

Two Gentlemen Spies  
And the  
Innocent Mademoiselle  
By  
Missy Strom



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**By Missy Strom**

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# Chapter One

“God help us, Raine, how could we get caught?” As Theo spoke he could feel the blood pooling in his mouth and overwhelming his lips’ capacity compelling him to spit. Lord, it was a crass gesture. He had no choice, for besides filling his mouth, the copper tasting blood was nearly gagging him. Probing inside his mouth for any interior damage, he felt one of his lower molars give a sickening wiggle. The manacles clamped around his wrists were attached to the bulkhead behind him on a fairly short chain. He could have explored his sore jaw with his fingers but felt advised to leave well enough alone. For that matter, if it was not for the chains holding him upright in hap hazard fashion, he would probably be lying in a battered heap upon the putrid wood planking.

He could see nothing in the black depths of the moldy smelling hold. The cold and dampness penetrated through his clothing as he waited for his brother to answer his rather insipid question. He had purposely phrased it that way, for its whining irritation was sure to produce a response from Raine who had remained ominously silent.

“Domino’s, fault,” Raine rasped, grimacing at the painful rawness of his throat when he attempted to speak. During the course of their being beaten into submission and ultimately kidnaped, for one dangerously intense moment, they had attempted to strangle him with a coarse hemp rope. Once they had him subdued, he had heard a voice he would never forget ordering the removal of the noose.

The chains on Theo’s wrists rattled as he moved his back more firmly against the rough wooden planks of the bulkhead. The slack in the chains was not enough to ease the strain on his back. After a sigh of relief, he spat again, grumbling at the need. In the pitch blackness he felt the overpowering need to keep Raine talking. So with deliberate intention he worked his mouth into position to achieve a whiny incredulousness in his normally deep voice.

“Domino?” he puled. The droning snivel of their nemesis’ name was enough to bring forth an irritated growling from Raine’s direction. Theo smiled followed directly by a wince. *Blast*. He should not try to smile. He and Raine had taken the brunt of their beating defending themselves against the surprise attackers. However, there had been too many of them. The surprise was too great to overcome, from obviously well

thought out plans to capture them. And that fact heralded a leak in their ranks or even worse, the possibility of having been sold out by someone. But if Raine was growling, there was hope.

“Deuced, this spying business is rickety,” Theo mumbled. With all the twists, turns, and subversions, never knowing whom to trust until he and his brother could trust no one but each other. At least they had that, he thought. Most operatives only had themselves to fall back on. Still, all in all, six years was a long time to be exclusively immersed in this spying for bloody regal old England. “Domino?” Theo asked again with a touch of disbelief.

“Aye it was, Theo,” Raine said, with vehemence. He choked on a cough that burned his throat and shot pain through his rib cage, proof of the damage done by their attackers.

Theo frowned at the sound of Raine’s voice in the darkness while trying to convince himself that his older brother sounded worse because he could not see him in the black depths of this virtual blindness.

“*Double agent*,” Raine finished in a low hiss. The strain of speaking was taking its toll on his ribs as well as his voice and the damnable cold was adding to his discomfort.

“Blast, Raine, I cannot see a damn thing in this pit of hell,” Theo swore. Perhaps in the daylight it would be better, Theo thought. A few cracks of light would probably show through the bulkhead slats. Then at least he would be able to see his brother to judge for himself how badly Raine was hurt. But for now, he had to settle for just hearing Raine because it was a moonless night, and the eerie cold of the hold they were imprisoned in was not helping.

“If it was Domino that would prove that we do have a double agent in our midst,” Theo admitted. “Be that as it may, *we*, and Domino, if he is a French spy, have much more to worry about with the appearance of this Black Spider—or Spirit—or-.”

“-Widow,” Raine supplied in a husky whisper hoping that it would not set him to coughing again. It did seem to ease the strain on his throat.

“Widow, did you say?” Theo mumbled as he tried to refrain from any more spitting. “Is that what the dark ghoul who kidnaped us said? I admit that I obtained no clear look at him as he was beating me up, just a hulking dark shape, but that voice now assures me that he is no widow. I collect, Raine, that the name ‘Black Widow’ implies a woman.”

Raine leaned his head back on the bulkhead feeling the up and down sliding of the ship. They were a fair piece out in the channel waters already. “*One* of the voices I heard, Theo, before I passed out sounded like the voice of the French spy Marapaul.”

“Oh deuced—*damn*. No! Not him again.”

Raine turned his head too quickly toward the sound of Theo’s exclamation and he had to suck in a tight breath. Christ, he hated to have to tell Theo that it was Marapaul but Theo needed to be warned. Marapaul had always held a strange perversion for both of them and it was better to be

prepared. “It was him,” Raine finished heavily. “I could never mistake that voice.”

Theo swallowed back his disgust and agitation. The last time they had, had any dealings with Marapaul he had very nearly gotten raped by the man even though Marapaul held a heavier attraction to Raine . . . not himself. He felt like swearing again but managed to refrain. This was a piercing tidbit of information that they never taught anyone at 100 Whipple Street, England’s covert intelligence offices. “Now see here gentlemen watch your backsides, and we do mean it literally.” It gave him the chills just thinking about it. He did not begrudge Marapaul his preference, as long as it was with someone else of the same persuasion. However no, was *no*, and did not mean come ahead and try to force me.

“Marapaul must have taken up with this Black Widow.” Theo paused, trying for a bit of levity as he added, “And you know how he likes to *cling*.”

“Oh, damn,” Raine groaned. “Do not make me laugh,” he managed to grunt, wishing fervently that he could hold onto his damaged ribs to minimize the pain.

“Sorry, brother, I was not thinking.” Theo said with more than a touch of concern, and with the accompanying *clink-clink* of the chains, he reached toward the sound of his brothers voice, managing to grab his hand. Their hands squeezed together in reassurance. It was hard to believe at this precise moment but they had been in worse predicaments than this.

“Domino must truly be afraid of this Black Widow for him to make that most unusual attempt to speak to us a fortnight ago,” Raine said. “I believe now that we are going to have to take Domino’s extraordinary warning to heart, albeit a bit too late.”

“Then it was not some underhanded dealings that Domino was engaging us in, Raine?”

“Nay, Theo, I believe our nemesis, that is, Domino, was really trying to warn us of a more villainous rogue spy than all of us put together. This Black Widow.”

“If that is true, Raine, then we are in significantly more trouble than my beaten body proclaims.” Theo kept holding Raine’s hand now for his own comfort. “And if Domino truly was warning us, as incredible as it seems, then we would have to believe what else he said.”

“Aye, Theo, it is a good thing that we have no family that can be use against us besides each other.”

“I wonder though about Domino? For him to be so worried about it to take the extraordinary action of warning us, his greatest foreign enemies. Perhaps he does have family? I mean, he must have someone.”

“I just wish that we had seen Dominos’ face, Theo. For him to have seen us, bodes ill and I thought as much at the time because he made sure that we did not see him. I do not like it. I do not like it at all.”

“Of a certainty, Raine, but consider the fact that you never forget a voice. So if Domino is playing the part of the Black Widow and he is on this decaying hulk, the moment you hear his voice you will know.”

“There is that,” Raine agreed, wondering if they would live long enough to worry about it at all.

## Chapter Two

Much later in the dark morning hours, the heavy iron grates over their heads clattered. Theo had been dozing, if a person could really do that in the position that he was chained in. He guessed it had to be two or three in the morning, and as he looked up he realized that it was indeed the iron grate to the hold being lifted out of place.

“And so it begins,” Raine mumbled from his right side.

Theo tensed in uneasiness. He and Raine were familiar with many forms of torture and at one time had discussed the various methods that might be entertained to coerce either of them into talking. Once, only a few years ago, they had both been tortured in a hellish Spanish prison. Thankfully it had only lasted a few horrifying days before they were able to escape. However, that was enough taste of reality for him to *never* wish to repeat the experience. Realistically, he knew that he had enough determination to withhold for a reasonable period of time. But it was more than just personal physical pain, it was simply what he and Raine had agreed to years ago that worried him. This idea to never allow anyone to use them against each other was fine in theory, (sealed in blood by two thumb pricks, they had been rather young), however when face to face with the inevitable it was unsettling.

He could only hope, if this was their captors’ intentions, that they would take him to use against Raine. Yes, he believed that he could handle that but what he could not handle would be Raine being killed because he refused to talk. Deuced, he would have to make certain they took him first if this seemed to be the case. Raine always did accuse him of having an impertinent mouth, which was true when he put his mind to it. What Raine did not know . . . but of course he did . . . was how much he loved him.

So it begins, Raine thought once again. Lifting his head, he squinted his gaze upward hoping to catch sight of something useful. He could feel the rough abrasion on his neck and his throat protesting the strain, but all he was able to see was a lighter gray obscurity. “It must be fog,” he muttered, which told him that they were likely still in the channel waters. In any case, north, south, nearer to France or to England, he had no idea.

“Water,” shouted a gruff man’s voice above them. The obvious *thunk* of a wooden bucket could be heard bumping against the bulkhead as it was lowered down into the hold on a rope.

Mystifyingly thoughtful, Raine thought considering the possibility of whether to rile them out of this generosity by mentioning that he and Theo had no hope to gain a drink, chained as they were. But then, Theo always eager to point out the obvious, ended his debate.

"I say! You up there sending the water down, it is most admirable of you, however-."

"-Piss down yer leg, ye bleeding sots, I ain't *no* admiral!" the sea-salted voice shouted down at them.

"No-no, I just-," Theo began, only to be halted again by the gruff voice above them.

"-If yer worrying about how to drink this here fine clear water, let me tell ye. Me master now, he thinks of every little thing for yer comfort." A raw-edged guffaw resounded through the hold making Raine believe that the old geezer might split his gut. However, all his thoughts halted abruptly at the next sound he heard. *It was a woman's surprised squeal!* Then a sickening thud as something, a body he proposed, landed at their feet!

"That's with me Master's compliments! He says to tell ye to *poke* her a few good times as this will be yer last endeavor of that sort!" The old sailor laughed roughly again. "Just how me master expects ye to do that with ye both chained, I don't know." His laughter echoed throughout the hold as they heard the grate slammed shut over their heads.

In the silence left behind, Raine and Theo could clearly hear a female whimpering in a space not far beyond their feet. "Bloody hell," Raine hissed beneath his breath

"Are you hurt, miss?" Theo asked with concern as he brought his booted foot forward searching to see how far away she might be. His boot met a solid form immediately. However, the simple touch of his boot sent the poor woman scrambling in the dark with the unfortunate sound of the bucket of water being over turned. "Please miss, I did not mean to-."

"Blasted it, woman! *Pick* up that bucket now!" Raine exploded harshly overriding Theo's plea, "That is our only source of water!" Raine's voice finally gave out with a jarring croak.

"Blazes, Raine! You are frightening her. She is crying and she could be hurt. Miss-*miss*?"

"Hell, Theo, I did not mean to make her cry," Raine barely managed to whisper. Damnation, he should not have bellowed so hard, he nearly lost his voice again. Theo however, was not paying any attention to him because he kept trying to speak to the dark-haired woman. Aye, he had seen that dark hair in the instant the sailor moved closer to toss the lady down into the hold. The sailor's torch had pierced the damp fog for a split second. He did not like what else he thought he saw besides incredibly long dark hair.

"Miss, I am Theo and that is my brother, Raine. Who I assure you is very sorry that he yelled at you." The woman's sobs were heart-wrench-



ing, though slightly muffled in the darkness, but were not decreasing a bit. “You know, Miss, we are chained here to the inside wall. Both my wrists and Raine’s too. We cannot move more than a few inches from the wall.” The woman’s sobs held a strange chattering sound as Theo paused to take a breath. “I thought that should make you feel better,” he began again. “I mean a-after what that sailor said.” Theo paused to assess if his words were having any effect then added, “I collect that I could tell you in this blackness that Raine and I are gentlemen and we would never harm you. Yet I can imagine how hard that would be for you to believe. So just know that although we *never* would—we *are* chained and could not.”

“Damn it, Theo,” Raine rasped at his brother’s rambling. Theo’s efforts appeared not to be doing any good because the woman still sobbed in some obscure corner of the hold.

“She needs to be reassured,” Theo replied hotly.

Raine knew the woman’s emotions were tearing at his brother. “I believe she is naked,” he whispered as low as he could but still so Theo could hear him. *Oh he heard!*

## Chapter Three

“What!”

“You heard me,” Raine hissed.

“You saw—*that*?”

“Glimpsed.”

“Blazes, Raine, are you sure, I mean-.”

“-Do you honestly believe I would miss something like that?” Raine asked in a croak.

“I—ah, *no*—but without clothes?”

“O! *M-Mon dieu. Mon d-dieu.*”

Both Theo and Raine stalled their speech abruptly as they heard the woman’s frightened, wavering voice. She sounded *so* young, and afraid. Who would not be? “French,” they both announced in the same breath.

“Who would possibly toss a naked French woman in the hold with us, Theo?” Raine asked. “It is a trick! *She* could be this Black Widow.”

“*Non-non!*” the woman bawled “I do *n-not* know t-thees widow!” Her voice became more muffled as she sobbed. “I swear t-thees!”

“Mademoiselle, *I* believe you!” Theo exclaimed somewhat passionately.

“Damn it, Theo!”

“But I do, Raine! *And* how can you be so cruel as not to?” Theo heaved an accusatory breath. “The poor thing is freezing. Can you not hear her?”

“It is an act,” Raine mumbled.

Theo produced an irritated *hurrmph*. The only way he would convince Raine was by questioning the young woman. “Mademoiselle, what is your name?” He could hear her sniffing in the dark and it was a painful sound making his heart break, imagining her naked, vulnerable, and curled in a cold dark corner. “Please, Mademoiselle, would you tell us your name?”

“N-Noel.”

“Ah. That is a beautiful name.” Theo heard Raine groan at his side but ignored him. “And your last name?”

“C-Camb-bria.”

“That does not sound familiar,” Raine muttered.

“Of course it does not,” Theo articulated. “How old are you, Mademoiselle Cambria?”

“N-Nineteen-n.”

“A-ha!” Theo extolled. “What agent could be this young, Raine? You will have to admit that she cannot be.”

“You started at nineteen,” Raine muttered. “And, she could be lying about her age.” The feminine voice in the darkness careened into a sound that could only be described as bawling. “Bloody hell, woman, stop that squalling!”

Immediately the young woman’s voice released an ear piercing squeal that reached a new crescendo. Belatedly Raine realized his mistake. There was nothing for it as he hesitantly offered an apology, “I . . . I am sorry,” he began with his voice sounding like the scratch of wood on wood, as the thought crossed his mind that he *never* apologized. But then, he had never been around a bawling demoiselle before. “Please, Mademoiselle, do not cry,” he finally hissed, unable to keep the touch of irony out of his words. It seemed cruel punishment.

“I cannot . . . s-s-stop, M-Monsieur,” she stuttered. “*Oh-*.” Her teeth began to chatter as her breathing came in catches.

“Mademoiselle, you must come here,” Raine announced abruptly.

“But w-why, M-Monsieur-r?”

“Damn it, woman, your teeth are already chattering with the cold and if you do not secure some warmth soon you will become ill. It is for your own well-being. *And* I am not asking you, I am ordering you to come over here this instant and sit between us where it will be warmer!”

Theo grinned and did not even mind the wince. Leave it to Raine to order the young woman about and by the sounds of it she was obeying. Of course not many could gainsay Raine’s barked orders and the roughness of his voice now added a commanding touch. Nevertheless, this was perfect for he had been trying to fathom a way to provoke Noel to do just this. Only her movements suddenly stopped and he held his breath.

“M-Monsieurs, I-I-I am-.” Her voice in the blackness sounded so small and helpless.

“-Naked,” Raine supplied as he listened to Noel gasp. Christ, she sounded young. “And we, Mademoiselle, are just as blind as you in this darkness. Now move!” The wooden planking creaked and Raine felt, then he heard, Noel’s presence with teeth chattering at his side. Suddenly in the gloom a small hand touched his thigh but jerked instantly away.

“*O-Oh*, M-Monsieur.” Twas a helpless plea.

“That is just my leg,” Raine supplied reasonably. “Are your hands tied in front of you, Noel?”

“*N-Non* Mon-n-.”

“-Raine . . . Simply call me Raine.”

“Raine.”

Damn, Raine thought, no teeth chattering that time only a beautiful and sultry feminine voice combined with a seductive French accent. God, he could never remember his name sounding so . . . good.

“And I am, Theo.”

“Theo,” Noel murmured.

Raine grinned, he guessed that Theo wanted to hear that sultry French accent wrapped around his name as well and he could not blame him. “Noel, feel for my leg again,” he ordered. “Both of them are side by side. Just crawl over them.”

“Oh *mon d-dieu*, I-I do not-.”

Raine scrunched one of his legs toward his chest, hissing back the pressure to his injured ribs. He curved it around where he knew Noel to be until he could straighten his leg along her backside. Then he gave a push, sucking in another breath at the pulse of pain centered in his rib cage.

Noel erupted in a squeal and fell forward partially onto Theo’s lap, by the sounds of Theo’s surprised groan. Although it was not a groan of pain, she must have landed in a most precipitous portion of his lap. “I said to sit between us, Mademoiselle!” Raine commanded. “Now you will do so!” If his determined bullying was the only way they were going to accomplish anything in this situation, then governing bully he would be.

## Chapter Four

Theo could not speak! Other than a gurgling gasp. He had *another person's* hands on his *swelling* penis! Blazes! *That* had never happened before. And *now* he was full-tilt, stiff as a board, over a few feminine digits that were—*groping*—for—purchase! He gulped hard. “Bloody hell-*ppp*,” he gasped.

Noel whimpered and began to cry again.

Raine felt what must be Noel's lower belly where she sprawled over one of his thighs and that meant that her naked derriere must be directly underneath his chin. Damn and blast, she was shaking so hard, he could feel it now where her softness straddled his thigh. “Get up, Noel,” he commanded roughly, giving her a jostle. He was truly worried now that he could feel her body shaking.

“I-I can-not, *non—n-non*,” she stuttered.

“You must,” Theo choked hoarsely, trying to keep from groaning out loud in pleasure. Through gritted teeth he expelled, “Push your hands against me *anywhere*, little one, we . . . *We* must keep you warm!”

“Oh, Theo . . . !”

Theo could feel Noel's face buried in his thigh. He could feel her tears soaking the cloth of his breeches. Blazes, how was he going to get her to move?

Raine slowly drew in his breath and prepared himself for the pain in his ribs. Then he bent his knees upward lifting his thighs until he knew a certain bare bottom must be within reach of his hand. Immediately a sharp sound, reminiscent of skin hitting skin, resounded through the hold. *Smack!*

“*Oow!*” Noel squealed.

“*Now*, you will move or I will continue *to-!*”

“*-Oo, non-non!*” Noel squealed, squirming off of Raine's thighs and doing wicked things to his cock as she went.

“*What did you do?*” Theo yelped out of the darkness as Noel *yanked* his balls . . . Squealed, *wrenched* his cock . . . Squealed, and then she jerked his chest hairs through his shirt before she made it partway up his chest to heave the *largest* pair of breasts he had ever chanced to see—no feel . . . *no* . . . he had never felt a woman's—well, anything before. *Christ*, he was going to die.

“I spanked her,” Raine growled.

“*Sp-panked* her!” Theo gasped with heaving emotion.

With unbending conviction, Raine rasped, “Yes, I did spank her!” His attempt at a snarl had fallen far short as he became distracted by the sounds of near strangulation in Theo’s voice. What were those two doing over there? “And I will do so again, if she does not get her little backside planted between us immediately!”

“*Oo! Non!* I will m-move, Raine. I will! See-see!”

Raine could not help his smile, it was obvious that he could not have reach Noel to carry out his threat, however she was too beside herself to realize this. In the next second she was pressed against his side with her small head wedged under his armpit. She was shaking alarmingly.

“E’gads,” Theo hiccuped, wondering in a rather dim-witted fashion how Noel could be shaking with cold when he was burning up! Then his mind cleared somewhat from what he could only assume was gripping carnal passion. Raising his eyes upward he expelled a breath of relief, “Phew.” If he had a handkerchief handy, he would have wiped his brow.

Raine’s voice rasped harshly out of the gloom, “Theo, quit passing wind over there Noel is going into shock!”

Theo was shaking his head trying to clear it when Raine’s word penetrated his befogged mind. Straightening himself as best he could, wincing with the effort, he managed to sputter, “Shock?” To himself he muttered, “Oh, Raine, if you only knew.”

“We must do something drastic,” Raine continued, then he expelled hoarsely, “Damn these blasted chains.”

“She can have my pants!” Theo exclaimed. “I can remove those, ah . . . that is with some . . . well, um—with help,” he finished as both of them listen to the ominous chattering of Noel’s teeth.

“Later, but for the moment we have to do something quickly,” Raine replied. Turning his body toward Noel, he spoke to the top of her head, “Noel, rip my shirt open and put your arms inside.”

“Oh, Raine, I-I . . .”

Raine felt Noel’s hands fumbling uselessly on the front of his shirt. Her fingers must be numb, he thought, better for her to attempt another way. “Underneath, try coming from the bottom then, sweetheart, push them up underneath the hem. And, Theo, use your body to hug Noel’s back, reach as much as you can and try to get her legs and feet too.” Raine’s next words were shrill and harsh. “*Christ!* You are *cold*, sweetheart.”

