

## HOOKED

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Edited by *Pamela Campbell*.

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Warning:

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Hooked

Diana Hunter

Dedication

For my editor, Pam Campbell, whose polishing cloth is responsible for making this story into a true gem.

## Chapter One

Strolling down the busy downtown street, Tania Pelligrini swayed her hips in their tight leather pants. Her stiletto sandals clicked along the sidewalk, their laces tied in neat little bows just above her heels. Bright red nail polish gleamed from her toes in the same shade that shone on her perfectly manicured fingernails. Long tawny hair, swept up into an untidy ponytail, curled tendrils of silk around the sharp features of her face. Her ample bosom, barely contained in the short-sleeved stretch top, bounced enticingly with every step.

Keeping her chin tilted down, she looked up through long lashes and smiled coyly at every man she passed. Whistles filled the air as she passed a construction zone and she waved and grinned at the men leaning from the beams to look their fill. A woman pulled a little girl from her path and scorn crossed Tania's face. She had no disease the child would catch. Except joy in her own sexuality. And that, Tania wished for the little girl with all her heart.

During business hours, Tania dressed with the decorum expected of one who worked in a prestigious law firm, even if she was a lowly research assistant. The pay was good, the hours predictable and at the age of thirty-five, Tania had no aspirations to change her career. The lawyers in the firm treated her well and she got along with them all. From the custodian to the head lawyer affectionately known as the Old

Man, all knew her name and she knew theirs.

Except today was Saturday and Tania was horny. With no one special in her life, she hadn't had sex in almost a year. Long ago she had decided that dating coworkers was too messy when things didn't work out—and sometimes even when they did. She enjoyed her independence. No one's sensitive ego to tiptoe around, no one's schedule to have to match. No one she had to prod into action when she was in the mood.

What had happened to all the “take charge” kind of guys? Had the women's movement succeeded in bleeding all the life out of men?

No, she was better off alone even if it meant taking her pleasure by herself. She'd lost count of the late-night sessions she had with a variety of toys she had purchased to keep herself occupied. For a long time, the toys had satisfied her. They didn't talk back or walk out on you, even though she did need to clean up after them and feed them batteries every once in a while. She grinned at the thought and added a lilt to her step.

Unfortunately, the motor had burned out of her favorite toy two weeks ago. And while she knew she could go buy another one, Tania just didn't have the urge. She wanted more than what her toys could offer.

And so this morning, after dressing for fun, Tania had headed out her apartment door and aimed for downtown. The malls provided better shopping for the masses, but tucked away in the corners of the city were shops infinitely more interesting than the mass-market offerings of the suburban malls. With no agenda in mind other than doing a little shopping and striking up a conversation with the first handsome man she found, Tania sauntered along the street.

\* \* \* \* \*

Jim Delaney had no idea what was about to hit him. His fortieth birthday loomed not too far away and he'd been waking up feeling his age more and more every day. He ate right, visited the gym three times a week and biked to work in addition to his daily regimen of exercise and a three-mile walk. In spite of all this, his body still protested when he forced it out of bed each morning.

He changed his walking route every day, as much for variety as for other reasons. Although his old girlfriend had finally stopped stalking him, threatening retribution for her own guilty interest in kinky sex, Jim still chose not to settle into a routine she could count on. Currently dressed in khaki walking shorts and a white T-shirt, Jim's physique made him the envy of his friends and turned the heads of many women on the street. No paunch hung over his belt, no flab gathered under his chin. Trim and fit with just a touch of gray at the temples in his otherwise black hair, Jim's sexy appearance called to mind the predator of the boardroom, a place he thrived.

The fact that he had inherited his company from his father didn't take away from his accomplishments since taking the helm. He'd expanded their market while keeping both the product's and the company's integrity. For that, his male employees admired him. His female employees adored him. He knew that women primped and preened when he walked by, but his attention was never more than polite. How could he ever explain to a modern-day woman that his sexual interests were politically incorrect? His last foray had proven disastrous.

This Saturday, Jim chose a route that would take him through a quiet section of downtown rather than the more residential areas. With no one special in his life right now, he found himself in need of some

company, even though he had adopted a scruffy appearance for the day. He hadn't shaved and he had let the summer wind dry his hair any way it wanted to. His purposeful walk led him along the secondary streets preferred by the city's native pedestrians and into some of the busier neighborhoods.

A sociable man by nature, he didn't subscribe to the attitude held by so many city people. He looked people in the eye as he passed them, knowing only a few would meet his gaze to make a small connection in the sea of people surrounding them. Men more than women returned his glance, which did not surprise him. Over the years he discovered women tended to shield themselves, cloak their bodies in invisible armor to keep strange men at bay. Not that he blamed them. Too many lunatics out there on the street. Playing it safe was totally understandable. But there was no reason he couldn't look and appreciate the beauty of the women he passed.

The smile in his eyes remained as he passed a woman and her little girl. The woman stared straight ahead, as if her eyes could bore a hole that would tunnel the two of them straight to their destination. The little girl's manner was still innocent and untrained, however. She looked around her with the curiosity given to the very young. Her eyes met Jim's and she smiled up at him, revealing a pretty smile that was all the better for the missing two front teeth.

Jim winked at her as they passed and his heart lightened. As long as there were children in the world, there was hope. A sappy thought, but one that sustained him when the mother gave him a dirty look and sniffed. He wished happiness on the child as he continued his brisk walk.

\* \* \* \* \*

A small café, its four tiny tables nestled under an oversized awning, beckoned to Tania's thirst. Surrounded by a low wrought iron railing, the café would give her respite from her heels, yet still allow her to watch the passersby. It was just too charming to pass up.

Entering the outside enclave, she took the last available table. Using one painted wrought iron chair for her packages, she sank into the other, leaning back with a grateful sigh. Smiling cheerfully at the older but still handsome waiter, she gave him the once-over and accompanying nod of approval before ordering water with lemon.

Her morning had been productive. One small shop, run by a woman from India, produced a beautiful sleeveless silk dress that would go wonderfully with the flat sandals she found in a Moroccan shop. Just two shops down from the café, she'd found a lingerie shop but, after considerable window shopping, did not go in. She had no one to buy sexy things for.

The thought distressed her only a little. Her sister married early and soon gave Tania nieces to dote on. Perhaps someday she would like a family of her own, but for right now, she found being the favorite aunt was actually a role she very much enjoyed. It let her play the heroine when she offered to take the kids for the weekend so Sarah and Rob could have some time together. And on Sunday night, she could give the kids back.

Leaning back with a contented sigh, she took in the view. Tourists and businessmen in their professional attitudes would never find this little out-of-the-way side street. Just the locals knew and populated it with their diversity. Across the street, an older, established Greek market vied for customers with the new Korean market just moved in next door. Shouts in Greek and Korean mingled with the languages of Mexico and Indonesia. Somehow a French café seemed to fit right in with the polyglot cacophony.

And into the mix walked a tiger. Jim Delaney's unshaven appearance did not hide his controlled

demeanor, nor his obvious enjoyment of the life that teemed around him. His step, almost cocky in nature, bounced him into Tania's line of sight, and her breath caught in a way it hadn't in quite some time. So when Jim's gaze roved over the patrons of the café, Tania made sure their eyes met.

The striking woman's eyes did not fall or look away. Instead they held a challenge and Jim paused on the sidewalk to smile back at her. His mind filtered through his acquaintances and came up empty. Besides, that smile was a come-hither look if ever he'd seen one. And he was a sucker for those tendrils of dark golden hair that curled around her face.

A waiter approached her table, being sure to lean in to get the full effect of the woman's low-cut top. She rewarded him with a smile and a straightening of her shoulders, flicking her glance back toward him to see if he might also like a closer look.

Jim grinned at the woman's obvious flirtation and it appealed to his ego. Giving her a once-over of his own, he noted the stilettos and the tight pants. The table blocked his view of her waist, but it didn't matter. Her other attributes were presented for display and he liked a woman with ample breasts.

By the time his gaze returned to her face, lust had settled in his groin. Probably a hooker, he decided, then shrugged. He wasn't one to turn down an afternoon's delight just because he would have to pay for it. And his libido could use a good workout, even if it came from a professional. It had been far too long since he had gotten what he wanted from a woman. Another glance around the tables showed only one empty chair, fortuitously the one that held the sexy woman's packages.

The sexy beast sauntered into the shade of the café, casting an inquiring glance in her direction. She nodded and sat up, removing the bags from the chair beside her. Tania watched, intrigued by the bulge in his pants as the tall, handsome stranger pulled the chair closer to hers as he sat.

Tania liked the way his look covered her entire body and she tilted her head to smile at him, almost demure in her own appreciation of his appearance. No beard to tickle her when he kissed her, she noted...only a little weekend scruff. Cunning dimples that played hide-and-seek in his cheeks. Dark hair long enough to tousle and hold onto in passion, and deep blue eyes that twinkled even in the shade of the café awning.

The breeze tossed his scent in her direction—she inhaled deeply, trying him out. A light cologne greeted her, mixed with the perspiration of a walk in the sun. Leaning forward to give him a close-up view of what he'd ogled from the street, she put her hand out in introduction.

"Hi, I'm Tania. Looks like you could use a glass of water."

"Jim Delaney." Decorum dictated that he simply shake her hand and then release her. But her fingers were cool as they wrapped around his and he held it for a moment longer than he would have in polite society. His eyes were again drawn to her breasts, their rounded hills glimmering with a slight sheen in the heat of the day.

"May I take your order, sir?"

Jim barely glanced up at the waiter's abrupt tone. "Water with a lime twist. And then a menu, please."

"Two menus." Tania looked up at the waiter through her lashes and smiled at him. "Please."

Almost tripping over himself, the waiter hurried off to comply.

