



FB FREYA'S BOWER PRESENTS

Digressions
Into Erotica

PHAEDRA TORRES

Digressions Into Erotica

by

Phaedra Torres



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Culver City, CA

Digressions Into Erotica

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it would never have occurred to me to do this.*

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The Four O'Clock Set

Stiletto is a dancer, stuck with the early afternoon shift. She makes the best of it, but is it really worth it?

Dead stares through acrid haze—I hate this place in the afternoon; clinking, sweat-soaked long necks, gin-soaked businessmen leaning on the rail or laying back in their chairs, legs spread like they have something to offer.

Gentlemen, I give you Stiletto!

I burst through the curtain and strut to center stage, daring them to look at me. Cupping the pole between cool palms, I sway my hips in time with the base line that pounds the air and let my gaze circle the room. Searching faces, selecting my prey.

Only a few are focused—eyes traveling up and down my body as I slither around the pole. There you are. I see you with your wad of bills and poorly veiled anticipation all but dribbling down your chin. Let me just slide the straps of my bra down my shoulders, holding my arms close to my body while I finger the clasp between my breasts.

I pause, asking with my eyes, *'shall I let it fall?'* I press in and up, so that when the hook is released, my nipples spring into liberation.

See how the pole fits between my glittery tits? Watch me now, when I slide down to the floor. I'll squat, knees bent and thrown wide, and *bounce, bounce, bounce*, slap my ass against the stage.

Is that you underneath me? Feel my skin smacking against your soft belly? Your six pack? Your jutting hipbones? Is your cock straining to pummel me? *Oh yes, I can feel it*, and I close my eyes.

Shall I throw my head back and let my hair trail up my vinyl coated calves? Let your eyes follow my thigh; let your mind wander over the shimmer of my boots, glistening red with oil and sweat.

Here. I'll bend back, place my shoulders on the floor, arch my belly into the air, grasp the six-inch spikes of my heels like handle bars and grind my clit against the cold steel.

I'll sit up then, and dare you to throw your money on the stage so I can belly crawl your way, slinking like a panther. I gather the wadded bills in my teeth, grasp them between my fingers and run them down my body. Your gaze is glued to my fingers as they delve into that little sequined triangle of fabric—a flimsy barrier between you and paradise.

Watch my hand linger there, fingers fluttering over what surely must be wet just from looking at you. You're all man, and I'm all shudders and sighs at the thought of what you would do, what you could do, if only you could reach out and lay your hands on me, plant your lips against my flesh.

But not today, not right now. Right now, as the music fades, I'll stand with pouting lips and apologetic eyes, and back slowly away until I disappear behind the heavy curtains.

Forty bucks. I hate this place in the afternoon.

Sleep Well, My Love

Do you ever wonder just how well you know the person sleeping next to you? It's not always sex that makes a scene erotic.

It's cold, my steel—though I caress it lovingly, cup it to my cheek. While holding it so, I can hear the succulent screams longing for release, and I savor them with eyes closed. I know every nick, every crevice, each millimeter of the paper-thin edge. The handle has worn to fit my fingers and no others. This is my blade. This is my mighty dagger. And you will know it, too—more intimately than me, and I am envious of you.

I'll lay its full coolness against your chest and watch the ebb and flow of each breath; rise, fall, rise...fall. So peaceful, so quiet, so precious you are to me. I'll trace the soft underside of your jaw with my blade's exquisitely pointed tip. As you turn away, I am compelled to connect the dots from freckle to freckle on your shoulder—but lightly—just a spider's web bejeweled with crimson dew. I am overwhelmed with visions of the luscious parting of your skin in the singing wake of my beloved razor's edge.

But tonight is not for you, lover. Tonight, I will lay my steel aside and watch you for a while, let the heat of your body soothe my pains, quiet my visions, and carry me to join your slumber. There will be other nights. Sleep well, my love.

Crime of Passion

A hasty trip to a quiet hall at a party can be murder.

Look at you, all sleek and cool. Your image slices through the crowd—the only crisp visage in the blur of cocktail-soaked minglers.

I can't help but gravitate toward you—your pointed gaze pulls me in. I step forward. You step back, urge me to follow without saying a word, and I tremble when you slip into the shadowed hall.

So awestruck am I that I glide after you, craving your darkness.

Your hand wraps around my throat and snatches me away from the safety of the crowd.

We swivel, and I am back against the wall, my knees on your hips, one of your hands cupping my ass. You devour me, leaning in to pin me with your weight.

Your other hand drops from my throat and skitters down my flank. Your forearm hooks beneath my knee and you hoist me higher. Rigid fingers delve between my thighs, which your searing hips have forced wide.

Ah! I cry out as your fingers drive into my clenching pussy, while your thumb surrounds my clit in tiny, agonizing circles. Your ministrations release a cloud of pheromones, and my nostrils flair to savor our mingled scents. You inhale deeply and your knees buckle, forcing a hiss from between your clenched teeth.

I feel the heat long before you stab me and plunge again and again. I'm gasping and screaming and crying out for mercy—*please! Oh, please!* There is no mercy in you. You power into me, every thrust raking textured wallpaper across my spine.

My fingers fumble through your hair, down the back of your neck, and clutch at your collar, struggling for purchase, fighting a losing battle.

We slip down the wall, tangled together, shoving, lurching into one another; our sole focus the point of connection. We are both sticky and slick, and each thrust comes with a squelch and a smack.

My neck is bent, chin tight to my chest, hips thrust into the air. We grunt like the carnal creatures we are, and hold our bodies taught and still, save for our pelvises; grinding against each other, pulling apart with harmonized groans, drawing together with deliberate precision. *Oh! Oh, just... right... there...*

My whimpers quicken, sharpen, deepen, as if each breath is coming from further down inside me, gathering strength, rolling up my core and filling the back of my throat to overflowing. They boil out of me. My lips open wide and *Ooooooh!* I howl as though the moon is hanging ripe above our heads.

One last gasp—for all I'm worth; I shudder against you and sag to the tiles.

You straighten and stand above me. Smiling triumphantly, you leave me to my last tremors and sighs.

You slip into the night and I am soaked, helpless, weak, and holding on for dear life. You slay me.

Summer Swelter

If you can't beat the heat, match it.

Summer swelter and I sprawl across perspiration soaked sheets, awaiting the mass of angry clouds on the northern horizon. Weak puffs of ozone-laced breezes filter through the window, and I peel my body from the bedding, angle my sticky flesh in their direction, and will the air to stir.

I slide my gaze to the chaos gathering against a patch of creamsicle sky. My mind wanders idly through images of you, each as drenched in sensation as I am drenched in sweat. Distant crackles of lightning spark a silent movie in my mind. My eyes drift shut. I trail my fingers lightly across my collarbone. *You kissed me there, coaxing sweet shimmers up my throat to escape my lips.*

The rolling thunder is remote and still whisper quiet—someone coughing politely behind a raised fist; *or the soft sounds from the back of your throat when the pleasure became unbearable.* I feel your keening now as jolts, and my muscles jump with pangs of liquid heat, distinct from the heavy smolder in the air.

Here at last, the wind picks up, sighs through the screen, draws with it the moisture from the room. At once I can breathe again, cool and deep. *I see you suckling greedily at my breast, grasping my nipple between your teeth, flicking the captured flesh with the tip of your tongue—and as I held your head to me, my chest swelled to match your hunger.* My fingers flutter down to clutch at my breast and knead frantically. But my hand does you no justice.

I can almost see the steam rising from my body. The inches of skin on skin between my arm and torso begin to sizzle, and I am forced to pull my hand away. I drop my forearm across my damp brow and cover my eyes. *I see your tongue trailing down my belly, your intense gaze capturing my own.* My abdomen quivers with the memory.

You grasped the button of my jeans between your teeth and released it with a flick of your head. My breath escaped me.

Your fingers curled around the waistband. Thumbs hooked in the belt loops, and you tugged slowly at the denim. Your hot breath covered the tender skin beneath. A wry smile lit your eyes, and you kissed me, full and wet, tongue splayed against my clitoris. Flames shot through my belly, contracting my muscles, yanking my shoulders from the bed. My legs flex and extend, shifting restlessly, wanting you.

My hands have now fallen to the bed, clutching fists full of soggy sheets. *You touched me, tentatively at first, just the pad of your thumb, your other arm slung beneath my hips, holding me in position. You lowered your mouth to me, following your thumb, tongue and fingers—seeking, invading, conquering. Agonizingly tender.* My breath comes in hitches and gasps. My eyes flash open. I marvel over the effect a mere memory can have on the here and now.

I focus on the boiling clouds that are now just above, reminiscent of writhing bodies beneath layers of gauze, and my eyes flutter shut once again. *You loomed above me and teased my throat with your lips until I could no longer catch my breath. You dropped*

your head, watching your body lower to mine. I watched as well, and raised my hips to meet you, my legs circling your waist and hooking in the sway of your back.

Toying with me, or yourself, you dabbed at me, watching the head of your erection disappear beneath the wisps of pubic hair, only to draw it back and watch it descend again. A growl tore through my clenched teeth, and I pulled you down with all of my might. You chuckled softly and with a thrust of your hips, you were inside me. Mutual sighs of relief hissed between us, accompanied by the sharp slap of our bellies colliding.

Full force, it hits me. My body rises off the bed, and everything inside me gathers, coils and surges from every pore, almost painfully, until I am hollow and weightless.

I sink into the sheets, roll onto my side and allow the storm's clean air and white noise to lull me to sleep.

Worship

The gift for the man who has everything.

Sit upon your throne, and I'll kneel between your knees. Timidly, I'll turn my big green eyes up to you, moisten my lips with the very tip of my tongue, and beg you silently for permission to proceed: 'May I? Please?' as my body shudders with desire for you.

You may rest your head, lean it back against the velvet cushions, drape your arms along the padded rails and close your eyes.

I'll release the sash on your fine silk robe...there, that's better. If you'll allow me just a moment, I'll gaze upon you in all of your glory, drink it in and save this vision for later, when I will use it upon myself. My mouth is watering at the sight of you. I want to touch you, just graze my fingernail across the very tip—but I won't—not just yet.

Instead, I'll slip my palms from your knees, up your thighs and gently part your legs so that I may lean in to you. I can already taste you on my lips. It takes all I have not to devour you in a frenzied rush, but this moment is to savor, and I promise, I will pace myself. Your shaft is not quite solid. I have not yet earned it, but the pearl of moisture sparkling on the tip beckons me, and with hot breath I'll advance upon you, inhale you into my mouth, and roll your swollen head across my tongue.

Now, I must use my hands, if only to hold myself at bay, and I grasp the base of your rod with one hand, cup your sack with the other. I can't hold back. My body is overtaken with the sweetness of it all, and I gently sway my hips back and forth. If you were to touch me at this moment—just to cup your palm around the swell of my bottom—my legs would dissolve beneath me.

However, this moment is for you, so leave your hands where they lie, and I'll begin to run my tongue up and down your shaft in lazy circles. I can't keep my lips from wrapping around it. I shimmy my head to jam you inside my mouth, until I've taken in every millimeter. I swallow, and swallow again, creating a vacuum chamber. My tongue never stops slathering you while I'm holding you gently between my teeth. I release you and blow cold air across your slick, tender skin.

I grasp you in my fist, and follow my mouth, slide my hand around and up and down, and lick and suck and nip. A moan rumbles from deep within me, and when I come up for air, my breath *hisses* between my teeth.

I flip my hair away from my face. Will you hold it back for me? Will you close your eyes or watch me? Watch me, please. I promise I'll hold your gaze—mine liquid, pleading, begging for praise—is this good? Does this please you?

I can feel your buttocks clenching. You rise in your seat and squeeze your eyelids shut...I could do this forever.

A sound escapes your lips. I sway my hips, pump my head faster, and you moan again and clutch my hair between your fingers, crush my face into your belly while your muscles jerk over and over. You thrust your cock into my mouth, bruise the back of my

throat with your powerful orgasm. My body quakes. The sheer joy of bringing you over shatters me.

If you'll allow me, I'll collapse for a moment to catch my breath. I'll rest my cheek against your thigh and watch the aftershocks twitching through you.

I want more...but this isn't about me, so rest your hand on my head as my signal to leave, and I'll rise, slowly back away, and disappear into the shadows.

Life's a Beach

Being a single mother is no day at the beach. Sandy finds an unexpected treasure on her trip to the shore.

My bare thighs peeled from the hot, sticky car seat, and my children tumbled out the passenger door. Clutched in their sweaty hands were pails stuffed with shovels, rakes, goggles, floaties, and nose plugs. A day at the beach: *what a concept*. I checked the contents of my bag, making sure I had everything a mother would possibly need in any given scenario—which, as it turned out, boiled down to fluorescent bandages, sunscreen, juice boxes, and peanut butter crackers. Fine.

Now I only needed Mommy's bag. This one contained the latest wisecracking female detective novel, sunscreen that didn't smell like bubblegum, a large blanket, and a few icy cold beers tucked into a miniature soft-sided cooler. Scoff if you will, but Mommy needed a break. And there wasn't nearly enough alcohol in those three cans of brew to numb my super-refined Mommy senses; adrenaline can do wonders for a buzz.

I slung both bags over my shoulder, grabbed my boom box and bumped the car door shut with my hip. I could see the kids running headlong at the water, and prayed they already heard my voice in their heads screaming, *Stop!*

I chuckled when both screeched to a cartoonish halt at the water's edge and peered over their shoulders, willing me to *Hurry up, Mom!* Good boys. I'll be there when I get there.

I stumbled through the sand, trying to look languid and effortless like they do in the commercials. I saw a few heads turn my way. It's fun to pretend they're noticing me—for maybe a second.

My boys dumped a good deal of their belongings in a heap at the foot of the Life Guard...er...super-tall chair thingy. Not exactly the spot I would have chosen, but it was hot, and my back already hurt from leaning to the side to counterbalance the thousand pounds of beach paraphernalia. So I dumped my burdens in an equally unceremonious heap and began the preparation stage of relaxation.

As I snapped my blanket in the breeze and let it fall to the sand, my attention wandered toward the splintery, whitewashed ladder to my immediate left. My gaze hit the top of the ladder and kept going, *and oh, my goodness*. Some very tanned toes hung over the edge of the platform. Above those sprawled miles of very tanned shins, which led to knees that were resting so far apart I could see right up the leg of the baggy red swim shorts. Oh!

It was suddenly very loud inside my head, what with the blood rushing to my face and all, and I realized my attention had been fixed for an unnecessarily long time. I realized there was an entire person attached to 'that very spot', and my gaze snapped to a very tanned face and into very green eyes, which were looking directly at me. There was a bemused smile beneath. It made me feel 'oogie', as my eight-year-old would say.

In an attempt to save a tiny bit of dignity, I busied myself preparing my little oasis, wishing it wouldn't be obvious if I were to pack up my stuff and lug it to another location

far, far away. But it really would, so I grabbed my book, spread out on the blanket, and turned my music on, nice and low. My gaze flicked over the top of the book every so often, to see my boys obediently staying in the shallows, splashing and giggling and running. I smiled to myself. What good boys—and what a nice early bedtime it will be tonight!

The sun was so brilliant that for a moment I closed my eyes. Okay, it ended up being for a couple of moments. And while I was soaking the sun through my eyelids, a shadow loomed over me. Expecting it to be a passing fellow beach goer, I didn't pay the shadow or the shooshing noise of the approaching footsteps much attention, aside from wishing the shadow's owner would get the heck out of my sun. But the footsteps stopped right next to me, and the shadow loomed closer.

I cracked open my left eye and squinted attractively at the offending menace. Oh. Directly in front of my face was a very tanned knee. And, again, from my angle, I could see right up the baggy red swim shorts. Oh, my. Again my gaze snapped to the face, and the very green eyes, and that damned bemused smile. What's so funny? The fact that my eyes are the size of saucers? Or is it my flaming red cheeks that bear a startling resemblance to those baggy red swim shorts?

"Sandy, right?" the bemused smile said.

Wait. What?

"Do I know you?" I asked. I casually scrambled into an upright position, all the while averting my gaze from the 'spot'.

He angled his bottom so that it landed on my blanket in front of me. A raised eyebrow capped one green eye. "I'm Seth. Sheryl's brother? You know, from work?"

I needed one of those icy cold beers. I rummaged around in the little cooler and pulled one out. I held it to my forehead for a second. That did it.

"Hey! You're Seth! Sheryl-from-work's brother! I know you!" *Because I'm smooth, that's why. Shut up.*

The bemused smile turned into a chuckle, and he nodded his head in agreement. Yes, he was in fact Sheryl-from-work's brother. And I had certainly noticed him before, but at the time, he'd had more clothes on, and was just Sheryl-from-work's brother—you know what I mean.

"Yeah. So, how's it going?"

Oh, good, small talk. What better way to make an uncomfortable situation unbearably mortifying?

"Oh, you know. The usual—neglect the children, work a bunch, get paid very little for my troubles and, um, go to the beach..." Best to just trail off before you swallow your tongue from all the *smooth* rolling off, I always say.

"Huh. Yeah. I hear ya. Those your kids?" He indicated with his head, since his arms were too busy being draped over his knees.

"Yup. Well, two of them are mine. The two that look like me." He laughed again and shook his head.

"You're kinda nuts, you know that?" Pfft! Kinda. Before I could dazzle him with any more brilliant conversation, he asked the most peculiar question. "So, did Sheryl talk to you?"

"Seth. Sheryl talks to me every day. We sit right next to each other."

He shook his head again. "No, I mean, about me."

Huh?

“Huh?” I felt the need to remove my sunglasses so he could see that my eyes were clear, perhaps dismiss the idea that I was in a drug-induced haze. Yes, I realized this might show him how clearly borderline I was, but I preferred him to think I was slightly erratic, rather than drugged up at the beach with my kids.

So, he was chuckling at me again, but looking right at my face—right into my eyes, actually. And he looked sort of...disturbed, himself. “So, I’ve been thinking...I mean, I was wondering—do you want to do something, sometime?”

Did that just happen? Let’s rewind. Yadda, yadda, thinking...yadda, yadda, do something? Okay, I’m a divorced mother of two bouncing boys, and you’re a...well...a very tanned individual. And I’ve already seen your package—twice.

“Sure.” Hey! Had I just said that? “That’d be nice.” Wow! I was really thinking on the fly. Smooth. Yup. That’s me.

Seth seemed to be examining his fingernails really closely all of a sudden. Alarms went off in my head.

“Well, um...how soon can you get a babysitter?” He mumbled into his cuticles.

“How soon do I need one?” I have to admit, it had been a long time for me. Since the divorce. I hadn’t wanted to deal with anything else, and I hadn’t wanted my kids to either.

“Tonight? Say, sevenish?” He said the last part as he chewed on his nail and scanned the beach with Life Guard eyes.

“Okay, yeah! So...okay.” I am *too* smooth. Everything in me wanted to jump up, grab a boy under each arm and squeal the tires on my way out of the parking lot, just to make it seven sooner.

“Cool.” He pulled out his cell phone. “What’s your number?” I rattled it off, all the while amazed that he was actually saving it in his phone. “Okay, I gotta get back up there. Keep the beaches safe and stuff...”

He sniggered. I giggled like a schoolgirl. I settled back down on my blanket and didn’t read my book, though I was holding it in front of my face thinking, *concentrate, darn it! Okay, she’s creeping into the building, even though her big, strong, handsome detective ‘just friend’ warned her against it...* But it was no use. I just couldn’t focus.

I won’t bore you with the details of my frantic afternoon trying to decide if I should buy something new to wear, or if that would be too ‘obvious’. I’ve embarrassed myself enough. Let’s skip ahead to the good part. And believe me, it’s good. Oh, and just in case you’re wondering, I opted for the casual look—jeans and a cashmere sweater my ex-mother-in-law bought me for Christmas just after the separation. *Thanks, Janet. Knew it’d come in handy some day.*

Blah, blah, blah, the boys got some quality time with Grandma. Overnight.

I’m not saying I was planning on anything, but I was open to possibilities. Go ahead. Call me a floozy. It had been way too long for me to care about the first date rule. I didn’t intend on throwing myself at him, but if he offered, I sure as hell wasn’t going to refuse.

