

Gilded Cage

By

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Chapter One

Somehow, it was the overwhelming silence that finally shocked Faith into consciousness and once she realized her position, she wondered if perhaps her conscience had been trying to keep her from recognizing her own plight.

Although she was fully awake – if considerably groggy – she couldn't open her eyes. They were forced shut by some sort of sweaty, smelly band of cloth that appeared to be tied behind her head, if the uncomfortable lumpiness against the back of her head was any indication. When she turned her head, she learned that it wasn't just the blindfold that stank to high heaven. She was lying on some sort of bed, and apparently the maid hadn't serviced it in quite some time. A gentle tug on her aching arms revealed that each wrist was unforgivingly fastened to some sort of post, as was each ankle. Her senses were almost overwhelmed by the stench surrounding her.

Goose flesh broke out all over her body as Faith's breath froze in her lungs.

She was bound, spread eagled . . . and completely naked.

And she had no idea where the hell she was.

Although every thought in her brain wanted to run helter skelter away with her sanity, Faith forced herself to be as calm as possible – although it wasn't easy by any means. She'd never had a lot of control over her emotions – they always seemed to interfere at the least opportune moments. But, although her eyes were welling with tears of abject terror, Faith struggled to keep the spiral of fear from eating her alive. She had to assess her situation and see what she could do – if anything, her traitorous mind squealed – to extract herself from it.

She tried her best to concentrate on remembering everything that had happened prior to waking up. Behind

the blindfold, her face wrinkled unbecomingly with the effort. It was Sunday, her first Sunday in Columbia, and she was browsing at the Mercado de San Alejo. She remembered being amazed at the array of wares for sale. She hadn't set out to buy anything, but she knew she wouldn't be able to get away without snagging some hand crafted chotchke or other for her handful of friends back home, if only to prove to them that there were other commodities for sale in Columbia besides drugs.

Her friends had thought that she was crazy to take this trip – and, since the last word anyone would use to describe any of them was quiet, they let her know of their displeasure in no uncertain terms. Not that any of their objections had served to deter her. Faith grimaced at the irony while tugging futilely at the bonds that held her wrists.

She wasn't stupid, though, and she'd done as much as she could to protect herself, including getting a gruesome number of preventative vaccines and booster shots. She could barely move either arm for a couple of weeks before she left. She didn't flash her money – what little she had – or advertise the fact that she was either a tourist or an American. She drank only bottled water, kept her mouth shut as much as possible, dressed as close to native as she could managed, and kept her eyes peeled for anything or anyone unusual – although it was a foreign country and pretty much everything was unusual.

Despite all the dire warnings and predictions, Faith found herself feeling relatively safe after a few days. She learned her way around Bogata fairly easily, and found the majority of the people warm and friendly. She almost snorted at the thought now.

Nothing had seemed unusual that day, either. She'd been strolling leisurely from one makeshift stall to the other, taking in all the sights and sounds and smells, trying to immerse herself in the culture, but also trying to remain wary. Apparently she hadn't done a very good job of the latter.

She'd only really looked down the darkened alley way for a second, but that was all it took for a group of rough, unkempt men to surround her and herd her away from the bustling market. Within seconds, one of them had reached around her face and clamped a wet cloth over her mouth and nose. Faith had a good idea exactly what it was that might have dampened that cloth, and did her best not to breathe, but it was a losing battle. Her eyes fell shut within just a few breaths. She couldn't even recall what any of the men looked like – no distinguishing characteristics, nothing. They were just a faceless group of men. She almost snorted. What the hell was she trying to remember details about their appearance for? It wasn't as if she was going to get out of this bed and head down to the local police department and fill out a complaint form. That wasn't how things worked here in the best of situations.

And this was hardly the best situation.

The stark, cold reality was that she would be lucky to get out of this alive.

Faith swallowed hard, her eyes filling with tears again that merely soaked the cloth that obscured them. She refused to give in to despair. There had to be a way out. There just had to be. With renewed determination, she began to pull at all four points where she was restrained.

Faith had no idea that there was a man in the room with her. Marco had been silent as a cat the entire time she'd been asleep, but as soon as he saw that luscious body stirring he left. El Diablo had left orders that he was to be notified as soon as the bellaza showed any signs of waking. He'd also left explicit orders that she was not to be touched – and he'd looked right at Marco when he'd issued the warning, although it really hadn't been necessary. Marco valued his life – and/or various parts of his anatomy – far too much to cross the Boss in any way.

He knocked vigorously on the thick wooden door to the inner sanctum. "Come."

Marco didn't even have to say anything – the Boss saw him and stood up immediately, brushing past him in the big hallway and practically running down to the small ante chamber where she was kept.

But this woman was no idiot. The door had banged open loud enough to wake the dead, but the pinioned body on the bed didn't so much as flinch. Marco knew that the Boss would have seen and noted this. Nothing – but nothing – got by El Diablo.

Cordero De La Fuente took but a second to drink in his captive, but he felt as if he'd known her for years. He'd been after this particular jewel for quite some time, but had never expected that she might fall into his lap as she had. He had expected to have to work much harder for her – which he was not adverse to in pursuit of his goals. Still, there she was, in all of her pristine ivory glory, awaiting whatever fate he decided to mete out.

Well, there was no sense delaying the establishment of exactly who it was that was in control of every single aspect of the situation. This woman, more so than any others he had met, was likely to give him trouble – or try to, anyway – if the natural order of things wasn't enforced immediately. His mind made up, and without removing his eyes from what he could see of her face, Cord drove his hand between her outstretched legs, cupping her warm femininity in the rough cradle of his palm.

Her response was instantaneous – she began to buck and writhe and wiggle as if her life depended on it, all in a desperate but useless bid to dislodge his hand. A dark, innately satisfied smile settled onto Cord's face and the men around him said a silent prayer of thanks that they were not in the Anglo woman's place. His deep chuckle startled them – none of them had ever heard him laugh

before – and its evil tone sent shivers up their spines.

Cord saw his men – out of the corner of his eye - unsuccessfully trying to hide their reactions, but it was this handful of woman that had his attention. She didn't shiver, in fact he could see that her jaws were clamped tightly together, as if she was barely choking back a scream. He wanted to reassure her that she needn't suppress her cries. She'd be screaming uninhibitedly not long from now.

"You're quite a beautiful woman, Miss Alexander." His low, intimate tone of voice – as if they were alone in the room together instead of surrounded by six or seven other men – and the way his middle finger slipped between her nether lips belied the excruciating formality of his words.

Practically fainting from the force and rapidity of her heartbeat, Faith tried to raise her head, but found that with her arms anchored above her head, it didn't go far. Why was he calling her Miss Alexander?

"Yeeeeesssss," he drawled, letting the fingers of his other hand caress slowly up the slope of one breast to trap a taut pink tip. "Very beautiful." As the fingertips of the hand between her legs explored inexorably until they found and began to tease her tiny love bud, his other fingers twisted her nipple cruelly, wrenching it violently and practically trying to wrap it around his hand.

"Aahhhhhhhhhhhhh-
iiiiiiiieyyooooooooooooooooooooooooow!" Faith couldn't help herself. She had never experienced anything but pleasure from that private area, and her nipples had always been ultra-sensitive. It felt as if he was trying to rip her breast off by tugging on it.

He adored the way her body moved as she tried to avoid the pain he was inflicting on her. It was, quite unintentionally, a very sensuous dance – however stilted by her bonds. He could feel himself stiffening behind the zipper of his khakis. Cord released the offended nipple then

crouched down beside the head of the bed, leaning over her, kissing along her jaw, never relenting in his exploration of that oh so private area between her legs. "I think I shall have to take some pictures of you like this – or perhaps with some additions – to send to your father," he whispered loudly in the general direction of her ear as he nibbled his way towards her lips.

Cord was smart enough, however, not to kiss her. He knew that she was much more likely to bite him than join in the kiss, and, although he could understand that response from her, it was not one he would ever tolerate. So he studiously avoided her mouth, deciding instead to leave a warm, wet trail down to the crest that he had so recently abused.

As his hot mouth settled over the vulnerable tip, suckling avidly at it, the thick fingers between her legs drove themselves deep inside her. Cord almost lost control at the feeling of being surrounded by her moist woman's flesh, but he managed to reel himself in – barely. Then his mind flashed on one thought – his fingers were drenched in her honey, and he had another struggle for control of his own body on his hands, although there truly really was no question as to who was going to win. He was in control. He was always in control of everyone and every thing. Always. There was no other alternative.

He hunkered down just a little more, so that he could truly whisper in her ear as he brought his finger out and up her crease until they hit that little morsel of flesh he'd explored so hurriedly before. Slowly, methodically, he began to rub the rough tips of his index and third fingers over and around and over the top again, coaxing an obvious, if decidedly reluctant, response from her. For a long moment, he just watched her, luxuriating in the power he had over her. This was going to be a lot more fun than he'd anticipated. It wouldn't have been nearly as amusing if she'd been some frigid thing. Instead, he was going to have the excruciating delight of not only bringing her to the limits of her sanity from pain, but also from pleasure.

And her blush – it turned nearly the whole of her milky white skin a becoming shade of dusky pink, not unlike that of her nipples. She was responsive, yes, but was also the modest sort. That was her crowning glory, as far as he was concerned. To inflict pain was one thing, but to inflict shame at the same time . . . and, nowadays, even in Columbia, it was hard to find a woman who was truly modest. He hadn't expected a virgin – she was far enough from a teenager that that would have been some sort of a record. But he was even more impressed by her modesty about her body since she was an American. Cord had long since lost his belief that there were any self-conscious American women. Most of them threw themselves at him with abhorrent abandon. That type of woman was the last kind who would ever strike his interest.

But this lovely Senator's daughter – this particular Senator's daughter . . . what a find! Just when he'd been organizing a daring, some would say foolhardy kidnapping just to teach her father a lesson about promoting reform in countries where he had no business sticking his nose, Juan and Alessandro spotted her in the market. Cord shook his head. He couldn't believe how easy this had been. Somehow, it was even a little too easy, but who was he to look a gift hostage in the mouth?

"My fingers feel good to you, don't they, little one?" As he expected she turned her head as far away from him as possible, but then he merely followed her. She couldn't get away from him, no matter what she did, and he intended to impress that fact on her, starting right now.

With his lips almost on her ear again, he continued in a soft, teasingly sensual voice, "I bet even that little pinch of your titty felt good to you, didn't it?"

Faith wanted to scream "NO!" at him, but refused to give him the satisfaction. She preferred to keep her strength for her eventual escape.

Cord didn't expect her agreement. But he could see how

her body was responding to him – despite how her mind must be railing against it. It was one of the most powerful things in the world – one of the things that brought him to instant granite hardness: bringing an unwilling woman to pleasure. And he was determined to do so to her, right here, right now.

And sometimes, spelling out the truth of their situation only added fuel to the fire – perhaps it gave them some sort of out intellectually, he didn't know. "We're not alone here, you know. There are five other men in this room. All of them can see you – every bit of you – because you're naked. They can see how red your nipple is from where I twisted it – they can see how taut it's remained, and how distended the other one is . . . "

Faith's eyes filled with tears that she immediately tried to blink away. If he would hit her, or abuse her as he just had – that kind of treatment she would have expected and could have dealt with. She was at least somewhat mentally prepared for pain . . . for rape. But this – this oversized hand pressing between legs that she couldn't close against it . . . the ultimate invasion when thick sausage fingers forced their way inside her, rooting rudely around, setting fires in nerves she would have given anything at that moment not to have. And then this soft, almost cajoling voice, ever so slightly accented, cinnamon fresh breath wafting over her cheek as he continued to talk to her, and continued to molest her, making her feel damnably good while she recited multiplication tables in her head and tried not to think about how his slick fingers and thumb had surrounded her most sensitive point, plucking at it gently yet firmly.

And, as her body continued to betray her and respond to him almost wholeheartedly, she knew she was going to lose this first battle, and waves of shame crashed over her, setting loose the tears that had puddled in her eyes.

Cord could hear her breathing becoming more and more labored even though she was facing away from him. He

could see her breasts rise and fall rapidly, and he deliberately slowed his fingers until they were barely moving across the barest top of her clit, keeping it surrounded and slick and warm and wet, but not stimulating beyond that.

“Did you know that all of my men are watching you right now? They can hear your heavy breathing. They can see those beautiful titties of yours rising and falling . . . they can see the way your hips move with my hand when you’re not thinking about how much you hate me. When all you’re thinking about is how good my fingers are making you feel.” He gently contracted the tips of his fingers on her engorged nub, then began to circle around it, fluttering his fingers, vibrating them, watching her like a hawk for each and every iota of her reaction.

When he knew the inevitable was at hand, he whispered, “They’re going to watch you come, right along with me. We’re going to hear you shout, and watching your hips buck against my hand as I bring you off. We’re going to watch your breasts bob with every motion, and I’m going to be able to feel each and every contraction.”

Everything he said, everything he did, this stranger who held her life in his hands apparently so blithely, should have turned her completely off. She should have been wrenching in his face rather than writhing and panting to the tune he called with his hand. She didn’t know him! She’d never even seen his face! She should be so scared to death that she didn’t feel anything!

But leave it to her overactive libido to kick in at any given provocation. And, she remembered from freshman psyche, fear is an aphrodisiac. That certainly appeared to be true in her case. Faith could feel that familiar tingle at the base of her spine, letting her know that it was only a matter of seconds. She used those seconds to prepare herself. This monster seemed to be getting his own jollies by watching her, so she intended to give him as little a show as possible.

Cord was close enough to her that it was impossible to miss the squeal she couldn't quite suppress, and the strong contractions against his hand. But other than that one peep and the convulsions she couldn't suppress, she showed no other outwards signs of having reached her pleasure.

Somehow, even though he'd won and imposed his will on her, it was a hollow victory. Cord's mouth twisted in a grimace that had his men taking an involuntary step back. That look on his face and in his eye spoke louder than any raised voice. The Boss almost never raised his voice. He didn't have to.

It was on the tip of Marco's tongue to ask if she'd come, but as soon as he saw his Boss's set face, he knew better than to ask. It was better to assume such things, anyway. There were very few women who could resist El Diablo when he set his sights. And even if he wasn't courting her, this woman would bow to him, just like all the others had.

Cord was busy, still whispering to his captive. "That was very naughty of you, Miss Alexander," he breathed, reaching out with the hand that had just satisfied her, still coated with her honey, to harshly pinch the nipple he'd neglected before. He was rewarded by her stiffly indrawn breath. "But you'll learn, I'm sure, that I don't allow you to stifle your feelings about what I'm doing to you. I want to hear it all – everything. The moans, the groans, the screams and the squeals. We only have a short time together before I have to let your father know that you're enjoying my accommodations. I'm sure he'll be willing to pay just about anything to get your back – even at the risk of his own career."

"My father?"

A big finger that still smelled strongly of herself was pressed to her lips. "You may only speak when I ask you a direct question, Miss Alexander. But you'll soon learn that rule, also."

"Fuck you! I'm not who you think I am! My name is Faith Whittaker! Let me go!" Faith screamed, suddenly unwilling and unable to hold still even a second longer.

Cord, who had been temporarily rendered deaf by the fact that she had bellowed with all her might almost directly into his ear, sat up slowly. "Apparently you didn't hear what I just said, or perhaps you didn't understand." He stood next to the bed and stared down at the nubile young woman's heaving, writhing body. "But either way, I guess you need to be taught my rule about speaking only to me, and then only when I have asked you a direct question sooner than I had expected."

Faith couldn't hear anything but a soft jingling of metal, then the zipper-like sound of something being pulled through something soft, like fabric. She was entirely unprepared for the excruciating pain of what happened next.

A woman's breasts, as far as Faith was concerned, were meant to be treated gently. Hers had never been treated any other way, by anyone, especially on those few days a month when her hormones ruled and they throbbed very nicely all on their own. At those times, she could barely stand her bra around them, much less let them be man-handled in any way.

So nothing in her experience prepared her for the searing thud of something striking her left breast – the one he hadn't twisted, thank God. The tip of whatever it was snapped against her nipple just as it was withdrawn. Faith couldn't take a breath. She couldn't. She'd expelled every ounce of air in her body as the pain exploded in her flesh, and was just beginning to draw it back in when another excruciating explosion lashed the inside of her right breast.

A belt. The word blasted into her mind unexpectedly. This monster was taking a belt to her breasts.

The next blow covered the top of her breast and wrapped around so that the tip licked fire on the tender side of her breast. This time Faith had enough breath, and she screamed with all of her might, pulling and tugging against the bonds. But she remained in place, exactly where he wanted her, so that she could not avoid the fourth and fifth lashings. Faith thought she was going to die from the pain, or worse than that, that she was going to live through it.

Cord watched her beautiful body writhe and twist and an unusual compulsion hit him – he wanted to send his men away, lay his body over hers and kiss the pain away. The thought made him angry – angrier than he'd been in a long time – and the last kiss of the strap that he bestowed raised an immediate welt on that bouncing flesh.

He wanted to throw the belt away when he was done, but his iron will wouldn't allow it. In slow, deliberate movements, he threaded the thick black belt back through the loops of his pants, all the while staring down at the sobbing, shaking woman it had left in its wake. Using a deep, threatening tone to deliberately frighten her even further, he said, "There's a lot more of that to come, Miss Alexander. I hope you've learned your lesson."

