

ELLORA'S CAVE TABOO

PHOTO *Play*



PAM MCKENNA

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Photo Play

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Chapter One

Darla looked again at the number on the door, a simple 83 in peeling gold foil. Yep, this was the place. Shabbier than she'd expected, at least from the outside—a dilapidated three-story walk-up in the artsy part of the city, flanked by a tattoo parlor and a pottery studio.

Well, no worries. This guy was supposed to be the best in the business. It was probably gorgeous inside.

It was hideous inside, a long climb up creaky steps to a hallway with a painted tin ceiling high overhead and plank floorboards underfoot. Shorter corridors branched off from the main one, creating a bewildering rabbit warren. Darla shifted her purse and tote bag from one shoulder to the other.

She wandered past heavy wooden doors that offered no clue to what was behind them, aside from suite numbers and the occasional cryptic hint scrawled on taped cardboard or on the door itself. "L.N.R." "Karma, Inc." "NO ADMITTANCE, THIS MEANS YOU!!!" Her nose wrinkled at the mingled aromas of incense, pizza, disinfectant, and, yes, stale pee. Some kind of New Age music emanated from an unseen location.

Had Konrad Drummond even mentioned the suite number when she'd called to schedule her appointment? She couldn't recall, had assumed she'd have no trouble locating the studio of one of the country's premier figure photographers.

Darla wandered the jumble of hallways, feeling her blood pressure surge with every step. She was in the wrong building—she had to be. Finally she happened on an open doorway. Green and mustard yellow paint had been splashed around the doorframe. Deliberately, it would seem. It looked like the Jolly Green Giant had upchucked a batch of bad peas.

She poked her head in. Here was the source of the incense and the New Age music. A zaftig woman sporting strawberry-blond cornrows and a dashiki perched on a lawn chair before an eight-by-four slab of plywood, flinging green and yellow paint two-handed from plastic squirt bottles.

"Excuse me?" Darla said.

"Third door on your left." The woman never broke stride.

"Uh..."

"Kon Drummond, right?" The woman glanced her way at last and paused to size Darla up. "Lonely housewife's last hope. Third door on the left."

"Thanks. I'll... Third door on the left. Okay, thanks."

Darla counted doors. One. Two. *Lonely housewife?* That was so insulting. To her and to Konrad Drummond. The man was an artist. A genius behind the lens. He'd been featured in major magazines and newspapers. *60 Minutes* had done a segment on him last fall.

Three. She peered closely at the teeny label-maker strip slapped under the doorbell. "Photography."

Photography? In itty-bitty ten-point type? That was how the preeminent photographic artist in the Northeast announced himself to the general public? No wonder Darla had missed it on the first go-around.

She raised her fist to knock as the door swung open. She jumped.

"My two-o'clock, I presume." Konrad Drummond jerked his head, wordlessly ordering her inside.

"Uh, yes, I—"

"Take off your clothes." He stalked back inside, ignoring her proffered hand. "Toss 'em anywhere."

The studio was, very simply, a holy mess. Tables heaped with photos and fast-food wrappers. Books and papers stacked on the floor. Supplies spilling from open cabinets.

A stack of cardboard cartons teetered in a corner, each bearing a scrawled label. "Assorted Props." "Filters." "Reflectors." "Costume Jewelry."

The front end of the room, however, was all business. Stands supported lights and reflective white umbrellas. A stiff white paper backdrop draped the wall and floor.

Darla stepped tentatively inside. The heavy door slammed shut on its own, startling her. "Umm...I want to thank you for fitting me into your busy schedule, Mr. Drummond."

His back was to her as he attached a camera to a tripod. He said nothing.

"I mean, I've seen your work. It's, well, it's incredible. I want you to know what an honor it is to pose for you."

Drummond glanced over his shoulder at her and frowned. His look asked, *What are you waiting for?*

"Uh..." Darla indicated her tote bag. "Where can I change?"

He responded with an impatient little smirk. Darla had been in this man's presence less than a minute and somehow she'd already managed to disappoint him. That had to be a record, even for her.

Konrad Drummond had a head of unruly dark curls and hadn't shaved in a couple of days. Stubble highlighted his firm jaw and the strong lines of his face, but it was his eyes that commanded her attention, ice blue with thick black lashes and devilishly peaked brows. Those startling eyes came this close to rolling back in his head.

"Okay, let's get the basics out of the way, Mrs..." He leaned toward the nearest table and flipped pages in an appointment book.

"Carmody. And it's Miss, I mean Ms., I guess. Anyway, I'm not married." She resisted the urge to add, *I'm not one of your lonely housewives.*

Not yet.

"And please," she added, "call me Darla."

"Boyfriend?" He was fiddling with his camera again. "Girlfriend?"

"What?"

"Who are the dirty pictures for, Darla? Who are we trying to get all..." He gave a lecherous pump of the hips.

"Oh. My, um, fiancé." Darla looked down at herself, at her neat white crop pants and pink, awning-striped blouse, trying to see herself as this stranger saw her. *Girlfriend?*

"And before we go any further..." She waited for him to turn his attention to her. He didn't. "I would never call your photographs dirty, Mr. Drummond. I've seen your work. It's sensual but dignified. Sophisticated. You're...well, you truly are an artist. That's what I'm looking for."

"Art."

"Right." She nodded. "Artistic photographs."

"Of you."

"Yes."

"Naked."

"Well, no." She held out a palm, a traffic cop redirecting the flow of conversation. "Not totally naked."

"Of course not." He directed a weary sigh to her tote bag. "You brought along a selection of lingerie."

She brightened. "Yes."

"A matching push-up bra and panties. Make that a thong. Black lace."

"That's right."

"And another set in red, because you couldn't make up your mind."

Darla's fingers tightened on the handle of her monogrammed canvas tote. She didn't care for this man's tone, not one bit.

"Plus matching garter belts and stockings," he added, "a sheer nightie, and an absolutely *adorable* teddy your BFF plucked from the Victoria's Secret clearance rack."

Darla's jaw worked. She took a deep breath. "Are you having fun, Mr. Drummond?"

"It's Kon." He fired up the lights and adjusted the placement of the reflective umbrellas. He was barefoot, his tall frame encased in baggy cargo shorts and a thin gray T-shirt that sported the logo of a local brew pub. "And since you ask," he said, "it's never fun snapping pictures of repressed suburban *hausfraus* in their underpants."

Darla's jaw sagged. "I am not a— Who do you think you are, speaking to me that way?" She barely noticed him taking her by the shoulders and steering her onto the white paper under the glare of the lights. He set aside her purse and tote bag, then held a light meter near her face. She said, "You think you can treat people that way just because you're some big, famous, egomaniacal...*shutterbug*?"

That elicited a bark of laughter as Kon took up position behind the lens.

"Don't you dare laugh at me!" Darla's eyes bulged. Heat flooded her chest and face. Flashes punctuated each snap of the shutter.

"Don't do that." Darla raised her palms. "I'm calling this whole thing off. I want my deposit back."

Click. "Undo a couple of buttons for me."

She crossed her arms. "I am not leaving here without my money."

"Uh-huh." *Click. Click. Click. Click. Click.*

She sighed in exasperation. "Uh-huh what? Uh-huh you'll give me my money back? I'm waiting."

"Can't." *Click.* "Spent it. Just one button, okay? Let's start with one button."

"What do you mean you spent it? That's— For heaven's sake, just write me a check so I can get out of here."

"It'd bounce."

She gaped. "Your check would bounce?"

"Why do you think I've been reduced to taking pictures of repressed suburb—"

"Don't say it again!"

He shrugged, still clicking off frames. "Three ex-wives with expensive lawyers. What can I tell you? What color bra are you wearing?"

Darla dropped her head into her hands. All she'd wanted was a few sexy pictures to jump-start her love life. How had a simple thing like that gone so off the rails?

"Good," Kon said, clicking the shutter. "Good. Now toss your hair back."

"What?" Her head snapped up.

"Excellent. That's it." He peeked from behind the camera with such a sexy, teasing smile, she almost forgot she was mad as hell at him. "You look really hot."

Now she did forget she was mad. She also forgot to breathe. Nobody had ever called her hot. "Pretty" on a handful of occasions when someone—usually her mother—felt like throwing her a bone, but never hot.

Darla's voice trembled. "You're a real prick, you know that?" Alarmingly, her eyes stung.

Kon's smile faded.

Her hand had grasped the doorknob before she remembered her purse and tote bag. She swung back into the room, praying she could keep the tears at bay until she was well away from this hateful man.

The hateful man intercepted her before she'd gone two steps. "Darla."

She tried in vain to twist out of his grasp. He was too strong, his big hands searing her upper arms, the clean, masculine scent of him filling her nostrils. He was so close. She couldn't think with him so close.

"Wait a second," he said.

"Where's my purse?" She craned her neck, trying to see past a pair of wide, muscular shoulders, trying not to let this self-important creep see how much he'd gotten to her. "Where did you put my stuff?"

"Relax," Kon said, "you can have your stuff, I just..." He squeezed her arms over the cotton blouse. "You need to see something."

He pulled her toward the camera. She resisted. "I've seen enough. I've heard enough. Let me go."

Kon tapped buttons on the camera and angled the viewfinder screen toward her. Darla went still, transfixed by what she saw there. She opened her mouth and shut it without speaking. She glanced at Kon, who studied her with an unreadable expression.

Darla leaned in closer to the small image, her voice an awestruck whisper. "How did you do that?"

The question socked Kon in the solar plexus, though he managed to keep his features neutral. The picture on the viewfinder was a close-up of Darla's face. She glared at the camera, her dark eyes burning with emotion. Long, straight chestnut hair framed her face, a few errant strands clinging to her flushed cheeks. Tendons stood out in her throat. A vein bulged in her temple.

She looked sexy as hell.

"Really," Darla said. "I mean, that's not what I..." Her voice trailed off.

"Yes, it is, Darla. It is what you look like." Kon clicked rapidly through the series of photos he'd snapped. Together they watched as frustrated anger seized Darla by the throat and gave a good shake. In the last shot, her eyes glistened with tears of helpless rage.

Why? Because he'd told her how hot she looked. She'd thought he was lying.

She turned toward the backdrop, looked at the lights, the umbrellas, then the camera.

"I'm good." Kon shrugged.

"You're a prick." There was no heat in it. The anger had drained away, leaving her deflated. "And a bully."

"Your point?" Kon stepped into the shadows behind the backdrop and reemerged with a little padded bench, which he placed right under the lights. An antique piano bench by the looks of it, the curved legs delicately sculpted, the top upholstered in rose and cream brocade.

He led her by the hand, settling her on the bench and rechecking the light.

"I find I'm no longer in the mood," she said.

Kon grinned. "I can always get a lady in the mood." He started undoing the buttons on her blouse in the most matter-of-fact way.

"What are you doing?" She yanked on his long fingers, but they kept right on going.

"I thought you were here for sensual photos."

"I am, but—" Darla tried to slap his hands away, "I can do that part myself. And anyway, I still haven't decided whether to stay."

Kon suppressed a grin of triumph. She wasn't going anywhere. "Well, you'd better make up your mind pretty quick, because my time is precious. You said so yourself. Ha! Beige. I knew it."