He picked me up at seven-ish—fully clothed this time, darn it. I can’t think of words delicious enough to describe how his butt looked in his jeans when he bent to move some books off the passenger seat of his car. Score one for the denim workers of the world. Oh, and points for the quick thinking lady who decided to wear jeans for her date. *Yikes! I was on a date!*

We had a surprisingly relaxed dinner at my new all-time-favorite restaurant, a little hole-in-the-wall, family-owned Mexican joint. Maybe it was the Margaritas as big as my

head, but I was really mellow and okay with everything. And it was nice to talk to an adult about adult things. Not XXX adult things, but just things: life, plans, ambitions—stuff like that.

The evening progressed swimmingly, and before we knew it, we'd been sitting in the cracked red leatherette booth for three hours. Our knees touched under the table, and the heat radiating off of him just about melted me into a puddle of pheromones. It was chemistry, pure and simple. I was all tingly and breathing extra deep, because the air felt cold in my nostrils, but soft and warm in my lungs.

Which is why, when we scrapped the movie idea and opted for my house, we were holding hands like high-school sweethearts and smiling shyly at each other.

There was a brief awkward moment when we entered my house—foreign body on the premises and all that. But when I turned to offer him something to drink, he captured my face in his hands and kissed me. The floodgates crashed open.

Suddenly, we couldn't get close enough to each other. We wrestled to get as much of our bodies touching as possible. I couldn't stand up anymore because someone had unlocked my knees, and they trembled and wavered beneath me. I raised one leg and wrapped it around his hip to steady myself and draw him closer still.

His hand cupped the curve of my bottom, and shivers radiated through my body. Gone were the cynic and the comedienne. I was all kinds of romance novel heroine: all heaving bosoms and 'take me now or lose me forever'. He hooked my other knee over his arm and scooped me up, and my legs snaked around his hips and clasped at the ankles.

"Which...way..." he gasped at me. I could only fling my arm in the general direction of my bedroom.

I latched my lips onto his throat and nibbled, tasted and sucked as if I hadn't eaten in days. *This is good!* I kept saying to myself.

We bounced off the walls a few times on the way, but we were oblivious. When we hit my bed, we hit it hard. I have a good, firm mattress, and the springs were just waiting for their chance to shine.

He ripped at my jeans, fumbling with impatient hands. I helped him a bit, but I was clawing at his clothing too, so I was of little use. I didn't want him to be so far away from me, at my feet and tugging at the legs of my pants. He seemed to recognize this need in me because, just as I thought it, he leaned forward and set his mouth on my belly.

Oh, my goodness. Butterflies, times a thousand, fluttered all through me.

I rose from the bed and curled my middle around his head, while my jeans became mere memories. His clothes turned into a pile of fabric on the floor, and we pressed against each other, reveled in every possible inch of skin touching skin. He slithered slowly down my stomach, touching, kissing, squeezing, nuzzling.

A thousand thoughts rushed through my mind. My bikini area! Had I remembered? I did a speed-run through my shaving routine and relaxed, wrapped my legs around his shoulders. The agonizing sweetness chilled my extremities and burned my core.

This may sound crazy, but my first orgasm snuck right up on me. One second I was thinking about what a shame it was that I couldn't go brag about this at work, and the next minute, I was gasping for breath and holding on for dear life. To my amazement, I was incredibly vocal.

Seth just smiled, and I laughed and floated back down to earth, my body relaxing back onto the mattress. The smell of latex hit me and I laughed even harder. This guy

thought of everything! Which was a good thing, since any hopes of rational thinking on my part had long since deserted me. He pulled my bottom to the edge of the bed, and I felt the very tip of his shaft prodding my lower abdomen.

I wanted to take him between my hands, and I did, but he gently brushed my fingers away as his mouth found my collarbone. The second his body slid up and over me, my legs curled around him so that my knees were resting on my shoulders, and I clamped his torso between my feet.

He watched me intensely, as if he didn't want to miss a single expression on my face or the tremors that vibrated through me. He eased himself into me, and I felt every muscle in my body contracting to hold him there.

Oh my goodness! It had been so long. My eyes rolled back and fluttered shut. The very act of drawing a breath became exquisite, swelling my chest with greedy draughts.

We eased into our liquid rhythm. Our pace slowed, and every second of friction was savored to its fullest. Our tongues were as if coated in honey; he tasted so sweet. Delicious mewling escaped my center and bubbled out of me, pitiable, needy whines and gasps for breath.

Had it been this good with the ex? In the beginning, maybe. A wave of vulnerability overtook me, and tears began streaming down my temples into my hair.

He cupped his hand around my face and brushed at the dampness. "Sshh...it's okay."

His tenderness soothed my frazzled thoughts, and I felt another orgasm rising from somewhere far, far away. His pace quickened, and he held me with all his strength while I bucked and convulsed beneath him, crying out, speaking in tongue. It was astounding, it was mind blowing, and it took almost everything out of me. He kissed me then, deep and demanding, and he inhaled every last ounce of energy from my body, even as he infused me with his own.

I don't have many recollections of the hours that followed, save for snippets of sensation that overtook me during the most mundane of tasks for days after. One of my boys would invariably catch me standing at the sink, wiping the table or sitting on the couch with a soft, goofy smile and glazed eyes. They don't get it. And I don't explain it. And when the phone rings and Mommy suddenly has to take the call in the other room, they keep on keepin' on, without a second thought about it. Until someone hits someone, or sits too close, or is *looking at meeeeeee*...

Good boys. I'll be there when I get there.

Amends

Every marriage has its scuffles and verbal sparring. It's how one handles them that makes a difference.

I creep down the hall, listening to the clicking and tapping of you, hard at work. I've been trying to be quiet all morning—staying out of your way so you can get done what needs doing. I was being childish this morning. Three or four cups of coffee later, I'm willing to admit that. I'm willing to make amends.

I slip through the barely open door and see you pause, listening. I hold my breath until you continue with what you were doing, and slink up behind you to place my hands on your shoulders. In your reflection in the monitor, I can see the gleam in your eyes as you purposely ignore my advances. You knew I was coming the whole time. Bet you didn't know I'd be naked, though.

I lean into you, "bookending" your head with my breasts, and moan softly before I whisper in your ear. *I'm sorry, babe. You were right—I was being stubborn. Forgive me?*

You manage somehow to keep a stern face and, with the tiniest shake of your head, let me know that it's going to take waaaaaaay more than that. I smile and whisper. *I love a challenge.*

I pull your chair back, circle around, and swing my leg over to straddle your lap. You allow me just close enough for your mustache to tickle my upper lip, then turn your head from me. Still not good enough, hmmm?

I press in anyway, and kiss your neck just above the collar. I lay a trail along the line of your throat until I reach the top button of your shirt. As I unbutton, I nuzzle exposed flesh, nipping on occasion, tweaking and flicking at your nipples on my way down.

I slide from your lap, down your shins, and wedge myself between your legs. Under your desk, I grasp your thighs and pull you closer. I hear your fingers back at the keyboard, and chuckle at your tenacity. You enjoy a challenge just as much as I. It's one of the reasons I love you so.

I can tell my actions are having an effect on you, dear man. I see you twitch, shift, and strain against the confines of your trousers. I focus on the object of my desire, and reach out to trace its outline against the weave of the fabric. I run my fingernails along the length, and it grows more rigid, and delightfully large.

Well, that settles it. I simply must have you. I fumble with the various fastenings of your pants and grasp frantically, greedy to have it in my hands and in my mouth. After a bit of wrestling and an apology for being so rough—along with the promise of no extra charge—*wink*—it springs free and proud.

Oh, and *should* be proud, standing at attention like the brave soldier. I salute him smartly and giggle.

You can't resist, and lean over to take a peek at my activities. The combination of your unyielding expression and twinkling eyes almost has me rolling on the floor with

glee, but I manage to maintain my composure and give you the most innocent look I can muster: big green eyes with HUGE question marks, and an angelic visage.

Will you take the bait? Will I win? I hope you stop glaring at me soon, so I can go back to playing happily in my little wonderland beneath your desk.

You raise an eyebrow, and I nearly wet myself. I *do* shudder visibly. Smug that you've won this battle, you return to your work.

Ah, but you haven't won the war, as they say, and I *could* be sandbagging, just to allow you enough confidence to bring you down hard. The bigger they are, the harder they fall, and all that.

Left to my own devices, I cock my head (no pun intended), scrutinize your seething python and giggle because I referred to it so. I contemplate what I should do first, and hum happily to myself, noting the way your prick is so terribly extended.

A shiver runs through me, from my head to my curling toes. I reach down and absently stroke my labia, feel my silky wetness, rub it between thumb and forefinger. At the same time, I notice how much your penis reminds me of one of those punching clowns. You know the ones—inflated, weighted, rounded at the bottom so you can punch them in the face and they just swing down and back up.

I snigger and extend a finger, prodding it. Sure enough, it sways and springs back into position, swinging like a metronome before it settles against your belly.

The purple head beckons me, and I can feel the saliva gathering in the corners of my mouth. Waste not, want not, I always say. No sense letting all that good lubrication slide uselessly down my throat.

No cursory licks, no stroking, no hands. Just a wide, wet kiss on the head, and I slurp it right into my mouth. Using my lips like a mountain climber's hands, I flex, grip, and pull while sucking vigorously, over and over until my nose meets your sable curls. Mmmmm...I taste your musk, spiced with sweat from the day's work.

I rest there for a moment and experiment with my tongue, pull back slowly and inhale deeply through my nose. As I roll your glans on my tongue, and ponder whether I should devour you or savor you, you decide for me, placing your hand on my head and rolling back your chair.

Your cock pops out of my mouth with a wet slurpy noise, and I bite my lower lip in anticipation of the tongue-lashing (again, no pun intended) I'm about to receive. I turn my downcast gaze up to you and look as adorable as possible.

You're contemplating me, that's for sure. But your smoldering eyes and sensual smile melt me where I sit.

"Come here, you," you purr, your hand out to me. I take it and rise to my feet. My legs are like rubber bands, they're trembling so. You pull me onto your lap and kiss my temple. "What am I going to do with you, dear girl? Hmmmm?"

I smile and shrug. "Anything you want?"

You growl and pull my legs around you. I lock my fingers behind your neck and my ankles at the back of your chair. You reach down between us and slide a finger inside me. I tremble and clench around it, and an unexpected moan rumbles the back of my throat. I lean back as far as I'm able without pulling too badly on your neck. Your finger slips out, and you angle your cock into me. I lean forward and down, feeling it sink, slowly and splendidly to the hilt. With a finesse gleaned from years of familiarity, my vagina swallows your full length, hungrily clutching to your girth. A perfect fit.

There's something about the sensation of wet pubic hair against sensitive skin—a damp, cold, springy cushion between my heat and yours. I grind my hips into your belly, feel the arms of the chair cutting into the undersides of my knees. I grip harder with my legs, and sway and rock, eyes closed, your arms wrapped around my hips, and hands cupping my ass.

The chair creaks in time to our rocking and fumbling.

"I'm afraid, my darling," you manage between gasps, "that this will have to be short and sweet."

I don't bother responding. I'm too busy savoring our coupling. I feel you trembling and angling your thrusts, with each nearly withdrawing completely. The head of your cock hits the upper wall of my vagina and rides against it, all the way to my belly button.

Your body tenses, and your buttocks clench and rise from the seat. You cram yourself into me, jerking your hips, straining toward the finale. I'm quaking as well, my thrusts violent and intense.

We make such a wonderful mess together, you and I. So deliciously squishy. I bounce and smile, and giggle and sigh, and ride you until I can't stand the goodness of it any longer and I have to let some of it go. It starts as keens, the 'E' sound over and over.

You, in my ear—a man never sounds as vulnerable as when he climaxes. The twang of power shoots through me and sweetens the deal. We clutch each other, your head nestled between my breasts and beneath my chin.

"So?" I gasp as I struggle to regain my breath. "Forgive me?"

You huff a couple times, and then lean back and push me off your lap with a grin. "I'll think about it." You smack my ass and roll your chair back up to your desk and wiggle the mouse to restart your session.

"I'm off to the shower, then." I hug you from behind and kiss the top of your head.

Just past the doorway, I stop and wait for you to join me.

Because I win. That's why.

What Then?

Meeting on the Internet, getting to know each other, exchanging pictures, enjoying each other's company? What happens after that?

So, we meet in a bar, you and me. After all this time talking about it. That's the easy part. And we'll maybe order a pitcher and find a table in the back...maybe a booth. I'll be blushing like crazy and looking at my hands a lot. My fingers will be sliding lightly up and down my beer glass and around the rim, leaving little trails in the condensation. If I have a bottle, I'll peel the labels off and leave little wads of paper in piles on the table. Waitresses *love* that, you know.

The whole time, we'll talk about your trip and the area and what you like, and what I'll show you and all the other fillers. I'll respond, laugh, and make you laugh, too. But only with a tiny part of my mind will I be in the "now" of the moment. The rest will be focused on my self-restraint. I'll try to keep from latching on to you.

I know you'll tell me to 'relax' a thousand times. And I'll smile and snicker a little at myself, and tell you I'm fine; I just can't believe you're right there in front of me. *And, I can't believe how much I want to touch you.*

Yes, I *will* be too chicken to say it out loud. But I'll be thinking it really hard. The question is, what am I going to do about it? Nothing. That's up to you. It's not that I'm passive. My decision has already been made. The rest is your call.

Maybe you can start by sliding your hand under the table to still my bouncing knee. That will probably be all the encouragement I'll need. The skin that you cover with your hand will sizzle, even through my jeans. The heat will radiate from your palm, up my thigh, and swell and linger, before rushing into my lungs and forcing itself out as a gasp. My eyes will roll closed for a second. Will you be expecting that reaction? I wonder what you'll do?

That's up to you, too. But in my image, when I look at you again, maybe I'll put my hand on yours, or maybe we'll just get up and leave. Real quick. Yes. In fact, let's hurry. You drive. I don't care where we go.

Oh, wait. This is my town, isn't it? Well, take me to your hotel room. Because that way, you'll be in your own territory, temporary as it may be.

What will we say to each other on the ride over? I don't think we'll talk much. The air in the cab of your truck will be too thick with anticipation and urgency. It's going to be awkward in the hallway and outside your door. Still no talking, just half smiles and shy glances as you slide the keycard and get the green light. But as soon as we step inside and the door closes behind us, I'll stretch my arms up around your neck and we'll kiss.

And that'll be it for us, I think. We'll be frantic.

Yes, let's be frantic. I don't need romantic eye gazing and heartbreakingly slow foreplay. We can do that later. I don't even care if we make it all the way into the room, or just end up on the floor outside the bathroom door. Let's just wrestle out of our jeans and connect as quickly as possible. I may even grab hold of you the second you spring

free of your zipper, and tell you to 'get over here', and lead you where I want you. Which is right here, inside me.

How many thrusts will it take? I know it won't take me long. I know I'll be thrusting back just as hard. I'll grit my teeth and grab your ass, and raise my hips to crash and grind against you. And I'll be on my way.

You can raise yourself up to your knees and angle my hips, and I'll arch my back and try not to buck you off. I'll be all tremors and thrashing, and gasps and cries, and I'll probably bite your neck when you lean over me.

After that, I may even be able to hold myself still, enough for you to get just the right friction in just the right places, and that'll put a hitch in your breath, and soft groans in the back of your throat. I like those. They jolt right through me.

Your body will be rigid, and tremble above me as you slam into me until you finally explode. That may even put me over the top again.

Then we can collapse on the carpet, and the tension will be gone, and we'll be able to laugh comfortably.

Speaking of comfort, let's move to the bed. Let's snuggle and watch a movie or something. I'll go easy on you. You'll have had a long drive. We could even sleep for a bit. That would be really nice.

If I can keep my hands off you long enough.

Hurts Syndrome

A foray into the world of BDSM. More of the mind than the body.

She trembles with excitement at the sound of boot heels striking the concrete outside her door. The latch disengages with a delicious click, and she quickly closes her eyes, rises and perches on the edge of her mattress, her heart slipping into overdrive as the footsteps draw near. Her nipples swell and harden. She feels Him looming closer, and a smile parts her lips.

“Three months tonight, pet.”

She grins all the wider and reaches for Him, clasps His hips and presses her cheek to His belly. He stands rigid for a moment, but then His body curves around her, and He bends to stroke and kiss her hair. “You are so precious to me, my little one. And you’ve done so well and come so very far.”

He stops to take her chin between thumb and forefinger, and tilts her face towards His. “You make me happy, and you make me proud—so very proud, pet. And with all your hard work and exemplary service to me, you have earned a reward.”

His hands move to frame her face. His thumbs brush lightly across her eyelids. “Do you remember, pet? Do you remember ‘Mariah’?”

The clock wouldn’t move fast enough, yet Mariah didn’t have time to complete what needed to be done. She had a huge pile of files on her desk, and several more in a drawer beside her, all of which required immediate attention. She just couldn’t seem to get to the point where she closed more files than she opened. There was constantly another phone call, another email, another V.P. standing over her, expecting her to drop whatever she was doing to deal with whatever he or she had on their mind at that moment. Whatever praise she received was hollow and short lived, and only led to higher expectations.

At home, life was no better. The clutter of someone shutting themselves off from the world—bags of garbage, dirty laundry, books, crusted food containers—were stacked and piled in front of the doors, and circled around the couch to leave only a narrow path from room to room. Distasteful, but Mariah found comfort in the disorder, in the way it made her house close in around her. Clutter offered no false encouragement.

Chores and hygiene were obligations Mariah could refuse. She *should* get the garbage into the can and out to the curb for pickup in the morning, and she *should* do at least one load of laundry so there would be something clean to wear tomorrow. She *should* shave her legs. She *should* get a haircut.

But she chose not to do these things. And therein lay the power—the power of ‘No’.

Huddled in her untidy cocoon one night, Mariah flipped through the channels, trying to find something she hadn’t already seen. She paused to light a cigarette and almost

dropped her lighter because of the noises coming from her television: a man's murmuring voice, followed by a sharp slap and a gasp of pain.

Awe-struck, Mariah's mouth fell open, and she leaned forward, attention riveted to the screen. A nude woman was secured in medieval-type stocks, her body pinned at the neck and wrists. A shirtless man circled her—murmuring questions, waiting for her breathless nod—then cracked her back with a cat-o-nine-tails. The woman cried out, yet strained towards him when he lightly caressed the welts growing on her bottom.

The camera zoomed in on his fingers, which slipped up and down the woman's exposed labia and paused to jiggle her clit. Mariah felt a stirring in her belly, and slid to the edge of the couch.

The man moved around in front, holding his dick in his hand. The woman turned eager eyes to him and nodded vigorously. He drove his cock down her throat, crushed her face against his pelvis and held her there—until Mariah was gasping for breath on behalf of the poor girl on the TV screen.

Muffled throaty groans and gurgles accompanied murmurs of encouragement and pleasure. The man pulled out of the woman, leaving a milky string of drool dangling from her gaping mouth. She whimpered and stretched her neck in an attempt to snare his cock with her tongue, her lips. He plunged into her again, this time pumping back and forth while pinching her nose shut. Her eyelids fluttered down, but he slapped the side of her head and demanded that she look at him. Her eyes flew open, and after that, she didn't even blink.

Yanking her head back by a fist full of hair, the man pulled out of her mouth, then circled back around, knelt, and shoved his face into the crack of her ass. He pulled back and spat, and a glistening blob of saliva slid between the crevices of her sex. Taking the whip from the floor, he rose and slid his dick into her anus, and pumped for all he was worth, cracking her again and again with the whip, as if he was riding a horse and urging it to go faster, faster!

Mariah leaned back against the cushions and slipped her hand inside her sweatpants. She was soaking wet, and her clit throbbed at the lightest touch. The man looked like he was ready to come, and Mariah circled her clit furiously to catch up. She pushed her free hand beneath the elastic waistband and crammed as many fingers as she could, twisted them in and thrust them back and forth. As the man on the screen grimaced and clenched his butt cheeks, Mariah cried out and came hard, hips off the couch, pumping against her hands.