Oh, she was good, Jim thought to himself as he watched the old man turn into a puddle of jelly. There was another who would willingly pay for the privilege of seeing more of the sexy woman who now turned her attention back to him and smiled.

"Glorious day, isn't it?"

"It is." Now that he sat beside her, he noted the tight leather and tall heels. Weren't those the kind called "fuck me" shoes?

Jim considered the direct approach, but then shied away from it when a uniformed patrol officer strolled by on the sidewalk outside the small fence that separated the café from the passing traffic. Narrowing his eyes, he considered whether she might be setting him up.

"So tell me, Tania. What's a nice girl like you doing in a place like this?" He smiled after delivering the corny line and Tania laughed. It was a pleasant sound, he decided. And he liked the way her eyes crinkled at the corners when she found something funny.

"Just resting my feet. Shade and a seat are a necessity after an exhausting morning of shopping." With an exaggerated motion toward her packages and an overacted sigh, she met his levity, then raised the stakes. "And what's a handsome man like you doing in a neighborhood like this?"

Tania leaned forward on the table, resting her chin in her hand and giving him a full view of her cleavage.

Jim's eyes fell toward her breasts before he glanced up at her again. No blush painted her cheeks, only a coy smile and an invitation in her eyes. For a moment he was discomfited. While woman often flirted with him, they were never quite so transparent. And Jim's tastes in sexual activity weren't every woman's cup of tea. Was she truly up to what he thought she was up to? His cock, semihard and beginning to be a bit uncomfortable, certainly voted in her favor.

While Jim still considered his answer, the waiter returned with water and menus, and the question was forgotten as they spent the next several minutes perusing the choices, exchanging small talk about what might be good and discovering neither of them had ever visited this café before. "Fate" Tania called it. "Fortuitous" Jim thought.

The waiter took their orders and disappeared again into the cool recesses of the small restaurant, leaving them to find the threads of their mutual flirtation. Tania reclined in her chair, once more leaning against the heart-shaped back, stretching her legs under the table at an angle to his.

Jim turned to face her, leaning his arm on the back of his chair, ignoring the way the hard, thin metal bit into his skin. Easing his hips, he allowed his cock more room, noting Tania's eyes taking him in. Even though still constrained by the material of his walking shorts, Jim was not a small man. When his college roommate had given him the nickname "Big Jim", it hadn't been because of the width of his muscular shoulders.

Stretched before him, Tania's body was a feast for his eyes and Jim ate up the sight. Her long, slender legs, cased in skintight black leather, led to full hips accentuated by a narrow waist, tightly belted. As his gaze lingered on the curves of her blouse, lust bloomed in his cock and he gave it full rein. This hooker was certainly a looker, as the guys in college used to say. And a hooker would accept his need to dominate her in the bedroom without all the feminist angst that other women seemed to have. The thought of stripping the tight clothes from her and pinning her under him as he ravaged her body with his touch brought his cock to full and uncomfortable hardness in the confines of his running shorts.

Tania saw him growing, and grinned openly. She loved having that effect on men. This one was hooked. Now all she had to do was decide whether to keep him or throw him back. If he recognized she was more than just a great body, she would play the line a little longer before deciding whether to land him or not. And she did like that little touch of gray at his temples. Very sexy.

"So do you walk this way often?" Tania almost winced at the banality of the question that popped out of her mouth, but the idiotic question was already between them. Instead she grinned, letting him know she knew the question was lame.

"No, rarely, in fact. I take a different route each day." Toasting her with his water glass, he downed the entire contents in one long, thirsty pull.

Tania sat, mesmerized by the way his Adam's apple bobbed up and down as he drank the entire glass of ice cold water. The perspiration that had clung to his brow when he first sat down was rapidly evaporating in the shade. Tania glanced down at his cock. Still as hard as ever. She resisted the urge to reach over and feel if it was real.

The waiter brought the salads they'd ordered and Tania did not miss the dirty look he gave to Jim as he set the plate in front of her new acquaintance. All smiles for her, the waiter gave one last venomous glance at Jim before disappearing into the cool interior of the café.

Tania laughed out loud. "You might want to switch salads with me. I think the waiter has it in for you."

Jim's grin, rueful and dimpled, played about his lips as he answered her. "Something tells me I can take him on. Or would you rather I not provoke a brawl in the name of your beauty?"

"Oh, it's getting deep in here!" Tania laughed and a woman from the table beside her flicked an envious glance in her direction. "But keep it coming, I like your compliments."

Over their salads, the two talked of nothing of consequence and everything of importance. She discovered his favorite color was light blue and she told him hers was deep purple. She liked seafood, he liked steak. He preferred the arcade and she preferred the roller coaster.

Jim decided Tania couldn't be more opposite to his own tastes, yet was still drawn to her overt sexiness. All through lunch, Tania's eyes remained focused on him as if he were the most important man she had ever met. Only the waiter ever got her attention, and in increasingly smaller increments. The salads were done, the check would come soon. If he wanted her for the rest of the afternoon, it was time to make his move.

"Tania, I would like to spend more time with you. Do you have any plans for today?"



Her smile deepened into a lopsided grin and she gave him her best Mae West imitation. "What did you have in mind, big boy?" Leaning forward, she rested her hand on his bare thigh, caressing the soft, dark hairs with the backs of her fingers.

Jim reached up and played idly with one of her loose strands of hair, curling it around his finger and pulling her face closer to his. Deliberately, he kissed those teasing lips, inhaling the scent of her perfume. And when he was done, he released her almost casually, leaning back in his chair to sip from the water the waiter had replenished. "That's what I had in mind, sexy."

"Oh, I like your style. I do, very much." Tania almost purred. That kiss had left her almost breathless. Playing with her toys would never be the same again.

The waiter came with the bill on a small tray and pointedly placed it beside Jim's plate. Without even glancing at it, Jim pulled a credit card from his wallet and placed it on top of the bill. As Tania started to protest, Jim held up his hand and motioned to the waiter to take care of the matter. With a small look of triumph, the waiter stalked off, bill and card in hand.

"Jim, you shouldn't pay for my lunch."

"Why not? Meeting you and sharing your table was an unexpected pleasure today. And I'm hoping to have more of your company this afternoon." The last time Jim had been in the company of a hooker had been over a decade ago and he couldn't remember if he had bought her dinner first or not. Whatever the etiquette, he was about to get laid and he was sure it was worth far more than the price of a lunch salad.

Tania smiled. "I'd like to have more of your company, too. But that's beside the point."

"What's the point?"

That stopped her. For the life of her, Tania could not think of a single reason why he shouldn't offer to pay for her lunch. And this guy had been pretty quick with the card the waiter now returned. Was he rich?

Not that it mattered. She had no illusions about what Jim wanted. The man wanted sex and that was fine with her. The feeling was mutual. Her foray into the city looked like it was about to pay off.

"Walk me home?" Tania reached for the bags she had accumulated in her morning's foray through some of the neighborhood's more interesting shops, but Jim beat her to them. With a gallant flourish, he lifted them and extended his hand to her as if she were the Queen of England. Grinning, she accepted his hand, slipping into a royal pose and smoothly weaving her way through the café's occupied tables.

Tania kept her eyes down and the coy smile on her lips as she sashayed down the crowded street, a man at her side to carry her packages. What was that old film where the man took the packages from the woman and showed her how to walk and get men's attention? *Easter Parade*, that was it. Tilting her chin up and putting on her best Judy Garland face, she enjoyed every glance, stare and ogle.

Continuing to flirt with Jim as they made their way back to her apartment, Tania found herself more and more intrigued by the tall man beside her. With each passing step, her attention became less and less focused on those they passed and more and more focused on the man beside her. This one had the makings of a real keeper.



All too soon they came to the brick building that was home for her. While they'd walked, Tania debated how to play this one. Invite him up now and she might never see him again. Play him out too long and he would disappear forever. She paused at the door of the building, giving him a long look, starting at his sneakers and working all the way up as if considering just what she was going to do with him.

Jim let her look. Turnabout was fair play after all, and he had certainly looked at her long enough. There was no way she could miss his cock, hard and becoming painfully so, in the tightness of his walking shorts.

"Well, thank you for lunch and for the escort home, Mr. Delaney." Tania's voice purred with invitation.

"It was my honor, Miss Tania. I had a very pleasant time." He took a step toward her, his voice dropping to a murmur. "And I would love to continue that pleasant time."

"Mmm...you would, would you? And how would you like to continue that?" Ostensibly retrieving her bags, her hand closed over his.

"Oh, I'm sure we could think of something." He nuzzled her hair, inhaling the scent of her perfume. Her hand brushed against his cock and he gasped.

His cock was larger than she expected and Tania's knees grew weak. Praying that he knew how to use it, she brushed her fingers over his cock again, deciding she didn't want to wait. She wanted him now. Tipping her face up towards him, she invited his kiss.

He obliged her, brushing his fingers over her breast as he raised his hand to her face. The feel of a very hard nipple was a temptation he did not wish to miss. Mentally going through the cash in his wallet, he wondered if he had enough for more than a quickie. Just what did hookers charge these days?

"So what's your fee?" he murmured into her hair.

"What?" He missed the sharpness in her tone that should have warned him.

"I don't want to shortchange you." The apricot scent of her hair filled his senses as he nuzzled along the back of her ear.

The woman in his arms froze. Standing very still, her voice was sweet and deadly.

"Tell me, Jim. What do you think I charge for?"

Still befuddled by the nearness, his cock throbbing with need, he blindly stepped into the abyss. "Sex, of course."

"So you think I'm a hooker?" Her smile of steel did not waver.

