

ELLORA'S CAVE PRESENTS



THE LAST PEARL



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The Last Pearl

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THE LAST PEARL

Maxie Cooper

Chapter One

Some claimed she was an urban legend. Others believed her to be no more than a fantasy. She was, in fact, the most sought-after tutor in the sexual arts the world had ever known. Thousands of men bragged about having been trained by her. In truth, the numbers were fewer although still fairly impressive. The men she *had* trained felt no need to boast.

To those who'd had the privilege of studying under her, she was known simply as Pearl. Her real name belonged to another life. Rumor was she'd taken the name in honor of qualities she most admired in the gem. Like the pearl, she was cool, timeless and beautiful. There was more to the story but few thought to ask.

The biggest misunderstanding about the woman known only as Pearl was that she was the most highly paid courtesan of all time. That rumor was incorrect. She wasn't a courtesan—or any of the other vulgar words used to describe a woman trained in the art of sexual pleasure—and she accepted no payment for her services. She was a teacher, a master in the art of lovemaking, and she was highly selective about the applicants she accepted, taking no more than a handful of students a year. Those selected received in-depth, one-on-one mentoring. If, at the end of their study, they wanted to show their gratitude by giving her a gift, they knew exactly which gift would meet with her approval. It was always the same thing—a flawless pearl to add to her collection.

She wore those pearls in a specially designed necklace that could be fastened in a variety of artful ways. For now it was draped in multiple strands around her neck, dipping low to the curved swell of her breasts.

She ran her fingers over the smooth surface of the lustrous pearls, finding the same comfort another might find in a rosary or Buddhist prayer beads. Her pearls were both

trophy and talisman. More importantly, they were a source of pride; visible proof of the number of lives she'd transformed. The fact that the pearl traditionally represented purity did not escape her. She considered sex to be the purest form of spirituality. Many people wasted their sexual energy with ineptitude and inexperience. With her help, they learned to raise lovemaking to an art form. But she could only help so many.

She closed the folder of the applicant she'd chosen. He was an excellent candidate—a mere twenty years old and still a virgin. By choice, obviously, judging by the pictures he'd submitted with his resume. He was a beautiful boy, with eyes that mirrored a poet's soul and a slender physique reminiscent of classic Greek statues. His file was complete with the required health form, a copy of his birth certificate and a signed waiver. Everything was in order.

As with all candidates, he came with a personal reference. She smiled thinking of Anton. He'd been one of her earliest and best students. That alone was a point in the boy's favor, even if she hadn't been instinctively drawn to him.

Rafe Allore. Even his name appealed to her. It had a rough yet sensual quality. She said it aloud, enjoying the way it rolled across her tongue before falling from her lips. Yes, her decision had been made. She dialed the number on his contact sheet.

His voice was a welcome surprise, deep and husky with a deliciously sensual quality that appealed to her on a purely aesthetic level. A sensuous voice would make those delicious growls and whispers in the bedroom even more seductive.

She reached up to stroke the pearls at her throat, letting them slide over and around her fingers. "If you're still interested in tutoring, I'd like to meet you this evening for a final interview."

There was a delightfully shy flutter to his voice. She could hear him swallow before answering. "Yes. I'm definitely still interested. Where...where shall we meet?"

She gave him directions to her favorite restaurant where a secluded corner table was hers for the asking. "Pack enough clothes for a week," she told him. "Nothing

else.” If she decided to bring him home with her, all his needs would be taken care of—and then some.

* * * * *

She took her time preparing for the appointment, first enjoying a luxurious bath drizzled with almond oil imported from Sicily. She buffed every inch of her skin to satiny smoothness, imagining how it would feel to the hands stroking it. It had been a while between students and while she could go without sex for weeks or months at a time, she did miss the comfort of another’s touch.

She dressed in a classic champagne-colored linen suit and smoothed her hair into a loose swirl at the base of her neck, holding it in place with an ivory hair pin. If she decided to let her hair down, it could be released in a tumble of golden waves with a simple tug on the pin. People often told her she looked like Grace Kelly. While she didn’t see the resemblance, the look of cool sophistication suited her for a first meeting and gave her a feeling of confidence and authority.

Her six-inch stiletto heels and scarlet lipstick added unexpected touches of seduction to the otherwise demure outfit and were guaranteed to send a man’s thoughts spinning in more erotic directions. Her only accessory was a single strand of her trademark pearls.

She arrived at the restaurant early so she could watch her prospective student arrive and was rewarded when he strolled into the room. His pictures, as impressive as they were, didn’t do him justice. Although of average height, he seemed larger than life, commanding the room with his presence. He was dressed in a well-fitting, although not ostentatious, designer suit. When he leaned against the reception desk, she was rewarded with a glimpse of a tight, firm and well-rounded ass.

She noticed other women watching as well. They glanced up as he entered, stopping their conversations as their gazes lingered in an appreciative scan from head

to toe and back again. He had the presence of a man twice his age. Pearl felt a flutter of anticipation, the first physical sign that she'd chosen well.

He followed the maître d' and scanned the room. When his gaze stopped on her, a smile of appreciation curled his lips. The flutter in her belly kicked up a notch. Oh yes. She'd go through the rest of the interview for propriety's sake, but her body had already decided to take him home.

"Pearl," he said, taking her hand in his. He held on for a moment longer than necessary. "You look exactly...exactly as I imagined you would."

"And you're much better looking than I'd imagined," she said.

A touch of color rose to his cheeks, reminding her again of his youth and inexperience. Pearl could barely remember what it felt like to be twenty. She reached up to caress the pearls at her throat. Twelve years of experience separated them, but it might as well have been a lifetime.

"I've ordered for both of us," she said, gesturing for him to take the seat across from her. She took her time to study him more deliberately. His Botticelli face was framed by thick chestnut waves. A strong jaw kept his face from looking too boyish, hinting at the emerging man beneath the innocence of youth. The juxtaposition of man and boy was intriguing. It would be her pleasure—in more ways than one—to transform him from a shy, virginal boy to a clever and satisfying lover. Someday there would be women grateful for the lessons he'd learned, but for the next few days he would be hers alone.

"Are you prepared to move in with me for as long as a week if I decide to accept your application?" she asked.

He nodded. "Yes. I was hoping...I mean...when you said to pack I thought..."

She let him stammer for a moment then took pity on him. "I just have a few questions to ask before we finalize the arrangements."

He sat up straighter, like a student accustomed to pop quizzes. She knew from his application that he'd taken accelerated college courses and graduated with honors at the tender age of twenty. No wonder he hadn't had time for sex. Still, there must have

been women falling at his feet. Well, she'd help him make up for lost time, giving him her undivided sexual attention and putting the "cum" in magna cum laude.

She retrieved a notebook from her purse. "Your application said you're a virgin?" She tilted her head and waited for an explanation.

"Yes. Is that all right?"

His nervousness was endearing. "Of course it's all right. I was just wondering why? Do you like women?"

"Yes. I do. It's just that I've been so focused on my studies and..." He lowered his gaze, his blush deepening. "I know this sounds old-fashioned, but I was saving myself for the right woman."

"And what changed your mind?"

He glanced away, then back again. "I didn't change my mind. It's just...the time is right, that's all."

He was saved from having to explain further when their meals arrived. She waited until the waiter left before resuming her questions. "Do you masturbate?"

He nearly choked on an olive. After a minor coughing fit, he cleared his throat and held her gaze. "I don't think I'll need any instruction for that. I've had plenty of practice."

Good, she thought. At least his parts were in proper working order. She slipped off one of her heels and ran her toe along his calf. His eyes widened. "How often do you pleasure yourself?" she asked.

He gulped. "Not often enough, apparently."

She slid her bare foot up the inseam of his pants, pleased with his immediate reaction. His eyes darkened and his breathing grew husky. She tucked her toes beneath his crotch and wiggled them. The tug and pull of material across his crotch was all the proof she needed that he would be a willing and able student.

She continued talking between bites, as if nothing at all was going on beneath the table. "If you decide to move in with me, you'll receive intense, personal, one-on-one training, during which you'll learn to master all the sexual arts, from cunnilingus to tantric sex. When we're done there won't be a woman in the world who will be able to resist your sexual skills."

His voice came out as a squeak. "Can we start now?"

She laughed. "We've already started." She slid her foot down the length of his leg and slipped her shoe back on, then leaned forward and whispered huskily, "Your first lesson is this—anticipation is the most powerful aphrodisiac. Once you understand that, you'll realize the value of prolonged foreplay."