Noel’s arms could have been made of ice and Raine’s entire body shuttered in reaction to the touch between their bodies. He gritted his teeth. “Push up the hem of my shirt, Noel, all the way up,” he ordered. “That’s it, now lean forward—blast—Theo push her forward.”

“*Raine*,” Noel whimpered into his chest hairs. The mounds of her bare breasts pressed onto his equally bare chest and her small hands clutched his back beneath his shirt. Raine moved as much of the front of his body as he could to press against hers and as his chest slid across her breasts, he could feel the hard berry tips of her nipples. “Phew,” he

muttered, using Theo's expletive. Now, with Theo behind her and himself in front, they were a sandwich.

Noel continued to sniffle and her shivering seemed to be subsiding. Raine could feel her body gradually relaxing. And if he could feel hers . . . "Hell and damnation," he muttered softly, knowing the seemingly innocent young woman could surely feel his erection against her belly, even through his trousers. Not only was he as hard as granite, his imperious member twitched in anticipation and there was nothing he could do about it, or anything else pressed against him so . . . so. Well, hell, who was he kidding, it felt wonderful, exquisite in fact and it certainly took his mind off his pain for a few moments.

## Chapter Five

“Did you know, Noel?” Theo asked in a softly muffled, conversational tone. “Raine snores. It is a God-awful racket, *and* I swear-”

“-I do *not* snore,” Raine interrupted. Speaking through slightly gritted teeth, he added, “And *what* this has to do with anything I-”

“-Ah, but he does,” Theo insisted, interrupting. “And *how* would he know that he did not, Noel? Why of course . . . because he is sleeping?”

“I tell you, Theo, that, I-do-not-snore,” Raine replied, huffing hoarsely. “*But* . . . I will tell *you*, little brother, that you gnash your teeth in your sleep!”

Theo noticed that Noel’s weeping had grown silent and her body beneath his was losing some of its racking tension. He continued speaking into her incredibly soft hair where his face was basically immersed at the moment. “Please take note, Noel, that I accept this generously. Why, you might ask? Well, it is simple, because *I* realize that I could not know for certain, as I am sleeping. However, Raine portrays all styles of indignation at the mere suggestion that he-”

“-That is because, I do not snore, you lame-witted rascal. *I have never snored*,” Raine expounded self-righteously.

“I s-snore,” Noel peeped suddenly. “Just ze, um, leedle bit.”

“You see!” Theo exclaimed in triumphant. “Even a gently bred lady can admit to some delicate, er, feminine, ah, snoring, Raine.”

“And how do you know that . . . that she is gently bred?” Raine asked. Then he groaned inwardly, instantly regretting his words. He could not deny his predilection to being very suspicious. He could not deny the years of spying that had enforced his suspicion tending qualities. Especially now with an exceedingly well endowed, very naked woman pressed to his equally naked chest in a manner he had never entertained before. He needed *something* to distract himself. Suspicion was a natural choice.

“Raine!” Theo exclaimed with heavily laced censure. “We have already proved that she is a gently bred, remember, . . . *nineteen* years old,” he added for emphasis.

“Well, Theo, you must admit it is not every day of the week that we are *beat up*, *kidnaped* and *chained* into the hold of an obviously seafaring merchant ship. Then thrown a completely nak—ed . . . Ah . . . *woman*,”



Raine whispered fiercely, wondering *why*, he could not forever leave things stand.

“Hrrumph,” Theo snorted. “Things like that do happen to us. Quite a bit actually, if you would take a moment to really contemplate it.”

“Not the woman part,” Raine muttered, disgruntled.

“Well, just because neither of us has *ever* been with a wom—.

Oops—”

“-*Theo!*” Raine interrupted hastily. “*That* has nothing to do with this!”

“Yes well, so you say brother, however I believe it has everything to do with this, ah, situation and further I say it would help our tender companion if we were to reveal—”

“-No,” Raine hastily interjected with a growl that heaved Noel up on his chest forcing her to clutch her fingernails into his spine to remain stable.

“*Please*, you must n-not dispute, *Monsieurs!*” Noel exclaimed “You have affection, yes?”

“Ah, hmm,” Raine cleared his throat.

“Well . . . um, yes. I, ah, suspect,” Theo mumbled.

“You do . . . both of you. I can hear thees,” Noel said softly. “It e’s thees that, um, brings. *Non*, eh, allows. Yes, thees e’s the word. It allows me to be safe.” She sighed gently and whispered as if to herself. “*Non*, *non* e’s feel. Yes, e’s feels safe.”

Both men were silent for a moment as they realized that they were literally wrapped around the delicate femininity of a woman. Bodily pressed to the pliant field of warm soft flesh, *pressed*, being the key word. So much so that they were choked into silence. Each could have said, honestly, that they had *never* had anything such as this happened to them before within their illustrious careers. They both were upon occasion, constrained to seduce certain women to further their spying efforts. However, seducing only and never in bed. It was mutually agreed upon and a very personal code between them. Though tempted many times, the fact was they were routinely entirely *too* busy over the years to . . . well to actually bed any of the women. Now, at the advanced ages of twenty-seven and twenty-five it was truly a sad state of affairs . . . surely!

“Sad state of affairs,” Theo mumbled in retrospect. Hanging his head dejectedly, he tried with every gentlemanly effort he possessed, not to notice Noel’s plump derriere seeking warmth as it rode his stiffly lengthened penis which stretched precariously beneath his broadcloth trousers.

“I will go *mad*,” Raine groaned lowly, thinking quite seriously about banging his already sore head on the plank hull behind him. Unfortunately, he was certain adding more injury to his head would not work to keep his mind off the touch of Noel’s velvet cheek, the caress of her fine eyelashes across his nipple or the feel of her impossibly long hair tickling around the waistband of his trousers. “Pray she is ugly,” he muttered underneath his breath.

“She is asleep,” Theo whispered after a time and Raine realized that he had been vaguely aware of Theo’s mutters above his own for some time now.

“How do you know that?” Raine asked quietly.

“Because she is snoring, if you would only listen,” Theo confided.

Raine supposed that Theo was right, since his heart had been hammering too loudly in his ears for him to be aware of her gentle snore. “Exhaustion, surely,” he mused.

“Yes well, she is undoubtedly warm now . . . don’t you think?” Theo asked softly.

“Hot,” Raine muttered.

“Well, hmm, I thought so too,” Theo replied then fell silent for a moment.

Raine could almost hear Theo’s mind whirling and was sure he knew what his younger brother was thinking. He did not have long to wait.

“What are we to do now, do you think?” Theo finally asked.

“Bloody hell, Theo.”

“Shh, you will wake her.”

“Hell,” Raine whispered, thinking they did not need this particular sort of distraction added to their already perilous situation.

“If this is hell, dear brother, then I am enchanted,” Theo replied magnanimously.

“We will never get any sleep at this rate,” Raine grumbled. “We may as well try to form some sort of escape plan.”

“Yes, that would be productive,” Theo agreed. Then, clearing his throat softly he added, “I, ah, foresee a few problems when dawn comes, brother.”

“Oh, and just what might that be?”

“More light,” Theo clarified.

“You *do* realize this could be some sort of ploy?” Raine inquired.

“I do not believe it,” Theo whispered intently. “Not of her.”

“Theo, you must admit there is a possibility . . . there is always a possibility.”

“Yes I know, but *if* I admit that, then you must admit there is a possibility that Noel is as innocent as she appears and needs our help.”

“Damnation, Theo, *we* need help at the moment—someone else’s help.”

“Well, there is that,” Theo replied half-heartedly. Raine could nearly hear Theo’s mind humming and wondered what more his brother would come up with. He did not have long to wait. “There are still some pins in Noel’s hair, Raine. At least one is poking my, er, cheek.”

“That close, little brother?”

“You are closer,” Theo hissed softly. “I can imagine just *how* close.”

“Don’t,” Raine grumbled.

“Beside *that*,” Theo emphasized, “I believe we should ask Noel to try to use one of those pins on the locks to your chains.” Pausing with a

heavy sigh he added, "I fear greatly what might happen to her in her present, um, state, Raine."

"I know, Theo, it is gnawing on me also," Raine admitted. "At least I do not believe *that* has happened to her thus far."

"No, I think if that were so, she would have been much more hysterical when they dropped her at our feet."

"All right then, we will wake her, but Theo, we most definitely need to find out exactly who she is."

"Of course, Raine, I will do so with relish. You know full well how I simply love to prove your overly suspicious mind wrong."

## Chapter Six

Noel did not want to wake up. She was very tired and felt warm and cozy and did not want to give up her dreams. In her dreams she was finally safe. Secure in the warmth exuding from the strong male muscles covering her front and back. Oh, but too soon reality was forced upon her once again by the gentle, but persistent urging of a voice close to her ear whispering, “Wake up, princess, we need your help.”

It was Theo’s voice, she recognized its silky depth, smooth as a tenor cello. Whereas Raine’s voice was like the residual rumbling of a baritone drum, long after it had been struck. She wished so badly to ignore his voice, pleasant as it was. She did not want to recall that she was stripped naked, laying indecently pressed to his brother’s warm and hairy chest, nor that Theo was cuddled behind her so closely.

She could feel the outline of each of their manly *batons*, against her bottom and belly . . . and this alarmed her. Not that she believed that Raine or Theo would-. *Non*, . . . but she was unsure of her own emotions in the matter for she had never felt such . . . such strange stirrings in her body before. Then the image of a dark menacing figure flashed before her eyes. The thought of that horrible man who had done this to her made her cringe inwardly. She was terrified she would see him again. Each day he had held her captive she had feared she would die. It seemed like such a long time to live with that fear, but she did not die. Now she must try to live, yes? She must not be afraid to try.

“I am awake, Monsieur Theo,” Noel murmured softly. Stirring against Raine’s chest as if to rise, she added with inevitable conviction, “I will try to do as you say.”

“*Don’t* move, sweetheart,” Raine groaned suddenly, sounding as if he could be hurt.

“O! I am most sorry, Monsieur Raine,” Noel said quickly as she froze barely leaning on him and remained very still. “I do not wish to hurt you.”

“No-no, it is quite all right, just do not move unless you have to, sweetheart.”

*Merci*, Noel thought, she very much liked to be called this sweetheart and princess. She also thought that she might like to see what each of these men looked like, thinking perhaps they must be very handsome men if their voices were any clue. “*Oui*, Raine,” she murmured.

“Now then, Noel,” Theo said from behind her, “We thought if you are warm enough now that you could use a pin from your hair and reach up and try to pick the locks on Raine’s manacles.”

“Pick . . . ? Pick thees lock,” Noel stammered, not understanding.

“To unlock them, sweetheart,” Raine said. The sound of his voice making his very muscled chest rumble pleasantly beneath her ear. “Like you would use a key to unlock a door.”

“Thees will work?” she asked in wonder.

“We will guide you,” Theo replied. “It is our only chance.”

“*Oui*, then!” Noel exclaimed. “I must try.” Forgetting about not moving she propped up on Raine’s chest, knocking Theo’s chin behind her in her excitement. “If thees works, then you would take me away from the horrible-horrible man, yes?”

“We would try-,” Theo began.

But Raine interrupted him. “-How is it, Noel, that you arrived here in such a state, and *who* is this horrible man?”

“*Mon dieu*,” Noel whispered to herself as she felt her body beginning to tremble again. They did not know the horrible man and now she was reminded so clearly that she was completely naked . . . and with these two strangers!

“Blazes, Raine. *You* have as much finesse as a trampling bull!” Theo exclaimed. “And now you have frightened Noel again . . . she is shaking!”

“*This* is not a game where you can brush off winning or losing lightly,” Raine answered gruffly. “However, I certainly did not want to frighten you, Noel. It is simply that we must know who you are and why you are here.”

“It e’s very terrible, Monsieur Raine,” Noel sniffled. “For I do not know. Thees man who takes me from sleeping in my bed. He asks me again and again who is Domino, and do I know thees Black Widow, and where e’s the red book? . . . the red book?” Noel finished, so close to tears that her voice wavered uncertainly. “I-I do not k-know any of thees” she managed with a sob catching in her throat. “I only know my *ma-mere* is gone and Phillip has not come home as he always does,” she finished seeking uncertain comfort on Raine’s chest.

“Out of your bed!” Theo exclaimed gruffly.

“And who is Phillip, Noel?” Raine whispered softly. “Tell me who he is,” he coaxed.

“He e’s my brother, Raine,” Noel confided feeling the warmth and strength of Raine’s chest with its fuzzy soft hair beneath her cheek.

“Ah,” Raine responded “And his last name is the same as yours?”

“*Oui*, Raine,” Noel answered softly.

“That would be Cambria, you said and why was Phillip away?”

“He e’s always gone from us, Raine, but he always comes home. He e’s a most important trader of silk. All over the world thees takes him.”

“Very interesting,” Raine muttered.

"I for one will ask you very plainly, Noel," Theo said with his warm breath very close to her ear. "Do you have any clue who Raine and I are?"

"Brothers," Noel replied hopefully.

"*Ha!*" Theo exclaimed "We are *sppp*—."

"-Theo!" Raine's chest inflated with his rasping bellow bouncing Noel upward on his chest.

"-*Spies!*" Theo finished quite succinctly.

"Oh, bloody hell," Raine swore.

"Spies," Noel choked. "I know nothing of spies."

"I *told* you, Raine!" Theo exclaimed triumphantly.

"She is hardly likely to admit it," Raine grumbled. Noel could not really blame Raine for being suspicious if what Theo said was true. Considering her own tenuous situation and how she arrived here she would most likely feel the same. In truth, she should probably be suspicious of them. Nevertheless, her intuition was strongly in their favor and she felt the need to defend herself, even if it meant braving Raine's forceful and fearful demeanor. She raised her head off his chest as though she could look directly into his eyes through the murky gloom of the hold and she said as firmly as possible "I would tell you, Raine. I swear I would!" Only then she paused in surprised. *Non*, she thought in shock. It could not be so, for she could see quite a bit of Raine.

"*Oh*," she gasped as her gaze caught in the dark hollow looking sockets of his eyes. Her body froze and even though she could not really see into his eyes, she knew they were there, peering with dark intensity at her. She became acutely aware of her bare breasts cushioned, like pillows against his hard naked chest. Gnawing on her quivering bottom lip, she clenched her fingers nervously, inadvertently grasping the hard sinew on his back.

"Hell, I should have known you would be beautiful," Raine sighed.

Raine's lips were so close that Noel could feel his warm breath on her face as she whispered in wonder, "Beautiful?"

"What has happened?" Theo demanded behind them.

"The light, Theo," Raine answered, never taking his gaze from hers and Noel could see the firm outline of his jaw begin to form in the dimness as he spoke. "I believe it is getting lighter in here," he murmured.

"Ah, I believe you are right." Theo muttered as he began to peer around. "Oh!" he exclaimed. "I see . . . Well, we certainly must not, er, none of us should, er, deuced! I just do not believe any of us should get upset."

## Chapter Seven

Noel suddenly realized what Theo meant. “Oh, *non*,” she whispered in distress. “*Non-non*,” she finished in a mere whimper as her body went rigid with tense alarm. They would *see* her . . . all of her! *Non!* She was a simple girl . . . a good girl and had never even held a man’s hand. She shoved on Raine’s chest, making the back of her head hit Theo’s chin again as she scrambled from between both men in the lifting gloom. She was thinking a bit hysterically that there must be a place to hide her nakedness from their gazes.

“Blazes!” Theo cursed. The pain in his jaw sent sparks to his eyes as his spine hit the bulkhead and he slid down to hang by his wrists off the chains.

“Noel, *stop!*” Raine snarled in a hoarse rasp. However it was too late as he caught a glimpse of her white buttocks as she scrambled from his sight into the darker reaches of the hold. He wanted to curse foully. She was *too* delicate, too small to be here in these dangerous circumstances. Too beautiful . . . aye, he’d seen that too. Then he heard her crying out in pain and he tugged roughly against his chains. “Noel! What is it Noel?” he asked urgently . . . stupidly in his concern, but his only response was her choked sob as if she were trying very hard not to cry.

“*Really*, Raine, sometimes I wonder about your sensitivity, obviously she’s hurt herself,” Theo hissed into the lifting gloom.

Raine turned his head toward Theo. Squinting through the gloom he could just make out Theo’s partially battered features. “Nice black eye,” he snickered snidely.

“Yes, well, you should see yourself,” Theo snapped back at him, giving as good as he got, adding, “You look barbarian enough to scare a *shire* of innocent virgins.”

“Hell,” Raine muttered. “We have to get her to come back.”

“I cannot say, Raine, that I have ever felt more helpless,” Theo said with intense emotion shaking his voice.

“Neither have I,” Raine agreed.

“Yes, well,” Theo muttered as he tried to collect himself, stiffen his voice as it were. “I could have a plan to bring her back to us. The only problem being, is how to keep her here once we have her . . . again.”

“If I were you,” Raine replied mildly. “I would hurry, because she is bound to discover the rats . . . and soon.”

“Oh my, . . . hell and damnation.” Theo peered toward Raine catching a glimpse of Raine’s compelling turquoise eyes. “Yes well then, back me up.”

“Ohhhh!” Theo moaned outrageously loud. “*Oh! God! Oh hh!*” He immediately tried to writhe about a bit as if in intense pain. Not all of it acting as the movements jarred his bruised body, while he sent Raine a look that suggested he could jump in any moment and help the scene.

“Oh yes, I see. Very inventive,” Raine muttered with a wincing grin, then he attempted to form a serious face as he tried to bellow despite his irritated throat. “*God*, Theo, what is it? Theo!”

“*Ahh—ohh—eeuhhhh!*” Theo groaned tragically.

“*E-uuh*,” Raine parroted, giving Theo a bemused glare as he shouted hoarsely again. “My god Theo! I cannot reach you!” Raine spied her then, a pale ethereal sight, tiptoeing hesitantly forward with small hands clutching her mound from sight. But not the pink nipples of her breasts. Large firm breasts of alabaster buoyancy jiggling with each tiptoe.

“M-Monsieurs, Theo . . . ?”

Noel had a curtain of midnight black hair that set off her creamy white skin to perfection. She was small of stature, petite, but very voluptuously rounded with eyes the color of melting coco-brown beneath thick sable lashes.

“My god,” Theo moaned.

Raine knew that Theo was trying to collect his scattered senses after his first view of Noel’s exquisite attributes. “*Help* him,” Raine grated, glad that his loss of voice made him sound so desperate. He lowered his gaze for Noel’s benefit and she scrambled forward on her knees before Theo.

“Oh, T-Theo—Theo!” she exclaimed with her voice wavering, and Raine noticed for the first time that she was crying lightly and had been the entire time.

“Oh, Noel,” Theo groaned wretchedly as he tried valiantly to keep his gaze upon the perfection of her lovely delicate face and not lower to the glorious heaping pillows of her breasts. *God*, her nipples were puckered like fat berries thrusting forward. He’d never seen-! “Oh don’t leave me!” he finished on a helpless moan.

Theo could only assume a moment later that he sounded quite desperately ill, for Noel grabbed his cheeks in her hands plying his chest exuberantly with her nubile breasts as she cried his name. “*N-Noel*,” he choked, wholly unable to catch a decent breath even if his very life depended upon it. And it did a moment later, when he felt entirely too lightheaded.

“A bit much,” Raine muttered loudly.

“*Oh*, b-blessed,” Theo heaved. “*Sss—aints.*”

Raine thought he might agree with Theo. Especially since his own vision was full of Noel’s perfectly pale heart-shaped derriere, whose cheeks flexed and squirmed precociously. However, Raine thought Theo



sounded about to expire . . . not that he could blame him, mind you. Grinning knowingly, Raine quickly suggested, “Noel, check his pulse. Check his forehead for fever,”

“My Theo,” Noel gasped as she straightened and placed one hand above Theo’s heart and the other to his forehead. His neck seemed to lose its strength as his head fell back on the bulkhead and his eyelids clenched. “O! Theo-Theo,” she murmured in concern, yet she felt no fever, but the hand she placed over his heart could detect that it was pounding rapidly.

“It’s all right now, princess,” he muttered with his eyes still closed as she stroked his brow.

Noel thought Theo was as fine looking as she had imagined. He had blonde hair dusted with sandy colored streaks and his lips, *mon dieu*, so generous and full. These were above his square dimpled chin. His entire face was beautifully sculpted with golden tanned skin and she wondered what color lay behind his closed eyelids.

“It was just a terrible catch in my ribs, but it is easing now,” he said, peeking out of one eye at her, then quickly shutting it again.

Hazel. Theo’s eyes were a dusky, green-blue, hazel. Noel sighed, forgetting everything but easing Theo’s distress. He had sounded so horribly wretched, he had frightened her terribly and then to have Raine sound so upset. Raine? She glanced over her shoulder and found Raine looking intently in the direction of her bare bottom. He must surely have sensed her gaze because he looked up slowly and her breath caught tightly in her throat. Raine’s eyes were an opalescent turquoise color with long dark-brown lashes emphasizing them. So beautiful, he was dark where his brother was sandy colored. Raine had a smoldering chiseled quality to his face, from his aristocratic nose to his sensuous lips. The deep brown of his hair fell to his angular jaw and there were bruises in the shadowy powder of his days old beard.

“I am sorry,” he said in a low intense voice.

Noel wondered if he meant he was regretful for looking at her bareness with such obvious masculine appreciation or just the very circumstances they were all in.

“You are very beautiful,” Theo said in a muted voice.