The question threw him off guard and he stepped back, confusion clouding his thoughts. The set of her jaw and the flash of controlled anger in her eyes further confused him and he stammered an answer. "Well, you are, aren't you? I mean..." His gaze took in her tight blouse and the twin delights barely hidden there. He didn't need to gesture to the tight leather pants. Who else would dress this way on a

Saturday afternoon but a hooker looking for a john?

“Thank you for a nice lunch, Mr. Delaney. Go away.”

Tania turned on her stiletto heel and slid her card through the magnetic lock on the outside of the apartment building. Tears stung her eyes, but she would not let them fall in front of him. How could he think that? Just because a girl liked to look sexy didn't mean she did it for a living.

“Tania, wait, I didn't mean, well, that is...” He fumbled, trying to understand what had just happened.

“Yes, you did, Mr. Delaney. Goodbye.” She let the door shut in his face. So she liked to show off her figure and she liked it when men appreciated it. What right did that give him to jump to conclusions? Anger at his assumption warred with the hurt caused by his question.

Walking quickly, she made it up the inside stairs to her apartment and just inside before she broke into heartbroken sobs.

## Chapter Two

Jim stood on the sidewalk, blinking in the sun. His mind raced through the lunch conversation, over her movements and the come-on she had given him. Had he missed something? All the signals of a woman looking for an afternoon of sex were there.

And then it dawned. She wasn't a hooker. She was a witty, intelligent woman who dressed in sexy clothes and who was looking for physical companionship. A woman with whom he had just spent one of the most enjoyable hours of his life. And he'd asked her how much she charged.

“Oh, my God. I can't believe I just did that.”

Slapping himself on the head, he paced outside the door. Apologize. That's what he needed to do. His cock, hard as malachite moments before, now hung limp as overcooked pasta as he thought of and discarded several approaches. Another slap on the head as he realized he didn't even know her last name. Searching through the mailboxes brought two choices, “T. Sweet” and “T. Pelligrini”.

“Some choices,” he muttered to himself. “One makes her sound like a porn star and the other like...” He shrugged. “Like a beautiful Italian.” Deciding a fifty-fifty choice was better than nothing, he pushed the button for “T. Pelligrini”.

And waited. A bus roared by and still he waited. He pushed the button again. Nothing.

Grimacing, he tried the other button. “Come on, T. Sweet. Let's see if I can apologize for thinking you're a hooker.”

A man's voice boomed out of the callbox. “Yeah?”

Startled, Jim stared at the box as if it had come alive.

“Who’s there? Whaddya want? This better not be no kid playin’ games down there.”

“Um, no, it’s not. I’m looking for Tania.” Jim swallowed hard at the thought of the massive body that must belong to that rumbling and grouchy voice.

“Wrong apartment. Try again, buddy.”

“Sorry to have disturbed you.”

Jim examined the listings again. “T. Pelligrini” had to be the right one and obviously she didn’t want to talk to him. Not that he could blame her. Shaking his head and deciding to chalk this one up to experience, he turned away from the building and retraced his steps to the café. From there, home was only a few short blocks away.

With the lunch hour dwindling, the tables before the café sat empty and accusing. Jim paused, glancing at the table that held such pleasant recent memories. The old waiter, cloth in hand, wiping down a table, stopped to stare at him.

“What?” Jim felt defensive.

For answer the waiter only shook his head and Jim understood the man knew he’d blown it. A perfect opportunity to have a glorious afternoon, gone with one stupid sentence.

Stalking past the café, Jim took his anger out in physical activity. As soon as he cleared the busy street and turned into the quieter neighborhood that was his own, he quickened his pace into a jog, running along a street he didn’t really see. His thoughts consumed him. Okay, so he had met and shared a table at lunch with a beautiful woman. So he had mistaken her come-on as a hooker looking for work. So she hadn’t been, and she had gone off in a huff. What was the big deal? She didn’t mean anything to him. He barely knew her. He ran faster. Running always cleared his mind and helped him forget his troubles.

At least, it had in the past. But today the memory of hurt in a woman’s eyes would not leave him. He ran past his own apartment in an attempt to outrun her reproach, running until his anger at himself finally abated and turned to shame. Only then did he turn and jog back home. For whatever reason, T. Pelligrini had gotten under his skin. He would have no rest until he had set things right.

\* \* \* \* \*

An hour later, freshly showered and shaved, dressed in a blue Oxford short-sleeve shirt that he knew set off the blue of his eyes, a pair of khaki pants, and his docksiders with no socks, he left his apartment and headed out once more with a vague plan in his head. A present. Something nice that said, “I’m sorry for what I did, but I’m not looking for strings right now. Let’s be friends.” Sexual friends, he hoped, but wasn’t sure there was a present in the world that would say that. A woman to go to the ballgame with, to take to the movies and to bed. That was all the commitment he wanted.

Of course, he wanted it on his terms. In the shower, he had fantasized about how he wanted Tania—on her knees, begging for her orgasm. Her come-on demeanor at lunch led him to believe that she was the type who always got what she wanted from men. He also suspected she liked to lead in the bedroom, letting her passions rule the dance.

But Jim preferred a different approach and as he had showered, he’d imagined what he would do to her if she would let him. He had rubbed the soap over his cock, feeling it lengthen as the image took shape

before his closed eyes. The warm water had relaxed his shoulders, allowing him to concentrate on his fantasy...

Tania knelt before him, her brown eyes wide with eagerness and desire. He stood naked, his legs slightly apart, as his fingers lightly touched her blushing cheeks...

No, that wasn't right. Tania wouldn't blush. He repositioned his hand around his cock, dropping the soap into the dish as he adjusted the fantasy to bring it closer to what he imagined was reality.

His fingers lightly touched her face as color rose in her cheeks, flushing them with the heat of her arousal. His touch explored the softness of her skin, the curve of her cheekbone. ...then slid into her hair to enjoy its soft caress. He watched her lips part and he stepped closer to guide her open mouth to his cock. With her hands tied behind her back, she could do nothing to stop him from using her mouth as he saw fit. As his long cock entered her mouth, he imagined her hands clenching and opening, wanting to wrap themselves around his length. But the ropes he'd tied around her body, transforming her from an independent woman into the sex toy she wanted to be, prevented her from being anything but his to use.

Pushing deep, Jim felt and heard her gag reflex kick in, but he stayed there a moment longer before pulling back and letting her breathe. She looked up at him, tears in her eyes from the rough usage, but she didn't protest when he plundered her mouth again, his large cock filling her throat.

Her tawny hair made an easy handle and he grabbed it with both hands, guiding her pace faster and faster. The tears flowed freely now, but still she made no sound of protest. He rubbed the tip of his cock against the back of her throat and savored the strangled sound she made as the first spurts of his seed filled her mouth.

In his mind, Tania looked up at him with lust in her eyes as she swallowed hard around his cock and Jim came loudly in the shower, his cum squirting into the tub to run down the drain.

He had dressed quickly, knowing he needed to see her again. With no real plan of action, Jim had retraced his route, his steps taking him past the small café where he had met the girl of his dreams.

The veteran waiter was wiping down a table when Jim walked by. He looked up and raised an eyebrow in question. A kinship rose between them that exists between all men who have ever done something stupid when it came to a woman. Jim knew the old man would know what to do. Clearing his throat, he called out to him, "So, then, what do I do to make it up to her?"

With a wise nod that showed he understood perfectly, the waiter indicated the side of the café. Jim's eye followed the nod. A riot of flowers spilled out onto the sidewalk from the florist's shop next door. Perfect.

With gritted teeth and narrowed eyes, he focused on the plan. Marching straight over to the array of blossoms nestled in their plastic bag cones, he surveyed his choices. A spray of large Shasta daisies caught his eye and he reached for them. Another throat-clearing from the waiter made him pause.

The old man shook his head. No good.

Jim stepped back and thought about his situation for a moment. The waiter was right...not just any bunch of flowers would do to smooth the way for his apology. Tania was intelligent and sexy...he needed a flower to match.

Red roses stood in pails of water. Those said “romance”. Not quite what he needed. Carnations were beautiful, but too cheap. These flowers had to be something expensive to make up for a blunder of this magnitude.

And there they were, along the top row of the display. Hidden in the shadow of a small awning, Jim almost missed the long stalks of the calla lilies. Smooth white blossoms curved in graceful waves around the long yellow stamen, an age-old symbol of the beauty of woman’s sensuousness enfolding man’s rigidity. A fitting metaphor for his own blindness. He didn’t need to look at the waiter to know he had the older man’s approval.

Twelve elegant lilies, carefully boxed and tied with a silk ribbon of sky blue, held Jim’s hope for making amends with the woman he had wronged. Now all he needed were the words.

Wondering if he should have gone home and changed into something more formal, Jim turned up the walk toward Tania’s apartment. She would just have to take him in his shorts and T-shirt. To go home without seeing her first was risking never seeing her again. Under his breath, he practiced his speech one last time.

Breathing deeply, Jim pushed the button. The quiet, seductive voice he remembered from lunch sounded tinny over the little speaker.

“Yes?”

“Delivery for Ms. Pelligrini.” Jim was not stupid.

“What is it?”

“Flowers, ma’am.” He screwed up his face in the hopes that this would work.

“Wait there.”

Tania paused on the bottom step. From here she could see the “delivery man” with the telltale rectangular box in his arms. He’d rung her bell over and over a half-hour before and she’d not answered him because she didn’t know how. What did one say to a man who jumped right from “sexy, independent woman” to “hooker”? And did she want to waste any more of her time with one who did?

With a resigned sigh, she stepped into the short hall and crossed to open the door. Tania gazed at Jim, reproach and hurt clouding her eyes as she listened to his apology.

“The assumption I made was out of line and I apologize. You are a beautiful, sexy woman who deserved much better from me. I do not excuse my behavior because, up until the moment I put my foot in my mouth, I enjoyed our playing. You’re intelligent, witty...all the things I like in a woman. I don’t know if you’ll ever be able to forgive me, but please accept these along with my apology.”

