexandra fidgeted nervously at his sudden silence. Worried he might be angrier than she'd intended, she tried to pull herself around to face him.

"Sit back." His voice was stern. "Now."

Alexandra leaned back and closed her eyes, hoping she hadn't pushed him too far. She was just about to apologize when he pulled the plug from the drain. Relieved this episode appeared to have ended, she grasped the edge of the tub and began to pull herself up. Until a pair of strong hands closed over her thighs, sliding her back against the tub.

She looked down nervously. The water was all but gone at this point, save the few inches still covering her feet. He replaced the plug and let the water stay as it was. Silky bubbles covered most of her body -- but they were quickly evaporating. It was only a matter of time before they'd all be gone.

"Refresh my memory." Lathered hands began to massage her trim waistline. "How many times have you demanded your freedom?"

It was difficult to focus with his hands on her. Between the butterflies and the goosebumps, she didn't know whether she was coming or going. "Several." She moaned as he pulled her arms behind her back.

"And how many times have you screamed my name?" His lips grazed her cheek.

She moaned again. "Only when you've forced me to," she lied.

"Is that a fact?" He moved her wrists into one large hand and let the other slide across her breasts.

She shuddered as strong fingers pinched her nipples. He was turning her own body against her. To prove how much she *did* desire him. Running the bar of soap along the curve of her hips, he bent forward and bit her shoulder roughly. She gasped aloud -- and then flushed with anger as he laughed. Alexandra tried to free her arms from his grasp, which only resulted in him tightening his hold on her.



“Patience.” He raked his teeth along the back of her neck.

“Mmmm.” She tried to muffle the sound of her desire as he bit her, but it wasn’t possible.

“Something you’d like to say?” He moved the bar of soap lower.

The sound of his voice was making her feverish, despite efforts to control herself. She was already mewling as his hand continued its descent.

“Any requests?” He leaned forward again, his lips moving to the hollow of her throat. “Freedom, perhaps?”

She thrashed against his shoulder, desperate to keep from giving in.

His hand reached its destination at last, and Alexandra shot upward in the tub. The hardened peak was already begging for his attention. Her entire body was. She cursed herself violently, appalled at how quickly he’d overcome her again. Her legs fell open, unconsciously beckoning his touch. He let the soap glide across the tiny pearl, now tingling with obvious need. The ensuing moan was primal. She couldn’t have held it back if she’d tried.

“You’re not enjoying this, are you?” he mocked her playfully.

“No!” she shot back angrily.

Lucius released his hold on her wrists and dropped the soap in the water. She gasped as his arm slid beneath her large breasts and pinned her against his chest. His free hand slid below her waist and didn’t stop until it reached her swollen sex. He’d grown tired of this game. If her rational mind couldn’t admit her desires, her subconscious mind *would*. Right now.

He had a magnificent view as he knelt behind her. Lovely breasts with tight little nipples boldly seeking his attention. Nipples that would have to wait. He was willing to deny himself the pleasures of her body -- this once -- if it meant teaching her a valuable lesson. She was already moaning loudly. As he’d known she would be. This was the kind of woman

who needed constant reminding of her submissive position. The kind of woman who lusted for such play. The kind of woman he'd thought only existed in fantasy.

His thumb slid across her clit, and she groaned. Increasing the pressure slightly, he began to move his fingers in slow circles against it. She was exceptionally wet at this point, and he wanted nothing more than to taste her femininity. In fact, it took some measure of self-restraint to stay as he was and not bury his tongue inside of her. *Later*, he promised himself.

Mouth open, eyes closed, her shallow breathing echoed loudly against the marbled walls of the bath suite. He tightened his grip on her waist, and she cried out. "God ... yes ... please ..." She bit her lip, desperation filling her voice.

Lucius pressed his cheek against hers again, his breath sending goosebumps down her back.

"Freedom?" His tone was wicked.

She groaned at the reminder. Reaching behind herself, she clasped his shoulders, nails digging into his flesh. His fingers increased the pace, and she twisted wildly in the bathtub. Her hips thrust against his palm, her body revealing signs of imminent climax.

"Lucius!"

There was something about the way she called his name. His cock was ready to explode. He couldn't ignore it any longer. Lucius slipped a hand into his pajama bottoms and began to jerk his manhood with powerful strokes. He was well beyond foreplay at this point. He was ready to come.

His other hand remained where it was, his fingers teasing her clit as she began to cry out with need. His chin resting above her shoulder, he groaned loudly, the sound of her shallow breathing driving him closer to his own climax. Thrusting her hips into the air, she screamed for him now.

Repeatedly. It was becoming a struggle to stay focused on his captive and not give in to the need she'd created in him. Her back arched, and he finally lost it -- bringing himself to release as she called his name.

*"Lucius!"* Her voice was raspy as she screamed his name one last time, the spasms finally starting to diminish.

He took a deep breath as his own orgasm subsided. He wasn't normally the type of man who needed to see to himself, but the effect this woman had on his senses left him with little choice. He looked down at her. She was still mewling softly in the tub, eyes half closed and lips slightly parted. Standing up to discard his clothing, he turned the faucet on and let the warm water run back into the tub. As it reached the halfway mark, he climbed inside and pulled her against him, bathing her first and then himself. They would both sleep better this way.

Once finished, he climbed out of the bath and hoisted her from the water. Smiling at the peaceful expression on her face, he carried her into the bedroom. He turned the covers back and laid her down on the bed. Reaching behind him, he turned the lights out and lay down beside her. He wasn't sure he could sustain another day like this. Mortals simply weren't built to withstand such pleasure.

## Chapter Six

Alexandra's eyes flew open as strong hands forced the gag into her mouth. Tiny arms lay strapped to the bed -- just tightly enough to ensure she wouldn't be able to do more than sit up. She stared in horror as he tested the strength of each knot.

*Don't react!* She wasn't going to serve his ego this early in the day. *Stay calm, he's just trying to get a rise out of you.*

He was dressed casually -- black T-shirt, blue jeans, and a pair of old Durangos. The man looked like he'd just stepped off a Harley. As he walked toward the television cabinet, she couldn't help but notice his ass looked just as good *in* the jeans as it did outside of them.

*Stop looking!* she scolded herself.

"I'll be downstairs for a short while." He pulled the double doors open. "Do you need anything before I go?"

*How the hell was she supposed to answer him with a scarf in her mouth?*

He flipped the television on and looked over his shoulder.

"Silence will be interpreted as a no," he informed her.

*Silence is all you're ever going to get!* her mind screamed.

Lucius grinned as he slipped two DVDs into the home cinema's auto changer. When the first ended, the second would automatically begin. They were brief films, but the two of them combined would aide her in passing the time while he was downstairs with Danilo.

"I'll bring supper when I return." He covered her body with a thin sheet.

It was already afternoon. Again. That made two days in a row she'd slept late -- something very out of character for her.

*Ahh, but this lifestyle is far more satisfying,* an evil little voice snickered.

She bit down on the gag and forced the voice from her head. At least she'd have some peace and quiet while he was gone. Lucius opened the door to the hall and turned around one last time.

"Enjoy." He smiled as he pointed the remote control at the DVD player and pushed play.

The door clicked as he closed it behind him, and the television screen went black. Not the slightest bit interested in his movie collection, the redhead closed her eyes and tried to make herself comfortable. Difficult, considering her present state of being tethered to the posts behind her. The tension was finally beginning to dissipate when a masculine voice suddenly permeated the room.

"Do you know where you are?" the man asked.

Alexandra opened her eyes in time to see a blond man move across the screen. He wore a black mask that covered half of his face. A whimper sounded in the background where a dark-haired woman could be seen wriggling on a large bed. She was tied down. Much like Alexandra was.

The view now expanded to include the two of them. The man sauntered back and forth in the foreground, a black whip in his hands. He seemed to take great pleasure in the woman's helplessness. As did the woman herself.

"And where are you?" he pressed.

"Your home, Master." She wriggled against the bonds covering her wrists and ankles.

"Do you know why you've been tied to my bed?" He traced the curve of her breasts with the edge of his whip.

The girl shuddered, quite obviously turned on by his touch.

"To bring you pleasure, Master," she whispered.

"Very good." He nodded his head in appreciation.

Alexandra couldn't believe what she was watching. Was this Lucius's way of prepping her for a life of slavery? She could feel the panic rising inside of her. There was no way in hell someone like her could even *pretend* to fancy slavery.

*Close your eyes, she told herself. Go to sleep and pretend you never saw this.*

Something easier said than done once the "slave" started moaning.

Alexandra peeked at the television just long enough to get a glimpse of the man as he began to undress. *You've had better*, her mind whispered as the man removed his shirt. *Recently, even.*

The man straddled the woman on the bed and ran his hands over her naked body. She slithered beneath him, doing her best to entice him further. He lowered his mouth to hers and bit her lip cruelly. She cried out in frustration but continued to writhe for her Master.

The man grinned.

"Would you prefer my tongue, or my cock?" he asked her.

Alexandra blushed at the question, despite it being asked of someone else. Someone in a movie, no less! It just seemed so ... so ... well ... indecent! *You've been a tad indecent yourself during the last forty-eight hours*, a voice reminded her.

*Only out of fear!* she argued.

*That explains why you've gone wet at the thought of Lucius asking you that same question*, the voice shot back.

She paused in her thoughts and felt her cheeks redden as the truth of that last statement struck her. She was indeed wet. Something Lucius had fully intended, no doubt.

\* \* \* \* \*

"How's the girl?" Danilo asked.

"Tired." Lucius grinned as they lifted the large wooden crate.

Danilo laughed out loud.

"Better than expected?" he asked.

"No." Lucius grabbed a crowbar from the workbench. "I think I knew she'd be this good from the start."

The smaller man looked at his friend, but didn't say anything. Those were strong words, coming from Lucius -- a man who typically lost interest in a woman after the first date.

"I'll be releasing her tomorrow," Lucius informed him. "I need this set up before I take her home."

He pulled the instructions out of the box and looked the photo over.

"Money well spent, if we manage to put it together correctly," he said.

"What's she doing now?" Danilo asked as they began hauling the wooden planks from the large container.

"Anticipating my return." Lucius winked.

Danilo rolled his eyes.

"You think I'm kidding." Lucius chuckled.

The other man eyed the American for a moment, but quickly shrugged it off. If ever there was a man who didn't kiss and tell, it was Lucius. Honorable, if not incredibly boring! The cellar door opened, and Elsa called down to them.

“Are y’all hungry yet?” she asked.

“I’m fine, thanks,” Danilo called back.

“Lucius?” She squinted down into the cellar.

“Could you just prepare something I can take upstairs when I’m done?” he replied.

“Anything in particular?” she asked.

“Surprise me,” he called over his shoulder.

“I’ll see what I can do.” She closed the door and left the two men to their business.

Danilo leaned the largest plank against the wall and stepped back to get some perspective. This was going to be one hell of an A-frame.

“Um,” he began. “I think this is going to have to wait.”

“For?” Lucius fished around in his toolbox.

“It would be easier to build it at her place,” he said. “Look at how big it’s going to be.”

Lucius stood up straight and followed Danilo’s gaze to the large plank. The arched brow seemed to indicate his agreement. It would be easier to move in its present state.

“I’ll take care of it,” the Portuguese man assured him.

“No.” Lucius waved his hand dismissively. “I wouldn’t ask you to do that.”

“I’m offering,” the smaller man replied. “I’ll hire someone to transport it, and then I’ll build it myself.”

Lucius glanced at the digital clock on his workbench. It was almost four o’clock, and they hadn’t even started riveting the planks together.

“All right,” he conceded. “If you’re sure.”

“I am.” The other man nodded.



“I’ll leave the details to you, then.” Lucius brushed the cedar shavings from his jeans as he headed for the stairs.

“No problem.” Danilo turned back toward the crate.

After all, it wasn’t every day a man was lucky enough to see one of these babies in person!

## Chapter Seven

If the first film had gotten her knickers wet, the second was the most sexually arousing footage Alexandra had ever seen. Comprised mostly of brief sex scenes, it had left her undulating in agony. To make matters worse, she couldn't even relieve herself, thanks to Lucius having tied her hands to the bed.

Instead, she lay there arching her back, contracting her vaginal muscles in a vain attempt to reach orgasm. Her body shuddered forcefully as she envisioned Lucius's tongue running over it. Quivering thighs revealed her arousal, a light sheen trickling slowly downward. She'd tried closing her eyes in hopes of settling herself -- but the constant moaning emanating from the television had been too much to block out. Even now, with both films ended, she couldn't shake the sounds and images from her mind.

"Did you miss me?" Lucius's voice sounded from the doorway.

Alexandra turned her head toward him, wondering how long he'd been standing there. She watched through glazed eyes as he laid a silver platter on the armoire. He flashed her a smile, and she grumbled something against the gag, jerking angrily at her restraints. He'd known the DVDs would arouse her, the vile wretch. She wanted to claw that satisfied grin right off his face! Pulling his shirt over his head, he removed it and let it drop onto the floor.

"I'm afraid I didn't catch that." He sat down beside her and pulled the gag down.

"Go fuck yourself!" she shrieked angrily.

"That's what I thought you said." He chuckled and reached for her restraints.

His touch sent a bolt of electricity through her, and she groaned. Lucius could feel his cock hardening as she writhed beside him, but ignored his need for the time being. One good tug, and the bonds slipped off. She was finally free. Sitting up, he kicked his shoes off and glanced at her face. Eyes closed, lips parted, she was ready for someone to ravish her. And he was most curious to see how long she could wait. He stood up and stepped out of his jeans.

"I've brought dinner." He switched the television off.

The redhead clenched the covers in her small hands and squeezed them tightly. She couldn't possibly eat right now. Not like this. Not with every nerve in her body crying out for his touch.

"Perhaps some water first?" He filled a small glass and sat down beside her.

Lucius brought the glass to her lips, supporting the back of her neck as she sipped from it. Her breathing was ragged, her skin covered in goosebumps. As he pulled the tumbler away, she placed her hand on his and stopped him. Clasping his wrist tightly, she jerked the glass downward, spilling the rest of its contents down her breasts and torso.

The muscles in his jaw clenched as his free hand set the empty glass on the nightstand. Blue eyes filled with lust as he watched her writhe in front of him. She lifted his hand and brought it to her lips. Staring at him through lowered lashes, she opened her mouth and guided two of his fingers inside. He bit his lip, a groan slipping out as she lavished attention on them. Letting him explore the heat of her mouth, she smiled to herself. She had him right where she wanted him.

Alexandra could sense his desire. She knew he was forcing himself to be still. To pretend she wasn't having as profound an effect on his senses as she truly was. In her mind, she knew this was wrong -- this enticement of a man who'd kidnapped her. A man who'd

locked her away in his castle to use as he pleased. Despite all this, he was also a man who ignited something she'd never known herself to possess. Lust. *Need*. A weakness she was going to allow herself, if only this once. She was going to use him the same way he'd used her.

She got to her knees and crawled to where he sat on the edge of the bed. His jaw was tense, and she smiled at finally being on the opposite end of this game. Sliding a leg around his waist, she pulled herself onto his lap and wrapped her arms behind his neck.

"Don't you want to play, *Master*?" She bit her lower lip as his arms closed around her.

She could feel his cock pressing against her thighs. It was a test now, for both of them. For him, to see how long he could control himself. For her, to see how long it would take to break him.

"You'll lose." He opened his eyes slowly.

*I certainly hope so.* She smiled to herself.

Alexandra pulled his arms away from her body and pushed him down to the mattress. She slid off the bed, pulling his boxer briefs down as she did so. He arched a brow for the briefest of moments, but quickly concealed his thoughts as she climbed atop him once more. She could see the muscles working in his jaw. He can't have been expecting this.

His cock was beautiful. There simply wasn't a better word to describe it. She inched her way up his body, letting her clit slide across his shaft as she made her way to his waist. Once there, she grabbed his arms and forced them over his head. Bending down, she nibbled at his jaw line until his breathing deepened. Glancing behind her, she smiled as his member stood at attention. He wanted her. Tough! He was going to have to wait. And suffer. Just as she'd had to.

"I'm wet, Master," she whispered in his ear.

His body jerked unexpectedly. He cursed under his breath, and she smiled from her perch above his waist. She was grinning from ear to ear, quite pleased with herself. She was also quite ready to take or be taken.

"You're going to lie very still while I fuck you." She dragged her teeth across his shoulder.

His hips twitched slightly, and his eyes darkened considerably. She felt the hair on the back of her neck stand up. She was suddenly nervous. Which only turned her on more.

"Don't move." She slid down his body until his member lay before her.

Wrapping her small hand around it, she pressed herself against his erection, moaning quietly as her clit touched it. She raised herself up just long enough to direct his shaft toward her aching sex. A deep moan escaped her as the tip of his member breached the entrance of her womanhood. Her head fell backward as she eased herself down his length.

Lucius wondered if she really thought her own strength had anything to do with keeping him on his back. She seemed to take great pride in holding his arms down -- but did she really think herself capable? His eyes twinkled as she licked her lips seductively. Apparently, the wench really *did* believe she was in control.

He wasn't sure how long he could lie still. Every bone in his body was telling him to grab her hips and hold her steady while he thrust himself in and out of her lovely pussy. Yet he was determined to see how far she could take this. She'd released his arms when she'd mounted him, and his hands moved to her hips now. Frowning at his disobedience, she pulled them away and forced them down to the bed. As she bent forward, her breasts teased his lips, and he couldn't resist the urge to take one of her nipples into his mouth.

"Noo," she moaned as he nipped her gently. "I told you not to move!"

He ceased his advance but did not apologize. She was lucky he'd stopped at all.

"Be *still*," she lectured him as she sat back up.

Watching her ride him while being prohibited from touching her seemed like an impossibility. That she would even expect such a thing only proved she understood very little about the true nature of men. He might be willing to humor her for the time being, but his patience was wearing thin.

Alexandra filled herself with his shaft and purred ecstatically as he finally penetrated her completely. Lucius, too, groaned softly as the warmth of her sex embraced him. Eyes closed, she began to move her hips back and forth, soft gasps leaving her lips with every stroke. Placing her hands on his thighs, she braced herself as each shock rippled through her body.