He shifted in his seat. "I think I'm beginning to realize that already."

She could practically smell the testosterone flooding his body. He really was adorable. She reached over and fed him a stalk of steamed asparagus from her fingers. His tongue sneaked out and licked her fingertips before she withdrew them.

"Sex begins long before your clothes come off." She took a slow sip of her wine then ran her tongue over her lips, making them glisten in the candlelight. "You'll need to romance a woman with all your senses. That's the most important lesson in *and* out of bed."

He nodded, his eyes intent on her lips. "I want to learn everything."

Her heartbeat quickened. She nodded then stroked a fingertip over the pulse point at his wrist. "First tell me more about yourself."

He told her about his life growing up, his years at an all-boys school, his interests and dreams for the future. His insecurity melted away as she gave him her undivided attention.

Smart, sexy and a feast for the eyes. If she were ten years younger and looking for a lover, he'd certainly fit the bill. She wasn't either of those things, however. Besides, it was against her personal code of ethics to carry on with one of her students. The first

thing she told all of them was to keep personal feelings out of their training. It was important to maintain an emotional distance. Otherwise things could get complicated.

As he talked, she teased him with a flirtatious smile or a seductive touch. By the end of the meal it was hard to tell which of them was more anxious to continue the conversation in a more private setting.

Before they left, however, she handed him a business card. On it was simply one word...*LAST*. She pressed a finger to his lips to keep him from asking questions. "Let's get your suitcase," she said. "Dessert is at my place."

Chapter Two

Rafe couldn't believe he was finally living out his fantasy. Pearl was even more enticing than he remembered. She had no idea this wasn't the first time he'd seen her. He didn't want her to think he was here under false pretenses. Far from it. Everything he was, everything he'd done in recent years had been leading him right to this very moment.

Now that he was finally here, there was so much he wanted to say and do, but he didn't know where to start. If this were a normal relationship, the pressure would be on him to make all the right moves. He'd have to worry about what to do, what to say. But this wasn't a normal relationship. She was the teacher and he was the student. All he had to do was put himself in her capable hands.

She'd left him alone while she changed. He looked around her apartment, taking in his surroundings. The living room was designed for comfort and decorated in soft, natural tones, with plump pillows casually arranged on oversized furniture that invited lounging. Candles flickered in tucked-away corners, their glow reflected in gilded mirrors strategically placed throughout the room. It suited her. Like the woman who lived here, the entire apartment felt warm, elegant and sensual.

When she stepped into the room all other thoughts fled from his mind. Instead of the tailored suit, she wore a simple sheath of ivory silk draped in a way that reminded him of Grecian goddesses. The pearls were crossed at her breasts and twined around her waist, emphasizing an enticing hourglass figure. Her feet were bare, which he found incredibly erotic, and as far as he could tell she wore nothing underneath. She casually reached up and pulled something from her hair, causing it to tumble around her shoulders in shimmering waves. His fingers clenched with the urge to run his hands through that glorious hair.

He took a deep breath and met her halfway. "Are you real or just a dream?"

She rewarded him with a smile that set his heart pounding, then reached up and stroked his cheek. Her lips were enticingly close, her voice a breath of a whisper. "Are you ready to begin?"

"Oh yes." If she only knew how ready he was and how long he'd waited for just this moment.

She took his hand and led him to the wide sofa. After he sat down, she lowered herself sideways onto his lap with her legs stretched along the length of the sofa. He let his hand rest on her outer thigh where the silky material had shifted to reveal soft, smooth skin.

"Have you thought about the card I gave you at the restaurant?"

He shook his head. All he'd thought about was her. "Last," he stammered. "The card said last."

She nodded. "It's an acronym. Each letter stands for a lesson in our curriculum. Can you guess what they are?" As she spoke, she stroked him with the curled edge of her finger, running it slowly from his cheek to his jaw, then down the side of his throat and back again. "Let's start with the letter L."

"Lips?" he asked, saying the first thing that came to mind. Hadn't he been obsessed with the ripe fullness of her lips all night, mesmerized by the provocative sweep of her tongue over the glistening surface? From the moment he'd first set eyes on her he'd ached to taste those lips and feel the heat of her mouth pressed against his own.

"Lips," she said, tracing the outline of his mouth with the tip of her finger. "No. Try again."

He wanted so badly to please her, but it was all he could do to form a coherent thought with the weight of her soft cheeks pressing against his turgid cock. He blurted out the first thing that came to mind. "Love?"

Her smile this time was indulgent. "You really are a sweet boy, aren't you?"

Injured pride stiffened his spine. He didn't want her to think of him as a boy. Despite the differences in their age and experience, he wanted her to think of him as a man...an equal partner both in and out of the bedroom. By the end of their time together he was determined to see that she did just that.

"I'll give you a clue," she said. "The letters stand for skills you'll need to learn."

He found himself entranced by her voice, the husky rise and fall. He could listen to her... "Listen!" he exclaimed. It wasn't a question this time. He knew he'd taken the first step in his sexual journey.

"Excellent." She rewarded him by leaning over and brushing his lips with a light kiss that left him wanting more. "Listening is the most important skill you'll ever learn. Your body may be clamoring for attention, urging you to push forward, but it's your ears that will seduce a woman first. Give her all your undivided attention and let her know that what she has to say is more important than what you want her to do."

She pressed a finger to a spot just beneath the edge of her jaw. "Kiss me right here."

He did as requested, letting his lips linger at the faint pulse at the side of her throat. She made a soft little purring sound that sent his pulse racing. "Listen to the sounds a woman makes when you're touching her," she said. "Those sounds will guide you to the spots that spark her desire."

He let his lips roam downward, leaving a trail of kisses along the curve of her neck and across her shoulder.

"Mmmm..." Her voice softened as she continued the lesson. "Listen for the cues as you explore a woman's body in a variety of ways, discovering the places that flame the spark and leave her weak."

With only the gentlest nudge of his chin, the material slipped from her shoulder, baring one breast. He cupped her breast and kissed his way lower, over the soft upper swell, then brushed his lips across her raised nipple. A soft, husky moan escaped her throat. Taking this as a cue, he parted his lips and teased the stiffening tip, feeling it tighten as he drew it between his lips with gentle little tugs.

She ran her fingers through his hair, holding him close to her breast as he nuzzled and licked and teased. "As long as you're listening to your lover," she whispered, "you can't make a mistake."

He brushed the edge of his teeth lightly across her areola. Taking her throaty moan as a signal to proceed, he closed his teeth around her nipple and bit down gently.

She gave a quick intake of breath and arched her hips upward. His hand slid beneath the material and caressed her upper thigh, finding the skin softer the further he explored. Burying his face between her breasts, he continued stroking higher until she gave a little moan and shifted, parting her legs for him. Drawn by the heat, he explored further, over her trembling inner thighs to the silky cloud of curls between her legs.

Nothing he'd seen or read about a woman's body could have prepared him for the wonders he found between her legs. The skin was soft and warm to his touch on the outside, yet slick and glistening smooth as he delved deeper. Her body was both primal and mysterious. He found himself suddenly unsure, wanting to uncover the mysteries but afraid to hurt her in any way.

As if sensing his hesitation, she placed her hand over his and guided him with firm pressure. Their hands moved as one as he cupped her in his palm, stroking the soft fullness of her mound. With the lightest pressure against his first and middle fingers, she eased them between the outer lips to slide along the length of her slit in long, easy strokes that bracketed the expanding bud of her clit.

He knew the various parts of a woman's body, but until now had been unaware of how exciting it was to feel the changes as she became aroused. Resisting the urge to plunge heedlessly, he listened intently, using her soft moans and trills of pleasure to guide him. He teased and stroked the folds surrounding her clit until it began to swell. Only when he heard the urgency in her breath did he focus his attention on the insistent bud. He stroked and teased, easing off when her body shuddered then circling back for more.

Her excitement enflamed him, making his cock jerk against the tight confines of his pants. He ground his hips against her bottom but remained focused on her pleasure alone.

She arched her back and lifted her hips and his finger slid easily inside her pussy. Her body trembled and quaked and the sounds of pleasure were undeniable as he rocked forward and back, plunging his finger deep inside her while using the heel of his palm to caress her clit in a slow circular motion.

There was no mistaking her sounds of passion. Going purely on instinct alone, he drove deeper, sliding two fingers into her slick pussy, feeling the walls clench and tighten around him. Her body bucked against his hand as he continued pressing and plunging deeper, until finally she cried out and jerked upward. He felt the trembling deep inside as she came for him, her body grinding tight and hard against his hand.