Tania wanted to be angry with him and the conclusion he had jumped to. The insult he had given her was not easy to forgive. But he looked so cute standing there with a stray lock of his dark hair curling over his forehead, his head hanging down and hardly able to meet her eyes at the end of his speech. Like a little boy making an apology after his mouth had just gotten washed out with soap. And he had shaved and changed his clothes. His cheeks, now free of the earlier stubble, and the fresh shirt and pants were a testament to the fact that he really was trying to make up to her. She watched his fingers fumble with the ribbon on the box, waiting patiently as he pulled the top off to reveal the sensuous flowers within.

Tania's carefully controlled demeanor slipped at the sight of the calla lilies, their pure white chalice-shaped trumpets gracefully surrounding their golden stamens. Determined as she was to be angry with him, her heart melted at such a wonderful apology bouquet.

"They're beautiful." Her shoulders relaxed, even though she wasn't quite ready to let him off the hook. Tania chose not to reach out for the flowers, waiting instead, quiet and composed, still standing in the doorway but smiling a little in her thaw.

Tania had not changed out of her tight clothes, yet Jim now saw past the external view she presented to the world and glimpsed the woman of breeding and class underneath. Tania was far more complex than he had seen before and worth much more than the casual afternoon he had originally intended to spend with her. This was a woman to taste in small sips, like savoring a fine wine. A woman to spend hours with, consuming every nuance, appreciating and relishing every inch.

Bowing, he lifted the lilies from their carton and stepped forward to place them in her arms. Wisps of hair blew across her eyes as the summer breeze wafted past and Jim took the liberty of brushing them back from her face.

"I would very much like to get to know you, Tania Pelligrini. Will you forgive me?"

The touch of Jim's fingers across her cheek, warm and intoxicating, dissipated her anger, leaving a much more pleasant feeling in its place. Letting her cheek follow his fingers, she turned her head, inviting his hand to linger. He complied, and she looked up through long lashes at his honest face. While making him beg for her forgiveness had a tantalizing, revengeful taste, she did not have the heart to resist his sweet, seductive apology.

"I forgive you, Mr. Delaney."

She wove her charms on him and hoped he would let himself be ensnared. Fascinating men did not often come into her life, and she did not want to let this one go, in spite of his bad beginning. As Jim bent forward, she allowed their breaths to entwine, brushing his lips softly with her own.

Tania was unsure just who was wooing whom. Her lips, full and soft and sensuous, teased him, made him lean forward to capture them with his own. But it was he who pulled her lip in to taste and leave her breathless when he released her.

She almost swayed. Heat flared from her pussy straight up through her stomach, which tightened with anticipation, and continued on up, bursting into twinkles in her eyes. Smiling demurely, she stepped back and gestured with the bouquet she still held. "These will need water. Would you carry the box upstairs, Mr. Delaney, since my hands are full?"

Jim grinned in return. "It would be my pleasure, Ms Pelligrini. Shall I get the door for you?" He caught the door so she could turn and enter, bending and retrieving the discarded box and blue silk ribbon.

Tania made sure she gave him an eyeful as she sauntered along the short corridor and up the single flight of stairs to her apartment. Handing him her key, she stepped back and appreciated the long, slender

fingers that manipulated the thin metal against the stubborn lock. Fingers like a musician's, supple and full of grace in such a simple act. Opening the door, he bowed her in and Tania inclined her head almost regally as she passed him. Once inside, she paused to watch his reaction to her small apartment.

Decorated with her rather eclectic tastes, the apartment's many styles should have clashed. What would he think of her mixing an Oriental rug, with its multicolored swirls, and a bright orange vinyl-covered chair of modern design? Yet she knew the chair's brightness brought out the oranges that hid in the pattern of the rug. Peach sheers hung at the windows to pool beneath in puddles of color. The windows were open and the warm, summer breeze wafted the curtains in the afternoon sunlight.

A loveseat rather than a couch sat against the far wall, more traditional in design and covered in another bizarre, yet effective color and pattern choice. Bright yellow brocaded sunflowers danced across the back and seat, producing a riot of summer color against the soft celery green walls, making guests feel as if they stood in the center of a meadow on a lazy summer's day.

Tania let the effect sink in, then tilted her head toward a small kitchenette off to the left of the front door. "There's a vase on the top of the fridge."

Jim took the hint. The serviceable kitchen, neat and clean, gave testament to Tania's ordered lifestyle. Leaving the box on the counter, he lifted the green glass vase carefully from its perch and carried it out to her.

She stood expectantly beside a small table next to the loveseat, the lilies still resting in her folded arms and a smile dancing across her lips. Jim crossed the short distance in slow, powerful strides, taking his time until he was certain he had her total attention. Keeping the vase in one hand, he held out the other and waited for her to put the long stems into his palm. His long fingers closed around the entire bundle and Jim lifted them to enjoy their light fragrance.

But instead of putting them into the vase, he turned and gestured to the floor. "Lie down on the rug."

She hesitated and Jim waited patiently as she considered his command. Apparently deciding to let him lead her in this game, Tania slid to her knees before reclining on her side on the Oriental rug. By the smile playing on her lips, he knew she was making sure that he noticed her sensuous curves covered in black leather. Already her nipples had hardened under her blouse, showing her response to his predatory gaze.

He waited until she was reclined on her side, her hand holding up her head, gazing at him with slightly narrowed eyes as she puzzled his intent. With a smile toying at his lips and a single sweep of his arm, Jim let the flowers fall to cascade over the resplendent curves of her hips. Only one lily remained in his hand and he bent to hold it before her mouth.

Tania leaned forward and closed her lips over the green stem in an open kiss. Jim turned and sat on the loveseat, holding the green vase between his knees, indicating with a gesture what he wanted her to do.

Rising, catlike, onto her knees, Tania crawled with slow, languorous movements toward the vase, the thick stem of the flower still held lightly between her lips. On all fours before him, she rose, tilted the flower and guided the long green stem into the vase. Her eyes flared with mischief and sensuality as she bent down to pick up another flower in her teeth, making sure he saw how she wrapped her lips around the thick stem. With her eyes, she told him how she would wrap her lips around him.



Jim's cock grew as she played his game not only without protest but with relish. His grip on the vase tightened as she placed the second flower, brushing her nose on his knee before twisting down, fluidly retrieving a third flower. Taking a deep breath, Jim relaxed his grip on the vase as he watched how she curved her body around, sensuously turning the tables. He might have started this game, but it was obvious that she intended to win it.

She needed to slither a few steps further for the next few flowers and the space gave her the opportunity to bend low, leaving her ass high in the air for him to admire. Weaving her body around to face him again, she carefully set each stem with the others between his hands. As the vase filled, he needed to hold the flowers out of her way to give her room and he felt her breath warm his fingers as he held the cool stems from her face.

One last flower remained on the rug. Tania retrieved it, but Jim moved the vase, setting it on the floor beside him. Taking Tania by the elbows, he pulled her up on her knees. Tendrils of hair still fell from the ponytail to frame her face, accenting her fine, thin nose and high cheekbones. Jim studied her beauty, letting his fingers meander over the soft skin of her arms and shoulders, the graceful curve of her neck.

Tania felt his fingers leaving trails of fire in their wake. Feeling as if he had tightened a valve inside her, her breath caught and she closed her eyes to savor the explorations of his hands as they passed over her lips holding the flower, continuing on to brush along her cheeks, her ears. And when he pulled out the tie that held her hair, releasing the soft waves to fall around her face, she tossed her head and smiled at him.

Jim's fingers cupped her chin, pulling her toward him to claim the lips surrounding the sensuous flower. Tania felt his lips envelop hers, caress her, want her. The flower tumbled to the floor and she plunged into the kiss, her passion ignited, needing him to fuel the flames that shot through her. Her arms came up to encircle him, to draw him down onto the floor to lie on the rug, but Jim resisted.

His refusal to do as she wanted forced out a whimper of frustration that surprised her. For answer, Jim pulled her toward him, holding her tightly, crushing her body into his as his mouth plundered hers, his tongue swirling her thoughts as he explored, tasted, drank in her essence. Squirming in his arms, her need threatened to overtake her devoured senses.

But their mutual seduction was complete and they were caught in the net they had woven. The fire in her belly would not be put out as Jim took the lead in their dance. Not releasing her soft, pliable lips, his hands sought hers, bringing them down to her sides and holding them there. He slid off the couch to kneel in front of her, his fingers entwining with hers as he drew back slightly from the kiss.

"Don't move your arms. Let me explore you."

Her breath caught and she nodded once as his fingers brushed up her arms and around the low neckline of her top. The heat of his breath warmed her skin as he moved to kiss the shoulder he'd exposed, pulling the stretchy fabric down to further pin her arms to her sides.

Remaining still tormented her when he scooped her breasts out for his inspection, his tongue leaving a trail of wet heat from her collarbone to her nipple. Taking his time, his hands explored her ample breasts, weighing them as if considering which one to taste first. Like many women, one breast was slightly larger than the other and its pink nipple, roused and aching for his touch, invited his tongue.

What was he doing to her? Why couldn't she focus? The sight of his tongue darting out to softly caress

her nipple made her head swim and her muscles ached to move her arms and press him to her.

She could not remain still. A needy whimper fell from her before she could prevent it. Swaying as his lips worked up to nibble at her earlobe, his breath hot on her skin, Tania leaned into him, her loosened hair running through his fingers to cascade like a tawny waterfall of color around her face.