Noel gasped, clasping her hands over her naked breasts. She huddled down on the back of her calves, trying to hide her bareness with her long hair.

“No, please, Noel,” Theo uttered. “How can you hide such exquisite-ness? We *should*—uh, honor our bodies proudly!” Theo gave Raine a purposeful look and a tilt of his head, over the top of Noel’s small head, in a gesture requesting help. While Raine, damn him, mouthed the words back, “honor our bodies?” Theo shrugged his shoulders. At least he was attempting something as he tried again. “Yes, Noel, *with* pride not embarrassment over gods’ perfect creation.”

“Ye’ gad’s,” Raine chuckled.

“*Oh*, you blackguard,” Theo snapped angrily. “You have ruined it all now, and you have *no* better idea!”

“I *adore* Noel’s body,” Raine enunciated. “Every spectacular inch of it! I would give my entire fortune away just to see her this way always. I would toss my noble title to the dogs for just one glimpse. I might, Theo, even toss *you* for-.”

“-You would?” Noel whispered looking up at him.

“Yes,” Raine stated emphatically. “Every blessed farthing, just to look at you.”

Noel smiled at him in a lip trembling offering, then looked at Theo.

“I swear, Noel, if I had a fortune, I would give it away also,” Theo exclaimed.

“Darling, Theo!” Noel exclaimed with a lyrical laugh. “You are both so, em, *discentè* to me, both of you.”

Raine noticed that Theo nearly melted into a human puddle at the sound of Noel calling him darling with her sultry French accent, and Noel must have thought Theo overcome again because she reached for him.

“My Theo, you are still so unwell,” she murmured, patting his chest and running her other hand through his hair.

“Oh I, . . . I do feel a bit faint,” Theo murmured wanly.

“Wolf,” Raine muttered and kicked Theo in the shin, meaningfully.

Theo could not feel bad for his slight pretense, not with Noel touching him so. She was so endearingly compassionate, besides being lushly naked to his eyes.

***Clank!***

“Noel, quickly!” Raine hissed. “Come between us *now!*”

***Clank . . . Clank!***

## Chapter Eight

They each looked upward at the grate being lifted over their heads and at the early light of dawn as it crept into the dank darkness of the hold.

“*Non-non!*” Noel cried, burrowing into the back of Raine’s shirt as he leaned forward to allow her more room. Then Theo moved to sit in front of her lower portion, which she curled around the back of his hips.

“*Come on, gel, the master wants to see ye now!*”

Raine recognized the voice of the old sailor from last night, and now he saw that the man had hefty shoulders with a gnarled grin and uneven tufts of white hair on his chin.

“*No!*” Raine shouted in a rough voice.

“*No, ye say? . . . why ye can’t just say no,*” the sailor mumbled.

“She is not going *anywhere* without something to wear,” Raine replied.

“And jest how are ye going to stop me now? You boys are chained. Ain’t ye?” The old sailor asked as he peered down into hold.

“*Come down and see!*” Raine challenged.

The old sailor seemed to ponder this, then leaned forward over the edge and said in a deliberately hushed voice. “I got no trouble getting the young miss somethin’ to wear. But if she don’t come with me, the master will send *two* others who won’t be at all nice to her, if ye get me drift.” He paused. “Ye just wait there and I’ll be right back.”

Raine judged the old coot illiterate and slow-minded as well, and his last statement proved the assumption.

“What are we going to do?” Theo asked grimly.

Raine looked at him intently as he answered in a voice colored with irritation, “We have wasted enough time!” Then in a less clipped voice then he had just employed, he ordered, “Noel, remove that pin from your hair and put it into *my* hand.”

Noel followed his orders quickly, staying behind him as he turned his body toward her. Crossing his chained wrists, Raine muttered, “I *am* a *fool*, not thinking of this sooner! I have allowed you both too utterly distract me. Theo, *I can reach* these locks.”

“Of course,” Theo replied with his gaze lowering to Noel. “It is all right, princess, Raine is the best lock pick there is, he will be free in seconds.”

“Less,” Raine uttered, pulling one wrist free and going to work quickly on the other lock, which came loose as he looked down at Noel’s upturned face near his stomach. The fragile features of her face and the luminous brown of her eyes clearly showed fear. “It will be all right, sweetheart,” he added vehemently.

“*O-Oui*, Raine,” she whispered as he turned to work on the manacle around Theo’s left wrist.

“He is coming back,” Theo advised, just before his left wrist came free.

“I do not believe he can see us down here,” Raine said as he moved to free Theo’s right wrist.

“Here ye go gov’,” the old sailor grumbled, followed by a muffled thud on the deck a few feet from them. “It’s all I could snatch and it ain’t like the master ain’t just gonna tear it off her when he sees her in it anyway’s.” He continued to mutter, “For all he likes them lads.”

Raine’s gaze lowered to Theo’s. “Marapaul,” he hissed to Theo’s grimace as Theo’s right wrist came free. Raine immediately began to pull his shirt off, up over his head, without undoing the ties. “Here, Noel, hold this until we get the clothes,” he said, handing the shirt to her.

“Well, *come* on gal!” the old sailor exclaimed. “I can see ye ain’t even got that petticoat yet. The master’s going to be pure mad, if I don’t get ye there quick!”

“*Sorry* chum, he is just going to have to be mad. Because we are not going to give her up!” Raine called hoarsely as he nodded to Theo and whispered, “Stay around the edges when you search.” Theo moved off quickly.

“Damn and blast yer bloody hide!” the sailor thundered. “I’m going to get my *ass* whipped good fer just being nice to ye!” The grate slammed shut. “*And* I’m going to tell them coots that comes get her that she’s free fer the taking! Just see if I don’t!”

The old sailor’s voice faded as he moved away while Raine went quickly to fetch the clothing which turned out to be a single sleeveless top with one attached petticoat. “Have you found anything yet?” Raine called into the shadows of the hold as he returned to Noel.

“Another door,” Theo answered out of the darkness. “I cannot tell if it is held by a lock or bar, but I did find a tin chimney lamp with oil and some rags.”

“Good,” Raine said as he crouched down before Noel to hand her the petticoat which she did not take but instead launched herself into his surprised arms.

“Raine, I cannot go to t-the horrible man!” she cried fearfully.

Raine found his hands on a naked back so soft he could only have dreamed of such softness. Noel had a strangled hold around his neck and the shirt he had given her was wedged between them. Taking complete advantage of the situation he dipped a look downward to her sleek curving buttocks, tempting him to lay his hands on their quivering

softness. *Blast*, he did not have time for this . . . or his incredibly wayward thoughts, but he did need to calm her.

“Please, sweetheart, you must be brave now,” Raine said calmly, his face buried in Noel’s silky hair, which unfortunately tempted him further as he inhaled the delicate aroma of lilies. “You must trust that Theo and I will do our best to keep you safe,” he said as he once again gathered his wayward thoughts.

“You will? You will do thees for me?” she murmured uncertainly, her warm breath brushing his ear, her lip’s whisper soft as they barely touched his cheek.

Of course, he realized, they had never really said so exactly, never actually reassured her. Tightening his arms around her for a moment, he said a bit fiercely “You have my vow on it and Theo’s too.” Praying that he would be able to carry through on his vow. At the same time he realized abruptly how devastating it would be for him if anything were to happen to her. How quickly she had become important to him.

“Now, Noel, you must help to put this on,” he said, kissing her temple briefly before he reached up and unwound her arms from around his neck. The movement of separation between their bodies loosened the shirt and it fell to the deck. He looked down at her and she did nothing to cover herself. “Here,” he said gruffly, putting the petticoat over her head in an attempt to help her on with it, but only after receiving a gaze filled with the black satin curls concealing her pussy beneath.

“The only hope I see, is to set the ship afire,” Theo said as he came out of the shadows and knelt beside them, setting the lamp, rags, and two plank boards down in front of them. His gaze worriedly took in Noel, dressed in her scanty attire. “There must be at least thirty sailors on a ship this size,” he finished tightly.

“Yes, I had considered that,” Raine replied, taking a hold of a plank board and standing. “It would have to be a series of fires and they would have to ignite rapidly on something that could not be easily put out. Then perhaps we could make it to the dingy’s. There must be at least two on a merchant ship this size.”

“There are kegs of gunpowder and several barrels of what I would say is rum in the corner behind that stack of crates, Raine.”

“That means there is a gunnery room close by, Theo.”

“Exactly, and being the most able, I will take the gunnery room, Raine, and you take Noel”

“Now just a moment, Theo.”

“Not even that much time, Raine, your ribs are broken or fractured at the very least, though you are hiding it well.”

Noel made a soft sound of concern behind them and Theo turned to her. “Noel, you must do everything Raine tells you, without thought,” he said with soft determination, smiling as she nodded her head bravely, even though her cinnamon colored eyes were wide with fear. He thought fleetingly of how quickly she had become important to him . . . and his

brother. He had felt the effect as soon as he had heard her speak, and then more when he had seen her. Now he had a fierce desire to see her safe, and he vowed silently to do everything in his power to do just that. "Right then," he muttered. "I will meet you at the dingy."

## Chapter Nine

Everything was going surprisingly well, splendid in fact, Raine thought, for such a spur of the moment plan. The cobbled together explosive charges that they had set in the hold, managed to split the huge boarded door in half while creating quite a impressive fire of smoke to cover the tracks of their escape. In fact, the entire escape effort was bounding forward, despite the tried and true rule that nothing ever came off without a hitch.

Only in that one moment of complete artifice, just as he was helping Noel over the side railing toward the hanging dingy, the small hairs on the back of his neck began to prickle. Turning his head slowly, Raine hoped to see Theo coming as promised, but instead his gaze caught a unnatural hulking shadow in the overcast light. Black actually, like a specter, moving in their direction, swirling along the cabin wall behind them. They had been found! The Black Widow or Marapaul? Raine wondered, as he turned back to shout, “*Hold* onto the seat tightly, Noel!”

Then he could only hope that Noel obeyed him as he snapped the dingy’s holding ropes free, plummeting the small craft into the ocean below. He heard Noel’s frightened scream as he turned to confront the billowing black threat that was upon him seconds, before he saw the flash of a knife. The hulking frame that collided with his was brawny and ferocious, giving him the certainty that although he could not see the man’s face, this was *not* Marapaul who was trying to kill him.



“*Eight . . . seven . . . six!*” Theo hissed as he sprinted away, casting a quick glance back over his shoulder. “*Blazes!*” he swore, huffing for breath. He was not going to make it, he thought as he turned his head forward and in that instant saw Raine fighting for his life against a black-cloaked menace. There was no hope for it, Theo realized as he plowed into both shapes and his momentum knocked all of them over the railing.

“*Two . . . one!*” Theo screamed just as he hit the wall of water beneath him.

Theo's scream was followed by an immense explosion from the ship. Noel, sitting helplessly in the dingy was screaming Raine and Theo's name when she was knocked to the floor by the enormous eruption. She had seen both men with the horrible man, fighting, and then falling into the churning water, right before the ship split apart.

"*O dieu!*" she wailed, trying to get up from the bottom of the rocking boat. "They must be alive! They must be!" she sobbed, scraping her palms on the splintery-coarseness of the boards. Just when she found the top rail and had hauled herself upright, a man's large hand came over the edge, grabbing the side of the boat and making her scream again at the suddenness.

"You, French *bitch!*" the man sputtered

Noel stumbled backward falling and hitting the last seat hard as the horrible-horrible man began to climb up into the boat. She could see his face now, where before there had only been a black cowl with hollow eyes. A ghostly predator! *O dieu*, she knew him!

"You!" she cried, scrambling to the furthestmost V of the boat as the man, she had seen nearly a year ago trying to kill her brother, lifted a long plank over the edge of the small boat.

"Damn, you piece of French muslin! Now I am going to have to kill you with or without your brother's red book," he snarled, lifting himself into the opposite end of the boat.

Noel peered around frantically as the tall man lurched toward her. She knew that this man meant to kill her if he got his hands on her. There was only one place to go and all she could think of in her panic was of Theo and Raine? She gulped, nearly choking, darting a terrified glance at the horrible man, and then she pushed herself over the side of the boat into the wave swept ocean. Just as she hit the waves, she heard the awful man shouting, "*you bitch,*" right before her head went under the water.

"*Damn it, Theo, release me and go and get her!*" Raine gasped hard as the water nearly swallowed him again.

"*Never,*" Theo hissed, grasping Raine more securely with his arm winding tightly beneath Raine's armpits. He tried to swim faster, nearly and an impossible feat, with only one arm and what he felt sure must be a broken ankle. Then bless the saints, he caught a blurry vision of Noel's bobbing head. Heaven and all the angels bless her, she must know how to swim. "Raine! Noel is moving away from him. She can swim! He cannot get to her unless he jumps back into the water! It appears there is only a sail and no oars."

"Thank god," Raine managed weakly.

"Raine, she has seen us!" Theo exclaimed. "And she is trying to swim toward us. I managed to drop the other dingy and when we find it we will be fine . . . Raine-Raine?" Theo said, taking a closer look at his brother, but Raine did not answer, yet he could see that Raine was still breathing. He knew that he must find the dingy quickly. His brother could not stand the cruelly cold water much longer. He struggled, swimming as hard as



he could with the added burden of keeping his brother above water. As he swam, he kept repeating to himself, “We *will* find it, we *will* find it!”

†

Raine collapsed into the bottom of the dingy, his body too shriven with cold to even attempt to help Theo pull Noel into the boat. Although it appeared his mind was still functioning, he knew they all had to be dangerously cold. To be left for any length of time in the English channel this time of year was a death sentence. At least they had found the second dingy, which gave them a chance. A very slim chance because beside their injuries and the possibility of freezing to death, there was the distinct smell of a storm blowing in . . . and if he was judging correctly very soon.

Shaking with the cold, Raine realized that lethargy that often came with numbing coldness was over taking him. “D a m,” he muttered in alarm at the deadened feeling in his lips. He had to think, and think quickly, before he could not.

Theo used the very last of his waning strength to push a shivering Noel up over the side of the dingy. He just could *not* do anymore, but just hang onto the side of the boat . . . and that effort was taxing him beyond his failing endurance. It was just too cold and wet, he could not even feel his feet . . . one more hammering wave and he would be done for.

“T-Theo, you *m-must* get into thees boat!” Noel’s voice was shrill as her stiff fingers clawed at his wrists.

Theo did not have the heart or strength to tell Noel that he could not, and then the next churning swell hit and he cried out, losing his grip!

“*Theo! No!*” Raine shouted grabbing Theo’s forearm with his uninjured arm . . . barely grasping his sleeve. He could feel his precarious hold was slipping as he shouted, “God, Noel! I am going to *lose* him!”

“*Non!*” Noel cried and she reached all the way over the edge of the small boat and grabbed the waistband of Theo’s trousers with both hands. Then she pulled, using strength she never knew she had, trying to make her whole body force Theo over the side. They were balanced precariously as she begged, “*Please*, Theo! Lift your leg! *Theo!* Please help me!”

“Ah, Jesusss,” Theo groaned. How could he deny Noel’s distress? She was sobbing and would fall in with him if he did not-. “*Blast!*” he growled fiercely as he gave a mighty heave forcing his leg upward and by some miracle Noel caught it.

Raine willed every muscle in his right arm to the straining point, then suddenly Noel was tumbling backwards with a squeal and Theo was nearly on top of her. “Thank god,” Raine groaned, right before he collapsed onto his back in the bottom of the dingy, laying there panting in steamy breaths. Well at least they had gotten some blood flowing, was all he could think, right before he passed out.

## Chapter Ten

Noel watched Raine and Theo anxiously. It had been many long hours since their escape and both men were incoherent with cold. Shivers were racking their large frames as they lay beneath the thin canvass sail. To make matters worse a sudden storm was pelting them with frigid sleet. She had seen the blood on Raine and found the knife wound on his upper arm, which she bandaged with strips of her petticoat. Then she had used more strips to bind a small gash on Theo's forehead, not knowing what else to do. Her mind was a whorl as she frantically tried to think of a way to save them all.

At first, as the small boat was tossed from side to side, she held out hope that they could manage to live through it, but that was before the great storm had come. There were no oars, nor did she believe that she could have lifted them if there were. *Non*, she did not even know what to do with the sail, but use it to cover Theo and Raine. So she sat, useless and shaking with cold, holding onto the rudder piece as if this would help. *O merci*, she did not wish to die and she did not wish Raine or Theo to die!

"*Voire!* I must do some action," she cried helplessly into her hands, unable to stop her body's quaking. The heat, she needed the *chaleur*, for them and for herself if she had any hope of saving them! It was then the small idea, came to her. Did she not remember always being warmer with her *ma-mere* in her bed on cold nights or Phillip when they were younger?

"*Oui!*" she exclaimed. First she would remove all of their wet clothing then . . . then she would . . . "*O merci*, Noel," she whispered. Knowing that she must . . . that she had to. But it was so-so naughty!

Taking Theo and Raine's clothing off beneath the sail was not easy, however once she got their shirts off, she could already feel the heat more. Both of them mumbled and Raine was trying to fight her, although very weakly, for a man so strong. Theo was more like the puppy, wanting to cuddle closer to her. They both shook so badly that she quickly tugged off their boots, murmuring silly assurances to herself and to them. "If we just cuddle this night, tomorrow the sun will warm us, yes?"

"N-Noel?"

The sound was a hoarse whisper as Noel was tugging down Raine's trousers, making *beaucoup* certain that she did not look!

“Raine!” she cried, pulling his trousers free and scrambling up to lean over his chest. She thought perhaps he was not shaking as much, but his beautiful eyes looked cloudy and confused.

“T-Theo,” he rasped, then swallowed hard.

“He is here, Raine, right beside us. But you are both so cold! There is a storm, Raine, and I do not know what to do.”

“You are s-shaking,” he mumbled as his eyes fluttered shut.

“Raine!” Noel rubbed Raine’s chest, she rubbed his arms with her palms, then she realized that she was dripping water on him from her drenched petticoat. Quickly, without modesty or thought, she took her shift off and then as quickly managed to remove Theo’s trousers. Rubbing his wide shoulders and arms, she was sure it was getting warmer in their cocoon beneath the sail. *Oui*, she definitely did.

“Oh god,” Theo groaned. He was feeling . . . No, he felt his hands being lifted and he heard soft frantically spoken French-. *Words?*

“Rub your hands on me, Theo. Please-please!”

*Oh lord, she was so soft, Theo thought . . . so soft and warm.*

“Cuddle, my Theo, . . . we will cuddle . . . Raine, you must come, too. Put your hands here. We will be one big cuddle, yes?”

Raine felt himself tugged and jostled until warm satin spun over his chest, hips, and thighs. The heat was fighting him, fighting him to come awake and discover more. He was so cold, but there was heat and he needed more. He pried his leaden eyelids open with a tenacious force of will and saw what his mind and body were nearly too unsteady with coldness to comprehend.

It was Noel, offering her naked warmth between his and Theo’s equally nude bodies. *And, oh god it was working.* The front of him, his chest especially was draining the heat from Noel’s back and the radiating warmth was allowing him to breathe easier. He could feel the canvas sail draped over the top of them being hit with icy plops of sleet, especially where it laid across his shoulder. However, beneath it, their combined bodies were beginning to create a lifesaving warm cocoon.

Raine could barely see the green tint of Theo’s hazel eyes over Noel’s shoulder. Theo’s cheek was nestled within the plumpness of Noel’s naked breasts and he appeared slumberous, in a half unconscious way. Raine was certain that Theo was not aware that his cheek was nesting on such a spectacular plateau, otherwise, Theo would have been flustered and skimming the edge’s shyness. That was Theo, sensitive, and now that he considered it fully, albeit woozily, Raine realized that he too was quite sensitive-. *Sensitive*, about his timbered cock and the exquisite ecstasy of having it cradled between Noel’s sumptuous buttocks. Buttocks that were certainly gifts from some heavenly nubile deity. Perhaps, he considered half-lucidly, that this was God’s gift before death. “A taste of heaven,” he murmured.

“*Ooo*,” Noel gasped, suddenly feeling the cool firm texture of masculine lips kissing the back of her shoulder, while a much thicker column

of Raine's anatomy, rocked in the valley it was spreading between the cheeks of her derriere. *Merci!* She had no way to move away from this piquant stroking of Raine's manly *baton*, because Theo's equally virile *baton* was burrowing intimately into the curls of her woman's place! Then quite suddenly she felt the firm outline of Theo's mouth as he sucked and kissed the inner slope along one of her naked breasts!

"*Oo! Dieu!*" she gasped as her fingers clenched into the tightly roped muscle of Theo's shoulders, while her lower body undulated with Raine's stirring rhythms compelling her from behind and *through* the crease of her tushie. *Oh!* This was *much* more than the big cuddle.

The strange feelings that the swaying of masculine muscle, in front and behind her body, aroused were accompanied by a heat that spread like oozing warm syrup deep into her sex. A tempest of desire flooded her, making her ache. It was a sweet spreading *hot* ache that tangled her searching toes with four muscular calves.

Raine understood that he should stop the questing glide of his rampant cock through Noel's saucy ass cheeks. However, somehow the thought and the action would not come together in his mind and then suddenly Noel's body simply ripened beneath his like a luscious warm peach. She was aroused. He could feel it in the return undulation of her sinuous little ass against his large cock. A cock that was rock solid and thickly massed, which he stroked down and through Noel's plush crack. And instead of halting, he hooked Noel's voluptuous hips into his hands for a better anchor, while he nibbled her soft nape. His hips rocked the thrusting swollen mass of his cock through the alluring hot cradle of Noel's supple buttock cheeks. At the same time he realized that Theo was having a similar reaction to Noel's lavish body. Noel's big firm breasts occupied Theo, as Raine watched Theo draw the aroused berry of Noel's pink nipple into his mouth like a sugary sweet candy.