Faith wanted nothing more than to curl in on herself, both mentally and physically. This was a nightmare, and she hoped and wished with all her might, with her eyes squeezed shut so tightly they hurt, that when she reopened them, that she would be home in her bed in Hagerstown . . . but it didn't work. In the mean time, it seemed that each of the stripes he'd laid across her chest were throbbing and thrumming in unison, their pain doubling and tripling with each second. Faith thought she would lose her mind if someone didn't loosen just one of her wrists so that she could rub her assaulted breasts. Someone had to do something to ease her pain, didn't they? Surely one of them would have some sympathy for her –

But as she was trying to wrap her mind around the agony of the fire in her flesh, everyone left. She was left alone to

try to cope with her situation as best she could.

Her fear spiraled out of control as she wept and moaned pitifully for long, tortured moments. Eventually, exhausted and hurting incredibly, she shook her head, trying to clear her mind. Faith knew that she had probably just been given the merest taste of what was in store for her if she remained in the hands of the maniac that had done this to her. He obviously thought that she was Sherry Alexander, the daughter of the prominent Senator Albert Alexander from Maryland. He was probably expecting some sort of rich ransom for her safe return – or at least the rich ransom. Somehow, after only a few minutes of acquaintance, Faith doubted that he intended to return her alive – even though she hadn't seen anyone's face and certainly couldn't have pointed any of them out.

She concentrated on trying to control her breathing to block out the pain and keep her from thinking about the fact that she was probably going to die here in some horrible way.

Or, worse, be kept alive for their amusement . . .

Chapter Two

Cord's big, muscular frame slumped back into the humongous black leather chair behind his antique mahogany desk, shifting several times in order to get a certain part of his anatomy into a comfortable position instead of threatening to split his zipper in two. But he couldn't clear his brain of the images of her that flashed, unbidden, through his mind. Dear God, she was perfection! Even if he hadn't been interested in coercing the stalwart Senator from Maryland to vote against the radical anti-drug bill that would have a devastating effect on his business in the States, he would have probably done just about anything to get a hold of his daughter.

Of course, he probably wouldn't have resorted to kidnapping her. When he wanted to, he could slip in and out of the U.S. entirely unnoticed, even with today's terrorist paranoia. Cord had been educated in the best schools in America and could, when he needed to, pass for the most Anglo of Anglos. They generally weren't looking for men in thousand dollar Armani suits, and his id was impeccably forged. The DEA was busy chasing after the myth of El Diablo – not a successful businessman with both deep roots and unquestionable references in their country.

Early on in his business career, Cord had seen the way the wind blew. He had grown up genteely poor, living on the good graces of extended family. He'd vowed that neither he – nor anyone in his family – would ever want again as long as he was alive, and he would do anything to secure his financial future. And he hadn't been afraid to get his hands dirty along the way.

As a result, he was an obscenely rich man with very bloody hands. And what he wanted, he got. He no longer had to go out and procure things himself – he had minions to do that for him. But he still didn't shy away from taking the reins himself – especially when it was personal.

And this was just about as personal as it got. He hadn't reacted like this to a woman ever. Ever. He wasn't sure he liked it, but it didn't seem to be dissipating. When he'd heard that the Senator's vote would be pivotal, he'd let it be known that he wanted as much information on this man as possible, and one of those packets contained a dossier on his daughter – Sherry Alexander – who was a famous painter. The dossier gave him a lot of good information and the more he read – and stared at the photos like a man in a trance – the more he came to like this woman. Another first. Women, to Cord, served very few purposes beyond satisfying his appetites in the bedroom. He'd always been very careful not to impregnate anyone, and he'd never committed to any woman, partly because he'd never found one he was interested in committing to, and partly because he knew that anyone he was close to immediately became a target. What woman would want that kind of life?

He rubbed his palm over his face. Too much thinking was never a good thing. He should just stick to what he knew. Stick to the plan. Get some stuff together to send to her father so that the man would know that someone who had an agenda had his precious daughter.

Cord couldn't quite stop himself from going downstairs, though, just to look at her. The thought of checking on her flitted through his mind, but he dismissed it. He wasn't checking on her. He would be willing to bet that those glorious breasts were still sore, and her arms and shoulders were probably aching from being held over her head for so long. But that wasn't his concern, he told himself. He just wanted to see her, make sure she was there. He couldn't believe the serendipity of just having her dropped into his life like that when he'd been getting prepared to go and get her. Something . . . something just didn't feel right about it, and he wasn't sure exactly what that was yet, but it would come to him. It always did if he was patient enough to let it.

Patience wasn't always his strongest suit, however, he grinned as he lit a cheroot.

He opened the door wide and just leaned against the jam, smoking the slim cigar and drinking her in with his eyes.

Faith heard the squeak of the door and every muscle tensed uncomfortably. Her body was already learning to expect to be hit, and not being able to see the swing, to anticipate the strike, was mind-chilling.

She wasn't crying. He was surprised. He could see how her whole body came to attention – as much as was possible – at the sound of the door, but she didn't say a thing. She learned well, apparently. "Try to sleep, Miss Alexander." Why he spoke, he'd never know. That urge to comfort was beginning to rival his interest in inflicting pain and pleasure, and that wasn't a good thing. It weakened him. He wished that he could call the words back as soon as they were out of his mouth.

It was him! That voice would haunt her forever – deep, gravelly . . . starkly evil. What if he took off his belt again? What if he came over there and put his hand between her legs again? Faith wasn't at all sure which fate was worse – being punished by him or being fondled by him. Both were atrocious, as far as she was concerned. She couldn't decide which was worse.

Faith almost snorted at his command. Like she was ever going to sleep in this situation – she might just wake up dead if she did. She wanted to remain awake and alert to any possibility of escaping. She was going to see if she could reach the knots in the ropes at her wrists. Sleep didn't figure in any of her plans for this evening.

She tried to remain as still as possible, hoping that he'd go away if she was as boring as possible. But she didn't hear the door squeak closed, so she knew he was still there, most probably staring at her, leering at her. She didn't even know what he looked like, yet he was free to ogle every inch of her – worse than that, he could touch every inch of her. Faith was having a hard time coming to terms with that

– with everything that had happened to her in the space of the last day. Just a few hours ago, she was a free and independent woman, roaming the market and trying to decide where to begin exploring the ancient ruins she'd come to see.

Now she was a prisoner, a vulnerable, already abused prisoner. She'd already learned that her body was only too willing to betray her, and her captors were more than willing to inflict pain. She didn't want to die here, but things were not looking good. The man who'd used his belt on her seemed to be the nearest thing to a leader – or he could be the head torturer. He was the only person who had spoken to her. And he seemed to think she was someone else. That couldn't be good for her. How was she going to convince him that she wasn't some Senator's daughter? There certainly wasn't anyone at home in the States that was going to pay a dime to get her back – much less the exorbitant sum he was probably asking for Sherry Alexander.

Aching tears welled and overflowed, dampening the blindfold, she was sure. Her breathing became stuttered, no matter how hard she tried to control it. She hated crying in the first place, but now she was crying in front of him and that made it that much worse. She didn't want to show weakness in front of him, not that she seemed to have any choice. He'd already proven that he could push her well beyond her limits, and this horrible situation had probably barely begun. She was doomed to die here, she knew, and that thought made her cry even harder.

Cord had heard a woman cry before and it had never bothered him. Then why was this woman's tears rekindling that urge that was entirely unnatural to him? He wanted to run to the side of the bed and comfort her, untie her arms and feet and cradle her body against his, reassuring her that everything was going to be all right. He could well imagine the thoughts that were running through her mind. She was probably wondering if he was going to kill her even if her father did exactly as he was told, worrying about

him returning with the belt – or worse – wondering when she would draw her last breath and if she would die slowly, and in pain.

None of these things had ever concerned Cord before. He'd done things like this and much, much worse – although women weren't usually who he ended up kidnapping. He'd been in this line of work for too long to become squeamish now.

But still, her tears tugged at him – at his heart, which he would have sworn was long dead by now, and those around him would have sworn was a part of his anatomy that was missing. He didn't earn his nickname – El Diablo – by being the sympathetic sort.

He could give her something that would help her sleep, but he decided against it. He used drugs when they were necessary, and they were likely going to be necessary with her, but not until he had to. Their intermingling could cause unseen problems. One never knew what underlying medical conditions a prisoner might have.

Cord frowned. He hadn't really thought of her as his prisoner, which was stupid since that was exactly what she was. Somehow, using that term in conjunction with her left a bad taste in his mouth. Thoroughly disgusted with himself, he turned and left, slamming the door behind him.

Faith wasn't at all sure whether it was morning or not, but she thought she had probably fallen asleep. When she woke, it was to a horrid cramp in her arm, and she thought her bladder was going to explode. Just at exactly that moment, she heard the door open, and she knew who had entered the room within the next three seconds, because his spicy, masculine cologne preceded him.

Without so much as a by your leave, she felt something being shoved under her right hip, and was horrified to realize that it was a bed pan. Even more painfully embarrassing was the fact that after he'd maneuvered it

beneath her, he simply stood there, and she knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that he was staring down at her, probably with his arms crossed over his chest in some disgustingly macho pose, waiting for her to pee while he got his jollies watching her. She'd heard about men like that who liked to watch women in restrooms, although they usually did it through some sort of peep hole in the bathroom.

Faith would be damned if she would relieve herself in front of this man for his obvious amusement, but she wasn't certain her body was going to obey her demand. She wished desperately that she could cross her legs – very tightly. Her splayed legs weren't helping her cling to her stubborn streak.

It was his sharp, startling voice in the eerily silent room that startled her into complying with her body's demands – that, along with what he said. "I'm not going to play nursemaid to you. If you don't use that thing within the next five seconds, I'm not going to give you another opportunity until tomorrow, and you'll have to lie in your own urine for the rest of the day and night. It's entirely up to you." If he knew his debutants, she would cave right then and there at just the thought of being so dirty for so long.

And he was right. He'd barely finished his speech before he started to hear her delicate little tinkles.

Faith was finished relatively quickly – for her, anyway - but he wasn't making any motion towards removing the pan. She tried to squirm as a hint – it was far from comfortable to be tied over a bed pan – but he didn't seem to be picking up on it.

Finally, after what seemed like an interminable time, he prompted impatiently, "You don't have anything else to do?"

As if she wasn't already humiliated and embarrassed enough. Faith thought her body must have been the color

of a freshly boiled lobster by now, every inch of it. She shook her head, leaving it turned away from him as far as possible as he removed the pan, then proceeded to clean every inch of her privates – letting his fingers linger over the part of her he'd already used once to bring her to a humiliating climax. Faith wished the floor would open up and eat her. At this point, she didn't know if she could take any more humiliation.

She hoped he might leave her the hell alone at that point, but of course that was too much to ask for. Faith wondered fleetingly if most kidnappers' bosses took such a personal interest in their hostage, or if she was just unlucky getting this one. Certainly he could have a flunky guard her. He must have other important . . . kidnapping matters to attend to . . . shouldn't he?

She could hear what she thought was the sound of a chair scraping across the floor. "Are you hungry?" he asked, the chair creaking as he sat next to her.

It wouldn't have mattered much what he'd asked her, she would have answered no to just about any question except, "Do you want to be released?" Faith shook her head, still facing as far away from him as she could.

Her refusal didn't seem to faze him much. "You will be. Eventually."

Faith didn't much like the sound of that. It sounded awful lot like she was going to be here for a while, but she was going to do everything she could, take every possible opportunity to get herself out of here, no matter how improbable or miniscule the chances. She didn't like her odds of making it out of here alive, so she figured she'd rather die fighting. If she'd been asked where she thought she might die, it certainly wasn't going to be the South American jungle, but it seemed that she was fated to die far away from home – not that home was so great, either, but it beat this all to hell.

She was surprised when he removed the gag, but she shouldn't have been, because his demand was immediate and his tone of voice did not invite defiance. "Tell me your father's private office number, so that I can call and tell him what he can expect to pay for your safe return."

She took her time answering him – especially since she knew that what she was going to say was expressly not what he was going to want to hear. She swallowed hard but her mouth and throat were terribly dry, so she closed her mouth and tried to gather as much spit as she could to swirl around those arid membranes.

"I'm not going to ask you again."

Faith sighed, knowing she had delayed as long as she could. She couldn't even imagine what he was going to do to her when he realized he'd gotten the wrong woman – yes she could, but she didn't want to think about it. "I don't know Senator Alexander's private office number because I'm not Sherry Alexander."

The silence was deafening. His anger was literally palpable. Faith began to feel smothered, and he hadn't even touched her, but the combination of his threatening presence beside her, and the utterly oppressive, rank air in that tiny room weighed on her like a wet down comforter.

He didn't say a word to her. Not one word. He didn't explode, he didn't yell at her, or scream obscenities, which is what she would have expected. Instead, he rose, and seconds later Faith felt his fingers – the ones that had already violated her once and had taken such delight in washing her a few minutes ago – sidling between the folds of her most private flesh, finding that inescapable knot of woman-flesh that had betrayed her before and tweaking it gently between his thumb and forefinger – just gently enough that she couldn't resist it – couldn't quite manage to put what he was doing out of her mind . . . playing with her in a completely insidious way that reduced her to a shaking, writhing mass of nerves within minutes. Those

strong, sure fingers wandered gently but insistently further down her cleft and pressed themselves up inside her, despite the way she tried to twist away from him. It must have looked and felt as if she was encouraging him instead of trying to save her soul and her self respect. She could not possibly have been any more disgusted with herself as she felt her own cream christening those invading digits.

What was it about this man that she kept responding to? She would have sworn that she was a strong enough person to resist abuse like this – in fact, she was quite convinced that if the first man – the one who had first noticed – that she was awake – was the one who was doing these obscene things to her, that she would be able to go on as if nothing was happening – perhaps even work up a sick stomach or at least not have to try to resort to multiplication tables in her head that didn't work in any way to alleviate the insipid ache she was suffering at his behest.

But this awful, horrid man was awakening her body in the worst way, the most private, precious way, without even trying. Faith had never been a moralist, but she'd always been very respectful of her body, and had never been the type to indulge in the one night stands that were so popular with her friends and on TV. The only men she'd ever slept with – and there were only three of them even though she had just turned forty – were men she'd dated and gotten to know. Some of the guys she'd dated had dumped her because she hadn't put out on the first or even the fifth date. She was a strong enough person that she wouldn't go to bed with a man unless she felt something for him, unless she thought the relationship was going somewhere. It went entirely beyond her nature to let a stranger even hug her, much less grope her like this oaf was doing.

There was a time when Faith would have said that she couldn't respond to someone she didn't love. It was a theory she'd never put to the test, however, and now she wondered if maybe that was because she hadn't wanted to know the truth. Sex meant too much to her. She had to be very comfortable and secure with a man to allow herself to

become that vulnerable with him. The very thought that she was being touched so intimately by someone she didn't know – someone who had absolutely no compunction about hurting her – badly and cruelly, for no particular reason – and her body was liking it was enough to make her want to slit her wrists.

But of course, she couldn't even do that at this point.

The choice about whether or not she was vulnerable with him had been removed. All she could do was lie there and be molested.

And pant, and only somewhat successfully stop herself from trying to grind her privates against that big, insistent hand, seeking relief from the frustration he was deliberately creating.

Cord watched her, enjoying the battle he could see she was waging with herself. He fully intended to triumph over her little inner war, but not quite yet. He watched her carefully, though. She was pretty – too pretty to just be a Senator's daughter, but from what he'd read about her, she was much more than that. She'd graduated from Brown with a degree in advanced mathematics, so she was more than just a pretty face. She headed several charities and had worked on her father's various campaigns. And although she'd dated occasionally, she was single, which was one of the more appealing reasons to kidnap her – no husbands or kids to get in the way of an easy snatch.

Still, he had to wonder what the heck she was doing in Columbia, though. When his men had brought her in, he had done some research on the Internet and had called some well-placed, well-trusted friends to see what he could find out about her itinerary while she was there. But he pretty much drew a blank.

It was a loose string, and Cord abhorred things that wouldn't wrap up nice and neatly into a package in case he had ever answer about and for it. It was almost too easy,

and he was worried that somehow, some way, that was going to end up biting him in the ass in the end.

But for now, he almost lost himself in her. She wasn't knock out gorgeous, but was more than pleasing to the eye, with shoulder length honey-blonde hair and, from what he could remember, sparkling green eyes that snapped with intelligence and wit. Suddenly, he wanted to see those eyes again, and was unable to prevent himself from reaching up to wrestle the crude blindfold off her head, flinging it onto the dirt floor in the middle of the room.

Chapter Three

Faith was suddenly blinded by the overhead light, and began blinking furiously as her eyes teared and ached sharply. At first, she wasn't sure if she really wanted to open her eyes. Maybe things were worse than she had imagined them; she wasn't sure she could take it. Perhaps there were things she didn't want to see – torture implements hanging from the walls, or, worse, skeletons in varying states of decay . . .