Jim pulled back and smiled at his willing partner. He felt her trembling and knew she wanted him. But he would take her slowly, making her beg for him before he was done. She might not be the hooker he had first thought her to be, but she was still an incredibly sexy, wanton woman... a woman whom he had insulted. Now he would make amends by giving her an experience she would not forget. Recalling his shower fantasy, he entwined his fingers in her hair, the memory of her mouth around his cock making him smile. There might be time for that later. Right now, he was much too intrigued by the hollow of her throat. Drawing her head back, he exposed her neck to his explorations. She smelled of honeysuckle and fresh air and he breathed her scent deep into his lungs before brushing his lips over her vulnerable skin, nipping and kissing and tasting.

To his immense satisfaction, she swayed. Her eyes had closed, and Jim knew she was losing focus. Already she hovered right where he wanted her. Still, he didn't want her moving too fast. If this was to be a memorable afternoon, then he needed to shape the time with a slow and sensuous arc. She deserved the royal treatment. Steadying her by the shoulders, he waited until she had her balance and could open her eyes and focus on him.

"I can take you to heights you've only dreamed of, Tania." He cupped her cheeks in his hands and kissed her lightly on her slightly bruised lips. Willingly, she opened for him, inviting him deeper, but he waited. He could be a very patient man.

"Is that what you want? Will you let me show you?"

Tania's head swam with the passions he'd awakened in her. With previous partners, the excitement had always run hot and quick, the coupling fast, furious and violent. What Jim offered seemed to be something very different and Tania found she wanted to explore it even as it frustrated her.

"I don't know if I have the patience."

"I will teach you patience." As Jim's lips brushed over hers, Tania tried to reach up to turn the touch into a full-blown kiss. But Jim's fingers tightened ever so slightly in her hair and prevented her from moving. His voice, still soft and sensuous, took on an undertone of command. "We do this at my pace—my way. Understood?"

Her temper flared. What was she thinking? And who was he to make demands? She was no cavewoman to be bossed around and dominated by the male of the species. She was a creation of the twenty-first century—an independent, proud and self-reliant woman.

She would have told him so, too... but Jim took that precise moment to close the kiss, his lips pressing against hers, his tongue gently, yet insistently demanding entrance again. Her knees weakened first and her arms came up to encircle his shoulders of their own volition. She gave way, feeling his tongue dance over hers, encircling and capturing her soul.

His lips did not leave hers, nor did his tongue stop its mesmerizing dance against her teeth and tongue, yet she felt him reach up and remove her arms from around his shoulders, placing them back at her sides as he explored. Tania fully understood his meaning—she was to remain still and let him explore as he saw fit.

Did he understand how hard this was for her? How could she remain still when she wanted to explore him, too? She felt his warm hands slide along her back, his fingers finding every hollow from her neck to her waist. Arching, she invited him to explore further, but his fingers stopped just short of the waistband of her leather pants.

“Tell me you like this, Tania. Tell me you want more.”

His cologne filled her swimming senses as his fingers skimmed along the edge of her waistband. No doubt remained, and she whispered into his ear, “Yes, please. I want this.”

He drew back and smiled, his nose barely touching hers. “I like your manners. Beg me, Tania. Beg me to take you to places you’ve only dreamed of.”

His hands pulled her face up toward him and she stretched upward on her knees, forcing her hands to remain at her sides. Inside, a battle raged as her desire warred with her independence. Jim’s thumbs caressed her cheeks as his lips placed warm kisses along her brow, exacerbating her need to return his caress. Why was she doing as he asked? What prevented her from throwing her arms around him and stroking him back?

Even as her mind asked the question, Jim nuzzled her ear, his tongue flicking out to lick the inner rim and drive her insane. She moaned as her knees turned to jelly and independence flew from her mind. All that mattered was his touch. All that mattered were the words that sprang from the depths of her need. He wanted her to beg? Well, if it got them to the part where they were rolling around on the carpet like two animals in heat faster than they were moving now, she’d be happy to beg. In fact, she’d beg to beg. “Oh, yes, Jim. Please... please take me there. Take me to places I’ve read about but never gone. Oh, Jim, please, yes.”

Her voice cracked as she pleaded, humiliation and need mingling to nudge her deeper into his control. Never before had anyone even offered to tame her wild passions. Was it possible Jim Delaney could be that man? Suddenly and very definitely, Tania hoped he would be as the flame inside her ignited again. Reaching toward him, she leaned in to kiss those wonderful lips of his.

But once more, Jim leaned back on his heels, his hands still holding her head, forcing her to stretch upward to look into his eyes. Tania knew he would see the wildcat in her eyes, the animal that lived deep in her psyche, feral and untamed in the ways of love. She understood his intent was to slow her down, to bank her fires, allowing them to roar into a blaze only when he commanded them to and not before. The understanding almost drove her to the edge.

Abruptly Jim rose, pulling her to her feet. He left her blouse half on and half off, placing her in the middle of the room before returning to sit on the loveseat, reclining much as he had earlier. Only this time, he rested his arms along the back and stretched his long legs comfortably into the room, making himself quite at home.

“Undress for me.”

Suddenly being deprived of his touch disoriented her for a moment. She took a deep breath and refocused her eyes even as her spirit responded to the command in his voice. She'd done stripteases before for lovers, but always in fun and passion. What this man wanted, however, was something different and she knew it. In spite of herself and the game she had started, she blushed.

Her arms, still confined by the blouse, floundered a moment as she fought free of the garment, finally maneuvering it into a position where she could just rip it off over her head in one quick pull. But when she looked at him and saw the hunger of the predator in his deep blue eyes, it dangled loosely from her fingers.

He would devour her, she realized. Those passionate kisses earlier, and now the removal of her clothes, baring her body to him, layer by layer, were just the first steps. To vamp for time and gather her wits, Tania righted her top and folded it neatly, setting it carefully on the bright orange chair. She turned from him a bit, trying to hide her blush as her heart leapt.

Jim nodded and gave her a small smile before indicating she should continue. With each item she removed, she bared more and more of her psyche as well as her body. Beneath his shorts, Tania saw his cock stir at her conflicting emotions of willingness and humiliation.

Reaching behind, she unzipped the tight pants, pushing the leather slowly down over her hips. She could not take her eyes from him, her cheeks burned as she removed another layer of civility. But too late, she remembered her shoes. The pants would never fit over them. And they needed to be unlaced before they would come off.

Biting her lip and bending in embarrassment to have her "dance" turn so clumsy, Tania quickly unlaced the shoes and flung the laces around her ankles, slapping the thin lines against her skin in her hurry. She didn't even feel their sting as she finished and stepped down off the height the heels had given her.

With the shoes off, the pants went quickly so all that remained was her thong. Her lip still caught between her teeth, she hesitated a moment, her thumbs hooked into the sides as she threw a glance in his direction.

He sat with his arms still thrown out along the back of the couch, the very picture of a man taking his ease and enjoying the view. How easy it had been for him to unnerve her. At his nod, she understood he wanted the thong off as well.

Tania wanted to fling it at him. Who did he think he was...calling her a hooker and then bringing her flowers...and what was she doing melting all over him like milk chocolate on a hot afternoon? Where was her dignity? Her pride? Her chin came out and her jaw set as she stood, naked in the sunlight.

"Tania, you are one heck of a sexy woman, do you know that?"

She opened her mouth to protest, then closed it without saying a word. Hadn't she planned to yell at him for something? What was it?

Jim stood up, unbuttoning his shirt as he rose. His smooth chest shone with a thin shimmer of sweat from the warm apartment and the woman who heated it up. Muscular, but not muscle-bound, the ripples of his abdomen made a double row of corded strength.

But he did not give Tania time to stare, advancing on her with the same catlike grace she had used earlier. "Stay still," he commanded her as he circled her, examining her naked body and debating which part he would consume first.

He noticed the tears of humiliation in Tania's eyes and how her hands balled into fists at her sides, doubting she had ever been treated this way before. He noticed that she held her breath, anxiety and arousal building in her as he continued to circle.

The knotted shoulders and clenched fists told him he was pushing her into places she had never been. If he commanded her to spread her legs, she would do so eagerly and he knew she would be wet. He did not give the command. To do so would push her too fast. There would be time for that later.

Quickly he stripped off his pants, letting his cock loose. The shaft stretched long and hard, and ached to sink into the warmth hidden under that tuft of dark hair on her mound. A part of him demanded he hurry things along and give the tensions coiling in his belly the release they needed.

But waiting would make the experience all the sweeter. Reaching down, he pulled a clean white handkerchief from the pocket of his pants. Such a simple thing, really... and yet such a wonderful instrument of torture. Stepping behind her, he pressed his chest to her back, enjoying the warmth of her naked body in the heat of the summer afternoon. His cock brushed the smooth skin of her ass and Jim relished the sweet agony.

"Let me blindfold you, Tania, and I will take you to heights you didn't even know existed."

Tania knew from past experience that by this point, she and whoever her partner was would already be rolling on the floor, yanking clothes off and throwing them in whatever direction they happened to go. Jim's slow, studied approach unnerved yet excited her. His chest, warm against her back, sent wonderful little tingles all the way to the tips of her fingers. She had an urge to reach down beside her ass, where his cock nestled against her side, but didn't. As curious as she was about what his cock looked like, the white strip of cloth that hung in his hands before her caught her curiosity. No one had ever tried this game with her. Probably because their foreplay hadn't lasted any longer than it took to take off their clothes. Tania's hesitation was fleeting. She nodded once, not trusting her voice. The white cloth, so innocent and pure, could not, by itself, hurt her. The butterflies in her stomach settled as she accepted the temporary loss of her sight. Her hands were not bound and if Jim did something she didn't like, she could rip off the handkerchief at any point. Thus desire beat down sanity with logic.

With her eyesight no longer giving her information, Tania relied on touch and sound to give her clues as to what Jim intended. She felt him slide his hand into hers and allowed him to lead her toward the loveseat. He prevented her from sitting on it, however.