The show ended, but Mariah couldn't let the moment go. She ran an online search for the term 'BDSM'. Thousands of sites popped up on the results screen. Intoxicated with the topic, she spent the rest of the evening, and on into the wee hours of morning, perusing as many sites as she could. She visited a free forum last.

An overwhelming need to experience what she'd seen gave her the courage to create an account. After entering her email address and selecting a password, she arrived at a new screen, wherein she answered a series of multiple-choice questions. When she clicked on the 'Submit' button, a new window welcomed her to the site as 'girl247.'

Mariah paused for a few deep breaths, and a shiver tickled her spine from her tailbone to the base of her skull.

In fine print beneath her screen name were disclaimers and instructions. She accepted the terms of use and went to her profile page. She decided against posting a

picture of herself, chose an avatar instead, and proceeded to a newbie pool. She had been instructed *not* to post, but to simply join the forum thread and wait.

While she waited, she admired her avatar. She'd picked a cartoon redhead with a full build and a black leather hood. Auburn locks spilled from the bottom of the hood, and curled around the neck and over the shoulder. The hands were bound behind the head, the knees bent and strapped tight, holding the body in a kneeling position.

Clicking around aimlessly, Mariah read the welcome thread:

You are known as girl. You will not speak until ordered to do so. You will refer to yourself as 'this one'. You have no access to the main site, nor will you until you have been chosen and given a name.

She sat for a while, and as the adrenaline ebbed from her body, decided it was time for bed. Just as she was about to close the window, a dialogue box popped up:

Professor Hand says: Your name is teacher's pet. Go to the Novice Room. Await my instructions.

Mariah's heart jumped to her throat. She returned to the main forum and saw that a new section had been unlocked for her. It was called 'In Training', and featured only one thread: the Novice Room. She clicked on the link and her screen went dark—purple lettering on a black background. She noted her new name under 'Users viewing this thread'.

Nothing seemed to be happening, and after a few minutes, she refreshed her screen. There was a new post from Professor Hand, a link to a private messaging system. Squirming in her seat, she downloaded the application and selected his name from the list of chat rooms.

Professor Hand: Hello, pet.

The cursor blinked at Mariah, awaiting her response. She held jittery fingers over the keys, and bit her bottom lip.

teacher's pet: hello

Professor Hand: Are you ready for me?

Mariah had no idea what she was supposed to say.

teacher's pet: ready?

Professor Hand: Yes, pet. Ready. Tell me you are wet for me. Tell me your pussy is aching for my cock. Tell me your tender flesh is trembling for the sting of my hand.

She gasped aloud after she read his message and had to close her eyes a moment before she continued. She *was* trembling, shifting in her chair, feeling a surge of warmth between her thighs. Her eyelids rose, and there was a new message.

Professor Hand: NOW, pet.

Mariah whimpered and let her fingers fly across the keyboard. The words she used were none that she'd used before. Not in this context. They came hard, each eliciting a thrill of butterflies in her stomach and chest.

teacher's pet: this one has been waiting so long for you. this one cannot believe you are actually here. the answer to all of this one's dreams. this one's pussy is aching for your cock. this one is wiggling in her chair, wishing your hands were on her ass.

Professor Hand: Good, pet. Good girl. You may touch your clit.

Mariah's left hand slipped beneath her sweatpants again and pinched her engorged clitoris between index and middle fingers. She moaned at her own touch. More than that, she moaned at his command.

Professor Hand: That's enough, pet. Where are you in this world?

She stopped touching herself and stared at the screen.

Professor Hand: Answer me when I ask you a question. Answer me quickly.

teacher's pet: in the Midwest.

Professor Hand: Very good. It's late where you live, yes? I want you to go to bed, pet. Imagine yourself bound at ankles and wrists, on your side, with me behind you, holding you in my arms. You are safe. I am here with you. You may sleep. But you have been slow tonight, and that will not be tolerated. When you wake, go to the bathroom and get your toothpaste. Apply a dab to your fingers and pleasure yourself. Then come here and await further instructions. While you wait, you may tell me how the toothpaste made you feel. Describe it in detail, pet. Good night.

The window locked, and Mariah was unable to post a response. It was four a.m., and she was suddenly very tired. She shut down her computer and climbed the stairs to her bedroom. In bed, she nestled her back against her body pillow, clasped her hands beneath her cheek and bent her legs together. She was asleep within seconds.

The next morning, Mariah woke before her alarm went off and hurried down the stairs. As she peed, she looked at her toothpaste. She stood, flushed and then took the tube into the living room, where she sat on the couch and considered her task. By the light of day, it seemed a silly thing to do. Besides, this was just a game. How was he going to know whether she did as he'd instructed or not?

The toothpaste went back to the bathroom, and Mariah made coffee instead. With mug in hand, she sat at her computer. It took her a couple minutes to swallow the excitement in her throat and log onto the chat room application.

He was already there. The second she entered the room, he sent a message.

Professor Hand: Good morning, pet. Did you sleep well?

teacher's pet: yes, thank you.

Professor Hand: And this morning?

The coffee turned to a lump in Mariah's stomach.

teacher's pet: bright eyed and bushy tailed

Professor Hand: =) You are precious, pet. And what of your assignment?
Hmm?

Mariah took another gulp of coffee.

teacher's pet: I didn't do it.

Professor Hand: Why did you disobey my orders?

teacher's pet: it wasn't the same this morning. I didn't feel the same.

Professor Hand: Do you wish to discontinue our relationship?

teacher's pet: NO! No, please? I just don't know how this works. I guess.
I've never done this before.

Professor Hand: Oh, pet! I am your first? =) I am honored. Do you have any experience with this lifestyle?

teacher's pet: no.

Professor Hand: Then I will truly be your teacher, pet. Your mentor. I will care for you. Rest assured, you are in good hands. =)

And so it began. His manner was supportive and nurturing, allowing Mariah to test the waters, find aspects of the various acts and rituals she enjoyed, and discover which things were not to her liking. It wasn't long before he was the first person she contacted every morning, the last person she contacted before sleep. Each day, he gave her a task via email, an assignment she was to complete and confirm. One morning, when she arrived at the office, there was an email waiting for her.

Good morning, pet. Were you in a private office, I would have you sit on your stapler and imagine my shaft between your luscious lips. Pity you are in a rather public cubicle. =(Instead, I would like you to place two binder clips on top of your monitor. As you work today, you are to look at those clips and think of the clamps I would place upon you. Pinch your nipples when no one's looking. Imagine my fingers replacing yours. =)

Use your cell phone to take a picture of the clips. I will keep the picture up today, thinking of you as you think of me.

Mariah complied with his wishes, a secretive grin twitching her lips while she quietly snapped the photo of the clips on her monitor. By eleven a.m., she was soaking wet and had to sit forward on her chair as she typed. When the little envelope popped up in the corner of her screen, her knees trembled in anticipation.

Hello, pet. How is your day so far? Are you thinking about me?

Mariah typed furiously.

Yes! Oh, yes!

He responded to her message immediately.

Good pet. That's my good girl. You deserve a reward, don't you? You may go to the lady's room and pleasure yourself before you eat your lunch. Imagine you are bound to a chair, your legs splayed before me. Imagine me in front of you, crop in hand, licking your pussy and tapping your inner thighs at the same time.

Mariah raced to the restroom, slammed into a stall, and hiked up her skirt while she thumbed the lock. She sat so quickly on the toilet that the seat slid sideways, squeaking in protest. Her fingers were already on her crotch, clutching, fumbling for purchase on the slippery surface. She came almost immediately, and fought hard to keep it silent. Holding it in made her head feel as if it were going to explode. She sagged against the tank and took a few minutes to regain her composure.

She had no appetite after, so instead went outside to smoke, then returned to her computer and emailed her Master.

Thank you, sir.

Was it good, pet? =)

Yes!

Will you do something for me, pet?

You're asking?

This is beyond the realm of my power. You will learn that these things we do are at your discretion.

What would you have me do?

Will you send me a picture of yourself?

Mariah hesitated to respond. He didn't allow her much time for doubt.

I would truly love to see you, pet. Are you afraid I'll be disappointed?

Her heart sank. Here, he was probably thinking she was some tiny thing, all cute and trim. **Yes**, was all she could write.

Oh, pet. That makes me sad. Do you not know I love you? You are beautiful to me already. How can a mere image of you change that? Do you sincerely believe I'm so shallow?

Mariah searched her folders for an acceptable headshot and attached it as a response. His reply was immediate.

You are beautiful. Back to work now. I'll email you when you get home.

Was that good or bad? She swallowed the lump in her throat and forced herself to concentrate on her job.

That afternoon, Mariah arrived home and raced to her computer, opening her email even before she plunked into her chair.

May I call you on the phone, pet?

Without hesitation, Mariah entered her phone number and clicked 'Send'.

The phone rang minutes later, and her whole body twanged, as if there were a string stretched taut from her pubis to her collarbone. The caller ID showed a long distance number.

"Hello?"

"Hello, pet. How is my good girl this afternoon?"

"Yay!"

He laughed. *"Good pet. Where are you right now?"*

"Sitting at my computer."

"I want you to go to your bedroom."

Mariah rose, ran up the stairs, and flopped down on her bed. "Okay," she said with a small giggle.

"Lift your skirt and pull down your panties."

Mariah fumbled to comply, the phone wedged between cheek and shoulder. "Okay," she panted.

"You are a good girl, my pet. Now spread your legs wid, and imagine they are strapped to the corners of your mattress. You may bend your knees a bit, but your feet cannot move more than a few inches in either direction."

"Yes, sir."

"Good girl. Now touch yourself, pet. Describe what you feel."

Mariah slid her hand between her legs, spread her folds with her index and ring fingers, and prodded her clitoris with her middle finger.

"It feels warm and slippery."

He groaned. *"Good, good girl. Do you have your panties by your side?"*

Mariah glanced down. "Yes."

"Put them in your mouth, pet. Stuff them all the way inside."

Mariah hesitated only a moment before she shoved her panties into her mouth, using her fingers to poke the wadded fabric against the insides of her cheeks.

"Ohhah," she mumbled through the cloth.

"Oh, oh pet. That's good. Very, very good." A bit of static accompanied these words, the sounds of a phone shifting, rubbing against something. "Now, pet, close your eyes. I am with you, standing at the end of the bed. Can you feel me there? Feel my hands sliding up the insides of your legs. Feel my palms as they slap your sweet inner thighs. Oh, you are ready for me, pet. Indeed. Look at how wet you are. You're practically dripping, my little slut."

Mariah traced her vulva with her fingers, feeling the swell and the wetness. She dipped two fingers inside, then slid the other hand down her belly to finger her clitoris, moaning as she curled her inserted fingers.

He was panting into the phone. *"I am on my knees between your legs, pet. I raise your hips and set your bottom on my thighs. Your feet cannot pull away from their bindings, and your back is stretched and strained. Feel my shaft prodding you. I am ready to enter, and you are frightened and excited. When I enter you, pet, you will come. You will come harder than ever before, and you will tell me to fuck you like the little slut that you are."*

Trembling, Mariah pulled her fingers out and raised her hips in the air, poising for his penetration.

"My cock is ripe and full, and you will need to stretch to accommodate its girth, but I will not tread lightly, pet. You will take me in, and you will take me NOW!"

Mariah plunged four of her fingers inside her vagina. Massaging furiously on her clitoris, she cried out through her fabric gag.

"Spit it out! Spit out the gag, pet! Sing for me!"

Using her tongue, she pushed the panties from her mouth, flexed her jaw muscles and gasped through the dryness.

"Oohh, oh, oohh!" She moaned so loud and deep that she could swear she heard the windows rattle. His grunts and praises accompanied her ride, until they were silent save for the hisses of both of them catching their breath.

"Your voice fits you well. You sing beautifully."

Mariah giggled. "I'm sleepy now."

He laughed. *"I'll bet you are! And me, pet? How do I sound on the phone? Am I what you expected?"*

She considered for a moment. "You know, you don't sound the way I imagined—your voice isn't as deep as I thought it would be."

"Are you disappointed?"

"No! You sound... powerful." She snuggled into her pillows.

"Good, pet. Good. Now, I must get back to work. I only have an hour before it's time to go home."

Mariah pouted. "Aw! But we just got on the phone!"

"As sweet as your little girl voice is, and as much of an effect as it has on me, pet, I must be strong. Now, be a good girl and rest. You'll need your strength for the next call. Oh, and pet?"

"Yes?"

"If you'd like, I'll send you some movies, so that you can see how we will be together. I would actually like that, pet. For you to watch them and tell me what appeals to you and what puts you off. May I send them, pet?"

"Yes." Mariah gave him her address. "I'm excited."

"As am I, pet."

Mariah smiled and said goodbye.

Done with a long, crappy day at the end of a long, crappy week, Mariah fumbled for the keys at the bottom of her purse while she rushed to her car. Five o'clock had long since come and gone. As she hit the remote lock button, she scanned the parking ramp. All seemed quiet that late at night.

She slid the cool metal keys through her fingers, just then looking down toward the lock. Her neck snapped taut. Something buzzed at the base of her skull, sending a

painful tingling sensation through her shoulders, straight to her knees. Her head swam with dark blotches that faded in and out of her vision. The keys clattered to the concrete, and she collapsed backward. As if in the distance, she felt someone's hands sliding beneath her arms.

A steady jostling awakened Mariah, and she lifted her head away from the smear of saliva that lay slick across her cheek. Realization set in, and she whimpered despite herself. Something—it felt and tasted like a rubber ball—had been used to pry apart her jaw. A swath of fabric rendered her sightless.

She wiggled her body and found that her arms had been lashed behind her back, at the elbows and wrists. Her hands felt cold and swollen, as did her feet below the biting straps around her ankles and knees.

The motion and the rough, springy synthetic surface beneath her body told her she was in a vehicle of some sort. All was eerily quiet save for the whisper of the drive train directly below her ear. The silence was more frightening than anything else, making worse the calamity inside her mind.

She grunted and strained against her bindings, but was overcome again, and let her head fall back to the carpet.

For the second time, jostling awakened Mariah. Her arms had been spread and raised above her, her legs splayed beneath. Bound tightly at ankles and wrists, blindfolded and gagged, she could only move her head when she strained to hear anything that would give her a sense of place. Again saliva flowed freely from the corners of her mouth. It had run down her chin and neck, and soaked into her shirt collar.

"You're finally awake, pet. I was hoping I'd have to tease you back to life."

A chuckle punctuated the softly spoken words. The casual tone sent shivers up her spine. Relaxed confidence and sheer power emanated from the presence before her. This was him! Professor Hand from online.

But it had all been conjecture, hadn't it? The hypothetical *'Oh, yes, there I'd be, innocently walking to my car, and Bam! There you'd be, to swoop in and take me away from all this.'* She'd laughed as she'd typed the words.

It wasn't so funny now.

She flinched when his hands settled upon her chest to unbutton her blouse, trembled while the fingers moved lower. He tugged the shirttails from the waistband of her slacks.

"And who would have thought someone dressed so primly would be wearing a red lace bra under all that office attire? Hmm?"

Disapproval shaded the voice, and Mariah felt a flush spread from her chest to her cheeks. Her blouse was peeled away and ripped along the seams. An icy sliver of metal pressed to her shoulder and the straps of her bra sprang free. Realizing he held a sharp implement made her shudders become convulsive. He shushed her while his fingertips traced the outlines of her nipples beneath the lace. "Careful, pet. This is very, very sharp."

You wouldn't want to get cut now, would you? I certainly would hate to see that, precious."

"Nnnnnnnngggggggggph!" The scream fell impotent against the ball gag, and spittle sprayed from her lips.

"Oh yes, pet. Do sing for me," her captor purred. He pushed roughly beneath the cups of her bra and pulled until the material fell away. "And your tender buds are aching for your Master's touch, are they not?" He pinched and twisted her nipples, coaxed out of her another ineffectual, muffled scream.

"Your photos don't do you justice. Your hair is a charming deep auburn. Not the 'plain old red' of which you spoke. And your body is nothing to be ashamed of, pet. All these exquisite curves and swells. No hard lines there. I can cup my hands around your lovely roundness, anywhere I please. You are Modigliani beautiful." He trailed his fingers lightly downward, following the valleys and rises of flesh.

The cold air against her exposed skin heightened her sense of vulnerability. She couldn't move beyond the weakest of tugs, but still she twisted against the restraints.

His hands slid over her tummy to the fastening of her slacks. With a sharp tug, the button ripped from its roots, and the zipper tore from its seams. For a moment, all was silent except for the tinkling of the button bouncing across the floor. He shoved a hand inside her panties, and his breath came in huffs that tickled the fine hairs on her belly.

"Red lace to match, my little slut? You knew I was coming for you. You were ready for me. Good pet." His fingers pushed further between her thighs, entering her for an excruciating second before quickly pulling away. She heard an intake of breath and knew, even before he spoke, he was smelling her scent upon his fingers.

"Mmm...pet. Do you know what this scent says to me? Hmm? It says 'Mine'."

With that, he brought the blade down the legs of her pants and ripped them from her body. He sliced the panties away next, leaving her open and laid bare.

A tingling of an entirely different nature jiggled her thighs. A washcloth scrubbed her skin, and her nose prickled with the scents of soap and urine. Only then did she realize that she'd released her bladder sometime during her ordeal.

"Tsk, pet," the voice continued, "you've certainly managed to get yourself messy this evening." A hand slid up the inside of her leg, and her muscles twitched in response to his touch. "I'm afraid that just will not do." The hand curved around her buttock, then pulled away and fell with a reverberating '*slap!*' across her flank. "You will maintain your personal hygiene, pet."

The washcloth invaded her labia and felt as if it scrubbed her raw. Her whimpers turned to sobs.

"Here is what I expect of you." His voice faded as he turned away, and she heard the tink of metal tapping metal and a splash of water.

"I expect you to be clean and presentable at all times. Starting with this." The hiss of aerosol filled Mariah's ears, and something cool and wet hit her skin. He smoothed it across her mons and down, following the curves of her sex. She felt the scrape of what had to be a razor, and the vagueness of her shock gave way and she cried out for mercy.

"Nnnnugh! Feezzz! Schah!"

"What was that, pet?" His bemused tone conveyed that he knew exactly what she was saying.

"Mmmph!" She strained again, but the only direction she could move brought her closer to his hands. Her treacherous body reacted to the heat.

“Oh, you want me to stop? You’d rather I didn’t shave you, is that it?” The razor clattered onto metal, and Mariah’s nerves sprang to electrified attention trying to sense his next move.

Creaks and groans of pulleys and ropes echoed through the room, and the frame to which she was lashed reclined a bit further. Her mind was a flurry of desperate thoughts. As a fantasy, as something to talk about and even yearn for, it had all been perfectly acceptable. But this? The real thing?

She felt him looming over her midsection, and a warmed washcloth dabbed away a small section of lather from her pubes. She jumped when a tuft of the short, curly hairs ripped from her skin. Fresh tears sprang to her eyes and she tried in vain to move herself away.

“Hhhmmmmph! Hmmmmmm...hmmmm...hmmm!” She screamed against the gag, taking deep gasps of air through her nostrils.

“Oh, does that hurt, pet?” His voice became hard and cold. “Lesson one, pet. My way is best. Yes?”

Mariah panted, but refused to respond.

“Yes!” He pinched flesh with cool metal and twisted until she cried out and nodded her head. “Good pet. That’s a good girl.”

He released the skin, smoothed it over with the washcloth, and continued his ministrations. He shaved across, then down between her folds of skin, tightening her nether lips between thumb and forefinger when the blade crossed the tender flesh.

“Now, pet, you will keep this clean and smooth, yes?” Mariah nodded her head slightly. “Good, pet. You learn quickly, my sweet. And things will be all the better for it.”

His breath was hot in her ear. Fingers smoothed down her clean-shaven mons, slid easily between her outer lips and circled her clitoris. He tunneled two fingers inside, shoving them as far as they would go, and her wall of fear melted against his palm.

“Wet,” he murmured. “Slick with it, pet. Is it anything like you’d imagined? Is this what you wanted?” He jerked his fingers into her G spot, pulled them away, swirled the fingers of the other hand around her pulsing clit.

