

*Black Velvet Seductions*  
*Bound By Fate*  
Lee Rush



*A Forbidden Experience*

Bound By Fate  
*by Lee Rush*

**Black Velvet Seductions Publishing Company**

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## **Dedication**

This book is dedicated to the sweet man who made my dreams more enjoyable than I would have thought possible.

## **Acknowledgements**

Thanks to both my families for their support and encouragement ... the real life family put up with my idiosyncrasies while writing and the Retreat family answered questions to help me along and gave me critiques on the way I handled those special scenes.

Christiane looked out over the fairgrounds and wondered which way she should turn next. The sounds of different interpretations of jazz melded more than clashed as they filled the air. She knew from the articles she had read that the jazz festival drew people from all over the country and even some from other countries. The different accents and languages she heard proved that. The soft southern drawl, the twang of the Midwest, the French accents, and Spanish were melodies of the world's voices as the people milled about between various venues.

And the smells! She didn't need to look around to know that she was getting close to the food courts. Her nose was assailed by so many known and unknown smells. Some odors brought delicious food to mind. Others hinted at new and wondrous things to try. Cajun spices mixed with the rich scent of thick barbecue sauces, the homey smell of southern fried chicken, and the sweet unmistakable smell of marvelous pralines so well known in this city.

Jostled repeatedly by the moving throng, she managed to move further down the fairway before giving up and moving to the side where she could look over the program again. When she had decided which group she wanted to hear, she looked up to get her bearings, then looked at her watch. They wouldn't be starting for almost an hour. The way her stomach was rumbling and her mouth was watering from the myriad smells, she decided to check out the food court in earnest before making her way to the performance stage.

The Cajun food smelled wonderful but she had a feeling it wouldn't do much good for her stomach. At her age the pralines would add a pound or two so they were vetoed as well. Another short walk down the fairway as she tried to decide. *Port of Call*, the sign was at the right side of the fairway. She stopped suddenly, causing the people behind her to run into her and mutter about tourists. She couldn't even voice an apology as she stood there, staring at the sign, her heart rate rising. She didn't even realize that she had been nudged to the side of the walkway. *Port of Call* was a popular restaurant from town. She recognized it immediately as one she wanted to avoid. The restaurant reminded her too much of the man who had made her familiar with it for her to want to eat there.

They had met online and gotten acquainted slowly over a few months. The chats were few and far between and mostly innocuous in the beginning. He told her about his life ... his marriage that left a great deal to be desired, though it had gone on for many years and had been maintained for the "honor and responsibility" and because he had given his word before her death from cancer.

They had talked about his avocation that had become his life's work and the things he had found on the web and how they influenced his current situation. They had talked about his interest in a way of life based on a series of books that appealed to his way of looking at the world around him.

She had told him about her husband who had been so ill, so close to death and the changes his illness had wrought in their relationship. She had shared the details of her current

situation and her hopes for the future that had somehow looked so dim.

She remembered the tantalizing talk of shared showers, the late night chats over "cheesecake and coffee" and found herself falling into a growing affection for him, despite her self-made vows not to get involved in that manner. The relationship with her husband had been a good one until his health issues changed him so much, as to be almost unrecognizable as the same man she had loved.

This new man showed her a different world. He was basically living out most people's dreams. He lived on a beautiful and semi-remote island, diving on ancient ruins not for fortune but to gain knowledge. He told her stories of things and places she had only read about.

She had kept a copy of all the chats they shared and had read them so many times they were engraved on her mind, almost word for word. The first time they engaged in cybering was three and a half months after they met online. They had begun with the coffee and cheesecake scenario they had indulged in before but then he'd had to leave to attend to "real life" matters. He promised to return as soon as he could. She had been disappointed, but stayed at her computer, playing solitaire until he returned. His first words when he came back echoed in her mind.

"What do you want from this, kitten," he asked, using her screen name.

"I don't know, really. I do know that I am attracted to you and I want this to continue. Is that enough of an answer for now?"

"And I'm attracted to you. I have been since we met. As long as you understand where I'm going and what I'm looking for, I think we can make this work."

Then he had gone on to explain the tenets of this new "world" he had found and wanted to enter. The world was based on books and the ideas conveyed therein. As he continued to explain, she felt a sadness creeping into her heart. The things he was saying ... if that's what he really wanted, she knew it wouldn't be with her. It couldn't be ... not the way she had been brought up. Men and slaves ... exciting thoughts to play at but in real life? She had become too independent over the years to see herself in that role.

Then the words she had longed to hear: "In the meantime, if you would like to cyber, scene ... I'm up for that. I've always had visions of pouring chocolate syrup over you and then licking you clean."

She had giggled and blushed as she read his words.

"That sounds so yummy. Can I tell you something?"

"Listens, while gazing at the lovely lady."

"I said I was attracted to you. This feeling ... I can't really explain it."

"Listens, carefully."

"It's ... I don't know what to say, I just feel like I need to say something here. There's only been one for me ... and right now, I just feel like I'm losing ... I can't explain it. I'm not saying this to make you feel bad, or elicit sympathy or anything, simply stating facts. It feels like part of my heart is tearing ... or ... I don't know, I can't find the words and I should be able to. I'm sorry."



"Kitten, that's why I asked. I have no intention of playing foot loose and fancy free with your feelings

"I understand, James, thank you for that. I can give you part of me, but not all of me ... if that makes any sense to you, not now at any rate."

"As long as we both understand that. I wanted to clear this up before we went any further. I will never trash or trample on your feelings. In my humble opinion, online is too near real life and boundaries tend to blur quickly."

"I know they do. I know somebody who met somebody here. She left her husband ... a man who was a minister and her childhood love ... and ran away to be with him. The last I heard she was pregnant and abandoned some place in upstate New York."

"Not a happy ending," his words flowed across the screen.

"No, it wasn't, for either of them. Her husband was heartbroken and didn't understand any of it."

"No, unless people get involved in online activities, they don't understand it."

"I know that I let my boundaries blur sometimes, but I *do* know where they lie. I've met some wonderful people here and gotten to know some I would never have had the chance to meet. Like you. Just stating the facts here," she typed.

"We needed to do that."

"Yes, we did. I'm better now ... I've got a grip on myself."

"Smiles, knowing where I'd like to grip you."

Her heart had almost burst then. The idea that he wanted this with her, even if only online, brought her so much happiness. She had been without for so long because of her

husband's medical problems. The words on the screen sang to her lonely heart, filling some of the darker spaces with a shining light.

She remembered the way she had stood quietly in that cyber room while he ripped her clothes off and then walked around her, inspecting that which he now "owned". She remembered the way she had typed that she quietly trembled, looking up into his steel blue eyes, her legs shaking as he walked around her. In reality, she had tried to be serious, tried not to giggle and seem too silly, but she was so happy, it was difficult to keep it out of her words as she typed. His words indicated his desire to just take her without any preamble, and then he had leaned in and whispered, his breath ruffling the hair above her ear.

"Such a sexy woman that wants to belong to me."

He held her close in the cybering, murmuring about months of pent-up desire being released at last. He brushed her hair back and she turned her head to nuzzle his hand. He entwined his fingers in her hair and pulled her even closer. More words from his sweet lips against her ear.

"Unimaginably happy, sweet woman."

She had gazed at the screen filled with his words that touched her heart and made her body feel warm and wonderful. She was enveloped in a happiness she hadn't felt in a long time.

Her arms slid around him as he held her and her head dropped back to look up into his eyes again, a soft smile on her lips, her heart pounding with happiness. Then he kissed her passionately and she moaned in the kiss ... actually

moaning as she sat there at the computer, her hands poised over the keys, waiting for his next words.

"Months in coming ... so very, very sweet."

"So long to wait, Sweet Man ... and such a reward for waiting."

His hands had moved over her body, exploring every detail of her warm flesh. She had reveled in the words he typed and had answered in kind. She clung to him, enjoying the warmth of his hands on her skin, pressing close as his hands moved down. Her mouth nibbled at his lips as his hands moved to her thighs, her ass, the very tips of his fingers lingering on her ass. She whimpered against his neck after the kiss broke, her back arching hard to his hands. His words of reality ... they had waited this long and all he wanted to do was just take her then and there ... no ifs ands or buts about it. Her answer had been hissed between clenched teeth ... a simple 'yesssssss'.

He had carried her to a big cyber bed and laid her on her back, and then laying down beside her, he had gazed down at her for a moment before speaking again.

"Gees, Kitten ... I've seriously wanted to do this for months ... just plain fuck you."

Letting her actions speak instead of mere words, she closed her eyes, imagining as she typed. With the words exchanged between them she could almost feel each touch. She had reached up and pulled him down into another passionate kiss, pressing her body harder against him. He had moved between her legs, quickly pressing his penis into her. Through her raised state of excitement, she could almost

feel it. His kisses turned into biting, almost animalistic, his tongue thrusting to meet hers, her hands reaching to grasp his ass and hold him inside her. Her legs moved up to encircle his waist, pulling herself up to equal his downward thrusts. She whimpered at the bites, biting back as the passion grew between them. Hands held and grasped tighter, nails scraped across hot flesh, muscles tensed and hardened as they moved together.

She closed her eyes again, blocking the words for a moment, letting the sensations flow through her and she could almost feel him throbbing, as if he were really there with her. Her muscles clenched and relaxed around him as he thrust deep. She moaned, he moaned. His hips thrusting down, hers thrusting up. The muscles in his ass bunched under her hands as he moved over her. Breath coming in gasps, hearts pounding in rhythm, soft grunts filling the air as their bodies slapped against each other. Panting, moaning and groaning over and over as the words filled the screen. Tears of joy and pleasure filled her eyes and began to slide down her face on the screen as well as in real life. Her body trembled under him, aching for release, aching for him to fill her with his essence.

"Don't stop, Kitten ... not now ... keep going ... come on, Kitten ... come on."

Finally, finally the explosion surged through her and her hands dropped away from the keyboard, clutching at the edge of the desk. It must have been the same for him because there were no words for a moment or two. She was shaking

as she sat there, her face wet with tears, her body sated and warm.

"Oh my God, Kitten. I'm thinking from the feel of things ... I've found it all."

Several times after that first night, they had begun again, but had been interrupted by life. They had not had much chance to continue their cyber affair, but they had talked about it and it was clear from those talks that they each wanted more. It was almost two weeks later that they were able to "play" again. That time the foreplay had led to a different conclusion and she remembered that as well.

Their enforced wait had led to more of the heated passion that had filled their talks. After the kissing and touching, the hugging and caressing, he had murmured against her ear that he simply wanted to take her ass. Another hissing of acquiescence had found its way onto the screen in reply and he had turned her onto her stomach on the cyber bed. Her face was pressed into the pillow, her ass was in the air and he was between her legs. She felt his breath as he leaned forward and then he began biting at her ass cheeks while the fingers of his right hand parted "her petals and entered her garden of pleasure."

Her hands clutched at the sheets as she felt his hot mouth on her, his tongue circling her anus. She pushed back to his mouth and felt his tongue slip into her while his fingers probed deeper into her vagina, reaching for her G-spot. She reached back with one hand and caught his hair, holding him tight against her. His tongue drilled into her relentlessly, matching his fingers that twisted and turned in her dripping

sex. She turned her face into the pillow and screamed with delight and pleasure as he continued to torment her. His other hand found its way to her breasts, teasing the nipples, pinching first one then the other, twisting them, scissoring them between his fingertips. Her moans were louder and louder, all capital letters on the screen before her. She was almost panting again, her body singing to the tune he typed.

He stopped what he was doing long enough to whisper again.

"Cum, Kitten ... cum for me again."

Then she was shaking harder, her hands barely able to type the words.

His tongue and fingers drove her mad with the need to finish completely and she gave herself into those feelings of pure pleasure. Her hands cramped from gripping the sheets tighter as she tumbled into the soaring sensation of bliss, shaking even harder as he pressed his face a last time into her ass, his tongue swirling one last time before letting her go.

Her body collapsed on the sheets as he moved up beside her and she turned her face from the pillow and smiled softly at him. Her body still trembled from the pleasure he had given her. He turned on his side and reached for her, looking into her eyes as he pulled her against him, cuddling her as he regained his breath. His hand cradled her head, his fingers sliding into her hair. Her eyes closed at the gentle touch after the passionate love making and she smiled as he kissed the new tears from her eyes.

"I'm sorry ... I don't seem to be able to help the tears."

"They are tears of joy, Kitten."

She remembered then that there had been a series of questions.

"What do you like in terms of bondage?"

She could feel the heat of the blush moving across her face and down her chest as she answered him. Even online it was a bit difficult for her to talk about such "wicked" things, but she had come to know him. She could talk about anything with him.

"Well, I've played a bit with that. My arms were tied over my head and then I was tied to a bench once. I've seen pictures of breasts being tied up but I don't think I would care for that. I don't think they would look very good purple."

"Japanese rope tying," he had typed.

"I'm not sure that's what it's called, but I'll take your word for that."

"No, I wouldn't want that either. Floggers?"

"With that other playing I did, there were paddles and crops, but I don't recall a flogger."

"Can I shave you?"

"Yes."

"Then eat you?"

"Yes, please."

"Have you sit on my face?"

"Mmmmm, yesssss."

"Cum in my beard?"

"Yes, yes, yes."

"Stand over you and cum on you?"

"Yesssss."

"I think we will do okay, Kitten."

Then he had smiled that wickedly evil grin he always mentioned and told her that he had to leave. There was some business he had to take care of.

"Take care of yourself, my sweet slut. I'll try to be back later this evening."

There followed more evenings of delight and learning and she found herself rushing home from the nursing home and through a late dinner just to be at the computer when he got online. Then, one night everything changed between them. Up until that time, they had talked about bdsm and he had teased her with things he would do if they ever met in real life. When he came online that night, the first words out of his mouth were out of character for the way they had been together.

"Where is my slut?!"

She hesitated for just a moment and then typed her response.

"I am here, Master."

"Why are you not in the bedroom, on the bed with your arms and legs spread for me?"

"I ... I didn't know that's where you wanted me, Master."

"Hhmmm ... you will need to learn to anticipate my desires, my slut. Get in the bedroom now and prepare yourself for me."

Typing the words across the screen as fast as she could, she made her way to the bed that was always there for them. She lay down and spread her arms and legs wide for him. She was curious just what he had in store for her. The masterly



tone of his words made her shiver in apprehension and excitement.

When he approached the bed, he was carrying silk scarves. Before he did anything else, he had her raise her bottom off the bed and he shoved a pillow under her, elevating her lower half.

"These scarves are made of the finest silk from the Orient, my slut. Soft, pliable and sensual to the touch, but also woven to be strong enough to hold even the most reluctant slut. Are you reluctant, my wanton woman?"

"No, Master, of course not. I would be foolish indeed to be reluctant to fulfill any of your wishes."

His cool response was a brief nod and a wicked, evil grin. She imagined the way his eyes crinkled in that grin.

She sat at the keyboard, watching the screen avidly, waiting to see what came next, trembling with anticipation at what he had in store for her. This was the first time they had actually played at any type of bondage. Even here, online, she was a bit nervous but still it excited her more than she thought possible.

He used the scarves to tie her ankles to the foot of the bed, and then her hands to the head of the bed, moving slowly and deliberately to heighten the tension. She sat before the computer screen, watching every movement of his hands as she imagined each movement he described in the text that moved across the screen. Each image burned into her mind.

Even though this was only a cyber experience, it was new and she felt as if she was putting herself completely in his

hands for the first time. Her heart was already beating hard and she was breathing fast. He hadn't even described how he would touch her, and yet it all felt so real to her. She couldn't wait for him to type the words that would say where and how his hands finally met her flesh.

After he was done tying her, he walked away from the bed and came back carrying something in his hand, hidden behind his back.

"Are you ready, my slut?"

"Yes, Master ... I'm ready for whatever you choose to do, ready to please you in any way I can."

During these playing sessions, she could feel the need to please him seeping into her soul. She had never been particularly submissive, but with him she most definitely was. It seemed to please him when he was in his "master mode" and in truth; it seemed natural when she was with him. She had played with others during her time online but she had never felt this way with any of them.

His words flowed across the screen as he pulled a flogger from behind his back and then swung it back and forth for her to see.

"As you can see, my sweet slut ... this flogger has a very intricately woven handle. What you see is silver kangaroo leather braided with black kangaroo leather. There are forty falls of the softest deerskin and I had it made in your favorite color ... pale green. This flogger was made for you my slut and will be used only to warm *your* skin."

Her heart beat even faster as he described it to her. She had searched floggers on the internet the first time he

mentioned them to her. As he described it, she could see the picture in her mind. She could see the long strands of soft leather hanging down from the handle and swinging back and forth as he moved his hand. She could imagine how it would feel on her skin, and shivered as that thought went through her mind.

He moved closer to the bed and then swung the flogger, bringing the soft strands down over her breasts. She gasped and jumped as much as the bindings would allow and he chuckled softly in response.

"Are you jumping from the feel of it, Kitten, or the popping noise it makes as it turns your flesh pink?"

She hadn't known about the popping sound, but now she did and would respond to that as well. She knew that this type of flogger was not the kind used to cause pain; that had been on the same website as the picture she found. This was a type to tease and redden the skin without giving a deep burn.

By the time he had struck her several more times, she was moaning and twitching under each stinging blow. He used the flogger carefully, teasing both in the way he struck her and then dragging it back across her reddened skin.