But then she mentally grabbed a hold of her runaway imagination. The room smelled bad, yes, but it smelled of sweat and urine, not decaying bodies. And if she was ever going to get away from this God awful place, she would need to know as much as she could about it – starting with its layout.

Slowly, very slowly, she opened her eyes, feeling them adjust to the light and deliberately focusing on the wall across the room rather than the man who was sitting on the side of the bed with his hand between her legs.

Faith didn't want to look at him. She could already tell that he was a big man – but she knew that before she'd opened her eyes. His voice was that of a physically large man – deep and imposing and autocratic, and his fingers – any of his fingers were a reasonable substitute for a fully erect penis, and she knew that all too well.

“Look at me.”

It was the fact that he whispered it rather than issuing an order that made her comply. The contrast between how he said it and how she would have expected him to say it drew her attention to him like a lodestone. This man was good. He knew when to push and when not to. As her eyes settled on him, a shudder ran through her from head to toe.

He was gorgeous. He would have put David to shame.

Rough around the edges, unshaven, probably more than a few days from a bath, but he was still darn closed to physical perfection – or her ideal of it, anyway. He was tall even sitting down, but it was the breadth of his shoulders and the obvious musculature there and in his bulging arms that impressed her against her will. His thigh where it pressed so close against hers was massive – she wondered if he hadn't been a body builder in his younger days.

He wasn't a spring chicken by any means, but then you don't get to be a legendary Columbian drug lord without experiencing a few things – most of which got most men killed off early. To have survived in the world – the culture – that he'd chosen meant that he was more ruthless than almost anyone else in his business.

This did not bode well for her future, she knew. He would be that much harder to get past. But she was determined to at least try just to retain her self-respect.

There was a touch of gray at his temples – hard earned, she was sure – but it didn't detract one iota from the overall picture. His skin was wonderfully tanned, his eyes dark and mysterious, and surrounded by more curly black eyelashes than any man should be allowed to own. His lips were marvelously full and sensual, lush and inviting and just slightly red . . .

Faith bit her lip through the gag, wanting to remind herself that he was the last man on Earth she should be rhapsodizing about. He reached forward and Faith flinched back, but there was nowhere for her to go.

A small smile played about his lips at her reaction as he reached around her to the back of her head, working the knot of the gag free. He sat back quickly, watching her body gradually release the tension he had caused by his precipitous movement. "I am Cordero Ricardo Alexandre Guillermo De La Fuente."

He said his name as if he was king of some great land. There was no lack of ego in this man.

Faith swallowed and tried to get her mouth moisturized somewhat before responding in a soft, broken voice that was none the less proud, "I am Faith Angel Whittaker."

The only response to her little statement was one raised eyebrow above those piercing eyes. "Oh you are, are you?"

She nodded slowly. Now that she'd started looking at him, she couldn't take her eyes away, and only part of that was his natural beauty. The rest of it was that in seeing him, in seeing his expressions and movements, she had an even better idea of just how dangerous this man could be – and was – to her.

He turned away from her, and Faith breathed a silent prayer of thanks that he was no longer man-handling her. He'd pushed her past her limits yesterday, and she wasn't anxious to repeat his ignominious triumph over her will. Not that it seemed she was going to have any choice in the matter.

"That's a very interesting alias you chose for yourself. What was it, your mother's name or something?"

Faith answered truthfully in as calm and quiet a voice as she could muster, although she was shivering – partly from the coolness of the room, but mostly from fear of just exactly what it was that he was going to do with her or, rather, to her. "No, my mother's name was Jessica Hardy Whittaker."

"No," he corrected, turning to face her, "your mother was socialite Happy Carlisle Alexander."

Faith sighed softly, not wanting to stir his anger by appearing annoyed. Then a thought struck her. "When your men captured me, I was carrying a knapsack. It had all of my ID in it – my passport, my birth certificate, credit cards,

driver's license . . . it's all in my name."

None of what she had said seemed to faze him in the least. "All of that is very, very easily forged, especially for someone as high up as your father." His forehead wrinkled for a moment, and he mused as he walked towards her. "The only thing I can't work out is why hw – who as far as I can tell dotes on you and is almost over protective – let you come here, to a place where it's extremely dangerous to be an American in the first place, much less the daughter of a high-profile Senator who is well known for his campaign against drugs."

"He probably wouldn't. Wouldn't you think that Sherry Alexander – if she were to come down here, which, you're right, is highly doubtful – would be surrounded by bodyguards and such? Would she be just wandering through an open air market like I was?"

Faith could see that she was raising points in her own favor and pressed on. "And wouldn't she be only too willing to give you her father's number so that she could get out of this place and back to her posh apartment in wherever?"

Cord's jaw worked back and forth as he stared down at her. She had some salient points. But then, that was only to be expected. Sherry Alexander wasn't stupid, and probably didn't want her father to be duped out of all that money. She sure as hell didn't want any South American tinhorn dictator dictating American policy, which is what his demands amounted to.

He took a deep breath and continued to drink in the sight of her. Suddenly the thought struck him that she was much too beautiful to be held here. There wasn't much of a chance for escape – his little compound was too deep in the jungle. If she managed to get beyond the gates – and he would have bet the lives of whatever men missed her that she wouldn't – there was nowhere to go for hundreds of miles around him.

“Roberto!” he yelled suddenly, still staring at Faith, boring into her as if he could see into her mind.

That was just about the only thing he couldn’t see at this point, that he hadn’t already touched and fondled and penetrated, Faith thought, closing her eyes against the flood of tears that started. Then she clamped down on that flood as ruthlessly as she could. She had to keep herself as calm as possible so that she could recognize and react when ever the slightest possibility of escape presented itself.

And it seemed that it was presenting itself much sooner than she would have expected. Roberto came scurrying in and practically made an obeisance to his leader, who barked orders in Spanish. Faith only had her two years of high school Spanish to rely on for translation, but luckily her teacher had been a bitch of a vocabulary Nazi, and she had somehow retained some of the words and their meanings.

He’d said something about moving her, and something about a bedroom, she believed, sighing and wishing she’d paid a hell of a lot more attention in that damned class. Suddenly, about five men burst through the door, making the very small room even more cramped. The devil was barking orders so quickly she had no hope of translating any of it, although she did her best to strain her meager abilities and catch something, anything about what they were going to do with her.

Within minutes she found herself re-blindfolded with her ankles bound securely together. When one of his lackeys reached for her hand, untied it and brought it down to rest on her stomach, her muscles screamed in protest, and it came out her mouth. No one paid any attention whatsoever to her outburst, even when it happened a second time with the other arm. Her wrists were tied together in front of her, and she was unceremoniously lifted from the bed and carried like a Yule log out of the room.

Faith had no idea where she was being taken, but she tried to keep track of the twists and turns. Halfway through, though, she knew it was useless. She had a terrible sense of direction, and what good would it do to get her back to that dank little room, anyway? She needed to see entrances and exits.

She was carted – naked as the day she was born - up a rather steep stair case, and the air around her changed once they had reached the top. She also sensed a lot more light – they were probably in the residential part of the place, she deduced. Faith thought she detected the scent of cinnamon, as if there was a kitchen somewhere around, and the sounds of her captors' feet were dulled considerably, so she figured there was carpeting beneath their feet rather than the dirt she'd seen in that awful room.

Though her surroundings had changed, her circumstances hadn't and that was evident in the fact that although she could no longer smell urine and worse, and the bedclothes beneath her were much softer, she was still tied hand and foot once they put her down – and this was a much bigger – king sized, she'd guess – bed, so she was that much more exposed when her appendages were stretched awkwardly out from her body. Very little was left to the imagination, which only made her blush again for the umpteenth time.

There seemed to be a lot of talk between the men and their leader – she'd already learned to recognize his voice. Faith figured it had pretty well been burned into her subconscious even on such short acquaintance. This man, more so than any of the others, held her life in his hands.

They were soon alone again, and Faith wasn't at all sure that this was a good thing. She could hear him opening drawers and cabinets, and then felt him putting things next to her on the bed. His voice startled her when he began to speak. "I believe I asked you a question a few minutes ago that you declined to answer. I'm not going to engage in discussions with you. I want your father's private office

number, and I intend to get it." He reached around her and pulled the blindfold off none too gently, but she wasn't bothering to look down much.

"Sherry!" he said sharply, and when she ignored him he grabbed a nipple in each hand and began to squeeze and twist at the same time. Hard.

Her eyes met his reluctantly, and his eyebrow raised. He didn't immediately release her tender bits but rather tugged harder in a gesture she knew was a punishment for not having obeyed him immediately. She thought that when he finally let go, her nipples would still be in his hands, they'd been tugged so hard and twisted around until her flesh surely tore.

"You keep your eyes on me at all times, or there'll be more of that." Little did she know, she was going to be getting a lot more of that in just a few minutes, regardless of her behavior. Cord had found that, for some people, merely watching the preparations for torture that was soon going to be happening to them, was enough to break them. It really involved very little work on his part, merely elaborate, ritualistic preparation, which was something he was interested in anyway.

He couldn't remember a time when he hadn't gotten off on pain – giving women pain in particular. But for him, the pain was inextricably entwined with pleasure, and of course the subtlety of humiliation. The ultimate to him was giving a woman an incredible amount of pain, followed by an incredible amount of pleasure. Sexualized pain was his goal, so that although his victim was feeling, say, her nipples being pinched and tugged nearly off by clothespins or something akin to that, she was also being stimulated by his mouth on her hopefully swollen, aching clit.

She felt his hand on her left breast, pulling it and arranging it so that he could get some sort of cord or something around it. Faith wiggled as much as she dared, but when his hand smacked sharply down on the inside of her right

thigh, she couldn't catch the moan that burst out of her mouth. Whatever he was wrapping around the base of her breast was getting tighter and tighter. It seemed stretchy and springy, and she recognized it as a pair of nylons that he worked around and around her until her breast stood out from her body almost perpendicular, getting darker and darker by the minute as the blood flow was restricted. Only it was her breast. The other one got the same exact treatment until she looked like she was wearing one of those outrageous costumes that Madonna used to wear where her breasts stood out exaggeratedly from the rest of her body.

Cord stood there at the side of the bed. Damn, she looked incredible like that – all gagged and spread eagled with her breasts standing at attention like that. He knew that they would soon start to ache badly, and he had very carefully left the nylons – which had been left over from a live-in mistress from long ago – unknotted at the very base of her titties, so that he could yank them even tighter any time he wanted during the course of his investigation with her.

He wanted that number. He wanted to get this thing going. There wasn't time to waste – the vote was coming up relatively soon, and he knew he'd need to give the Senator time to coerce others to vote with him against the bill. Cord had no doubt that he'd do exactly as he was told – he would want nothing more than to get his daughter back safe and sound.

And he would . . . just slightly more used than before.

But well used. Very well used indeed.

He took up a long, red rubber length that was about as thick as his pinky finger, maybe a little less. It wasn't quite limp and it wasn't quite stiff – kind of like himself at this moment. But it worked wonders on breasts – and bottoms, although he was more likely to use them on breasts, just because the pain level it inflicted was fairly severe, with a lot of thud and sting with a minimum amount of weight and

no real damage to the breast tissue.

Cord knew his pain implements well – at least as well as he knew the pleasurable ones.

Most women never really associated their breasts with pain in general – except those pain sluts who craved it. They might experience some in regards to childbirth and nursing, but in general most men just seemed to want to bury their faces in all that breast flesh and occasionally suckle when there was so much more that could be done!

He looked up at Sherry, and she was doing as she was told, although her eyes were mere slits, she was complying with the letter of his law. He shook his head. She was incredibly stubborn. This was going to be fun!

He was glad he'd had her moved – he hated the smell of that place downstairs, and he liked the idea of having her bound to his bed like this. Now he could play with her all night in comfort, if he wanted. With malice aforethought, he had had his bedroom and several others in the house, quite thoroughly soundproofed, for just such events as these, although usually the women he occasionally brought back to his house were into what was going to happen just as much as he was.

Cord climbed onto the bed from the bottom, between those beautifully spread legs. He thought he could almost see her clit peeping from between those plump, downy covered lips she was yanked so wide apart. Well, he'd be more than looking at it in a short while, he was sure. He had a sudden thought, and vaulted off the bed to his dresser, coming back with a jar that he opened on his way, taking out a big gob on his index and third fingers. With his left hand, he parted her pussy lips, making her start to writhe to try to avoid the unavoidable, but she was secured so tightly and stretched so wide that her movements barely registered, and he easily found his target, slathering that impudent little nub with the slick, viscous cream. All he had to do now was sit back and watch, really. This stuff worked magic on the

most frigid of women. He figured she'd come near to exploding with or without his help.

Faith thought she'd never seen anything so frightening in her life as this man's smile. It was pure evil. He was enjoying what he was doing to her to the fullest degree, and she knew as soon as she saw the ointment on his fingers that she did not want it to make it to its destination on her body.

But there was literally nothing she could do about it.

This woman was wonderfully responsive, even in pain, and he intended to have as much fun with her as he could before he had to give her up.

He didn't like to kill woman, so despite the fact that the men around her would have slit her throat without a second thought, he could easily keep them from doing that on pain of their own death. If her father did as he required, she would be released in a relatively safe place where she could easily get a flight back to the States.

If he didn't have enough time to get her to surrender the phone number, he had other avenues working on that, and he'd get the message to the Senator one way or the other.

But for now, Cord arranged himself just below her ribcage – not sitting directly down on her, or his weight was lightly to cut off her oxygen, but posting on her as if she was a fine Thoroughbred – and she was – and he was an English rider. He kept himself just a little bit above the saddle to make the ride easier. She was watching him more closely now, probably realizing what he was going to do. Her eyes were wide open and frightened, and she had a right to be.

He was going to make her scream and beg, for mercy from the pain and relief from the unbearable ache that cream was going to create between her legs without him even having to tend to her in that area . . . for now.

For a long moment, while he was climbing on to her, Faith didn't feel anything from whatever it was he had painted onto her privates. She had been holding her breath, fearing it was some sort of peppery concoction or something worse. It started insidiously, just warming every where it touched, and then, once that had begun, it graduated quickly on to making her clit and all of her surrounding tissues flood and swell with blood, increasing its size and thus its sensitivity to an infinite extent, so that just the air around it seem to brush against it and tease and tantalize . . .

But there was no touch firm enough and she remained in that state, the entire area swollen and throbbing and aching with unfulfilled need, desperate for any sort of contact whatsoever. Faith couldn't control her hips as they arched up all on their own, seeking something, anything to rub against to alleviate this atrocious, all consuming hunger –

At the moment her hips first arched beneath him, he was ready, and the little rubber snake crashed down onto her breast flesh for the first time, drawing a scream that filled his ears and brought another of those ultimately evil smiles to his face.

And Faith knew that this was only the very beginning of her ordeal.

Chapter Four

And she was right. That awful little red rubber whip assailed her obscenely presented tits ferociously. Cord was very methodical when he punished. He started with one stroke per breasts, then graduated to two strokes in a row, then finally three – sometimes being excruciatingly careful that they all landed in exactly the same place, sometimes not. He was so good with the wicked thing that he could get it to go anywhere he wanted to, and land with precisely the weight that he intended. He spent a good amount of time simply laying it down perpendicularly, so that the very tip, the part that would snap the hardest against her skin, would land on those beautiful nipples of hers.

It seemed the more Faith tried not to scream, the harder it was not to. But any dreams or fantasies about taking this punishment lightly went out the window very early on – he had driven her beyond control within the first fifteen minutes, and she was whimpering and screaming at will – his will – from that point on.

He didn't just beat her. No. That would have been too brutish. Too common. He stopped sometimes and massaged the breasts he'd just taken the whip to. And his touch was consoling and gentle and almost pleasurable, except that he was touching throbbing, painful flesh. She almost wished he wouldn't stop, that he'd just get on with it and maybe then it would end sooner, but, again, as always, she had no control. He could do anything with her – to her – that he wanted.

And he did.

Occasionally, he would stop, and reach very slowly down to the base of her breasts, making sure that she could see him and knew full well what he planned to do. This would set off her sobs and cries again, and he wasn't even touching her. He didn't need to. He would merely be reaching for the loose ends of the nylons, to which he

would give several good, hard tugs on each side, forcing her already tautly expanded flesh to expand that much more in some areas, and contract unnaturally in others. Her breasts were almost as hard as rocks, full and tight and fair to bursting with pain.

Faith had never cried this much in her life. She had never experienced pain like this before. She'd never even had a child, and had been lucky enough to skate through life without ever breaking a bone. Oh, she'd had the occasional sprains and bruises, but nothing – nothing like this.

And what was worse was that she was enjoying it – with or without the help of that damned cream. If she had been asked prior to this whether or not she could enjoy pain – become sexually aroused from it, her answer would have been a hearty and extremely disdainful no. But apparently she didn't know herself as well as she thought she did.

The whipping was bad, and the massage was a respite at least, and the tightening of the bonds around her abused flesh was unbelievably painful, but the worst thing was when he reached back behind him with his right hand and just lay his finger over her clit. She couldn't buck against him because he carefully exerted too much weight and she couldn't lift her hips. She was immobilized, her clit practically reaching out to try to get some kind of friction going, but there was none.