She moaned and pushed against the fingers, not sure if that was the correct response, not sure she cared. This was what she’d said she wanted, wasn’t it? All those hypothetical discussions, masturbating over the phone, listening to what he’d do to her if he had her in his snare.

He removed her gag, but held his fingers to her lips to keep her from speaking.

“Is that good, pet? Enjoying your reward?” Mariah whimpered in response and pushed harder. She felt his body descend, then jumped as his mouth, wet and hot, replaced the fingers on her lips. He sucked deeply, drew her tongue out into his mouth. He retreated again, and Mariah heard the whispers of fabric and a zipper coming down. Her nerves on point, she tried to prepare for what was to come.

To her surprise, the creaking of pulleys and gears filled her ears, and her rack rotated slowly, coming to a stop when she was fully inverted. She opened her mouth to form a question, but fingers gripped her chin and held her jaws agape. He slammed himself down her throat, flattening her nose against his testicles, and leaned in with his full weight before pulling back to ease into a steady rhythm.

Mariah could only catch gasps of air through her flared nostrils on the occasional back stroke that pulled him out far enough to clear her airway. He cooed and groaned,

and leaned in to place his mouth upon her, this time on her sex. Pulses of sensation launched through her entire body.

Other noises that she was unable to identify filtered into her awareness. His finger circled her anus, tickled and probed, coaxed her sphincter to twitch and contract.

“Virgin territory, pet?”

He chuckled, burrowed his finger inside, hooked into her painfully, forcing the ring of muscles wide for something he shoved into place. Her anus snapped shut on the intrusion, and she suffered the sensation of a cool base sitting snugly against her soft, puckered skin.

Through a red haze, and the constant rhythm of his thrusts into her mouth, Mariah heard a vibrator switch on. The initial low thrum became a high whine, and the walls of her vagina gaped in anticipation. The phallus slid inside, and he fastened it into place, wrapping what felt like laces around her thighs. The steady humming throbbed inside her innermost regions, and she was reduced to tremors and sweat.

Again his mouth lowered to devour her, and his head thrashed between her legs. His hands snaked between their bodies. With a vice-like grip, he seized her nipples and twisted them in opposite directions. His thrusts came faster, harder, more intense, and Mariah was overwhelmed with it all, feeling an intense orgasm gathering itself to erupt, overshadowing her fight for air.

“That’s it, pet!” He gasped as he thrust. “Come for me! Give it to me! Now!” He roared and jerked into her mouth. Pulses of semen choked her until she remembered to swallow. A massive release washed over her body, rocking through her again and again, and her strangled cries joined his breathless praise.

“Yes, pet. Come for me! Good girl! That’s my good pet!” He sucked her clit and lapped at the edge of the vibrator as he spent his last into her throat.

“Clean me, pet. Suck me dry, my little cum slut. That’s a good girl. And not a drop spilled. Extra points for good behavior your first time, little one. Indeed.” He groaned once more and jerked into her, grasping her ankles and holding tight. “Oh, pet! You are ripe! You are so fresh. So good. Such a good little pet.” He sagged against her and rested his forehead on her thigh.

He stepped back, and his flaccid penis slipped from her mouth. He spun her upright once again. He kissed her deeply then, and afterward replaced the gag, strapping it securely into place.

“Only a taste, pet.”

Mariah's head sagged against her shoulder.

Mariah spent quiet hours in a cage after their first session, huddled against the cold cement floor, shivering within leather straps that crisscrossed her body. Her knees were held to her chest. A cruel steel bar spread her thighs. And in her mouth, a phallus, secured tightly by a wide leather band that ran around her jaw and buckled at the base of her skull.

To this buckle were fastened several more straps, securing a leather sheath that encased her arms from just above the elbows, all the way to her fingertips. She lay awkwardly on her side, and had only managed to sleep sporadically for unmeasured amounts of time. Thoughts of her ‘other life’—her real life—began to fade.

The next day he had a new lesson for her. As he pulled her from her cage and strapped her to the rack, he warned her of the importance of compliance. He required certain actions, like the tumblers in a lock, before he released her to ecstasy.

He began slowly, teasing, taunting, edging her closer and closer, but never quite taking her all the way to completion. Each time she was close to coming without permission, he would stop and strike her with a rod until hot welts rose on her flesh.

After what felt like hours, almost insane from the throbbing of enflamed thighs and the nearness of climax, she issued her first, “P-peash?”

He crammed his staff inside her and held himself there, his trimmed pubic hairs prickled against her smooth-shaven skin. “What, pet? Please what? More? Oh, I have plenty more to give, dear one.” He continued pumping while stimulating her erogenous zones with his fingers and various other tools. She was a mass of tremors and chattering teeth, and still he slid in, out and back again

“P-peash, Shah? Peash, muh Uh?” The shame of mumbling those words, the act of admitting her need, somehow thrilled her to the core, and she clenched around his shaft, aching for him to bring her over the top.

He paused then, and prompted her through the rest of her script. “May you what, pet? Hmmm? What do you want, my little one?” He stroked her trembling cheek and brushed the back of his fingers across her clamped nipples.

“Peash Shah, mah yuhr peh cmm?” she finally gasped. Through the ball gag, slick with her foaming saliva, it sounded nothing like English. He understood, though, and counted backwards slowly from ten while tweaking her body into full explosion, pumping vigorously, near climax himself. Her body coiled and held against the tide until he reached the magic number ‘one’, and his words of encouragement were all but lost in her cries and sustained moans.

“Now, my little cum-pet. Good, girl. That’s a goooooood girl.” His pace quickened. He shuddered inside her, ready to burst.

The relief almost surpassed the release. Every muscle, tendon and nerve ending sang with the rush. It was the most powerful feeling Mariah had ever experienced, and she found herself relishing in the ‘letting go’ of it all. The fact that she had no choice freed her to simply react. That she was rewarded for reacting as instructed was not lost on her—and thus her satisfaction was two-fold.

A lesson learned quickly garnered praise most treasured. He showered her in adoration, bathed and groomed her, stroked her hair as it dried and cooed to her softly. “What a proud and happy owner you make me, pet. I am lucky to have one such as you.”

The most difficult lesson began with whispers and tugging of the fasteners of her hood. She lay on her blanket on the floor of her cell, arms sheathed behind, legs strapped four ways.

“Another step ahead, pet. Another opportunity, another reward. You mustn’t open your eyes in my presence, pet. You are not yet ready to understand.” She kept her eyes squeezed tight, but his words echoed in her mind.

Understand? What’s to understand? I’m not stupid. Her eyelids popped open, but sprung tight when a blast of air burned her retina.

“Keep. Them. Closed.”

She cowered at his calm, icy tone. When he was most quiet, he was most angry, and she was most in danger of being disciplined. Her eye stung beneath the lid, and she wished her hands were free to rub some moisture back into it. She tried blinking quickly, but was rewarded with a shot of air in the other eye.

“Keep them closed, else you’ll get the hood, and I will *not* be pleased, pet.” He pinched the alligator clips on her nipples.

No. She did not want him to be disappointed. She wanted him to be proud and happy.

She whimpered and shook her head, leaning in to place her head upon his lap.

“Good girl. That’s a very good girl.” He stroked her hair, caressing from her crown to her shoulder, then down her side and over her hip. With a swift movement, he latched on to the inside of her thigh, simultaneously pulling her up onto her elbows and knees, and spun her on her blanket so that her backside swayed in front of him.

“I love my little pussy pet. Always wet, always ready.” He shoved a huge dildo into her vagina, gripped her hips and slathered her anus with his tongue. “No muffles this time, pet. No gag for you.”

He curled over her back and undid the buckles of her ball gag. She pushed it out with her tongue, flexed her jaw a little, but kept her face pressed against the floor. He leaned away from her, and with one thrust buried his cock to the hilt in her rectum. Instinctively, she pulled away, but his fingers locked into her thighs and held her on point. He pounded into her. It stung. Then it burned, and she grunted and cried with each thrust.

He slapped her hard across the left buttock. “Don’t clench, pet! Release your muscles!” He smacked her again, harder this time, and she felt a numb spot growing where his hand left its impression. “Release!”

With a wall-rattling scream, she sagged to the floor, letting all of her muscles relax, relying on his grip on her hips to hold her aloft. The friction of his shaft, hot and smooth against the inner walls of her anus, began to grow and warm and radiate. She became aware of the sensation of the dildo rubbing against his invading member, with only the thinnest membrane between them. Soon she began to rock back to him, moaning with abandon, eyes closed tight, riding him as he rode her.

“Oh, good pet. That’s it. Good, good pet.” He gripped her tighter, and his thrusts became more calculated and deliberate. “I want you to sing for me, pet.” One hand snaked around her leg, fingers sliding in to punish her clitoris.

“Oh! Oh! Oh!” Out of control, oblivious to the world, her one task and only focus in life: to relish this moment and show her appreciation. She had but one syllable, it seemed, and it poured from her until she was unable to catch her breath and her voice became a hoarse whisper.

Her cheek grew raw from scraping against the concrete where the blanket had been pushed aside, but the irritation was far away from her awareness. She plunged back, savoring the sound his testicles made as they collided with the dildo. His breathing turned to sighs and moans, and he counted down with each thrust, from five this time, as eager as she to climax.

“Oonne!” He growled, and crashed into her so hard his hipbones bruised the flesh of her buttocks. “Sing, pet!” He slapped her in time to his thrusts, and her mouth shot wide to elicit that one syllable, not over and over, but in a long, sustained howl that originated

in her belly, and swelled and bloomed and exploded out of her mouth. She was a good girl. She was his pet.

When he bathed her after, he cooed and sighed happily, and she couldn't stop smiling.

He came and opened her cage, then hefted her into his arms. Setting her on a table, he spun her around to face him, removing her gag as he spoke.

"Now, pet, you have been with me for two full days and nights. It is time for you to choose your path. As I said before, all things are at your discretion." He cupped her face in his hands. "I will bring you to a phone and leave you for a while. If your desire is to remain in my keeping and complete your training, then you will call and terminate your employment. You will then call your closest friend and tell her that you have a family emergency and need to be away for a while.

"I will, of course, support you during the time you are with me, pet. You've no need to worry about your home. You will always have a home with me, and I will keep you well."

With that, he brought her somewhere else and set her down. "I will step out, then you may remove the blindfold and open your eyes." He released her arms from their sheath and detached the bar from between her legs. He then tied her hands in front, allowing a small amount of movement.

After the door clicked shut, Mariah blinked in the brightness of the small room. She leaned back against the couch on which she sat and contemplated her bound wrists.

Is this what I want? A thrill washed over her when she thought of having someone keep and care for her. No decisions to be made. No responsibilities save for his expectations.

She dialed the phone.

When she'd completed her calls, she replaced the covering over her eyes and leaned back onto the cushions. It wasn't long before he returned.

She heard the phone beep, as if he checked the caller ID. The phone clattered into its cradle.

"Oh, pet."

He dropped between her knees and leaned in, spread her legs and kissed her vulva. Gently, he stroked her labia with his tongue, alternately penetrating her and circling her clitoris until she moaned softly and placed her bound hands on top of his head. His hair was full and thick between her fingers, and she clutched instinctively when he pulled away from her grasp.

A click and a light buzzing sound foretold her fate. Working quietly, he slid a slender, lubricated vibrator into her anus, pulled straps around her thighs and secured them with buckles at her hips. He planted his hands firmly on her sides and slid his cock into her, pumping slowly and moving his hips in lazy circles. He raised her arms above her head, pinned them against the wall, then leaned in and whispered in her ear.

"You've made me so happy, my pet." With that, he hastened his pace, grunting softly in her ear until he climaxed and collapsed on top of her.

Mariah cried quietly, the cloth over her eyes soaking up her tears. *What have I done?*

She woke to his gentle hands. He hushed her, and quieted her tremors with a soft, warm blanket that he folded around her battered frame.

“You are my pet, yes?”

She nodded and stroked her cheek against his shoulder.

Taking her hand, he held her palm upright and wrapped her fingers around a thick, leather strap that jangled while she explored it with her fingers.

“Do you choose this of your own free will, pet?”

She nodded again and mewed through her gag.

“Then go on, pet. Put it on. Clasp it tight.”

She did as instructed, squeezed the cool metal of the lock and it clicked into place.

“I’ll hold the keys, pet. I’ll hold them dear, as I hold you. But know that they are yours for the asking. Though I would give them with a heavy heart.”

When she woke again, she was lying in a bed, right arm cuffed to the opposite post so as to keep her on her side. Her collar was likewise latched to a slender chain, which in turn attached to an eyehook in the headboard. She had reached a new level of reward. She stretched her legs, savoring the freedom of movement, scissoring them between the sheets and wiggling her toes.

She opened her eyes and drank in the natural light coming from a long narrow window set high in the wall.

She heard him coming and snapped her eyes shut, but couldn’t still her legs before he opened the door.

“Good morning, precious. Did my little one sleep well? Hmm? Nice and comfy?” She whined happily, yearning for him to cross the room and join her. “Today, pet, we graduate to a new level.” The mattress sagged under his weight.

“To me, pet,” and she obediently moved toward him and felt along his legs until she rested her cheek on his thigh. Stroking her back, he told her of his new expectations: new levels of responsibility, and with these, more mobility.

She tensed at the idea of free roam. Just the thought of being without the security of her tiny space, even this new room, was almost more than she could bear, and she whimpered pitifully.

“What is it, pet? Are you not ready for your new station? It is a place of pride, and I want you there, precious. I want you by my side. This is what we’ve trained for. This is your true calling. Can you not feel it?” His hand slid between her buttocks, his fingers dipping into her wetness. “I can feel it, pet.”

He rose from the bed and unlatched her wrist and leash. He tugged lightly on the latter, encouraging her to sit up and slide to the edge of the bed. A few more gentle pulls, and she was standing, then following behind him, eyes closed, fully entrusting herself to his guidance.

The echo of his boots suggested she was in a small room. The tone of those echoes evoked images of ceramic tiles and porcelain fixtures.

“Now, pet—I’ll leave you to tend to yourself. There will be no peeking, little one. I *may* be watching. Directly in front of you is the sink. You’ll find tooth and hair brushes

to your left and right respectively, and you'll feel the shower door immediately to your left."

The door slid shut and she heard the lock snap into place. She immediately began her task, humming to herself as she did so. While in the shower, she ran her fingers lightly over the ledge until they stumbled across the razor she knew she would find. Carefully, she inched her way up her legs with her fingertips and followed with the razor. She shaved until not a single prickle of stubble marred her silky skin.

No sooner did she shut the water off than she heard the door opening, and he folded her into a warm, fluffy towel. She sank to her knees with instinctual reverence, but he stopped her with firm hands on her shoulders and drew her to himself. His hands grazed down her body.

"Very, very good, my pet. Very, very good."

She sighed into his chest and melted into his embrace. Never had she been more content. His magnificence flowed through her with a current so strong as to make her extremities tingle.

He led her back to the bed and gently bound her arms and legs, spread eagle style. Sliding between her thighs he inspected her shaving prowess with his fingertips. Lightly stroking her belly, he kissed her, sucked at her vulva and swirled his tongue around her clitoris. Groaning, he slid his hands beneath her hips and held them aloft. "I think someone deserves a reward."

"Yes, pet. You remember."

His thumbs stroke from her eyelids, to the bridge of her nose and down, then softly across her lips.

"Open, pet. Open those beautiful wanton eyes and gaze upon your Master."

Straining against her strict conditioning, she forces her eyes to open, blinking and flinching in anticipation.

He takes a step back and encourages her scrutiny, spreading His arms. She focuses on His face first. Her gaze travels down His average build—in all His drab normality.

He could be anyone. But He isn't. He is her Master, and she weeps at His beauty.

Sponge Bath

Poor hubby is on the injured reserve list. He needs some pampering.

There's my poor man, laid up for a week on doctor's orders. And look at him—files open and mountain of paperwork spread before him. He's typing furiously on that laptop, has his cell phone wedged between his shoulder and ear. His leg is slightly elevated on a stack of throw pillows.

I have only to walk in with the large bowl, sloshing warm, soapy water, and he looks up, calculates, then drops the phone to the bed. I set the bowl on the nightstand and gather his papers into the appropriate folders, put his laptop to sleep, and slide onto the edge of the bed.

With one hand set against the center of his chest, I ease him back onto the pillows, smiling all the while. He looks a bit bewildered, yet hopeful. His expression is priceless as I ease his shorts down over his hips—mindful of the brace that runs from ankle to hip—and throw them to the floor.

I take the wet cloth between my hands and squeeze the excess water back into the bowl, drape it over my palm and begin my gentle ministrations. I know he's sore and tired, so I skip the preliminaries and go straight for the main event, placing my warm, soapy, cloth-covered hand flat across his stirring organ.

I feel him twitch and jump beneath my palm, and the heat of the washcloth pales in comparison to the heat that emanates from beneath. As the lather rises, so does his desire. The sweet scent of the soap mingles with the heady scent of his arousal.

His eyes are closed, mine heavy lidded, and our breathing synchronizes with our familiar rhythm. He's slippery and rock solid in my grasp. Everything in me wants to swing my leg over his hips and have my way. But I don't just yet—the ride will be the potentially hurtful portion of our session. I'll prolong it only long enough for our climaxes to be short and sweet.

I move the cloth lower, cupping his balls, and allow my other hand to soak in the bowl for a moment before taking him firmly and stroking from tip to base. My fingers slide easily over the slick, bubbly surface of his cock. As my fist pumps harder and faster, I climb onto my knees and lean in to take his right nipple between my teeth.

I hold it there, flicking my tongue, then latch on with my lips and suck hard. His hips are rising to match the motion of my fist, and my hips sway in the air, my clitoris throbbing. The blood rushes through my ears with each pulse. I can hold back no longer.

I rise up, slide my leg over his belly, and guide his cock into my already clenching pussy. Mutual moans pass between us. I sink and he slides, until we are crushed against each other.

A new scent joins the symphony—the smell of soap and labia, squishy, tangy, sharp and sweet. I grind against him slowly, and raise my hips on the upswing, riding smoothly, not even a canter, but an air ride up and down, like a piston: steady, even, and delicious.

I lift myself, far enough that the tip of his cock almost slips out, lower myself again and sigh my pleasure. The head of his shaft delves inside and presses against that warm, sweet spot, eliciting a guttural moan from between my clenched teeth. I grind again, pressing him harder into that cluster of singing nerves.

He's panting now as I sway and rock against him, holding his rib cage for support. He groans and twitches, and I take it as encouragement and rock harder. My thumbs brush over his nipples and my eyes roll closed. I rotate my hips faster, harder, crushing myself against him. He grabs my hips and lifts me, repositioning his leg so that I no longer jar it with my body. I grin sheepishly, but he rotates my hips and hits the spot again. I cry out and stiffen, then shake with release, falling against his chest for a moment to catch my breath.

My muscles clench around his shaft, milking from base to tip, tip to base. I rise again, lift my hips and slide back down. His hands shoot out and grasp my thighs, slide around to cup my ass, guide me slowly: up and down, around, and back up again.

Before long, his mouth is open, his eyes squeezed tight, and the tendons in his neck are straining with each thrust. I can feel another climax building in me just from witnessing his rapture, and we crash together a final time, with a wet slap of skin. He holds me down tight while he strains every millimeter of his cock inside of me, and explodes.

Again I collapse on his chest, and he cups the back of my head and kisses my hair. Once I've caught my breath, I rise and slide off him and the bed, taking the washcloth with me. I rinse it and ring it out. I use it to wipe him clean once again, the odors of our coupling rising to the fore with each stroke.

After he's clean, I turn the cloth on myself and rock my pelvis against my palm. I'm not ready to be done. I contemplate a moisturizer session, but his eyes are closed. A sleepy smile touches the corners of his mouth.

I slide the bed sheet up to his chest, kiss his forehead, and carry the bowl back to the bathroom, where I dump it, rinse it and tip it upside down on the sink. I return to him, my poor, sweet man, and stretch alongside to await his awakening.