*What are we doing*, Raine wondered? And the answer, "staying alive" was lost in the next second accompanied by the sounds of Noel's excited moans of pleasure.

"*O! Oh, dieu,*" Noel gasped. "I should *not*." But her mind was in conflict with these newly discovered pleasures and her upbringing. Yet her young fertile body overruled her mind as she thrust her breasts forward into Theo's mouth trying to keep in contact with his naughty tongue. A tongue that was creating the most wondrous sensations! That a man could do this to a woman's nipples! At the same time her hips wriggled forward riding her sex up and down Theo's upsurging male *baton*. *Oo!* These things she had never known, and now both men rocked her from front to back . . . and their hands! *O merci*, four male hands stroking her, molding her curves to theirs.

Raine curved his tough muscular body along her back and pressed her into Theo's solid frame. Front to front—front to back, while Theo mounded her breast into plump piles of pleasure, kissing and sucking on them ardently.

Noel's head fell back and Raine began to nibble on her lips, running his tongue along the seam of her mouth. "Open for me, sweetheart," he breathed as his tongue penetrated her mouth and he imitated the movements of his thick manly *baton* stroking through the cheeks of her tushie.

"Ommm!" she cried around Raine's hotly prodding tongue.

Theo painted his tongue around the swollen kernel of Noel's nipple, thrusting so avidly into his mouth. Licking the fat berry like a hungry kitten engaged in lapping up a saucer of frothy cream. His mind was too dazed in sensual tension to follow any more details than the palatable feast before him. Part of his mind mused in a whimsically incoherent way, that a young man could go entirely too long without the sexual pleasures of a woman's flesh. It was unnatural, he was certain! So certain in fact that he'd never truly realized a man's penis could have an indulgent and quite *demanding* mind of its own. He could feel his, slim and extended in length, curving nearly to his belly button, sliding like a veritable snake engaged upon a slithering journey through hot satin curls.

*Ah . . . blazes.* The blunt sensitive head of his lustful penis could feel the tender invitation of Noel's pussy lips, slick and oh so hot, as they clung to the length of his vicarious snake. While he slid his snake up and down through lips that sucked at the head, dripping dew and unfolding like a morning blossom.

His stroking drove Noel to more frantic, undulating, and twisting movements. He was amazed that a woman's body could contort in such engaging fashions, allowing him to sup on breasts made by the Gods, while his masculine snake slithered up and down through feminine lips of splendor. His uncontrollable thoughts, and the newly discovered erotic sensations, were guiding him toward the ultimate peak, driving his body to increase his efforts. He rocked even harder, nearing the summit of an explosion just as he heard a strident voice.

"*Move your knee, Theo! That is my spot!*"

Theo's head jerked upward releasing the fat thrusting bulb of Noel's nipple with a gasp. He tried to catch Raine's gaze, as they all continued to rock in a hot frantic bobbing motion "*And how do you know that is your spot?*" he gasped.

"*Ah God!*" Raine exclaimed in an abrupt groan. "*Because, I need L-Leverrr . . . age-! Oh! God, Theo . . . now!*" Raine's entire body shuddered violently.

"Point taken!" Theo exclaimed, moaning several heartfelt Jesus's he before he cried, "***Hurry take your L-Leverrr . . . age-. Hurry! . . . oh, Jesus! . . Oh . . . god!***" Theo tensed, straining against Noel as his seed pumped free mingling on his belly and hers.

Moments later, Raine blissfully spent, rolled partially onto his back, while just as euphorically spent Theo plopped onto his back. Leaving a limp-limbed Noel between them with her head on Theo's chest and her knees tangled with Raine's legs.

## Chapter Eleven

Silence rained completely until ten minutes later when Noel, who was dosing began to shiver again.

“Damn,” Raine muttered, feeling as though his mouth were full of cotton and knowing the seeping coldness was edging closer once more.

“I c-cannot believe we d-d-did that,” Theo stuttered through chattering teeth. He had discovered the sail was short on his end.

“We h-have to do it again,” Raine muttered with his own cold induced stutter as he looked over Noel’s small dark head at Theo. “And m-more,” he finished grimly.

“M-More?” Theo questioned hesitantly and then contrived more firmly to stop the chattering of his teeth as he said, “Move c-closer, perhaps if we h-huddle?”

“It will not be e-enough,” Raine replied, but he did gather Noel up into his arms, until she was sandwiched between them as he laid his forearm loosely about Theo’s waist. Noel merely sighed with a shivery sound and continued to sleep with her head propped on Theo’s muscled shoulder. The rearranged position put Raine and Theo nearly eye to eye.

“We do not k-know how to do more . . . r-really,” Theo supplied, rubbing Raine’s arm, carefully around the bandaged of his wound feeling his palm growing warm as he continued to rub. Perhaps it would help if they rubbed each other all over, Theo thought, because he could not really comprehend what they had done. While not explicitly violating a pure young woman’s maidenhead, they certainly had corrupted her innocence. Although, he had to admit, she had been willing.

“But we d-do, Theo, do not forget Madame J-Joyeau.”

“J-Joyeau,” Theo stuttered, while Raine returned the favor and rubbed his arm and shoulders. Well truly, Theo pondered, Raine was correct, they had the theory—though they had not put it into a practical application. The theory had been provided to them years ago at the beginnings of their spying careers, by one Madame Joyeau on the arts of seduction. Only, Raine in his inimitable fashion had demanded the full course and nearly gotten himself bedded by the professional prostitute. However, in the end Raine managed to extract himself from the seasoned demimonde with a bluff. A bluff, Theo now remembered, of a lower extremity disease.

Still, in the end, they had gotten quite a colorful verbal education. In fact he distinctly remembered that he had walked around for nearly a

week with a perpetually hard penis. Of course Raine had kept trying to tell him at the time that it was not an unnatural state for an eighteen-year-old male to be in. But of course *he* had still been embarrassed. And then they had become embroiled in their first assignment and they had gone off to their first spying adventure in France. In the years since then, they had both, but more so Raine, seduced women with kisses, flattery, and seductive touches. All for the well-being of their country. A dreamy-eyed languorous woman was ever so much more talkative. For himself it had not been an easy thing to attempt seduction, for he embarrassed easily. It was funny he thought, now that he thought about it, not once since meeting Noel, had he been embarrassed in front of her.

"I a-am so c-c-cold, Theo, . . . R-Raine," Noel chattered suddenly from a position beneath each of their chins.

Theo looked down at Noel's lovely face, as he heard Raine murmur, "Kiss her, Theo."

Theo did not hesitate, his mind and body were more than ready. Though cold, his desire for Noel was undiminished and from her previous reaction he did not think she would resist. It was a most unusual situation, he thought, as he softly brushed his lips against Noel's shivery ones. She was as sweet and downy as a soft baby chick and he caught the sultry promise of her bottom lip as he laved it, sucking gently, deepening his kiss before he retreated some moments later. Then he watched Raine tilt Noel's chin upward with his knuckles and lower his head slowly to kiss her berry-sweet lips next. He was so near to them that he could hear the catching of a sigh in Noel's throat and feel her fluttering heartbeat, where her firm young breasts pushed ardently against his chest. When Raine lifted his lips from Noel's, Theo saw that the color of Noel's irises was nearly ebony-brown.

Then Raine murmured, though he stuttered with cold. "We are going to m-make love t-to you, Noel."

Noel looked at each of them with her eyes turning a smoky chocolate color. "*Oui*, m-my Raine, . . . my T-Theo. We m-must cuddle more, y-yes?"

"I-If we want to stay a-alive," Raine replied looking at Theo, who nodded.

They made no plans . . . there could be none for such a thing. Yet they came together like three separate pieces, fitting together to make a whole. Raine was more vocal, given to instructive command, while Noel was delightfully malleable, becoming more eager with each touch. Theo was creative, belying any shy embarrassment over such intimacies. Between them they soon had a heated warmth stirring beneath the canvass, loosening their chilled limbs and minds.

"*O dieu*, Theo! *Dieu!*" Noel cried passionately as she pushed her hips forward.

"Theo, I believe you found 'that *certain* spot'," Raine murmured huskily as he smiled into the strands of Noel's silken hair, caught in the

bristles of his unshaven chin. Her breasts were firm, large-shaped globes, swaying erotically in the palms of his bigger hands. He rolled the taut fat bulbs of her aroused nipples with his forefinger and thumb. The protruding rosy-pink buds were swollen tight between his fingertips as he plucked them, arching her in response.

He pulled her shoulders back even further, cradling her slender back along his chest as he lowered his head to nip one of the quivering berry tips into his mouth. He rolled the round protrusion around on his tongue making Noel whimper. And glancing downward, he had a clear view of Theo's tan fingers massaging in between the lips of Noel's flushed pink pussy.

Theo agreed with Raine's assessment for he had rubbed playfully many places within the delicate coral-lipped folds of Noel's sex, but this seemed to be "*the spot*." He could even feel a hot pulse beat deep in Noel's juicy puss as he used his forefinger to rub on the flange of tender beaded flesh, that so excited her.

"*O! O! DDieu!*" Noel cried.

This was incredible! Theo glanced at Raine, then back down to Noel's flushed face. Her eyes were clenched and her lips, which were swollen and flush from their kisses, were parted as her honied gasps of pleasure kept coming faster and faster. "*Euo—euoooo!* My Theo! My Raine! . . . O! Oooo!"

"She has never climaxed before," Theo murmured in dawning realization.

"I would say not," Raine whispered with a seductive grin, then added in a husky-gruff voice, "Dip your other finger inside of her, Theo."

"*Ooo!*" Noel bucked her hips passionately, but Raine held her firmly in place as Theo mated her with his finger. Each thrust brought Noel's hips upward into a bowed arch to meet Theo's plunge.

Raine growled hotly, "*Two fingers, Theo.*" Then Raine caught Noel's panting lips with a heated kiss, sucking her tongue deeply inside his mouth, absorbing each panting breath puffing out of her mouth in abandoned moans.

Completely transported, Theo lifted Noel's lovely slender legs up over his muscled forearms, gaining him sterling access to an exquisitely erotic view of her tender, dewy-drenched cleft. She was completely abandoning herself, spreading herself wider as his fingers dipped deeper inside her hot, tight sheath. Soon her small heels were clamped to his shoulders muscles.

He *never* dreamed of having a woman so vulnerable to his ministrations. He could not have imagined the fierce protectiveness that swept through him taking the hard edge off of his own rampant lust. He looked up at Raine with glazed passion filled eyes, barely able to realize that Raine was gazing at him just as fiercely.

"*Take her over the edge Theo!*" Raine uttered through gritted teeth.



Theo could tell from the sound of Raine's voice and the look on his face that Raine would soon reach a similar edge. Just barely acknowledging Raine with a flick of his eyelids Theo circled his fingers faster in Noel's hot quivering puss as he thrust another finger inside her hard and deep.

"O!" "*Dieu—mon dieu! Mon amoureux/euse!*" Noel cried out, "my sweethearts," ardently as she tumbled over the precipice. Tumultuous sensations burst through her body. The rapture engulfed her, taking her to a place she never knew existed. She could not think as her body continued to pulse to the intense sensations rippling upward to the very core of her being. When they left . . . slowly receding, leaving a feeling so exciting, . . . *so* exquisite that it left her breathless and quaking.

"You are so very beautiful," Raine murmured as he kissed her lips gently.

Noel's eyes remained closed, but she heard Theo murmur. "So lovely, princess."

Theo kissed her too and she opened her eyes to look at these two beautiful men who made such wondrous love to her. With both men gazing at her, Noel suddenly realized how wild and abandoned she had been. Then quite suddenly . . . without warning, to herself or them, she buried her face in Raine's shoulder and began to weep.

"Noel! My God did we hurt you?" It was Theo. His chest was cradling her back, his hand stroking the long strands of her hair gently as he tried to sooth her distress.

"*Non-non,*" she blubbered into Raine's salty skin, sniffing loudly. She had unconsciously curled her body into his lap, her head cradled on his chest.

"It must be something, sweetheart," Raine murmured as he stroked her bare thigh, guessing all to well the emotional turmoil she must be experiencing.

"Of course there *is* something," Theo grumbled gently, and then he barely whispered, "She was *untouched*."

"*O mon dieu,* I am not the naughty girl! I am not," Noel cried drenching Raine's shoulder with more tears. Abruptly Noel stiffened then jerked her stricken gaze to Theo as she wailed, "I am not *capricieux euse!*"

With this declaration, she once again buried her face into the crook of Raine's shoulder with a hiccup-sob as Theo looked at Raine and questioned, "*Capricieux euse?*"

"Wanton," Raine muttered holding on tightly to Noel.

"*Oh* thank goodness," Theo replied with a heartfelt sigh.

"What is good about it?" Raine demanded, looking thoroughly perplexed. There were times when he was absolutely at a loss about the complex turnings of Theo's mind. This was one of them.

“Well, do you not see? Noel only thinks she has been somewhat—risque.” Theo hushed his voice, but it was silly because Noel was too close not to hear. “She was completely abandoned.”

“O! Dieu-u-u,” Noel wailed.

“That *is* it? That is all?” Raine growled, thinking surely that they had shattered a virgin girls dreams of true love at the very least. Theo merely nodded, patting Noel’s head soothingly as Raine continued to mutter. “That is ridiculous. Well . . . maybe not ridiculous . . . But.”

“It is *not-t*,” Noel quipped, lifting her head from Raine’s shoulder, looking directly into his eyes and stiffening her chin in a defiant manor.

“She is a lady,” Theo whispered. “We need to reassure her.”

“I *am* ze lady,” Noel sniffled, gazing up at both of them.

Raine knuckled her chin, trapping her gaze. “I *want* abandonment! I love abandonment! And I can tell you without even asking him that Theo *adores* abandonment.”

“You do?” Noel questioned with a look of disbelief and a pretty snuffle of her red nose.

“Yes!” Theo answered dramatically, quick to add adamantly, though quite boldly. “The more, the better!”

“So you see, my pretty little *capricieux/euse*,” Raine said. “We are head over heels in delight *and* you had best prepare for more abandonment, *amoureux/euse*.”

“O my Raine!” Noel exclaimed reaching around his neck for an exuberant hug as she plied his chin, neck, and ear with endearing and energetic little kisses. He in turn engulfed her in a bear-hug, smiling over her head at Theo, with a bemused shake of his head. Abruptly, Noel disengaged herself from his embrace and launched herself at Theo with the same abandon.

Theo caught Noel to him as she bussed his chin very warmly several times and then she asked quite seriously. “Theo, what e’s thees over the heels that Raine says?”

Theo suppressed his sudden urge to laugh as he watched Raine fighting a deep chuckle himself—and failing—until they both burst out laughing. Unfortunately, Noel was lost in the translation and both of them had to religiously kiss her pouts away.

Noel unconsciously stroked Raine’s thigh with the bottom of her bare foot while she restlessly ran her hand down over Theo’s chest. After a time Noel, sighed and said, “We must do more, yes? You will both cuddle more with me . . . yes?”

“Oh God,” Theo groaned, theatrically collapsing on his back. “I am going to die at a young age . . . I simply know it!”

“What e’s it, Theo?” Noel exclaimed, innocently, petting the tight tendons of his belly with her soft palms, her fingers venturing below his naval—dangerously close to the willful head of his once again stiffly engaged penis.

Raine groaned helplessly himself at just the sight of them. That, and Noel's bare toes had slipped higher on his body as she moved closer to Theo. Those delectable toes were now teasing the crisp hair around his navel and his cock bucked stoutly in reaction. "We are trying not to—not to . . ." Raine choked on a stutter. Damn, when had he started stuttering from more than the cold?

"Not to what, my Raine?" Noel asked.

She was whimsically unaware of the tragically aroused condition of each of them, Raine mused. "Not to *tup* you," he finally managed to expel.

"E'gad," Theo groaned. "Tup! Could you not have been the least bit flowery?"

Raine leaned forward with a glare, but immediately winced because the posturing, bent over as he was, was definitely not a good idea with a lustfully rigid cock. "It *was* the least offensive word I could think of for it," he managed to rasp.

"Tup? . . . what e's thees tup?" Noel asked wiggling her toes where they were caught in the bent crease of Raine's body, so very near to his torment.

"Oh God," Raine groaned, looking down at the mischievous wriggling.

Noel thought that Raine really did not look well at all, as she absently rubbed her foot over a thick—warm—*O merci!* Her eyes widened as she thought belatedly to move her foot. But Raine grasped it into his big hand. She ventured to look at him. His gaze was hungry, his eyes gleamed with turquoise-fire . . . for her? And-And—her foot-!

Theo was completely unaware of their interaction, because his eyes at that precise moment were clenched in a silent battle of his own. Because for whatever heavenly reason, Noel had just a few moments before—*grabbed* his penis—*tightly!* Oh God! But that was all right though, he would *not* complain. No-no! Perhaps, he thought, in a highly randy manner that he was beginning to realize men had about them when thus engaged—perhaps Noel was not quite as innocent as he first thought! That pesky, bedeviling thought brought his hips upward to help her with the stroke. He was perspiring—*ly* certain that she was about on the verge of pumping!

"*M-Merci!*" Noel squealed softly with her eyes now rounded like china saucers and her gaze turned to Theo who was-?

"-Stroke it," Raine murmured in a tenor commanding rumble.

Noel's gaze whipped back to Raine who scooted forward, very close to her, while keeping her foot pressed firmly over his very thick, manly *baton*.

"You want to," he drawled huskily, leaning forward to nip her earlobe which made her lean toward him. "You want to feel him . . . feel me . . . cuddle more . . . stay warm," he finished in a deeply seductive murmur against her ear.

“*Oui*,” Noel surrendered breathlessly, not certain what it was that she was surrendering. “E’s this the tuppung, Raine?”

Raine place his wide masculine hand over her hand which was holding Theo’s steely *baton* and then Raine showed her a primitive—thrilling stroke as he murmured. “Perhaps we will manage to keep from tuppung if you can show me how abandoned you can be.”

“E’s thees good, Raine?”

“It is honorable, sweetheart, . . . not good—just honorable.”

## Chapter Twelve

“I feel like a cad, Raine. A deplorable lowlife cad. Ouch!” Theo tried to jerk his foot away from the pain, but Raine held his foot firmly.

“Sit still,” Raine grumbled through his teeth. “I cannot bind your ankle with you jumping around like that.” He did so dislike having to hurt Theo, but it had always been like that. Perhaps it was the product of being the older brother by two years.

“Sorry,” Theo mumbled. “Now I am a nambee-pambee *and* a cad.”

“Thank god it is morning,” Raine sighed. The sun was out and it was fairly warm, if one compared it to the frigid storm of last evening. He and Theo had even managed to rig the sail. He looked away from Theo’s swollen, possibly broken ankle, down to the cradle of the boat where Noel still slept. She was covered with their shirts and once again he thought, thank god it was morning.

“You know, we very nearly—er—tupped her,” Theo said, also looking down at Noel.

“You *see*, there is no milder word,” Raine admonished. “Admit it.”

“I suppose upon further reflection-.” Theo looked at Raine with his sandy hair tousled on his forehead and struggled not to grin. “-Oh all right! I have not thought of a better one either. Yet I still feel like a cad.”

The corner’s of Raine’s mouth twitched as he suppressed grinning at Theo’s sense of order and honor. Because he, more than Theo, realized the pure enjoyment, they had been afforded, knowing that Theo would be hesitant to confess it. Lowering his, head he gained control and went back to bandaging Theo’s ankle with strips of Noel’s petticoat. “Well we did not, Theo,” he finally managed. “So you can stop feeling like a cad. Because I will tell you that it was either doing what we *did* do—or freezing to death. And I can promise you that we would have succumbed without—um, well—doing what we did!”

“Cad or no,” Theo mumbled as though he were paying little or no attention to what Raine said. “We *are* keeping her!”

“What!”

“Ouch, Raine! Carefully, please.”

“Sorry,” Raine snapped. “However, *just* what do you-.”

“-Marriage,” Theo expelled, thoroughly interrupting him. “One of us *must* marry her.” Theo leaned back on his elbows, tilting his head and

giving Raine one of those maddening looks. “And I am afraid that it will just have to be you. You are the earl in the family after all.”

Raine all but dropped Theo’s foot purposely, then thought better of it and let it down easily. Still, he could only think of one stupid thing to say. “But we *just* met her.”

Theo eyed him as though he were a prospective father judging the bridegrooms goods as he waved his hand dismissively. “Neither here nor there and you know it.”

“*Theo*,” Raine began heatedly. “If you think that I would even entertain the idea of marrying her—marry for life, I might add, over some misbegotten sense of honor because of what we did, well-.”

“-Oh no,” Theo interrupted with a gleam in his azure eyes. “Not that, my dear brother.” Theo sat straightly upright and looked at Raine closely. “No, I think you have no choice because you *want* to keep her as much as I do.”

Raine opened his mouth . . . then shut it again. When Theo was right, he was really right.

“Theo, Raine, you must not argue,” Noel grumbled, suddenly breaking into their conversation. Tilting her tousled head of black wavy hair to one side, her button nose scrunched upward in a very French attitude as she asked sweetly, “What e’s it that you argue about now?”

