



Changeling Press

Sierra Dafoe

STRAY CAT
STRUT

Shifter Sisters 3: Stray Cat Strut

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ISBN: 978-1-59596-661-2
Formats Available:
HTML, Adobe PDF,
MobiPocket, Microsoft Reader

Publisher:
Changeling Press LLC
PO Box 1046
Martinsburg, WV 25402-1046
www.ChangelingPress.com

Editor: Chrissie Henderson
Cover Artist: Bryan Keller

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Shifter Sisters 3: Stray Cat Strut

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The world, according to Persia:

1. *In the battle of the sexes, Persia always wins.*
2. *When in doubt of the outcome, see Rule #1.*

Furious that Tori took the man *she* wanted, Persia is determined to find a beau who'll turn both Tori and Lu absolutely green with envy. But finding a man who can outshine Drake Foster is no small task -- he'd have to be handsome, suave, sexy, adorable, romantic, powerful *and* rich...

In the meantime, there's Billy Gruff -- young, blond, and absolutely gorgeous. A perfect consolation for her wounded pride. And when Billy takes her home to meet his brothers, Persia finds herself with an overabundance of mouthwatering choices.

Billy is just as sweet and luscious as any girl could ever want. His brother Alec may *think* he's bad, but Persia knows exactly how to get his goat -- and nobody, but nobody ties this keyboard-playing kitty down!

But when big brother Ben appears on the scene, Persia discovers to her chagrin that she's well and truly fucked. Or at least, she's *about* to be...

When in doubt of the outcome, see Rule #1. Welcome to the world of Persia.

Chapter One

This had to have been one of the worst weekends of her life. She couldn't believe she'd lost a man -- no, *two* -- to *Tori*!

What the hell's she need two for, anyway? Persia stalked down Congress Street, an overstuffed backpack slung over one shoulder and a vase of red roses clutched in her arms. *She barely even knows what to do with one!*

Her heels clomped angrily on the deserted sidewalk. Around her the city was silent -- well, as silent as a two-bit little place like Portland, Maine, ever got on a sticky summer night. Tires squealed as a Plymouth Duster roared by, drunken boys hanging out the windows, wolf-whistling at the sight of her. Thunder grumbled in the distance, and heat lightning streaked the sky over Portland Bay.

The tension in the air suited Persia's mood. She was pissed. Never in all her days would she have even *imagined* she could lose such a luscious pair of men to that skinny, uptight, flat-chested, bloodsucking...

God damn it! They'd been perfect, too. Rich, gorgeous... and she'd bet anything they knew how to treat a girl *right*.

They should have been hers -- the roses *and* the men. Persia's chin quivered as she threw the roses, vase and all, into a nearby trash can. Not even the satisfying *thunk* they made as they hit bottom could cheer her up.

She didn't want them, anyway. She wanted her *own* damn roses. And she was hungry. And tired. And her backpack was heavy. And the fucking strap of her fucking shoe was digging into her fucking ankle, and it *hurt*!

And no way was she moving to some dilapidated old farmhouse with them, either. So both Tori and Lu had found men to take care of them -- bully for them. She

was *not* going to sit around some farmyard, acting all domestic and watching Lu pop out puppies -- or whatever the hell werewolves had -- with Sean.

In fact, she didn't know why she'd hung around so long. She was a cat, damn it. She didn't need them -- she didn't need anybody!

And she could get any man she wanted. Any time at all.

Tilting her little chin in the air, Persia stalked onward. Ahead of her, the Plymouth Duster pulled an illegal U-turn and came back for another pass.

"Hey! Hey, mama! Wanna go for a ride -- on my tongue?"

Babies. She sniffed. *Young, dumb, and full of cum.* But every man had his uses, however limited, and right now she was broke, hungry, and without so much as a roof for the night. Letting the backpack slide off her shoulder, conveniently taking the spaghetti strap of her shirt with it, Persia stopped in her tracks and turned her big, sapphire-blue eyes toward them. The Duster was rolling slowly past her, four -- no, five -- pimple-faced bozos hanging out the windows staring at her, their mouths open in identical, goofy grins.

"Were you talking to me?" Casually, she reached down and slid her miniskirt an inch higher on her plump thighs as she straightened one of her stockings. The Duster's brakes squealed as it came to a full stop, and five rapt pairs of eyes followed the movement of her hand.

Persia smirked. Oh yeah, she knew *their* number, all right. Running a hand through her short, platinum blonde curls, she sashayed across the street to the car and leaned in the driver's window, her lush, full bosom tumbling half out of her push-up bra. The boys' eyes widened. Two of them gulped, their Adam's apples bobbing up and down like corks in an ocean.

Persia's smile curved higher -- she could practically see the blood draining from their brains. Batting her eyelashes, she purred, "Now, which of you boys can afford to buy me dinner?"

Five hands plunged into hip pockets for wallets. A ten, two twenties, a handful of crumpled ones were thrust toward her. The boy behind the wheel held up a fifty, and Persia blew him a kiss as she plucked it neatly from his nerveless fingers.

"Thank you, sweeties. Bye-bye."

Wagging her fingers at them, she moved away, her high heels clicking on the sidewalk. She could feel them gaping behind her, their gazes glued to her butt. Her mood much improved, Persia smiled to herself and put an extra wiggle in her walk -- just to give them something to think about later.

Nobody could ever say she wasn't generous.

* * *

At this hour, Portland's one and only all-night diner was almost deserted -- a couple making moony-eyes at each other in a booth; a gaggle of drunken frat boys busily making the waitress's night miserable. Persia rolled her eyes.

Yup. Such a scintillating nightlife. God I miss the Big Apple.

But this was where she was -- and besides, she smelled bacon frying. Her belly rumbled in response. Pointedly ignoring the lascivious comments from the frat boys, Persia slid onto a stool at the end of the counter, dropped her backpack to the floor, and flipped open a menu. She was *starving*.

"Know what you want, dear?"

The overnight waitress, a broad, matronly woman with faded gray hair, smiled down at her -- but her annoyance with the frat boys showed in the tight little lines around her mouth as she filled Persia's coffee cup.

"Everything." Persia tossed her head, her curls bobbing. "It all looks good!"

"Well, let me know when you know." The waitress sighed in exasperation as one of the frat boys hollered "Miss!" and turned back toward the table.

She never really understood people, Persia thought, watching her go. Now if it had been *her*, she woulda clawed that asshole a good one and told him to smarten up. Sure, she would have gotten fired -- so what? Hell, she'd scrounged her meals out of garbage cans plenty of times.

Okay, so there was a certain advantage to having a fur coat whenever she needed, but it still didn't make sense -- why would so many people waste so much of their lives doing something they hated? No way would anyone ever catch *her* trading her freedom for some pathetic degree of security. Life was too short -- even if you had nine of them.

And why *had* she stayed with Tori and Lu so long, anyway? She pondered the question as she poured cream into her coffee and added six sugars. Habit, she supposed after due consideration.

Habit -- and the band.

Yeah, the band was a big part of it, she admitted. She was absolutely *born* for the spotlight. And whatever delusions Tori might have about Lu's voice, Persia knew damned well it wasn't Lu's singing that brought the boys back to watch, over and over and over.

But no way was she going back. Nuh-uh. For what? So Tori could flaunt her two hunkalicious millionaires in her face -- the two men who *should* have been hers?

Persia stabbed her spoon into her cup, stirring her coffee sulkily. Whatever momentary lift she'd gotten from the boys in the car was gone -- after all, what kind of triumph was there in that? Bunch of pimply, hormone-ridden walking hard-ons; they'd have been turned on by a warthog if it was wearing a garter belt.

And she wasn't going back. Nope. Not until she found a man to turn both Lu and Tori absolutely green with envy. After all, she deserved the best.

And in the meantime...

"Billy!" The waitress sounded like she was going to blow a gasket as she stalked behind the counter and slid the plate she was carrying back through the serving window. Persia watched through slitted eyes -- she rather liked watching other people's dramas. "Billy, those numb shits are driving me crazy. Crisp the bacon some more for me, will ya?"

For the first time, the short order cook she'd heard rattling around the kitchen appeared in the opening. Persia froze on her stool.

Wow. Just wow. Now *that* was what she called cute.

Cute? Hell, girl, he's gorgeous!

He was, too. Shaggy, sun-streaked hair fell over soft brown eyes that glowed with warmth as he smiled at the scowling waitress. Young, taut muscles rippled under his smooth skin. A leather thong around his neck drew her attention to his torso, hidden behind the ratty cooking apron. Persia wondered what his chest looked like. Absolutely yummy, she'd bet -- it was way too easy to picture him on a beach somewhere, strong tanned thighs flexing as he played Frisbee in nothing but cutoffs.

Or sprawled on the sand, wearing nothing at all.

Oh yeah. She could definitely picture that.

Damn, he was pretty! His face still had a bit of adolescent roundness despite the strong, well-shaped jaw. He had great lips -- full and pouty, just the kind a girl could happily nibble on all night long -- and a slightly snub nose that went well with his easy, boyish grin.

Hell, he doesn't even look old enough to be out this late by himself, Persia thought, and smirked. *Somebody might come along and just gobble him right up.*

It had been a while since she'd actually slept with a man. Not that she didn't like sex -- *au contraire!* as the French would say -- but she'd gotten pickier and pickier over the years. It took a lot more to tempt her these days.

And Persia was suddenly feeling very tempted indeed. She leaned her elbows on the counter, chin propped in her soft little hands as he took the plate and glanced at the offending meal. "I dunno, Jen. If I cook this any more, it's gonna be burned."

"Hell, *I* know that." The waitress heaved an aggrieved sigh, but some of the tension left her broad, fleshy shoulders. Persia grinned -- she rather suspected Billy had that effect on a *lot* of older women.

And the younger ones probably just about pissed their pants at the sight of him.

Jen jerked her head at the table. "It's not worth arguing with those damn yahoos -- they want it burned, they can have it burned. I don't give a fuck."

Billy craned his neck, peering out at the rowdies who were now flipping pennies into a water glass, cheering like it was the damn Superbowl every time they got one in. Persia admired the strong tendons in his neck as he did, and the way that honey-gold hair just brushed his bronzed shoulders. "Ah, don't let 'em get to ya, Jen. Hell, you coulda changed their diapers."

"Don't remind me," Jen growled as she turned away. Billy grinned at her back and disappeared behind the window. A moment later, Persia heard the bacon sizzling.

Well, yum! Sure, he wasn't rich -- therefore not a keeper, sadly. But he'd sure go a long way toward easing the sting of her disappointment. Crossing her legs, Persia swung one plump calf back and forth, enjoying the slight pressure it created in her groin.

It was gonna be tough to find the right man, she mused. Money alone wasn't enough -- God knows, she'd had her share of sugar daddies in her time. The only problem was, they were invariably *old*. And she liked 'em young -- young and lean and hard-bodied.

Like Billy.

"Jen, you're up!"

Persia straightened as he slid the plate back across the divider. Lifting her arms, she fussed with her hair, arching her back and pushing her generously full breasts out front and center, willing him to glance over at her.

He did. Those deep, warm brown eyes swung toward her like a needle toward north and stopped, widening. Persia's smile deepened as he gaped, his arm still extended with the plate forgotten in his hand. Letting her lower lip pooch in a playful pout, she played with her hair, twirling one white blonde curl around a finger as she gave him a flirty little smile.

Billy didn't even notice when Jen lifted the plate from his hand.

God, she loved guys with brown eyes and blond hair. Whatever it was about that combination, she didn't know, but Persia felt a definite trickle of warmth between her plump thighs as they locked gazes. Neither of them moved until the waitress came back

with another order, rattling it off as she looked down at her notepad. "Two eggs over easy, rye toast, dry, mush and Swiss omelet with whole wheat... Billy? Hey, Billy!"

Startled, he jerked his gaze to Jen, shaking his head as if to clear it. "What?"

She glanced at him skeptically. "Thought you were falling asleep on me there, kid."

"No, I... uh..." His eyes flicked to Persia again. She dropped her gaze with a pretense of shyness -- after all, she'd already hooked him. She knew it. "Just give it to me again."

Smiling smugly, she studied the menu as the waitress repeated the order, taking her time over that most critical of decisions -- pancakes or waffles?

She already knew what she was having for dessert.

Only it didn't quite work out that way. She'd eaten slowly, savoring her waffles, hash browns and bacon, smugly conscious of Billy's surreptitious glances. She'd spread jam on her toast in high good humor, twirling back and forth on her stool as she did, enjoying the warm pulse of anticipation in her crotch. Every so often she'd let her gaze wander over to Billy, who blushed slightly each time she caught him watching her.

Way too fucking cute.

But when, after artfully tousling her platinum curls in front of the mirror and tugging her top down to reveal more of her full, soft breasts, she came out of the ladies' room, Billy was gone.

What the fuck? Her good humor evaporated like mist as she stared through the serving window at the fat, balding man who'd taken Billy's place behind the griddle. The apron he'd been wearing was wadded in a dish tub. Abruptly, Persia realized the sky was getting light outside.

God *damn* it! Men didn't just walk out on her -- not on *her*! Not ever. And especially not boys -- not even ones who looked like the human equivalent of catnip.