Layover

The ten mile high club is good, but frequent flyers get special perks.

To most of my colleagues, business class is only a layover on the way to champagne and caviar flights. Me? I enjoy the airbus lifestyle. With my seniority and lineholder status, I pretty much get my itinerary a month or so in advance, and always get what I want.

Right now, while I'm strapped into my jump seat waiting to hit 10,000 feet, what I want is Mr. 2A.

Actually I call him 'Mr. C.' He's a regular commuter. I don't know what he does for a living, but he has power. Window seat every time, and already this flight, he has the laptop fired up, to pound those keys until they smoke.

He calls me 'Em', never 'Emily', as printed on my nametag. I've been witty. I've been coy, and I've been a gracious hostess. All the while, my 'what if' gland has been put through its paces. Normally on these commute flights, I'm scheduled on a later flight back, but tonight I have a layover, and reservations at his hotel.

The second the seat belt light goes off, I'm up out of my harness and into the kitchen to get him a fresh drink. I check my cleavage in the mirror on my way through the curtains, and pull my top button half way through the buttonhole. I wear my best gentle, innocently sexy smile, and head his way.

"More of the same for both of us, I see," he says, and slides his laptop to the adjacent seat. His fingers brush mine as he takes his drink from my hand and smiles. I call it that, but really it's not a 'full' smile. Only half his mouth curves up, and there's a glint in his eyes, an intimation of the sarcastic remark that's waiting just behind those luscious lips.

"For a second there, I thought you were going to ask me if I 'come here often'." I wink and wrinkle my nose, expecting one of his generous belly laughs. He winks instead.

"Ah, well, I've seen you 'round often enough, I suppose."

"Yeah, well, this trip's going to be different. I'm taking a night off, this time. Treating myself to a nice hotel. The Grand, in fact."

"Ah, lovely place, that. It's where the company sets me up, you know."

"Oh?" I fake surprise. "Aren't you the lucky one, Mr. C."

He smiles again. "So Em, do you?" He favors me with a tiny raise of his eyebrows.

It takes a moment for everything to click into place. *Do I what? What were we talking about?* Then it hits me. A joke, perhaps a proposition: *Do I come here often?* I drop my eyelashes. "Not nearly often enough."

I match his smoldering stare, but inside I'm singing, *It's gonna hap-pen. It's gonna hap-pen!* My belly flutters and I bite my lip to keep the song inside.

I lean over to set his tray table in position, and my blouse pops open. I pretend not to notice, but keep him in my peripheral vision to be sure that he does. I reach across him to arrange the Skymall magazines, and my right breast is in full profile, the lavender lace demi barely covering my nipple.

An air pocket provides the perfect opportunity to ‘falter’, and his hand shoots to my hip to steady me before I fall across his lap. The jolt of electricity between us shocks me weak, and I lean into his hand a bit more before rising up and adjusting my uniform, leaving the top button wide.

“You okay there, Em?” That’s not concern I see in his eyes. His hand has gone from cupping my hip to smoothing his trouser leg.

I suppose the warmth in my face could be construed as a coquettish blush.

“Almost.”

But this flight can’t be over soon enough.

Back in the haven behind the accordion door, I busy myself with meal preparations, but I’ve left the door open a crack, and I can see him out there, leaning forward slightly, that half smile playing on his lips while he fingers the mouse pad. I picture those lips pressed against me, and I can almost feel the hot slippery sensation of his tongue traveling down my neck.

I break out in goose flesh and swivel around the corner to the restroom. The door slaps shut on its springs and I slide the lock home, releasing a huge breath I hadn’t even known I’d been holding. Hands pressed hard against the tiny steel sink, I regain some composure.

This is getting ridiculous.

Once I have my bearings, I shimmy my skirt up around my hips and hook my thumbs into the strings of my panties. I yank them down and sit quickly as I feel the silky wetness tickle between my legs.

I love this, this game of anticipation. The chemistry between us has been kicked up a notch, and it’s keeping me on point. My hand moves of its own accord, sliding down between my legs. The meaty part of my palm brushes against my clitoris and I jump. My forefinger probes and slides, testing the viscosity.

Do I have time for this? A slideshow of steamy images flies through my mind, and I rock my hips.

Yes, I have time, damn it!

I dip my fingers inside and draw them back slippery, then begin circular motions around my pulsing clit. My hand moves in wide, slow motions, like a shark lazily circling its prey, and my eyes drift shut. I form a pattern of dipping, then returning to circle—faster, tighter, my breath keeping pace.

I sway with the rhythm, and soon I clamp my lips together to hold back groans. My climax rushes toward me, crashes into me, and grips me; rigid, trembling, and straining to hold myself quiet. My teeth grind, my head buzzes and ears ring. Then it releases me. I slump until my breathing slows.

I pull myself together as quickly as possible, gather my scattered wits and wash up, straightening my uniform before rushing to get back on schedule with the flight routine. All through the flight, I try to concentrate on what I’m doing, but find myself having to rely on autopilot. Every trip to the front is another stolen glance, another zing up my spine and down through my belly.

When we strap in for descent, my knee is bouncing, and I catch glances from passengers near the front. Let them think what they want. It’ll give them a story to take home with them. He seems to be relaxed, though I notice that his knee is swaying slightly—a metronome foretelling the slow, easy rhythm of his hips.

I’ll bet he thrusts with his entire body!

The shock of the wheels hitting the tarmac looses another flush of anticipation. I stifle a groan.

He files past me at the door and throws me a full on smile. "See ya later, Em."

I lean back against the wall and *will* the rest of the passengers to get the hell off the plane. In fact, I'm half way to my storage cubby to grab my carry-on and purse when the last passenger steps into the boarding tunnel. I zoom through the checklist with my fellow hostesses, dump a hasty 'great flight, see ya!' into the cockpit, and *race* through the terminal and out to the curb to catch the hotel shuttle.

I just make it. The doors hiss shut at my back, and I stumble to an open seat, juggling my belongings into a more manageable pile. Before I sit, I scan the passengers and, while my ass drops into the molded plastic seat, my heart drops to my stomach. He's not there.

I ran, and everything! Now I'm going to have to find him at dinner, and what are the odds of that? He probably eats in his room. *This isn't the way things were supposed to happen, damn it!*

When we pull into the circular drive, I see another shuttle bus, just departing after loosing its passengers, and hope springs anew. Deflated but not defeated, I head into the hotel, scanning the front desk, the lobby, and the elevator banks for my frequent flyer. But nothin' doin', as they say.

The concierge clears his throat and shoves an envelope into my hand. I'm thinking it's some last minute change in itinerary, which happens from time to time when someone needs to have a direct flight home. Usually an emergency, or it wouldn't get past the dispatchers, so the orders are taken without much complaint.

Safely inside the elevator, I slide my finger under the flap and pull out a slip of heavy bond paper covered in a wide, hasty scrawl, with a keycard attached:

Cocktails at 6:00?
- Mr. C in #1342

Thanks to that cool brass bar along the back wall of the elevator, I'm still upright when the doors open on my floor, and I have a chance to regain my composure. I walk calmly to my room, where I fall onto my bed, kick my feet and hug myself, and grin so hard my face hurts.

I take stock of the room while I pull myself together. Nothing fancy, just plain, but nice. The curtains are drawn, so it's opaque shadowy with bits of daylight peeking around the edges of the drapes.

With several hours to kill, I swipe the pamphlets off the nightstand and roll onto my belly to peruse the shops and sales. I end up falling asleep with my cheek pressed against the full color ads.

It's still stuck to my face when I wake with remnants of a dream evaporating before my eyes. The light in my room has deepened, and I check the clock to find I have an hour before I have to meet him. I pull some clothes from my bag and drape them over hangers on the back of the bathroom door, hoping the steam will get most of the wrinkles out while I bathe.

I don't really have time for a full bath, but I want one, so I take one. I start the water, dump in the bath salts, and go about setting my toiletries on the counter. By the time I've brushed out my hair and stripped out of my uniform, the tub is full and frothy, and I step in with a sigh.

It feels so good I almost forget what I'm doing. I go through the familiar motions of shaving, but as the razor glides up my inner thigh, I imagine his fingertips following, and steal myself against taking matters into my own hands for the second time today. Instead, I carefully swipe the razor around my bikini line, finish my left leg, stand, flip the toggle plug and start the shower.

Once out, I allow my body to dry in the cool air, and shake off the sudden case of nerves that shiver through me. I'd opted for casual and comfortable when packing, and I'm grateful for that as I slide my jeans over my hips. A gauzy button-down blouse is just the ticket, and some easy-off sandals complete the ensemble.

I do my hair, nothing fancy, do my make-up, nothing heavy, and spray a mist of my favorite perfume into the air. I dance through the cloud. I'm ready and I'm excited, and I'm scared to death, but in a really good way.

I grab a tiny bottle of bourbon out of the mini-fridge, screw off the little aluminum cap with my teeth, then spit it into my hand and suck the liquor from the tiny plastic neck. With my keycard in my left hip pocket and his keycard in my right, I sling my purse strap over my shoulder and hit the hallway. I have to go up two floors, then down to the other end of the hall, and I can feel him all the way from here. Next thing I know it, he's just on the other side of the door, and as I hear the latch disengage, my body sizzles and a hiss escapes me.

"Hey, Em," he whispers and smiles. He's wearing jeans and a black t-shirt, and I've already decided I'll be taking that with me when I go. With a boldness that surpasses my fantasies, I reach out to him, beckoning with my fingers. I grab him by the waistband and yank him closer, looking up into his face. I knew it would burn my fingers to touch him, and it does, but I slide my hands up his belly anyway and he leans into me.

I guess we're not going to talk. The kiss? Wow. It steals my breath away. Knocks the wind right out of me. Good thing there's a bed nearby. I walk him backwards through his door, and he inhales my neck, his hands clutching fists full of hair at the base of my skull. He swivels us around and backs me up to the edge of the bed until my knees buckle and we fall back. I can't think straight, because this entire time, a voice in my head keeps saying, *I can't believe it's happening! I can't believe I'm doing this!* over and over.

He's on his knees before me and I push against him. He stands and kicks off his boots while I sit up and wrestle his jeans down to his ankles, then scramble out of mine, kicking them into a heap on the floor.

I look up while I fumble with the buttons on my blouse, and there it is. Reality. He stands before me, hands on hips, legs slightly spread. Passion swallows my shock and I have to touch him. I must wrap my fist around him and stroke him, feel the pulsing heat, the satiny skin. He's ripe: full color, looking like he's ready to pop. I need just a taste; my lips slide around the tip. My tongue slathers. I savor the salty, coppery flavor.

He grasps my head and pulls it back, leans down and pushes me onto the bed to kneel between my knees once again. One hand clasps my waist, the other... Oh, the other! It cups around my pussy, thumb pressing my clit, two fingers slipping inside and curling upwards. I latch my legs around him and ride his hand, grinding against it. The

hand is good, but I desperately want him inside me. I want him to cram himself into me, *slam* into me, scrape his knees against the carpet, he'll push so hard.

After all these months of subliminal foreplay, it's exhilarating and a little bit frightening, this *lust* that's overpowering me. I almost laugh out loud, but instead I urge him to pull my legs up over his shoulders and lean into me. Then I grab onto the duvet for dear life.

I hope the guests in the adjacent room aren't there—I can't keep myself from yelping and sighing. He thrusts, each motion beginning with his shoulders and rolling down his back before plunging exquisitely into me. I push my shirt up, and he drops one of my legs and slurps my nipple into his hot mouth. He sucks hard, pumps harder—is he going to come? I am. I can feel my stomach muscles contracting, my breath tearing from me. I grab his face and pull his mouth to mine, and shudder my groans into him, breaking away to gulp air into my starving lungs.

His pace quickens and he swivels his hips, pounds them against me while growling into my ear. One last smooth thrust, and it's his turn to shudder. His legs extend behind him, taut with his outburst. His toes dig into the carpet as he forces himself as deep inside as he can get. My head tips back and his mouth latches onto my throat, biting and sucking. He rears back, thrusts in jerks, and “Oh's”. I love the sounds he's making; they thrill me, and I rise up to clutch his chest, pressing my face into the hollow of his neck so I can feel them rumble through me, pushing me up and over again.

We roll onto the bed together, and he reaches across me to pull the comforter down around us. He embraces me with it, resting his cheek against my hair and catching his breath.

“Helluva frequent flyer reward, Em.”

I giggle. “Better start saving up those miles again.”

His penis twitches beneath my trailing fingers, and I gasp in surprise when he rolls me onto my back.

“We've got ten hours before the flight home, missy. I reckon by that time, you'll owe me.”

Money Shot

In Penelope's line of work, it's all business. Nothing like a little of the past to get in the way.

Pen mashed the pedal to the floorboards and leaned forward as if to help the waffling engine kick into gear.

"Come on. Come oooooon!"

The piece of shit Duster gathered itself up and shot into the night. Sucking her cigarette down to the filter, Pen scanned the darkened expanse of Southwestern desert. She flipped the butt out the window and watched the sparks bounce and fly in her rearview mirror. No flashing lights back there, but it could be just a matter of time. "Shit-shit-shit-shit-shit-shit, shit!"

Her fingers alternated between drumming the steering wheel and raking through her hair. She flicked her gaze to the mirror again, and she found comfort in the glowing yellow lines that disappeared into the darkness.

She groped around on the dash for a hair tie, and propped her knee against the wheel while she used both hands to peel her curls from her face. After, she settled back into the seat, hooked her wrist over the top of the steering wheel, and eased into autopilot.

Another day in paradise.

A lumbering, clanging garbage truck woke Pen early. She stretched languidly and dove back under the covers. Her hands traveled up the muscular legs next to her, until they reached the prize. Pen grabbed hold of Brian's testicles and pumped her fingers, squeezing and releasing as she slurped the end of his shaft into her mouth. He smelled of sex and sleepy sweat, and tasted salty sweet. A sharp intake of breath sounded from somewhere above the blankets, followed by soft grunts and a yawn. Just as she was hitting a good rhythm, the phone rang.

Pen groaned, flipped back the covers and grabbed the handset. She pressed the buttons two and three at a time until it stopped trilling, and fumbled it to the side of her head.

There was no, "Hello, how are you?" Just, "Got a job for ya, Peanut," followed by instructions. She scrubbed her face with the back of her hand and scrambled for a pencil and scrap of paper.

Thirty minutes later, freshly showered and coffee in hand, Pen sat on her kitchen counter and deciphered her notes. She blew the steam off the top of her cup to clear the view. She couldn't decide how she felt. The mark was worth enough, and she'd definitely earn her money—and it wasn't like she had a choice or anything. At least she wouldn't have to waste time learning his moves. The only trouble was, he was just as familiar with hers.

“Shit.” She crumpled the scrap of paper and tossed it into the garbage disposal.

An hour later, she chucked her bag of tools into the trunk of her car, which left her forty-five minutes to get across town and check in before heading out. She flipped open her phone and thumbed her brother’s number on the speed dial. “Hey, Matty. Can I use your garage? Cool. You got a car for me? Thanks. I just gotta make a stop. Then I’ll swing by. Be there in about an hour.”

She dropped the phone on the seat and swung onto the freeway. Thirty minutes later, she pulled up in front of a squat cement building in the center of a block of warehouses.

Pausing for a deep breath, Pen thought about the crap she was about to take. She stepped out and slammed the car door. Avoiding the oil spotted gravel, she double checked the address, and pounded on the steel door. Two short hits, then she yanked at the handle. Clarence peered at her from around the doorframe of what must have been an office at one time, just off to the right. His glare turned to a chuckle and a nod of recognition.

“Hey there, Penelope. How’s tricks, kid?”

She gave him a sarcastic sneer in reply. Clarence was pure ‘old-school’, and he firmly believed bending over in back alleys was the only place for women in the ‘business’. He’d made his opinion crystal clear from day one. But over time, she’d made her bones and earned a little begrudging respect from the guy.

“Nothin’ doin’, Clarence. Shit don’t pay enough.” Pen briefly squeezed his arm on her way past. Clarence pivoted his considerable bulk and matched her stride down the dim hallway.

“Yeah, I guess no matter how you slice it, though, they’re fucked when you’re through with ‘em, huh?”

Pen had to laugh at that one. She pulled herself together just in time to knock on the very last door.

Hollow wood muffled the “Yeah!”, but she heard it and took her cue to enter. As soon as she was on the other side of the threshold, Clarence leaned in, grasped the doorknob in his meaty fist and gently shut the door behind her.

Even in these utilitarian surroundings, Hector was slicked back and dressed to the nines, not a strand of his salt and pepper hair out of place. The reading glasses perched on the tip of his nose were endearing, but did nothing to lessen the power of his presence. Pen leaned back against the door and waited quietly for him to finish what he was doing. Calmly, he made a final slash with his pen and peered over his glasses.

“You *can* sit, you know.” He spoke with the air of someone who is accustomed to being the voice of reason. He gestured to one of the ratty chairs in front of the metal desk, and swiveled to deposit his paperwork into a file cabinet to his right. “I apologize for the seedy location, but I’ve got some matters to attend, and as the old saying goes, never shit where you eat.” He paused and looked at her again, removing the half moon lenses from his face. “So, how’s my Peanut today? Are you ready for this?”

Pen sighed and moved to the chair, flopping down like an obstinate child. “Just gotta test me, dontcha, Hector?”

Hector chuckled softly. “Yes, Peanut, I do. You’re welcome.” He leaned back in his chair and regarded her for a moment. “Believe me, this job is warranted. If it tests your loyalty, then that’s icing on the cake.” Hector punctuated this last comment by leaning forward again and laying his elbows on the creaky desk.

Pen examined her cuticles. "Loyalty, huh?" Hector didn't take the bait. He'd known her too long for that.

"Peanut, I love you too much to let you blow this. And I respect you enough not to bring up all I've done for you since I yanked your scrawny ass off the streets." He raised an eyebrow.

"*Subtle*, Hector."

He chuckled. The sarcasm bounced right off him. "It's time for you to get going. Just another job, kid. Big bucks this time, too; Platinum Bones...yeah." He let the last word roll off his tongue and fade. He shook his head slowly, no doubt remembering the hit that had taken him into the six-figure bracket.

"Yeah well, *Boss*, I should probably get to it, huh?" Pen cringed on the inside, trying to belie the trepidation that rippled through her. He only chuckled at her again and tossed a legal-sized envelope on the blotter.

"There you go, Peanut. See ya on the other side." With that, he turned back to the open file drawer and began walking his fingers across the letter tabs. He glanced at her one last time, and she took her cue to leave, swiping the package off the desk in passing.

"See ya, Hector."

She exchanged parting nods with Clarence on the way out. The second she had her car door shut, she ran her thumbnail along the top fold of the envelope. Inside were photos—*very funny*, *Boss*—an address and an itinerary. She tossed it on the seat next to her phone and cranked the engine. She wanted more than anything to spit gravel at that faded little building, but she refrained for composure's sake.

Within twenty minutes, she rolled into her brother's shop yard. A pair of grungy hounds trotted up to her door and snuffled at the window. They left smears and smudges in their drool-soaked excitement.

"All right, guys. Jeez. Gimme a minute to get out of the car!" The big boys backed up and rested on their haunches while she squeezed through the generous space they offered. Pen smiled at their goofy grins. "Hey, boys." She walked between them, scruffing them each on the head as she went.

Matty came out of the shop, grease rag flopping between his hands. "Hey, Sis." He tilted his head and squinted at her through the midday glare. She and Matty had the same brown eyes. Their blue-eyed dad always said, '*Just shows how full of shit you two are. Just like your fuckin' mother!*'

"Whatcha got for me?" Her baby brother always had a spare vehicle sitting around. Disposable, as they say.

He smirked. "A Duster. Straight outta seventy-two. Heh. No balls, either. Hope you don't get sloppy." He held out the keys with two fingers.

Pen crossed arms and glared at him.

He snatched the keys back and grinned. "Alright, I messed with it a little bit. It'll get you out of a jam, I'm pretty sure." He turned and ambled towards the far end of the garage. "But you know, if you don't want it..." His laughter followed him around the corner.