“Thank god!” both men exclaimed in unison.

“You must be the most religious Monsieurs I have ever known,” Noel said with a smile, then she quite naturally let loose of the shirt she had been holding across her bare bosom . . . and stretched. “*Ou la*, my back is cricketed.”

“You and your, *nakedness* is biblical,” Raine exclaimed out of the side of his mouth.

“Well quite frankly, Raine, I find it *very* spiritual,” Theo answered out of the side of his mouth as their petite French lady yawned widely. “By the by, dear brother,” Theo continued in a low voice filled with suspicious glee, “Since you get to marry her, I get to tup her first.”

Raine’s neck cricked as he twisted it and looked at Theo, dragging his gaze away from breasts made in heaven. Why the sly, loveable, he-devil, he thought. Then he closed his mouth and punched Theo’s shoulder feeling quite full of himself, saying, “Only if I get to help.”

Theo smiled, rubbing his shoulder. “Of course,” he agreed magnanimously. “What is a wedding night without the groom?” Raine could have sworn that he saw a lecherous gleam hiding behind his brothers innocent orbs.

Their discourse ended abruptly as they heard Noel shouting, “*Raine, Theo*, do you see this? Look-Look!” Noel was squealing excitedly, making both men turn to look only to see her on her knees, leaning over the edge of the boat, pointing.

What a delicious teardrop shaped bottom, Theo thought as he tore his gaze up higher, to see what Noel pointed at. It was another sail boat in the far distance and it looked nearly exactly like-!

“-*Ou la!* They will save us, yes?” Noel asked excitedly, waving her arms over the edge of the boat.

Raine was the first to reach her, gently grasping her waving arms as he pulled her back into the middle of the boat. Theo quickly followed and industriously wrapped her up in one of their shirts.

“We do not want to summon that—er, particular boat, princess,” Theo managed to say as he slid Noel’s arms into the sleeves of the shirt and began a fumbling attempt at working the ties. *Blazes*, he thought, trying not to notice Noel’s healthy, ripe, and oh so well-rounded body in the daylight, while pondering the fact that a penis certainly had a willfully mischievous and *quite* randy mind of its own! Perhaps he should name the “marauder” he had in his pants, he mused? Shifting his hips slightly to ease the uncomfortable tightness in the crotch of his trousers, where said, ‘marauder’ was well—slithering again! Raine appeared no better off though.

Theo eyed Raine’s rigid jaw line and the predatory gleam in his turquoise-colored eyes. Yes, Theo decided firmly right then and there, they were definitely going to have to marry Noel, because the chance of her remaining un-tupped, before they got off this boat appeared very small indeed.

“But why not, Theo, Raine? Do we not need to be rescued?” Noel asked in confusion.

“Hmm, of course, sweetheart, however we cannot just pick any boat,” Raine answered lamely, not entirely willing to upset Noel as a completely honest answer would do. But alas, she picked out their vagueness.

“*Mon dieu!* Thee’s e’s the horrible man’s boat, isn’t it? Theo, e’s it?”

“Yes, Noel, I am afraid that it is,” Theo answered grimly.

“But they cannot catch us?” she asked in a whisper.

“Of course not, sweetheart, princess,” both men answered in unison.

*Oh but they could*, Noel saw hours later when the other boat was so close to them that she could clearly see Marapaul, and then the horrible man’s hooded cowl! Raine and Theo were trying to race their little boat as quickly as the wind would carry them to a shoreline that had appeared. But Noel was not convinced this was such a wonderful idea, because the reef and rocks look *beaucoup* dangerous!

She held on tightly to the seat in their small boat, where Theo had told her to hold onto as she watched both men work so hard at trying to steer the boat over the crashing surf. Raine was at the tiller piece and Theo was moving the sail back and forth and she wondered if she was the only one who could feel the ominous creaks and shudders of their boat beneath them!

*Then it happened!* Just as Theo shouted, “Hard to port, Raine! Hard to port! *Damn . . .* we are not going to make *it-t!*” Theo’s voice faded beneath the rending sound of wood crashing into rocks

Noel barely caught the edge of the boat as it tilted up on its side and she saw Theo being flung into the crashing waves! “*Theo-Theo!*” she screamed whipping her head around to scream for Raine’s help. But he was gone too! “*Non!*” she screamed. The sound of the pounding waves and the screech of the boards tearing apart as the boat struck the rocks overshadowed her screams. Mixed with these terrifying sounds were the shouts of Raine and Theo trying to tell her to let go of the boat. Yet she did not hear them and then she was in the water! *Alone!*



# Chapter Thirteen

## *A Fortnight Later in London*

Noel wiped her fingers angrily at her tears, as she sat before the mirrored dressing table, telling herself valiantly that she would not cry again. Raine and Theo were lost to her. She remembered it all so horribly well. She remembered how Theo and Raine now thought that *she* was the Black Widow and they hated her! Because she had told them so . . . been forced to tell them so! She tried so hard not to remember, but she could not help it.

*At first she felt a sense of relief at being rescued as she came sputtering out of the water. It had taken her some time to stop choking and coughing up water, to realize that she stood on a narrow coral reef in the violet-blue dusk. She had assumed it was Raine and Theo that stood beside her in the growing dusk. The scene before her was dramatic in its fierce intensity, nature on a rampage endowing the waves with incredible height, loosening their spray high in the air with the aid of the increasing wind. But then, oh too soon, as though carried on the wind, she heard Theo's voice shouting. Turning her head slowly she saw that instead of Raine and Theo, it was Marapaul and the horrible man in the cowl that held her. She lifted her gaze only to see both Raine and Theo across an expanse of water, on a spit of land close enough to see, but too far for from where she stood to come to her rescue.*

*She looked around frantically then, yet realized quickly that the water and the way the shoreline was curved, proved to be a natural barrier from each of them reaching the other! She was just about to shout to them in her rising panic when she felt the barrel of a pistol prodding her side. It was then Marapaul told her, her fate as the horrible man held the pistol to her.*

*"I can kill both of them from this distance, mademoiselle, and I will unless you tell them exactly what I tell you to say!"*

*"But why?" she cried.*

*With merciless force he grabbed her arm jerking her forward. "It is not for you to know!" he hissed. "Now laugh and tell them that you are the Black Widow!" He shook her again. "Taunt them or my friend here will kill both of them. One shot each."*

*But she had not laughed, she had cried, only the fierce wind carried it until it sounded like laughter to her ears. She had shouted everything she had been told to say, until she saw Theo slumped down in the sand and Raine stood with his fists clenching and unclenching in his anger. It was anger so palatable that she could feel it across the distance, so intense that she knew if he had his hands on her, he would strangle her. This was the last she had seen of them on that windswept beach, bare-chested, wet, and defeated. She had prayed for a long time after, that somehow they would not believe her, because she was in so much trouble and she needed them desperately. But of course they had not . . . and would not come to rescue her.*

Noel brought herself back from her memories, looking into the mirror and trying to stir up her courage, only she was so weary. She had been trying to be brave for so long, she felt like a taut violin string about ready to snap.

“You look beautiful this evening, my delicious French tart.”

Noel started and then shuddered as the horrible man’s long elegant fingers closed over her bare shoulders. Bare because she was forced to wear an indecently low-cut evening gown. *He* was calling himself Lord Valmont now, a supposed English baron. But she knew this was a grand lie for she had heard him speak French to often to believe he was English.

She thought now, after she had been able to piece together all the snippets of conversations she had overheard, that Valmont was some master spy scheming terrible intrigues for his own immense profit. A most dangerous spy for the General Napoleon. She had also been able to understand that Valmont intended to clear the field of *all* spies, because something important was about to happen in France. Noel thought this must be the inspiration of a war. She also thought this ‘clearing the field’ meant, assassinating all the other known spies. And it was here that it became truly bizarre for Valmont, who was the true Black Widow, wished to kill all the spies on his own side of France also! Valmont had told Marapaul that the board must be cleaned for them to reap the most power and profits. Clean out both sides of the continent. She had overheard this clearly, and now she knew what the red book was and *who* they thought her brother to be.

“*Non!*” Noel cried, toppling her chair backwards and forcing Valmont to move back as she rose and whirled on him. “You will not touch me!” she cried.

Valmont laughed maliciously, making Noel shudder again. “Perhaps tonight we will consummate this attraction we feel, Noel? You must know there will be *no* one to stop me!”

“I will *never* help you find Phillip if you dare to touch me!” she gasped, hugging her arms over her chest as a shield.

“We do not *need* you to identify him, mademoiselle. That is only an added benefit we give you, to spare his life. He will come, regardless,

once we show you around London enough and he realizes that we have you. He will come then! Famille attachment is so usable.”

Noel desperately wanted to keep Valmont distracted from his earlier lascivious thoughts, which were becoming harder to fight off, so she tempted a question to him. “I do not *comprendre* why you would look for Phillip in London, when he e’s French?” Noel now knew with certainty that her brother Phillip, the supposed silk merchant, was really the French spy called, Domino. “He is a French spy, e’s he not?”

“*Quit* being vapid, cherie,” Valmont sneered. “Of course your brother is a French spy. A French spy that was planted here in England!”

“Oh,” Noel murmured. She truly had not understood this. She was too naive in the *affaire’s* of spying to be aware of all the nuances.

“And the red book your brother has stolen, trying to use as useless insurance against me, that book contains the names of all of France’s spies. All the spies abroad and on the continent. Domino will give me the French spies and the two gentleman spies, Blackbow and the Hart, will give me the English spies. So brilliant really-.”

“-Raine and Theo!” Noel exclaimed in horror, then clasped her hand over her mouth, but it was too late. She had not realized that they were still involved.

“Of course, you naive little *pigeon*! And it is nice to finally know their true names!” Valmont sneered. “That is just another reason why you are being displayed in London. Do you really believe that I would let this Raine and Theo go twice now when I had two perfect chances to shoot them? Oh no, one of them must be used against the other to retrieve the name of the English spies! And *you*, Noel, are going to draw them out, because they will now want to kill you or to capture you, and I am wagering on capture. Blackbow is too good a spy not to want the information he mistakenly believes you possess. No, *ma cherie*, Blackbow will attempt to take you alive and that is when we will capture him and his ever faithful, Hart. Marapaul has great plans for the adorable Hart and eventually Blackbow also . . . and *you*, Mademoiselle, will be the catalyst to all that we desire.”

Noel tried to scoot sideways along the dressing table. It was an instinctive need to escape but also foolish. Valmont was there so swiftly that she nearly swooned as he grabbed her wrists harshly.

“And now, pigeon, it is time for us to leave for Lady Standish’s ball. We are already late and we must not miss this opportunity to display your charms.”

## Chapter Fourteen

“Raine, I have told you a dozen times, now that I have thought on it carefully, that our Noel could have been crying, not laughing. And now I am nearly certain of it,” Theo said with a laboring breath as he tried to tug at the abdominal breath-snatching corset that he wore beneath his stiff bombazine evening gown. Blazes, why did he *have* to have the lighter beard, he fumed?

“Theo, you must remember to pitch your voice much higher and titter like one of those addleheaded ladies of the *ton*,” Raine commanded grimly. He adjusted his coiled and tiered shoulder length gray wig, as he pressed a palm to his back which was crimped in a hunched position, depicting an aging matriarch. “And—you *know* it does not matter if Noel was screaming or laughing. What matters is what she *told* us. Ah, dear brother, to be *so* duped. *What* does that say about us?” he finished angrily.

It did hurt, wretchedly, Theo fumed. But if it were true it would hurt so much more. Although he knew that he should be as wise as Raine was in this matter, it seemed his heart and “marauder” were of differing opinions. “Yes well,” he replied lamely.

“Higher,” Raine growled as he scrunched one eye socket furiously around his monocle and tapped his silver knobbed cane forward. “And pick up your skirts like a lady would,” he finished in a grumble.

Gad’s, Raine thought, Theo made the most atrocious attempt at trying to impersonate a female, however it was a pretty good horse-ugly, to his tottering old man image. They would have to do though. They had to, because *she* was here and he meant to get his hands on her! Preferably, around her ivory neck. To think, all of Noel’s beautiful glorious innocence had been a sham. That was the part that was obscene, not even that they had been duped, but all of Noel’s precious innocence had been contrived! It made their innocence seduction . . . dirty. It shamed him. It angered him. It . . .

Grasping the head of his cane more securely, Raine brought himself back to the present gesturing to Theo. “Come, Lady Isobel, let us find *and* capture our French fem-fetal,” Raine said in a gnarly old man’s voice as he offered Theo his arm.

Theo did not like what he was seeing at all. They had been watching Noel from a distance for over an hour and Raine was too angry to admit

that this Lord Valmont treated Noel as if she were some captured possession. Raine would not admit seeing the emotion in Noel's beautiful brown eyes. There was fear and an agonizing haunted look each time Valmont took the liberty of putting his hands on her. A coarse brush of her breast, a rude squeeze of her bottom—discreetly so no one noticed except he and Raine, who were watching them so closely.

"Damnation," Raine growled at Theo's side. They had both just witnessed Lord Valmont with the clever use of his body as cover—cupping Noel's mons through her silk skirts. Instantly Noel's heart-shaped face paled and a terrified grimace flashed across her perfect features as she tried to jerk away from him. But he held her firmly in place, whispering something into her ear that made her still her struggling. The misery in her eyes turned her irises into a deeper brown color, echoing her physical fear.

"Raine, you *must* admit now that-."

"-I admit nothing!" Raine interrupted harshly.

Theo knew there was no use arguing with Raine when both their emotions were so high. He had never expected an affection for one particular woman to come this way for both of them. So hot, so fast, and so consuming! Nor had he thought that they would fall in love with the same woman at the same time. And just *who* the deuce was this Valmont?

"We need to get this 'Lord Valmont' away from Noel, if we are to have any hope of capturing her," Raine said in a low voice.

"Yes well," Theo whispered back. "I do not believe we will be able to do any social maneuvering to separate them. She is highly unlikely to accept an offer to dance, from an old gent like you."

"Then we must devise a diversion," Raine responded, gripping his cane tightly. "I believe something with a huge amount of smoke should do. Yet no fire to harm anyone. Smoke should cause enough panic. And you can move closer to them, perhaps stumble and drop your fan so that Valmont is forced to pick it up. That should put you close enough to grab our Black Widow when the panic starts."

Theo winced at the mention of Noel being this corrupt, evil, and very experienced rouge spy. It just seemed so-.

"-And you *will* grab her, Theo? Without hesitation!"

"Of course," Theo snapped irritably. Raine could be so suspicious.

"If we are lucky in the panic we create, I just might be able to capture this Valmont for a few interesting questions," Raine said.

"I say!" Theo exclaimed suddenly. "Something has happened. Noel looks frantic. It is nearly as though there is someone on the other side of the room that she is trying to warn away from-."

"-Forget that," Raine responded sharply. "We need to move quickly now!"

*It was her brother Phillip! Oh no*, Noel thought in panic. If he was the French spy Domino, as Valmont had told her, why had Phillip come so boldly into the ballroom to just stand in plain sight on the other side

of the room? *Oh, mon dieu.* What could she do? She thought of screaming or fainting, yet just then as if God were answering her prayers-.

“-Oh! *Oh*, my dear!” twittered a large aging matron dressed in a black bombazine gown. The matron’s gray wig was tilted at an odd angle as she attempted to reach her fan, which seemed to propel itself into the air with a dangerous spin, right before landing directly at Valmont’s feet. “I am *soo* clumsy, my lord! If you would be so kind,” the matron squawked

*Thank dieu—thank dieu*, Noel thought, because now Valmont would be forced to release her waist to pick up the lady’s fan!

“Do not move,” Valmont hissed into Noel’s ear, squeezing her waist painful for one moment, before he released her to bend over.

Noel did not waste her chance. She shot a grateful look at the stout matron and nearly stumbled at the look in the ladies green-tinted hazel eyes. However, she was already set in motion and a shrill scream exploded from her throat! “*Phillip!* They will kill you! Run! *Run!*”

“You bitch!” Valmont snarled behind her.

Valmont sounded so close, Noel thought as she frantically pushed through the sea of people, while she screamed at the same time. “*Phillip! Phillip, run!*” But she could not see Phillip! She could not see anything, she realized a moment later. She was so hysterical that she had not seen that the entire ballroom was filling with smoke!

“There you are, you little French *bitch!*”

“*Non!*” Noel screamed as Valmont grabbed her from behind.

But just then another man’s furious voice erupted out of the blinding smoke, “*Take your hands off her!*”

*It was Theo’s voice!* A black shape leaped out of the smoke and plowed into Valmont, who lost his hold on her in an effort to defend himself. People were screaming in panic all around her and everyone was trying to escape the room, which was quickly filling with smoke! Noel coughed and blinked her burning eyes as the people around her jostled her to and fro. She felt light headed and could barely catch her breath. She did not know which way to go, but the frantic people around her were carrying her with them in their mad dash to escape. She had no choice but to follow the crowd of people.

If only she could make it outside, she would flee! Or find Phillip! That reminded her that she should shout for him. “Phillip! Phillip,” she cried, then she choked very hard on the smoke. “P-Phillip!” she tried again, coughing wretchedly as her head began to spin and bodies pushed her from every direction.

Then just as she felt herself about to faint, Noel heard Valmont’s horrible-horrible voice! “You will *never* get away from me!”

## Chapter Fifteen

“Noel! Noel!”

*He knew that voice!* Raine pulled his running stride up shortly in the smoke-filled ballroom, keeping the handkerchief over his nose and mouth. *That voice was Domino’s!* He would recognize that voice anywhere, and now he was torn. In which direction should he proceed? Raine finally decided to follow the voice of France’s most notorious spy. “Domino.”

“Noel!”

Raine continued to tracked the voice. He was close and the ballroom was getting easier to negotiate as more people spilled outside.

“Noel! Noel!”

He was nearly there, Raine thought, then he wondered why Domino would be calling Noel’s name. At the same time he prayed that Theo was not in any danger!

“*Noel! Merde! It is Phillip!*”

Raine stopped cold, in stunned amazement. Her brother? Just then a shape backed out of the smoke directly in front of him. Noel’s brother?! Removing the handkerchief from his nose and mouth, Raine yelled, “*Phillip*, or should I say Domino!” he finished with an angry shout as he spun Phillip around.

“Valmont!” Phillip exclaimed as his body was turned about. “I have the *damnable* red book! *Now* give me my sister!”

“*Wrong* spy,” Raine growled, right before he slammed Phillip in the jaw with a smashing uppercut.

“*Agh-!*” Phillip grunted as he was moved back by the force of Raine’s blow.

Raine rapidly followed through with a fist aimed at Phillip’s belly, but Phillip blocked the blow and delivered a bruising left jab of his own. The blow to the jaw snapped Raine’s head back but he quickly recovered, spitting blood out of his mouth as he moved to tackled Domino, bringing them both down onto the ballroom floor.

“*Merde!* What the hell are you doing here *Blackbow?*” Domino gasped.

Raine grunted as they struggled on the floor. “I could ask you the same thing, *Phillip!*” They rolled and Raine managed to get a choking

hold around Phillip's neck. "But what I want to *know* is how long you *and* Noel have been playing the game as the Black Widow!"

Phillip broke the choke hold and attempted to punched Raine again as he shouted, "Are you insane! *Noel* is an innocent nineteen-year-old girl! She's my sister! And how the hell do you *know* Noel? What have you *done* with her?"

Raine grappled with Phillip thrashing beneath him. The man was livid about his sister. But finally, Raine was able to land a solid blow to Phillip's jaw, knocking him temporarily unconscious. While he lay across Phillip, trying to catch his breath, Raine realized, had not Phillip been so upset over his sister that their fight would likely have gone the other way.

An hour later, Raine was frantic. Theo was gone! Noel and Valmont were gone also. And all that he had was Domino, or as the case may be, "Phillip," trussed up in the back of his carriage. Raine slammed open the carriage door and lunged inside, grabbing Phillip by the lapels of his evening jacket. "What have you *done* with him?" he shouted. "*What have you done* with my brother? I swear to god, you French pig, if you harm my brother, I will kill you with my bare hands!"

"So now you know how it feels, Blackbow!" Phillip hissed. "They have my sister too!" he finished angrily.

"If you expect me to believe-!" Raine spat.

"-I do not care *what* you believe," Phillip interrupted wearily. "All I care about now is *my* sister! *Merde*, just look inside my jacket pocket. I was going to give them all the names of the French spies, *just too save* her! Why would I do that if Noel or I were the Black Widow? *Mon dieu!* If you know Noel at all, you know that she couldn't—*wouldn't* be involved in this! Except as a prisoner. A person to use against me! *Just* as I warned you about a fortnight ago!"

Raine released Phillip and searched inside Phillip's jacket, finding a small red book. "*This* is the red book? Noel said Marapaul kept asking her about a red book."

"*Merde!* Marapaul! I knew he was involved. I thought for a time *he* was the Black Widow, but now we both know that is not true!" Phillip exclaimed.

"Valmont," Raine uttered, looking at Phillip. "It has to be the man posing as Lord Valmont. *He* has to be this Black Widow."

"The tall blonde man standing with Noel at the ball?" Phillip asked.

"Yes."

"So you finally believe me about Noel?" Phillip asked.

"I do not believe you about anything," Raine responded grimly. "Except, . . . perhaps, Noel."



## Chapter Sixteen

Theo regained consciousness with a hard hand shaking his chin. But he kept his eyelids closed, clenched in dread when he heard a husky-rough voice in his ear.