That wasn't how this was supposed to go!

Persia glanced at the waitress, chewing her lip. No, dammit, she was *not* going to ask after him like some starry-eyed teenager. Besides, she'd only been in the bathroom a minute -- he couldn't be far.

Making a quick decision, she tossed money on the counter, hefted her backpack, and thrust it at Jen. "Can you watch this? I'll only be a second."

"Yeah, sure." Jen tucked it behind the counter and Persia stalked out the door.

She looked up the street, but nothing was moving in the Old Port at this hour except a street-sweeper, humming its way along the old cobblestones. Where the hell had he *gone*?

Then she spotted the alley to one side of the restaurant. The clink of a bike chain carried loudly in the cool morning air, and Persia smiled, slitting her eyes.

So he thought he could just walk out on her, huh? Well, there was more than one way to skin *that* cat -- and she'd had enough disappointments for one weekend, thank you very much.

This one wasn't getting away.

Chapter Two

Billy Gruff wheeled his dirt bike out of the alley, whistling idly. He wasn't crazy about working nights, for sure, but he liked this part of it -- getting out of work when everyone else was just waking up, the whole city lying fresh and sleepy around him. Soft pastels streaked the sky over Portland Bay, and the clouds were no more than wisps of milky white, like fading dreams left behind by the moon.

Ben and Alec always laughed when he told them things like that. *Dreamer*, his big brothers called him. *Billy, the dreamer*.

Well, maybe. But so what? He wasn't impractical enough to think that college tuition paid itself, at least. Sure, Ben was always willing to help out, but Billy rather liked supporting himself. It was nice not being in Ben's shadow for a change.

Wrapping the chain around his bike seat, Billy swung his leg over and pushed off -- and a white cat streaked in front of him, narrowly missing his front wheel.

"Jesus!" He braked hard, staring after it. Oddly enough, it didn't keep running. Instead it stopped just short of the far curb, glanced back at him, and miaowed. Then it plopped onto its haunches in the middle of the street and started washing one paw with its pink little tongue.

"Christ, cat, are you *trying* to get killed?"

The cat looked up at him and blinked.

Wow. He didn't think he'd ever seen eyes quite that blue. Except maybe on that girl in the diner... He blushed again, remembering the way his hard-on had tented his Dockers, making him grateful for the counter hiding his erection from the world -- and her. Whoever she'd been.

He'd never seen her before, he was sure. God, she was hot! All plump and curvy with those full, luscious breasts practically popping out of her bra -- and those eyes.

She'd stared right at him, her lips pooched out in a *seriously* sexy pout, making him wonder what it'd be like to have those lips wrapped around his shaft as she sucked him...

Twenty years old, and he'd never had a blowjob. Sometimes Billy wondered if it was really as great as Alec always said.

Well, he sure wasn't going to find out from Hannah. She was willing enough to let him go down on *her*, but the other way around? Uh-uh. No way. She had nice tits, though, that was something.

Not as nice as the girl in the diner.

Firmly, Billy shut down that line of thinking. Didn't matter. He was seeing someone. Hell, he was *living* with someone -- you didn't ogle other girls when you were living with someone. That'd be just wrong.

He pressed down on the pedal, starting off -- and the cat, which he'd completely forgotten about, dashed in front of him again.

"Whoa! Cat, you're gonna get squished!"

The cat miaowed again. This time, it sauntered back to him, weaving between the bike wheels and brushing up against his legs, purring. "Hey, you're a friendly little thing, aren't you?" Billy reached down to scratch it behind the ears, and the cat leaned into his caress, purring.

Pretty thing it was, too, with all that soft, fluffy white fur. It sure didn't *look* like a street cat -- it looked more like somebody's pampered pet. "Hey pretty, you lost? Is that what you're doing out here all by yourself?"

The cat sank to its haunches and miaowed plaintively. Straightening, Billy looked around the empty street.

Well, hell. He couldn't just leave it here. Dumb thing'd probably sit in the street until it got run over. But Hannah didn't like cats. She wasn't allergic or anything -- she just didn't like them.

More and more often over the past two months, Billy had found himself wondering exactly what she *did* like. And if he was anywhere on that select list.

Climbing off the bike, he scooped the cat up, hoping against hope there'd be a collar and ID tag hidden underneath all that fur. It -- *she*, he realized -- was surprisingly heavy for her size, but she purred happily in his arms, kneading his biceps. "Wow, you're a chunky little thing, aren't you?"

Raising her head, the cat shot him a disgusted look from those sapphire eyes and kneaded harder.

"Ow! Okay, okay -- comment retracted. Sheesh! What is it with women about their weight, anyway?"

Nope. No collar. No ID tag. Billy looked around the street again, then glanced back at the diner, wondering if he could foist the cat off on Jen. Probably not -- she had Chihuahuas.

Ah, hell. "Well, it'll only be for a day or two, right, puss? Somebody's got to be looking for you." The cat looked up at him again, her eyes half-lidded in enjoyment as he stroked her. Then Billy eased her up onto his broad shoulders, grinning as she draped herself around his neck like a fur collar. "I hope your balance is good."

Swinging his leg carefully over the bike, he waited until he felt the cat's claws dig in, and pushed off.

* * *

As soon as he opened the apartment door, Persia's nose wrinkled. The place smelled nothing like Billy's clean, tangy scent -- it smelled of cleansers, potpourri and air fresheners. In other words, of female.

She narrowed her eyes, looking about suspiciously. From her vantage point on his shoulders, she could see the neatly arrayed tins on the kitchen counter, ranked according to size, the ceramic knick-knacks spaced along the mantel with an almost military precision, the ironing board jutting like an accusation in front of the TV.

And she could feel the way Billy's shoulders tensed beneath her as he practically tiptoed into the apartment. "Han? Hannah, honey?"

Persia snorted to herself. *Honey?* Not this woman, whoever she was. For all its color, the place still managed to look cold and forbidding. They both breathed a sigh of relief when Billy's soft query brought no answer.

He picked up a note from the counter. Tilting her head, Persia scanned it.

Gone for coffee. Back by nine. Put your goddamn laundry in the hamper this time.

Yeah. Quite the love note.

Billy sighed and, wadding up the note, chucked it at the trash can. He missed. Shrugging, he lifted Persia off his shoulders and set her on the couch. "All right, cat. I gotta take a shower. Don't make yourself too much at home, okay?"

Not hardly. *This* wouldn't do, at all! Only what was she going to do now?

The question faded from her mind, though, as Billy peeled off his shirt, leaving it draped over the back of the couch as he ambled toward the bedroom. Persia promptly followed.

Oh, yeah. Muscles rippled beneath his tawny skin, leading from those warm, solid shoulders down his back to where his work pants hung loose around his lean hips. Jumping onto the bed, she watched eagerly as she kneaded the coverlet, purring.

He sat beside her to pull off his sneakers (dropping his dirty socks, Persia noticed, onto the floor where they lay like two deflated cotton balloons) and then unbuttoned his pants and stood.

He wasn't particularly tall, actually, only five-ten or so. But he was built like a young god -- all warm, flowing muscle and soft, velvety skin. His shaggy, honey-blond hair hung in his face as he bent to slide his pants off, revealing a gorgeous ass encased in white cotton briefs.

Da-yum!

She arched her back in sensual delight, feeling horniness pulse along her frame. Jumping back down, she twined around his feet, rubbing herself against those luscious bronzed calves. Billy reached down to stroke her, and she purred in delight at the feel of those strong, work-roughened fingers sliding through her fur.

Hell with Hannah, whoever she was. This tasty little morsel was *hers*.

Scooping her up, Billy deposited her back on the bed. "Now be good, okay? I'll only be a minute." Giving her one last pat, he headed out the door.

Determinedly, Persia dropped lightly to the floor and followed. She wanted to see *all* the goods. Right now. But Billy closed the bathroom door firmly behind him and she stared at it, nonplussed.

She could change back, of course, and let herself in. But how would he react? He was still practically a kid, no matter how gorgeous. And he had a girlfriend...

Persia let a cunning smile curve her flat little face.

Not for long, bucko.

Padding back to the bedroom, she leaped up on the floral-print coverlet, stretched out languorously, and changed just as she heard keys rattle in the front door.

The shriek from the bedroom made Billy jump in surprise, and shampoo ran into his eyes, stinging.

"You bastard!"

Oh, fuck. Shutting off the water hurriedly, he grabbed a towel and knotted it around himself as he yanked the bathroom door open, foam still running down his neck. Hannah was just storming out of the bedroom, her eyes wild with fury. "You fucking bastard! I can't *believe* you'd do this to me." Turning away, she stalked toward the living room.

Clutching his towel, Billy followed. "Christ, Hannah! Calm down. It's only a --"

"Calm down? Calm *down*?" Her long, straight chestnut hair fanned out as she spun to face him, snarling, "Give me a fucking break!"

"Well, I mean, I knew you'd be upset, but..."

"Upset? Are you totally gone?"

Breathing deeply, Billy tried to get control of the situation -- which wasn't easy when you were dressed only in a towel and had shampoo in your eyes, and your girlfriend was practically emitting flames. "Now look, Hannah. It's only for a couple of days. So can't we just..."

Her derisive laugh cut him short. "Only a couple of days? Is that supposed to make it okay?" She glared at him, hands propped on her hips in that way he absolutely despised. What the fuck was she, his mother?

Still, he tried to make one last attempt. Moving close, he slid one arm gingerly around her. "C'mon, Han. Relax. Hell, maybe you'll even like her."

She recoiled as abruptly as if he'd just dropped a snake down her shirt. The blaze in her eyes hardened to a cold, steely loathing. "Out. I want you out. Now."

"What? Don't you think you're overreacting a bit, here?"

Hannah stared at him in utter disbelief. Then, wordlessly, she stalked to the kitchen counter, snatched up her keys, and went to the door. "I'm serious, Billy. I want you out of here. You and your little *friend*. You've got twenty minutes. If you're still here when I get back, I'm calling the cops."

"Hannah..."

The slam of the door cut him off. Utterly bewildered, Billy wandered back to the bedroom and stood in the doorway, shaking his head at the fluffy white cat curled contentedly on his pillow, purring.

"Jeez. I didn't think she'd take it like *that*."

On the pillow, Persia opened her eyes a crack, studying the way the water beaded down his naked torso, and smiled in triumph.

But before she could change shape and take advantage of the situation, he was yanking on jeans and pulling open dresser drawers. His movements were stiff, jerky, increasingly angry. She miaowed at him enquiringly, and he shot her a glance, his jaw tight and determined, giving her a glimpse of what he might look like in another ten years -- absolutely, devastatingly handsome.

He gave her a thin smile, so different from his earlier broad, boyish grin that Persia felt a momentary pang. "Don't worry about it, puss. She was never all that crazy about me to begin with. It's not your fault."

But it was. She stayed uncharacteristically quiet as Billy picked up the phone, punching in a number. "Alec? Yeah, it's me. Is Ben around?... No, I just need a place to crash. Could you... Great. Thanks. I'll be waiting outside. Oh, and Alec? Is a cat okay?... Cool."

He hung up the phone and shoved his clothes into a duffel bag. Tugging the drawstring shut, he hefted the bag over one shoulder and reached to scoop her up. "Well, pretty, looks like you're coming home to meet the family."

* * *

"I hate to say I told you so, but..."

Billy leaned his chin on his fist, staring moodily at the scenery rolling past. The wind whipping over the convertible carried a warm tang of salt. "Don't even start, Alec."

From her perch on his lap, Persia looked up at Billy's older brother. *Nice*. About twenty-seven, she guessed, maybe twenty-eight, with straight golden hair two shades lighter than Billy's in a stylish, slightly grown-out cut. He was wearing pleated linen pants and a soft silk shirt, the cuffs flapping slightly in the wind as he drove. He handled the convertible with casual ease, his bangs whipping back from his smooth forehead as he held the speedometer steadily at ninety.

Alec shot Billy a rakish grin. "You don't seem too broken up about it."

"I'm not." Billy's hand stroked Persia absently, and she kneaded his firm thigh, the muscles well developed from the bike that was now crammed in the back seat, its front wheel spinning in the breeze. She'd done him a favor, really -- that Hannah was a bitch. Only, where were they going now?

Wherever it is, it better have a bed, she thought grumpily. She was still horny. And the heat from Billy's groin wasn't helping matters at all. *If I'd known nailing him was going to be this much effort, damn it, I wouldn't have bothered.*

Sure, he was luscious, but this was getting ridiculous.

"Good," Alec said, his full, mobile mouth suddenly serious. Then he grinned again. "If you *were* broken up about it, I'd have to slaughter her."

"Damn it, Alec!" Billy burst out suddenly, half-turning to face his brother. "I'm not the baby anymore."

"Yes, you are."

Billy glared, then looked away. "Did you tell Ben?"

"Nah. He's out of town. You can tell him yourself if you're still around tomorrow."

"Thanks." Persia caught the note of relief in Billy's voice. Then she felt the car slow beneath her, turning off Route One. A few moments later, she heard a mechanical whine. Standing up with her paws resting on the doorframe, she peered out, her eyes widening as a wrought-iron gate slowly swung inward, admitting the convertible to a paved private drive.