She looked down at herself, at the sturdy beige bra he'd revealed. He saw the battle going on behind those wary eyes, saw her fighting the urge to cover herself.

"It's okay, I'm gay," he soberly informed her as he stripped the blouse from her shoulders and tossed it into a corner. "This doesn't do a darn thing for me."

Darla grasped at this morsel. She started to relax and even offered a relieved little smile—for a good two to three seconds, long enough for him to unhook the bra.

Those dark eyes narrowed. "A gay guy with three ex-wives?" she demanded, clutching the bra to her chest as she came to her feet.

"Yeah, that gay line rarely works." He unzipped her pants.

"Wait a minute. Stop." Darla clamped one arm over her loose bra while struggling to haul up her pants even as Kon tugged them southward.

Her filmy silk thong was beige, too, but color was the only thing it had in common with the frumpy, full-coverage bra. "Oh yeah." Kon's cock gave a little twitch of approval. "We might be able to do something with this."

"White pants," she explained. "I hate VPL."

The dreaded visible panty line. As if she had to justify sexy underpants. He peered around her for a better look.

"Do you mind?" Darla scooted backward to thwart him, losing one of her sandals and practically tripping over her slacks in the process. "Just point me toward the changing room." She squinted past the lights, obviously looking for that damn tote bag. Her security tote.

"Darla. Listen." Kon pressed a palm to his chest. "Do you trust me?"

The look she gave him said, *You have got to be kidding.*

"I mean as an artist," he said. "You came to me because I'm the best. You've seen my work."

"How refreshing." Her tone was arid. "A man with a healthy ego. The changing room?"

"There is no changing room." Kon spread his arms. "What you see is what you get."

She huffed out a breath. "Turn around, then. I'll change...over there." She nodded toward the far corner of the room where assorted pieces of cloth—drapes, scarves and the like—spilled from a cut-off refrigerator carton. "Better yet, you can hold up one of those drapes—high—to give me some privacy."

"When I'm going to see you naked anyway? Come on, you can't be that repressed."

"Stop saying that. I am not repressed." Darla's pants slipped from her fingers and puddled at her feet. She struggled to keep her breasts covered as she bent to pull them up.

"If you say so," Kon muttered. Obviously Darla Carmody had no inkling of her physical appeal. She was shy. Self-effacing. Vulnerable. Kon knew the type well. He should. He'd married three of them.

Which was why he had no intention of letting this one get close. It was just as well she was engaged.

"And I'm not going to get totally naked for you," she said.

"It isn't for me," he reminded her. "It's for your fiancé. Are you telling me he hasn't seen you naked?"

"You know what I mean. Will you—will you just—" Darla emitted a growl of frustration as she tried to refasten her pants while holding up her bra. "Will you at least fasten this thing so I can pull myself together here?"

Kon stepped behind her and took hold of the ends of her bra. The instant she released it, he flicked the ugly thing off her and slingshotted it over her head. Darla grabbed her breasts. The pants fell. Kon seized her around the waist and lifted her as he kicked her pants and sandals halfway across the room.

"How dare you!" she howled, fighting like a tigress against his hold, her back pressed to his front. They stumbled around like that, tripping on electrical cords and nearly knocking over Grandma Drummond's Victorian piano bench.

Darla wore only that wispy, nearly invisible thong, and the muscles of her ass pummeled his cock as she squirmed and thrashed. Not too shabby as cheap thrills went. Her skin was hot satin. She smelled of vanilla and lavender and woman.

"We don't have time for garter belts and shit like that." Kon's words came in harsh grunts. Her hair whipped his face and caught in his mouth. "Settle down." If he had an extra few hours to kill, he'd let her do the sexy-lingerie routine, let her gradually get comfortable with the process, and with him, while gently coaxing her toward the full monty. But time, as they said, was money, and as usual, "they" were right.

"If you've seen my work," he huffed, "then you know I don't do cheesy lingerie shots."

"I'm the goddamn. Paying. Customer." She punctuated her words with blind backward kicks to his shins. "I get to decide."

Kon hauled her off her feet, inadvertently grabbing a breast as he did so. It was a fine, firm breast and made a more than decent handle as he wrestled her crosswise onto the bench, pinning her body with his and shackling her wrists behind her back one-handed.

They remained that way for long seconds, panting from their exertions, her butt angled high and still pressed to what was now a blue-ribbon hard-on. Kon felt his heart pounding—felt her heart pounding, too, against his other hand. He eased his grip on her breast, letting it fill his hand like a ripe, heavy fruit. He weighed the silky flesh, gently stroked and molded it. The nipple pulled into a tight bud, teasing his palm.

Kon sucked in a breath. Darla was still breathing hard, but said nothing. Still holding her wrists, he leaned down and kissed her neck. She trembled. He gave in to the impulse to lightly bite the place he'd kissed.

A ragged whimper issued from her throat. "What are you doing?"

"You're delicious." He drew the scent of her deep into his lungs, the perfume of desire she was helpless to suppress. "I can't resist."

And he couldn't. Kon was going to fuck this woman. He was going to take her right there, right then, on Grandma's piano bench under the blazing lights. His cock was practically bursting out of his pants. Darla Carmody was one of the hottest women he'd ever met, a woman of stunning natural sensuality, and the best part was, she had no clue about this part of her nature.

Which, of course, only made her hotter—to him, at least. Kon was going to use Darla's body in every way possible and he was going to enjoy the hell out of it. Because it would be strictly a one-time deal. After she strolled out that door, they'd never set eyes on each other again.

That part was nonnegotiable, a self-preservation tactic he'd learned the hard way. Three expensive times. Do not let her get close. Do not let her get under your skin.

Kon stroked his fingers around the side of Darla's breast and down her back, savoring the feminine curves and hollows. He ran a finger along the edge of the thong to where it dipped between her ass cheeks.

She jumped and glanced at him over her shoulder. "Kon...I don't think this is a good idea."

"I think it's the best idea I've had all day." He skimmed his fingers lower, over the drenched silk that declared her a liar. "And I think you agree."

Darla's body tightened like a bowstring. She gasped and reflexively tilted her pussy into his touch.

Kon smiled. He leaned back a little for a better view, still manacled her wrists with his other hand. Holding her captive excited him, and he sensed it did the same for her. Perhaps the physical domination helped her to mentally let go and give in to the pleasure overtaking her. If so, he could think of plenty of other ways to enhance her submission experience.

He kneed her legs farther apart and looked. The beige silk, sheer to begin with, was practically transparent now where her juices dampened it. "Why did you shave your cunt?" he asked.

She took that as an invitation to renew her struggles. He tightened his grip on her wrists and forced her thighs wider still. "It was for the boyfriend," he said. It wasn't a question. "One more thing to add some jazz to a drab love life. Did it work?"

She went still, breathing hard.

He answered his own question. "Guess not, otherwise you wouldn't be here, would you?"

And here was where she was going to stay until he'd made her come more times in one afternoon than she had in all her time with the fiancé.

"What's his name?" Kon asked. "Your unappreciative betrothed?"

Darla shot a scowl over her shoulder. She blew hair off her flushed face.

"That's okay." He patted her butt. "We can just call him Mr. Right. Me, I love a hairless cunt." He also loved landing strips, topiary trims and bushes in glorious full bloom. He didn't care how a woman chose to display her nether regions as long as the display was for his benefit.

"So. Tell me." Kon's tongue traced the curve of Darla's throat. "You on the Pill?"

She hesitated. "Yes."

"Any STDs?"

She scowled again. "Of course not. How can you ask me that?"

"Excellent! Me neither." He glanced around his train wreck of a studio. "Latest lab report's around here somewhere if you want to see it in black and white."

Her only response was a disgusted sigh. He stroked his knuckles between her legs, relishing the caress of her swollen labia under the thin silk. A shuddering moan rose from deep in Darla's throat. Her hips moved in time with his caress—he didn't think she was aware of it.

"Does Mr. Right make you feel like this?" Kon's voice sounded low and thick to his own ears. "Does he take his time with you? Does he get you this hot and wet?"

Darla opened her mouth to say something. To tell him to stop?

He didn't give her the chance. One long finger nudged aside the edge of the thong and pushed deep inside her.

She cried out, bowing her back and forcing his finger deeper still. He watched it happen, watched her slick, tight passage accept first one, then two rough fingers, moving in the age-old rhythm.

"Tell me you want it," he growled. "Tell me to fuck you."

Her response was a long, keening whimper, more animal than human.

"Say it." Kon released her wrists to give one round butt cheek a stinging slap. She shrieked. "Say it, Darla!" His self-control was a fragile thing. When she refused to

speak, he landed two more quick spanks, *whap! whap!*, feeling her pussy tighten with each blow.

He'd spanked her just hard enough to leave rosy handprints on her lovely ass. With her hands free, Darla tried to push up from the floor as if preparing to push him off her. He twisted a third finger into her then, stretching her, trying not to rush it, a challenge of the highest order with his cock battering the fly of his pants, trying to get at her.

"Oh...oh..." Darla groaned. Kon's aching balls throbbed with every "oh".

That was enough. It was time. He withdrew his fingers and ripped open the silk shielding her mound.

Darla gasped, and gasped again at the sound of his zipper. "Kon!"

His cock sprang into his hand, hard as tempered steel and glistening with pre-come. He touched the tip to her sweet, swollen clit. It might as well have been a cattle prod, the way she sprang off the bench, disentangling their limbs and tumbling onto the floor in one graceless motion.

"Whoa!" she hollered. "Whoa! Whoa!"

"No whoa!" He wagged his free hand side to side. "No whoa! This'll be good, Darla. It'll be fun. You'll see."

"Kon, I'm a—" She hugged her knees to her chest, effectively covering herself. "I'm an engaged woman. Practically married."

Kon followed her gaze to his engorged dick, still twitching to get inside her. He muttered a string of the most blistering cuss words he could think of, then started over at the beginning of the list as he stuffed himself back into his pants.

Dominance play could be a kick, but it required a minimum of two willing partners. That "willing" thing was a crucial part of the equation.

Kon closed his eyes and took a deep breath. And another. He heard Darla scramble to her feet, imagined her squinting past the pool of light, searching for her far-flung

clothing. If he were a gentleman, he'd let her throw on her clothes and slink on out of there.

He opened his eyes. "We're not finished, Darla."

"Oh, we're finished, all right."

"Maybe *that's* finished." He caught her arm as she tried to scoot past him. "But I still owe you a photo session."

"Yeah, right." She tugged. "Let me go."

"I took your money, you'll get your pictures."

Darla gave an impatient sigh. To her credit, she made no attempt to cover herself. Well, what would be the point now?

"Here's what I'm going to do for you." Kon got in her face, made her look at him. "You'll get the whole package, just like we discussed on the phone. The studio session, the prints, all of it, and you're not out another penny."

Now he had her attention. Everyone loved a bargain. "You mean...but I only paid you, what, about a tenth of the total cost," she said.

Kon opened his palms. "I'm going to accept your deposit as payment in full. An unprecedented offer." He forced sincerity into his voice. "Call it an apology."