Incredible. He couldn't believe he'd brought her to climax. Even though his cock ached to fuck, he was filled with an intense sense of pride and satisfaction. Before he could revel in his newfound mastery, however, she turned and slid off his lap. He was afraid he'd done something wrong and she was going to leave, but instead she grasped for the button of his waistband.

He growled and helped her with the zipper, then lifted his hips while she drew his pants down to his knees. Before he could undress all the way, she straddled his hips, pressing the heat of her pussy against the thick root of his shaft. The head of his cock brushed against her tummy.

She cupped his face and kissed him hungrily, parting his lips with her own until their tongues met and twisted. His cock grew even harder, pressed between them as they kissed. "I need you now," he growled, unable to wait a second longer to make her his own.

She released his mouth and stared deeply into his eyes. Her cheeks were flushed, her hair a halo of tousled curls and her eyes burned hot and wild. She was the most

gloriously beautiful creature he'd ever seen—primal, passionate and powerful. He wanted to possess her completely.

With one smooth move, she rose to her knees and reached between them to grasp his cock. He was sure he'd explode just from her touch and knew he couldn't wait much longer. Holding him firmly at the base, she slowly lowered herself onto his engorged shaft, guiding his fullness inside her slick opening. He groaned and arched his hips, pushing himself deeper into her velvety smoothness.

"Pearl," he moaned, and the sound of her name on his lips seemed to light a fire within her. She grasped his shoulders and plunged hard and fast onto his aching cock, sending him reeling. All he could do was cry out her name as she rode him harder, faster, bringing them both to the point of no return.

With a final cry of surrender, she arched her back and let go, pumping fast and furiously. He felt her orgasm crash around him and gave one final heave, pushing himself to the hilt inside her and exploding in a hot rush. Her pussy tightened in spasms around his cock, milking the cum from him as he fucked her. Each wave of her orgasm brought a fresh spurt of his own until there was nothing left and he'd emptied himself completely inside her. And still he continued pumping, unable to stop.

She collapsed against his chest and his arms tightened around her. He was afraid to breathe, afraid to move. He wanted to stay inside her forever. She nuzzled against the side of his neck, purring softly. The sounds of satisfaction were intoxicating to his ego. He stroked her back and brushed his face against the side of her head. "Beautiful," he whispered. It was the only word he could find to describe her and what they'd just experienced. "So beautiful."

She gave a final shudder and relaxed completely in his arms. When he was able to think again, he realized they'd only covered the first letter of the acronym. His lips curled up in a satisfied smile. He couldn't wait for the next lesson.

* * * * *

When the world settled back on its axis, Pearl had a moment to wonder about what had just happened. For the first time in her career she'd lost control. It worried her. She was supposed to be in charge at all times, but for a moment she'd forgotten her role and simply responded to him as a woman. That had never happened before.

She'd wanted to take his virginity gently and instead had acted like a wild and wanton woman, stripping him of his innocence with reckless abandon. What kind of a teacher was she?

She had to force herself to leave the comfort of his arms. She took a deep breath and sat up, straightening her clothes demurely before sliding off his still tumescent cock.

He gave her a slow, sexy smile. "How'd I do, teacher?"

She felt a warm flush rise to her cheeks. The look of masculine pride in his eyes transformed his face, stripping away all traces of innocence. "I think you're a natural."

His grin widened. "So the A stands for A-plus student?"

She bit her lip to keep from laughing. His newfound cockiness was charming. She stood and gave his impressive cock another longing glance before holding out her hand to help him to his feet. She reached out to pet him one more time before he could tuck himself away in his pants. "The A stands for adaptability," she said, trying to keep the longing from her voice. "Every woman is different. Some need gentle coaxing, others prefer a firmer touch. Some want to follow and others to lead. If you always make love the same way, you'll be wrong some of the time, but if you learn to adapt to each woman's specific needs, you'll be right *all* the time."

"What if I only want one woman?" he asked, giving her a look of naked longing.

Her heart gave a little flutter. *No*, she thought. *Don't go there*. Other students had thought they'd fallen in love with her. It was natural for someone being introduced to their first sexual experiences to misinterpret lust for love.

But this was the first time she'd felt herself in danger of falling for one of her students.

Using the excuse that she had to freshen up, she turned and walked away. What she really needed was a few moments to get her feet back on the ground and remember that this was simply a temporary arrangement. Even if he wasn't her student, there was still the age difference to take into consideration. No matter how much he appealed to her with those gorgeous puppy-dog eyes, she had to remain focused.

She cleaned up and readjusted her pearls into a modified Möbius strip—draped over her shoulders, down over her breasts to rub against her already sensitive nipples, then between her legs on either side of her labia before crossing at the back and winding around her waist to clasp in front. The brush of pearls against her breasts and between her legs kept her in a highly intense state of sexual awareness. It was her favorite way to wear the pearls when conducting a training session.

After donning a robe and leaving her dressing room, she found Rafe rooting through a basket of fruit on the dining room table. "Hungry?" she asked.

He glanced up with a guilty start. "I was too nervous to eat much at dinner," he admitted. "And apparently I burned off what few calories I managed to absorb."

"In that case," she said, "I think you're ready for your next lesson."

His eyes lit up and he reached for the button at his waistband.

She held up a finger and smiled. Oh, the vigor of youth. Virility was certainly one point in his favor. "Not that kind of lesson," she said.

His face fell and his lips turned down in a pout. "I thought we were going to try some different positions."

She pulled up a chair and joined him. "Oh we will. We'll have lots of time for that. But knowing different positions isn't the reason you're here. You could find those in any sex manual, including the Kama Sutra, the oldest sex manual of all. What's important is building confidence in your lovemaking skills. There's nothing sexier than self-confidence in a man, whether in or out of bed."

He sat up straighter, obviously already feeling some of that confidence. And with good reason, she had to admit. She reached out and took a ripe, juicy plum from the

fruit basket. She held the fruit up for his inspection. "We'll use this for your next lesson."

He watched her intently, hanging on her every word. Already he was putting his first lesson to use – listening.

"The letter S stands for savor," she said. "As with everything in life, whether food, good company or making love to a woman, it's important to savor the experience. Luxuriate in every scent, taste and touch. Lovemaking is not a race to the finish line. A woman can sense if you're doing something simply because you feel you have to. True seduction comes when she realizes that giving her pleasure is just as intoxicating for you as it is for her."

She reached for the clasp at her waist and slid one pearl off. Using a small silver spoon, she scooped out an oblong slice down the length of the fruit then pressed the pearl into the V-shaped groove near the top of the opening.

"Imagine this is a woman's vagina," she said, using her fingertips to demonstrate. Notice how the skin is firmer on the outside. The outer lips are less sensitive and can be teased with nibbles and love bites." She handed him the ripened fruit to inspect. "Once we go deeper into the more tender flesh, you want to take more care. Use long, luxurious sweeps of the tongue to start with."

She stopped him before he could dive into the fruit. "Wait. Savor the smell first. Fill your senses with the unique aroma of the woman you're about to make love to. Then taste, first with the tip of your tongue until the taste buds tingle. Savor the juices before plunging deeper, letting your tongue guide you to the sweeter depths."

She watched as he followed her guidance. He closed his eyes and took long, slow breaths, then let his tongue trace a lingering path up and down the sweet fruit. Juices flowed down his chin and she felt herself growing wet just watching.

"Now the pearl," she said, "represents the woman's clit. That's the most sensitive part of her body. Don't rush it. You want to seduce the clit, make it reach toward you

for attention. You're not trying to force an orgasm, but simply enjoying every moment of pleasure along the way."

He slowly worked his tongue upward then away, almost but not quite teasing the buried pearl with each stroke. She wiggled in her chair, encouraging him with soft words. "That's right, just like that."

He gave the pearl one quick flick and she trembled, imagining that flexible tongue stroking her own throbbing clit. "Over and around each side until it reveals its fullness to you."

He complied, working his tongue around the pearl, adding little licks and swirls and sucking sounds that made her own pussy wet with anticipation. He was a quick learner, mastering the technique immediately.

Watching him ravish the fleshy fruit made her pussy ache. It was all she could do not to drag him between her legs and feel that clever tongue sliding up and down her slit with the same sensuous abandon.

She had to tear him away from devouring the fruit. "Very good," she said, leaning over to reward him with a kiss. His mouth tasted sweet and sticky. She licked the plum's nectar from his lips and let her tongue glide over the edges of his teeth. He was delicious and ripe for the taking. It was time to put his lesson into practice and she couldn't wait.