"Careful, pretty." Billy tugged her back against his chest, holding her firmly. Persia didn't resist. She was too busy staring at the house that came into view as the driveway curved around a high hedge.

Whoa.

The house was huge -- in fact, it wouldn't be stretching much to call it a mansion. The white stone edifice reared above them as they pulled up to the front porch, which was guarded by tall columns. To the left, beyond a bluff of waving beach grass and primroses, she could see the glitter of sunlight on the ocean. A soft salt breeze played through Billy's shaggy hair as he looked up at the house and grimaced.

This was home? Persia stared at the gleaming windows, the broad flagstone steps, a slow satisfaction blooming in her chest.

Okay, so maybe the effort had been worth it, after all.

Chapter Three

Finally, Persia thought as Billy pushed the door shut behind him and dropped his duffel to the floor. The bedroom was nearly the size of Hannah's apartment, with soft blue carpeting, French doors that stood open onto a small balcony overlooking the ocean, and -- Persia was amused to notice -- a Shania Twain poster hung over the large bed.

Lowering her to the floor, Billy sank wearily onto the bed, sighing as he tugged off his sneakers. His eyelids were red and droopy, like a little kid who'd stayed up all night. But as he slid his jeans and underwear off, giving Persia her first glimpse of his cock, she had to admit there wasn't anything little about him.

Oh, yum. She licked her chops, swishing her tail lightly as Billy stretched out, then scowled in annoyance when he tugged the sheet over himself. Rolling his head to one side, he glanced down at her muzzily. "I wish I knew what your name was. Oh well. Good night, pretty."

And, seemingly between one breath and the next, he fell asleep.

God *damn it!* Here she was, all alone in a room with this naked young stud, *finally*, and he fell asleep on her!

Well, she wasn't *about* to put up with that. Leaping up beside him, Persia climbed onto his stomach. He murmured, shifting slightly, and the sheet slid lower on his hips. A trail of honey-gold hairs dusted his lower belly, running from his belly button down until it disappeared beneath the sheet. Persia followed it with her eyes, speculating.

She couldn't just change and wake him up, damn it all. He'd wig. Some guys, waking up to find a naked girl in their bed, wouldn't even stop to think twice -- but

Billy wasn't one of those. Short as their acquaintance had been, Persia knew he had scruples.

Scruples. One more thing about humans that she totally didn't get. But whatever.

Soooo... she'd just have to make sure he was too distracted to flip out.

Gee, what a bummer, she thought, purring. *This poor, scrumptious stud all naked and asleep... Which part should I wake up first? Hmmm.*

Delicately, she walked up his torso, admiring the way his abs rippled, barely even depressing beneath her weight. His rib cage was broad and solid, rising and falling gently with each breath, and soft golden hairs dusted his well-developed pecs. Persia stood over his face, studying the lines of it -- the long, honey-colored lashes that curved against his tanned cheeks, the faint pink of sunburn across his cute little nose, the full, pouty lips, half open now in sleep.

Finally turning away, she curled up right in the hollow of his chest, listening to the strong, steady beat of his heart. For a moment Persia just lay there, sprawled on top of this gorgeous young hunk, soaking in the warmth of his body and enjoying the soft hiss of distant waves. She smiled to herself as Billy's hand came up automatically to caress her in his sleep.

Then she turned her head, admiring the small brown circle of his left nipple. It lay flush with his chest, flat and velvety-looking. Extending her neck, Persia licked it lightly.

It contracted under her tongue and, encouraged, she lapped it again, her raspy little tongue darting over the nub until it hardened, rising up to greet her. Billy's breathing deepened, his hand sliding off her to fall laxly back to the mattress.

He really *was* asleep -- way asleep. All the better. She swished her tail, letting it trail back and forth across his torso as she turned her attention to the other nipple. Soon it, too, was poking up proudly.

Then she turned to see what results her ministrations had produced.

Looking down the length of his body, she purred in satisfaction at the pronounced ridge his cock now made beneath the sheet. God, she loved young men! Blow in their ear and they walked around with a hard-on for a week.

Speaking of hard-ons, the thick, swollen head of Billy's was protruding from under the sheet, and Persia took a moment to admire it, her gaze lingering on its firm, purple curves, the way it brushed his abs just below his bellybutton, the enticing little slit in the tip.

Then she moved back down his body and, tugging the sheet aside carefully with one paw, lowered her head and licked that lovely shaft.

Billy murmured something, still sound asleep. His cock, already hard, stiffened further at the unaccustomed stimulation. His balls were taut and full, nestling against his lovely thighs. Smiling to herself, Persia padded delicately down his legs and turned so she was standing above them, her tail swishing back and forth across their round hardness.

Then, slowly and thoroughly, she lapped up and down the length of his erection over and over, relishing the taste of it, warm and sweet, the firm solid flesh flexing beneath her tongue.

Billy moaned slightly, his face flushing even in his sleep. He tossed his head once, his body tensing under her, his ass tightening automatically, pushing his hips up toward her. A first drop of clear, slippery liquid slipped from his slit, and Persia couldn't resist -- she swirled her tongue over it, licking up that delectable drop.

God, she was horny! Her entire body wanted to arch, to twine itself around this glorious specimen. His breathing had deepened, growing hoarser as his body responded to her attentions. His cock was so hard it jutted up like a spear, pulsing with each heartbeat. She couldn't resist -- she lowered herself and sprawled on top of it, her paws cupping the swollen tip, her soft belly fur caressing that marvelous shaft.

Billy groaned. His hand came up, fondling her sleepily, pressing her tighter against his groin as she lapped at his cockhead. Liquid heat unfolded inside her as Billy's fingers ran through her fur, sending shivers of pleasure all through her.

His fingers tightened as he murmured again, his face clenching, even in sleep, in the grip of his arousal.

Oh yeah. Yeah, he was ready. So was she -- big time. Sliding herself farther down his legs, Persia let herself change.

Now he lay before her as she straddled him, his muscular legs trapped between her plump thighs. Leaning forward, she rocked herself against them, feeling her own juices trickling between her swollen labia, feeling his hard, full balls pressing gently against the soft mound of her sex.

Then she bent over him and took his cock in her mouth.

She peered up as she sucked him, watching his reactions. His lips were parted, his breath rasping in his chest. His lashes fluttered -- his hand tightened on her hip -- then his eyelids opened and he was looking down at her, his gaze still unfocused with sleep.

Smiling, Persia sucked harder, flicking her tongue across the sensitive ridge of his cockhead and then plunging downward, taking him to the hilt. Billy's eyelids closed again as his hands rose to her hair, his fingers sliding through her short platinum curls as she pumped her head up and down, milking that gorgeous cock. She loved the feel of it in her mouth, thick and warm and solid, and the way his balls contracted up against his groin, growing even harder. His hips flexed, and Persia let her lips go soft in invitation as he pushed his cock up into her mouth.

"Oh, Jesus," he whispered. "Man, Alec, you were right."

His hands fisted in her hair, and Persia jerked back against that rough grasp. But his fingers tightened further as he thrust his cock into her mouth, deep and hard. Too hard. Wriggling wildly, Persia yanked herself from his grip, and Billy shrieked as she left fingernail scratches across his strong thighs. She recoiled, glaring down at him as he stared up at her, his eyes wide.

"Shit!" Then his gaze seemed to focus. "You! What... How..." Panting, he ran a hand through the shaggy mass of his blond hair and peered at her again with those huge brown eyes. "You?"

"Who else would it be?"

"I thought I was dreaming."

Persia let her mouth curve into a fetching pout. "About me, I hope."

"Yeah. You were..."

He broke off abruptly, blushing. How cute! Sliding herself up until she was straddling his groin, Persia slid her soft, furred mound up the length of his shaft. "Does this feel like you're dreaming?"

Billy groaned again, his hands coming up to clench her plump thighs as he pushed her harder against him. "Oh, God..."

"Slowly, sweetie," she murmured. "Did you like what I was doing before?"

His gaze seemed to unfocus, his jaw going slack and his cock jerking beneath her as he remembered. "Uhhhm..."

Persia almost laughed. God, she really *did* love young men -- so bashful and sweet and enthusiastic all at once. "Well," she simpered, "if you're not sure... maybe I better do it again."

His eyes widened as she swung off him, kneeling beside him on the bed as she lowered her head until her platinum curls tickled his belly. "Now this time," she murmured, "let me do it *my* way."

Billy gulped. Then gasped as she took him back in her mouth, flicking her pointed little tongue back and forth over the sensitive tip.

"Oh, Jesus." Closing his eyes, he swallowed again, dropping his head back. All that shaggy blond hair tumbled across the pillow, and his hand slid to her thigh, running up it as she sucked him. His cock pulsed in her mouth, and she was *loving* the sounds spilling from his throat -- small, horny gasps; a muted, almost embarrassed moan. She pistoned her mouth downward again, encompassing his entire shaft, and his moan deepened. "Oh my God. Oh, Jesus. Oh... fuck!"

She lifted her head quickly. "What?"

He was staring at her, panting, his eyes dark with embarrassment. "I can't do this! I don't... I don't even know your name!"

She chuckled. "Silly. What does that matter? We're both here, aren't we?"

Still on her knees, she moved her face to his, brushing her lips over his full, soft ones. Slowly, his lips moved under her -- at first no more than opening slightly to her light, steady stroking, then pressing up against in her quick, soft little kisses. Then, hesitantly, his tongue slipped between her teeth, touching delicately against her own.

Saliva exploded in her mouth as she moaned, and Billy's hands came up to cup her head as he kissed her more confidently, his tongue gliding against hers, exploring her mouth.

Gasping, he pulled her on top of him again, grinding his cock against her swollen clit. Persia dropped her head to his shoulder, clinging to him as he humped her, his shaft gliding slickly through her free-flowing juices.

Damn, if she didn't get him in her soon, she was gonna come before he did! Not that that would be such a bad thing...

Lifting her head, she kissed him again, her tongue lashing against his. Groaning, he demanded, speaking half into her mouth, "Tell me your name."

"It's Persia," she whispered, grinding her mons against his throbbing shaft, and kissed him again.

"But... How did you... get in here?"

"You brought me," she murmured, and laughed, low and soft.

Billy pulled his head back abruptly. "What?"

She gazed down at him, letting a teasing light sparkle in her sapphire eyes. "You brought me, remember?" He stared at her, puzzled. She leaned forward and breathed in his ear, "Miaow."

Billy's eyes widened. Curling her lips in a small, playful smile, she raised herself above him, letting her breasts hang, full and heavy, just above his mouth. His cock throbbed between her thighs, and Persia shifted her shoulders, dragging first one nipple, then the other, over Billy's lips until with a sob he opened his mouth, tugging one rosy tip between his lips and sucking it hungrily.

His body arched beneath her, his cock straining against her mons. Gliding her clit up and down its length, Persia bit her lip in concentration, giving herself over completely to the sensations pulsing through her. "Oh yeah. Oh, Billy."

Gasping, he released her right nipple and turned his attention to the left one, suckling it with a needy ferocity that made her rub herself harder against him, purring with delight. His shaft, gliding between her sodden folds, was hard as iron. Reaching down between her thighs, she wrapped her little fingers around it, marveling at its thickness. Then she tilted it upward and lowered herself on it, mewling hungrily as his cockhead slowly spread her open.

Pressing down, she worked him deeper inside her, rocking back and forth to slide her slick little pussy up and down its length. Then, as he groaned below her, her nipple trapped lightly between his teeth, she thrust her hips downward, burying him in her cunt.

Billy's head snapped back, and he cried out as his orgasm burst from him, fierce and unstoppable. Persia stared down at him in dismay as he bucked beneath her, his hands clenched on her hips and his head thrown back, groaning harshly as his balls pulsed against her bottom, shooting wave after wave of his seed deep inside her.

Fuck!

Shuddering, gasping, he slumped back against the pillow, his eyes wide and soft, luminous with emotion.

God *damn* it! Her own unfulfilled need blared like a klaxon between her thighs. Her clit pulsed hungrily, but already Billy's cock was softening inside her, tickling the walls of her passage as it lost its hard thickness and shrank, millimeter by millimeter, until it slipped out of her altogether, leaving her grinding her teeth in frustration.

Tugging her off him, Billy pulled her down beside him, his mouth seeking hers. Persia lay, stiff with resentment, but his hand came up to cup her chin, lifting her face to his as he kissed her over and over, gently, almost reverently. Persia seethed under his caresses as he nuzzled her hair, then settled her in his arms, her head resting on his

shoulder, and kissed her forehead lightly. "God, Persia. You're amazing. You are absolutely... the most... amazing... woman... I've..."

She waited. And waited. Then she lifted her head.

Billy lay beside her, clasping her tenderly in his arms, his head thrown back and his mouth gaping open, sleeping.

God, she hated younger men.

She pushed at his shoulder. "Billy." His head lolled slightly. "Billy!" She pushed harder, and he mumbled something incomprehensible, his arms closing tighter around her, pulling her against his warmth.

Fuck. Persia huffed in annoyance, and debated simply yanking herself from his arms and leaving.

But damn -- he looked so cute, sprawled like that with his head thrown back and his tanned, furry legs splayed across the mattress. Sweet. Defenseless.