"No, sit on the floor with your back against the seat."

His voice came from just above her head, to her right, and she smiled to show him she was intrigued by this game. Dropping gracefully, she stretched out her slender legs, demurely crossing them at the ankles and making herself comfortable. She heard Jim move away and was tempted to lift the handkerchief and see where he went. But the apartment wasn't large and if stealing from her was his intent, he'd find little of value.

She heard him rustling around in the kitchen. A plate rattled and she called out to him, "There isn't much,

but go ahead and help yourself.” The sarcasm dripped and she frowned, puzzling over his intentions. The fires that had ignited just moments before sank to a simmer as she folded her hands, cocked her head and tried to figure out just what this was all about.

Several moments later, she felt him return and kneel beside her. It sounded as if he put something down on the floor, then all was quiet for a moment. Her frown deepened.

“Open your mouth,” he instructed her.

Hesitantly, Tania opened her lips, the frown still knitting her brow under the white cloth. What was he up to?

“Wider...”

Defiantly now, she opened her mouth wide. Something cold hit her tongue and gingerly she closed her mouth around the spoon.

“Taste.”

Tania smiled as she recognized the round shape and taste of one of the white grapes she’d bought yesterday at the supermarket. Nice and sweet with just a hint of tart in them. Swallowing, she eagerly opened her mouth for another.

Jim laughed. “Oh, you think you’re about to be fed, do you? Try this...”

Tania made a face as something pepperminty and squishy hit her tongue. She swallowed it down and wrinkled her nose. “Toothpaste!”

“Yep. This is all about sensations, Tania. About learning to slow down and appreciate every sensual aspect of life around you. It’s also about learning to trust me.”

Tania felt a spoon at her mouth. Trust him? Did he think he would have gotten this far if she didn’t? What might he be planning? Hesitantly, she parted her lips and opened her mouth. Another spoonful of something. She closed her lips around the spoon as Jim fed her. This was something smooth with little bumps and the flavor burst in her mouth. “Tapioca pudding...” Grinning she bent her head down as she enjoyed the flavors mingling in her mouth. “I begin to understand.”

She felt a brush against her breast and did not flinch from the soft and fuzzy something that stroked her skin. She could not identify it but decided it wasn’t important. Only the sensuous caress mattered as Jim traced it over her breast, her belly, her arm, her neck.

Abruptly it was gone. She sat up, eager for the next sensation. What would he show her? Unconsciously, Tania changed positions as she became comfortable with their game. Instead of sitting with her legs straight out, stiff and closed up, she adjusted her position, now sitting cross-legged, leaning forward for what he would give her next. Although her fingers itched to lift the white handkerchief and peek at the food Jim had on the plate, she kept her hands at her sides and tried not to bounce in anticipation.

Tania jumped as she felt his fingers brush lightly against her breast and hover there. They were cool, as if he had dipped them in cold water on this hot afternoon and then rested them against her skin. But there was no pressure, indeed, he barely touched her.



Suddenly cold ripped through her skin and she gasped as an ice cube touched her flesh. He trailed it over the mounds of her ample breasts in diminishing figure-eights, not changing the pattern until he had circled around each nipple, the cold ice stiffening them and turning them into hard little nubs that ached for his touch. The remaining sliver of ice then slid down to her belly in trails of cold flame that made her squirm and cry out. Tania's hands came up in automatic defense, to push away the cold, but she touched only the warm skin of his bare arms. The ice cube paused with an implicit warning. Moaning, she forced her hands back to her sides and let him play with her body. Heat flared inside her to answer the call of the cold ice. Flames heated her skin and melted the cube into nothing.

Then warmth on her skin again, the tips of his fingers spreading the water from the melted ice over her belly and breasts, stopping to gently pull her nipple, twisting it and giving it a small pinch before dropping her heavy breast.

As each new sensation tore at her control, her whimpers turned to growls. Her ragged breath caught in her throat and her need broke loose. She could not keep up this torment. She wanted him and she wanted him now.

Her hands grabbed for the blindfold, but Jim was quicker. He ensnared her hands in his, holding them tightly, preventing her from taking it away.

"Trust me, Tania. Trust me."

The command in his quiet voice was hard to resist. For a moment she wanted what she always had—quick passion that burned hot and flamed out quickly. But her pussy throbbed in a way it never had before, and deep down inside, she didn't want him to end it too soon. This agonizingly slow pace held the allure of something worth waiting for. Sniffling back her frustration, she relaxed her hands and let him bring them down to her sides again.

Tania flinched as the ice again touched her heated flesh just above her navel. Three times he circled it around, dipping it once to rest in the little hollow until he'd forced another moan from the back of her throat.

Behind the blindfold, Tania's eyes closed as Jim slid the ice lower, tracing the outline of her mound and letting the water drip between the downy hairs to trickle and tease. Her nails dug into the carpet as she pushed her hips forward, her knees opening as far as her crossed legs would allow.

"That's it. Open for me."

Even as his encouragement made her feel like the slut he had thought her to be, her legs slid apart and spread wide for him, inviting his touch. She no longer cared what he thought of her as long as he didn't stop. Leaning back on her hands, she opened herself to new ideas and sensations.

The ice cube, mostly melted, slid easily between the pink lips of her pussy and with a quick push, Jim slid it into her opening. The cold ice along her hot slit sent conflicting messages to her brain, which, in response, promptly shut down all rational thought. The heat of her pussy melted the small piece of ice and cold water trickled from her.

With an oath, Tania ripped off the blindfold, her driving need finally outweighing her intention to obey. Jim sat beside her, not a stitch of clothing covering the hard, sculpted planes of his chest or the ropey threads of muscle in his arms. Whatever this guy did for a living, his body was incredible. What god had



come down from on high to live on Earth and walk into her life? Not from Olympus, this one. The Greek gods were too civilized for the slow heat of James Delaney. A Celtic deity, Tania decided. The primal lust of dominant males echoed in the depths of desire that glimmered in his look.

She paused only seconds as her glance fell to his magnificent cock, which stood hard and dark with desire. The condom already in place didn't hide the ridges and sheer size of him. With a second oath, she straddled him before he could stop her, holding herself above his cock.

"Enough!" she commanded. "I want you inside me now."

Something flashed in his eyes—was it anger? Irritation? She was past caring. All that mattered right now stood just a fingerspan away from entering her and driving her over the edge. Her pussy twitched as her need ran hot. But Jim's hands tightly gripped her waist, preventing her from impaling herself on his upright cock.

"I'm not tameable, Jimbo." She had no patience for slow sensuality and she unleashed the feral animal that always drove her sexual encounters. "Hot and quick" was her style and she demanded it from him now.

But Tania had not counted on his strength...or his ability to say no to the desire that flared in him as obviously as it burned in her. Jim's lips pursed as he lifted her petite frame and dragged her to the floor beside him. He rolled over, effectively pinning her beneath him, his face inches from hers.

"We do this my way or not at all."

Tania's temper flared. Even as she spit the words out, her heart trembled inside. "How dare you? First you call me a hooker and insult me, and now when I give you what you want, you tease me? Do you want sex or not?"

Jim just grinned and repositioned his grip on her squirming body. Holding her wrists above her head with one hand, he slowly slid the fingers of his free hand down the side of her cheek, pressing against the flushed skin of her neck, not stopping until he reached her chest, where he grabbed a fistful of breast and squeezed. Flesh bulged where her breast escaped the cage of his fingers.

"I want sex with you, Tania. But my way." He tightened his grip and saw the need flare in her eyes even as she squirmed harder.

"Slow..." He leaned closer to her ear, whispering the words he knew would drive her crazy.

"Sensuous..." His tongue flicked out to leave a trail of fire along her earlobe.

"Erotic..." His hand released her breast, leaving white fingerprints behind. His fingers slid along the sinuous contour of her hip as he shifted and put his knee between her legs, forcing them apart.

"Oh, my God..." Tania turned her face to him, her eyes barely focused. Mesmerized, she fell under the spell of this Celtic god whose tongue danced around her ear and whose fingers slid over the hair on her mound and straight to her clit.

"I like seeing you turn to a puddle of jelly." Jim grinned down at her.

"I bet you do," Tania managed to say around her gasp as his knee pressed against the tender flesh of her

thigh, spreading her legs further apart. And when he slid his finger into her pussy, she couldn't stifle the moan that emerged from the depths of her soul. "Oh, yes. Fuck me, Jim. Fuck me with your fingers."

"No." Grinning, he pulled his fingers away, while using his other hand to keep his grip on her wrists. Tania squirmed and tried to pull free, but the man's hands were like iron manacles around her wrists. Anger flared in her. Just who did he think he was?

"You can't lead me along and then drop me over and over. Are we going to have sex or not?"

His eyes went sad. "We are having sex, Tania, if you would just slow down and enjoy it. There is so much more to sex than just rutting together like two wild animals. So much more than having a man stick his cock in you, coming, dropping into bed exhausted and being done with it. But that's all you know, isn't it?"

She didn't answer. She had no answer.

Jim saw the confusion and need mingling in her eyes. What was there about her that made him want to teach her the finer points of love? A woman was something to be savored and cherished, not fucked and left. Which, he was beginning to suspect, was all she had experienced.

He brought his fingers, still covered in the white, creamy juices of her pussy, up to her face. "Have you ever tasted yourself, Tania? Do you know what a sexy woman you really are?"

With his wet finger, he traced her lips, pleased when her tongue snaked out to lick them clean. Deciding to push her limits of patience, he held his fingers still. "Lick them clean for me, Tania."

With barely a moment's hesitation, she lifted her head and pulled first one, then the others, one by one, into her mouth to clean them off.

"This is all new to me, Jim." Her voice, husky with emotion and need, was barely above a whisper. "I can't just turn it off and on like you can."