Pen grabbed her stuff out of her car and hauled it around the corner of the building. She found Matty standing next to the ugliest shade of yellow she'd ever laid eyes on, offset horrifically by a tattered, once-white ragtop.

"Laugh it up, little man. Your time's coming."

Matty tipped his head back with an appreciative laugh. "Yeah, Pen. Keep telling yourself that."

Pen swiped the keys from his upturned palm and stretched to give him a peck on the cheek. She stuffed some bills into his shirt pocket. "See ya, bud."

"Take it easy, Sis." He closed her door and stepped back, and Pen pulled away.

Jason leaned into the girl he had pinned against the wall in the back room of the bar. He braced himself, then pulled her legs up around his hips. He reached between them, nudged the little swatch of fabric to the side, and sunk his fingers into her. She was on fire for him, or maybe it was the bourbon that had her all lubed up. Either way, it worked out in his favor. He always got hot before a job.

"Oh, God, Anthony! Oh!" She wrapped her arms around his neck and her lips around his Adam's apple. Jason fumbled with his button and zipper, pried his rigid shaft from behind his briefs and slung the waistband beneath his sack. He reached into his back pocket and pulled out a condom, but she grabbed his hand before he could tear the package open. Her look smoldered.

"Let me do it," she whispered, and sunk down to her knees. She opened the packet with her teeth, put the condom in her open mouth and grasped his prick with both hands. Keeping her eyes on him, she slowly drew the tip into her mouth and pushed down, her lips taut and unrolling the thin sheath over his dick. When she reached capacity, she swallowed once, throat constricting around him, and he groaned and pulled her up, not willing to wait another second.

She swung around and leaned her forearms against the wall. Her ass shoved against him. He grasped her hips and drove it home in one thrust, holding there, feeling his pubic hair press against her sticky flesh while he regained control. The heat was intense, and she clenched around him like a vice.

"Fuck me, Anthony! Please fuck me!" She wiggled her hips and ground against him.

With a half-groan, half-growl, he pulled back and poised to slam into her again. She whimpered and tilted her pussy towards him, and Jason began pounding. She cried out through clenched teeth and arched her back. Her head dropped, her mouth opened wide, and she shuddered and slowed their rhythm, switching to long, slow gliding strokes up and down his cock, squeezing him until he thought he would pop.

Not. Just. Yet... he chanted as she rode him harder. She grabbed her own tits and squeezed with more force than he would have done.

The sounds of a commotion in the front of the bar filtered back to Jason's consciousness. "Ah, good to see you, sir! The usual, then, is it?"

The bartender had given the cue. Jason pumped faster until the friction made him explode. He grunted into the back of her neck, and bit and sucked and gushed.

His spent cock slipped out and hung limp and soggy over his briefs. She turned in his arms and kissed him deeply, then touched his lips and eased around the doorframe into the ladies room, wiggling her mini skirt back down around her thighs.

Jason hit the men's room, flushed the condom and cleaned up a little, splashed water on his face. He snuck a peek at the front room and slid through the greasy door into the alley behind the bar. Releasing a breath, he picked through the scattered garbage and retrieved a silenced pistol and a small device he'd stashed earlier. He shoved the weapon

in the waistband of his jeans, then—device in hand and hand in pants pocket—he strolled casually out of the alley and into the street.

When he made it to the other side, he continued on a block, then pressed a tiny button on the device. The windows of the bar exploded onto the sidewalk. He jumped at the sound, turned and trotted back to the scene, and blended in with the crowd that was already gathering.

Scanning the onlookers, he selected a bland, polyester clad woman and moved to her side. “What’s going on?” he inquired casually.

The woman’s gaze wavered only momentarily in his direction. “Well, I couldn’t say, but it looks like a fire or something. Something sure made a noise! Didja hear that?” She swung her mousy head in his direction. “BOOM! Just like that! I saw the whole thing, you know. I was standing in that window, right up there.” Her stubby finger prodded the air towards the opposite side of the street. “I’m lucky it didn’t explode all over me!”

She smelled ready for picking. He just had to determine which approach to use. After studying her movements for a few minutes, he was ready to launch into his act, though the very idea left a bitter taste on the back of his tongue.

“Say, um...you wouldn’t by chance... Oh, never mind.” He shook his head and chuckled to himself, sheepishly looking away at the fire.

“What? I’m not going anywhere with you, mister! What do you think this is, a singles’ joint? We’re in the middle of the street watching a *burning building*, for Pete’s Sake!”

He put his hands up defensively. “Oh, no! No, no. I mean... I wouldn’t dream of... I would never be so forward. Sorry. I was just going to ask if you had a cell phone. Mine’s dead.” He watched all the tumblers click into place in her eyes. *Surprise...good. Realization...yes. Aaannnd...mortification.* Her eyes widened and a flush rose from her throat to flood her cheeks. *There ya go, sweetie.*

She took a step back and tittered. “Oh, sorry. I guess I...” She struggled for grace-saving words. “I don’t have a cell, but you can use my phone upstairs if it’s local.” She nodded her head towards the window. He imagined the gun going off in her face. *Click, click, boom.*

“Really? I mean, are you sure? I’d really appreciate it, but you know...”

She waved him on. “Don’t be silly. Besides, the street’s full of cops right now. How safe can a girl get?” She half smiled, the irony of her statement flashing in her eyes for a split second before it was dismissed with a blink. “Come on, I’ve got to get back up there anyway. My kitty’s probably going crazy by himself.”

Jason gave her his most earnest smile. “Wow, you really are nice. I can’t tell you how much I appreciate this.” *Phase Two.* “I have to call my girlfriend and let her know something’s up, or she’ll have my skin when I get home.” He looked at the ground as he walked. “She’s funny like that, I guess. Don’t get me wrong, I mean, I love her so much, but...” He sighed almost too heavily and glanced up at her on the stairs. “Sorry. You don’t even know me. What do you care?”

“Oh, no! I mean, please, if you need to get something off your chest, then who better than a new acquaintance? I have no idea who you’re talking about, right? So I’m safe for venting. Go ahead. I don’t mind.” She smiled softly and waited for him to catch up to her on the landing. She gained a new level of enthusiasm with each flight of stairs, until they finally reached her floor. “Oh, I am so sorry! I never got your name! I can hardly let

someone into my home before I even know his name, now can I? My name's Gail, by the way."

Resting her back against the door jam, she extended a small hand towards him. Jason gave the hand a limp pump. "I'm Derrick. Nice to meet you, Gail." He shuddered inside as his palm slipped against hers. She already felt like a corpse—greasy, sagging skin, no muscle tone, and cool to the touch. He resisted the urge to rub his hand on his shirt.

Gail beamed at him and turned toward the door. "Pardon the mess, Derrick. I wasn't expecting company, of course." The door opened immediately into a tired, mud-toned living room, all long and narrow. Thirty-year-old furniture in various stages of collapse lined the walls. Jason watched Gail shove a pile of semi-folded laundry to the side of the couch. "Have a seat, I'll go grab the phone from the kitchen. You want me to get you something to drink while I'm in there?"

Jason scanned the room, his gaze landing on the window. He stepped to it and peered out at the rapidly dwindling chaos below. *This'll do nicely.*

He heard Gail fumbling in the sink and imagined her hastily washing a couple of 'decent' glasses, even though he'd never answered her question. He pulled the pistol from its nesting place and padded towards the kitchen.

Pen propped the detail list on the steering wheel and figured out what time she'd arrive, where he would be, and where she should wait. Each location on the itinerary sparked a flashback. When they'd met, when they'd fought, and when that rage had transitioned into passion... She shook her head and smiled in spite of the situation.

The drive only took a couple of hours, and she was a little amazed that he'd been so near, for however long he'd been there. She pulled into his apartment complex, found a nice, quiet spot, and double-checked her notes and supplies. After a quick scan of the parking lot, she slipped out and walked towards the back of the building. She took the stairs and let herself into a dim hallway.

Four doors down on the left waited an empty apartment. Four doors down on the right sat the target's place. Pen listened for a minute, then let herself into the empty residence.

She stashed her tools back in her bag and took a quick look around. The bathroom was a hollow shell with a hole in the floor. *Great!* She checked her watch—no time to make a run. Luckily, she'd made a pit stop in town, because hide-and-seek always made her feel like she had to pee.

She settled in to wait, sitting and leaning against the wall, and pulled out the contents of the envelope. She hadn't given the photos any more than a cursory glance, so she took a minute to study them in detail now. Not much had changed in three years. He looked a little closer to dead, but that was about it.

She ignored the pang, but couldn't stop the memories from flooding back. Resigned to getting them over with, she tipped her head back against the crinkled wallpaper and closed her eyes.

There he was—all smoldering eyes and slack-jawed concentration, the electricity between them so thick that she could easily picture his sighs coming out in rushes of colored vapor. He'd always known just where to touch her, just which buttons to push.

They'd been in it together, the two of them, completely open, no false names or histories. No one else had ever given her that.

Glancing at her watch, Pen idly traced the fingers of her other hand across the inseam of her cargo pants. The hard knob of material, where all four seams met, was positioned just so, and she rocked against her hand, pushing against the shape.

"No time for weakness, Pen!" she admonished herself.

She sprang to her feet and began pacing the cramped entryway, checking the parking lot on each pass of the window. *Get it together, Pen. It's a job. Just a job.* After several rotations, wiping her sweaty palms on the seat of her pants, she glanced again and saw his vehicle pulling up to its assigned spot.

Pen scrambled to her bag and withdrew her weapons, hastily fastening and stashing them into the pouches and pockets of her clothing. *Gotta be ready. One quick shot.* She screwed the silencer onto the muzzle and slid a round into the chamber.

She rested her gloved fingertips lightly against the doorknob and peered through the peephole. Within seconds, she heard footsteps on the carpeted stairs to her right.

One shot to the temple, slightly angled to the back, was all it had taken to leave the shrew in a heap on the kitchen floor. Jason returned to the window and watched the activity below for a while. Matching cops to vehicles assured him that he had accounted for almost everyone on the scene. There was a small gathering of blue off to the side of the hook and ladder. They'd be canvassing soon, he imagined.

Jason grabbed Gail's keys off the small table next to the door, let her cat out, and exited through the rear of the complex. He weaved through a few alleys, and meandered down a sidewalk or two until he came to his car. As he pulled away, his first genuine—if sardonic—smile curled his mouth.

That was slick. Bonus points awarded for securing a safe spot in which to watch the bar over the next couple of days, and see if the target showed up to assess the damage in person. All bets said he would—Hector kept a tight reign on his business holdings. But Jason knew Hector better than any of the morons who paid his bills. Hector was no fool. He'd be there, just not quite yet.

Swinging his car up behind an old warehouse, he checked his mirrors one last time, then stepped out and stuffed his hand behind the puckered metal sign to the left of the loading dock. It took a bit of finger wiggling, but he soon had his package in hand. He briefly flipped the flap to check the contents, returned to his car and headed home.

As the streetlights slid across his windshield, he couldn't help feeling smug. This would put him in a new tax bracket. And well deserved, he figured. He'd paid his dues and worked for every penny he'd earned. In the ten years he'd been an independent contractor, he'd graduated from Molotov cocktails to pipe bombs, to the very latest in plastique. Better toys were more expensive, especially when you only used them once, but the pay scale evened it out.

He'd spent a couple thousand in his head by the time he turned into his complex. That would be the first thing to change. Time for new digs. Maybe he'd go further west, as in 'all the way west'.

He pulled in, yanked his keys and jumped out of the car. The calculations put a spring in his step: how much money to throw into his retirement account, how much he

could spare to start fresh in another scene. Well, not *completely* fresh—he'd need his contacts and references, of course.

He made what was, hopefully, one of his last trips up the stained, carpeted stairs. and jangled his keys into position in the lock. He heard a *click* from inside, just seconds before the latch of his door disengaged.

He threw his door open, spun inside and back against the wall. *What the fuck was that?* He reached out to swing his door shut, and caught a glimpse of movement in his peripheral vision. He threw his hand in that direction and felt the heavy contact of his fist against metal. A gun clattered to the floor and spun across the hall. He turned to face his would-be attacker.

"You're shittin' me!" He drew a slow breath, forced his body to relax and exhaled. He raised himself to the balls of his feet, resting his weight lightly.

"Hey, Pen." He backed into the room, drawing her inside with the challenge in his gaze.

A knife, balanced loosely in her right hand. "Jay."

They eyed each other warily.

"Well, ain't this special. It's been a while, huh? Did you find me to satisfy your own curiosity, or is this a business call?"

"All we know is business, Jason."

They circled each other slowly.

"Aw, come on, Pen. We did alright." He took another slow step to the left. Pen followed, staying directly in front of him, body angled sideways, just out of arm's reach. Every muscle in her body looked coiled and ready to spring at any given moment. *She was always so damn good.* He shook his head. "Hector sends *you*. And you wonder why I went solo."

"Hector's a smart man, Jason." Her weight shifted.

He leaned in slightly, centering his weight with a small bend of his knees.

Recognizing the gleam in his eyes, Pen drew both arms up, elbows bent, fingers loosely curled, ready to snap into tight balls of sinew and bone, fist and blade. "Well, this should be fun."

Just as the words left her mouth, Jason threw his fist straight at her face.

Instinctively, she blocked his swing with her forearm and used his momentum to propel herself sideways. She drew her knee back and slammed it into his groin. As he pivoted to face her, she hopped to the side. There was blood in his eyes.

This was *not* going to be fun.

Jason tasted bile in the back of his throat. He needed to get a grip. A joker's grin stretched his mouth. His cheeks ached with it.

She watched him, sizing up the damage, no doubt. This wasn't going to work here. He'd have to take care of her, but not yet. She had a few tasty morsels of information to feed him first.

He feigned a left jab and circled around with his right fist, aiming at her temple. She barely blocked the swing, and his fist grazed past her ear, snagging the cartilage with a grinding crunch. *That'll get her head ringing, at least.*

He dodged a swipe of the blade, swung with his left again and connected with the side of her head. She staggered sideways and attempted to shake it off. He didn't give her a chance, and followed with a fist to her diaphragm. She doubled over, air gushing out. The knife dropped to the carpet. He sent his knee into the bridge of her nose and she was down for the count.

Squirrely as she was, he knew he needed to act quickly. He scooped her up, checked the hallway once more, and carried her out the back door and down the fire escape stairs.

Shit! His car was parked in the front lot. He set Pen on the stairs, leaned her head against the railing, and peeked around the corner of the building. All seemed quiet in the twilight. Still, he needed to get his car over here.

What a pile of crap this day turned out to be! He shot a glance at Pen, who still seemed to be out cold, then made a casual dash to his car.

Pen came to with a bad case of the spins. Her tongue was dry and she sucked on it a little while she took in her situation. Jason leaned against the corner of the building, looking towards the front parking lot. She dropped her jaw and closed her eyes when she saw him turning in her direction. The metal railing bit into her temple, but she kept her head in position and worked out her next step.

As soon as she heard his footsteps jogging away, she sprang up, thankful she'd parked where she had. She looked in Jason's direction as she sprinted towards the Duster. His eyes met hers, just as they both climbed into their respective drivers' seats. Pen already had the keys in the ignition and was cranking the engine when she slammed her door. She could hear him following suit. At least she'd had the foresight to back into her parking spot, a piece of training he'd obviously forgotten. She slammed the shifter into first and popped the clutch, tromping on the gas.

She needed to hit the desert, where she'd have open space to maneuver and no witnesses, time to get into a defensible position. And all her gear was still upstairs.

"Crap!" She pounded the steering wheel and dodged slower traffic. She'd have to go back there. *Sloppy, sloppy. No damn good.* Good thing she always kept a spare.

A glance at the rear view confirmed he was with her. Ironical as it was, she was going to kill him or die trying. She figured a small part of her would die either way.

She shot wide around a vehicle in the left-hand turn lane, and swung onto the freeway on-ramp. Jason was only a block behind. She fumbled for her sunglasses to block the last shots of sun and merged into the oblivious traffic, crossing all four lanes in an effort to gain some ground.

Jason stayed right on top of her. They kept at it for miles, until the off ramps began spreading out and leading only to back roads and three-pump gas stations. Pen leaned forward, fumbled under the seat for her 'emergency' weapon and wedged it beneath her leg.

Eventually there was nothing but desert, and a check of her gas gauge told her it was time to get this over with. Pen braced herself and veered off the road onto the hard-

packed sand. Her tires shuddered over every crack and crevice. She bounced the front end through a series of divots and came to a screeching halt in a ravine. She flipped off the headlights the moment the tires stopped moving, giving her eyes a chance to adjust before darting out behind a pile of boulders. Between the Duster, the ledge of the ravine and the rocks, Pen figured she had as much cover as she was going to get, and knew it wouldn't be close to enough.

Jason couldn't help but laugh when Pen's vehicle spun off the road. He pulled over and watched the headlights bounce wildly into the night, come to a stop and go out. He eased his car into drive and crept out onto the desert, aiming his wheels toward the spot where he'd last seen those headlights.

Of course, Pen *could* be creeping along in the dark, just to throw him off her trail, but he suspected she'd holed up somewhere to wait for him—she'd never been one to back down.

The front end of the car dipped and rose over the last ripple of hard-packed sand, then tipped towards the bottom of a ravine. His headlights landed on the piss-yellow Duster, parked at an angle against an outcropping of rocks. She'd been there long enough for the dust to settle. He had to assume she was prepared for whatever move he was about to make.

He killed the engine, cut the lights and gave himself a minute. No sounds interrupted the stillness. No movement violated the dark, but he knew she was there somewhere—he could feel her. It appeared he wasn't going to get any information after all.

Nice move, rookie. May as well get it over with now. He grabbed his gun off the seat and opened the door slowly, crouching behind it as he crept out of the car. He scanned back and forth over the shrouded terrain and picked up more details as his eyes adjusted to the dark.

Perched behind a pile of rocks, Pen watched the lights brighten the closer Jason's car came to the ravine. Just before the beams crested the hill, she put her back against the rocks and closed her eyes to prevent blinding. She heard the tires slide, crunching down the gravel on the bank of the riverbed. The undercarriage scraped against the rocks at the bottom.

The car stopped and the engine cut out. She checked her weapon with her fingertips; safety off, round chambered, two handed grip. She drew a breath and waited for the sound...and there it was. Just the slightest *tick*, as the headlights were switched off.

Pen rose to her full height, propped her elbows on the rock in front of her and sighted in on Jason's forehead. He squinted into the darkness, partially shielded behind the open driver's side door. Perhaps he heard her, or felt her, because he ducked down and to the left. But he didn't duck far enough.

Fish in a barrel, Pen. Duck on a pond. Her hesitation bothered her.
Unacceptable.

She squeezed the trigger gently, depositing a bullet just left of center, leaving a black dot on Jason's forehead, visible only for a second before he slumped backward and fell to the ground. She released her breath and relaxed her arms, waiting for the echoes of the gunshot to fade.

Not foolish enough to take her eyes off him, she crept down from her shelter, eased over to crouch at the front fender of his car, and watched him closely for signs of life. The sight and smell held a sure sign of death—he'd released his bowels.

Pen made a quick sweep of his car, gathering any items she deemed useful before she tore off in the Duster. She performed a mental inventory of the contents of the bag she'd left at the apartment complex. There wouldn't be anything with which to identify her, but she knew better than to leave equipment by choice. She bumped her car back onto the highway and headed to town, stopping only to fill her tank at the first available opportunity, an unmanned pay-at-the-pump station. She paid in cash.

Flashing lights surrounded the complex. Apparently they were on to Jason and/or his disappearance. She continued driving, careful not to speed up. Leaving her gear behind grated on her, but she didn't really have a choice.

The second she hit the state highway, the heebie-jeebies set in. She couldn't control it. She just kept watching the mirrors and urging the car home faster.

Even after the review, Pen couldn't think of anything she could or would have done differently. Should have been a clean shot at the apartment, but his reflexes had been too damn quick. It ate at her a little, but she was Platinum now.

She leaned her head back against the seat and smiled. *Platinum! Triple figures.*

She stopped at her brother's place, chucked some beef jerky at the boys, and switched cars while they munched away happily. Back in her garage, she let out a huge sigh and sunk into the car upholstery for a few minutes.