Oh, what the hell.

Sighing in frustration, she dropped her head back to Billy's shoulder, still feeling arousal pulsing through her -- but the sensation was like the sound of the waves breaking outside; distant, steady, almost soothing. Sunlight pooled warmly on the blue carpet, and a soft ocean breeze played through the sheer curtains.

Yawning hugely, Persia stretched, settled herself more comfortably against Billy's firm young body, and closed her eyes.

Chapter Four

She murmured happily, her back flexing as she tilted her hips upward toward the warm, pleasant pressure against her clit. Sleepily, she ran a hand over one breast, enjoying as she always did its round, firm fullness, caressing her large, hard nipple. The pleasure in her groin increased, and she purred in contentment, letting her thighs go loose, languorously savoring the small jolts of heat that shot along her nerves.

Then Billy sucked her clit between his lips and she mewled in arousal, the warmth in her belly spiraling up into fire. Opening her eyes, she looked down to see her soft white thighs draped over Billy's broad, tanned shoulders in the dimness, his shaggy blond head bent between them, devouring her cunt. His muscles flexed as his hands slid under her butt, lifting her more firmly against his mouth, and he hummed in delight as she slid her hands to his hair, holding him there.

The sound vibrated through her, making her nerve endings tingle, and Persia gasped, pulling his head even tighter against her. She could feel his face curve in a brief smile -- then his mouth closed over her again, his tongue dancing against her clit as he sucked it, his jaw working. The soft, hungry sounds of his mouth against her flesh made her nipples tighten further. Persia arched up against him, small cries spilling from her throat as she closed her eyes, concentrating on the growing ache between her thighs.

God, this boy sure knew how to eat pussy! His tongue lashed up and down the ridge of her clit, then plunged lower to lap her dripping folds. He hummed again, savoring the taste of her, and Persia almost came right there. Then he slid his mouth up to her clit again, suckling it as greedily as an infant. She tossed her head back, her fingers clenching and releasing in his soft, shaggy hair as her cries spiraled higher and the heat in her crotch grew, and grew, and grew...

Oh!

Quivering, she clung to him, tugging his head hard against her as the tension exploded and fire streaked through her, making her moan with delight. Billy held her there, his tongue still swirling gently over her small, hard nub, drawing her peak out, and out, until she slumped against the pillows, panting in satiation.

Then he raised his head and grinned up at her, his teeth flashing in the dim light. "I just figured, if you got to do that to me while *I* slept..."

Persia gave him a mock-glare, and magnanimously decided to forgive him for falling asleep on her earlier. "What time is it?"

"Almost nine. Are you hungry?"

Hungry? She was starving. As she pulled herself into a sitting position, legs curled up before her, she saw the silver tray set on the bedside table. There was a bowl of fresh strawberries, coffee, a pitcher of milk, toast, a glob of marmalade spooned into a little glass dish, maple syrup, and...

"Waffles!" she cried delightedly.

Billy grinned and ducked his head in pleased embarrassment. "Well, I knew you liked them."

"What a sweetie. Thank you." Leaning forward, she gave him a peck on the cheek and plucked a strawberry from the bowl. To reward him for his thoughtfulness, she savored it slowly, closing her mouth around it and then drawing her head back, letting it pop from between her lips as she smiled demurely. Billy watched every movement, his eyes growing large.

That's not all that's growing, she noted smugly, glancing down at the lump in his jeans. He was naked to the waist, his lean torso bare, the muscles moving delightfully as he leaned in to kiss her, slow and deep. Persia sucked his lower lip just as she had the strawberry, nibbling it lightly before looking up at him from under lowered lashes.

Billy smiled, sighed regretfully, and pushed himself to his feet.

"Where are you going?"

He dug a T-shirt out of the duffel, tugging it over his head as he replied. "I've got to get to work. I'm gonna be late. Don't let that get cold, okay?"

"But..."

"Yeah?" Billy pulled on his socks and reached for a sneaker.

"But what will your parents think?"

He glanced around, startled, then chuckled. "It's not my parents' house -- it's my brother Ben's. My parents passed away four years ago in a car crash."

"Oh." Persia felt like she should say something more. "I'm sorry," she offered awkwardly.

"It's okay." He bent to tie his sneakers, then gave her a quick kiss. "Don't worry, you'll be fine."

She watched him walk to the door. "But, Billy..."

Billy paused. "Yeah, honey?"

Persia bit her lip. "Nothing." As he opened the door she added hurriedly, "Have a good night at work."

His face spread in an enormous grin. "You, too. I'll see you in the morning."

The door closed behind him, and Persia slumped back with a sigh.

Shit.

Not his parents' house. His brother's. No fat trust fund, then... And she hadn't meant to stay more than one night anyway.

Still, Persia mused, he really *was* awfully sweet. And he knew how to cook -- one more point in his favor. She poured a glass of milk and reached for the waffles. They were light and fluffy, a little crispy on the outside -- just the way she liked 'em. Drowning them in maple syrup, she leaned back against the pillows, ruminating as she ate.

Sure, he was pretty -- *pretty*? Hell, he was absolutely scrumptious.

And he was young.

And he could eat pussy like nobody's business -- and obviously enjoyed it. But was that enough to make him a keeper?

Finished with the waffles, she picked up the bowl of strawberries and set it on her soft belly, wiggling her toes as she ate them one by one.

Young had its drawbacks, too. Boys Billy's age were so delighted just to be *having* sex that their tastes tended to be, well... Let's just say it didn't take a whole deal of inventiveness to hold their attention.

And sweet as he might be, Persia had to admit that the old pump-pump-squirt, however adorably enthusiastic, would get tiresome *real* quick. Of course, eventually he'd grow out of that particular problem, but...

Then the image of Tori, hanging on the arms of her two handsome millionaires as she stepped into that goddamn limo, slipped into her mind.

Persia scowled. Next to it, she pictured herself, perched precariously in cat form on Billy's shoulders as he pedaled through Portland...

Oh, *hell* no! Nuh-uh. No way. Not *this* kitty! Shoving the bowl back onto the tray, Persia leaped from the bed and dug hurriedly through Billy's duffel bag. Yanking a Korn T-shirt over her head, she searched deeper, muttering, "C'mon... C'mon... Ah!"

Triumphantly, she unearthed a pair of sweatpants and tugged them on. They bagged, six inches too long, around her ankles. Well, it couldn't be helped. And she only had to get out of the house, anyway.

Quickly, she padded to the door and reached for the knob. But as she turned it, all she could see was that huge, goofy grin on Billy's face as he'd glanced back at her, standing where she stood right now, looking so happy he could burst.

Slowly, her hand slid from the knob. She stared at the door, willing herself to open it, and then spun away, snarling in frustration, her snarl spiraling up into a shriek of rage as she tripped on the impossibly over-long sweatpants.

God damn it!

Yanking them off, Persia threw herself back down on the bed, hammering the pillow in helpless fury. Damn Tori, anyway! This was all *her* fault.

* * *

"Yo, Alec, can I borrow the car? I'm gonna be late."

Alec lifted his head from the armrest of the couch where he sprawled, clicking the TV remote idly as he mused about his latest ex-girlfriend. Billy stood in the

doorway of the parlor, grinning sheepishly. "Sure. Keys're on the kitchen table. How's the cat?"

Billy, who'd turned away already, checked abruptly. "Cat?"

"Yeah. Cat. Four paws, white tail. Remember?"

"Right." There was something weird about the way Billy glanced at him. "It's, uh... It's fine."

"Well, did you give it a litter box, at least?"

Now why in hell would that make Billy giggle like a schoolgirl? Twenty was a little old to still be finding scat jokes funny. Besides, he hadn't been joking.

Billy schooled his expression sternly, but Alec could still see a grin tugging at the corners of his mouth. "It's covered, man. No sweat."

"Well, I'm not the one who's gonna be sweating it if Ben comes back and finds it pissed all over the carpet."

Billy's mouth twitched again. In fact, his entire body was quivering with repressed laughter. What the fuck was *wrong* with the kid?

"Really, Alec, it's okay. Don't go in there, huh? She's... uh... she's kind of shy."

"Whatever. Don't wreck my car."

"I won't." Grinning, Billy loped out of the room, practically bouncing.

Well, I'd sure be bouncing if I were the one who just escaped Herr Hannah's clutches, Alec thought. *But Billy?*

Fuck, who knew? Kid was practically still a teenager. Looking back from the mature detachment of twenty-seven, Alec could easily understand how that whole Hannah thing had come about. It was simple -- Hannah had popped Billy's cherry.

Alec shook his head, remembering. It had been he who'd talked Ben down from his fury when he'd come home from one of his innumerable business trips to discover Billy had followed the bitch home like a puppy. At least Billy hadn't dropped out of college, Alec had argued -- and hadn't Ben ever done something stupid over a woman?

That had been the one flaw in his reasoning, Alec admitted. There were times he seriously doubted Ben had ever done anything stupid in his life. And *definitely* not over a woman.

Billy, he thought, was probably going to do a lot of stupid things. Some guys just had to fumble around a while, feeling their way through a universe that both entranced and confused the shit out of them. But that was okay -- Billy would always have his brothers there whenever he needed them.

Only what the fuck was up with the kid *now*?

Sure, he hadn't looked exactly regretful when Alec had picked him up this morning -- in fact, Alec would have been surprised if he had. He'd been betting that a couple months of Hannah would be more than enough to wake the kid up. But the way Billy had just walked out of here, like he was practically floating on sunbeams...

Alec sighed. In a way, he kind of envied his little brother. There was a freshness about Billy that had nothing to do with his age, an innocence both wonderful and horrible to see. It meant that on some fundamental level he would always be surprised each time someone hurt him, every time the world proved not to be what he thought.

But it also meant each day was an adventure, and yesterday's betrayal would be quickly forgiven.

So which would you rather be, Alec? A wise man, or a fool?

Sadly, he was neither. He was just a cynic. It happened, he supposed, when you were Benjamin Gruff's younger brother.

Take Julie, for instance.

Julie had been one more in a long line of women Alec had watched throw themselves fruitlessly at Ben. And when Ben coolly ignored them, they were invariably more than happy to dangle their lures in front of *him*.

Alec -- no fool -- had never hesitated to take advantage of the situation.

But how could you help despising someone who was willing to fuck you just because you were somebody's brother? Julie, for instance, couldn't *wait* to spread her thighs for the middle Gruff brother.

He often amused himself by seeing how far they'd go to keep him, what level of degradation it'd take to make them pull back in disgust. Usually quite a bit. Julie had hung in there longer than most, grimly determined to snag the brass ring she imagined existed somewhere in their future -- whatever it was. Hell, *he* didn't know. He made a nice enough living working part-time for Ben -- enough to keep him in expensive suits and flashy cars with a minimum of effort -- but he'd never pretended to any of them he was anything like independently wealthy. Whatever delusions they foisted on themselves were their own goddamn business.

He wondered sometimes if he'd ever meet a woman who'd like him for his own sake. Who'd like the same things he did. At heart, he knew, he was really kind of shallow. He liked good parties, fast cars, needling his brothers... and kinky sex.

Kinky enough to eventually send even Julie storming out into the night.

So I guess my ideal mate is a Hustler centerfold. He wondered idly if any man had ever bought that *Occupation: geophysicist* bullshit. Then he chuckled. Billy would, God help him.

Shaking his head, Alec clicked off the TV. Despite Billy's airy reassurances, Alec didn't want to hear the bellowing if Ben came home to find his furniture all scratched to shit, or something. It was one thing to tease Ben -- it was quite another to really piss him off.

Besides, Billy'd never know.

Padding barefoot up the broad, carpeted stairs, he heard a muted, rhythmic thumping coming from Billy's room. What the fuck was the damn cat *doing*? Hastening his step, he yanked open the door and froze, staring blankly at the girl lying on the big queen-sized bed, beating a pillow in a fit of pique.

The girl rolled over, cat-quick, as she heard the door open. She pulled her thighs up against her chest and wrapped her arms about them, glaring at him. She was wearing a black Korn T-shirt -- one of Billy's, he suspected -- and, he saw quickly, nothing else.

What the fuck?

Her short white-blond curls tumbled down over her eyes, and she pushed them back irritably, scowling up at him out of the clearest sapphire eyes he'd ever seen. She had a round little face with a slightly pointy chin, soft white shoulders that showed where the T-shirt hung half off them, and pouty lips that were set at the moment in a thoroughly discontented line.

"What are you, Billy's new girlfriend? How the hell did you get in here?"

"None of your business," she snapped, yanking the T-shirt up over one shoulder. It was, he thought, a piquant display of modesty, considering her golden-furred pussy and glistening slit were exposed entirely to his view.

Alec snorted. "It sure as hell *is* my business, if you're in my house."

She glared at him. "You're not Ben. You're Alec. Don't give me that shit."

"Fine." Alec wished she'd cover her crotch -- it was distracting, to say the least. "It's still my business, though."

"Billy invited me, okay?" She swung her legs over the side of the bed, sitting on the edge. Which meant her pussy wasn't staring him in the face any more, thank God. Instead, as she bent over to snatch up the sweatpants on the floor, he got a full panoramic view of her tits as the T-shirt bagged downward. They were big as melons, lush and firm, and Alec swallowed in a throat suddenly gone dry.