For answer, he released one of her hands and guided it down to his still rock-hard cock. "I can't turn it off and on either. But I won't rush through sex with you. At least not this first time."

"First time?" Was he saying there would be more times? Suddenly it seemed two paths lay before her. One way lay the life she'd led this morning, right up until the moment she had seen Jim sauntering down the street. That path was neat and orderly, with few surprises. Every day she would go to her job, every evening she would come home to her empty apartment. Her life stretched before her in straight, disturbing sameness. Nothing would ever change. Even her sex life. Hot and quick with passions flaming, yes, but always the same. And ultimately, she'd be alone. No one stood in sight on the path, no one beckoned her further along.

The other path led...somewhere else. It wound out of sight quickly, the way dark and unfamiliar. It was untidy and a bit unkempt. Without being able to see far down the road, who knew what risks lay ahead? But Jim stood beside this path, his confident smile a bit cocky, yet reassuring that she would not be alone.

“I don’t know, Jim.”

And then his fingers slipped back to dance over her clit again, fingering her and sliding between her wet nether lips and driving sane thought from her mind as the banked embers flared into an all-consuming fire. “I can’t do this.” The whimper rapidly became a shout as the feral animal inside drove her wild. With sudden strength, she pushed him away, sitting up and snarling as the untamable force broke loose again. Passion’s grip held her and Tania flung away all the carefully gathered shreds of her self-control.

She pushed him onto his back and straddled him, his cock pressing against her mound. “I want you now,” she commanded. There was nothing left of the sane, rational woman. Just violent, incredibly primal need drove her now as she fought for completion. The hell with slow and sensual. She just didn’t have the patience.

Jim gripped her hips, again preventing her from impaling herself. “My way,” he commanded, his voice raspy with power.

“You can’t always have your way!” Tania’s voice rose to a screech. She sounded like a complaining washerwoman even to her own ears and lowered her tone. “I want passion...hot sex on a hot afternoon...and I want you to give it to me.”

She was losing control of the situation and knew it. Even as she tried to command him, her voice took on a pleading quality that infuriated her. Why was she coming so unhooked by this guy? Confusion and frustration knit her forehead into furrows as the heat inside her banked again...the hot embers hiding beneath a thin layer of pride. Was it only this morning that she had wondered if there were any “take charge” types of guys left in the world? Jim Delaney offered her a sexual experience she’d never had, on his terms, his way. Why didn’t she have the courage to accept it?

Fire spit from Tania’s eyes as their wills clashed, but still Jim did not back down even as his own desire to thrust himself into that willing heat built inside his belly. This was a deal-breaker for him. If she could not slow down and accept his guidance, then all the earlier hopes he’d had for turning this into something more than an afternoon of sex were done. Granted, when he’d thought she was a hooker, all he’d expected was a “fuck ’em and leave the money on the table” afternoon. But there was so much more to this woman and instinctively, he knew she was worth fighting for.

“Fuck me now, damn it!”

Jim saw the change in her eyes as her last word came out as a plea and suddenly realized that he could win this battle of wills, but only if he played his cards right. One tip of his hand and not only would she show him the door, but she’d probably kick him down the stairs as well.

Still keeping his tight grip on her hips, he lifted her up and to the side a second time. Her entire body trembled and as he sat up, he pulled her into his arms in a tight embrace. He gave one hand free rein to brush over her skin, keeping the heat flowing from one sensuous part of her body to another, while the other arm held her close and prevented her from escaping. “This is twice I’ve had to stop you, Tania. If you cannot behave, I will have to leave.”

“Behave?” She struggled to push him away. She wasn’t a child to be scolded. And just who did he think

he was? If only his fingers didn't feel so damn good. They danced over her skin, making it hard to concentrate on her pride.

"I intend to awaken a new passion in you, Tania. One that will run as hot and fiery as the one that likes quick sex. But 'quick' flames out too fast for my taste." His voice, soft in her ear, commanded her in ways she barely understood. When his fingers came up to her chin and lifted her face to his, she didn't resist. "This is all about sensation, Tania. You learned how sensual taste could be, let me teach you how erotic touch can be."

"I feel how erotic touch is. Your fingers..." She couldn't even complete the thought as his hand slid down to encircle her neck. For the first time, she glimpsed the power he had over her—and the power she still held. All she had to do was tell him to leave. All she had to do was say "stop" and he would get dressed and walk out of her life as quickly as he had walked into it. And yet, the vulnerable feeling of his warm fingers lightly pressing against her neck opened a channel inside. Her heartbeat drummed against his fingertips, her breath quickened as she faced the two paths, one safe, secure and lonely...the other dark and forbidding, but with him beside her.

Her head tumbled back as she gave him her neck and her will.

Tania trembled in his arms and Jim knew she was afraid. But she didn't run, didn't scream...and didn't tell him to stop. Bending down, he claimed a kiss from her parted lips, sliding his tongue around hers when she pressed against him and her lips opened in submission. Keeping the pressure on her neck only a moment more, he relished the sudden openness of her giving and plundered her mouth, claiming it for his own.

They parted and Tania's eyes opened, barely focusing. "More. Teach me more about touch."

He grinned at her demand. All right, he'd cave in to her command this time and let her win this one, since it gave him an opening to win the war. Still keeping his grip around her body so that she could not move away from him, he brought his hand away from the beautiful stretch of her neck and flicked her nipple.

Tania's head came up as the sting made her gasp. Again he flicked the nipple and she struggled to move away. But he was strong and held her tightly against his side. A third flick and she cried out.

"Ouch. Jim, that hurts."

He flicked it a fourth time. "And it excites you, doesn't it?"

Her cheeks colored. It was true. It hurt, yet her pussy was gushing. The banked embers glowed.

He switched to the other nipple, alternately squeezing it tightly between his fingers and flicking it hard. She tried to remain still and just let the sensations flow through her, but found it impossible.

"You see?" He lifted her chin again and held her eyes. "So much more fun than just rutting on the Oriental carpet."

She couldn't answer, tingles were flowing from her nipples to her fingertips and down through her belly to her pussy. For the first time, she didn't want to just jump on him and ride the sensation through to the end. These tingles were far too intriguing to let them go too quickly.

“More?” She looked at him, knowing her question was a plea and not a demand.

He smiled as his fingers now caressed her sore nipples. “Much more.”

Satisfied that she would not try to rush things again, at least not for a while, he released her and stood. He held his hand down to her and when she placed her smaller, more delicate one in his, he pulled her up to stand at his side. “Keep that fire banked, keep control of your passion and breathe deeply. Whenever you feel yourself wanting to come, I want you to tell me.”

“Why? So you can stop again and make me frustrated?”

He grinned. One lesson he was learning about this woman was that she was no doormat. “No, so I can guide you to the longest, hardest, most incredible orgasm you’ve ever had.”

She cocked an eyebrow at him, her nipples pink and tingly and her pussy soaking wet. “You’re on, Mr. Delaney. I’ll let you know when I want to come.”

“Bend over and put your hands on the chair seat.”

That sixties-style chair she had found at a garage sale last spring. The clothes she’d stripped off for him still lay, neatly folded, on the seat. Ignoring them, she leaned over. Bright orange vinyl stuck to her palms as she experimented a moment, finding a comfortable position.

“Spread your legs for me.”

The words made her knees weak, even as she wanted to throw something at him for commanding her like she was some sort of slave girl. Shifting her weight, she parted her thighs, feeling the slight breeze from the open window caress the hot lips of her extremely wet pussy. Feeling open and vulnerable, her breath caught in her throat as a slow smile spread across her face. It had been a long time since anyone had taken her from behind, but her memories of it were pleasant indeed.

Jim’s hands caressed her ass, the smooth skin of his palms warm against those rounded hills. Around her cheeks and up along her back, then out and down to her hips, his hands explored every inch of her skin. Completing the circuit, he began again, this time his fingers massaging her muscles until she was purring in contentment. His cock, still hard, brushed against her leg and she smiled. She was not the only one who would benefit from the waiting.

He set one hand in the center of her back. “Be still.”

Almost a whisper, his voice held power and she held herself quietly, no longer arching or voicing her appreciation of his touch.

“Take a deep breath and hold it in. Don’t let it out until I tell you to.”

Closing her eyes, Tania dropped her head, pulling air into her lungs in a long, slow intake. Just as she reached her limit, she heard him instruct her again.

“Slowly let it out, and as you do, let the tension in your back flow out as well.”

The calm before the storm settled over her and she closed her eyes. A languorous smile played on her

lips as she released the tension in her shoulders, allowing him to guide her thoughts and movements.

“Take in another breath, and this time, think of your pussy as you do. Focus on your clit, and on the breeze that cools it...”

Serenity filled her soul as she listened to his voice. Inhaling again, she bent her knees a little, allowing the warm air to caress her pussy the same way his hands had run along her back.

“This is all about giving me control and letting me teach you about sensation. Feel how your pussy tingles. Feel how open you are...how ready you are for my cock. Hold your breath and feel yourself on the edge...”

She did. The abyss yawned but a step away. For the first time, she did not run headlong and jump. Instead, she stood where she was, content to hover close to the edge and savor the moment, content to wait for him to take her there at his pace.

The slap of his hand on her exposed ass shocked a cry from her lips as the abyss suddenly rushed closer. Shying away from it in confused betrayal, she shot up and turned to face him. “What was that for? What do you think you’re doing?”

Jim stood silently behind her, one eyebrow cocked as if he expected her to know the answer. Frowning, she considered a moment and then realized that she did.

“Sensations. This is all about sensations.”

His smile dimpled one cheek and Tania studied him a moment as she weighed this new tingle. Jim simply stood with his hands at his sides, waiting for her reaction. Smiling a naughty smile of her own, Tania made a show of turning her back to him again, bending over and carefully placing her hands on the vinyl seat. For good measure, she adjusted her stance, widening the space between her legs so he could see how turned on the spanking made her.