The imagined stinging and teasing had her aglow as she sat at her computer, avidly reading his words of passion on the screen. He "whipped" her for several minutes, alternating between her breasts and thighs, with the tips of the deer hide slapping against her shaved pussy, teasing her clit and making it peek out more and more as it went on.

She was twitching and twisting under the onslaught and breathing harder as she typed her responses. Then he stepped away from the bed and she whined softly at the computer as she wondered what he was doing, leaving her like that and walking away. Then he came back with a box in his hand.

He stood beside the bed; smiling down at her. He displayed the box he held. Chocolate covered cherries. She was a bit puzzled, but she could see in her mind that he had the wicked glint in his eyes that his words conveyed.

Taking a piece of candy from the box, he raised his hand over her body and squeezed it, allowing the thick, sweet juice to drip down over her body.

He had never been the fastest typist and had admitted to being a "hunting pecker" at the keyboard, but now he was typing even slower than before.

He took another piece and lowered his hand and there was another long wait until his hand was positioned over her breast, then another interminable wait before he crushed the chocolate morsel between his fingers and the thick juice coated her nipple, the cherry inside dropping down and landing beside that tightened tip. Another candy was in his hand and she wondered where this one would drip and where the cherry would fall. Her other breast, of course, she should have guessed.

He watched her then, watched the candy dripping down over the skin of her puckered nipple. The slowness of his typing was a tease to her senses and he was good at it. Moments later, another crushed candy dripped its juice near

her navel. Would the cherry land *in* her navel?? It plopped down to the right of it.

So slowly his words appeared on the screen ... she had no idea where he would drop the next cherry. Lower? Higher? At one point he held the candy for so long she wondered if he had been disconnected from the internet. Then the next target came all in one post...

He watched as the thick juice splashed on her lips and the cherry bounced into her mouth as she gasped in surprise. Then he was trailing the liquid and the cherries down over her body, slowly dribbling the juices thickly over her shaven pubes and tingling, reddened skin.

She laid in the cyber scene, moaning softly as each cherry fell against her skin, the light plopping further exciting her. She could almost feel the gooey, sticky substance on her skin as she typed her moans and twitches.

He moved to the foot of the bed and stood there licking the sweet syrup from his fingers, letting her watch as he sensually moved his tongue between the fingers to get each drop of the liquid. She was licking *her* lips as she watched him in her mind's eye. Then he was laying between her legs, starting above her right knee and lapping up the thick liquid as it dripped down her leg. She could feel it dripping down to where he couldn't possibly reach it and she tried to raise her leg a bit but it was tied too tightly to move much. His beard tickled her skin and she chuckled softly to herself ... how sticky his beard would be when this was over.

And then he nipped her thigh and all thoughts of chuckling were gone from her mind. She moaned at the computer as

she felt his mouth on her thigh and the little nip of his teeth. Breathing even harder, she was squirming in her chair as he typed. She closed her eyes and swore she could *feel* his mouth. When she opened them again, he had reached the place where her leg joined her body. Then he went to the left knee and followed the same pathway upward. The muscles in her thighs were twitching at every touch of his tongue and the constant tickling of his beard as he moved his mouth. She couldn't hold her legs still while she sat in the chair waiting for his next words, waiting for that hot mouth to move, to tease her flesh ... *God! It really felt like he was with her!*

Next he was on his hands and knees over her, nibbling and sucking the syrup and cherries from her nipples and breasts. He bit her nipples softly as he caught the cherries on his tongue, then winked at her and began working his way down her body again.

As his mouth moved down, he sucked more than the juice from her body; he sucked her skin as though he couldn't get enough of it, as though he really wanted to eat her. There was a bit of pain but mixed with the hot tongue moving back and forth across her belly, the pain was nothing. Her back arched as he moved lower, trying to press her pubes up to him, so he would move down ... move ... there. She was gasping for the breath that his typed words stole from her. She could *feel* it ... feel every sensation that he typed and she was trembling at the keyboard.

She was writhing under his mouth, whimpering as he got closer to the seat of her cravings, but he wouldn't go *there*. She raised her head and looked down at him, breath caught

in her throat as she saw that wicked grin above her glazed pussy. She wanted to plead with him ... beg him to do it ... *for God's sake, do it!* She was afraid if she voiced her desire, he would stop to tease her even more ... to push her even farther without release, so she kept the words in her head and moaned and wiggled and tried to press up to his mouth even though the pillow had her raised up as much as possible.

She was panting when his tongue finally ... finally touched her clit and her body stiffened under him and she cried out loudly.

"No, my slut. I have not given you permission and you will *not* cum without permission. You may nod your head if you understand."

She vigorously nodded her head and then closed her eyes, trying to concentrate on something besides her body's reactions to his mouth. He was lying between her thighs, suckling her pussy and when she closed her eyes, he reached up and grasped her nipples, pinching and twisting them, adding to the deep sensations moving through her and causing louder moans to fill their cyber room.

He continued to use his tongue and mouth on her pussy, nibbling and biting the skin that was still tingling from the strokes of the flogger, reaching up now and then to pinch and twist her nipples. She squirmed and writhed under his mouth and hands, pleading with him. Gasping for breath, moaning repeatedly she fought to keep her orgasm in check. Finally, he raised his head, leaving her aching pussy for just a

moment and said it ... the ecstasy she sought with her entire being.

"Cum for your Master, slut."

Then his tongue was twisting and teasing her clit, his fingers pushed deep inside her, curling upward to that place. Her hands pulled at the bindings, her thighs quivered against him as he lay there. She was overwhelmed by the emotions spasming through her, both in the cyber room and at the keyboard. In the room, her body twitched and tingled as she soared into ecstasy. At the keyboard, she was shaking, her hands were trembling as she screamed her release

There had been times in her life when she had climaxed without being touched. The thoughts and emotions flitting through her mind when she had been *doing* for her husband and she had reveled in the pleasure she was giving him had sometimes allowed her own orgasm to sneak up on her. This was another one of those times, but it wasn't her husband this time ... it was this man who had captured her imagination.

When she had finally regained a semblance of sense, he untied her, crawled up beside her on the bed and cuddled her soothingly.

"Master ... oh Master ... thank you. Please let me..."

Before she could complete her request, he leaned and kissed her softly.

"Not this time, my wanton woman ... there are things I must attend to and I can't stay."

She had sighed against him and pouted but she understood. Real life seemed to intrude most often when she



wanted to spend all her time with him. She smiled up at him and watched him go, blowing kisses after him.

These evenings continued over the next few months. Her feelings for him grew by the day so that when he finally suggested that they might meet in real life, her heart fluttered with growing excitement. Of course, she was nervous about it, but by that time, she had become enamored of this man who was so different from any she had ever known and she jumped at the chance to meet him.

The thought that it could possibly be dangerous didn't even occur to her. She felt as though she had come to know him very well. She wasn't worried about meeting a "complete stranger" for a possible intimate experience.

He had come to the city where she lived and they had met at a La Casa de Napoli, a quaint Italian restaurant not too far from her home. She had gotten there early, not wanting to keep him waiting and anxious to actually meet him after all this time. When he walked into the restaurant, she was still nursing her first pina colada, her eyes continually wandering to the door.

He walked toward her with that "funny step" of his ... the result of a congenital hip deformity. He seemed taller than 5'10" but that could have simply been that she was sitting and he was standing. She smiled broadly when she saw how closely his white beard had been trimmed. The last time she had seen him on his webcam it had been a bit ... shaggy. His hair had more pepper in it than his beard, but it was predominantly white and was receding just a bit. He wore it brushed back but a stray bit seemed to fight against the

comb or brush, and curled a bit, drooping from where it had been meant to stay. His eyes really did look like blue steel. They seemed to twinkle when he smiled and crinkle up at the corners like a certain jolly old elf.

"Hello, James. It's so good to finally meet you."

"Annie ... you are as lovely as the pictures you sent me."

He slid into the booth and sat just close enough for a first meeting, but not so close that she would feel uncomfortable. He was everything he had seemed to be online. Neither of them were young kids and both had lost their spouses a few years before. He had lost his wife to cancer and she had lost her husband to Alzheimer's disease. Her husband had lived in a nursing home for quite some time, but he didn't know who she was or that she even spent most of her time away from work at his side. So she was a veritable widow even though he was alive.

While they were becoming acquainted through their various chats, they had discussed his growing attraction to the world of bdsm and that was one of the things they discussed over dinner. He hadn't had much experience with it in "real life" but he had read a lot about it and he proceeded to explain a lot of things that she had read about herself. She had never engaged in such activities but the playing they had done had excited her. She was more than willing to give it a try with him, though she was a bit nervous about it. She could feel herself blushing at some of the discussion and actually getting a flushed feeling about it when he changed the subject.

He began telling her tales of his exploits diving on ancient wrecks. He had brought her a cd for the computer that contained pictures from his early days on the little island where he spent half his year. He'd also brought copies of carbon dating reports on things he had found buried in the ocean depths and even some newspaper and magazine articles written about him and the dives he had made.

He had a delightful sense of humor and had no problem telling her stories that didn't exactly put him in the best light. They talked about books they had read, movies they had seen, even arguing about one of Harrison Ford's movies.

They laughed over his stories, drank wine and laughed some more, rapidly forgetting the almost heated debate of the Harrison Ford movie. She chuckled at that one as she remembered ... Harrison Ford had *not* made a movie with Madonna involving hot wax.

She enjoyed looking into the steel blue eyes across from her, enjoyed seeing him through his words as he talked about diving and finding ancient amphorae of olive oil. They had been talking for so long that it was a surprise when the waiter appeared with the check. When she looked up at him, she realized that they were the only patrons left in the restaurant and she blushed, startled that it had been so long.

She was saddened by that, by the thought of the evening ending already and she sighed deeply. James paid the check and stood up, taking her hand in his and helping her from the booth.

"I would suggest a walk on the beach, Annie, but this old hip gives me problems sometimes when I walk a lot. Tom has

a nice wine cabinet at the house and if you would like to join me there, we can continue our discussion."

There was a glint in his eye and a smile on his lips as he made his suggestion.

"I think I'd like that, James ... very much."

They walked out to the parking lot and she led the way to her car. She looked up at him questioningly and he answered before she could ask.

"I took a cab. I don't drive much any more."

She knew from chats that Tom was a friend of many years from the island. Tom had grown up in this house and after his mother moved out west, he kept it, often loaning it to traveling friends. James had borrowed it for this trip.

James didn't know the exact way to get there, but they had the address and it wasn't long before they found the house again.

When they reached the house, he made her comfortable on the couch and went for a bottle of wine. She watched him walk into the kitchen and remembered with a sad heart the time he had told her about his childhood and how he had been teased and tormented because of his physical problems. He came back with the wine and glasses and she smiled up at him from the couch. As he poured the wine, he looked up from the glasses and smiled back at her.

"Are you sure you want to do this? I don't want to force you into anything."

"I know you don't. I admit I'm a bit nervous, it's been such a long time for me, so long since I've really been touched, but it's what I want, James."

He took a seat beside her and handed her the glass of wine. As she took the glass, he reached up and slid his fingers into her hair, combing it back from her face very gently. Then he moved his hand to her cheek. She turned her head into the caress and brushed her lips across the palm of his hand. When she turned her eyes back to his, he leaned down and gently kissed her lips. It was a simple, gentle kiss. It was light warmth brushing across her lips, but it had been so long since she had been kissed like that, it caused a fluttering in her stomach that seemed to spread through the rest of her body.

Then she leaned into the kiss and against his warm body, seeking more of the sensations that she had been denied for so long and needed so much. The hand holding the glass of wine trembled a bit, but her other hand reached up and moved slowly down his cheek, her fingers moving through and then grasping his beard, tugging it gently, in effect holding him in the kiss. She heard him chuckle softly in the kiss and then he leaned his head back, smiling at her once again.

As she looked up into his eyes again, the light from the lamp beside the couch seemed to glisten in the salt and pepper hair. Without moving his eyes from hers, he reached for the glass and put it on the coffee table.

"I don't think we need to spill this good vintage on the sofa, nor ourselves, do you?"

She was slightly breathless and definitely wordless as she shook her head.

"But then again.... it might be fun to lick the nectar from your skin," he winked as he said it, that oh so wicked grin on his face.

She blushed furiously at the suggestion, but nodded just the same. Then his arms were around her again, pulling her close. She moaned softly and slid her arms around him. He kissed her deeply and passionately, slipping his tongue between her lips and she tasted him for the first time. The wine and his words were all so sweet in this first real kiss.

Her heart was already pounding harder and faster with nervousness and excitement and this simply added to it. His arms around her, he moved his hands down over her back, caressing gently but firmly. Her arms almost lost their grip as she gave in to the feelings enveloping her. She longed for the sensations to continue and grow, and her body responded by pressing closer to him, searching for the feelings she had not experienced in years.

He broke the kiss and looked down into her eyes, then slid his arm from her back and moved it sensually down her arm, finally lifting her hand to his lips and kissing the palm of her hand.

"I think we'll be more comfortable in the other room, sweet lady."

Not letting go of her hand, he got to his feet and gently pulled her from the couch. When they stood together, it was almost like a dream come true. This is what her heart and soul cried for and she hoped it was the same for him.

He led her into a bedroom at the back of the house and she smiled as she saw the view through the back windows.

Sliding glass doors filled the wall leading to the back yard and a glimpse of a beautiful garden with a myriad of flowers and glowing lanterns placed artfully among the plants. The light from those lanterns cast shadows into the room and the candles he lit added to the romantic atmosphere.

When the candles were lit, he turned back to her, standing in front of the glass doors so that he was silhouetted against them. He lifted his hand to her and she moved toward him tentatively. She was still nervous in this situation and her knees felt so weak she almost stumbled as she moved toward him. Her hand was trembling as she slid her fingers into his hand and stepped close, looking up at him with a soft smile on her lips.

He released her hand and moved his fingers to the buttons on her blouse, slowly unfastening each one in turn. She trembled under his touch but held her place, mesmerized by the twinkle in his eyes.

"I'm not a model, James."

"I know that, Annie. Neither am I. Despite that, I think we'll fit together very nicely. At our age, there are bound to be wrinkles everywhere we don't want them."

She nodded and stood silently as he unbuttoned her blouse, then slid his hands under the material to caress her skin. She fought to control the moan that almost escaped as he touched her. The warmth of his hands and the idea of a virtual stranger touching her after all this time, made her heart race and her breath quicken again. His palm pressed against the center of her chest and he chuckled softly.

"I can feel your heart racing, Annie."

She could only nod at him.

"Is it fear? Or is it passion, Annie?"

"Passion, James. I have no reason to fear you."

To her surprise, his fingers were swiftly tangled in her hair, bending her head back as his arm moved around her waist and he pulled her forward at the same time. She gasped for breath as she found his face so close to hers.

"Maybe you should, Annie."

A thousand things ran through her mind as she heard his pronouncement and gazed into his eyes. They seemed so hard for an instant, and then there was coolness. She was alone here with a man she hadn't met until tonight. Nobody really knew where she was. How foolish she had been in thinking that.... and then those thoughts melted away as she felt his lips pressed to her ear.

"Scared you for a minute there, didn't I?"

She trembled as she let her head fall forward onto his chest, took a deep breath and nodded.

"You are a wicked man, James."

"I know, and you are a wicked, wanton granny. Just my kind of woman."

He hugged her tightly and kissed her again before moving his hands to her back, his fingers working at the hooks on her bra. It was only another moment before his deft fingers unfastened her skirt and let it fall to the floor with the blouse and bra. Then he was looking in her eyes again as his fingers slid inside the waistband of her panties.

"Last chance to back out, Annie."



In the dim glow of the candles and outside lighting, she could see the wanting in his eyes and she whispered her response.

"Do it, James."

His fingers grasped the material and pushed it down over her hips, then tugged at it until it was loose and slipped to the floor. She lifted one foot, then the other and kicked the panties to the side. She stood there before him, naked, trembling, half waiting for him to say he had seen enough and she should go home.

"Turn around woman and let me see what is mine."

She was suffused with a warm glow at the idea of belonging to him. There was a minor conflict in her heart at the concept of "belonging" because of the way she had been raised. However if this was the way he wanted it, then she was more than willing to be "his".

Turning slowly around, she let him see every inch of her, every inch the aged, wanton granny that she was. When she faced him again, he took her hand and led her to the bed, a hand on her shoulder gently pressed her to the mattress. She sat there, watching him undress in the candlelight. As if to tease her, he unbuttoned his shirt slowly. With the lights from the garden behind him, he seemed to almost turn into a bat as he pulled the shirt open and held it there for a moment before shrugging it from his shoulders and letting it fall to the floor. She saw his hands move to his belt and then heard the sound of the zipper in the quiet room. She watched as the pants fell to the floor and then a moment later, his shorts were around his ankles as well. There was a moment of pain

for her when she saw him awkwardly balance to kick the clothes away from his feet. Then he was walking toward her and she scooted back and lay down, smiling up at him as he slid onto the quilt beside her.

He reached out to take her glasses and put them on the bedside table, then put his own beside hers. He caressed her face again, his fingers brushing over her smooth cheek, his fingertips barely touching the wrinkles around her eyes. She moaned softly and put her hand over his on her face. Her eyes were half-closed as she kissed his palm, then his wrist, slowly moving up the inside of his arm as he held her close. Her lips kept moving upward to his shoulder, his neck and finally to his lips. Soft little kisses barely touching his skin, then more pressure on his mouth. She leaned back, breaking the kiss and looked up into his blue eyes.