“Come awake *now*, my sweet golden boy. We have unfinished business, you and I.”

*Marapaul!* Damn and blast! Theo could not help it, he rasped a ragged breath.

“Ha! I know you are awake my firm young stallion! So keep your eyes closed if you like. Marapaul does not mind a bit of shyness in his lovers, yes!” A rough hand clasped Theo’s rump through the trousers he’d been wearing beneath his lady’s disguise, and dug into the muscle with a hard kneading of stout invasive fingers. “We will work that out between us,” Marapaul whispered lewdly against Theo’s ear.

“*No!*” Theo expelled harshly. Yet it was then *horribly—terribly*, he became fully aware of his position! He was *tied* to a bed! Tied face down by his wrists and ankles, looped in tight leather thongs, and bound to stout bedposts on all four corners of a feather-stuffed mattress. The gown that he had been wearing as a disguise was gone and his chest was bare. His chin hung over the edge of the mattress where the head piece should be. *Ohgod!* This was bad!

Marapaul’s fingers began digging into the waistband of his trousers from behind, trying to pull them down over his hips. “Get your sweaty *foul* fingers off of me!” Theo shouted as he tried to push his hips further down into the mattress to impede Marapaul’s relentless progress.

“Oo, I love a fight, dear boy,” Marapaul huffed.

The entire mattress sagged with Marapaul’s ponderous weight as Theo felt Marapaul climbing onto the bed to get a better grip on his trousers. Then Theo felt the revocable tug of cloth pulled down over his flanks and baring him to mid-thigh!

“*No!*” he screamed, nearly choking on the edge of the mattress with his heads wild gyrations of denial.

“Ah—*so* sweet!” Marapaul hissed, grasping both of Theo’s naked buttock cheeks into the meaty stoutness of his hands.

*OhGod! OhGod!* “I will *kill* you, you sweaty fat pig!” Theo screamed, not realizing that he had screamed this last phrase as he fought

his bonds so hard that his flesh ripped, while he tried desperately—*helplessly* to buck Marapaul off him! Only his strength gave way too quickly from being knocked unconscious earlier and too horribly soon he was left panting, barely able to move. Still, Marapaul's fingers fondled his buttocks lewdly. Short fingers groping the crease and then shoving between his thighs to squeeze his balls.

"*Please,*" Theo pleaded shamefully, feeling sickened and emasculated. "I *beg* you, Marapaul. Do not do this! Don't do it—please!"

"Ha!" Marapaul expelled sharply. "You and your dark handsome brother are too good for the likes of me. I will show you—*especially* your brother one day soon!" he finished on a hiss.

"*Oh God no-no!*" Theo yelled as he felt Marapaul shoving two pillows beneath his hips, bending his body helplessly into a bestial position! He knew what Marapaul would do first. He knew! Even as he felt his buttocks cleaved open—and Marapaul's hot hairy legs grazing his inner thighs. Theo nearly fainted with the effort to breathe through his terror, wishing he had as he struggled against his bonds while Marapaul fingers prodded his anus!

*Oh God!* He had never *even* made love to a woman properly! He was a virgin and what might this do to him. Then abruptly Marapaul's hands were gone. It was then Theo heard outraged screaming.

"*Non! You, horrible-horrible beast!*" It was Noel's shrill voice screeching! Followed by sounds of something hitting human flesh. ***Thud! Thud!***

Theo felt Marapaul's obese weight tilting over his back as his dazed mind tried to accept Noel's presence. Was she hitting him? The mattress dipped sharply on the left side with a tremendous bounce, then the sound of considerable weight hitting the floor sounded.

"*Oh God,*" Theo moaned, *praying*, that Marapaul would not get up. But the only sound he heard was his own harsh panting breath. And then—

"Oh, Theo! My Theo!" Noel cried. "It will be all well *amoureux/euse*. He is *beaucoup* unconscious!" Theo felt the pillows being tugged from beneath his hips. "I hit him very hard with a candle stick," Noel gushed as Theo felt her fingers working on the bonds around his ankles. "All will be well, Theo, you will see, yes?" Noel soothed as first one ankle was set free, then the next.

"Thank god," Theo groaned raggedly as Noel began working to untie his right wrist. He lifted his head, but all he could see was Noel's small waist. She was wearing a white satin bed robe tied at the waist. "R-Raine—where is Raine?" he asked in a choked voice.

"Oh, Theo." Noel's hand stroked his cheek tenderly. "He e's not here. I only see them carry you inside."

Theo was confused. He was shaking. Why would Noel help him? It did not seem to matter because she was here, climbing into his embrace. His hands were free and he wrapped his arms urgently around her slender back as she burrowed into him with her arms tightly around his waist.

They tumbled onto their sides, facing each other on the feather mattress, and without reason he searched out Noel's pouted lips and began kissing her desperately.

He needed this—he needed this so badly! He could not think—he did not want to think. All he wanted was the fresh scent of lilies and warm soft woman's flesh around him. And oh, Noel was so soft and so warm, molding her generous curves eagerly to the hardline of his body. Their lips met in a frenzy of heated kissing.

With his lips still shaping hers voraciously beneath his mouth, Theo rucked up the hem of Noel's gown, baring her to the waist. Then he caught her lush buttocks in his hands and rolled her beneath him.

"Theo-Theo," Noel moaned.

"Take your top down," Theo mumbled over Noel's mouth, not wanting to let her lips go for a precious second as he lifted her buttocks until they were cradled, bare genitals to bare genitals. Theo felt Noel wrestle her top open hastily to his command and then, *god!* Noel's bosomy breasts smashed into the wall of his chest, rolling hot skin to hot skin, as the swollen buds of her excited nipples prodded his muscled chest like hot embers.

"Princess," Theo moaned, sweeping the cavern of Noel's delicious mouth deeply with his tongue as he rubbed his chest back and forth across the firm mounds of her breasts.

"*Oui*, Theo—*oui!*" Noel mewled passionately, undulating her drenched slit against his rock-hard marauder. And he helped her with his hands cupping the cheeks of her bare buttocks while he rotated his hips, until the head of his penis was wet from her arousal—and he was rubbing over, *that spot*.

"*Oo*, Theo!" Noel's head fell back, separating their lips.

Instantly Theo dove for Noel's bared throat, sucking hotly on the curve of her neck, as he flexed his hips in short bursts so the head of his penis plied rubbing friction deep into the lips of Noel's puss. Her knees drew upward as her heels clipped the back of his thighs and held, seating him firmly in the cradle of her hips.

Theo rose upward, locking his elbows, as he arched his back and thrust his hips harder. The helmeted head of his penis burned with juicy friction through the lips of Noel's throbbing puss. And Noel rode his penis, writhing beneath him as she clutched his tightly flexing biceps, scratching her fingernails into the muscle like a kitten scratching a post. Her slender white throat arched and her midnight-black hair spread wildly over his hands braced on either side of her head.

"Princess—*sweet*, hot little princess," Theo moaned low and deep in his throat as he dipped his gaze to watch the ruddy head of his long curving penis sliding up and down through Noel's undulating puss.

"*Oo*, Theo-Theo!" she moaned ardently. "More-more! *Amoureux/euse!*" she panted.

By god he'd give her more, Theo thought, and with a heady weight of manly satisfaction, he nudged the head of his penis lower. Watching it slip beneath the black curls of Noel's pubis and feeling it press into her tight entrance. The circular wetness gave under the pressure of his prod, until half of the head was inserted and disappeared from his view.

"Sweet baby," Theo groaned tightly through his clenched teeth as he felt the muscles on his back ripple while his buttocks quivered. Then he pushed forward more.

Noel cried out passionately, moaning words completely in French. Once about his "manly *baton*," as she arched beneath him, thrusting her breasts high. The overwhelming need to be planted deeply inside Noel drove Theo forward, until he was encased to the root of his penis as the hot inner muscles of Noel's tight sheath convulsed in response.

"Aaa!" Noel cried.

"Are you all right?" Theo exclaimed with his nose pointed to the ceiling in shivering bliss!

"Ouiii!" Noel gushed with a heavy release of pent up breath.

"Ah—thank god!" Theo groaned with heartfelt emotion as he began to rotate his hips and Noel's small feet curled around the back of his thighs, to use as leverage to raise her hips upward to meet each of his thrusts.

Then the dance of love began in earnest.

He thrust!

She arched!

They gyrated!

And they clutched each other as they grew love sweaty and pleasure hoarse. It was then Noel climaxed on a heady scream, contracting the walls of her vagina around 'marauder.' *Bringing him home!*

"Oh God! *I love you*," Theo belly-groaned as his seed pumped deeply inside Noel and he fell forward, catching his weight on his elbows.

†

"You have to go and find Raine, Noel. And I have to stay here and watch," Theo explained again. "We are *not* letting them get away. Especially after what you have told me."

"But to stay, Theo, it e's so dangerous," Noel said as they both looked down at the still unconscious Marapaul, who Theo had tied up tightly.

"I will not stay in here, Noel, but outside so that I can follow them if they leave. I only wish Marapaul was not so obese, so that I could haul him out of here now!"

"But, Theo," Noel exclaimed, brushing his sandy-colored hair away from his face. "I do not even know where here e's."

"Yes well," Theo said evasively, clasping her hand. "We have to get you dressed and out of here." He pulled Noel along. There was no way he was going to jeopardize Noel's safety further, by allowing her to stay

here one second longer. He would just have to work out the details as he helped her dress, and then he did not allow her to waste anytime with corsets or petticoats, just a simple woolen dress, stockings, shoes and a warm cloak. He had them downstairs in minutes.

“Noel, go to the back servants entrance and wait there. I am going to hail a hackney to come around the back.”

“But, Theo-!”

“-Please, princess,” Theo interrupted, giving her a quick hug. “I need you to do what I say. Exactly what I say.”

“*Oui*, Theo,” she replied, but he could see she was reluctant.

“Good girl,” he murmured as he patted her rounded bottom to get her going in the right direction. The look she threw him over her shoulder, at his intimate pat, was smoky. He grinned a bit arrogantly, he realized as he hurried to find a hackney. A man could do that—be a little arrogant—once he had—well yes, “done the deed.”

Thank god he found a hackney quickly and directed the driver around the back of the townhouse. Unfortunately, just as he was entering the townhouse, a carriage began to pull up out front. Luckily though, whoever was inside the carriage, and Valmont would be his favorite guess, had not seen him and Theo quickly shut the front door before sprinting to the back of the townhouse. Theo knew that if this was Valmont, the Black Widow, he would not stay here long once he found out that his captives had escaped, leaving Marapaul trussed up and unconscious.

Theo reached Noel and hurried her out the back of the townhouse. “He is here, Noel,” he said urgently as he opened the carriage door.

“Oh, Theo!” Noel exclaimed, clutching his hand.

“Now listen to me carefully, princess. Valmont will leave and I must follow him. Raine will not know where I am, and there will not be any way to tell him until Valmont stops moving. You must tell Raine to wait at our estate for word from me. Give him this address. The driver has it, but tell Raine to wait for word from me.”

“*Oui*, Theo, I will do this,” Noel said, kissing the side of his cheek and then the other. “And you will swear to me that you will be safe.”

Theo hugged her briefly. “I will, princess. I intend to see you again.” He handed her up into the carriage and blurted, “Noel! Tell Raine that I said he has *never* been to bed with a woman before! And *I* say that you *are* innocent!”

## Chapter Seventeen

“Damn it, Theo! Where are you?” Raine jammed his fingers through his dark hair in agitation creating tunnels through the wavy black strands as he continued to pace the study of his London estate on Mayfair Street. He had a furious Phillip locked upstairs in one the numerous bedchambers, as impotent as he was himself over what to do next. How to find them! He had already tried to locate where Lord Valmont’s residence might be. However, the slippery Black Widow had obviously used a fake name in renting his establishment.

That left him with only two options. One was to canvass the city for sightings of Valmont or Marapaul, which he had the offices at 13 Whipple St., working on. And the other was to wait for the Black Widow to come to him. Or Theo! He still did not know exactly what had happened to Theo. He was afraid to guess. Nevertheless, on spurring the Black Widow into contacting him, he had an inspiration. Tomorrow in the London Times a small ad, but noticeable for its bold print, would read—

“To the spider who reads Red Books. Contact Blackbow for the French translation.” That would snag him, Raine thought. The Black Widow would be sure to assume that Raine had the red book! A double rap, sounded on the study door, interrupting his thoughts and Raine stopped pacing, looking up. “Yes,” he called sharply.

The door was opened and his elderly butler appeared. “Your grace, there is a rather distraught French lady in the foray.”

“Noel,” Raine expelled as he barreled out of the room.

Noel watched as the blackening storm that was Raine stalked toward her. He was large, dark, handsome, . . . and furious. Before this Raine could frighten her this way, but now she stood her ground, having known worse enemies. He was like an ocean storm as he grasped her upper arms painfully and bellowed, “*Where is Theo!*”

Noel held back her cry of pain as she uttered, “He e’s safe!” Yet this was *all* she would say to him until—! “Release me!” she demanded, glaring at him defiantly.

“Not-,” He bodily shook her. “-Until you *tell me* where he is!”

“And I will say *nothing* to you, until you let me go!” Noel cried hotly. She was furious with Raine, because *he* had not believed in her! “*O!*” she

squealed suddenly as Raine bodily hauled her up over his broad shoulder! “*Oo!* You brute!” she cried, trying to beat her fists on his back.

“And you, my little French maiden! Do *not* have the upper hand here!” Raine growled. Then he stalked with her squirming in his hold, back into what appeared to be the estate’s study as he uttered, “And you are going to speak to me *now*—quickly—or I will *beat* it out of you!”

“*Ooo* you—you—you!” Noel sputtered indignantly as Raine slammed the door behind them. “*Salaud!*” she finally managed to cry.

“I am not a bastard!” Raine shouted.

And then Noel suddenly found herself bodily flung down on a rigid tè-tè-tè lounge in a flurry of skirts and squeals. Her spine hit the embroidered back of the lounge and she huffed at the momentary loss of air. But then she captured enough air in her lungs to scream in senseless outrage, “*Oo!* I *never* should fall in *amour* with you!” Stunned at her own outburst, Noel clamped her hands over her mouth after this outrageous revealing of her deepest emotions. How could she? But she was so angry, so furious, so-!

“-*What* did you say?” Raine demanded, as he bent over her, planting two big fists on either side of her head, against the back of the lounge.

Immediately, Noel lifted her hands from her mouth, pushing hard on Raine’s chest, which only served to rock him. “Go away from me! I say nothing-*nothing!*” she cried.

“Oh *no*,” Raine growled and he took the back of her head in his big hands, pulling her upward to him, until she was clutching his shoulders for balance. “I *heard* what you said, sweetheart,” he uttered. “And you are going to say it again!”

Noel gasped as Raine’s mouth clamped down hard over her lips in a rough passionate kiss. He bruised her lips over and over again with demanding ardor. Devouring her mouth as no man had ever done before . . . Until she was whimpering passionately. Then he broke his lips away from hers and rasped, “Is he really safe, Noel?”

“*Oui*,” she panted, unable to find any more breath or words as Raine turned her and began pushing her down onto the lounge.

“Then give me your tongue, you little French vixen,” he commanded in a rough voice.

“Raine,” she gasped. Yet then he had her tongue tangled with his and further words were impossible as he laid her completely down on the lounge with his body covering hers.

Raine dug his hands beneath Noel’s skirts and found that she wore nothing, but her hot naked skin. “Take the gown off! I want you naked,” he growled in a tight voice, trying to hold his passion at bay as his long fingers gripped her bare hips.

The dark brown color of Noel’s eyes sparked with golden embers, then turned into a deeper black as she fumbled with the buttons on her bodice. He watched her intensely as he willfully stroked her naked hips

in his hands. "Pull it open," he commanded, when she came to the last button.

Raine sucked in a tight breath. He had thought that she would be wearing a corset and petticoats. He was blind sided, jolted by the sight of Noel's naked breasts with the tips rucked tightly into fat rosy beads. "Where is your corset—your petticoat?" he snapped, digging his fingers into her fleshy hips? "Did someone take them from you?"

"It was, Theo!" Noel exclaimed, obviously startled at his roughness.

"Theo," Raine uttered and he knew his irises glittered with newly heated emotion. "I want you naked," he commanded again, and then he flicked his tongue outward to lick the swollen bulb of Noel's aroused nipple. Noel whimpered abruptly in reaction as the tautened berry of her nipple heated against his tongue.

"Now!" Raine rose quickly, pulling Noel upright with him. In seconds he had her gown pulled down off of her shoulders, off her arms, hands, and pushed down to the curve of her flared hips. "Stand," he commanded, not waiting to see if she would obey as he lifted her bare waist in his hands to stand her on her feet before him. "*Now* take it off for me, sweet vixen," he commanded in a tenor murmur, lifting his hands from her waist. "Slowly," he drawled.

Noel was a woman now. Raine could see it in every inch of her demeanor. Theo had loved her intimately—thoroughly. He would stake his life on it—and he would know soon enough. His innocent mademoiselle was outwardly sensual now. She was still angry with him. It sparked her brown eyes, gone ebony with her increasing arousal. God—and he would know when her body was aroused. He and Theo had touched, kissed, and licked every inch of her to know. But now she was a vixen. His vixen. Unafraid to be naked before him as they had taught her to be. And she was using her knowledge, taunting him with it.

She gave him a purely seductive look, pouting her lips, red and swollen, from his kisses. She paused with her hands on the edges of the gown, not moving her hands either way. She was posturing for him with her breasts held high and her gaze gone sultry. Ah—sweet heaven, he was in trouble! -And about to love every minute of it.

"You think I am zee Blackest Widow and yet still you wish to strip me, *mes amour*," she purred, rolling her hips once while sweeping her long hair backward with one awe-inspiring fling of her head.

Raine gritted his teeth—determined to *not* get down on his knees and howl! Instead he used every effort he possessed to sit back and put his hands behind his head. It was hard—very hard *all* over! He hoped Noel did not look down just yet. "I think you are *my* Noel and I am waiting for you to strip for me," he said as causally as he could manage, and still his voice cracked.

Raine watched raptly as Noel mercilessly teased him, slowly pulling down one side of the gown for a peek of her pale hip, then she hid it again, doing the same with the other side. And all the while she undulated



her hips, the mounded buoyancy of her breasts came along for the ride with healthy youthful jiggling. He was sweating!

“*Non*, more you believe me to be thees Black Widow, my Raine?” Noel asked seductively, then she turned and looked back over her shoulder at him with her fingers hooked on the back edges of her gown, hanging at her waist. Raine could not speak so he only nodded his agreement. “Then you love me, *mes amour!*” she exclaimed, tugging the gown down over her lush ass. She purposely wiggled her buttocks from side to side keeping her eyes focused directly on his.

An inarticulate sound erupted from his throat as he leaped upward. Noel squealed, dropping the gown, and then she pretended to run from him. He caught her at the door, swinging her around as he lifted her up against the doors’ wood paneling. “Put your legs around me, you little vixen,” he commanded, swooping his mouth over hers for a heated kiss. He suckled and ground his lips over hers as he helped her legs gain the anchor of his hips with his grasping hands holding the outside of her thighs.

“*Oo*, Raine–Raine,” Noel mewled, kissing him back hungrily as she tightened her hold around his neck, bringing her body closer.

Raine fumbled with the button loop on his pants. “Oh god, Noel,” he groaned, freeing his cock from the material. He took a hold of the hard column of his cock and brought the broad head up to Noel’s pussy, rubbing it between her scorching pussy lips.

“O! Mmm,” she moaned incoherently as he kissed her, plunging his tongue deeply inside her mouth.

He could feel the wetness of Noel’s arousal drenching the head of his cock as he rubbed it up and down between her flushed little pussy. Then he broke their kiss and leaned back so he could see to position the now slick head of his cock at her vagina. There he rubbed the head around in circles, making Noel whimper senselessly as she clutched his shoulders. His cock was big and she was small and he used all of his will power to go slowly as he started to enter her.

“*Oo*, Raine it e’s *so* big!” Noel panted, squirming over him.

“Hush, sweetheart,—just relax,” Raine uttered hoarsely as he pushed some more.

“*Oo*, *non-non*, you are *too* big,” Noel gasped and Raine could feel her inner muscles tightening, trying to expel the inch of him that was inside her.

“It is all right, little love,” Raine cooed deeply, going back to Noel’s mouth to kiss her. He was desperate to be inside her! But he was much bigger than she was. That was until, in desperation, he changed their position a little by getting his forearms underneath her thighs, opening her up more and lifting her higher.

“*Oooo*, Raine!”

The repositioning alone plunged him halfway inside of Noel! It was so tight around his cock that he was shaking. He pushed, stretching

Noel's tightness around him as she panted and rocked on the column of his rigid dick. She was tearing his hair as he thrust upward, impaling her fully.

"*Ooo, you fill me so much! You are so hard!*" she cried with shocks of convulsions rippling the inner walls of her vagina over his embedded cock.

"*Ah, god!*" Raine grunted, trying desperately not to start fucking Noel like a wild animal as his entire being was screaming for him to do so. He could nearly cry. The desperation was so acute. The joy, the pleasure, the intense emotional need!

"*Tup me, Raine!*" Noel mewled. "Tup me up and down!"

*Oh god! His heavenly vixen, Noel!* "Yes!" he managed to utter. Noel mounted onto him like a spring as he lifted her up and down, banging her spine against the door. Her heels caught his buttocks as she humped over him, a clear participant in their energetic coupling. Each stroke was slammed into her tightness. A renewed stuffing that burned with friction, making them groan and pant as he banged her against the door insistently faster.