He wouldn't allow any, unless, at the end of this particular torture, he deigned to flick his fingertip once, maybe twice, as he turned his attentions again to her breasts, leaving her painfully swollen in more than one area.

Cord indulged himself just then, laying his head down between her breasts and forcing them to surround his head. He was a normal man after all, he thought, just wanting to be surrounded by all this beautiful bounty. But he wanted more than that from those gorgeous mounds – much more. He demanded more, and he would have it from her.

When he drew back, he considered her for a moment, then reached for her nipples, but she was being held so tightly at the bottom that her nipples were essentially being pressed flat from within. But he was quite determined, and managed to scrape up just enough to get the alligator clips he'd rescued from one of his drawers onto the very tips of each nipple. The ends of the clips were held together by a small chain that he then wrapped around her neck, adjusting the tension until the clips were pulled backwards, pointing towards her face in what looked like a very uncomfortable position. And judging by her mewls and whimpers, it was exactly that.

He reached down next to him and took up a long, flat piece of wood that looked like a ruler, but it had a somewhat flared end that had a hole in the middle of it that cut down on wind resistance. Cord reached down and examined her minutely, noting the presence of every welt and bruise. She was marking up nicely – fair skinned women usually did the most impressive job of bruising; it showed up so starkly against all that creamy white flesh. Bruises like this never failed to excite him – and knowing that he'd been the man to put them there only added to his arousal, which was pressing rather insistently against his zipper and had been for quite some time.

She excited him like no other woman in his experience. Maybe he'd have to revise his plan of giving her back . . . he mused, tapping the end of the implement against his lips thoughtfully.

Faith was already bawling loudly again in anticipation. Her breasts were going to fall off at any minute, she was sure, but the never seemed to. The agony just went on and on, and how he was going to take that awful stick to her.

And he did. Mercilessly. He cracked it down onto that cringing titty flesh again and again, careful not to forget the tender underside, and paying particular attention to those nipples in their metal teeth. Each stroke moved her breast,

which tugged on her tenderized nipples, but never quite released them from the sharp teeth that were threatening to sink into them to the hilt. Faith's upper body danced to his terrible tune as she cried and moaned and begged for mercy, all semblance of dignity gone at his hands.

Suddenly, he did stop, and reached back with one hand to lay that torturous finger against her again, while he continued to strike her breasts sharply with the ruler. Her movements trying to avoid the stick naturally moved her just a smidge against his finger, but again, not enough to achieve fulfillment. She was sore and aching and being driven nearly out of her mind with pain and sexual frustration when he surprised her and whirled around to face her, laying down the ruler and, with her eyes locked to his, sinking down to her outspread legs and burying his face between them, mouth open, tongue out to lick and flick at her from the moment they connected.

But his hands weren't idle, either – they each continued to spank and smack her breasts, making the chains that held them jiggle. He even reached enough to tug the nylons ever tighter, keeping both sets of the ends in his one hand and pulling sharply while his mouth devoured her, forcing her towards an inevitable end that came humiliatingly quickly as she screamed and exploded into his mouth at the same time.

At that instance, someone knocked politely and entered the room. It was an older man, dressed in a formal uniform like tuxedo. He spoke in Spanish, so she had no idea what he was saying, but frankly she was too flooded with humiliation to be able to listen, anyway.

But her tormentor remained where he was, licking and suckling and drawing out every possible fraction of pleasure for her even while this man watched, making her climax a second and third time, until he issued a short command and the man left. Cord rose slowly and divested himself of his clothes, revealing an incredibly huge penis rising up proudly from his loins.

Faith was still trying to recover from having been sexually fulfilled in front of a total stranger who had just stood there and watched her. She wasn't sure why that seemed worse than anything else that had happened to her, but it did. Then she looked at his naked body for the first time. He was magnificent – he would have made a wonderful bronzed statue. Although she tried not to look there, she kind of had to – it was too prominent to ignore. She had never seen a man who was that big. He rivaled dildos she'd seen but none she'd owned. She wasn't at all sure she could accommodate him, but she was terribly sure that her body was going to enjoy trying. She loved to be stretched, even though she was very careful to keep herself from becoming too stretched by doing Kegel exercises.

Cord positioned himself at her opening then looked up to make sure she was watching him, as she should. Faith was looking down at him with no small amount of fear in her eyes. He was somewhat surprised at the idea that she was afraid of him penetrating her. She wasn't a virgin, and he wasn't that big.

He held her eyes as he advanced into her, but it wasn't as easy as he thought it might be. She was wonderfully, incredibly tight. "Ahhh, mi Dios," he moaned under his breath. She was going to kill him with this pleasure. He could feel himself losing control and he was barely halfway in. But this was what she did to him. He hadn't had a control problem since he was thirteen - but it seemed that, with her, he would have to be careful.

Taking several deep breaths, Cord managed to wedge himself inside her a little more, but it was too much. He had to push and buck into her, and his movements shoved him the rest of the way into her, but there was no time to enjoy it. It had been too long between women. He slammed into her one last time, hard, and threw back his head with an animalistic growl. His hands reached down automatically and grabbed her hips, picking them up and grinding her against him with another loud groan.

Cord lay down on top of her, stretching out and covering nearly every inch of her. He was a big man, and he dwarfed her completely. His weight pressed her into the mattress, he knew, but Cord kept an ear out for any breathing problems. Some women couldn't take him on top of them – they started to have breathing problems, or maybe the faked it because they just didn't like being so physically overwhelmed.

But this one – she'd been physically overwhelmed and dominated by him since the beginning. They fit together perfectly in more ways than one.

He had pretty much made up his mind to keep her a while ago, but he was just starting to consciously acknowledge the decision. It would probably play havoc with his business because the Senator was sure to raise a stink after el Diablo betrayed him, but there was nothing that could be done about that. He'd just have to go to the mattresses and stay cool for a while. He certainly wasn't going to starve.

When Cord finally came to his senses, he could hear her soft sobs. She was still crying. He didn't have a lot of hopes of eradicating her tears, but they seemed to bother him like none others. He hated to hear a woman cry – scream and moan and groan and writhe, but the crying, that could get to him, especially when he wasn't actively doing anything to her. So he unbound her breasts, which actually had the reverse effect; instead of quieting her, she screamed aloud when each was released, but he'd know that was coming because it must've hurt something fierce to have the blood flow back into them when they'd been restricted so tightly for so long.

He tossed the nylons aside and began to massage her breasts very gently with her fingertips, examining the beautiful pattern of marks he'd created, each one separate and distinct but intertwined with the others. On a whim, he reached into his nightstand and took out a digital camera, and snapped several shots, just of her breasts, then moved

back enough to take a few of the entirety of her position – her blonde hair in a wild tangle behind her, arms outstretched as if she was trying to embrace a gargantuan lover, legs splayed, pussy still wet with a combination of her own juices and his own.

Faith remembered the punishment she'd experienced at his hands when she'd spoken out of turn, but she couldn't help it. It seemed like the ultimate in _____ fates to have him documenting her shameful state. "Please – no!" she whispered with not much volume, her voice hoarse from the screams he'd encouraged with his use of the whip and the ruler.

"Ahhhh, yes, Miss Alexander. I need some souvenirs for when you are no longer with us so that I can look back and see how beautiful you were while you were with me." He liked the absurdity of using such a formal title with her when she was being presented to obscenely to him.

He had said "when you are no longer with us". She wished she could be sure that he meant when he released her, but that could also mean when she was dead. Faith sighed, trying to resign herself as much as possible to just looking for every escape route. She knew there were some who might have thought that she should have tried while they were moving her, but she didn't want to make an aborted attempt and end up in worse shape than she was now. She wanted to succeed. She had to.

She had considered making an attempt then, but had abandoned the idea. She didn't know her way around, she was bound six ways from Sunday. They would have recaptured her in about five seconds, and then there was no telling what they would do to her, judging from the situation she was just starting to recover from.

The leader seemed to have taken some sort of liking to her. From what she could tell, she was in his bedroom. If she played up to him, if she tried to comply with his wishes as much as possible and no matter how hard or distasteful it

was – at least to her intellectually; her body seemed to have completely abandoned the idea of self respect in favor of complete hedonism – if she could get him to trust her just the slightest bit, then maybe she would have a true chance at escaping.

He amazed her at that point when he finally put the camera to the side – after taking dozens of atrociously embarrassing photos, some of every area of her body, even close ups of her dewy slit that made her want to cringe away from the fingers that held her pried apart for the camera's invading eye – and released her left wrist, then came around the bed and released her right one. Very slowly, he moved her arms down, remembering how this morning when Roberto had done that that she had screamed. Her shoulders must be killing her. He put each of her arms out perpendicular to her side and began to massage her aching muscles.

Faith's eyes drifted shut then snapped open, remembering his order that she must always look at him. He grinned softly, seeing her dilemma. "Close your eyes if you want to," he said in that lilting accent of his.

This man – this terrorist, kidnapper, torture master extraordinaire, must've spent the next half hour expertly massaging and rubbing just her upper arms, from her fingertips to her collar bone. Faith couldn't peg him. He didn't seem to fit into any category she tried to stuff him into. It would be a lot easier for her to hate and revile him if he was never nice to her. But he'd done several things – like move her to a nicer place and this massage as well as the sexual pleasure he was continually driving her to – that weren't quite in the profile she wanted to brand him with.

"Are you hungry? Thirsty?"

Faith took a deep breath. The truth was she was still too scared to be hungry. She'd always gotten almost nauseous when she was nervous. But she knew she needed to eat to keep up her strength. "Yes, please," came her schoolgirl

pat answer.

"I'll see what I can have Miguel rustle up for you. You're going to need your strength."

That statement managed to alarm her again when she'd almost become somewhat relaxed, despite her situation. But there was something even more pressing on her mind. "May I ask you a question?"

He had finished dressing and turned to stand next to the bed. He hadn't retied her arms since she hadn't made any immediate move to flee. If she acted up, she'd be more confined again. "Yes." He was very curious about what her question was.

"You – you never asked me for the telephone number again."

Ahhhhhh. The little one was curious about his plan, why he'd done what he did to her. She needed a reason, something by which to justify it in her mind. Cord bound her arms, but this time out to the sides like the position he'd had them in when he was massaging her. Then he sat next to her on the bed and leaned over her, his arm over her head, trapping her by laying it on her hair. "No, I didn't, did I?" She was afraid he was going to leave it there, but he didn't. "What I just did to you, I did purely because I wanted to. You remember that, little one. In here – " he touched her temple - " and in here," he touched her still warm pussy. "I can do this to you – and more – any time I like. And I will, I promise."

He kissed the side of her face gently, almost in a fatherly manner, then left without so much as a backward glance, leaving Faith behind to stew about what he'd said . . . and done.

Faith didn't know how long he was gone – she looked for a bedside clock but didn't find one – but she was glad that he'd left both the blindfold and the gag off. She dearly

hoped that he brought something cool to drink, although this part of the house was obviously air conditioned, and she was even getting a little chilly. Her nipples tightened and rose, and she had to suck in her breath at the pain of that simple, involuntary movement. She hadn't looked at the condition her breasts were in, but didn't think she wanted to, anyway.

Her situation was still a little surreal to her, and if she concentrated hard enough, she could almost ignore it and just pretend that she was sleeping in some hotel. It was easier in this room, because it didn't stink. She did spend some time before she closed her eyes trying to memorize the layout of the room. She would have given anything to have been able to take a peek into his bedside tables. She'd bet that he had at least one gun in here – especially if this was his room – somewhere, and she wanted to find it.

Just as she had started to relax again, he returned along with the man who had seen her climax in his mouth. The servant was carrying a tray of food with several bottles of spring water, which he set down next to the bed, then left.

Her tormentor came over to the bed and sat down. Faith expected that he would then release her wrists and let her eat. But that was not how he wanted to do this. Cord had already decided – especially once he got the intelligence report that was lying on his desk – that he wanted her to come to depend on him for everything – kind of like retraining a wild animal, or enforcing one's dominance over a dog. So he fed her himself.

The first thing he gave her was a drink of water using a straw he fed into one of the bottles. She drank thirstily, but he took the bottle away so that he could give her a bite of the sandwich his butler had made. It was herb roasted chicken with a garlic mayonnaise, fresh, crisp cucumber slices and apple several thick slices of apple smoked bacon. This was all enclosed by two slices of homemade honey wheat bread. He fed her slowly, taking an occasional

bite himself, making sure she'd chewed and swallowed before he offered more. She drank down all of the water before finishing the sandwich, so he picked up the phone from the nightstand and called down to what was apparently his kitchen, telling Miguel to bring more up, on ice.

Then he disappeared through a door she hadn't seen anyone use yet, reappearing with a basin and several towels. A thought struck him before he started bathing her. "Do you need to go to the bathroom?" he asked, watching the flush creep over her body slowly from head to toe.

Faith didn't want to say yes. But her bladder was bursting from all the water. And that wasn't all she had to do. Her shame and humiliation forced her to beseech him not to look.

His smile was gentle, but she knew from firsthand experience that it was a lie. "No, Miss Alexander, I shall remain by your side for everything. There is nothing about you that I do not control, and the sooner you learn that the easier it will be for you."

Faith bit her lip, wishing he would quit calling her that. And, dear God, she wished he would disappear after he fitted the bedpan beneath her. There was nothing she could do but get it over as quickly as possible. Thankfully, he didn't say a word the whole time. If he had, she thought she would just melt into the bed from the mortification of it all.

Once she had finished, he set about bathing her. It was a strange thing for him to do, as far as she was concerned. What did he really care if she was clean or not – unless he was some sort of neat freak? Most men would fuck anything that stood still long enough as far as she understood their basic motivations. Clean or unclean. But it was surprisingly nice to be bathed like this. He untied one arm and washed it thoroughly, massaging her shoulder when he got there with those abhorrently strong fingers. He dried her thoroughly before retying her, then moving on to

the leg on that side, repeating the same ritual. He cleaned her extremities before washing her body, paying particular and cruel attentions to her sore breasts, rubbing her nipples with the washcloth over and over, deliberately chafing her there as she squirmed to get away, but, of course, to no avail.

Her stomach was thoroughly rubbed with the soft cloth and sweet smelling soap, and then he joined her on the bed, facing away from her, to concentrate on the most interesting area between her legs. He didn't use the wash cloth for this, however, preferring instead to thoroughly soap up his hand and then delve it between her folds and wash her, inside and out with his soapy fingers. Cord rinsed her off using the cloth, though, then patted her dry with a fluffy white towel.

Faith figured he was finished when he stopped rooting around down there, but she was wrong. Instead he untied her only to retie her on her stomach, and perform the rituals again . . . everywhere, including her bottom, which was now completely at his mercy. He seemed to take an inordinate amount of pleasure from that area, almost as much as from her front side. Those soapy fingers found their way down her bottom crack until they stumbled on her little rosebud. His insistent, foreshadowing play there made her try to wiggle away from him, but he merely leaned over her so that his other hand both braced himself and kept her hips from moving.

She was well and truly caught, and very nearly immobile, and began to whimper as she felt the tip of his index finger pressing against that tender hole, where no man – no man and nothing – had gone before. “No, please please please please please,” she whispered, almost chanting it.

Cord liked it when she begged him. It wasn't going to stop him from doing exactly what he wanted with her, but it was just a nice counterpoint to the action as his finger made its inevitable way into her bottom, advancing very, very slowly but firmly, until it was seated inside her up to his last

knuckle.

Faith couldn't stop herself from moaning rhythmically, even though he wasn't moving that finger . . . yet. It was just that feeling of pure and unadulterated invasion. It was driving her insane that he was violating her in this way – it was much worse than having him rape her. Rape she expected. Sodomy she didn't.

But that was what she was getting.

He did move his finger, all the way out, then all the way back in again. Repeatedly, and more rapidly each time, until she felt it was like being fucked by a sex toy. Only it was him. He was doing this to her with another part of his body.

And Faith was beginning to like it.

She'd never felt anything like this, having never had the interest in exploring any kind of anal sex, but she felt as if an orgasm was building within her. Only it wasn't building in the right place, and that was almost scaring her. She'd only ever climaxed through her clit or her vagina. But this most most definitely pleasure, and it was building to something.

Cord couldn't believe his luck. Somehow he'd had the blind, dumb luck to stumble on a woman who seemed to get off on nearly everything he did to her. This was a rarity in women, as far as he knew. Few other women had ever allowed him to play with their asses like this, and he'd never found one that seemed to truly enjoy it. Most of them put up with it because it was him, he was hung like a stud, and he had lots of money.

But she was panting and moaning, and the moans had nothing to do with pain, because as far as he could tell he wasn't hurting her – he was pleasuring her.

He forced her to her fifth orgasm of the day, making her ride his fingers to a culmination that was strange but

satisfying. And, as always with him, mortifying.

Faith didn't know how she could take any more. She collapsed down onto the bed, feeling his finger slip from her body. She'd learned more awful things about herself at his hands, endured more pain and been forced to more pleasure than she would ever have thought she could live through. Tears started to ooze out of her eyes slowly, sluggishly, as if they, too, were really too tired to bother.