Her hands were resting on his chest and he smiled down at her, moving his pelvis against hers. She moaned again, putting her head down on his chest as the feelings of closeness grew between them. Then his fingers were in her hair again, pulling her face up.

"We need to mate my manhood with your womanhood, Annie," he whispered very analytically.

The look on his face then was almost comical, like he was trying to be serious. But she had to chuckle at his archaic use of words. He slapped his forehead and chuckled.

"I can't believe I said that."

She giggled and kissed his forehead.

"No hitting what I care about."

He nuzzled her neck as her hands moved over his back. His pelvis pressed insistently against hers, his penis was hard and pulsing against her. She shivered as she felt his warm breath on her skin. She was trembling again, but with controlled passion this time and not the fear she had felt before.

"I love the feeling of your skin under my hands, James."

"You feel so good against me, Annie," he breathed in her ear, moaning softly as he did.

His hand moved down her body and slid between them, exploring her vaginal area. His fingers danced over her enlarged clit and when he touched it, she drew in a sharp breath, moaned loudly and thrust her hips up to his hand. For so long, her own hands and fingers had been the only ones to touch her like this. The knowledge that it was him touching her combined with the delicious sensations building in her body. It was as though her body was taking control of the situation and elevating her responses to each and every touch. The blood was rushing through her veins as he wiggled his finger on her clit; her heels were dug into the bedcovers as she pushed up to him to feel his fingers more. Her body craved his touches and she wanted more ... and more.

Her hands moved down his back and clutched at his ass, pulling him tighter against her. She could feel his penis rubbing against her shaved vulva, seeking the slightest opening and she raised her leg a bit, sliding it down over his thigh.

He nibbled her earlobe as he breathed soft words.

"You are lovely, my wanton granny."

She moaned in response. It was all she had breath to do; his actions had stolen the rest of the breath from her body. She needed him to touch her as he was doing, needed this more than she had thought possible, more than she would ever be able to express.

His skin was so warm under her fingertips and it had been so long. When she had done this herself, touched herself like this, she had pictures of him in her mind and memories of the words he had typed.

Those times had been for release of tension, for what she felt she needed at those moments but it had never been like this. Her hands could have never made her feel like this. Her vibrating massager could never do more than stimulate her to a quick climax. This was heaven compared to that and she never wanted it to end.

He rose up over her and slid his penis inside her heat as his tongue slipped into her ear. The muscles of her vagina clenched around him as he plunged deep inside her and she moaned unabashedly, shivering again in his arms at the touch of his tongue in her ear.

"Oh, God, James.... It's been soo long."

Hot tears slid from her eyelids and rolled down her face as he filled her completely. The pleasure and joy were so intense; there was nothing she could do to stop them.

He kissed her deeply, his tongue again sliding into her mouth, sliding along her tongue, almost dueling with it. He sucked her tongue as she fought to suck his. Back and forth, their tongues slid from one mouth to the other, suckling, licking, nibbling as the passion built. It was a fire spreading

from his hot mouth to hers and then down her body, centering between her legs and joining with the pulsing sensations there.

Then he raised his head and kissed the tears away. She sobbed softly at the gentle touch of this man she had grown to care about.

"I'm sorry, I can't help the tears."

"They are tears of joy, Annie."

Her hips moved to his, meeting each of his thrusts with her own, her body trembling under him in her need. Her hands were on his ass, feeling the muscles clenching under her fingers with each stroke of his penis into her hot, wet vagina. Annie moved under him, one hand on his ass to pull him in even deeper and harder, the other hand at the back of his neck, holding his mouth to hers. Her breathing was ragged and harsh and his matched hers, breath for breath. His moans grew louder as hers grew louder, each move a counterpoint to the other in their climb to that place of ecstasy and ultimate pleasure.

He spread his legs wider for better leverage and plunged harder and deeper into her wetness. She dug her heels into the sheets and lifted her hips to him. The muscles of her vaginal walls contracted and relaxed around him as he thrust rhythmically and deeply into her. She moaned against his neck as the feelings of pleasure started moving through her body. Unbelievably intense shocks of pleasure surged through her. Soft grunts and groans filled the air as the sound of their bodies slapping together grew harder and faster. Each of

them moaned against the flesh of the other, each thrust to the other as the need and desire grew.

His mouth found hers again and nibbled hungrily, pressing hard in the passion of the moment. Her lips were crushed under the pressure but she bit back just as hungrily. She craved his touch now, craved his mouth, but most of all she craved his penis deep inside her. She had to have it. She had to have him. There was no doubt she was losing her senses in this passionate coupling and she didn't care. Her clit was almost on fire from the pressure as he drove into her, sending unbelievable sensations through her body. She was gasping for air; the only air she got was filled with his scent, his cologne, his soap, his arousal. The scents filled her head and completely obliterated any sense of decorum or propriety, driving her even higher on her journey to ecstasy.

He moved his hips into her, grinding hard against her pubes on the down stroke, filling her completely. She felt as well as heard his moans, his labored breath calling her name as he moved inside her. Her eyes opened to gaze into steely blue looking down at her. She raised her head to catch his mouth again and they kissed, biting, chewing, and nibbling as the passion built between them.

Her hips moved hard to his, meeting each of his thrusts with her own. She needed to feel him as deep as he needed to be. Her breath was wild and erratic. His breath gasped from his lips in response.

"Annie," was all he could manage to say.

"James," was all she could answer ... there was no breath for any more. She clung to him, finally throwing her legs up

and around his waist, holding him tightly inside her. Her heels dug into his ass and she used that for leverage to raise her ass off the bed, her hips undulating in rhythm with his thrusts, her pubes pressing hard against his, the crushing pressure to her clit finally too much to bear.

Then it was if the universe exploded around them. Their bodies shook with the release of emotion. Both bodies arched into the other as the passion reached its culmination. Both cried out loudly as his seed filled her body. His fingers dug into her arms and back as he clung to her. Her legs wrapped tighter around his waist holding him deep inside her as he bucked and thrust over her, into her. Her face pressed tightly against his neck, mouth opened in an effort to hold in the screams of ecstasy but quite unable to do so. The sounds of passion reached and the gasps of exertion and release mingled in the close confines of the room. Moments that seemed to last forever finally slowed. A few more strokes, a few more breaths, a few more gasps for air and then he lay over her, fluttering kisses over her tear stained face.

"Oh, Annie.... My God, Annie."

She clung to him as his body relaxed over her, the tears of continued joy slipping down her cheeks. Her body still shook under him as she pressed her face against his neck, trying in vain to catch her breath. Her legs slipped back down from holding him, resting beside his on the bed. His penis pulsed again inside her and she smiled against his neck.

He rose up onto his elbows then, looking down into her glowing face. "Finally, Annie. Dear God, finally."

She reached up and caressed his face gently, his beard tickling her fingers as they moved over his face.

"I can't believe the way you made me feel, James."

"I can't believe we waited this long, Annie. My God, woman.... you make me crazy with need for you."

He turned slowly and carefully onto his side, holding her against him as he did, never letting his penis slide from her warmth. He continued to hold her and cuddle her as he touched her and kissed her repeatedly. She pressed against him as close as was humanly possible, not wanting the sensations to end.

She leaned up and kissed his lips so very softly and the kiss was answered in kind. A kiss of love, not simply passion. A kiss of caring, not simply needing.

"It would not have been as sweet, dear lady if we had not waited this long. It could never have been this sweet."

She chuckled softly as she snuggled under his chin and spoke quietly.

"I would never think to argue with you, sweet James."

He cuddled her close for a few more minutes and then edged away from her.

"Stay here, sweet lady.... eyes closed.... and quiet. I'll be right back with a little surprise for you."

She listened with a smile on her lips, wondering what kind of surprise he had in mind. Her body still tingled and quivered a bit with the afterglow of their lovemaking and, if truth be told ... with the anticipation of whatever he had in mind.

It was only moments later that he returned.

"Eyes closed now ... raise your head for just a minute."



When she did as he requested she felt something slipping over her face and head.

"Oh, my ... a blindfold, James?"

"Ssshh ... give me your hand, Annie."

She smiled as she realized what he was doing ... that life changing thing was about to happen. Her heart was beating faster again, and she felt weak inside. Only online had she ever experienced anything like this. They had played it, talked about it and now it was to become reality. This was like the nervousness she had felt at meeting him for the first time. She trusted him, knew he wouldn't harm her.

Her hand was trembling as she raised it and his hand closed around it, pulling her gently to her feet. He led her with an arm around her waist and she realized that he was taking her from the bedroom. She followed behind him as he led her down the short hallway they had used to enter the bedroom, then a turn to the left. She hadn't been this way before. The thick carpet of the hall disappeared from under her feet and she felt the coolness of tile. Another room that he hadn't shown her ... what kind of room, she wondered.

In only another moment, he had her turned around and standing in place. It was cooler in this room and she heard the soft sounds of an air conditioner. She could feel the goose bumps popping up on her skin and tightening her nipples again.

"Move your foot to the right, Annie."

She felt something wide and rather stiff closing around her ankle and gasped softly. Then came the directions to move her other foot and the same feeling again. Then the sound of

metal on metal ... like the click of something snapping together. Cuffs. He had put cuffs on her ankles to hold them in place. She wiggled her ankles a little and could picture the leather cuffs in her mind, she had seen them in so many pictures of bondage games. The excitement began to build in her just as it had when they had talked about this and played it online.

"Now give me your hands, Annie."

"James?"

It had been exciting when they played online but now that it was really happening, she was getting a bit nervous. Her legs were already shaking from the excitement and her heart was pounding harder. Maybe she wasn't as ready for this as she had thought.

Her hands being cuffed would put her completely at his mercy. Her heartbeat gathered speed as she considered it. She would be at his mercy. Here. Now. Her breath was coming faster. Something about those words, 'give me your hands' always made her heart beat faster. She never really understood it, why it happened like that, but it *did* happen and now this was more than online. This was *real*. She hesitated just a moment.

"Do it, Annie," his voice a bit more commanding this time.

She knew her hands were trembling as she held them out and felt the same sensation, stiff leather on her wrists; cuffs again, the same noise. She tugged a bit, trying to pull back, but his fingers were firmly gripping her hands. Then she heard a clicking noise, metal on metal, a clinking ... chains? His fingers released her hands and she tried again to pull

them back, but now there was resistance she hadn't felt before. Moving her hands from side to side, she felt that resistance again and her arms were slowly raised over her head. Her head was turning from side to side, trying to determine just where he was so she could let him know ... she wasn't sure now ... she was ... what?? Scared? But she *knew* he wouldn't ... well, she was pretty sure he wouldn't hurt her ... not really. Her body was stretched slightly, her feet were not quite flat on the floor and she finally heard a breath to her right side, almost as though he was exerting himself in some way. She turned toward the sound of his breathing questioningly.

"James? I..."

"Sshh," the soft sibilant was at her ear, ruffling her hair, tickling her cheek.

The sound of a barefoot slapping softly on tile, seeming to recede as he walked away from her, then the music started and she heard something that made her even more nervous. Over the sounds of music, she thought she heard the click of a door closing, almost drowning out the sound of her own heartbeat which was pounding in her ears. What had he done? Tied her here like this and left her alone?

She pulled on her hands and found that the cuffs cut into her wrists if she pulled too hard. It didn't do any good any way ... the pulling had no effect. Her hands weren't any looser and she couldn't pull them down. She tried moving them from side to side and found that she could do that a little, but when she did, it tended to pull her up a bit tighter. Then she tried her feet ... moving them was easier, but she

was still constrained. She could only move her feet a couple of inches either way. She was well and truly bound like this. The trembling began again, harder this time.

"James?"

No answer. She turned her head from side to side to try and hear him but there was no sound other than the music. Music. Not exactly what she would call music. It seemed familiar though, like she had heard it before but couldn't place it. A tinkling sort of music, like wind chimes, but.... no ... she couldn't place it.

She began to feel that ginger ale type feeling in her right foot so she shifted her weight to the left foot and wiggled the toes of the right.

*'Wonderful ... that's all I need ... my foot going to sleep now.'*

"James ... are you there?"

Again, no answer. She strained her ears to listen for any sound that would tell her he was still in the room, but there was nothing. She waited a few minutes, standing patiently, waiting for him to come back. Nothing. No sound. No doors. Nothing.

She tried moving her hands again. Same effect. Nothing. Her arms were getting tired, and she had to keep shifting from foot to foot to avoid the ginger ale feelings again. Her fingers were tingling as the blood drained from her upraised arms. She arched her back to ease that ache a little, then tried to move her shoulders to ease the beginning ache there.

"James!"

She began to get annoyed that he would do this to her. She had taken quite a chance in coming to meet him and he was treating her like this? The longer she stood there, the madder she got or maybe it was the beginnings of fear that fueled her anger, but she didn't want to think about fear ... he wouldn't hurt her ... she *knew* that.

"James, dammit. What are you doing?"

No response.

"James!"

Maybe he had to use the bathroom. That would be a logical explanation for him leaving her, so she tried tossing a bit of humor into the moment.

"James, did you fall in?"

Still no answer. Still no sound except that damned music. Her mind wandered for a moment. She knew she had heard it before but what was it? She had always liked the sound of wind chimes tinkling in the breeze, but it was beginning to get on her nerves now. Besides, unless the wind chime was hanging right in front of the air conditioner, she wouldn't be hearing it now. What the hell was it then?

She didn't know how long she stood there like that, blindfolded, hands tied and raised above her head, ankles cuffed and fastened to something in the floor. She did know that it was long enough for her legs to tire ... for her arms to ache from being over her head. Her hands were falling asleep and now they had that tingling sensation. She twisted her hands back and forth, trying to find a bit of leeway in the cuffs, maybe a way to free herself, but there was none.

"James? Please come back. Don't leave me like this any longer."

Nothing.

"James? I've changed my mind. I don't want to do this."

Nothing.

"James!"

The fear slowly began to seep into her senses. Nobody knew where she was. Nobody knew she was meeting him. What was he going to do? How long did he plan to leave her like this?

"James? Please?"

Deepening fear brought tears that slipped under the bottom edge of the blindfold and rolled down her cheeks, tickling her skin. She tried to turn her head to rub the blindfold and her face against her arm, but it didn't work. The tickling was still there as the tears continued to flow. She felt sweat starting to slide down her scalp under her hair to bead on her skin. She felt the tickle of the sweat near her ears, across her forehead, down the sides of her face.

"James, don't do this, please."

Her legs were shaking harder now and her breath was coming faster as the fear became stronger. Why had she done this?? Why had she come to meet a stranger like this? She was such a fool. Stupid woman! Stupid to trust somebody she only knew from the computer! She shook her head as she hung there, almost suspended from her wrists as her legs trembled. She felt drops of sweat fall onto her skin as they were disturbed from her shaking.

And that damned music ... what the *hell* was it? She listened to it a moment more and it was like a light bulb lit up over her head ... it was a rain machine ... like she had at home. It had different sounds to accompany the dripping water. She chuckled softly, congratulating herself for finally figuring it out. Then she stopped patting herself on the back and tried again to get him to answer her.

"James?"

Her voice was a soft whimper now.

"Please, James. Come back. Don't do this to me."

Then she felt something on her back and her head snapped to the side.

"James! I knew you wouldn't leave me like this."

But there was still no sound other than the music. What was that? Something touched her back, she knew it. She shook her head again, her hair softly flipping back and forth when she did. When she still heard nothing ... still heard only the music, she began to wonder if she had, indeed, felt something on her back. She sighed softly when she realized it could have been just a silky hair that had come loose and dropped down her back. She whimpered again and then gasped.

Another touch on her left breast and her head jerked up.

"James?"

Nothing. She sighed, she was sweating, that's for sure. Maybe it was a drop of sweat that dripped down on her skin. She couldn't believe this was happening to her, couldn't believe the man she had come to care for, the one she had agreed to meet, was actually doing this to her. What was

wrong with him? Had she fallen under the spell of some kind of pervert? Somebody who wanted to hurt her? She had never dreamed that he could or would treat her like this.

Another touch on her ass and her head jerked around again. This was weird. This many touches was that normal? She had never noticed anything like this before. Of course, she had never been in quite this position before either. Maybe it was just a hypersensitivity to stimulus. She had read about sensory deprivation. Is that what this was? Had she started imagining things weren't there that couldn't possibly *be* there. Was that what these little touches were? No. With sensory deprivation, you couldn't hear either. Well, maybe this was a type of that. She couldn't see. And that damned music was all she could hear.

"Come on, James. Let me loose?"

She hated the whining note that had crept into her voice but she couldn't help it. She was really getting scared now.

More minutes passed, more silence except for that damned music. Noise, that's all it was, white noise to cover anything else. Did that mean he was here? Was he in the room with her?

"James. I know you're here."

Nothing. No response.

Her legs were shaking harder now and her arms were aching, her hands hurting from being over her head for so long like this.

"James, please. My hands are hurting."

She kept turning her head to try and catch any sounds but there was only that damned, incessant music.



"James, please?"

That last word caught in her throat as a soft sob escaped her lips. She tried hard not to give in to the fear, tried not to cry, but she was really scared. She had met a veritable stranger for sex and now she was in fear for her life. She didn't *know* what he was going to do. She didn't *know* what was going to happen to her. She *did* know that she had been a fool to come here, a fool to long for something that she didn't *have* to have.