“God, yes ...” She moved her hand to her clit and began to rub it slowly.

Lucius’s hands curled into fists, and he struggled to remain still. A smile spread across her face as she looked down at him. He was clearly losing control. She pulled her fingers away from the tiny bead and slipped them into her mouth, licking them slowly as he watched her.

And that was more than any one man should be asked to ignore.

With lightning speed, he grabbed her arms and yanked her downward. Bending his knees, he forced her to lie against him, pinning her to his chest.

“New rules.” He gritted the words out slowly, trying to maintain his composure.

Alexandra gasped at finding herself suddenly helpless. She’d gone from being in total control to having none. He held her wrists to his chest, forcing her to lie there as he thrust himself inside of her. The movements were contained, but displayed an element of raw power she hadn’t yet experienced with him. It was clear she had pushed him to the limits of self-control.

“Lucius ...?” She was already approaching orgasm.

“Yes, Kitten?” His voice was remarkably even for all the passion she could hear in it.

“Fuck me harder,” she whispered. “*Please.*”

He jerked her arms forward, bringing her face close to his. Moving both of her wrists into one hand, he used the other to grab the back of her head and draw her lips to his. The kiss was deep, commanding. All-consuming. He owned her. There wasn't a doubt in her mind. Or his, judging from his actions.

"Lucius! Yes!" She squealed with pleasure as the peak of her orgasm shot through her.

He let out a deep growl before driving himself into her with a fury he'd never shown before now. Her body rose up and down while narrow hips plunged his shaft deeper and deeper. As she neared the crest of her final wave of bliss, he let himself go, simultaneous orgasm enveloping their glistening bodies. Blissfully spent, she desired nothing more than to curl up beside this man and spend the night in his arms. Lucius seemed to have read her mind as he gently lifted her and placed her beside him.

He closed his eyes for a few moments, amazed to have found a woman who reveled in her own sexuality. A woman who could allow herself to be taken. Her breathing had finally returned to normal as she began to fall asleep. Which was exactly what he planned to do himself. It was late, and the food he'd brought earlier would be cold by now. Tomorrow was a big day. Would Alexandra be able to accept him after he explained the truth of her abduction? The alternative was something he couldn't bring himself to even think about.

## Chapter Eight

It was obnoxious, whatever it was. Darrin covered his head with his pillow and tried to ignore it, but it somehow managed to get worse. Lifting his head, he opened one eye and peered through the darkness of the room, trying to determine the source of the offensive noise.

It was the phone. He glanced at the clock beside his bed. Five o'clock in the morning. Who the hell would be calling him at this ungodly hour? Reaching for the princess-style receiver, he dragged it off the cradle and grumbled into the mouthpiece.

"Yes?" he said groggily.

"Good morning, Mr. Sinclair, this is Gabriela Petrova. I hope I'm not waking you?" purred a silky voice.

"Actually ..." He rubbed his eyes gently.

"Oh! I'm so sorry! I can call back later if you like?" she said hesitantly.

"No, no, it's fine. What do you need?" He yawned.

"I know you plan to surprise Lucius this morning, and I thought I'd offer you a lift to his home." Her voice was sticky sweet. "I could find my way to the mansion blindfolded."

"Is that so?" he muttered sleepily.



“Absolutely! And, given the nature of our relationship, I’m surely obligated to help his uncle in any way I can,” she said.

The nature of their relationship? So much for the redhead Lucius just *had* to have shipped over here.

“That’s very kind of you, but isn’t it a bit early yet? What time does he normally get in to the office?” he asked.

“About eight or nine, depending on where he spent the night,” she replied. “My place is much closer to the office than his.”

Darrin sighed. He hoped his nephew was taking his work seriously and not frolicking about Prague with every pretty face that came his way.

“All right, how about we drive over there around seven?” he suggested. “He’d still be home at that time, I would guess.”

“Super, I’ll be in front of the hotel at six-thirty. Are you enjoying the accommodation I selected?”

“Yes, it’s lovely, thank you,” he remarked absently. “I’m going back to sleep, Gabriela. I’ll see you at six-thirty, ok?”

“I’m looking forward to it.”

“So am I. Goodbye for now,” he said.

“Goodbye,” said Gabriela.

Darrin hung the phone up and rolled onto his side. Who was he kidding? He was wide awake. There’d be no going back to sleep for him now. His thoughts turned to Alexandra, and he rolled his eyes, wondering whether Lucius even remembered who she was.

\* \* \* \* \*

Facing the river, Darrin gazed in admiration at the prism of color lining the streets on the opposite side. Lucius was right; the architecture here really was something out of a fairy

tale. A sleek, red Audi swerved into the hotel's parking lot and made its way around the circular drive. The statuesque blonde behind the wheel brought it to a halt in front of the doors. She flipped her vanity mirror open and applied fresh lipstick to her sensuous pout. Giving herself an appreciative nod, she turned the car off and opened the door.

Swinging her long, silky legs over the white leather seat, she let her stilettos touch the ground lightly. Fire engine-red fuck-me pumps, he noted warily. They almost matched the car. She stood up and closed the door behind her, slipping the delicate gold-chained purse over her bare shoulders. Sashaying around the sports car, she stopped to adjust her black panty hose while several Japanese businessmen ogled her from the lobby window.

Gabriela hiked her sleeveless, skintight dress up a few inches more and smoothed it with long, graceful fingers. Built like a runway model and standing near six feet tall, the girl turned heads. Moreover, her carriage suggested she knew it. Darrin sighed. Lucius sure knew how to pick them.

"Ms. Petrova?" he called as she headed for the entrance.

She stopped suddenly and spun around.

"Mr. Sinclair! I almost mistook you for Lucius! You could be brothers!" she gushed.

Darrin resisted the urge to roll his eyes.

"Thanks very much." He glanced at the Audi. "I'm ready to head to my nephew's, if you are."

"Certainly!" She ushered him toward the car.

"Ms. Petrova," he began as they took their seats.

"Please, call me Gabriela." She turned the car on.

"Gabriela," Darrin corrected himself. "What exactly are your duties?"

"I'm in charge of PR and recruitment. The hiring and firing, an American might say," she said as they left the hotel drive.

“And how is your American colleague faring these days?” He was more than curious now.

“Which one?” she asked.

“There’s more than one?” He raised an eyebrow.

“There are five Americans in the office. Most are of Czech ancestry and speak the language. But there is one who can’t speak it *at all*.” She sneered. “But it’s of little importance. I don’t think she’ll be with us much longer.”

“Who would that be?” He played dumb for a moment.

“Oh, just someone very arrogant and unpleasant.” She shuddered dramatically.

Darrin frowned. That sounded nothing like the kid he’d met in New York. How could she have changed so much?

“Did she announce plans for resignation?” he asked.

“Not yet, but I hope she will. I don’t want to have to fire her.” Gabriela veered left onto Lucius’s street.

“And how does Lucius feel about her performance?” he asked.

“I’m not even sure he knows who she is.” She waved her hand dismissively. “Her duties aren’t very important.”

“I see.” Darrin’s mind just couldn’t get around this drastic change.

He leaned back and surveyed the passing scenery. He’d have to talk to Lucius about this. He couldn’t imagine how the little redhead could’ve gone bad so quickly.

The bells in a nearby church chimed softly as they arrived at the manor. Darrin jumped out of the car and approached the gate. He pressed the button beneath a sign that said “Sinclair” and waited for someone to answer. A few minutes passed, and he pressed it again, wondering if his nephew was still home. Silence filled the morning air, and he turned toward the car.

“Hello?” came a familiar voice.

“Elsa! How are you? It’s Darrin.” He hurried back to the microphone.

“Darr? Oh, my stars, but it’s been *ages!*” she exclaimed. “Let me just buzz you in.”

“All right, I’m heading back to the car.” He made for the Audi.

The large gate swung inward as he returned to his seat. He closed the door, and Gabriela drove up to the main entrance. She stopped a few feet from the front porch, and Darrin hopped out, eager to greet Elsa as she opened the front door.

“Darrin!” She clapped her hands. “It’s wonderful to see you!”

He rushed up the steps, sweeping her into an affectionate bear hug. “Been a long time!” He set her down with a hearty laugh.

“Let me see you!” She leaned back and looked him over. “You sure haven’t changed much in the last few years, have you?”

“And *you* haven’t changed at all.” He kissed her hand dramatically.

“Uh-oh, he wants something.” She rolled her eyes playfully.

“Well ...” He looked down at his stomach. “I could use a little Elsa cooking.”

“Is that all? Come on in, stranger! I’ll fix you right up,” she bubbled happily.

“Good morning, Elsa.” Gabriela slithered up behind them.

Elsa froze. She hadn’t noticed the younger woman in her excitement. She nodded her hello, and Gabriela smiled happily in return, oblivious to her sudden change in character. But it hadn’t been lost on Darrin.

*Odd*, he thought to himself. *Wonder what the story is there?* He made a mental note to add that to his growing list of questions for Lucius.

“Will you be having breakfast with Darrin, or are you still on your latte diet, dear?” Elsa smiled sweetly.

Gabriela giggled. “Thank you, but I’ve already eaten.”

Elsa nodded politely, her feelings masked. She moved to open the door, and Darrin scolded her gently. He dashed forward and opened it for both women, waving them inside. Elsa led the way to the kitchen and offered them a seat at the small table overlooking the backyard.

“If y’all don’t mind, I’ll just run upstairs and let Lucius know he’s got company,” she said.

“Sure.” Darrin pulled a chair out for Gabriela.

“Back in a flash.” Elsa walked to the staircase at the far end of the kitchen. She just hoped their houseguest wasn’t awake yet.

## Chapter Nine

Lucius opened his eyes slowly, wondering what had awakened him. Lying on his back, he looked down at Alexandra's peaceful expression. She lay half-sprawled across his torso, a shapely leg stretched possessively across his thigh.

"Lucius!" Elsa's hushed voice called from the hall.

Turning toward the grandfather clock opposite the bed, he wondered why she'd come knocking at seven-fifteen in the morning. Curious, he slid out from beneath the young woman's embrace and left the bed. She didn't stir, not yet recovered from their late-night encounter. Grabbing a sheet from the bed, he headed for the hallway. He unlocked the door and cracked it open.

"Lucius, we need to talk!" Elsa whispered.

She seemed calm enough, but he could tell something wasn't right.

"What is it?" Lucius glanced down the corridor.

Elsa's pale blue gaze observed the slender figure in his bed. She was still asleep. The older woman relaxed visibly, her fragile shoulders slumping forward in relief.

"Can you step outside for a moment?" she asked.

It was more than a question. Lucius assessed Alexandra. She hadn't moved. He looked back at Elsa and waved her into the hallway. She shuffled aside as he passed through the door.

"What's going on?" he asked, closing the door behind him.

"Darr's here. He's downstairs in the kitchen."

"No kidding?" Lucius beamed. "Tell him I'll be down in thirty minutes."

"Lucius ..."

He frowned. That wasn't what brought her to his room at seven-fifteen in the morning. "All right, Elsa. Out with it." His voice was gentle, but firm.

Elsa straightened to her full height of 5'11" and looked him dead in the eye. "That little Czech strumpet drove him here," she said through gritted teeth.

Lucius squeezed his eyes shut. He didn't need to ask whom Elsa was referring to. Gabriela had a talent for placing herself near him every chance she got. Even if it meant dropping by his home uninvited.

"Lucius." She snapped her fingers in front of his closed eyes. "This is no time for reflection!"

He sighed and opened them slowly. "Not so easy to run down for breakfast *now*." He rubbed the side of his jaw.

"No. But you can't hide up here, either. It'll only send him looking for you, and that little tart just might follow him," she said stiffly.

"Good point." He sighed again. "Suggestions?"

"Come down now. Five minutes of pleasantries and then excuse yourself," she offered.

"And if she starts screaming her pretty little head off while I'm gone?" He nodded toward the bedroom.

"Lucius, I didn't raise a fool. You'll think of something." She headed for the stairs.

He took a deep breath and stole back into the bedroom. She was still sleeping, thank God. If he left her as she was now, she might well start pounding on the walls before he reached the kitchen. Short on time, Lucius decided to tie her to the bed. The handkerchief he'd gagged her with yesterday lay mixed among the coverings at bottom of the bed.

Best to make use of that as well, he thought with a grin.

Cautiously, he rolled her onto her back and secured the restraints around her wrists. Collecting the scarf, he let it glide between her lips and tied the ends at the nape of her neck. As he stood there admiring his work, he felt his loins begin to stir. She looked delicious. He hoped Darrin and Gabriela would be leaving quickly.

Snatching his pajama trousers from the ottoman, he slipped into them quickly. He walked to the armoire, grabbed a white T-shirt from the top shelf and crept out the door. Taking the stairs two at a time, he pulled the shirt over his head, his large arms finding the sleeves as he reached the first landing. A few seconds more and he'd reached the ground level, following the heavenly aroma of pancakes into the kitchen. Elsa was chatting away with Darrin as Gabriela tried to work herself into the conversation.

"Darr!" Lucius greeted his uncle warmly.

Darrin swiveled toward Lucius's voice and jumped up to greet his nephew. "Look what the cat dragged in." He slapped him on the back.

"Easy there, old man." Lucius winced playfully.

Darrin rolled his eyes. "Oh, puh-lease," he said dryly.

"Good morning, Lucius," Gabriela purred from her seat.

Lucius tensed at the sound of her voice. "Gabriela." He gave her a brief nod.

"Sleep well?" She licked her lips suggestively.

"Not really." He struggled to keep a straight face.

"Elsa tells us you aren't feeling well. Canceled your schedule for today ..." Darrin said.



The older woman gave Lucius a pointed look. He smiled to himself as her plan became clear. "I've got a touch of the twenty-four-hour flu." He sniffled for good measure. "I'm sure I'll be fine tomorrow."

"You poor thing!" Gabriela leapt from her chair and rushed to his side.

Elsa bit her lip and went back to her stove, pretending not to notice. Gabriela reached a hand to Lucius's forehead and gasped dramatically. "You have a fever!" she cried. "You should go to the hospital straight away!"

Evidently, that was more than Elsa could take. She whipped around and pointed a commanding finger at Lucius. "All right, young man, back to bed with you. I won't have you infecting everyone you come in contact with," she said. "I'll bring you a tray when I've finished cooking."

Lucius shrugged. "You heard her," he said.

"I certainly did." Darrin arched a brow slightly.

"Are you staying here tonight, Darr?" Lucius asked.

"I have a hotel near the river. Nice view. American shower." He winked.

Lucius grinned. "How long are you in town?" he asked.

"Five days," came the reply.

"Well, you're welcome to stay here if you get tired of the tourist sector," the younger man offered.

"Sounds like a plan," Darrin agreed.

"Great. I trust Gabriela will introduce you to our wonderful staff?" He wondered what she'd been thinking when she'd bought that dress.

"That goes without saying, Lucius," she said coyly.

"Of course it does." His tone was dry as he grabbed a pen and paper.

He scribbled a quick note to Danilo and folded it up carefully, passing it to Elsa on his way out of the kitchen.

"I'm heading back to my sick bed. Enjoy your meal." He made for the stairway.

"Get some rest, Lucius," Darrin said.

"You know where to find me if you need anything," Gabriela cooed.

"Thanks for stopping by." Lucius ignored her completely as he waved goodbye to his uncle.

He climbed the stairs slowly, trying to forget that Gabriela Petrova had somehow managed to worm her way into his home again. Clearly, she was still intent on wriggling her way into his bed. Fortunately, it was no longer available. His thoughts shifted to his most recent acquisition. He hoped she was still sleeping. Still fatigued from the previous evening, he wanted a brief nap before starting all over again. And they *would* be starting all over again. He would make certain of it.

Lucius reached the bedroom door and pushed it open. She appeared almost childlike, sleeping soundly there in his bed. The restraints and silk scarf conjured vivid memories of wanton thrashing, her nubile body writhing beneath him as he fucked her senseless. He moved closer to the bed, and she suddenly murmured something indiscernible. Tiny beads of perspiration covered her forehead, and he wondered if she wasn't having some sort of nightmare.

Her body began to shake as sobs racked her small form. He frowned and sat down beside her, removing the bonds as she inched closer to him in her sleep. Lucius watched her carefully. Was this a memory? Some random dream? He wanted to wake his lovely captive and comfort her, but didn't have the energy to fight with the hellcat she was bound to turn into. He decided to give the dream a chance to sort itself out. After all, she was much easier to deal with while asleep.

## Chapter Ten

Alexandra bolted upright in the bed and scanned her surroundings for the source of the high pitched scream -- and then realized it was coming from her. Lucius reacted immediately, both arms encircling her. He stroked her curls softly as she clung to his chest.

“What is it, Kitten?” he coaxed her gently.

Suddenly reminded of her captivity, she began to struggle against his chest.

“Let me go!” she demanded.

Lucius flipped her onto her back and covered her body with his. He pinned her to the bed as he held her wrists above her head. “Calm down,” he whispered.

Her nipples hardened mercilessly -- a stark reminder of how defenseless she was against this man’s touch. She moaned loudly beneath him, her breasts straining against the cool air.

“Much better.” His mouth covered a taut peak.

She closed her eyes and turned her head away from him. He released a wrist and ran his fingers through her hair.

“What were you dreaming about?” he asked softly.

“I don’t remember.” She wasn’t about to confide her work problems to him.

“Liar ...” He bit her neck sharply.

She groaned, squeezing her thighs together as the first signs of her arousal became evident.

“I don’t.” She whimpered.

“Yes, you do.” He suckled the other nipple and bit it gently.

His lips traced a fiery line between her breasts, sloping downward until they reached the soft curve of her stomach. His tongue drew wet circles along her skin as she arched her back. He reached a hand beneath her neck and lifted her head from the pillow, jerking her forward as his mouth found hers greedily. His hands roamed across the length of her body, ripples of pleasure running through her.

Suddenly, a loud knock sounded at the door, sending Alexandra into a sitting position. She scrambled to cover herself with the duvet as Lucius grumbled something unintelligible. His shaft was throbbing beneath the dark blue coverlet, and he hoped this interruption would be brief.