She kept her eyes closed while he turned her over and retied her so that her head hung over the bed, and then he proceeded to wash her hair, carefully and tenderly, as if he was caring for his six year old daughter.

His contrary actions – feeding her, moving her, massaging her – all contributed to the tears as they began to flow more naturally. She sobbed uncontrollably the entire time he was washing her face and hair.

Cord noticed, but knew there wasn't anything he could do about it but release her, and he wasn't about to do that. So he ignored them for the time being. If she needed to cry, she should cry. This had certainly been an eventful few days for her. It was no wonder she was in tears.

When he retied her on the bed, it was to one side, with her arms together above her head and her feet together to the leg at the bottom of the bed. At least she wasn't splayed as she had been, although she was just as naked. He took a wonderfully soft, light mauve blanket and draped it over her, and, despite her tears, she was nearly asleep by the time he finished arranging things for her. That was exactly what he had wanted.

Chapter Five

The next thing Faith knew, someone was suckling at a very sore nipple. One of her very sore nipples. And he was playing with the other one, rolling and pulling it. Her mouth was dry but not arid as it had been when she was gagged, and he captured that as well, thrusting his tongue into her mouth and nibbling at her lower lip.

She tried to stretch but didn't get very far, and he didn't seem inclined to release her right now. Cord was thinking about what he had learned in that intelligence report. He'd found out some things he really would have been happier not knowing.

Like the fact that she wasn't Sherry Alexander. The intelligence report contained a DVD that had been recorded in the States just yesterday, showing Sherry Alexander standing next to her father as they waved to the crowds in his home district in New York. They also reported the differences in finger prints, as well as a slight difference in both height and weight, and the fact that Miss Alexander was left handed, and his captive was most definitely right handed. If that wasn't enough, it contained references as to where he could look on satellite TV for live interviews with Sherry, since she was making the rounds in defense of her father's new drug bill.

He absently tuned in one of these political interview shows, just to satisfy his own curiosity. Sherry Alexander and his little kidnappee did look remarkably alike. He didn't fault his men for what they did – in fact he felt like he owed them a tremendous gift for having brought this woman to him. It was something he would never have thought of doing on his own because of the hassle. But here she'd been given to him on a silver platter.

All in all, he decided that he preferred the woman who was now sleeping soundly in his bed – and then he had to laugh

at himself. He probably preferred her because she was here, and wasn't going anywhere except at his say so. Cord opened a desk drawer and took out the knapsack she'd had on when she was captured. He spilled the contents onto his desk: a wallet, a cheap cell phone, her passport, some chewing gum and a dime novel. He opened the wallet and stared at the driver's license: it said that she was exactly who she had said she was. Faith Angel Whittaker. She lived in West by God Virginia, and was approximately thirty-two years old.

He snorted at himself. She was probably the daughter of an illiterate coal miner or something. Regardless, he doubted she came from a family that could even afford to look for her, if they even noticed she was missing, that was. He'd held his breath when he'd found out that she wasn't who he'd wanted her to be, but now he was pretty sure that he didn't have to worry that she was someone who could get him killed.

He hoped. Cord would have his investigators do a little more research into Miss Whittaker just so that he did know who exactly it was that he was dealing with.

After making a few phone calls and issuing some new orders to his second in command, he wandered back to his bedroom and found her sleeping soundly, just the way – and where – he wanted her. Cord stripped and climbed into bed beside her, leaning on his side on his elbow, stripping away the blanket he'd put over her to look at her in the glow of the moonlight. She was perfection itself., as far as he was concerned. If he wasn't careful, he'd lose his heart to her.

He couldn't resist putting his hand on her as she slept, laying his hand, fingers extended, palm down, onto her relatively flat belly, feeling the satiny warmth there. Faith stirred, but didn't wake. She could already be pregnant. Usually that thought would have made him want to run for the hills, but somehow, it was not so bad thinking of having made her pregnant. Cord would love to watch her grown

heavy with his child.

He drew back from her a bit, shaking his head. What was coming over him? She was making him sound almost mushy, even to himself. He needed to take several steps back from her before he ended up mooning over her and getting nothing done, like some lovesick teenager.

Still, when he fell asleep, it was with his hand on her, and a sense of pride of ownership swelling his reluctant heart.

The next few days fell into a terrible, predictable pattern that had Faith nearly driven out of her mind. She couldn't read him from one moment to the next, and never knew exactly what to expect from him. Sometimes he was very cold and calculating – that was when he was most likely to hurt her, and unfortunately both of them enjoyed it with he did. He spanked and paddled her, strapped her, and fucked her, all rather violently, but always with a keen eye to what made her cream all over his fingers and herself. He was eating her up from the inside out, and Faith wasn't sure that she could survive much more. It was almost a game to him – getting her to scream and cry with incredible pain, always sexualized, always involving her breasts or her bottom or various combinations thereof – but then turning that depth of pain around so that she reached heights of pleasure she'd never experienced before. He took her to the lowliest lows, and then the loftiest heights, every time, exhausting her mind, body, and soul.

But he also fed her like a baby, noticing exactly what it was that she liked to eat, and occasionally bringing her chocolate treats. He brought broccoli once and she cringed as if he had his belt in his hand when he presented it to her, so he never brought it again. He was letting her have more and more unrestrained time, and Faith was making a conscious effort to gain his trust, at least enough to fool him into a false sense of security about her so that he would eventually trust her to wander around his house unfettered and unchaperoned. That was her goal. Once she'd gotten him to trust her that much, slipping away from him should

be that hard. When she was finally allowed to be up and about, she'd spend as much time as possible casing the joint and paying attention to whatever schedule there was for the security people he would inevitably employ around the house and the perimeter of his land. She would have to find a way of circumventing them, and well as gather enough provisions for an unknown amount of time that weren't too heavy to carry.

Still, she didn't want him to think she was a pushover. He might catch on to the idea that she was just lying in wait for the right moment to get as far away from him as possible, but she also didn't think she wanted to push and find out whether or not he'd discovered that she wasn't who he thought she was. She was walking a fine line in a lot of areas, and figured that one wrong step could get her killed – or worse.

One evening, though, she took a chance and asked him outright, figuring he could pretty much kill her whenever he wanted to. He didn't have to wait for any particular time. She did preface her question, though, remembering the beating she'd gotten for speaking when she shouldn't. "May I ask you something?" She hadn't used "may" since she was a little girl, but it was getting a real workout with him, just in case.

She was free at the moment – he hadn't retied either her legs or her arms, and he was feeling expansive. He'd striped her bottom good with his belt this time, eliciting sobs and moans and making her beg him to stop, then brought her to an earth shattering orgasm, the repeated it while he drove himself into her. Cord enjoyed it immensely when she climaxed on his penis. He often gathered her legs onto his shoulders to force her to open to him more fully. Even several days later, she was still amazingly tight and it still took him several attempts to seat himself fully within her.

He was feeling expansive . . . indulgent even, and answered, "Yes, but I might not answer."

Faith shrugged. "I think that's pretty much a given. You have all the power in this situation, and regardless, I don't think any woman has ever succeeded in coercing a man to say anything he didn't want to."

Cord chuckled. She was very right.

She decided that the best way to confront this was head on. She wasn't dead yet. She knew he was getting his jollies out of what he was doing to her sexually, out of punishing her. As long as she was interesting to him, she'd be alive. Faith looked him straight in the eye and asked with a calmness she didn't feel, "Do you know the truth about me? About who I am?"

Her answer was in his demeanor. He looked down, but only for a moment. "Yes. For a while now."

"So when are you going to kill me? When you become bored with me?"

The look on his face was priceless. She bet there were very few people in his life who had ever rendered him speechless, but she could see that he was struggling to say something but nothing was coming out. She was right. Cord couldn't believe the blasé way she was asking him, as if she was asking him to pass the salt. He swallowed, then his eyes narrowed shrewdly. "Why would you think that I was going to kill you?"

It was her turn to look at him in disbelief. "Because I'm not stupid. This is probably still Columbia," she said, realizing at the same time with a start that she really didn't know that, "and I'd be willing to bet that you are a drug lord."

He was nodding. There was no reason to hide it from her when she'd already guessed it. "Your powers of deduction are pretty good."

"Nice house, and army of men around you, tons of security . . . you're either a drug lord or the first ever Columbian

rock star.”

“But that doesn’t mean I’m going to kill you.”

Faith barely stopped herself from rolling her eyes. “I don’t know very many philanthropic drug lords. It’s the smart thing to do.”

His finger pressed itself over her lips. “You talk too much, Miss Whittaker.”

She desisted, but still wondered if he’d ever answer her question.

They settled down to go to sleep. He was right behind her, holding her back to his front, his left arm encircling her waist, so that if she so much as twitched, he would know it. This was the first time he was letting her sleep unfettered. Just as she was falling asleep, she heard his voice behind her, rumbling into her ear.

“I don’t intend to kill you, Faith. If and when I ever get tired of you, I’ll have you brought to a city and dropped off with everything you came here with, as well as enough money to get you back home. I promise. You don’t need to fear for your life while you’re with me. But I do intend to keep you.” He stroked her arm gently, then added with an undertone of warning, “As long as you don’t betray me. That would be something I couldn’t forgive.”

Faith didn’t know if he would consider running away to be betraying him, but it didn’t really matter. As much as her body enjoyed with he did to it – even the punishments, severe as they were – she was not willing to let him do this to her until he grew tired of her. She didn’t want to be an amusement, or a gangster-style moll.

And she didn’t want to hang around long enough to get to know him, God forbid. She was probably more afraid that she might actually start to like him, and then love him, than

she was that he might kill her.

Eventually, things began to happen much as Faith had envisioned: he grew to trust her. She was careful not to make any moves that might tip him off to her plans, but also tried not to be too much of a lapdog. When he finally let her out of his bedroom, it was so that she could attend a beautiful dinner for two in his huge dining room. It had been decorated with candles and roses that reflected off the gilt mirrors on the mauve walls. The dinnerware was Wedgewood and the crystal was Waterford. It was decked out to the hilt. He had all of the accoutrement of a very wealthy man, but he had no friends and very rarely even took a girlfriend, so she was getting the benefit of all that he had, even though she was technically his captive.

He didn't want to give her back the grubby clothes she'd come to him in, so he sent one of his lackeys to buy a dress for her, taking the sizes from the tags on her disreputable t-shirt and jeans and telling Roberto to go to a particular dress shop that he knew and tell the shop girl that this was for a woman who wore those sizes and that he wanted the prettiest dress there, that money was no object. Robert had arrived back yesterday, with a gorgeous gown in tow. He'd grumbled a little under his breath about being sent on an errand that he felt was beneath him, but it didn't mean anything.

Cord presented Faith with a long pink strapless gown that had a lacy, handkerchief hem and floated around her curvy figure like a cloud. By this time, he was allowing her to shower by herself in his bathroom – although he often accompanied her, and loved to wash her naturally curly blonde hair, which he'd done this morning. Her hair floated around her shoulders like the dress did around her legs, several strands curling lovingly on one full breast.

Faith was nervous, quite unsure about how to react to the treatment – she'd never owned a piece of clothing that was as beautiful as this dress, and he was treating her as if she was his girlfriend, which was not a position for which she

qualified. But when Miguel appeared and announced that things were ready, he offered her his tuxedoed arm and escorted her in to dinner.

The room was gorgeous, and smelled of fresh roses. There were huge vases of them all around the room, and the table – which was probably about twelve feet long and seated an army of people – had several smaller, more delicate arrangements. He seated her at his right, and took his own seat at the head of the table, just as Miguel began serving.

Dinner consisted of multiple courses of exquisite food – the best of everything. It was almost as if he was trying to put his best foot forward and impress her or something. It was excellent food, but didn't impress her nearly as much as her companion did – and that was just what she didn't want. He was such a dichotomy. He could be as mean as a snake –and obviously enjoyed inflicting pain, most especially on women. He had brought her to the brink of insanity by doing just that – but had never let her go over. He seemed to know just how far he could push her, and always pushed just a bit past the edge of her own personal tolerance level by combining the pain and exquisite pleasure.

But she'd never really tried – never wanted – to know him as a person. This evening, though, she was getting a big dose of the man himself. He was very smart – which should have gone without saying. His position equated to being the CEO and CFO of a very large corporation, and he'd obviously had a tremendous amount of success at it. Their discussions ranged wide and far – from Catholicism to Antarctic wild life, and he conversed very intelligently on every subject.

And he'd made her laugh on several occasions.

Faith didn't want to laugh with him, but she couldn't resist. He was mesmerizing. A king. At the top of his game, and

master of all he surveyed.

Chapter Six

When they were through with dinner, he led her back to his room and disrobed her himself, laying her out on the bed and tied her again, spread eagled as she had been when she was first a guest in this room. The thought flashed into Faith's mind that it was time to pay the piper for that dinner.

And she was right.

Once he had her secured, he brought something out that she'd never seen before. It was some sort of box that he plugged into the wall, and then she could see him attaching wires to what looked like a dildo and a butt plug. She swallowed hard, trying to fight back the idea that he was going to electrocute her.

But that wasn't it at all. Before he turned whatever it was on, he nuzzled her neck gently and kissed his way down her body. He still hadn't really kissed her – she didn't know if he was worried that she might bite him. She might well have when she'd first gotten here. But she'd already decided that she wanted to live – and pissing him off would only earn her more pain. So best to keep him unaware of any malicious thoughts she might have towards him – which were worrisomely absent, as far as she was concerned. But there was no need for him to know that.

When he got to that fragrant juncture between her thighs, which he had personally perfumed lightly before he'd slipped the dress over her head, he parted those folds and wet them with his own saliva, suckling her clit between his lips and flicking it with the tip of his tongue, making her groan at the current and remembered pleasures. Her body loved him, and responded to him almost instantly now. She felt him slip something inside her that was definitely not his penis – it wasn't nearly big enough – and then move down a little ways to press the butt plug like thing into her bottom. The last thing he did was put some kind of patch onto her already budding clit that clung there as if for dear life.

It wasn't very big, and he'd lubricated it with his own saliva before he pressed it into her, so it went in relatively easily. Then he levered himself away from her and stood staring down at her for a long time. He was making Faith very nervous with all of this. She didn't know what the equipment was that he was going to use on her, but she knew she didn't like the looks of it, especially since he wasn't making any moves to join her on the bed.

Instead, he pulled one of the chairs that were carefully positioned by the bow window over to the side of the bed and sat down in it, facing her, with his feet up on the bed. He could see that wild look in her eyes, that she was afraid, but she didn't seem panicked or he would have reassured her that this wasn't likely to hurt . . . probably.

He took the controller and placed it in his lap, glancing down at it only for the shortest of seconds, then back up to her. She was so much more interesting to look at, and he was dying to see how she reacted to this type of treatment.

He'd occasionally used a TENS unit as a torture method. It left no marks, and was incredibly effective as a method of extracting information from the most reluctant of adversaries. A TENS unit worked by sending electronic impulses to the nerves beneath the skin onto which its electrodes were placed. This could cause amazingly intense pain . . . But he'd also learned from reading on the Internet that it could be used for pleasure, and that had spurred him on to his own personal exploration into just that using the electrodes that had come with it. He'd found it absolutely unbelievable – that something could stimulate him that much, but it did. He certainly responded to it – more than once in a session, which was something that hadn't happened to him – as a forty two year old man – in a very long time. But he didn't like it. Cord liked to be doing things – to himself or, much more preferably, to someone else - and even though no one else was manning the controller, he still felt as if it wasn't enough control.

But he'd been dying for someone to experiment on, and Faith fit the bill perfectly. He was going to knock her proverbial socks off.

It was then that he noticed the fine tremor of her arms and legs and reached forward to put his hand on her shin. "Relax. I'm going to try not to hurt you – much," he added, which couldn't have helped her trembling, but he wasn't going to lie to her. "And you'll actually find that this is going to make you fly."

Cord sat back, his eyes on her. He knew the buttons well enough that he really didn't need to look at them, and for that he was grateful. He didn't want to be looking down; he wanted to be looking at her. He wanted to see every twitch, hear every peep she made. His steel trap mind would catalog them and he would remember for next time – for ever – what had made a scream get caught in her throat, and what had made her tug at her bonds, her hips seeking for something that wasn't going to be there – his touch.

Sex by remote control. It would be like having someone else in bed with them, without all the hassles of trying to find someone compatible, which he would never have any interest in. He considered himself extremely lucky to have found her, and he was much too jealous to ever let anyone else touch her in an intimate way. Hell, he would probably never even let her bring herself off again. That was what he was for – he was the one who determined whether she experienced agony or ecstasy, and that was the way he intended to keep it.

He started very, very slowly, barely adjusting the knob up at all, allowing her to become accustomed to the feeling, which was so intense that, in the beginning, even something that was intended to be pleasurable could be interpreted as pain. It was the very strength of it. There was no cushion between the instrument and the nerves it was designed to stimulate. It was a raw, uncontrolled sensation that could easily become frightening. Cord tried to keep in mind that the electrode that was sitting directly atop her

clitoris should be kept at a lower setting than the ones that were penetrating her body, since all her little clit was was a bundle of nerve tissue that was much more concentrated and sensitive than either of her passages.