She had trusted her feelings, trusted what she had learned about him. All those people that said you had to be careful of the people you met on the internet, they were right, it seemed. She hadn't listened to those naysayers. She had found what she wanted or what she thought she wanted and she went for it. He had seemed like the answer to all her dreams. He was her age, intelligent, well traveled, and accomplished. He had seemed to really care about her. She was at a loss to explain it other than to accept the fact that she had made a horrendous mistake and now she would pay for it and pay dearly.

She was trembling with fear and the tears were flowing from under the blindfold. She was going to die. He was going to kill her here in this house that was supposed to bring some happiness into her life with their meeting. There were so many things she had never done, so many things she had never seen and she never would now. She was going to die here today and nobody would ever know what really happened to her. She supposed it was a good thing though. At least nobody would know what an idiot she had been to

meet a stranger like this. Nobody would know that she had met a serial killer and become another notch in his list of victims.

"Scared now, Annie?"

She screamed as the whispered words ruffled the hair covering her ear. Her legs gave out completely and she sagged, hanging there by her hands, sobbing hysterically.

"James! Oh, my God ... James."

Adrenaline rushed through her body and she shook harder. Her heart was in her throat as she strained to regain some breath. She tried to turn her head to the sound of his voice, but the next sensation was so unexpected, she froze. His fingers were between her legs, brushing against her sex. She moaned loudly at the touch and her hips twitched toward his hand. His fingers slipped into her pussy and wiggled from side to side and then pulled away from her. After all that he had done, after leaving her hanging alone like this, her body was betraying her. She didn't understand it, but that touch after the fear had filled her consciousness was magnified unbelievably.

She sobbed softly, grateful that he was there and she was not alone, but still enveloped in fear.

"Please let me loose, James."

No answer again. Had he left her again? She didn't think she could bear it if he left her alone again. But then she realized yet again, she didn't have a choice. She had to bear it because she couldn't free herself. She was at his mercy, captive to his every whim.

"James?"

All of a sudden, she had her answer.

Pain, sharp and hot across her ass! She screamed at the shock and her body rocked forward.

He had hit her with something and it stung and burned her skin. A belt ... he had hit her with a belt!!! It had to be that ... what else could it be? She pulled her feet under her again and tried to move forward. But with his fingers between her legs, she also wanted to push back to his hand.

"James!!!"

Then his hand was teasing her again, his fingers wiggling from side to side as they pushed into her. She was appalled to find that she was wet and his fingers slid easily inside. Her pussy clenched around his wiggling fingers and relaxed and clenched again, pulling his fingers deeper with each spasm. His thumb pressed against her clit and rubbed it back and forth, eliciting a long, soft moan. Her body was committing the ultimate betrayal. She wanted to curse him for what he had done to her, scream her anger at him yet her body was responding on its own to the teasing and torment that brought so much pleasure.

Another spasm of pain shook her body as he hit her ass again and she cried out again. She gasped and fought for the breath his actions had stolen from her. Her mouth was dry and she licked her lips. Her feet scooted along the floor as much as the shackles would allow. She tried to escape the leather across her ass, but her body craved the attention of his hands and there was a fight inside her as to which would win.

She tried to twist her body away, tried to anticipate the blows to her ass but she could not ... there was no definitive timing to them.

His fingers again ... plunging deeper into her each time he used them, teasing her, wiggling inside her, then sliding out again. She held her breath; waiting ... tensing the muscles in her ass, unaware that action would only make it sting more. Nothing. She finally expelled the held breath.

Then he struck her. She whimpered as her ass continued to burn with each stroke of the belt.

He played with her pussy and used the belt as he chose, not as she anticipated. She could hear him chuckling softly after a particularly hard twist to the side to avoid what she thought would be the belt, but was instead his lips pressed against her burning ass cheek. Her body jolted at the soft touch and immediately pressed back for more, but his lips weren't there any more. She was fairly dripping from the assault of his fingers, from the mixed sensations of fear and wantonness, from the desire and need of him and the pain. Whatever he did, whatever he wanted; at that moment, that was the only thing that mattered.

The incessant music, the crack of the leather on her ass and her moans were the only sounds in the room. She didn't even hear the music any more. Her body was on fire and not simply from the torment to her ass. He was making her feel things she had never felt before. She was frightened and excited at the same time. The sensations were combining in her mind and she was no longer sure which she craved more, his fingers and hand or the belt he was using on her ass. She

was gasping for breath and was sure her heart would burst from her chest. The excitement of what he was doing, something she had only experienced in online scenes ... the fact that it was him doing it...

She hadn't known what it would be like to be completely at the mercy of another person like this. It excited her beyond belief and she needed it now. She needed him to go on and never stop his attentions to her tortured, aching body that pulsed with pleasure and delight.

Every touch, every instance of pain or pleasure, the combinations were confusing her clouded mind. He had tortured her mind with silence and deprivation and now he was torturing her body with hand and belt.

"Oh, my God ... James.... James."

His hand continued to move in and out of her dripping pussy, his thumb continued to torment her clit and she felt the surge in her body toward the ecstasy he had provided in the bed. She moaned over and over as the pleasure built, only to be jolted higher by each successive crack of the belt.

"James.... please ... I can't.... I can't wait ... dear God, James, please."

His fingers continued. The belt continued. One minute. Two. Her body was shaking uncontrollably. Then she heard his soft words at her ear.

"Cum, my sweet slut. Cum for your Master."

She moaned loudly as he finally gave permission for her release, but the moan only lasted for a moment before she was overwhelmed by the deeper forces and she screamed again as her body tumbled and surged into a hard orgasm of

pleasure and pain. His fingers thrust harder and deeper, his thumb pressed onto her swollen clit even harder and the belt fell onto her red cheeks repeatedly. He kept the orgasm going as he kept his attentions going, the orgasm building and building, going on and on. Finally her body stopped twitching and sagged, hanging by her cuffed hands.

If she had been in her right mind, she would have heard the belt hit the floor but the only thing she knew for sure was that his fingers slid out of her soaked pussy. She didn't feel him releasing her ankles. She didn't feel him leaning against her as he released her hands and then held her close. She didn't feel herself lowered to the floor and held in his arms. She didn't hear his soft words at her ear as he caressed her.

She remembered the rest of that night and then the next day, as well, when he taught her more of what it meant to be helpless and under the spell of another person. With that first time firmly in her mind, she knew beyond any doubt that he was indeed what she had wanted. There were times later when she had doubted herself, when she doubted her ability to give herself so totally to another, but then she had those days indelibly woven into the very fiber of her being. Whatever he wanted from her would be his. The only thing she would not, could not give him was forever and he knew that and accepted it.

\* \* \* \*

Her reverie was interrupted by a loud chorus of voices behind her. She started to turn to see what the problem was, but something slammed into her from behind. She was

abruptly falling forward and she didn't have enough time to stop her fall. She couldn't breathe, could barely raise her hands to break the fall. The wooden wall of the food booth in front of her was rushing toward her. There were more shouts. There was movement to her side and she glanced that way just as her knees hit the ground and her face moved inexorably to the wooden wall. A fast glimpse of that face she had dreamed of for so long, the white beard, the blue eyes and then sharp pain to her forehead ... then wavering light...

Was that? No, it couldn't have been. Then blackness.

She struggled to open her eyes without pain, but the bright light hovering over her then flashing back and forth in her eyes was painful in the extreme. She groaned loudly and tried to move her head but that only elicited more pain.

"Glad to see you're awake. Can you hold your eyes open a second so I can check your pupil's responses?"

A young voice among the soft sounds around her. Yankee was the first thing that came to her mind. There was no southern accent at all, but the voice was deep and rich with a genuine concern hiding in the simple words.

"No ... it hurts."

"I imagine it does, but it will only take a minute to check."

She opened her eyes as best she could, held still so the light could flash in them again and then it was gone, but not before the pain seared into her head again, not before tears filled her eyes in response to the pain.

"Where am I?"

"St. Tom's Hospital."

"Why? What happened?"

"What do you remember?"

"No offense meant, but could you lower your voice just a bit? Everything is making my head hurt even more ... including you.

"I remember standing in the food court, trying to decide where to go next and then pain in my back. I seem to remember falling and that's it."

"Well, apparently you were too close to the outbreak of a fistfight and got caught in the midst of it. Witnesses said you fell forward into the side of a booth and hit your head after one of the idiots slammed into you."

"Wonderful. Anything broken?"

"Not that we've been able to find. How do you feel?"

She peeked out through mostly closed eyes and watched him walk around the gurney as she spoke. He was young and rather handsome in a way that kind of went with the voice. When he reached over and touched her forehead, she yelped.

"Not too bad until you did that. My head hurts pretty badly."

"Yep, and it will for a while. You've got a hell of a knot there."

"So I noticed. When can I leave?"

"As soon as your friend makes the arrangements."

"Friend? I don't have any friends here. I'm from out of town."

"Really? Well, somebody has been sitting here with you."

"Wait a minute.... what do you mean, make arrangements?"



"To take you home and keep an eye on you for the next 48 hours."

She looked up at him; eyes wide open now despite the pain in her head

"In case you haven't noticed, I'm an adult and I *can* take care of myself."

To the side, the bedside curtains parted and a man stepped into the cubicle. She knew him, of course, and closed her eyes again, cursing to herself.

*So I did see him*, she thought to herself. *Absolutely frigging wonderful! What is he doing here?*

As the thought flitted through her mind, she found her pulse racing. Him? Again, after all this time? The memories flooded into her again ... the words ... the touches ... the experiences. Determined not to let him know her deepest feelings, she refrained from looking at him; sure he would be able to tell what she was feeling if he saw her eyes. She put her hand up over her eyes as if to shade them from the light as she addressed the doctor again.

"When can I leave?"

He looked from her to the older man and back to her, then shook his head and stepped back. "You want to leave? Go ahead. Leave now."

"Glad you see it my way," she mumbled as she moved her legs to hang over the side of the gurney and sat up. She hesitated for a moment, the burst of pain from her headache causing a wave of nausea. Then she looked down and saw her legs ... and she sighed heavily.

"My clothes?"

"In a bag under the gurney. You can get them yourself, can't you?"

Her head jerked up at the change of tone in the voice of the young doctor. No longer a smiling face, he was frowning at her and shaking his head slightly.

Realizing then that she was wearing one of the old fashioned hospital johnnies, she reached behind her and pulled the material together, then held the front down with her other hand. As she slid down off the gurney and her feet touched the floor, her legs gave out and she pitched forward, hands releasing the material as she reached to break her fall.

"What the hell are you doing? She can't.... Annie!"

She heard his voice and the concern in it and her heart started pounding even harder. She almost turned to him reflexively but that was the only reaction she had time for. Her head was pounding and she was falling on her face ... again.

The young doctor stepped forward and caught her as the older man on the other side voiced his disapproval and moved toward the end of the gurney as if to come and catch her himself. The young doctor held her up as she regained her feet.

"You've got a crappy bedside manner, young man," she mumbled against his chest as her head began to clear.

"So I've been told. Just sit here and let your friend take care of you. Stop being such a stubborn pain in the ass," he whispered back.

He helped her back up onto the gurney and she laid back, eyes closed. She could hear the retreat of the doctor's steps

on the tile floor as he left the cubicle. "The nurse will be in to discharge you. Now behave yourself and you'll do fine," he said over his shoulder, and then he was gone.

"Annie?" She heard his funny step as he approached the gurney.

Without opening her eyes, she answered: "I don't see what the problem is; I am quite able to take care of myself. I really don't need your help. When I *did* need it you were long gone and couldn't be bothered."

He didn't say anything for a moment or two and she was beginning to wonder if he had indeed left her alone again. A sharp pain pierced her heart when she realized she didn't want that either.

*Make up your mind, you twit! You either want him here or you don't. You can't have it both ways.*

So many thoughts had flitted through her mind as she heard that voice and knew he was close again. The soft words in her ear, the soft touches, the longing and yearning to touch him and have him touch her; and the possibility of more pain warring thoughts in her mind as she heard that voice again.

"The problem is that you may have a concussion and you need to be with somebody to make sure there are no problems. Is there somebody where you're staying that can take care of you, Annie?"

She could hear the change in his voice, a tightness that wasn't there a moment ago. At this point, she didn't care if he was mad. Maybe if he got mad enough he would go away and she wouldn't have to deal with the pain any more. She was

pretty much used to the pain of him being gone, so that wouldn't matter much. Would it?

She heard him step closer to the gurney. She wouldn't look at him, she thought. Then he took her hand and touched her face, turning it to look into her eyes. With his touch on her face how could she keep her eyes closed, when she needed to see the steel blue of his eyes so badly? She opened her eyes, fighting the urge to turn and nuzzle his hand. Those eyes ... those steel blue eyes looking into hers again. Her heart leaped into her throat and she couldn't speak for a moment.

"Is there, Annie?"

That tone in his voice, she had heard that before, too. That was his "Master" voice and he was using it on her now? After everything that had happened between them? The last time she had heard that tone he had used far different words and they came unbidden again: "Cum for me, my sweet slut. Come for your Master."

"No, there isn't," she bit out the words through gritted teeth as she tried to pull her hand back, "but it shouldn't be a concern of yours."

*Damn you! I wish it was your concern!*

Ambiguous thoughts in her head, she wanted it to be his concern, craved that but knew it wouldn't be, knew he would only hurt her if she allowed the closeness again.

"It's Eddie's concern, not mine. It was his booth you fell into. He's taking steps to avoid any lawsuits. You'll stay with me until the doctor says you're cleared to leave."

"Just explain to your nephew that I wouldn't think of suing him or anybody else. It was an accident, James. Plain and simple. Nobody's at fault, least of all your nephew."

"He *is* my nephew and that's precisely why he's worried about you. I've told him that we are ... old friends, Annie."

Her eyes opened wide as she heard that. Is that what he thought? They were friends and that's it? She couldn't keep the tinge of ice out of her voice when she spoke again.

"Seems like you have everything planned."

She could feel her lip curling in a sneer as the words came from her mouth, but not from her heart.

"Eddie does, Annie. I have nothing to do with it, other than to make sure you're all right before you go back to your hotel or motel or wherever the hell you are staying."

"Right. And I'm sure that's the way you want it, too."

He looked at her and she saw the anger flash in his eyes. Then he let go of her hand, turned and walked away. As the curtain closed behind him, the tears filled her eyes and she shook her head.

"Damn you, James," she whispered and put her arm over her eyes, her headache pounding once again as the memories and feelings flooded into her mind. She wanted to hate him for what he had done to her, to them. But as much as she had tried, she couldn't hate him, couldn't force that negative emotion where he was concerned.

She must have dozed off because the next thing she heard was a wheelchair being pushed into the cubicle. A cheerful nurse was behind it waving papers.

"All set to go, hon. Let me give you a hand here and then I'll take you out."

She sat up on the gurney and let the nurse help her dress and then get into the chair. When the girl pushed the curtain back, she was confronted by James again.

Her heart caught in her throat as she saw the concern on his face before he had a chance to mask it with anger again. Then her demeanor changed as well ... cool, to match his. She had to convince them she was all right because the thought of spending time with him, him watching over her was something she didn't want to consider. She was afraid, of herself it seemed. What would she do with him so close? Could she control herself? Could she be close to him and not allow those feelings to overwhelm her again?

"Hello, Mrs. Talbot, I'm Eddie St.Jacques, Jim's nephew. It was my booth you fell into at the festival. I just want to make sure an old friend of Jim's is taken care of after an accident like that."

"Thank you, Mr. St.Jacques. I appreciate your concern, but as I've already told James, I'm quite able to take care of myself."

He was just as James had described him, olive complexion, dark hair, and dark eyes ... no accent though. For some reason, maybe the name, she had always thought he had an accent that wasn't necessarily a southern one.

"Yes, ma'am, I'm sure you can and just as soon as the worry about a concussion is over with, you'll be free to do just that. We simply want to be safe rather than sorry."

They went out the ambulance entrance and Eddie took her hand, helping her into his waiting car, but not before she had gotten out of the wheelchair on her own. The nurse frowned as she threw the brakes onto the chair. She handed the bag of belongings to James and turned back to the hospital door, mumbling about safety and wheelchairs and overanxious patients.

James leaned into the back seat and handed her the bag, his blue eyes gazing into hers. Her heart was pounding so hard that she was afraid she would pull him into the seat and just lean against him, wanting the safety she felt in his arms. She took the bag from him, put it on the seat beside her and turned her head to the window, leaning back and closing her eyes. He watched her, then sighed and closed the car door, taking his place in the front seat next to Eddie. The next time he looked back, she was asleep, slumped down a bit, her head resting on her arm.

It didn't seem long before the car stopped and Eddie was reaching into the car to take her hand and help her out again. She put her other hand up to shade her eyes as she looked at the verandah and yard before her.

The scent of the flowers had reached her nose almost as quickly as the dappled light hit her eyes. She could smell gardenias and roses as well as the delicate scent of the jacaranda trees and the heavier scent of magnolias. There were several trees in the yard and the shade was deep in some places, both in the yard and on the verandah. It was a wide, deep verandah and there were trellises on both ends of it, thick and full with hanging boughs of purple and red

flowers. A good portion of it was covered from the elements with an old-fashioned tin roof.

James took her bag and held her arm as they started across the verandah. She heard the car door close again and looked back at the driveway.