He hoped she'd buy it—the rapacious scoundrel suffering pangs of remorse over his assault on the modest lady's virtue. Forget that this particular modest lady had responded like a sex-starved concubine. The aroma of her need still teased his nostrils. If he even hinted at that, she'd be out the door in a blur of motion.

Kon wasn't about to admit defeat. When Darla Carmody walked out of there later—if she could still walk—she'd have been fucked more ways than she probably knew existed. He didn't owe a thing to Mr. Right, and neither did she if the clueless clod left her this frustrated and insecure.

He saw the war being waged behind those glittering dark brown eyes. His tone oozed contrition. "I know I don't deserve a second chance, but I also know I can do

some amazing work with you in front of the lens.” He tilted his head, offering his best puppy-dog smile. “Let me make it up to you, Darla.”

Chapter Two

Darla had yet to decide whether she'd lost her mind. *Click*. She tilted her head. *Click*. She shifted to the side, leaning on one arm. *Click. Click. Click*. With every snap of the shutter she changed her position slightly, as Kon had instructed. She'd slipped off the ruined thong and now sat mother-naked on the piano bench, her back to the camera, while a stranger photographed her.

For Brian. She mustn't forget. This was all for Brian. Or rather, for their relationship.

Oh, who was she kidding? It was for sex. A shot in the arm for a love life that had always been, well, limp at best, starting with those first awkward gropings on her living-room sofa. But it *was* for their relationship, really. Wasn't sex an important part of any marriage? Brian was going to be her husband. She had an obligation to improve their sex life. She had a duty to make herself as alluring a bed partner as possible.

Obligation. Duty. Where were those high-minded ideals a little while ago when she'd responded to Konrad Drummond like a two-bit whore? Just thinking about those few superheated minutes made Darla's pulse skitter.

Don't think about it, she commanded herself. Don't think about the feel of his hand on her breast, of his fingers driving between her legs. Don't think about that gorgeous, enormous cock that came this close to filling her deeper and wider than she'd ever been filled. It had been a mistake, on both their parts. Kon had apologized, and there was no reason for either of them to mention it again. So she wouldn't think about it.

Except maybe on those nights after Brian had performed his almost-husbandly chore and scurried back to his own apartment by 8:45 so he'd be rested for the morning commute. On those nights when she burned for release, maybe she'd allow herself to think about the dangerously sexy photographer with the long, rough fingers and the long, hard cock and the ice-blue eyes that seemed to penetrate to her very core.

Click. “What are you thinking about?” Kon raised his head from the camera. “You look...distracted.”

How Darla hated that knowing smile of his. “I’m just wondering how long you’re going to keep me sitting here.”

“No problem. I’m ready for a change.” He crossed to the carton labeled “Assorted Props” and returned holding lengths of wide pink satin ribbon.

She stiffened. “What are you going to do with that?”

“Make you irresistible to Mr. Right. Lie back.” Kon pushed on her shoulders, positioning her head near one end of the bench. She raised a knee and angled it inward. He smiled at the overdue display of modesty but blessedly made no comment. He drew her right arm over her head and began tying it to one leg of the bench.

“Wait a minute.” Darla tried to sit up. He pushed her back down. “Kon, wait.”

“I can’t have you questioning every pose,” he said, “every artistic decision.”

She tugged against the knot. It held fast. “This is artistic?”

“I require silence while I work. And complete compliance with my directions.” Kon captured her left arm and secured it in the same way, finishing the knots with big, floppy bows. “I can’t concentrate with a model who keeps jabbering. Questioning. Whining.”

“I’m not whining, I just don’t see why you have to tie my —”

“A gag can add quite the artistic touch, as well.”

Darla’s jaw snapped shut. She watched him move away, listened to his retreating footfalls as he headed into an unseen corner of the studio. She could see little past the circle of lights trained on her. It was as if she were onstage, under a spotlight.

Her wrists jerked against their bonds, an unconscious reflex. She closed her eyes briefly, trying to calm herself with an assertive little pep talk. *You’re the boss*, she told herself. *You hired this man to do a job for you. You are in control here.*

Yeah, right. Only one person was in control here. She didn't see him, but she heard him in the far corner of the room, heard something heavy scrape against the plank flooring.

Darla's heartbeat faltered. Her bare breasts rose and fell faster as Kon's footfalls approached. She opened her mouth to ask about his plans—and closed it again. No speaking. He'd made that clear. All she could do was lie there and wait for...whatever he decided to do to her.

That thought buzzed between her legs, and she pressed her thighs more tightly together, the raised knee tilting even farther inward.

"Why are you squirming?" Kon asked. "Uncomfortable?"

"And if I said yes?" she said. "Would you let me up?"

His smile was a feral flash of teeth. She had her answer. At least her curiosity was assuaged—a tall wooden stepladder. That was what he'd gone after. He set it up a short distance away and climbed it with camera in hand.

Darla had thought she'd felt vulnerable before, but that was nothing compared to now, with Kon staring down from his lofty perch. He clicked off a few shots, then held the camera aside to study her. He took his time, his cool gaze traveling from her hair, fanned out on the bench, to the tips of her toes and back again. Something about what he saw bothered him. He descended the ladder and stood over her, scowling.

"Am I—" The words caught in her throat. "Am I doing something wrong?"

"Shh..." Kon's fingers touched her mouth. They trailed down her throat to her right nipple, which he caught between thumb and forefinger.

Darla gasped. If she weren't tied down, she'd have leapt off the bench.

"The point of all this is to get Mr. Right worked up." He tugged on the sensitive nub, rolled it, pulled it and let it snap free of his grasp. The breast settled with a jiggle and he moved on to the other side. Her face and chest burned with the telltale flush of desire. "You want him hard for you?" Kon said. "Let him see how hard *you* get for *him*."

Patiently he pinched and caressed her nipples until they stood in tight peaks. Then he stroked a hand down her torso, dangerously close to her weeping pussy. Darla twisted her hips, nearly tipping the piano bench. With the speed of a striking cobra, he swung his leg over the bench and sat facing her, holding her wide-spread thighs atop his.

“What—what are you doing?” The harder she wriggled, the harder he gripped her, those long fingers pressing into her soft flesh, his thumbs a scant inch from her smooth mons. His thighs felt hard as stone under hers.

With every tug of her wrists against the satin bonds, Darla’s panic spiked. It was panic based not on fear—Kon had already demonstrated he was no rapist—but on her own spiraling arousal. He’d rendered her immobile, helpless. He could do anything he wanted to her, and she already knew what that was.

Tell me you want it, he’d said. Tell me to fuck you.

She had wanted it then, God help her, and somehow, she wanted it even more now that she was bound naked and spread open, a spectacle of sexual need under the unforgiving lights. She was wetter than she’d ever been down there, and he saw it, he saw everything. She could control none of it, not the trickle of moisture, not the shameful pumping of her hips, certainly not the hungry clenching of her pussy lips, a reflexive grasping at nothing.

Darla looked down at herself, past the tight buds of her nipples to her belly and legs, so pale against his suntanned hands. She dropped her head back, squeezing her eyes shut. *Do it, she thought. Just do it.* Never in her life had she felt this yawning, thumping emptiness. If he didn’t fuck her right here, right now, she thought she might go mad.

“Does Mr. Right ever tie you up?” Kon’s hands slid around her hips, slowly made their way over her waist.

Darla blinked. She could barely make her mind function. Kon’s hands were warm and a little rough, like a cat’s tongue. “I...what...?” Why would Brian tie her up?

But she knew what Kon meant. She knew about bondage play—in theory, at least. She'd never understood the appeal, never thought that kinky stuff had anything to do with her.

"No surprise there," he remarked dryly, as his hands stroked up her rib cage. "Does the guy exercise any imagination or is it all slam-bam?"

"Kon, I..." *I want you to untie me.* The words perched on the tip of her tongue, just waiting for her to set them free. She knew he'd respect her wishes, would release her and end this torment. Just as she knew he'd drop his pants and drive that big cock into her in the next instant if she asked him to. The choice was hers.

She'd tell him to untie her. In a minute. Just one more mind-blowing, pussy-tingling minute of this delicious sexual captivity. She'd had no idea relinquishing control could be so intoxicating.

Darla groaned as Kon's fingers found her breasts. He ignored the sensitized tips, caressing her with the lightest of touches until she was a mass of squirming, panting need. Her eyes drifted shut again, so she wasn't prepared for the feel of his tongue on her nipple. Little cries of pleasure escaped her as he sucked the bud into his hot mouth and nipped it with his teeth. His bent position allowed her to grind against him, and she did so automatically, without forethought.

A low growl of appreciation bubbled up Kon's throat as he turned his attention to the other nipple, suckling greedily while his fingers teased its damp twin.

Darla's head moved restlessly. She was breathless with desire, desperate for release. And yet she couldn't bring herself to say the words. *Fuck me, Kon. Fuck me now, I need you.*

He seemed to know, though. He raised his head, and her breath caught at the intensity of his crystal-blue gaze. She saw something there, a dare or a challenge, as he slid off the end of the bench, tugging her hips toward him and lowering his face.

His grip on her ass was like iron, but his lips were impossibly soft as he kissed her right there, on her burning clitoris. The strangled cry she heard couldn't have come

from her—could it? She'd never made a sound like that in her life. She panted his name over and over as he rained kisses between her legs, little sucking pecks that had her jerking her hips to meet them.

Darla fought it. She fisted her hands and tried to make her brain work. There was something she was supposed to do—she was supposed to tell him to stop. Right about now. Then his tongue glided up her slit and it was all she could do to hold on to the top of her head. He traced a path around the stiff bud, holding her still as she struggled for more direct contact. She needed to come. She'd never needed to come this badly, as if her very life depended on it.

"Say it," Kon murmured against her drenched flesh. His hot breath seared her. She didn't have to ask, *Say what?* Yet she couldn't bring herself to utter the words. Why couldn't he just do it? Why did he have to torment her like this?

His tongue was long and strong and agile. It stroked. It flicked. It darted inside. He was voracious, relentless, fucking her with his mouth, pulling back every so often to let her float down from the brink, only to take up where he'd left off and bring her even closer. Darla was practically sobbing with frustration.

"Say it," he commanded, more forcefully this time.

"Please...please..." she moaned.

Kon closed his mouth over her clitoris. Darla's body was no longer her own. Her entire being was focused on that one electrified spot between her legs, her cries echoing the cadence of his greedy, sucking mouth.

She was almost there, teetering on the point of no return, when Kon lifted his head and sat back on his heels.

"No!" she cried, thrashing against her bonds and his imprisoning hands. "Do it, Kon. Fuck me." She didn't recognize her own voice, the raw desperation and need. "*Fuck me!*"

Kon's eyes glittered with satisfaction as he reared up, unleashed his cock and drove into her in one long, steady plunge. Darla screamed, the pleasure so acute it nearly

tipped over into pain. Never had she been stretched this wide, filled this deep. Her orgasm exploded out of her, wringing a feral groan from Kon as her pussy milked him. He gritted his teeth and groaned again, obviously struggling not to finish too soon. Black spots crowded Darla's vision as she slid into unconsciousness.