“Come in, Elsa,” he called.

The door opened slowly, and Elsa’s smartly dressed figure carried a large silver tray into the room. Padding lightly across the Persian rug, she stopped in front of a small table and set it down on the smooth wooden surface.

“Let’s see now. Orange juice, pancakes, sausage, bacon, and scrambled eggs. The best in Prague, if I do say so myself,” she declared.

“Thank you, Elsa. It looks wonderful.” Lucius scanned the tray.

“Ms. Alexandra, we have a number of feminine toiletries, in case you might be without your own,” Elsa offered.

“Thank you, that’s very kind,” she stammered politely, embarrassed to be seen lying naked beside a man she’d just met.

“I’ll just make you a basket and leave it outside the door, dear,” the elderly woman said.

"We'll be leaving shortly, but I expect we'll be back in time for dinner," Lucius informed her.

"Romantic day in the park, perhaps?" she asked.

"Weather permitting," Lucius nodded.

"You kids enjoy yourselves," Elsa said, heading for the door.

He was taking her to a park? Alexandra almost laughed as she began to plot her escape. She couldn't believe his stupidity. Surely, he didn't expect her to follow him round like a puppy? She would gain her freedom by nightfall. Perhaps even see him arrested by then, as well.

"Elsa?" Lucius began.

"Yes?" She whirled around in the doorway.

"Is it lonely down there without Danilo working today?" He hoped she'd catch his drift.

"Not at all. I'm rather enjoying having the entire downstairs to myself. See y'all when you return." She smiled and let the door close behind her.

The grandfather clock struck nine.

"Oh, no!" Alexandra's tiny hand flew to her mouth, the horror of her nightmare now bordering on reality.

Unyielding fingers closed over her wrist as she tried to jump out of the bed.

"Not so fast, love. What's your hurry?" He eyed her suspiciously.

"I have a job, you *kidnapper!*" she cried angrily.

He studied her for a moment, his demeanor softening. "Did you really think I would let you leave so easily?" he asked quietly.

"I can't afford to lose this job," she pleaded.

Lucius placed a finger against her lips. "You may contact your employer and excuse yourself. By text message. After I approve it." His blue eyes issued a silent warning.

"You don't understand! If I don't show up today, I'll be fired!" She began to panic.

"Nonsense," he scowled. "Do not take me for a fool. No one is fired for missing one day of work."

Tears began to stream down her cheeks, and she covered her face with her hands. He reached out and gently pulled her hands away. "Look at me, Alexandra," he said softly.

She refused.

His free hand went to her chin and turned her face toward his. "Why this irrational fear of losing your job?" he asked.

"It doesn't matter. It's too late now, anyway." She wrenched her hands from his and wiped away her tears.

"If I'm asking, it matters. Answer me." It was an order.

She sniffled and bit her lower lip, wondering why he would even care. "I work for an American company. I was sent here several months ago to start training. I'm due to take over general management soon," she said.

"Sounds reasonable so far." He watched her closely.

"It does, *doesn't* it?" she said sarcastically.

"So what's the problem?" He ignored her tone.

"My supervisor doesn't like me very much." She looked down at her feet and tried to keep her voice from quavering.

"I can't imagine anyone not liking you." He smiled as he surveyed her buxom figure.

"It's not funny," she said flatly.

Lucius cleared his throat sheepishly. "All right, someone you work with doesn't like you. How does that translate into getting fired?"

"She said as much!" She gave up trying to hold back the tears.

Lucius tilted his head to the side.

"Sorry, did you just tell me your supervisor's a woman?" He looked confused.

"Yes," she frowned. "A leggy blonde who detests me. The owner's flying in to check on our progress today. He'll believe everything she says, without me there to defend myself."

Lucius bit his tongue as Gabriela's face flashed in his mind. That harlot was little more than a glorified receptionist. An errand girl, really. If an old friend hadn't begged him to hire her, the little tart would still be working in a brothel on the German border.

Dark blue eyes focused on Alexandra's tear-stained cheeks. He couldn't imagine why she'd believe something so ridiculous. He wished he could ease her mind, explain that her job wasn't in jeopardy. But he couldn't. Not without revealing his identity and the lengths he'd gone to for the sake of fulfilling their mutual fantasy. She wasn't ready for that yet.

"Let's start by calling your boss and telling her that you're too ill to work today," he said.

Lucius walked to the nightstand and plucked the French phone from its cradle. He faced Alexandra and motioned for her to join him.

"What's the number?" he asked.

Hesitantly, she provided the numbers, and he dialed them quickly. He started to hand the phone to her and then paused. "Don't make me regret this," he said. "Do not tell her where you are."

"As if I know," she said huffily.

He wasn't amused.

"Okay, okay," she consented. "I won't mention I've been kidnapped by a complete stranger and have no idea where I am or might be."

His mouth twisted wryly as he handed her the phone. Placing it against her ear, she crossed her fingers and closed her eyes. It was already ringing.

“*Prosim?*” a snide voice answered the phone.

Lucius took hold of Alexandra’s wrist and bent down to hear the full conversation.

“Gabriela?”

“Yes, who is this?” The Czech woman sounded annoyed.

“It’s Alexandra ...”

“*Ty kravo!* Where are you?!” she growled. “You were supposed to be here an hour ago!”

Alexandra closed her eyes and took a deep breath. “I’m sorry, but I’m quite ill and won’t be able to come in today,” she apologized.

“You’d better start looking for a new job!” Gabriela screeched into the phone.

Lucius’s knuckles went white as he gripped the table beside him. Gabriela’s shrill voice made his skin crawl. Outraged by her behavior, the derogatory names she’d just used infuriated him. The redhead might not understand Czech, but *he* did. He wanted to rip the phone from Alexandra’s hand and fire the bitch immediately. But it wasn’t the right time. Her termination would have to wait.

“Tell her you have a bad signal.” His anger was barely manageable.

She looked at him for a moment and then swallowed. Hard.

“Gabriela, I seem to have a bad signal. I hope ...” She stopped talking as the phone went dead.

Alexandra spun around to find Lucius’s finger resting on the receiver. He’d hung up on her. She gaped at him in apparent horror.

“You won’t lose your job. You’re just going to have to trust me on that one,” he said matter-of-factly.

Alexandra looked at the phone and returned it to its holder. Convinced Gabriella would fire her immediately, she let her shoulders slump forward, wondering what she would do with her life now. After she escaped her abductor, that was.



Lucius slid two chairs from beneath the small table and nodded toward one of them. She walked over slowly, as if in a trance.

“We’re leaving shortly.” He waited for her to sit down.

“I’m not really hungry.” Her eyes were brimming with fresh tears. “I’d prefer to bathe now, if that’s all right.”

He looked at her for a moment. “You have twenty minutes. Would you like some assistance?” He smiled suggestively.

“No,” she said firmly.

He threw his hands up in defeat. “Let me know if you change your mind.” He grinned.

She snorted and turned toward the bath suite. Unlikely! When Darrin Sinclair offered her this job, it was the first opportunity she’d had to make something of herself. To prove her worth. Now her dream would end, thanks to this man. She wanted to sink beneath the water in the large bathtub and never resurface.

She stepped into the tiled room and shut the door. The bath had fresh water in it, and she assumed either Elsa or Danilo had slipped in to fill it this morning. She selected lavender and rose bath salts from the marble countertop and poured them into the bathwater. Alexandra moaned softly as she sank to the bottom, letting the ivory spheres envelop her completely. Resting her head against the back of the large basin, she felt utterly helpless. What she would do now?

*You’ll think of something, she promised herself. You always do.*

## Chapter Eleven

Lucius was rifling through his chest of drawers when Elsa placed the basket of toiletries against the bedroom door. With Alexandra still in the bath, he decided to take advantage of her absence and speak with the housekeeper privately. He opened the door just as she was walking toward the stairs. She jumped, startled by his unexpected appearance.

“Damn it.” She gave him the evil eye. “I ought to turn you over my knee for that. Didn’t I teach you better than to scare the bejesus out of an old woman?”

“Sorry, Elsa.” Lucius grinned. “I just wanted to catch you before you were out of earshot.”

“Well, you caught me.” She eyed him warily. “Make it good!”

Lucius looked over his shoulder to confirm his houseguest was still in the bathroom. “Your favorite Czech strumpet has Alexandra convinced she can be fired on a whim.”

“How on earth did she manage that?” Elsa’s eyes widened.

“It appears she misrepresented the level of authority she possesses.” Anger began to creep into his voice.

“The little hussy!” Elsa scowled. “I warned you, Lucius. You never should’ve hired that woman in the first place.”

Lucius kneaded the muscles at the nape of his neck. He knew she was right. He should have seen this coming. Alexandra arrived two months after the company was up and running. By that time, Gabriela had established herself as company trollop and wasn't happy to share the territory. Not with a beautiful woman who might steal the owner's attentions. He'd made the mistake of hoping she'd fade into the woodwork if he kept his distance. Instead, he'd very nearly created his own personal stalker.

"I know," he admitted. "Bad judgment on my part."

"You don't say?" She placed a hand on her chest, feigning disbelief.

He sighed and raised a hand to plead for mercy. "I hired her out of desperation, not stupidity. She'll be fired the next time I see her," he said.

Elsa looked pleasantly surprised. "Is that a fact?"

He nodded.

"Good for you. That's the right thing to do. Especially if you want to keep this one in your life." She tipped her head in the direction of the bedroom.

Lucius checked the room behind him once more.

"Spit it out, kiddo. What's *really* on your mind?" Elsa gave him a knowing look.

Lucius glanced down at the floor.

"Alexandra's depressed, now that she thinks she's lost her job to a conniving gold digger," he said.

"So enlighten her, Lucius," the elderly woman said softly. "You have to tell her sooner or later, anyway. She'll be thrilled to know you're not some mass murderer."

"Yes, she'll be thrilled. And after she spends a few moments digesting it all, she'll be ready to kill me," he said wryly.

"Initially, perhaps. But I suspect she'll find it flattering, eventually." She patted his arm gently.

"I shouldn't have brought her here this way." He leaned his back against the wall.

"Nonsense. Every damsel wants to be swept off her feet. She could've done worse. Most men aren't capable of love at first sight," she said.

Lucius looked up. Love? He'd never been in love before. Could Elsa be correct? He closed his eyes and pushed the thought out of his mind.

"And if she hates me for it?" he asked quietly.

"Lucius, you brought her here kicking and screaming. Shortly after she arrived, the kicking and screaming stopped. Or diminished, at least." Elsa crossed her arms. "She's attracted to you, or she'd have clawed your eyes out by now."

"You make it sound so logical," he said skeptically.

"Just do yourself a favor and tell her today," she advised. "She deserves to know."

Lucius sighed. She was right. She usually was.

"One last thing." A smile tugged at his lips. "Her blouse suffered an untimely fate last evening -- would you mind stitching it up while we're out?"

Elsa's eyebrows shot upward. She opened her mouth to speak, but paused as the bathroom door opened. Her gaze turned to Alexandra as she walked back into bedroom. She was bundled into a large black towel, dark red hair spilling across her creamy shoulders. Having noticed the two of them in the doorway, the young woman stopped abruptly.

"I was just leaving some toiletries for you, dear. Chance of rain today, so make sure Lucius brings an umbrella. Men are terrible about remembering those things." Elsa nudged him with her elbow.

The elderly woman turned toward the stairs, and Lucius crossed back into the room, closing the door behind him. "Feeling better?" His eyes ran over her.

"Not really," she mumbled. "I don't suppose she packed a new job into that basket?"

He held it up for a better look and shook his head. She moved toward the bed and looked around for her pants and boots. They were tucked beneath the bed skirt, and she

walked over to collect them. Lucius took a deep breath as the towel hiked itself over her hips and exposed her perfectly rounded bottom, giving him a glimpse of the pink jewel between her thighs. His erection was immediate, urging him to pick up where he'd been forced to leave off earlier.

He didn't need much in the way of convincing. Two long strides and he stood directly behind her as she leaned over the bed. He pulled her up the rest of the way, smiling as she dropped everything in her surprise. She opened her mouth to protest, but he covered it with his left hand and pressed her forward onto the bed. He reached beneath the towel and slapped her bottom with a firm hand.

An unexpected thrill shot through her body as he spanked her. She couldn't believe it. Only a whore would enjoy something like that! Embarrassed by her body's reaction, she lashed out at him. "I'm not some plaything you can toy with any time you like!" she hissed over her shoulder.

Hoisting her arms over her head with one hand, he untied his pajama bottoms with the other. He let them fall to the floor and shoved them aside. Lifting her to her knees, he leaned against the bed and grasped her hips firmly. She felt her pulse race as she tried to anticipate his next move.

Lucius ripped the towel from her body, sending a bolt of electricity through her. Large hands clasped the damp ringlets framing her face and drew them behind her neck, clearing the way for his mouth. He nibbled a path from her earlobe to her shoulder as his hands forged across her belly, his rough caress eliciting mewls of excitement from her lips.

"You're not my plaything, Alexandra?" He was taunting her.

Her nipples hardened mercilessly at the sound of his voice. She tried to pull herself together, praying this man would not see his effect on her.

Lucius placed his hands between her thighs and forced them open so suddenly she nearly lost her balance. He slipped two fingers into her pussy, her narrow hips bearing down on them as they filled her. She thrashed against him.

“Did I do that?” His fingers examined her wetness.

She groaned in response, ashamed of her behavior, but secretly enjoying the power he held over her.

“You *are* my plaything, Kitten.” He caressed her softly.

She could feel the fire building inside of her, increasing with every word he spoke. He was taking control of her, body and mind. His free hand wound through her tresses, holding her prisoner to his touch. He nibbled at her neck for a few moments before biting her viciously. She shuddered, her warmth contracting around his fingers.

“Spread your legs further.” His voice was low.

“Is this the only way you can get a woman?” she sneered.

His expression was thunderous. His body went rigid, and he withdrew his fingers slowly. He placed his hands over her hips and lifted her easily, spinning her around. His face betrayed a dangerous passion, and she was suddenly fearful. It was almost terrifying, the way he was looking at her. He pulled her toward him and reached a hand around the back of her neck. Before she had time to think, his mouth descended upon hers. The kiss was furious and fully intended to shatter her will.

He wrenched his lips away suddenly, leaving her in a daze. She tried to balance herself but he grabbed her shoulders, crushing her against his torso. Alexandra gasped as he seized her hips and brought them in line with the rest of her body. Her secret treasure now lay directly against his sex, a delicate blossom, enticing him with its silken petals.

Cautiously, she raised her eyes to his. Her inner thighs grew slick with need, taut nipples straining against the broad expanse of his chest. She could feel his cock harden as it pressed against her. Lucius took a step backward, covering his erection with a large hand and

massaging its length. She felt a flush of excitement, as she had the first time she'd watched him touch himself. But this time she stared openly, entranced by the eroticism.

"See something you like?" A smile played at the corners of his mouth.

Alexandra looked up as he moved toward her again, shifting uneasily from one knee to the other. Lucius grabbed her thighs, forcing them apart and dragging them up and over his hips. As he wrapped her legs around his waist, she threw her head back, unwittingly pressing her clit against his shaft. She felt an electric shock as it rammed into the tiny pearl, her hips rotating repeatedly above him. His hands clasped her waist and stopped her movement. She shrieked in frustration.

"Are you my plaything?" It was almost a dare.

She hesitated to say something so submissive to this man. Annoyed with her silence, he lifted her hips and pulled her against his manhood for the last time. His lips tickled her neck, sending chills down her back.

"Last chance, Kitten," he cautioned her.

On the verge of orgasm, his voice alone was almost enough to send her over the edge.

"I'm your plaything, Lucius," she whispered.

He lowered her onto his member, and she bit his shoulder to keep from crying out in pleasure. He threaded a hand through her curls, yanking her head back as his tongue invaded her mouth. She rode him feverishly until orgasm finally overtook her. Raking her fingernails across his back, she moaned his name like a whore. His own climax began to rock his masculine form, but he didn't stop until she'd been sated. As his breathing returned to normal, his gaze ran over her face. She was positively radiant, basking in the glow of her orgasm, oblivious to her surroundings. Powerful arms lifted her to the top of the bed, laying her head against a pillow.

"Sleep, Kitten." He swept a cherry-colored lock away from her eyes and kissed her on the cheek. "You have a long day ahead of you."

## Chapter Twelve

With Alexandra sleeping soundly in his bed, Lucius decided to make use of this time and find some clothing for her. Tempting though it was, she couldn't accompany him to the park naked. Slipping out from beneath her slumbering form, he headed for the door and let himself out of the bedroom. He made his way down the hall to her earlier hiding place and unlocked the door. Ducking inside, he skimmed his hand along the wall and flipped the switch Alexandra had been unable to locate.

He opened the armoire, hoping Elsa hadn't removed the coat Gabriela left behind last month. The lush had arrived on his doorstep one evening -- drunk -- and had to be given a bed for the night. And some clothes to sleep in, as she'd been completely naked beneath the jacket. It was the first time he'd ever locked his bedroom door. But that time he'd been locking someone out, as opposed to in.

He smiled at his good fortune. The sexy overcoat was still there, and his captive was going to look fantastic in it. In fact, he couldn't really justify the idea of her wearing anything else. Why not make the most of his last hurrah? Lucius closed the cabinet and walked back to the hall. He turned the light off and closed the door, tucking the black coat under his arm before returning to the bedroom.



As he entered the room, Alexandra stood before the large windows, tightly wrapped in a white sheet. She had a faraway look on her face, and he felt another twinge of guilt for locking her away like this. He crossed the room quickly, stopping an inch or two behind her small form. He brushed her silky hair aside and nuzzled her neck softly.

"Would you like a proper shower before we leave?" he asked.

She gave him a look.

"You don't *have* a proper shower," she reminded him.

"I don't have one in this room," he said. "I do, however, have one in the guest bath."

"And do you have a clean sheet available for me to wear today?" She whirled around, her voice dripping with sarcasm.

Lucius held up the overcoat.

"You'll be wearing this today," he announced.

"*Only* that?" Her mouth fell open.