Chapter 6

It was a long, long night. Faith had never felt anything like what he was doing to her, and she really didn't have any interest in ever feeling it again, despite the depth of feeling it evoked – and it was truly mind blowing. He'd eased her into it at first, which kind of surprised her. She could never tell whether he was going to be Dr. Jekyll or Mr. Hyde. Sometimes he was a disturbing mixture of the two, and this was one of those times.

He'd sat there, watching her intently, and she felt for a flash as if she was some great science experiment of his – he looked like he needed a clipboard so that he could jot down her responses and a pair of thick glasses with which to peer at her. As it was, he came to stand over her with the control box for that thing in one hand, and his other hand manipulating either nipples.

She came to fear every time his hand would leave her breasts, because it meant that he was going to manipulate the settings that were easily starting to drive her crazy. He tweaked and twisted until he had her just shy of an orgasm, and then he sat down for a moment, watching her.

She was a gorgeous specimen of a woman, and Cord stood ramrod hard just from looking at her. But seeing her like this – held with science by his hand – as close to her peak as he could manage without throwing her over, her sleek, curvy body covered with a fine sheen of perspiration, her breasts rising and falling rapidly with every breath, writhing and moaning as those two implements of his torture pulsed and throbbed within her in a way that no human man could was close to driving him over the side to his own paradise, without any sort of tactile stimulation whatsoever.

Just the sight of her extreme pleasure.

When she looked like she could stand no more, and her body might actually override what he was doing and bring her to an end before he deemed it time, Cord stood at the end of the bed then lay down between those well spread legs, reaching up to open her with his strong fingers, welcoming himself to her most intimate spot, soft wet lips to soft, wet lips. He sealed his mouth over her, and managed, awkwardly, at the same time to amp up the volume on the machine, just enough, just that last little bit, until she went mad against him, bucking and arching and pumping her hips against him.

Cord wrestled every last ounce of ecstasy from her, reaching down between her legs to drive the pulsing dildo in and out of her, hard, making a blood curdling scream fill the room as she climaxed again and again and again, uncontrollably.

Faith thought she'd die of it. That he'd kill her with it; she fully expected to die in mid orgasm during one of the tremendously strong spasms he and his little toy were sending through her.

But she didn't. She lived. She must've had close to fifteen orgasms within a space of a few minutes, and unlike those not achieved by artificial means, these didn't seem to be diminishing in strength one iota.

He let her rest between sessions, but not for long. He kept her up all night – in more ways than one, indulging himself, torturing her with pleasure in any way he could think, forcing her to more orgasms than even she could count. Of course, he had to indulge himself in providing her with a bit of a counter point to all of that bliss, and Cord believed that he had just the right method with which to do that. After one particularly hard come – and they all seemed to be the kind that wrung every muscle dry for her – he rolled her onto her stomach, with both pieces still well imbedded within her

body, but set very low, almost – but not quite – off.

Faith figured that this abrupt change of position couldn't be good, but she was so bathed in delicious gratification – if exhausting gratification – that she couldn't really think or organize her thoughts. He'd gotten her so befuddled, her brain forcibly bathed in endorphins that seemed to reduce her to monosyllabic responses, if that. Mostly, she spent that night doing a lot of moaning and panting and groaning . . . and screaming.

Once he had her secured on her tummy, and blindfolded just for good measure, Cord just couldn't resist running his palms over the sleek, hot expanse of her – like something caressing a statue they'd just bought. There was definitely a pride of ownership in his touch, and he made sure that Faith felt it in every inch of her that his sure, strong fingers explored. She was his, and if he had his way – which he almost always did – she'd never be anyone else's.

He'd never felt as possessive of any woman as he did of her. Oh, he'd made sure that the women he was with – however few and far between – knew that while he was with them he was their only man, and considering his high sex drive, he kept them more than satisfied for the time he was with them. But they'd never come to his house and slept next to him in their bed. Cord had always come to them, or taken them to a luxurious spa, which seemed to keep them happy. He didn't like revealing his home to anyone, but the way he felt about Faith seemed to be different in a lot of aspects, perhaps because of the circumstances of her arrival and captivity.

If there was anything he could have changed, that would be it – which of course was entirely ridiculous. They probably wouldn't have met otherwise. He didn't mind the fact that she'd come here against her will – although she probably did. But Cord knew that they would probably never get the chance to be as close as they might be because of the dynamic of their relationship, such as it was.

He was mulling all of this as his hands roamed over her rounded hillocks – the ones he punished so often, but less so of late. Cord had become almost obsessed with pleasuring her – and he really thought that the crux of it was pleasing her against her will. It gave him a tremendous sense of power, almost even more so than roasting her backside a glow in the dark red.

But the combination of the two was what drew him to reach beneath the bed and take out something he had bought on the Internet. It was a junior school cane, long and thin and surprisingly stiff. It made a threatening whoosh when he whipped it through the air. Cord hadn't used one before, but he had gotten this a while ago in anticipation of using it on her, and had practiced quite diligently on a man who had directly disobeyed one of his orders. That man didn't get the special considerations that Faith did – nice room, big bedroom. He was in the small room she'd been in originally – and had a much harder time of it, since it seemed to take him an inordinately long time to perfect his stroke.

But he was ready for her now, and he was dying to see whether she could climax – against her will – through a considerable amount of pain. Cord brought the cane up, not too far at first – there would be time for that later – then down sharply across the crest of those enticingly soft skinned mounds.

Her all out throaty scream was like music to his genitals. Cord thought he was going to come right then and there, but he fought it back. He spent the next hour fighting himself - and finessing her. That was part of what enabled him to last so long – trying to get the right mix of agony and ecstasy for Faith. He had to make a lot of adjustments – cranking things up more towards the end until her bottom and thighs were laced with tracks up, down, and crossways. Staring down at those livid weals also contributed to his fevered state – Cord was sure that he was going to end up with the case of blue balls to end all cases of blue balls.

Finally, when ever square inch of her was covered with raised lines and they had both reached the ends of their ropes, he covered her with himself – drinking in her groan as his weight pressed into her bruises - slipping the vaginal plug out of her with barely a tug – she had dripped her honey into a pool beneath her and it fairly plopped wetly into his palm – and replacing it with himself as he turned up both the clitoral and the anal stimulators.

Once he'd seated himself within her, he was surprised to realize that he could feel the electrical pulses through her sugared walls, and as he drove into her, craving an end to this torture, he reached beneath her and pinched a nipple in each hand.

Faith felt the first contraction of her first orgasm and it was so intense that she began to pass out, but those insistent fingers on her nipples called her back, and she remained conscious for all of it, which must have lasted for at least five minutes because although he'd come seconds after claiming her, he refused to shut the damned thing off, forcing her to ride the intense wave until the end – until she literally collapsed beneath him.

He was right.

She'd flown, but her mind had seemed to fly away at the same time.

Faith felt as if she wasn't connected to her body any more. She could see what he was doing – removing the anal plug and the clitoral electrode and untying her, but it didn't register. Nothing seemed to.

Cord moved surely around the bed, arranging things, putting the cane away, tucking the TENS back into his drawer, moving Faith slightly to one side so that he could join her on the bed. He'd never really bothered to comfort her much – it seemed superfluous to him and false at best. But she'd been like a limp rag doll since she'd come in that fantastic explosion that he'd been privileged to witness, and

he was a little worried about her. So when he finally lay down, he reached over and pulled her to him. Part of him had to acknowledge with that move that another reason why he hadn't tried to hold her after he'd punished or pleasured her was that he was pretty sure she'd reject it, and although he was well known not to be afraid of anything – including death – he didn't want to deal with that if it happened.

But she didn't seem to even notice that he'd tugged her up against his side. Her eyes were wide open, but she was barely blinking, staring at something across the room from them. He couldn't help himself – he felt her forehead, but it was cool and dry. Perhaps she was in shock. “Are you all right?”

Without taking her eyes from whatever had caught them, she nodded slowly.

Several minutes later, he felt something from her that he had seen surprisingly little of, except in the middle of a session when her bottom had been roasted ruby red, or her breasts had been bound and beaten to the point that they were criss-crossed with welts and wheals: she was crying. Silently. The only way he knew that she was doing this was that he could feel the dampness against his side as the tears pooled on his chest then rolled down his flanks.

He tightened the arm that was around her, but she pushed him away, rolling onto her side away from him, and he didn't stop her, until she rose from the bed. “Come back here,” he commanded sleepily, but the steel was still underlying his words, as always.

She still didn't say a word, and he was instantly alert should she decide to bolt from him, but that was not where she veered towards at the last minute – the bathroom. His whole body was still on the alert – this was really the first time she'd scared him like this – where he'd worried that she might try to escape. All in all, she'd been very complacent about her situation, surprisingly so, but

perhaps the bliss he gave her – and possibly even just a little of the pain – kept her there.

Cord didn't much care what it was that kept her compliant. Stockholm Syndrome or whatever. He appreciated it, but it wasn't as if he couldn't control her if she decided to be a resistant bitch. She'd just learned to adapt and get along as best she could, and he counted her smart to do that.

The toilet flushed, and seconds later he saw her weave her way back to bed, sitting very gingerly down on the edge with her back to him, then lying on her side facing away from him again. He did the same, ignoring the unwanted urge to hold her to him. But seconds later he could hear her crying. Not just crying, sobbing as if her heart had been cut out. As if someone had told her she had days to live. The bed shook with the force of her tears, and, although he refused to examine the feeling, the sounds of her sobs were wrenching that long dead body part.

His heart.

But Cord kept himself right where he was. He didn't roll over and gather her to him, tenderly stroking up and down her arms, wiping away her tears with his fingers, brushing his hands through her hair. It had been his experience that when a woman cried, if you held her and comforted her, the tears lasted that much longer and were just that much louder. He counted himself right when, a few minutes later, she quieted, and, as he listened to her with excruciating care, her breathing evened out and he knew she was asleep.

Only then could he relax and get to sleep himself.

Chapter Seven

A rude realization awoke Faith the next morning, bursting into her subconscious with such ferocity that her eyes flew wide open: she had to get out of here. She had to get away from him. She tried to roll onto her back, but her cane tenderized flesh reminded her that that was not a good idea, and probably wouldn't be for quite some time.

He was overwhelming her – dominating her to such an extent that her mind was always filled with him. And her body was . . . her body was in love with him, for what he could – and would – do to it. He seemed to know exactly what she craved physically – he'd found that perfect balance between pain and pleasure, and guided her to it each time, unerringly. Last night had been the worst night yet – not physically, although the punishment had certainly not been any fun. But emotionally and intellectually. With everything she'd been put through in the weeks that she'd been with him, bound and unbound, in pain and in ecstasy, this had been the most demeaning, most demoralizing thing he'd done to her so far, and she was terrified that he intended to repeat the incident with some regularity.

To be driven to such heights of passion by a machine was going beyond the pale. She'd dealt with everything else that had happened by keeping her mind as active as possible, looking and planning for every possible escape route. As soon as he'd let her up and about the huge house, she'd tried to gather as much information as surreptitiously as possible. He spent quite a bit of time each day on the phone in his office, and she was left alone to her own pursuits. Of course, he'd given her the warning speech about not leaving the house, and then eventually the grounds once he'd learned to trust her a slight bit.

Faith had memorized the layout of the house from top to bottom as soon as she knew that he hadn't designated anyone to pay her any particular attention while he was

working. She knew every nook and cranny inside, and then worked on learning the outside. She learned the routine of the machine gun toting guards, the frightening look of which was almost enough to put her off her plan. But she quickly decided that she'd rather die trying to escape than live in luxurious limbo with a man who tortured her in every way possible just for his own jollies.

And for hers, she had to amend wryly within her own mind.

She'd already tried all the obvious stuff and found herself dead ended – there were no phones in the house except those in his office, and either he was in his office or the door was locked. She knew, because she'd tried it at her own peril, watching nervously from side to side to see if someone – namely him – was going to sneak up on her. No one did. She'd been onto one of the rooftop porticos and looked around. There was nothing around them but jungle – no neighbors, no roads, no nothing. And no Internet that she could see – unless he kept that locked up in his office, too.

The guards patrolled diligently around the outside of the house and the neatly manicured grounds that blended almost seamlessly into deep jungle just a few feet away from the lush grass. They wouldn't talk to her – not that she tried to be obvious, but she did smile and say hello to a few of them, but none of them seemed inclined to respond to her flirtatious smile. Probably on penalty of death from El Diablo, no doubt. Somehow, she didn't figure that he shared well with others on any account.

She also spent some time with his butler, who at first was only a little bit more forthcoming. But Faith persevered, annoying him in the kitchen as he was cooking, and making suggestions about what she would like to eat. He generally took them if it was possible, and after a few mornings she got into the habit of going down to the kitchen to kibitz about whatever he was cooking and chat him up as much as possible.

Miguel wasn't quite a font of information, but he was helpful even if he didn't know it. She was able to get her knapsack from him. Her wallet was in there, although it had been stripped of almost everything except her personal photos. There was no license and no credit cards. Her passport was gone, too, along with the small amount of money she'd tucked away in one of the hidey-holes in her purse.

Well, it didn't have anything in it, but she could use it to carry things with which she could survive in the jungle – not that she really knew what that would be. She figured it would be atrociously hot – like it was outside – and she'd need water, salt, very basic first aid things, some wet wipes, bug repellent if she could find it, and as many things to eat as she could take, waterproof matches or ones that could be easily secured in a bag so that they wouldn't become damp, and a small flashlight she'd scrounged, for use only in an emergency. She slipped some of these things casually into her conversations with Miguel, making it sound as if they would just make her stay here a bit more bearable, and they began to appear slowly in the well stocked pantry. He knew she spent a certain amount of time outside, and things like she was asking were perfectly acceptable. She was careful not to ask for something that sounded too demanding, or might have tipped him off as to her intent in collecting all these things.

He'd caught her scavenging and packing away bottled water into a paper bag to take to her pile of confiscated stuff, but thankfully he didn't know what he was seeing. She was able to put a bottle into the cupboard and when she turned to him she appeared to have retrieved only one from the fridge, which was nothing for him to get alarmed about. Faith thought she'd have a heart attack right then and there. She wasn't cut out for this sneaky stuff. She wasn't used to constantly have to be checking her back.

Her morning walks amongst the guards served a dual purpose – it slowly accustomed her to the blanket heavy air. She'd never seen air that was literally steamy that wasn't coming from a kettle – but this qualified. But she

forced herself to make several rounds several times a day, lengthening her walks slightly each day until her stamina had built a little more.

She had found a hopefully long forgotten drawer in one of the rooms she'd never seen anyone go into and hid her stash there. Faith would have preferred to hide it in the attic or the basement, but didn't think she could get away with going to either place with any regularity. Soon she had a pretty good supply going, and it was a damned good thing, because the day had come that she wanted to leave.

Immediately.

Hell or high water.

Before things got any worse.

Sunday would have been her chosen day, and if she could have stuck it out till then – three days away – she would have. But she couldn't – not to retain what she had left of her sanity, which was precious little as it was. On Sundays the guard presence was lessened so that everyone could attend mass at the small chapel on the grounds. Even the devil himself went, which had surprised Faith to no end.

Miguel had told her on a Sunday morning while she was sitting in the kitchen. She had wondered aloud to him where he'd gone, since he wasn't in his study. "Mass," the butler had said, watching her face closely. She'd given him the response he wanted – sheer surprise.

"I wouldn't have pegged him as a religious person," Faith responded, her voice intimating that she thought he should be struck down by a bolt of lightening upon entering any religious building.

Miguel continued to wash the vegetables he was going to use in this evening's dinner. "There's a lot you don't know about El Diablo."

Faith snorted. "Oh, I'm sure there is. I'm afraid I know quite a bit too much about some parts of him, though."

"Did you know he was American?"

This, too, surprised her. "No."

"He holds dual citizenship. He was born here, but his Mother was American, like you."

Faith didn't like that comparison at all. She'd very carefully avoided thinking about the fact that she could already be pregnant.

But Miguel rambled on, which was unusual for him. "His father kidnapped your mother, much like you were kidnapped, only his father didn't have a Senator he was trying to manipulate. He just fell in love with Miss Penny, and had to have her."

Faith felt a shudder run through her. She did not want the same fate to befall her. She would not be trapped her. She wouldn't.

Sitting on the edge of the bed, she knew she would have to be careful today, having made the ultimate decision to leave. He was distressingly alert to her moods and sometimes seemed to read her mind – this was one thing he didn't want him seeing in her.

So she spent as little time with him during the day as she could – not that they had fallen into the habit of spending a lot of time together during the day, so he didn't miss her. Dinner that night was nerve wracking for her because she was trying too hard to be relaxed and not tip him off. But, of course, he noticed that she was acting differently.

"Are you all right?" he asked, frowning at her. She'd been acting strangely since last night – beaten and subdued, which he didn't like at all. It was much too much of a reminder of exactly what their relationship was like. She

wasn't chatty in the least, and almost never smiled or laughed, but she didn't usually have such a pall hanging over her as she did tonight. He wondered if he'd gone too far, using both the TENS and the cane on her. Perhaps it had been too much.

She was playing with Miguel's delicious soup, dragging her spoon through the bowl but not eating much. "I've got a bit of a stomach upset and I'm tired. Can I be excused?"