Chapter Three

She came to amid an erotic whirlwind of sensation. Kon was still inside her, still rigid as a sequoia, the tip of his penis touching the deepest, neediest part of her. Those big, strong hands stroked her repeatedly, from thighs to shoulders, as he murmured her name and sweetly urged her to open her eyes.

She blinked. His torso was bare, and — she leaned up for a better view — so was the rest of him. His clothes lay in a heap on the backdrop, along with the satin ribbons. He'd untied her wrists and even managed to shuck out of his shorts without unseating himself from her body. She smiled wryly. Konrad Drummond was a man of many talents.

"Don't get up too quickly. Take some deep breaths." Gently he pushed her back down. His crooked smile mirrored hers, crinkling the corners of those shockingly blue eyes. "I was afraid you'd snooze all afternoon, and then what would I do?" His hips pumped, a lazy thrust that brought her fully awake. "It's not my style to fuck an unconscious woman."

"As opposed to fucking a woman into unconsciousness." Darla looped her arms around his sinewy neck. "Why do I suspect that isn't a first for you?"

He grinned at the compliment, then some of the humor faded as he studied her.

"You want to know if I regret it," she said, toying with the damp curls at his nape. "You want to know if I'm going to burst into tears and accuse you of taking advantage."

After a moment he said, "Something like that."

"The answer is no." Darla ran her hand down his chest, lightly furred and layered with muscle. She brushed her fingertips over his nipple and felt his response deep inside. "Don't ask me why not. I'd rather not think about all that right now."

All that being Brian and their upcoming marriage. She loved Brian. At least that's what she'd told herself, and him, these past months as they'd booked the hall and sent out the invitations. The flowers were ordered, the music booked. Last weekend his sister Annie, a wonderful girl whom Darla had asked to be her maid of honor, had thrown Darla one hell of a bridal shower.

"Then don't think about it. Think about this." Kon slid his arms around her, pulling her up and pressing his mouth to hers.

Darla had never been kissed like this, like he couldn't get enough of her, like kissing *mattered*. She tasted a bit of herself on his lips, and it went to her head like an aphrodisiac. Kon's hips rocked, and she matched his rhythm, mewling into his mouth as her arousal grew. He knew just how to move, how to tease her clitoris with every stroke, and nudge that magic spot within her, over and over.

Kon wrapped her legs around his hips and rose to his feet in one smooth motion. He held her ass, lifting and lowering her on his stiff cock, his eyes burning into hers the whole time. The muscles of his shoulders and arms bunched, but his movements remained fluid and controlled. He had the build of a dedicated athlete—obviously he didn't spend *all* his time cooped up in the studio.

He strolled off the backdrop and past the detritus of his studio, hammering her steadily without breaking stride. She knew he was close to coming, could see the effort he expended to delay it. Meanwhile her own pleasure spiraled with each ramrod thrust. She clutched him shamelessly, gouging his shoulders with her nails, breathlessly seeking release.

He paused by a pegboard. "Grab that."

She looked at the object he indicated, a coil of thin brown rope. A needle of apprehension jabbed her. "What are you going to do with—?"

"I said grab it." His fingers tightened on her butt, and she realized his authoritarian attitude hadn't changed simply because the photo session had morphed into an all-out fuck-fest. He still expected...how had he expressed it? *Complete compliance*. Which

sounded dangerously close to the *O* word—obedience. One part of Darla rebelled against the very suggestion she obey him. Another part experienced a thrill of arousal. It was that part that won the internal battle.

She reached out and lifted the rope off its hook. It was heavier than she'd expected, and she saw now it wasn't one piece but several substantial lengths of pliable brown cord. Kon returned to the front of the studio and instructed Darla to deposit the rope on top of the stepladder, which she did.

Up to this point, he'd demonstrated remarkable self-control, but she could tell the moment of reckoning was imminent. His breathing had turned ragged, not from exertion but from holding off his own release. Veins bulged in his arms and neck as he worked her on his steely cock. Still he managed to make his way to the big carton overflowing with pieces of fabric, everything from filmy silk scarves to fuzzy faux-fur throws. She gasped as he kicked over the box, which spewed its multicolored contents onto the floor, directly under an enormous skylight. Buttery sunlight puddled on the cloth.

Kon rearranged the pile with one long foot and answered the question evident on her face. "I'm building you a love nest, my dear." He turned and lowered them to the floor, lying back on the mound of fabric so that she straddled him, still impaled.

Finally! Something *she* could control. Darla rode him hard, and he let her set the pace. He reached around her bottom, touching the place where they were joined, gathering her juices. She was unprepared when his slick finger slid higher and caressed her anus.

"Kon!" She tried to squirm away from the unfamiliar sensation.

"It's okay." His other hand gripped her ass, holding her still. "I won't hurt you. Relax for me, sweetheart."

"I—I can't."

"Shh...Darla..." Kon held her gaze as his finger gently probed. "Are you telling me no one's ever touched you here?"

She didn't bother to answer, knowing he could see it in her face, in her body's alarmed response. She supposed she must appear laughably inexperienced to him, but he wasn't laughing. He was staring into her eyes, and the way he looked at her, it was as if no man had ever seen her before, really seen her.

Darla took a deep breath, willing her muscles to relax. Kon began fucking her once more, his finger thrusting and withdrawing along with his cock. It was a stunning sensation, being penetrated in both openings at once, and before she knew it, Darla found herself responding, found herself welcoming the novel intrusion. She let go of all her trepidations, her inhibitions, and let herself simply *feel* for the first time in her life.

Her second orgasm was more powerful than the first, if that was possible. It was as if her body didn't belong to her, and she was grateful for Kon's big hands locking her to him, grounding her. He came in the same instant with a hoarse cry, his eyes rolling back, his hips snapping hard against her. She felt his hot seed spurt deep inside as her pussy convulsed, drinking it all in.

They continued to rock against each other for a few moments, savoring the aftershocks. Finally Darla collapsed in a sated heap, and Kon rolled them onto their sides on his makeshift nest, their legs entwined. He kissed her, deep and tender, running his hands over her body in long, soothing strokes.

She half dozed for a few minutes, nuzzling his chest, breathing in the intoxicating scent of him. At last he gently untangled their limbs and moved away. She listened to his footfalls recede, feeling cool emptiness where he had just been.

Darla rolled onto her back and stretched, gazing at the grimy skylight overhead, at dust motes lazily drifting in shafts of sunlight. So this was what it felt like to be thoroughly loved.

Wrong. She was thoroughly fucked, and in more ways than one. An image of her fiancé sprang into her mind, and she determinedly pushed it away. Not yet. There would be time for that later, for guilt and self-recrimination. For painful decisions.

She watched Kon stride toward her, clearly comfortable in his naked skin, a study in pure masculine grace. He carried his camera, which he set on the floor nearby, and a damp washcloth.

“What, still conscious?” A teasing smile touched his eyes as he knelt next to her.

“You’re slipping.” She gave a regretful little shake of the head. “Guess you’ll just have to keep trying.”

That prompted a full-blown grin. He folded the washcloth and lightly pressed it between her legs. It was warm, almost hot, and it felt heavenly. “You sore?” he asked.

“A little.” Darla wasn’t accustomed to this much attention below the belt. Sex with Brian generally entailed lying under him for two to three minutes while he grimly humped away like he was on the clock.

Her thighs automatically drifted open as the washcloth stroked and probed her intimate flesh. Kon’s touch as he ministered to her was at once tender and assertive. She felt the leashed strength of his fingers under the sodden terry cloth, felt the buzz of renewed desire as he grasped the nubby cloth by a corner and slowly dragged it over her slit. She released a long, shaky exhalation and reached for his hard thigh, needing to ground herself.

His penetrating gaze met hers, a flash of cerulean under those devilish brows, and she saw he was wholly absorbed in the moment—in her. Her breathing quickened as the washcloth retraced its route, the folds of terry molding themselves to the folds of her labia. He repeated the gesture over and over, with single-minded patience, until Darla was panting and squirming, her hips rising to enhance the contact. She was barely aware of her hand gripping his thigh until she felt his erection brush against her fingers.

Kon tossed aside the washcloth. Darla reached for him, his name erupting from her throat in a ragged whisper. She expected him to fall on her, to fill her. Instead he reached for his camera.

"I'm not finished photographing you." A smile played at the corners of his mouth. "In case you were wondering."

Darla hadn't been wondering, hadn't been thinking of anything past the here and now. Kon directed her poses, having her lie and sit in various positions. He shot her from all angles, standing over her, away from her, squatting, even joining her on the floor. At one point he leapt onto a nearby table and shot her from a height.

"The light is perfect here. So are you, Darla." For long moments he just stared at her. "God, but you are beautiful."

She didn't believe him. Wasn't that what photographers always told their models? Still, the way he looked at her, with equal parts wonder and intensity, she did feel almost beautiful for the first time in her life.

She'd expected her aching arousal to subside as she posed for him, but in fact, the opposite occurred. As she stared at the camera lens trained on her, at this extension of Kon's own greedy gaze, the buzz of awareness between her legs only grew stronger, until at last it was all she could do to hold still as he composed each shot.

Click, click, click, click, click, click, click.

Kon knelt next to Darla where she lay on the nest of fabric. He positioned her arms over her head, selected a delicate silk scarf and tied her wrists together. He repeated the procedure with her ankles, lashing them together with a long scrap of ivory lace.

The sensual buzz ratcheted up a few notches. Her breasts rose and fell faster, drawing his gaze and his hand, which lightly skated down her torso. Her nipples had pulled into hard little knots, and the fleeting brush of his fingertips felt like an electric jolt. She squirmed, needing more, even as he rummaged through the pieces of cloth and drew out a sheer chiffon scarf.

He floated the large, peach-hued square over her legs and hips, dragging it higher, until it settled like a dirty thought over her chest and face. Her view through the scarf was hazy as Kon half buried her legs under scraps of cloth, draping others over her hair and arms so it looked as if she were emerging from the pile of fabric.

Darla tried to ignore the sensuous caress of silk and satin and velvet, tried to ignore the erotic thrill of her bound wrists and ankles, a novel response she was still trying to come to terms with. Every ragged breath puffed the chiffon and scraped her hypersensitive nipples against the sheer covering, maddening her.

Kon didn't speak as he clicked off frames, a cloudy figure stepping around her, standing over her—capturing her image, her vulnerability and helpless desire.

He lifted her bound hands and moved them to her crotch. "Touch yourself," he said.

Chapter Four

"What?" He couldn't mean what she thought he meant.

"I mean exactly what you think I mean." Kon addressed her from behind the camera. "Stroke your pussy. I'll tell you when to come."

"No!" She started to sit up. He was on her like lightning, pushing her down and replacing the chiffon scarf.

"I thought we'd gotten past your defiance, Darla." His tone was harsh. "You will do what I tell you to do."

"Not that. I...I couldn't."

"You're kidding, right? After everything else we've done?"

"This is different. It's so...you know. It's private." Despite everything, Darla felt her face flame—though heaven knew she masturbated often enough when she was alone, her sex life with Brian being the snore-fest it was. "Come on, Kon. Would *you* jerk off in front of an audience?"

"An audience? This isn't Carnegie Hall, Darla, it's just you and me here."