Fuck, where had Billy found *her*?

And when? This was making no sense. Okay, yeah, he *had* gone out briefly while Billy was sleeping. Or while he'd thought he was sleeping, anyway. Maybe Billy had called this... this...

"What's your name?"

"What's it to you?"

Man, she was a contentious little thing! Alec grinned, and leaned back against the doorframe, folding his arms across his chest. "Nothing. I've got no problem just calling you 'bitch.'"

Wow. That glare could probably sear a hole through solid steel.

"Persia." She stood, yanking the sweatpants up over her full, jiggling bottom -- much to his relief. He shifted slightly, trying to will down the growing erection in his pants.

"Are you gonna throw me out?" she demanded.

Alec scratched his nose, considering. "Nah. I think I'd rather make damn sure you stay until Billy gets home and can tell me for himself where the fuck you came from -- Persia."

Which reminded him. He looked around quickly. "Where's the cat?"

Persia curled her lip in a sneer. "I ate it."

"Yeah? You eat pussy often?"

Shit! Why did he ask that? She stood there glaring, arms folded under those incredibly luscious breasts, Billy's sweatpants hanging down to reveal that soft white belly... and all Alec could do was picture her sixty-nining some other chick. His incipient hard-on sprang to full erectness.

Fuuuuuck. Running a hand through his hair, he cleared his throat. "Look, you startled me. You're more than welcome to spend the night."

And I'm gonna lie awake all night, thinking about everything I'd like to do to you. His cock throbbed, straining against his briefs.

Damn it, he *had* to stop thinking things like that! He could see the silver tray on the bedside table, the neatly arranged pitchers, the empty plate. There was even a dollop of marmalade in a small glass dish, with an honest-to-God jelly knife laid alongside.

Shit. Billy must really be gone on this chick.

"What if I don't want to?" she asked, her hands propped challengingly on her hips. Her mouth curved in a knowing sneer. "What're you gonna do? Tie me up?"

Hell, yes.

"No." He kept his voice cool and steady, but she smirked, tossing her head as if she'd just won round one and they both knew it.

Which, Alec reflected, she had.

"Fine. You got anything better than this I can wear?"

"How --" Alec broke off abruptly. He wasn't *even* going to ask what had happened to her clothes. "Sure. Follow me."

As he led her down the hall toward his own bedroom, Alec realized he was going to have to do some *serious* reassessing of his little brother.

Chapter Five

God, it felt good to have someone to take her frustrations out on! Persia stalked behind Alec, furious with him -- and with herself. What the hell was *wrong* with her, anyway? She was a *cat*! She didn't worry about silly things like jobs, or schedules, or hurting someone's feelings...

Why the hell hadn't she just walked out?

She'd been thrilled when big brother Alec had come on strong. It had been *such* a relief to snarl at him!

And she'd seen the way he'd looked at her -- his gaze lingering, darting almost guiltily to her chest, her crotch, the hard bulge of his erection inside his linen pants...

Think you're so big and bad, do you? Persia smirked to herself. *Yeah, I've got your number, big brother Alec.*

He pushed open the door of his bedroom, and she glanced around speculatively. The place was almost Byzantine, as opulent as an opium den. A massive four-poster bed reared up toward the ceiling -- which was, she saw, tiled with mirrors. A deep, plush loveseat, upholstered in a rich burgundy, beckoned seductively from before the empty fireplace. Heavy velvet curtains were drawn closed over the windows, and paintings of voluptuous nudes hung here and there. Persia was amused by how much they resembled her -- all curvy hips and generous breasts and lush, creamy thighs.

Alec yanked open a dresser drawer and gestured curtly. Glancing at him curiously, Persia stepped forward and almost squealed in feminine excitement at the sight of soft, billowing silks and expensive lace. Glancing sidelong at Alec, she asked, "Are you sure this stuff'll fit me? You're not really my size."

Alec merely looked at her. Obviously that shot hadn't hit home.

Dismissing him from her thoughts, she turned back to the drawer, pawing delightedly through the jumbled stockings and garter belts and teddies and chemises. Her eyes widened slightly when she spied a pair of nipple clamps, but the handcuffs buried under a pile of French-cut panties didn't surprise her at all.

Selecting what she wanted, she turned to find Alec leaning against the edge of the bed, watching her. A strange, speculative smile played about his lips.

"Did you want to watch me?" she snapped. "Just to make sure I don't try to steal anything?"

Alec raised one thin blond eyebrow and folded his arms across his chest. "If you like."

He really *was* quite handsome, she had to admit, with that straight, well-styled hair and those angular cheekbones. He had the same boyish, almost snub nose that Billy had, though -- but his eyes were hazel, not brown.

Holding his gaze challengingly, she reached down and grabbed the hem of Billy's T-shirt, tugging it down tight over her full breasts. For all his detached demeanor, the bulge in his pants was back, she noticed. Smiling wickedly, she pulled the shirt upward, slowly baring her belly, her rib cage...

Abruptly, he leaned forward and grabbed her wrist. "Exactly what the hell do you think you're doing?"

"What? I'm getting changed."

"No, you're not. Don't play stupid."

Exasperated, Persia dropped her shirt back down, pulling against his hard grip. "Hey, you're the one who stood there watching!"

"And you were quite happy to see how far I'd let you go, weren't you?" As suddenly as he'd grabbed her, he turned her loose, and she half fell back onto the loveseat, banging her tailbone painfully against the armrest. "You don't deserve Billy."

"Who said I wanted him?" Persia shot back, furious. Her gaze darted toward the door, but Alec saw her glance and moved to block any possible exit.

"Uh-uh. Not until you and I have had a little chat."

"Yeah? What about?"

"About exactly what it is you're doing with my little brother."

With a sniff, she settled herself more comfortably on the loveseat, her mouth settling in a sulky line as she rubbed her chafed wrist. "Ask Billy."

"Billy's not here. You are." For all his earlier playfulness, Persia suspected she'd found the one thing Alec would always be serious about -- his little brother. Strangely enough, a wave of jealousy swept through her -- nobody had ever cared about *her* like that. The thought only increased her pique, and she glared up at Alec, refusing to speak.

Alec stood over her, his glinting hazel eyes studying her intently. "So what was it, Persia? Was it the house? The thought of all that money?"

Persia blinked at him, then leaned back and drawled lazily, "Boy, you don't think much of your little brother, do you?"

A sharp, angry amusement flickered in his eyes. "It's not my brother I don't think much of."

Oooh! Persia flounced to her feet, furious.

But as she stormed past him, he grabbed her arm. "Don't think I don't know your type, Persia. You're an opportunist. If it's there and you can take it, you do. Well, bad news, toots." He gestured at the house around them. "None of this is Billy's. So why don't you take your gold-digging little ass on out of here and never come back."

She'd been planning to. In fact, if he hadn't grabbed her arm, that was *exactly* what she would've done. But now, Persia was pissed. "No."

Alec's face slowly spread in a hard, threatening grin. His grip tightened on her arm as he dragged her closer. *Yeah, you're sadly mistaken if you think you frighten me, big bad Alec. Besides, I can feel that boner you're trying to pretend you're not pressing against me.*

Persia snorted. "Besides, you're one to talk about opportunists. Don't *even* pretend you weren't going to stand there and watch me."

A thin, amused smile curved his lips. "Why not? You were playing games with me, Persia. Seeing which of us would cry uncle first."

"Yeah?" She tilted her chin, ignoring the jolt of excitement that thrilled along her nerves at the tightness of his grip, and smirked up at him from under long, curling lashes. "You think you're man enough to make me cry uncle?"

He gazed down at her a moment, his nostrils flaring. "Oh, you really *do* like to play games, Persia. But I don't think you'll like this one."

She sniffed. "Try me."

Her lip curled in disdain as they locked gazes. Two spots of color burned high on Alec's sharp, chiseled cheekbones, and she could feel his cock pulsing, hard as iron where it pressed against her. Then something inside Alec seemed to snap, and with a muttered oath he dragged her against him, his lips savaging hers, his tongue forcing its way between her teeth, devouring her mouth until she clung to him, panting, every nerve ending on fire.

Roughly, he thrust her away. "You *are* a little tramp, aren't you? Fine. Here's the game. If you break first -- if you refuse anything, beg me to stop, *anything* -- you leave Billy alone."

"Fine," Persia spat. "And if *you* lose?"

Alec grinned. "I won't."

Yeah? That's what you think, bub.

Oh, he was going to enjoy this! His cock throbbed painfully as he pictured everything he'd like to do to her, all the ways he'd like to torment her, that sweet creamy flesh laid bare before him, just waiting for whatever he chose to do.

Alec gestured brusquely to the lingerie she'd left draped over the loveseat. "Put those on. And never mind the teddy."

"Anything you want, sweetie." Her smug little smile infuriated him. It made him want to thrust her to her knees right there, to wipe it off her lips by shoving his cock into her mouth, pounding and pounding until he drowned her in his cum...

Jesus! Alec tossed his head back, fighting down the fire in his groin. His balls felt made out of lead -- dense, heavy, tugging at his groin.

Don't think about it, Alec. Think about Billy. Think about getting this little whore out of his life for good.

It wasn't easy, though, as she turned away from him, her cute, chubby butt jiggling beneath the sweatpants as she yanked the T-shirt over her head. Her platinum curls bobbed around her shoulders as she glanced back at him and smiled, turning slowly.

Her hands cupped her naked breasts, forcing them together. She stood, a little naughty-girl smirk on her lips, letting his gaze rove over her. He noted the deep cleft of her cleavage, the way her hands forced those big tits up until they practically spilled out over her fingers. Alec's erection flexed in his pants -- had he thought his cock was hard before?

And it grew even harder as Persia tightened her grip, squeezing those two firm, milky globes, caressing them, then sliding her fingers lightly up their sides until she grasped her nipples.

Jesus. Alec swallowed, staring. Her tits were perfect. Absolutely perfect. Full and heavy and lush. Her areolas were the size of half-dollars, already flushed a deep, dusky rose. The tips stood up proudly, large and pebbled with arousal as she tugged them.

Alec's mouth watered and he swallowed again, his jaw moving reflexively with the desire to wrap his lips around one sweet, reddened nipple and suck...

Firmly, he fought down the urge, holding himself rigid as he watched, refusing to betray the way his body responded.

"Very pretty, Persia," he said, pleased that his voice remained level. "Now the pants."

Slowly, holding his gaze, she bent forward, letting those delectable breasts dangle as she slid the sweatpants off. Then she stood, trailing her pink-tipped fingers up those soft, milky-white thighs and playing them through the flaxen tangle of curls that covered her mons. Below, Alec could see the lips of her pussy, already thickened with arousal. The little minx ran a finger between them, and Alec felt his balls swell painfully, trapped in the confines of his silk briefs.

"Now put those on," he commanded -- but his voice cracked as he did so, ruining the effect. Smiling in triumph, Persia turned lazily to the lingerie on the loveseat behind her, making it clear she was *choosing* to indulge him, damn her!

Without the lure of his big brother's money, Alec had to admit he didn't make quite such a formidable master. And it had been easier, so much easier, to order Julie around, and Tina and Valerie and a dozen others whose names he could hardly even remember. It had been easy to despise them, to keep his distance emotionally even as he paddled their skinny little asses or tightened the nipple clamps on their scanty breasts...

Damn it, Billy! Did you have to find a woman who looks like every wet dream I ever had?

Luckily, the thought of Billy restored his self-control. He watched impassively as she rolled the seamed silk stockings up her legs, attaching them to the garter belt. He loved the way her thighs plumped out above them, and the way the back straps of the garter belt dimpled her chubby little butt.

Sliding on the push-up demi-bra, she turned, and Alec sucked in his breath at the sight of her. The bra cupped the lower half of her breasts, leaving her nipples totally exposed and lifting those lush mounds toward him, their fullness spilling out over the white lace.

Damn, she was perfect! Short and voluptuous with pale, silky skin that would pinken beautifully under a spanking. Her sapphire eyes were bright with excitement, as if she could read every kinky thought running through his head -- and enjoyed them.

Shit! What was he gonna do now?

Rummaging in the lingerie drawer, Alec brought out the handcuffs and pulled her hands behind her back. She gave a little mewl of pleasure as the cuffs snapped closed, and he couldn't resist reaching around to cup those luscious breasts, rolling the nipples between his fingers as she pressed back against him, her naked little bottom rubbing against his groin.

"Oh, Jesus," Alec murmured, painfully aware of the way his breath rasped in his throat, the way his body was trembling, rigid with suppressed tension. Her body was soft against him, pliant and warm, almost quivering with eagerness.

She wanted him. She *wanted* him to take her -- and worse, Alec suspected she wanted him to take her exactly the way *he* wanted. Hard and dirty and twisted.

Fuck, I'm in trouble.

"Turn around, Persia," he ordered, trying to maintain some semblance of sternness. Fuck, Ben would have been able to handle her with no more than a look and a word!

Why couldn't he be like that? Maybe if he were, the girls would throw themselves at him the way they did at Ben.

Persia, at least, seemed to be enjoying his company -- but she was the one woman who wasn't *supposed* to! She stood, her face tilted up toward him, her lips parted in arousal.