"Come here."

If there was nothing else she'd learned from him in these past days, it was obedience. She might not want to come to him – indeed she didn't – but she had damned well better or she wouldn't like suffering the consequences in the least. Especially not on a freshly caned bottom.

She didn't feel like she had a temperature, but her eyes looked bleary and almost unfocused, and she had fairly dragged herself over to him.

"Go to bed. I'm going to call my doctor."

She didn't even bother to protest, not that it would have done her any good. He arranged to send a helicopter to his own private physician, who arrived several hours later. Cord walked into his bedroom and flipped on the light on his nightstand. Faith rolled over, as if on command, barely opening her eyes.

"Faith, this is my doctor. He's going to examine you."

Faith sat up, keeping her eyes closed as much as possible.

The doctor – and Cord – watched her very carefully. Her pulse, blood pressure and respirations were all noted. He took her temperature – orally, not in the ear, and she was very grateful, not the other way. "How long since your last period? How long since your last bowel movement? What have you had to eat today? Any allergies?"

She answered truthfully, blushing involuntarily at some of the questions, and reeling off a long list of antibiotics that she was allergic to. Cord frowned, trying to mentally memorize the list.

When he was finished, the doctor didn't speak to her, as she expected. Instead, he put his equipment back into his bag and walked to the door. Cord followed him, admonishing her to lie down and try to get back to sleep.

He came back minutes later, but Faith had turned her back to the door in hopes of getting as much sleep as she possibly could before dawn. She'd set her internal clock – which was generally reliable – to wake her early in the morning so that she could get started on her trek

"Roll onto your tummy, Faith," he whispered in the darkness.

She did as she was told – one of the last times she'd have to do that, she hoped fervently. He stripped the sheet off her. She was naked beneath it because he refused to give her anything to sleep in. He had told her early on that he'd turn the air down or whatever made her comfortable, but that she wasn't going to sleep in anything because he wanted to be able to get to her any time he wanted her, without having to fight through layers of clothes to do it.

When Faith turned her head towards his, she saw something she knew she didn't want to see: he was holding a translucent plastic bag and white hose. She knew what those were for, but had never had an enema before, and wasn't thrilled with the idea of experiencing one now. Besides the pain – which he would have argued that her body welcomed to a certain extent – one of the other dichotomies he had discovered about her tastes in matters of the flesh were that she hated to have things put into her bottom – hated it mentally, anyway. Her body loved it, and he took every chance he could to demonstrate that to her by forcing her to climax anally on multiple occasions.

To Faith it was just another method he used to degrade her. To Cord, it was a method by which he controlled – and therefore bound – her body to him. No one else would be able to give her pleasure such as he could. He knew it without a shadow of doubt, or even an iota of ego. They complimented each other so well in their likes and dislikes – he couldn't imagine ever finding a woman who meshed so well with him in the bedroom. He probably would have been willing to put up with her even if she had been a shrew just because of that. But she was quiet and smart and observant, when she did deign to speak with him, and he was beginning to like her.

But the doctor had given him a chance to experiment in something he hadn't had a chance to get to yet. He'd never given an enema for medicinal purposes, but, frankly, he couldn't imagine that he was done a whole lot differently. The doctor had given him a recipe of sorts, which he had taken the liberty of strengthening in a few small ways, adding lemon juice to increase her cramping and adding a little salt for balance, using the mild soap he'd found in a guest room rather than a perfumed one that might have unwanted side effects.

The water was lukewarm, so that she would feel it as it snaked through her bowels. He wanted her to feel every bit of this lovely treatment. Cord had watched her eyes bug when she saw what he was holding, and she had turned the most wonderful shade of pink. The hose was clamped tightly right now while he considered which nozzle to use – he owned a collection of several, most of which were modified butt plugs. Only a few were legitimate nozzles; the kinds that came with the usual kit.

After looking at each of them carefully, he chose a largish one that was narrow at the entry end, expanded to larger in the middle, then narrowed again where it joined the hose, so that she would be hard pressed to push it out, not that she was really likely to do that – her bottom was barely recovering from the caning. Faith wasn't stupid. She

wouldn't want to endure any more of what she'd gotten last night.

The doctor had kindly given him a tube of lubricating jelly, which Cord already owned several of, but then he wasn't likely to know that. He spread a very thin layer of it on the nozzle – enough to slicken its way, but not enough to aid its retreat, should she decide to be defiant. "Up on your knees, with your head down."

Faith reluctantly assumed the degrading position, appalled at how her bottom was thrust so high into the air, as if she was inviting his invasion.

"Spread your knees well," he kept tapping them apart until he was satisfied and she was practically split wide as a wishbone.

Spreading her legs had one good side effect – it lowered her outrageously exposed rear end. But it also forced her privates to almost dangle down between her legs. Faith could feel her inner and outer lips parting as she complied with his taps, until she could feel the very air drifting and blowing around parts of her that hadn't felt such a blast of air in quite some time.

Without further ado, he pressed the nozzle against her exposed rosebud, which opened much more easily than it had when she'd first come to him, almost greedily grabbing at the intruder and sucking it in without much pressing on his part at all. Cord loved the way she opened to embrace what he presented her with, submitting to him and accepting her medicine docilely.

He clicked the clamp open and heard her indrawn breath as the cooling liquid rushed into her, then shinnied up beside her to whisper in her ear. "The next time I do this, I'm going to make you watch the bag as it seeps into you." His right hand found its way inevitably between her legs, his middle finger smeared with just a touch of jelly – enough to rub over and around her already swollen clitoris until

she began to grant him her own honey to use against herself. How galling that must be!

"I love this," he tweaked her nubbin sharply, feeling her wiggle a little trying to get away from his insistent fingers. "Ah – ah – ah. Do I need to bind you?"

She was starting to pant and didn't answer him immediately.

"Faith!" he cracked sharply. "Do I need to bind you?"

"N – No, Sir."

"Then stop moving. I want to bring you off several times during this enema. You are not to try to avoid it. As a matter of fact, I want you to ask me to give you this orgasm." He reached over and clicked the clamp open a little more, enjoying her panting and the fine sheen of sweat on her body as she tried to accommodate the rush of liquid into her bowels.

"P – Please, Sir, give me an orgasm."

"Good girl," he praised, pressing his lips to her ear while his fingers dipped into her pussy to collect her body's betraying fluids. "I love to think of that water and soap suds and lemon juice I put together cleaning you out, making you cramp with it, forcing you to accept that into your body as I bring you off."

His fingers knew her too well – he knew her too well. She didn't want to respond to him, but her body anticipated his touch and had already prepared itself for him. While she was in the middle of a vicious bout of cramping, he dipped more fluid onto his fingertips and began to barely rub the tips of his index and third fingers very quickly over the very swollen mass of nerves, making her want to arch towards him, which would made her clamp down onto the instrument that was delivering the torturous liquids into her poor system.

"Look at me," he commanded, and she obeyed. He reached over and flicked the clamp wide open, and she groaned her dismay, but didn't take her eyes off of him. She knew better. There was still more than two thirds of the enema to go, and he told her so, adding, "And at least two orgasms besides this one, I'm thinking." His fingers continued their sensual torture, flicking and rubbing and claiming her as sure as her bottom was being claimed and the rest of her was being wrung out from it.

"I want you to keep your eyes on me while I pleasure you. You experience pleasure only at my hands, and I want you to come, Faith. Thank me while you're coming. I want to hear you thank me for your enema and your orgasm, Faith." He liked to use her name, although he required that she call him Sir. It reinforced just who was in control of this situation, as if there was ever any doubt.

It was coming. She was coming. She fought it as hard as she could, but it was starting to overwhelm her. His threat hissed through her teeth, "If you don't come three times during this bag, I'll hang another, you know." And it was that thought that drove her over the edge. The thought that she knew he'd do exactly as he said, regardless. He never issued idled threats. He would, without one ounce of regret, hang a second bag and let the entirety of that drain into her in order to prove his dominance over her. And to wring the promised three orgasms from her all too willing body.

But she made it to three, just barely, three very hard, exhausting orgasms, just as the last of the enema solution was draining into her bottom. He wouldn't let her go immediately; instead he turned her over and fucked her hard, his penis straining to get at her from the doctor's visit. He fucked her hard and harshly, raping her as he always did, but more brutally than usual because she was so full of enema that he sloshed around with each pounding stroke.

Even once he'd emptied himself inside her, he held her beneath him, making her beg to be allowed to release her

burden. She swallowed down her pride and did so, but he made her say it over and over and over while she writhed beneath him, feeling like she was going to explode. He'd wiggled his hand beneath them and held the nozzle plug inside her, so that she couldn't expel it at will – his strong fingers kept it firmly in place until she'd debased herself enough to be granted the right to expel it.

She had to practically sprint to the bathroom, which wasn't good either because it jiggled the contents of her innards that were just busting to get out. Faith didn't know how long she spent on the john, but it was too long. She didn't know if she'd had enough sleep to leave in the early morning, but she was surely going to try.

Her internal clock woke her pre dawn, just when she wanted. She was exhausted, but the stress and nervousness about what she was doing helped her awaken early. Getting out of the bedroom wasn't hard. He'd stopped noticing when she left the bed, and sometimes she'd deliberately gotten up in the middle of the night to watch a movie. The first time she did that, she'd let him discover her on the couch in the living room, explaining that she sometimes had insomnia. He hadn't confined her to bed, but he had reacted as if he'd thought she'd left – barreling into the room screaming orders to Miguel as if he was going to call out the National Guard instead of just his own small private army.

She was as stealthy as she could as she walked around the house, saying good bye to the last vestiges of civilization until Lord knew when. She did know that Miguel got up early, so she wanted to get out of there as soon as she could. Once she had her backpack – which was heavier than she wanted it to be – she donned a pair of green shorts she'd stolen from him – tightening the waist with a length of rope she'd found in the attic – and pulled a t-shirt of his that she drowned it, tying it in a knot on her hip just to keep herself from practically tripping on it. She left

through a sliding glass door and skirted the house, watching for the rotation of the guards. Faith knew she had about a five minute window to get across the grounds and blend into the jungle before the next guy came by. That was by far the most harrowing point of her young journey, but once she was enveloped in the greenery, she realized she had no idea where to go or what to do to survive in the jungle.

But she was going to do whatever was necessary to tough it out and get to any town she could. Her first idea was to find a stream that she could follow, that would hopefully turn into a river that would lead her to some – any – sort of town or village. Until then, she would just walk west, wishing she had paid more attention to geography in school. But even though she didn't know specifically where she was, she was working on the assumption that she was still in South America, somewhere, and knowing that South America was longer than it was wide, she had decided that walking east or west would be her best bet. Eventually, she'd hit water either way.

Faith tried to keep her ears open, but there was a lot more noise in the jungle than she had anticipated – birds screeching at each other and monkeys doing the same. She'd figured it would be kind of quiet, like the forest at home. She was hoping to hear anyone who might be coming after her, but now she wasn't at all sure she'd be able to do that, especially if that person happened to be the Devil himself.

Not that he was likely to come after her. He'd send out some of his goons, no doubt. He had too much work to do moving the drugs, or whatever it was, that he dealt.

In a way, that was a comfort. Paid men would only look so hard. The Devil would never give up. Never. That thought made her shudder: that she might get back home some time to West Virginia, and answer the door only to see him standing in front of her. She didn't know what she'd do. Kill him, maybe? He certainly deserved it after what he'd done.

Her anger at him fuelled her feet, and she covered what she thought was quite a bit of distance while carefully keeping the sun at her side. As soon as she saw a likely place where she could comfortably ride out the inevitable afternoon shower, she did. It certainly wasn't his pillow topped king sized bed, but then there wasn't anyone in it who was likely to demand sexual favors, either, which was more to her liking. She tucked herself into a small cave, after throwing rocks into it to make sure that no wild animal had had the same idea. Nothing came out, so she made it her new home, granting herself some small sips of water and a few licks of salt from her palm. She ate a small part of a breakfast bar from the box she'd stolen from the pantry, and tried to catch some sleep, but cat naps really weren't her style, so she ended up just staring out at the torrential rain and wondering if he'd even bothered to send anyone after her.

Hopefully not. That was the last thing she wanted.

Wasn't it?

Once the rain stopped, she started to trek again, trying to keep track of the sun, and having a harder time walking on the slick rainforest floor. She pooped out long before she wanted to, and ended up not many hours later having to find a place to sleep. Faith didn't dare to start a fire – if they were following her it would lead them right to her, but she did manage to find a nice, uninhabited rocky ledge where she curled up as tight as she could, trying to swallow down her fear at being in the heart of the jungle alone at night.

Every sound seemed amplified. There could be big cats stalking her for food; she could be attacked and ripped open any minute. Faith was beginning to wonder if the relative safety of his compound wasn't such a bad thing, but then she shook herself mentally. She wasn't a slave. She wasn't anyone's property, and he'd had no right to subject her to those obscene things . . .

Her body clenched at the thought of some of those obscene things, and she knew she was going to have to retrain it not to. She didn't want him, she didn't.

Faith was surprised to find that she did sleep, although not deeply and not for long. She didn't know what time it was when she awoke, but she waited patiently for the sun to appear before she picked up her things and tried to make sure she was leaving no trace of having been there, although she knew she was probably just making it worse.

She walked at as much of a jog trot that she could, but again had to find shelter for a short time during the rain. All of those turns around the grounds had paid off, though. Before she'd started to do that she probably wouldn't have lasted more than a few hours. But her muscles barely hurt when she settled down on another small ledge she'd found, giving herself the treat of a whole breakfast bar because she was starving. After several swallows of lukewarm water, she put her head on her knapsack and closed her eyes, trying to fall asleep to the mind numbing beat of the rain on the canopy high above her head. It took a long time coming, but eventually her eyelids drifted shut and she fell into a dreamless sleep.

Chapter Eight

Cord was beside himself. He'd noticed she wasn't in bed beside him as soon as he rolled over that morning, but that wasn't all that unusual so he wasn't worried at that point. He'd gotten up and showered, figuring she'd fallen asleep on the couch in the living room as he had several times before. But when he'd gotten to the living room, the TV wasn't on and she wasn't there. The couch was cold – she hadn't been there in quite some time. He called for Miguel and the men that guarded the house and they conducted a floor to ceiling search, but found nothing. Not so much as a trace of her existence there.

She was gone, and the only place she could be was in the jungle. Grimly, he checked the safe in his office, where he kept his hand guns. She'd never really been in his office, but he just wanted to be sure. There were no guns missing, and none of his guards were missing either, so no one was helping her. She was alone and unprotected in the jungle. His blood ran cold. She could easily be dead by now. She had no idea what dangers she faced.

Within minutes, he'd organized a small search party, leaving Miguel there in case she returned. He couldn't spare too many men – leaving the compound defenseless was an invitation to other drug lords to destroy it. He was a marked man – even by his own kind. Cord sent men in several different directions, but followed what he thought was her trail himself. He'd grown up around the jungle and could track prey with the best of them. And she was definitely that. He intended on recovering her and bringing her back to his house – whether he was going to beat her butt bloody or fuck her brains out was up in the air at this moment, he was so angry. But it was a pretty good bet that it was going to be some violent combination of the two.

None of his men volunteered to go with him. None of them had volunteered to look for her either. He knew they thought he was going soft, spending all of his time with the

woman who was supposed to be his prisoner, giving up on trying to influence the Senator against the vote, and not killing her when he realized that she wasn't who they'd thought she was.

He'd become almost obsessed with her, he admitted, and it was that obsession that made him appear both weak and somewhat crazy to his men. It was the crazy that had saved him so far, along with his past with them. He had to find her, and fast, if he was going to keep what was his.

And that was her, above all else.

Her trail wasn't that hard to follow, although he was quite amazed at how much ground she covered and how careful she was obviously trying to be about covering her tracks, but in doing so, in trying to create disarray from the places where she'd slept or found shelter during the rains, she just managed to make things worse. She would have been better – not that she was ever going to find out – to just get up and go, and to have remained as still as possible while she was occupying that space. She had done a very good job of cleaning up after herself, though. He didn't find any candy wrappers or soda cans. Cord didn't know exactly what kind of provisions – if any – she'd taken, and he wondered what she was eating and drinking.

His mind, of course, conjured the worst of all possibilities, inserting her broken and bleeding body into his vision wherever he looked. He'd only had time to put together a small bundle of the barest of necessities, figuring that she couldn't have gotten too far away from the compound.

But he was wrong.

And he could no more turn back from trying to find her than he could cut off his own right arm. She was his, and he would have her, even if he lost everything in retrieving her, even if he died trying. He wasn't afraid of death.

The Devil wasn't afraid of anything.

Except losing her.

She had been dreaming. She was home, at her house in Shepherdstown, standing in the kitchen making dinner for her friends. She could hear them laughing and talking at her grandmother's dining room table. But as she brought the platter, piled high with a big, tender roast and potatoes and carrots and onions, she dropped it onto the carpet when she saw who was really around her table:

And Miguel, and Marco, and Roberto – the people who had seen her shamed, and the one who had done the shaming.