"Yeah, and a *camera*," she added.

"This coy routine is getting old. You're aroused as hell." Kon returned her hands to the juncture of her thighs. "Now do something about it."

Darla closed her eyes and kept them closed, gathering her composure, willing herself to overcome her irrational modesty. And it was irrational—wasn't it? Kon was right. It made no sense to draw the line about this one thing after...well, the man had had his finger in her butt, for crying out loud! How much more private could it get?

She took a shaky breath and forced her hand toward her mons.

"That's it, sweetheart. Good, excellent," Kon murmured. *Click*. "Show me what you do when you're alone. You're so wet—I know you need it. Show me how you bring yourself off." *Click. Click*.

Darla swallowed hard. She touched a lone fingertip to her needy, weeping slit.

"Open your eyes," Kon commanded.

"Can't I keep them—"

"No."

Darla opened her eyes. Through the chiffon she saw him rearing over her, saw sunlight glint off the lens of his camera. "I can't." She jerked her hands up. "I can't do it, Kon."

Immediately he set aside the camera, grabbed her bound wrists and hauled her off the "love nest".

"What are you doing?" she asked.

"Silence." Kon threw her onto his shoulder, eliciting a grunt of astonishment from Darla.

"Kon!" she said, then yelped as he pinched her ass, hard.

"I said silence. You've forfeited the right to speak." He strolled across the studio, holding her legs with one hand and squeezing her buttocks with the other. "I know it's hard to relinquish control, and this is all new to you. So I'm going to make it easier for you. I'm going to soften you up a little."

Darla didn't like the sound of that. She wanted to ask what he meant, but didn't dare. He picked up some object as they passed a worktable, but she couldn't see what it was.

Kon paused before a threadbare camelback sofa, a genuine antique by the looks of it, with fringed, moss-green upholstery and sagging cushions. It was the only uncluttered space in the studio. Perhaps he took naps here—or entertained lady friends.

He set her on her feet. Before she had a chance to regain her equilibrium, he sat on the sofa and pulled her facedown over his lap, her bottom elevated, his erection nudging her belly. Automatically she tried to lever herself up, but with her wrists and ankles tied, she didn't have a prayer of evading him, and whatever he had planned for her.

He didn't leave her in suspense. The first sharp *thwack* seared her butt cheek like a branding iron. She shrieked, managing a quick peek over her shoulder before he shoved her back down.

A wooden ruler. He was spanking her with a goddamned ruler! "Kon—!" Her protest was cut off by another scream as the wicked thing landed five times in quick succession. Shock waves radiated through her buttocks and into her swollen pussy, which clenched in time with the blows. She hadn't signed on for this, and she started to tell him so in no uncertain terms, only to have him snatch a bandana off a side table and stuff it into her mouth.

"So willful." Kon rested the ruler on her thighs and caressed her stinging flesh. She shuddered, moaning under the gag. "Your pleasure will be so much more complete when you learn to let go, to surrender without reservation."

His big hand both soothed and inflamed her as he stroked and squeezed her buttocks. He lifted the ruler. "Are you ready for more?"

Vehemently Darla shook her head, her pleas muffled by the gag. It wasn't the pain she was afraid of, but the new and unwelcome self-awareness. Was she some kind of perverted masochist, to be stimulated by this kind of treatment?

The bandana muted her cries as Kon spanked her with the ruler, lightly at first, a string of soft slaps covering a wide swath of real estate, followed by two fierce whacks across both cheeks. Darla whimpered, feeling heat blossom in her abused flesh, in her drenched sex—feeling something else, too. The softening Kon spoke of. The surrender.

Thwack! Thwack! Thwack! He kept the ruler moving, raining slaps on the roundest part of her ass, then the sides, the bottom edge, the thighs, and back again.

Kon said, "The endorphins should be kicking in about now," and he was right if what he meant was that the blows hurt less. The pain was still there, but in an altered form, making it easier to bear, easier to focus on other, more welcome sensations.

He loosened the knot binding her ankles and tossed aside the piece of lace. His hands parted her thighs as wide as they would go. She didn't fight him or attempt to close them. She took a deep breath, preparing herself for whatever came next.

Kon said, "Don't move."

Darla jerked as the ruler touched down high on the tender inside of her thigh. He slowed the pace of the spanking, choosing his targets with care, coming perilously close to her sex without directly striking it. Her juices bathed his thighs and his cock, which thumped like a battering ram against her belly. *Yes*, she thought. She wanted it, needed it. But this was Kon's show. He was in charge, and he would reward her with that splendid cock when he was good and ready.

Darla realized with a start that she was arching into the punishment, tilting her ass to afford him better access. She emitted a ragged moan, feeling yet more of her will drain away. He seemed to sense this yielding. Again he set aside the ruler and touched her, soothing with delicate strokes, then squeezing and pinching the inflamed flesh.

Kon pressed his palm between her legs, and Darla cried out beneath the gag, pushing against him.

"I told you not to move," he said.

She whimpered. He had to know he was demanding the impossible. She trembled with the effort to obey him as he spread her labia as if inspecting her.

"You're close to coming," he told her, as if this were news to her. "You're not allowed to come unless I give you permission. If you come before then, I will punish you. And if you think spanking is the only kind of punishment I can inflict, let me assure you, my imagination knows no bounds."

Kon thrust two fingers into her, and she gyrated against them, earning an open-palm slap on the tenderest part of her abused ass. He fucked her with his hand, teasing

her anus with his thumb. She groaned, feeling her body grasp at the invading fingers, struggling to remain still.

"Good," he said at last. "You're learning. But the lesson's not over." He lifted the ruler and pressed the smooth wood between her widespread thighs, where his hand had just been. At the same time he pressed on the small of her back, holding her still and angling her pussy higher. She'd never felt so exposed. "Your cunt is greedy and demanding," he said. "It needs to be punished, too."

Darla's breath caught. Before she could think how to stop him, the ruler landed with a *thwack* on her engorged clitoris. And again and again, a string of light smacks that electrified her. He seemed to know just how hard she could take it, right there.

She felt his long, strong fingers on her ass cheeks and between them as he spread them wide. She yelped beneath her gag as the ruler found its mark, blurring the line between pleasure and pain. Never in her wildest imaginings would she have pictured herself on the receiving end of such treatment, or guessed how close to ecstasy it could bring her.

"Stand up." Kon tossed the ruler aside and helped Darla to her feet. Her legs felt like rubber, but she managed to keep her balance. He yanked the bandana out of her mouth. His pale eyes seemed to glow from within. "You've made progress. I've decided to let you speak. Are you ready to obey me?"

"You mean to...?"

He nodded. "To get yourself off."

"Yes." She was beyond embarrassment, desperate for relief. Her fingers started to slide down her belly, but he caught them before they reached their destination.

"Good to know, but I decided I'm not going to let you come. Not yet. We'll see how much you've learned," he said, as he led her by her bound wrists to the front of the studio. "Maybe I'll change my mind."

Chapter Five

Darla stood under the lights, frustration gnawing at her, as Kon moved the piano bench behind the backdrop and returned carrying a...

Corinthian column? Darla knew her columns, and this one was definitely Corinthian, with a stacked base, fluted shaft and an elaborate top decorated with flowers, leaves and scrolls. It looked like weathered white marble, but Kon had little trouble carrying it. Obviously it was a lightweight prop, though the base appeared to be weighted for stability.

At that moment Kon presented the very image of a Roman god – naked masculine perfection, with curly dark hair and the strength of a legion. He centered the column on the paper backdrop in the glare of the studio lights, then circled it, considering. Darla knew better than to ask what he was planning, but she found out soon enough when he positioned her with her back to the column. He selected a long piece of rope from the coil sitting on the ladder. He pulled her arms behind the column, tying first one wrist, then the other, and connecting them by a short length of rope.

There was no slack in her bonds, no wiggle room. Her shoulders were pulled back, causing her breasts to jut forward. With every breath, they trembled. With every breath, she felt the constriction of the ropes—including the invisible one that seemed to tug at her clitoris. He secured another length of rope firmly around her waist, winding it several times before knotting it behind the column, which felt like sandpaper against her sore bottom.

Kon eyed her up and down. She pressed her thighs together, maddened by her pumping need and the trickle of moisture that escaped her. He ran his fingers over her scalp, loosening her hair and arranging it around her shoulders. “Are you nervous?” he asked.

"No." She swallowed hard. "Maybe a little."

Her prominent breasts drew his gaze, and his hands. Her breath escaped in a shuddering sigh as he lifted and stroked them, his thumbs grazing the sensitized tips. A wry smile crinkled the corners of his eyes as he strode away. "Don't go anywhere."

He was back within moments, empty-handed – or so she thought until he opened a fist. Earrings. The long, dangly kind they called "shoulder dusters". She frowned. He wanted her to wear jewelry?

He held one up for Darla to see. Several strings of glass and brass beads hung from an inch-wide hammered brass disk backed by a spring clip – something like this was too heavy to wear pierced. He gave the earring a little shake; the beads shimmied and clacked against one another.

"Not my style," she said.

"They are now." He captured her right nipple and teased it into an even sharper point.

Darla's eyes widened as his intent became clear. "Kon, wait!" She struggled against her bonds, eyeing the bauble as if it were a rattlesnake. "No, no, no, no, no... I don't think I'm ready for this. I *know* I'm not ready for this."

"After what you've already endured today, you balk at a little nipple action?" He tugged the rosy peak, readying it for the metal clip, fueling both her desire and her trepidation.

"This isn't the same," she said. "This is...I'm very sensitive there."

"What did I tell you about whining?" He flipped open the earring's spring backing, making her jump. His grin was impish. "You're just trying to find out what I meant by more imaginative punishments, aren't you, you little scamp?"

"For God's sake, Kon, those things aren't made to hang from nipples."

"Yeah, and wooden rulers aren't made to whack your juicy little twat. But you liked it. How do you know you won't like this?"

"Can't—can't we start with something easier?" She squinted past the lights and spotted rows of rope against one wall, displaying photographic prints held in place by clothespins. "A clothespin! That has to be better than...than that thing."

One satanic eyebrow arched. "Why, because it's made of wood? Think about it, Darla—how strong the spring has to be for a clothespin to hold up wet laundry. This baby, on the other hand," he tested the spring clasp with his thumbnail, "is at least intended for human flesh. Of course, if you'd rather start with a clothespin—"

"No!" Darla's heart was a wild thing trying to hammer its way out of her rib cage.

"I thought you'd come around," he said. "Such a sensible woman."

Darla held her breath as he positioned the decorative disk over her nipple and slowly released the spring clasp under it. She gasped as cold metal clamped down on the sensitive bud, and gasped again when he released the earring, letting its full weight pull on her nipple.

She looked down at herself, at the gleaming brass disk, the shiny beads shivering and tinkling with each ragged breath. It hurt, yes, the sensation sharp and insistent but not *too* painful. She watched helplessly as Kon attached the other earring. He flicked the beads on both and she stiffened with a little moan, of pain or pleasure she couldn't say. Kon watched her closely, and she knew he saw everything, every nuance of feeling, physical and mental. She could hold nothing back.