She took his arm and led him to the chaise for a visual demonstration. She had him sit on the far end while she slipped off her robe. She leaned back on the chaise and brought her knees up, spreading her legs to reveal the way the strands of pearls framed her still sex-swollen pussy on either side.

His eyes were drawn to her own ripe plum. She brought his hand to her mound, letting him cup the fullness and stroke the soft curls framing her mons. She could feel the heat radiating from her pussy to his cupped palm. "Now look," she said, spreading her legs wider and parting her lips. She stroked the smooth inner folds, holding them open for him to see. "Here's the tender center where the sweetest juices lie." She let one

finger glide along her opening, then slide up and around her swollen clit. “And here’s the pearl, the key to a woman’s pleasure. Notice how I let the natural juices lubricate my touch so my fingertip glides over my clit.”

“Beautiful,” he breathed, devouring her with his soulful gaze.

He watched intently as she allowed herself a few moments to enjoy the sensation of stroking herself in the way she knew best. “You can learn so much by watching a woman give herself pleasure—which touches her body responds best to and how to listen for the sounds that will guide you so you know when to speed up, where to give more pressure, when to give her the release she needs.”

Pearl had to force herself not to give in to the orgasm building steadily. This was about teaching him. Her own needs were secondary. “Are you ready to put what you’ve learned to use?”

“Oh god yes,” he moaned huskily. “Please.”

She couldn’t tell him how much she wanted it as well.

He leaned forward slowly, almost reverently. He spread her legs even wider, studying the contours of her most intimate places before lowering his head and taking a long, deep breath. He touched her with just the tip of his nose as he breathed her in then slowly exhaled a whisper of warmth along her opening that sent shivers down her thighs. Oh yes, he was a very good learner.

His tongue swooped and swirled along her inner folds, stimulating her juices to flow even more. He made decadent sounds of pure pleasure as he lapped her honeyed depths. His enjoyment was intoxicating. No longer a student, he’d become a true connoisseur. That was the one lesson she couldn’t teach. It had to come from within.

She lifted her hips, giving him more room to explore. His tongue teased upward with the barest flick that sent a jolt to her clit. “Oh yes,” she moaned, wanting more. Ignoring her plea, he instead began a circular sweeping movement around the edges of her clit, teasing it into fullness before covering the rigid pearl with the curve of his tongue in a blanketing caress.

Her buttocks clenched and her toes curled.

He leaned back on his heels and caught her gaze. "Is that good?" he asked. The question was innocent, but the look in his eyes was one of self-assurance.

"Yes," she said. "Very, very good."

Still holding her gaze, he reached for a strand of the necklace resting against the folds of her labia and pressed the string of pearls between her legs. He tugged gently and caressed her slit from top to bottom, letting the cool gems glide along her heated flesh. Just when she thought she couldn't take another moment of delicious torment, he lowered his face between her legs again and ran his tongue up and down the line of pearls, pressing them between her folds. He covered them with his mouth, running his soft lips along the pearly path. His teeth brushed over the curve of each stone, sending singing vibrations through her entire body.

He was everything she could have ever wanted in a lover — creative and playful and intense. She had to remind herself that he was her student, nothing more. But oh God, she wanted more.

"I think that's enough for today," she said, trying valiantly to regain her control.

"No," he replied huskily. "I haven't learned how to bring my woman to orgasm like this yet."

My woman. The words alone were intoxicating. Before she could argue, he replaced the pearls with his tongue, cupping her clit in an intensely seductive kiss and drawing it between his lips. Her hips jerked. She felt one long finger slide inside her pussy and gave a gasp of surprise that was swallowed by a moan of ecstasy as he suckled harder on her trembling clit. Her walls contracted around his finger. She ground against him, taking his finger deeper inside. It still wasn't enough. As if understanding a lesson she'd yet to teach, he slid another finger in beside the first, then curled them upward until his fingertips stroked and teased the hardening ridge of her G-spot.

That's when she lost control completely. She arched and moaned, riding his hot mouth uncontrollably. He sucked and stroked harder, urging her with little growls that

vibrated around her clit. “Oh God yes!” she cried out as the orgasm exploded through her entire body. She bucked and tightened, but still he held on, drawing her climax out until she was heaving and gasping for air, then finally releasing her clit to watch her ride out the final wave of orgasm.

“I could watch you forever,” he whispered, gathering her in his arms and cradling her against his body. “That was the most beautiful thing I’ve ever seen.”

His gaze was rapt, his eyes dark and liquid. He no longer looked like a boy, but a man—a man who’d received more pleasure than he’d given.

Pearl found herself at a loss for words. Suddenly it felt as if their roles were reversed—he the teacher and she the willing student. Because she couldn’t stop herself, she reached down and cupped his erection with her hand, finding him hot and rigid. She traced the outline with her fingernails, teasing him with just the light fabric of his trousers between them. He placed his hand over hers and pressed it tight against his body so she could feel his cock pulsing against the curve of her palm.

With a wickedly sensual chuckle, he nuzzled the side of her neck. “Is it time for another lesson?”

“Oh yes,” she said. It wasn’t, but curriculum be damned. Every womanly urge inside her wanted to give him the same pleasure he’d just given her. She unbuttoned his pants and slid the zipper down in a slow, seductive tug, releasing his turgid cock. She slid down to the foot of the chaise, switching places with him as she removed his pants.

She drank in the sight of him. Long, muscular thighs and a silky patch of chestnut hair framed his glorious penis. It was a phallic masterpiece—straight and thick and uncut. If she were a sculptor, this was the cock she’d choose as a model to go down in history as the perfect representation of virile manhood. She leaned forward and inhaled the musky heat of his body.

Before she could taste him, he stopped her. “Wait,” he said. “Aren’t I supposed to show you the ways a man pleasures himself so you’ll understand how my body reacts?”

She was both proud of how much he'd taken the lessons to heart and excited by this new twist. One of her favorite fantasies was watching a man pleasure himself to orgasm. The sight of a man's strong hands gripping his shaft made her incredibly hot. "Yes," she said, hoping he didn't notice the tremble in her voice. "That's exactly what you should do."

"I thought as much." This time she couldn't help but detect a hint of humor in his eyes. "I just know how much I enjoyed watching you," he said, "and thought I'd return the favor."

Oh, there would be favors returned all right. She wet her lips and watched as he brought his hands to the base of his balls and curled one around them to cup and squeeze. Her breath hitched in her throat. She wanted to nuzzle her face beneath those tight, firm balls, lift and roll them around her tongue and drag them individually into her mouth.

He gave his balls one final caress then curled his fingers around the base of his shaft and stroked upward. The fluid movement lifted his balls tight against the root of his erection. He stroked downward, pulling his foreskin and revealing the thick bulb of his cock head, the surface already glistening with pre-cum. Her mouth watered. He grew harder with each long, smooth stroke and she admired his self-control. This was a man who knew enough to savor the foreplay rather than rush to climax.

She ran her hands up his inner thighs, feeling the muscles tremble and bunch. Her breath washed over his skin as she slid her fingertips into the grooves between thighs and testicles. She leaned in closer, transfixed by his every movement – the slow twist of his wrist on each upward stroke, the lingering grip on his crown and the quick slide of his thumb over the juicy slit of his head. A low moan escaped her lips.

Unable to stop herself, she buried her face between his legs, inhaling the heady scent of his manhood. She ran her tongue upward, sweeping the groove between his balls to lift and separate them. She drew first one then the other into her hungry mouth in long, sucking pulls. He continued stroking his cock as she made love to his balls,

feeling them tighten and lift as she first sucked them then rolled them in her palm. She teased the sensitive skin behind his sac until she was rewarded with an animal moan of pleasure.

He lifted his hips and she took that as a sign that he was ready for more. Emboldened, she reached down and spread his cheeks apart and let her tongue explore deeper, sweeping over the tight rosebud of his ass. His cheeks clenched and his hips bucked. She could feel his body jerking now and knew that the rhythm of his strokes had increased. With an urgency almost impossible to contain, she used her tongue to spread him open, teasing him with quick little thrusts, then pushing deeper until her tongue was buried inside him. She fucked him with her tongue while he jerked his cock in ever-quickenings strokes.

His moans became growls as the primal beast inside let go, jerking and thrusting with wild abandon. No longer able to contain herself, she lifted herself to her knees and watched as his frenzied strokes increased.

“Not yet,” she murmured. “Enjoy the build-up a little longer. Give yourself to the pleasure and it will make the climax even stronger.”