The table wasn't set for dinner. Instead there were four cuffs at the different corners, and a cart full of punishment implements next to the man who would do the punishing. The man who had caused and then witnessed the depths of her shame and degradation.

Him.

The man who still, miles away, and in her subconscious sleep, could make her body thrum to life as if he was a cherished lover rather than a brutal rapist.

Faith began to scream in her sleep, but it was one of those aborted attempts, where she couldn't really give voice to her terror, where it stuck in her throat and just became some pathetic mewling . . .

But when she awoke, she realized that it wasn't the dream that was preventing her from screaming. It was a big, frighteningly familiar hand that covered her mouth and part of her chin. Faith opened her eyes and looked directly at him, feeling her heart sink to her feet. She'd lost. She'd lost her bid for freedom, and now he would drag her back to his bedroom torture chamber, down into the depths of depravity, to where her body's demands – and his commands – ruled her life.

Cord couldn't believe that he'd finally found her. He wanted to beat his breast and beat her bottom at the same time, but didn't do either of those things. He leaned forward and did something he hadn't done the entire time she'd been with him – something he'd desperately wanted to do, but didn't trust her enough to commit to.

He kissed her, gently, firmly, but undemandingly. There were no expectations in that kiss. None. Just encouragement and coaxing.

Faith, too, did something she hadn't done before. She drew her arm back and punched him, square in the stomach. It wasn't a woman's punch – it was the hardest, solidest punch she could manage, but it was still like slamming her fist into a brick wall. But she continued to do it, although her attempts became less and less technically perfect and more like bitch slaps, but it still felt good to her.

She'd repressed her more violent tendencies while he'd held her at his house, trying to stay alive, trying not to provoke him into killing her. She'd wanted to blend into the woodwork, in hopes that she'd bore him out of wanting her, or some other such scatterbrained idea which obviously hadn't worked.

But no more. At this point she didn't care whether or not he killed her, and she wasn't going to hold herself back any longer. If he offed her, it would be a welcome relief.

He kissed her with everything in him, and she beat him with every ounce of frustrated pain and pleasure in her. Cord did absolutely nothing to defend himself. He considered it a good thing that she was finally showing some signs of anger at him. She had been so complacent about her situation – and complacent in general as far as he could see – that he had just about convinced himself that she was settling into this life with him. But trying to escape like this had given him a wake up call.

She was pissed, and she had every right to be. He ignored

her futile attempts to hurt him, until she managed to jam her knee partially against his testicles, making him convulse as he fell on top of her. He wasn't about to lose her again, so he simply placed himself over her, relying on his weight to keep her where he wanted her.

Deprived of her goal – which she'd hit once to her immense satisfaction, Faith continued to batter his back and shoulders, showing no signs of stopping until the tears relieved her of her ability to continue punching. All she wanted was for him to go away and let her curl up and die. She didn't even care at this point whether or not she ever got back home. She just wanted to get away from him.

Faith had no idea that she'd sobbed her thoughts out loud, or what kind of effect they'd had on Cord. He was lying on top of her, where he'd been before, when he'd had her at his complete and utter mercy, then shown her absolutely none. For a very long moment he simply stared down at her, seeing – really seeing her tears for the first time.

She'd cried while she'd been with him – the intensity of the agony he'd created in her body allowed for nothing less. He'd made her scream and beg him to stop while tears dampened the sheets beneath her, but he'd never paid any attention to them. She'd rarely cried at any other time in front of him, until now.

Despite the relative danger to himself, Cord leaned down and kissed her with every ounce of gentleness he possessed, letting his lips settle over hers with gossamer tenderness. Faith was too involved in her own catharsis to pay much attention to what he was doing. She fully expected that he would rape her again, maybe even punish her horribly out here where the wild animal cries could join with her own screams of anguish before dragging her bodily, kicking and screaming, back to his house. That was the only way he was going to get her to go back.

If she'd looked up at that point, she would have seen his own private anguish, would have seen his clenched jaw,

and perhaps the slightest hint of tears in his own eyes. But she didn't.

Cord ran his hands down her body with that particular stamp of ownership he imbued any time he touched her, then levered himself to his feet, reaching down to pull her up beside him. "We need to get going if we're going to reach town by tonight."

Faith was exhausted – emotionally, physically, spiritually. She didn't want to walk. She wanted to curl back up on her little rock ledge and fall asleep. And she really didn't much give a damn whether or not she ever woke up.

She didn't even notice that he'd said "town" rather than "house". He wouldn't let her do what she wanted – which was no surprise – and sink back down to the ground. He pulled her along behind him, his grip hard on her small hand.

Within several hours, they were in a village where he was apparently very well known – the people fairly bowed and scraped to get him what he wanted.

And what he wanted, apparently, was to get her back home.

She didn't start paying attention until a plane arrived on a grass landing strip just outside of the small village, and he began dragging her towards it. As he thrust her onto the plane, he pressed a big wad of money – American – into her hand, saying, "I will take care of everything. When you get to Bogota, go to the American Embassy and tell them who you are. Everything will be arranged. You'll be home by the day after tomorrow."

Faith was floored. She couldn't do anything but watch him as the plane chugged unhealthily away from him. He shouted something to the pilot, who nearly lost control of the plane right then and there. She leaned back into the plane as he reached by her to pull the door closed,

stridently encouraging her to buckle her seatbelt.

He was right. She was home, in her own bed, within thirty six hours. The entire experience played in Faith's mind like a horror film she'd attended and gotten a little too personally involved in. It took her forever to get to sleep, and she kept checking the locks on her doors and windows compulsively, as if she expected him to appear at her door like she'd thought he might while she was still with him.

When Faith finally did fall asleep, she stayed asleep for almost twenty four hours straight. Unlike her usual behavior when she came home from an adventure – where she'd call all of her friends and have them over for dinner to show them the pictures and tell them about what she'd seen and done, she kept entirely to herself once she'd gotten home safely. Despite her time with him, she hadn't even expended the six weeks of vacation time she'd allotted for her trip, so it was a surprise when she appeared back at work, but she knew after a short time that she needed something to keep her busy or she'd go crazy.

Her friends were amazed to see her early – usually she came back threatening to chuck it all and move to wherever she went, but not this time. Faith was unusually subdued, and it made them all worry about her.

Strange things were still happening to her even though he was – supposedly – miles away from her. She logged into her bank account online, and found her balance was in the eight figure range. She promptly trotted down to the bank to find out whose deposit got crossed with hers, and was told that there was a wire deposit made from a bank in London that had come through a day or so before.

Faith's back went ramrod straight. She didn't know anyone in London, and she certainly only knew one person in this world who had tens of millions of dollars. More than that. And he apparently decided to assuage his guilt by trying to

pay her off for her services.

She let it be known in no uncertain terms that she wanted that wire returned to its sender, and also had a note put on her account that no deposits of more than five figures – she was planning ahead for her own IRA deposits when she was a senior citizen, if she was lucky – should be accepted without calling her first. Her paychecks certainly weren't that amount, and she didn't have any rich relatives, so she couldn't see a problem with putting that kind of caveat on her account.

This incident, though, disrupted her hard won but extremely fragile sense of security. She felt like she was being watched, but couldn't prove it.

And she was right.

Cord had returned to his compound to find that there had indeed been an attempted takeover of his property. Of course, he had squelched it mercilessly, taking out his own frustrations at having given her up on his enemies. When the fighting was over, there were dozens of bodies around, and most of that count belonged to him.

He tried to leave her alone. He did. But she popped into his mind in the middle of the night, when he'd been able to roll over and touch her, or pull her against him, or press himself into her. He even tried to find another woman, but found he had absolutely no interest in anyone else. He wanted her. He wanted her back with him, even though he knew that short of kidnapping her again – which he couldn't completely discount – he would never hold her again.

But Cord did indulge himself in keeping track of her, at first relying on second and third hand information from his informants to make sure that she'd gotten home all right, and she had. He had men watching her house under the strictest possible orders not to get caught doing it – by her or by the American police. He did some more poking about her and realized just how poor she was – she must've

saved and scrimped and lived like a church mouse to go on the adventures she did every other year or so. So he decided to compensate her for her time with him – he knew that no amount of money would ever make up for what he'd done and he wasn't functioning under any delusions that a large deposit would make her come running back to him.

He couldn't be that lucky.

He also knew – even as he picked up the phone to his broker in London – that he was doing this for himself and not for her. It was making him feel a little better – almost immeasurably, but a little – to give her something of himself. Something that he valued. Something she needed.

But he hadn't been surprised when several days later he got a call from his broker, who very nervously informed him that the funds had been returned to his account; that the deposit had been refused on the other end. The man was very careful – very aware of just who it was that he was dealing with here – to explain that it wasn't any sort of error on his or his company's end, but that the person he'd sent the funds to had refused them. The tone of his voice also conveyed just how crazy he thought the recipient was to have done such a thing.

Cord put the phone down, snorting. He couldn't have said he was surprised at her actions. It was probably a move he would have made if he were in her shoes. She didn't want to be beholden to him in any way. She wanted him out of her life.

But he wasn't just going to go away. He was going to bide his time and watch her from afar. And maybe, just maybe, she'd find herself his guest again sometime in the future.

Perhaps she would even come to him on her own – but he wasn't going to pin his hopes on that. He'd take her any way he could get her.

Faith was restless. Very restless. Nothing seemed to hold

any interest for her any more – except sex. She'd always been highly sexual – since adolescence. But she'd also always held that drive firmly in check and had never slept around much. She considered sex to be much too intimate to make a sport out of it – that was part of why what had happened to her was so devastating to her. She'd never had sex with a stranger before, and yet he'd done that and so much more to her, against her will.

She was having a very hard time dealing with the fact that she'd enjoyed it so much – that her body had reveled in his abuse. She'd known she had a leaning towards sado-masochism and spanking, but had never indulged that fantasy, but now she couldn't ignore the fact that her body had come so easily to crave what he could do to it – and the harder the better.

At first it had just been her body, but now it seemed her very thoughts were against her. She would wake up in the middle of the night, her body covered by a fine sheen of perspiration, often after having orgasmed violently in her sleep, her hips arching and seeking something . . . someone . . .

Him. The Devil.

It was always him. He starred in all of her dreams, and, she had to acknowledge to herself, all of the fantasies she used to ease the ever present throbbing ache between her legs. Nearly every evening, she found herself using masturbation to get to sleep. It was a wonderful sleep medicine. But her fantasies – which, prior to her trip, had revolved around being spanked and taken a la a juicy bodice buster by the likes of Tom Cruise or a young Sean Connery – had become darkly ritualistic replays of scenes from her captivity.

She would be lying in her big bed, all alone, lying awake and trying to resist what she knew she had to do to get to sleep. But eventually she would cave and do what needed to be done, reaching into her bedside stand for the KY and

squeezing out a dollop onto the middle finger of her right hand, although she probably wouldn't even need it, if the perpetual dampness of her panties was any indication. Her nightie – and the light sheet she always used no matter what the season – was already bunched at her waist, where it went as soon as she wiggled into bed, and her hands found their way between her legs unimpeded. She hated to get lube on the sheets, but that didn't happen this time.

There was nothing to distract her from her purpose – no TV, no radio, no noisy neighbors. She'd even shut off the ringer on the phone as was becoming her habit, so that she could get to sleep without telemarketers driving her out of her mind.

This was not something with which she'd experimented in a very, very long time. She'd discovered her own pleasure when she was sixteen, and had barely left her room for several months after that, trying out all sorts of new positions and textures and ointments . . .

But now, decades later, she pretty much had it all down pat and didn't bother with a lot of accoutrements.

Besides, the real action was where it always had been – in the most sensitive erotic organ in the body – her brain.

She played through some of the scenes of her captivity, having given up trying to direct her brain elsewhere. When she'd tried not to think of him, to think of a nameless cute hunk or the latest gorgeous movie star, somehow he always ended up looking like him, regardless, and none of the loving, glossed over spanking scenes that had satisfied her before seemed to do it for her now.

But replaying how he'd raised welts on her poor bottom with the cane, or his belt, then brought her to several howling orgasms – now that had her near to her boiling point in five seconds or less. She seemed to live in a state of arousal anyway, so it never took her very long to get to that point where she had to decide whether to tease herself

and drag it out or just frig herself furiously and come in a spasm of pleasure that burst quickly but throbbed and pulsed for long minutes afterwards.

It took her a while to accept what she was missing – what he'd given her in the space of a few short days that she craved so much now. Pain. If asked, Faith would have automatically rattled off that she didn't like pain; it hurt her. But that wasn't quite the story any more.

It excited her, and he had stripped away her sanity, her civilization, making that side of her bare and raw and exposing it to the light of day for the first time. And it wasn't about to go hide in the closet like a good fetish any longer. So, she did a little exploring on the Internet and found a leather club in the closest thing to a big city around her, and decided to pay it a visit. If she didn't like it, she never had to return, but all of the people chatting on line about it on various boards seemed to think it was a great place.

She was smart about it – telling a close friend of hers enough about where she was going that her friend nodded and put her hand up, not wanting to hear more. Stella made her put the name and telephone number of the place in an envelope that she'd only open if, for some reason, Faith didn't return.

Stella's casual attitude about Faith not returning set Faith on edge. No one knew about what had happened to her while she was in Columbia. No one. It was not something she wanted bantered about amongst her friends, and as well as she knew them, she knew that they wouldn't be able to resist gabbing about it to each other. Everyone in her small circle of friends knew everyone else, and it was, as far as Faith was concerned, an inevitability that they would chat amongst themselves about each other.

She arranged to call Stella just before she went into the place, and decided that an hour and half there would be long enough for a first time to decide whether or not she liked the atmosphere and would ever go back to the place

again. So the first thing she had to remember to do when she got out of the club, was call Stella, or Stella would call the police.

It was a complete success. The place looked like a hole in the wall, but was quite roomy inside. Everyone was very nice, but no men approached her or tried to grope her or, worse than that, discipline her – not that she would have let them. This was not his compound in Columbia where she had to take whatever someone dished out. She could walk away at any time.

But she didn't. She watched some impromptu spankings of slaves by masters, then there was somewhat of a show of one particular slave being bent over a horse and caned. Her master offered the anyone in the audience the chance to discipline her – although not with the cane because the use of that particular implement took a certain amount of training, which did make Faith a little uncomfortable for the slave, and there were several men who took her master up on the offer.

She wondered if her screams sounded like those of the girl onstage, surprised that it didn't bother her to hear another woman's cries of real pain. It didn't. She found herself sympathizing, and putting herself in the girl's place to a certain extent. What was being done to her made Faith hotter than she wanted to admit, and it was that realization that sent her out of the club before the hour and a half was up.

As she was walking out towards her car, she called Stella and let her know that she was okay, and was on her way home. The other woman sounded extremely relieved to hear it.

Just as she got to her car, though, someone stepped towards her, out of the shadows. She would have recognized that voice anywhere. "Why'd you send back the money?"

Faith froze, but her body creamed instantly, staining her panties. It took her a moment, but she collected herself and turned towards him. He looked as gorgeous as ever. Even more so in jeans and a tight fitting Army green t-shirt. Not so much the high powered drug lord right now, he more resembled an American blue collar worker on a bender. "Because I didn't want your blood money."

He nodded, drinking her in with his eyes. He would probably never love any woman. But he had come closer with her than any other woman he'd ever met. He wanted her back, and he got what he wanted, one way or the other. "What about me?"

"I certainly don't want you. I had hoped never to see you again," she replied with a snappy ease she didn't feel.

Cord took a step closer, his hands wide at his sides to show her he meant no harm, although she shied away anyway. "You mean that if I cupped you right now, you wouldn't be wet?"

Her strangled cry was his answer, and he smiled smugly. "I thought so." He looked past her at the club as she hurriedly got into her car. Frowning, he asked, "What were you doing there?"

"None of your business. Go away." She closed the door and roared away, but her nerve endings were thrumming at his nearness at the same time her mind was calling her a thousand kinds of a fool for having the slightest physical interest in him. He'd kidnapped her. He'd abused her. He'd dominated and punished and controlled her. What was she doing rhapsodizing about him, and wondering – hoping – if he'd bother to follow her?

When she pulled up at her house, he was already there, standing next to some low slung sports car that probably had an Italian name. She didn't know from cars. Ignoring him entirely, she walked up to the back door, key already in hand, and slipped it into the lock. He was standing right

behind her as she opened the door, and followed her in without asking.

Somehow, Faith wasn't surprised. It would have gone against his personality to have asked for anything. She dumped her purse and her keys on the heart shaped table just inside the door, where they always landed, and turned to confront him with her hands on her hips. "What do you think you're doing?"

He didn't miss a beat and didn't stop walking towards her. "Coming to claim what's mine." He lifted her off her feet and carried her in the direction of the hall, figuring it was probably what led to her bedroom, and he was right. He put her down on the bed and had her stripped in record time, grabbing her face between his cupped palms. "Did you let anyone in there punish you?" he asked in a low growl.

Faith swallowed. "No."

"Damn good thing," he answered on a long breath, leaning back up from her to snake his thick leather belt out of his pants. "If you had, this would have been much harder for you."

Naked, she turned onto her stomach as the belt whistled through the air, sighing contentedly until the moment it impacted her upturned bottom.

The End