If Darla weren't tied to the column, she'd be free to pluck the maddening things off her nipples and end the sensual torment. As it was, she could only endure it, for as long as it pleased Kon. She felt like a pagan offering, her naked body bound, adorned, displayed for the enjoyment of others.

For her own enjoyment, too, if she was being honest with herself. It shouldn't turn her on to be used this way, but God help her, it did. Every breath reinforced the constriction of the ropes, the bite of the little brass jaws, the weight of the beads tugging at her nipples. Her pussy felt engorged, painfully empty. Had she ever been this aroused?

Darla's eyes squeezed shut as she fought to calm herself. The first *click* of the camera shutter snapped them open. "Oh God..." She'd almost forgotten the purported reason for the elaborate pose—sexy pictures of herself. For Brian. This went way beyond what she'd had in mind when she'd sought out Konrad Drummond, master photographer.

Click. Click. Click. Click. She struggled against the ropes, averted her face from the camera as Kon circled her, photographing her from different angles, at one point climbing onto the stepladder for a loftier perspective.

Darla's face felt scalded, flushed with mingled need and shame. "Kon...please!"

He paused, lowering the camera from his face. He waited.

She swallowed hard. He would stop. They both knew, all she had to do was ask. He'd stop it all. Erase the pictures he'd taken. Untie her. Hand her her clothes and watch her walk out of there.

They stared at each other for endless moments. She swallowed hard. "I...I could never show these pictures to—"

"I know," Kon said, so quickly she wondered if he didn't, after all, want to know her fiancé's name. How much easier it must be to deal with the existence of some anonymous "Mr. Right" than a real, live man with a name. How much easier to ignore that man's claim on the woman you've come to...

Care about? Darla gave herself a mental shake. She was nothing to Kon, nothing beyond a convenient plaything. An afternoon's diversion. Plus, in her case, a bit of pocket money. She was delusional if she let herself believe otherwise.

Kon set the camera on the ladder, picked up another length of rope and approached her, never breaking eye contact. Finally he lowered his gaze to her breasts. He lifted the beads. "Do they hurt?"

"A little." Her voice sounded breathless to her own ears. Her breasts rose and fell, and the rhythmic tugging maddened her. "It...it feels..." She took a deep breath and admitted, "I can't describe it, but...I like it."

His eyes, when they met hers, were smoky, the pupils dilated. "I thought you would." His cock stood stiff and glistening mere inches from her drenched flesh. The sight of it made her squirm in frustration. "Open your legs," he said.

Just hearing the words made her pussy clench. She obeyed.

"Wider," he barked, snapping the looped rope between his fists.

She struggled to spread her legs, knowing the bright photographic lights revealed everything, every pulse of her swollen flesh, every drop of desire. She was on the verge of begging him to end her torment, to let her come, when he touched the bundle of rope between her legs. It felt hot from his hands, deliciously abrasive. He pressed it between the lips and dragged it over the swollen nub. She cried out, her hips jerking to meet it.

"You're so responsive," he murmured, stroking the rope up, then down, again and again. Darla writhed, trying in vain to intensify the rough caress. "So deliciously responsive," he added. "I'll bet he hasn't a clue. Your Mr. Right."

Why should Brian have a clue about Darla's sexuality? Until she'd met Kon, she herself had no idea about her own needs, her desires, the many surprising dimensions of her sexual self.

Abruptly Kon tossed the rope aside. Hot color suffused his face. His movements were harsh and jerky as he untied the rope binding her waist and tossed it away. He pushed down on her shoulders and on the rope binding her wrists, forcing her to her knees while her arms remained bound behind her. Her thighs were still spread, her feet flanking the column.

Kon was anything but gentle as he grasped her jaw. "Suck it," he growled, pressing the purple head of his penis past her lips. Eagerly she took him into her mouth and felt his fingers tighten on her scalp. "Harder. Like that. Take it deeper." He pumped his hips, skewering her mouth, grinding into her.

She sucked him deeper than she'd thought possible, reveling in his taste, in the satin hardness of him, in the animal groans that greeted every thrust of his cock. His pleasure was a live thing, a wild, untamed thing that had broken free of its leash.

Clearly, he rode the razor's edge of control. She'd done that to him, and the knowledge inflamed her.

He planted his feet wider and fucked her mouth in earnest. His fingers gripped her skull, tipping her head. "Swallow it," he growled. Moments later, his back arched and a hoarse cry tore loose from his chest. His hips snapped as he shot his come into her throat.

They were both left shaken and drained. Kon started to pull away, but Darla moved with him, drawing him back into her mouth. He groaned. His grasp eased, and his fingers skated over her face as she caressed him with tongue and lips, confident she could bring that glorious cock to full attention once more.

It happened sooner than she'd expected. His penis stirred as she sucked him. Within a minute he was completely erect. Kon chuckled. "You're pretty proud of yourself, aren't you?"

Darla glanced up at him with smiling eyes, even as she licked and teased his twitching cock. She *was* proud, a novel feeling to associate with sex, at least for her. She decided she liked it.

Kon pulled away—successfully this time—and helped her to stand. He ran his hands over her arms, still tied behind the column, and asked if they were sore. When she said no, he tugged on the earrings dangling from her nipples. "What about these?"

Her breath caught in her throat, and her pussy throbbed. "It's...ohhh...it's a good kind of pain," she admitted.

"Like the ruler?" He offered a devilish smile. She returned it.

"Like the ruler."

Kon bent to run his tongue over and around the brass disk and its cruel little clamp. Darla moaned as pleasure-pain shot straight to her clitoris. He said, "I need to be inside you when these come off." He kneed her legs open and lifted her hips, pushing into her in one fierce lunge.

"Yes!" Darla cried, locking her legs around him. Her head whipped from side to side as he rammed into her, the column quaking with each savage thrust. "Yes, Kon, oh God, oh yes!"

Kon paused, his cock buried to the hilt, his balls nestled against Darla's ass. Supporting her with one hand, he brought the other to her breast. His eyes glittered with a strange intensity as he grasped the beaded ropes of one earring and slowly pulled. And didn't stop.

Darla's back bowed and she emitted a series of sharp cries. The pleasure and the pain reached their zenith when the little clamp finally snapped free. She moaned as blood flow returned to the tip of her breast, and moaned louder when Kon sucked the tender bud into his scalding mouth. Never had her nipple felt this alive, this sensitized. The remarkable feeling extended to her pussy, and she writhed on Kon's rigid cock, knowing he felt it, too, felt her internal muscles milking him. This must be what he meant by needing to be inside her when the tormenting little playthings came off.

He bent his head to the other nipple and closed his mouth around it, earring and all. His strong tongue kneaded and explored where hard metal met delicate flesh. Darla felt the scrape of his teeth, the urgent sucking of his lips. She groaned, working herself on Kon's steely shaft, feeling her orgasm coiling inside her like a snake, moving in for the kill.

Without warning, he yanked the earring off in one swift, startling movement. Darla came hard, in blinding waves that tossed her body like a rag doll. Kon bared his teeth, every muscle clenched, riding out her pleasure while making an obvious effort to delay his own.

Darla was gulping air, reveling in the last, lingering pulsations, when Kon withdrew from her body and stepped away.

"Wait!" she called as he stalked to a battered leather briefcase and upended it over a worktable. "What are you doing?"

The contents of the briefcase landed on the debris already heaped on the table. Photographs and candy wrappers fluttered to the floor. About a hundred bucks in loose change scattered in all directions.

Oh God, she thought, *what now?* Handcuffs? A riding crop?

He shook the empty briefcase, peered inside it and shook it again. Something small clattered to the table. Kon hooted in triumph. "I knew you were there, you son of a bitch!" He strode back to her and displayed his treasure—a tiny tube of petroleum jelly, the kind meant to be used as lip balm.

"Uhh...my lips aren't chapped," Darla said.

"No, they are not." He lifted her legs, settling her knees over his shoulders. "I think I would have noticed."

Her eyes widened as he squirted a good-sized gob of petroleum jelly on his fingers and smoothed it over the head of his stiff cock. He squeezed out more jelly and reached under her bottom.

"Kon? Oh!" The jelly felt chilly on her anus as he rubbed it in. "What are you doing?" she asked.

"You're a smart girl." His finger caressed the sensitive opening before pushing inside. "I'll bet you can figure it out."

She tried to squirm away as a second finger joined the first, his touch careful but firm. He probed her, stretched her—preparing her, she knew, for the ultimate invasion. How could she endure it when even now she felt impossibly filled? Never had she imagined a man would try to make love to her there. Certainly Brian never would.

"I can't do this," she panted.

"Yes, you can." His voice was gentle, soothing. He brushed stray hairs off her forehead. "Darla, look at me."

"Kon..."

“Look at me.” With his free hand he cupped her chin, forcing her to obey. He searched her eyes, his expression at once tender and inflamed—and almost painfully sincere. “Do you think I’d do anything terrible to you?”

She couldn’t lie. “No.” Don’t ask her why, but she knew it in her bones.

“I want to give you pleasure in a way you’ve never experienced.” Primal male territorialism roughened his voice. “And I need to claim you where no other man has been.” He withdrew his fingers and guided his slippery cock into position. She stiffened. “Easy, sweetheart,” he said. “Remember before? How you made yourself relax?”

“But that was only your finger.” Darla suddenly wished her arms were free.

“I won’t do it until you’re ready. I promise.” Kon nudged the constricted opening, pressing a little harder each time, all the while murmuring words of tenderness and reassurance. True to his word, he was patient, unhurried—content to wait until her body and mind were ready to accept him. He never took his eyes from hers, watching as arousal and sensual curiosity overrode her initial fear, seeming to sense just the right moment to—

Darla gasped as he breached her body there, in her most private place. The sensation wasn’t at all what she’d expected. It felt like his penis had grown even larger, filling and stretching her to the limit and beyond. Mostly it felt as if he possessed her, wholly and absolutely. She was his.

He withdrew a little and pressed deeper, again and again. She panted and whimpered his name and found herself rocking in time to his movements. Those peaked eyebrows grew more satanic still as he smiled, looking down. “It can’t be too terrible for you,” he teased, and she knew he saw what his skillful ass-fucking had done to her. She felt her juices trickling and was relieved when he shifted her weight onto one hand, thinking he meant to pleasure her with the other. Instead he reached around the column and released the knots binding her wrists. He placed her right hand between her legs.

"It's time." His eyes burned her like blue flames. "I'm going to watch you make yourself come."

Darla should have known she wouldn't get out of that one. Earlier today, Kon had called her repressed, but that was before the most unforgettable afternoon of her life. Only moments ago, he'd marveled at her responsiveness. *Deliciously responsive*—that was how he'd put it. A deliciously responsive woman didn't balk at pleasuring herself under her lover's hot gaze.

Particularly when said lover was still pumping his hips, skewering her asshole with that sublime cock of his. The column rocked under the assault of their rutting bodies. It was a bit late in the day to turn prissy. Plus, her clitoris throbbed like a little heart, demanding attention.

Darla touched two fingers to Kon's mouth, wordlessly demanding entrance. The feel of his lithe tongue almost sent her over the edge as she thrust them in time to his pistoning cock. Finally she withdrew them and homed in on the ultrasensitive bud between her legs.