"Undress me," he said.

Smiling, Persia sank to her knees before him and stretched her neck forward. He could feel the whisper of her teeth just above his skin as she seized his shirt and tugged, pulling it slowly out of his pants. Each tug pulled slightly at his groin, teasing his cock even further.

Alec leaned his head back against the mantel, closing his eyes. Christ, never in his *life* had he been this hard!

Her mouth continued upward, deftly popping each button out of its buttonhole. She had to stand and stretch upward to get the top one, and Alec marveled again at what a tiny thing she was, all of five foot two, maybe three...

Five foot two, eyes of blue...

He couldn't quite repress a groan as she pulled his shirt aside and ran her velvety lips over the expanse of his chest, slowly circling one of his nipples with her pointed little tongue. Then she flicked her tongue over it, making him gasp as it

contracted into a hard, bronzed point. Alec's hips jerked forward, and he felt a first spurt of pre-cum leak from his cock.

Looking up at him demurely as she unbuttoned his pants, Persia dropped to her knees again, leaning forward to seize his zipper in her teeth and draw it gently down. Christ, his cock was so sensitive he could feel every tiny click as the zipper's teeth separated, slowly exposing his groin. He looked down and saw his cockhead, flushed a deep purple and so hard it looked shiny, poking out of his briefs.

Persia was staring at it too, her eyes wide and sparkling with enthusiasm. She licked her lips hungrily and Alec groaned, his balls clenching hard at the very sight of those pouty pink lips so near his cock. A second drop of pre-cum beaded in his slit, rolling slowly down the curve of his cockhead.

Extending her tongue, Persia delicately lapped it off, and Alec bucked again, his hips jerking involuntarily toward that warm, waiting mouth.

Fuck, if he didn't get control of this situation right *now*, she was going to make him come before he even had his pants off.

"Tell me, Persia, have you ever played with nipple clamps?"

Oooh, this was promising! She liked pain, on occasion. As long as it was done right. And Alec looked like he'd spent a *lot* of time practicing.

Persia almost giggled, then decided to lie -- just for the fun of it. "What are those?" she asked, her eyes wide, smirking to herself as Alec bought it, hook, line and sinker, his hazel eyes darkening with lust at her *faux* innocence.

Her clit was thrumming between her thighs, and she leaned forward again, hungry to have that delectable cock in her mouth. She liked the tug of the handcuffs against her wrists, too -- being tied up had always been something she enjoyed, maybe partly because she knew all she ever had to do was shift shape to get out of it.

Billy was sweet in the sack, sure. And eager, *and* earnest -- but one look around Alec's bedroom had told her that *here* was a connoisseur. Alec was clearly a man who

reveled in sex, who knew how to draw it out to delectable heights. Who knew how to make it *last*.

Why, then, was she suddenly feeling a twinge of guilt? Persia puzzled over it a moment, perplexed. It wasn't that she hadn't *liked* sex with Billy, after all -- not by a long shot! It just wasn't what she wanted all the *time*.

Surely any reasonable person could understand that?

Alec interrupted her thoughts by pushing her back, away from the luscious cock. Persia pouted, then watched as he slid his pants and briefs off. He was taller than Billy, the lines of his body long and lean. Sure, he didn't have Billy's tanned, rolling muscles, but he was a thoroughly attractive man for all that -- and she liked his style. The way he drove, carelessly fast. The way he teased and grinned. Yeah, Alec definitely knew how to have a *good* time.

And she wasn't about to let this playboy get the best of her. Hell, no! She had a reputation to maintain, after all.

Tilting her head curiously, she watched as he dug the clamps out of the drawer and seated himself on the loveseat, beckoning her to come kneel between his thighs. Then he held the clamps up. The silver chain holding them together sparkled.

"These are nipple clamps."

Persia let her eyes widen further in feigned alarm. "You're going to put those on my... my..."

Alec grinned. "Want to cry off, Persia?"

She shook her head stubbornly, and Alec opened the first clamp, leaning forward as he placed it carefully around her erect nipple. She had to bite her lip to contain her moans as he tightened it slowly. "Too much?" he asked. She shook her head again, and panted with delight as he tightened it further, sending a spike of pure bliss through her.

"More?"

This time, Persia couldn't control her panting as she nodded, and Alec pulled back suddenly, staring at her.

* * *

Christ, what the hell was Billy *doing* with this chick? She was gutter trash, a total tramp. Look at her! She was literally quivering in delight at what he was doing to her!

And she'd lied to him. *What are those?* Alec snorted, remembering.

Yeah, as if you didn't know, Persia.

Fine, then. He tightened the clamp further, his blood racing. She rocked on her knees, pistoning her hips hungrily as he fastened the other, tightening it down until it pinched her nipple, the silver metal digging slightly into the pink, crinkled flesh. He stared down at it, his breath rasping in his throat.

Holding her arms, he tugged her up on her knees before him so that her full, heavy breasts were on a level with his eyes, the clamps dangling like jewelry from her large, pain-hardened nipples. She writhed lightly, her head thrown back, humming in delight at the sensations coursing through her body.

Fuck. Was there *anything* he could do to her that would make her say "stop"?

Suddenly furious, Alec reached out and cupped her breasts, closing his fingers over the nipple clamps and squeezing. Persia's neck arched backward, and she screamed in delight, "Oh, Alec! Yes!"

Oh, Jesus. She loved it. She absolutely *loved* what he was doing to her. Small, breathy yips of mingled pain and pleasure were spilling from her throat, exciting him in a way the grudging, pretended moans of his other playmates never had.

How high could I take her? he wondered. *How far?*

What would it be like to feel her come around him, *really* come, screaming in mingled agony and bliss as her orgasm took her?

But he couldn't. He couldn't -- he *had* to make her tell him "no." Hannah had been bad enough -- Billy didn't need a tramp like this fucking with his head, messing up his life...

No. But I do.

Staring down at Persia, feeling the ache in his groin, Alec admitted that everything he'd ever wanted, everything he'd ever dreamed of, was right here before him.

And he wanted her. He wanted her worse than any woman he'd ever met. His balls were a fury of hot, throbbing need. His cock was so hard he felt like he could drive nails with it.

God help me, I do.

Chapter Six

There was something really weird about the way he was looking at her. Even distracted by the sensations searing through her body, Persia noticed it. He had this strange, haunted expression on his face as he fondled her breasts, sending waves of pleasure from her stinging nipples straight to her throbbing clit. The outer lips of her cunt were so swollen she could feel them gliding against each other, slick with the juices spilling from her passage.

Oh, she *liked* Alec's games! She didn't mind at all the fact that he had her squirming on the floor at his feet -- but she had every intention of making *him* squirm, too.

He was crazy if he thought he could win this little battle.

His hands moved over her breasts, caressing them, squeezing them. He tugged lightly on the chain dangling between the nipple clamps, and she whined with delight. "What do you want to do now, Alec? Do you want to fuck my mouth?"

Letting her eyelids droop sensuously, she leaned forward, running her tongue up the length of his jutting erection, then swirling it over his hard, shiny head. Liquid spilled from its slit, hot and salty, and Persia lapped at it eagerly, smiling in triumph as she heard his low groan. "Oh, Jesus. Fuck!"

Sitting back on her heels, she peered up at him coyly. "Does that mean you want me to stop?"

He opened his mouth and then stiffened abruptly, and Persia almost laughed. If he said *yes*, it meant she won.

"Damn you, Persia." Reaching out, he grabbed her head, burying his hands in her platinum blonde hair. Then he pulled her to him, forcing her head down into his lap, his back arching as her mouth closed around his thick shaft.

Now, why is this so different than when Billy did it? she wondered as Alec pushed her head lower, flexing his hips to drive himself up into her mouth.

Because it's really me doing it, making him lose control, making him be rough...

And she reveled in it. She lashed her tongue over his slit, then pistoned her head downward, hearing his gasp as she took him all the way to the root.

Sucking vigorously, Persia drew her head back up, and felt a hot, heady triumph as he groaned and shoved her down again, his cock plumbing her mouth, the scent of his arousal filling her nostrils.

He held her there tightly, the depth of his need obvious in the way his hands trembled, in the sharp, short thrusts of his cock as he pushed up into her, fucking her mouth with a heedless hunger. She tugged her arms just to feel the handcuffs tighten around her wrists, and purred in delight as his cock swelled even further, thrusting between her lips.

He can't stop now, she wagered, urging him on with her tongue, pulling him deeper. *He can't possibly stop now...*

But he did. With a groan he pulled her off him, tumbling her back onto the thick carpet. She fell awkwardly, angry now that her hands were bound -- it made her look ridiculous to be sprawled there, her thighs flung wide, her hair in her eyes. He stood over her staring down, panting, his eyes wide with something that looked like shock. His cock angled stiffly before him, jerking in time with his heartbeat.

"Are you crying uncle, Alec?" She slit her eyes at him teasingly. He shook his head slowly, that strange, wondering gaze still on his face.

What in hell was wrong with him?

Persia wriggled on the carpet, drawing her thighs up, arranging herself more seductively. The haunted shadows in his eyes grew deeper. He looked like a man wrestling with his own demons.

Well, *this* was no fun!

She bet she knew what would get him, though. Smiling coyly, she rolled over, raising herself to her knees with her hands cuffed behind her, and thrust her butt upward.

With a low, despairing groan, Alec sank to his knees behind her.

Purring hungrily, Persia rocked her hips back toward him, and smirked to herself as she felt his hands on her ass. Still he hesitated, that thick, lovely cockhead pressed against her dripping folds. Then a harsh sob burst from his throat and he plunged into her, sinking home in one hard thrust.

"God, Persia," he whispered, his whole body trembling. "Oh, Christ, you feel just like velvet. All warm and soft and tight."

Oooh, she *liked* compliments. And she liked the harsh desperation in his voice. Turning her head slightly, she murmured, "I know someplace even tighter."

His shaft flexed inside her at her words and she heard him gasp, on the very edge of climax. Quickly, he pulled back out of her, and Persia heard him rise. A moment later, there was the scrape of a drawer being opened. Then she felt his hands on her hips again, and his cock nudged at her upturned ass.

"Oh, Persia." His hands lifted from her hips, and a second later she felt his finger, slick with some lubricant, circling her tight, puckered hole. "*Now* do you want to cry off?" he whispered.

She panted, barely able to shake her head, paralyzed by the lust pouring through her body. Closing her eyes, she concentrated on the feel of his finger rubbing her rectum, penetrating slightly as he coated her ass. Then it was withdrawn, and Persia moaned as his cockhead replaced it, pressing against her opening, slowly spreading it open as he forced himself into her tight little hole.

Persia squirmed on the carpet, dragging her breasts back and forth against its plush softness, whimpering with delight as the clamps tugged at her nipples. She was on fire, her whole body yearning between those two sharp sensations -- the pinch of the clamps, and the delectable feel of Alec working his cock into her ass.

In her mind she imagined Billy, his eyes wide, asking in horror, *You want me to do what?*

Sweet, innocent Billy. He had no *idea* what he was missing.

Purring, she rocked back against Alec and felt his cockhead pop past the tight ring of muscle. He groaned, his thighs quivering against hers, and held himself still a moment, fighting for control. Persia nudged her hips backward and he grabbed them tightly, pinning her there. "Not yet. Jesus, not yet."

Persia smiled in triumph. "Are you crying uncle, Alec?" She braced herself for the hard, punishing thrust she *knew* would be his answer.

But it never came. He hung above her, his hands heavy on her hips. Craning her neck, she could just see his face through the tumbled fall of her platinum curls. He was staring down at her ass, watching himself enter her, his jaw slack with desire. Then his gaze flicked to her face, his haunted hazel eyes holding hers as he whispered hoarsely, "Run away with me, Persia. Run away and live with me. You don't... You don't want Billy. You want *me*."

With a ragged gasp, he plunged himself inside her.

"Yes! Oh, *yes*, Alec!" She cried out in delight, arching back to meet him, *loving* the fullness of him inside her, stretching her open. Her nipples blazed with fire as his thrusts rocked her back and forth, her breasts dragging against the carpet. Reaching around, Alec's fingers found her clit, rubbing over the hard, sensitive nub with a firm, practiced touch.

Persia quivered, moaning in ecstasy as he pounded into her, his hips slapping her ass, his fingers pressing and stroking and squeezing her clit. Heat coiled in her belly, flaring along her nerves, and she felt his cock swell even further, his hard, tight balls grazing the lips of her cunt with each thrust.

He stroked into her, deeper, faster, his groans filling her ears, his cock hammering into her with desperate urgency. His fingers caressed her clit, flicking over it, teasing the fire inside her higher and higher...

Crying out loudly, Persia arched below him as her climax roared through her, her inner muscles spasming with the force of her release. She heard Alec moan as his balls contracted and he slammed his hips forward, burying his pulsing cock inside her as he came, wave after wave of cum filling her ass.

Then a voice shrieked, "Get *off* her, you bastard! What are you *doing* to her?" Persia screeched in shock as Billy plowed into his brother, yanking Alec out of her and tumbling them both to the floor.

Oh, shit!