“I can’t...”

“Yes, you can. Ride it out a little longer and wait for my signal.”

She leaned over to capture the head of his cock in her mouth. He gave a low moan of surrender as she lathered the tip with her tongue, sliding it along the sensitive slit to drink in his heady juices. Testing his self-control, she opened her throat and took him deeper, sucking him in with long pulls. She curled her lips tightly around his thrusting cock, taking him as deeply as she could.

She reached down to squeeze his balls, feeling them rise and tighten with impending release. She knew he couldn’t hold on much longer. She lubricated her middle finger with her own juices, then teased his anus and slid it inside him. She plunged deeper, locating his prostate gland—the male equivalent of a woman’s G-spot. He tightened and tensed around her finger, then relaxed as she plunged deeper still.

His entire body went rigid and she knew he was on the brink. She increased the pressure, massaging his prostate while he fucked her mouth with more insistent thrusts.

He came again, with slightly less force than the first time but just as much enthusiasm. She took it all, swallowing every drop then licking him clean afterward. When she peeked up, he was gazing at her, eyes misty with adoration. She couldn't resist and took him in her arms.

"My Pearl," he whispered softly, nuzzling the side of her neck. She held him close, ignoring the warning beating through her veins. This was dangerous. Already she felt him tugging at her heart, making her want — *need* — more.

"That will be enough lessons for tonight," she said. "Let's rest and start fresh in the morning."

He nodded then surprised her by sweeping her up in his arms and carrying her off to bed.

Chapter Three

Pearl woke slowly, her body spooned against Rafe's. She could feel his morning erection pressed firmly against the crack of her ass. One of his arms cradled her head and the other was draped around her waist, holding her close. She gave a soft little sigh and wiggled against him. His cock responded immediately and his hand came up to cup her breast. Mmmm...he was delicious to wake up with.

She considered throwing her curriculum out the window and just spending the entire day in bed, having him for breakfast, lunch, dinner and an evening snack as well. They'd start off in the missionary position. For all her sexual agility, that was still her favorite. There was something intoxicating about the pressure of a man's body looming over hers while she surrendered to him completely. It was nice to be on the submissive side every now and again, especially when her lover was skilled and thoughtful of her needs.

Before she could suggest just that, however, he slid his arm from beneath her and sat up. "Don't move," he said. "I'll be right back."

She watched him wrap the strip of material she'd worn the night before around his waist and walk out of the room. Did she detect a new swagger in his step? It wasn't surprising, even though they'd only spent one night together. She found that a little hands-on experience was a good foundation for any novice. Further lessons added technique to build on that foundation. His natural skills would go a long way for him, however. She had no doubt he'd leave here as one of her star pupils.

Just the thought of him leaving left her feeling empty. She rolled over onto the side of the bed still warmed by his body. She buried her face in his pillow. It smelled of sex and sandalwood. She didn't have to think of him leaving just yet. They had plenty of time before she sent him out in the world with his newfound sexual skills.

He returned carrying a tray of coffee and toast. "This was the best I could do," he apologized. "Maybe when we're not making love you can teach me how to cook so I can make you a more substantial breakfast." He gave her a knowing wink. "We'll need to keep up our energy."

There was no doubt his demeanor had changed. He'd come into her home an inexperienced boy, but what she saw now was a man brimming with confidence. If she wasn't careful, he'd soon become more than even she could handle.

"Thank you," she said. "Usually coffee is all I can face in the morning anyway."

Rafe sat on the edge of the bed and drank in the sight of her. Even tousled and sleepy, he found her incredibly appealing. Morning revealed a touch of vulnerability in her eyes that tugged at his soul. He had all he could do not to tear the coffee cup out of her hand and ravish her right there. He took a deep breath and sipped his coffee.

"I thought we could put one of my lessons to the test while we ate," he said.

She raised one eyebrow in question and nibbled on a triangle of toast.

"Listening," he explained. "I think I need to work on that some more."

"Do you?"

"Yes. Plus I want to know everything there is to know about you—your life, your loves, your dreams."

A frown creased her forehead and she glanced away.

"Is Pearl your real name?" he asked.

She shook her head. "It's the name I chose when I decided to make a new life for myself." She shifted, as if uncomfortable baring her soul.

To put her at ease, he focused on the reason he was sharing her bed in the first place. "What made you become a, um..."

"A teacher?"

"Yes, a teacher."

She set her coffee cup down and lowered her eyes. The silence stretched out and he was sure she wouldn't say anything at all. Then her shoulders slumped and she began to speak.

"I was married very young. Only seventeen. We were both virgins and expected sexual compatibility to come naturally. When it didn't, we each blamed ourselves. Instead of talking about it together, we suffered alone. Insecurity and inexperience is a dangerous combination. With no reason to come together, we eventually drifted apart. A distance built up between us, a wall of silence that extended from the bedroom to the rest of our marriage."

Once she opened up, it all came pouring out, as if her story was one she'd never told anyone before. She let out a breath that became a sigh. "Before our short marriage ended, we'd managed to hurt each other beyond repair. The damage ran deep. I vowed never to let another man hurt me again, even if it meant remaining celibate." She shrugged one shoulder. "It wasn't as if I'd miss what I'd never had in the first place."

He wanted to take her in his arms and make the hurt go away, but knew it wasn't the right time. She needed to unburden herself completely before the wound could heal. Instead he simply held her hand, giving her the strength she needed to continue.

"After two years of celibacy," she said, "I met a man who made me change my mind. Xavier was an older man, experienced in the art of lovemaking. I had my first orgasm in his bed and finally realized what I'd been missing. He taught me the many ways of making love and showed me the true meaning of sexual enlightenment."

Rafe felt a stab of jealousy for the man who'd helped a lost, lonely girl blossom into a passionate woman. He couldn't help asking. "Did you love him?"

She smiled, even though tears glistened at the corner of her eyes. "Yes. I did. And I was grateful to him. If only I'd known the ways of love sooner, I wouldn't have made a failure of my marriage. A little knowledge could have saved me a lot of heartache."

"What happened to Xavier?"

Her voice softened. "We had three glorious years together," she said. "Then he lost his battle with leukemia."

Rafe's heart went out to the young girl who'd found love only to lose it once again. No wonder she sheltered her heart from emotional entanglements, focusing instead on the physical act of lovemaking where she was in control of the outcome. He knew without asking that there were no men in her life besides her students. She gave everything she had to them...everything except her heart.

Rafe was determined to change that.

"We had time to prepare," she said. "I knew Xavier was dying when we first met. It was only a question of when." She took a deep breath then let it out with a sigh. "Before he died, Xavier told me to take what I'd learned and use it. That's when I decided to do for others what he'd done for me. Teaching became my sole purpose in life. It helped me find a sense of fulfillment and purpose. I don't need anything more than that."

Rafe understood the truth behind her words. Instead of physical celibacy, she now punished herself with emotional celibacy. "Is that why you don't accept payment for your services?"

She shook her head. "I don't need money. Xavier left me comfortable for life. It was his final gift to me. I do it to help young men like you learn how to be better lovers who eventually make happy and fulfilling mates."

He had one more question, but wasn't sure how to ask. He glanced at the nightstand where her pearls lay pooled in glistening coils. It couldn't be coincidence that she'd chosen to name herself after the gems she wore.

She followed his gaze and smiled. "The first year we were together, Xavier gave me a single pearl on a chain. He said the stone reminded him of me—cool and regal and precious." A blush colored her cheeks, making her look even younger than she was.

"He added a single pearl every year we were together until he died." She reached out and stroked the pearls, as if gathering strength from the flawless stones.

Sudden realization dawned on him. There were countless pearls strung along the necklace—more than could be accounted for by a three-year relationship. Most of them must have come from other lovers.

He hazarded a guess. “The rest of the pearls are from your students?”

She nodded, clasping the pearls to her chest. “It’s the one gift I can’t resist. I know it comes from the heart and represents both gratitude and a true understanding of the lessons they’ve learned.”

Rafe understood. He already felt an overwhelming sense of gratitude. Even after only one night he instinctively understood that the only gift perfect enough to represent that gratitude would be a single precious pearl to add to her collection. The pearl, once added to the existing strand, would represent their time together and in some small way allow him to always be a part of her life. It didn’t surprise him that he wasn’t the first grateful student to make the connection. He only hoped that by the end of the week he’d be the last.

“It’s my way of honoring the man who put me on this path,” she said softly, letting the pearls glide through her fingers. She took a deep, bolstering breath and stood. Glorious in her nakedness, she looked more regal than if she were draped in ermine and royal jewels.