Her eyes slitted as she caressed herself. She felt her nostrils flare, felt her legs stiffen, felt the tension build in her body.

"Put them in," Kon demanded, and watched as she burrowed her fingers into her hungry pussy. She thumbed her clitoris, and the air escaped her lungs in a raw, ragged groan. She hadn't known it was possible to feel this way, fully surrendered and at the same time fully liberated.

"Come," Kon growled. Hot color flooded his face. The tendons stood out in his neck. "Come for me, Darla. *Now.*"

Darla screamed as she found the edge and tipped herself over it. Kon's cock seemed to swell to gigantic proportions as her body contracted around it in wave after wave of ecstasy.

His fingers gripped her ass hard. He threw back his head and growled, letting himself go at last. He bucked hard against her, jetting his come deep within, prolonging her orgasm as he tumbled into his own.

Chapter Six

Four weeks after Darla walked out of Konrad Drummond's photography studio, an email appeared on her computer screen. "Where do you want the pictures sent?" There was no signoff, unless you counted the automatic "signature" Kon's email program appended to every note, containing contact information for his business.

He had her home address—she'd provided it back when she'd arranged for the photo session—so she could only assume he was concerned for her privacy. It wouldn't do for her fiancé to intercept the fruit of Kon's artistic labor, after all. As far as he knew, she and Brian could be living together. How downright gallant of him.

Darla ignored the note. The last thing she wanted was the photos he'd taken of her, tangible evidence that that afternoon really happened.

We won't see each other again.

He'd said it matter-of-factly, not unkindly. Still, it had been like a kick to the stomach. She'd just finished pulling on her clothes, or almost. Kon stood before her, fully dressed himself, buttoning her blouse. She tried to search his eyes, but he stared at the buttons as he spoke.

"It's just the way it has to be," he added.

Darla swallowed hard. Okay, she hadn't expected a declaration of love, the whole hearts-and-flowers routine, but still...

"What, no round two? Ever?" She hoped her smile looked worldly—good luck with that. "I mean, I get what this is about, Kon. It's about sex, not...not anything else. I know you think I'm naïve, but come on."

Kon placed his hands on her shoulders, his gaze focused on something behind her. His smile looked as weak as hers felt. "You want to hear me say it's me, not you? Okay, it's me. I don't do repeat performances. Not anymore."

Not since the three ex-wives, he meant. Did he really think anything beyond a one-night stand would lead to monthly alimony checks for life? Or was it indeed her, despite the rote reassurance? Darla's money was on that second thing.

Well, she wasn't about to beg. He'd given her the most remarkable afternoon of her life. She'd have to content herself with that.

"Go home to Mr. Right," Kon had said. "Forget this happened." He'd given her shoulders a little squeeze. She'd recognized it for the dismissive gesture it was and picked up her purse and tote bag.

Now, a month later, her finger hovered over the "delete" button. But not for long. "Good-bye, Kon." The email blinked into nothingness.

Five days later she returned home from the gym to find a message on her answering machine. He didn't identify himself—another bow to privacy—but of course, he didn't have to. She'd never forget that deep, seductive voice. "This message is for Ms. Carmody. Your order is ready to be picked up."

She blinked. Picked up? As in seeing him face-to-face? He'd sent three emails, each one more insistent than the last—and none of which she'd answered. *Go home to Mr. Right*, he'd told her. *Forget this happened*. How could she hope to forget about their magical afternoon if it was immortalized in a stack of glossy eight-by-tens stuffed in the back of a closet or hidden in her underwear drawer?

For that matter, how could she hope to forget about their illicit afternoon when it scrolled through her mind like an XXX-rated video every time her head hit the pillow? Inevitably her hand would slide down to her famished pussy, buzzing with desire. The fingers of her other hand would pinch her nipples as she remembered the heavenly contrast of cold brass and a molten tongue.

Now here he was, suggesting she pick up the photos in person. A slip of the tongue?

She listened to him rattle off his phone number, then played the message again. He sounded a bit stiff, as if he'd rehearsed what he'd say if she didn't answer the phone. But there was something else...

She hit "play" one more time. It wasn't her imagination. He was nervous. She'd made Konrad Drummond nervous!

How the heck had she accomplished that one?

Darla thought back to that day. She thought about how, after a certain point, Kon no longer wanted to know her fiancé's name. How he refused to look her in the eye while giving her the brush-off. He was bored, she'd thought. He'd had his jollies and was now faced with the tedious task of ejecting the plaything *du jour* from his life.

Or...

She looked at the answering machine. She thought about those persistent emails.

Or he was conflicted because she'd gotten under his skin. Not too long ago she'd considered that possibility absurd. Now she wasn't so sure.

Darla gave herself a mental shake. *You're dreaming, girl.* She was reading far too much into far too little. No amount of wishing was going to make a man like Konrad Drummond fall for her.

She decided to screen her incoming calls, half expecting him to try her again, which he did later that evening. And every day for the next week. And three times a day on the weekend. Each time she spied his name on Caller ID and let the machine pick up, he seemed wound a bit tighter.

"...I'm happy to drop off your order if you'd prefer. This is the only number we have on file for you, so, uh, please call at your earliest convenience. Our number again is..."

If all Kon wanted was to deliver the photos in a discreet manner, he'd have found a way to do so by now. Sooner or later he was going to get her on the phone. Then what?

Darla would be lying if she said she never wanted to see him again. And she'd wasted too much time lying to herself—most notably by becoming engaged to a man she didn't really love. The time for self-delusion was past. She and Kon had shared more than their bodies during that amazing afternoon, and after listening to all his stilted phone messages, she knew he felt it, too. Only problem was, he didn't want to.

Well, that was just too damn bad. Whether the man was self-delusional himself or simply stubborn, she didn't know or care. Life was too short, and Darla Carmody had decided she deserved a man who was incredible in the sack *and* honest about his feelings for her.

The next time he called, she surprised him by picking up the phone. "Hello, Kon."

"Darla! Hey, you're a hard girl to get hold of."

"Not really. I've been dodging your calls."

He rewarded her honesty with an irritated exhalation. "I have your photos."

"Fuck the photos. What do you really want?"

A pause, then... "You mean do I want to fuck you again?"

Her tone was impatient. "Of course you want to fuck me again, Kon, and I want to fuck you. That's not the issue."

"You only want to fuck?" He sounded smugly amused. "What, you've had enough of ropes and nipple clamps?"

"Actually, I don't think I could ever get enough of ropes and nipple clamps, now that I've experienced them," she said. "It was a major turn-on, being dominated like that. You know what else was a turn-on? Sucking your big, luscious cock. And coming with your big, luscious cock in my ass. Oh, and being spanked. I'd definitely love to do that one again. And a thousand other nasty things. The question is, am I going to try them with you or with someone else?"

Kon choked out a startled chuckle. "I assume you're home alone right now and Mr. Right isn't sitting there listening to all this big-luscious-cock talk?"

"Brian's out of the picture. I called off the wedding the day after I met you."

"You're kidding."

She said, "Being with you helped me realize how dishonest I was being with myself. I'd like to return the favor."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"It means you felt something more than hormones when we were together. So did I."

He was quiet a moment. "Listen, I told you when you left—"

"Yeah, I know what you told me. It's bullshit," she snapped. "I know it, and I'm hoping either you know it or you're capable of figuring it out."

His sigh sounded exasperated. "You said it yourself—it's just about sex. Remember? You claimed not to be naïve."

"It was what I thought you wanted to hear," she admitted. "You were telling me we'd never see each other again."

"Why does everything have to be romanticized? Okay, so I changed my mind. I do want to fuck you again. You want nasty? Glad to hear it. My big, luscious cock is yours to use and abuse. Just park the romantic shit at the door."

"Sorry, I'll take a pass."

It wasn't what he'd expected. She could hear it in the dead air. "Suit yourself," he said, right before he broke the connection.

The phone calls stopped. Darla told herself it was for the best. How long could she have maintained a physical relationship with Kon while denying her true feelings? As much as her body craved him, she couldn't—wouldn't—backslide into self-delusion.

On a rainy evening a week and a half later, Darla received a package by same-day courier, a small padded envelope with no return address. She turned it over in her hand and felt her pulse stumble. It was from him. Somehow she knew it was from him.

The envelope was too small for photographs—unless he'd transferred them to a CD. She shook it. Something rattled inside. She tore the envelope open and spilled the contents on her kitchen table.

A single earring. Clip style, with a hammered brass disk and strings of beads. Just seeing it brought that afternoon rushing back, all the mind-blowing details she'd tried, and failed, to exorcise from her memory. Damn him for doing this to her, the manipulative son of a bitch.

Something was clamped in the little brass jaw—a sheet of glossy paper folded into quarters. What kind of note had he written that couldn't have been sent more easily and cheaply by email? She freed the paper and unfolded it.

And screamed. Her Chihuahua, Monster, leapt off a chair and escaped to his little doggie bed in the corner.

"That prick!"

The paper was a flyer advertising a photographic exhibit titled "D. Bound". It was illustrated with a full-color photo of herself, nude, tied to the fake Corinthian column in Kon's studio. The view was from above, so it had been taken when Kon stepped up on the ladder. The snug ropes around her waist dug into her soft, pale skin. Her arms were drawn tightly back. Her breasts jutted as if in offering, the tip of each adorned with a gleaming brass ornament from which dangled several strands of beads. One knee was bent, the sole of the foot pressed to the column. Her hairless slit was clearly visible, the labia moist and swollen with desire.

"No, no, no, no, no..." she groaned.

During the photo session, Darla had been oblivious to the technical and artistic decisions Kon made. Now she saw how masterfully he'd handled the composition and lighting. Her body was a sensual landscape of light and shadow, every dip and curve rendered in sharp relief. Her chestnut hair gleamed, and the earrings sparked with light, drawing the eye.

“Oh God, oh God, oh God, oh God, oh God —” She scanned the writing on the flyer, looking for the where and when of this exhibit, of which she was obviously the sole subject. She screamed again, a full-throated banshee howl. Monster dashed from the room, his nails clacking like castanets on the tile floor.

Darla glanced at the clock on the sideboard. “I’ll kill the arrogant SOB!” She snatched up her purse and keys as she ran to the door. “He can’t do this to me.”

The exhibit had opened precisely three minutes earlier at a private club on her small town’s main street. The Port Stanley Club was housed in a historic brownstone that was regularly rented out for exhibits, performances and receptions. Darla cursed Kon the whole way there, wondering how she was going to shut down an exhibit in progress, dreading even showing her face in a roomful of salacious photos featuring said face.

In the photo Kon had chosen for the flyer, she’d turned her head aside. She recalled how conflicted she’d felt at that moment, unable to decide whether to put a stop to the session. She was unrecognizable in the flyer, but the exhibit was a different matter. Her face was clearly visible in the vast majority of pictures Kon had taken.

Not that anyone would be focusing on the face. As the windshield wipers slapped at the rain, Darla leaned across the front seat and extracted her sunglasses from the glove box. The glasses were large and very dark. Not perfect as far as disguises went, but better than nothing.