"I have to get back to the festival, Mrs. Talbot. Jim is going to give you any help you need. Call me if you need anything, Jim and don't forget to get that info for me."

James nodded and then led her to the French doors leading into the house from the verandah. Pulling his keys out of his pocket he unlocked the doors and pushed them open. She faced a large, airy room but before she could step into it, another sharp shard of pain shot through her head and she leaned against the doorjamb, eyes squeezed shut.

"Are you all right?"

She nodded gently, took a deep breath and stepped into the room. The room was lovely, painted a soft blue color, with a mural painted on the wall opposite the French doors. It looked to be almost a duplicate of the verandah with subtle shadings to delineate the shadows from trees. The flowers hanging from the painted trellises made it seem as though the heavy scent of blossoms was coming from the room instead of through the open French doors.

Even with the mural, it was a distinctly masculine room with the heavy furniture placed around the room. She thought at one time it had been a sunroom, but the heavy drapes on the windows would cut out a lot of light when they were closed. Then she saw the oak bed at the other side of the room. He had changed this huge room into a bedroom and



den combination. When she looked closer at the pictures on the mantle of the small fireplace, she realized it was his room.

"Here you go, Annie. Just make yourself comfortable, I'll be right back with coffee and something to eat."

"Thank you, James. Don't go to any trouble on my account, please."

She walked back to the French doors and looked out over the yard again. She could feel the anger emanating from him as he watched her turn her back again.

The house was set back from the street and seemed to fit into the surrounding trees and shrubs. She had been asleep when they pulled into the driveway and hadn't seen much of the house except for the portico that led to the verandah, dripping with wisteria vines, fragrant in the early afternoon sun.

When she heard his steps on the wooden floor receding from the door at the side of the room, she made her way around the room, touching things ... his things. A silver frame holding a picture from the island, she had seen that one before in the cd he had given her. A framed certificate on the wall denoting his membership in some international diving association. His computer sat on a desk to the side of the large room, where he had so lovingly talked to her.

She shook her head and went to the love seat situated near the fireplace. Rearranging the pillows on it, she seated herself and wiggled around, shoes off, making herself comfortable on the thick cushions. She pulled the afghan from the back of the loveseat down and over her legs. Putting her glasses on the end table beside the small sofa, she snuggled

her face into her arm and tried to relax. Breathing deeply and rhythmically, she tried to ignore the pounding of the headache that would *not* go away.

She had dreamed of a day like this ... dreamed of seeing him again ... facing him after what he had done to her. She had known then what she would say and how she would feel. Now that her dream had actually come to fruition, though, all those thoughts and plans were gone from her head.

He was seething when he went down the hall toward the kitchen, mumbling under his breath. "Damned woman is going to be the death of me. Take care of herself, my ass; she can barely walk into the damned room without leaning on something."

Then he sighed deeply ... leaning on *him* ... that's what he wanted her to do. Why hadn't she leaned on him instead of the doorjamb?

He went into the sunlit kitchen and took the can of coffee from the cabinet, then fixed the machine to brew. He checked the fridge and made a plate of cheese, crackers and some fruit, a multitude of thoughts running through his head while he worked.

He hadn't planned any of this ... couldn't she see that? He was just trying to help and keep her safe while she was ill. Why was she making it so difficult? Then he leaned against the counter. He knew why she would make it difficult. He closed his eyes as he recalled the moment he decided to walk away from her.

It had broken his heart and it hadn't helped that she had kept emailing him asking why he had stopped. He recalled the

tears he had shed. He knew he had made her miserable, hurt her terribly and apparently it was beyond any chance of repair. But did he want to repair it? It seemed as though nothing had changed. She still wore the rings on her finger. That was one of the first things he had noticed, even as she lay on the ground outside the booth at the fairgrounds.

He wasn't sure how long he stayed there like that, remembering the times they had shared, the words of forever and always. He knew why she was acting the way she was. In fact, he didn't blame her.

His heart was saddened as he fixed the tray with the snacks and coffee and walked slowly back to the bedroom. His hip had started to ache and he would need medication soon or it would get worse, but he had to take care of Annie first.

He made it down the hall without too much pain and stopped when he saw her on the love seat. He sighed as he stepped into the room, shaking his head again.

"Annie, what are you doing?"

She raised her head, blinked away another episode of napping and looked toward the door to see him with a tray in his hands, coffee cups steaming as he walked slowly into the room.

"I'm resting, James. Isn't that what I'm supposed to be doing?"

He put the tray down on the table in front of the love seat and looked down at her.

"Why are you making this difficult?"

"This is obviously your room, James."

"And your point is?"

"You made it clear that you didn't want me in your bed, James. Why should I think that's changed?"

Anger flashed in his eyes and he turned away from her before he could say anything. She watched him stand there with his back to her for a few minutes, the tautness of his shoulders showed his emotions were still held in check.

*Good. If he gets mad enough, maybe he will stay away from me. Maybe I won't have to make a fool of myself after all.*

"Just get in the bed, Annie. It doesn't matter whose bed it is. Just get in it and get some rest. I'm not going to discuss anything else right now."

"I told you, I don't want to be a bother. I'm quite comfortable here."

"Now, Annie. In the bed."

His voice had taken on that commanding edge again and he turned to face her.

With a sigh, she gave up; giving in to him was easier than dealing with his anger and the pain.

"All right, James. My head is hurting too much to argue with you now."

She sat there for a moment then put her head down gathering her strength around the headache before she got to her feet and moved toward the bed. She wasn't very steady on her feet after laying on the loveseat, but she moved slowly, determined to make it to the bed without his help.

She felt him watching her as she moved across the room. She wouldn't look him in the eye as she sat on the bed, her

hand brushing across the surface of it, feeling the tiny stitches of the hand-made quilt. She had always loved quilts, but that wasn't the reason she looked at the quilt instead of into his eyes. She knew if she did...

"I would like a bit of that coffee. The caffeine might help my headache."

He nodded silently and brought the cup across the room. He held it to her lips and let her sip the fullness from the cup before handing it to her. She raised the cup to her lips again, but her hands were shaking so much that the coffee slopped over onto her hand and she gasped at the heat on her skin. He saw, of course, and his hand went to the cup again, steadying her grip on it.

"Are you frightened, Annie? Of me?"

"No, James. Why should I be?"

"Your hands are shaking as though you were frightened."

"Well, I'm not. It must be from the headache. I really don't feel well at all."

"Take another sip and get some rest, then."

She took a deep drink of the coffee, hoping against hope that the caffeine really would help her and then she let him take the cup away. She pulled her legs up on the bed, turned on her side and stretched out with her back to him.

He watched her, then sat down and drank his coffee, nibbling at the tidbits he had placed on the tray. When he heard her breathing even out, slow and deep, he flipped the afghan off the loveseat, carried it to the bed, and spread it over her sleeping form. Then he returned to the chair and sat there watching her sleep.

He hadn't needed her emails to remember her; he had the memories of the time they had spent together both online and in real time. The memories were bittersweet as they flitted through his mind. He remembered the sweetness of the woman lying in his bed, the absolute devotion she had shown him and the love they had shared. The way he had turned away from it and her, like a fool. At least he still had his integrity, but integrity didn't keep him warm on cold nights and damned sure didn't soothe his aching heart.

\* \* \* \*

He looked up from his book at the soft moan to his right. Annie was struggling to a sitting position on the bed, her hand slipping as she pushed herself up. He quickly rose to help her. She looked so pale and confused; he couldn't help the pang of sadness and concern that went through him.

"Annie? What is it?"

"Gonna be sick," she moaned and tried to get out of the bed.

He grabbed for the wastebasket and held it close, holding her against him at the edge of the bed. She shook against him as she gagged and vomited the coffee and a bit of bile into the plastic liner of the wastebasket. She winced each time she gagged, and she kept her eyes closed. She moved her head away from the wastebasket and leaned against him, tears streaming down her face.

"All through?"

An almost imperceptible nod against his chest and then he put the wastebasket to the side and continued to hold her,

gently brushing her hair back from her face. His heart was racing as he held her. The scent of her perfume was just the same as he remembered. She felt so good in his arms. He wanted to lean down and kiss her but he just held her and spoke softly.

"It's all right, baby.... ssshhh.... everything is going to be okay."

"Hurts, James. It really hurts," she whispered against his chest.

"I know. Just don't fight me, Annie. Let me take care of you through this. Please, just let me help."

"I won't fight you. I hurt too bad to fight any more."

"That's my girl. Lean back, Annie. Let me get a cool cloth for your head."

She laid back on the bed, eyes closed, shivering in the coolness of the room. She tried to relax as she heard him walk away from the bed. Moments later, she felt a cool, soft sensation on her forehead and eyes. The coolness of the cloth resting on her face helped to soothe her headache and blocked the light from her aching eyes. She stayed there; quietly enjoying the gentle touches, smiling softly. Eventually she fell asleep.

When she awoke again, she was alone in the room. A soft light from the desk lamp across the room cast the room in shadows that continued from the open French doors. There was a tray on a small table beside the bed and when she peeked, she found a delicious array of fruits and vegetables. She nibbled on the food, but didn't trust her stomach enough to really enjoy the meal. She sipped at the cool tea that

accompanied the dinner and tasted the chamomile in it. She smiled softly and leaned back to rest after the little repast.

She dozed off and woke up several times during the night. Some of those times, she smiled to see him sitting in the chair close to the bed and sometimes he was in the chair across the room at the computer. She didn't speak, just watched him for a few minutes before dozing off again. She realized she was letting herself slip back into the old feelings for him, but at this point, it just didn't seem to matter. She was there and so was he.... whatever happened, would happen. Then she caught herself and shook her head slightly, listening to the words in her head.

*Yes, you want him ... you never stopped wanting him, but good God, woman, what the hell is the matter with you?! You know what he did! Walked away from you when you needed him the most! All the times you emailed and messaged him ... begging ... pleading ... cajoling ... even trying to joke a response from him and nothing ... not one damned word. He walked away from you without a word of explanation and now you want to just invite him back into your heart and body? Are you crazy? He made you miserable! You couldn't stop crying ... for days at a time. You let him hurt you like that and you're going to do it again? I thought you had a bit more intelligence than that! Maybe you ARE getting senile.*

She slowly turned over in the bed, facing the wall again and thought about it a bit longer before she fell asleep again. She was right, he had hurt her, a lot. No matter what she had done after he stopped talking to her, she hadn't been able to get a response from him. She had even sent a rather sexy



letter telling him why he might find himself tired in the morning when he first woke up.

That was a good one. She'd told him she had snuck into his room while he was asleep, tied his hands and feet to the bedposts with silk scarves and had her way with him. She had been very sensual and very naughty in that note. Still nothing. Not a 'hello' ... not a 'go away' ... not even a 'fuck off, lady.' Not even letters sent between 'just friends' had had any effect on his hardened heart.

Not one word and now just because she found herself in his presence, she was going to forget all about that? Not bloody likely! With those final words ringing in her head, she closed her eyes and went to sleep again, swearing to herself that she would not fall under his spell again.

She would get through this mess she found herself in and go home. Then the image of home and how it had been when she left it brought tears to her eyes that slowly slid from her closed eyelids. She had been alone in that house for quite some time since Dan had gone to the nursing home, but now being there was worse. It seemed colder all the time, quieter, and she didn't relish the idea of going back there.

The home had been filled with so much love and happiness and then so much sickness and sorrow. Dan had been so vibrant, so active. He'd taken her for walks on the beach or fishing whenever she had a few extra hours off work. As his illness began to manifest, there had been shouting matches because it robbed him of recent memory first.

He accused her of doing nonsensical things. Then he wouldn't accept her explanations or believe that he had forgotten anything.

The doctors had shaken their heads, telling her there was nothing they could do. She'd watched as he deteriorated almost visibly as the days went by. Since he had been in the nursing home, the house wasn't the same. There were no cheery voices, no extra clothes to pick up or wash, only the memories of the life they had shared.

\* \* \* \*

A loud peal of thunder jolted across the storm filled sky, rattling the tin roof of the verandah and shuddering into the cozy room through the open French doors. Annie bolted upright with a cry and James jumped to his feet and hurried to the bed. She had a wild look in her eyes, surprised, startled. Fearful. And then he had his arms around her and she was shaking.

"Sssh, Annie ... it's just a storm. It won't last long."

He wanted to hold her even tighter, caress her even more, and make love to her again, this time in *his* bed and not a borrowed one. Her face was pressed against his chest and he heard her sobbing over the thunder rolling away from the city.

"Annie. What is it? Why the tears?"

"The thunder woke me up," came the small voice in reply, "and then I heard the rain. The rain, James. God. Why did it have to rain on top of everything else?"

He shook his head as he stood there, not understanding what the *hell* was so upsetting about a little rain. She didn't seem to be afraid of the lightning and it was understandable to be a little shaken by thunder so loud it woke you up but...

"I don't understand, Annie. What does the rain have to do with anything?"

And then his senses rocked as he remembered and he *did* understand. When he was in Italy and they had talked on the computer, they had talked of walking in the rain, hand in hand, experiencing the Italian way of life together. He had told her many times how he wished she was there to share it with him, how he wished they could be together to enjoy it all. He had wanted to take her to the restaurants, the ruins of Rome, the hills of the wine country, wanted to share the country with her ... share the world with her.

He remembered the poetry she had shown him about walking in the rain and the pain expressed in the poems. It was pain he had caused her over and over again because he had walked away from her.

He desperately wanted to make love to her now to take her heart away from the memories of his leaving but he was afraid. Things really hadn't changed. She was still married. She hadn't made any attempt to hide her bitterness and anger with him even though she seemed to have gotten used to him being here now and helping her. Still, he didn't want to press his luck and try ... not now. Not yet. He had hurt her badly and he knew it. He knew he had taken the coward's way out, too.

He had cursed himself time and again for the way he had left her, but at the time he had felt it was the only way to end it. If he had told her why, if he had given his reasons, she would have argued. She would have stated her arguments and reasoning just as she had in the letters she had written to him, begging him to tell her why he had left her.

He wasn't sure he ever would have been strong enough to withstand her tears; God knew he didn't *want* to withstand them. He had wanted her with him more than he had ever wanted anything before, but it was a lesson in futility. Her love for him was apparent and he knew she would have put herself in a position of being filled with guilt to spend even occasional weekends with him. But he couldn't allow that, he loved her too much. So he had hurt her to save her more hurt. How many times had he wondered if it had all been worth it?

"Sssh, Annie ... it will be all right."

He held her like that for a few minutes until his hip began to hurt more, then he turned and sat beside her on the bed, still holding her against him. It was a while before she calmed down and he continued to stroke her hair and shoulders as the sobbing eased and her breathing was normal again.

"It's still kind of early, Annie. Why don't you rest a bit more and I'll make some breakfast. I'll wake you again when it's ready."

"James, I ... I'm sorry. I didn't mean ... you don't have to wait on me, you know."

"I know that, Annie, but you did say you would let me take care of you until you were better. You aren't going to go back on your word, are you?"

"No, James ... I won't go back on my word."

He stood up and looked down at her, reached for her again and slipped his fingers down her cheek. He watched her as she started to turn her head to nuzzle his hand as she had done before. Her eyes flickered up to his and then she pulled back, catching herself before she turned her head too much. Then she lay back on the bed, quiet and cool again. He sighed and then went down the hall to make breakfast.

*What the hell am I doing? God, she makes me want her just by looking at me. She has a few more wrinkles around her eyes. There's a bit more white in her hair and she's cut it shorter, but it still feels as silky as I remember. Those hazel eyes ... still so clear and still changing in the light. Her skin is as soft as it was when I touched her last, smooth ... not even as wrinkled as it should be at her age. She hasn't changed a bit.*

*The situation hasn't changed; nothing has changed except that she's here where I can touch her. Dammit, even the scent of her makes me crazy! She's still using that same perfume. Frigging green tea perfume! Stupid name for a perfume ... but the scent of it ... always reminds me of her, and I see the damned words all over the place!*

He continued arguing with himself as he made breakfast and then set up the tray with oatmeal, fruit and coffee. He knew she didn't usually eat much for breakfast but she hadn't eaten last night and it would do her good. Carefully carrying

the tray down the hall, he promised himself he wouldn't push it. He wouldn't pressure her into changing her attitude towards him. He understood that he deserved her bitterness, he had hurt her unbelievably. Her poetry had showed him that as had her letters and notes that filled his message box. Each and every one of those notes had clutched at his heart, torn him up inside as he pictured her tears and the expression on her face. The grapevine of their friends had let him know what she was going through. He had lost a few friends over the way he treated her and he'd had to bear up under that as well.

He made a quick stop in the bathroom, washed up and then turned the hot water on to get it started.

*Dammit, I want her.*

The delicious smell of hot coffee awoke her. When she opened her eyes, he was standing beside the bed, coffee cup in hand and a smile on his face.

"You are feeling better, aren't you?"

Her head didn't hurt, her eyes didn't hurt and she felt a full smile stretching her lips. She loved the tone of his voice, deep and soft. The caring she heard was almost a caress to her ears.

"I'm feeling much better this morning, James. The migraine seems to be gone. And it *was* a migraine, James ... not a concussion. Thank you. If that coffee is for me, then I owe you another thank you."

"It is for you, sweet lady," he said as he sat beside her on the bed, holding the cup for her to drink.