"*O! O! Raine, more!*" Noel squealed.

"*Your grace! Sir! Do you need attendance, sir?*" yelled his butler on the other side of the door.

*The banging?* Raine's passion cramped mind tried to fire as he roared, "*Go away! Not now!*" He lifted Noel higher with each rapid thrust as he pushed her, thudding harder against the door!

"*Oooooo!*" Noel cried.

Damnation, he could feel her—Noel was going to climax! Then Raine could feel his cock being squeezed rhythmically as Noel's vagina went into spasms and he throbbed in response as the intensity held him in its grip, until . . . On one final stroke . . . "*Oh god, Noel! Oh, god-god! Oh, sweet baby, I love you! Jesusss!*"

"*Raine!*" Noel squealed passionately as her orgasm rocked through her and grabbed his dick in rolls. His seed ejaculated in an excruciating torrent of rapture. He was frozen in time as he held her up against the door with his knees locked.

"*Jesus,*" he grunted, wondering what the hell was holding him up. But Noel clung to him shaking, vulnerable, and so precious that he knew he would drag himself through hell to protect her.

When he thought he could manage it he lifted her up, releasing their joining and caught her under the thighs with his forearm as he carried her back to the lounge. She was languid and cuddly, barely aware of her surroundings. He laid her down, keeping her within the circle of his arms as he laid down with her and he pulled his jacket partially over her nakedness to help keep her warm.

"*Oh, my Raine,*" she sighed, nuzzling little kisses on his neck.

## Chapter Eighteen

Raine thought perhaps he was not completely a part of himself as he lay holding Noel's lovely nakedness closely to him. It was an experience beyond belief to take one's first woman. He was mature, intelligent, and perhaps vastly jaded about life, but this-. This proved him humble—and perhaps not as jaded as he once believed himself to be. He forgot about spying, he forgot about betrayals, and he nearly even forgot about Theo. But not quite . . .

"Tell me where he is," Raine murmured as he kissed beneath Noel's earlobe.

Noel started upright in Raine's arms. She had been so overcome by the intensity of Raine's lovemaking and her own response that Theo's instructions had flown from her mind. "Oh, *mes amour*, I forget! I am so bad."

Quickly Noel related what had happened as she patted and smoothed Raine's shoulders. Her eyes remained downcast until she came to the end. Then, looking directly into Raine's eyes she said, "Theo e's watching thees Valmont and if he leaves he would follow him."

Abruptly Raine swore as he lifted her to her feet. "Damnation, he will get himself caught again!" Gaining control of himself, he gently urged Noel to sit as he said, "Noel, I have some things I need to tell you also." With that, he began to pace in front of her. Finally he stopped and asked, "Do you realize now that your brother Phillip is the spy, Domino?"

"Yes, Raine. Valmont has told me thees." Then Noel exclaimed, "But he must not mean you any harm, Raine!"

"Yes, Noel, in that respect you are correct. He did try to warn us." Pausing in front of Noel, Raine went down on his knees and took her small hands in his. "Noel, I have your brother, here, locked in a room upstairs. I also have the red book. The reason that I have not turned Phillip over to the authorities is because of his warning and because he is your brother. And I have been so worried about Theo that I have not questioned him yet."

"Phillip e's upstairs? May I see him?"

"Yes, yes. I think it is time we cleared up this entire situation. And as soon as we dress, I will summon my butler to bring Phillip here to you."

A short time later there was a brief knock at the door followed by a large burly servant stepping into the room. "My lord. You rang?"

"Ah good it is you, Hensly. Please bring our guest and tell him his sister wishes to see him."

Hensly returned quickly and a little breathlessly. "My lord! The gentleman is gone . . . vanished! The room is empty and the window closed. Nothing is missing from the room . . . and yet he is gone."

"Damnation!" Raine swore. "Search the house and grounds. He is here, or near by."

"Raine, e's thees bad that he is gone?" Noel asked innocently, secretly pleased that her brother had escaped. But she wondered where would he go and if he would try to come back for her? She now hoped not, for his sake as well as her own. She still loved her brother very much, but he had lied to her *and* put her life in danger. It seemed to her now that it would be better if he just disappeared. After all, she had Raine and Theo to protect her now.

"Yes and no." Raine responded with a grim purse of his lips. "I would have liked to talk to him to see where his true loyalties lay. That he has chosen to escape while I still hold the red book is a puzzle. But then spies are notorious for being unpredictable."

"But, Raine, now we have lost both Theo and Phillip. What will we do?"

"Continue on as planned and see if Valmont takes the bait."

"Bait, what e's thees bait?"

"I have put a notice in the newspaper offering to exchange Theo for the red book."

"But would you do such a thing?"

"Ah, sweetheart, but of course. My brother is more important than the red book!"

"I think you are not telling me the truth. You are a spy and much, how you say, 'unpredictable'. I think that you were planning to rescue Theo and keep the red book."

Raine stepped closer to Noel and whispered in her ear as his tongue slid over its shell like perfection, "My sweet vixen, we are corrupting you with our intrigues. It is better that you do not know."

"But-!"

"-No, sweetheart, trust me, it is better that you do not know."

"I do trust you, Raine, but what of my brother?"

"Noel, you have lived all these years and never known about your brothers true occupation and I am sure he deliberately planned it that way, to assure your safety. He has always made his own way, his own rules. Now it appears that he believes you are safest here with me."

A knock at the door interrupting them as once again Hensly entered. "My lord, there is a rather disputable person in the kitchen. It seems he has a message for your eyes only. Also, we have not found any trace of your guest as yet."

"I did not think you would," Raine answered. "And under the circumstances if what I suspect I am about to hear is true, Hensly, I will have more need of you by my side." Turning to Noel, Raine said, "It appears your brother is quite inventive and has managed to escape. Under the circumstances it is likely for the better."

"You do not think thees e's so bad. How e's thees so?"

"It is quite simple, Noel. Now that he is gone, I am no longer obligated to turn him over to the authorities."

"You would have done thees, Raine?"

"To be quite honest, I am not sure." Turning to Hensly, Raine asked, "Do you still have our friends on standby?"

"Yes, my lord," Hensly answered. "They are ready to go at a moment's notice."

"Fine, excellent. I need two of them immediately who are familiar with Marapaul. The house where Mademoiselle's Cambria and Theo were being held is on Isley square, number 23. I want it under surveillance." "Now," Raine continued as he turned back to Noel, pulling her into his embrace. "I will be very busy. And you, mademoiselle, have had a very exciting and exhausting day. I will order a bath for you and a tray sent up to your room and then I want you to rest so that you will be fresh and beautiful when Theo and I return."

"But, Raine, is there nothing that I can do to help?"

"No, Noel. I want you here safe and protected." Before Noel could protest further Raine grasped her shoulders and drew her close. Lowering his head, he kissed her slowly and passionately, until she melted in his arms. When he drew away, they both were breathing deeply and Noel had a glazed look in her eyes. Gently he turned her and called to the maid waiting to take her to her room.

Raine watched Noel until she disappeared from the room and then he turned to Hensly saying, "Do you have a man ready to follow this disreputable fellow lounging in my kitchen?"

"Oh yes, my lord, even if you had not ordered it."

"Excellent. Well then, let us see what this disreputable person has to say."

Upon reaching the kitchen, Raine saw that Hensly's description was correct. The messenger was without a doubt a filthy retch. And before Raine could utter a word the man demanded, "Are you this high and mighty Lord Blackbow?"

Raine did not respond as he made a mental inventory of the man's physical appearance. Although dressed in dirty rags and sporting a gruff beard, Raine was sure that he was not the retch, he appeared to be. Glancing a questioning look at Hensly, he was not surprised by Hensly's concurring nod.

"Well, you are ye or ain't ye?"

Raine merely nodded, but said nothing, waiting. It soon became apparent that the man had no patience as he shoved a missive forward,

but he did not let go of it, saying, "I was told to deliver this to ye and they said ye would pay me. So pays up and I'll be out of here."

Turning to Hensly, Raine nodded and Hensly produced several coins tossing them to the man. As soon as the man caught them, he dropped the missive in Raine's hand and moved swiftly out the door.

Raine chuckled lightly shaking his head as he said, "Now *who* do you suppose that was?"

"I am not sure, my lord, but he was too physically fit to be a dock side rummy."

"Yes, I agree, but to what purpose?"

"We should find out soon enough when my man returns from following him."

Raine nodded as he opened the note reading it quickly. "It seems, Hensly, that I am rendezvousing at midnight on the docks by Warton's Warehouse. I am to be alone, bringing the red book."

Raine and Hensly retired to the study to plan their strategy. They still had doubts about the man who had delivered the note and were speculating as to just whom he might be when the door opened a crack and a voice said, "My lord, may I have a word with Mr. Hensly."

Raine raised a questioning look to Hensly and he said, "It is Morris, he must have word of the messenger."

Raine nodded and Hensly went to the door and drew Morris inside. "Lord Blackbow, this is one of my best men, Ted Morris."

Morris touched his forelock saying, "Your lordship, Mr. Hensly." Then he hesitated seemingly confused.

"What news do you bring?" Raine asked slightly impatiently.

"Well," he began. "Me and Dickey were supposed ta follow the rummy, being as how we are the best at slippin' through the shadows. But this bloke, he d'na leave."

"Did not leave?" Raine and Hensly spoke at the same time.

"No sirs, he pussyfooted down the street till he spied the first alley, like he knew where he was goin'. Slunk down the alley and slid in behind the stables."

Raine glanced at Hensly giving him a knowing grin and Hensly nodded.

"So," Morris continued. "Me and Dickey, just kept our eyes peeled and sure nough, the shadows were moving and we figure there was five others. Maybe six." Morris paused, waiting, but neither Raine nor Hensly said a word, so he continued. "Me and Dickey figured we would wait and see if any took off, like as to draw us away, and sure nough, one of the blighters high tailed it down the road. While Dickey went after h'm, I got our other fellas in place to keep an eye on the other rummies. Sort of waiting ter see what his lordship wanted us to do."

"Excellent, Morris. Hensly, it is just as we thought. Valmont would try to draw us away and then break into the house, hoping that the red

book was still here and possibly even kidnap Noel to make her brother give it up if he still had it.”

“It would seem so, my lord,” Hensly concurred.

“Aye, that it does,” Morris echoed.

“Well then we must arrange an appropriate welcome, should we not gentlemen?” Raine advised.

“I have three of my men already in the house, my lord, and can have two more in a matter of minutes.” Hensly replied.

“No,” Raine said, pausing. “Three beside yourself should be enough for what I have in mind.”

“And just what is that, my lord?” Hensly asked.

“I intend to reduce the enemy’s strength.” Raine sneered.

“But how?” Hensly asked.

“I will explain later but for now I need to know if any of your men are my size and coloring. I have a little deception in mind.” Raine said.

“Ah, I think James would be about right, my lord, but . . .”

“-Excellent,” Raine interrupted as he turned to leave. “Bring him to my chambers as quickly as you can, we are running out of time to make the rendezvous.”

## Chapter Nineteen

Noel entered the bedchamber and barely had time to notice how lavishly it was furnished when a parade of servants followed and proceeded to set an intricately carved screen on one side of the largest bathing tub she had ever seen. Not only was the bathing tub unusually large, but it was set into the floor. She watched the servants fill the tub, until she was alone with only two maids who helped her undress. The maids sprinkled the hot steaming water with rose oil and the aroma was intoxicating, and as she slowly lowered her body into the water she allowed herself to relax against the towel.

For the first time since her capture she felt safe enough to relax. Though it was only her body that was receiving the benefit. Her mind was still in turmoil. So much had happened and so quickly. Now in retrospect she realized how incredibly lucky she was for the simple fact that she had been in the company of Raine and Theo. She was positive that if not for them she would have been raped by Valmont and left for dead. With a shiver she brought her thoughts under control and turned her mind to more pleasant avenues.

The bath was delicious, she thought as the heat of the water soothed her sore muscles. The maids had left behind a lovely soap dish filled with balls of soap exuding the same aroma as the oil and a strange looking object similar to a sea sponge. Picking it up Noel immersed it in the water and was surprised when it softened. With an exclamation of surprise she realized what it was for and quickly worked a lather into it with the soap.

There was a timid knock at the door and as it opened a maid popped her head around the edge and asked if Noel wanted help washing her hair. Noel nodded her assent. The maid entered carrying another bucket of water. After the young maid helped Noel wash and rinse her hair, she helped Noel exit the tub, wrapping a large linen towel around her as she guided her to a small chair set before the fire. The warmth of the fire relaxed Noel, and as the maid brushed her hair she grew drowsy. The maid had remained quiet as she brushed, but now, she cleared her throat and began speaking haltingly. "Mademoiselle, may I have a private word with you?" she began.

Noel, drawn from her lethargy, simply answered, "*Oui?*"

"Mademoiselle, I have had word from your brother, Phillip."



Noel started erect crying out, “*Phillip*, but how could you?”

“I brought a tray to his room and he pleaded with me to give you this letter. He is so handsome and he was so sincere that I could not deny him.” The maid brought a folded piece of paper from within the folds of her skirt and handed it to Noel. Noel’s fingers closed around the letter and at the same time she heard a knock at the door. She barely had time to quickly stuff the letter beneath the towel at her breast when the door opened and a servant carrying a tray entered.

As soon as the servant left, Noel retrieved the letter, broke the seal and began to read it. Noel could see at once that Phillip had wrote the letter for she readily recognized his hand writing.

Dearest Noel,

How can I explain or justify what has happened to you? For nineteen years I have been able to protect you from the life I was forced into. I am sure that after your deplorable experience that you now know that I am a spy. There are other things you know nothing about and it is best that you know nothing about my true activities. I hope with time I will be able to tell you all. But for now all I can do, is ask you to trust me.

I am very familiar with Raine and Theo and could not have found better protectors for you myself. I am asking you to put your trust in them until I can come to you with a free conscience.

I love you dearly, *cherie*. Please pray for me and the day we can be together again.

Your loving brother, Phillip

Noel sighed, she did not know what to think of Phillip or this revelation that he was a spy all these years. He had put her in terrible danger, yet at the same time she knew that she would never have met Raine and Theo, were it not for Phillip. Perhaps she could only be glad that Phillip was well and not captured by his enemies. For now that must do. She sighed again, realizing just how tired she was. She would eat then sleep as her handsome Raine suggested.

Noel slipped easily into a deep sleep and her last thoughts were about Raine and Theo. For some time she was beyond even dreams, but slowly an image began to form in her unconscious mind. She was standing in front of a door and she knew that behind that door was her deepest desire. Her hand moved slowly to the handle and when she pushed it open a shaft of light fell across the threshold that was her bedroom.

The room was dark, and as she hesitated she heard Theo’s voice calling to her, “Noel, princess.” Then as she stepped into the room another voice beacons, “Noel, sweetheart.”

It was Raine and she moved toward him, only to hear the door close with the snap of the lock. Thrown into complete darkness, she uttered a cry, “It e’s to dark! I cannot see.”

Noel had barely finished speaking when she saw a spark flicker and then the slow rising blaze of a single candle wavering, moving until it lowered as it was set upon a table. Behind her, she felt a sudden warmth enclosing her back. There were arms reaching around her, enclosing her, drawing her back against a chest that emanated heat. A husky voice whispered in her ear, "Princess, it is I, your love, Theo."

Then in front of Noel eyes a dark form slid forward as strong firm hands grasped her shoulders. The form took on shape as a kiss brushed her lips. "And I, your love Raine, sweetheart."

Noel waited speechlessly, her body already anticipating the pleasure she had so recently discovered. Raine bent his head and once again the warmth of his lips brushed hers, then slanted slightly and settled, drawing her into a deeper caress. His tongue teased her lips begging entrance and without hesitation she opened for him and tried to lean forward, but Theo's arms were still around her. Yet now Theo's hands were caressing her breasts, affecting an abrasive yet pleasurable friction against her puckering nipples. Her body responded to the stimulation and she undulated, moaning her enjoyment.

Deliberately Noel placed her hands on Raine's chest and began to slide them upward. She could feel the beat of his heart, and the heat of his body suffused her hands, creeping up her arms directly aimed to the intense pain-pleasure in her breasts. Her nipples throbbed and a strong surge of pleasure flashed from her mouth to her breasts and directly to the throbbing need deep in her sex. She felt warm wetness there and remembered how it had happened before, first with Theo and then with Raine.

Her body echoed, becoming extremely sensitive to their touches. She followed Raine's kisses more deeply, while her fingers liberally explored the vast expanse of his sinewy hard chest. Yet at the same time she rubbed against Theo, riding the long hardened ridge of his manly *baton* that wedged itself between the soft crests of her bottom. She moaned, a murmur of excitement, as Theo continued to massage deeply the turmoil within her breasts.

Suddenly a cool breath of air caressed her back, and then the warmth of a tongue sliding down her spine caused her to shiver and thrust her breasts higher into Theo's kneading hands. How could this be, her befuddled mind asked and then she knew? Raine's clever fingers had released her bodice.

"What do you do to me?" she gasped.

"Love you, princess?" Theo whispered in her ear.

"Adore you, sweetheart," Raine murmured.

"Thees makes my body ache so." Noel moaned.

Just as she spoke, Raine thrust his hips forward engaging the bulge of his throbbing man's *baton* into her cleft, rubbing it erotically against her sex. "Come, sweetheart, let us dispense with these clothes and become as we were on the boat."

“*Oui, oui*, thees would be *trois magnifique*.”

Still, deeply within the dream, Noels fingers fumbled with the fastenings of Raine’s breeches. She could feel his thick *baton* twitch when her fingers brushed the hot solid mass. Boldly she touched it, then ran her hand down and then up, rubbing its throbbing bulk, feeling it’s weight and power. Raine groaned with pleasure following her hands stroking with rigid counter thrust along the palm of her hand.

Then abruptly their clothes seemed to vanish into thin air and Noel felt herself floating toward the bed. She turned her head and she saw that Theo was already there, sprawled in his naked glory. His golden body was a magnificent sight and Noel could not stop herself as she watched in utter fascination as he turned onto his back and his powerful *baton* expanded and curved upward in greeting.

Theo reached for her, while she was reaching for the spellbinding curve of his virile *baton* and Raine slid in behind her. She knew immediately that Raine was greatly aroused the moment his body touched hers. She felt his maleness prodding between her cheeks at the same moment that Theo’s hand began combing through the ebony curls decorating her sex, his fingers searching for her most precious nub.

“Ah sweet, Noel, you are so beautiful, so hot, so ready,” Theo murmured as he stroked the sensitive nub.

Attempting to wiggle forward into Theo’s ardent fingers, Noel was stopped by Raine’s hands on her hips holding her firmly as he guided the nob of his engorged *baton* to the dripping entrance of her throbbing sex. He pressed the hooded tip past the first gate to pleasure, wasting no time he thrust fully into the depth of her. “*Oo!*” Noel collapsed on top of Theo with a scream of pleasure.

Noel could feel the tip of Raine’s male *baton* pulsing at the opening of her womb and her own body gripped him with an internal spasm along his thickness embedded so fully and hard inside her. Then as though in response to her pleasure his thick *baton* enlarged and he pulled back slightly riding the lips of her splayed sex over the fire of Theo’s rigid *baton* beneath her.

Theo passionately took her mouth with his tongue while his hands gripped the back of her thighs and he rocked her against Raine’s thrusts. Each time Theo rocked her onto the stabbing thickness of Raine behind her, he also rocked her over his own throbbing shaft. She screamed again as shudder after shudder rippled through her. Thrusting her body forward, she tensed and in seconds she was once again at the peak, and then she was falling into the darkness of her dream world.

## Chapter Twenty

Once in his chambers' Raine began to pace. Hensly watched nervously, afraid to break into his obvious concentration. Suddenly, Raine stopped and walked to the door that led to his closet. He remained in the closet for a short period of time and exited it with a bundle of clothing. Tossing them on the bed he turned to Hensly, saying, "This is what we will do. James will leave wearing my clothes. He will appear to be me attending the assignation. Hopefully a diversionary tactic."

James was summoned and when he arrived, Raine explained his plan. Once James had changed clothes they stood side by side in front of the full length mirror and Raine nodded, satisfied that James would pass any but a close inspection. The clock in the foyer chimed eleven o'clock and Raine shook James' hand and sent him on his way. Hensly left Raine with a final admonition, "This Valmont is a sneaky devil, my lord. Watch your backside."

While Hensly dispersed his men, Raine slowly made his way to Noel's chamber, extinguishing all but one candelabrum at the far end of the hall. Quietly opening the door, Raine slid into the room. Walking toward the bed, he could see Noel's slight form outlined on the bed. She had thrown off the sheet and the bed gown she wore clung to her body outlining her petite perfection. Her hair was spread across the pillow and as Raine stood watching her breasts rise and fall in gentle sleep, he could not resist running his hand through her silken tresses. To him, she had become as much a part of himself as his brother Theo. He knew that somehow he must find a way for her to accept both of them into her life. Because he could not imagine living separately from them and deep within his heart he knew that Theo felt the same.

Raine knew time was running short and he reluctantly turned away from the allure that drew him to Noel. Bringing his mind back to their present circumstances he realized anger was burning through his veins. Never, in all of their adventures, had they come so close to disaster, so close to losing their lives. Valmont was more than a French spy, more than an enemy of England. He was a power hungry manic who would kill all those that stood in his way.