Alec stared up in horror as Billy flung himself toward them, picturing in that instant exactly what the kid had seen as he opened the door -- his girlfriend in handcuffs, her face pressed to the carpet, crying out as his big brother fucked her in the ass.

Fuck! He probably thinks I was raping her!

And God knows what Billy would think of the nipple clamps...

Then Billy slammed into him, knocking him backward, and light exploded behind Alec's eyes as Billy's fists hammered his face. Seizing Billy's shirt, he rolled to one side, throwing him off him. "Dammit, Billy! Stop!"

"Fuck you, you bastard!"

They wrestled furiously, tumbling about the room, slamming into the dresser, the bed, the couch. Distantly, he could hear Persia's shrieks. Billy fought like a madman to beat his face to a pulp, and he fought just as desperately to pin him.

"What the fuck is going *on* here!"

Alec froze, and in that unguarded second a hard, heavy blow landed on his temple. Stunned, he sprawled on the carpet as Ben heaved Billy off him. Alec took one look at the black fury on his older brother's face and decided to stay right where he was.

Not so Billy. He struggled like a wild thing -- but Ben was two inches taller than Alec, and outweighed the youngest Gruff brother by a good thirty pounds.

"Let me go! Let me go, damn you!"

"What the hell is wrong with you?" Ben tightened his grip. Then he saw Persia, still sprawled on the floor near Alec. "Who the fuck is this?" His sharp emerald eyes noted the handcuffs, the nipple clamps. "One of yours, I take it."

"She's mine!" Billy thrashed desperately, taking advantage of Ben's momentary shock to yank himself free and throw himself down beside Persia who was huddled on the floor, crying. "Honey, I'm sorry! I'm so sorry I left you!" He fumbled awkwardly with the handcuffs until he sprang the release, and gathered her up into his arms.

Jealousy stabbed through Alec, puncturing his guilt, and he snarled as Billy stroked her hair. "Are you sure about that?"

"Shut up, Alec! I saw what you did to her! I... you..."

"Yeah? That's what you think!"

"Stop it! Both of you!" Ben towered in the doorway, arms folded across his massive chest, his emerald eyes flashing with rage. Behind him, in the hall, Alec could see the suitcase he'd dropped hastily when he'd heard the fighting. "Now somebody explain what's going on."

"It was him!" Billy flung out an accusing finger. "He *raped* my girlfriend!"

"Oh, *bullshit*, Billy!" Somewhere in the back of his head, Alec was horrified to hear himself talking like this to his little brother -- but the sight of him holding her, stroking her, when she'd said... She'd said... "She said she'd move in with me!"

"*What?*" Billy's eyes were wide with scornful disbelief. "No, she didn't! *Tell* him, Persia!"

At a sharp gesture from Ben, they both shut up. "Let her go, Billy."

Reluctantly, glaring, Billy turned her loose. Sniffling, Persia drew in on herself, sitting with her arms wrapped around her knees as tears spilled down her face. More gently than Alec would have thought possible, Ben hunkered before her, his green eyes holding hers sternly. "Is this true, Persia? Did you come here with Billy?"

She snuffled again, raking her arm across her face, and nodded.

"And you slept with Alec?" His gaze flicked to the nipple clamps. "Of your own free will?" Ben glanced narrowly at him, and Alec felt a stab of anguish at the mistrust in his eyes.

Her face pale, Persia nodded again.

Sighing, Ben stood, helping her up, and ran a hand through his short, neatly trimmed hair. Lines of fatigue marred his face, making him look older than his thirty-one years. "I take it you both still want her?"

Billy nodded stubbornly. Alec looked up at her standing there, trembling, her arms wrapped across those gorgeous tits. He wasn't as blind as Billy. He could see what she was. She was kinky, opportunistic, shallow...

Just like me.

Dropping his gaze, Alec nodded.

"Personally, I think you're both fools." Alec flushed. Billy scowled and looked away. Ben shook his head in disgust. "Well, it appears you need to make a decision. One or the other, Persia. Make up your mind."

She looked at Billy, who gazed up at her beseechingly, his brown eyes pleading. Hating himself, Alec raised his head as she turned to him. She looked so lost, so frightened...

So torn.

"I..." She glanced back at Billy, her eyes wide, the tears welling again. "Billy, I..." Billy bent his head, anguish showing in every line of his young, handsome face. Alec's heart clenched with guilt -- and relief. "I can't!"

Sobbing, she whirled away from them. Ben reached to grab her -- but his hand closed on nothing. Alec stared, dumbfounded, as the nipple clamps fell to the floor, the silver chain between them glittering, landing atop a handful of lace and silk as a fluffy white cat streaked out the open door.

"What the --"

Ben broke off abruptly as Billy lunged after her, shouting desperately, "Persia! Persia!" as he disappeared into the hall.

Ben and Alec stared at each other in disbelief. "Did that just happen?"

Alec nodded slowly. "Jesus. Ben, I... I'm..."

"Save it." Hauling him to his feet, Ben scooped up Alec's discarded pants and thrust them into his hands. "You go after Billy. Keep him in the house. Sit on him if you have to."

"Where are you going?"

Ben's face was grim. "To find that damn cat."

Chapter Seven

Persia streaked through the soft morning light, her lungs burning, her throat tight with tears she couldn't shed in cat form.

Sliding through the bars of the gate, she turned blindly, dashing along the shoulder of the road. Cars whizzed by, the turbulence of their passage whipping her fur. A horn honked, and she jerked away in terror as a tire almost clipped her. She leaped aside and landed stiff-legged, staring about wildly.

Where was she? Which way was home? She wanted Tori. She wanted Lu. She wanted to be somewhere, *anywhere* where these feelings didn't tug at her, didn't make her feel so lost and scared and confused.

Run away with me, Persia. You don't want Billy. You want me.

God, Persia. You're amazing. You're absolutely the most amazing woman...

And Ben, kneeling before her, his deep voice both stern and gentle. *One or the other, Persia. Make up your mind.*

I can't! I can't!

Terrified, thoroughly dejected, she stood on the roadside, wailing her grief, heedless of the cars whipping past. All she wanted was to be home -- even if home was a dilapidated old farmhouse. She didn't care. She didn't care anymore.

Somebody, please come and take me home.

Ben breathed a sigh of relief as he spotted the cat crouched on the shoulder of the road ahead, miaowing piteously. He wasn't about to waste time trying to figure out what the hell she was -- it didn't *matter* what the hell she was. The only thing that mattered had been the desperation on Billy's face as she'd run out the door.

The only time Ben had ever seen that expression before had been the day he'd had the task of telling a thirteen-year-old boy their parents were dead.

And Alec! Ben had few illusions about his brother -- he was a lackadaisical playboy, a charming, harmless ne'er-do-well. Never in a million years would Ben have expected him to do *this*.

But what really surprised him was the fiery determination in Alec's eyes as he'd fought -- actually *fought* -- Billy for this... this... whatever she was. It made no sense. Things had always come easily to Alec. Ben had long ago given up hope that he'd ever bother fighting for anything.

So of course he has to grow some spine now, damn it all. And what the hell am I going to do about it?

If it had just been Alec, Ben would have simply said "good riddance." But he hated seeing his baby brother hurt. It invariably brought back the way he'd felt, watching Billy's eyes well up with tears when he explained that Mom and Dad weren't coming back. Irrational as it was, Ben hadn't been able to help feeling guilty.

Strangely enough, the sight of that forlorn shape on the side of the road provoked that same, familiar twinge. He slowed the Mercedes, letting it coast to the shoulder.

The cat sprang up, its -- *her* -- sapphire eyes wide with alarm.

"No, Persia! Wait!"

But she skittered backward, disappearing with a flash of white into the bushes lining the road.

Ben threw himself after her, pushing through the heavy brush. Bursting through to the other side, he caught a glimpse of her streaking ahead through knots of scrub pine beach grass. He could smell the ocean clearly here, and the sandy soil shifted under his feet as he pursued. Finally, scratched and sweaty, he reached a clearing banked with primroses on one side and a tall stand of poplar on the other. He looked about, but there was no trace of her.

"Damn!" Standing erect, his chest heaving as he sucked in a breath, he shouted, "Persia! Persia!"

"What do you want?" The low, quavering voice came from his right, behind the primroses. The scent of salt was heavy in the air.

"I just want to talk, Persia."

"What about?"

Yeah, she was definitely crying. Ben ran a hand briskly through his hair. Teenage boys, he knew how to handle. Crying women were another matter entirely.

He sat down -- why not? If she decided to run, he'd never catch her. "Look, can't you come out? I just want to talk to you."

"No." The word was sullen. "I'm naked."

Ben rolled his eyes. *You were wearing handcuffs and not much else the last time I saw you*, he was tempted to say. Instead, he unbuttoned his shirt, tossing it in the direction of her voice. "I'll close my eyes, okay?"

He did, and waited, listening to gulls cry along the shoreline which must be somewhere just ahead. After a moment, he heard a small rustling. "Can I open my eyes now?"

"I guess."

She was sitting huddled on the sand, knees drawn up to her chest, tears still trickling down her cheeks. She looked so waifish, his shirt billowing around her -- at least six sizes too big -- that Ben couldn't help but smile. Such a teeny creature to have wreaked so much havoc! He hunkered down nearby, keeping his gaze neutral. "So, why don't you tell me what happened?"

"I don't know."

"Well..." Ben scratched his jaw. He hadn't had time to shave before his flight. "Do you always take advantage of young, innocent boys?"

"No." She darted him a sulky look. "Sometimes I take advantage of rich old men."

He couldn't help it -- he threw back his head and laughed. "You know, if any of the gold-diggers who've been chasing me the past eight years had been half that honest, they might have gotten somewhere."

"What do you do, anyway?" She cocked her head, a canny glint in her eyes. The scent of primroses was thick around them, and the poplars rustled lightly in the breeze.

"I'm an efficiency analyst. Do you know what that is?"

She shook her head, her chin propped on her knees.

"Basically, I tell people how to do things better. I'm good at looking at complex situations and finding the easiest, most effective solution." He sighed heavily -- if only he could see the solution to *this* little situation! "At twenty-three, fresh out of grad school, I talked my way into a consulting contract at Bath Ironworks. My bid was so ridiculously low I guess they figured they weren't out much if I didn't work out." He shrugged. "Now I travel all over the country. It's not a bad living."

At that, Persia snorted, and he laughed again. "Okay, it's an obscenely good living. Was that part of what interested you in Billy?"

"No."

Ben cocked an eyebrow skeptically.

"No, it wasn't! And besides, I knew it was yours."

"And waiting around forty years for a possible inheritance didn't hold much appeal."

"Yeah, as *if*."

He chuckled at the honest contempt in her voice for *that* idea. "So what did happen?"

"I don't know!" She hugged herself tighter, her tears starting up again. "It wasn't... I didn't mean... It was just supposed to be a one-night stand!"

"Why didn't you leave, then?"

"I don't know," she wailed. "I don't know! I was gonna, and then I couldn't, and then Alec came in, and I... I..."

God, what *was* it about her? He should be furious with her -- she was the cause of this whole mess. But instead Ben found himself moving to sit beside her, draping a comforting arm around her as she cried. "Hey," he murmured. "Hey, it's okay."

Slowly, her sobs abated. Lifting her chin, he turned her face toward him, wiping her tears gently away with his fingers. She stared up at him, still sniffing, her big sapphire eyes holding an almost childlike vulnerability.

She hadn't meant to, Ben realized, amazed. This waifish little vixen truly hadn't meant to cause any harm.

"You need a keeper, Persia, you know that?"

"What do you mean? No, I don't!"

He chuckled -- and damned if that wasn't the fourth time he'd laughed in the past five minutes. "Yeah, you do. You're a nine-car pile-up waiting to happen."

She glared at him, outraged, and Ben couldn't help it -- he leaned forward, laughing at her fury, and kissed her.

Sulking, she tried to pull away -- not because she objected to his kiss, he was certain, but because he'd laughed at her. But despite whatever Alec might think, Ben did, in fact, know his way around women. He persisted, his mouth caressing hers until the resistance faded from her limbs and she clung to him, panting, her lips soft and tremulous beneath his firm kisses. When he finally released her, she sighed deeply, her head tilted back as if eager for more. Finally, her lashes fluttered open and she gazed up at him adoringly, her eyes huge and luminous and so crystalline blue...

Then Ben did the first truly stupid thing in his life -- he bent his head down and kissed her again.

She was so soft, her entire body pliant and malleable as he pulled her against him. He cupped her chin, raising her face to his as he devoured her lips. He felt drunk on their sweetness, his head spinning, the blood thundering in his ears, his chest, his cock...

Hesitantly, her pointy little tongue flicked against his. Ben groaned, and plunged his tongue fiercely into her mouth. She opened before him, yielding everything to his embrace, clinging to him hungrily as his mouth raked over hers.

Then he bent his head to her breast, unbuttoning his own shirt to uncover one warm, dusky nipple, and she sighed in his ear as he drew it into his mouth. Suckling it firmly, he loosened his belt and kicked off his shoes, then lowered her to the sand and gazed down at her wonderingly.

She was intoxicating. Enchanting. Amoral and innocent and delightfully transparent. Impulsive, irresponsible, immature, careless... and completely, utterly irresistible.