The heavy door rolled shut behind her, and she eased out of the car, took her shoes off in the entry and crept into the house. She padded up the stairs, stripping off her clothes as she went.

The shower was incredible, and Pen allowed herself some time to think. A few tears stung the backs of her eyes, but she pinched them off by squeezing her eyes shut, and scrubbed away the crazy day.

Clean and dry, she padded naked to the bedroom and slid under the covers. Her hands traveled up the muscled thighs beside her until she reached the prize. Brian stretched and gave her a sleepy smile.

"Now then. Where were we?" Pen grinned and slurped his stirring cock into her mouth.

Playing with Dolls

Joey and Tash are friends and roommates. But there's more beneath the surface. More than Joey's ready to deal with.

She was a doll of a woman, four-foot-eleven, blonde, long lashes, evening gown sparkling in the neon bar signs, tiny feet strapped into impossibly high heels. Absolutely beautiful.

Small though she was, on stage she was larger than life, strutting to the beat and swaying her hips, as strong in body as she was in charisma. When she flipped into handstands against the pole, or did inverted push-ups, men threw money onto the stage.

When she was on, she was *on*, and nothing could stop her. She was the star attraction in that small town strip joint. We ran the club, she and I. Well, not officially, but we had our influence, she being the top drawing dancer, and me being the waitress with the nice rack and special smile for each and every patron.

Anastasia, she called herself, onstage and off. Her real name became a shadow that faded completely. I called her 'Tash', and she called me Joey, and we shared a house in the west end of town; more out of convenience at first—both working at the bar and her needing a roommate—but we immediately fell into familiarity. The kind of friendship that burns fierce and hard, destined to burn itself out.

Together, we were a 'good time'. Everyone knew they'd be entertained, just being near us. She'd set 'em up, and I'd knock 'em down. The employees became a swirl of faces around our fire, feeding off our heat and intensity, living vicariously.

We kept the customers entertained, and bolstered the morale of the staff, keeping that wall against society strong and vivid. There were always those who would make a point of justifying their patronage, and spit at the service we provided.

"When you gonna get up there and take your clothes off, sweet thang?" All lecherous hands and filthy sneers.

I would smile that smile, wink and say, "Never," squelching the tingling at the base of my skull.

I'd been offered upwards of five hundred dollars, cash on the table, and still hadn't succumbed to temptation. I felt the wind whistling through the chasm I would have leaped, and it was a leap down, in my opinion.

"Ya fuckin' hypocrite!" Tash snorted after work one night, when I told her about it over videos and wine.

"What?"

"All that shit you spew about admiring my self esteem and being able to get up there on stage every night? And you *know* what it takes for me to do it, Joey!"

"Oh." It had been a long night, and my fuzzy brain wouldn't fire on the first couple turns of the key, but once it sparked, it went straight into high gear.

"Oh! No, Tash, no! That's not what I meant!" I moved to the couch and snuggled in next to her, shoving her bag of sweaty costumes to the floor. "You know I could never do

what you do, Tash. I don't have the balls. For me to do it, well, it would mean something totally different if I did it. You know?"

Tash remained stiff for a minute, then melted against me. "Yeah, Jo, I know."

We watched the movie in silence for a few minutes, my mind whirling over what I'd said.

"You know what I *could* do, though? When it's slow, or the guys are being tight with their money, I *could* do the backwards tip thing."

Tash pulled away and raised an eyebrow at me. "You could, huh? You'd bend over the rail and let me take a dollar off your face?"

"Yeah!"

"You know I'll have to sit on your face, don't you? So I can pick up the dollar?"

"How bad can it be, Tash? I'm practically sitting on your lap right now. It's not like we have a lot of personal space between us." I jabbed my finger into the soft spot below her ribs.

Tash shot off the couch and grabbed a dollar from the end table. She creased the bill lengthwise. "Lay down on your back and angle your head so it hangs over the edge a little."

Grinning, I did as instructed, digging my shoulders into the cushions. Tash laid the dollar over my nose.

"Now lay still."

She turned away from me. Looking over her shoulder, she pulled up her oversized t-shirt and lowered herself onto my face. Her skin was soft and cool against my blush. Instinctively, I held my breath. She swiveled her hips a little, then stood up, her arms in the air. When she raised the hem of her shirt again, the dollar bill was pinched neatly between her butt cheeks.

I smiled up at her. "See? That wasn't so bad." I rubbed my chin. "You're due for a wax job, though."

"Alright, ya little shithead. Scoot over!"

Tash wiggled in next to me. We fell asleep long before the credits rolled across the screen.

A few nights later, on a slow, hot Friday, pulling tips was like pulling ice-cold taffy. Body odor and stale beer hung thick in the stagnant air.

I sighed and wiped my arm across my forehead after I set a drink on a regular's table. He smiled and flipped a couple quarters onto my tray.

"Heat's got 'em sluggish, huh?" His gaze swept the room. "Not a whole lot of enthusiasm tonight."

"Watch this." I smirked and set my tray on an empty table. Pulling a five out of my pocket, I creased it like Tash had done.

I caught the eye of every customer in the joint, smiling wickedly and waving the bill in the air. Hips swaying, I made my way to the end of the stage. The boys in the front row were the customers I wanted. They sat glassy-eyed, a few singles laid out in front of them, but no action in their faces.

I waved the five a few times for their benefit, then turned my back to the stage. With a flourish, I bent back, tits thrust in the air, and hung half my frame across the rail. A

hoot from the back snapped the boys to attention, and Tash turned slowly in my direction. She grabbed the pole briefly as she pranced over to me, grinning and high stepping like a dancing pony.

Her gaze traveled from face to face, her expression saying *'Well now, lookie here, boys...'*

I placed the bill on my nose, stretched my arms along the rail to either side, and waited for the big move. A couple more high steps and Tash was right on top of me, leaning over, a breast in each hand, nodding her approval to the audience. Some slow, sweet Eric Clapton played in the background, and Tash was *on*, her tongue just visible behind the sexy smile, eyes twinkling with delight at the mischief we were about to make.

They shouted encouragement as if they were in charge, driven beyond their heat-induced hazes. Tash lowered her body and slid across mine. Her nipples grazed from my belly to my forehead. She knocked the bill askew, but recovered, taking it between her breasts. She pressed them together, nipples gripped between thumbs and curled forefingers.

Heavily lashed eyes flashed down at me, peeking through the golden tendrils of hair that spilled between us and tickled my chin. She winked and smiled. "Ready?"

She spread her breasts and the bill fluttered back to my face. I smiled back and rocked my lower body. "Yeah."

Tash threw her head back and laughed a deep, full stage-laugh. She stood, caressed her hips and thighs, twirled, arched her back and extended her ass. Spreading and bending her knees, she squatted over my face and lowered herself onto me. She clutched the hair at my temples and bounced once, twice. Then she sprung up, snapped her legs together and did another twirl to show the money had been deposited. I could taste her sweat on my lips.

The applause was crazy loud after the awed silence inside my mind. Head swimming, I raised myself slowly off the rail. My back was a little sore, but I was otherwise unscathed. I smiled, pulled my tray off the now occupied table and strutted off to take an order.

We made a killing that night.

After work, we snuggled on the couch for a movie, wrapped in her down comforter. I had her feet in my lap, and I discovered I could stretch my fingers out to fit her foot: heel to the base of my palm, little bejeweled toes just edging over my fingertips. She had thick, hard calluses on the balls of her feet, gained from wearing the four-inch heels every night. Another reason not to dance.

"Tash! Look!" I held her foot to my hand above the blanket.

She chuckled sleepily. "Cut it out, ya doorknob!" and closed her eyes.

I waited until she'd been asleep for a few minutes before I eased myself out from under her legs and went to bed. Once safely cocooned within my blankets, I thought I'd drift right off, but my mind wouldn't shut down. My thoughts were slippery and electric.

My left hand folded onto my breast. My right hand slid beneath the waistband of my flannel boxers—a parting gift from a one-night-stand. My knuckles peeked out of the flap in the front when I bent my fingers to soothe the heat that bloomed and pulsed beneath. My eyes rolled back in my head and a grunt escaped me when my fingers brushed my clit.

I dug my toes into the mattress and pushed my hips in the air, squeezed my buttocks together to hold myself high and rigid, while my fingers pressed and circled, ever faster and harder. No pretenses, no warm ups. Just straight to the shuddering end.

I clenched my teeth together and growled between them, released my muscles and rocked against my hand. My hips fell back to the bed, and crashing wave after wave flowed from my center outward, receding slowly, until they were merely lapping at the shore and I floated off to sleep.

Funny. I played the game, it being such a crowd pleaser that Tash and I were an 'item'. Never occurred to me how comfortable it had become.

"Crystal's coming back to town," Tash said out of nowhere on the drive home one night.

"What for?" From what Tash had told me, things with her and Crystal had ended badly. I'd heard stuff from other people too, but that shit only rolls so far.

Tash's eyes glistened in the streetlights. "To dance. I saw her on the schedule for next week." She steered onto the exit ramp and signaled our turn. Her expression was neutral, her lips set in neither a smile nor a frown.

I wasn't sure what I was supposed to say. What happened between her and Crystal was none of my business, though I was itching to know. I gave it a minute while we turned onto our street and headed towards the end of the cul-de-sac. "Huh," I said at last.

"Yeah," she answered. She pulled into our driveway, shut the car off, and turned to face me. "Don't listen to anything she says, Joey. It's all a bunch of bullshit and she knows it." Her eyes found mine in the streetlight's glow. The intense stare made me uneasy. "Okay?" she prodded again.

"Yeah." I climbed out of the car and went into the house. Instead of the usual movie and unwinding, I begged off tired and went to my room.

I tried reading a book, but a pang of jealousy kept jabbing me in the chest and temples. What the hell did I have to be jealous of? The question rattled through my mind until I fell into fitful dreams.

The next few days felt like a month of standing at the edge of a minefield, waiting to take that first step.

We pulled into work that Sunday, and Tash flicked her cigarette at Crystal's powder pink Trans Am parked behind the owner's Corvette. The embers exploded against the fender and cascaded to the pavement, where they sputtered and died.

We parked in the alley, and Tash got out and tossed a "Grab my bag, will ya?" over her shoulder as she yanked open the heavy back door of the club.

The big door slammed behind her, and I was left looking at the dashboard and trying to decide what part I was supposed to be playing in this new game.

"Yeah. Sure." I hefted Tash's duffle bag out of the back seat and banged through the entrance. I dumped her shit at the bottom of the stairs that led up to the dressing rooms. Tash had already disappeared behind the heavy beaded curtains that blocked the stairway.

“Fireworks with tonight’s show, Joey. This is gonna be a hot Sunday.”

Jerry, the daytime bouncer, came up behind me and put a hand on my shoulder. I leaned back against him for a moment, soaking in the empathy. He squeezed my shoulder, brushed past me to slam the lid on the jukebox and took his seat near the stage. Show time.

A slender, tanned arm poked through the curtains and handed Jerry a five to plug into the jukebox. He punched in the numbers, and when an aching Sheryl Crow oozed out of the speakers, Crystal glided through the curtains.

Cameron Diaz eyes intense on the few men at the rail. Cameron Diaz lips pouting and slightly parted. A heart-shaped face infused with natural beauty. An hourglass shape tightly wrapped in a modified Springsteen tee and a pair of raggedy cut-off jean shorts. Bought-and-paid-for breasts strained against the worn material. A flat stomach balanced round hips and ass.

She grabbed the pole in both hands and pivoted to a downbeat. Honey colored hair grazed her shoulders. Bittersweet melodies wrapped around the air, and she mouthed the words while her eyes glistened as if they were about to well over. She hugged herself, rubbing her upper arms and pushing her cleavage into a vertical smile, then fell to her knees and arched back onto the stage.

“You got a couple of empties over there, Jo.”

The manager’s voice smacked me in the back of the head. I grabbed my tray and change for a twenty, and hit the floor.

By now there were men standing at the end of the stage, bills in hands or bills in mouths, leaning against the padded railing, just waiting for Crystal to strut their way. Testosterone and arousal electrified the air. With a Betty Boop expression, Crystal slithered over. She grasped the front of her shirt with both hands and ripped it apart in one fluid motion.

Her liberated breasts should have bounced free, but they were solid, the skin stretched tight from implants. The men didn’t seem to mind. They roared when she snagged the hat off one man’s head and stretched it over her left tit. She wiggled it on, then raised her hands and bounced on the balls of her feet. As the music ended, she replaced the man’s hat, wrapped her arms around his head and shoved his face into glittery cleavage. She pushed him off after and strutted back to the pole for the next song.

Within no time, we were packed to the rafters. I ran my ass off to keep up, but my tip jar was overflowing for my troubles.

“Is it really Sunday night?” I screamed to Sarah, the bartender, while she tipped more bottles onto my tray and tossed me my change.

Sarah shook her head and threw her hands up in the air. She rushed to the opposite end of the bar and pulled fresh drinks as if her daddy were an octopus. Her shirt clung to her back, and she stopped for a heartbeat in front of the little plastic fan propped next to the register.

A hand on my ass got me moving again, and I hoisted my tray above my head and wove and shimmied through the crowd. Customers were three deep at the bar, and I made a circuit along the perimeter to catch the guys waiting to place an order. They *always* tip well, those guys. Even when the waitress’s hair is plastered to her scalp with sweat.

I took my break during Tash's set. Sparks were virtually flying off her as she spun and bent, swayed and beckoned. Everyone could feel the competition, so thick in the air. Tash looked like a predator, her eyes set hard, dressed in her favorite gown—glittering, slinky and skin tight. *Little Lover* set the tone, and she was quick silver, swooping around the pole while she released the snap of her bodice. Her dress pooled at her feet, revealing the matching g-string and bra.

This was what they wanted—Anastasia in all her glory. She shimmied up the pole and crossed her legs, to sit primly as if there were actually a chair beneath her. Fluid and sensual, she arched her back and extended her arms. She slid down the pole with her feet clasped around the top and her hands clasped around the bottom. Halfway down, she flipped, landing on her feet near the front of the stage.

She stood, arms crossed, and dared the customers to come to the stage so she could lean into them, let them hold their money between their teeth and drop it into her extended g-string.

A nod from the manager told me it was time to get moving again. I stubbed out my cigarette and went back to making the rounds.

The rest of the night went by in a blur, the dancers coming out and talking and drinking with the customers, but me too busy to notice. Before I knew it, I was wiping the last layer of sticky beer off the last table, while the bouncers followed behind, stacking and tipping the chairs.

I plunked onto the last stool at the end of the bar and dumped my tips onto the counter. Straightening and sorting, I shook my head at the unexpected windfall. Just as I was thinking of going for breakfast, if Tash wasn't too exhausted, I heard her laughter. She came flouncing down the stairs and I figured the odds were in my favor. I turned to speak and stopped, my mouth hanging open. Tash and Crystal were together. They were giggling and heading my way.

"Hey, Joey, me and Crys are going for breakfast. Grab my bag, will ya? The keys are in the outside pocket. See ya at the house!" She pivoted and followed Crystal, who was already headed for the door.

"Now there's an old story," Sarah said behind me. I swiveled on my stool and watched her slide up onto the beer coolers. She dumped her tips in a pile next to mine, swung one leg under the other and began sorting her money. "You know about all that, don't you?"

I shrugged. "Nah. I've heard things, but nothing worth repeating."

"Well, I think it's shitty that Tash is treating you this way. And what's even shittier is that you're not the first. She had another roommate," Sarah gestured the quotation marks, "before Crystal, too."

I lit a cigarette and leaned my arms on the padded edge of the bar. "We are just roommates, you know." I blew a cloud of smoke towards the floor. "Well, friends, too. Close friends."

She regarded me for a moment, then shook her head. "Yeah, well, that may be how *you* see it." She put down her money and touched my hand. "Look, Joey. We all like you, so don't take this the wrong way, but we all know how Tash is, and we know how this is going to go. It's a pattern, see? She's a predator. Whatever it is she's using you for, she'll get tired of it, and find something or someone she thinks she can get more from. Leave you to watch the dust settle. I don't want to see that happen to you. None of us do, Joey. And it's starting to happen. Mark my words."

I grabbed my tips and moved around the bar to exchange my coins and small bills. "Yeah, I hear ya. Thanks." I threw the bank bag onto the coolers and rushed past Sarah so she wouldn't see my chin quivering. "I'm beat. See ya tomorrow."

"Just look at your options, Jo!" she yelled at my back.

I pushed past Jerry, who'd stayed on to help out with the unexpected rush, and took the stairs to the dressing room two at a time. On my way back down, I avoided his gaze, heading straight for the back door with my head down. Jerry fell in behind and escorted me to the car.

"Joey, hang on, will ya?" He turned me around with a hand on my shoulder.

I leaned back against the car and crossed my arms. "What, Jerry? I know! Watch my back, right? I got it."

"Nah, Joey." He dropped his hand, but his gaze clung to me. "I just want to let you know I've got a spare room at my place." I opened my mouth to snap at him, but he held his hands up. "I'm not sayin' nothin', Jo. Just letting you know. You've got my number. Call me if you need me. Whenever." His gaze dropped to the gravel, but the emotion behind it still hung between us.

"Yeah, okay, Jer. Thanks." I hugged him quickly, then sat in the car. He threw Tash's bag in the back seat for me, shut the door and patted the roof of the car a couple times.

I backed out, waved and sped home, racing my tears. I managed to hold it together until I was on the couch with the movie we'd ordered on pay-per-view. I huddled under the blanket and let the tears fly. Everything I'd been told flashed through my mind, over and over, and I started recognizing nuances of the personality they'd described. Little things she did, things she'd said; it all fell into place. More than anything else, I was mortified that I'd fallen into the trap. At least, that's what I kept telling myself.

I came out of a dream to a mouth on my nipple and hand wedged between my legs. Still hazy, I started to sit up, but was shushed and pushed gently back onto the couch. Tash hovered over me, her face just in front of mine. I smelled booze and pussy on her breath. She kissed me, deep and hard, and tears leaked from the corners of my eyes.

"Sssh, Joey. It's okay. I'm here." She stroked the hair away from my forehead and planted a kiss on my temple. Her mouth traveled down my jaw line, over my collarbone and back to my nipple, where she suckled and flicked and teased with her tongue. All the while, her right hand stroked my belly, sliding lower and lower each time, until she was caressing the insides of my thighs and lightly touching my labia.

I shuddered, growing wet, a voice inside telling me to go with it—just do it. My legs peeled themselves apart and my pelvis tipped up against her palm.

"There's a good girl. That's right." She was on her knees next to the couch, and she took my hand in her left and guided it to her crotch. She rubbed my fingers against her outer lips. My virgin touch fumbled blindly, then pressed against her until they sunk into her opening.

She hissed and rocked her hips, pistoned her fingers into me and urged me to match her pace. Her thumb circled my clitoris, wrenching loose a sob from my chest, and I curled around her hand.

"Sssh. Hush now," she murmured, and lowered her mouth to my vulva.

Her hot wet mouth fulfilled the ache I'd felt for weeks and I almost gave myself over to it. But the second-hand scent and the warnings wouldn't fade. I pulled away from her, pushed her back, and bolted upright. I couldn't let her do that to me.

I caught her eyes in the semi-darkness and held them. I pushed her back on the couch, spread her legs and crawled between them. She smiled wide and clutched at her breasts, kneaded and pulled her nipples. She laid her head back and closed her eyes, allowing me to take charge.

Tentatively, I kissed her, not sure how to proceed, but thinking I'd simply do what I would want done to me. I took a mental deep breath and pulled her lips open with my thumbs, and the familiar pungent scent of feminine arousal filled my senses. Before I could talk myself out of it, I slathered her from bottom to top with my tongue. She tasted salty and had a slightly bitter aftertaste. Her musk coated my flared nostrils. The need to know overpowered me.

I ravaged her, power hungry, thrilling at her reactions. When I reached what felt like a satin covered button, I closed my mouth around it and sucked, flicking and swirling with my tongue. I crammed three fingers inside her and pumped them back and forth, curling them upwards where I knew it felt good.