*Sweet lady. Good God, how I've longed to hear that from those lips. The nights I needed to hear it or at least read it on the screen and now I've heard it and I know I'm lost.*

Her blood was rushing again, her heart pounding as she leaned to the coffee cup he held to her lips. After she had sipped the fullness from the cup, he handed it to her and brushed her hair back from her face.

She held the cup, turned her head into the caress, and kissed his hand. Her breath caught for a moment as she realized what she had done, but she couldn't quite manage to stop herself from kissing his hand again. She turned her face back to him, already knowing that he had leaned in to kiss her. She had felt his soft breath on her cheek and was ready for the touch of his sweet lips. She needed to taste his mouth again, needed the feel of his lips on hers, the tickle of his beard on her face. She was trembling with need as she raised her head to his lips.

His hand moved up to touch her face and cup her chin as he kissed her. When he broke the kiss, he leaned back enough to take the cup from her hand and put it on the nightstand beside the bed.

She watched him move, watched his hand on the cup as he put it on the table and remembered that hand on her body, touching and teasing her. He turned back to her and those blue eyes in which she had lost all her inhibitions and fears gazed into hers again. She remembered the way his eyes crinkled at the corners when he smiled at her, showing his pleasure that she was his to love, to have, to command. She remembered the way his lips curved in that wicked smile

that led her into fates she had only dreamed about from books she had read.

It was that same wicked smile he had left her with the night before he stopped talking to her. He was the same person who had almost destroyed her, who had broken her heart into a million pieces. He was the same person who had caused her so much pain and anguish and he was in front of her enticing her into another chance at happiness ... another chance at pain.

*Why, damn you ... why did you leave me?*

The thought flashed through her mind and into her heart. She wanted to know why, but she also wanted *him*, and in truth, she was afraid to ask why, afraid to know the answer. If she asked him now ... would she have the nerve to hear the answer? Or would he walk away again?

Even though she knew she was letting herself in for more hurt and pain she looked up at him and smiled softly. She wanted him too much to let past hurts stop her. All the words that had run through her mind last night were as wisps in the wind ... gone just like he had been gone from her. She knew she was putting herself in danger again but right then it didn't matter in the least. The only thing that mattered was that he was there and touching her just like he had that first time.

"James ... I ... I feel kind of grubby. Would you mind if I took a shower before.... ummmm ... anything else?"

He chuckled softly and pushed the covers back, pulling gently on her hand.

"Your water awaits, sweet lady. I already started it running to get hot."



He held her hand as she slipped from the bed. He led her to the bathroom where the steam was beginning to billow from the enclosed shower. She stepped away from him and faced him, just as she had long ago. Then she started unbuttoning her blouse.

"I'm still not a model."

"You are still lovely in my eyes, Annie. You always were."

*Then how could you leave me? How could you do what you did to me?*

She forced herself to push those thoughts away again, shoving them into a corner of her mind and slamming a door so they wouldn't creep out to interrupt her again.

She smiled and undressed as he watched her. Not too slowly, not too quickly either ... just ... undressed, letting him see again. Like the last time, a blush started on her face and then moved down her body, but this time there was light in the room and he could see the blush coloring her skin. She saw the smile on his face, saw his eyes crinkling again and felt pride that even with her sags and wrinkles he was still glad to see her like this ... as she was the last time. She was his and there for the taking and she found that she wanted it more this time than she had the last. When the last of her clothes dropped to the floor, she turned away from him and stepped into the shower.

This shower didn't seem to fit into the old-fashioned house at all. It was larger than a regular shower and there were built-in seats on the side of it. The back wall of the shower was a window that looked out over a small garden enclosed by a high wall. There were four showerheads pouring water

down from both ends of the shower and steam filled the enclosure. She stepped in and adjusted the water as it poured down, letting the water sluice down over her head and body, enjoying the heat as it seeped into her skin.

Because she was under the water, she didn't hear the shower door open, didn't hear him step in behind her, and didn't know he was there until she felt his hands on her waist and his breath on the back of her neck. Even under the hot water, his breath on her neck made her shiver with pleasure as she felt his skin pressed to hers.

She moaned softly and leaned back against him, the heat of his body against her back only intensifying the heat from the water. His hands moved from her waist around her body and grasped a breast in each hand, squeezing gently.

"Woman, you are a vision to these old eyes."

She turned her head to him, gazing into his eyes a moment before leaning to kiss him again. She turned to him, never taking her lips from his, and pressed her wet body against him as fully as their height difference would allow. Her arms went around him, her hands sliding down and cupping his ass cheeks tightly, pulling him even harder against her. His beard tickled her lips and nose.

*His kiss is as sweet as it always was ... he seems to want this as much as I do, but if that's true then why?*

His hands moved slowly down her back, nails dragging across the water heated skin.

*Why now and not then? Dare I ask? If I ask ... will this end?*

He moaned in the kiss and his hands slid further down, clutching at her ass and squeezing.

*No. I'm not going to take the chance. Right now, I want this more than anything. I want him.*

Mouths pressed hard, tongues dancing, slipping, sliding together, hip grinding against hip, engorged penis pressed against her shaved pelvis. Moans from both of them echoed from the tile walls as the kiss ended and they looked deeply into each other's eyes. She moved her hands from his ass and slid them around to rest on his chest. Her eyes locked with his as she sank slowly to her knees just as she had done before. Her fingers trailed down his body before coming to rest on his hips. He watched her kneeling before him and thrust his fingers into her hair, tangling them and holding her face up to his.

She smiled up at him, remembering the other times he had held her like this, remembering the times she had knelt at his feet, pleasing him, teasing him as much as he teased her.

"Annie..."

Still looking up, she leaned forward, her tongue slipping from her lips. The flat of her tongue touched the underside of his scrotum and slowly slid up to the base of his penis. He groaned loudly and tightened his grip in her hair. She moved her mouth up, her tongue moving from side to side on the underside of his throbbing shaft, until she reached the tip. Her right hand moved from his hip to his hard cock and she grasped it, squeezing gently as she pulled the tip to her open mouth. Her tongue shot out again, pressing into the slit at the

tip of his penis, and then sliding slowly around the sensitive ridge at the head of his cock. He moaned again and tightened his fingers in her hair even more, holding her mouth against his cock, and causing her to wince at the pulling of her hair.

Slowly, teasingly, she moved her mouth down over the head of his cock, taking in as much of it as she could, then trying for just a bit more. She was rewarded for her efforts with another loud groan, and she smiled slightly around his cock. The sound of him enjoying her mouth made her want to please him even more. Then he thrust his hips to her hot mouth and it was her turn to moan. Doing this for him had always excited her beyond belief. Hearing him, feeling him throbbing in her mouth as his cock slid across her tongue, made her quiver with pleasure. Her fingers squeezed harder, both around his cock and at his hip when she felt a tremor run through him. Her left hand slipped back around to his ass, clutching it and running her nails lightly over the hot skin. She moved her mouth from the tip of his cock to the base, repeatedly, swallowing around him as he touched the back of her throat.

As she suckled, her fingers moved on his ass, feeling the muscles bunching as his hips thrust forward. Slowly, she moved her hand to the center of his ass, sliding her fingers from the top of the cleft to the bottom. When her fingers reached his puckered ass hole, they pressed gently, rubbing back and forth, massaging lightly, and slipping over the skin wet from the hot water.

"Annie ... oh my God ... Annie. Yesss ... oh yesss."

She pressed her mouth down as far as it would go again, nose pressed against his belly. When she heard him moan again, she slipped her finger inside his ass, wiggling it from side to side to facilitate the entry. The finger then followed the motions of her mouth.... her mouth moved up and down on his cock, her finger moved in and out of his ass, a little deeper each time she pressed inside.

"Annie, my god, woman," the words were a guttural groan rasped from his throat.

She was still looking up at him and she could see the look of rapture on his face. She could feel him trembling as she leaned against his legs. Her nipples were hard and pressed into his skin. He moaned again and again as his hands pulled at her hair, holding her there. She knelt at his feet and giving him all the pleasure she could possibly give.

Over and over, she brought her lips and tongue to the tip of his cock, swirling it around the sensitive head before plunging back down his shaft, taking him all the way into her mouth and pressing her nose into the nest of curly hair around the base of his cock. Over and over, her finger plunged into him, curling and pressing, waiting for the right moment to press harder. Even over the sound of the water, she could hear him gasping for breath, she could feel the pulsing in his shaft as the blood rushed through his veins and because her breasts were pressed against his thighs, she could feel every tremor that shook him. She felt him begin to shake harder and heard the deep groan from his lips. Her finger plunged into him again, curling deep inside and pressing hard as he erupted in her mouth. He cried out as the

pressure on his prostate increased the intensity of the orgasm. She swallowed as quickly as she could, his throbbing shaft shooting thick streams down her throat. He filled her mouth and throat repeatedly and it was all she could do to not spill a drop.

His fingers were tangled so tightly in her hair, gripping her so firmly that she could barely move, almost like being bound and at his mercy again. She groaned as he slowly released his grip on her head. She moved her head back, her mouth slipping to the tip of his cock as she did. One last, soft suck and she let his cock slip from her lips and her finger from his ass. She looked up at him and saw the look on his face. That look had meant this is my woman and she has done this to please me. She smiled broadly at her accomplishment.

"Good god, Annie."

He stumbled a bit as he moved to the side of the shower and sat on one of the benches. She moved after him and knelt at his feet, leaning against his still quivering legs. Even where they sat, the water splashed down over them and she felt the spray on her face as she nuzzled his thigh. A moment later, she felt his hand on her head, rubbing her hair.

"Woman, you are truly a wonder," he said as he pulled her up to kiss her softly.

"I am only what you made of me, James, but I am glad that I pleased you."

She smiled up at him after the kiss and then snuggled beside him on the bench. This had always been a favorite thing for her, snuggling with him as she enjoyed the afterglow

of being with him, feeling his arms around her holding her close ... safe and secure in his caring of her.

"Let me catch my breath and then I'll make you a breakfast that we will really eat, instead of letting it sit on the table."

"You don't have to do that, James."

"I know, sweet lady, but I want to."

They sat there for a few moments longer, snuggled together as the water poured down over them. Then he got up, rinsed off by turning around in the heavy stream a few times, smiled at her and stepped from the shower. She watched with a wide smile on her face.

After he was gone, she bathed and washed her hair, humming to herself. When she stepped out of the shower, she could smell a fresh pot of coffee brewing and other delicious odors coming from the kitchen.

After she dried off, she realized there was nothing to put on but the clothes she had taken off and they were a tad too grungy for that. She wrapped a towel around her head and found another one to wrap around her body, then went padding down the hall, following the scent of coffee. She found the kitchen and stood in the doorway watching as he cracked eggs into a skillet and tossed in some cheese and chopped ham.

"James ... I have no clothes. Is there any way we can get my bag from the hotel?"

He looked up from his cooking and smiled wickedly. "Well, Annie, you know I don't drive any more. Where did you say you were staying?"

"At the Regency, across the river."

"Well, that's a good distance from here. I don't think we could walk there and back. I guess you'll just have to stay in that towel until I can get Eddie to run out and pick up your things. Maybe he can manage it some time tomorrow or the next day."

"But, James..." she started to protest but then she saw the wicked gleam in his eye and she laughed out loud.

"I'll give him a call. I'm sure one of the family can run out and get your stuff."

She made toast and poured the coffee while he scooped the eggs onto the plates. Then they carried them to the table on the back porch and sat down to enjoy the food and each other's company.

It had been a long time since they'd had any talks of consequence. He had stopped talking to her, even online, quite some time ago ... almost two years. She had never stopped longing for those chats.

She asked about the island and his business and he regaled her with stories of some of his students, and then moved into subjects more dear to his heart ... reefs and the destruction man caused daily. He taught classes on reef ecology as well as diving and she never failed to learn from him. He had lived the life that most people dreamed of and she was one of those people.

His island home was on a hill overlooking the deep blue lagoon, where he taught the diving classes. She had had a good life married to Dan, but it had become sad and empty after his illness. James had brought excitement into her life



with his stories. He had taken her out of her sadness every time they talked. He had been her lifeline and she felt deep in her heart that he had saved her sanity with his exploits. She had told him that she could listen to him forever ... and he had laughed but she meant every word.

He had saved her only to abandon her when she needed him most. A sharp pain went through her when she remembered that and again she shoved it away. *That was then, this is now. I'm going to enjoy this as much as I can, for as long as I can.*

They had just carried their dishes into the kitchen and she was standing at the counter drying her hands, when he reached and slid his fingers inside the top of the towel. Before she had a chance to react to his touch, he ripped the towel away and dropped it to the floor. She started to turn to face him.

"No. Don't turn around. Don't move at all."

That tone of voice was the one he had used when he tied her hands before, a tone she wouldn't soon forget. Her breath caught in her throat as she obeyed the commanding tone. Unsure of what he was going to do, she nevertheless began to breathe faster.

Her eyes closed as she tried to control her breathing and the trembling of her legs. Then she heard a noise to the side and felt something rubbing against her ass. What was it? She concentrated on trying to figure it out as it moved from one cheek to the other. He was tapping it against her skin. What was it? It was hard and small, not cool to the touch ... *what?*

He tapped harder against her ass ... then harder still, stinging her flesh. What was it?

"Amazing how versatile these little wooden spoons can be, isn't it? Stirring soup ... mixing cakes. I've even seen them used for propping open stubborn windows. But we don't need any windows propped open, do we Annie?"

"No, Master ... no windows."

In the kitchen ... she should have known it would be a spoon. It had to have been something that he could have reached quickly. Would it be anything like the belt she had felt before? Would it be just a little sting or ... ?

She gasped as she found out how much it would sting as it fell across her ass. She inadvertently moved forward.

"Did I say you could move, Annie?"

"No, Master."

Her legs had already been trembling as she wondered what he was going to do; now that she knew, they shook even harder. It was difficult to stand and not move at all. It was difficult to stand there unfettered and allow somebody to cause her pain like this but ... it was what he wanted. Nobody had ever treated her like this and she didn't quite understand why she found herself wanting to do exactly what he wanted.

"I did say don't move at all, didn't I?"

"Yes, Master."

"Tsk tsk ... and you disobeyed me."

Again the stinging sensation as the spoon fell, but this time on the other cheek. She gasped again and tried to speak normally, though she felt anything but normal. He was showing her again what it meant to be controlled by another.

Incongruous feelings ... wanting to avoid the pain but also wanting to belong to him. No, not wanting. She found a need to belong to him growing in her mind and soul. He was what she had always wanted in her life and this was what he wanted. Did that mean she wanted the pain, too? She wanted him, wanted to please him more than anything and if this was what it took, then so be it.

"I ... I didn't mean to, Master."

She was trembling from head to toe now, wondering what he would do. Would he continue? Would he stop because she had disobeyed, even though it was an accident? She didn't want him to stop, not now, not ever. She was becoming more needful of this side of him. He was always strong and when he got into this mode, she found herself longing for it, longing for him to make her *his*.

It had started as simple excitement at doing something new and different from anything she had ever experienced before but now it was more than that. Now it was a need, a yearning to belong to him ... to be cared for, taken care of. There was a deepening willingness and need to care for him in every way.

Online friends had talked about what it meant to wear the collar of a dominant and she had listened to every word, astonished at the time. She had read books and articles about being controlled by a dominant. Her friends had told about the *need* to belong to somebody like this but she hadn't really believed it. She had been raised to be independent and strong, to be herself and that's what she had always been ... not the "pet" of a man. But when he was like this with her,

she could believe what she had been told; she was beginning to crave it and all his attentions.

Then she felt his breath against her neck and held very still.

"You won't move again, will you Annie? I wouldn't like to have to punish you."

"I won't move, Master."

He had to be able to see her trembling. Her legs were shaking hard both from the stinging and the emotions building up inside her. He had to see her heart pounding in her chest ... there was no way she could hide these things from him. She was naked in the kitchen, ordered not to move, bound by his words alone and he was using a wooden spoon to warm her ass.

His hand slid between her legs and she gasped. She thought perhaps she would die from the pleasure. His touch inflamed her soul as the spoon inflamed her flesh. She would endure anything for another touch like that.

"Oooohhh, Master," she moaned softly. Her hips moved back as she wiggled on his hand, and then stopped herself abruptly. *That wouldn't be considered moving, would it?*

He didn't seem to consider it as such because he didn't correct her again.

The spoon was moving from cheek to cheek but never the same way twice. There was no way to anticipate where the spoon would fall next ... top of her ass cheek ... bottom of the other one ... top of the same one ... back and forth or sometimes the same one ... never allowing her the satisfaction of knowing where it would land.

She closed her eyes and tried to be still. Her hands were clenched into fists as she fought to lock her knees in position so that she couldn't even sway forward.

His fingers slid back and forth along her clit, teasing, increasing the tingling sensation moving through her.

Each strike of the spoon on her stinging ass was punctuated by a gasp for breath and a soft moan of mixed pain and pleasure.

Two fingers slid into her wet pussy, wiggling side to side.

She moaned loudly and held her breath as the fingers pressed a bit deeper, her fingernails dug into the palms of her hands as she clenched her fists even tighter.

She fought for breath as a particularly stinging blow to her ass burned her skin, burning into the very fiber of her being.

His fingers slid out to tease her clit. She could feel the dampness spreading; it had to be coating his fingers, she could almost feel it seeping down her thighs.