Clutching the pearls like a talisman, she straightened her spine and turned. “I’m going to take a shower now.”

Rafe knew better than to stop her. He’d already pressed her to open up more than she was comfortable with. Instead he simply watched her walk away with a new appreciation. Now it was time for the healing process to begin.

* * * * *

Alone in the shower, Pearl let her tears flow. No student had ever thought to ask about her past. She cried for lost loves and wasted years. She cried for the young girl

she once was and the lonely woman she'd become. As she wept, the pain eased and the years slipped away.

No wonder she felt a hundred years older than Rafe. She'd lost her youth and innocence long before she'd even had a chance to appreciate them. The years had hardened her. She prided herself on being a teacher dedicated to her work when in truth she'd simply traded love for labor. As long as she had her work to focus on, there was no need to think about her own needs and desires.

Pulling herself together, she finished showering then dressed and joined Rafe in the kitchen. "The bathroom is all yours now."

He started to reach for his suitcase but she stopped him. "There's no need to get dressed after your shower. Meet me in the bedroom and we'll move right on to the next lesson."

His cock jerked in response.

"Before you go," she gestured around the room, "pick out any object here in the kitchen."

He made a show of inspecting everything.

"I'm only looking for the word," she said. "We're not going to use what you pick for anything kinky."

He seemed vaguely disappointed then settled on the ceramic teapot sitting on the stove.

"Okay, 'teapot' will be your safe word. If at any time you're uncomfortable with anything we're doing, just say the word 'teapot' and we'll stop."

He swallowed hard. "Has anyone ever had to use the safe word?"

"Not yet," she said with a sly wink. "But there's always a first time." She swatted his butt. "Now hit the shower while I get things ready."

She watched him walk away, admiring the fluid movement of muscle beneath firm flesh. His ass was truly a work of art. With a girlish sigh, she poured herself a second

cup of coffee. As soon as she heard the rush of water in the shower, she moved to the bedroom and began preparations for the next lesson.

From a nearby cabinet she removed a variety of items—scented oils, silk scarves, a feather tickler, warming body lotions and a variety of dildos and paddles. She separated the pearls into four equal strands and set them on the bedside table alongside the rest of the items.

With the shower still running in the bathroom, Pearl prepared to dress. She chose a red brocade corset that cupped and lifted her breasts while cinching in her waist and a matching G-string. She fastened sheer black nylons to the garters and then slipped on a pair of black patent-leather stilettos.

She checked her reflection in a floor-length mirror and nodded. It was sexy without being too intimidating. The last thing she wanted to do was scare the poor boy off before they'd even started.

* * * * *

Rafe stepped into the bedroom wearing only a towel wrapped around his waist. He took one look at Pearl standing in front of the mirror and let out a slow whistle of appreciation.

She turned and smiled. "Are you ready for your next lesson?"

"Ready as I'll ever be." He let the towel fall, letting his erection prove the point. "Where do you want me?"

She nodded toward the bed. "Lie on your stomach."

He did as she asked, glancing briefly at the assortment of items assembled on the bedside table. He had to admit that some of them looked more frightening than erotic. He stretched out on his stomach and folded a pillow under his chin, turning his face toward the table so he could see what she was doing.

She poured a puddle of oil onto her palm, letting it warm against her skin before climbing onto the bed and straddling his hips. She rubbed her hands together and

began massaging his back in long strokes all the way down his spine then up again, across his shoulders and down his arms.

A moan of pure pleasure escaped his lips. He felt himself relaxing deeply as she massaged his muscles. His breathing slowed and his eyelids drooped as she worked the oil expertly into his muscles.

"The last letter is T," she said. "It stands for Trust." Her hands performed their magic as she spoke. "First trust your own instincts. If you've followed the three earlier lessons—listen, adapt and savor—then your instincts will guide you the rest of the way."

She finished with his back and had him turn over, then started fresh on his chest and legs. He was captivated by her movements. She took her time with each muscle group before moving on to the next. As she moved, he'd catch a tantalizing glimpse of skin peeking from beneath a panel of lace or the dainty slip of a garter. It was more erotic than seeing her completely naked.

"You also have to learn to trust your partner," she continued. "If you can't trust your lover, then how can you expect her to trust you?"

He wasn't sure if her statement required a response so he simply nodded, luxuriating in her touch.

"Are you ready to trust me?"

The answer came out of his mouth without conscious thought. "Completely."

He could see she was pleased with his response. She kissed him lightly on the lips before sliding off him to the side of the bed. "Do you remember your safe word?"

It took him a moment, but he chalked that up to the fact that her kiss had left him feeling lightheaded. "Teapot."

"Very good. If at any time you're feeling uncomfortable, simply say the word 'teapot' and we'll stop whatever we're doing."

She reached for a section of pearls and wound it loosely around his wrist, then fastened it to the bedpost before doing the same to the other. "A simple tug will break the strand and free your arms if necessary," she said. "Of course I would be heartbroken to see my pearls scattered all over the floor."

He noticed the smile on her face and realized this was part of the sexual game. While he could easily break free, his desire to please her was stronger than any desire to escape. The loose lengths of pearls were more binding than steel restraints.

She did the same with his ankles until he was spread-eagle on the bed.

"Do you still trust me?"

"Absolutely."

She nodded. "Then let's begin." Her voice took on a note of authority. "This is the part of the lesson I like to call Fetishism 101."

She reached for a feather tickler and began brushing it along his skin, from the soles of his feet to his inner thighs. When she lightly tickled beneath his balls his cock jerked straight up. He had to force himself not to tug on the pearl restraints. She eased the feather up his belly then teased his nipples until they hardened. A low moan of ecstasy escaped his lips.

"Simply stated," she said, "a fetish is when interest becomes obsession. However, the word fetish has become a catch-all phrase often used to describe sexual practices considered outside the norm." She stroked the feather down the length of his penis and back again. "In my opinion, anything that you and your lover enjoy, as long as it's not illegal and no one is hurt, is a choice rather than a fetish."

He gulped and nodded.

"Some people might consider light bondage to be a fetish, while others think of it simply as foreplay."

Rafe's cock told him he was definitely in the foreplay cheering section.

“As with anything else, it’s simply a matter of degree. There are people who enjoy a little light bondage and others who prefer something rougher.”

She continued teasing him lightly with the feather as she spoke, making his cock jerk and thump against his belly. The combination of tickling and teasing combined with the effort not to break the pearls was driving him mad.

She pointed to different items on the bedside table as she explained various forms of so-called fetish behavior—from spanking to foot play, latex and rubber, hot wax and butt plugs, and dominance and submission. At this point he was ready to scream “teapot” just so he could break free and fuck her senseless using all, some or none of the items on the table.

“Is there anything in particular you’d like additional hands-on experience with?”

His voice came out as a guttural growl. “You. I only want you.” He meant that in more ways than one. He wanted her body, her mind and her soul. He wanted all of her, always and forever.

She reached for a satin blindfold. “Would you like to wear this? Some people say it enhances the sexual experience, not knowing where the next touch is coming from.”

He shook his head. Nothing could enhance his sexual appetite more than the sight of her. He didn’t want to miss a thing.

She settled between his legs and began stroking his cock in a light two-fisted grip. He moaned, fighting the urge to thrash and jerk. Her voice softened. “Tell me what you want, Rafe.”

I want you to love me the way I love you. He couldn’t say that, however. He could only hope she understood the longing in his eyes. “I want to be inside you.”

She released his cock and rose to her knees. With a quick tug on the strings at her hips she removed the tiny slip of material covering her pussy and straddled him. She lifted his cock and guided it between her legs, rolling the head along her slit until it was covered with her juices.

Just when he thought he couldn't stand another moment of torment, she pressed the head to her pussy and rolled her hips until just the head of his cock was embedded in the tight ring of her opening. She held him there, rotating her hips in lazy circles.

The sight of her looming over him impaled on his cock took his breath away. She was more than a teacher. She was a sex goddess.

With aching slowness, she lowered her weight onto his cock an inch at a time until they were joined completely. He let out a moan of pure pleasure and lifted his hips, trying to force himself even deeper inside.

She rocked forward and back, alternately rolling her hips in slow circles that ground his cock tighter inside her grasping pussy. He fought the urge to arch and thrust. His fingers clenched with the desire to touch her, to squeeze her firm breasts, to grab her ass and ram his cock so hard into her she screamed for more.