He nodded.

Alexandra's eyes narrowed into a vicious glare. "And if I refuse?"

"You'll go as you are." He shrugged.

"I hate you!" she spat venomously.

His arms closed around her, and he pressed his lips to her temple. "You seemed to like me well enough a short while ago," he murmured.

Large hands circled her waist, but she jerked away quickly. Deciding it best to let her go -- or risk losing more daylight -- he grabbed his clothing and picked her boots up. He couldn't suppress his amusement as he headed for the door.

"I'm going to take a shower now. If you want one before we leave, I'd advise you to tag along."

She was furious. But she wasn't stupid. This outing might be her only chance for escape. The basket Elsa had thrown together was still sitting where Lucius left it. She snatched it and made for the door with all the passivity she could muster.

He signaled for her to follow him down the hall, several doors beyond the room she'd hidden in the night before. When they reached a smallish door at the end of the corridor, he pushed it inward and ushered her inside. Portraits decorated the walls. *Family* portraits, most likely, which appeared to date back to the fifteenth century. The floors were home to the same Persian rugs found throughout the manor, while mauve tapestries billowed gracefully from the windows. The canopied bed was almost identical to Lucius's, save the mauve and gold bedding. The door to the bath sat ajar, and he motioned her ahead.

"The shower's in there," he said. "I'll join you in a moment."

She looked at him with alarm.

"Why would you be joining me?" she asked nervously.

"Water conservation?" he offered cheekily.

Her anxiety replaced with anger, she stormed into the bathroom. The same black marble covered the floors, and the fixtures were made of gold. Or something that looked very similar. The shower was quite modern, and she assumed Lucius had it built after he'd moved in. She walked over to get a better look.

It reminded her of a space-age Roman bath. Large glass walls formed an elegant showering area, surrounding a handmade floor of cream-colored tiles. Each wall had its own showerhead, casting an impressive waterfall when the faucets ran simultaneously. Alexandra guessed as many as four or five people could fit in there. And never have need to make way for anyone else.

"Ready to get wet?" he asked innocently.

She jumped at the sound of his voice. "Who's first?" she asked.

"Are we still playing this game?" He arched a brow.

“Please!” She was beginning to panic. “I couldn’t!”

Lucius frowned. “Is that your final word?”

“Yes, it is. I’ll just wait for you out there.” She veered toward the bathroom door.

She’d almost reached it, when he plucked her from the floor and swept into her his arms. Lucius sighed as he carried her, sheet and all, into the shower. He turned the faucet on and set her directly beneath the current. As the warm water saturated the sheet, he tore it from her body, tilting his head back to admire the view. She scrambled to cover herself with her hands.

“You’re sick!” she screeched.

Lucius grinned and handed her Elsa’s wire-mesh basket. “You have fifteen minutes,” he said as he undressed himself.

He faced one of the showerheads and grabbed the bar of soap from the shelf beneath it. Lathering himself vigorously, she couldn’t help but stare in quiet fascination. His body was perfect.

“Fourteen minutes,” he called over his shoulder, as though he knew she’d been studying him.

She looked down at the basket. Stocked with several brands of shampoo, she selected the one closest to her fingers as he rinsed himself off. The sweet scent of raspberry filled the shower as she poured the gel over her head. Covered in creamy suds, tiny bubbles caressed her breasts as she worked the shampoo into her hair.

Eyes closed, she could suddenly feel his gaze on her body. She opened them slowly, blushing as his stare wandered up and down her length. He made no attempt to hide his erection. Lucius groaned quietly, blue eyes lingering on taut nipples as he opened the shower door and climbed out.

“Five minutes,” he told her.

She mumbled under her breath and increased her pace, wondering why *everything* had to be an order. Grateful for a moment's privacy, she gave herself a thorough scrubbing as he busied himself in the next room.

"Sixty seconds." He was on his way back to the shower already.

"I'm finished," she snapped.

The shower door swung open, and he bit his lip. Unfolding a large towel, he smiled as she claimed it with lightning speed. He tucked a wet lock behind her ear, and she looked away, a blush sweeping across her face.

She hurried out as he cut the shower off and spent the next few minutes concentrating on the towel she was wrapped in. Anything to keep her mind off the man standing beside her. Sporting black dress pants and a crisp, white shirt, he made business savvy look sexy. The collar was unbuttoned, the sleeves rolled up. He looked positively commanding. A man who always gets what he wants. Or takes it. He stood behind her quietly as she readied herself. Their eyes met briefly in the mirror, and she felt her heart begin to pound in her chest.

"Time to go," he said softly.

She whipped around, drawing the towel more tightly across her breasts.

"You can't possibly expect me to wear that." She glowered at the black coat.

"I do, and you will," he stated calmly.

"I won't!" she refused.

Lucius lowered the jacket. "If you prefer to remain here today, that would suit me just as well." His gaze lingered over her ample breasts.

Alexandra bit the inside of her cheek and counted to ten. It would be difficult to escape while tied to a bed. He'd get his way this time, but it would be his undoing, she vowed to herself. Presenting her back to him, she let the towel fall away. He hesitated for just a moment, appreciating the smooth curve of her waist. She scowled over her shoulder.

“Lift your arms, Kitten,” he instructed.

Reluctantly, she complied. He draped the coat across her shoulders and let it fall down the length of her.

“You missed something.” He nodded toward Elsa’s basket.

She fished out a small plastic bag and opened it. Elsa had thoughtfully donated a new pair of pantyhose to her. The older woman must’ve known her sadistic kidnapper would dress her in a jacket only a hooker would buy. She wondered where he’d found something so trashy.

Alexandra slipped the stockings over her tiny feet and stretched them across her thighs. Lucius tried to get a better view, but she was well-hidden behind the overcoat. As she buttoned it to the neck, the intensity of her glare promised future retribution. Lucius bowed and extended an arm toward the bedroom. Her glare deepened.

“Will I be barefoot as well?” She brushed passed him.

“Your boots are next to the bed,” he said, still bowing.

She shot him a look and sat down on the bed. He took a moment to enjoy the view of her calves as she pulled them on. Red curls tumbled sexily over her shoulders, drawing his attention back to the coat. The butterfly collar accentuated her graceful neck and would have provided an excellent view of her décolletage, had she not buttoned the jacket completely. He walked forward and took hold of the slender lapels.

“You will wear it like this.” He unbuttoned the coat until it lay open at her bountiful cleavage.

She bit her tongue, refusing to give him the satisfaction of a response. He slipped into a pair of black dress shoes and looked her over one last time.

“Shall we?” He directed her toward the door.

She took a deep breath and passed through it as he held it open. Suddenly wary of what might lay in store, she paused as they neared his bedroom.

“What is it?” he asked from behind her.

“Where are we going?” She tried to appear only moderately interested.

“To the front door. You do recall being carried through it?”

Alexandra faced him just long enough to give him a scathing look. Grasping the handrail at the top of the stairs, she gripped it tightly as her heels carried her downward. She was more than ready to leave this house of horrors. Lucius followed close behind, stopping just long enough to collect his keys from the foyer. He followed her onto the porch and let his arm curl around her waist.

“Some ground rules for today,” he began.

She turned away as he spoke to her.

“You will not discuss our relationship with anyone,” he warned. “And you will not wander more than three feet from me. If you do, I won’t hesitate to spank you.”

She spun around in total outrage. “You wouldn’t!”

Lucius tipped his head forward slightly. “Wouldn’t I?”

Alexandra gulped. She couldn’t imagine what she’d done to deserve any of this.

“The garage is behind the manor. Down the steps and head left,” he said.

She made her way toward it in silence. As she looked at the sky, it seemed Elsa’s source had been wrong. The weather couldn’t be lovelier. She reached the landing and turned left, as he’d directed. A large barn-type building stood before them, and Lucius walked ahead to unlock the doors. Pulling them toward his body, they began to swing open, and he disappeared into the darkness. He called out as the shadows swallowed him whole.

“Don’t even think about it,” he advised. “You’ll never get over the gate.”

She surveyed the grounds as he vanished, only to conclude he was correct. That horrible, metallic scraping sound she’d heard on her arrival, turned out to be a massive iron gate. The damned thing seemed to span his entire property.

A car door closed, and she could hear an engine turn over. White headlights sliced through the darkness as a black Mercedes Kompressor slithered out of the garage. So that's what she'd been stuffed into a few nights ago. Not one to think much of cars, she thought she might finally understand the fuss some people made over them. This one was sexy. He left it running and got out to close the garage doors, waving her over to join him. They reached the car at the same time, and she hopped in before he could open the door for her. He sighed as he slid into the driver's seat.

"Anything in particular you'd like to hear?" He held the gate remote up until the iron bars began to slide open.

"No." She watched him toss the fob back into the glove compartment.

"Bach it is." He selected a disc from the classical composer.

"Are you going to tell me where we're going?"

"Probably not." He grinned.

She crossed her arms over her chest and sank down into her seat. He was absolutely impossible, and her freedom simply could not come soon enough.

## Chapter Thirteen

After an hour of playing tourist in downtown Prague, Darrin decided to head back to the hotel for a nap. And to call Lucius. Something strange was going on, and he wasn't getting the full story from Gabriela. He examined his map for a few minutes and was surprised to find himself only a few streets from his hotel. Taking a leisurely pace, he continued to admire the architecture. The city still looked much like it did three and four hundred years ago.

He spotted the hotel and hurried across the street during a lull in traffic. As he entered the main lobby, he waved to the clerk behind the counter. He wondered if she remembered him. Not that he expected her to. She'd only seen him once, after all. Darrin called the elevator from the lobby, and the gold doors opened immediately. It traveled upward at a snail's pace, and he wondered if this was why the bellhop had taken the stairs last night.

The elevator finally slid open, delivering him to the second-floor hallway. He approached his room and ran the key through the slot before opening the door and flipping the switch. As his shoes touched down on the carpet, a slight rustling caught his attention. He knelt down and plucked the crumpled piece of paper from the floor. It was a message from Elsa, slipped under his door by the hotel staff.



*Darr, you're cordially invited to dinner this evening, eight o'clock sharp. Attendance will include Lucius, his guest, and myself. If you'd like invite a friend, feel free. Just make sure her name isn't Gabriela. Love, Elsa.*

Darrin laughed out loud. He'd suspected Elsa wasn't overly fond of that woman. He walked to the phone and dialed her number.

"Hello?" Elsa answered the phone.

"Elsa, it's Darrin." He smiled.

"Darr! Are you coming for dinner?" she asked.

"You need to ask?" He laughed again. "Listen, do you have a minute? Am I interrupting anything?"

"No, no, I just walked in the front door. What's on your mind?" she asked.

"Do you happen to know anything about a young American girl who arrived a few months ago? Her name is Alexandra," he said.

Elsa nearly dropped her groceries. Darrin would be furious if he knew what had taken place over the last seventy-two hours. This girl was "the one" -- even if Lucius didn't know it yet. She couldn't take a chance on anyone interfering before he realized it.

"Darr? I'm having trouble hearing you. Must be a bad signal," Elsa fibbed.

"Elsa?"

"Either Lucius or myself will pick you up at seven-thirty, okay?" Elsa asked.

"Ok, that's fine. I hope you can hear me ..."

"See you at seven-thirty. Bye for now." Elsa hung up quickly.

## Chapter Fourteen

They'd driven a good forty minutes before Lucius finally turned the Mercedes onto a narrow, dirt road. She'd never been in this part of Prague before. Towering fir trees lined the road, and the occasional pheasant had to be honked off the street. To a girl from Hell's Kitchen, they seemed to be nearing the edge of the earth. Lucius reached out and ran his fingers across her inner thigh.

"Enjoying the ride?" His voice was husky.

"It's getting very dark." She fidgeted, trying to change the subject.

He looked up for a moment, glimpsing the skies through the moon roof. "Probably due to the trees. There's a clearing ahead, should be sunny from there on out," he assured her.

His hand remained on her thigh, and she nearly castigated herself for enjoying it. As they reached the plateau, Lucius pulled into a makeshift parking lot.

"Not so dark, after all." He relaxed as he looked across the plateau.

Alexandra sized up the darker clouds in the distance. "Not at the moment."

He dismissed her concerns and opened his door. "We'll be gone long before they get here," he said. "Let's go."

She reached for the door handle and felt his hand on her wrist.

“Don’t forget the ground rules,” he warned.

They climbed out of the car and closed the doors behind them. Pointing the fob over his shoulder, Lucius locked the Kompressor and made for a set of concrete steps. He stretched a hand in her direction, but she scorned the gesture.

“You can do better than that.” He tsked and grabbed her hand.

She sighed loudly but didn’t resist. She’d have to cooperate if she was going to escape. They took their time, moving toward an observation post halfway down the hill. Beautiful pink and orange roses lined the path on either side. As they reached the tiny lookout post, she marveled at the view. It was glorious.

“Beautiful, isn’t it?” His eyes roamed across her face.

She nodded her agreement.

“This way.” He pressed her onward to a second set of steps. “There’s something I’d like to show you.”

Alexandra clutched the steel bar as she looked down the side of the hill. The incline seemed far steeper than before. Though not necessarily acrophobic, she did get nervous when standing at great heights. Something Lucius detected, despite her attempt to conceal it.

“I’ll lead the way from here.” He took her hand in his.

He made the descent slowly, letting her walk at her own pace. Her hand clasped his tightly, and she stayed close as they hiked downward. They eventually crossed a trail moving east to west, and he steered her onto it. As the path crept around a corner, a large gazebo came into view. He stopped in front of the entrance.

“Something to write home about.” He waved her inside.

She crossed the old wooden planks to one of the massive pillars. And froze as soon as she reached it. Situated at the very edge of the hill, part of the small pavilion dangled over the side with nothing to support it. Suddenly fearful, she began to inch away from the periphery, oblivious to anything beyond a sudden desire to feel solid ground beneath her

feet. Dazed, she bolted for the security of the path, only to be startled back to reality as she collided with Lucius's immovable chest.

He spun her back toward the magnificent view. "Shhh," he whispered.

She felt his hands go to her hips and bring her closer.

"You're perfectly safe, Kitten." His voice was soothing.

"Please." She was beginning to hyperventilate. "I don't think I want to be up here."

"Somewhere else you'd rather be?" His hands slipped under her coat and between her thighs.

She wondered if her rapid pulse was due to fear of the gazebo, or fear of discovering why he'd brought her here. "Someone could see us!" she cried in desperation.

"We're all alone," he promised.

He bent over and wrapped an arm behind her knees, lifting her easily. She blushed as he carried her to a bench and set her down gingerly. He knelt on the ground before her, pulling her thighs against his chest and draping her legs across his shoulders. His mouth was just inches from her pussy, and he was already hard. He ran a finger over the soft, pink folds through her stockings. She was wet, and regardless of what she might say, her body wanted him. Leaning forward, he ran his tongue over her sex, the thin nylon barrier permitting every sensation to pass through easily. She tried to push him away.

"Be still," he commanded.

She shuddered, the authority in his voice sending another ripple down her spine. Her fear began to subside as her arousal intensified. Confident fingers seized her panty hose, tearing them wide open. Alexandra cried out as his mouth covered her flesh, devouring it greedily. His tongue skipped lightly across the tiny bead, and she squeezed her legs together impulsively.

Lucius's tongue continued its exploration, and she reached for his head once more, this time urging him closer. Her skin glistened as her body worked itself into a frenzy beneath his

lips. Small hands locked together behind his head, holding him possessively. Her moans deepened as lust took control of her body.

“Oh, God,” she sighed, her head falling back against the wooden railing.

His lips caressed her clit, slowing his pace until she whimpered impatiently. The sound was intoxicating. His mouth inched lower, his tongue piercing her depths. Her breathing grew labored as he brought her closer and closer to orgasm. He took her hands and pinned them at her sides, her gasp filling the pavilion. As she struggled to free herself, another surge of wetness covered his tongue.

“Are you going to come for me, Alexandra?” His tongue darted across the tiny pearl.

Her eyes fluttered as she squirmed in pleasure.

Lucius gathered her wrists into one hand, unbuttoning the black slicker with the other. He gave the sash a quick tug and groaned as the jacket fell open, her generous breasts spilling out into his eagerly awaiting hand. He caressed one and then the other, pinching her nipples softly as she wriggled beneath him.

Alexandra ground her womanhood against his tongue at a rapid pace. Her head rocked from side to side, her mind reeling with desire. Orgasm was building at a feverish pitch, and she wanted to savor every minute of it. Passion mounting, she jerked against him as his tongue increased its momentum, the tiny peak fully erect between his lips. His fingers gripped the soft flesh of her thigh as she called out his name.

“Lucius!” She bucked uncontrollably.

Gently, he took her clit between his teeth, knowing it would render her senseless. Alexandra’s back arched and her head rolled from side to side, screams of delight penetrating the autumn air. Climax consumed her as she braced herself against the wall.

Sliding her shapely legs off his shoulders, he laid them across the bench, allowing her to lie down completely. Clasp the edges of the overcoat, he pulled them together, adept

fingers buttoning it carefully from top to bottom. He tied the sash into a knot, securing it tightly.

Lifting the bottom of the jacket slightly, he examined the state of her panty hose. He grinned. Considering his haste to get his mouth on her, they were in surprisingly good condition. Thunder sounded in the distance, and he frowned. The storm was already setting in. His gaze returned to Alexandra. She was still delirious, and he didn't know how long it would take her to recover. At this point, she wasn't coherent enough to make her own way back to the car.

Knowing the concrete would be slick once the rain began, he decided to carry her himself. And he decided it was best to go right then. Lifting her limp form into his arms, he carried her out of the gazebo. It was only drizzling at this point, and he hoped to reach the car before the downpour started. This entire area would turn into a mud bath, and he didn't want to get trapped in it. Not on foot, and not in the car.

## Chapter Fifteen

As the first real drops of rain struck his face, Lucius scolded himself for not remembering the umbrellas. He approached the steps and apprised them carefully. He started to climb upward, glancing briefly at Alexandra. She was still very drowsy as Lucius held her in his arms. It was just as well, he thought. Better to have her blissfully unconscious, than fighting her way back to the car. The rain began to fall with greater force, and he was tempted to increase his pace -- and likely would have done -- were it only his own life at stake. In this case, the cargo he carried was too precious to risk on so sheer an incline.