Her skin stung, her breasts ached, her clit tingled as she gasped for breath. He buried his fingers deep inside her, twisting and turning, touching all the sensitive places inside her. She moaned and tried to calm her leaping heart.

His breath was on her ear again, his body almost pressed against her back as he spoke softly, ruffling her hair.

"You're very wet, Kitten. I can feel your muscles clenching at my fingers. Are you close, Kitten? Do you want to cum for me?"

"Oh, God ... yessss, Master, please."

"You must tell me when you are about to cum, my slut."

"Yes, Master. Almost. Almost there," her words gasped out as the sensations grew harder, bringing her closer to that abyss of deep pleasure.

His fingers twisted and turned faster, curling inside her, his little finger moving and pressing against her clit. Her body cried for just that little bit more to push her over the edge ... and there it was ... that last tiny wiggle of his fingers.

"Now, Master.... *NOW!!*"

The hand that had been teasing and tormenting her thrust deeper and pressed against that special place.

Her body began to soar into that ecstasy he had become so good at providing. Her legs were shaking uncontrollably. Her head began to pound as she fought to stay still, to enjoy and endure the mixture of pleasure and pain as it took her to a higher plane of sensation. Hot, stinging skin combined with the shocks of pleasure surging through her body. Lights exploded behind her eyelids. Flares of red burst over and over like a July Fourth celebration, raining down tingles instead of sparks.

The spoon fell faster and harder across her stinging ass. Burning pain combined with the explosion of lights that seemed to surge through her with the pleasure. He kept it up, relentlessly thrusting his fingers and swinging the spoon until her head dropped back, her hands flew out in front of her to keep her balance. More bursts of light. Her body shook her thighs trembling as she fought to maintain her upright position. Her breath came in short pants as she tried to fill her lungs, her breaths bursting out as she fought to keep the screams inside.

The clatter of the spoon hitting the floor sounded just as he slid his arms around her waist and held her against him. She fell into his arms; her hands reaching back to clutch at him to keep from falling. The pounding in her head diminished as she felt the strength of his arms enfolding her.

His mouth was against her ear when he spoke again.  
"That's my good girl ... that's my wanton slut."

"Master ... my God ... Master."

She leaned back against him, still panting for breath, her body still shaking. She felt the warmth of him against her back, his arms around her and she felt ... safe. Even after what he had just done, she felt safe. This was where she belonged.

*If only he could see that.*

"I have some business I have to attend to, Annie. Why don't you rest for a while? I think ... maybe ... you could use it now."

And there was that wicked chuckle again. A pat on her ass, a kiss on her neck and he was gone. He was gone, but not completely this time ... only for a short while.

*My wanton slut. He said ... my*

She turned in time to see him going through the kitchen door. Smiling softly at his words, she leaned against the counter until her heart stopped racing and her breath returned to normal. Then she picked up the towel, wrapped it around her again and went out to the verandah to enjoy the spring morning. The buzzing of the bees, the chirping of the birds had a soporific effect and it wasn't long before she fell

asleep, a smile on her face and thoughts of him filling her mind.

He woke her up gently shaking her shoulder. "Going out for dinner, Annie. Time to get ready."

"Out? James ... no clothes. Remember?"

"Guess you'll just have to wear the towel then. It's a big family barbecue at the townhouse and the car will be here soon to pick us up. I don't think anybody will mind the towel. Just make sure it matches your shoes."

She looked at him as if he had lost his mind and then he smirked again.

"Eddie had one of the kids pick up your bags and bring them out while you were napping."

She was shaking her head as he held out his hand and took hers, pulling her to her feet. He kissed her softly and gave her a gentle nudge toward the bedroom.

"It's going to take me a while to get presentable."

"You are always presentable, sweet lady," he replied with a chuckle.

"Casual, nothing fancy, Annie. It's only family."

"Good, because I didn't bring anything fancy with me."

As she rummaged in her suitcase for clothes to wear to a barbecue, she wondered at the family thing. Was this the equivalent of taking a girl to meet your parents? She knew Eddie was married to Sandy and that they had two daughters. She knew that Eddie's mother was James' older sister and lived in Colorado, but that was it. She had never seen any of them until she met Eddie yesterday. She wondered if he had brought other women to family gatherings or if she was the



first? She would have to be on her best behavior. She did not want to embarrass him in any way.

She took her time before the mirror, applying the little bit of makeup that she wore, fluffing her short hair ... staring at herself in the mirror.

*God, I hope I'm the first.*

She emerged from the bedroom a few minutes later wearing a pair of jean shorts and blue and green patterned blouse. He smiled and whistled when he saw her, making her blush furiously.

"I take it these clothes are all right then?"

"They sure are, Annie. And what's in them is more than all right. Good timing too. Eddie just pulled into the driveway."

They walked out to the car, sitting close, but not too close and behaved decorously on the ride back into town. The townhouse was huge and set back from the street on a deep lot. Tables had been set up on the patio and a quartet of musicians was tuning up when they arrived. She was nervous when it came time to meet James' sister but when Carol hugged her, she relaxed. After a few minutes conversation with Carol, James took her by the hand and led her away, ostensibly for a tour of Eddie's rose garden. When they reached the base of the huge weeping willow tree, surrounded by the hanging greens, he took her in his arms and kissed her softly.

"Why were you so nervous? It's just family, Annie."

"I know, James, but it's *your* family and I didn't want to do anything to embarrass you." He chuckled softly and kissed her again.

"That's not something that's going to happen, Annie. You are the model of decorum, sweet lady."

"Well, I think we both know that's not true, James." She slid her hand down the front of his body and squeezed him gently through his pants. His eyes got big and he blushed as he felt her hand, then he hugged her tight against him and laughed aloud.

The rest of the evening was a blur of fantastic food, good music and lively conversation with Eddie's family gathered all around. There were a lot of surreptitious touches, smiling glances and a brief kiss or two under the old willow as the shadows of dusk hid them under the feathery branches.

By the time they finally got back to the big house, both of them were tired and ready for bed. She showered and they shared a late pot of coffee, looking at the pictures of his European trip before she got ready for bed. He had more business to attend to on the computer and told her he would be along shortly. She was asleep two minutes after her head hit the pillow.

She woke up a time or two during the night and saw him laying beside her, sleeping soundly but not close enough to snuggle. Not wanting to disturb his rest, she laid there with a soft smile on her face, watching him sleep. She had dreamed of waking up and seeing him beside her so many times. Their future had never been a given, never a certain thing but it was something she wanted with all her heart.

When things had started to fall apart in her world, he was the one who had been there for her, who had kept her on the

track that led away from deep depression and fear. Then he had disappeared.

Part of her mind was worried that it would happen again, that he would leave her alone again, but her heart fought that notion and reveled in what they had together at this moment. There hadn't been a whole lot of happiness in his life either ... professional happiness, yes but not the personal happiness that came from a solid marriage with shared love and experiences.

His marriage to Helen may have started off like any other marriage but it hadn't stayed that way. Once they had moved to the island, she had changed dramatically. He had to travel in his business and she refused to go with him, preferring to stay in the house overlooking the bay. She had become more distant as time went on. James had told her at one point that as long as Helen had the electricity and television, she was happy.

She had thought of him almost daily over the two years since he had disappeared from her life. She thought of him being alone with his online fantasies, and that's what he was doing ... spending time online with a young woman that would never touch him.

Through the grapevine of acquaintances they had shared, she knew some of the things he had gone through and they had not been pleasant ones. So many times she had cried herself to sleep at night, alone in her bed, thinking of him and trying to figure out what she could possibly have done to make him walk away from her ... to stop speaking to her at

all, even as friends. And now, he was there beside her and her heart was filled with happiness again.

The next morning, she found a note on his pillow, telling her that breakfast was in the kitchen waiting for her and that he had some errands to run. She should relax and he would see her when he got back to the house. She enjoyed the breakfast he left for her and reciprocated by making a nice cold lunch that he could have whenever he got home again.

After breakfast, she went out to wander around the old-fashioned southern garden. There was a sizable fishpond filled with koi, a huge oak tree with chairs underneath it for resting in the shade. Set in amongst the flowering shrubs were statues covered with the patina of age. Bougainvillea and wisteria hung down from the trellises on the side of the house and the colors were more brilliant against the dark green of the leaves.

Back under the covered part of the verandah, she pulled a small table next to a double chaise lounge. She brought out a pitcher of lemonade and a tall glass, as well as her book. She made herself comfortable and read for a while, sipping at the lemonade.

Glancing at her watch, she wondered where he was, and then smiled to herself. Humming, she got up and went into the bedroom, heading for the shower again. She took a long, leisurely shower, washing her hair and scrubbing with the scented bath wash she brought with her. When she came out of the shower, she powdered herself and spritzed perfume that matched the bath wash. Dressed in a soft cotton

wrapper, she went back to the verandah and made herself comfortable.

Engrossed in her book, she barely noticed the storm front moving in. She had just finished reading a significant section of the book and sighed deeply. She was a bit surprised when the sigh brought the scent of rain deep into her lungs. She looked up and saw the dark clouds just as a loud clap of thunder made her jump.

The rain on the tin roof over the verandah was soothing and reminiscent of visits to her grandmother's home in Tennessee when she was young. Then the memories of those talks from Italy came forward again and the tears welled up in her eyes.

They had talked of his walks through the small city where his friend lived and the things he had done during the day there. He told her about the elaborate late evening meals that were so commonplace in his friend's family, the camaraderie that existed between neighbors and friends, and the wines they had consumed. He told her how much he wished she was there with him to share the things he had seen and the places he had visited. She had wept at her desk because they were unable to do those things.

Now with the rain and the distant rumble of thunder the pain had moved into her heart again. She cried for all that they had lost and because she feared they would lose it all again.

Her life had not been an easy one when she first met him and she knew the future would bring more of the same, because her husband was now further away from her than he

had ever been. James had shared parts of his life with her as well ... his wife's illness and the almost sense of relief he had felt when she died. He had revealed the guilt he felt at that relief, too.

He had considered divorce and admitted to her that it should have happened years before. However when his wife had first been diagnosed with diabetes, he had felt an obligation to maintain the status quo and continue to care for her, though that was all that remained between them. Helen had been an extremely bad patient; not listening to the doctors or to him and her diabetes had progressed so far that if the cancer hadn't been found, the diabetes would have spelled the end for her. From the things he had told her, their marriage hadn't been a happy one in quite some time.

For her part, she had been honest with him, unlike so many on the internet that chose lies to make themselves look good. She loved Dan and had no problems saying it but she knew that their life together was doomed when he had been diagnosed with multiple illnesses, including Alzheimer's disease.

She and James had talked of many things, including the time when they would both be alone and whether or not a future existed for them. They had talked at length of walking in the rain in Italy or on a beach. They had spoken of evenings before the fireplace, sharing coffee and the pictures he took in Italy, and also about the things he would teach her with silken ropes and velvet floggers.

These were the things that haunted her after he stopped talking ... the things she had remembered the most vividly.

The rain was a constant reminder of him and she lived in an area that endured a great deal of rain every year. Then there were the almost continual ads on television for all the events here in his home city ... come to the jazz festival ... come visit our beautiful city ... more reminders of him and the future they would never have.

Too many times she had been sitting on the couch, crocheting while watching tv and simply burst into tears as another ad was shown. Too many times she had found tears welling up and sliding down her cheeks as she drove to work and heard a song they had both liked. Too many times she thought of all the emails and personal messages he had ignored. Too many times she wondered what would happen if their paths ever crossed again.

Would it happen again? Would he walk away again when the doctor said she was all right and he felt no obligation to her? She shook her head as she leaned back ... if that were to be the case, she would leave without a problem, even if it killed her to do it. She would *not* be an obligation. If they were to be together at all, it would be because he wanted her with him and not because of a sense of duty.

Her mind kept running in circles. This trip, running into him the way she had, it must be fate. It had to be. Could fate be so cruel as to let them find each other and then tear them apart again?

It was just as it had been before he stopped. Now, here together, they were as they were two years before ... loving, touching, closer than she could have imagined. But would it

last? That was the loudest question echoing in her heart and mind. *Would it last?*

\* \* \* \*

She lay on her side, sleeping as the rain continued to patter softly down on the tin roof. There was a tickling sensation along her leg as she slept and she moved her leg to stop the sensation. There was a momentary cessation and then it continued, higher up her leg. She grunted softly at the irritation, turned her head, moved her leg again and the same thing happened. Her cotton wrapper had ridden up exposing her bottom, and it was here that the sensation started next. She put her hand down and rubbed her outer thigh. The feeling was at the bottom of her cheek next, then just a bit lower, sliding between her cheeks. A feeling of warmth traveled around the bottom of her cheek, tickling more as it moved across her ass cheek and then between her legs. She moaned softly and smiled in her sleep, then turned to lay on her back as the feelings increased in pleasure.

As she turned, her legs fell open a bit and it was only seconds before there was a rubbing across her shaved sex, causing another soft moan and slight rising of her hips. The feelings increased to that point to bring her fully awake and she opened her eyes. She immediately lifted her head, saw him between her legs on the double chaise, and smiled up at him, chuckling softly.

"You are a very wicked man, James."

"Yes, Annie.... I surely am."



He watched her face as he nudged her legs apart further and took a place between them. Reaching up, he dragged his fingers slowly from her waist down the outside of her thighs, his fingernails teasing her flesh as they moved down. She watched him, watching her. She licked her lips as he smiled at her.

She held her breath in anticipation as he lay there, leaning down, breathing warmly on her naked pussy. She felt his hot breath as she waited. She watched as he leaned closer. When his tongue actually brushed against the lips of her pussy, she gasped in delight and closed her eyes.

Her back arched and her hips moved up, pressing her pussy up to his hot mouth. She moved her hand down over the wrapper and between her legs, grasping at his beard and pulling him tighter against her. She could hear her moans of pleasure even over the rumbling thunder and rain pelting down on the tin roof. His hot tongue teased around her clit over and over and then slipped between the lips of her pussy and deeper inside. Her fingers tangled in his hair and beard as her hips thrust up to his mouth.

Her head tossed from side to side, eyes closed in the deepest pleasure. His tongue teased her and sent shocks of electricity through her body, making her moan even louder as she pressed up again, needing the heat of his mouth.

His lips closed tightly around her clit as he suckled it, nibbling and nipping gently. Annie moaned loudly, unable to keep her body still under his ministrations. He slipped two fingers into her pussy and pressed upward. She bucked and twitched under him as the surges of lightning increased with

each caress of his tongue. Her breath was coming in gasps as her body began to tense under his mouth. His hand slipped under her ass and pressed her up to his searching mouth, the other pressed deep inside her, curling upward.

Lights burst into fractured shards shooting off into oblivion behind her closed eyelids. Waves of the most intense sensory overload surged over and through her body as she trembled under his mouth and hands. A long, drawn out groan of pleasure slipped from her lips, followed by the sibilance of the only word she was capable of.

"YEEESSSSSSS!"

He held tightly to her, his hands under her ass as his mouth continued to work over her wet clit and pussy. She squirmed and writhed, her body responding strongly to his firm grasp and hot mouth. Her moans were loud and long and lasted for several minutes as her orgasm reached peak after peak and then slowly subsided. Annie lifted her head and smiled down at him. She was greeted by a smiling face, wet beard and twinkling eyes.

His eyes locked with hers as he began a slow, sensual climb up over her body, finally coming to rest with his throbbing cock tip resting against her dripping pussy. He chuckled very softly and whispered, "Woman, you make me crazy with desire for you."

Then he moved his hips and she felt his hard cock slipping into her wet pussy. She thrust her hips up to meet his; his girth stretching her even through the wetness. That he wanted her to feel this good, that he could *make* her feel this good even after the glorious orgasm that had torn her

asunder only moments before was evidence of love more than lust. Her pussy muscles clenched around him; pulling him deep as she wrapped her legs around his waist. She wanted as much as she could get from him.

"Mmmmm, yessss, sweet man, yesssssss."

She rocked hard under him, raising her hips repeatedly to meet each of his downward thrusts. Her clit throbbed and burned under the pressure of his pelvis grinding against hers. She could feel him twitching and throbbing inside her as his cock pumped in and out of her wet cunt. Arms around him, hands clutching at his back, fingertips and nails digging into the flesh of his back, she could feel him tensing as his orgasm neared.

He grunted and groaned over her as her cunt muscles squeezed his cock. There was a last, hard thrust into her and she pressed up as hard as she could, holding him tight as he lay over her, spilling his seed into her.

"Gggoddddd!!!!"

Body taut over hers, the only part of him that moved was deep inside her, twitching and throbbing, his orgasm spending all his energy into her. She felt tears of joy sliding down from her eyes and she covered his face with little kisses of happiness.

"Oh, James.... yesss, my sweet man ... yessss." Her heart was grateful that she could do this for him, that she could give him this joyous release with such happiness.

He kissed her deeply and slowly turned onto his side without breaking the kiss. He held her tightly against him as they both regained a semblance of normal breathing. She was

snuggled against him, burrowed under his chin when she felt his flaccid penis slipping from her wet pussy. A small, soft moan escaped and she leaned her head back to kiss his cheek very softly.

"I am so very glad to have found you again, James."

"No more so than I, sweet lady."

They lay there together for quite a while, not speaking, just listening to the continuing rain and far off rumbles of thunder. Finally, the sound of the telephone broke into their sweet reverie and he started to get up.

"Oh, James. Do you have to?"

He kissed her lips softly and chuckled. "Yes, Annie, I do. I'm expecting a business call and I have to take it."