She held her arms up to him, smiling hopefully, and Ben bent down to her, knowing he was lost.

Billy's kisses made her think of strawberries -- sweet and fresh and wholesome. Alec, now... Alec was like chocolate torte, decadent and rich, stirring the senses. But Ben... Ben made her toes curl.

Oh, my!

His kisses were demanding, determined. His mouth moved over hers, taking what he liked, savoring her with a thoroughness Persia had never experienced. His tongue slid between her teeth to find hers, teasing it out to twine with his until she was squirming on the sand below him -- just from a kiss!

Eagerly, she ran her hands over him. He was built like Billy, but on a larger scale -- his shoulders so broad they dwarfed her, the heavy muscles in his arms and back flowing like liquid iron under his warm skin. She ran her hand down his chest, purring in delight at the thick thatch of fur tickling her palm, then followed his taut abs down to his waist...

"Uh-uh, Persia." Ben shook his head at her, lifting her hand away from his crotch. "Don't be impatient."

She pouted, turning her head away -- she wanted him *in* her, right *now*! But Ben just chuckled and turned her face back toward him, kissing her again, long and deep, until she felt like she was melting, right here on the sand.

His scent filled her nostrils, clean and strong and musky. *I'm never giving this shirt back*, she decided. *Not ever. I'm going to keep it and then whenever I want to I can take it out and smell him again.*

His hand slid to her breast, cupping it -- and big as her breasts were, Persia was shocked to realize his fingers encompassed it, squeezing it lightly, then trailing up to tickle over her erect nipple. Sweet, shivery shocks ran through her body, delicate and delectable, and she bit her lip, trying to be good, trying to be patient...

It was so hard! Her pussy throbbed urgently, begging to be pierced, and her clit ached, wanting him to touch her there, right *there*.

But Ben obviously had other plans. Propping himself on one arm, he traced a line down her chest, his fingers gliding over her skin, barely touching, making her quiver with delight as he followed the cleft of her cleavage, down over her soft belly, just brushing the topmost curls of her sex -- and then changed direction.

She whimpered, wanting to urge his hand downward, feeling juices spill from her slit as she writhed hungrily. In response, he lowered his mouth to one full breast as his fingers circled the other, still lightly, still teasing. His lips whispered over her skin, following the curve of her breast, his tongue darting out to lap the soft underside. Her nipples ached, longing to be touched -- but he continued his slow, tormenting perusal until she was gasping below him, arching her back, thrusting her breasts up toward him shamelessly.

Smiling at her brazenness, Ben closed his lips over one hard, swollen nub, and Persia yelped in delight. His fingers toyed with the other, rubbing it, tugging it until she thought she might faint from the sensation.

God! She was hornier than she'd ever been in her *life*, and he hadn't even touched her pussy yet!

"Going to be nice to me, Persia?" he growled in her ear.

"Uh-huh," she breathed, hardly daring to move. "Only please, Ben, please..."

"Please what?"

"Please make love to me now."

Grinning in triumph, he shed his pants quickly, and Persia gasped. "Oh. Oh, my!"

Then he was moving over her, spreading her thighs, that enormous cock pressing between her folds, parting them, pushing into her... She *was* going to faint. She was sure of it.

"Oh, *Ben*." She reached up to him blindly, reveling in the feel of his strong, solid body covering hers, pinning her down as his shaft prodded deeper, inch by inch.

My God, how much *was* there? Her blood thundered in her ears as he slid in even further, his cock filling her so completely she was gasping in shock, shuddering beneath him in a frenzy of lust.

She bucked below him, her nerve ends burning with fire. Groaning, he flexed his hips and drove in so deep Persia saw sparks dancing behind her eyelids. He pressed his groin tightly against hers -- and that hard, steady pressure on her clit tumbled her over the edge. Ecstasy exploded inside her body, searing through her limbs, making her cry out, over and over, as her cunt contracted around that huge, rock-hard cock. He impaled her, mastering her completely, pushing in even harder until she came again, whimpering, pleading incoherently, her head tossing as waves of bliss broke through her, again and again, and again.

Gasping, she fell back against the sand, realizing only then she'd been clinging to him desperately, holding on for dear life as her orgasms shook her. Wonderingly, she looked up at him, raising one hand to run a finger along his heavy jaw and over his full, beautifully molded lips.

He groaned again at her touch, the corded muscles of his neck standing out, and his emerald-green eyes bored into hers, dark with passion. Then he moved above her, that huge shaft sliding out of her only to press in again as he took her, over and over, absolutely and completely. There was nothing, nothing in the world but his cock

claiming her pussy, flexing inside her as his groans grew louder. He bent his head, pressing his cheek against hers, and she could hear his heartbeat thundering as he made love to her, his cock piercing deeper than any man ever had, blotting out the clearing around them, the sound of the surf, the sun in the sky...

Roaring, he lifted himself, his head thrown back, the muscles in his chest and neck and shoulders straining in rapture as his hips pushed down hard, burying his cock up to the balls. She cried out in bliss as she climaxed again, her cunt gripping his cock even as it flexed inside her, shooting wave after wave of cum deep into her passage.

Small, high-pitched mewls spilled from her throat as she clung to him, quivering, feeling fire race along her nerves until it faded into a bone-deep, golden heat. Then, with a deep, ragged sigh, he collapsed on top of her, utterly spent.

Lost in her warmth, Ben lay there, panting. The minutes passed -- or hours, he couldn't tell. Finally, reluctantly, he slid out of her and rolled onto his back, breathing deeply. "Oh, Persia."

Turning onto his side, he propped himself up on one elbow and looked down at her. His shirt flapped in a gust of breeze off the ocean, concealing and then revealing her lush, creamy breasts, her curvy little belly, the soft flaxen curls which covered her sex. Trailing his fingers through them, Ben smiled ruefully.

Oh man, Billy. What a mess. What a total freaking mess.

But fixing messes was his job. And it was painfully obvious there was only one possible solution to the Persia problem.

"Come on," he said, rolling unsteadily to his feet. God, he wasn't sure he could even walk straight.

"Where are we going, Ben?"

He reached down to pull her to her feet. "Wait and see."

* * *

Alec watched from the porch as Billy flew down the front steps. "Persia!" Almost before Ben had stopped the car, he swept her up into his arms, her chubby calves dangling, the hem of Ben's shirt flapping around her soft thighs.

A pang seared Alec's heart at the way she turned her face up to Billy, smiling sweetly. Billy covered it with kisses, and Alec looked away.

It's okay, he told himself sternly. Billy loves her. And you're a big boy, Alec -- you can take this.

Liar, his heart whispered back.

But then Persia slid from Billy's embrace, leaving him standing on the drive as she moved toward Alec, her hips swaying, her pouty little lips curved in a naughty, provoking smirk. God, just the way she looked at him made him hard! She held his gaze as she approached -- and then sashayed right past him into the house.

Alec swallowed, staring after her. She glanced back teasingly. "What's the matter, Alec? Cat got your tongue?" With a saucy wink, she headed up the stairs.

Shaking off his paralysis, he turned back to Ben -- and found Billy openly gaping at their eldest brother. Ben cleared his throat uncomfortably. "I'm, uh... I'm gone a lot, you know. You, uh... You two think you can keep Persia entertained while I'm gone?"

Staring at his brother, Alec felt his face slowly spreading in a broad grin. "She got to you too, didn't she?"

Oh, my God. The great Benjamin Gruff blushes. Alec laughed aloud.

"Well?" Ben demanded.

Alec and Billy glanced at each other. Billy nodded. Alec shrugged.

"Good."

As Ben strode up the porch steps, Alec couldn't resist murmuring, "Want to borrow my handcuffs?" Ben glared, and followed Persia into the house. Alec grinned at his back.

Billy wandered up the steps, looking dazed. "So I guess that means she's staying."

"Looks that way." Alec shot a speculative glance up at the balcony outside Ben's bedroom, then turned firmly away.

"Alec?"

"Yeah?"

"Will she... I mean, do you think she'll be happy here?"

Alec grinned. "With three of us dancing attendance on her every whim?" Billy let out a huge sigh of relief, and grinned back. "Come on. Let's go play Nintendo."

"How about Frisbee?"

Alec threw a companionable arm around Billy's shoulders. "Whatever you want, little brother. Whatever you want."

* * *

The high-ceilinged room was painted white, the walls glowing with reflected sunlight. Creamy apricot-colored gladioli bloomed in a vase on the nightstand, their delicate fragrance perfuming the room. French doors stood open onto a balcony with a stunning view of the ocean, and Persia threw herself onto the positively *enormous* bed and shrieked into a pillow.

Oh, my gawd!

Grinning, she rolled onto her back. How good could it get? Waffles in the morning -- and kisses like strawberries, fresh and sweet. *And racy lingerie and bondage and hot, kinky sex.*

Annnnd...

The door opened, and Persia lifted her head. Ben stood there, a small, amused smile playing about his lips. "So, are you going to be a good kitty from now on?"

"Oh, yes, Ben," she said fervently. "As good as good as good!"

He snorted. "I doubt it. You'll try, at least. Hopefully three men will be enough, even for you." Then he shook a finger at her warningly. "The second you decide to wander, it ends, Persia -- all of it."

She gazed at him meekly, folding her hands in her lap. She'd be an angel. An absolute angel.

He studied her skeptically, then reached into his back pocket. "Fortunately, I think I know how to buy your good behavior." Drawing out his wallet, he selected a credit card and held it out. Snatching it from his fingers, Persia squealed, bouncing on the bed in her excitement. Ben grinned. "So tell me, Persia, do you like emeralds?"

She froze, unable to contain the greedy gleam in her eyes. He chuckled. "How about pearls?"

She nodded enthusiastically.

"And diamonds?"

Persia stopped dead still, complete and utter happiness blooming in her chest. Then she launched herself at Ben, throwing her arms about his neck. "Oh, *yes*, Ben!"

He clasped her to him, his kisses hard and urgent as he carried her back to the bed. As he lowered her down and covered her body with his own, he murmured intently, "And which one do you like *best*, Persia?"

She giggled, sliding her arms around his neck. "Oh, Ben," she chastised. "You know perfectly well a lady *never* tells."

Epilogue

For the twenty-third time, Tori paced down the alley beside Geno's to peer along the dark street. Lu slumped against the corner of the nightclub, hands thrust in her pockets.

"Tori..."

"Just give it a minute!"

Lu sighed. "Tori, Sean's already onstage. Face it. She's not coming."

Tori glared at her. Then her shoulders slumped. "Yeah. I guess you're right."

"Tori, it's not your fault."

Yes, it was. But what, really, could she have done? Even if she'd turned Jake and Darius down, they'd never have been interested in Persia instead.

But if she had, at least Persia would still be here.

Lu glanced at her, those brown eyes studying her cannily. "So, if you *could* go back -- would you change it?"

No. No, she wouldn't. Tori hung her head. "Yeah, okay. Let's go in."

But as she turned away to walk up the alley to the loading dock, Lu stiffened beside her. "Hey, Tor?"

She was grinning. Turning slowly, Tori looked where she was pointing, at a long, gleaming white limo rolling up to the curb.

The man behind the wheel was as rakish and dashing as a blond Errol Flynn. But handsomer. Definitely handsomer. But he was apparently just the beginning. Tori stared as the most mouthwatering boy she'd ever seen climbed out of the back, shaggy beach-boy hair falling around tanned shoulders positively rolling with muscle. He was followed by a man who had to be six-two at least, with commanding green eyes and a mature forcefulness to his features that reminded her sharply of Darius.

Then, daintily extending a white little hand, Persia gracefully allowed the two men to help her out as the driver got out and stood, leaning against the grille of the limo with his arms folded, grinning.

Tori stared. "Persia!"

"What?" The little minx blinked at her innocently. And was that a diamond necklace glittering at her throat? "Sorry I'm late. Oh, this is Ben. Alec. Billy..." She simpered, positively simpered, up at the stunning young man. Then she turned back to Tori, tossing her head airily. "I hope somebody got my keyboards set up already."

Strutting past them, she headed up the alley. The three men nodded greetings and disappeared around the corner, heading for the club's front entrance. Tori stood dumbfounded, staring after Persia.

"Told you she'd land on her feet," Lu murmured. "Come on."

Sean looked up from tuning his guitar as they trooped out onto the stage, and grinned at the sight of Persia. Swinging his Gibson into position, he launched into the all-too-familiar guitar solo.

For once, Tori didn't wince at the sound of it as she picked up the bass line. The irrepressible sex kitten gave Sean a flirtatious wink as she moved to the mike, and Tori glanced over to see Lu roll her eyes and laugh.

The crowd hollered, wolf-whistles breaking out here and there as Persia launched for the gazillionth-and-one time into her signature song, preening and strutting in true Persia fashion.

"Don't you wish you could be as carefree and wild..."

I don't know about class, Tori thought ruefully, shaking her head. But she's sure got style.

Sierra Dafoe

Sierra Dafoe published her first erotic romance with Changeling Press in May of 2006, and hasn't stopped since! Named a Rising Star of Romance in July by Love Romances and More, she received three 2006 CAPA nominations including Favorite Erotic Author (a fact which still has her stunned!).

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