Once he'd reached the plateau, he jogged in the direction of the Kompressor. The worst that could happen now was falling in the mud. There was quite a lot of it, the rain falling as heavily as it was. As he neared the car, he draped her over his shoulder while locating the keys in his slacks. Not wanting to soak the fob in this downpour, he waited until close enough to operate the device through his pants pocket. His shirt was drenched and completely see-through now, clinging to his chest and shoulders. He reached for the passenger door and opened it quickly, setting her down on the cold, leather seat. Reaching across her lap, he grabbed the seat belt and strapped her in.

The sound of the door closing snapped her back to the present. She wondered how he'd transported her to the car. As she tried to recall the moments before she'd lost consciousness, she felt her cheeks grow hot. The only memory she could recount was this man bringing her to orgasm. Again.

"I see you've rejoined the living," he teased her as he slipped the keys into the ignition.

She blushed and redirected her gaze to the parking lot. A thick, orange mud covered the immediate area, with more piling up by the second.

"I don't suppose this car has wings?" she mumbled.

"Sadly, no." He frowned slightly at the increasing level of mud. He put the car in drive. Pressing the gas slowly, he tested the conditions on the plateau. As he tapped the breaks, the car slid twenty degrees to the right before coming to a stop. Too slick a surface to control the car with any degree of confidence.

"We're going to have to wait this out." He turned the car off. "It isn't safe enough."

Alexandra slumped against the seat. Pensive for several long moments, she wondered how she'd escape now. And then it hit her. She looked Lucius over as he sat beside her. He seemed fairly relaxed, all things considered. He certainly didn't have his guard up. Hugging her arms across her chest, she pretended to shiver.

"Do you have a blanket in the trunk?" she asked in her best little-girl voice.

He eyed her briefly. She certainly had good reason to be cold.

"I believe I have some towels from the gym, but I think you'd prefer the heater." He reached for the keys.

"I'd really like to get out of this coat. A towel would be great." She hoped she didn't sound too eager.

Lucius looked out the window and grimaced. "I'll see what's back there." He reached for the door handle.



He jumped out and closed the door quickly, trying to shield his eyes from the rain. Watching him feel his way along the body of the car, she could tell the voracity of the storm was interfering with his vision. Alexandra's heart was pounding in her chest. This was it. If she lost her nerve now, she'd be at his mercy forever. She peered through the rear window until a large object obstructed her view. He'd opened the trunk and would be searching for her towel. It was now or never.

She pushed the passenger door open and looked toward the back of the Kompressor for signs of his return. The torrential downpour obliterated any chance of seeing him and, thankfully, did the same for her. Slinking out the car, she let the door rest against the frame of the car without closing it. Dropping to her knees, she crawled toward the edge of the hill. Not her first choice of escape, but the only one available at this time.

Having found a towel for each of them, Lucius hurried back to the driver's door. Covering his head as he jumped in, he dried his hair while extending the other towel toward the passenger seat.

"Let me know if you want the heater on." The towel muffled his voice.

A moment of silence passed before he faced the empty seat and pulled the towel from his head.

"Can't you at least *fake* some appreciation for my nearly drowning ..." His voice trailed off.

His eyes darted toward the window in hopes she might be standing outside, playing some sort of game. But he knew better. She was horribly mistaken if she thought herself capable of navigating this park, particularly in weather like this. If she wasn't careful, she could slide right off the edge of the plateau.

Lucius bolted from the car and returned to his trunk. Searching his gym bag, he found the safety glasses he used for racquetball and slipped them on. It wasn't a perfect solution, but it was better than facing the rain with no protection at all. At the very least, he could see

better than Alexandra, wherever she was. Leaving the car unlocked in case she doubled back, he raced for the path. It was the only way down, aside from the road, which was now a river of sludge. He peered over the edge. Relieved to find she wasn't dangling from a tree, he hoped she wasn't being reckless in her plight for freedom.

"Alexandra!" he called into the rain.

Unable to see her in the darkness, he feared she might be injured. Or worse. Lucius knelt in the mud and let gravity pull him down the hill, using the large, concrete steps to control his speed. As he neared the trail, he spotted a tiny figure crawling along the path. Almost certainly Alexandra, he was relieved to find her still in one piece. Even if she *was* covered in mud from head to toe. The girl was obviously heading for the gazebo. He cringed. It would be dangerous in this weather.

"Alexandra, stop! It's not safe down there," he called.

She increased her pace, thereby increasing his level of anxiety for her safety.

"It's not safe with *you*, either!" she cried over her shoulder.

Finally reaching the path, he threw caution to the wind and chased after her. He'd almost succeeded when a loud crackling sounded behind him. He whirled around in time to witness a large birch crash down across the trail. Spinning back toward Alexandra, he called out again.

"Be rational! You're safer with me than you are out here!" he said.

She faced him angrily.

"I'd rather plummet to my death than let you ruin my life! You've destroyed what little I had. What more do you want?" she sobbed.

He was gaining on her and hoped she'd remain still just a few minutes longer. "Nothing has been destroyed," he told her.

The wind tore the safety glasses from his face and carried them away in the storm. He angled his head to the side, trying to shield his eyes from the elements. She paused in her fury, placing her hands on her hips.

"I've lost my job! And you've ... you've ... no man will ever want to touch me again!" Her small hands closed into fists.

A few seconds more and he'd have her. "Alexandra." He extended a hand cautiously, but she backed away.

Her rage was palpable. He took a step in her direction, and she lunged at him, screaming like a banshee as she attacked him. Lucius seized her arms and crushed her tightly against his chest.

"Calm down," he said quietly.

She wasn't listening. She was crazy, cursing him furiously and doing everything in her power to kick, scratch, or bite him. Lucius knew she was beyond reason at this point. He brought his hand down across her bottom with a loud smack. She gasped loudly as the slap brought her back to her senses.

"One warning per outburst." He drew her back into the safety of his arms.

"Wretch!" she hissed.

"Whatever I am, your life has not changed," he told her.

"You might control *me*, for the moment, but you don't control my boss!" She was fuming.

He bit his tongue. This was neither the time, nor the place. "We'll discuss it later. I'll not have you catching pneumonia out here." He waved her onward. "There's a limestone tunnel fifty yards ahead."

Suddenly, the rain's tempo increased, and they had no choice but to slow down. It was becoming too difficult to see. Sensing her growing fear, he wrapped his arms around her as they walked.

“Maybe we should stop here and wait it out.” She indicated a cluster of pines along the path.

“Nonsense. They could come crashing down at any moment.”

No sooner than he’d finished that sentence, a large boulder tumbled down the hill and fell across the path in front of them. The redhead jumped skittishly, increasing her speed almost immediately.

“Whoa, settle down. We’ll get there soon enough.” Lucius’s arms locked around her waist.

“If we’re not flattened by a boulder first,” she said shakily.

“You’ll wish you *had* been, should you slide down the cliff in your haste.” His expression was serious.

His point was not lost on her. Something which became obvious as she slowed to a snail’s pace beside him. They continued along the trail until a large object began to emerge in their path.

“Something’s blocking the trail up there,” she called into the wind.

“It’s the tunnel.” He tried to hide his relief.

As they neared the entrance, her expression turned pensive and she began to chew her bottom lip.

“What is it?” Concern crept into his voice.

“Your car,” she spoke the words softly.

“What of it?” He edged her forward, the car being the last thing on his mind.

“Do you think it’ll still be there once the storm has passed?” she asked meekly.

“Let’s hope so.” He sighed. “It’s a hell of a walk back to the manor if it isn’t.”

## Chapter Sixteen

Danilo Travada sat down on the tiny bed and surveyed his work with pride. In less than five hours' time, he'd transformed the cozy bedroom into a fantasy chamber. Something he was thrilled to be able to do for his friend.

He'd met Lucius nearly a decade ago. The large American had saved him from the losing end of a bar fight in his native Portugal. Indebted to him, a drunken Danilo dramatically volunteered himself as an indentured servant. Lucius respectfully declined, requesting he instead serve as a tour guide for the remaining week of his vacation.

They'd kept in touch over the next few years, and when the Sinclair family opened a restaurant in Portugal, Danilo offered his services as a manservant -- a highly respected position in Lisbon. With Lucius residing in the capital city for nearly a year, the two men spent a great deal of time trading tales and advice on everything from politics to women.

It was during a conversation on the latter that Lucius learned of an unusual society. An underworld, comprised of consenting adults and their somewhat unorthodox sexual tastes. He'd always been a tad more dominating than other men, something he'd recognized early on. And though he wasn't interested in causing or experiencing pain, he certainly enjoyed being in control. Provided the woman enjoyed it as well.

Danilo proved to be a wealth of information, having served his dominatrix girlfriend for nearly five years. He brought Lucius around to the clubs, letting him test the murky waters of various lifestyles. Much of it proved too bizarre for the handsome American, but he was more than willing to borrow a few tricks of the trade every now and then. When Lucius decided to move to Prague, he offered Danilo his old job back. Having recently suffered a significant pay cut, he was eager to work for his longtime friend. And being a citizen of the European Union, it was a simple matter to employ him legally.

Danilo smoothed the velvet quilt beneath him, its crimson color in stark contrast to the ivory walls of the bedroom. He'd had it flown in from Paris last week. Opaque curtains of the same material hung loosely from the windows, shielding the room from nosy passersby. Leather restraints were fastened to the bed posts, an array of creams and flavored oils lined the nearby chest of drawers. All very well done, he thought as he twisted around to view his masterpiece.

A 6'5" inch A-frame towered in the corner. It had taken two full hours to rivet the planks together, and he *still* wasn't done. Once completed, leather straps would hang at the ready, eager to secure a captive's wrists above their head. Large metal rings would adorn the base planks, just begging to confine a pair of slender ankles. Plush, velvet padding would cover the better part of the large pine frame, placed there to protect the delicate skin of anyone who might find themselves all tied up with no place to go.

"*Meu Deus*, I'm a genius." He smiled, envisioning the final product.

Lucius's note indicated he would bring Alexandra here in the morning. Which meant he expected everything to be ready well beforehand. Taking a moment to stretch, Danilo grabbed the toolbox and pulled out a large wrench. It wouldn't be long now -- another hour or two and this baby would be up and running!

## Chapter Seventeen

Alexandra stood just inside the opening of the tunnel, too reticent to continue on her own. More like a large cave, she thought to herself. And it was dark inside. Sensing her apprehension, Lucius clasped her small hand reassuringly.

“It’s not as bad as it seems,” he said. “There are several electric lanterns inside. Provided the storm hasn’t knocked the power out.”

“You first,” she said nervously.

He walked ahead, holding her tightly against his side. As their eyes adjusted to the darkness, they were able to make out a faint light up ahead. “The electricity appears to be intact,” he observed.

“Thank God!” She shuddered with relief.

The ground was wet, but far less so than the path they’d just traveled. With the limestone walls shielding them from the weather, it almost made a pleasant hideaway. Almost. He led her through the tunnel until they reached a second set of lanterns. He motioned for her to sit on the wooden bench beneath the lights.

“Is it safe for us to be in here?” She wondered if they were alone.

“As safe as anywhere else,” he mumbled distractedly as he inspected one of the lanterns.

“Do you hear that?”

“Hear what?” He glanced at her.

“Running water -- a small stream or something.” Her eyes searched the darkness.

Recognition flashed across his face. “There’s a waterfall just up ahead. Would you like to see it?”

“Something to do, I guess.” She shrugged and rose to her feet.

He snaked an arm around her waist as she walked by him. “If the waterfall doesn’t interest you, there are other ways to pass the time.” He grinned at her.

Her eyes widened, and she tried to back away from him. “Grow up!” She worked against the fingers at her waist.

He sighed and set her free. She stormed toward the sound of rushing water, her black heels echoing loudly in the tunnel. The light from the lantern grew brighter with every step, and when she reached its full luminosity, she couldn’t believe her eyes.

“Stunning, isn’t it?” He moved behind her and placed a hand on the small of her back.

She was speechless.

Breathtaking columns of stalactites lined either side of an equally impressive waterfall, spanning nearly ten feet in width. The subtle lighting made them sparkle like diamonds. Alexandra stretched a tiny hand forward slowly, entranced by the beautiful display. Delicate fingers passed through the gentle stream, and she turned to her captor in surprise.

“It’s warm,” she said, a look of bewilderment on her face.

He nodded.

“But, how?” Her voice was filled with curiosity.



“There’s a hot spring above the tunnel,” he explained, looking up. “It’s been trickling down here for ages.”

She looked down at the muddied raincoat. As she stood there shivering, she realized how desperate she was for a bath. This could be as close as she’d get to one for a while. Unfortunately, she couldn’t do anything without giving him a free show.

“Penny for your thoughts,” Lucius said.

She felt a chill as his breath touched lightly against her neck.

“I was just thinking how nice a warm bath would be.” Her voice faltered.

“You’re welcome to indulge,” he said mischievously.

Alexandra felt her heart skip a beat. “Have you no shame?” she hissed over her shoulder.

Large hands gripped her arms and promptly swung her around. “No.”

His eyes darkened with desire, and she regretted having asked the question.

“What’s wrong, Kitten?” He studied the curve of her breasts.

“Don’t touch me!” she spat.

She stood only inches from the waterfall now, with no escape in sight. He continued to close the space between them, slowly, deliberately. He was obviously enjoying himself.

“Animal!” she shrieked as he inched closer.

He lunged for her coat, and she panicked, jumping back to avoid him. A wave of warm water crashed over her, and she howled in dismay. Lucius reached for the lapels and yanked her forward. Maneuvering her into his arms, he kissed her hard on the mouth. Her small fists pounded against his chest until he tore his lips away, leaving her breathless.

“Who’s going to bathe you, Alexandra?” His tone was almost salacious. “You, or me?”

“Neither!” she snorted. “I’ll wait until I’m in the presence of someone who might afford me some privacy!”

“That won’t be any time soon.” He began to unbutton the wet dress shirt.

She paused just long enough to feel her stomach flutter.

“How long will this tantrum last?” he asked quietly.

His question took her by surprise. “What?” she stammered.

“I think you heard me.” The sleeves fell from his shoulders.

Her gaze drawn to his sinewy forearms, her imagination beginning to wander. He tossed the sodden piece of clothing to the ground and stood bare-chested before her.

“Remove the overcoat.”

Alexandra grew more flustered by the second. She scanned the tunnel, hoping to find some nook or cranny she might escape to.

“If you wanted help, all you had to do was ask.” His voice was low.

She opened her mouth to reply, but could only gape as he untied the jacket and ripped it from her body. With the exception of her boots, and the tattered panty hose still clinging to her legs, she was completely naked. Her heart was pounding. She scurried backward, instinctively seeking shelter in the waterfall. Pressing her back against the wall behind it, she was relieved to find it had a soft, smooth texture.

“Ravished in a waterfall, Alexandra? Thank you, I think I will.” He pounced on her quickly, pinning her between the wall and himself.

Slender enough to submerge most of her form behind the water, her nipples were still exposed, leaving them taut and vying for his attention. Lucius pulled her forward to get a better view of the tiny peaks. Frantic, she placed her hands against his chest.

“Am I so revolting?” he asked quietly, lifting her chin toward him.

“What will happen when the woman you live with returns?” She scratched at his arms, cursing him in her fury.

“Have I treated you so badly?” He captured her wrist in midair.

“Yes!” she cried.

He released her and stood very still, his dark blue gaze searching her face for the truth. Part of her believed what she’d just said. The other part longed for him. She was fighting a battle within herself, and he wasn’t sure which side was winning. He wrapped his hands around his belt, unbuckling it slowly. She remained silent, masking any concern as he undressed himself.

“Apart from Elsa, no woman has lived in the manor since 1948,” he said.

His hands began to unfasten his trousers. He slipped out of his shoes and kicked them to the side. Releasing his pants, he let them fall to the floor and stepped out of them. He removed his socks, gathered the slacks into one hand and tossed them on top of his shoes. All that remained was a pair of boxer briefs, clinging to his erect member.

“Come here, Kitten.” He moved closer.

“No,” she whispered, transfixed as he peeled the briefs from his muscular legs.

His arm cut across the thin divide and wrapped around her waist. He yanked her forward, crushing her large breasts against his chest. Taut peaks burned into his skin as he steered her back into the waterfall. He groaned at the mounting pressure in his groin.

“Do you wish to be set free?” he whispered.

Her eyelids fluttered as his mouth trailed across her neck, kissing her slowly.

“I didn’t hear you,” he murmured against her lips.

“Y-yes, I want to be free.” Her voice faltered slightly.

He was quiet for a moment. “If that’s what you want, then you shall have it,” he said softly.

Alexandra’s mind was racing. He was going to set her free! But there was little time for celebration as Lucius hoisted her into his arms. Bracing her against the wall, he wrapped her legs around his waist, his eyes devouring her hungrily. The force of the water made it difficult to maintain her balance, and she clung to him helplessly.

"I'm the first man to satisfy you, aren't I?" His hands tightened their hold on her waist.

A crimson blush swept across her cheeks. How could he know such a thing?

"It's all right." He grinned. "No need to compliment me further with an explanation."

Furious, embarrassed, and outraged by his arrogance, she lashed out at him. "I won't be satisfied until I've gained my freedom," she snapped.

Lucius smoothed her curls and tucked a lock behind her ear, his other hand brushing across her hardened nipples.

"I suspect you'll be satisfied before then."

She opened her mouth to reply, but was stunned into silence as her arms were stretched over her head. Furious, she bit her lip and tried to appear calm.

"Unimpressed?" He tipped his head to the side.

"Do you really have to ask?" She sneered.

The muscles in his jaw tightened. His eyes narrowed as he let the belt unravel from his hand. "My, my, when did I lose your interest?" He looked down at the black leather strap.

"Your question suggests you had my interest to begin with." She laughed cruelly.