She pulled up to the Port Stanley Club, aglow in welcoming light. Her stomach lurched as she envisioned people she knew strolling through the exhibit and recognizing, with a shock, the subject of the erotic photographs. She didn’t doubt that many of her own friends and acquaintances were among those planning to attend this exhibit. It was quite a coup, after all, a small town like hers hosting an exhibit by an internationally known talent like Konrad Drummond.

He’d done this just to get back at her. Just to hurt her. The evil fucking bastard.

She braked to a halt in front of a hydrant and hurled herself out of the car, heedless of the downpour as she bounded up the front steps and yanked open the door. The

entrance foyer was a study in architectural elegance, with its hand-carved woodwork and elaborate chandelier. The turn-of-the-century charm was wasted on Darla, who stood in a puddle of rainwater, gulping air. No one was there to greet her, but a signboard directed exhibit-goers up the wide, carpeted stairs, which she took three at a time, pushing the sunglasses up her nose.

She hurried to the Bennington Room, straight ahead. Her heart jumped into her throat as she spied, through the open mahogany doors, framed photographs hanging on the far wall. In that instant she wanted nothing more than to turn on her heel and flee back out into the rain. Through sheer force of will she put one foot in front of the other, steeling herself to confront a roomful of pictures of Darla Carmody, buck naked and desperate for a cock.

Inside the windowless exhibit room, she felt the first tiny spark of hope. She was the only one there. Dare she hope she was the first? Perhaps the rain had kept the crowds away or at least slowed their arrival. She might yet thwart Kon's plan to punish and humiliate her.

She might not have to move to Mongolia after all.

Darla looked around. Shouldn't the artist be on hand to discuss his work and bask in the adulation of his admirers? Maybe he'd run out to the little boys' room. Here was her chance to rip all the pictures off the walls, to smash the glass and tear up the prints. There were several dozen of them, each large and detailed and unmistakably *her*. Where to start?

She grabbed the nearest framed photograph and wrenched it off its hook. She raised it, intending to slam it against the gleaming parquet floor—and paused, unable to drag her gaze from the riveting image.

In this picture she reclined on the pile of drapes and scarves, her body languid and well loved, her eyes at half mast, smiling into the camera, which had been held low, on a level with its subject. She recalled Kon getting down on the floor to take this shot. The

result was a startling intimacy, as if the viewer were her lover—the man who'd put that look into her eye.

Darla slipped off her sunglasses and hooked them on her sodden shirtfront. She brought the picture closer to her face and studied it. She barely recognized her own body, the sensuous line formed by her leg and hip up to the arm thrown carelessly over her head. Sunlight spilled onto her from the overhead skylight, painting her flesh in ribbons of gold. The image was exquisite.

She looked around at the other pictures. They were all exquisite. In all of them, she was beautiful. A beautiful, confident, sublimely sexual woman in the presence of the man who brought those qualities out in her.

"That's one of my favorites."

Darla jumped at the sound of Kon's voice. She spun around and saw him leaning in the doorway, arms crossed, watching her. He wore pale linen slacks and a navy shirt made of some soft material that draped his sinewy shoulders in a most distracting way. And deck shoes. The man actually owned shoes!

Her fingers tightened on the picture frame. "You...you had no right."

He shrugged. "You didn't want them."

She looked at the pictures on the walls, trying to summon the outrage that had gripped her moments earlier, trying to remember why these entrancing images were supposed to make her feel dirty and used. "But it's...it's wrong, Kon. You didn't ask me."

"You're wet." He started toward her, as graceful and unhurried as a panther.

Darla backed up a step, still clutching the picture. "Don't change the subject. I knew you weren't happy with me, Kon, but I never thought you'd try to hurt me like this."

"You're shivering. You need to get out of those wet things."

"Nice try," she said. He wasn't lying—she was shivering. The building was air-conditioned, and she was soaked to the skin. She glanced around the room, bare except

for a handful of ponderous leather club chairs and a white-draped table laden with champagne in a bucket, crystal flutes and a variety of hors d'oeuvres, including the makings for beluga caviar canapés.

"Where is everyone?" she asked. "I can't believe folks would stay away in droves from a Konrad Drummond exhibit just because of a little rain."

She let him take the picture from her and replace it on the wall. This close, she was reminded of how good he smelled, the natural masculine perfume of his skin. He plucked the sunglasses off her blouse and pocketed them, then started in on her buttons. *Déjà vu*.

"Are you crazy?" She grabbed his wrists. Her gaze flew to the open doorway. "Anyone could walk in."

"I don't think so." He shook off her hands as if they were pesky flies and continued to open her blouse. And smiled when he exposed the plump upper mounds of her breasts above her sheer maroon demi bra. "Very nice, Darla." He fondled her bottom with an experienced hand. "Does the thong match?"

"You're a pig," she said, and he laughed. She struggled against his embrace, though with little conviction. She couldn't deny the erotic thrill in simply being held by this man, in feeling his heat and power enfold her.

"Why?" she asked.

"Hmm...?" Kon nuzzled her throat, causing her neural synapses to misfire. "Why what?"

"Why..." She stifled a moan of pleasure as his fingers slid down the crack of her ass over her damp slacks, and asked, "Why do you think no one's going to come in?"

"Because this is a private exhibit." He tugged the blouse off her shoulder and nibbled a path along her collarbone.

Darla blinked, trying to clear the fog of desire. "How private?" She pushed at Kon, to no avail. She might as well have been trying to budge Michelangelo's *David*. "How many flyers did you distribute, Kon?"

"God, you taste good." His hands were everywhere, and so was his mouth. It was as if he couldn't get enough of her. When his lips finally found hers, he was ravenous. "I forgot how goddamn good you taste."

"Kon, answer me!" Darla leaned back as much as she could. She grabbed a fistful of curly dark hair and yanked his head up, forcing him to look her in the eye.

"Ow! What?"

"How many flyers did you make for this exhibit?" she demanded, with one more sharp tug to ensure his undivided attention.

"One. Stop that."

"What?"

Kon disentangled her fingers from his hair. She stumbled back, dumbfounded.

"You're lying," she said.

"Think about it." He rubbed his sore scalp. "Did *you* see a flyer before today? Did anyone you know mention an upcoming exhibit?"

In her anger and desperation, she hadn't considered that. "You...you made one flyer," Darla said. "For me."

"Private exhibit. Like I said."

She looked around the room. He'd developed all these photographs. Had them framed. Bought champagne and caviar. Rented out the fucking Port Stanley Club! Cash-strapped Kon Drummond had done all this.

For her.

"You needed to see these pictures, Darla." His tone turned serious. "And I needed to see you again." He read her mind. "No, not to fuck you. Not *just* to fuck you," he hastened to add.

Darla searched his face, seeking the truth behind those brilliant blue eyes. "Then why, Kon?" She watched his chest expand on a deep inhalation.

"I need you in my life." He lifted his hands and let them fall. "I don't know how else to say it."

She swallowed around of lump of raw emotion. "You said it just fine."

"I didn't think I'd ever feel this way again." Kon dragged his fingers through his hair. "No, that's not right. I've never felt this way. Not with any of the exes. Not with anyone. I don't know what it means yet."

She offered a watery smile. "Join the club."

Kon's throat worked. "All I know is, the last fifty-one days have been pure hell. Not knowing if I'd ever see you again."

"Fifty-one days, huh?" She chewed back a grin.

"What, you weren't counting?"

"Sorry, sport," she said, "I was too busy trying to put you out of my mind so my right hand could get some rest."

Kon's eyebrows looked particularly devilish just then as his teeth flashed in a wicked grin. He practically tore the navy shirt from his body. The rest of his clothing followed in short order, and she saw—surprise, surprise—that he was hard as a post. He started stripping Darla with the same feverish impatience.

"Help me, goddammit," he growled. "If I don't get inside you in the next five seconds, I'm going to lose my fucking mind."

She laughed, kicking off her flats as he hauled her jeans and thong to her ankles. Erotic anticipation gathered deep and low. She felt she might come at the merest touch. He took advantage of his crouched position to tip her over his shoulder and carry her like a sack of flour to the nearest leather club chair.

"This view looks familiar," she told the small of his back. "I can walk, you know."

"Stick with what works—that's my motto."

"What, no rope?" she complained as he threw her facedown over the back of the big chair, her ass elevated. "Where are my nipple clamps?"

"Demanding wench." He landed a sharp slap to one round butt cheek. She yelped and felt the burn spread outward, settling like fire in her hungry pussy. He spanked her two-handed, varying the placement and pacing of the blows, at one point shoving her knees wide to get at the tender flesh of her inner thighs.

Darla's cries were half shriek, half sensual moan. "Please..." she begged, "I need you, Kon. I need you now."

"If I weren't in such a hurry, you'd get my belt." *Smack. Smack.* "Next time," he promised, and finished up with a volley of stinging slaps between her legs.

Darla's back bowed as if to offer a clearer target. Her mouth opened in a silent scream, her orgasm so close, so close...

Without warning, Kon's cock replaced his hand. He drove into her with a guttural cry, and Darla came instantly. Her body jerked like a marionette, each ecstatic contraction a little explosion within her. Kon's fingers slid under her to caress her and prolong her orgasm.

He withdrew from her limp body, lifted her and sat her in the club chair. He crossed to the buffet table, his erection bobbing against his belly, and popped the cork from the bottle of champagne. "Thirsty?"

"How did you guess?"

Greedily she accepted the frosty bottle of hundred-dollar bubbly. He hadn't bothered with a glass, and she wasn't about to complain. The champagne slid down her throat like carbonated silk. A little spilled on her breasts. "Oops."

"Oh no," Kon said dryly. He knelt in front of the chair. "Whatever are we going to do about that?"

"Do I get a vote?"

"This is a benign dictatorship." He pulled her closer. "No vote for you."

The first touch of Kon's hot tongue on her champagne-chilled nipple wrung a moan of delight from Darla. He licked and laved and sucked. Getting clean had never felt so outrageously dirty.

"Wait." She tipped the bottle, drizzling champagne between her legs, gasping as the cold liquid bathed her inflamed flesh. "I think you missed a spot."

"How careless of me." Kon threw her legs over his shoulders and bent his head to his task. Every whimper and moan from her seemed to spur him on. He flicked the tip of his tongue in rapid-fire bursts over her clit, giving her little respite between assaults, until she was writhing and half sobbing beneath him.

Finally he reared up and pushed into her. She was more than ready, eagerly clinging to him, rising to meet his hammering thrusts. Without breaking stride, he rose from the hard floor to kneel on the massive club chair, angling her body for an even deeper fucking.

They came in the same instant. He shouted and bucked against her as her orgasm detonated. They slumped together in a sweaty tangle of limbs.

When Darla could find her voice, she asked, "Will it always be this good?"

"No. It'll keep getting better." The devilish brows wagged. "But only if we practice, practice, practice."

About the Author

Pam McKenna has been an avid storyteller since she was old enough to put pencil to paper. Her number-one passion is the written word, though if you read her stories, you might conclude that her true passions lie elsewhere. And you'd be right. Pam loves erotic fiction and has never been shy about pulling out the stops and treating her readers to five-alarm fantasies. Pam McKenna is the pen name of an award-winning, multi-published romance author.

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