Her panting became grunts, and the grunts became moans, and I could feel her body tensing, her muscles clutching at my fingers. She came hard and loud, and I held my mouth to her through the thrashing and shaking. When it subsided, I drew myself alongside Tash and pulled the blanket around us.

"I've never done that before." I whispered into her hair.

"You were perfect." She whispered back and snuggled against me.

I rose with the sun for the first time in years, with a clear, steady path in front of me. I made coffee, showered and dressed, listening to Tash snoring off her drunk in the living room. I was not in a good place. My little play for control the night before had been a step, but it led in the right direction.

I scribbled a note and left it by the coffee.

You wanna fuck me, Tash?

Fuck you

-J.

I dialed Jerry's number, hastily made my bed and packed my belongings. I eased the front door shut behind me, waited on the steps, and let the sun warm my face and cleanse my soul.

The Novice

Auronnah is an adept learning to ply her skills under the tutelage of her Mistress and caretaker, Celeste. As young, free spirits will, Auronnah tests her boundaries, and common sense falls prey to desire.

Auronnah quickly checked the hallway, ducked into her Mistress's library and slid the forbidden tome back among the dusty volumes on a high shelf. Satisfied it was properly aligned, she pursed her lips and blew. A sheet of dust settled across its spine, to blend it in with its brethren. Auronnah checked that she hadn't smeared the incantation scribbled on her hand, and proceeded smugly to the supply closet.

In the living room, she set the smudge pot down, knelt before the low table, and lit an arrangement of pillar candles. She touched a spark to the heady greens inside the stone bowl, leaned over and wafted the pungent smoke into her face, off her brow, and around her head.

She rolled her shoulders and her neck, easing her spine into its most comfortable position; vertebra stacked neatly, one on top of another. Face raised and eyes closed, she allowed the rest of her body to fall into alignment. The flow of her mind released. She plucked at random fragments of thought and coaxed them to completion, liberated each thought as she brought it to fruition, until her mind was clear and focused solely on the image of her intended.

Come...

The essence of her psyche rippled, then settled back into place as the wish traveled through, out and away. She exhaled, gathered herself and continued, repeating the word in her mind several times over while she rocked and hummed softly. Her hands rose and hovered a moment at chest height before extending towards the candles. She followed the currents of heat with her fingertips, all the way up to the full extension of her arms, then splayed and pushed at the air.

She felt the thread reach its target. The sheer power of the creature vibrated back and sang through her. Tingling and elated, she leaned back and stroked herself through the folds of her gown. Mouth slack, eyes closed, she rocked her hips in time to the powerful heartbeat that strummed the filament of magic between them.

"Are you soothing again, Auronnah?"

Her eyes fluttered open, and she glowered at Celeste, who seemed to appear every time she commenced a spell. Celeste's face softened, and she glided over and stroked Auronnah's hair.

"Oh, my little star. You and your wish spells. Well, it's good practice." She smiled down at her charge. "And now, Aurrie, lessons, lessons. Gather your things and meet me in the study." With a whoosh of amber silk robes, she was off.

Auronnah grinned, knowing full well that her Mistress had no inkling of what her young charge was about. She snuffed out the candles, waved a hand over the smudge pot for one last whiff of sage, clutched her books to her chest and scurried down the hall.

She cast a glance out the window on her way past, and tacked a fleeting thought to the tail end of the spell that soared toward the distant mountains.

Make haste...

Flowing forth, grazing the treetops, dipping across the meadows: deep into the belly of the mountain traveled the spell. It twisted between crevices, squeezed through fissures and at last sighted its target. It fell upon him, plunging into his brow.

His eyes shot open and his body jerked up. He slammed back against the cold stone of his chamber wall and probed the darkness for the source of his sudden awakening.

His head swam. Something warm and velvety soft flowed through his thoughts, seeping in to drape down his shoulders and saturate his chest, and he released the breath he'd been holding for what seemed his entire life.

He sprung to his feet, back scraping against the rock face, and felt a stirring, as though 'someone' had plucked a thread from his chest and gently tugged at it. He pushed away from the wall and staggered into the darkness to follow the faint trail of residual magic.

His loins tingled in anticipation and his snarl echoed off the cavern walls.

"Auronah! Snap to it, girl! What are you off about?" Celeste whirled around to face her charge. "Star, if you are going to get past this level, you'll need to concentrate. You must master the basics in order to control your power, innate or otherwise."

But Auronah was far away, mentally tracking the path of the one she'd called forth, shifting in her seat with anticipation. "He's coming, Mistress."

"Who's coming? Are you speaking of the wish spell, Auronah? You didn't actually perform a summons, did you?"

"But Celeste, I can soothe him! Think of the—"

"You've no knowledge! Do you not see why I pound these lessons into your head, child?"

Auronah shoved her hands into her lap and forced herself still.

"Well, we're just going to have to set this right, little one. This will not do."

Auronah snapped to attention. "Celeste, no! Please! It's is nothing I can't handle! I've stayed well within the realm of my powers, Mistress! I swear it!" She slumped in her seat. "I'm not a child anymore."

"No, Star. No you're not. But you *are* young. It's over your head. You're not ready. That's all there is to it."

"Just because I'm not a hundred years old like you!"

Auronah gasped at her own petulance, and fell silent. Celeste moved to stand next to her charge and placed a hand on her shoulder.

"How close is he?"

Auronah dropped her eyes, but internally sought him out, seeking to buy herself some time. "Just to the woods, Mistress." Hastily she added, "My thread faded hours ago. I only just now sensed him again, but I no longer have a connection."

Celeste closed her eyes and went still, hands in the air, fingers spread and extended. Auronnah watched and waited, holding her breath until her Mistress relaxed.

“I don’t sense him anywhere near.” Celeste worried her hands a moment, then turned to her charge. “To bed with you, little star. You’ll need your strength. Tomorrow we’ll bind the meadow in case he returns.”

The creature sensed the proximity of his prey. He tipped his head back and scented the air, savoring the combined sweetness of the magic and its spell caster. Stretched before him, the thread thrummed and pulsed, and he felt a gentle prodding in his mind. She sought him out—tentative fingers of inquiry that touched on his thoughts, measuring his intent. He held his hunger far to the rear of his consciousness, teasing her with only a sliver of his desire.

A different, more assertive sensation touched his mind, and he closed off all access with a twitch of an eye. The probe rebounded off his defenses and petered out, a wick in the dregs of its wax.

Lengthening his strides, he crashed through undergrowth and bent saplings in his path. Her scent was cloying, wrapped around his senses, stoking the fires of his already ravenous need. There was light in the distance, and behind it, shadowed movement. He tasted her in the air.

Heedless of all else, he plunged forward into the night and burst through the final line of trees. His gait swallowed the field beyond, and he panted and salivated more with each step.

He swiped at the thread of magic clinging to his chest. The link dropped, barely noticed as it wafted to the ground, faded to gray, then dissipated completely.

Auronnah lay on top of her covers with Celeste’s admonishments still ringing in her head. She strained her ears for the slightest sounds from her Mistress’s room. The lights had long since been extinguished, and the cottage ticked and creaked as it too settled in for the night.

With utmost stealth, and a faint cloaking spell cast under her breath, Auronnah crept out of her room, down the shadowed hall and slipped out the back door. She hit the field at a run, her cheeks already flushed with excitement.

She neared the edge of the clearing, and could feel his power weaving between the line of trees that stretched as far as her line of sight would reveal. Her need carried her forward, so strong and ravenous that she could have traversed the underbrush with eyes closed.

At last she came to rest near the center of the forest, in a clearing washed the palest blue with full-on moonlight. Flowering willows flanked a quiet stream that split the expanse in half. The venue offered both seclusion and numinous air, magical because it was the place where Celeste had found her when she was but a child. It was only fitting that it be the place where she initiated her true power.

Auronnah perched atop a boulder on the western bank and settled in to wait.

He'd doubled back and fallen in behind her, his crashing gait now fluid and silent. The only telltale sign of his presence: the musk that rose from his arousal and hung like a fog about him.

He held back in the shadows and watched her gentle progress, leered at her delicate features, salivated over the scent that saturated his nose. This would be a meal to be savored.

Puzzling, that this lithe creature had the strength to summon him; but in his needful state, the thought was a fly buzzing at his ear, and he swatted it away. She draped herself in wait, and he lunged forth into the clearing. She started at the sudden disturbance, but remained still, eyes closed, a smile playing on her lips. Again he marveled at her tenacity, and it stirred his loins, almost to a painful state of desire.

Auronnah gasped at the rumblings near the edge of the clearing, and the scent that suffused her nostrils sparked thrills through her body. She fought the urge to open her eyes, knowing full well that she didn't want to see what was coming. If the books were accurate, his visage would strike in her a fear more powerful than her desire, but his sexual prowess was a legend of its own.

His bulk displaced the open air of the clearing, and she felt his heat long before the steely paws closed around her shoulders and lifted her into the air. His talons pressed gently against her fair skin, sending shivers throughout, and a great inhalation sucked at her gown, from sternum to pelvis.

The fabric ripped away, and she was flipped onto the grass, face pressed against the springy turf while a rigid, furry arm held her hips in the air. A thick, hot tongue slathered her exposed nether lips, and she moaned and writhed against the iron grip on her waist.

Near drunk from the heady scent of his secretions, Auronnah braced herself against the turf in anticipation of the beast's first thrust. The force of his entry all but flattened her. His erection stretched her almost beyond her limits. She cried out, jerking away instinctively, but the beast held her in place, hunched over her and pumped, an exquisite battering ram insisting on entry.

Her body gave way, accommodated his girth, and she rocked back on her knees in time to his thrusts, her supple flesh crashing against his solid wall of fur and muscles. He gripped her tighter, and Auronnah let loose a yelp when a second phallus swelled from beneath his thick pelt and probed against her backside.

Slick with seed, the second protrusion slid up and down the parting of her buttocks, and dripped onto her back for a few fevered thrusts. The beast held her away and rammed it into her, eliciting a moan from Auronnah such as she'd never before uttered. Her groans and cries were guttural, coming from deeper inside than she'd known was possible. Each utterance filled her throat, resounded in the air and bounded off the ring of trees that surrounded the clearing.

In a swift motion, the beast yanked himself out of her, flipped her in mid-air, and resumed his thrusting, holding her aloft with one paw beneath her back. The larger of his appendages now in Auronnah's anus, he grunted and strained, and the smaller shaft

began to swirl around inside her vagina, wiggling like a worm through the earth and finding her most receptive nooks and crannies. Rapture loosed her body, melding it to his form; juicy, riding and succumbing to his manipulations.

His serpentine tongue lashed out, impossibly long, and wound around her breasts. It squirmed at her nipples, snaked down her belly, left a snail's trail of wetness in its wake. When the heated muscle touched against her clitoris, the sweet sizzle was excruciating, and Auronnah screamed in ecstasy, bucking, legs and arms flailing, head thrashing back and forth.

The beast snarled and held tight to her torso, his talons mere fractions from rending the flesh below her rib cage. He strained into her, impaled her on his dual shafts until he let loose a guttural howl. It shook the meadow, rippled the water of the stream, and bent the trees away.

His seed planted and his hunger assuaged, the creature released the limp form and watched her collapse in a heap on the dewy ground. The grass was slick with his secretions, pooling in the patches of bare earth and seeping into the soil. She whimpered, but did not stir.

Spent as he had into her, his power felt renewed, glaring inside him, brilliant. Overwhelmed, he howled again. He lumbered on all fours into the woods, slashed his mark against the sides of the trees with great arcs of his claws, and passed into the darkness.

Auronnah woke to the tinkling of the brook only a few feet from her head, and dragged herself to the edge to wet her arid throat. The water was icy and sharp against her tongue, cutting through the thickness in her mouth and reviving her senses. She angled her body over the bank and rolled into the water, letting the current carry away the creature's residue.

It had been more than she'd bargained for, to be certain, but she wouldn't pretend to regret her actions. She giggled to herself and cast a hasty muzzle spell across his luminescent trail only just dissipating into the pre-dawn shadows.

Too drained, she hadn't the strength to cast far enough. The magic fell limp against the forest floor and faded back into her conscience. She would rest, she reasoned, and rose to gather her tattered garments from the grass. Yes. She would rest a bit and return in the morning.

Her limbs were like rags, and she stumbled back to the cottage, a faint, sated smile dancing in her eyes. She pulled herself together long enough to slip through the rear door and pad silently to her room, where she sunk gratefully into her down-filled mattress. Just as she pulled her covers up around her shoulders, a spark ignited in the corner, and Auronnah paled at the sight of her Mistress stepping out of the shadows, brightening the room with a light cast above her open palm.

"That is no soothing I smell. You reek of your mischief," Celeste said, her face drawn and cold, eyes flashing disappointment, concern, and anger. "Come. Let us undo this evil you've laid on our doorstep. I've eluded the darkness too long to perish of a young

girl's foolishness!" Celeste threw her hands out before her, and the lamps and candles throughout the house ignited with a *whoosh*.

"By the Goddess, child! Have you retained *nothing* I've taught you?" She looked back, but continued on, fully expecting Auronnah to follow, which of course, she did.

The creature slept until his sluggishness gave way to another, baser hunger, and he snarled his need. Tendrils of saliva dripped from his ragged maw. He roused himself and followed once again the scent of his earlier prey.

Celeste pulled several books from the shelves and frantically paged through them while muttering under her breath. "Of all the... where in the world... Ugh! Where is that volume, child?"

Auronnah sighed heavily and produced the book from beneath her robes. Celeste snatched it and flipped it open, one hand gliding along the words, the other flailing at the bottles on a nearby shelf. She dashed and pinched and poured. Incantations flew from her lips.

But all too soon, the walls of the cottage shook with an unearthly booming. The discordance rattled the windows until they imploded into a rain of glass shards. The women shielded their faces and ran to the front of the house. Just as they reached the foyer, the door blew off its hinges, and a dark, seething figure filled the frame.

Auronnah fell to the floor in her haste to reverse direction. She cowered behind the soothing table, watching as Celeste drew herself to her full height and sketched figures in the air.

"You are not welcome here! Return to the night! I bind you from entering! Return to the night!" The spell swirled around Celeste, catching her robes in an updraft as it solidified before the beast. "You are not welcome here! Return to the night!"

The creature stepped forward into Auronnah's line of vision, and she shrank further under the table. He was horror incarnate: great, gnashing jaws filled with row upon row of needle sharp teeth, black eyes this size of a man's hand, matted fur that did nothing to disguise the massive muscles beneath. Ape-like arms ended in cruel black talons, which scattered splinters in their wake while dragging across the cottage floor.

The creature swatted at the magic. The spell shattered like the windows had done only moments before. With a vicious swipe, he slashed Celeste's torso open. She fell to her knees and her innards spilled across the floor.

One stride brought him to Celeste's crumpled figure. Auronnah shielded her eyes, but couldn't block out the slurping and crunching sounds.

When all was silent, she peeked over her forearm. The beast sat upon on his haunches, bathing himself as a cat might, licking paws and rubbing the fur around his muzzle. His eyes rose to meet hers. He huffed and drew nearer. Paralyzed, unable to recall the simplest of spells, Auronnah squeezed her eyes shut and awaited her fate.

The creature's wet muzzle nudged her body, sniffed and salivated. He licked her chin and growled in the back of his throat. He snatched Auronnah up in one paw, talons now puncturing the soft flesh of her sides. She cried out, expecting the crunch of his jaws on

her midsection. Instead, he held her aloft, her body sagging like a rag doll, and impaled her with the larger of his penises.

He pummeled into her, stretching her insides painfully. The attack jerked her up and down. He grunted and growled, and she yelped and cried for mercy.

He sank onto his knees, leaned back and used both giant paws to plunge her onto himself, again and again. Auronnah's teeth clattered together with each jarring impact. His second penis joined the first, pried its way inside her vagina as the beast increased the pressure and speed.

His climax was torrential. The searing liquid gushed out of her and washed down her flailing legs, splattered everything around them in pink droplets of his semen and her blood.

Just as Auronnah wondered if it would ever end, he filled her with a final thrust, then tossed her to the floor, where she lay in a crumpled heap, sobbing into the rug. The beast grunted as though laughing and lumbered out the door.

Auronnah's hand slid down to her belly. She already felt his seed growing inside her battered womb. Her just reward.

She rolled her head towards the meager remains of her fallen Mistress. "Oh, Celeste," she murmured, "I am so sorry."

His hunger sated, the demon turned and ambled back to his mountain, another thousand years' slumber beckoning him home.

What I Want

Just this one time, I'll tell you exactly what I want from you.

You asked me what I wanted. What I expected from you. As I'm mulling over the answer, I can't believe you don't know. Is it so obscure? Am I so complicated? Or can you simply not believe the answer you see before you?

No strings, no promises, no ties that bind. Chains, all of them. Heavy, daunting, suffocating. I, for one, cannot bare the weight. I've nothing to offer for more than today. So, for this day, I'll close my eyes and guide you.

I want to sit in a corner of the room and watch you advance, slowly, softly, your anticipation dragging your toes across the carpet. I want to see your desire for me smoldering in your eyes—a passion so thick, so palpable that it coats your eyelids like a blanket and holds them at half-mast.

I want to watch as your hands rise slowly while you drop to your knees before me. Graze your fingertips lightly across my collarbone and down to my waist, whisper-touching across my torso along the way. When you drop your forehead to my lap, I will hold you. I will wrap my arms around your head, and lean into you, until my cheek rests in your hair.

If you were to peek at this moment, you may see a tear slip from my lashes and splash on your upturned cheek. But don't peek. The tears are for me, and they're not for today. They'll keep.

Whisper softly to me. I want to hear your accent, hissing my name from between clenched teeth, as if you haven't the strength to hold yourself away from me any longer. Lean into me and say it again, beneath my ear, into my hair, hot and moist against my skin...

Then just this once, just this one time, I'll ask you...

Will you do the damn dishes! How much do I have to do around here, for crying out loud! And do you think you could you take out the garbage? Huh? Just once, maybe?

Years May Go By

Passion is more than sex, more than love. Passion is fusion. If it lasts beyond the first encounter, or even the thirtieth, that's something worth holding dear.

Years have passed. They'll do that, you know. One minute it's right now, and then the next thing you know, that was ages ago.

Aah, but I remember you. The flavor's changed some. I roll memories of you over in my mind. They've become less coppery and sharp, mellowed to a buttery softness.

Age has a way of doing that to a person's life. Years, age, life—we are heavy with them, you and I.

Aah, but I remember us. We were *something*, weren't we? Oblivious to the world, brazenly hand-in-hand, and glorious. Our lives spread before us like a long stretch of headlights bending into the early morning horizon.

And when we crashed together, sparks would fly. *We would fly!* Swept away on the wings of our passion, beating with all our might towards the sky. Your hands upon me were as if designed expressly for the purpose of fitting to my form.

Ours was not simply a connection: we were *fusion*.

I know, I know—it wasn't like that every time. But it always felt like home to me. It was exactly where I was supposed to be—the place toward which my life, before you, had been laboring, my reward for battles well fought.

You pleased me as no other could have. When you were inside me, my every pore connected with yours, and the current was complete, coursing through our bodies, from yours to mine and back around again. We singed the very air round us. I always thought I could smell it when I lay back after, exhausted and drenched in sweat, amazed at just how heavy my body felt when empty.

I was equally amazed how quickly my body would begin to fill again. Perhaps after a nap, or just a few minutes, or days, electricity would course through my limbs, solidify in my torso, bounce against the underside of my skin, seek a way out and through.

All it would take was a brush against you, to release it and send it hurling, where it would clash with your current and magnetize the air between us.

I suppose that's how we've come this far together, without even noticing the time. Our lives—no, our life—was a series of releases and recharging.

Ah, but I remember us. How could I forget?

And so, my dear man, I know you have not forgotten. I know that it's all in there, tucked away for safekeeping. I know you draw upon it, little tastes as needed for strength. Don't fight for me, sweet man. There's nowhere you can go that I'll not be with you. And you with me.

So this is not goodbye. And though I'll keep you in my soul—I'll only hold your hand until you've released your grip on mine.