His eyes clouded over. She felt a tingling at the nape of her neck as an eerie silence filled the room. Instantly regretting her foolish bravado, she opened her mouth, her mind searching for words to diffuse his anger. Lucius's gaze returned to her breasts, still partially shrouded by the waterfall.

He held her thighs firmly across his hips, wrists pinned to the ledge above her head. A feeling of total helplessness washed over her. She began chattering nervously, apologizing for her brash words. He covered her mouth with his hand, and she flushed in outrage, her words muffled mid-sentence.

"Hush," he scolded her gently.

Emboldened by her anger, she tried to lower her arms. Lucius tsked and wrenched them downward, taking her by surprise. He wrapped the belt around her wrists several times and jerked them above her head again. Her upper body was now immobilized, her breasts hungry for the attention of his skillful tongue. It happened so quickly she hadn't time to protest.

Alexandra stared in helpless wonder as he manipulated her body. She was half in awe, half in lust. In her present situation, she was very much at the mercy of her captor. A revelation that made her very, very wet. His fingers blazed a path through the valley of her breasts, leaving a trail of fire behind as he touched her. The effect was immediate. Her eyelids felt heavy as he took control of her. He smiled pointedly.

"Have I managed to capture your interest?" He placed special emphasis on the word capture.

"No ..."

Her head rolled back on her shoulders.

His hand grasped the hair at the nape of her neck, the hollow of her throat now exposed to his mouth. "Perhaps I should give up?" His lips teased the sensitive area slowly.

She closed her eyes and prayed he would not. His mouth consumed hers so passionately, she feared she might never catch her breath. Her hands twisted inside her bonds, desperate to touch this man who could bend her will so easily.

"How does it feel, bound like a slave at my mercy?" His voice was soft.

His question was at once both seductive and shamefully exciting. She shuddered as a new surge of wetness spread throughout her pussy. Lucius pressed her flat against the wall, her anticipation building as he prepared to penetrate her. She whimpered, writhing back and forth in sweet agony.

"Any special requests?" He was obviously enjoying her predicament.

"Untie me!" she pleaded.

"When I've finished with you."

Steadying her beneath the waterfall, he slid a hand between them, bringing it to the entrance of her womanhood. She arched her back against the wall, breasts swelling beyond the veil of the cascading waters. He dipped his head quickly and took a tiny peak into his mouth as he continued to examine her wetness.

“Lucius.” She moaned helplessly.

“Yes?” His mouth left one nipple in search of the other.

“Untie me,” she demanded weakly.

“No,” he replied darkly.

He drove two fingers inside of her, his mouth maintaining its assault on her nipples. She couldn’t believe he’d done this to her again. In less than three days time, she’d gone from respectable woman to shameless whore, fucked ten ways from Sunday and begging for more.

“What will you do with your freedom, Alexandra?” He released her wrists suddenly.

Unprepared for the sudden loss of support, she collapsed against his chest. He took her bound wrists and pulled them over his head, letting her arms fall across his shoulders. She gasped as her breasts made contact with his muscled flesh. His hand caressed her cheek before his thumb slipped between her parted lips. She ran her tongue across it, licking it feverishly.

“You didn’t answer me.” His lips grazed her temple.

“I’ll go home to America,” she whispered.

Lucius furrowed his brow. He nudged her thighs further apart, slowly easing the head of his cock into her slick entrance. Alexandra sighed and tilted her head back. “I don’t believe I heard you correctly,” he said quietly.

Large hands reached out and hauled her forward. She trembled with need. Anchoring herself against his chest, she repositioned her hips, allowing his sex to slip further inside of her.

“Lucius ...” Her bound hands clung to the back of his neck.

“What will you do?” His voice came out strained as she undulated above him.

“I’ll go home!” she cried out, his hardness penetrating her completely now.

His mouth descended upon hers. She could almost taste his fury.

“You will not.” His kiss was smoldering. “I didn’t go to all this trouble just to have you run back to America.”

Thrusting vigorously now, he kissed her fiercely with every stroke. She thrashed against his chest, on the verge of orgasm already. “I’ll go anywhere I please!” she proclaimed defiantly.

He lifted her arms and returned them to the ledge above the waterfall. Leaning forward slightly, he took a rose-colored peak into his mouth and suckled it until she squealed with pleasure.

“You may go where you please, provided I’ve given you permission to do so.” His voice was grave.

An inexplicable thrill shot through her upon hearing those words. The first wave of orgasm neared its peak, and she was panting wildly now.

“Oh, God,” she moaned.

“Shall I continue?” He smiled wickedly.

Her eyes glazed over as he exerted full control over her small frame. Her mind told her to resist, but her body failed her.

“You need me,” he said softly. “And I won’t let you go so easily.”

She screamed in ecstasy, his shaft piercing the core of her being. Waves of warm water crashed over her, stimulating taut nipples as her captor fucked her masterfully.

“Lucius!” The second peak of orgasm was upon her.

“Yes?” he asked innocently.

“I want to feel you come inside of me ...” Her voice was raspy.

He pulled her downward.

“What will you do with your freedom?”

She whimpered ecstatically in his arms.

“Answer me,” he said softly.

“I don’t want my freedom,” she whispered.

She was quivering with need, her sex dripping with honeyed nectar. He ran his lips along the curve of her neck, nipping provocatively as she moved against him.

“Come for me, Kitten.” He increased his pace again.

His command seemed to electrify her. She purred with desire, coming again and again and again. He, too, shuddered with his own climax, having restrained himself longer than he’d thought possible. Reaching for the wall, Lucius steadied himself, waiting for the aftershocks to subside.

Alexandra leaned against his shoulder. He withdrew from her slowly and carried her to a nearby bench, laying her across the smooth, wooden planks. She sighed contentedly as he collected her coat from where it had fallen earlier. No man had ever known a vixen like this one, he thought to himself.

The jacket was nearly dry now, as were his own belongings. He ran a hand beneath the water, trying to rinse the mud away as he carried it back to his captive. Helping his listless captive to a sitting position, he drew the sleeves over her shoulders and pulled it snugly across her body before dressing himself.

It was five o’ clock already. The storm had passed, and he wanted to reach town before it got dark. Concerned the road might well be under water, he preferred facing it now, while the sun was still shining. He ran his hands through his hair, eyeing Alexandra’s graceful form. She looked incredibly sexy, even now.

“Time to head back.” He knelt down beside her.



She mewled in response, unwilling to interrupt the bliss of her afterglow. He brushed a curl from her cheek as he got to his feet.

"I'll take that as a request to be carried." He grinned.

Lucius gathered her into his arms, resting her head against his shoulder. He hoped to find the trail in usable condition.

"Lucius?" her voice lilted upward.

"Mmmm?" He squinted, his blue eyes adjusting to the sunlight.

"What will you do with me now?" she asked.

"I haven't decided yet," he teased.

"You're despicable," she murmured.

"Indeed," he smiled.

She took a moment to look around them. Aside from a trail of fallen leaves, there was little indication of the storm.

"It's as though it hadn't rained." She looked at him in surprise.

"Let's hope the plateau came through with similar colors." He began to scale the steps cautiously.

Lucius was relieved to find the Kompressor the same as he'd left it, save being covered in mud. Opening the passenger door, he set his charge down and kissed her on the forehead. Walking around to the driver's side, he climbed in and took a deep breath. Tired muscles sank into the comfortable leather, and he wished he could sit there forever. Alexandra yawned contentedly beside him. He suspected she'd be well asleep by the time they returned to the manor. Slipping the key into the ignition, he turned the car on, blasting the heater to keep her warm. The conditions of the parking lot had improved tenfold.

If he knew Elsa at all, he expected Darrin had been invited to a late supper. Which meant they had less than two hours to get home and prepare for his arrival. Lucius turned the radio on as they left the park behind them. He wasn't sure he had the energy to entertain his uncle, but at least he'd managed to tame the redhead in time for a peaceful evening amongst family.

## Chapter Eighteen

“Good afternoon, I’d like to speak with one of your guests,” Elsa said politely.

“Certainly,” said the young woman on the other end of the receiver. “May I have the name, please?”

“Sinclair. Darrin Sinclair.”

“One moment, please.”

Elsa tapped her fingers as she waited for Darrin to answer the phone. She hoped he wasn’t in the shower. It was coming up on seven o’clock now, and there was still no sign of Lucius. She figured it best to collect the elder Sinclair herself or send a taxi for him.

“Hello?” Darrin said sleepily.

“Darr, it’s Elsa. Did I wake you?” she asked apologetically.

“Elsa! What’s on the menu?”

“Barbecued chicken, mashed potatoes, and collard greens.” She beamed into the phone.

“You’re kidding.” Darrin sounded surprised. “They have all the makings for that here?”

“No, not really. But I’m a Texan. I can make anything work,” she boasted proudly.

“I believe it!” he said. “How’s that nephew of mine?”

“Collecting his dinner guest, I believe.”

“Well, I’ll be ready on time,” he said.

“That’s what I’m calling about. I expected him home by now, but ...” Elsa paused as the gate to the driveway began to swing open.

“Elsa?”

“I’m here, Darr. Give me a second; someone’s just opened the gates.” She walked to the window overlooking the front lawn.

She parted the drapes and peered through the large glass panes.

“Well, what do you know,” she grinned. “Your nephew has finally arrived. Shouldn’t be long before you’re enjoying my famous home cooking. We’ll see you soon!”

“Amen to that!”

The elderly woman hurried outside to intercept Lucius before he could park. He stopped the car as she approached his window.

“Could you have come home any later?” She tapped her foot as he rolled the window down.

“Sorry, Elsa” he grinned sheepishly. “We were delayed by the storm.”

Elsa looked over at Alexandra and raised an eyebrow at her disheveled state. “I’ll just *bet* you were.” She placed her hands on her hips.

Lucius grinned. “Is Darr here yet?” he asked.

“No.” She walked around to the other side of the car. “But he will be, just as soon as you pick him up.”

The redhead opened her eyes as Elsa swung the passenger door open. “Good morning, Glory. Up and at ’em.” She took her by the arm and helped her out of the car.

Slightly disoriented, Alexandra glanced at Lucius.

"Elsa will see to you while I'm gone. I'll be back soon. With a surprise guest." He winked and waved her on.

Prodding her toward the house, the silver-haired woman patted her on the back. "Don't fret, sugar. He won't be gone long," she said.

The younger woman's first impulse was to deny any interest in when he might return, but she was too tired to fight about it. She followed her hostess into the manor as Lucius drove off.

"I took the liberty of mending your blouse." Elsa led her guest upstairs.

Alexandra closed her eyes, grateful the older woman couldn't see her reddening cheeks. She pulled the hem of the jacket as low as possible, trying to conceal the holes Lucius had left in her panty hose.

"I've also washed it, along with your slacks." She swung the bedroom door open.

The two women crossed over the threshold, and Alexandra's blush deepened, memories of time spent in the large four-poster bed rushing back to her.

"Would you prefer a bath, or a shower?" Elsa asked.

"A bath will be fine, I don't want to cause any trouble," she said politely.

"Alrighty." Elsa handed her some fresh towels from the linen closet. "Make yourself at home and come down to the kitchen when you're ready."

"Thank you for your hospitality." Alexandra smiled shyly.

"Glad to do it," Elsa called over her shoulder as she left the room.

Alexandra ran her hands through the mass of curls hanging down her back. She winced as her fingers caught in a tangle. Eager to soak in the large tub, she headed into the bath suite and let the basin fill itself. The warm water felt like heaven as she slipped beneath the bubbles with a sigh. Her thoughts turned to her captor.

No man had ever made her feel so sexual. So desirable. So *alive*.

*Which makes you a freak, I hope you realize that,* a little voice snorted.

“Does it?” She spoke the words aloud to herself.

Was she suffering from that psychological phenomenon in which abductees fell in love with their kidnappers?

*Whoa, who said anything about love??* The little voice was clearly panicking now.

Alexandra sat up straight and took a deep breath. Of course, she wasn't in love. How silly. She'd only confessed to being content here. As his captive. Enjoying a man like him taking control of her life -- and her body. Perpetually wet at the thought of being taken again.

*Freak is far too mild a word,* the voice sighed.

Wasn't it, though. She couldn't deny it. The police would say she'd been brainwashed and could no longer think clearly. Let alone think for herself. She knew society would pity her, a woman snatched off the street by a madman. Yet, somehow, it felt right. Looking back, he hadn't forced her at all. He'd simply unlocked a door and led her through it. Bringing her true nature to the surface so subtly she hadn't even realized he'd done it. Until now.

Would another man have gone to such great lengths?

Tired, and chilled to the bone, Alexandra pushed her thoughts aside for now. She wanted nothing more than to relax until Lucius returned, but this was her chance to have a heart-to-heart with Elsa. The woman seemed kind enough, and Lucius's love for her was obvious. If anyone could fill in the blanks on her handsome abductor, it had to be her.

## Chapter Nineteen

Darrin was already standing in front of the hotel when Lucius turned into the driveway. He spotted his uncle at once and pulled up alongside of him.

“How are you feeling, kid?” Darrin hopped into the car.

“Much better now that I’ve had a solid day’s rest.” The younger man suppressed a grin.

“Good, because there’s something we need to discuss.” Darrin switched the radio off.

Lucius wasn’t sure he liked the sound of that. “What’s on your mind, Darr?”

Darrin fidgeted uncomfortably. “What’s the story on you and Alexandra?” he asked quietly.

“There isn’t one,” Lucius shrugged. “It just took some time to approach her.”

Darrin frowned slightly. “And Gabriela warmed your bed in the meantime?”

Lucius cringed. “I’ve done a number of foolish things in my life.” His expression was stone cold. “Bedding Gabriela has not been one of them.”

Darrin was relieved, if still a bit perplexed about the whole situation. “She seems to think the two of you have spent the night together,” he said.

The younger man balked at the suggestion. "She spent the night at my place *once*. Showed up on my doorstep in the middle of the night. Drunk out of her mind. She was in no condition to drive. Slept in the guest room," he explained.

Darrin tsked softly.

"*And* I've just discovered she's been masquerading as Alexandra's boss." His grip on the steering wheel tightened. "Putting her through hell in hopes of making regional manager herself."

"Why didn't Alexandra confide any of this to you sooner?"

Lucius winced slightly. "We hadn't been properly introduced until very recently," he mumbled.

"*How* recently?" Darrin faced his nephew.

The answer was virtually inaudible.

"What was that? I didn't hear you." The older man moved closer.

Lucius cleared his throat. "Friday evening." He flinched at the sound of his own words.

Darrin did the math in his head. The girl had arrived two months after Lucius hired her. "Four months!" His eyes widened. "You waited four *months* to introduce yourself?"

Lucius squared his jaw and stared ahead in silence.

"I know that look." Darrin sighed. "What aren't you telling me?"

He kicked himself mentally. How did everything get so out of control? "She's joining us for dinner," Lucius said.

"And?" his uncle prodded.

"And ..." He hesitated for a moment. "I may have neglected to mention a few details regarding her employment."

"Such as?" Darrin was on the edge of his seat now.

"Me," he confessed.



A deafening silence filled the car.

"You never told her." Darrin was incredulous. "She doesn't know who you are or how she got here."

Lucius clenched his teeth and sat up straight. This wasn't wrong. Granted, he could have orchestrated his plan with a bit more finesse. But nothing about having this woman in his home -- or his bed -- was wrong. And he wasn't going to apologize for it.

"I'm going to tell her tonight," he promised.

Darrin squeezed his eyes shut and massaged his temples. "She wasn't surprised to hear her boss was coming to dinner?"

Lucius winced again. "She doesn't know," he replied.

"For *Christ's sake*, Lucius!" The older man threw his hands up in exasperation.

"Come on, Darr -- what could I say?" he shot back. "Hi. I'm the man who can't stop thinking about you. The man who just had to have you. The man who dreams about you every night." He shook his head in self-disgust.

But Darrin had gone quiet. "Every night?" His tone had softened.

"Yes." There was no point in downplaying it.

## Chapter Twenty

Alexandra stood in the entrance to Elsa's kitchen and tapped the large wooden door.

"Well, come in, girl, don't just stand there." Elsa waved her toward a table next to the oven.

"Thank you." She entered hesitantly. "Can I help you with anything?"

"I've got it covered." The elderly woman smiled.

Alexandra walked to the table and pulled out a chair. "Elsa?" she asked timidly, sitting down.

"Spit it out, dear," came the friendly reply.

The younger woman sat up straight, trying to summon her nerve.

Elsa looked over her shoulder. "Do I have to beat it out of you?" she chortled, and cocked her head to the side.

"Would you tell me about Lucius?" Alexandra blurted the question out before she could change her mind.

The housekeeper grinned and turned back to her cutting board. "What would you like to know?"

"I'm not sure," she replied. "Anything. Where's he from? Why's he here? What does he do? Is he ... married?"

"Well!" Elsa laughed. "Pretty specific questions after all!"

Alexandra wrung her hands nervously.

"I'm pulling your chain, sugar." Elsa poured herself some coffee. "Would you like a cup?"

"No, thank you," she declined politely.

The elderly woman checked the potatoes on the stove, giving them a quick stir before joining her guest at the table. "Let's see," she began. "No, Lucius isn't married. Nor does he have children. He's here because his family has Czech roots and he wanted to experience them firsthand."

Alexandra sighed with relief.

"What else did you ask?" Elsa pursed her lips and tried to recall.

"Where's he from?" her guest reminded her. "What does he do?"

"Yes, that was it." She tapped the table thoughtfully. "That's a bit more complicated. His paternal grandfather was a New York senator during the 1940s. He made a small fortune in the stock market near the end of his term and invested the money in several family-run restaurants. Lucius is the controlling partner in the business now that his father has retired. When the opportunity came about to reclaim his mother's ancestral home here in Prague, he worked a deal with the government to do so. His uncle manages the American side of the business, while Lucius oversees European operations from here.

"His maternal grandfather was a captain in the Czech Army until seeking asylum in the States. Marcela, his mother, was born and raised in San Antonio. She met and married his father, William, at a young age. With business keeping him overseas more often than not, Marcela wasn't prepared to handle a newborn alone. Enter Elsa the nanny.