Jim waited until she settled, hiding his grin. She had turned the tables on him again, making it seem as if the game were her idea. No, this one was no doormat at all. She let him lead her, but once she decided she liked the path, she settled confidently into it as if it were her right to be there. Could this be the woman he’d always longed for? One who could not only allow him his need to dominate but who wouldn’t lose her own delicious personality in the process? Too bad he didn’t have any of his “toys” here. The heart-shaped cheeks before him made one hell of a spankable ass, but his hand was going to get tired much sooner than a paddle. He could do her so much more justice with the right tools.

For now, his palm would do, however, and he spanked her again, this time leaving very little time for her to gather her wits between slaps. Under his hand, the skin turned pink. When she moaned, he switched cheeks, watching the creamy white liquid pool between the lips of her pussy. And when it dripped, a thin line hanging... suspended...her moans turned to whimpers and she gasped out, “I need to come.”

Jim let his hands hang at his sides again, the palms of his hands burning and as pink as her ass. His cock throbbed almost painfully and he knew neither of them could take much more. Grabbing her hips, he positioned himself at the entrance to her pussy, holding her hips still so she could not move.

“Oh, God...Jim! I need to come. I don’t think I can hold off much longer...”

Still he held her hips in his deceptively strong hands, his cock quivering at the entrance to her pussy. He retained control, knowing he needed to force her to accept his dominance. Only then could he teach her all the wonderful sensations of sex, including one called “humiliation”. She had tasted it earlier, when she had begged for his kiss. Except her begging then had only been a means to an end, not words spoken from her heart. A woman of her pride would fight, but her ultimate submission to him would send her emotions into a whirlwind that would make her flight unforgettable. His fingers pressed against her skin as he held her, her pussy hovering just centimeters from the tip of his cock. Growling his command, he pushed her limits.

“Then beg me.”

A feral growl came in answer and she shook her head even as she squirmed in his hands, trying to take his cock inside her.

“Beg me, Tania. You want to be fucked? Then beg for it.” He slapped her ass again.

Embarrassment and mortification mingled with frantic need and Tania cried out, tears of frustration pooling in her eyes. She shook her head no, and he gave her ass another spank. It almost sent her over the edge. How could he demand that she debase herself like that? How could he treat her that way? The image of a slave girl came to her again. Didn’t he realize she was an intelligent woman? That she was independent. That she was...

His cock brushed against the entrance to her pussy and the tears of need slid down her cheeks as her pussy longed to embrace him. A wall crumbled inside her heart as her last coherent thought flew out the window.

“Please, Jim. Please fuck me. Let me feel you inside me.”

His cock brushed against her again and his fingers tightened on her hips, his thumbs digging into her reddened skin as she writhed in agony, trying not to come.

But when his fingers reached underneath to find her clit, all her pretenses shattered. Tears coursed down her face and her heart admitted his dominance. Whimpering, pleading, she begged again—this time from the depths of her being. “Please, Jim. Take me. Let me hold you. Please?”

Her sweet submission drove him over the edge. Without another word, he gripped her hips and thrust his swollen cock into her opening, forcing himself deep inside. Her muscles strained to accept his width, stretching to take him. He pushed her body away and pulled her to him a second time and a third, plunging again and again to allow her muscles to pull from him the seed his body wanted to give her.

His cock filled her, struck the sensitive spot inside, and she cried out in wordless passion even as his groans ran counterpoint. She rode him viciously in her need, moving now in tandem with his thrusts, her fingers gripping the edge of the chair as his fingers dug into her hips, slamming harder and harder.

“Come for me now. Come for me, Tania.”

The world stopped. Two breaths held...one glorious second stretched to two, stretched forever before they plummeted to the earth in mindless ecstasy. Muscles contracted and released and together their



voices shouted to the world that they were one. All the pent-up passion she held onto spilled out in waves of glory that lifted her time and time again until, spent, she leaned her head on the vinyl chair seat and gasped for breath as Jim leaned his hips against hers, relishing the last echoes of his climax.

For the first time in her life, Tania felt sated and whole. And when her body settled, and Jim pulled her to him to lie in his arms on the carpet, exhaustion overtook them both. Sliding her arms under his, Tania laid her head on the packed muscle of Jim's shoulder, just listening to him breathe as she sorted out the confusion in her mind.

Jim returned to reality slowly. The afternoon of paid sex he had thought to get when he'd first sat down at Tania's table had turned out to be far more than he had bargained for. He felt the light weight of her on his chest and pulled her close, burying his nose in her hair, drinking in her scent. A woman with passion that ran so hot and deep was the type of woman who came into a man's life only once. For some, maybe never. He was not about to let this one go.

"Jim?" Tania's muffled voice sounded far away.

"Yes, Tania?" He was a bit surprised to find his own voice fairly dreamlike.

"We need to do this a lot."

Jim grinned down at the tawny hair spread over his chest and pushed it away from her face. "Does that mean you liked learning about the different sensations sex can have?"

"Yes, you cad. I liked learning about the 'different sensations sex can have'. All of them." She blushed. "Even the spanking." Lifting her head, she gave him a mischievous grin, reaching down to gently squeeze his cock. Briefly she wondered what he tasted like but decided that would have to wait until later. Right now she was far too comfortable to move.

He looked down at her and brushed a stray hair from her cheek, still flushed with the heat that had fueled their passion. He tilted her chin up and gently kissed the soft lips he was falling in love with. "Even the spanking? I was afraid you were going to send me packing at first."

"The thought did cross my mind."

"But you didn't."

She propped herself up on one elbow so she could see his face. "No, I didn't send you packing. And before you ask why, I really don't know. If you'd have asked me at lunch if I wanted to be spanked to an orgasm, I'd have told you to take a hike. But when you slapped my ass... I found it so... wonderfully erotic... that I didn't want you to stop."

Jim went out on the limb. "There are other sensations I can teach you."

"Oh? Like what?"

The afterglow still lit her face, and there was an endearing, open curiosity there that made him smile up at her from his comfortable position on the floor. A flash of desire sped through him as he imagined what he would like to do to her. But past experience had taught him that the limb he was moving out on was a

precarious place to venture, so his words were gently said.

“Sensations that involve...ropes.”

“Really?” Her brow furrowed. “What do you mean?”

The limb he stood on could break at his next words. Jim hesitated, his fingers idly playing with a lock of her hair as he considered the best approach. Deciding Tania was the type of woman who wanted information in the most direct way, he rolled over onto one arm so he could gauge her reaction when he told her his somewhat kinky preferences.

“Tania, I want to teach you how being open and vulnerable to someone else’s will can be erotic and sexy. I want to make you vulnerable to me by tying you up. I want to teach you how the rope I weave around your body can hold you, how it can caress your skin. How it can bind you to me in more ways than just the physical.”

Tania’s lips had parted and her breasts moved in tandem with her quickened breath. “You want to tie me up and fuck me?”

Jim laughed. “In short, yes.”

“With rope?” She eyed him carefully.

“Yes.” He sobered. Would she accept what he proposed? Or would she show him the door?

A slow smile spread over her face as she considered the idea. “And chains?”

“And chains.” Did he dare hope?

Her smile turned naughty. “And whips?”

He grinned. “And whips.”

“I’d like to know more about whips. A lot more.”

Jim’s fingers traced the outline of her face, wonderment in his voice. “My God, woman, you are incredible.”

She smiled up through lowered eyelashes. “Thank you. Does that mean you’ll come back?”

Jim grew serious once more. “Tania, I would very much like to come back. I don’t want today to be all there is for us.”

“What are you saying?”

His hand reached out to cup her breast and he felt her heart beat harder even as her eyes narrowed. Was he misinterpreting her again? He’d already made one huge mistake today and he didn’t intend to make another. Did he really dare hope that this woman could handle his politically incorrect attitude toward sex? He looked into her wary eyes and didn’t want to pass up the chance to find the answer. Taking a chance, he put his feelings out on the line. “I’m saying I’m not seeing anyone at the moment. But I’d like to be.”

“Me?”

She looked so surprised and so vulnerable that Jim wanted to find whoever had hurt her in the past and punch his lights out. “Yes, love. You.” He resisted the urge to flick that cute little nose of hers.

“Good.” Tania’s heart soared. “I’m not seeing anyone either. At the moment.”

“And you will let me teach you more about slow and sensuous sex?”

“And whips and chains? I’m counting on it, buster.”

Much too exhausted by their afternoon to do more than kiss her gently, Jim smiled down at the beautiful woman in his arms. “Then what do you say we continue this and see where it goes?”

“I’d say I am very glad you walked by my table today, Mr. Delaney.” Tania looked up at him through her long lashes, flirting with him. “And I’d say you need to kiss me again.” *And maybe give me another spanking*, she added silently.

“Yes, ma’am.” Jim’s grin lasted only until their lips met and Tania seductively pulled on his lower lip, arousing his cock again. Jim suddenly wasn’t sure who was leading whom in this partnership, and as the kiss deepened, he decided he didn’t care. Whether she had hooked him or he had hooked her, this partnership would be unlike anything either of them had ever experienced. Pulling her into his arms and taking possession of her mouth once more, Jim knew he wasn’t going to let this one go.

#### About the Author

For many years, Diana Hunter confined herself to mainstream writings. Her interest in the world of dominance and submission, dormant for years, bloomed when she met a man who was willing to let her explore the submissive side of her personality. In her academic approach to learning about the lifestyle, she discovered hundreds of short stories that existed on the topic, but none of them seemed to express her view of a d/s relationship. Challenged by a friend to write a better one, she wrote her first BDSM novel, *Secret Submission*, published by Ellora’s Cave Publishing.

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