Though deep in thought, Raine was brought immediately to attention. His senses had detected the slight disturbance of the door being silently opened. Then the edge of a glow from the hallway blinked out and darkness hid any further chance of recognizing who was entering the room.

Valmont smiled to himself, pleased that his plan was proceeding so well. Standing just inside the room, he paused to light a small candle. He did not dare anything larger. From its dim glow he could only see a foot or so directly in front of him. Carefully moving forward a step at a time, he soon was standing near the foot of the bed. A sneer of satisfaction lifted his mouth as he saw that the occupant of the bed was Noel. Placing the candle on the bedside table he reached out with both hands toward the sleeping form but was startled at the sight of Noel rising from the bed, screaming and brandishing a knife.

Something had awakened Noel from her erotic dream. Some infinitesimal phantom had brushed against her, bringing her quickly from her deep sleep, but cautioning her to remain still. Barely cracking her eyelids, Noel saw the spark that lit the candle. But its dim light only seemed to outline the dark figure moving slowly toward the bed. Earlier in the evening, Raine had given her a dagger, telling her to keep it with her at all times. She had put the dagger under her pillow with her hand firmly grasped around it as she fell asleep. Now she waited as the form came closer and when she saw the form raise both of its hands she struck.

Quickly recovering his senses, Valmont grabbed Noel's wrist and twisted sharply. The knife fell uselessly to the bed and at the same time he clamped his other hand over Noel's mouth. "It is useless to struggle, you little *bitch*," he growled, leaning over Noel and forcing her hands above her head. "Your protector has gone to save his brother. And *you* are no longer important."

Noel winced at Valmont's words, hoping they were not true. But she knew that no matter what was true or not, she could not let Valmont kidnap her again. Her experience at his hands had taught her that struggling was, as he said "Useless," so she relaxed her body and lay quietly, waiting.

"Where is your brother?"

Noel mumbled through Valmont's hand but her words were undistinguishable.

Valmont picked up the knife and held it to her throat as he said, "I will release your mouth, but should you scream I will slit your throat!"

Noel took a deep breath knowing that he would not like her answer. "I do not know. He was here, but has escaped."

"He was here!"

"*Oui.*"

"Then Blackbow has the red book?"

"I do not know! They tell me nothing. I know nothing," she pleaded.

Valmont raised his hand and struck her sharply across the face, making her cry out. But then suddenly as Valmont swung his hand back for another blow, he went still. "What?" he exclaimed.

"Not, what, but *who* Monsieur Valmont," Raine responded tightly, holding the tip of his sword to Valmont's back. "*Release* Noel and step away from the bed or I will run you through!"

"Raine!" Noel cried out. "It e's you. But how . . . ?"

"I never left, sweetheart."

Realizing his chance, Valmont lunged forward and grabbed Noel by the wrist, dragging her from the bed. Turning swiftly he held her against his chest and affixed the knife under Noel's chin. Grinning, he growled evilly, "Now who has the advantage, Blackbow? Throw down your sword or I will slice her throat!"

Raine grimaced. Once again he had underestimated Valmont, he thought as he lowered his sword and let it drop to the floor.

Noel was struggling, but Valmont only tightened his grip ordering her to cease her struggles or he would kill her immediately. Sobbing softly, she slumped in his arms.

"It seems I have you at an impasse, Blackbow. Now tell me, where is Phillip and the red book or you will never see this tempting bit of fluff alive again!" As he was talking Valmont moved slowly, dragging Noel with him, closer to the door, but his back was still to the wall.

Raine's eyes flicked from Valmont to Noel. "You are right, of course, I cannot let her die. You see, Valmont, she is not just a bit of fluff to me . . . I-I love her!"

"Raine!" Noel squealed as she began struggling again.

"Enough of this drivel! Where is the red book?" Valmont shouted angrily.

"Well . . . you see, that is the problem," Raine responded tightly. "Phillip has escaped, and Theo has the red book. So . . . if you really are holding him captive, then you should already have the red book."

"You are lying!" Valmont yelled.

"No! Why not ask your henchman, Marapaul, surely he knows. After all he has had a passion for my brother for some years now. As for myself, I have never espoused such unnatural goings on."

Valmont's face puffed up, turning bright red with anger. "I do not believe you! Marapaul may prefer men, but he is loyal to the cause. He knows the power we will hold once we have the red book!"

"Could it be that he wants it all for himself?" Raine asked.

"*He e's* lying!" a voice declared from the doorway.

Raine turned his head and saw Marapaul standing there with a pistol in his hand as Marapaul continued to say, "We have searched the house and found nothing! No Phillip, no Theo, and no red book." As he spoke, Marapaul moved to stand next to Raine, his pistol raised to Raine's head. "*Enough* of your games, Blackbow, where is the red book?"

“You cannot kill me, Marapaul! If I should die the locale of the red book will die with me,” Raine said as he lifted his hand and pushed the gun away from his head.

Noel listened fascinated, thinking, this is the life of a spy. *Mon dieu*, is this how her brother had lived? Although she was afraid, she found that her blood ran hotly through her veins and she felt a stirring of excitement. Just as she was about to speak, she felt Valmont relax his grip around her waist. Thinking quickly she shouted to Raine as she stomped her foot down on Valmont’s instep and tried to twist away, “Raine!”

It was then the wall seemed to explode toward them, hitting Valmont on the shoulder and knocking him to the floor. The suddenness took Valmont by surprise, forcing him to release his grip on her and she fell the other way. Noel watched in amazement as two figures emerged from the dark hole in the wall. One man made an immediate dive toward Marapaul, hitting him at the knees and carrying him to the floor. As Marapaul fell, his pistol went off striking the ceiling. The other man went directly for Valmont striking him over the head with the end of a pistol, before Valmont could even raise his head.

Raine quickly reached Noel. Kneeling, he gently touched her cheek. “Noel, sweetheart, are you all right?”

Noel sighed deeply, “*Oui*, Raine. E’s it true?”

“Is what true, darling?”

“You say . . . I love her.”

“Yes, my little innocent treasure . . . I love you!”

Raine’s words had barely left his lips when a voice from behind him said, “And I love her too!”

Raine and Noel both shouted, “*Theo*” at the same time.

Another voice broke their startled confusion, “Ah, but gentlemen, I loved her first.”

“Phillip!” Noel squealed as she struggled to her feet and rushed to her brother.

Raine stood and grasped Theo by the shoulders. “Are you unharmed, dear brother?” he asked.

“*Dear* brother? I say, Raine, that is a bit much.”

“Theo, Theo, you have no idea of how good it is to hear your chiding voice.”

“Raine, you could not possibly have been worried about me . . . could you?”

Before Raine could answer, Noel was squeezing between them. “Theo, you are not hurt?” She exclaimed as she began to run her hand across his chest and down his arms.

“What is this all about?” Phillip asked sternly watching the obvious intimate play between Noel, Raine, and Theo. “*Have* you two taken advantage of my sister? If you have harmed her-!”

“-Peace, Phillip,” Raine said calmly. “As soon as we take care of Valmont and Marapaul all will be explained to your satisfaction.”

“*Oui*,” Noel exclaimed as she turned back to her brother and reached up to hug him again. “You will see, Raine and Theo have been most kind to me and saved me many times. But, you, *Phillip*, have much to explain to me.”

“But, but . . .”

“Later, Phillip,” Theo assured him.

Before Phillip could protest further, Hensly burst into the room. “My lord, I see you have Valmont and Marapaul well in hand, so it appears to be all over. My men have rounded up all of Valmont’s henchmen and have them locked in the wine cellar. That should keep them busy for a time.”

“What of Valmont’s men who left to go to docks?”

“My men backtracked and captured them and brought them here. They are in the cellar also. Do you want me to take Valmont and Marapaul down to the cellar?”

“No,” Raine answered. “Take them to the room in the hidden tunnel and see to it that they are securely tied up. I believe, Theo and I have a few questions to ask our guests . . .” Raising an eyebrow, Raine glanced at Philip saying, “And I am sure Monsieur Cambria has some questions of his own. Oh and Hensly, return shortly I will be sending a message to the home office.”

While Hensly and his men removed Valmont and Marapaul, Theo pulled Raine aside. “Where is the red book?”

“Quite secure, never fear,” Raine answered. “But, we have more important decisions to make.”

“More important? How so?” Theo asked.

“Important to Noel.” Raine responded. “Although we agree we have no problem sharing, I fear that Phillip would not understand.”

“Well yes, I can see how that could be a problem and I assume you have already found a solution.”

After a few moments of complete agreement the two brothers concluded their conference. Now it was time for Raine and Theo to switch places. Theo took Phillip aside while Raine brought Noel to the fireplace asking her to sit on one of the fireside chairs. Drawing the other chair closer so they could have a more intimate conversation, he set it by her side and seated himself. Reaching over and taking her hand, he began to rub his thumb over her knuckles. Clearing his throat, he asked, “Have you and Phillip set things right between you?”

“*Oui*, but he is very concerned for my future.”

“As are Theo and I. Theo is explaining what I am about to ask you. Sweetheart, you have heard both Theo and I profess our love.”

“*Oui*, and I have much *amour* for you and Theo. It is not the normal way, I think. Many of the people might not understand thees.

“True, but I think that Theo and I have found a solution.”

“What, Raine?” Noel asked excitedly.



“You know that usually a lady would not love two men equally, and she could be looked upon with ill grace by the *ton* if she did. But if you are agreeable, you can have both, Theo and I, and no one will ever be the wiser.”

“How can thees be so?”

“Theo and I adored sharing your affection. Yet for propriety’s sake, you must wed one of us-.”

“-O!” Noel exclaimed, before Raine continued.

“-And because I am the oldest brother and the heir, Theo and I, have agreed that I should wed you-.”

“-*Oui*, Raine!” Noel squealed launching into his waiting embrace. “I would marry you!”

“Now, Noel,” Raine chuckled enjoying her freely abandoned exuberance as he secretly winked at Theo. Then Raine shifted Noel within his embrace so he could look at her directly. “Noel, about your brother-.”

“-Oh, Raine!” Noel exclaimed interrupting him. “We will not tell Phillip every little thing, yes? Phillip has kept little secrets from me and now I keep little secrets from him. Thees will make us a very happy family I think?”

“Exactly,” Raine responded with a grin. “Now, I see that Theo has finished speaking to your brother so I must go and speak with him. And Theo wants to speak to you.”

With that said, Raine and Theo changed places. Raine studied Phillip as he approached wondering what Phillip was thinking. But, he could tell nothing from Phillip’s amiable demeanor.

“It seems we are to become related,” Phillip said while shaking Raine’s hand.

“You seem too agreeable, Phillip. What of the red book?”

“You have it and I am sure you will turn it over to your superiors. That is all I intended in the first place. You see, I have been a double agent all these years under Lord Burley.”

“Ha!” Raine exclaimed. “I was beginning to suspected as much after that last encounter when you tried to warn us.” Raine paused, looking at Phillip seriously. “Now, Phillip, about Noel-”

Phillip raised a hand halting Raine’s words as he said, “It seems obvious from the display I just glimpsed from across the room that my sister has great affection for you. And I take it from her enthusiasm that she did agreed to marry you?”

“Yes.”

“Well then, how soon do you plan to marry? I have only a brief time to spend here and I would like to see her take her vows.”

“I plan to obtained a special license and if it is agreeable with Noel we can be married tomorrow if necessary.”

## Chapter Twenty One

Clasping Raine's hand, Noel glided through the doorway into their bedroom. Theo was seated in front of the fire and when she entered he rose, a fluted glass of champagne in his hand. After taking a sip, he offered her the glass and she smiled shyly as she accepted it and then turned it until she could sip from the side where his lips had touched it.

The brothers wore identical royal blue robes that reached almost to their feet. Their feet were encased in velvet slippers that same royal blue color. Her own gown and robe were a similar royal blue and so sheer that one could see her skin beneath. Noel's breath caught in her throat and a shiver of anticipation ran up her spine at the sight of her two husbands.

Raine stood at her back, his hands at her waist and Theo leaned close and brushed a warm gentle kiss to her lips, saying, "At last *ma petite* you are ours."

"*Oui*, my husbands, and you are mine. But I am very curious. You both have seen me naked, yes? You have explored my body with your hands and your eyes and your lips. But . . . I have not been able to do the same. I would like very much to explore your body's. Thees e's is permitted, yes?"

Raine looked at Theo over the top of Noel's head. Their faces held identical smiles. They spoke together. "Yes, yes!"

Raine was not as surprised as Theo and was the first to speak. "What would you like us to do, *ma petite*?"

"Hmm," Noel mused, pausing. "But of course," she continued. "You must take off your robes, I think."

"But of course," Theo responded as he quickly untied the belt of his robe and let it slide to the floor. A fraction of a second later, Raine's robe joined it.

The brother's stood side by side and Noel was speechless. They were magnificent. If she had to choose a word to describe them, it would have been beautiful. But of course she could not tell them that, especially Raine. He was too proudly male. And so she simply purred and approached, but was stopped by Raine's question. "And are you going to remain clothed, we would have our curiosity satisfied as well, Noel."

"*Oui*, Raine." Noel untied the bow that held her robe and it too slid to the floor. Before she could do more, Theo and Raine stepped forward,

one on each side and bending down grasped the hem to pulled her gown up and over her head, letting it fall to the side.

Theo was the first to speak as they guided her to the bed. "Princess, your wish is our command."

Raine and Theo lay side by side, leaving enough room between them so Noel could kneel between them. She sat back on her heels as she looked from one to the other. Even though she was not an expert, she could tell they were by far the most exciting males she had ever seen. Their contrast was an added benefit. Their own excitement was readily apparent.

Each of their magnificent male organs rose from nests of pubic hair and each virile *baton* curved upward toward their belly's. This pleased her, for it was the very part of their body's that she was most interested in. She touched Theo's leg and ran her hand slowly upward, sliding to the inside of his thigh as she neared her obsession. His body quivered as her fingers slid into the blonde curls beneath. Then when her finger tips came in contact with a slightly rougher texture she realized for the first time there was more than just a rigid manly *baton* involved.

Boldly, she reached further until she held two globes in her hand and as she squeezed, Theo shivered with delight and whispered, "Gently, please, princess."

"Does this give you pleasure, my Theo?" Noel asked.

"Yes," he gasped as she massaged him intimately again.

Turning her head, she looked at Raine and began sliding her other hand up his thigh as she asked, "You would like this also, my Raine?"

"Definitely," he growled with a blazing heat in his turquoise eyes that gave him a dark hungry appearance. And when her hand reached her goal Raine expelled a rough bass groan. "And if you are very curious, sweetheart, you might try stroking that cocky fellow who seems to be standing at attention."

Noel released the heaviness of Raine's male sacks and slid her hand around the base of his erect male organ. Her hand did not reach completely around. Fascinated she did the same to Theo. But with Theo her hand did reach completely around, but not by much.

"Oo, you are so silky," she crooned and she bent closer to get a better look at these marvelous instruments, while sliding her hand's upward until she reached the hooded tip of each one. "What e's thees?" she asked as her fingers encountered a slick moisture when she reached the tips.

Neither brother could answer. Their body's had arched upward as her hand reached the sensitive head, but Raine, his head arched back managed to convey their pleasure by grasping Noel's hand and indicating that she should do it again. Sensing their enjoyment and before she continued, she bent over and kissed the moist head of first Raine's and then Theo's throbbing male organ, sliding her tongue around the hot tip before she lifting her head and continuing her stroking.

Both Theo and Raine were moaning and grinding their hips upward to follow each of Noel's increasing strokes. Both men were enthralled by their petite innocent maiden. But as with all things there could be too much of a good thing and Theo was the first to concede. "Raine, I must put a stop to this most delicious moment, for I . . ."

"-Speak for yourself, brother, I *am* in heaven."

"Yes, well, I am about to expire if I do not stop her quickly," Theo said through clinched teeth. "Your being in heaven, is all well and good, but what about *our* plans for our new wife. The things that we had planned."

"Theo, Theo. This is our wedding night. The whole night. There is time for everything and I fully intend to enjoy my Noel's curiosity."

Noel suddenly stopped stroking, realizing that all things were not equal with the brothers. "I . . . I," she stumbled. She was afraid she had done something wrong and she quickly covered her face with her hands. "I have not pleased you," she moaned miserably.

Though sighing with a kind of relief, Theo was first to realize Noel's uncertainty and quickly embraced her, murmuring words of comfort and denial. "No . . . No, princess. You do not understand. You just gave us a little too much pleasure," he said gently, pausing to look purposely at Raine before he continued. "But if we selfishly let you continue, we would not have been able to please you as well . . . and it is our greatest pleasure to please you."

Raine had not interrupted, but he had raised up on his elbows. His hand reaching out to caress Noel's back and as his hand reached Noel's heart-shaped buttocks he gave them a gentle pinch which distracted her from Theo and she turned her head to look at Raine. Seeing his mischievous grin Noel knew that he was about to disrupt Theo serious explanation and she began to giggle. She had not realized until this moment that Raine's serious attitude was a foil for his brother's gentle prodding.

Relaxing back against Raine she began to laugh and Raine began to chuckle. Theo in the midst of his serious explanation found himself grinning and joining in by falling onto Noel and Raine.

Soon the three were intertwined with much groping and touching. Theo was the first to recover and he reached over and drew Noel closer until half of her body covered his. Looking down the length of him, she was quick to notice his still rigidly posed male *baton*.

"E's it always like thees?" she asked.

"Ah . . . no . . ." Theo muttered.

Raine who had raised himself on his elbow and was looking over her shoulder said. "It is a miracle of nature," he explained. "If you would stroke me as you did before you will see."

Taking him at his word, Noel began stroking Raine's thickened *baton* again and watched spellbound as it grew larger and larger. "How e's thees possible?" she asked. "It is part of the mating process," Raine answered between panting breaths.

*“Non . . . Non, I mean, how did thees fit? It e’s too big!”*

“Ah, good question,” Theo interjected, “Just how exactly does it fit, Raine? After all, it appears there is a difference in size here, between yours and mine.”

“Well . . . there is a way to physically demonstrate, if Noel is agreeable.”

*“Oui, oui, I am, how you say, ‘most curious’ about thees.”*

“Good! First I want you to notice that Theo’s superb appendage . . .”

“-Ap-pp-dage,” Noel stuttered.

“Sorry, Theo’s, ah shall we say, ‘pleasure giver’.”

“Oh . . . ah . . . I see, thees pleasure giver.”

“Yes, pleasure giver. Later we will discuss your pleasure receiver.”

“Raine!” Theo sputtered.

“-Theo’s, ‘pleasure giver’, you will notice that it is thinner and longer than my own. Now I would like you to take this ‘pleasure giver’ into your mouth as deep as it will go and begin to suck on it.”

“Suck on it?”

“Yes, sweetheart, suck on it and as you do I want you to keep your eyes on Theo’s face and remember the feel of his ‘pleasure giver’ in your mouth.”

“Raine, are you mad!”

“Patience, Theo,” Raine cautioned.

Noel found the repartee between the brothers highly amusing. Theo wished to protect her delicate sensibilities, while Raine wanted to expand her sexual awareness. It was most interesting, and what she really thought would be quite a revelation to both brothers. So she settled in excitedly to do just as Raine had suggested. Her lips had just barely touched the tip of Theo’s male organ when he jerked. Without thinking she grasped the base and held it steady as she lowered her mouth, first encompassing the tip and letting her tongue explore its silky smoothness.

Noel could feel the quivers passing though Theo’s body and it thrilled her to be the cause. Lowering her mouth further she felt the tip slide up to the roof of her mouth and as it reached the opening to her throat she began to suck. With the first pull, Theo raised his hips, pushed forward and groaned. “God!” he cried out, drawing out the sound as Noel raised her head and lowered it again still sucking.

Noel kept her eyes on Theo and was amazed at the expressions that passed across his face. Most importantly she could see that he was lost to the needs of his body, no matter what his mind demanded.

Raine watched closely and finally could not resist any longer. Raising up behind Noel, he leaned over her heart-shaped buttocks and slid his pulsing tool into the crevice. His own body took over, reacting to the erotic scene, he began to pump up and down sliding within the friction of Noel’s buttock cheeks.

Noel glanced back and saw the look on Raine's face and thought, sex was most interesting. It seemed that during sex, the body had a mind of its own and it pleased her that she could keep two such dynamic men enthralled. She no longer cared about her original question because her own sexual urges were pulsing through her body. When Raine, with his hands holding her hips steady, gave one final push and entered her, she cried out at the sudden release of the tremors that rushed through her body. Her sex grasped Raine's thick shaft, squeezing and releasing and squeezing again as another tremor overtook her. Moans fill the air and with one final drive Raine fell on top of Noel and Theo, his whole body shaking.

Stymied, Theo gently pushed and first Raine, and then Noel rolled off of him. Noel lay next to him her legs sprawled wide and it seemed he could see her tender wet puss pulsating. Never one to lose an opportunity, he quickly rolled over Noel and began kissing her breasts passionately, sucking on her nipples, and with his penis in hand he began searching for that final release and quickly found the opening and slid in. With his first plunge he felt her inner muscles close over him. They seemed to be humming. The humming vibrated through his shaft and reached his balls causing them to tighten and then expand. It took only a few strokes to reach that summit and when Theo began to pass over, he felt Noel coming with him and as the last breath escaped his lungs in a fierce scream, Noel screamed her release with him.

The End

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