“When he was about nine, I met and married my husband, John. We moved back to San Antonio shortly thereafter. I stayed in touch with Lucius, but tragedy struck when Marcela died in a fall. Unfortunately, his father wasn’t interested in raising his son, so I took him home with me. While William saw to it Lucius never wanted for anything material, the boy needed love and care. Enter Elsa the surrogate mother.” She winked.

The housekeeper’s story fascinated her. Alexandra’s heart ached for the little boy whose mother was torn from him so young, and a father who was so cold he could allow another to raise his child.

“Lucius is a good man, Alexandra.” Her tone was serious.

The younger woman looked away nervously. She’d hoped her feelings weren’t so obvious.

“You can’t fool *me*, missy,” Elsa admonished her in grandmotherly voice.

Returning to her stove, she stirred the potatoes one last time for good measure. “You think you could keep an eye on these for me?” She gave her a sideways glance.

“Um ...” She was no shining star in the kitchen.

“Not very domestic, eh?” The old woman chuckled as she turned around.

Alexandra smiled sheepishly.

“All right -- how’s about you run on down to the cellar and find us a nice vintage wine?” Elsa nodded toward the door on the far side of the room.

Now *that* was something she could handle. By the bottle, at this point. “Do you have a preference?” Alexandra asked as she approached the cellar door.

“No, dear, but Lucius typically drinks red.

“I’ll just be a minute.” She flicked the switch and went downstairs.

“Take your time, sugar,” Elsa called back.

She'd just grabbed a few more spices from the shelf when someone rang the bell at the front gate. Alexandra was already out of earshot. She'd have to answer it herself.

"My mashed potatoes had better survive this interruption," Elsa mumbled as she walked over to the intercom.

She reached up and pressed the button next to the speaker. "Who is it?" she drawled into the microphone.

The faint sound of static was the only reply. "Hello?" she tried again, more loudly this time.

Nothing. "So much for modern technology." Elsa sighed to herself.

It was already too dark to see beyond the courtyard. Knowing Danilo was due to return some time this evening, she figured it must be him. Besides, no self-respecting person would drop by this late. Not unannounced and uninvited.

## Chapter Twenty-One

“Gabriela will be fired in the morning, Darr,” Lucius promised. “Long before she can cause any more trouble.”

“The sooner the better.”

“About Alexandra,” Lucius began.

“Don’t worry -- I’m not touching this one with a ten-foot pole,” his uncle assured him.

The younger man nodded his thanks as they pulled into the manor’s driveway. “At least the worst is behind us.” He sighed as the large gate began to open.

Lucius tossed the fob back into the glove compartment and drove the car onto the grounds. The driver’s side mirror was still caked with mud, and he took a moment to roll his window down to clean it. It was almost all the way down when he stopped suddenly, slamming on the brakes.

Rage surged through his body as the red Audi materialized before him.

“Looks like the worst is parked alongside of us” Darrin groaned. “Remind me to stay home the next time I get the urge to check up on you.”

“Give me five minutes.” Lucius was out of the car before Darrin could answer him.

He couldn't see the front steps yet, but he *could* hear the unmistakable sound of women arguing. The volume was controlled, but the catty atmosphere was palpable. As he passed through the courtyard, the figures of two women came into view. Elsa and Gabriela were standing at the foot of the front steps. He stepped out from the shadows and headed straight for them.

"But Elsa, I'm certain Lucius would want me to wait for him." Gabriela was pleading for entry.

The elderly woman made no attempt to hide her feelings. "Go on and wait." She crossed her arms. "Just do it somewhere else."

Gabriela narrowed her eyes.

"When I tell Lucius you treated me this way ..." She let the threat hang in the air.

Elsa smiled flatly and shot Lucius a look. "I think he knows." She signaled for him to come forward. "Goodnight, Gabriela."

She walked back into the house and closed the door behind her. Pulling the drapes back as discreetly as possible, she peered through the foyer window.

"Lucius, you're home!" Gabriela's voice penetrated even closed doors.

Elsa flinched as the leggy strumpet threw her arms around him. *Get that girl out of here, boy!*

"Elsa?" The old woman jumped at the unexpected intrusion.

She turned around slowly, mentally fumbling for an excuse to explain why she'd been peeking through the window. She steered Alexandra away from the foyer and back to the kitchen.

"Thought I heard a car pull up." She smiled. "Time to replace the hearing aid batteries, I guess."

The redhead giggled. "Don't worry, I thought I'd heard something, too --" Alexandra stopped and spun around.

She furrowed her brow. “Did you hear that?” she asked. “It sounded like a woman screaming.”

Elsa squeezed her eyes shut. Good Lord, what a nightmare. If there wasn’t a wedding at the end of this madness, she was going to be one ticked Texan. “I’m sure it’s just the wind, dear.” She dismissed the question as nonchalantly as possible.

The younger woman shook her head. She was certain she’d heard something. Alexandra headed for the front door and yanked it open. Her eyes widened as Gabriela’s slender form came into focus. Tongue-tied, she stared helplessly at the scene below.

“You’re asking me to leave?”

“I’m *telling* you to leave,” Lucius replied calmly.

Elsa crept out onto the porch landing as quietly as possible and tapped Alexandra on the shoulder. “Come back inside, dear, Lucius will take care of this,” she whispered.

Alexandra couldn’t begin to imagine what the Czech woman was doing there. How did she know Lucius? *Something’s not right*, a voice whispered from within.

Elsa had already stepped back over the threshold and released the door, believing Alexandra to be right behind her. But she wasn’t. The bizarre spectacle unraveling before her had her fixated.

The door slammed shut.

Gabriela’s head snapped around. Thin fingers shielded her eyes from the porch lights as she squinted at the figure standing beneath them. “Who ...?” She stepped forward and let out a blood curling screech. “What’s *she* doing here?”

“*Goodnight*, Gabriela.” Lucius was clearly having a difficult time controlling his temper.

An evil grin spread across the blonde’s face, quickly replaced by a sticky sweet smile. “You didn’t turn me away the *last* time I was here ...”

Lucius looked up just in time to see Alexandra cover her mouth in surprise.



“Gabriela, I’m warning you.” He took a step in her direction.

“Could I just have my clothes back, then?” Her face was the picture of innocence. “You sent me home in yours last time.”

Alexandra felt her stomach lurch. The black raincoat. She should have known! Bitter tears stung her eyes as pieces of the puzzle began falling into place. *But how do they know each other?*

Elsa flung the door open and stormed out onto the porch.

“You little hussy!” She looked ready to tackle the woman herself.

“He’s great in bed, isn’t he?” Gabriela continued with a sneer.

“You’re *fired!*” Lucius’s voice boomed throughout the courtyard.

Fired? A look of confusion crossed Alexandra’s face. She turned toward Elsa, who now stood fanning herself in a corner.

“Fired?” Gabriela shrieked.

She glared at Alexandra, fists clenched at her sides. “This is all your fault!” she spat angrily.

Alexandra’s focus was still on Elsa when the Czech woman suddenly bolted in her direction. A steady stream of profanity rolled off her tongue as she raced toward the top of the steps.

“Bitch!” She slapped Alexandra across the face. “You Americans think you’re so much better than us!”

Lucius moved quickly but stopped when Alexandra waved him back. If she’d been quiet before, it was only due to her state of confusion. Gabriela was in for a shock if she expected a cowering response. Four months of pent-up frustration had just reached the boiling point, and she was tired of holding back.

Her fingers shot through the air, landing in her attacker's long, golden mane. A simple flick of the wrist and the troublemaker was now bent downward, arms flung wide, struggling to remain upright beneath Alexandra's grasp.

"If you ever touch me again," Alexandra spoke through gritted teeth, "I'll break that perfect little nose of yours."

"Let go of me!" Gabriela demanded angrily.

"Sure." She smiled and released her grip.

Her opponent wasn't prepared for the sudden loss of balance. She toppled over into a graceless heap. Legs askew, a mat of tangled hair obscuring her face, she scrambled to stand up. Scanning the area wildly, she lunged toward a ceramic flowerpot, hoisting it from the ground and hurling it at Alexandra.

The sound of shattering clay filled the courtyard. In a matter of seconds, Lucius had pulled Gabriela's arms behind her back, pinning her against the porch railing. Angry sobs racked her thin form as she wailed dramatically.

"Call the police, Elsa." Lucius sighed wearily.

The elderly woman nodded and disappeared into the house while Alexandra looked on in semi-detachment. Her mind was still reeling from this latest turn of events.

"Fired?" she asked in a quiet voice.

He took a deep breath and ran a hand through his black hair.

"Kitten ..." he began.

"Lucius?" Darrin suddenly appeared in the courtyard below. "What the hell's going on up there?"

Alexandra felt her knees go weak.

This was just too much now. Where did Mr. Sinclair come from?! How did the man who'd hired her know the man who'd kidnapped her? And how did the man who'd kidnapped her know the woman who'd threatened to steal her job?

A sudden image of her last paycheck flashed through her mind. “*Oh, my God...*” A wave of nausea threatened to topple her.

The authorizing signature had belonged to someone named L. Sinclair. What had seemed insignificant at the time now seemed like a revelation. She gave Darrin a quick once over. Dark blue eyes, thick black hair, and a strong, squared jaw. Just like the man standing beside him. What had Elsa said? Lucius belonged to a family of restaurateurs?

“Ms. Scott?” Darrin placed a hand on her back. “Are you all right? You look a bit pale.”

His voice was enough cut through the haze. *Run! Get away from this madhouse while you still can!* her inner voice was screaming now.

She took a step backward and eyed the steps through lowered lashes. Stomach churning, heart pounding, she edged her way toward them as subtly as possible.

“Alexandra, give me a minute to explain,” Lucius began.

Too late. She was already running as fast as her small feet would carry her. Mentally berating herself, she couldn’t forgive her foolishness -- believing the words of a man who’d kidnapped her! She’d almost reached the gate when she realized it would be locked -- and she didn’t have a key. Her heart sank at the prospect of remaining his prisoner. Beaten, she leaned against the Kompressor and kicked the tire angrily.

“I ought to smash his damned windows!” she said, whipping around to face the Mercedes.

Her mouth fell open at the sight of the lowered car window. She couldn’t believe her good fortune. She reached into the car and opened the door from the inside. Having seen Lucius operate the gate this morning, she knew exactly where to find the fob. In a matter of seconds, the iron structure was halfway open, and she ran for the street.

“Alexandra!” Lucius called out from the shadows behind her.

He’d followed the sound of her footsteps as far as he could. But they’d disappeared. As he neared his car, he slowed his pace, trying to determine her most likely place of hiding.

“We need to talk,” he called again. As he continued to walk, he noticed something unusual about the street lights. They were casting a strange shadow across the driveway. He approached the large gate and stopped. It was open.

“Damn!” He pounded his fist into his thigh.

Lucius looked at the Kompressor, now just a few feet away. He’d left the window down. Cursing himself furiously, he ran back to the manor. Elsa and Darrin had Gabriela cornered on the porch, awaiting the arrival of the police.

“Darr,” he began.

“How’s Alexandra?” his uncle asked.

“Gone.” Lucius stepped into the house and grabbed his jacket.

He removed his cell phone from the pocket and dialed Danilo’s number as he returned to the porch. “Come on ...” he muttered impatiently.

“Lucius! I’m almost done,” Danilo exclaimed as he answered his phone. “Wait ’til you see ...”

“Danilo,” Lucius interrupted him quickly.

“What is it?” the Portuguese man asked.

“I need you to stay there a bit longer,” Lucius said. “I’m on my way, but you might have a visitor before I get there.”

Danilo stood up and walked to the living room window. No one in sight yet. “I’m here, boss,” he assured him.

“Try not to terrify her. She’s in a bad way at the moment,” Lucius warned.

Darrin looked at his nephew.

“Don’t ask,” Lucius mouthed the words to him.

“I’ll be there in thirty minutes.” He hung the phone up.

Gabriela glared at him from the stoop, plotting revenge as she wallowed in self-pity. Lucius shook his head in disgust.

Elsa waved him on. "Go see about the girl." She gave him a thin smile.

Lucius didn't need to hear it twice. He rushed through the front door, reaching his car in less than a minute. Slipping the key into the ignition, he revved the engine for a moment, sickened by the fear of losing Alexandra.

*That's not going to happen,* he promised himself as he tore through the front gate.

## Chapter Twenty-Two

Alexandra scanned the tram nervously. She hoped there weren't any ticket inspectors onboard. Not one to use public transport illegally, she'd had little choice this evening. Lucius had confiscated her purse -- and all of its contents -- the night she'd arrived.

*Has it really only been seventy-two hours since he swept me off my feet?*

She cringed at the idea. *Snatched* off her feet was what she'd meant to think. Snatched -- as in kidnapped!

Alexandra tried to think of a good excuse for losing her keys. Her landlord was a nice enough man, but he wouldn't be thrilled to see her at this time of night.

*"Karlovo Namesti,"* the automated announcement chimed as the doors opened.

She shuffled off the tram and headed for her block. As she approached the building, it suddenly occurred to her that getting inside might prove difficult. The front doors were never unlocked at this time of night. Not to mention the doorbells were *inside* the foyer. A minor inconvenience, to say the least.

Searching the courtyard, she hoped to spot a familiar face. She'd almost given up when she heard a lock click. A smallish figure had just opened the front door. She called out as she ran toward the figure.

*“Cekejte, prosim!”* she begged the person to wait in her best Czech.

The light above the doors had burned out ages ago, and she couldn’t see who it was in the darkness. As she reached the entrance, the figure whisked by before she could say thank you. She lurched forward to stop the doors from slamming.

“How rude!” she mumbled under her breath.

Alexandra scrambled into the foyer and closed the door behind her, rubbing her hands together to keep warm. She found her landlord’s bell and rang his apartment.

*“Prosim?”* came the gravelly voice.

“Mr. Vanek, this is Alexandra Scott. I’m very sorry to bother you, but I’ve lost my keys,” she told him.

“But how it’s possible? Where the keys are?” He sounded confused.

“I don’t know ...” she lied.

“Moment, I will come to you,” he said.

The lights came on, and she could hear the jingling of keys in the hall. He was coming. Alexandra walked to the second set of doors. She waved, smiling as he approached her. The lock clicked, and he ushered her into the lobby.

“Thank you, Mr. Vanek.” She tried to sound as grateful as possible.

“Ms. Alexandra, I am having a very beautiful guest tonight. Can we talk tomorrow?” he asked.

“Yes, certainly!” She sighed with relief as he led her upstairs.

He slid his key into the lock and left it hanging there.

“You need something else?” he asked.

“I’m fine, thank you,” she assured him.

*“Dobrou noc.”* He wished her goodnight and headed back to his own apartment.

*“Dobrou,”* she called back.

The hall light was on a timer, and it went out before she'd accessed her apartment. The main switch was opposite her front door, which meant her living room was closer. She opened the door and hurried inside, feeling along the wall until her fingers touched the switch.

"Big baby." She flicked the switch on, chiding herself for fearing the dark.

She turned around and gasped as a large hand suddenly closed over her mouth. The front door slammed shut as strong arms pulled her against the solid chest of a very sturdy, and very large, man. Panic seized her instantly. She scratched and bit him -- did everything she could -- but nothing came of it.

*This is what I get for escaping that monster?* She tried to hold back the tears.

"Shhhh." The man's lips fluttered against the nape of her neck.

Chills ran down her spine as the warmth connected with her bare skin.

*Nooo ... he feels just like him ... sounds just like him ...* She closed her eyes tightly, hating that part of herself which ached to submit to Lucius even now.

A scarf slipped over her eyes, and the room was suddenly black again. Alexandra moaned as a leather strap secured her wrists behind her back. She couldn't help but imagine Lucius restraining her again. Her nipples tingled with excitement, and she cursed her body's willing response. Shapely thighs quivered as a large hand examined their curves. Her head rolled back, memories of her captivity rushing back.

"Lucius," she murmured softly, her mind replaying their most intimate moments.

"I'm here, Kitten." His words caressed her ear.

Her body went rigid. It couldn't be. Her mind had created this hallucination to cope with her present situation. Right?

"Lucius?"

"Yes," he confirmed, his fingers brushing across her cheek.



Momentarily calmed by the knowledge a rapist hadn't broken in, her relief was quickly replaced by rage. "Get out of my flat!" she screamed angrily. "Get out of my *life!*"

Lucius sighed and gathered her into his arms.

"Put me down!" She battled with the restraints around her wrists.

He kicked the door to her bedroom open and switched the light on. Long legs carried them to the bed, where he dropped her rather suddenly. She hit the mattress with a thud.

"Bastard!" she screeched.

He chuckled softly as she inched her way to the headboard. She'd almost made it before he'd captured her legs, forcing them apart. Her mouth fell open as leather straps closed over each ankle. She was blindfolded, hands tied behind her back, each leg secured to a bed post.

"You've reached a new low," she growled.

"Let's see if I can't outdo myself." He sounded amused.

The color drained from her face. He shifted his weight, trying to give his swollen member some additional room. Lucius walked around the bed and knelt beside her, wrapping a silky curl around his finger as he spoke.

"If you'll excuse me, I'm going to take a shower." He pulled his shirt over his head and stood up. "I ravished a beautiful woman in the park, and I'm still covered in mud.

She blushed and turned away from his voice.

He chuckled as he crossed the hall to the bathroom. She had a proper shower, thank God. Sliding the curtain aside, he shed his clothing and climbed in, groaning as the hot water struck his shoulders and lower back. He wondered if Danilo was home by now. The man had truly outdone himself. He turned the water off and stepped out of the tub, grabbing a towel from the closet. A bit small for someone of his size, but he managed to fasten it around his hips. It would have to suffice.

He returned to the bedroom and looked in on his vixen. His cock stirred at the sight of her lying there, helplessly bound to the bed. He could almost taste her apprehension. Dark blue eyes admired the hardened nipples straining at her shirt. Rattled or not, she was definitely aroused.

Lucius walked to her chest of drawers and lit the candles. The soft scent of vanilla filled the room as he switched the lights out, bathing the room in candlelight. He walked to the bed and let his weight sink down into the mattress beside her. She lay there, silent and unmoving.