His entire body began to tremble and clench. He bit his lips to keep from screaming as she rode him with maddening slowness.

"Baby," she cooed, then leaned forward and captured his lips in a kiss that seared his mind as well as his soul.

He wasn't sure whether it was the kiss or the unexpected endearment that did him in. He just knew that he couldn't have stopped himself from coming for all the teapots in China. The orgasm flowed through every nerve ending in his body, coalescing in a ball of heat at his groin and rushing upward into her with an intensity he'd never experienced before.

She cradled him in her arms as his body trembled. His cock continued jerking inside her long after he'd spilled his seed. And even after all that, it still wasn't enough.

"I need you," he murmured into her hair.

She raised her head and looked deeply into his eyes. In them he saw everything he'd hoped for, everything he needed.

As if sensing she'd revealed too much, she looked away. She eased herself off his cock and rolled to the side. With flicks of her wrist she released the pearls binding his wrists and ankles.

Once free, he reached for her with a possessiveness he hadn't thought possible. He rolled her onto her back and mounted her. Her pussy was tight and hot and slick with their combined juices. He clasped her hands over her head and ground deep into her hot core, grinding his pelvic bone against her clit with each driving thrust.

He bent his head and nipped at her nipples, raking his teeth over the sensitive tips until she mewled, then taking the swollen buds into his mouth and sucking hard while he pounded into her.

He drove hard and fast, fueled by pent-up sexual tension. This time when he came, he was taking her with him. He raised his head and held her gaze, watching her eyes darken with desire. "Look at me," he said. "I want to watch you come."

She let out a little moan of surrender. He saw the change in her eyes when she lost control and gave herself to him completely. He thrust forward, plunging himself to her very depths. She rose with him, surrounding him in the heat of her climax. They came together in a glorious rush that seemed as if it would go on forever.

He held her tight as she trembled with the rippling aftershocks of their lovemaking. Now that he'd found her, Rafe knew he could never let her go. She was everything he'd always fantasized about and so much more. He had to tell her everything.

Trust. That's what today's lesson was all about. She'd trusted him enough to share her past with him the night before. Now it was time for him to do the same.

* * * * *

Pearl snuggled in Rafe's arms enjoying the afterglow of their lesson. It didn't feel right calling it a lesson. It felt like so much more. It was as if their souls had joined as well as their bodies. For a moment they'd felt more like lovers than...

No, she couldn't allow herself to think that way.

She gave a soft sigh of contentment and searched his face. "Are you sure you're a virgin?"

He chuckled. "Well I'm certainly not now."

"You know what I mean. You're such a natural, it's hard to believe you were a virgin when you came here."

"I was," he assured her. He caressed her cheek, his voice soft with emotion. "That doesn't mean I haven't made love to you a thousand times in my fantasies. I've dreamed of kissing your lips, of savoring every inch of your body and bringing you to heights of ecstasy you've never experienced with any other man. I've spent a lifetime dreaming of making you my own."

Pearl pulled away. "I don't understand. We've just met."

"No," he said. "You've just met *me*. I've known you for many years."

She sat up, confused by his statement. "What do you mean?"

He let out a deep sigh and pulled her back into his arms, holding her tightly. "You know that one of your former students was my sponsor."

"Yes. Anton."

He nodded. "Anton is a family friend who I've always looked up to. He was almost like an uncle to me. He taught me to ride my first bike and how to play chess. One day I spotted him in a restaurant with the most beautiful woman I'd ever seen. I stayed hidden and watched them as she fed him fruits and touched him in the most intimate ways. I was only fifteen, but I lost my heart to this temptress. I could only dream of someday having a woman look at me that way, as if I was the only man in the room."

Her eyes widened with understanding.

"Afterward, I followed them to a secluded glade beside a waterfall in a wooded park."

Pearl remembered that afternoon. Thinking about the intimate things she and Anton had done beside the waterfall brought a flush to her cheeks.

“Just looking at her made my cock spring to life and I couldn’t help touching myself. I watched as they made love in the privacy of the woods, unaware that I was hiding in the shadows. I had my first orgasm that day.”

He grasped her chin and forced her to meet his gaze. “That’s the day I fell in love with you, Pearl. I vowed that one day I’d have you as my very own.”

She lowered her gaze, frightened by the intensity she saw in his eyes.

“At the end of the week Anton stopped meeting the woman of my dreams. I couldn’t imagine how he could give up someone so perfect. If I had this woman, I’d treasure her for all time.”

She pressed a finger to his lips as if she could keep the words from escaping.

He took her hand away, unable to let the words stay hidden. “You asked me why I’d saved myself for so long, remember? I was saving myself for you, Pearl. No other woman would do.”

Chapter Four

Up until now Pearl had taken a clinical approach to her sex lessons. Her student curriculum was a well-planned manual with Step A leading to Step B. But with Rafe she'd thrown the manual right out the window, taking a more natural approach to teaching. She was more involved and inspired. With him, sex felt new again.

They'd spent the last few days after his revelation building on the lessons he'd learned. There wasn't a room they hadn't made love in or a position they hadn't tried. She'd known for a while that there was nothing left to teach him. From here on in, experience alone would be the best teacher.

They hadn't spoken again about the feelings he'd been hiding, concentrating instead on their lessons. But she felt the ties binding them together drawing closer each day. As much as she hated the thought, it was time to let him go. If she waited too long it would be unbearably hard for both of them to say goodbye. He had a life to return to and so did she. There was an entire batch of new applicants to consider.

A shudder rippled down her spine. Just the thought of taking another man into her bed felt like a betrayal. She'd somehow lost the ability to distance herself—so necessary to this job. There was also the age difference to consider. Logically it didn't seem to matter. Only twelve years separated them. But just remembering what he'd told her about the time he spotted her at the waterfall made her feel dirty somehow, as if she'd stolen his virginity a long time ago.

Was it love he felt or simply infatuation? Perhaps both. If they had more time together it might be possible to determine which emotion was stronger and whether or not they could build something solid from a shaky beginning.

What about her own feelings? She knew he'd become more than a student to her. If they'd met under other circumstances, things might have been different. She

straightened her spine and strengthened her resolve. This was the right thing to do...the only thing she *could* do.

After applying the finishing touches to her makeup, she joined Rafe in the living room. "Ready?" she asked.

He looked up with an admiring glance. "You look wonderful. I'll be the envy of every man at the restaurant."

She took his arm and started for the door, then reached up to her throat. "Oh, I've forgotten my pearls. Could you be a dear and get them for me? They're in the jewelry box on the dressing table."

"Of course," he said with an indulgent smile.

"I'll meet you down at the car."

As soon as he disappeared into the bedroom she retrieved his suitcase from the closet where she'd hidden it while he was showering. He'd been so excited about their outing that he hadn't noticed it was gone. She'd decided to break it to him at the restaurant. There was less chance that he'd cause a scene in public. She felt terrible, but it seemed less heartless to say goodbye where they'd first met than to just send him away at her doorstep.

She tucked his suitcase into the backseat and waited for him to return with the pearls she'd purposely left behind. Now all she had to do was get through dinner and hope she didn't break his heart.

* * * * *

They were seated at the same table where they'd first met...was it only a week ago? She tried to remember the boy she'd introduced herself to, but there was no trace of him left in the man by her side.

He ordered a bottle of sparkling champagne then raised his glass in a toast. "To the best teacher I've ever had."

She swallowed hard and tried to keep her voice from quivering. "And to my very best student."

"Ever?" he asked.

"Ever," she admitted. That, at least, was the truth.

Dinner was bittersweet. They talked and laughed and fed each other food from their fingertips. But she felt as if she was wearing a mask, smiling on the outside and crying on the inside.

Refilling their glasses, Rafe raised his glass for a second toast. "To us," he said, his eyes shimmering with candlelight and hope.

As much as she ached to answer the unspoken question, Pearl knew she couldn't. They both knew the rules.

She touched her glass to his. "To a successful session."

"And more," he insisted. "You have to know how I feel about you. Pearl, I..."

She pressed a finger to his lips before the declaration of love could escape. She lowered her gaze before the heartache on his face weakened her resolve. "Please, let's just enjoy the rest of our meal."

He did as she asked, but Pearl knew the subject would come up again. It only strengthened her conviction that sending him away was the right choice. The longer this went on, the harder it would be for both of them.

He was young and vulnerable, in love with a childhood fantasy. She was older and should know better. That's why she cautioned her students against confusing lust with love. It was the reason she had rules in the first place. Breaking them now, no matter how tempting, would go against every ethical and moral principle she'd lived by for the last ten years.