She pouted and looked up at him as he stood up from the chaise and turned to walk into the house. Quickly, she reached out and patted his ass.

"Hurry back, please."

"You can bet on that, sweet lady."

Lying back on the chaise, smiling softly, she hummed quietly in counterpoint to the thunder as she waited for him. Several moments passed and then several more and he didn't return. She sat up on the chaise, reached for the now warm lemonade, and took a sip. She looked out over the garden, admiring the wet blossoms and the heavier scent of the flowers in the rain.

Looking toward the house to see if she could see him, she noticed him sitting in the little study next to the bedroom. It looked as though he was working at the business computer

but she didn't see a telephone in his hand. She got up from the chaise and headed into the study.

His back was to the door when she walked in very quietly and went to stand behind him. She leaned forward, sliding her hands down over his shoulders and putting her mouth close to his ear to whisper.

"I thought you were coming back outside."

She felt his body stiffen at the same time the words left her mouth. Frowning, she stood up and moved to his side.

"What was that, James?"

He didn't look up as he spoke. "I don't know what you mean, Annie. Just some work I have to get done."

"You stiffened up as though you didn't want me to touch you."

He fought to hold all his emotions in check as he kept his eyes averted from hers and focused instead on the window opposite the desk. A trick of the light let him see her expression and it cut him to the quick. If she saw the pain in his eyes, if she saw the tears that threatened, he would be lost to the battle within his heart. He forced the coldness and indifference into his voice as he answered her.

"I've spoken to your doctor, Annie. That was him that called a while ago."

"And?"

"And he said that as long as you have been symptom-free this long, there shouldn't be any problems relative to a concussion. You're good to go, Annie."

He could see the stiffness in her body as the words sunk in, the reflection almost a mirror that threatened to tear him apart as he saw her face.

"I see. What exactly are you saying, James?"

Her voice was small, soft, questioning the situation and him, not sure if she was hearing correctly.

"You're good to go, Annie. So go. Go home to your husband. There's nothing for you here."

His voice almost broke on that last lie, but he held his pain in the deepest part of his soul. He thought of the pain he was causing her, causing himself as well but he knew he had to continue. The future they both wanted was not to be. She was ... taken and not by him ... never completely by him and he couldn't change that.

Annie put her hand on the back of his chair as if to hold herself up and he could see her shaking as she stood there, the diamonds on her hand sparkling in the light with the movement . Her face was white and filled with pain as she tried to speak again. Her mouth opened and closed then opened again as she tried to find the words. Her voice took on a whining tone as she began again and it ripped into him that his whining slut used a tone he never wanted to hear outside of their bedroom, as she begged him to let her cum.

"What are you saying, James? Go home? After what we've shared here? You want me to go home? You can't be serious."

He turned the chair then and looked up at her, forcing a cold expression he had never shown her before. He had to be cold now, to not give in to the tears and shock on her face, to keep his damnable honor and integrity intact.

"I am very serious, Annie. Deadly serious. Go home. Go be with your husband. It was a nice weekend, Annie. You're damned good in bed ... it was worth the time spent."

He could almost see her heart being ripped from her body. He had hurt her before when he stopped talking to her, he knew that. This time, however, he knew it was totally unexpected and therefore totally unacceptable. How could she bear this? It was hard enough on him.

How could he do this to her? Again? As much as he loved her and he was hurting her like this again? He didn't deserve to even look at her after this. He never would deserve it.

"I can't believe you're doing this. You let me love you again. You let me care about you again. I don't deserve this, James ... no more than I did the first time. Why are you doing this?"

He stood up and put his hands on her shoulders, turned her toward the door to the verandah and gave her a gentle push.

"Go home, Annie. Now. Just go home to your husband."

She stumbled a step or two toward the verandah and then turned to face him again.

"I wish I could, you bastard. I wish to hell I could."

He watched her stumble out to the verandah and move out of sight into the bedroom and then he fell into his chair, head in his hands. As "masterly" as he was with her, he wasn't now. He put his head down on his arms on the desk and let his heart break completely. He was sending her away again and it was killing him.

It wasn't what he wanted but it was the way it had to be. He could *not* continue to be the "other man" in her life any more than he had been able to the first time. And he wouldn't let her do what he had done with Helen.

He remembered that too well. The nurse that had been taking care of Helen at the house had been attracted to him and his honor had gone out the window that time too, hadn't it?

Helen had been calling him. When he finally walked back into the room, the nurse trailing behind him, his wife lay in their bed, dying. He had tried to justify his behavior to himself but it hadn't worked. He remembered the guilt and regret and knew the toll that kind of guilt would take on a sensitive woman like Annie.

*What the fuck did you think you were doing? You had to try and have it all, didn't you? You knew you couldn't have her, knew it was stupid to try and yet you did it again. Jackass! Yeah, sure you love her but it's not enough, is it? She has a husband, you fool.*

Then the words sank into the maelstrom that was his mind and he raised his head, gazing into nothing as he tried to figure it out.

*What did she mean? She wishes she could go back to him?*

He thought about her final words, letting all types of scenarios run through his head as he tried to figure them out. They had friends in common, he would have heard through the grapevine ... surely *somebody* would have said *something* about drastic changes in her life. He double clicked the



messenger icon on his computer and began to review his messages, hoping to find something that would explain this.

He searched his files of messages, searched his mail and there was nothing there. In truth, he hadn't had much contact with their mutual friends in quite some time but surely at least Grace would have let him know. She had been the one to introduce them. She had been the one that acted as his source when he wanted to know something; the one who had always passed on little tidbits about Annie and what she was doing. There was nothing from Grace to indicate anything had happened. He searched further back in his files and still there was nothing.

What he did find were copies of their chats, copies of her letters to him. He read some of them again and felt her pain in every line she wrote.

*How could I have done that to her? How could I be doing it again now? Causing her even more pain? Screw your honor and bullshit. She needs to know why. She deserves to know.*

The poems she composed after he deserted her were written in tears. The scenes they recalled, the words spoken between them caused another sharp pain in his heart. That one haiku especially pierced him:

"chocolate cherries sweet juice dripping down over my tightened nipples"

Her pain was evident in everything she wrote; her love for him infused in each line.

Pain brought him back to her words again. *What the hell? Has something happened that I don't know about? No ...*

*that's not possible. The grapevine would have gotten word to me if anything had happened.*

At last, he looked up, still puzzled by her last remark and realized that she had been gone for quite a while. She should have been dressed and ready to go by now, ready to deliver scathing remarks at another betrayal, ready to express her disappointment, anger and possible hatred as they waited for the cab to take her away. But she hadn't come out of the bedroom.

He got up and walked slowly out to the verandah, looking wistfully at the chaise where they had shared their last moments of happiness, and then he turned into the bedroom. Her suitcase was on the loveseat, her clothes thrown into it as if she hadn't cared about them, but she wasn't there. Then he heard the shower running and went down the hall where she hadn't even bothered to close the door. When he looked in, his heart broke.

She was sitting on the floor of the shower, knees pulled up and head resting on her knees, sobbing her heart out. When he opened the shower door she turned away until she was facing the back wall. He reached into the shower and turned the water off, feeling it dripping down over his arm as the water flow diminished.

"For God's sake, Annie. That water is like ice. Do you want to get pneumonia?"

She hadn't even noticed the water growing colder, hadn't realized she had been sitting there that long. She reached out and used the bench in the shower to pull herself up off the

floor. Standing slowly, she stepped past him and reached for the towel to dry off.

"What did you mean?"

She wouldn't speak to him, wouldn't even look at him.

"Annie? What did you mean? You said you wished you *could* go back to your husband. Is something wrong, Annie? Why can't you go back to him?"

She glared at him and spat out the words. "Because he's DEAD, James! He died seven months ago!"

The shock speared deep into his heart and he almost fell back against the wall. The horror of what he had done hit him hard. The things he had said to her to make her leave him and go home again ... home to an empty house ... home to nothing.

"He's dead? Oh my God, Annie. Why didn't you tell me? Why didn't somebody let me know?"

"For what? You've made it obvious that I was just a plaything for you while I was here. And why would anybody else let you know? You made it very clear that you didn't care. What the hell difference would it have made?"

He tried to reach for her, tried to take her into his arms, but she pulled away.

"Don't touch me!"

"Annie, oh Annie," he sighed.

"Annie, he was the reason I stopped talking to you, stopped everything with you."

"Well, it's not something you have to worry about any more, James," she snapped.

She turned to walk out of the bathroom, away from him. He grabbed her arm and pulled her back.

"Don't you understand, Annie? I didn't plan it, but I fell in love with you."

"You've got a damned funny way of showing it, James. I thought you cared. I really believed you when you said that to me but then you deserted me, even after all the promises you made, you left me."

Her voice was soft but firm when she started to speak but as she continued, it became a bit louder, more bitterness slipping into her words. He saw her eyes turn from a hurt sadness to the hardness of remembered pain. She leaned against the wall and took a deep breath and closed her eyes.

When she opened her eyes again she glared up at him. Standing up as straight as she could she almost spat the words at him. "I had to face it all myself. Alone. I had to watch him fade away before my eyes and I couldn't even talk to you about it. I tried, James ... I tried everything I could think of to get you to talk to me and you didn't even have the *decency* to respond."

He flinched at the anger in her voice and knew she spoke the truth. What he had done to her was inexcusable, unconscionable and it surged through him what a vicious thing it had been ... deserting her without a word. He reached out his hand to her and she slapped it away.

"You were *supposed* to be my friend more than anything else. My friend! And I needed my friend! I needed you to talk to me! I needed you to hold me when I hurt so bad I could barely move and you couldn't be bothered."

She leaned against the wall, head down, her body shaking with pain, deep sobs robbing her of the ability to speak.

"For God's sake, listen to me, dammit! I loved you. I still love you, but I couldn't deal with sharing you with him. I wanted you for me, Annie. All for me and I couldn't ask you to leave him and stay with me. You would have refused to leave him, and..."

"You're damned right I would have refused."

"I know that, and I wouldn't have asked you to do it. I didn't want to hear that refusal. I didn't have a choice, Annie. I..."

"You had a choice!"

He recoiled as her shout bounced off the tile walls, her anger pulling her from the wall. She stood straight facing him, her eyes glinting with anger and pain.

"All you had to do was be my *friend*! You didn't have to be anything else. Dammit ... you needed to be my friend. You promised me ... you would always, always be my friend, no matter what else happened. How many times did you tell me that? How many, James?"

"Annie, I know I promised you and I wouldn't break a promise..."

"But you *did*!! You broke your promise to me, James. Where was your honor and integrity when you broke your word to me?"

Her face was still suffused with anger but her voice had taken on the quiet of righteous anger.

"I lost it, Annie. I tried so hard to stick with my belief in honor by walking away and not interfering in your marriage.

It didn't work, I know that now. I guess I knew it then but I was afraid you would..."

"Afraid I would do what? Love you? You knew I loved you; there was no way you couldn't know that. Afraid I would leave him? You knew that wasn't going to happen."

"That's the point, Annie. It's what I wanted. I wanted you for *me*. Not now and then for a stolen weekend ... not here and there when you could get away from home for a few hours. Twenty-four/seven, Annie ... that's what I wanted and you couldn't give it. So what was I supposed to do, Annie?"

"You were *supposed* to be my friend, James. Above all, you were supposed to be my friend. That's what we said when this whole thing started ... friends. If there was never anything else between us ... we were supposed to be friends."

Tears filled her eyes and she leaned heavily against the wall.

"I needed my friend, James and he wasn't there. You weren't there for me."

The tears sliding down her face hurt him more than her words could have. The pain he had caused her ... the sorrow and anger ... the loneliness ... none of it had to happen. He saw that now. As much as it would have hurt to be with her and not touch her, it's what he should have done.

"Annie, please listen. I wanted you too much to share you with your husband, so I left you alone. That was wrong. I stopped talking to you to keep from hurting you and hurt you worse. That was wrong, too. God, I know I hurt you. I know I caused you a lot of pain. I read the poems, dammit. I read all of them you posted to your site. Did you think I wouldn't? Did

you think I wasn't hurting too?" His voice softened as he tried to make her understand. "I knew it would be worse if we continued, I knew it would be harder to let go if it went on any longer."

He stood there, watching her, waiting to see if she would give him the chance he so desperately needed. He closed his eyes and tried to keep the unbidden tears from falling.

"Annie, I love you. Stay here with me. Don't leave me now that I've found you after all this time. Don't leave me now that we've found us."

He reached out for her, hoping against everything that she wouldn't push him away again. His fingers touched her arm as she leaned against the wall, and then slid slowly down to close around her hand.

"Annie, please."

She had been looking up into his face as he made his explanations, had seen the pain as he confessed his feelings for her. She saw the tears in his eyes and the truth as well.

"James."

He reached up to her face and wiped away her tears with his fingertips.

"I mean every word of it, sweet lady. Every damned word. I love you. I always did."

Then he leaned closer and kissed her gently.

She sighed softly and leaned against him, whispering, "James, I never stopped loving you. Even after all that happened, I never stopped. There were times when I wanted to hate you, but I couldn't."

"I wouldn't have blamed you if you did, Annie. I was wrong in what I did. I'm sorry I was such a fool."

She slid her arms around his waist and he sighed with relief as he nuzzled her hair.

"James ... there's something I have to tell you."

He tensed up, not sure what she was going to say.

"If you ever get all noble like that on me again, I'll ... I'll..."

"You'll what, dear lady?"

She looked up at him and laughed with delight and wickedness.

"I'll tie your ass to the bed and find a big stick to beat you."

"You'll have to catch me, first, you wicked, wanton woman."

She slid her hand down his chest and then lower, chuckling as she grabbed at his penis through his shorts.

"I don't think I'll have a problem with that, sweet man. No problem at all."

"No, probably not. I'm not sure I could work up the energy to run from you."

"Darlin' I can guarantee that. All the energy you have will be taken up with something more fun than running."

The passionate kiss they shared was only a precursor to their future and a reminder of their past. She was here and here she would stay.



## About Lee Rush

Lee Rush was born in a small Tennessee town that had an old-fashioned town square in the middle of town. Her mother worked for the doctor who delivered her. Though she grew up in Chicago, her heart was tied to that sma

Tennessee town.

Growing up, she wrote stories about what it would be like to grow up in

Tennessee, even being published in her local newspaper, where she worked at various tasks during her summer vacations. Realizing that she would never travel to places she saw on TV, she sent for materials from exotic places and wrote stories about the places she saw in those pictures.

Six months after her wedding at her mother's house, Lee and her husband chucked what would be a normal lifestyle for most people and went "bumming".

They worked for a while, made some money and moved down the road to the next place they wanted to see, stopping in Tennessee, Florida, New Orleans,

Houston, Phoenix and a short journey into California before returning to

Phoenix for five years. Lee's memories of these places help her to bring them to her stories.

Though her primary reading was in the area of science fiction and Stephen

Bound By Fate  
*by Lee Rush*

King, she has found a home in "erotic romance" and enjoys putting her thoughts of why people do the things they do on paper.

Life interfered in her writing and it was put on a shelf while she worked to support her ailing husband and children. She attended writer's workshops to keep her skills sharpened, but it was not until her husband's health required her to retire from work that she was actually able to use those skills, finally having enough time to sit and write.

"Bound by Fate" is her second book to be published and the first with Black

Velvet Seductions. The experience she has had with the people at Black

Velvet has encouraged her and taught her more than the workshops ever did.

She is already at work on her next book, as well as stories for upcoming anthologies.

"Bound by Fate" tells the story of James and Annie, mature adults who have found each other on the internet, almost lost what could have been and find each other again.

Lee loves to hear from her readers by e-mail at [lee.rush.bvs@gmail.com](mailto:lee.rush.bvs@gmail.com)

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR THESE UPCOMING RELEASES

[www.blackvelvetseductions.com](http://www.blackvelvetseductions.com)

## **Toy's Story—Acquisition of a Sex Toy, Book #1 of the Master's Circle**

**By Robert Cloud**

David and Doreen used the internet to start a romance that centered on her fantasy to kneel at his feet as a slave. When her real life interfered with her Internet fantasy life she left the fantasy behind.

But when the fantasy is who you are it becomes overpowering. Doreen could not stop wishing for the fantasy that was out of reach.

When she could no longer deny the powerful fantasy she begged David, her online Master to rescue her from her vanilla life. He complied, fulfilling her wishes in a way that she had dared not consider even in her most wild and erotic fantasies.

\* \* \* \*

## **His Perfect Submissive**

**By Alyssa Aaron**

Kara was the victim of a brutal rape that occurred when she was seven. The event destroyed her family and left her fearful and distrustful of men and terrified of sex.

Slade is a dominant. He just wants a peaceful, obedient, submissive with whom to share his life. In Kara he glimpses the kind of submissive he wants.

When Kara's brother embezzles \$30,000 from Slade's company, Slade seizes the opportunity and makes Kara an offer she can't afford to refuse. The only way she can save her brother from certain prison is to accept Slade's marriage proposal and become his submissive.

Kara faces her wedding with anxiety. She can't tell Slade she can't submit sexually without risking her brother's freedom, yet she doubts she'll be able to keep her promise to be a submissive, obedient wife.

This romance explores the role of trust in even the most mismatched of partnerships and explores the complex connections between dominance and submission. It demonstrates the power of real love to heal even the deepest wounds.

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