“Shall I keep you blindfolded?” His fingers traced the soft line of her lips.

*Please, no,* she whimpered mentally.

“I don’t care,” she lied.

“Don’t you?” His voice was tinged with doubt.

“No,” she said flatly.

He suspected the darkness bothered her a great deal, but decided to let her save face. “If it doesn’t matter, I’ll just remove it.” He pulled the silk away from her eyes

Alexandra squinted, giving her vision a moment to adjust. She blinked in disbelief at the crimson drapes and bedspread. Angrily, she twisted her body toward Lucius and promptly gasped at the large structure looming behind him.

“What the hell is that?!” She stared openly, unable to hide her shock.

“Surely, you’ve seen one before?” He grinned

“Something left over from your time with Gabriela?” Her mouth curled into a snarl.

Lucius ignored her and walked to the nightstand, retrieving the Swiss Army knife Danilo had left behind. Alexandra’s heart was pounding in her chest. He grasped the front of her shirt and started to cut the buttons away, one by one.

“What are you doing?” She couldn’t believe he was destroying it all over again.

“Removing the buttons from your shirt,” he replied calmly.

“Why?” she cried.

“Because I can.”

“You’re reprehensible!” she declared.

“That I am, love.” His tone was sober. “Something I intend to rectify this evening.”

Her eyes searched his, wondering what he meant, but his face gave nothing away. The shirt fell open to her waist, breasts suddenly exposed. He set the knife down on the dresser and leaned over her, his mouth covering hers quickly. Her lips parted easily as his tongue danced across them. His body moved over hers, his hands moving beneath her to clasp her bound wrists. He pulled her up and got to his knees. She was facing him now, ankles strapped to the bed as he knelt over her lap. Her breasts heaved against the expanse of chest, a delicious warmth enveloping her.

He untied her wrists and pulled her arms across his shoulders. His tongue teased hers gently while his hands explored her curves. Her response was spontaneous, effectually mollified by his touch. *Yet again.* Steadying her with one arm, he reached backward and removed her restraints, first one ankle and then the other.

“On your knees,” he ordered.

He repositioned her before she could refuse. Sliding the shirt from her shoulders, he tossed it to the floor. He gripped her waist firmly, strong fingers unbuttoning her pants before slipping inside of them. Lucius groaned. He’d forgotten she wouldn’t be wearing any panties.

“Are you wet, Kitten?” His voice was soft.

She was unable to resist, but unwilling to submit. Not yet. He removed his hand and grasped her arm, yanking her body against him. His other hand reached around to spank her lovely bottom. Amber eyes flew open, her rage returning in droves.

*“Are you wet?”*

"I am not, you arrogant pig!" she spat.

He tilted his head back and looked down at her. "From Kitten to Hellcat, in the blink of an eye." His fingers wound through her hair.

"I hate you." Tiny hands clenched into fists.

"You've mentioned." His smile was almost angelic.

She lowered her eyelids, peering up at him angrily.

"Have I also mentioned this will be our last meeting?" she said coolly.

"Is that right?" He cocked his head to the side.

"I'm going home tomorrow." Her tone was smug.

"In that case, I'd better make tonight count," he said.

He watched her carefully, their eyes locked as he pulled her against him. "How will I entertain myself, when you've gone?" he asked playfully.

"I'm sure Gabriela will be up for the task," she said bitterly.

Lucius ran a hand through his hair. "Everything Gabriela said ..." he began.

"Oh, *spare* me!" she snapped.

"... was twisted and untrue." His hand cupped her chin gently.

"Is that so?" She folded her arms. "Whose overcoat was I dressed in today?"

His jaw stiffened. "Gabriela's," he said quietly.

His honesty both surprised and enraged her. "You admit it?" She stared in disbelief.

"Alexandra," he placed his hands on her shoulders.

"Did she spend the night at your home?" She shoved his hands away, tears threatening to spill down her cheeks.

"Yes, but ..." He stopped as Alexandra's hands flew at his face, clawing at him in her fury.

He snared them with minimal effort, enraging her further. She bent forward and bit his arm, eager to tear his flesh with her teeth.

“Enough!” His deep voice filled the tiny room.

The sheer volume of it stunned her into silence. He stood up and hauled her off the bed.

“You’d be well advised to remain silent.” His tone brooked no argument.

Alexandra swallowed, bravado now replaced with an instinct for self-preservation. He carried her to the large A-frame and set her down on the floor. She felt the air go out of her lungs. He was actually going to tie her to that thing!

“Lucius,” she pleaded.

She just didn’t know when to shut up. Grabbing the blindfold once more, he stretched it across her mouth. He wanted to throttle Gabriela. If the tramp had been born a man, he’d have settled this the old-fashioned way.

“Thank you for cooperating,” he said dryly.

Tiny hands pounded against his chest. He stood still as she flailed about, the effort wasted on his large frame. As she began to tire, he wrapped her wrists in leather bindings, tethering her to a metal chain above her head. She twisted frantically as his arm circled her waist, lifting her easily to remove her pants.

Lucius’s gaze wandered across her naked body as he stroked himself beneath the towel. He’d never tied a woman up before. Not like this. She looked like a slave girl, waiting for him to take her. It would be very difficult to control himself tonight.

“If you promise to behave, I will remove the gag,” he offered.

She looked up at him slowly, rage coloring her beautiful cheeks.

“Shall I remove it?” He raised a brow.

Her nod was almost imperceptible. Nimble fingers untied the scarf and touched her lips softly. He brought his mouth to hers, but she pressed her lips together. Lucius considered

bending her will, but retrieved the flavored oil instead. It was similar to the one he'd used at his home, but the warmth would last much longer. Even after he licked it off.

The bottle's appearance was so unusual, he half expected to find a "Drink Me" tag around its neck. He removed the cork and tipped it upside down over his hand. Red licorice, he noted, licking his lips. Setting it down within arm's reach, he positioned himself behind Alexandra, molding his chest to her back. He took a large breast and kneaded it softly, the tiny peak hardening beneath his fingers. His other hand brushed her scarlet tresses aside before bringing his lips to her ear.

"What do you need?" He slipped a finger into her pussy.

Her body jolted in his embrace, the gasp escaping her before she knew it was coming. Trembling fingers curled around the restraints, and she bit her lip as he pushed a second finger into her wetness. Placing a hand on her hip, he spun her around. He nearly came at the sight of her dangling body. Like a fly, caught in a web. His hand wound through silky ringlets, gently caressing the nape of her neck. She was breathing heavily, her arousal a heady mix of desire and rage.

He loved her like this. "Gabriela left that jacket after spending the night in my home," he answered her, finally.

Alexandra scowled with every bone in her body as he set the bottle back down on the dresser. "At least you admit to your lies!"

Lucius observed her for a moment. "What lies?" he asked softly.

"The robe, the restraints --" she hissed.

"Purchased in anticipation of your arrival." He stood up straight.

She glared at him now. "Gabriela spent the night with you!"

He reached for her cheek, smoothing the soft skin with the back of his hand. "She spent one night in my guest room -- alone -- sleeping off a very drunken stupor," he said. "I let her stay because it was less hassle than forcing her into a cab."

"You dressed me up in that whore's clothing!" she cried angrily.

Lucius bowed his head slightly. "After imagining your lovely body beneath it ..." He cleared his throat. "I must admit, my intentions at that point were purely self-satisfying. I'm sorry."

His concession seemed to take her off guard. He could see her battling within herself, giving him hope. She wanted to believe him, he could sense it. If the girl would just be calm for two minutes, he could explain everything.

"That might work on *other* women you've kidnapped," she shouted, "but it's not going to work on me!"

"You're the only one, love," he said quietly.

"I'm the *only one* who doesn't know what you *do*," she snorted. "You work for Mr. Sinclair, don't you? You're related somehow."

She looked him dead in the eye.

Lucius smiled at her cleverness. "If I explain --" He placed his cheek against hers. "-- do you promise to remain calm?"

"Calm?" Her expression was incredulous. "I'll show you *calm*!"

She tried to kick him, but his hand closed around her thigh and stopped her. He let it slide behind her knee, raising her leg to his waist and keeping it there, her swollen sex spread across his abdomen. It was enough to send a shiver down his spine. He didn't want her doubting him. But an explanation would only carry as little or much weight as she'd allow.

Focusing on the task at hand, he turned her around and pulled her against him. He knew this position drove her wild, and he needed all the help he could get. Brushing her hair aside, strong fingers exposed the sensitive nape of her neck while his lips hovered above her shoulder. Skilled hands explored the softness of her hips as she pressed against him. She was already quivering beneath his touch

"Do you recall the day you were hired?" he murmured against her shoulder.

“Yes ...” She swallowed.

“Do you recall the book from your interview?” he asked.

Alexandra tensed suddenly. How could he know she’d had a book with her?

“Kafka’s *Amerika*,” she replied hesitantly.

“No, not that one.” He nuzzled her ear.

Puzzled, she wrinkled her brow. *I’m sure it was Kafka. Mr. Sinclair even asked* -- She froze as a terrible thought snagged in the back of her mind.

Her jaw shot downward, and her heart began to pound furiously.

*Nooo, I couldn’t have left it there ...* The very idea was humiliating. “Was there another book?” she hedged, her body temperature rising now.

“There *was* ...” He seemed to be enjoying this.

She moaned as agony turned her cheeks a deeper shade of pink.

“I must say, you have excellent taste in literature.” He pulled her against his hardness. “It’s rare you see a woman indulge her true sexual nature.”

*He must think I’m a freak!* She wanted to crawl under a rock.

“To be frank, I expected to find the owner a little less ... *appealing*,” he continued. “But seeing you in the cafeteria shortly after you interviewed with my company ...”

“I thought Mr. Sinclair was owner of the company?” she interrupted him.

“My uncle owns forty-nine percent of the company,” he said. “I own the other fifty-one. And it was my decision to hire you.”

She was right -- they were related. “But I interviewed with *him*. He called me the same evening.” She was still confused.

“You applied for a job you were overqualified for,” he said. “You wouldn’t be here now, had I not discovered you that afternoon.”

She closed her eyes tightly.



“What’s wrong?” His arms encircled her.

“I’m a hired whore.” Shame crept into her voice. “What could possibly be wrong?”

“I did not bring you here to serve my sexual appetite,” he said softly. “Though, I won’t deny I intended to take you.”

Alexandra stood silent as her mind tried to process everything he’d said. If she were to view it objectively, one could argue her ultimate capture fantasy had finally been fulfilled. And in grand fashion. On the other hand, she felt like a toy. Used by a wealthy man who was used to getting his own way. “I’m sorry, you’ll have to do better than that,” she said hotly, dismissing his entire explanation.

He whipped her around to face him, causing her to gasp in surprise.

“I thought you’d never ask.” The intensity of his stare made her weak in the knees.

The kiss was savage, dominating. There was no question he’d do whatever he wanted to her. Her knee slung across his hip, Lucius’s free hand drifted down her back and over the curve of her bottom, parting her silky depths with his fingers. The telltale sign of her lust flowed over his hand as he thrust deeper and deeper inside of her.

Full breasts strained against him, his steely frame starkly contrasting with her lithe form. Her head was swimming, she was supposed to be furious, but couldn’t remember why. His tongue plundered the sweetness of her mouth as his fingers maintained their pace.

“You kidnapped me,” she pouted between moans.

“A poor decision,” he acknowledged quietly. “Though I do believe you enjoyed it.”

His fingers withdrew from her delicate sheath, and he turned her around, his teeth raking across her skin. His palm ran over a nipple, and she trembled.

“You couldn’t have been very interested, going three or four months without seeing me.” She tried to hide her disappointment.

“I saw you nearly every day, love.” His confession surprised her. “I wouldn’t have you alone on the streets of Prague after midnight.”

He placed his hands on her hips and steadied her writhing form. She hung there beautifully, the long chain spiraling as she tugged at the bonds around her wrists.

"I'd park beneath the bridge and keep watch until your tram arrived," he said.

"That's how you discovered me so soon after I'd fallen," she said quietly, mostly to herself.

"I hadn't expected to take you so soon," Lucius nodded. "But I've no regrets."

He lifted her again, hoisting her upward until her breasts were directly in front of his mouth. A simple task for a man of his strength. He wrapped her legs around his waist and leaned forward, taking a taut nipple into his mouth. She draped her arms across his shoulders, running her hands through his hair as much as the restraints would allow. He could feel the warm nectar of her sex against his groin.

"I lost my mother in a similar accident," he said softly. "I had to make sure you were okay."

Alexandra's heart went out to him as she recalled Elsa saying his mother had died in a fall.

"But you didn't have to kidnap me, you could have explained ..." She softened her tone.

"You didn't enjoy it?" He nipped gently at her waist.

"Maybe," she hedged. "But you should have told me the truth."

"Do you forgive me, Alexandra?" His fingers twined through her hair, forcing her head back savagely.

She moaned as his lips flew to her neck.

Lucius placed her feet on the carpet, grabbed the red elixir from the dresser, and removed the cork. Slowly, devilishly, he let the potion trickle down her breasts. She purred like a kitten as the oil warmed her skin. He bent down and suckled a pert nipple, the flavor of red licorice covering his tongue.

He dropped to his knees, his mouth following the trail of fire as he inched toward her beckoning womanhood.

"I want to touch you," she begged, tearing at her chains.

"Patience, woman," he said as his tongue pierced her warmth.

"*Please.*" Her body twisted in anticipation.

He grasped her knee again, this time sliding it over his shoulder. Placing a hand at her lower back, he repeated the movement with her other leg. She now sat upon his shoulders, straddling them, arms strung up over her head. Lucius withdrew his tongue and ran it over her clit. His lips devoured the tiny pearl as she pressed herself against his tongue.

"Lucius," she mewled. "Please let me touch you."

He pulled his head away from her thighs and set her back down on the floor. His gaze was piercing as he untied the leather strap and lowered her arms. She ran her tiny hands over his chest, openly admiring his magnificent physical condition. His body was the perfect combination of strength and size.

Lucius took her hand in his and moved it down across his abdomen. She blushed suddenly, realizing his intended destination. Their eyes met, and he held her gaze, guiding her to his shaft. Her fingers closed over it, her pussy tingling at the thought of making him come.

Alexandra reached for the same glass bottle and opened it carefully, pouring the contents over his erection. She knelt down and smoothed her hands across his thighs, outlining the muscles with her fingertips. Her mouth enveloped his thick member, and he growled with pleasure.

Her hand wrapped around the base, moving up and down in time with her mouth. Stealing a glance upward, a thrill ran through her as his head tipped back slowly, eyes closed and lips parted. She smiled as her mouth closed over him again, the head of his manhood brushing against the softness of her throat.

His eyes flew open. He plucked her from her floor, startling her with the ferocity of the move. Two large strides and he'd reached the bed, gently placing her on the mattress. He covered her body quickly, pinning her slender arms above the pillow.

"You're mine." He spoke the words slowly, deliberately.

She moaned as his knee pushed her thighs apart.

"In the morning, you'll return to the manor," he informed her.

"But ..." she began.

"There will be no discussion," he cut her off.

"I'm quite happy here, thank you." Annoyance flashed across her face.

"That's not the issue, Kitten." He took a nipple into his mouth.

Her eyes closed, and she arched her back to give him full access to it. "What *is* the issue?" she asked breathlessly.

"I won't have my employees, friends, or family thinking me a fool," he said quietly.

"Why would they?" She cried out in pain/pleasure as his teeth continued their play.

Lucius ceased his activity and brought his lips close to her own.

"Wouldn't *you* think a man foolish, to live separately from his wife?" He raised a brow inquisitively.

Alexandra's jaw dropped. She was absolutely speechless. He chuckled before kissing her fiercely. He released his grip on her hands and folded her legs around his waist, his other hand sweeping behind her neck to bring her lips closer to his.

"Must we continue this conversation, or can I fuck you now?" he asked.

He slid a hand beneath her hips, positioning her to take the full length of him. He slipped into her, slowly at first, guiding his sex between the soft folds as her hands ran over his shoulders.

“Yes ... *yes* ...” Her head thrashed from side to side. She shivered as he filled her completely.

“Do you like that?” He nipped her earlobe gently.

“You know I do.” Her voice was hoarse with desire.

Her clit shuddered as he rubbed against it. She was almost there, the first wave of orgasm growing stronger with every second.

“Scream for me, Kitten,” he coaxed in a stern voice.

Alexandra threw her head back as her orgasm began. She scratched his back, peering down at him through lowered lashes. His eyes darkened, and he bit her shoulder, her screams filling the room as her climax neared its peak. Lucius groaned, and his body went rigid with its own release, her name escaping his lips as orgasm overtook him.

She was still writhing slowly when he finally collapsed beside her on the bed. He cradled her protectively, as if laying claim to her body, mind, and spirit. Something he’d taken possession of long before now. She wondered whether they’d ever leave the bedroom, once she’d moved into the manor. Stirring slightly, her eyelids fluttered softly as she stretched in his arms.

“Lucius?” she murmured between parted lips.

“Yes, Alexandra?”

“Do you love me?” She snuggled deeper into his embrace.

A mischievous smile played across his lips. “Is it required?” He yawned lazily beside her.

She lifted her head from his shoulder and gave him a dirty look. “No ...” Her eyes narrowed slightly.

“Well, if I *must*.” Lucius brought a large hand down across her bottom.

Alexandra howled in protest, her tiny hand massaging the area he’d just slapped.

“Plenty more where that came from, Mrs. Sinclair.” He grinned shamelessly, drawing her back down into his arms.

“Promises, promises.” She giggled, the smile still etched on her lips as they drifted off to sleep.

THE END

## **Isabella Snow**

Isabella Snow is the classic alpha female in search of an alpha male. Having lived in Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Austin, Amsterdam and now Prague, she's come to realize just how endangered the species really is. To console herself, she spends vast amounts of time creating the perfect male via her writing.

Focusing on contemporary erotic romance, Isabella specializes in the capture/forced submission subgenres. Cos nothing says lovin' like a man who takes what he wants. Especially when he's gorgeous and built like a Greek God.

In her spare time she enjoys shooting pool, playing chess and any manner of intellectual debate.