After the dessert dishes were cleared she glanced at the maître d' and nodded—their prearranged signal. She reached across the table and covered Rafe's hand with her own. "Do you remember the first lesson I taught you?"

"Of course I do. Listen," he said.

"It's time for you to listen now." She took a deep breath. "You've been a wonderful student. I can't tell you how proud you've made me."

She watched as realization sank in. "You're sending me away?"

"We're done," she said. "There's nothing more I can teach you." She kept her tone light but her heart was breaking.

His face was stricken. "Wait," he said. "There's so much more I need to learn."

She shook her head. "I'm sorry, Rafe. I've already made up my mind. Believe me, this is hard for me too." She brushed a tear from her eye. "It's the best thing for both of us right now."

"Right now?" he asked, grasping at straws. "Does that mean there's still a chance for us?"

She was saved from answering by the maître d'. "Your taxi is waiting, madam."

She stood, anxious to make a clean break before he could say something to make her change her mind. "Goodbye, Rafe. Your suitcase is in the backseat of your car."

She turned and rushed past him, tears streaming from her eyes.

* * * * *

The apartment felt empty and cold without Rafe there. She missed him already. She wandered from room to room. Everything reminded her of their time together—the places they'd made love, the dining room where they'd shared meals and conversations, the bedroom where they'd snuggled together and talked long into the night. She didn't think she could face sleeping in that big bed all alone.

She changed out of her dinner clothes and wrapped herself in a fluffy white robe. Thinking a cup of tea might help her relax, she went to the kitchen, but the sight of the teapot brought on a flood of tears. Now that she was alone, there was no need to hide her tears...even from herself. She let herself have a good cry, but unlike well-meaning advice to the contrary, felt no better afterward.

She fingered the pearls at her throat, her touch lingering on the *first* pearl—the one Xavier had given her. His love and patience had set her on the path to teaching, sharing the same sexual knowledge he'd given so freely to her. But was that the only lesson he'd imparted? Hadn't he also taught her to open her heart to love again when she'd thought she was empty inside?

She'd loved twice and lost both times. How much pain could one heart endure? Perhaps that was why she kept herself at a distance, allowing herself to indulge in sexual pleasure only within the strict confines of a teacher-student relationship. She'd told herself that forbidding personal contact with her students outside the classroom was for *their* benefit, but perhaps it was simply for her own protection. Maybe all those self-imposed rules and guidelines were set in place simply to keep her own heart safe.

Pearl slept fitfully, her mind a torrent of questions and doubts, then woke in the morning determined to get on with her life. Structure and order had served her in the past and it would do so again. She pushed aside all thoughts of her tears the night before, chalking them up to a moment of weakness. Love and romance were for the young and fanciful. They had no place in her curriculum.

After putting the coffee on to brew, she showered and changed into her favorite silk lounging pajamas and twined the pearls around her neck. Refreshed and with a cup of coffee by her side, she prepared to spend the day working. She fanned a sheaf of folders across her desk, determined to select an applicant for her next training session.

Her heart wasn't in it, however. All the names and faces blurred together. So many men who needed her help...but she only wanted one. Instead of looking forward to a new training session, the thought of sharing her bed with anyone but Rafe filled her with a sense of dread.

Perhaps it was time to think about retiring? She leaned back in her chair, rolling the idea around in her head.

Could she give this up? For the last ten years, teaching had been her vocation. She ran her fingers along the pearls, taking pride in the tangible proof of her success. Ten years, averaging two to three students a month. She'd changed hundreds of lives for the better—but what about her own? She couldn't do this forever. Maybe it was time to move on.

When she heard a knock on the door, she wasn't surprised. On some instinctive level she hadn't really expected Rafe to leave without a fight.

"Let me in, Pearl. I have something to give you."

She shook her head. She couldn't accept anything from him. It wouldn't feel right.

"Please. Don't I deserve the same opportunity as your other students to show my gratitude with a gift?"

The sound of his voice weakened her resolve. She'd only been alone one night and already missed him desperately. Maybe she shouldn't have been so hasty. Who would it hurt to luxuriate for a few more days in the company of a man who made her feel treasured and adored? Maybe the memory would be enough to last her a lifetime.

"Pearl...please?"

The ragged edge to his voice broke through her last shred of resolve. She unlocked the door and let him inside, wondering at the effort it must have been taking him to stand tall with pride despite the devastation she saw in his eyes.

He held out a satin jeweler's box. She knew what was inside. She raised imploring eyes to his. "Rafe, I can't." What they'd shared together was more than a simple transaction. Accepting payment, even in the form of a gift, would only sully the memory.

He placed the box in her hand. "Please. Just open it."

Inside, as she'd expected, was a single pearl nestled on a bed of crushed velvet—and a card. She recognized it as the card she'd given him on their first night together.

She mouthed the familiar word—LAST.

"You know what that means, don't you?"

She nodded. "Of course I do. The card stands for each of our lessons."

"Yes," he said. "*My* lessons." His eyes took on a sly gleam. "But don't you think it's hypocritical to teach lessons that you yourself haven't learned?"

His question caught her off guard. "What do you mean?"

He stepped closer until she could feel the heat radiating from his body and smell the tantalizing scent of him. "Listen is the first lesson," he said. "Listen to your heart, Pearl. What's it telling you? Be honest with yourself. Is your heart telling you that you're feeling the same things I am?"

She took a step back but he closed the distance between them again. He reached for her hand and held it. "What does the A stand for, teacher?"

"Adapt," she said, feeling a flutter in her chest."

"That's right. Adapt to change. Maybe this situation calls for a new set of rules. I think you've become a slave to your rules and you've forgotten how important it is to adapt to each unique set of circumstances that comes along."

She released a trembling breath, feeling their roles reverse. This time when he moved closer she didn't retreat. His arms came around her and she melted into his embrace. He cradled her against his chest and she couldn't imagine any other man holding her this way ever again.

He brushed his lips over her ear. "Savor," he whispered. "Savor every touch, every scent, every moment." His hands caressed her in long, luxurious strokes, each one bringing her tighter against his body. "What we have is too special to throw away. You owe it to yourself to savor what we have together."

She lifted her chin and gazed deeply into his eyes. Everything she wanted was there for the asking. All she had to do was...

"Trust," he said, finishing the thought for her. "Trust your instincts, Pearl. Trust me. Trust *us*."

She nodded, and the simple gesture melted her long-frozen heart. He captured her mouth and claimed her with a kiss filled with longing and desire. The kiss, as well as the lessons, went both ways. She answered with her own—*yes*.

Yes, she was ready to listen to her heart, to adapt the rules to a new and exciting relationship. Yes, she owed it to herself—to both of them—to savor this blossoming love. And yes, most of all, she was willing to trust. Yes, yes, yes.

He was the first to break the kiss. He took the card from her hand. “It’s more than an acronym,” he told her. “In this case, it’s also the word that’s important...

“*Last*, Pearl. I want to be the last man you’ll ever need, the last lover to share your bed.”

He stopped her before she could argue. “I’m not asking for a lifetime. I’m just asking you to give us a chance. We can take it day by day, moment by moment. I’ve waited my whole life for you, Pearl. I’ll wait as long as it takes for you to realize that you love me too.”

She cradled the pearl in her palm. It was cool and smooth and heavy with promise. Unlike the pearls that came before it, however, this one symbolized a new beginning. All she had to do was let go of the past and embrace the future.

Rafe tucked a finger beneath her chin, tilting her face until their eyes met. “It’s never too late to learn,” he said, echoing her own thoughts. “Isn’t it time you learned to live again? To love again?”

There was no denying the sincerity in his eyes. “Yes,” she said, letting her mind accept what her heart already knew. Rafe had turned the tables on her, proving himself wise beyond his years. In doing so, he’d taught her the most valuable lesson of all.

She reached up to remove the strand of pearls from around her neck and let them fall to the floor. As Rafe swooped her up in his arms, she closed her hand tightly around the only pearl that mattered—the *last* pearl.

About the Author

Maxie Cooper wears many hats, writing in multiple genres under various pseudonyms. In addition to writing, she has a passion for sexy new shoes, decadent chocolate and hot, steamy novels. She can often be found indulging in one or more of these guilty pleasures at the same time.

Although Maxie physically resides in a small upstate New York community, her imagination takes her to faraway magical places where an element of fantasy usually finds its way into her award-winning books.

The author welcomes comments from readers. You can find her website and email address on her author bio page at www.ellorascave.com.

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